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THE BEATLES

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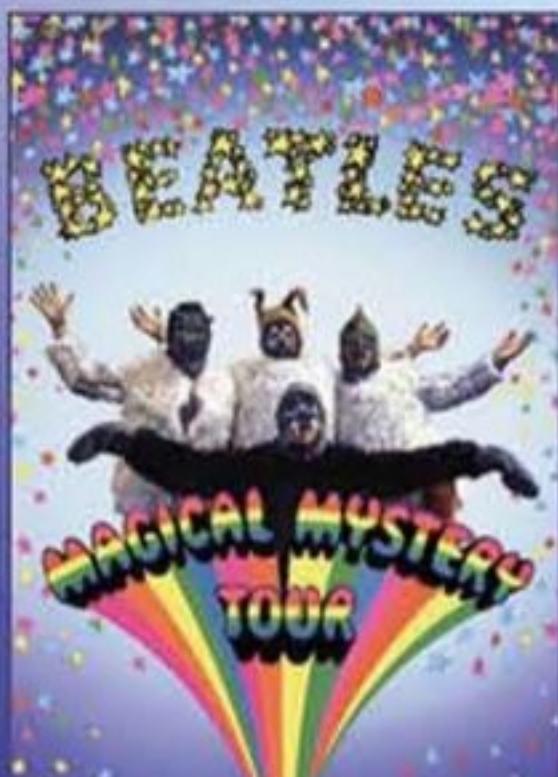


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- Restored film with remastered audio in 5.1 and stereo on DVD and Blu-Ray
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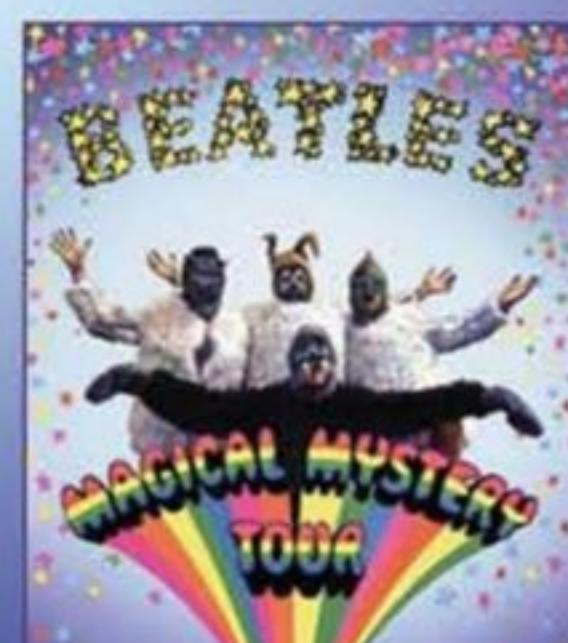
- A replica of the original 1967 Magical Mystery Tour UK double EP, remastered in Mono
 - 60 page collector's book featuring never before seen photos



Magical Mystery Tour
DVD



Magical Mystery Tour
Deluxe Box Set



Magical Mystery Tour
Blu-Ray

4 Instant Karma!

In our front section: punk posters, the Uncut Music Award 2012, Prince, Jah Wobble, Cody ChesnuTT...

12 Rickie Lee Jones...

...on US politics, Jesus and playing pool

16 Siouxsie & The Banshees

The goth-punk pioneers take us behind the scenes of their psychedelic masterpiece, *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse*

24 Mark Eitzel

Album by album with the AMC man

28 The Byrds

The story of *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, and the band's 20 greatest songs as chosen by J Mascis, Emmylou Harris, Bobby Gillespie and more

46 Bruce Foxton

His life in pictures

48 LCD Soundsystem

James Murphy turns his back on fame

54 Don McLean

The making of global hit "American Pie"

58 Steve Miller

"I'm cheap and ruthless!" says the gangster of love

40 PAGES OF REVIEWS!

65 New Albums

Including: Neil Young, Bat For Lashes, Jeff Lynne, Van Morrison

87 The Archive

Including: The Velvet Underground, REM, Johnny Cash, Peter Gabriel

102 DVD & Film

Magical Mystery Tour remastered

107 Books

Zep, Jagger and Joy Division biogs

108 Live

Leonard Cohen, At The Drive-In, End Of The Road Festival

126 Not Fade Away

This month's obituaries

128 Feedback

Your letters, plus the Uncut crossword

130 My Life In Music

World Party frontman Karl Wallinger

Are we rolling?



Gene Clark:
a shambling,
fragile figure
in 1977

WHEN IT COMES out in the autumn of 1974, Gene Clark's *No Other* seems to me like an album everybody should hear, nothing short of a masterpiece. I beg for enough space to review it at appropriate length in what used to be *Melody Maker*, to a wholly unsympathetic response, people regarding me as someone who's taken leave of their senses who should be approached with caution and a very big stick. I'm told to stop my infernal whining and write 100 words on the album, which I do, sulkily, most of them superlatives.

The extravagant claims I make on its behalf, however, bestirs few people enough to actually go out and buy the thing. Many more simply ignore the album altogether and it quickly sinks without trace, barely a copy sold. It has been unfortunately thus for Clark since he quit The Byrds in 1966, his solo career to date not much more than a catalogue of commercial failure. Great music on albums like *Gene Clark With The Godsin Brothers*, *The Fantastic Expedition of Dillard & Clark*, *Through The Morning*, *Through The Night*, *White Light* and *Roadmaster* has been routinely overlooked, leaving Clark often disheartened, solace found increasingly in hard liquor and drugs. *No Other* was meant to be the album that returned him to former glories and was lavishly financed by David Geffen's Asylum Records; to the tune, some said, of \$100,000. This is a lot of money for only eight completed tracks and an album that could only have sold more poorly if it had remained unreleased. When Clark announces to an appalled Geffen that for a follow-up he intends to record an album of "cosmic Motown", he's introduced to the wooden thing in the wall otherwise known as the door. Three years later, he's on another label with a new album called *Two Sides To Every Story*

that's just come out when I interview him in London in May 1977.

Clark's departure from The Byrds is blamed on his chronic fear of flying, which compromised the band's touring and promotional schedules. Even the most naïve of fans, however, suspects there's something more seriously askew, which turns out eventually to be Gene's increasingly debilitating dependency on alcohol and narcotics, both of which he partakes in to the point of damaging excess. It's certainly a shock meeting him, not least because my memory of him in The Byrds as their impeccably cool and imperious frontman is still so vivid. He cuts a shambling figure now as we are left in a room so full of furniture it might otherwise be used as a storeroom, somewhere things are dumped and possibly forgotten. There's something worryingly astray about him, a puddled fretfulness, an inclination towards drift and vacancy. He seems like someone with a fragile sense of himself.

He's a big man still, heavily bearded, with the lumbering momentum of a slow-moving tug on a sluggish current, a bulky craft with a possibly rusty hull. Unmentioned habits have clearly taken their toll, as well as the thudding blows of serial disappointment at the dismal turns his solo career has taken. When he speaks, his voice seems to come from a faraway place I'm concerned may be somewhere he these days spends too much time with only his worried self for muttering company.

He seems trim of neither body nor mind and I'm genuinely sorry when I ask him for a response to the colossal public indifference to *No Other*, which he has just told me he truly believed was his ticket back to the big time, as he so describes it. He becomes immediately agitated, struggles for the right words, can't find them and so simply shrugs, waves a hand, stares out the window, increasingly estranged from the moment.

In the distant hum of office life, a telephone's ringing and going unanswered, continues to ring and is still unanswered. "Do you think that's for me?" he finally asks.

I tell him I have no idea.

"Neither do I," he says, rising to go and then actually going, the interview, such as it has been, evidently over.

Rickie Lee Jones

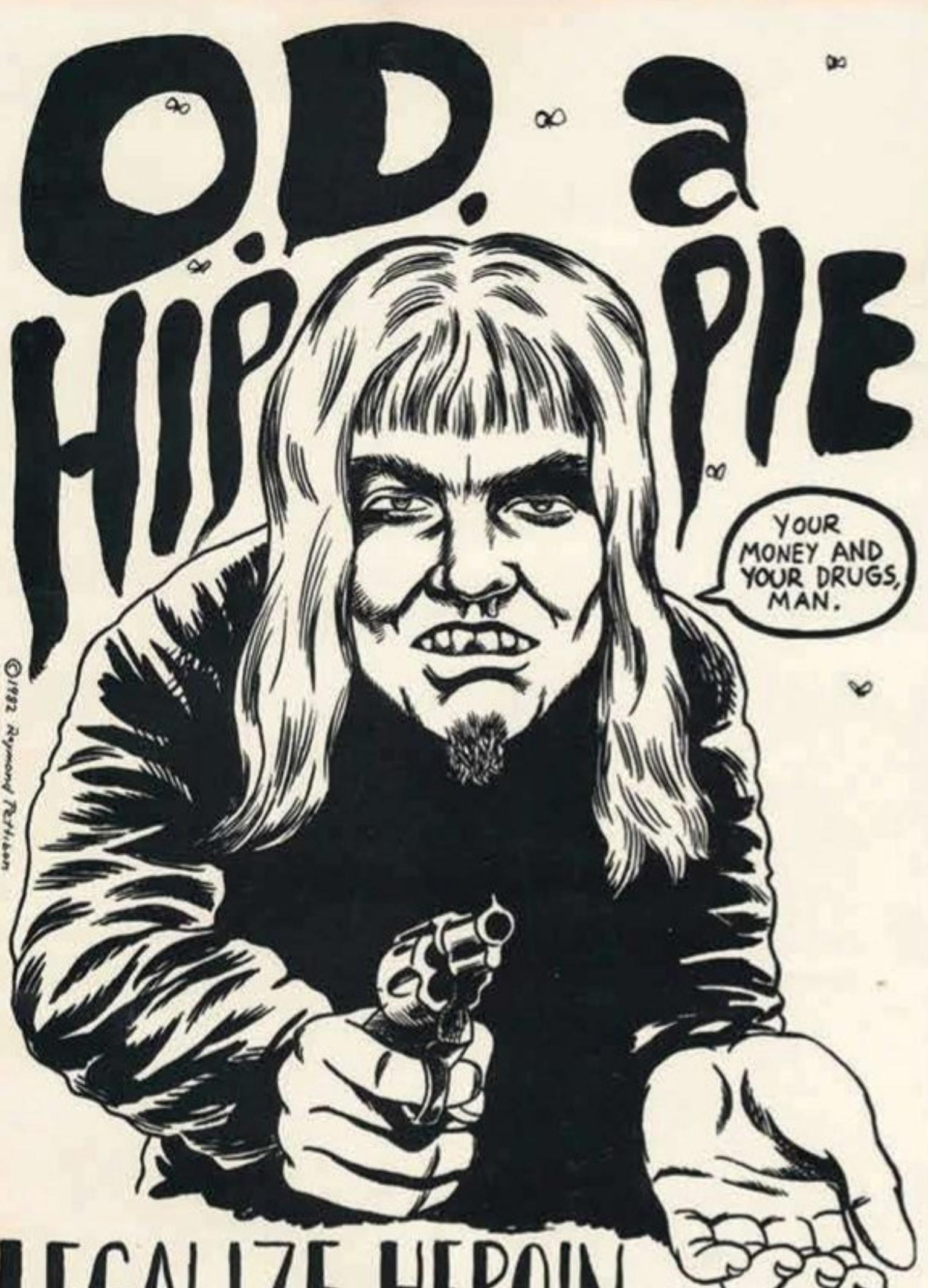
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Professions

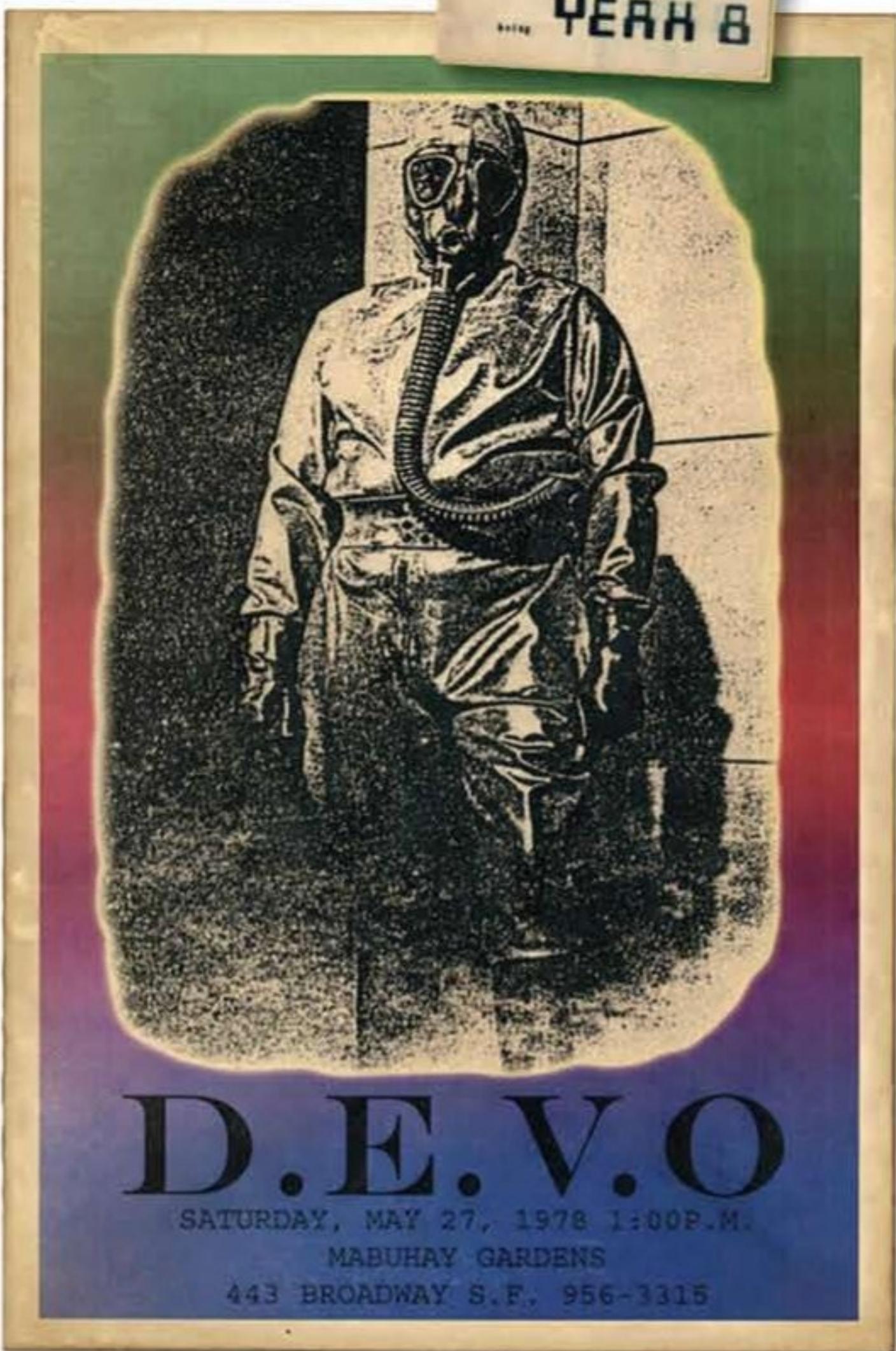


YEAH B



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BAN HIPPIES. (and New Yorkers)

Raymond Pettibon

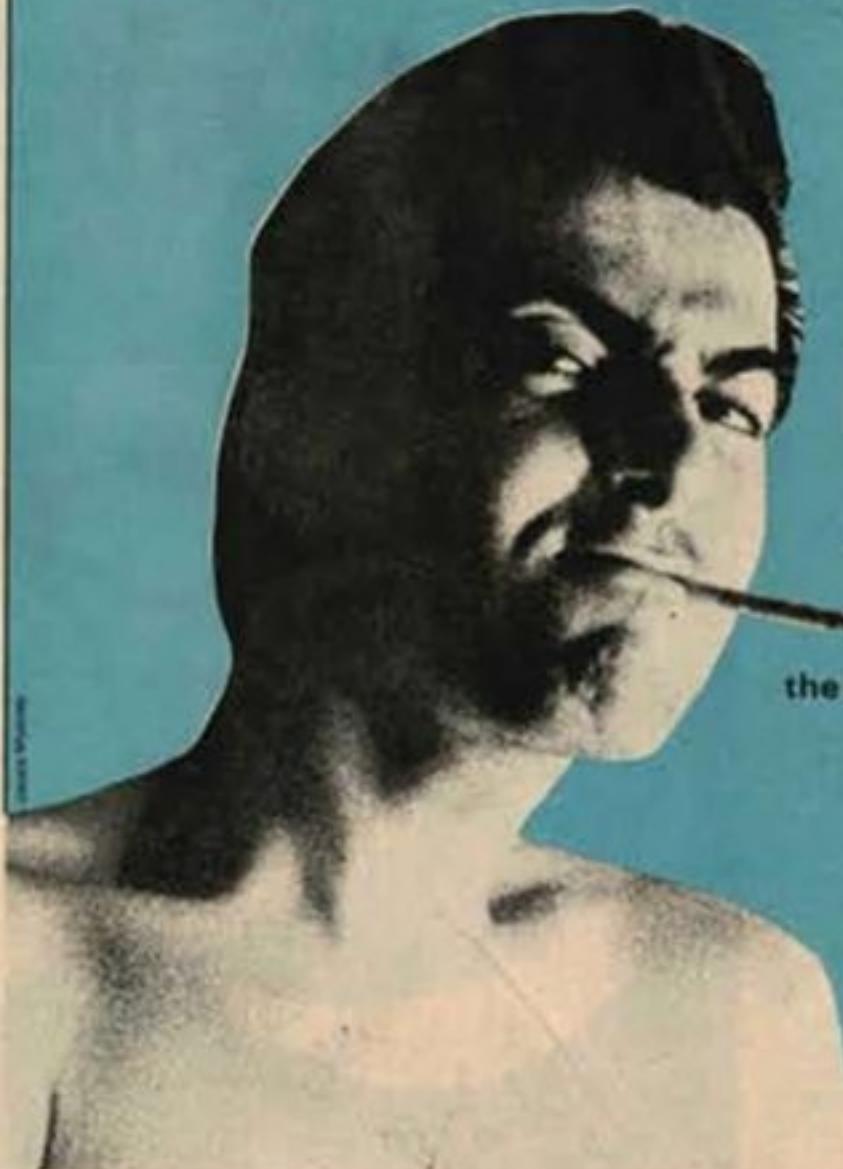


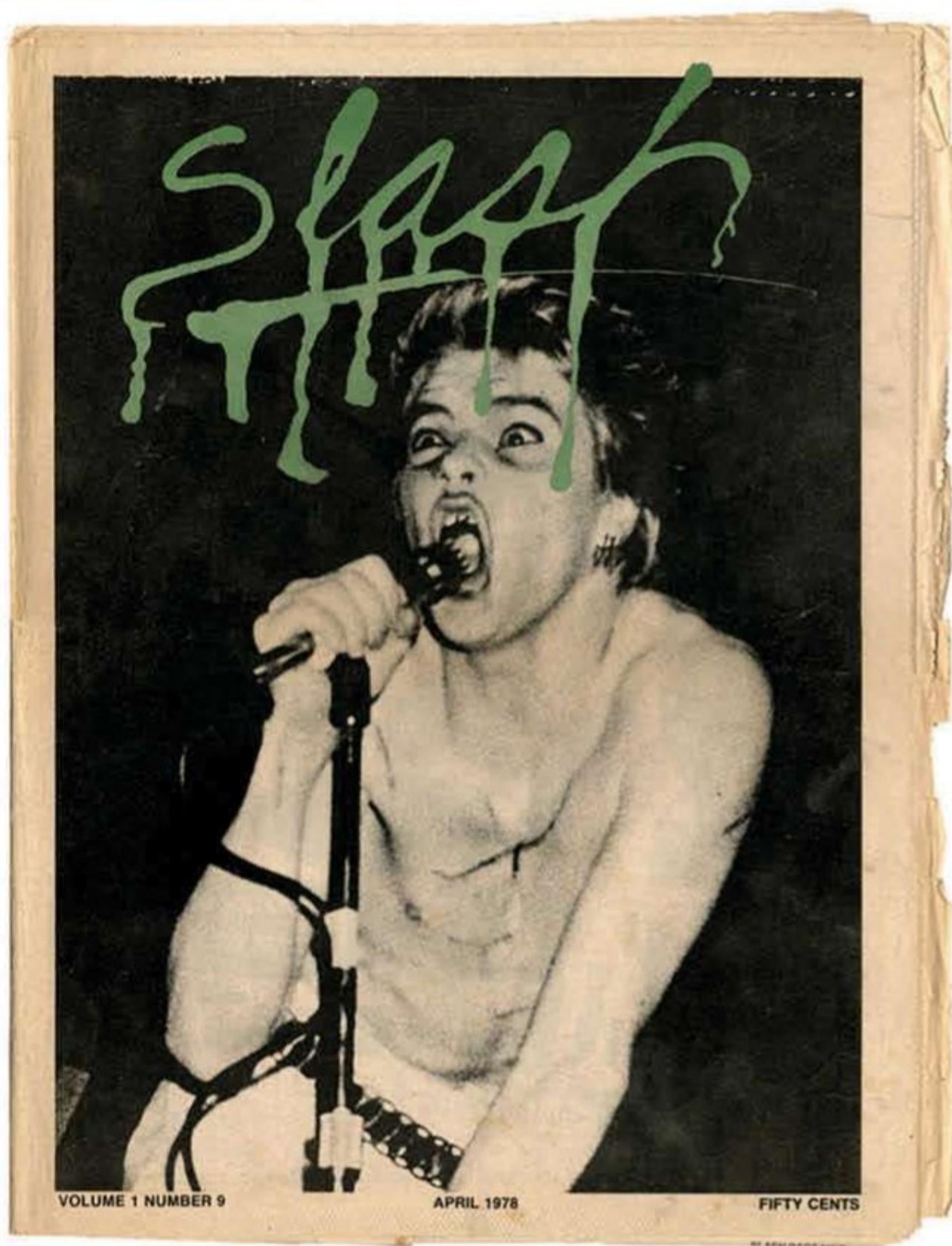
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THE
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MUSE

the lowdown on grease





NEW ART RIOT!

Uncovered: the art of punk!



HIRTY-FIVE YEARS after Jamie Reid and Malcolm McLaren channelled the Situationists, and

the Sex Pistols released *Never Mind The Bollocks*, the art of punk seems to have completed its journey to acceptance by the cultural elite. *Someday All The Adults Will Die!* is an exhibition

that has just opened in London's Southbank Centre, showcasing the extraordinary range of radical design that illustrated punk posters, record sleeves, fanzines and flyers on both sides of the Atlantic. Jon Savage and Johan Kugelberg, the show's curators, have also edited an accompanying book, *Punk: An Aesthetic*, from which we've culled these striking images. Clockwise from top left: LA poster by Raymond Pettibon; Devo poster, San Francisco, 1978; fanzine by Tuli Kupferberg of The Fugs (*inset*), 1964; Ramones LA fanclub mail-out, 1977; The Offs poster, San Francisco, 1979; Darby Crash at The Germs' first gig, *Slash* magazine, 1978; the first use of the word 'punk' applied to music, by Nick Tosches, *Fusion Magazine*, 1970; Angel And The Snake (later to become Blondie), supported by the Ramones (playing their third gig), CBGB's, New York, 1974; *Insane Whorehouse*, a Japanese fanzine, 1979.

Someday All The Adults Will Die! Punk Graphics 1971–1984 is at the Hayward Gallery Project Space, Southbank Centre, London, until November 4. *Punk: An Aesthetic* is published by Rizzoli, £35.

A QUICK ONE

► Confirmation, finally, of some David Bowie activity. A massive retrospective exhibition opens at the Victoria & Albert Museum next spring. David Bowie runs from March 23-July 28.

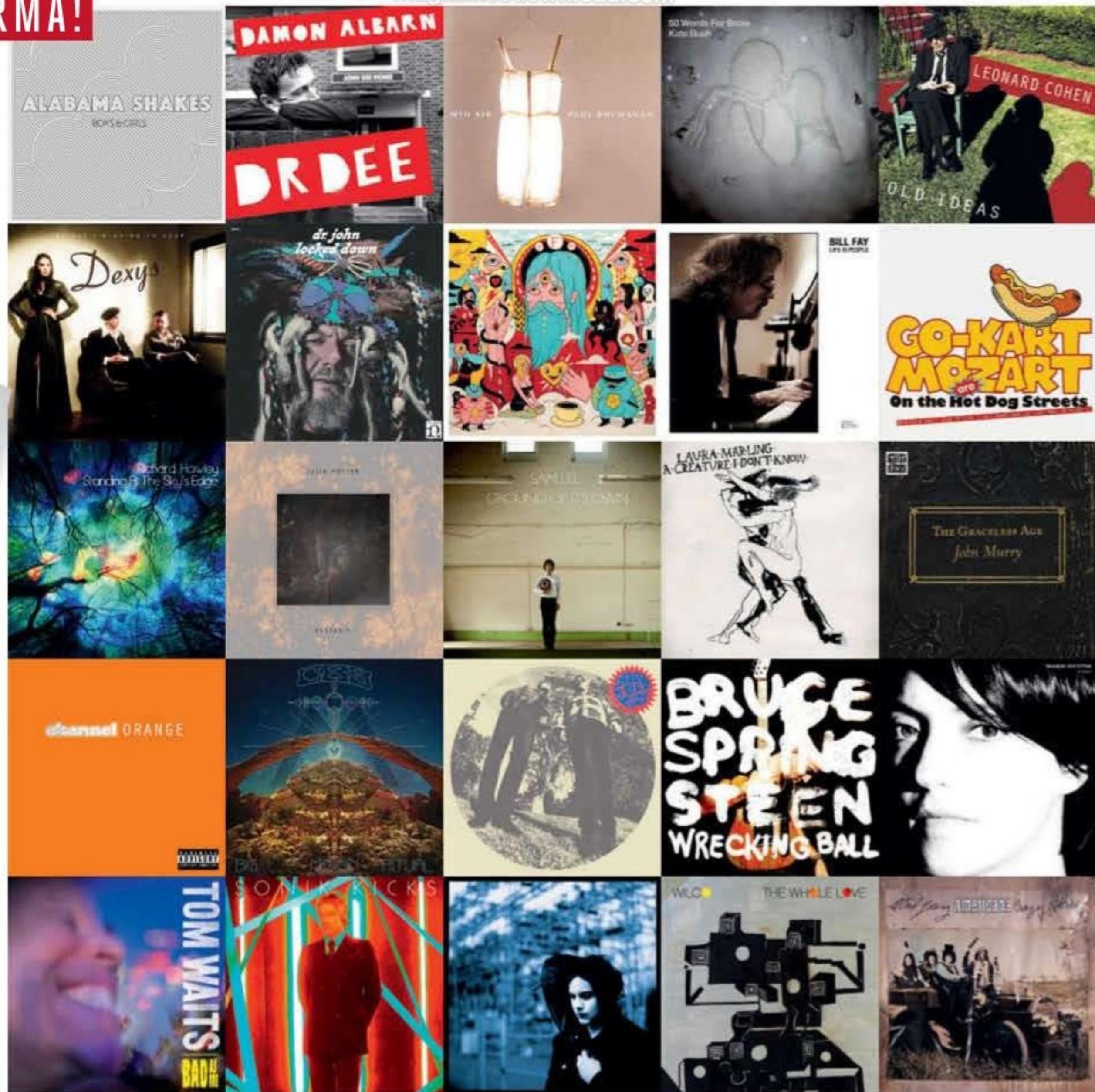


► Amid the glut of rock auto-biographies and potential Rolling Stones activity this autumn, this may have escaped your attention - *A Prince Among Stones: That Business With The Rolling Stones And Other Adventures* is the work of Prince Rupert Loewenstein, the band's longtime, discreet financial adviser. Could be fascinating: Kindle edition due Nov 8, with a hardback after Christmas.

► An auspicious reunion on Feb 2 at the Shepherd's Bush Empire, when Roger Chapman reconvenes Family for the first time in 40 years. Tickets are on sale now.

► London's Raindance Film Festival will this year feature, on Oct 4, the premiere of *Derailed Sense*, a new doc on Vic Godard & Subway Sect. Apparently, director Graham Bendel (*Billy Childish Is Dead*) has "seriously fallen out with Godard's camp... this could become the 'lost documentary' after this screening."

► For a daily dose of *Uncut* news, reviews, video and blogs - check out www.uncut.co.uk.



THE UNCUT MUSIC AWARD 2012

Revealed! The 25 albums in contention for this year's trophy



LAST YEAR, PJ Harvey joined Fleet Foxes, Tinariwen and Paul Weller as a winner of the *Uncut* Music Award, our annual prize for the most inspiring and rewarding album of the year. Now, we can reveal the albums that have made the longlist for 2011-2012. As usual, age, nationality and record sales are irrelevant in this competition: the 25 albums are favourites of the *Uncut* team, and were released between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012.

The next stage is to whittle these 25 down to a shortlist of eight - a job that will be done by our panel of illustrious judges. We'll reveal the identities of the judges in the next *Uncut*, and announce their winner in our issue out at the end of November. As in previous years, we'll also be publishing the whole judges' deliberations on www.uncut.co.uk - no sinister finagling behind closed doors for this music prize.

Anyway, here's our longlist to be getting on with, in alphabetical order...

THE UNCUT MUSIC AWARD 2012 LONGLIST

- **Alabama Shakes** - Boys And Girls (ROUGH TRADE)
- **Damon Albarn** - Dr Dee (PARLOPHONE)
- **Paul Buchanan** - Mid Air (NEWSROOM)
- **Kate Bush** - 50 Words For Snow (PARLOPHONE)
- **Leonard Cohen** - Old Ways (COLUMBIA)
- **Dexys** - One Day I'm Going To Soar (BMG)
- **Dr John** - Locked Down (NONE SUCH)
- **Father John Misty** - Fear Fun (BELLA UNION)
- **Bill Fay** - Life Is People (DEAD OCEANS)
- **Go-Kart Mozart** - On The Hot Dog Streets (WEST MIDLANDS/CHERRY RED)
- **Richard Hawley** - Standing At The Sky's Edge (PARLOPHONE)
- **Julia Holter** - Ekstasis (RVNG INTL)
- **Sam Lee** - Ground Of Its Own (NEST COLLECTIVE)
- **Laura Marling** - A Creature I Don't Know (VIRGIN)
- **John Murry** - The Graceless Age (BUCKETFULL OF BRAINS)
- **Frank Ocean** - Channel Orange (DEF JAM)
- **Chris Robinson Brotherhood** - Big Moon Ritual (SILVER ARROW)
- **Ty Segall/White Fence** - Hair (DRAG CITY)
- **Bruce Springsteen** - Wrecking Ball (COLUMBIA)
- **Sharon Van Etten** - Tramp (JAGJAGUWAR)
- **Tom Waits** - Bad As Me (ANTI-)
- **Paul Weller** - Sonik Kicks (ISLAND)
- **Jack White** - Blunderbuss (THIRD MAN/XL)
- **Wilco** - The Whole Love (DPBM)
- **Neil Young** - Americana (REPRISE)

Cleaning up his act:
Prince performs at the
Super Bowl, Miami,
February 2007

A ROYAL FLUSH

Redo Me, Baby!

Controversy! Whatever is PRINCE up to with his back catalogue?

EARLIER THIS YEAR, two interesting developments occurred in Prince's world. First, he terminated his contract with Universal Music Publishing, leaving him without a recording or publishing deal at a time when, unlike other artists, he shuns the internet, withholds his latest releases from iTunes and forbids YouTube to show his videos. And the second interesting development was that a high-profile Prince fan pointed out what insanely self-negating behaviour this was.

"[YouTube] is clearly how an unaware generation can discover his genius," protested Questlove, drummer for hip-hop soulsters The Roots. "He will pay dearly for that when people shrug 'When Doves What?'" Questlove also raised another pertinent point: Prince's back catalogue has never been remastered and his classic albums can only be heard in 1980s CD audio quality. Could 2013 be the year when Prince, whose recent concerts have delighted fans with their 'greatest hits' setlists, gives sonic upgrades to *Purple Rain*, *Parade* and *Sign 'O' The Times*?

Not quite, according to Ian Jones at UK-based Prince fansite The Dawn Experience. It's all a question of ownership. "The rights to his albums revert back to him from Warner Bros after 30 years," Jones explains, "so he already has the rights to the first five [*For You*, *Prince*, *Dirty Mind*, *Controversy*, 1999]. He's remastered them himself.

But with the decline of CDs and the rise of digital, and with Prince being against lossy formats, he's unsure which format the remasters should be released on, if at all."

Another problem is that Prince just isn't the looking-back type. Nadeem Ahmed, a longtime fan and expert, tells *Uncut*: "The history of his relationship with Warners and also the fact that he's remained so prolific in his output has left little time for him to reflect or dedicate himself to reissue campaigns." But could Prince surprise us by releasing his remasters – whenever they materialise – on Warners, the label that once

provoked him to write 'slave' on his face? It's known that Prince still occasionally visits Warners for meetings.

Jones, however, feels that Prince's sellout status as a live performer would make a partnership deal between Live Nation and Interscope Records (along the lines of Madonna's) a more likely outcome. "That would give Interscope some good back-catalogue reissues. As Prince hasn't released anything in two years, I imagine a deal would be sooner rather than later."

Another question is whether Prince will doctor his albums before reissuing them. He re-recorded "1999" (subtitling it "The New Master") and was even rumoured to be planning to re-record his entire catalogue. That rumour has died down over time, but, as Prince biographer Matt Thorne observes,

"He often goes back and re-records unreleased songs or overdubs new bits, censoring the explicit content."

Censorship is an area that Prince may have to confront on several of his famous albums. One of the most salacious songwriters of the '80s and '90s, he became a Jehovah's Witness in 2001, and his faith has had a noticeable effect on live shows, where he substitutes new lyrics for swearwords. Songs like "Sexy MF", "Head" and the notorious "Darling Nikki" (which led to Parental Advisory stickers on albums) are no longer performed at all. "The Cross", from *Sign 'O' The Times*, has been rewritten for a different reason: Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus died on

a stake. "It sounds like a joke," winces Jones, "but it's true." In his efforts to rid his work of sexual explicitness, Prince sometimes veers to the opposite extreme. "A good example is 'Extra Lovable', a much-loved '80s outtake," notes Thorne, "which he renamed 'Xtra Loveable' and re-recorded, removing the sexually aggressive lyrics and replacing them with references to Care Bears and Elmo from *Sesame Street*."

Surely it can't be possible that we'll see "Darling Nikki" re-titled as "Darling Elmo" on a masturbation-free reissue of *Purple Rain*? Time will tell. Prince's manager could not be reached for a comment. DAVID CAVANAGH

WAKE UP THE NATION!

OUT
NOW!

► Besides the monthly editions of *Uncut*, we've recently found time to put together another of our Ultimate Music Guides. This time, the subject is PAUL WELLER, and over 148 pages we tell his complete story: from The Jam, through The Style Council, and on to his rich two decades as a solo artist.

We've dug into the *NME* and *Melody Maker* archives to find remarkable interviews, often unseen for years. We've commissioned new reviews of all his albums, from The Jam's debut to *Sonik Kicks*. And we've even hired Weller to write the intro. "These songs take on a life of their own," he says. "It'll be interesting to see what people have got to say about them here..." It is, rest assured. *Paul Weller: The Ultimate Music Guide* is out now.

THE JAM | THE STYLE COUNCIL | THE SOLO YEARS
PAUL WELLER
SONIK KICKS!
A new look at all of the Guvnor's albums
WELLER MEETS TOWNSEND
The classic confrontation
THE CHANGING MAN THE COMPLETE STORY
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!
Legendary interviews, unseen for years!
THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE
NOVEMBER 2012 | UNCUT

"Highly Accomplished and warmly uplifting" UNCUT ****

"Possibly the best thing The Charlatans' lead singer has done" MOJO ****

OH NO I LOVE YOU OH NO I LOVE YOU II REMIX ALBUM

FEATURING REMIXES BY TOM FURSE (HORRORS) . FACTORY FLOOR . PERC . WALLS . TANDY LOVE

"He's joined forces with Lambchop lauder Kurt Wagner and recruited some of the Nashville man's bandmates, experimentalist R Stevie Moore and My Morning Jacket's Carl Broemel to play on an album that sounds hushed, bucolic and carefully crafted" *** Q

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‘Fuck knows where Keith is now...’

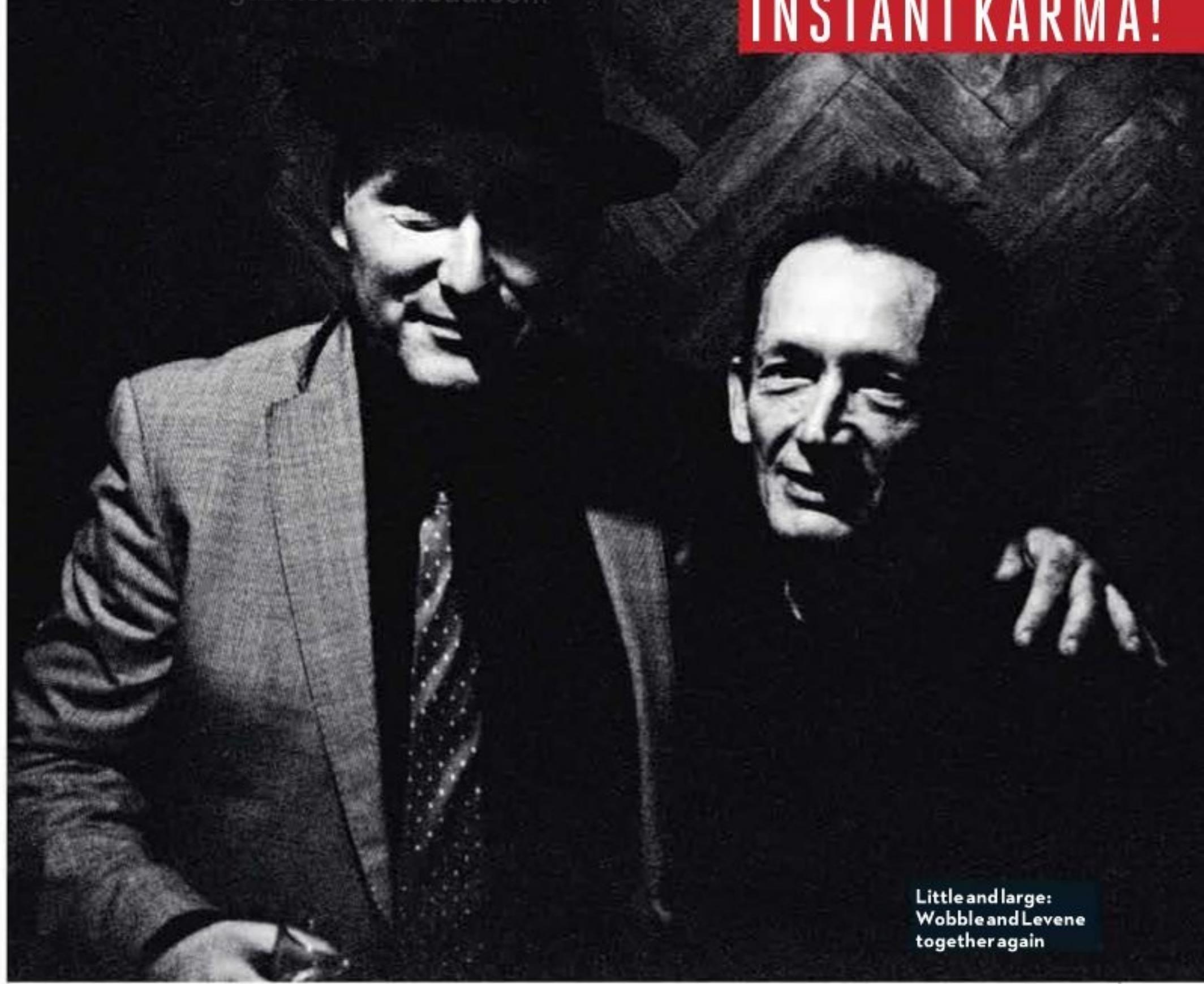
Old PiL mates JAH WOBBLE and KEITH LEVENE are working together – when Wobble can track down his legendary guitarist...

ICOLLABORATE WITH lots of people,” says Jah Wobble. “but the people you’re most likely to fall out and squabble with are people from the punk era. The whole thing with McLaren and the Pistols poisoned everything.”

That may explain why Wobble has only occasionally crossed paths with guitarist Keith Levene in the 30-odd years since they left Public Image Ltd. “I only ever did about 20 shows with PiL, and I always knew me and Keith could still explore new territory. So, on the suggestion of [former PiL drummer] Martin Atkins, we met up in Bethnal Green, had a hug and a chat, and rehearsed.

“Some members of my band didn’t know much about him, but within minutes, they were all very, very impressed. He plays with his fingers, rather than with a plectrum, and somehow he sounds like he’s using an effects pedal when he’s not. He makes remarkable sounds on a guitar.”

Recording in London, Huddersfield and Salford, Wobble and the long-elusive Levene have come up with *Yin And Yang*, an album which sets Levene’s incendiary guitar against Wobble’s wobbly dub bass and ranting lyrics.



Little and large: Wobble and Levene together again

“The Yin and Yang is me and Keith,” Wobble continues. “He’s skinny and little, I’m a big fat bloke. He lives in an instrument in the upper registers, I live in an instrument in the lower registers. He was always into opiates, I was into alcohol.”

They’re joined by drummer Marc Layton-Bennett and the Miles Davis-inspired trumpet of Sean Corby, who take us through dub, blues and even a version of “Tomorrow Never Knows” in 7/4 (“Keith wears a Beatles T-shirt to every gig!”).

