



Sexy Jane says: Mine is the first record to be labelled X.

JANE BIRKIN is the girl who came to fame by wrestling naked on the floor in a searing interlude with David Hemmings in a film called "Blow Up." It caused quite a furore.

But not half the fuss and bother and raised eyebrows that her first single—"Je T'Aime Moi Non Plus" has roused.

Miss Birkin, it appears, is rather resigned to perpetually being in the middle of controversy. "Well, everyone likes scandal of some kind don't they?" she says.

People whose main object in life is to steer us clear of anything that might corrupt our souls, have gone hot under the collar trying to pretend "Je T'Aime" doesn't exist. It has received no radio promotion anywhere in the world.

Even French radio stations didn't dare play it. There, they actually understood the words in between the panting. And, even now that it's the biggest smash in French pop history—having sold over 120,000 copies—they only play it once a day, fading it at the end.

Despite its radio ban the song already promises to be a perennial hit. Jane describes it as the first "X"-certificate record and it looks certain to be as big a smash in Britain as everywhere else.

"Somehow," says Jane. "It's timeless. It was the hit of France, in Spring, now it's the hit of Summer and I suspect it will also be the hit of Autumn."

In passing, the single has made a much bigger star of Jane and her boyfriend Serge Gainsbourg than any of her six films, or his huge reputation as a foremost serious French music writer.

Miss Birkin is tall, slim, coltish and extremely lovely. In many ways she looks strikingly like model Jean Shrimpton, with that air of naive innocence that somehow adds fire to the controversy that surrounds her.

She is 21 years old, and is in Britain with Serge working on their second film together, called "May Morning." They are shooting it in Oxford.

She chuckles when she recalls how the record was made, and speaks English as though she was talking in broken French. Her conversation is littered with admiring references to Serge, who wrote the song. In many ways he seems to Jane Birkin the kind of figure Claude Woolf turned out to be for another English girl—Petula Clark.

"Serge originally wrote the song for Brigitte Bardot but she decided not to release it after all.

"One day he heard me singing in the house and decided to write me a song based on Chopin—whom we both admire. Then he remembered 'Je T'Aime' and we decided



SERGE GAINSBURG, Jane's boyfriend, who wrote their controversial hit

BY PENNY VALENTINE

to cut that as well. I don't sing like Brigitte at all. She spoke it, and I have that high—well, almost bathroom voice!

"We came to London to record and it was really cold and professional. Serge was at one end of the studio and I was at the other. I was a bundle of nerves and in a real panic. Serge had worked it out so clearly—almost to the point of orchestrating the breathing.

"In many ways it was like doing a love scene in a film. They have to be very precise and technical so they come off the right way. You know, once Serge and I did a love scene in a film and they couldn't use it. We got so carried away we forgot to look at the camera and place ourselves the right way. If we'd done the record like that it would never have worked."

Jane and Serge took the record back to France with them, and the company turned red and said they couldn't release it.

"They said it would only take

one mother to complain that her child's mind was being warped—and they couldn't take the risk. So we were about to put it on an album instead when suddenly they changed their minds."

Since that day things haven't been the same for Jane and Serge. They are the most talked-about couple in Paris and highly controversial.

"But the nice thing," says Jane, "is that since that record I've sung on TV and because of THAT people have stopped me in the street and everyone knows my face. I've suddenly become famous. Much more so than any of my films have made me. It makes you realise what a marvellous media singing is,"

There are quite a few reasons why "Je T'Aime" should have had such phenomenal success. It's a pretty sensational record by anyone's standards. And basically it's very romantic, even though, as Jane points out, the lyrics actually mean "I Love You—Not Do!"

"Mainly I think that it's just the best love song I've ever heard," she says. "And after all

it could have been very coarse and brash. You know when that record is played in clubs everyone gets up and starts dancing close together, it's amazing.

"Even in Italy, where we NEVER thought it would be played, we went to a club and there it was. Apparently they got the records in from Switzerland and people were offering £50 each for a single. If we'd known we'd have taken a suitcase-full across with us!

"The actual success of the record, which is stunning, I think comes from word of mouth. People telling other people about it. And it DOES have a lovely tune. A lot of instrumentals have been made of it and that's helped. You know, Serge and I went into a shop in London to buy the two British versions and they'd sold out."

The success of the single has posed only one problem for Jane and Serge: What do they do for a follow-up?