

AUDIO FILES

Various Artists

Red Hot and Blue

The songs of Cole Porter epitomized wit and sophistication for a generation of music lovers. Showcased in landmark musicals like *Anything Goes* and *Kiss Me Kate*, they set a marvelous standard that few composers even attempt to match.

This album is a tribute to Porter's enduring legacy, as well as an attempt to raise money and awareness about AIDS. It's a fitting choice for two reasons. First, Porter's tunes about love are whimsical, pointed and a bracing antidote.

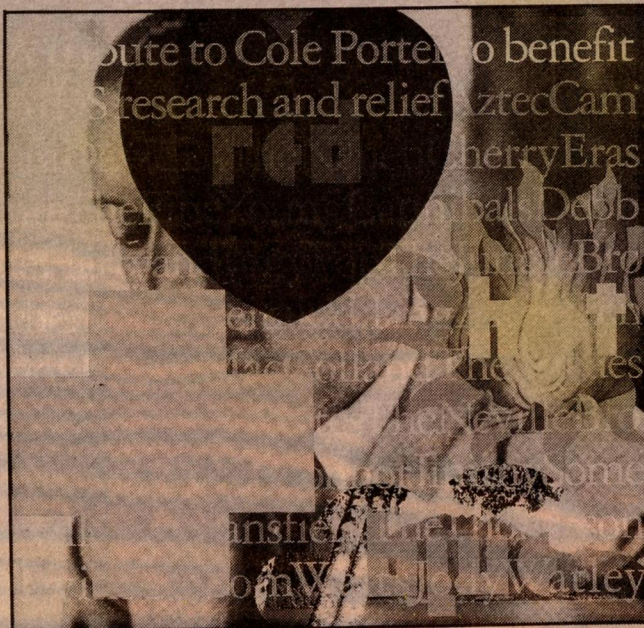
But good intentions don't guarantee a good album, as anyone who has listened to *We Are The World* recently will attest. Happily, *Red, Hot and Blue* is a thoroughly entertaining marriage of pop musicians and Porter's standards.

The approaches of these artists fall into two camps — those who tackle the songs in a modern or traditional setting, and those who use Porter's lyrics and melodies as a starting point for their own improvisation.

The more successful of the former include k.d. lang, who aches and moans her way through "So In Love" with convincing pain and David Byrne, who turns "Don't Fence Me In" into a pounding, pulsating declaration of freedom.

Of the latter, Neneh Cherry and The Jungle Brothers use "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "I Get A Kick" respectively to make explicit warnings about the dangers of sex without a condom. Cherry's song is especially effective when it turns Porter's couplet, "Use your mentality/ Wake up to reality" into good advice.

But because of the great humor in Cole Porter's songs, the most enjoyable versions here are also the funniest. The Fine Young Cannibals deliver a stripped-down, funky version of "Love For Sale," the story of a prostitute. As Roland Gift soars through lines like, "Love for sale/ Appetizing young love for sale/ Love that's fresh and still unspoiled/ Love that's only slightly soiled," a sassy woman in the background keeps interrupting with comments like, "Oh



really?" and "Tell me more."

Debbie Harry and Iggy Pop trash their way into "Well Did You Evah" with delicious abandon, and Tom Waits growls and rasps "It's All Right With Me." By all rights, his tortured vocals should have slipped into self-parody by now. But the jungle-like grunts and groans that provide the arrangement for "It's All Right" are so amusing that it works yet again.

Not every song is so successful. Annie Lennox's sweetly dull version of "Everytime We Say Goodbye" slows things down. U2's smoky, mysterious take on "Night and Day" is good enough, but it's certain to gain more of an edge when performed live. And Aztec Camera's Holiday Inn jazz framing for "Do I Love You" is a tepid finale.

But the hits far outshine the misses. "Miss Otis Regrets," the story of a spurned lover who murders in broad daylight simply isn't a very good song. But Kirsty MacColl and The Pogues have great fun pairing it up with the classic kiss-off, "Just One Of Those

Things."

And The Thompson Twins deliver the album's highlight with their hilarious, droll cover of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" ("Who wants to be a millionaire/ I don't/ Have flashy flunkys ev'rywhere?/ I don't/ Who wants the bother of a country estate?/ A country estate is something I'd hate.")

A string of other fine performances and lavish packaging make *Red, Hot and Blue* an unqualified success. It will be accompanied by a television special airing on World AIDS Awareness Day Dec. 1 that will showcase music videos of these songs directed by some of the top directors around.

BY MICHAEL GILTZ