The pair also reunited earlier this year to tour PiL’s Metal Box In Dub, featuring a John Lydon tribute singer, Nathan Maverick. Two years ago, Wobble turned down Lydon’s offer to join the reformed PiL, after being offered a derisory weekly wage for the tour. “It wasn’t just the money,” he says. “It was also that John had already chosen a band. And you can’t replace Keith.” He also says he received threatening letters from Lydon’s lawyers about his and Levene’s tour.

“It’s just a nuisance, like having to call a plumber. But listen, I’ve no axe to grind: John’s had a positive

impact in my life, and God bless him.”

Wobble now lives near Manchester; Levene, however, remains difficult to track down, even by his bandmate. “Fuck knows where Keith is now,” says Wobble. “He was in Hackney for ages, but I think he now divides his time between Newport in Wales and America. Keith has about five mobile phones and you have to text him on a few of them before he gets back to you!”

Yin And Yang is one of a clutch of recent Wobble releases, including an album with singer Julie Campbell, an instructional DVD and upcoming collaborations with Mancunian synth duo Marconi Union and Shakatak’s Bill Sharpe (really).

“I make records all the bloody time, people know what I sound like. But Keith, we don’t hear nearly enough of him, and he’s a bloody amazing musician. I’m glad we got this down on record.”

JOHN LEWIS

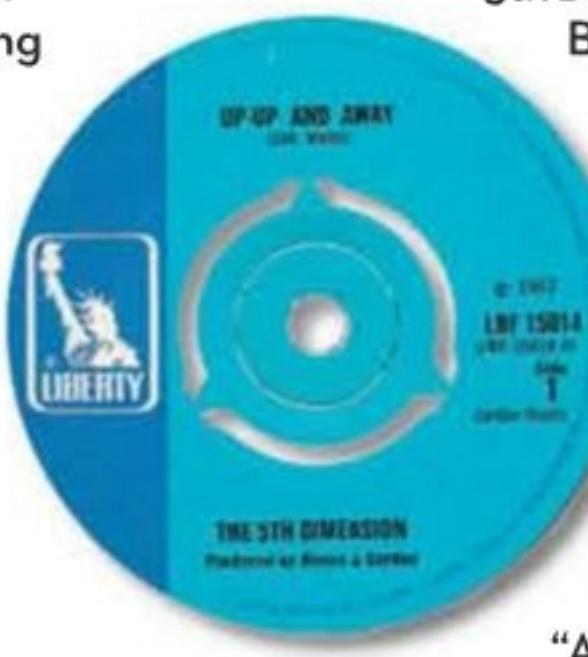
Jah Wobble & Keith Levene’s Yin And Yang is released by Cherry Red on November 19

AND ON DRUMS... HAL BLAINE

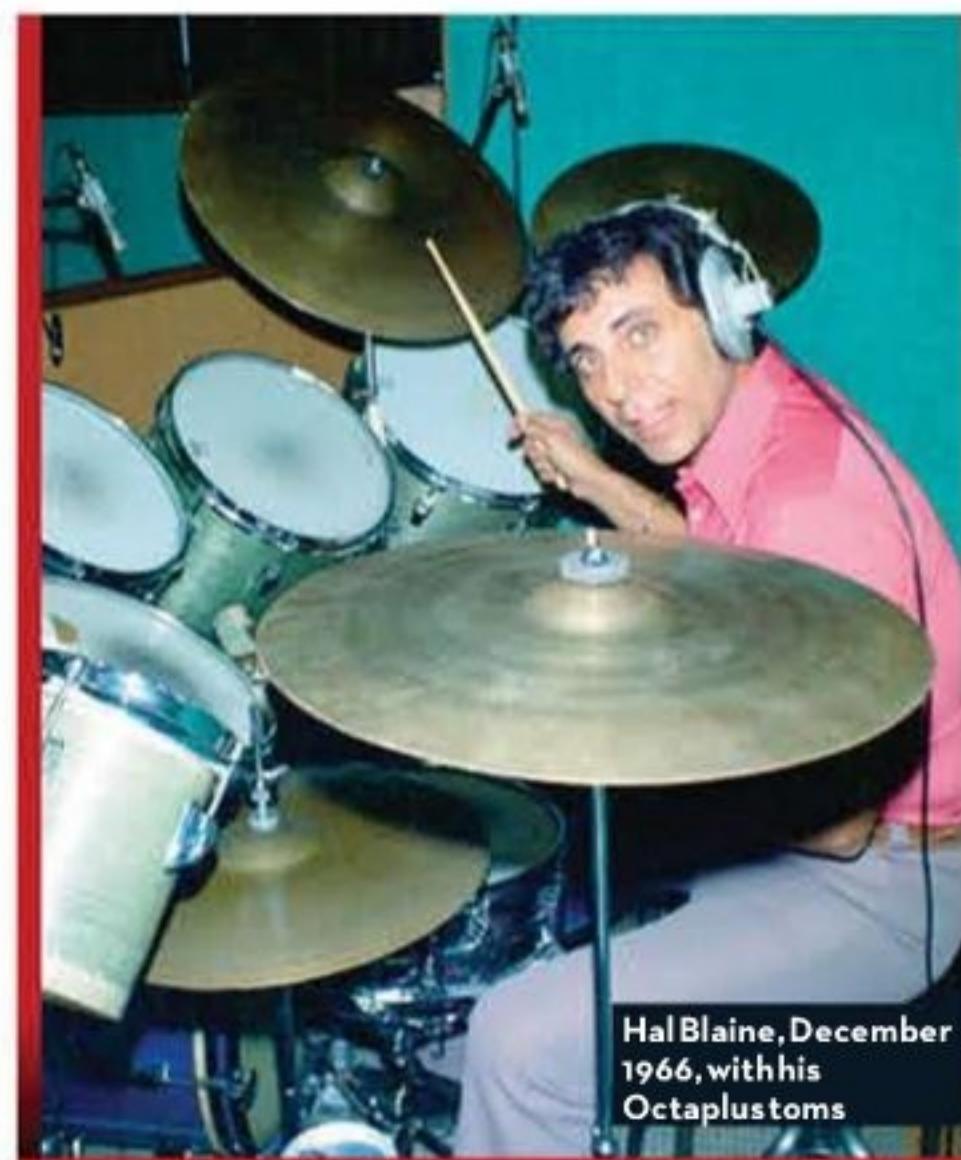
UNCUT’S GUIDE TO ROCK’S GREATEST SESSION PLAYERS

► Most famous for being part of LA’s session giants The Wrecking Crew, drummer Hal Blaine has played on 50 US No 1s and over 150 Top 10s. Blaine’s novel set of eight tunable concert toms ended up being made as Octaplus toms from Ludwig: “Like a fool, I never patented anything... which is the easiest thing in the world – costs you nothing.”

KEY SESSIONS: Frank Sinatra, “Strangers In The Night”; Nancy Sinatra, “These Boots Were Made For Walking”; The



5th Dimension “Up, Up And Away”; The Beach Boys, “Good Vibrations”, “God Only Knows”; The Crystals, “He’s A Rebel”; Elvis Presley, “Can’t Help Falling In Love”; Jan & Dean, “Surf City”; The Byrds, “Mr Tambourine Man”; The Mamas & The Papas, “California Dreamin’”; Simon & Garfunkel, “Mrs Robinson”, “The Boxer”; The Carpenters, “Close To You”; Sam Cooke, “Another Saturday Night”; The Crystals, “Da Doo Ron Ron”; Roy Orbison, “It’s Over”. PHIL KING



Hal Blaine, December 1966, with his Octaplus toms

Cody ChesnuTT:
cleansed by
fatherhood



I'M NEWISH HERE

Cody ChesnuTT

The long-awaited return of a maverick soulman, out of his bedroom and into Al Green's old studio

“I USED TO smoke crack back in the day”, sings neo-soul songwriter Cody ChesnuTT on his new album, *Landing On A Hundred*. “I used to gamble with money and lose, I used to dog the nice ladies, used to swindle friends, but now I’m teaching kids in Sunday school.”

It has been 10 years since ChesnuTT released his first – and, until now, last – album, *The Headphone Masterpiece*. Recorded on a four-track in his LA bedroom, it was a wonderfully sexy, profane and narcissistic set that sprawled across two CDs. But was he really such a bad guy? “I’ve never smoked crack in my life, but dogging the nice ladies, that’s definitely me!” he laughs. “With that song [“Everybody’s Brother”], I wanted to be a voice for the men that did struggle, that went through all those destructive life experiences, and got ahead of the 8-ball instead of behind it.”

Landing On A Hundred, recorded with a 10-piece band in Memphis, is full of that redemption, love and a yearning for a better tomorrow, as ChesnuTT reflects on his Christian faith, his love for his wife and, on “I’ve Been Life”, the potential for the African diaspora to haul itself out of its troubles. “I’m tired of the fighting and chaos and disorder,” he says. “Even though there’s a lot happening in terms of upward mobility, the civil

wars, the poor still struggling with basic needs – I wanted to use my energy through this music to push us toward a healthier unity.”

It’s a far cry from *The Headphone Masterpiece*. One of that album’s songs, “The Seed”, was covered by The Roots with ChesnuTT on vocals, and drew him into the spotlight for a brief period. “Of course you want to peek behind the curtain, so to speak,” he says of his brush with fame. “Some quickly become disillusioned with it, as I was. I began to prepare myself to evolve, I was reading more, I was observing.”

He also moved from LA to rural Florida, got married and became a father. As a result, all the talk of pussy and fucking has ebbed from his music, as he aims to be a model parent. “I haven’t used those words in 10 years, man. The child cleanses you – if you’re trying to maintain their purity and offer them the best you can, it cleanses you, mind, body, soul and spirit.”

In this vein, he’s ceased performing much of *Headphone*, but the new material more than matches it, inspired as it is by the “cut and dried honesty” of classic soul. “Music today, yes it’s catchy, but there’s a feeling missing,” he says. “I just hope these songs find people at the human level again.”

Landing On A Hundred is released by One Little Indian on October 29

I'M YOUR FAN

“His instrument is always pure, beautiful and sincere. I don’t know him very well, but when I hear his voice I sure feel like I do...”

Meshell Ndegeocello



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

ALLAH-LAS

Allah-Las

INNOVATIVE LEISURE

A meticulous and sensational new garage rock band from LA. Their exquisite taste extends to killer mixtapes at allah-las.com.

ROYAL TRUX

Accelerator

DOMINO

A welcome reissue for the avant-scuzz duo’s heroically deranged stab at mainstream LA rock. From 1998.

ATOMS FOR PEACE

Default

XL

Thom Yorke unveils his new group, featuring Flea on bass. No surprises for Radiohead fans, happily.

THE BAIRD SISTERS

Until You Find Your Green

GRAPEFRUIT

Meg Baird, from the sainted Espers, returns with sister Laura to further finesse her ghostly take on folk music.

FOUR TET

Pink

TEXT

Kieran Hebden’s discreet series of 12-inches are compiled for a spellbinding album of rich, jazz-and-folk-inflected dance music.



MICHAEL CHAPMAN & THE WOODPILES

Natch 7

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ANTI-

AN AUDIENCE WITH...

Rickie Lee Jones

Interview:
John Lewis

The singer-songwriter discusses American politics, her prowess on the pool table, and why religions are “hideous”, but Jesus himself isn’t bad...

THERE ARE TWO unspoken rules when interviewing Rickie Lee Jones. One is to expect the very shortest shrift if you ask her about her ex-boyfriend Tom Waits (“I can’t believe people still ask me about a relationship from, what, 30, 40 years ago!”). The other is not to grill her about drugs (“it’s fucking hilarious: people only understand female artists through the prism of suffering!”).

Otherwise, few areas are off limits. Her interests are wide – talk turns from religion (“it takes an agnostic like me to speak up for Jesus”) to politics (“Romney is a symbol of some disgusting aspects of my country, but he’s an honest symbol”) and her love of the Cocteau Twins (“Liz Fraser is just *wonderful*, isn’t she?”). Along the way, she discusses her friendship with The Blue Nile (“I heard them on the radio, fell in love, and made a pilgrimage to Glasgow to meet them!”); her thoughts on actors (“dumb as dang!”) and about achieving her greatest success with her first album: “My early work resonated with people more than anything else I’ve done, which is something I’ve had to get used to.”

She’ll also cheerfully admit to suffering from writer’s block. “Which is why I keep recording albums of cover versions!” After releasing several collections of jazz standards and showtunes, her latest album *The Devil You Know* features artful reinventions of classic rock songs, including material by Van Morrison, Tim Hardin, Donovan and the Stones.

“Singing is acting, and with cover versions I’m always playing a part,” she tells us. “I have to act them each time. It’s because I have an odd style – there’s always that casual, conversational thing going on. Other people’s songs sound different once I’ve finished with ‘em!’”

STAR QUESTION



What I love most about your songs is the sense that I’m listening in on your inner dialogue, and that I’m moved by some basic enigma I don’t always grasp. I’m of the belief that what you leave out is as important as what you put in to a song: are these conscious decisions for you?

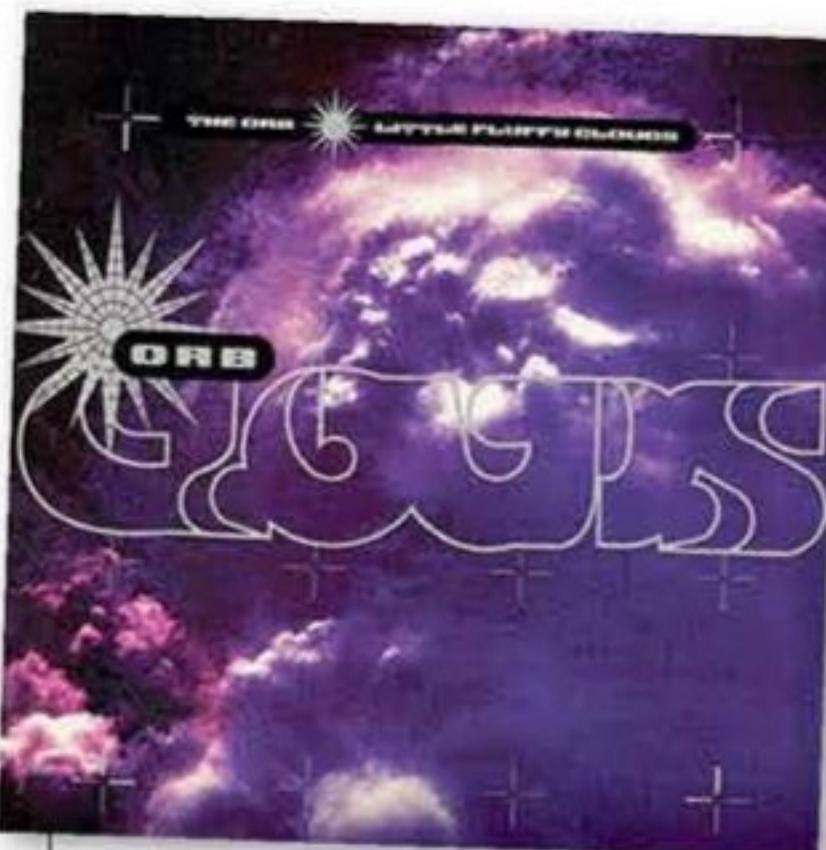
Gretchen Peters

“An enigma I don’t always grasp”. Me, too! I’m not sure I can analyse my own work, but those decisions

are never conscious. There are definitely things where you ask the listener to connect the dots, and that is important for me. Where it really works is live. I send out this stuff and it ignites the audience, who then have their own set of things. It’s probably the closest thing to what I imagine a church might be. It’s harder to make it happen on record. My earlier records maybe did that better.

What has Laura Nyro’s music meant to you, and did you ever meet her?

Robin Ore, Richmond, Virginia
Sadly, I didn’t meet her. But my engineer became her engineer



towards the end of her life, so we kinda sent messages back and forth. She knew I loved her, and I also know she loved me. She was proud of me, as her kinda spiritual heir. That meant a lot, because most of my musical heroes were all guys. She was the only girl that struck my imagination. Her singing was so raw, her choice of material so beautiful. I had that *West Side Story* thing: I was so enamoured with New York City, and she was a whole part of that. So yeah, she was huge and greatly missed. And I’d love to do more of her songs.

You’ve always resisted talking about drugs in interviews. Why?

Gavin Ross, Monmouthshire

People always ask me about drugs, especially in England. I’ve never understood why. Journalists want to unearth some dirt and rub it over you. Why? Drugs have always been around my life, and I did have a serious battle, for a couple of years, but I’ve been clean for about 30 years now. I also find it interesting that people can only understand female artists through the prism of suffering. It isn’t respectful for women in music, the way in which

people always want to find their point of breaking and write about it. Men also have points of breaking. But for some reason, we love that point in women. If you talk about evil things, you honour them. If all we write about is the evil people do – robbing, shooting, raping – we honour it. I don’t think it should be honoured!

STAR QUESTION



What are the skies like where you live?

Alex Paterson, The Orb

I’m actually looking out of the window at some big fluffy clouds right now, but I guess we’re going to have to sign a contract before I answer that – you may use this recording on a record! What did I think of The Orb sampling my voice on “Little Fluffy Clouds”? It was a new kind of music at the time, 1990, and I found it all a little confusing. But my enjoyment of it was soured by their refusal to give me any royalties. Whatever I might have wanted to like about that song is tainted by the bad behaviour of the band and their legal representation. They still have the chance to do the right thing. I’m not dead!

I hear you’re a top pool player. Any tips?

Christophe Benet, Cheshire

My brother had a pool hall when I was a kid, we used to go after school, and I got quite good. Playing pool is a kinda zen thing. Being a girl gave me a little something, ‘cos people aren’t expecting much of you. I’m





“My country is over.
They call it
democracy and
all it really is all
about is protecting
capitalism”



Jones recording her new album, *The Devil You Know*, with her ideal producer, Ben Harper

not so good at long shots, but very good on side pockets, the tricky shots that people often find hard. A lot of people just go for the corners. They don't think about the holes in the middle!

STAR QUESTION



Nowadays, young artists need to wear so many more hats. Can you imagine Bob Dylan organising

his email list or setting up a MySpace page? Could we be losing out on some great talents because of this?

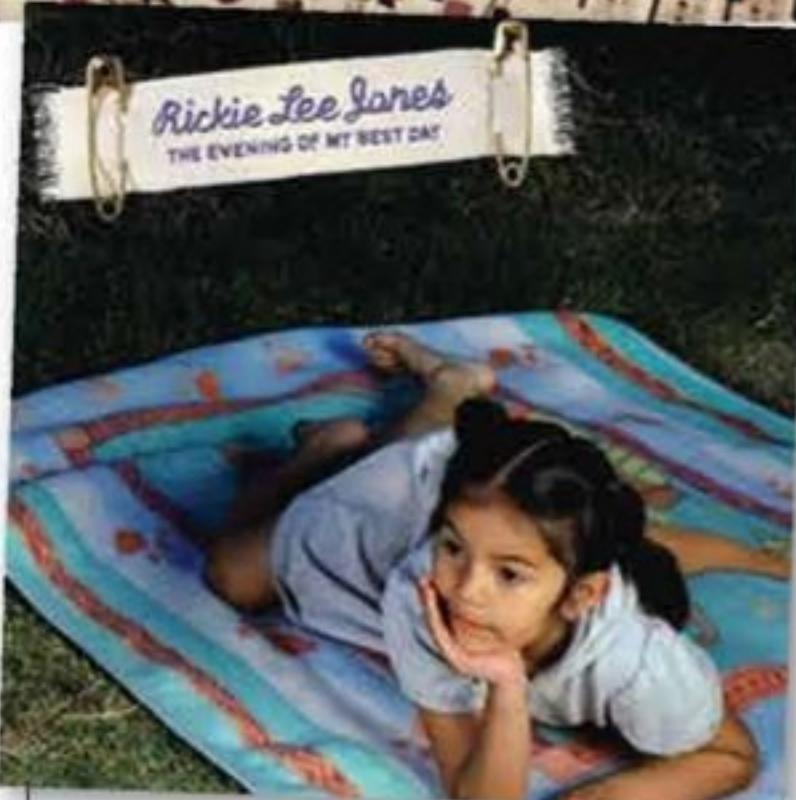
Beth Nielsen Chapman

I guess so. But I also think that there are always people who are devoted to music, and they will seek out the talented artists. What more could you want than someone singing your songs after your death? Of course, it'd be nice to have some money, but that's not everything. It would be nice to have what I had when I was young, which was unlimited resources. If it took three months to work on the bridge for a song in the studio, they gave me three months! I've not had that good fortune for many years. So I tell myself: sometimes you do greater work if you have the challenge of not having things available. I'm not sure if that's true, but it sure provides an impetus, spiritually, to fight for yourself.

Your 2003 album *The Evening Of My Best Day* vents your anger with George W Bush. Has Barack Obama fulfilled your hopes as a president?

Tanel Tabur, Ōru, Estonia

I'm pretty far to the left of anyone I know, and I didn't have any hopes for Barack Obama. I saw him as just



another Chicago politician. People were desperate for someone to save them from what had happened with Bush, so they assigned a divinity to him. His only sin is that he accepted it! Like Bush, he still goes behind that curtain to deal with the power players. Is he better than the other guy? Probably. But my opinion is that my country is over. I've seen Republicans steal elections. The "centre" has moved so far right. They call it democracy and all it really is all about is protecting capitalism.

No drinking on the job! Ben sang a song with me many years ago, and he was so much more talented than I expected. Oh, that sounds awful, doesn't it?! He sang this song on *Balm In Gilead* with me called "Old Enough". He sang it so good! He became one of the few people I trusted to hear my music while I was recording it. And he became an ideal producer. He came up with some of the choices for this new album of covers. I initially had "The Weight", "Sympathy For The Devil" and [Rod Stewart's] "Seems Like A Long Time". Then Ben suggested a few songs like "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" and we were off.

You've lived in France at various points over the last 30 years. How good is your French?

Carole, Brighton

C'est ne pas bon. Ha ha. I was never fluent. I'm American. We don't know about anybody else! I tried, but I didn't have the ear for it. I lived

"Nine times out of ten, actors are very disappointing people. Although musicians can be worse..."

STAR QUESTION



Rickie holds the sacred key to the sacred door: she lent me that key for a record, for which I am eternally grateful. Now, when can we drink that wine?

Ben Harper

Ha! We always had a bottle of wine waiting to be drunk at the studio.

there for a couple of years. My husband was French, but he had to speak to me in English. When I went out, I'd try and understand what people were saying to me – I can guess half of what's happening, which can be disastrous! But I understand it a lot better now I don't live there: French Canadians are easier to understand. However, the moment I try to speak French, Spanish comes out! My Spanish is roughly as bad as my French.

You voiced a fairy in the animation of *Pinocchio And The Emperor Of The Night* – ever fancied doing any more acting?

Laurie Shala, West Ham

I'd just got married and was living in France. I met Steve Tyrell, who did some of the soundtrack and, through him, I got the offer to voice one of the parts. My dad was very excited. And then my dad died. So I felt like I had to take the part for him. I was the saddest Blue Fairy ever! But I had a lot of fun doing it. I wish I could have done more acting, I think I'm good at it. I could get a groovy part as a drug dealer, like Leonard Cohen! Thing is, nine times out of ten, actors are very disappointing people. Ha ha! Although musicians can be worse...

STAR QUESTION



Has a love of jazz hampered your career?

Flying Lotus

You betcha! As far as being a pop artist, it would have been much easier to market a pop singer with a simplistic image. I was always insistent on bringing jazz ballads with me onto the pop stage. But, in the long run, it opened the door for people to do a wider variety of music and not be struck down by critics as "inauthentic". It might have hampered my own career, but it's helped to expand what a "singer-songwriter" is able to do.

Do you believe in God? And how did that effect *The Sermon On Exposition Boulevard*, where you're effectively singing from Jesus' point of view?

M Barton, Warwickshire

Do I believe we are connected by an invisible power that responds to us and affects us? You bet. But no, I didn't have to believe in Jesus to sing that album. I was vamping back and forth between The Bible and books by [Persian poet] Rumi, and I did something I always wanted, which was to improvise a song. I was inhabiting the body of Christ! Thing is, in America, our experience of Jesus is different. American religions are hideous! I think this old Jew needs a little redemption. My Jesus is the old rabbi who preached nothing but love, but has since become the emblem of everything but. 

Rickie Lee Jones' The Devil You Know is out now on Concord/Decca



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SAMSUNG

A Kiss in the 80s madhouse

It's 1982, and SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES have fired their manager, their brilliant guitarist is unraveling and they are being pestered by the ghost of John Lennon. Yet, somehow, they manage to record their opulent, psychedelic masterpiece, *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse*. "We were losing our minds," they tell us...

WHEN THE BASS PLAYER and the manager of Siouxsie & The Banshees arrive at The Priory, they get a shock. Their guitarist, who has recently been sectioned by his wife, is here primarily to be treated for a worsening drink problem. But he is currently, they are informed, in the pub. Steven Severin and Dave Woods walk around the corner to the bar in question, and find John McGeoch surrounded by strangers. He kisses them. He's shaved his head completely bald and is sporting a fresh tattoo. He looks nuts.

"He'd gone to the pub with some day-release people from the home," recalls Severin, 30 years later. "It sounds funny, you walk into the pub and there's 10 nutters! We couldn't see... there was no end in sight. What the hell do we do?"

The band was starting a UK and Far East tour in seven days. Severin had been abandoned by bandmates mid-tour before. Never again. He left the pub and made a call. By the end of the day, The Cure's Robert Smith was, for the second time, the guitarist of Siouxsie & The Banshees.

On the day after the visit to Roehampton, the Banshees released their fifth and best album, *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse*. It had already received the most adoring reviews of their career, and would reposition its makers as purveyors of an opulent, sensual new form of '80s psychedelia. Its star, some would argue, was the Scottish

guitar genius that Severin had just fired. "We'd been through a lot together and it had just felt really solid," Siouxsie Sioux tells *Uncut*, recalling the end of the Banshees' imperial phase with a mixture of dry amusement and regret. "Nothing could derail us. Except," she adds, knowingly, "ourselves."

IN THE SUMMER of 1981, Siouxsie & The Banshees were a happy band. Or at least as happy as a group of confrontational characters and mercurial talents with a history of dramatically changing lineups could ever be. They had survived the traumatic mid-tour departures of drummer Kenny Morris and guitarist John McKay in September 1979, which prompted Smith's first spell as temporary Banshees guitarist, and had since recruited the outstanding reggae and African-influenced drummer Peter 'Budgie' Clark from The Slits. After some lobbying, they had also eventually persuaded guitarist John McGeoch to leave Howard Devoto's Magazine to become a full-time Banshee. This was the lineup that in November 1981 completed a five-month European, UK and American tour in support of the Top 10 success of their fourth album, *Juju*. What should have been a moment of celebration, however, was soured by the reaction of manager Nils Stevenson, to the growing romance between Siouxsie and Budgie, which had developed during sessions for the "Wild Things" EP, the debut by their side-project, The Creatures, the sleeve of which pictured the

"When we
were doing the
sessions for
Dreamhouse,
I first took acid"

SIOUXSIE SIOUX



champagne-happy couple cavorting in the shower of a Newcastle hotel room, bare nipples, ecstatic faces and all. This wasn't a problem for McGeoch or even Sioux's one-time beau, Severin. But Stevenson, another of Siouxie's former lovers, freaked. Unresolved feelings towards Sioux led him back to a heroin habit he'd kicked when first managing the group.

"He became erratic and unreliable," says Sioux now. "He came out to the last show in New York at The Peppermint Lounge and just... lost it. One particular situation got out of control and John pinned him against a wall and said, 'Just fucking go home.' He was too obsessive towards me and I felt suffocated by it. It was almost a *Play Misty For Me* scenario. He'd be waiting outside my house... it was almost scary."

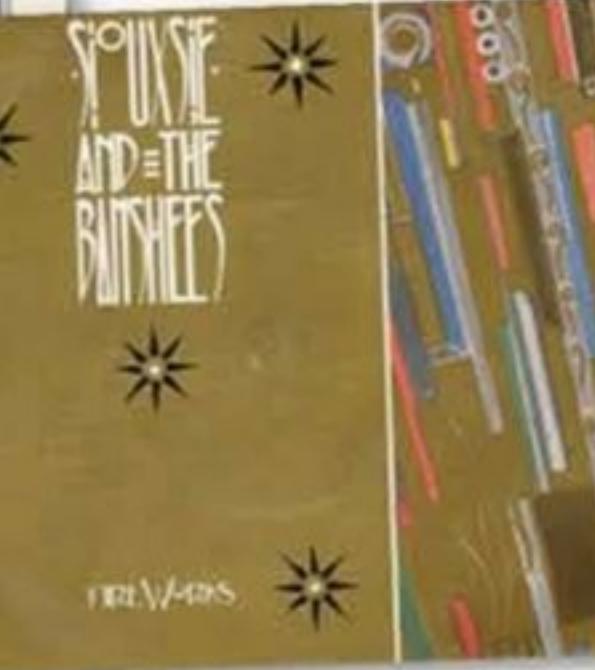
Stevenson was fired in the spring of 1982, just as the Banshees started work on their fifth album, despite Sioux losing her voice while on tour in Scandinavia in March. The follow-up to *Juju* would be "lush and exotic, and as aurally seductive as possible", Sioux recalls. Severin had even come up with a title, inspired by a piece of twisted Hollywood history that author James Ellroy would subsequently make famous in 1990 novel *LA Confidential*. "I was watching some hour-long TV show and it was all about the '40s when they apparently had these brothels where the women had been surgically altered to resemble the stars of the day. The title just came to me after that. It was

TOM SHEREHAN; RAY STEVENSON/REX FEATURES



The Banshees with John McGeoch (left), 1982: "He was in a bad way..."

WILD THINGS BY THE CREATURES



'Obsession': Sioux with Nils Stevenson, Southsea, 1979

"We were trying to launch ourselves into a post-psychedelic opulence..."

STEVE SEVERIN

funny when the movie of *LA Confidential* came out, because that's exactly where it came from."

The heady imagery of *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse* needed a willing facilitator of a different sound. In October 1981, the Banshees had attempted to record a proposed new single, "Fireworks", with *Kaleidoscope/Juju* producer Nigel Gray. The recording hadn't gelled, so the band turned to Mike Hedges, who had produced The Creatures' "Wild Things" EP at his Camden Town studio Playground in Bayham Street, London NW1. The

torrid, string-driven wall-of-sound The Cure producer helped sculpt for May 1982's "Fireworks" single opened a new direction for an increasingly confident Banshees.

The main bulk of the *Dreamhouse* sessions took place at Playground

between June 10 and July 18, 1982, and were both the most productive The Banshees had ever been involved in and a disaster waiting to happen. The feverish desire to write, record, experiment, party and avoid sleep bore extraordinary creative fruit while taking an immense toll on each member of the band.

"With *Dreamhouse*, it was the intensity," recalls Budgie, with the hint of a shudder. "Not the hard work, but the intensity of being in the studio and living it. It felt round-the-clock. It felt like we never went home."

"The band drank a lot," laughs Mike Hedges. "Every day they came in someone would go back out and buy four or five bagfuls of wine which would then go in the fridge. That was at about five in the afternoon and we knew it would be an all-nighter. We were working 14-hour days, and I don't think I was drinking as much as the band, because I couldn't have done my job."

"The boys started experimenting with cocaine and speed during the making of *Juju*," says Sioux. "John was very organised on the getting-the-cocaine front."

Siouxsie had discovered a more interesting fuel than speed

EYEWITNESS!

BUCKETS AND BELLS

How *Dreamhouse* got its sound...

STEVEN SEVERIN had wanted to work with Mike Hedges ever since he had witnessed an Associates session, which often involved things like singing through vacuum cleaner hoses while using copious amounts of methamphetamines. "It was berserk," he recalls fondly. Hedges' love of wild experiment was fully indulged for *Dreamhouse*.

"For some tracks we put mics in water to produce a percussion effect," Hedges remembers. "You put them in condoms. We had a 44-gallon rain bucket and we would lower tubular bells into it to get different sounds. But eventually we lowered one in too quickly and punched a hole in the barrel, and got 44 gallons of water covering the entire studio floor."

"On 'Circle' John McGeoch decided to use one note from a tape of the bells of Big Ben stretched over 16 bars," reveals Severin.

There was a method to Hedges' madness. "The reason why I used Sioux stomping on a drum riser instead of drums for 'Obsession' is because it's far more cinematic and far more emotive to someone's brain to make something with a sound they can't quite work out. I was obsessed with making things sound other-worldly."



John McGeoch, on tour with the Banshees at the Hot Klub, Dallas, Texas, October 18, 1981

'I DIDN'T REALISE HOW BLOODY GOOD HE WAS...'

The late, great Magazine/Banshees guitarist John McGeoch remembered...

JOHN ALEXANDER McGEOCH of Greenock in Scotland lent his ringing arpeggios, effects-laden Eastern scales and bursts of punk power to music by Magazine, Visage, Generation X, The Armoury Show and PiL, as well as the Banshees, before quitting music in 1992 and training to become a nurse. He died in his sleep in March 2004, aged just 48. He was also a painter, and it was while studying art in Manchester that he first met Howard Devoto. "I first met John at a party at designer Malcolm Garrett's house," recalls the Magazine frontman. "It was April '77, after I'd left the Buzzcocks, and Malcolm had already said I should meet his flatmate because he could play all the guitar parts on *Marquee Moon*."

Magazine bassist and future Bad Seed/solo composer Barry Adamson shared a flat with McGeoch during Magazine's glory days. "I related to John more than anyone else. He was my ally in the band. He was slightly reserved in some ways, but also quite feisty and boisterous. My favourite John performance is the solo in



'Permafrost'. I sat in the room while he played and it was literally a mind-blowing moment. That's the one I'll take away."

"At the time, John had no more drink or drug problems than some other members of Magazine," Devoto insists. "I wasn't angry when he left. I was philosophical. I didn't realise how bloody good he was and how difficult he'd be to replace."

Johnny Marr remembers McGeoch as a Manchester local hero and inspiration. "I was first aware of John from Magazine; 'Shot By Both Sides' and 'The Light Pours Out Of Me'. The Banshees became what they were meant to be when John and Budgie joined. John was modern and original... distinctive. 'Spellbound' by the Banshees and 'Because You're Frightened' by Magazine are my favourite McGeoch performances."

Siouxsie freely admits that McGeoch was the best Banshees guitarist. "I always wondered whether he could be the guitarist again for the Banshees. It was around the time of the Seven Year Itch reunion in 2002 and we were thinking, maybe, guest guitar, and see what happens. But it never happened. We've all kind of wondered what would have happened if."

and cocaine. Hedges had introduced her to a brand of LSD called California Sunshine. When a drunken 5am studio jam produced an oddly beguiling take on cocktail jazz, led by McGeoch's atonal piano, Sioux took the tape home and proceeded to edit and write the song that would become "Cocoon" while tripping. The lyric sees Sioux recede into childhood, lying in a cot, hugging her knees, imagining the thoughts of a caterpillar hiding "in the cotton wool cocoon" as a metaphor for infant insecurity. "When we were doing these sessions and I first took acid, I remember thinking, 'I wonder if I should go and see my mum and just say, 'Here, Mum... let's take some acid together.'" I remember thinking, 'Is that a good idea, or could she die from it?' I really wanted to understand everything about where she came from and my childhood."

Looking at Sioux's *Dreamhouse* lyrics as a kind of once-removed regression therapy makes "Circle" – an experimental song based around an ever-circling loop of a section of orchestra from "Fireworks", with a lyric that Sioux describes as 'the depressing realisation that you're doomed to repeat the sins of your parents' – especially disturbing. Because when Sioux was still nine-year-old Susan Janet Ballion of Chislehurst, she had been sexually abused by a neighbour. Was this childhood horror the backstory for "Circle"?

"Circle" isn't linked to that. But that incident has shaped me and the way I protect myself. Seeing through the idea of pure sexual allure and understanding that it's usually a controlling thing. It can be in an extreme situation, like an older person abusing a much younger person... but most relationships can be broken down into someone being manipulated and overpowered by someone else."

Similarly, "Obsession"'s tale of twisted love – wherein a spurned lover breaks into their ex's home and places locks of hair on their pillow – can't help but be informed by Sioux's experience with Nils Stevenson. But this stalker testimony – with an appropriately stalking rhythm provided by Sioux stomping on a mic'ed up drum riser, rather than drums – is not exactly what it seems.

PLAYGROUND STUDIOS

THE SMALL, aptly named Playground studios on Bayham St, London NW1 opened in 1980 and closed in 1983. But its brief existence produced *Dreamhouse* and other influential post-punk LPs, the Associates' *Sulk* and *Faith* by The Cure. Producer Mike Hedges co-designed Playground with studio specialist Andy Monroe. "It was small but it didn't feel cramped," recalls Steven Severin. "Underneath was a garage where we found all these 1/4-inch tapes of K-Tel comps. We spent an evening listening to things like Slade and Sweet from the first-generation tapes."

But the *Dreamhouse* sessions turned out to be the last major Playground project. "The studio was extremely successful," insists Mike Hedges. "But my business partner was a junkie. He overdosed not long after *Dreamhouse* and so the studio was sold. Too many bad memories."

"This all came about from the *Juju* tour in America," Sioux explains. "What I found most intoxicating about New York was the amazing bars and I had this amazing conversation with a tattooed sailor. He told me this story of someone who became so obsessed by their ex-lover that they'd break into their flat and leave their pubic hair on their pillow. It was like a folklore tale. Was I applying my experience with Nils to the story? Well... it's a connection. It made the story more poignant and allowed me to live in the place of the song."

But the psycho-sexual nastiness of the themes was being constantly undercut by the playful experimentation of Hedges. "Hedges would invent things for us to do when we got bored," says Budgie. "These were either, a) very constructive, or b) a complete waste of time. We let off hundreds of indoor fireworks. We found out that fire extinguishers do very strange things to fabric. We froze buckets of water with microphones in them to see what would happen as they thawed out."

The black comedy reached a peak on "Slowdive". Over a motorik Budgie beat, Siouxsie mocked old-school lists of dance moves like "The Locomotion": "Put your knees into your face/And see if you can race real slow"; "Taking honeysuckle sips/From your rolling hips". "I wanted to turn the Jane Fonda Workout on its head," Sioux laughs.

When violinist Anne Stephenson let out a cry of pain during the recording of "Slowdive", she unwittingly gave The Banshees their very own "I've got blisters on my fingers!" moment. On the released recording, Stephenson's "Oh my God!" provides the song's false ending, an expulsion of eroticised exhaustion before the song simply starts again from the top, and eventually fades. "Of course I was pleased," Stephenson laughs. "I know it sounds like an orgasmic gasp... the best one I've ever done, I suspect."

This hint of "Helter Skelter" was fitting. The Banshees had covered "Helter Skelter" way back on *The Scream* in '78, and, as far as Severin is concerned, *The White Album* is the major influence on *Dreamhouse*. "We were listening to it a lot, in terms of the variety of songs, the kind of instrumentation they would use. We were trying to



SLEEVE NOTES

WHO IS MODHITIS RETSINA?

The Grecian credit mystery...

ON THE SLEEVE of *Dreamhouse* there is a credit: 'Assisted by Leo Pappas and Modhitis Retsina.' They weren't *Playground*'s favourite Greek tape ops. Mike Hedges explains. "A normal day's work on *Dreamhouse* would go like this: Budgie would come in first at 2pm. Then at about 5 or 6 the rest of the band would stagger in. We'd then all go to Modhitis, the local Greek restaurant. We'd say hello to the owner Leo, have a meal and drink loads of retsina [a notably strong, bitter resinated Greek wine], go back and start recording."

"Our social life during *Dreamhouse* involved many a retsina bottle and smashed plate on the floor," laughs Sioux. "Then Budgie made a tree out of the bottles."

The retsina tree was an ideal way for Budgie to mix his relentless search for percussion ideas and increasingly out of control drinking habits. "The retsina tree was a percussion instrument where I'd drink the required amount of retsina from each bottle until I got the right balance of tones. And if you drank slightly too much from one bottle, you'd have to start all over again."



Hair guitar: Siouxsie, backstage at The Peppermint Lounge, NYC, November 1981

→ launch ourselves into a post-psychedelic opulence, I guess. Hence the strings, hence a lot of really lush imagery. I would say something like 'Green Fingers' is our 'Savoy Truffle', our quirky little George Harrison song."

So, when Budgie spurted an entire bottle of warm champagne over a desk at *Playground*, where else could The Banshees go but *Abbey Road*? In Studio 2, the band and Hedges continued work on "Melt!" and "Obsession" and encountered the ghost of John Lennon (see *The Haunted Console panel*, p21) for a few days. When *Playground* was once again ready for action, the hard work of honing the sprawling sessions into a focused suite of songs was completed by Sioux and Hedges alone in a week of intense editing and vocal overdubs. It put a dangerous strain on a voice that had gone completely in Sweden just a few months before. One doctor in Gothenburg had advised Sioux to give up singing altogether. "Sioux was struggling a bit," confirms Hedges. "It wasn't easy for her. But Sioux's not the sort of person who would accept that if she didn't stop singing she'd lose her voice. She'd just go, 'Oh – fuck off' and sing anyway. I think the vocals on that record are really brilliant."

AT THE END of July, the Banshees played one-off shows in Milan and at the Elephant Fayre in Cornwall. Sioux worked on the Gustav Klimt-inspired *Dreamhouse* sleeve with Al McDowell of design company Rocking Russian and photographer Michael Costiff. "Slowdive" was chosen as a single and a video made where the boys had to do a corny dance routine behind Sioux, and John McGeoch struggled with the relatively simple physical demands. McGeoch was quickly unraveling, and, while the band had seen signs at the end of the *Dreamhouse* sessions, they had chosen to ignore them.

"He wasn't spending as much time at the studio by the end," says Budgie. "There was a problem with 'She's A Carnival'. It was like, 'Hang on... this guitar's not really doing it,' from Mike and

Steven. And that was the first time I'd heard that. There was a more serious problem for John that none of us were aware of, and we didn't realise until we got to those gigs in Madrid."

