

SWALLOW

Blowback

MICHAEL BROOK

Live At The Aquarium

(4AD/CD only)

THE FIRST two 'temporary' releases by 4AD, limited-edition (5,000) tasters, piquant little nibbles, aural *canapes*, or maybe the *petits fours* after the main course. Swallow's 'Blowback' is a set of radical remixes/instrumental versions of tracks on their 'Blow' LP, and it encapsulates that quintessential dreamily ambient 4AD sound (with occasional scything guitar) to the extent that it verges on parody. New Age wombadelia with strings attached by people who have – if only subliminally – visited 'Another Green World', Prof Eno's School Of Ambience, whilst playing some Satie and a Vini Reilly LP. Failing to decide whether to be soothing or jagged, it goes nowhere into wibbly dreamspace. 'Sugar Your Mind' indeed. Mine's a Hermeseta, then. **(5)**

Michael 'Mr String Soundscapes' Brook released his 'Cobalt Blue' LP back in May, and to launch it, played live to 'media and friends' at the London Zoo Aquarium. Michael taped it for his own benefit, but it was duly considered to be worth sharing with the world – in a strictly limited sense, of course. Except that Brook fans will already have 'Cobalt Blue' in full, so this is no more than a vanity item. Well, there's hardly going to be any gagging audience excitement, is there? A surgical strike in a lovely package, to be sure, but hardly essential. And we've had quite enough infinite guitar for one year, ta very much, Mike. Just short of self-indulgent. **(6)**

Still, the good news is that these gorgeous little things retail at only £7.99 (hi, collector saddoes!) and the next in the series will be a Throwing Muses double live LP. 4AD – they're doing it for The Kids, even if they like their own reflection a bit too much. For rock *gourmets* only.

Betty Page



Quiet men tweak 'em with fork-um tail: Swallow