

## ALBERT SALERNO

1915 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Francisco CA 94116  
phone: 415.665.0276  
email: [albertsalerno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:albertsalerno@sbcglobal.net)

## ENTERTAINMENT REVIEWS

### MUSIC REVIEWS (BAM Magazine):

#### SHINEHEAD

(Elektra) *Unity*. Shinehead was born in Jamaica and raised in the Bronx; this makes him a reggae-rapper. Produced by Jam Master Jay (of Run D.M.C.), *Unity* is an adventurous rub-a-dub rap record, filled with eclectic musical references. Woven into the raps are bits of Duke Ellington's "Take the 'A' Train," the Singing Nun's "Dominique," Sam Cooke's "Chain Gang," and strangest of all, Marty Robbins' "Big Iron." When Shinehead sings "Come together, right now, in unity," he is addressing fellow rappers who have fallen into the back-biting habit of "dissing" each other. He follows this riff with Pete Seeger's "We Shall Overcome." The reggae backing lends an air of amiability to the whole affair. Shinehead's lyrics manage to avoid the vulgarity and posturing so prevalent in rap. A moody version of "Who the Cap Fit," based on the Bob Marley tune, is handled nicely, and there is even a non-rap ballad, "Golden Touch," which Shinehead croons in his purest Smokey Robinson falsetto. Not bad, Shinehead. (BAM Magazine)

#### THE SPINNERS

(Volt) *Down to Business*. At first it's a bit of a shock to hear the Spinners singing over synthesizers and drum machines. Most of their Atlantic hits were recorded with large studio orchestras, including MFSB, the house band at Philadelphia's Sigma Sound studio. The five powerhouse vocalists were led in the '70s by the amazing Philippe Wynne, in unforgettable songs like "I'll Be Around," "One of a Kind Love Affair," and the exuberant "Mighty Love." Wynne was replaced in 1977 by another prodigiously gifted singer, John Edwards, and the group persevered through the mid-'80s. They are ranked among the most successful vocal groups of all time.

With *Down to Business*, their first album in three years, the Spinners are at the peak of their vocal powers. The soulful voices shimmer over the cloying, synth-laden production. An understated intelligence shines through most of the Spinners' work, and it is refreshing to hear them taking as many risks as they do here. The group harmonies have never been warmer than on the beautiful "Memories of Allison," an acapella treatment of a neo-soul ballad. "So Hard to Let You Go," an inspired marriage between Edwards' impassioned tenor and bubbling Jamaican steel drums, soars to perfection, modulating up to pop music heaven. "I'm Happy Baby" neatly updates the classic Spinners sound from the '70s, and "I Wanna Love You Forever" floats Edwards' fluid vocals over a 21-voice choir, suggesting a more soulful version of Foreigner's "I Wanna Know What Love Is." Highly recommended.

## **FILM REVIEW (SF Hot Ticket)**

### **Heat and Sunlight**

Shot on black and white videotape and transferred to film, *Heat and Sunlight* is an unpolished gem. San Francisco filmmaker Rob Nilsson (*On the Edge*, *Signal 6*) wrote, directed, and stars as Mel Hurley, a photojournalist undergoing the collapse of a love affair with a choreographer (Consuelo Faust). The action unfolds over a 24-hour period, the eve of Hurley's 40th birthday. The film looks gritty and unadorned, yet like a Henry Miller novel it is bursting with irony, irrationality, and compulsion. There are some unforgettable images: huge photos of starving Biafran children stare down at Hurley from the walls of his studio, alongside erotic portraits of the sensual Carmen. We can easily identify with the man who shot these pictures, feel his emotional hunger and sense of loss. Nilsson's world is blemished, inconsistent, and roughly tender. Like a good short story, the film creates and sustains a pervasive mood and rewards us with unexpected revelations. Although *Heat and Sunlight* won the Grand Prize at the U.S. Film Festival this year, Nilsson has been unable to find a national distributor, and the film is being locally promoted by the cast, crew, and friends. The Kabuki is to be commended for providing a welcome alternative to its usual Hollywood fare. (SF Hot Ticket)

## **WORLD MUSIC REVIEW (Audiohighway.com):**

**Amampombo** -- This West African ensemble incorporates voices, marimbas, talking drums, and akindinda, the Ugandan xylophone. Amampondo's joyous music is like an aural picture puzzle, constantly changing perspective as you listen.

## **COMEDY BLURB (Audiohighway.com):**

### **You Are Not A Lone**

Actor/comedian Richard Belzer, who made his film debut in "The Groove Tube," has built a career out of irreverence. His 1997 CD "Another Lone Nut" offers caustic observations on such cultural mainstays as fad diets, UFO eyewitnesses, vapid Broadway musicals, and late-night TV preachers. Always insightful, Belzer's monologues reveal new depths of absurdity you wouldn't want to miss! Click here to experience the satire of "The Belz," or check out one of our other many comedians-on-tap.