On October 29, the Banshees flew to Spain for two shows at Madrid's Rock Ola Club. John McGeoch arrived in a shocking state of disrepair. Recalls Severin: "At the first gig, we started

playing 'Arabian Knights' and he started playing 'Spellbound' – that's the funny side of it. But it wasn't funny. He was in a bad way. When Nils left, John and I had spent a lot of time trying to get to grips with the finances. It was really stressful. I think John had some kind of nervous breakdown."

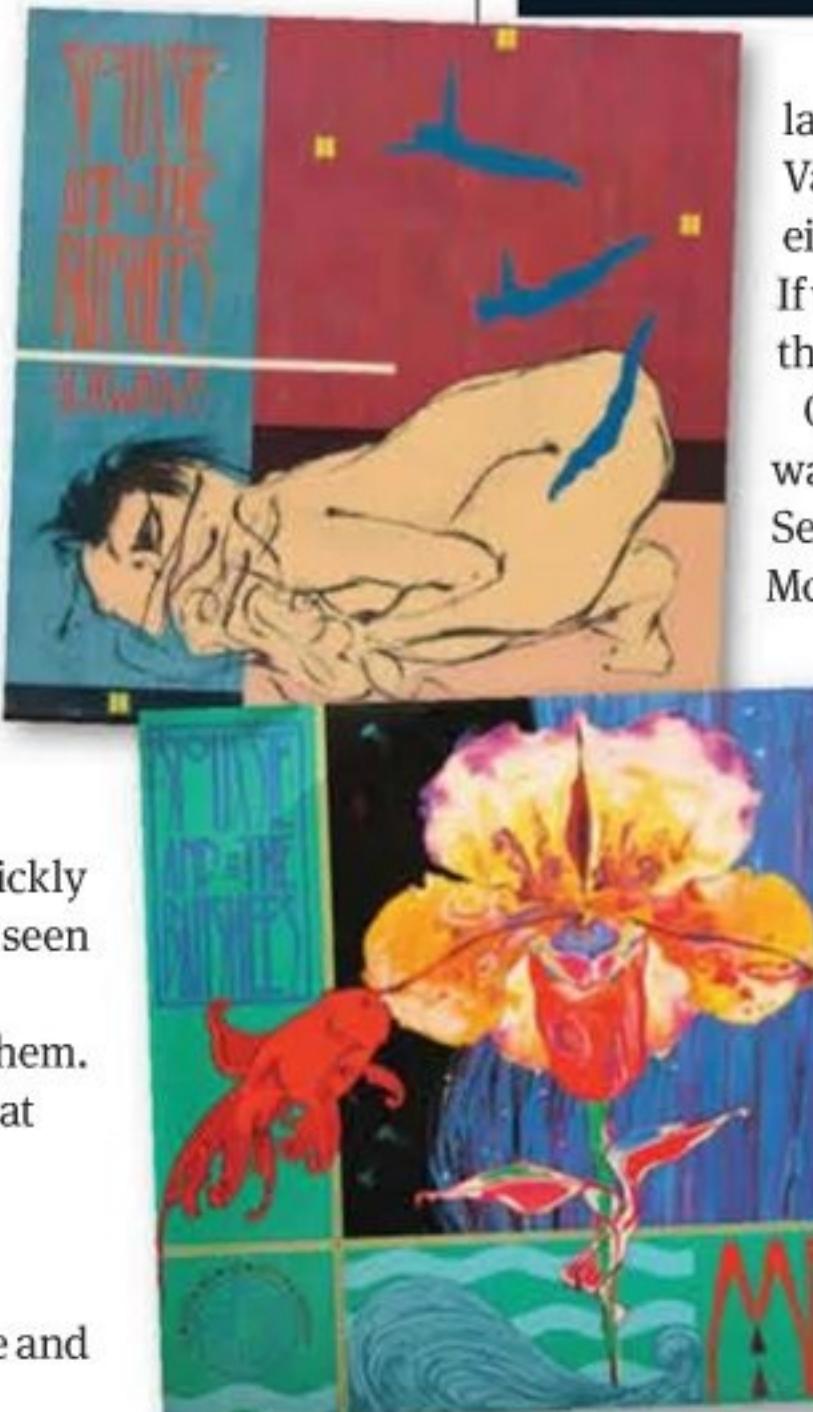
"It became obvious that he didn't know where he was," says Budgie. "I thought he'd just gone too far that night, but much

later he admitted that he'd been given a Valium to calm his nerves, 'cos he was shaking either from withdrawal or too much drinking. If we'd been noticing this we might have said the show can't go on. But we weren't."

On the band's return to England, McGeoch was sectioned and sent to The Priory. After the Severin and Woods visit, the decision to sack McGeoch was made instinctively and

instantly. There wasn't even a band meeting. "It sounds very callous," Sioux acknowledges. "I wish it hadn't happened. But alcoholism is not something that gets fixed overnight, or even in a year. It takes a lifetime. Maybe even then it never truly happens."

On November 7, 1982, six days before the Banshees set off on a UK tour with Robert Smith on guitar, *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse* was released to rapturous acclaim. In the *NME*, Richard Cook, a Banshees-sceptic, called the album:





With Robert Smith in Venice, 1983, filming the "Dear Prudence" video. Inset below, Siouxsie's *NME* cover from April 1982

"...a feat of imagination scarcely ever recorded" before concluding, "I promise, this music will take your breath away." *Melody Maker*'s Steve Sutherland called it "an intoxicating achievement". All the reviews noted the change of direction, away from the occasionally studied blackness that made the Banshees "goth", towards what Cook called "pure, open-minded ambiguity" and "flooded radiance and flame".

At the back end of 1982, the Banshees found themselves competing with records as sonically disparate as the Associates' *Sulk*, *Too-Rye-Ay* by Dexys Midnight Runners, *The Lexicon Of Love* by ABC, *New Gold Dream*

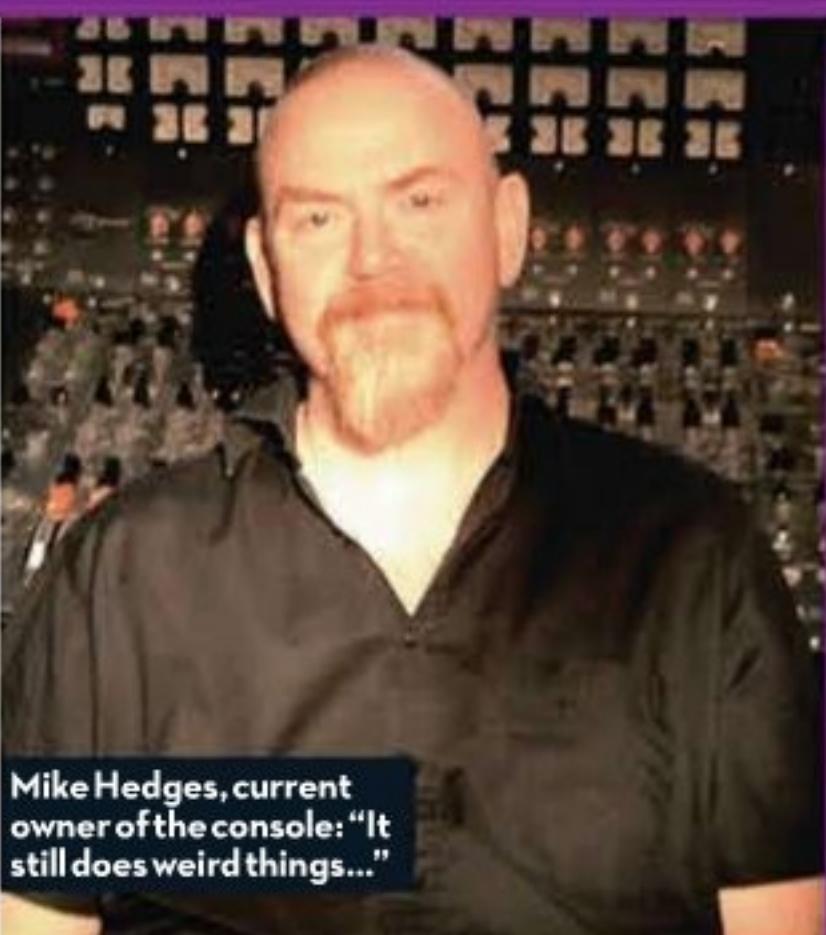


HOST IN THE MACHINE

THE HAUNTED CONSOLE

How the Banshees met the spirit of John Lennon...

THE BANSHEES AND Mike Hedges spent a few days in Abbey Road Studio 2 during the making of *Dreamhouse*. There they encountered the ghost of John Lennon. "We were working on 'Obsession,'" Steven Severin explains. "There was a guy called Anthony Fawcett who had been some sort of press assistant who worked with The Beatles in the later years. Anthony came in to visit us, sat down and said, 'God, I haven't been here since I was here with John and Yoko', and just as he was saying that, McGeoch was doing a guitar part and - you hear it in the middle of the record because we kept it in - the tape speeds up for about 20 seconds and then settles back down, so the guitar goes really weird in the middle of the song, just around the time the strings come in. It was a really



Mike Hedges, current owner of the console: "It still does weird things..."

spooky thing and Anthony was saying it was the ghost of John Lennon."

Mike Hedges adored Studio 2 and, when Abbey Road sold off some of its equipment in the '90s, bought the haunted console. "It's still sitting right here in my control room in my studio in France. It's the console that recorded *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. The postscript to that is it still does weird things. On Channel 13, the meters move when there's no sound, as if there's a vocal coming through. We've tried to fix it many times but eventually gave up."

But, despite *Dreamhouse* achieving healthy sales, reaching No 11 on the UK album charts, and remaining in the Top 40 for almost three months, its singles resolutely flopped. Both "Slowdive" and "Melt!" (which was backed by a version of a French Christmas carol, "Il Est Ne Le Divin Enfant", that John McGeoch had refused to work on) failed to reach the Top 40.

Severin still feels that the lack of 'a star turn' is *Dreamhouse*'s one flaw. "In some senses, it's my favourite Banshees album. As a collection of songs, it's probably more cohesive and has a greater atmosphere than any of our other albums. But it could have benefitted from one more song where we sat down and said, 'Let's write a single to go along with this album.'"

The Banshees continued until 1995, briefly reforming for the Seven Year Itch reunion tour in 2002, and all without John McGeoch. The guitarist went on to work with the short-lived The Armoury Show before a stint in PiL that lasted until 1992. But LA's den of rock'n'roll iniquity took its toll, and McGeoch quit music and retrained to be a nurse. He never got entirely clean and died in his sleep in 2002, aged 48 (see panel p19). Budgie still feels guilty. "When he died, it really shook me. I felt I'd let him down. As a band we rarely discussed how each other was doing. And when you get to the nitty-gritty of *Dreamhouse*, what you find is that we really could have done that a lot better."

And that is a key element of *Dreamhouse*'s tragic majesty. It's a product of addiction, stress, old, sick love and new, dangerous love, money woes and a darkness that would eventually claim three lives: McGeoch, Nils Stevenson, who died of a heart attack in 2002 without ever reconciling with Sioux, and the co-owner of Playground, who died of a heroin overdose soon after the finishing of the album, forcing the closure of the studios. But, as none of the protagonists could talk openly to each other about what they were going through, the terror, desire, depression and anger was poured into the stunningly beautiful music that emerged from a small room in Camden Town.

"We were caught up in the insanity of that moment," says Budgie. "We were losing the studio. We were losing a member. We were losing our minds. You try to manufacture those things, where you're trying to live on the edge, take away the safety-net, risk everything, and you're hoping that, out of the risk-taking, comes something magic. And that's what *Dreamhouse* is. But you can't continue that way."

by Simple Minds and *Forever Now* by the Psychedelic Furs – all records which, in very different stylistic ways, declared the end of arty, doubt-ridden, cynical and critical post-punk's hold on British alternative rock. By the beginning of 1983, The Jam had split, The Clash had imploded and U2 had made *War*, an album that transformed punk's political protest into air-punching, feelgood, stadium rock. *Dreamhouse* enabled the Banshees to survive the punk culling by wiping the slate clean and making them into the kind of smart, glamorous pop group who could have a huge hit in 1983 with a cover of The Beatles' "Dear Prudence", and have the moment feel like natural progression rather than desperate sell-out.

SONOS



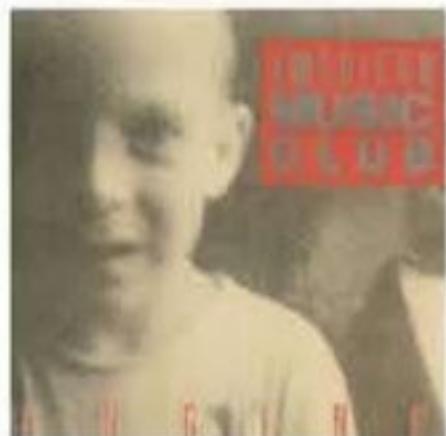
ALL THE MUSIC ON EARTH. IN EVERY ROOM. WIRELESSLY.



Mark Eitzel

The American Music Club singer and solo artist revisits his compelling canon

AS SINGER-SONGWRITER for AMC, Mark Eitzel was the guiding spirit behind some of the most beautiful, visceral records of the '80s and early '90s. After the band split in 1994, he went on to make some wide-ranging solo albums, before reforming AMC in 2004 for two further releases. His wounded voice, wracked stage presence and bittersweet worldview make him an enduringly compelling artist. Eitzel's return with a fine new solo LP, *Don't Be A Stranger*, is particularly welcome following a heart attack in 2011. "I love all these songs, old and new," he tells *Uncut*, gazing over the expanse of his back catalogue. "They're all still alive for me."



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB ENGINE

FRONTIER/GRIFTER/
ZIPPO, 1987

Following the patchy *The Restless Stranger*, AMC's second album is dynamic and fully formed, evidence of an extraordinary songwriting talent beginning to blossom.

We had made *The Restless Stranger* because our drummer was moving to Germany and we wanted a record to sell. We all moved to Germany thinking that was a smart plan – we opened for Sonic Youth once, that was about it! We knew *Engine* was a real record, it felt like a progression. The writing was less tentative, we didn't want to be Joy Division quite as much. We were relaxing into who we were as people. Of course I was writing my life. There was a bar called the Hotel Utah, and a lot of it was from hanging out there. I listen to those songs 25 years later and it's like, 'Oh wow, I did that?' I'm proud of it, but I can't say if it's evocative of '80s San Francisco or whatever. It's become something else for me now. Being in the band was always a bit of push and pull. I wasn't really meant to be a songwriter, I was meant to be the frontman, but I was writing all the songs. There was an awful lot of collective work on the arrangements, but after *Engine* I was known as Fucking Eitzel. "Yeah, fucking Eitzel writes the songs!" But actually the band were really accepting. The weirder the songs were, the more they liked them. I'd bring in "Nightwatchman" or "Mom's TV" and they would be like, "Oh that's great." So I'm full of shit.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB CALIFORNIA

FRONTIER, 1988

A haunting masterpiece, graced by a fistful of Eitzel's most emphatically compassionate songs, AMC's nuanced performances and Tom Mallon's hazy yet widescreen production. I think *California* is as straight and direct as I ever got. "Lonely" is about being lonely. "Jenny" is about Jenny. "Firefly" is about my mother. "Blue And Grey Shirt" is about waiting for somebody to die. I used to do lots and lots of drugs when I was a kid – obviously – so I was sitting up in a suburban area, high as a kite on acid, and I thought about how absolutely simply I could say something. The songs are direct from the point of view of a San Francisco party person, someone who's never sure if what they're doing is any good, so they're trying to make up something that is in the ball park of what a good person would say.

On the other hand, I was really bored with conventional songwriting. I've always had a hard time remembering normal chord structures. A few years before *California*, [AMC guitarist] Vudi had turned me on to Nick Drake, then someone showed me all his weird open tunings, and I thought, 'How nice is this?' "Firefly" is one of those. I was always the one who wanted to put weird sounds on the record and strange noises all over the place, which was never really welcomed, because the idea was that you have to respect the songs.

It absolutely felt like a leap forward, but fun? No! It was all done in about a week and from my point of view they were miserable, miserable sessions. It seemed like it was always like, "No, that's fucked." That was the way we all talked to each other: this is just a piece of shit, so who cares? But that album still sounds beautiful, and that's all down to Tom Mallon. What Tom offered wasn't his recording gear or anything like that, it was his brilliance. He was the leader, he really and truly was, but his bedside manner wasn't always the friendliest. If it was good he would just smoke a cigarette and say, "Fine."

We had that San Francisco thing of you create art and it doesn't matter that no-one hears it. That was very much of the time we were living in, but in the UK, people were starting to say nice things. We had a fantastic agent and publicist at Demon, who was pretty much responsible for all of that. See, I can't really claim it's the music, because I've seen so much wonderful music just disappear in the world. But I knew *California* was great, and the nice thing is that I still play a lot of those songs.



Not a happy band: AMC, just before the first split in 1994



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB EVERCLEAR

ALIAS, 1991
While Eitzel's songs are haunted by AIDS, drugs and death, AMC create a more epic soundscape without sacrificing an inch of emotional depth.

Yeah, I know... a lot of death. My mother died. My father had died a year before. I'm a melodramatic, sensitive fucker, so when both your parents die you tend to get quite emotional about it. But the main thing was I wanted the music to sound bigger. I remember they played "Western Sky" back-to-back with another record on a local radio station, and the other record sounded so much bigger on the radio. I thought, 'How do they do that?' I wanted this next record to be loud, I didn't want to disappear so much. I wrote 'Rise' about a week before we walked into the studio because I thought, 'We need more, we need a big song.' I wrote 'Why Won't You Stay' at the same time. When we were working on the demos for *Everclear* we brought in Bruce Kaphan. He was an engineer at this big fancy studio so we made the record there, which is probably why it sounds crisper. Also, it was mixed by Joe Chiccarelli, a big studio guy who brought a kind of LA pop music flavour to it. Relatively speaking! It abso-fucking-lutely achieved what we wanted. I loved it, even though the reverb was sometimes a little too much for me, and the bass was so BASS. Everything was so demonstratively present, but I was really proud of it.

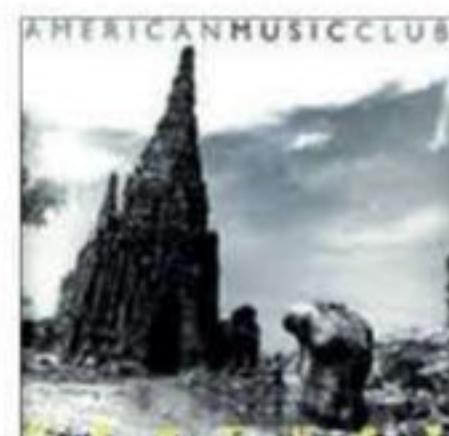


TOILING MIDGETS SON

MATADOR, 1992
Featuring future AMC drummer Tim Mooney, the beloved 'Frisco post-punk group enlist

Eitzel for a thrilling howl of beautifully discordant avant-rock.

The Midgets were local legends. I loved them when Ricky [Williams] was in the band, they were one of my favourite ever groups. When they played, the whole room, at least in my mind, was full of this swampy darkness. The word "fecund" is overused, but it is a terrific word to describe that kind of music! I love *Son*, but it lives under the shadow of another record they made called *Sea Of Unrest*. It's one of those incredibly important and not even available records. Tom Mallon did it and it's probably the best record he ever made. I just wanted to play with them. When they lost Ricky to his heroin addiction, I was like, "God yes, I'll sing with you!" I was never an equal member, never part of the band. I was... attached. They were very tight, and they had their sound, but I was really, really proud to be part of it.



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB MERCURY

REPRISE/VIRGIN, 1993
AMC sign to a major label and enlist Mitchell Froom as producer. With typical perversity

the music becomes more complex and opaque. I remember our UK publicist's comment about *Mercury*. He said we should have made it more

like *California*, and he was absolutely right. The songs and the arrangements should have been simpler. I listen back to "Dallas, Airports, Bodybags" and I cannot make head nor tail of what was played! I've since tried to play it live, but there's just no way. *California* was much more of a pop record than *Mercury*, but again it was that San Francisco thing: let's make an anti-pop record and put it out on a major label. That'll show 'em! That's not to take anything away from that record, which I think is amazing. I love "I've Been A Mess", "Gratitude Walks"... I still play those, but the label were really disappointed, they wanted more of a pop thing. Too bad. At the same time, it was when the industry was still run by people with some idea of artist development. They were quite old-school. My dealings with indie labels were fine, but the majors were great, too. Everybody has always been really fucking nice to American Music Club. They didn't always know what to do with us, but they let us put out records and gave us money. The extent to which people celebrate the death of the music industry is really sad to me.



MARK EITZEL 60 WATT SILVER LINING

WARNER BROS, 1996
A smooth, almost jazzy affair in places, the songs on Eitzel's solo

studio debut are diverse but powerful, while his voice has arguably never sounded better. I think I fucked up. It was weird, I had all these songs written and I had a whole other record that I recorded as demos on an ADAT. I still have them somewhere, but they never saw the



Sailing no longer, 2008: (l-r)
Steve Didelot, Vudi [overboard],
Mark Eitzel, Sean Hoffman

light of day. I thought I wouldn't use those songs because they were too dark, so I decided to make something which was a little lighter and lighthearted, and that was *60 Watt*. Unfortunately, my default setting has always been towards gloom. I guess that's what happened – the default kicked in. Of course, when Vudi first heard it his response was uncontrolled laughter, he just thought it was hilarious and awful. "Oh Mark, this is such shit." Bless him. That's AMC for you, there wasn't a lot of joy! One reviewer dismissed it as "Mark Eitzel's mid-career jazz record", but people are always coming up to me to say they love it. For me, it was business as usual. I was working with Mark Needham, the engineer, who played a big part in the production. It was so expensive! God bless Warners, they did me right. We had Mark Isham play trumpet. He was great. Triple scale. He brought his wife and her friend up so they could shop in San Francisco while he recorded. It was like a proper session scene. So funny!



MARK EITZEL WEST

WARNER BROS, 1997
A writing and recording collaboration with REM's Peter Buck. Beautifully crafted,

impeccably performed, though a tad tentative in places.

It started with this great late-night thing between me, Peter and Greg Dulli in a bar that Peter's wife owned in Seattle. I had just seen *Triumph Of The Will* and I was drunk and very right, and going on about what evil really is. Peter didn't agree with me, he said that film should be burned. We argued and became friends. Working with him was such a revelation. Peter is one of those guys who never says something is bad. He always says it's the best thing you've ever done, and that's actually a good thing. There's a reason he's a rock star, because he never says die. We wrote the genesis of the songs in three or four days, then I went away and wrote the lyrics over a period of four months, then we recorded it in about three

days. Everything about the record was quick. It had to be, because he had a lot of things to do. I loved making that record. It was a good fit, and an insanely great band. We wrote a bunch of other songs and we were going to do another album, but I don't know where that is at this point. I don't think Peter will ever stop, he just loves it. I was really sad when REM broke up and people were going, 'Hooray!' How upsetting.



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB THE GOLDEN AGE

MERGE, 2008

After splitting in 1994, AMC reunite a decade later. Harking back to early glories, this beautiful collection becomes a swansong following the death of Tim Mooney earlier this year.

The break-up wasn't my decision. Everyone said they weren't willing to sleep on people's floors anymore. I was, so there was a real schism. A few

"Given the opportunity to rework a song, I will – I could work on these songs forever"

MARK EITZEL

years later, I was living in Chicago and my mind and the weather were tending towards the cold. I'm a California boy, I'm really not tough, so I was ready to go back and Tim [Mooney] called and said, "Why don't we try to do a record?" I had a bunch of songs I was going to do myself but I didn't know how to. First we made *Love Songs For Patriots* and then *The Golden Age*. I'm very proud of both those records, actually, especially *The Golden Age*. They are very much part of the whole AMC history. There wasn't much unfinished

personal business, strangely, but without Bruce Kaphan and Tom Mallon it didn't feel like AMC so much. Me and Vudi are flighty, "arty", whereas Tom and Bruce were always like, "Now we're going to work!" We were all a bit stuck in our ways, but bending over backwards to make this thing happen – and we did. I doubt very seriously that there will be any more AMC records. Without Mooney, you know... and Vudi isn't willing to use the name anymore. But me and Vudi will work together again at some point because I love him.



MARK EITZEL DON'T BE A STRANGER

DECOR, 2012

It reads like a Hollywood script. After Eitzel's 2011 heart attack, a lottery-winning friend pays for him to make his most accomplished, fully realised record in many years.

Well, the vocals are a little too loud. Otherwise it's OK. It really is a classic studio record. We had some money, which was an absolute gift. It was a total fucking luxury, I was a pig in shit! I wanted it to go on forever. It took about three months to make because we had the presence of Rickie Lee Jones in the studio, who was a big priority over me. In the end all the songs that reflected on my heart attack were taken off because they weren't very good – you can't write anything when you're on top of it. We redid [AMC's] "All My Love" because a friend of mine in England, John Bourne, came up with a lovely new arrangement, so that's all his fault. I also took out a verse. Given the opportunity to rework a song, I will. I could work on these songs forever. I suppose the heart attack changed things a bit. I don't give quite as much of a shit anymore. I know my career is over, I know nothing will happen from this point onwards, but I still want to just make music. Who am I kidding? In my heart, I'm still hoping for world domination. ☺

Mark Eitzel's Don't Be A Stranger is released by Décor Records in the UK on October 1

fresh

produce

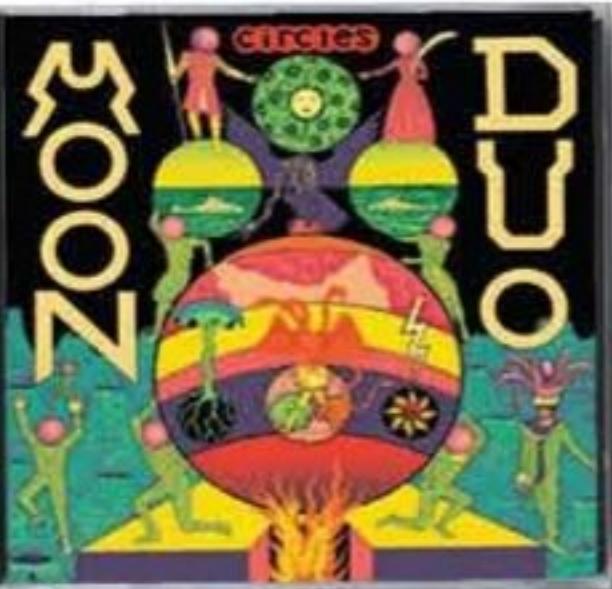


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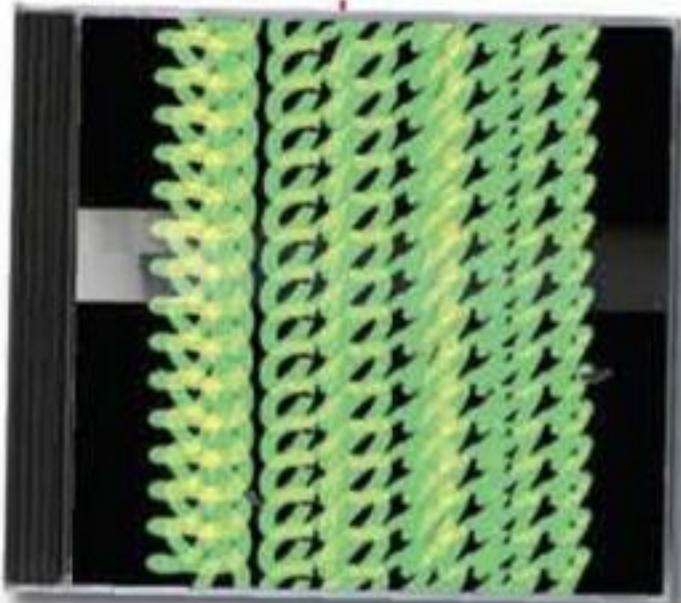
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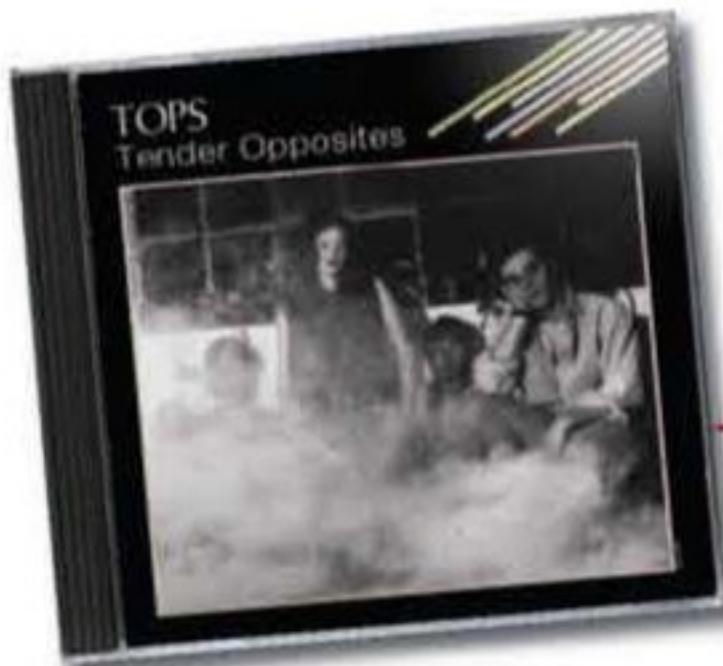
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Wasn't born to follow...

During an intense nine years from 1964 to 1973, THE BYRDS made the transition from Beatles wannabes to country-rock pioneers – via folk, acid-rock and psychedelia. Along the way, they recorded Dylan covers, ragas and pop classics, topped off by those exuberant harmonies and *that* Rickenbacker sound. Over the next 17 pages, we celebrate The Byrds' greatest achievements. First, we talk to the key players involved in the making of their 1968 classic, *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, and then bandmates, friends and famous fans select the 20 best songs from their incredible repertoire...

REX FEATURES

30 | THE STORY OF THE NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHERS

Exclusive! Crosby, Hillman & McGuinn speak

36 | THE BYRDS' 20 GREATEST SONGS

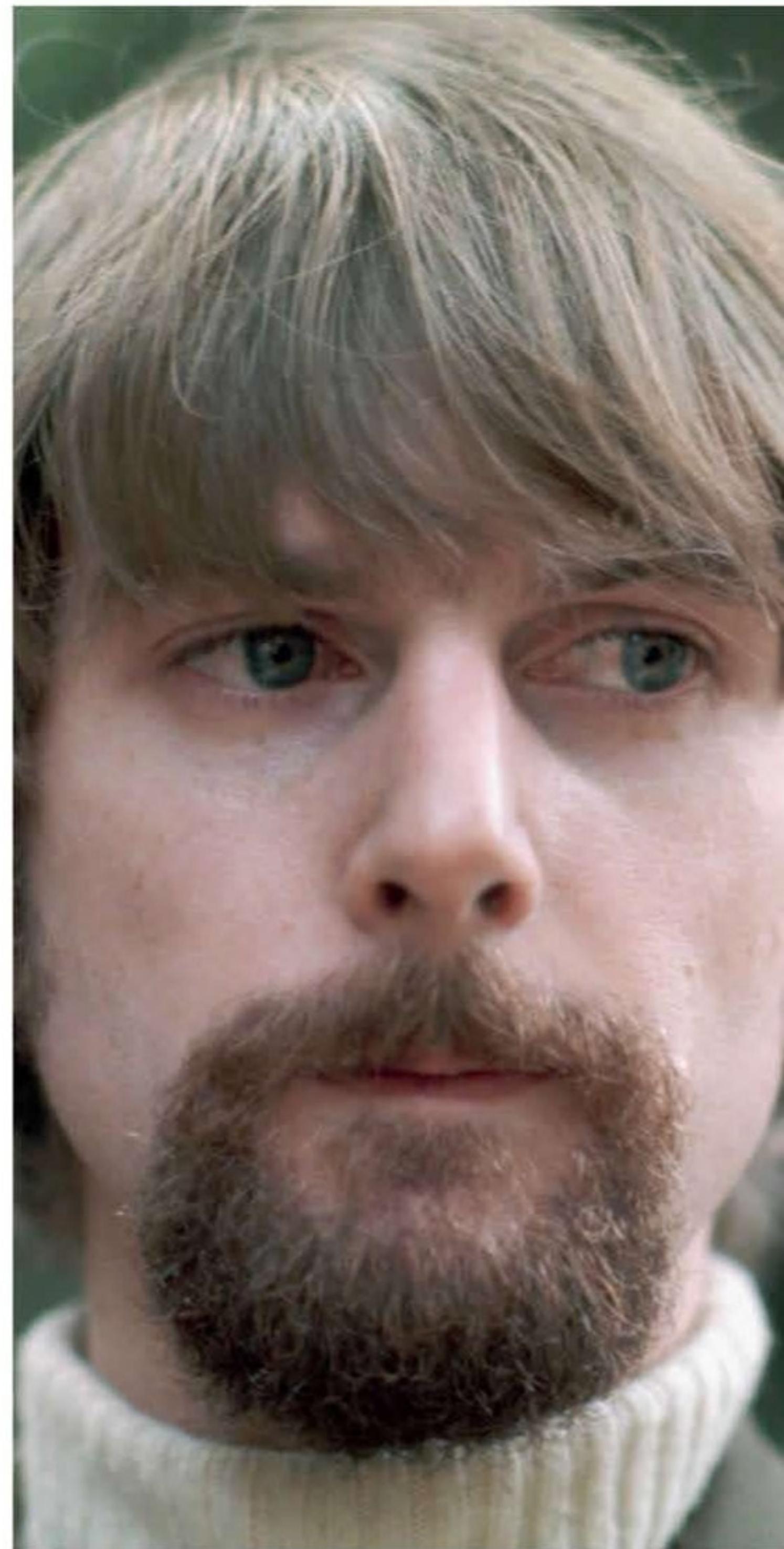
As chosen by Emmylou Harris, J Mascis, Bobby Gillespie, Jonathan Wilson and more

44 | YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY

FREE CD! A guide to this month's compilation of Byrds-influenced music







CHANGE IS NOW

Story: Graeme Thomson **Photos:** Henry Diltz



On this landmark release, **THE NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHERS** found The Byrds exploring fresh creative possibilities. But it also soundtracked the band as they were falling apart. “The album came out of rubble,” they reveal. “But something really amazing emerged at the end of that...”

THE TWO PORSCHEs pull away from Columbia Studios in Hollywood and head west along Sunset Boulevard. Taking a right into North Beverly Glen, Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman stop outside a modest wooden house clinging to the hillside on Lisbon Lane. David Crosby is waiting to greet them, alerted by the sound of the cars “echoing through the canyon”, but unaware he is about to become an ex-Byrd.

“They blasted up my driveway in a pair of Porches and said, ‘We’ll do better without you,’” says Crosby today. “I think they regretted that particular choice of words not much later.”

“He was all happy to see us,” continues McGuinn. “Hey man, come on in!” I said, ‘David, we’ve got some bad news. We’ve been talking and we’ve decided that we’d like to go on without you.’ He said, ‘Oh wow, man, we can still make some good music together.’ And I said, ‘We can probably make some good music without you, too.’ Yeah, he was upset.”

This was early in October 1967. Three months earlier, The Byrds – McGuinn, Crosby, Hillman and drummer Michael Clarke – had started recording their fifth album. Ten weeks later, only two members

of the band remained. Clarke went first, swiftly followed by Crosby. Later, McGuinn and Hillman found time to rehire and then refire Gene Clark, The Byrds’ original singer.

The Notorious Byrd Brothers is the soundtrack to one of the great rock soap operas. It is also a brilliant and beautiful attempt to crystallise music’s past, present and future; its themes are utopian and its influences manifold: psychedelia, country, folk, modern jazz, classical, space-rock, Brill Building pop. “It’s got everything,” says McGuinn. “We were into new areas of creativity, blending genres and exploring types of music that we hadn’t done before.” “Change Is Now” – the very last song Hillman, Crosby and McGuinn recorded together in the 1960s – speaks of both social foment and the desire to dissolve all musical boundaries: “*Change is now, things that seemed to be solid are not.*” The Byrds, as it turned out, were no exception.

HAVING WEATHERED THE departure of Gene Clark and media moralising over perceived drug references in “Eight Miles High”, the Byrds had returned in February 1967 with the more experimental *Younger Than Yesterday*. Its lead



single, "So You Want To Be A Rock'n' Roll Star", made explicit a growing weariness with their niche as Dylan-covering jingle-janglers. Soaking up everything from John Coltrane to electronic music to *Revolver*, The Byrds had become immersed in the West Coast counter-culture, some more publicly than others. When they appeared at the Monterey Pop Festival on June 17, Crosby – a natural exhibitionist – raved about LSD and the assassination of JFK while his bandmates tuned up and stared at their boots. The following night, Crosby appeared onstage with Buffalo Springfield, filling in for the departed Neil Young. It was a very public demonstration of his shifting loyalties towards Springfield's Stephen Stills.

The Other Woman in the *Notorious* soap opera, Stills was already wooing an unsatisfied and increasingly bored Crosby away from the family unit. "I remember hanging out at Stephen's house," says McGuinn. "He started playing some blues riffs then turned to me and said, 'Can you do that?' I said, 'That's not really my style, man.' He turned to David and said, 'See!' It was like, 'He's not as good a guitar player as I am so you don't want to work with him.' Stills was trying to win Crosby away from us, poisoning his mind." As Crosby tells *Uncut* today: "Stills was a better writer and much better player and singer than Roger – and he wanted to sing with me, whereas by then, they didn't."

The discord deepened during sessions for a new single

"DAVID WAS ON A DIFFERENT WAVELENGTH, AND IT BECAME IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK WITH HIM"

CHRIS HILLMAN



The Byrds onstage at Monterey, 1967: (l-r) guest musician Hugh Masekela on trumpet, Hillman, Crosby, Clarke (out of view) and McGuinn

ACID CASUAL



"WITNESSES HAVE BEEN KILLED!"

David Crosby's Monterey rant...

Over three days in June 1967, the big beasts of '60s music gathered at Monterey Fairground in California. The concert brought Jimi Hendrix, The Who and Janis Joplin to widespread prominence, as well as introducing Otis Redding to a mass white audience. The Byrds' rather ragged seven-song set on the Saturday night was most notable for Crosby's grandstanding rants about the JFK assassination – "He was not killed by one man! Stories have been suppressed! Witnesses have been killed!"

– and the benefits of giving LSD to "all the statesmen and politicians in the world". His bandmates weren't overly enthused. "David was very outspoken at Monterey," says McGuinn. "I didn't disagree with what he said necessarily, but he was just trying to be hip and I resented it. It was an arrogant attitude on his part that was a real put-off and was hard to work with." The following night, Crosby played with Buffalo Springfield, opening a new chapter in his career and the life of The Byrds.



Crosby onstage at Monterey with Buffalo Springfield's Stephen Stills and Richie Furay, 1967

on June 14 and June 21, either side of Monterey. A great surge of romantic angst, Crosby's sublime "Lady Friend" is packed with power and promise, yet it was "where we lost David", admits Hillman. "That was a good song, but he went back in the studio and didn't tell us, and replaced all the voices and made a mess of it. That was where it was starting to fall apart. We weren't working together."

The single stiffed, ensuring that it was a thoroughly discontented band who entered Columbia's Hollywood studios on July 30 with house producer Gary Usher and Simon & Garfunkel engineer Roy Halee. "I recall dissension in the group," says Halee. "Egos, man. Tension. It wasn't a lot of fun being there. Not much laughter or enjoyment." The sacking of manager Jim Dickson in late June was a further factor in turning The Byrds, as Hillman says, into "a rudderless boat".

Yet despite the fact that, according to Crosby, "by the time we had started *Notorious* we were not doing well with each other at all," all but one of the nine original tracks on the album are co-writes, the exception being Hillman's "Natural Harmony". "The normal way was one person had an idea and we'd all gather around and do that," says Hillman. "I remember 'Draft Morning' was written when we were in Hawaii together."

A deceptively becalmed lament for a kid forced to "leave my bed to kill instead", "Draft Morning" was the first track recorded for *Notorious*. They worked on it for four days, the longest unbroken stretch of recording on the album. "As usual we did one song at a time, because we were going out on the road and coming back," says Hillman. They returned in mid-August to cut "Dolphin Smile" and "Tribal Gathering", a frantic, finger-snappin' contrapuntal ode to the communal hippy idyll anchored by a crackling heavy rock interlude.

Both the style and subject matter of the new songs was striking. They espoused a super-idealistic vision of free love, youthful promise, world peace, ecological harmony and a kind of cosmic oneness that embraced alien life. The music, meanwhile, merged the modernist sound of the Moog synthesiser with traditional American forms. Influenced by Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck, several songs were in exotic time signatures. The complex nature of the music exacerbated existing tensions to the point where a full-blown shouting match erupted during "Dolphin Smile". "Michael couldn't get the song right and David is just making him feel worse," recalls Hillman. "At one point Michael said, 'I'm just doing this for the money.' I said, 'Well, we're not going to make any money if you play like that!' He was a talented musician but he was lazy." Clarke quit, replaced on the album by Wrecking Crew drummers Jim Gordon and Hal Blaine.

Crosby was also feeling the heat. Three days after Clarke's departure, on August 17 The Byrds recorded "Triad", a daring song of sexual liberation in which Crosby outlines to a female friend the joys of a threesome. Disliking both the song and the sentiment, Hillman and McGuinn vetoed its inclusion on

"IT WAS A BIT OF A STICKING POINT..."

The saga of "Triad": Crosby's naughty song...

