

PORTION CONTROL

'Hit The Pulse'
(In Phase E22) *****

SUBTITLED 'SPECIAL

Maximum Discordant Mixes', this seven track mini LP is a dynamic dancefloor delight. Not content to drill home 'hard, electronic rhythms', 'HTP' is filled to the brim with melody and an array of studio effects, ranging from heavy dub to hard core NY disco. All the component parts become pure Portion Control: stylish musical collage over compulsive beats with a glance at Morricone, soulful serenades and growling speeches.

Side two's selection of tunes firmly dismisses the trudging whitey boho funk that littered the radio last year. This is emotional stuff, passionate,umping sex music that drives with every chorus. Portion Control play Kraftwerk meets mokey Robinson with an delible, contemporary style of their own.

Amazingly, they're already surpassing this collection. If you take a listen to 'Chew You Bits' — the opening cut on the one — you'd be surprised at that is even possible. Next case 'Raise The Pulse', soon to be released through iminated, takes this onary inducing onslaught a p further.

or now, though, this mini- is essential listening, and t tapping, material. A oling derangement of dern music, a pulsating verhouse of emotion, it's olute murder.

DAVE HENDERSON

ERATING EATRE

ss Mauger'
buki KAOT 6) *****

A strange circumstance directly links the Very ionable Art Of Noise's it EP with the not so hep ating Theatre, who are and on the Cork-based

Kabuki label. I even ignored them. Or rather HIM (for they are one person, a Roger Doyle) when I did a round-up of that excellent small label.

This should more than make amends, because 'Miss Mauger' shares with Horn and Morley's 'Moments In Love' (the only concrete track on 'Into Battle') a drifting instrumental inspiration that you can't ignore. It's like a new kind of music and, once again, it's odd that they should turn up at roughly the same time with the same sets of ideas.

'Miss Mauger' is an album that goes at 45 rpm, and this oddity seems to compound Kabuki's overall knack for being neglected. They have so many excellent acts already (Kissed Air, Microdisney etc) that this really shouldn't be so. Doyle here presents a handful of short instrumental pieces — the result is as interesting and provoking as the gist of it sounds standard dull.

The secret is in Doyle's love of a sharp, stop-you-in-your-tracks melody. Cynics would say this is eighties Tangerine Dream, abbreviated somewhat. It is up to a point, a very significant point: Doyle injects his clipped scenarios with a sense of love, and a pointedness that very clearly raises them above any self-indulgence.

He is not into any discernible pose. He attempts, as the group name suggests, to take accepted instrumental music apart and put it back together again with a new perspective. One that can truly make it moving. Nearly every track here is slow and wan, but they are built round a 'living' force that stabs at the heart — in all sorts of ways.

He can be punky ('No Come') or disco/chat-show spoof ('Positive Disintegration') but mostly he is sad, in all kinds of fashions! The 'secret' once again is that Doyle has discovered a richness in instrumental music that is very rarely heard of — he is, if you like, a sensible version of Jean Michael What'sname. An incredibly sensible and sensitive version.

'Miss Mauger' is up for

grabs, but she definitely shouldn't stoop to settling at being ignored.

DAVE McCULLOUGH

BLACK ROOTS

'Black Roots'
(Kick KIK 002) ***1/2

FOR BLACK Roots, this debut LP presented a dilemma, typical to any 'hard' reggae group: the balance between appeasing their loyal fans and appealing to as wide an audience as possible, to ensure good record sales.

At first, I thought 'Black Roots' fell into the 'muted' category, the carefully streamlined production applied to the eight songs show cased here giving a tasteful and refined edge to their arrangements.

However, with repeated listenings, it's become clear to me that the octet — always the most forward of the Bristol reggae rockers — have skilfully straddled the poles of that dilemma and come up trumps with a record that can only enhance their already formidable live' reputation.

Each song operates within a classic roots reggae structure, based on an always tightly controlled rhythm. Best

examples of that mould are the re-worked version of 'Tribal War', with it's hypnotic bass/drum hip-shaker; the majestic 'What Them A Do' and the gorgeous 'Move On', both of which utilise horns beautifully; and the militantly uplifting 'Opportunity', which must be a sure fire candidate for the next single.

The only duff track is 'Africa', full of rasta cliché and marred by a weak vocal, while one other criticism might be that the group over-rely on Frenchie's cultured guitar solos to fill out the songs. But these comments are diminished by the deep strength which Black Roots have at their command.

This is likely to be one of the best LP's from a British reggae group for a long time.

DAVE MASSEY