

## Short Takes



**Vox Humana/Kenny Loggins**

Sometimes, you can tell a record by its cover. In this case, the cover is on Kenny Loggins' new album, *Vox Humana*, and it's a portrait of him that looks garish, a bit tacky and rather like it was drawn with crayons. The music inside isn't much better.

Except for a duet with Stevie Nicks ("Whenever I Call You 'Friend'"), Loggins' only Top 10 hits have been movie themes. Though "I'm Alright" (from *Caddyshack*) wasn't enough to give him sustained popularity, Loggins has had another chance after the huge success of "Footloose."

*Vox Humana* is filled with songs like "Footloose," songs with quick cuts and even quicker tempo changes, songs that jump from verse to chorus to bridge to chorus to verse. Unfortunately, none of them is nearly as engaging as that smash single.

Some of the music and lyrics floating around on *Vox Humana* aren't half bad, but they're strung together so haphazardly it's hard to care. For example, the bridge in "Let There Be Love" could be switched with the chorus from "No Looking Back" without any noticeable difference. Or improvement.

The ballad "Forever" is a standout, but that has more to do with its company than any minor musical merits it might possess. Overall, the music is dull and repetitive, Loggins' singing is thin and uninvolved and, at best, the lyrics are mediocre.

On "Love Will Follow," for example, he sings "I run out of breath 'n' start to shake/I love you with all my heart can take," and on "No Looking Back" Loggins' philosophizes "Out on an open road/Racin' to beat the night/No matter where I'm goin'/I guess I'll get there alright."

This is an unsatisfying album with too many gimmicks and too little substance. But, as Kenny Loggins' newfound popularity begins to ebb, he can look hopefully towards the spring of '86. That's when they'll release *Footloose II*, giving him yet another crack at stardom.

By Michael Giltz

## CHESS



### Chess/Original Cast Recording

To begin, gather three writers together; one who is a master of the musical (Tim Rice, co-creator of *Jesus Christ, Superstar* and *Evita*, among others), and two who are stalwarts of pop music (Benny Anderson and Bjorn Ulvaeus of Abba).

The opening gambit.

Then, follow the proven formula, as exemplified by *Evita*, of recording a cast album before the play has been finished. This piques interest in the musical and flushes out scores of backers who beg you to take their money.

Pawn to King's four.

Now, compose a witty, erudite score for your story about a World Championship Chess Tournament between a bratty American and a Russian. Mix in various musical styles with liberal doses of panache — everything from Rodgers and Hammerstein (the smart, tongue-in-cheek opening number titled "Merano") to rock-tinged-high points ("Pity the Child," the musical's emotional centerpiece).

Bishop to Bishop's four.

Record the music using such popular British performers as Murray Head (who sounds exactly like John McEnroe would, if he could sing), Elaine Page and Barbara Dickson.

Release several singles. Begin with "One Night in Bangkok," a quirky, techno-pop dance tune and "I Know Him So Well," a sweet, poignant and ultimately ironic duet between Paige and Dickson. Watch, with a pleased expression, as they race up the charts of country after country.

Queen to Bishop's three.

Casually finish writing the script for your musical, *Chess*. Open it on Broadway and the West End in the same night. Sit back and enjoy the rave reviews. The album and play are smash hits commercially, and deservedly so.

Queen takes pawn.

Check and mate.

By Michael Giltz