► Crosby's slinky, sexually unabashed song symbolised the polarisation of The Byrds by the summer of '67. A depiction of the free love ethos which Crosby was putting into practice, it dangles the delights of a ménage à trois in front of two girlfriends: "I don't really see/Why can't we go on as three..." The Byrds recorded it for *Notorious*, but McGuinn "was in this spiritual exercise at the time and I didn't think that was a good thing to put out. The subject matter was a bit of a sticking point." Hillman disagrees that it was vetoed "on a moral basis. It just wasn't a good song and it didn't fit into where we were going." Crosby laughs at the notion that "Triad" was intended to be culturally progressive. "Ha, no! I just thought it was mine and good and I loved singing it." He passed it over to Jefferson Airplane for *Crown Of Creation* (1968). CSNY released a live version on *4 Way Street* (1971), but it wasn't until the 1987 rarities set, *Never Before*, that the Byrds version was officially released. It appeared as a bonus track on the '97 reissue of *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*.

DON HUNSTEIN/SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT; HENRY DILTZ/CORBIS



Soon to split: (l-r) McGuinn, Clarke, Hillman and Crosby

the album, infuriating Crosby. Significantly, "Triad" was recorded at the same time as two Goffin & King songs – "Wasn't Born To Follow" and "Goin' Back" – entered the picture. "I think [after 'Lady Friend'] there was pressure from the record company for hits, and Gary Usher as staff producer probably brought those songs around," says McGuinn. "I certainly didn't seek out Goffin & King material, it just showed up in the studio. They were probably a good idea as far as pop hits go, but maybe it would have been more of a Byrds album with all Byrds material."

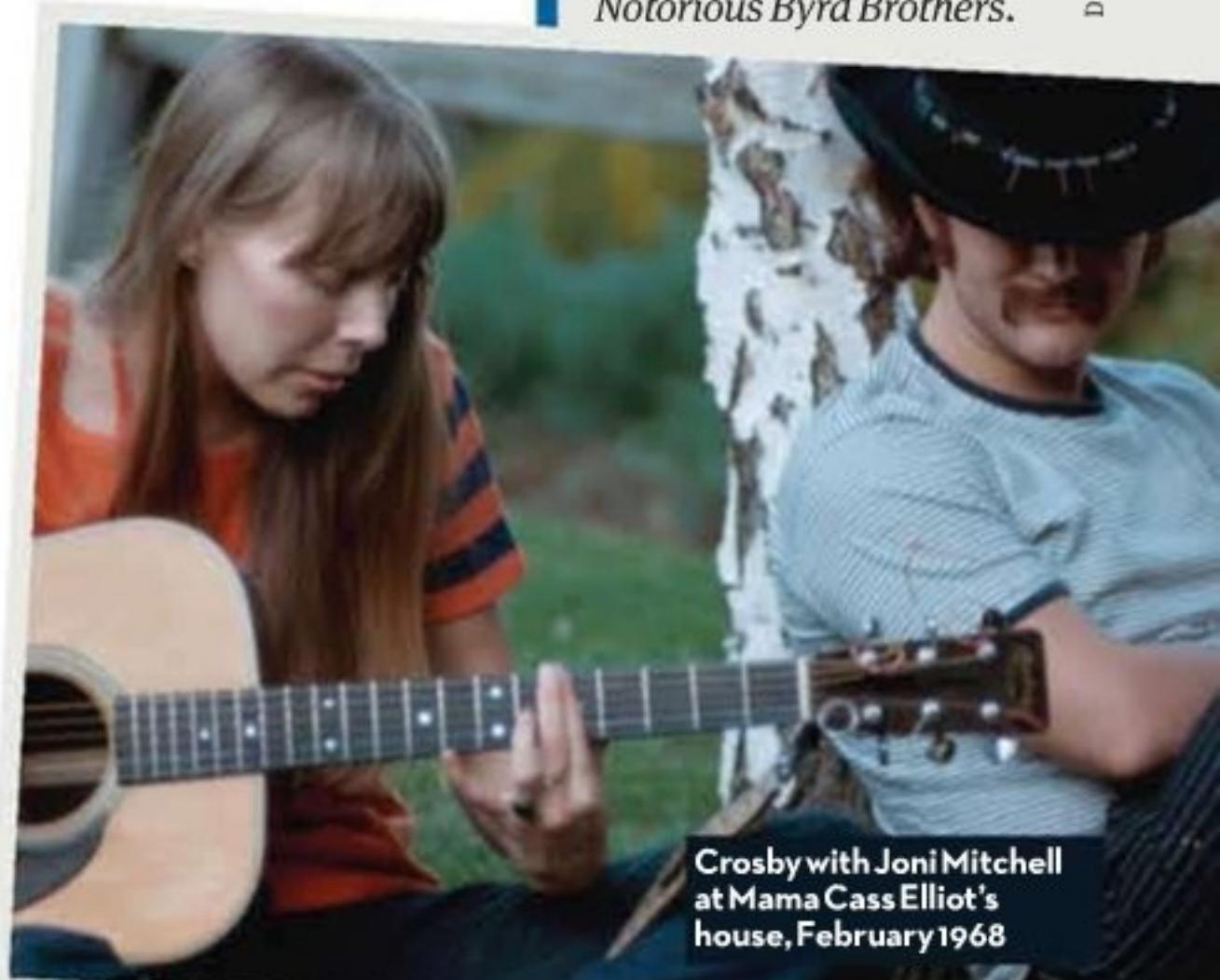
Crosby certainly thought so. He objected to recording "Brill Building crap" in favour of his own material and refused to play when the band attempted "Goin' Back" on August 29. McGuinn, normally so self-contained and undemonstrative, ranted and raved and told him to leave. Crosby grabbed his hat and stormed out. A fundamental clash of personalities, musical styles and principles had finally come to the boil. "I love David, but he had just lost interest," says Hillman. "He stopped coming to rehearsals, he wasn't participating. He was drifting away. He was running around with Stills and Buffalo Springfield. He was on a different wavelength and it became impossible to work with him. In all honesty I don't think he'd deny that."

"David was difficult to get along with," says McGuinn. "Even in CSN, I think they have separate buses! But I kind of regret firing him. We did it impulsively. It probably wasn't the best thing to do careerwise. We gave him \$50,000 and he bought a boat, went down to Miami and ran into Joni Mitchell, got together with Stephen and Graham [Nash] and became a superstar. So we did him a favour!"

BILL FLEMING OF The Rose Garden, an LA folk-rock band who had been working with Gene Clark, was in Columbia Studios the night Clark was drafted back into The Byrds as Crosby's replacement. "Gene was really up," says Fleming. "He couldn't wait to show us this Native American knife that Chris had given him that night as a welcome back gift. It was all happiness."

Fleming recalls that Clark "was there, but not recording". Exactly what he contributed when the *Notorious* sessions resumed in early October remains a matter of conjecture. Some sources suggest he sang backing vocals on "Goin' Back" and "Space Odyssey". If so, you can't easily identify him. According to McGuinn "he didn't really contribute to the record. I can't remember if he sang or played. I'm not saying he didn't, I just don't recall." However, McGuinn clearly remembers writing "Get To You" with Clark "up at my house. Somehow Hillman got credit for that song because of a clerical error which nobody ever contested."

That Hillman's recollections of Clark's second stint in the band are even less clear is hardly surprising. Clark's return lasted barely three weeks, his exit



Crosby with Joni Mitchell at Mama Cass Elliot's house, February 1968



The Byrds live at Monterey in 1967, and left, in 1966, following Gene Clark's departure

→ hastened by the fear of flying that had forced him to quit The Byrds 18 months earlier. "We went on the road with Gene but he freaked out again and had to go home on the train," says McGuinn. The singer was also increasingly frazzled. On October 22, The Byrds performed "Mr Spaceman" on the Smothers Brothers' show with Clark, "but he wasn't really there," says McGuinn. "He was spaced out. Zombie-fied."

Hillman and McGuinn completed the record using session musicians. Joining drummers Blaine and Gordon were pedal steel player "Red" Rhodes and Clarence White, who had played guitar on *Younger Than Yesterday*. Wrecking Crew guitarist James Burton is also credited on *Notorious*, although nobody can remember him playing on it either. Keyboardist Barry Goldberg recalls the sessions as "pretty chaotic to say the least. No-one knew what Byrds member was going to show up and nobody knew who was who. You felt that things were coming in and out, there wasn't really any band spirit."

Both Hillman and McGuinn credit Usher for not only holding the sessions together, but helping to push the studio to its limits. "Gary was a bit of a kook who loved to experiment," says Halee. "A very adventurous, creative kind of guy." *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* is alive with sonic adventure: horns crash against synthesisers, pedal steel meets string quartets. "Space Odyssey" is a cosmic madrigal, both futuristic and ancient. "Moog Raga", an instrumental

"SPEED HELPED YOU TO SING HIGHER, PLAY FASTER. IT REALLY INFLUENCED THE MUSIC"

ROGER McGUINN

outtake, sounds like Ravi Shankar on the moon. Paul Beaver and Bernie Krause, makers of *The Nonesuch Guide To Electronic Music*, came in to help guide McGuinn through the mysteries of the Moog on "Natural Harmony" and "Goin' Back", while Usher was constantly trying to manipulate sound. "Gary was wild about phasing," laughs Halee. "Wild about it!" McGuinn concurs. "He was always thinking up ways to phase shift. You didn't have electronic phase shifting back then, you had to take two tape recorders and slow one down. It was very primitive the way we accomplished some of those effects." Halee remembers mixing songs "with eight mono machines lined up in the hall, each with a different kind of reverb on them."

The desire to innovate was contagious. For his spiralling solo on "Change Is Now", McGuinn "found one of those old plastic battery-operated record players in the trash, took it apart and put the amplifier into a cigar box and attached it to a two-inch walkie-talkie speaker. The thing had such sustain you wouldn't believe, it would go on for about five minutes! That's how I was able to get that almost sitar-like sound."

On "Artificial Energy", the final song recorded on December 5 and 6, Usher created a bright, hard-edged soul sound by throwing sharp brass against a "Taxman" bass line and stabbing organ. "Gary said, 'Just go with it, man, just groove with the changes,'" says Goldberg. "It was super-



Paul Beaver and his Moog

some cables in, do the session and walk out. On *Notorious* we ran it through a filter and processed the sound. Roger had a genuine interest in

electronics, but it was mostly the engineers who were working with this stuff. They understood what was going on!"

ELECTRO ODYSSEY

IN THE MOOG

How The Byrds became pioneering lords of the synth...

► In June 1967, jazz musician Paul Beaver and former Weaver Bernie Krause set up a booth at the Monterey Pop Festival to promote their electronic synthesiser, one of the first made by Bob Moog. Roger

McGuinn was fascinated. "We'd seen it at Monterey and I bought one right after I got back to LA and started using it in on *Notorious*. It was first time anyone I knew had used the Moog. I thought 'Space Odyssey' sounded really good with those effects on it. It's melodically really interesting and has some textures you wouldn't get

any other way." After Monterey, Krause & Beaver introduced (and sold) the instrument to other artists, including The Monkees, The Doors, George Harrison and Simon & Garfunkel. Due to the complexity of the instrument, they were usually booked to play it themselves. "We were working 80 hours a week," says Krause. "We'd patch

WE'LL MEET AGAIN

"IT DIDN'T REALLY WORK OUT..."

The slight return of Gene Clark

► Clark's return to the Byrds fold in 1967 has always seemed slightly mysterious. Though he'd released a solo LP after his initial departure from the band and was still writing and performing, he appears to have been a



Briefly reunited with Gene Clark (left) in 1967

psychedelic, nothing you'd ever expect from The Byrds." A darkly comic tale of amphetamine psychosis, "Artificial Energy" is an anti-drug song written under the influence of drugs. "The irony is we were on speed when we wrote and performed it," says McGuinn. "We were always smoking pot, with speed and alcohol on top. Speed was an interesting tool. It gave you more energy, more sustain, you could sing higher and longer, play faster. It really influenced the music, probably more so than LSD and marijuana." Despite that, Hillman maintains "we were quite well behaved in the studio. McGuinn and I would tend to be on time, get down and do the job. We were prepared."

Perhaps "Old John Robertson" – a tribute to the silent film director – best captures the mix of old and new sounds, playfulness and ambition, which runs through the record. A mere 110 seconds long, it's copiously phased and features a baroque middle section in which a string quartet hijacks the spry country two-step. "In hindsight, I wish we hadn't put that stupid string quartet in the middle, 'cos it makes no sense at all," says Hillman. "But that's the nature of that album. It goes to some oddball places! And that's OK."

THE NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHERS was released on January 15, 1968. On the album cover a horse takes the place of David Crosby, a message as blunt as the music inside is light and lithe. Almost 45 years later Crosby remains brusquely dismissive of the album's qualities – "I couldn't care less" – although "being older and wiser now" he does acknowledge more enduring regrets. "With all three of us alive and still very good at what we do, I would happily fly wingman to Roger with Chris, with whom I am friends, and make some more music. Roger has said repeatedly – because I have asked him repeatedly – that he doesn't want to do that. I'm sorry he doesn't. As for *Notorious*, it was, for me, obviously much better than I left." Adds Hillman wryly, "Of course, David never let us forget that the greatest thing that ever happened to him was being fired, because he got together with Graham and Stephen and – he used to say this

– 'made 10 times the amount of money you guys did!' I would say that's not really what counts. It never was."

It's just as well. *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* proved conclusively that The Byrds' days as a money-spinning chart band were over. The album barely scraped into the US Top 50, while "Goin' Back" fared even worse as a single than "Lady Friend". Yet its stature has grown with time. "That album came out of rubble, out of absolute chaos, but something really amazing emerged at the end of that," says Hillman. "To this day people come up and say that it's one of their favourite records."

A landmark release in isolation, *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* was also a springboard to further peaks. Within weeks of finishing it The Byrds had recruited Gram Parsons and Clarence White; within three months they had released "You Ain't Going Nowhere", the first glimpse of *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*'s pioneering country-rock sound. That record, however, had been started with

very different intentions. "I had this idea of doing a chronological album, going from 1100 to 2100," says McGuinn. "Starting with early music and baroque, going into Appalachian, rockabilly, country, jazz, rock and roll, and ending with space music. I couldn't get anybody to go along with me so I did *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* instead." In fact, on *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, The Byrds had already got far closer to that heady ideal than McGuinn may have realised. As close, perhaps, as any band. ☀

"AS FOR THE NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHERS, IT WAS, FOR ME, OBVIOUSLY MUCH BETTER THAT I LEFT..."
DAVID CROSBY

"We had The Beatles as our benchmark..."
McGuinn, Crosby, Hillman, J Mascis, Bobby Gillespie, Van Dyke Parks, Emmylou & more on...
THE 20 GREATEST BYRDS SONGS

ghostly presence during the *Notorious* sessions. Rose Garden's Bill Fleming confirms Clark was in the control room for the recording of "Goin' Back", but the "only person I saw on the other side of the glass was McGuinn. Gene and Hillman weren't in the studio. It looked to me like the song was already done." Says Hillman: "I've seen 'Get To You' credited to Gene Clark, but either Roger wrote it or we wrote it together. I know I had a part in that song but I don't know that Gene did. He came back briefly but it didn't work out." Drugs and alcohol, which plagued Clark in later life and eventually killed him, were already taking a toll. "The Smothers Brothers show is on YouTube, and you can see he was burned out," says McGuinn. Clark made more of an impression when he reunited with all five original members on *Byrds* (1973) and with McGuinn and Hillman in the late '70s. He appeared with The Byrds at their induction to the Hall Of Fame in '91 (above), months before his death.

So you wanna be a rock'n'roll star..?

THE BYRDS' 20 GREATEST TRACKS

INTRODUCTION BY ROGER McGUINN

LOOKING BACK, YOU can see there were several main stages of Byrds music. We started out with the folky thing, mixing Dylan and Pete Seeger with The Beatles, then we dabbled in a bit of jazz fusion with "Eight Miles High", which was misconstrued as psychedelic. It wasn't meant to be, but it was branded that way. Then we did things that were purposefully psychedelic, like "Artificial Energy", and then we got into country with *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*.

"It was always organic, it wasn't a conscious effort at any point. The only conscious effort was to get away from the labels the press kept putting on us. Like, 'Let's get out of folk-rock and do something else', which is why we got into John Coltrane. We wanted to extend our territory.

"Having said that, that early folk-rock sound is very pleasant, with the harmonies and jangling guitars. I was already a 12-string player, I'd been playing it since the late '50s, and then we saw The Beatles with a Rickenbacker in *A Hard Day's Night*. It was a different sound than you could get with an acoustic, so I had to get one of those! In the studio we put compression on it and it stretched out the sound, it made it sustain a good



long time. Suddenly it really stuck out in the mix.

"It's a good sound. I still like to listen to it, and it caught on! Many other people have used it in their work. We got a hit with 'Mr Tambourine Man' and we thought, 'Why mess with success?', but by the third album it was getting tired and we wanted to stretch out and see what else we could do. We decided to do more of our own material. It was always a little difficult politically because we could never do it quite evenly, and it was usually the producer who decided which songs ended up on the record. David Crosby always felt he was unfairly treated, that he didn't get enough songs on the albums.

"It was hard to get an even share but the mixture worked. Crosby brought the jazz influence, Chris Hillman and later Gram Parsons brought the country, and I was coming from folk, as was Gene Clark.

Michael Clarke didn't have that much influence on the direction, though at one point he declared we should be a blues band like The Rolling Stones! Gram was the main influence on doing an entire album of country on *Sweetheart....* I wanted to do some country but not all of it. I wanted to make a two-record chronology of the history of music.

"I'm grateful we decided to do the songs we did instead of bubblegum pop hits. We went for album-orientated quality. We had The Beatles as a benchmark, which made us very productive. I love all the stages of The Byrds. I can't say I have a favourite. I love them all for different reasons."

20 BALLAD OF EASY RIDER

From *Ballad Of Easy Rider* (NOVEMBER 1969)
Single October 1969. Highest US chart position: 65

Gifted the opening couplet by Dylan, McGuinn pens a brief, beautiful sundown song for the hippy idyll. His solo version played over the film credits, but the full Byrds recording is the classic.

IAN McNABB: When I first got into The Byrds in the early '80s, the consensus was that they were cool until the original lineup dissipated, and then they became less relevant. *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* was seen as a complete left turn. They'd turned into a country band, and in the early '80s that was a lot less cool than it is now! After that, it was like they were dismissed as boring old hippies. It was also hard to get all their



albums. So I didn't hear "Ballad Of Easy Rider" until much later, and I was also quite late coming to the film. I eventually tracked it down on VHS, it cost about 20 quid. Then I heard that song. It plays right at the end of the film but it's not the final recorded Byrds version. It's just McGuinn with Gene Parsons on harmonica. Hearing it on the film put the hook in me to check out the album, and that was the first time I heard the song in its full form. It's really only a minute and a half long, they edited it to make it longer. They stuck the first verse on again at the end and you really can hear it! It has McGuinn's finger-picking, beautiful strings, and no bass. It also sounds like they've looped the drum track by sticking various pieces of tape together. It's a great lyric. To me, it seems to sum up the whole ethos of the late '60s hippy dream in so few words and such a small, perfect package. It's a call to simpler things.

Natural harmony: The Byrds put down vocals for *Turn! Turn! Turn!* at Columbia Records Studios, Hollywood, California, September 1965

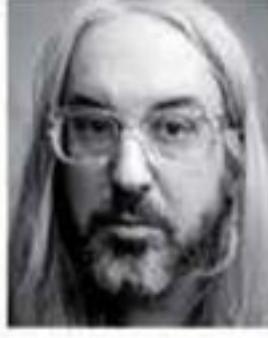


19 IF YOU'RE GONE

From the album *Turn! Turn! Turn!*

(DECEMBER 1965)

A lovelorn missive from master songwriter Gene Clark, with McGuinn's pipe-like drone adding to the air of rich melancholy.



J MASCIS, Dinosaur Jr.: I come back to this a lot. I love the way Gene Clark's singing is really heartfelt. When I was younger, I thought The Byrds were too wimpy for me, but I got into them in my late twenties. Maybe I got into them through the back door via Gram Parsons, who I was really into, first of all. Dinosaur Jr even did a cover of "I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better" on an early Byrds tribute record, though I still wasn't that into them then. I went to see the reformed Buffalo Springfield last year and they reminded me of the fact that The Byrds were kings of the hill and the Springfield always seemed to be trying to push them out of the way. The whole song is pretty cool. It's got a great guitar line from McGuinn and the backing vocals are fantastic. Most of all, it shows Gene Clark at his best. I really appreciate his skill as a singer. The Byrds are what got me into Rickenbackers. It's the only 12-string sound to aim for. If it doesn't sound like The Byrds... all other electric 12-strings sound wrong.

18 WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

From *Fifth Dimension* (JULY 1966)

A simple, harmony-rich reading of the British trad standard, based on Robert Tannahill's 18th-Century Scottish folk ballad, "The Braes Of Balquhidder".



SIMONE FELICE: My initiation to this treasure came not first from The Byrds, but from Sandy Denny, rest her soul. Though, like any true folk tune, it lives on the wind, for all to own, for all to whistle. What I find unique about The Byrds' rendition is the way they so naturally infuse their



"Everyone goes on about Sgt Pepper, but Notorious... destroys it"

BOBBY GILLESPIE



signature California harmonies and upbeat drum feel, offering a slightly joyous, dreamy take on such an old, sad, weather-beaten song. One of my favourite bits about their version is the instrumental break where they all hum the vocal line, driving it home, seducing us to hum along, know the melody, share the melody. It is this sense of reverence for what's come before, this gentle messenger's spirit, that I admire most about the many gifts The Byrds left us. Whether it was "Wild Mountain Thyme", "Turn! Turn! Turn!", "Set You Free This Time" or "Mr Tambourine Man", it wasn't my song, your song, his song, her song. It was our songs. Go forth, young one, go tell it on the mountain.

17 WHY?

From *Younger Than Yesterday*

(FEBRUARY 1967)

B-side of "Eight Miles High", March 1966. UK chart: 24. US chart: 14

Driven by Crosby's growing fascination with the music of Ravi Shankar, and propelled by McGuinn's sitar-like drone, this is a landmark of psychedelic raga-rock.



BOBBY GILLESPIE: There are three different versions of this song. I love the version that's on the B-side of "Eight Miles High". That version is raga-rock at its best, with McGuinn's guitar sounding like pure "White Light/White Heat". It's a scorching solo, totally out there. I think it's only about three chords, but it's always been a favourite of mine. The whole sound of The Byrds is what made them special. Yes, the 12-string is incredible, but the harmonies are out of this world. Earlier today I was listening to *Preflyte*, which is the album of demos, and even on there the harmonies are amazing. Listen to what Crosby and Clark are doing and it's so beautiful. You can hear what their influences are – but at the same time it's something completely new.

I'm a Byrds fanatic, really. I love the sound; it's really joyous, euphoric music, and the whole





attitude of the band. Everyone always goes on about *Sgt Pepper*, but *Notorious...* destroys it. And the performances on *Fifth Dimension*, especially, are outstanding. It's a very intense

record, almost like The Velvet Underground with songs like "I See You" and "Eight Miles High". It's pretty primitive, as well.

16 DOLPHIN'S SMILE

From The Notorious Byrd Brothers (JAN 1968)
A calm, blissed-out, hugely inventive marriage of Crosby's timeless natural imagery and McGuinn's modern palette of psychedelic guitar sounds.

NICK POWER, The Coral:

"Dolphin's Smile" sounds like music no one had ever heard before. It's complex, I don't even know what the timing is, but like a lot of my favourite Byrds tunes you don't notice how it moves. It just sort of... glides. Everything they do seems effortless. You listen and think, I could do that – and you can't! I love the imagery on this song. It's pure. It never comes across as the bad, naff side of hippy-dom. I don't even think it's an idealistic thing, it just feeds your imagination. As soon as you hear that tune – or pretty much anything off the *Notorious Byrd Brothers* album – it conjures up so many colours and images. It's just unbelievable, and the vocals are stunning. They are still underrated, I think. Going from "Mr Tambourine Man" to *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* in four years is just astonishing.

15 EVERYBODY'S BEEN BURNED

From Younger Than Yesterday (FEBRUARY 1967)
B-side of "So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star", January 1967. US chart: 29

Crosby's jazz-scented rumination on a failed love affair actually dated from his early days on the LA folk circuit, before finally making it onto The Byrds' fourth album in electrified form.



LOUBARLOW, Dinosaur Jr/

Sebadoh: I'd always known about The Byrds, but when my wife and I met they became the soundtrack for our young love. "Everybody's Been Burned" is one of those songs that made my cry, which I can't say about many songs. We split up for a while and she became engaged to somebody else. There was this huge upheaval and I was writing all these songs on my own, and I started playing that song because it was so important to her and I. It had a very calming effect for me, just playing it. Then, when we got back together again, I was working on a record and recorded it for that. Every single word in the song meant something to me, so I thought it was ideal. The original is so incredible musically, you can't imitate it. It's impossible to describe that loose sound the early Byrds had. They were just coming out of this period at the Beatlesque pop end of things and were incorporating this undercurrent of jazz into the music. I thought, "Yeah, I'm gonna butcher it, musically, because lyrically I believe in it so much." When I was in Dinosaur Jr, J [Mascis] was always bad-mouthing The Byrds: "They're the worst, they're so wimpy." But I'd be defending them: "No, they're so beautiful!"



Sitar heroes: McGuinn and Crosby at a press conference held for the release of "Eight Miles High", March 1966

HORSES & BYRDS

"THEY COME FROM A SPECIAL PLACE..."

PATTI SMITH on her love for all things Byrdsian

T WAS FUNNY, because I was such a Bob Dylan fan and then The Byrds came out and did a few Dylan songs and at the time I wasn't really very attracted to that. Then I heard "Eight Miles High" and it was, like, 'Oh, mystical.' But the song that really did it for me was "So You Want To Be A

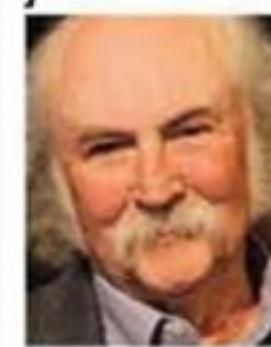


Rock'n'Roll Star". That song was unique in its time, with its sarcastic language and that live energy. Something about that song clicked something in me. To this day I don't really understand it, because I was just a 20-year-old girl working in a bookstore, but it filled me with a sense of future – my own future. Sure enough, I wound up recording it, singing it onstage, ripping off my guitar strings to it! The Byrds have a magic quality, I've come to really recognise that. They came from a special place.

14 TRIAD

From the compilation Never Before (DECEMBER 1987)

"Why can't we go on as three?" asks Crosby in this gorgeous ode to the inclusive pleasures of '60s free love. Written in 1967 during the sessions for *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, the song, amazingly, failed to make the final cut.



DAVID CROSBY: "Triad" was just a hippy dream kind of thing. The time around "Triad" was a great time to be alive. You have to remember that this was after the invention of birth control and before the onslaught of AIDS. So

we were in this pocket in history where we could just 'do it' a lot. A situation like "Triad" was what it was. It happened and it was a great pleasure. I know a lot of people it happened to and I had it happen to me several times. Some of those relationships were almost stable, lasted quite a while and were really wonderful. I don't think there are any rules about how you can love somebody. There are lots of possibilities. We knew it wasn't a stable, let's-have-kids kind of relationship, but it was fun. At that point we were starting to explore all kinds of answers. There were people living in different groups: threes, fours, tens, twenties. As time passes, stuff gets aggrandised and takes on a kind of legendary status. But those of us who were there know it for what it was.



13 TRIBAL GATHERING

From The Notorious Byrd Brothers (JAN 1968)

Written by David Crosby and Chris Hillman, this feverish jazz-rock trip captures the communal hippy ideal at its Utopian peak.



MARK GARDENER, Ride: I'm a bit of a Byrds freak. My uncle turned me on to them when I was about nine years old. I got into the hits and then slowly I found my way into *Notorious Byrd Brothers*, which is my favourite album. In my darker, more tripped-out days, I remember coming home with a mate, hallucinating, and listening to that album from start to finish. "Tribal Gathering" is amazing. Where is that coming from? It's so hard to



The Byrds after Gene Clark's departure, July 1966: (l-r) Hillman, Crosby, Clarke [front], McGuinn

place, it's such a strange track. What were they on when they wrote it? How do you get a time signature like that? They were such a strong writing force, individually and collectively, and there was always something explorative about what they were doing as a unit. The Byrds were on that tightrope, they could have fallen to one side and been a bit fey, but they never did. They always kept it cool and interesting. You felt they were on the inside of the counter-culture, they were qualified to write and sing about it. Much more than The Beatles, in a way. I would definitely have enjoyed myself at some of Crosby's parties! Hallucinogenics and lots of beautiful girls with flowers dancing around? I could definitely have had a piece of that. In fact, I think I tried to do my own version of a Tribal Gathering in my early Glastonburys... This song didn't just influence my ears – it influenced my philosophy on life for a while. I'm a hippy at heart, and I guess that comes from their music.

12 LADY FRIEND

Single July, 1967. US chart: 82

The only Byrds' A-side to be written solely by Crosby, who also oversaw the lengthy recording of the song and replaced his bandmates' backing vocals with his own.



BRENT RADEMAKER, Beachwood Sparks: I think it's so ahead of its time with the horns. Think of all the stuff that came after, Chicago and Blood, Sweat & Tears, white rock psychedelia, that uses horns. That song was all Crosby – he was fighting for that song to be big and it didn't even make it on an album. It was on a single but it was a flop. That says a lot about a song as well, the circumstances in which it was written. Because when you're in a band that has such different writers, if you ever thought enough of a song to fight for it knowing that you're gonna get totally ridiculed by the other guys – not because the song's bad, but just because of how passionate you might be about a song – that says a lot about it. My God, the original mix is crazy sounding. There's so much reverb – it's sounds like Flying Saucer Attack or something! It's pretty heavy for The Byrds, too. And it's so beautiful – the words... if you use words in a song to equate a girl or love or a feeling or emotion, but you're using the waves of the ocean, it's killer – but it doesn't sound anything like what you think surf rock is. I could talk forever about this.

IN BOB WE TRUST

PLAY A SONG FOR ME...

The Byrds' first single was a Dylan cover, and they would continually return to record his songs. Here's their 10 best Bob covers...

Mr Tambourine Man

Mr Tambourine Man (1965)

Put the second verse between choruses, add 12-string, a beat, harmonies, and history is made.

All I Really Want To Do

Mr Tambourine Man (1965)

Major restructuring adds a Beatlesy bridge and a sublime descending chorus melody.

Chimes Of Freedom

Mr Tambourine Man (1965)

The crisp rhythm and bright jangle accentuate Dylan's lightning-struck poetry.

Lay Down Your Weary Tune

Turn! Turn! Turn! (1965)

The Byrds' slow-rolling majesty makes this mystical folk tune almost hymn-like.

My Back Pages

Younger Than Yesterday (1967)

McGuinn and Crosby's voices lift Dylan's anthem of creative liberation to euphoric heights.

You Ain't Goin' Nowhere

Sweetheart Of The Rodeo (1968)

Enter Gram on a glorious version of Dylan's then-unreleased Basement track, kickstarting country-rock.

Nothing Was Delivered

Sweetheart Of The Rodeo (1968)

A deft clip-clop through weird America, with honky-tonk piano and a thumping chorus.

Positively 4th Street

Untitled (1970)

Crackling live cut, enhanced by Clarence White's guitar, sounding like pedal steel.

Just Like A Woman

Byrdmaniax (1971)

Spare country-gospel outtake, released on the 2000 reissue.

Paths Of Victory

The Byrds boxset (1990)

Dylan's '63 cast-off recorded by a reunited McGuinn, Crosby and Hillman in vibrant style in 1990.

GRAEME THOMSON

11 WASN'T BORN TO FOLLOW

From *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* (JAN 1968)

The Byrds deliver Goffin & King's transcendent hymn to wind-blown independence to the counter-culture, via an airing in *Easy Rider*.



SIMON NICOL, Fairport Convention

Convention: I had been an avid consumer of each new Byrds LP as it appeared, delighted by the speedy change of flavour as members dropped away and new players were absorbed.

"Wasn't Born To Follow" is a Brill Building song which in this arrangement is a perfect frozen moment of free-spirited hippy ideals. Which is why it sat so well in the soundtrack of *Easy Rider*. Hearing it now takes me straight back to fringed cowboy jackets, patchouli and pot hanging in the air, and headband-wearing hippy chicks in cheesecloth dresses as far as the eye could see. And when the almost-Pre-Raphaelite storm of romantic lyrics abates, we get the track phasing and swooping as the lead guitar flies free. If you wanted to know what the '60s were like in three minutes, look no further.

10 MY BACK PAGES

From *Younger Than Yesterday* (FEB 1967)

Single March 1967. US chart: 30

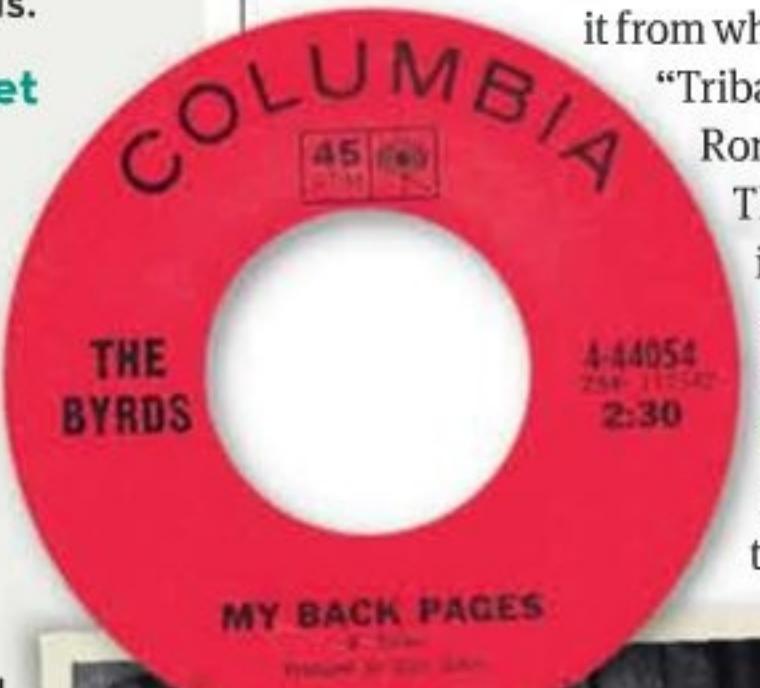
Perhaps The Byrds' finest Dylan cover (despite Crosby's misgivings about it having all the life of "a four-day-old mackerel"), distinguished by McGuinn's great Rickenbacker lines.



RICHARD HAWLEY

I first heard "My Back Pages" on The Byrds' *Original Singles, Volume 1*. It's obviously a Dylan song, but they do it in such a way that makes it theirs. I fell in love with The Byrds when I was about 16. It was the harmonies that really drew me in, then the brilliance of the songs themselves and McGuinn's 12-string playing. That's something I've gone back to on this new album of mine [*Standing At The Sky's Edge*], where I've used the 12-string a lot. I remember convincing my nan to buy me a Baldwin Double Six for a hundred quid. And she lent me the money because of The Byrds. That instrument is the one I used on "Baby, You're My Light" [from 2001's *Late Night Final*] and I played it loads on Jarvis' first album. I used to be a serious Byrds nerd. I'm a huge Gene Clark fan, too. People say that "Down In The Woods", one of the tracks on the new album, was nicked from The Stooges. But it's not. I nicked it from where Ron Asheton got it from: "Tribal Gathering" by The Byrds.

Ron Asheton nicked that riff from The Byrds, while McGuinn took it from Bo Diddley, who in turn stole it from Billy Boy Arnold, who nicked it from Charley Patton. So even The Byrds go back to the birth of the blues.



The master and apprentices: The Byrds with Bob Dylan at Ciro's, LA, March 1965

9 MR SPACEMAN

From *Fifth Dimension* (JULY 1966)

Single September 1966. US chart: 36

Bluegrass by way of the Milky Way. McGuinn sends out a welcoming message to astral travellers with this piece of zippy, warm-hearted country.



ROGER MCGUINN: This wasn't about drugs! It's a country song, I guess one of the first rustlings of country music in The Byrds' recordings. After listening to Ringo [Starr] doing the Buck Owens song "Act Naturally" on *Help!*, I thought, OK, The Beatles are doing a little 2/4 country riff here, let's see what I can come up with. Putting a space theme to a country song seemed interesting to me, mixing things up a little bit. I had a quasi-spiritual thing with space, it's about having a bigger picture of what's going in the universe. On some level the song is a joke, but I knew that FM radio waves would continue into space. I thought the song would probably get played on the radio and so there was no harm in putting a message in there. It was tongue in cheek, but it was also, "Hey, if anybody's out there take me for a ride, man!"

8 DRAFT MORNING

From *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* (JAN 1968)

Hillman's undulating bass and Crosby's carefree lyric illustrate the divide between the hippydom of California and the escalating war in Vietnam.



JONATHAN WILSON: I have always loved "Draft Morning": the production, the groove, the dulcet-toned vocals. The melody is gorgeous, but it's the irreverent attitude and anti-war sentiment that holds your interest. The message is being wrapped in this mellow beauty.

I first heard them when I was very young. My dad's band played a few Byrds covers I heard growing up, so I probably knew who Roger McGuinn and David Crosby were before I could speak. When I listen to them, I hear the gap between The Everly Brothers and The Beach Boys, great harmony groups, and the psychedelic era of California bands like Love. I met David Crosby at his 70th birthday party and we sang together for the first time at the No Nukes concert in 2011. There's just something larger than life about David – he lights up a room with his energy. I sang high harmony above Graham Nash on a folk song while Croz was in the wings. I said: "Jesus, man, I can't believe I have to go out in front of 10,000 people and sing above Graham Nash, the greatest high harmony singer in the world." Croz looked at me and said: "I used to, you can fucking do it!" I hit the parts, thank God – he yelled [encouragement] from the side stage. He's a brilliant man and one of the coolest motherfuckers there's ever been in the rock'n'roll game.

7 I'LL FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER

From *Mr Tambourine Man* (JUNE 1965)

B-side of "All I Really Want To Do", June 1965.

UK chart: 4. US chart: 40

A classic that embodies the early Byrds sound: ringing Rickenbacker, tambourine and heady harmonies, with Gene Clark in his imperious pomp.



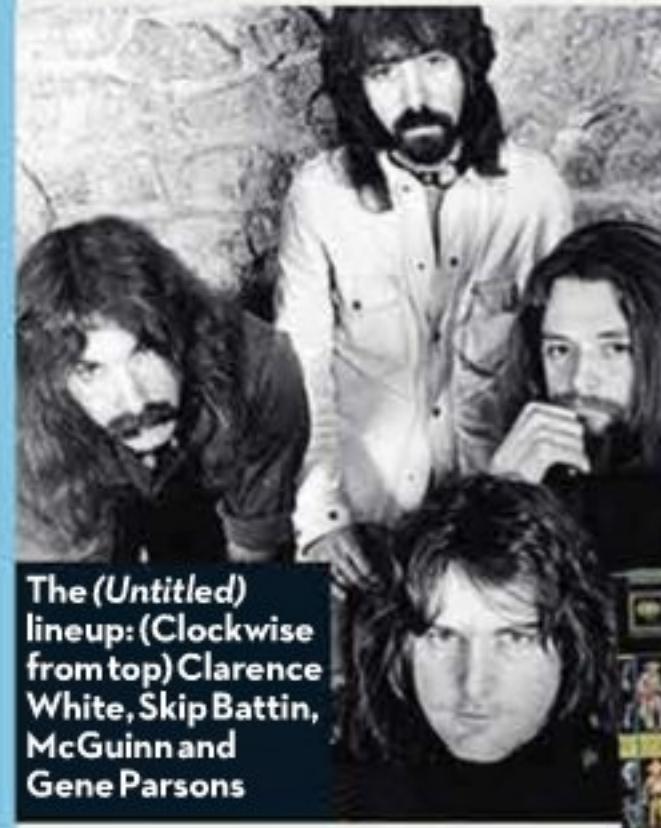
MIKAL CRONIN: The Byrds are one of those bands that just always seemed to be around. You'd hear their songs all the time and find out who performed them later. I really love "I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better". It's simple but has some interesting chord changes and vocal harmonies. I like how the harmonies build as the song progresses. They

TIMES A-CHANGIN'

AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE

The end of The Byrds

BY LATE '68, with Hillman's defection to The Flying Burrito Brothers, McGuinn was the sole original Byrd. He began assembling a new lineup, centred around himself and ex-Nashville West/Kentucky Colonels guitarist Clarence White, though their March '69 album *Dr Byrds & Mr Hyde* sold poorly on release.



The (Untitled) lineup: (Clockwise from top) Clarence White, Skip Battin, McGuinn and Gene Parsons

Despite drafting in original Byrds producer Terry Melcher, follow-up *The Ballad Of Easy Rider* (1969) fared little better, a largely uninspired collection of covers and传统als given a country-rock glaze. By now the group had settled around McGuinn, White, Gene Parsons and Skip Battin, a lineup that remained unchanged for the best part of three years. The quartet's most impressive recording was 1970's double album *(Untitled)*, half recorded live and half new studio songs. Of the latter, McGuinn's "Chestnut Mare" gave The Byrds their first UK Top 20 hit since "All I Really Want To Do" in 1965.

Yet the momentum was soon lost with *Byrdmaniax* (1971), marked by Melcher's bizarre decision to overdub the tunes with horns and a gospel choir, supposedly without the band's consent. The Byrds' final hurrah arrived five months later with *Farther Along*. McGuinn officially wound things up in early '73.

ROB HUGHES

come in for the first time in the first chorus then continue. That's a technique I've tried to incorporate in my own music. It's a good trick to keep structurally simple songs interesting all the way through.

