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## DIXON HOUSE

**D**ixon House isn't his full name—it's Edward Dixon House ("Teddy" to his friends)—and he has a musical history as varied as the songs on his debut A&M album, *Masked Madness*.

Although presently residing in Seattle, Washington, Dixon was born in Victoria, British Columbia, where he grew up like a lot of kids, "music crazy." Although he received formal musical training on the bass clarinet as a child (and still maintains an active interest in classical and liturgical music), he broadened his horizons to rock & roll as a teenager. "You could say the British Invasion had its effect on me," he smiles.

Experimenting in many high school bands, he honed his rock music abilities—at the same time, he was composing classical music in theory and composition classes. But while attending high school, his parents started up a "group home" project in which homeless boys were taken in. Dixon soon found he had two, three, and then a dozen brothers living in his house. "I kind of retreated into my music a lot, just to be alone," he recalls.

Leaving home at the age of 19 he began making his living at music—a path he's followed ever since. "Once when I was 18 I worked at a furniture store," he remembers ruefully, "but that didn't work out. All I ever wanted to do was to make music."

He signed on with a musical talent agency, and worked odd jobs around the Vancouver area and beyond—stuff like weddings and bar mitzvahs—and even landed a stint as a lounge entertainer. "The lounge at first appealed to me because it had a piano, and I could do my own music there during the day," Dixon recalls. "Pretty soon this agency had my trio working in Reno." Dixon looks back on this time philosophically. "It was educational. I got to work with audiences—and I got paid." But he continued to work with rock groups too, and in 1976 his group, Songbird, met with producer Mike Flicker and recorded an album for the fledgling Mushroom label. The record never came out, due to the label's preoccupation with its star group, Heart. (One early member of Songbird was Howard Leese, now of Heart. Howard and Dixon have remained good friends, and Howard plays all the guitar parts on *Masked Madness* and co-wrote several songs.)

Undaunted, but still in demand, Dixon moved on to another record label, Infinity, and did *Fighting Alone* under the slightly longer name The Dixon House Band. To support this album they toured much of the U.S. and Canada, sometimes as headliners—sometimes as the opening act.

"We played huge stadiums in the north, and worked on a raft, playing to people on the beach in Memphis. We saw the whole continent from a van, and found we had fans everywhere," Dixon says.

But he couldn't capitalize on the strength of that album and tour. Yet again his record company folded, absorbed into its parent company, and Dixon was out shopping again.

That didn't last long. Under the aegis of longtime mentor Mike Flicker, Dixon returned to the studio in early 1981 and recorded *Masked Madness* with some of L.A. and Vancouver's finest session players. Soon thereafter the album was picked up for American distribution by A&M, (simultaneously, it's the debut product for the new Flicker Records label in Canada).

*Masked Madness* is a subtle fusion of rock, reggae, and R&B delivered in a sophisticated package. "Just One Kiss," the opening track of the album, weaves romantic harmonies and instrumentation while telling of a love affair that is now only a memory. Asserting the strength of a current romance, "Our Love" delivers bright harmonies coupled with a strong R&B flavored bottom.

"Masked Madness," the title track, reveals the musical prowess of House and guest guitarist Howard Leese in a powerful rock composition. Another smooth rocker, "Automatic Pilot," is a driving song, perfect for highway cruising or stay-at-home rocking.

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Reggae and R&B enthusiasts will thrill to the upbeat "Green Light," which blends funky rhythms with a smooth production feel. "Too Late Belinda" is a tough tune, pulsing with a reggae beat; while "All Too Clear" is an intricate fusion of reggae, funk and quirky new wave effects.

Dixon House is a versatile stylist, whose diverse musical interests and background meld together in a bright, sophisticated package. *Masked Madness* demands unveiling.