The bassline is great in this track, too. In the third verse it seems that Hillman flubs a little bit. He hangs too long on the A before dropping down to the E with the rest of the band. I love it when bands leave in little 'mistakes' like this in recordings. I imagine them recording it live, the bass flubs in an otherwise great take, they look at each other, smile and keep jammin'.

6 HICKORY WIND

From *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* (AUGUST 1968)

Gram Parsons' signature tune, with country greats Lloyd Green on pedal steel and John Hartford on fiddle, was a vivid evocation of Southern life, juxtaposed with the spiritual bankruptcy of wealth.



EMMYLOU HARRIS: Working with Gram Parsons made me stop wanting to be a folk singer and get into country music. I suppose I was moving toward that when we were working together. But with his death, I just felt I needed to continue doing whatever it was we were doing. It was still early on and I was finding my way. Fortunately, I hooked up with some great people who shepherded me through it. "Hickory Wind" is one of Gram's most important songs, certainly one of the saddest and most

beautiful. He was a country boy and that longing was a real deep part of that. You can hear it in even his most cryptic writing. *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* is very important. Unfortunately, you don't hear him on it unless you get the versions on the boxset, but he's all over that record. He and Chris [Hillman] are the reasons that record happened.

I came to an appreciation of that album late – because I'd been right to the well with Gram – but it changed a lot of things. So much came as a result of that record. And the songs are stunning. It was so far ahead of its time.

5 5D (FIFTH DIMENSION)

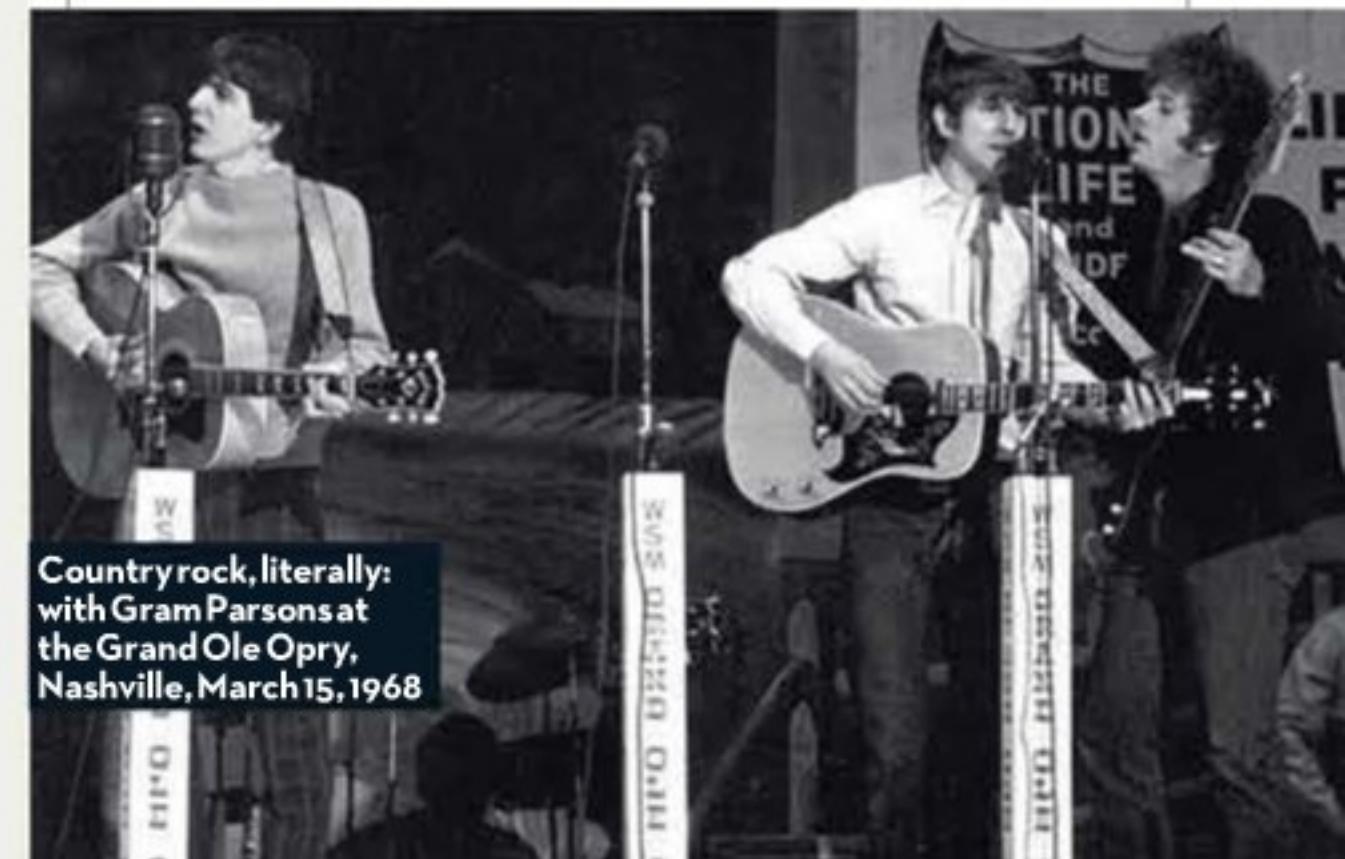
From *Fifth Dimension* (JULY 1966)

Single June 1966. US chart: 44

After Gene Clark's departure, McGuinn's musing on the infinite beyond was augmented by a young Van Dyke Parks on organ, instructed to "think Bach".



VAN DYKE PARKS: These illuminated and self-examined lyrics to "5D" codified, in a capsule, the spiritual quest of 'The '60s'. When I first heard them, having been invited to the studio recording, I remember feeling fortunate to sit in on a session that would reveal that quest, and



Countryrock, literally: with Gram Parsons at the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, March 15, 1968



Lights! Camera! Byrds!
The group on Ready
Steady Go!, August 6, 1965

The Byrds' sober social role in it. It reveals a spiritual awakening unburdened by any religious dogma. Cutting-edge in the counterculture. The 3/4 format was a squaresville retro-recall to the waltz, so out of place post-twist, or any other dance step of the era. That spoke to the author's non-commercial intent, which was something I could admire. [Previous Byrds producer] Terry Melcher and the fellows knew I could play keyboard. Terry asked me if I could play Hammond B3. "In my sleep!" I lied. I'd never even touched one. Yet playing on the date was a benchmark in my life. It also brought me local renown as a studio player and helped me make ends meet. And I'm ever grateful for it. I'd passed up on a hustle to be a Byrd, yet I admired them so. They had the potential to be the great American defenders in the onslaught of the British Invasion. Their first album accomplished that and solidified Southern California as a hotbed of alternatives to the Brits, in their obsession to sell us the Delta Blues.

4 | SO YOU WANT TO BE A ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR

From *Younger Than Yesterday* (FEBRUARY 1967)

Single January 1967. US chart: 29

Loosely aimed at The Monkees, this crackling, hard-edged pop classic takes a satirical swipe at fame. Features Hugh Masekela on trumpet and screams recorded at a Byrds gig in Bournemouth.



TY SEGALL: I grew up in Southern California and The Byrds were one of those bands who were always on the oldies radio station. When I was a little kid I think I heard their version of "Mr Tambourine Man" before I'd even heard Dylan's. It was only later when I understood the importance of that cover and what they were trying to do with it. It seemed like The Byrds were always around with that song, then you start to discover just how great they were as the years go by and you start hearing them properly. The one that always stood out for me was "So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star". I guess the older I



"Putting a space theme to a country song seemed interesting..."
ROGER MCGUINN

get the more I understand people who have success and how there's always a flipside to the positivity of it all. I think The Byrds had that, too. The best kind of music is the kind that puts you in a different place to your everyday life. I'm not the biggest folk music guy, but the reason my ear went towards psychedelia was because it was a form of escapism. The Byrds definitely had that. And I remember hearing "So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star" as a little kid and going: "Yeah. Yeah! I do, I do!" I'd pick up my guitar and try to play it. It's just one of those tunes that's always been a classic Byrds song.

The 12-string guitar, the harmonies and the production elements of The Byrds have all fed into my own songs. The way they did it created this whole different world. That's why I love their music. It's all those elements sewn together.

3 | TURN! TURN! TURN!

From *Turn! Turn! Turn!* (DECEMBER 1965)

Single October 1965. US chart: 1. UK chart: 26

Pete Seeger's evergreen folk tune, itself adapted from the Book of Ecclesiastes, recast as a stirring anthem for the bright new '60s counterculture.



SID GRIFFIN, The Coal Porters:

Never mind my favourite Byrds song, I actually think that "Turn! Turn! Turn!" may be my favourite song, period. One, it's a great song and great performance. The legend is that they went through something like 77 takes over a few days. I don't know whether that's true, but I like the fact that this was a band playing more or less live in the studio to get the song to perfection. Second, if it dates from The Bible, it's arguably the oldest lyric in the history of rock'n'roll.

Third, there's a saying we used to have with the guys from Green On Red: if a song's good you really can't screw it up. "Turn! Turn! Turn!" has been done by Pete Seeger on his banjo, the man who wrote it and put it together, and it's been done by Judy Collins, with – irony of ironies – a young Jim McGuinn on guitar. There's also a very pretty straight folk version by Joan Baez. And it's been done by The Byrds in a

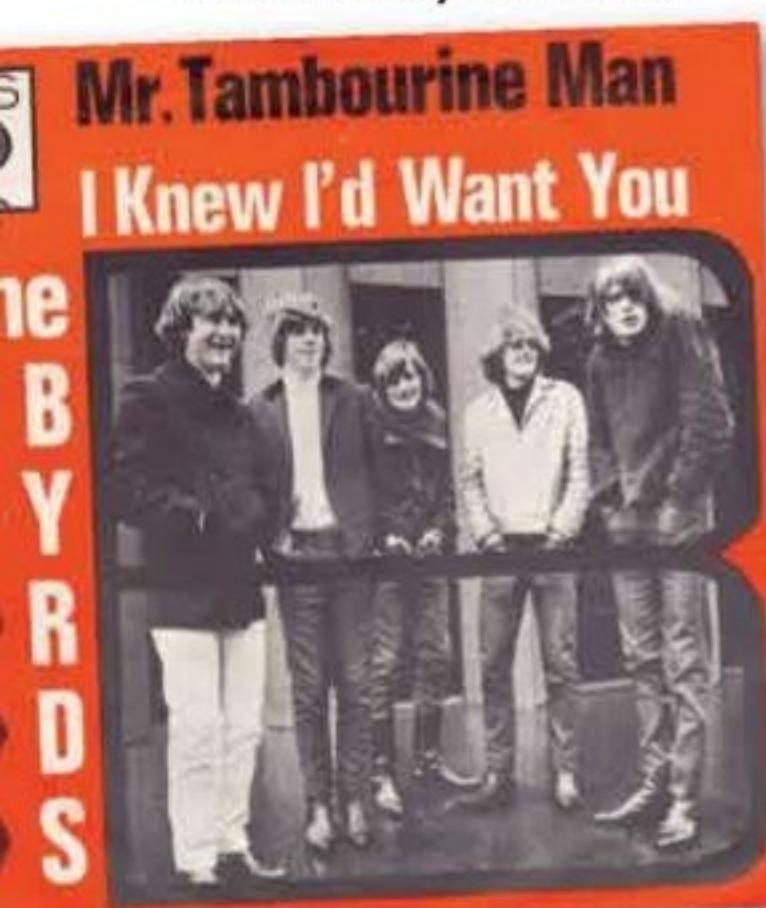
great rock'n'roll version. So it's a song that can stand up in numerous multiple versions.

The fourth reason is probably the most important for me. As much as any song out there, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" encapsulates a beautiful moment of the '60s. I was just a kid then and I always think of something good, warm, bright, positive and powerful. It represents that glorious moment when The Beatles had broken through, yet we hadn't got to that point in '68 when Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were shot. It represents that high watermark, that four-year period when it looked like it was not only possible to change the world through pop music and the ideas of youth on the march, it looked like it was going to happen. Everytime I hear "Turn! Turn! Turn!" I think of this high-water mark when it looked like things really were going to change on the strength of youthful idealism, soundtracked by electric rock'n'roll.

2 MR TAMBOURINE MAN

From *Mr Tambourine Man* (JUNE 1965)

Single April 1965. UK chart: 1. US chart: 1
Folk-rock goes boom in a 140-second starburst blending Dylan's poetry, The Beatles' pop jangle and heavenly harmonies.



THE BYRDS

but was a great demo. Our manager, Jim Dickson, was convinced it was a hit record. His job was to convince The Byrds of that fact! Crosby hated it. He didn't like Dylan's voice, he didn't like the 2/4 time signature and he didn't like its length. So we pared it down to AM radio time, put on the Rickenbacker intro and outro, added the harmonies, and basically conditioned it for radio while still maintaining some of the original folk integrity. Finally, David got behind it.

I remember us having to audition for Dickson about who would get the lead vocal. We all tried singing it and for some reason, I won. When it came to recording we were all shocked that the band wasn't going to be allowed to do the backing track. The label had hired the Wrecking Crew. The only reason I was allowed to play was that I had a few years of session experience behind me in New York working for Bobby Darin. Understandably, the rest of the guys were quite upset, and campaigned to be able to play on all our tracks after that. But the Wrecking Crew were really tight. We knocked out "Mr Tambourine Man" and the flipside "I Knew I'd Want You" in one three-hour session, whereas it took The Byrds 77 takes to nail the "Turn! Turn! Turn!" backing track!

Dylan and Bobby Neuwirth came to rehearsals to hear us do it, and their comment was, "Wow, you can dance to it!" Dylan wasn't a pop star at that point, he was a folk hero. So it was probably an eye opener for him that he could do his songs in that way. I realised later that we'd missed a few nuances in his original melody, but overall it came out well. It was a No 1 and it really did launch us.

LEAVING THE NEST

THE BYRDS, POST-FLIGHT...

What the original lineup did next

Roger McGuinn: 1973's self-titled album marked the beginning of McGuinn's solo years. The '70s also found him touring as part of Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue and reuniting with ex-bandmates for 1979's *McGuinn, Clark & Hillman*. He continues to champion traditional music on his popular Folk Den website.

Chris Hillman: The bassist joined Parsons and Clarke in The Flying Burrito Brothers, who released their debut, *The Gilded Palace Of Sin*, in 1969. He then played with Stephen Stills in Manassas, joined the Souther-Hillman-Furay Band and formed The Desert Rose Band.

David Crosby: Joined Stephen Stills and Graham Nash (and sometimes Neil Young) for the US counterculture's first great supergroup. The peak of his solo career is 1971's majestic *If I Could Only Remember My Name*.



Gene Clark: Solo LPs *White Light* (1971) and *No Other* ('74) - along with '68's *The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark*, recorded with bluegrass ace Doug Dillard (above, left) - are creative peaks. Died of a heart attack in 1991.

Michael Clarke: After drumming for the Burritos, Clarke joined ex-Burrito Rick Roberts in Firefall. Their 1976 debut went US Top 30 and yielded a Top 10 hit, "You Are The Woman". Died from liver disease, due to alcoholism, in December 1993. ROB HUGHES



1 EIGHT MILES HIGH

From *Fifth Dimension* (JULY 1966)

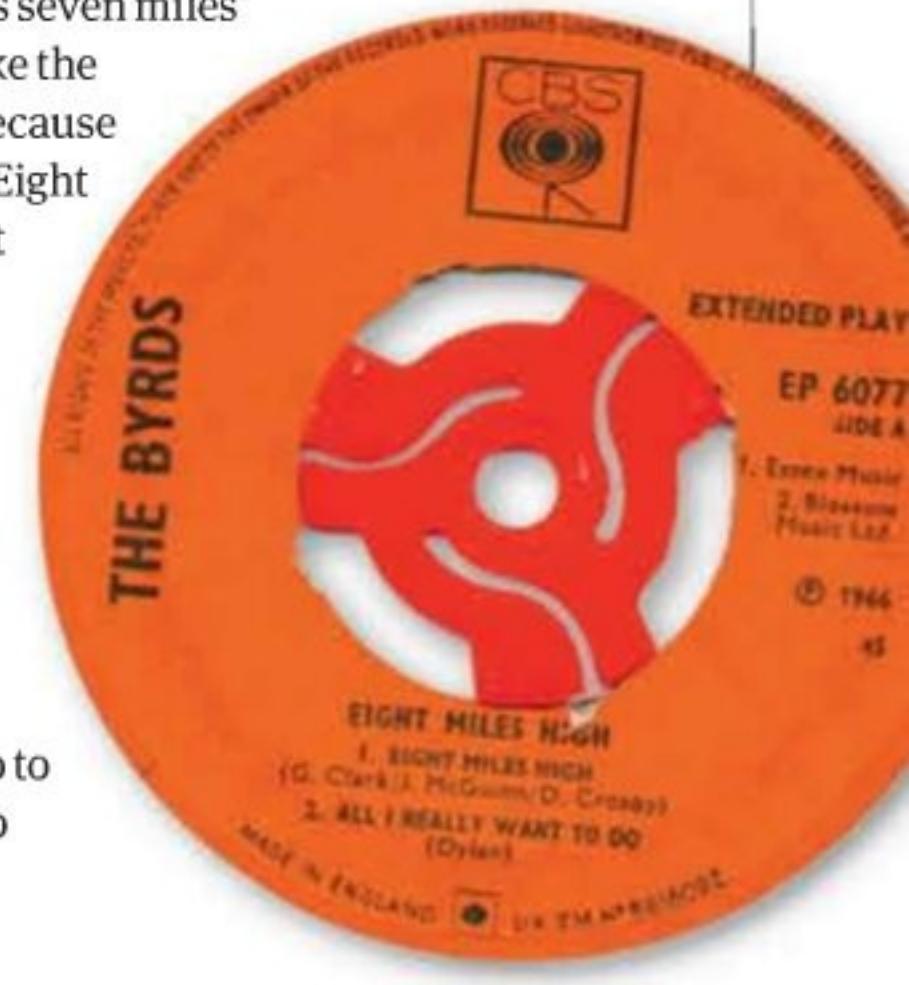
Single March 1966. UK chart: 24. US chart: 14
A daring ascent into raga-rock, fusing modal jazz, Indian music and nascent psychedelia. Sounds as timeless and progressive today as it did in 1966.

ROGER McGUINN: We were on tour in the United States. We were always on tour! We were in the Midwest and we stopped at some town to visit a friend of David Crosby. David's friend had copies of John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* and *Impressions*, which had the track "India" on it. I had a cassette recorder and recorded both Coltrane albums on one side of a blank cassette and some Ravi Shankar on the other. We strapped the cassette deck to the Fender amp on the bus and listened to both sides of that tape over and over again on that tour. This went on for a month, and we were so steeped in this music that by the time we got back to LA it all just spilled out, almost like we'd been brainwashed by Coltrane and Shankar.

"Eight Miles High" is out there. It's spatial. I was trying to emulate Coltrane's saxophone with my Rickenbacker. It's got a lot of what Coltrane was going for on "India", which was to capture the elephants in India with his wails, and there's that tabla beat. He was trying to incorporate Indian music into jazz, and we were trying to incorporate his attempts to do that into a rock'n'roll song. So there's a lot of things going on.

Gene Clark came up with a lot of it, but he didn't write the whole song. The airplane thing was my idea, I was always into planes and spaceships. Gene and I were talking about the trip we'd taken when we'd gone to England on tour, and the fact that the altitude was 37,000 ft, which is seven miles high. He didn't like the number seven, because the Beatles had "Eight Days A Week" out

and he thought that was much cooler. So we changed it to "Eight Miles High", even though commercial airliners didn't go to 42,000 ft. They do





Plane genius: The Byrds jet to the stars in early 1966: (l-r) Crosby, Clark, Clarke, Hillman, McGuinn

now, some of them. When radio stations heard it they thought, 'Wait a minute, they can't be talking about planes because they don't fly that high. They must be talking about some other kind of high!' Then the *Gavin Report* came out with a tip sheet for radio and they banned the record because they thought it was a flagrant drug ad. Some of the band still like to pretend that it is. Crosby will always say, 'Yeah, it's about drugs, man!' But it's not. It's about touring the UK: the British press, the cars, the girls in the crowds, the weather, the street signs on the side of the buildings which we weren't used to and couldn't find. It's about cultural shock.



CHRIS HILLMAN:

What I'm most proud of about The Byrds is that within 18 months we went from covering Bob Dylan to making "Eight Miles High". We had grown as musicians. We stumbled into something without really thinking, which is how you should make music. It was so creative. It was a truly exciting time. People talk about the guitars and the lyrics on "Eight Miles High", but Michael Clarke played brilliantly on that, and what about the singing? David was just a beautiful vocalist, as were Gene and Roger. They would

"It would have been interesting to have seen where we would have gone..."
CHRIS HILLMAN



A tribal gathering: McGuinn, Crosby and Clark in the studio

double the lead and David would come in with a vocal that was just beautiful. It would have been interesting to have seen where we would have gone had we all stayed together, taking "Eight Miles High" as a launching point. Where would we have gone? It wouldn't necessarily have ended up at *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*.

I have to pay credit to Columbia, they really didn't put a lot of pressure on us over what we recorded. The only pressure was that we had to do two albums a year no matter what, but they weren't too strict about content. The business was still pretty artistically orientated. The label supported "Eight Miles High" until it stopped getting played on the radio, which really killed it. That meant it fell off the charts. It's amazing to think

that it didn't make the Top 10, but I felt so lucky to be in that band at that time. From '65 to '67, I think, was the best of The Byrds. Magic. And "Eight Miles High" might just be the best of the best. ☺

INTERVIEWS: ROB HUGHES, TOM PINNOCK AND GRAEME THOMSON

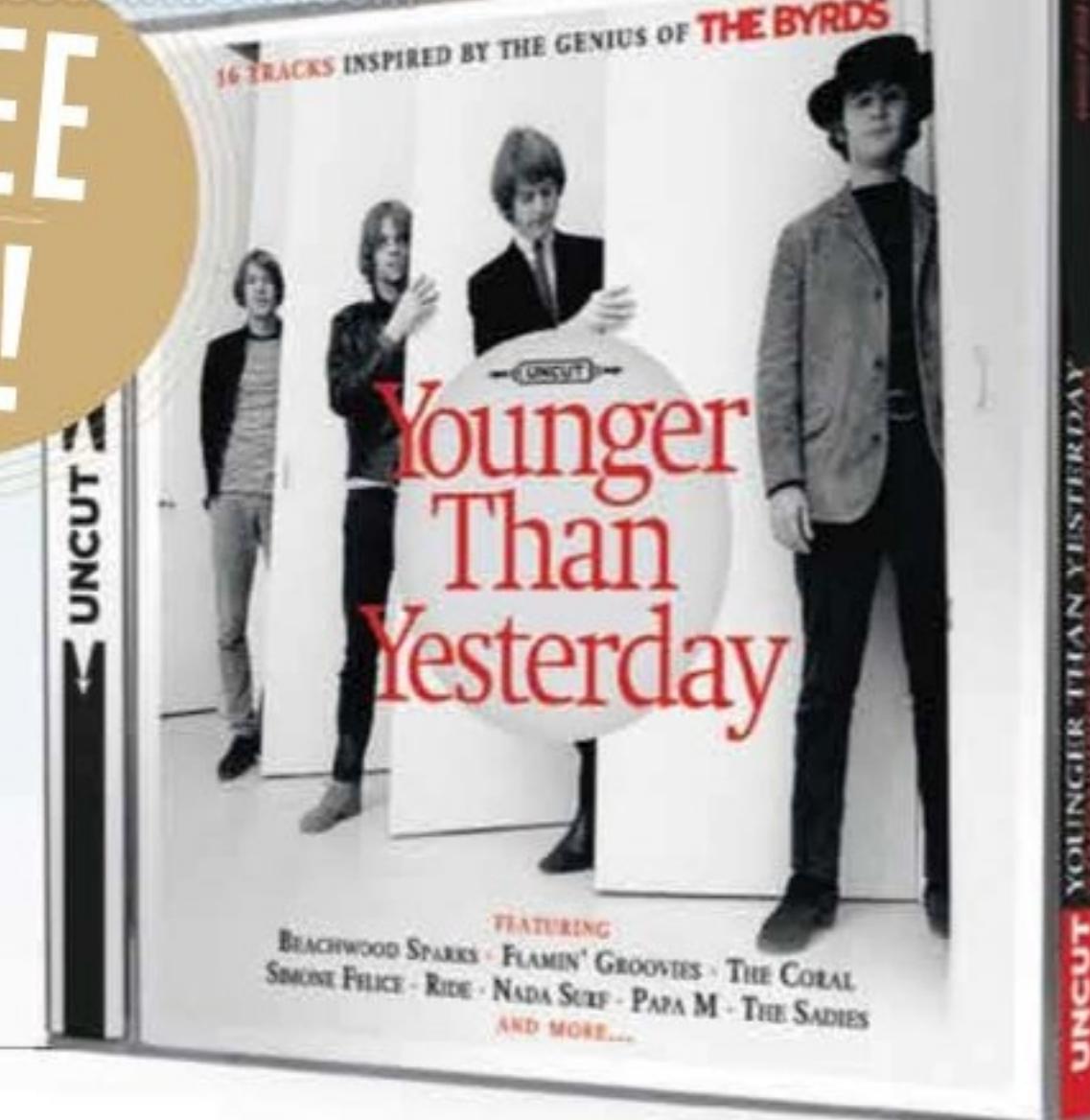
TELL US YOUR FAVOURITES!

Do you have a much-loved Byrds song we've omitted? Or do you disagree with our selection? Or do you have a story about The Byrds you'd like to share with us? Write and tell allan_jones@ipcmmedia.com!

Younger Than Yesterday

16 TRACKS INSPIRED BY THE GENIUS OF THE BYRDS

FREE CD!



1 BEACHWOOD SPARKS

Sparks Fly Again

LA's latter-day janglemeisters kick off our Byrds homage with a pedal-steel drenched taste of sun-dappled glory that wouldn't have sounded out of place on *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*.

2 THE SADIES

Wasn't Born To Follow

The veteran Canadian alt.country rockers revisited Goffin & King's classic on their 2001 album, *Tremendous Efforts*, evoking The Byrds' joyously psyched take and the memorable scenes the song soundtracked in *Easy Rider*.

3 THE CORAL

1000 years

If The Byrds' lift-off was inspired by the British invasion, the Canyon spirit travels the musical trade routes in the opposite direction to beget the surging guitars and blissed-out harmonies of the Skelly brothers and their Liverpool cohorts.

4 ALLAH-LAS

Vis-à-Vis

Ringing 12-strings and Cali-dreaming from the debut by LA's current retro-kings – with echoes of Gene Clark's "She Don't Care About Time" chiming fuzzily down almost half a century.

5 THE COAL PORTERS

Draft Morning

Crosby had already been fired when McGuinn and Hillman recorded his anti-draft song on *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*. This lovely acoustic interpretation by Sid Griffin's band was recorded in Scotland in 2006.

6 RIDE

Seagull

The headlong rush of "Eight Miles High" inspired the cascade of squealing feedback and serrated



guitars which introduced us to the Oxford shoegazers on their 1990 debut, *Nowhere* – a record which, let us not forget, predated My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless*.

7 VELVET CRUSH

Mr Spaceman

McGuinn's whimsical musings on extra-terrestrial contact recorded by the Rhode Island powerpoppers as the B-side to the single "Hold Me Up", released on the Creation label in 1994.



8 WOODS

Hand It Out

Woods give their current address as Brooklyn – but the synergy of this jangling gem from their sixth album resides somewhere in the clubs of Sunset Strip circa 1965, as The Byrds were first taking flight.

9 NADA SURF

Jules And Jim

Another Brooklyn band pointing their ringing Rickenbackers west towards the Californian sun on a track from the new album from Matthew Caws and his melodic alt.rockers, currently celebrating their 20th anniversary.

10 FLAMIN' GROOVIES

Feel A Whole Lot Better

An effervescent rendering from the Groovies of the Gene Clark classic that he later admitted was based on the riff from The Searchers' "Needles And Pins".

11 THE MARBLE VANITY

Assemble

A touch of *Forever Changes* joins the Byrdian vibes on this track from the Chicago baroque-rockers led by Bill and Lisa Roe – but then Love's Bryan MacLean did once have a gig as a roadie for The Byrds...

12 MIKAL CRONIN

Again And Again

Exuberant, *Nuggetsy*, super-charged garage-pop from the San Francisco wunderkind's solo debut, produced by the great Ty Segall himself, and which made *Uncut*'s Top 50 albums of 2011.

13 HUSH ARBORS

People & Places

One-man band Keith Woods – last seen playing with Thurston Moore – handles all the instruments here on a jangling romp that channels classic '60s folk-rock tropes, topped with a singular vocal that's entirely of his own patent.

14 SIMONE FELICE

Wild Mountain Thyme

A tremblingly lovely take on the folk standard covered by The Byrds on *Fifth Dimension*. Find it exclusively via Simone's website on *Songs From A Lonely Place*, a collection of solo takes of songs previously recorded with the Felice Brothers/The Duke & The King.

15 THE SOFT PACK

Captain Ace

The San Diego quartet evoke McGuinn's status as space-rock progenitor on a track from newly released second album *Strapped*. And just to show how everything here connects with haphazard serendipity, another Soft Pack song was recently covered by Nada Surf.

16 PAPA M

Turn! Turn! Turn!

We close epically with David Pajo's 16-minute guitar fugue built around The Byrds' arrangement of Pete Seeger's classic adaptation from the Book Of Ecclesiastes – except he's omitted the lyrics and left us to sing along...

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



RORY GALLAGHER

REMASTERED 1975-1982

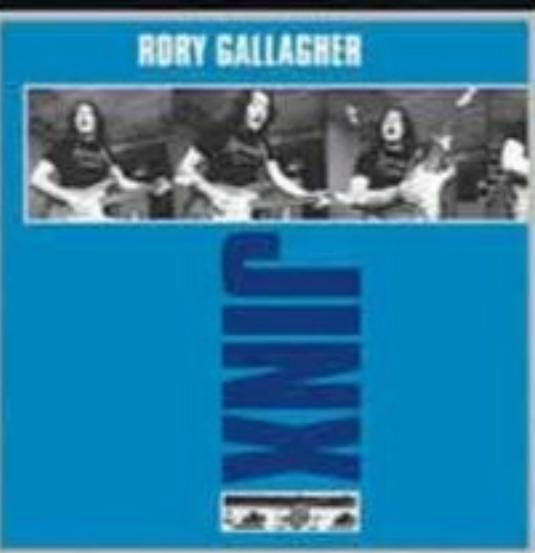
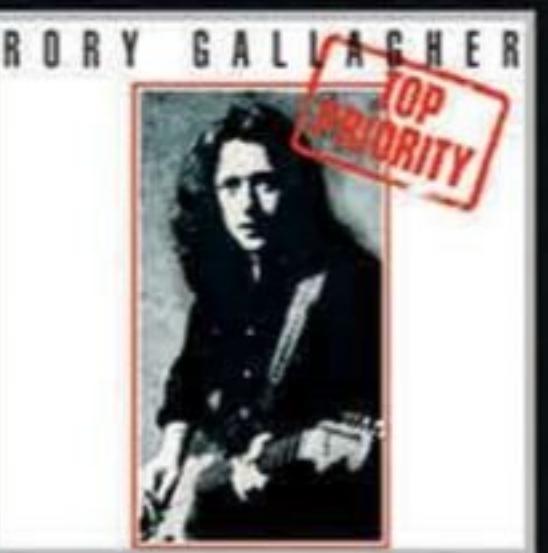
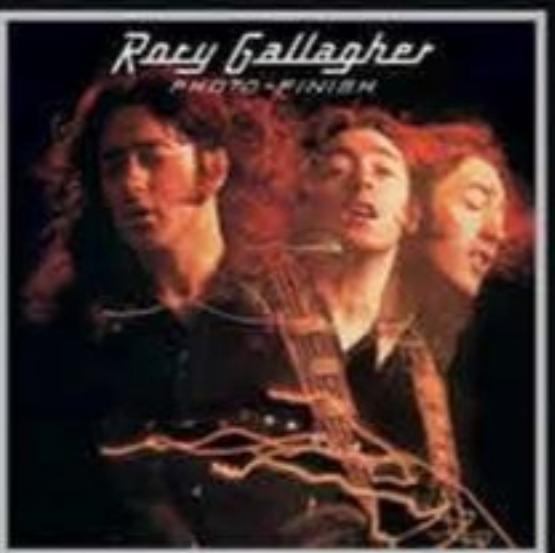
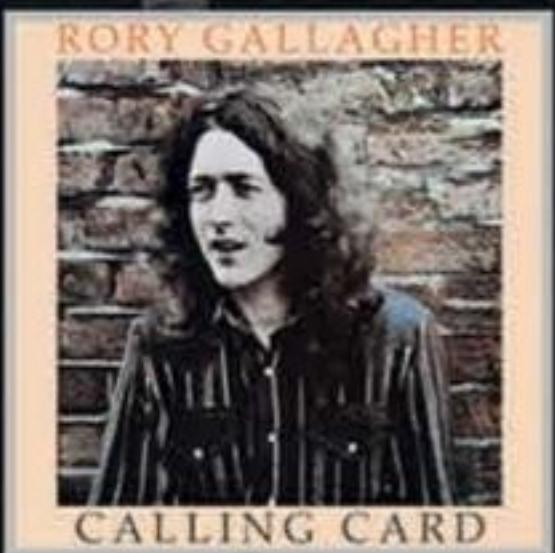
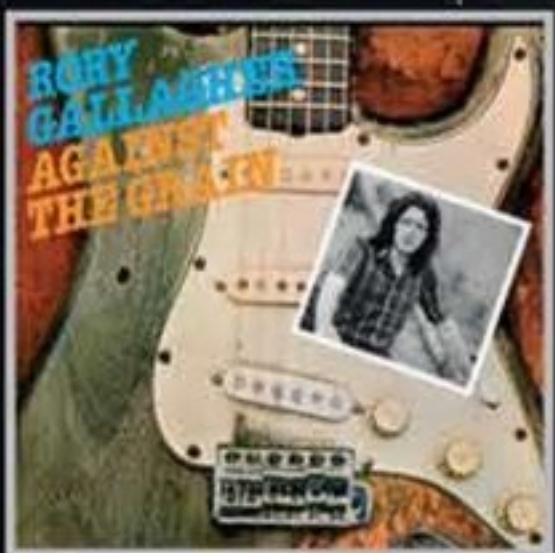
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Stool Pigeon – 9/12



CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Bruce Foxton

When you're young... How the man from The Jam came out of the wilderness to be reunited with Paul Weller



THE NASHVILLE ROOMS, LONDON, 1977

Shane MacGowan [second left] has actually got all his teeth there. He was a big Jam fan. Even then, he was usually three sheets to the wind. Polydor did little "In The City" badges at the Nashville, and the following grew each show we did. This was where we wanted to be. We'd outgrown the working-men's clubs around Woking. The last few shows we did there, people had fingers in their ears, it was too raucous. They wanted the bingo, anyway.



LONDON, 1977

That's tape we're wrapped in. Maybe the thought behind it was trying to tame these angry young men. I look a bit perplexed. Polydor were trying to do something a bit surreal, a bit different, as you know how hard it is to get in the papers. I've no complaints about the label. People only get sour when they stop having hits. There's always reasons why you didn't get enough press, or airplay. Because it was shit.



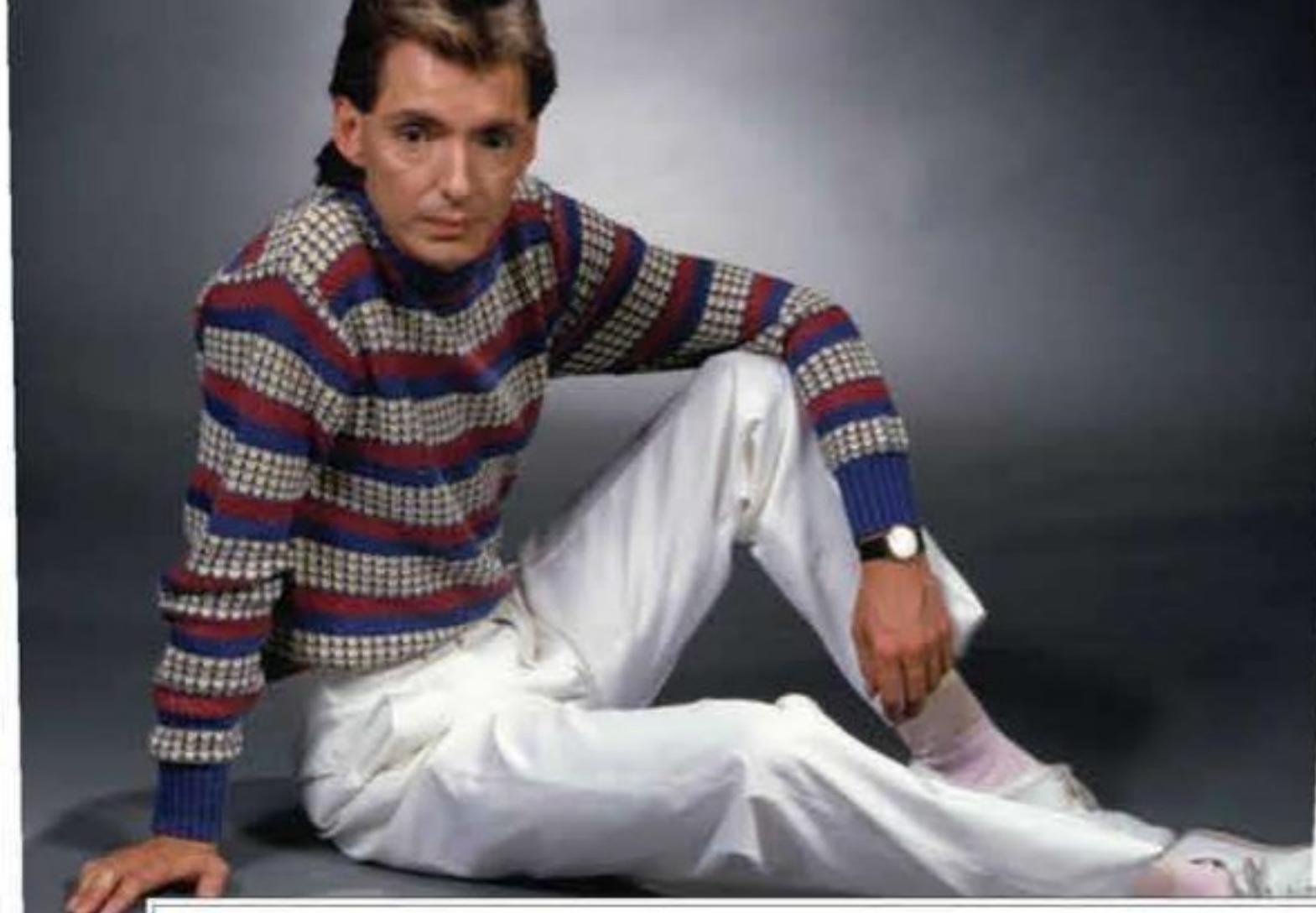
NEW YORK, 1977

I used to really like Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers, but if someone had said before just seeing this, "Have you met him?" I'd have said no! That American trip felt very superficial. We did various tours later, but they were token gestures, really. We supported Blue Öyster Cult in an enormous dome, like Spinal Tap, and had 10,000 booing us. And then later "Going Underground" went straight in at No 1 [1980]. So we shot back on Concorde, to where they did want us.



LONDON, 1982

The cracks were appearing by then, and Paul decided he wanted to leave the band. And it was hard to keep going after that. Fans were in tears asking us why we were splitting up, and I said, "I honestly don't know. I don't know what he's going to do now, I've no idea what I'm going to do now." When the last tour was suggested, I initially said to John [Weller], "I can't go out there. It's too upsetting to do this." It was very hard.



LONDON, 1984

I was fumbling around for a new direction, and I don't think that's the way I should have gone! I was trying to find my feet as a solo artist, and open to suggestions. It was just too much. All of a sudden I'm on my own. I didn't have any quality control when I was writing those songs for *Touch Sensitive* – no-one said, "Bruce, that's shit." All the record company wanted was to cash in on The Jam.



NEWCASTLE, 1999

Stiff Little Fingers. I was with them for 15 years. By 1990, I was in The Rhythm Sisters, a Leeds indie group, and I was thinking, 'What am I going to do, this is not going anywhere?' when Jake Burns rang up and said, "Do you fancy joining Fingers? The next gig's in Tokyo." Fucking hell, this is more like it. Because I was in the wilderness. I'd been in bands since The Jam, and all I wanted to do was keep playing.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON, 2010

Onstage, Paul's birthday. The place went bonkers. He called us when my wife was having treatment in 2008, to wish Pat good luck. It meant more to me than anything in the world. We're good mates again. It's great, 'cos I used to get asked, "Do you see Paul?" "No, sadly not." And it'd play on my mind. We experienced so much, how can it all be just brushed aside?



TYNE TEES STUDIO, NEWCASTLE, 1984

That's my wife on the left, Pat, bless her, who sadly passed away in 2009, and that's Steve Lillywhite on the right of Dame Edna. We got an invite onto the Midsummer Night's *Tube* TV show. We'd been on holiday and the tan was fading, so I put some of Pat's fake tan on, then another dollop. I didn't realise it didn't kick in till hours later. You can see this orange blob moving about in the crowd. It looked like I'd been Tango'd.



LONDON, 2008

From The Jam. Rick [Buckler]'s The Gift were playing Guildford Uni in 2006, and I got asked to do a couple of songs. We did "...Tube Station" and "Smithers-Jones". It was fantastic to be onstage with Rick again and I was hugely touched. In January 2007, From The Jam was formed. We gave it a lot of thought. I knew it had to be good.



BLACK BARN STUDIOS, NEAR WOKING, 2012

Russell [Hastings, right] and myself have been seriously writing songs since 2010. I thought, 'I'll ask Paul if we can use his studio,' and it's gone on from there. Paul plays on three tracks on this second solo LP. It's the most inspired I've felt for a long time, and a lot of it came from Paul playing, from his renewed friendship. I'll be proud of these songs 'til the day I die. It took a while, but we got there in the end. ☺

Back In The Room by **Bruce Foxton** is out on Bass Tone Records on October 1. Uncut's **Paul Weller: The Ultimate Music Guide** is out now



THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO

AMES MURPHY IS straight off a transatlantic flight, installed in a corner of the London offices of the production company behind *Shut Up And Play The Hits*, the film about the last days of his band, LCD Soundsystem. He is crumpled, unshaven and nursing a painfully gammy foot. "Ultimate fighting injury?" *Uncut* enquires, referring to the mixed martial art for which he's an unlikely evangelist. "Ultimate drinking injury," he groans. Nevertheless, even an under-the-weather James Murphy is a force to be reckoned with. *Shut Up And Play The Hits* centres around LCD's spectacular swansong at Madison Square Garden in April last year. It's ironically titled because, through backstage chatter, frontman humility, TV interviews and post-show hangover, Murphy just can't stop justifying, eulogising, wisecracking, pondering the peculiar history of his band. He was well into his thirties before forming LCD, with years of life experience as provincial punk, literature student, indie scenester, jobbing engineer. Consequently, when success eventually called, he was thoroughly prepared. His three albums – *LCD Soundsystem*, *Sound Of Silver* and *This Is Happening* – add up to something like the Great New York Novel of the noughties, incorporating the desperate hedonism, high anxiety, self-conscious snark, whipsmart wit and post-Imperial melancholy of that curdled decade. Still fulfilling promotional obligations 18 months after he supposedly quit, Murphy occasionally plays at being jaded, but his beautiful, lively mind is relentless. In the course of an hour's conversation, he's part-Louis CK schlubby idealist, part-Lester Bangs gonzo philosopher and part-Sam Lipsyte scabrous cynic. The epigram to *Shut Up And Play The Hits*

18 months ago, James Murphy called time on his brilliant band, LCD SOUNDSYSTEM. Now, with a film on release documenting their farewell concerts, Murphy reflects on his reasons for quitting, and what plans he has for a post-LCD career: "I don't," he says. "And it's terrifying!"

says, "If it's a funeral... let's have the best funeral ever." Does it feel like it's turning into the longest wake ever? "Holy shit, yes," he says with a wry smile. "It's a very long march to the barrow ground."

"I thought, if I start complaining, I should quit. So we quit. Because it was too much"

JAMES MURPHY

Is it weird, having to obsessively rake over the embers of the last day of your band?

It's not that weird. Everything weird really happened early on in the band. And everything after that, that's supposed to seem weird, just never seems weird, relative to the band happening at all. Raking over it? This is my job! My job is fucking weird.

What were the weird things about LCD Soundsystem?

Just the band being successful. Or before the band started, the things that prompted me to start writing "Losing My Edge" were so weird. Being a DJ suddenly, being invited to parties, and having something to lose. After playing music and being involved in music my whole life, and failing comically. Or not even failing grandiosely – just

I WAS THERE

A James Murphy timeline

1992: Turns down an offer of a writing job on a new sitcom called *Seinfeld* to become drummer in post-grunge

also-rans Pony
1993: Builds Plantain Recording House, starts work as indie-rock engineer, starts DJing as Death From Above
1997: Meets ex-UNKLE producer Tim Goldsworthy during engineering work on

David Holmes' *Let's Get Killed*
2001: Forms DFA label with Goldsworthy
2002: "Losing My Edge" released under the name LCD Soundsystem
2005: LCD Soundsystem release their eponymous debut album

2006: LCD release 45:33: a disco odyssey put out as part of a promotion with Nike
2007: LCD's second album, *Sound Of Silver*, is *Uncut*'s album of the year
2009: Murphy writes a soundtrack for Noah Baumbach's *Greenberg*

2010: LCD release *This Is Happening*. Label-baiting track "You Wanted A Hit" gives credence to rumours this will be the band's final album
2011: LCD play New York farewell show
2012: *Shut Up And Play The Hits* is released

→ sinking. Failing mediocrely! Nothing prepared me for having my moment in the sun. Which I considered to be before the band. New York likes art stars. It doesn't like movie stars. So I was an art star, and we were weird and cool and ephemeral. That was so weird that everything that subsequently happened has seemed like a tiny ripple effect of that big bang, that cataclysmic event.

You played your first gig in London. Did you ever have an inkling that this might be, if not a career, an ongoing project?

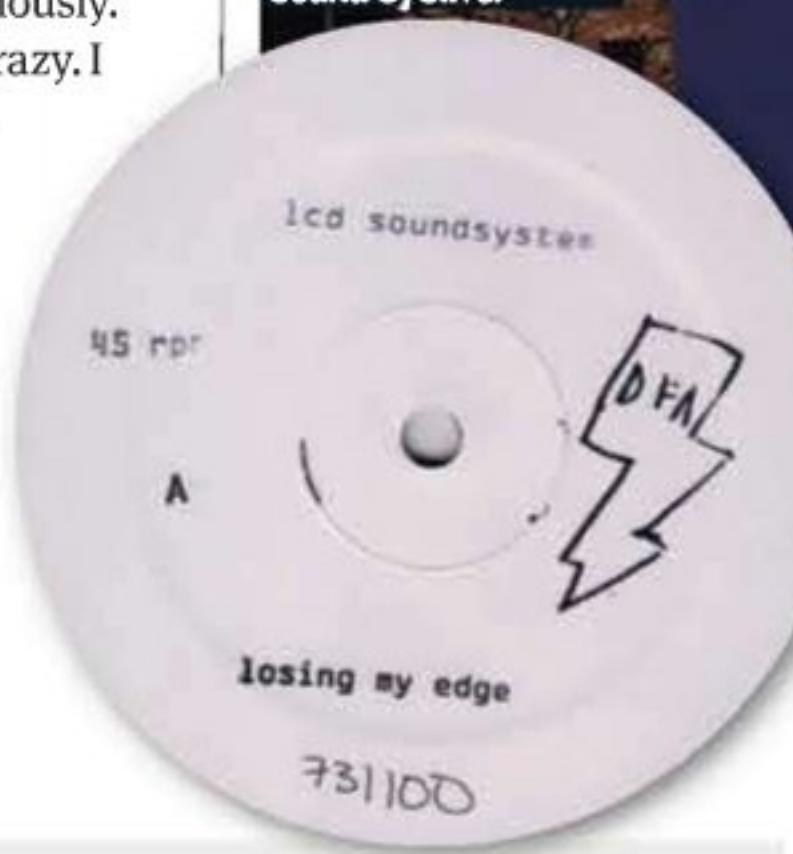
I don't know. I was pretty aggressive then and pretty crazy. Yeah, fuck it! We're going to do things weird, we're going to do things our way! I'm not working a tour, we're doing some weird shows. Let's do it! Then I made an album, gave it to the Soulwax guys and they were like, "Your life is over, dude." And I was like, "Why?" They said, "It's good. You're going to be on tour." So I said, "I'm not going to fucking do that." "You say that. But we don't want to DJ, and here we are."

In the movie, the author Chuck Klosterman wonders what the defining failure of the band was. Was it that you couldn't escape that treadmill or bend it to your will? Is quitting a way of getting the craziness back? Yeah, it definitely is. I try to take people equally seriously. I try to take fans seriously, even if they're fucking crazy. I try to take people at the record company seriously, sometimes though they behave in ways that prohibit you from taking them seriously. So I always try to err on the side of "We-ee-eell... maybe you have a point." That makes a lot of things difficult. It's one of those jobs like being a triage doctor. What you want to do is perform microsurgery to save that knee... but that guy over there was just SHOT! In the FACE! So you have to know that you can't give 100 per cent ever. You're just running around trying to save lives.

TIM SOTER



Last hurrah for the Soundsystem at Madison Square Garden, NYC, April 2, 2011... and no soundcheck!



Cheer up, it was Uncut's album of the year: Murphy in 2007, around the release of *Sound Of Silver*



And you never get the satisfaction of saying, "The last stitch – can we take that off?" "Oh, beautiful scar, Dr White." "Thank you!"

That wore me out. Leaving the record company meeting and they're saying, "OK, well, there's no extra tracks? You're only going to make one video? Is there anything three-and-a-half-minutes long? The song people respond to most is almost nine minutes long and it's got a three-minute, almost inaudible, intro? Ugh." You're just like: arghh. You go on tour and people are emailing: "Why aren't you in Des Moines, Iowa? You only play where people think you're cool?" You're constantly disappointing people. That wears you out, if you care. If the other alternative is that you don't care, I can't do that. People say, "Well, don't do Facebook, don't look at it, let the people do their job!" But I can't. This represents me. LCD Soundsystem represents me. No person is going to answer questions for me on the email interview! No-one's going to post things on my website that are supposed to be from me! Because then you're like, what's the fucking point? If I start complaining, I should quit. So we quit. Because it was too much.

How did the movie come about?

Before the decision to end the band, someone told me, "Oh, the BBC wants to do something on you, they have these directors who did a Blur thing." So we met up with them a couple of times and I really liked them. The BBC thing didn't work out, so we decided to do it ourselves. At one point we thought, let's just do a fiction movie. The movie was called *What It's Like To Make Things*. It would just be all these weird dream sequences. I was trying to get Kanye to be in all my dreams. I didn't want to see the band play, I just wanted one scene from the concert, the shot of the balloons dropping. And we were like, cool, let's get a permit to shoot in Madison Square Garden. But the permit was, like, the budget. For the whole movie. We're like, "OK, if we're going to spend this money, let's shoot the concert at least." We wanted something that could be the whole arc if we needed it to be. Rather than trying to shoot a movie but only having half of it, and because of budget pressures having to cobble something together and release it.

HOW TO BUY GREAT RELEASE

Five key LCD songs

1: "Losing My Edge"

(Single, 2002)

LCD's debut single established James Murphy as the laureate of 21st-Century rock-snob anxiety, as all his hard-earned cultural capital goes south in the age of internet abundance.

2: "Yeah"

(Single, 2004)

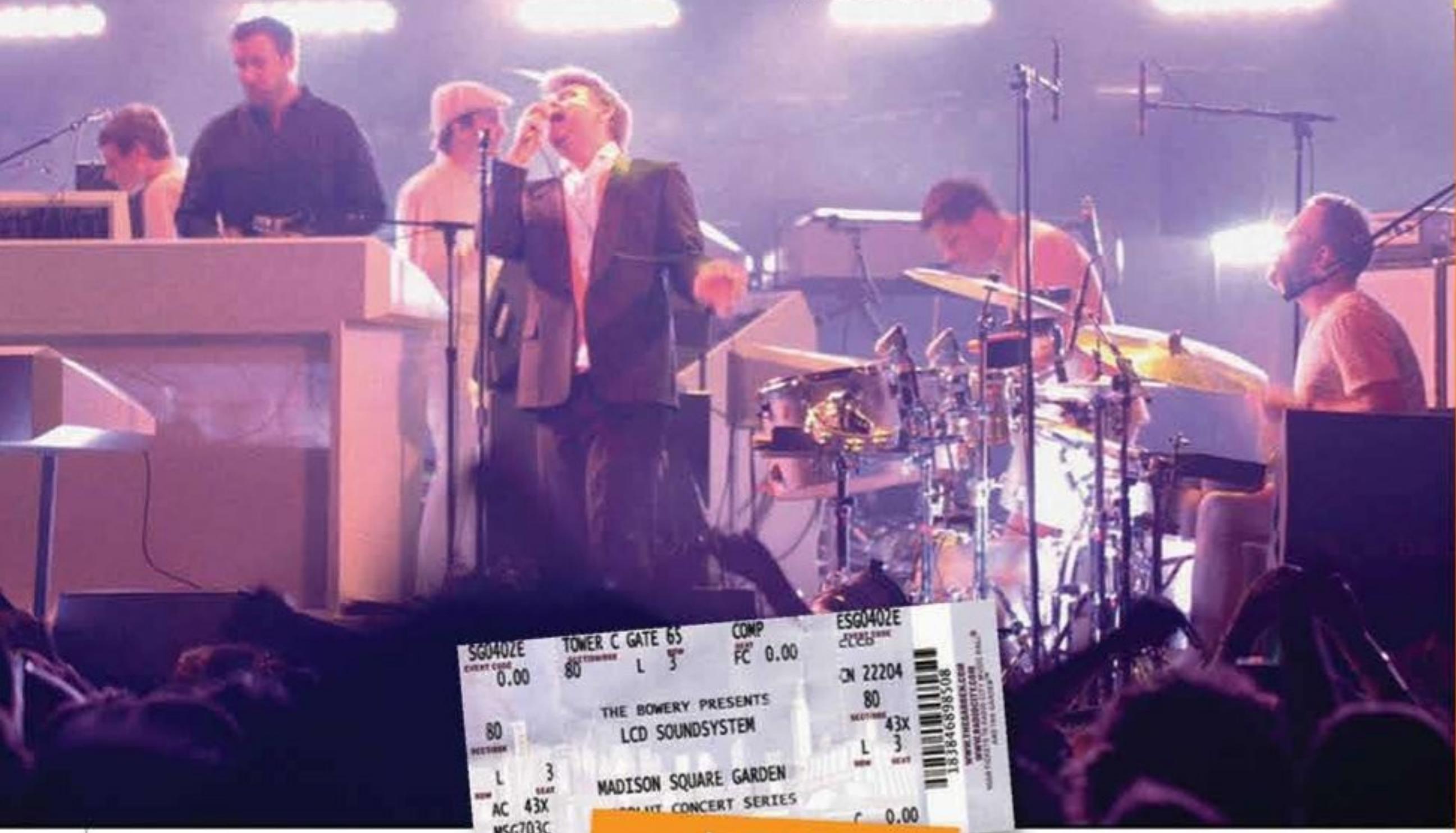
"Not as good as 'Losing My Edge'", Murphy pre-emptively scrawled into the run-off groove, but this brilliantly dumb punkfunk anthem proved the debut was no fluke.



3: "All My Friends"

(From *Sound Of Silver*, 2007)

The highlight of LCD's masterful second album was a kind of disco Bildungsroman, charting the idealism and careerism of modern mid-youth



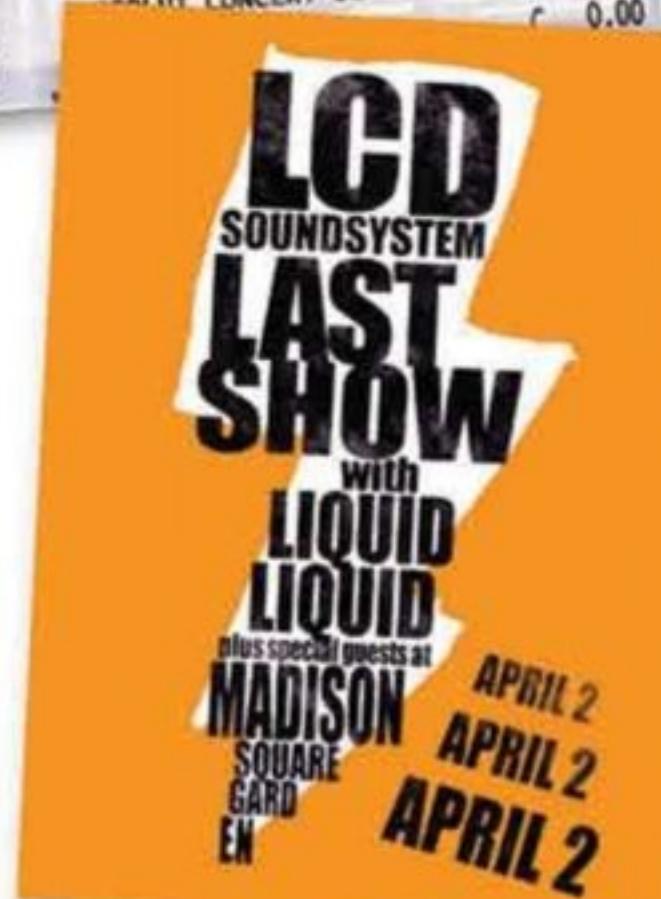
How much input did you have?

Nothing in the narrative. I was really there for the concert footage and the concert itself. I know who plays what, what's important to me. Naturally, the editor is picking a few shots that seem a little too rockstarry for me. I don't like those. I like it to look like a street fight. And I think it does a good job of looking like a street fight! There are moments that are quite beautiful. I like early '70s American films and I think they're beautiful in a rough way, and when the beauty happens you're unprepared for it.

Is there a danger that the movie replaces your memories?

That's not even a danger, it's totally replaced my memory. I don't remember the show. I remember polaroids. The moment when I first crinkled up a lyric sheet and threw it away. I always have my lyrics in a pile in case I get stuck. Very rarely actually looked at them. The first time I was about to put it under I thought I will never, ever have to sing that again. I'll never sing this again! To have these beat-up, five-year-old lyric sheets which have notes on, to know that you're destroying something that might be important to someone else. Or it might be important to you later... I remember when I threw out my school yearbooks. I knew – 'I'm going to regret this.' I threw out all my Smiths shirts – this is a regret in the making. You should do stuff you regret. Don't look back? A little bit. More like look back in anger!

When you think of bands quitting at the top, you think of Ziggy Stardust or The Jam. Rarely American bands... No, because we don't fucking stop. We keep chasing the paycheck. The Rolling Stones took more than the blues from America. I just wanted to have all the bad ideas fully realised. Why don't we do a balloon drop? Or why don't we build a spaceship made out of cardboard and make shitty video visuals with models on strings? Why not? That's like 15 bucks, let's do that. I loved fully blowing out all the dumb



"The only fears you have when you get bigger are – what if you fail? That's boring"

JAMES MURPHY

ideas we'd never had time to do. If we'd done that at the beginning of the tour we would have had all these beautiful set pieces that would have made economic sense. Instead we burned almost all the money we made that year. We lost everything! It was brutal. That show lost so much money. People on the internet are like – oh, I get it, you're going to cash in at Madison Square Garden. You have NO IDEA how this business works. You don't make anything for playing at Madison Square Garden! They keep all the money because they're Madison Square Garden. What are you going to do? Go to the OTHER Madison Square Garden? To put on a show like that there are 1,500 union guys. That's going to a 1,000 bucks per head. You get the balloon truck – the balloon truck held my landing dock hostage for hours and took us for an extra \$5,000 on the day! We couldn't get our gear. Shit like that – hilarious. We barely got a soundcheck and then I pulled the band off early so Liquid Liquid could get a soundcheck because they played first. I was so angry and then I was like – that's our band! Our band doesn't get a

soundcheck for our last show at Madison Square Garden and I drag us off because Liquid Liquid – who we love – has to get a soundcheck. That's a pretty big eulogy for us.

Do you have your post-LCD career as carefully planned as the farewell?

That's the beauty of it, I don't, and it's terrifying. I felt like the band was born out of a weird miasmic sludge of time and influence and fucking around and all this stuff. Ironically, the band born out of this created less craziness and more and more order. Then I was like: what if I go and make a fourth record and I don't know what to do? That's not a big deal. But what's the point? Why don't I just go back to that chaos? That mass of energy. The only fears you have when you get bigger are – what if you fail? That's boring. Now I'm like – who knows? People tell me →

MUSICAL THEATRE

IT COMES APART, THE WAY IT DOES IN BAD FILMS

James Murphy on rock movies

WASIA connoisseur of the rock movie? No, I wasn't really. Apart from *Spinal Tap*, which is a different thing, obviously. A lot of reviews have compared [*Shut Up...*] to The Band's *The Last Waltz*. It's an obvious shot because it's the last show. They were a band's band. And we were on some level. But with a lot less drugs! I didn't watch *The Last Waltz* again because I knew I'd get ideas.

Stop Making Sense [below] is amazing. I think of it like the Demme movies with Spalding Grey or Laurie Anderson, where it's a mannered piece. I think it's genius the way it starts – it's like theatre. Maybe this movie is to us what those were to those bands. They succeed because they fit the band's personality. I think this fits our personality. *Perverted By Language Bis*, about The Fall, is a perfect representation of them – it fits their cut-and-paste fuck-you rawness and intellectualism, a refusal of beauty. It has that manner to it.





Lofty ambitions:
Murphy with his dog,
Petunia, in a still
from the LCD film

→ people are going to remember your band forever! No, they're not! People barely remember Kurt Cobain. He was in a huge band and he killed himself? That's the way you never die. People won't say, hey, remember that guy who was sad so he quit, but maintained friendships with the people he worked with? What an epic tragedy! It's almost Greek!

You seem busier than when you were in the band...
I am. It's been an unexpectedly difficult year. I'm building a new studio. I'm trying to open a store. It's time-consuming. It's also expensive. I have found no-one is willing to do construction for free. So I am DJing a LOT. It's my job now – I DJ. I have the jumpsuit to prove it.

"You should do
stuff you regret.
Don't look back? A
bit. More like look
back in anger!"

JAMES MURPHY

had varying relationships with and understandings of. I wanted to stop the train of the mass of those things. So I'm no longer signed. I've said "I'm done!" so we can memorialise that this is the end of LCD. It's like I have a manufacturing plant but I don't want to make plastic bags anymore. But I still have this plant. I'll make music. I still DJ with Pat [Mahoney]. I see all my friends. Nothing happened. I just wanted to get off the train. A friend asked me to cover a song for a movie recently, and I was calling everyone up and said, you wanna do this? One guy was like – you'd do that? Use the LCD name? But if it's the same group of us covering a song? If I call it James Murphy And The Murphtones, is that better? Who cares? And they're like, people will get upset! Um, that's the beauty of quitting! I don't give a shit! That guy who cared? He quit! Now you get me! ☺

Shut Up And Play The Hits is released on DVD by Pulse Films on October 8

So what happens if
you wake up with an
awesome idea for
an LCD song?

I just write a song. What's the difference, man? This is the epic joke! LCD is a bunch of things. It's me in the studio making a record. Two: it's that group of people touring. Thirdly, it was the thing signed to EMI. And four, it was an entity that fans

SO WHAT NEXT?

I CAN CHANGE

Five post-LCD career options, by the man himself

1: Novelist

Is writing the ultimate freedom? More like the ultimate nightmare. I have no delusions about looking out of the window wistfully and jotting my thoughts while someone brings me tea. I said once that I was working on something and that's been turned into I'm writing a novel. I take "I'm writing a novel" as a phrase very seriously. I am not Writing A Novel. I am working on something, sporadically taking notes. I've written scenes out. I know what the principal themes are. I know the settings and characters. But I think it's a big 'un.

2: Soundtrack composer

Working on *Greenberg* was great but people say "Do you want to do more?" and I say NO. I did it because Noah and I had a good relationship and he was working across the street from my studio. So I dealt with Noah. I could put my ego aside because it's like I'm helping him paint his house. At the same time, I don't have eight people saying, "I think it's too mauve. What do you think?" Most of that job, you have one note from the producer saying make it more lively. One note from the music supervisor saying mellow it out a little. One note from the director saying don't listen to those guys. Nuh-uh. I

have no interest in that world. If someone asks me to make a soundtrack I will make music. If you would license that for your film, please do.

3: Mom and pop store owner

We're going to open this store in Brooklyn. What's it going to sell? Stuff my girlfriend and I like! Coffee. Old '50s and '60s wristwatches. It's going to be a personality store. There might be a record store downstairs. A coffee shop out front. But it's expandable. Sometimes it'll be tiny, it'll just be a coffee shop and magazines. Other times it might be a showroom. Just a space to do stuff. I want to be able to make things and design things and have space for that.

4: Ultimate fighter

I really almost did it. I put some money away, I live cheaply. I can train. I'm quick. I'm flexible. My problem's going to be my weight-to-strength ratio. I'm hypermobile, which means my ligaments are too long, so I use a lot of muscle to stabilise myself. So I can't get any lower than 170lbs and survive. 170lbs is still a big fighter.

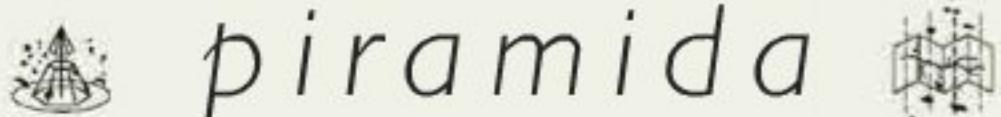
5: Watchmaker

I really want to do a watch. I'm not kidding myself that I'm going to make the fucking watches. I'm not a fucking idiot. But I'm fascinated by those guys who sit at the tables with the magnifying glasses. I know that I can't do it. But if I can make one watch with some help – and say, look at this! The watch I made! That would be so cool!





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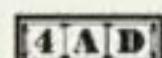


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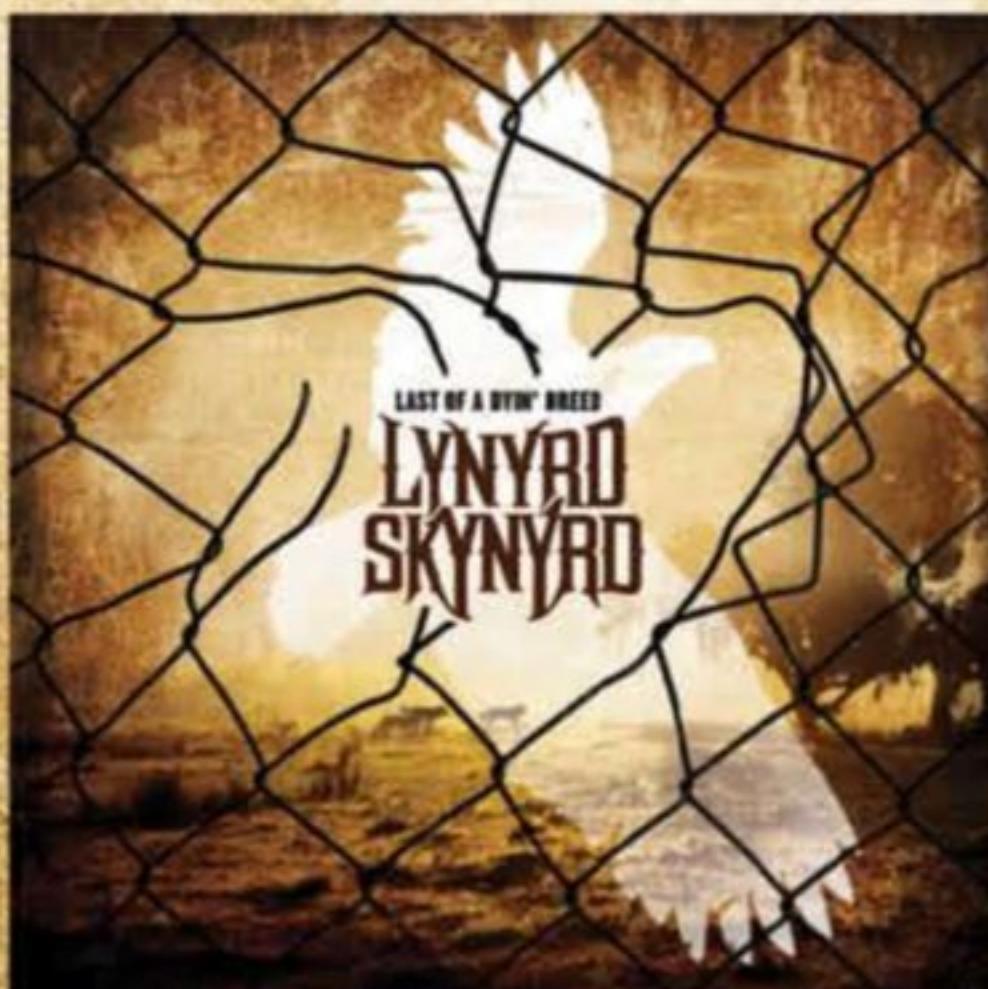
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American Pie

DON MCLEAN

The 1971 global hit that summed up a nation and spawned myriad covers was “a death song, really”, says the seasoned singer-songwriter

AMERICAN PIE IS a death song, really,” says Don McLean today. “Friends of mine who’d died in Vietnam were being brought back. There were flag-draped coffins, assassinations. Rock’n’roll and Buddy Holly had saved my mortal soul, as the song says. Holly’s plane crash in 1959 foreshadowed a series of deaths, from my father’s two years later when I was 15, which shattered my life, through to Kennedy’s. I came from a conservative, white middle-class background, and all this destroyed my belief in everything I had been taught.”

Don McLean was a regular on the New York folk circuit in the late ’60s. Taken under his wing by Pete Seeger, McLean released one album, *Tapestry*, in late 1970, which sold modestly. In March the following year, he debuted “American Pie”, in Philadelphia, while opening for Laura Nyro. Inspired by his childhood memories of reading about Buddy Holly’s death on February 3, 1959 in a newspaper, the song’s six verses then went on to deliver a coded history of rock’n’roll, from the optimism of the 1950s through to darkness at the end of the ’60s.

“The whole time we were doing it, we thought it was an album cut, because it was just too long,” remembers bassist Rob Stoner. Despite its epic length – 8 minutes 33 seconds – it became one of the biggest hits of the 1970s. “It was a summation of music, politics, life in America: everything,” says McLean.

NICKHASTED

DON MCLEAN: I was living in a little gatehouse in Cold Spring, New York on the Hudson River, and I was upstairs in the room that I used to write songs in. I started singing this slow,

opening part that was about Buddy Holly. It was just so pretty. It was like it came in on my radio. And I thought, ‘God, that’s nice.’ For a long time I just had that. Then I made up this nutty chorus that I liked, and it’s really fairly pornographic – you know, “Miss American Pie...” And then I had this idea develop about politics and music, that they flow together, parallel through history. I could see it in the ’50s and ’60s. I decided to project that forward and create a kind of rock’n’roll dream.

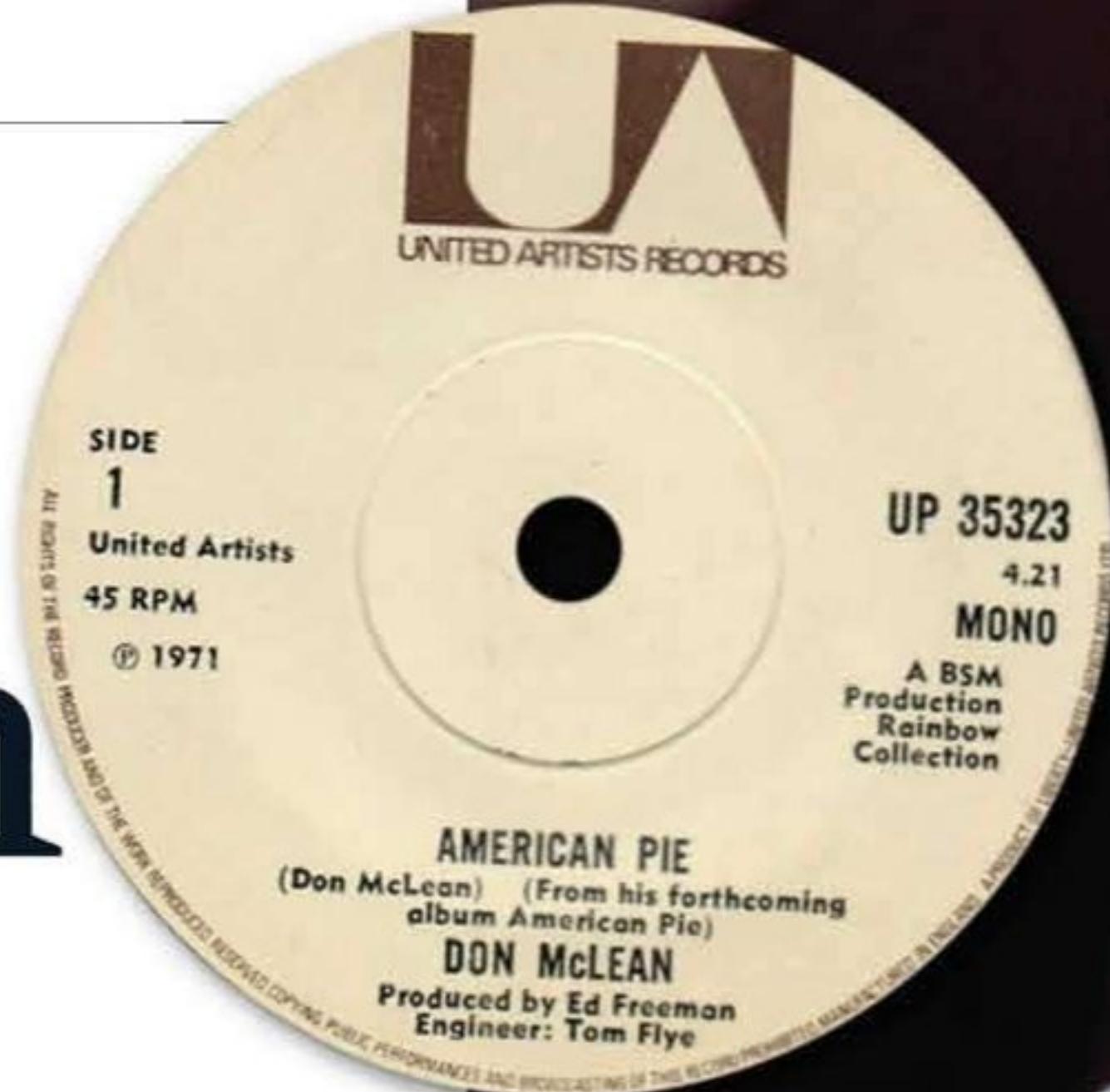
ED FREEMAN: I had only produced two or three LPs, so I was pretty green. But Don searched me out, on the basis of the first record I had made.

MCLEAN: A record called *Bird On A Wire* by one of my favourite artists, Tim Hardin, was produced by Ed, and I thought it was the best Hardin album I’d heard. So I wanted Ed for this. Unfortunately, he didn’t really like what I was doing. And I found him to be a condescending and insecure guy. So we did not get along.

FREEMAN: My taste at the time was much more towards authentic folk music, and I found him to be very commercial and self-consciously poetic. At the beginning, I wasn’t a fan.

MCLEAN: I knew that this guy had something that I wanted, and I was going to get it, but I didn’t have any idea how much bullshit I was going to have to go through.

FREEMAN: The first time I heard “American Pie” he had only written the first verse and the



KEY PLAYERS



Don McLean
Vocals,
songwriter,
acoustic guitar



Ed Freeman
Producer



David Spinozza
Guitar



Rob Stoner
Bass

chorus, and I remember saying, “Hey, that could be a hit record.” And then I heard the finished thing, and I realised there was no way in hell that was going to be a hit record.

MCLEAN: He got the rehearsal studio in uptown New York of a guy named Dick Cutler. And wisely, Ed had put together a little

group of guys – like Rob Stoner [then named Rothstein] on bass. And I think he had a piano player and maybe a drummer, and we went there and rehearsed for about a week.

ROB STONER: Our wives were friends, and so Don and I were hanging out socially and jamming. He and I rehearsed and worked up “American Pie”. He was constantly tweaking the lyrics. I thought it was a really great Buddy Holly tribute. The melody is a direct cop from Holly’s “I’m Gonna Love You Too”. It’s the same exact melody and chords! At least for the first eight bars. It’s a homage to Holly, in more ways than lyrically.



"It was everything I wanted": Don McLean in 1971

FREEMAN: Don was not comfortable with the idea of working with seasoned studio musicians. So I put together a band who were not all slick studio players, and took a bass player and a drummer and worked out the song's arrangement for a couple of weeks.

MCLEAN: That was really necessary for me. But nobody could get "American Pie" even close to right.

FREEMAN: The first verse stayed the way he played it on the guitar. It was my idea to switch it to piano, which I think he objected to.

MCLEAN: Then Ed saved the day by coming up with a piano player called Paul Griffin [who died in June, 2000], on the day of the session at the Record Plant. I was playing hard acoustic guitar. And Paul Griffin heard that, and he started playing gospel piano all over that record, and that's what made that track happen. Up until that day, it was a disaster.

DAVID SPINOZZA: Paul was famous for playing that way. Paul and I had mostly done black R&B dates. At that time, you didn't get many black or R&B musicians who got called in to play on a folk-rock record. We were playing with Aretha – that was our roots. Paul brought a sort of churchy, gospel joyousness to this tune that was about death. He brought out that juxtaposition. It's a bittersweet song.

MCLEAN: Everything was rocking and jumping, it was everything I wanted. The track itself on the record is live, with all the guys playing. Everybody felt it and just jumped all over it.

SPINOZZA: I remember the playing building in excitement. I thought that we hit on something. I didn't have a name for it.

I couldn't figure out what genre of music it was. Because Paul was doing his gospel thing over there, and then Don's acoustic guitar comes in and it goes to another level, and then I come in

halfway through on electric guitar. You've got layers that a singer-songwriter can't do by himself. It built very naturally.

FREEMAN: The body of the song was recorded all at once, except for the first verse, which has something like 16 splices. Paul Griffin, it turned out, was originally a violinist, he'd switched to piano quite recently. He was nervous about the solo, and didn't really know what to do.

SPINOZZA: I'd done thousands of hours in the studio with Paul Griffin before we did "American Pie". He was a great piano player.

TOM FLY (engineer): There are seven splices in the piano section. Paul's a great piano player, but together with Don's singing, it's two free-form, fluid things at once. So we took the razor-blade to it.

FREEMAN: I had a clear idea of how I wanted the vocal to be, and Don improvised, a lot. He was perfectly capable of singing it exactly right, but he wouldn't. So I recorded, I believe, 24 tracks of vocal, and edited out all his improvisations.

MCLEAN: There's a thing called YouTube, you can see I've always sung it exactly the same way.

STONER: You can feel the kinetic excitement of the thing coming together →

"There had never been a chart record anywhere near that long"

ED FREEMAN



McLean: "There's a sinister, dangerous quality to America..."

→ and one of the things that makes it exciting is that people didn't really know the song. Before the last verse, the track slows down for a second. It's like the end of "Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands", when you can just feel the musicians looking at each other – is this the end? There's a point where everybody's going, "Is this the place where we stop and he goes into *"I met a girl who sang the blues?"*?" It's pretty loose, man.

SPINOZZA: Also what was different was that this was a song that started in tempo, went out of tempo, to what they call *rubato*, a music term meaning he plays freely, and then all of a sudden goes back into tempo. That was used in musicals. It was never used in a pop record. Most songs started at a tempo and stayed that way.

FREEMAN: There was one take, the last one, where everybody crowded into the booth to listen to it. We were celebrating, back-slapping. There was a clear sense that this was a classic that would go down in history. But there was no sense that it would be a chart record, because there had never been one anywhere remotely that long.

FLYE: We actually got the whole thing on one side of a 45. We cut it at half-speed. But jukeboxes would have cut out before the end.

FREEMAN: Then we faded it out on one side and faded it up on the other. But the radio stations just played the album, and people went out and bought it.

FLYE: It sold millions of copies in the first couple of weeks. It took off like a rocket.

FREEMAN: At one point I asked Don, "Who are the father, the son and the holy ghost?" And he said, "They're the three men that I admire the

most." That was the only question I ever asked him about the lyric, and that was the only answer he gave me.

STONER: You can fill in the blanks about which character you think is what. I mean people are always making such a big deal about it – theses on the meaning of "American Pie" – but it's obvious. It's a didactic story of rock'n'roll up to that point. It's not very deeply coded.

FREEMAN: I was very aware of what the song was about: the loss of American innocence in the '60s, and the crushing death of the hippy movement. Somebody wrote a letter to *Life* magazine, two weeks after they wrote about "American Pie". It was a woman whose husband had been missing in action in Vietnam. And she said that she used to cry and feel sorry for herself until she heard "American Pie", and it made her realise how much we had all lost. "American Pie" was one of the first pieces of pop culture that acknowledged that there was a wound. It wasn't as if at Altamont somebody stood up and said, "OK everybody, the movement's over." "American Pie" did. It was a very important song.

MCLEAN: There's a sinister, dangerous quality to America. There's a flaw. We're a behemoth that I felt then was moving in the wrong direction,

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** Don McLean
- **Performers:** Don McLean (vocals, acoustic guitar), Paul Griffin (piano), Rob Stoner (bass, backing vocals), David Spinozza (guitar), Roy Markowitz (drums), West 44th Street Rhythm & Noise Choir [various studio personnel] (backing vocals), Ed Freeman (harmonium), Tom Flye (tambourine)
- **Producer:** Ed Freeman
- **Recorded at:** Studio A, Record Plant, New York
- **Released:** November 1971
- **UK chart position:** 2
- **US chart position:** 1

and I feel now is moving even more in the wrong direction. So all I did in writing the song and finishing it the way I did, was call the direction correctly.

FREEMAN: He played his first Carnegie Hall performance, a few months after "American Pie" came out. And he said, "There are a lot of people who I knew before who didn't much care about me, and all of a sudden they're coming up to me and trying to be friendly, and all I can say to you is: keep your distance."

MCLEAN: When you're that successful, you get sick of yourself. I cracked up. In the mid-'70s I finally just snapped, and I started to cry a lot. But I got through it.

FREEMAN: As a songwriter, he was running dry. That was his fling with greatness, but it didn't last.

MCLEAN: It's a song that replenishes itself, as I sing it now. As new things happen around it, it's always there. All the songs that I play each night lead towards that song. It was a summation of music, politics, life in America – everything.

ON RECORD Don McLean starts a UK tour on October 19. See www.don-mclean.com for details. He also releases a new DVD, *Don McLean: American Troubadour*



US No 1. Released that month in the UK, it hits No 2. The LP eventually stays in the UK chart for 53 consecutive weeks

TIMELINE

March 12, 1971

"American Pie" gets its debut when McLean supports Laura Nyro at St Joseph's University, Philadelphia

May 26, 1971

Basic track is recorded at the Record Plant, New York

November 1971

"American Pie" single

released, just after the album of the same name

January 15, 1972

"American Pie" starts its seven-week run as

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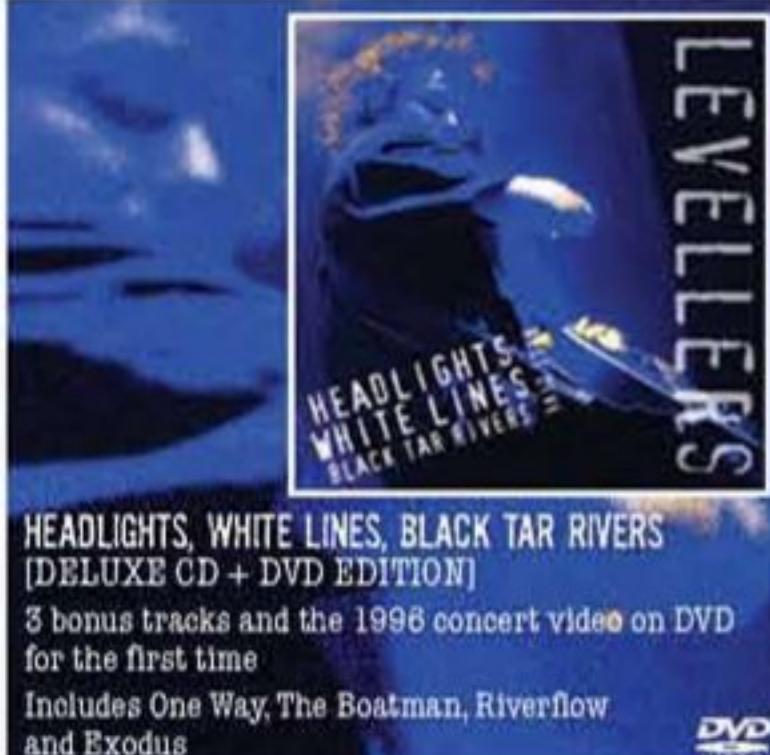
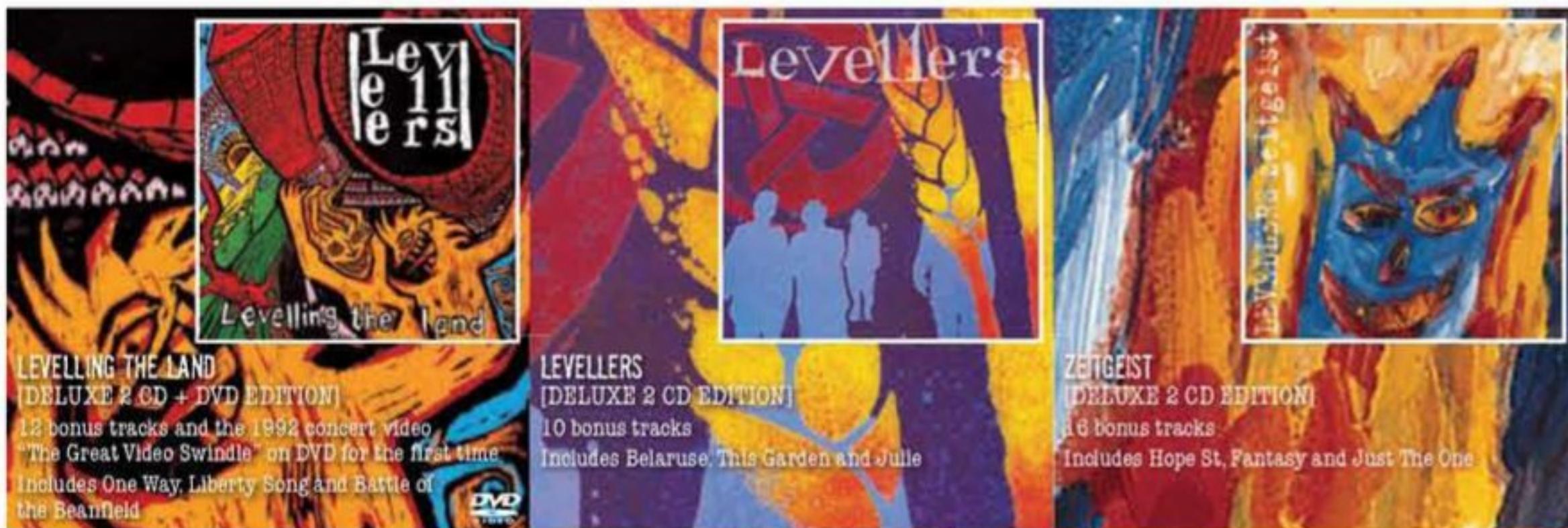
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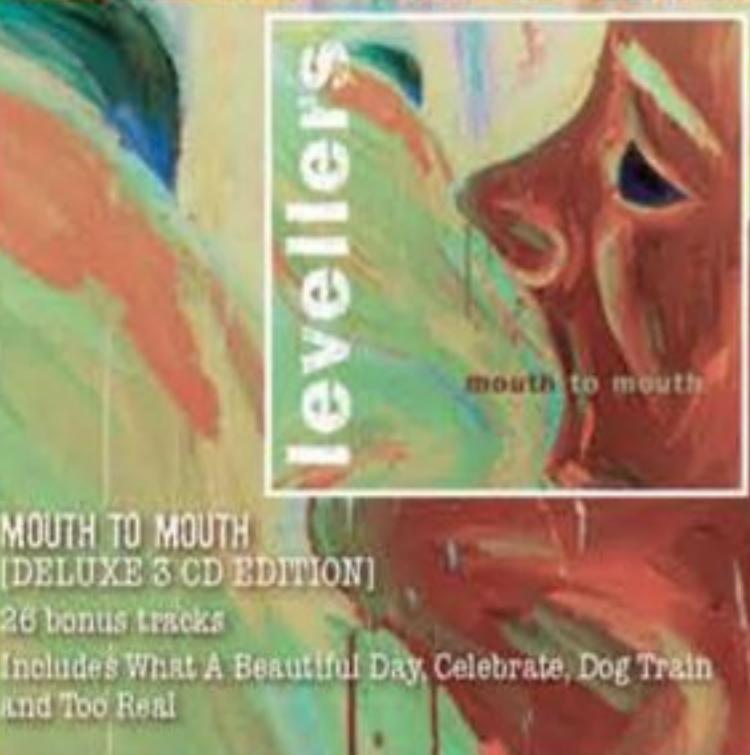
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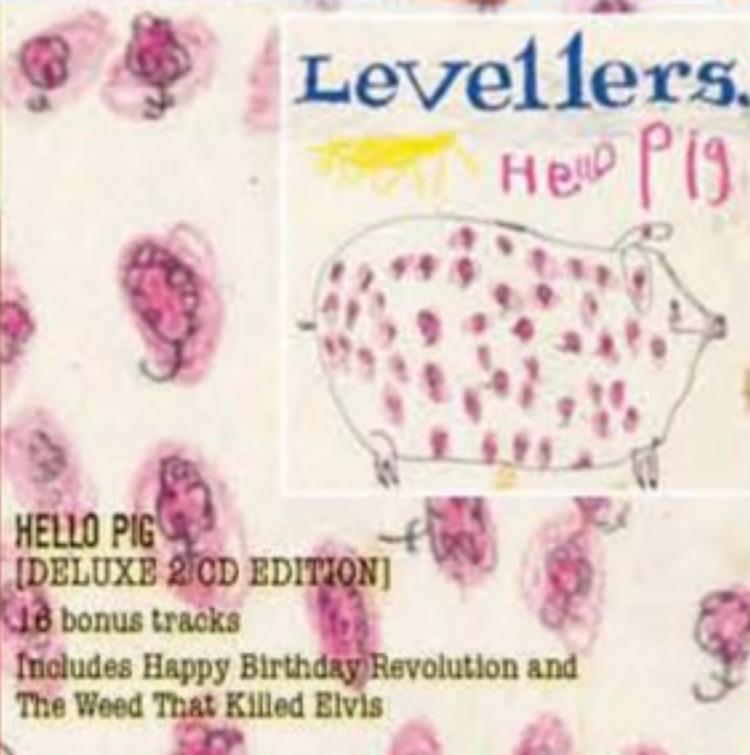
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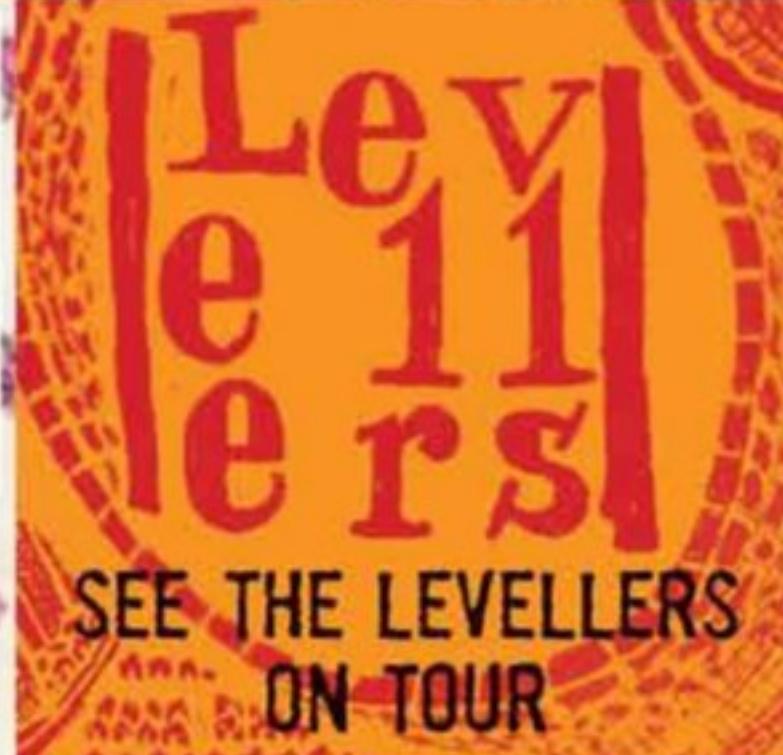
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CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE

From humble origins among the San Francisco underground, The Steve Miller Band become one of the biggest groups in America during the 1970s. Here, STEVE MILLER tells us about early friendships with blues legends, sitting in on Beatles sessions and the key to his own remarkable success: "I'm cheap and ruthless!"

Story: Andy Gill

IT'S JANUARY 29, 1969, and Steve Miller is hanging out in the temporary basement studio at Apple's Savile Row headquarters. Leader of The Steve Miller Band, one of San Francisco's hottest groups, the guitarist is on his own in London to mix the band's third album, *Brave New World*, but his engineer Glyn Johns is held up working with The Beatles on what would become *Let It Be*. George Harrison, a fan of Miller's previous albums, has invited him over to the sessions, where, the previous day, he sat silently watching The Beatles knock out "Get Back" with a casual brilliance that left Miller stunned. What would they get up to today?

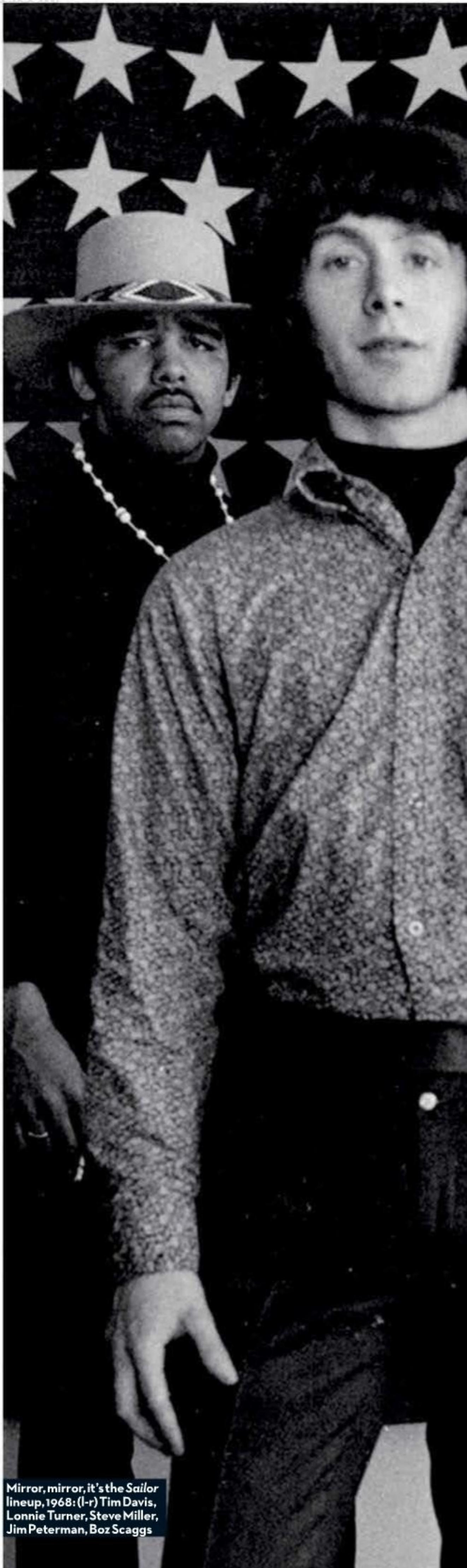
The problem is, John and Ringo are nowhere to be seen. Thumbs are twiddled, brows are furrowed, and then Paul has an idea.

"Paul invites me out into the room to jam a little," remembers Miller. "He sat down on drums, and I used Lennon's Epiphone. I showed them this tune I'd been working on, and George and I started to play. But George didn't jam that well, he wasn't a real loose, jamming-on-a-12-bar-blues kind of guy, he was all barre chords and everything straight. We played for about 10 to 15 minutes, then he left, and Paul and

I started playing, and we instantly locked in together. I showed him some guitar riffs and started kickin' his ass, and he played some drums and kicked my butt, and we had a thing goin' on. Then Glyn Johns said, 'Hold on guys, let's put that down on tape.' So we did. Paul played bass, and I added another guitar part, and I played a pedal steel part, then we started doing background vocals together. We worked on it for five or six hours."

The result, "My Dark Hour", became the closing track of *Brave New World*, one of five albums from The Steve Miller Band's early years that are being reissued by Edsel Records. "Paul and I had this very brief, intense experience," says Miller fondly. "We had this couple of days together, and I got this very close-up, inspirational musical moment. And then I didn't see Paul again for another 30 years."

It's a typical episode in the Zelig-like life of Steve Miller, a man who, en route to selling more than 30 million albums, has been involved with some of the 20th Century's most significant musical movers and shakers, participating first-hand in many cutting-edge changes →



Mirror, mirror, it's the Sailor lineup, 1968: (l-r) Tim Davis, Lonnie Turner, Steve Miller, Jim Peterman, Boz Scaggs



ILLER IS KNOWN as a stalwart of the San Francisco hippy scene who parlayed that apprenticeship into pop success through the '70s and '80s with a series of multi-million-selling hits like "The Joker" and "Take The Money And Run". But his musical history goes deeper than that, right back to Miller's infancy – when Les Paul, the creator of the electric guitar, became his godfather. Steve's parents were friends with Paul and his wife, Mary Ford, in '40s Milwaukee. Miller's dad even recorded the duo on his Magneocorder, and made plexiglass picks and pickguards for Les' guitar.

"I learned what became the master pattern of my life when I was four or five years old, hanging out with Les Paul," says Miller. "I learned how Les sped tape up and slowed it down, how Mary sang multiple harmony parts with herself," he says. "This is 1949, I'm thinking, 'So you speed tape up and slow it down, you can record multiple takes, electric guitars are cool, you can promote records, you have to do this, it's show business: I got it!'"

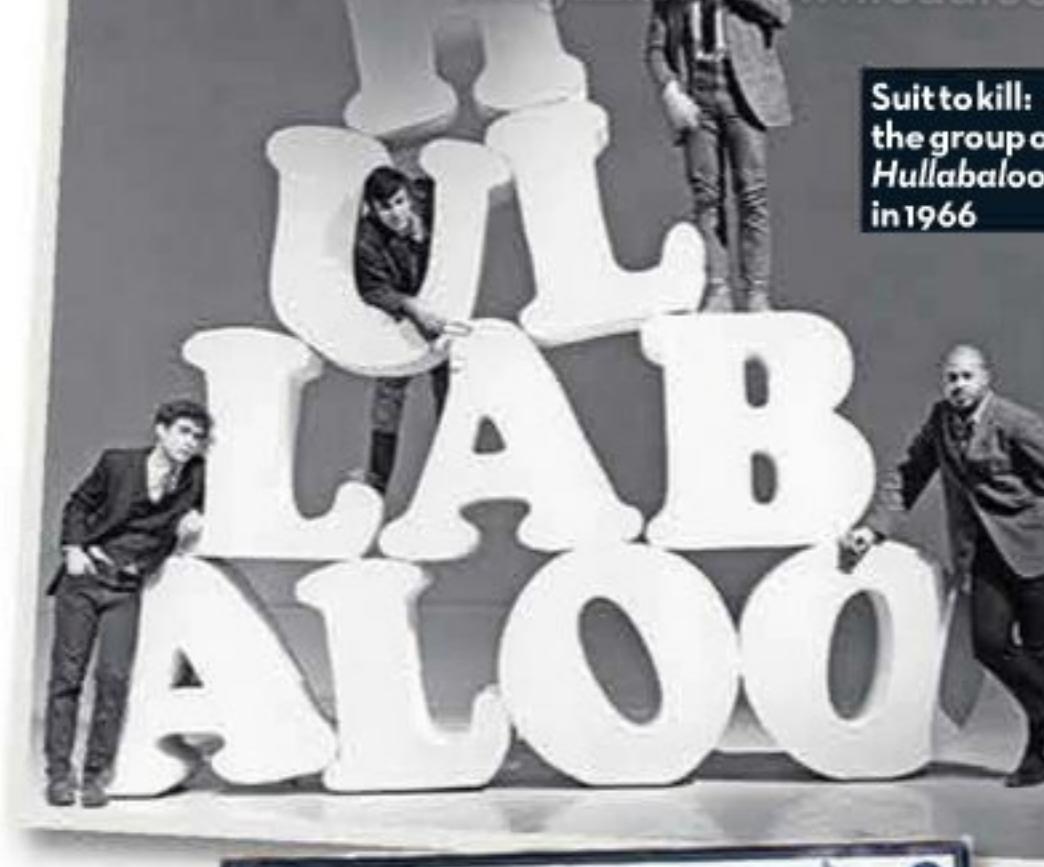
When Steve was six, his parents moved to Texas, where they were visited by a constant stream of jazz musicians. Among them, T-Bone Walker, who "knew my dad well. I still have a recording of T-Bone playing at my house, and it's absolutely breathtaking. Nineteen cuts of T-Bone and all these cats, sitting around playing requests. T-Bone taught me how to play the guitar behind my head and do the splits at the same time, which is always good to pull off when some hotshot lead guitar player's trying to burn you offstage!"

Miller himself began working professionally in 1955 at the age of 12. Having taught classmate Boz Scaggs how to play guitar, he formed a band with him, The Marksman, playing every Friday and Saturday night 'til they graduated from high school. "We were really fucking good," Miller recalls. "If you wanted to throw a big party in west Texas, you had to have my band. We backed Jimmy Reed when I was just 14."

After attending college in Wisconsin and a year at the University Of Copenhagen, Miller headed to Chicago in 1965.

"I had this talk with my parents where they asked, 'What are you going to do?', and I told them what every parent wants to hear from their child: 'I'm going to Chicago to play the blues.' My father looked like he would hit me with a board, but my mother said, 'That's a great idea, you're young, you have no responsibilities, here's a hundred bucks, leave tomorrow.'"

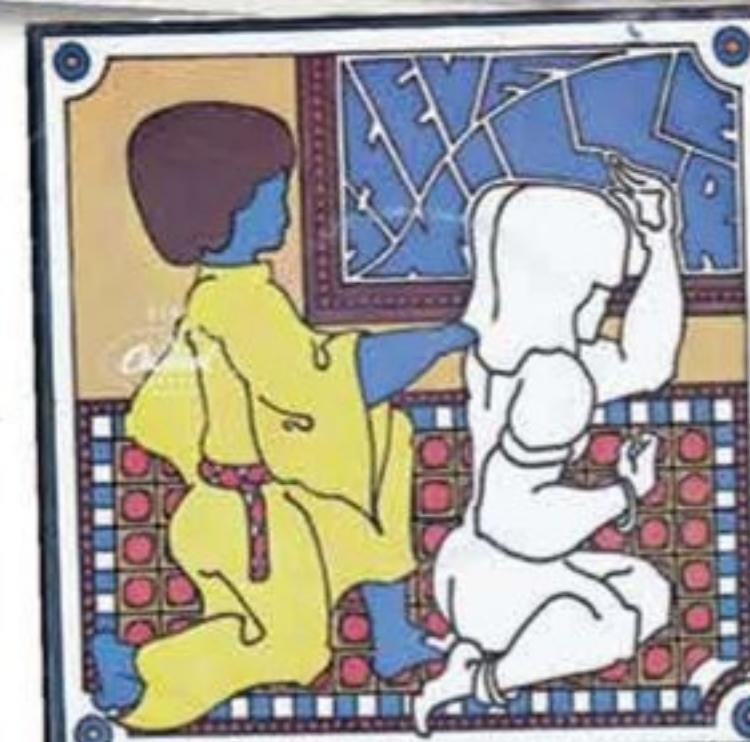
GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF STEVE MILLER



Suit to kill: the group on Hullabaloo in 1966



Miller in a shoot for *Brave New World* (1969)



Miller and Tim Davis, San Francisco



"When I did it, I had no fucking idea 'The Joker' was anything..."

STEVE MILLER

In Chicago, Miller got to play with Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf in the blues giants' twilight years, before he fetched up in San Francisco in 1966. He fell in love with the city's music scene, and a year later formed The Steve Miller Blues Band, soon shortened to The Steve Miller Band, with drummer Tim Davis, bassist Lonnie Turner and keyboardist Jim Peterman, with Boz Scaggs rejoining Miller following a period busking in Europe. He remains fondly enamoured of that era. "That was a very rare time, we can only hope that happens again in a couple of hundred years or so," says Miller. "One of those weird renaissances, 'holy shit this is the greatest thing that's happened in 200 years' kind of times."

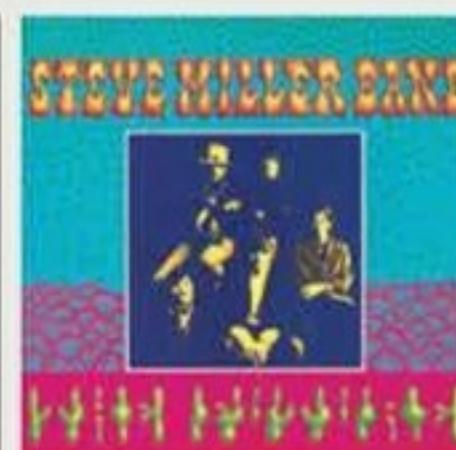
But when Miller signed with Capitol in 1967, he found it impossible to record at Capitol Studios in LA. Restricted to midnight downtime, and required to continually move their equipment from one studio to another, his band quickly grew frustrated with the conditions.

"I'd signed with Les Paul's label and thought I would have all these great resources, they'd help me make these great records," he says, "and of course what I'd done was just joined this pool of bands that were all fighting each other for

HOW TO BUY

JOURNEY FROM EDEN

Your guide to the best of Steve Miller



CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE

(CAPITOL, 1968)
An astonishingly assured debut, *Children Of The Future* featured an ambitious psychedelic suite of segued songs by Miller on Side One, tempered with a couple of Boz Scaggs originals and blues covers on the second, establishing the band's formula.

US chart position: 134

7/10



SAILOR

(CAPITOL, 1968)
Their masterpiece, *Sailor* is stuffed with great songs and atmospheric arrangements including their first hit, "Living In The USA" and the instrumental "Song For Our Ancestors". Scaggs contributes three songs, his final work with the band before going solo.

US chart: 24

9/10



BRAVE NEW WORLD

(CAPITOL, 1969)
With keyboardists Nicky Hopkins and Ben Sidran joining the new trio lineup – not forgetting 'Paul Ramon' (aka McCartney) – *Brave New World* was patchier than *Sailor* but contained enduring favourites such as "Space Cowboy", "Seasons", "Kow Kow" and "My Dark Hour".

US chart: 22

7/10

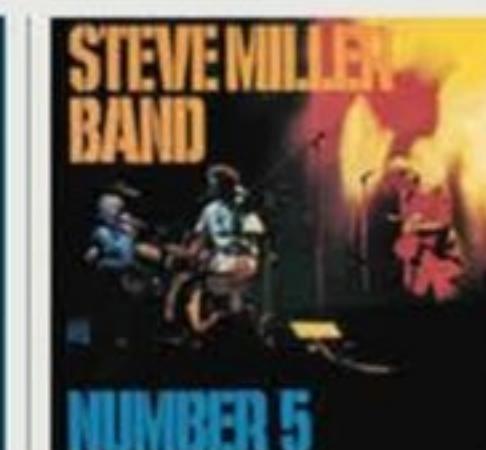


YOUR SAVING GRACE

(CAPITOL, 1969)
Another overlooked gem of psychedelic blues, this features interpretations of R'n'B numbers "Little Girl" and "Motherless Children", alongside the epic "Baby's House", perhaps the finest nine minutes of pianist Nicky Hopkins' career.

US chart: 38

8/10



NUMBER 5

(CAPITOL, 1970)
With changes in lineup, producer and studio – Cinderella Sound in Nashville – this was a transitional album on which Miller tried leavening the band's blues and psychedelia with country tinges courtesy of the renowned session crew. US chart: 23

6/10

THE POMPATUS OF LOVE

Some people call him Maurice, 'cos he speaks of the pompadus of love - so, Steve, what is this pompadus of which you speak?

“THE POMPATUS OF love is nothing. It's

kind of a reference to an R'n'B track I had heard about a million years before, one of those 'come closer darling, while I do whatever it is I'm going to do with you' kind of things. To me, it just reminds me of some guy with a pompadour. It was just tossed off, one of those lighter moments in the studio. I get about 10 letters a year from lawyers asking me what the pompadus of love means. Words are very important in the legal world, and lawyers always want to know what things mean: 'Steve, I was wondering if you could tell me... if you need legal services, just call me, tell me what the pompadus of love means.' I don't know, what the hell does it mean? You tell me!”



The hit factory: The Steve Miller Band just prior to "The Joker" release, 1973

the same resources." On the second night, Miller called up the executive with whom he'd signed for six figures, and told him he could have his money back. The threat worked: he was told he could pick his own producer and studio.

"So we started looking around, and talked to George Martin about maybe doing a record," says Miller. "He said he would do it, but he wanted points and everything, and I'm cheap and ruthless, and wouldn't pay him! Brilliant businessman that I am!"

Instead, Miller chose Glyn Johns, who had been working as Martin's engineer on The Beatles' records. "I learned a lot from Glyn," reveals Miller, "because he had been working with pop groups making pop records, and was able to bring a lot of organisation to our sessions."

The band decamped to London in early 1968, where they recorded their debut, the psychedelic blues album *Children Of The Future*, at Olympic Studios. "They loved rock'n'roll, they loved us, and we loved them," Miller recalls – though he made life hell for his producer. "I browbeat Glyn Johns every step of the way! I wanted my records to be dry and present, and he liked lots of echo. Every step of the process I was breathing down his neck."

The result, however, was some of the most potent records to come out of the San Francisco scene, particularly the band's

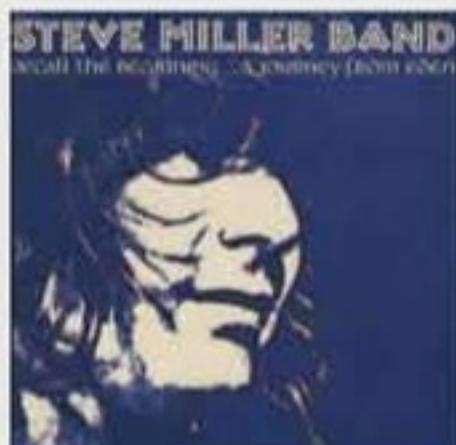
second album *Sailor* from 1968. Recorded back in the States – and the last album to feature Boz Scaggs in the band – it's a triumphant confluence of great songwriting, peerless playing and imaginative arrangements. But life in San Francisco was getting hairier, in more than one sense.

"We had a big old house in the Haight-Ashbury where the band lived," recalls Miller. "I was there for two years, then I got my contract and went to London, we were gone a couple of months, and when we got back, [radical community action group] the Diggers had broken in, taken everything and given it away. Our house was stripped, even the sinks and toilets!"

UT ALL WEIRD renaissances come to an end, and for Miller, frustration with Capitol's shortcomings hastened his resolution to take greater control of his career. The final straw came when he was in hospital in 1971, having broken his neck in a car accident, and the company bunged together a bunch of outtakes as *Rock Love*, by far the weakest album in his catalogue. After pulling all his tapes from Capitol's library, he put together a new band with Gerald Johnson on bass, Dick Thompson on keyboards and John King on drums, and took hold of the production reins, making *The Joker* as a last throw of the die in 1973.

"I got rid of everybody who was telling me how

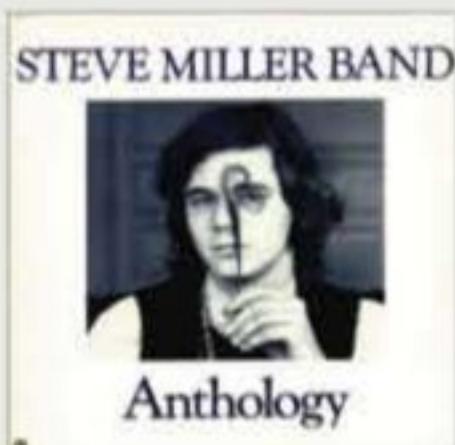
PETER MAZEL/SUNSHINE/RETNA



RECALL THE BEGINNING... A JOURNEY FROM EDEN

(CAPITOL, 1972)
The weak first side is followed by a beautifully sequenced second climaxing in the string-laced epic, "Journey From Eden", recently rehabilitated as Chill-Out Guilty Pleasure and Laurel Canyon Classic. US chart: 109

7/10



ANTHOLOGY

(CAPITOL, 1972)
Comprehensive 16-track survey of Miller's pre- "Joker" career, short on *Sailor* but otherwise including virtually all you need to hear. But beware: the CD edition edits "Baby's House" down from nine minutes to less than three.

US chart: 58

9/10



THE JOKER

(CAPITOL, 1973)
Despite continuing his trademark blend of R'n'B covers and spacey originals, *The Joker* had a lighter, jauntier tone than previous SMB albums, and most importantly, a massive hit single that shunted Miller's career into overdrive.

US chart: 2

8/10

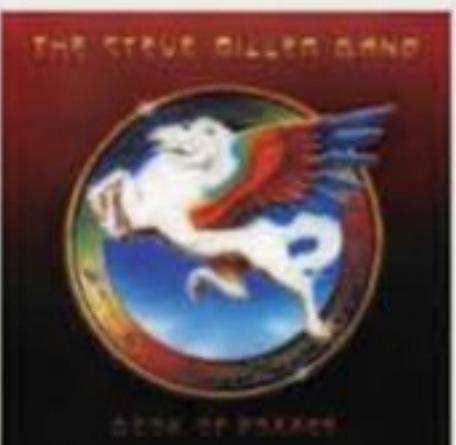


FLY LIKE AN EAGLE

(MERCURY, 1976)
The emblematic Miller album, on which his songwriting smarts and grasp of studio technology produce a string of era-defining classic hits including "Rock'n Me", "Take The Money And Run" and the title track. A brilliant blend of bonhomie and technology.

US chart: 3; UK 11

9/10

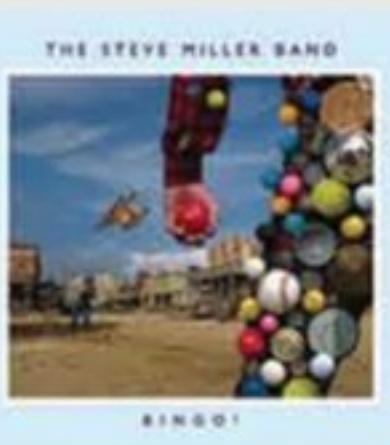


BOOK OF DREAMS

(MERCURY, 1977)
Recorded at the same sessions as its predecessor, this continued Miller's run of hits with "Jet Airliner" and "Jungle Love", but had rather more filler than *Fly Like An Eagle*.

US chart: 2; UK 12

7/10



BINGO! LET YOUR HAIR DOWN

(ROADRUNNER, 2010/2011)
Miller returns to his first love with two collections of blues covers given a pop sheen, his easy-going charm evident on "Tramp", "Ooh Poo Pah Doo" and BB King's once ubiquitous "Rock Me Baby", on which he duels guest axe-hero Joe Satriani to a standstill.

US chart: 37 (Bingo!)/8/10

→ I should do it, what was wrong and why I should have this person play on my record," he says. "I just had to move on and start making my own records, and the first one that I produced, ha ha, was the one that finally had a hit single!"

He delivered the album to Capitol, told them to make sure it was in the stores, and set off on tour.

"We used to do 60-city tours," he explains. "Brutal, but we were young and we loved it. I went touring, and suddenly 'The Joker' started taking off: it had nothing to do with Capitol working it, every radio station in the country picked up on it and all of a sudden – zamm! – it was a monster hit. I got home and there was a cheque for \$300,000 that had been in my mailbox for six weeks, stuffed in there with junk mail!"

What might appear to be a hook-packed trifle of engaging simplicity, from its list of aliases to its wolf-whistle guitar to its singalong chorus, "The Joker" became a serious hit – going on to sell 500,000 copies and pulling its parent album into the Top 5, a place The Steve Miller Band had never been before. At the time, Miller didn't realise its potency.

"When I did it, I had no fucking idea 'The Joker' was anything," he laughs. "Usually, a hit single has three hooks, but 'The Joker' has five. I was just doing the best I could, and I struck lucky. Now, with hindsight, it's: What a clever record! I played it last night to 8,000 people, and they loved it!"

THE JOKER" was a pivotal moment in Miller's career, both a vindication of his abilities and the key to controlling his own destiny. He pulled together everything he had learnt about making music, and devised a lighter, contemporary pop sound that incorporated new synthesiser technology alongside his trademark guitar flourishes. His next two albums, *Fly Like An Eagle* (1976) and *Book Of Dreams* (1977), were recorded together but released separately: had they been a double-album, it would have been possibly the most hit-stuffed album ever, as a string of infectious singles including "Take The Money And Run", "Rock'n Me", "Fly Like An Eagle", "Jet Airliner", "Jungle Love" and "Swingtown" sold in the millions worldwide.

But as the band grew more popular, so their star waned with tastemakers, especially as punk rock took off in America in the early '80s.

"Everyone liked the band, and we were all over the radio, so the journalists turned against us," recalls Miller. "We went from being this cool underground band to being that clown who wrote 'The Joker'! I thought my career was over after 'Abracadabra': that was my biggest single, the No 1 record in the world in 1982. Yet when I put it out, Capitol basically told me to get lost. They weren't going to help me tour, they didn't have good feedback on it, and radio was turning towards punk music."

"I had a different contract in Europe, with Phonogram, so I called Bhaskar Menon at EMI and told him, 'Y'know what, Bhaskar? Since you're not prepared to help me, I'm cancelling my sold-out 35-date American tour and I'm going to Europe.' When I got to London, the song was already No 1 everywhere in the world except the United States. I toured Europe and came back to the States, and both the album and single were No 1, and the 20,000-capacity sheds were just opening up. So I came back with a No 1, went to do 11 sheds, and there were like, 3,500 people in places that held 20,000. I thought, 'Wow, I'm screwed, my career is over!' So I stopped touring. I bought a boat, started touring up and down the Inside Passage, up to Alaska, having adventures."

Miller began touring again in 1989, but this time he found himself in the fortunate position of not having to make records for Capitol.

"When I came back touring again in the 1990s, I was selling a million and a half records a year, without even having to talk to Capitol Records," he says. "I didn't want

ACID FLASHBACK

"I THINK I'VE BEEN DOSED!"

The perils of touring with the Dead

WHEN STEVE MILLER moved to San Francisco, his act already honed by a dozen years of playing to redneck Texans and hardcore Chicago blues fanatics, he enjoyed the music scene but wasn't initially impressed by some of the musicians' abilities.

"When I got out to San Francisco, the Grateful Dead were standing around stoned, trying to tune their guitars for 10 minutes between each tune," he says. "They were a bunch of folkies that had been playing banjos and acoustics, and their drug dealer/manager had gone out and bought them amplifiers and electric guitars and Beatle boots and told them, 'Now you're an electric band.'



The Grateful Dead live in 1992, featuring Miller (centre)

That's kinda how the San Francisco bands got started."

But he grew to love the Dead, and hankering after a taste of the old days, went out on tour with them "just for fun" in 1992. It proved quite an experience, for his manager at least.

"We played to 800,000 people in 10 days. On the first date, my manager and I walked to the press box to catch the Dead's show, and we had to cut through the stage-right corner of the crowd to get there. We're sitting watching the show when my manager says, 'Y'know, I'm beginning to get little berries and cherries floating in front of my eyes, I think I've

been dosed.' They had sprayed the crowd with acid – the kind of stuff that if you touch it, you can taste it in a millisecond, it just goes right through your body. So the first step of the first show, I wind up walking my manager round the parking lot for 12 hours! But for the grace of God, it could've been me!

"But it was fun to see the Dead – there'd be 20,000 people camped outside who didn't get in, they'd be selling harem pants, nose rings and incense. This is Kansas and Indiana: it was like, 'We're moving in, we've come for your children, there's 30,000 of us, we'll be camping at your football stadium – with legal permits!'"



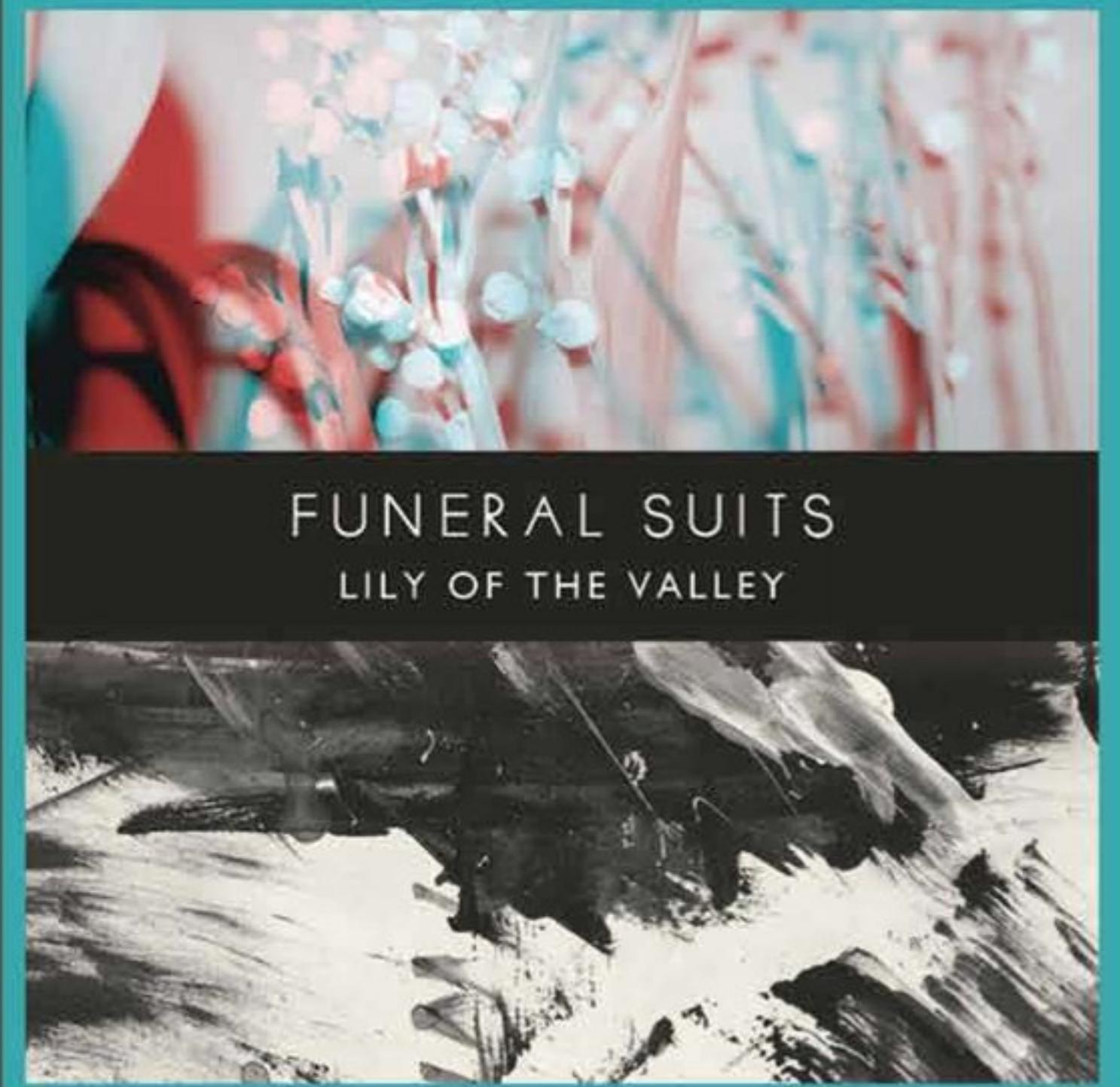
Double trouble: Miller rocks his double-neck Gibson SG

those assholes involved in my business. They couldn't run a lemonade stand, much less a record company. I was selling all this stuff, and I didn't need them, so I didn't bother releasing albums."

Eventually, of course, he returned to recording again after a 17-year hiatus, with his excellent recent albums of blues covers, *Bingo!* and *Let Your Hair Down*, both – ironically – recorded with Glyn Johns' brother Andy as co-producer. Though never in danger of challenging Miller's earlier commercial feats, they demonstrate his continued mastery of the tributaries that have fed into his own musical development since he first picked up a guitar. "It was long work, a lot of hard guitar work, where you go back in and do it over to try and get it the best it can be," he says. "And I kinda needed to do that to get back into working shape."

Now he's back in shape, there's no stopping him. His next project, he reveals, is one which "chews up" the Great American Songbook by matching jazz tunes with blues lyrics – singing "CC Rider" over Miles' "All Blues"; or Jimmy Reed lyrics over Coltrane's "Mr Day". "It's sort of a way of moving these two great forms forward," he explains. "Both blues and jazz stopped in the '60s, and nothing really great's happened since, really. What I'm working on now I think is the best stuff I've done in my life, but it's not pop music. Now that there's no record business, I love making records!"

Special Editions of *Children Of The Future*, *Sailor*, *Brave New World*, *Your Saving Grace* and *Number 5* are available on Edsel from October 8; Steve Miller plays London's Roundhouse on October 20



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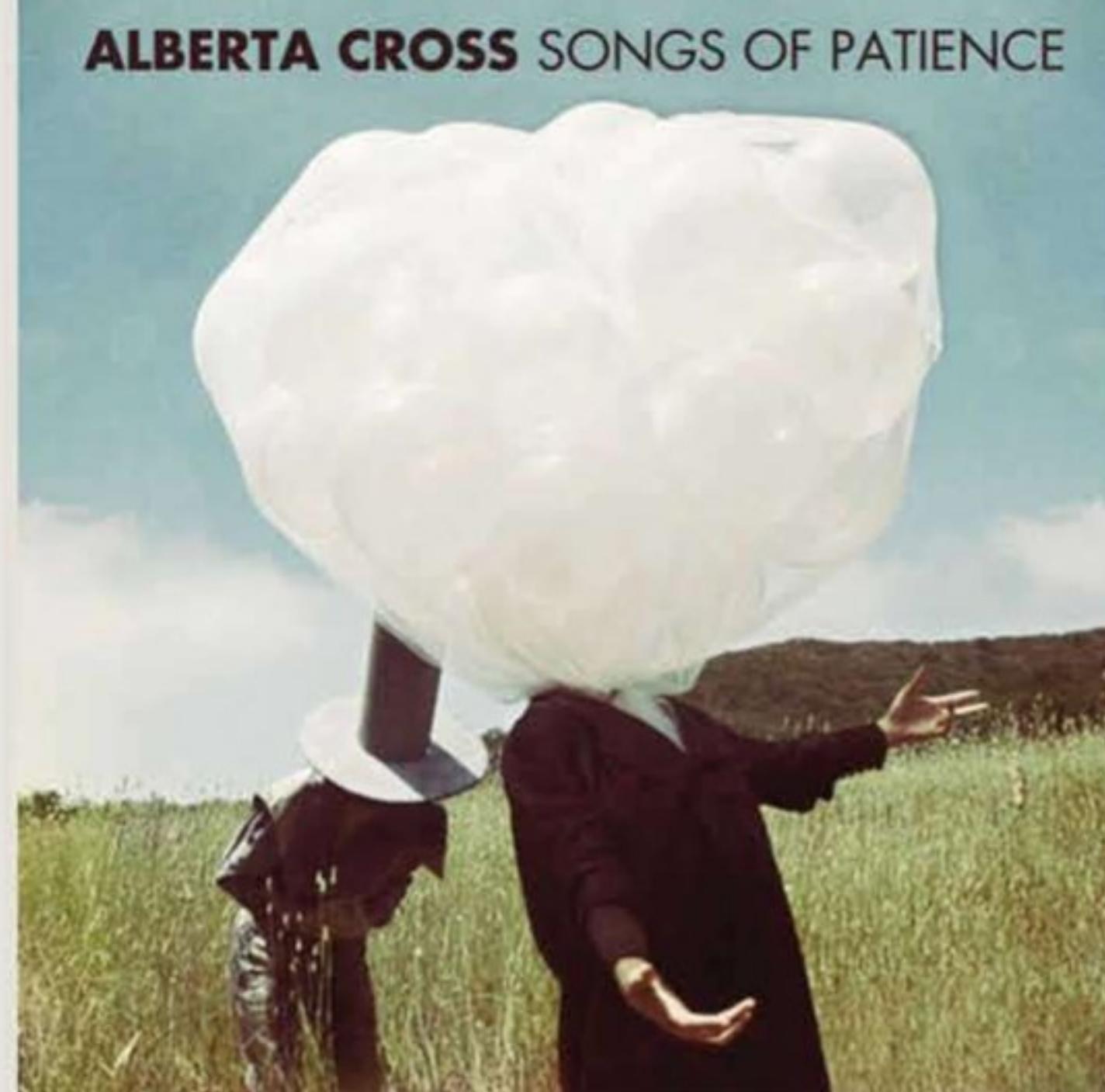
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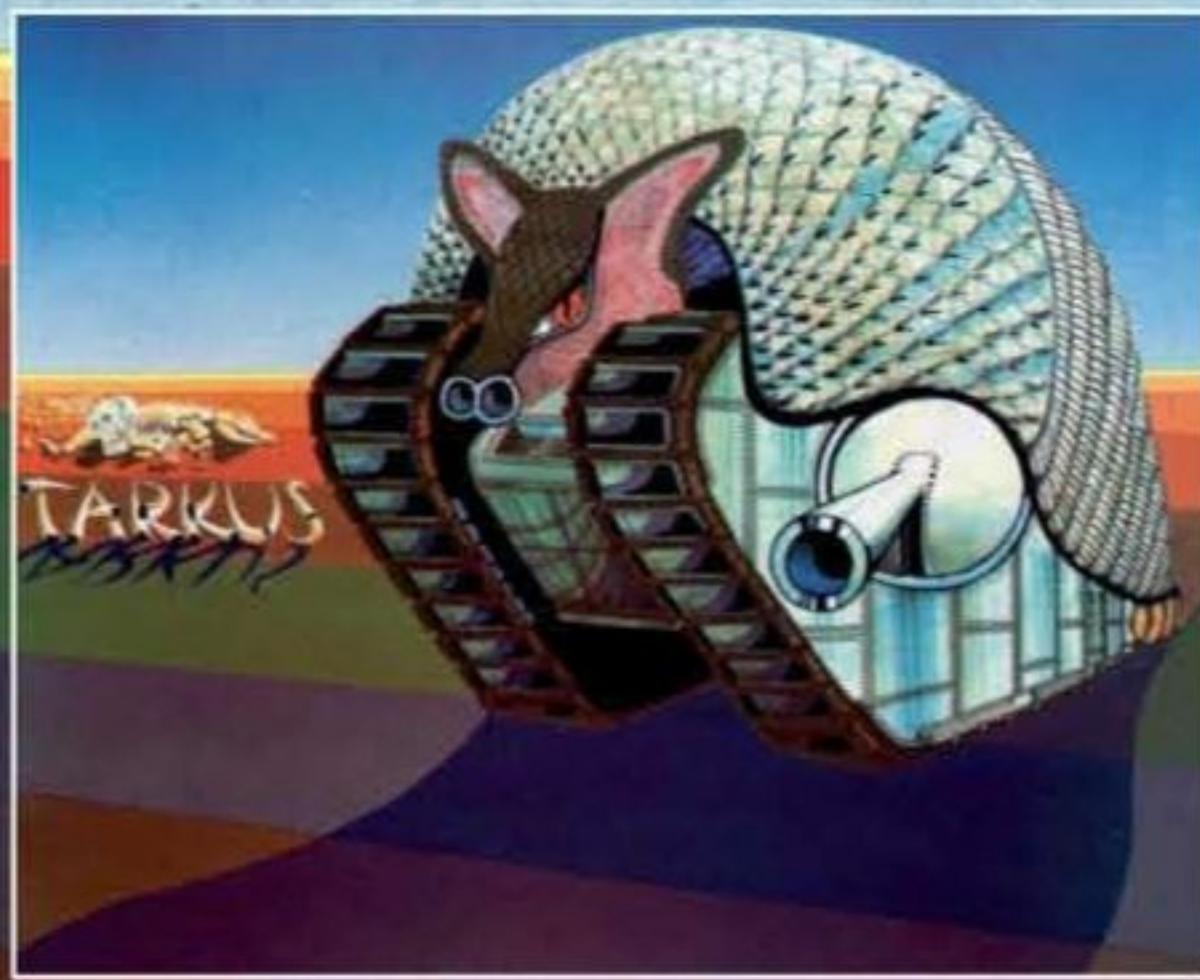
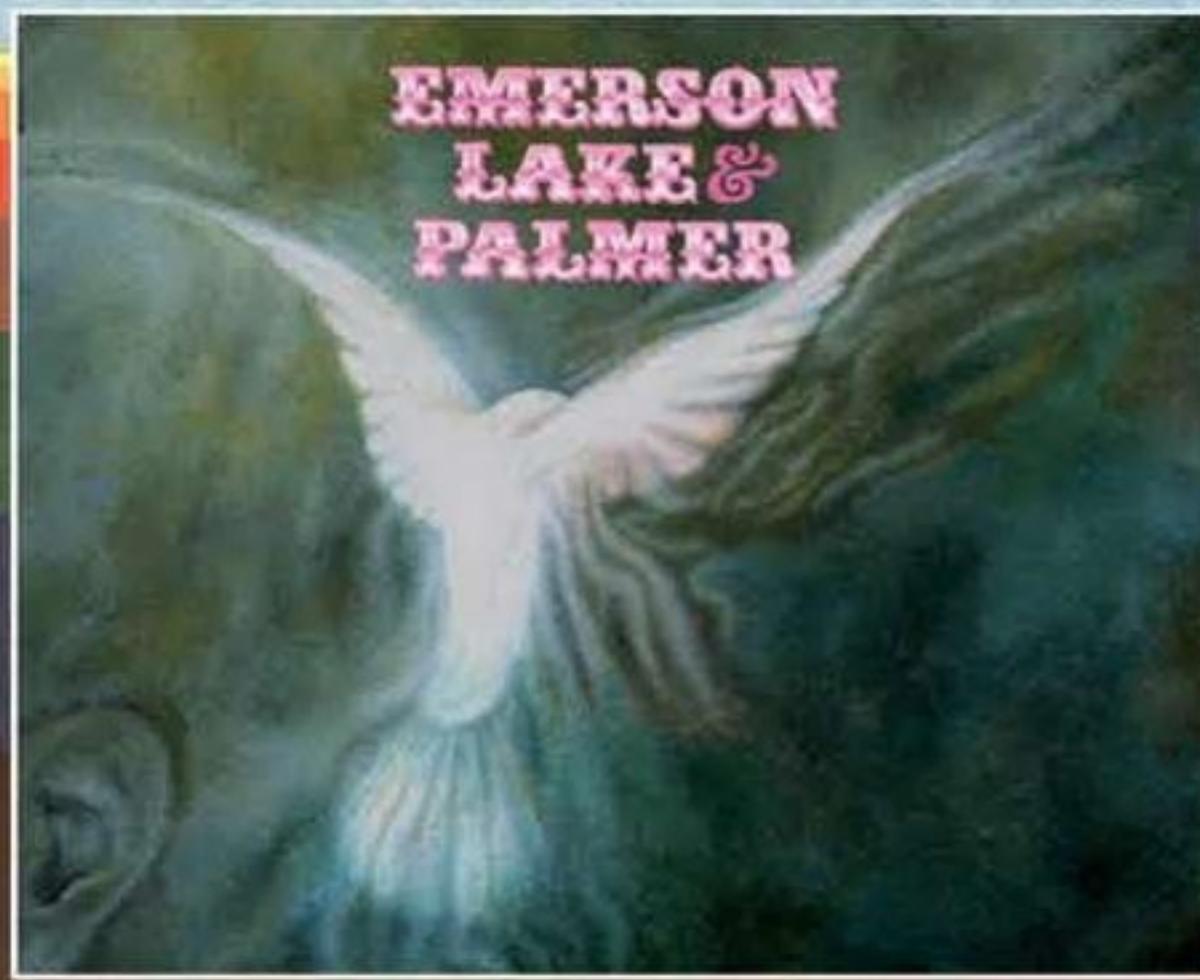
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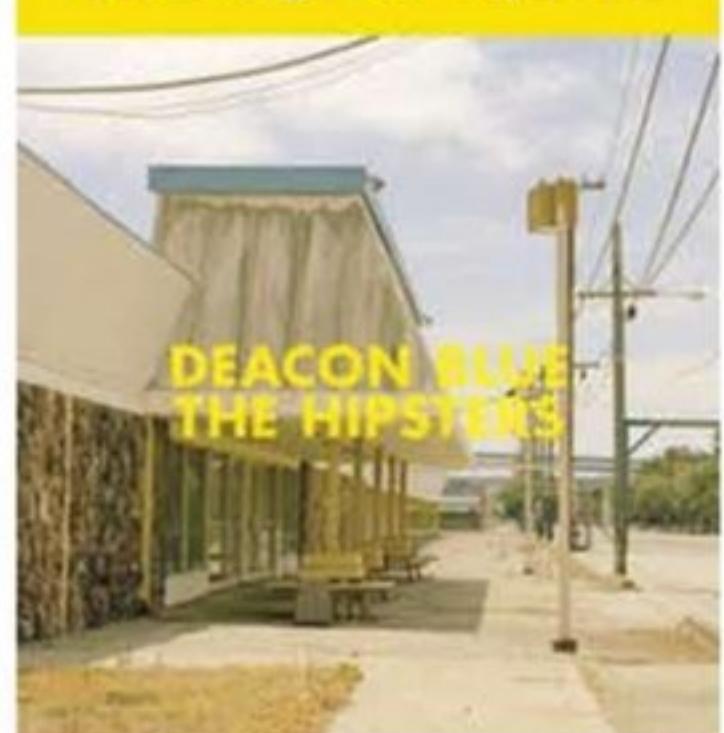


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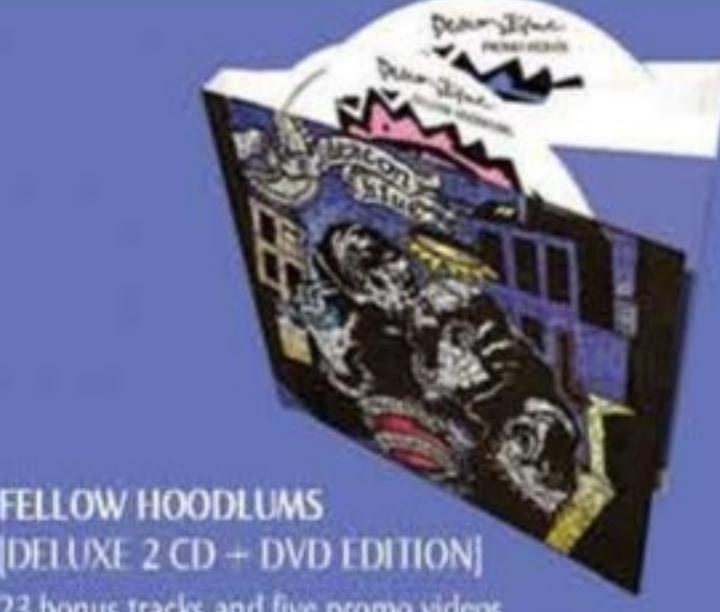
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NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE

Psychedelic Pill

REPRISE

Heavy! Shakey takes the longest, strangest trip of his career... By John Mulvey

8/10

NEIL YOUNG IS NOT, at a guess, an artist who suffers much from writer's block. In the past few years, many of his albums have felt like spontaneous dispatches from an over-productive mind. He has been provoked into action by a useless president, and by an obsessive need to apply driving metaphors to America's parlous economic state. Some projects have been shaped by a new relationship – with, say, producer Daniel Lanois – while others have stemmed from reunions with old collaborators, as Young cycles through the musicians he has relied

upon, with an admittedly capricious brand of loyalty, for over four decades. It is easy, too, to imagine Young foraging in his archives, repeatedly postponing the next volume of his retrospective endeavours when something old stimulates him into creating something new, at speed.

Talking to *Uncut* a few months ago, Young gave the impression that bashing out a book came just as simply. "Writing was a very easy thing to do," he told Jaan Uhelszki, "things came out." Later, though, he suggested that his artistic hyperactivity was born of necessity: "They paid me some money →

TRACKLIST

- 1 Driftin' Back
- 2 Psychedelic Pill (Phased Mix)
- 3 Ramada Inn
- 4 Born In Ontario
- 5 Twisted Road
- 6 She's Always Dancing
- 7 For The Love Of Man
- 8 Walk Like A Giant
- 9 Psychedelic Pill (Alt Mix)

Live with Crazy Horse on day one of the Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, August 10, 2012: (l-r) Frank Sampedro, Billy Talbot and Young



to write the book," he said, "and that means I don't have to go on the road [*he has subsequently, of course, gone back on the road*]. I spend money as soon as I get it. I don't care how much money I have, I can use it to do something."

In 2012, then, this haphazard magnate has found a cunning new way to build multiple revenue streams from one idea. First, he wrote what may be an autobiography: *Waging Heavy Peace*, due to be published this autumn. Secondly, he reconvened the doughty Crazy Horse to channel folk songs remembered from his youth into a scrappy, invigorating album, *Americana*. Finally, Young kept Ralph Molina, Billy Talbot and a notably engaged Frank Sampedro around for further sessions, that have coalesced into the 35th and longest studio album of his career: *Psychedelic Pill*, a remarkable series of jams that keep returning to the subject of writing a memoir.

Psychedelic Pill opens, quaintly, with a kind of acid flashback. As "Driftin' Back" begins, Young is alone with his acoustic guitar, "dreaming about the way things sound now/Write about them in my book", and grappling with the relationship between himself and his readers. After about 80 seconds,

Crazy Horse join him for some unusually sweet, CSNY-like harmonies, but in an audacious coup de théâtre, they are gradually overwhelmed by another, electric version of the song. A looming jam is faded in, midway through what proves to be one of many protean solos.

If "Driftin' Back" is anything to go by, *Waging Heavy Peace* will be inventive, idiosyncratic, digressive and preposterously long. "Driftin' Back" ebbs and flows for 27 minutes, anchored – if that's the right word – by Ralph Molina's highly personal interpretation of keeping time, while Young sorts through a wide selection of his most languid and mellifluous attack strategies. The best antecedent might be "Slip

Away" on 1996's undervalued *Broken Arrow*, an album that shares a good few similarities, at least sonically, with *Psychedelic Pill*. Verses here are strewn randomly across the rugged terrain, impressionistic snippets from various rants and reveries about the acts of creation and meditation, about "blocking out my anger" and, evidently, succumbing to it. "Don't want my MP3," he protests at one stage (somewhat ironically, given how *Psychedelic Pill* can only be reviewed as a digital stream), before complaining about the use of

Picasso in wallpaper design. Much, much later, he will announce, bafflingly, "Gonna get me a hip-hop haircut," and eventually conclude, more plausibly, "Finding my religion/I might be a pagan..."

As a method of repelling the sceptics, it's hard to think of a more effective album opener than "Driftin' Back" in anyone's catalogue. For those faithful Rusties who relished the "Horse Back" jam – a horizontal, 37-minute extrapolation of "Fuckin' Up" and "Cortez The Killer", posted on *neilyoung.com* this January to herald the return of Crazy Horse – the good news is that *Psychedelic Pill* features three more new classics in that unhurried, expansive style. Two of them, "Ramada Inn" and "Walk Like A Giant", will already be familiar to fans who've listened assiduously to bootlegs of the recent Crazy Horse American tour.

"Ramada Inn" (16:50) is the more tender of the pair, with an uncharacteristically nuanced and coherent narrative about a long-term relationship being tested by alcoholism. The presence in recent setlists of "Love And Only Love", from 1990's *Ragged Glory*, gives a clue as to the elegiac tone that Young conjures up with both his voice and his guitar, and the gentleness that he solicits from his traditionally rough and ready bandmates. Meanwhile, "Walk Like A Giant" (16:29; live, the Arc-style clanging finale stretches for 10 more minutes) finds Young's questing solos brought back down to earth by a jauntily whistled refrain. The subject matter will be familiar from many of the vigorous and strange albums Young has made since

As "Walk Like A Giant" sputters to a close, Young has rarely sounded so furious and potent

Greendale in 2003 – namely, the failure of his generation to deliver on their strident promises to save the world. "I used to walk like a giant on the land," he sings, "Now I feel like a leaf floating on the stream." But if the lyrics allude to defeat, he manifestly still believes in the transformative possibilities of an electric guitar solo. As "Walk Like A Giant" sputters to its conclusion, he has rarely sounded so furious, and so potent.

In contrast, the fourth lengthy track, "She's Always Dancing", is a comparative trinket, clocking in at 8:33. Evidently delighted by "Driftin' Back"'s opening gambit, Young repeats the trick, letting an a cappella intro be consumed by another torrid and ecstatic jam, this one in the vein of "Like A Hurricane". The protagonist, a hazily drawn free spirit much given to "burning", is very like the woman in the "shiny dress" who practises her "party moves" in the title track. "Psychedelic Pill" itself is pretty flimsy stuff, in which Young finds a decent riff and lets a fragment of a tune cling on to it for dear life: he even introduced it, during an August show at Red Rocks, Colorado, by admitting, "It's a new song but it sounds exactly like an old song. I don't even know what it is." "Cinnamon Girl" might be the reflex answer, but an even closer analogue is "Sign Of Love" from *Le Noise* (2010). The thinnest song on the album, Young stubbornly plays it twice, once in a "Phased Mix" that subjects the entire track to strafing effects, presumably in a stab at psychedelic resonance, or else as a crude, homebrewed response to Daniel Lanois' sonic gerrymandering on *Le Noise*.

"Twisted Road" is a good-natured amble through nostalgic reference points ("Like A Rolling Stone", Hank Williams, Roy Orbison, "listening to the Dead on the radio"), written for what became the *Le Noise* sessions: Crazy Horse reportedly rehearsed it before they were dismissed in favour of Lanois' gadgetry. "For The Love Of Man", a heartfelt bit of schmaltz, is *Psychedelic Pill*'s "Hitchhiker" or "Ordinary People" – an unreleased curio plucked from the archives and revamped, for obscure reasons. Bootleg live versions of "For The Love Of Man", often called "I Wonder Why", date it from 1981, and it shares an inspiration – Young's son, Ben, who has cerebral palsy – with that year's *Re-ac-tor*, if not a style.

Psychedelic Pill runs for nearly 88 minutes, across two CDs, three vinyl records, or one of Young's beloved Blu-Ray discs. It's the work of a man still preoccupied with concepts of liberty, who still feels the need – both spiritually and, it seems, financially – to work, but who has engineered himself into a position where he can carry out his business with extraordinary freedom. Jonathan Demme, the director who has now collaborated on three films with Young, told Jaan Uhelszki, "Before Neil had the aneurysm [in 2005] he told me he used to feel like a giant, and now he feels like a leaf in the stream... It was a watershed moment. It's allowed him to take bigger risks."

To some, *Psychedelic Pill* will seem like a monumental work of self-indulgence. To others, though, its heft and eccentricity make it one of the purest expressions of Young's genius to date. At its centre is one last song, a cranky, boisterous little country number called "Born In Ontario", which compresses the themes of this enthralling record into a digestible nugget distantly related to "Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere". "Born In Ontario" breezily encompasses roots, family, rough-hewn philosophy, the pursuit of freedom, life on the road, and the consolations of writing: "Once in a while, when things go wrong/I pick up a pen, scribble on a page/Try to make sense of my inner rage."

Like many things that Neil Young sings, it comes across as rather facile on paper. In the context of this mammoth album, though, juxtaposed against so much eloquent and emotional guitarplay, it encapsulates the joy, depth and paradox of *Psychedelic Pill*: an album, inspired by the writing of a book, that is at its most profound when the words are swamped by a great, irresistible weight of music.



LONG MAY THEY RUN...

Neil Young's 20 longest studio songs!

THE MEATINESS OF *Psychedelic Pill*'s songs are confirmed by this chart of Neil Young's studio epics, which shows that three of them have taken up residence in the top four. Indeed, the data makes it seem that Young has started stretching out more in the past decade or so, though that may well be the extra time allotted him by CDs (and, needless to say, Blu-Ray discs). One wonders how long, say, "Cowgirl In The Sand" might have lasted, if Young hadn't been restricted to two sides of vinyl back in 1969: on the *Live At Fillmore East* set recorded in 1970, it had grown to 16:09. The "Cowgirl" on 2000's *Road Rock Volume One* is Young's longest live album cut (18:11). A couple of surprising absences. "Like A Hurricane" and "Cortez The Killer" might have seemed like shoo-ins, but the original studio jams only lasted for 8'20 and 7'29 respectively. Live, of course, it was quite another matter – "Hurricane" had more or less doubled in length when it was essayed on *Weld* in 1991.



- 1 "DRIFTIN' BACK" (PSYCHEDELIC PILL, 2012) 27'37
- 2 "ORDINARY PEOPLE" (CHROME DREAMS II, 2007) 18'13
- 3 "RAMADA INN" (PSYCHEDELIC PILL, 2012) 16'50
- 4 "WALK LIKE A GIANT" (PSYCHEDELIC PILL, 2012) 16'29
- 5 "CHANGE YOUR MIND" (SLEEPS WITH ANGELS, 1994) 14'39
- 6 "NO HIDDEN PATH" (CHROME DREAMS II, 2007) 14'31
- 7 "GRANDPA'S INTERVIEW" (GREENDALE, 2003) 12'57
- 8 "SUN GREEN" (GREENDALE, 2003) 12'03
- 9 "CARMICHAEL" (GREENDALE, 2003) 10'20
- 10 "LOOSE CHANGE" (BROKEN ARROW, 1996) 9'49
- 11 "LOVE AND ONLY LOVE" (RAGGED GLORY, 1990) 10'18
- 12 "COWGIRL IN THE SAND" (EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE, 1969) 10'06
- 13 "DOWN BY THE RIVER" (EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE, 1969) 9'13
- 14 "BE THE RAIN" (GREENDALE, 2003) 9'13
- 15 "T-BONE" (RE-AC-TOR, 1981) 9'10
- 16 "SCENERY" (MIRROR BALL, 1995) 8'50
- 17 "AMBULANCE BLUES" (ON THE BEACH, 1974) 8'56
- 18 "SHE'S A HEALER" (ARE YOU PASSIONATE?, 2002) 9'08



DONALD FAGEN

Sunken Condos

REPRISE

An unexpected new solo treat from the Steely Dan legend and Hall Of Famer. By Bud Scoppa

9/10

MORPH THE CAT, the final volume of Donald Fagen's *Nightfly*

trilogy, which appeared in 2006, is introspective and jittery, reflecting the cumulative impact of 9/11 and his own sense of encroaching mortality – making it at once the darkest and most personal chapter in the Steely Dan canon. While *Morph* was a musically dazzling and emotionally intense work, it would have been a distressingly bleak way to close the book.

Happily, solo album number four – which arrives with little advance warning – dispenses with mortal dread as Fagen re-immerses himself in the finer things – or the “Good Stuff”, as he puts it in one song – amid the life challenges facing ageing Boomers (Fagen is 64).

As these nine tracks make abundantly clear, his current mood is reassuringly effervescent and self-mocking. *Sunken Condos* is loaded with Fagen's instantly familiar signature moves, as he breaks out his long-codified and precisely calibrated vocabulary. Here there's righteously swingin' grooves (powered by drummer “Earl Cooke, Jr”, whose name curiously fails to come up in a Google search), extended chords (there's no chord too obscure for this crew) from a superb (what else?) studio band led by co-producer/multi-instrumentalist and Dan mainstay Michael Leonhart, and Donald's sharply drawn, irony-laden narratives.

The album's bookends, “Slinky Thing” and “Planet D'Rhonda”, revisit the generation-spanning romantic escapades of *Gaucho*'s “Hey Nineteen”. In the opener, fuelled by a groove that matches its title, the narrator is “a burned-out hippie clown” who meets and tries to put the make on “a lithe young beauty”, to the amusement of observers as the mismatched couple makes the rounds of various public gatherings. Here and elsewhere, the rich tones of latter-day Dan guitarist Jon Herington provide the ultra-cool counterpoint to Fagen's decidedly uncool leading man in his increasingly desperate attempts to “hold on to that slinky thing”. The closing “Planet D'Rhonda” finds an older guy lusting after a chick who's “somewhere between 19

and 38”, and “when she does the Philly Dog – I gotta have CPR”, though the poor schlub knows full well that “it's never gonna happen”. Coursing through the track is some wild post-bop improvising from jazz guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel, the aural equivalent of the narrator's racing pulse.

The sense of yearning for the unattainable is also played out at the album's midpoint on “The New Breed”, wherein a similarly love-struck dinosaur (“He's ready for *Jurassic Park*”) is dumped by his girl in favour of the young dude

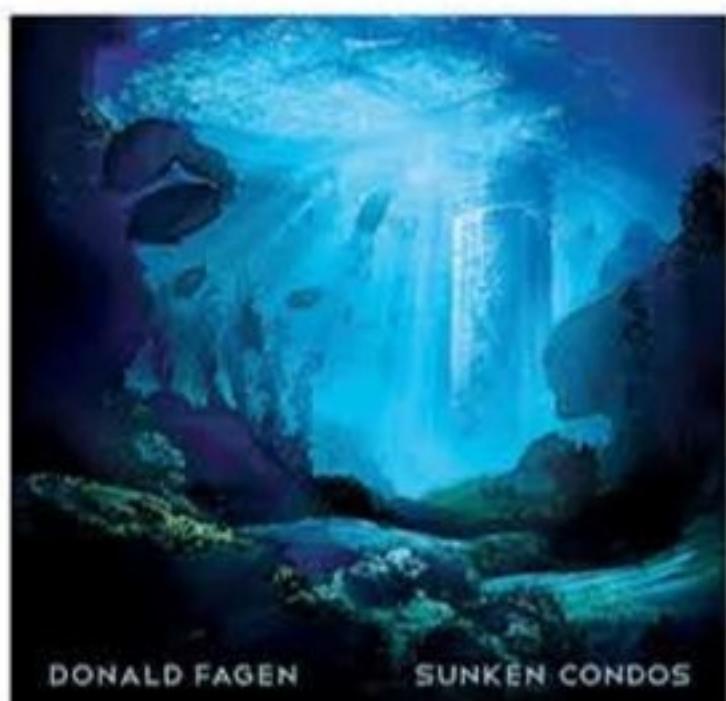
who upgraded her software, so the old-timer steps aside, leaving her “to your new dotcom slash life”.

Fagen's propensity for embedded mysteries has rarely been more intriguingly manifested than it is on “Memorabilia”, a song as slippery as it is catchy, with its references to US nuclear tests in the South Pacific during the '50s.

In the hook-filled “Miss Marlene”, the protagonist finds love in a bowling alley, of all places. The album's most sublime piece is “Weather In My Head”, a modified midtempo blues in the manner of “Pretzel Logic” and another scintillating workout for Herington, with its slam-dunk payoff, “They may fix the weather in the world/Just like

Mr Gore said/But tell me what's to be done/Lord – 'bout the weather in my head”. The lone misstep is a cover of Isaac Hayes' 1978 funk workout “Out Of The Ghetto”, but the band blows through it with such exhilaration that Fagen can be forgiven for this indulgence.

What, then, does this new, post-trilogy work represent for Fagen? A second wind? A therapeutically induced acceptance of things as they are, perhaps? In any case, Dan aficionados will undoubtedly receive *Sunken Condos* as a fascinating new puzzle – or series of puzzles – to be endlessly debated if never actually solved. What matters is that Donald's back in his self-referencing sweet spot, and all's right with the world.



TRACKLIST

- 1 Slinky Thing
- 2 I'm Not The Same Without You
- 3 Memorabilia
- 4 Weather In My Head
- 5 The New Breed
- 6 Out Of The Ghetto
- 7 Miss Marlene
- 8 Good Stuff
- 9 Planet D'Rhonda

A to Z

COMING UP THIS MONTH...

p70 BAT FOR LASHES

p72 RICKIE LEE JONES

p74 JEFF LYNNE/ELO

p78 VAN MORRISON

p81 RANGDA

p82 MARK EITZEL

p83 DAN STUART

p84 KATE RUSBY

p85 TAME IMPALA



TORI AMOS

Gold Dust

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

Cornflake Girl + 52-piece orchestra = knockout reworkings

Despite her classical training and Grammy nominations, in the UK

Tori Amos has often been viewed as Kate Bush's emotionally incontinent American cousin. Her baroque-pop style may be an acquired taste, but her 13th LP should satisfy committed fans and win new converts. Here Amos teams up with the Metropole Orchestra to revisit songs from her '92 debut onward, adding sumptuous, bejewelled dimensions to the richly expressive likes of “Precious Things” and conceptual epic “Yes, Anastasia”. A big-band/symphony orchestra hybrid, the Metropole shifts styles convincingly from Danny Elfman to Vaughan Williams, dwarfing the achievements of all pop acts tilting at “class” via a plain string quartet.



JESSICA BAILIFF

At The Down-Turned Jagged Rim Of The Sky

KRANKY

Shoegazing chanteuse completes her fifth wooze-a-thon

Recently a touring member of Boduf Songs, Jessica Bailiff privately worked up this new collection of hazy songs during the hot summer of 2011. Bailiff opens her one-woman show with the strong “Your Ghost Is Not Enough”, vocals planted in the Bilinda Butcher school. Her multi-instrumental overdubs sound like group interplay: the mordant “Sanguine” trudges back to her slowcore origins, while “If You Say It” is Gothic swoon-song imprisoned in its own reverberant tower. “Violets And Roses” is enhanced with biting bowed bass. Despite a mix fixed by Anticon producer Odd Nosdam, ultimately Bailiff sounds too much in thrall to her shoegazing peers.

ROB YOUNG

BAT FOR LASHES

The Haunted Man

PARLOPHONE

A stripped-down – yet chart-friendly – return.

By Stephen Troussé



7/10

of retconning your way onto a John Hughes soundtrack or a David Lynch commercial, it represents a pinnacle of a certain kind of 21st-Century pop ambition. Florence Welch, for one, was chartreuse with envy. But it also brought into focus the oddly precarious state of Natasha Khan's career: was she already a charming period reference – part of the late-noughties UK tulip craze for pop wonkettes, Kate Bush-babies and La Roux? Or a more resonant, ongoing artistic presence? *Less Than Zero*'s soundtrack, after all, referenced The Little Girls as well as Elvis Costello.

In some way it feels counterintuitive to talk of the precarity of an artist whose first two albums were both nominated for the Mercury Prize. But *The Haunted Man* certainly feels like a make or break release, the moment Khan establishes whether she can outlast the whim of pop fashion. Though the cover – a Ryan McGinley portrait of a discreetly naked Khan gallantly giving a fireman's lift to a similarly naked pal – feels on one level calculated to generate daft controversy, it also seems intended as a statement of artistic sincerity: enough of theatrical contrivance (the cover of 2009's *Two Suns* looked like a Mighty Boosh dream sequence, while the songs featured a bewildering array of personas) – now this, as Mike Yarwood used to say, is me.

"Laura", the first song to emerge from the album (though not, apparently, a single) gives substance to this intention. Composed at the label's insistence, when they felt Khan hadn't written enough hits, it's a collaboration with Justin Parker, the co-writer of Lana Del Rey's "Video Games", and evidently this year's go-to guy for swooning, widescreen balladry. From the opening piano twinkles you initially fear an Adelatrous bid for the bland heart of the Radio 2 A-list, but somehow, through the force of her singing and the classic but compelling songcraft, by the time it builds to the chorus – "You're the train that crashed my heart/ You're the glitter in the dark" – you're sold. It may be the first Bat For Lashes song to be unashamedly moving.

The song's bold simplicity isn't entirely representative of the rest of the album, however, which is lush and cinematic, albeit in the classic manner of say David Lean (*Ryan's Daughter* was reportedly an influence) rather than *Donnie Darko*. Opener "Lilies" floats in on plangent waves of Cocteau-ish guitar before blooming into a sumptuous synthetic chorus (replete with this season's must-have retro-accessory: the bass sound from Berlin's "Take My Breath Away"), while

WHEN BAT FOR LASHES' darkling "What's A Girl To Do?" showed up in Brett Easton Ellis' 2010 novel *Imperial Bedrooms* – his neo-noir high-school reunion sequel to *Less Than Zero* – it seemed like a significant artistic coup. Short

of retconning your way onto a John Hughes soundtrack or a David Lynch commercial, it represents a pinnacle of a certain kind of 21st-Century pop ambition. Florence Welch, for one, was chartreuse with envy. But it also brought into focus the oddly precarious state of Natasha Khan's career: was she already a charming period reference – part of the late-noughties UK tulip craze for pop wonkettes, Kate Bush-babies and La Roux? Or a more resonant, ongoing artistic presence? *Less Than Zero*'s soundtrack, after all, referenced The Little Girls as well as Elvis Costello.

"Marilyn" is a similarly lavish Lynchian power ballad. It occasionally feels a little too clinically tasteful, as severely and determinedly classic as Khan's newly bobbed hair. At times, especially on "Oh Yeah", you might be reminded of the crystalline geometries of Annie Lennox's solo *Diva-dom*. You miss her earlier wildness, even when it risked gaucheness. Some songs feel a little too eager to please, too anxious to build to the obvious – "Horses Of The Sun" rides in with an unsettling, martial verse, like something from Portishead's *Third* (and indeed, Adrian Utley plays on the track), but then abruptly cuts to a bombastic chorus that seems to

belong to another song entirely.

But on the title track Khan comes into her own: stuttering Morse-code beats give way to the ratatat of musket, fife and drums, heralding the entrance of the male voice choir of some ghostly WWI division, before erupting into an astonishing symphonic climax. Casting about for reference points you can only think of Kate Bush or Jane Siberry's more epic moments. But crucially it's reminiscent of their ambition rather than their stylistic tics. In the past Khan laboured in the long shadows of her obvious influences: on *The Haunted Man* she's exorcised some of those ghosts and gone some way to becoming her own woman.

Q&A

Natasha Khan



Do you think *The Haunted Man* is your strongest album yet?

It's certainly the most consistent in terms of vision. I wrote about 30 songs and I think the fact it took two and half years to make really paid off. I really pushed myself – my critical voice is quite strong!

Did working with Justin Parker on "Laura" influence the writing of your own songs?

"Laura" was actually the very last song that we wrote. The record company kind of pressured me into writing it because they thought there weren't enough singles. I thought, I feel really

good about what I've written so far but if I'm going to do a collaborative thing it's not going to be with just anyone. And I really liked "Video Games" from quite early on. So I used my time with Justin to get him to teach me about songwriting things like middle eights.

How did the male voice choir on the title track come about?

"The Haunted Man" was one of the first songs I wrote for the album. It was quite a long piece – I was thinking of it as film music or a musical. And I kept hearing male voices. I went out to Italy to work with Rob Ellis, and he introduced me to a choral master, and we had a fantastic day out in the mountains working out these crazy harmonic intervals, listening to The Beach Boys and old monks. We projected it out of an amp out over a canyon to get that amazing slapback echo, to get that feeling of soldiers coming back from war.



SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Newbury; Assault And Battery 2, London; Mr Dan's, Arizona; Perugia Riverside Studios
Produced by: Natasha Khan, David Kosten, Dan Carey, Rob Ellis
Personnel: Natasha Khan, Adrian Utley, Beck, John Metcalf



COLIN BLUNSTONE On The Air Tonight

ENNISMORE

Elegant if saccharine MOR from the Zombies songwriter

Singer-songwriter Blunstone (*Odyssey &*

6/10

Oracle, "She's Not There", etc) specialises in creating readymade guilty pleasures which sound like they were recorded in 1973 and have recently been unearthed from a suburban charity shop. This album features some glutinous ballads and rather too many redundant lyrics (this is a world where whatever doesn't break you makes you strong, where I wanna lose myself in loving you, and so on), but the harmony-laden piano ballad "So Much More", the epic Carpenters-like waltz "For You" and the 10cc-ish powerpop of "17 Over You" are examples of a master songwriter who knows how to string together a chord sequence.

JOHN LEWIS



BRASSTRONAUT Mean Sun

TIN ANGEL

Mellifluous Canadians boldly go where many have gone before

Somewhere to the left of the indie-rock mainstream, this Vancouver-based

6/10

sextet peddle a refined blend of jazzy post-pop with breezy falsetto vocals and warm, brassy arrangements. Their vocalist, chief songwriter and keyboard player Edo Van Breeman is fond of literary lyrics and pastel-shaded bossa nova flourishes, sometimes risking a precious tweeness reminiscent of Belle And Sebastian. But the stand-out tracks here are the most melancholy and experimental, notably the piano-led Flaming Lips-style tearjerker "Mixtape" and the elegantly deconstructed ambient break-up ballad "Moonwalker", which appears to be about a couple forced apart by the vastness of deep space.

STEPHEN DALTON



JAKE BUGG Jake Bugg

MERCURY

Smart debut from Nottingham newcomer

8/10

Following support slots with The Stone Roses and Noel Gallagher, some degree of ubiquity seems assured for this Clifton-born 19-year-old. Bugg's references are strictly retro, but his debut boasts a pleasing absence of stodge. Hear as he tears out the traps with "Lightning Bolt" – a two-and-a-half-minute rattle of brittle skiffle guitar and fast-talking Dylanisms that recalls the long-lost Lee Mavers in its mix of breezy delivery and easy melody. Slowies like "Broken" still feel underdeveloped, but experience should smooth that out; "Country Song", meanwhile, suggests he could make it as folk fingerpicker in the event that 'lad-rock icon' doesn't pan out.

LOUIS PATTISON



DAVID BYRNE & ST VINCENT

Love This Giant

4AD/TODO MUNDO

Byrne and former Sufjan Stevens collaborator get horny

A one-off 2010 collaboration between

Byrne and Annie Clark, suggested by New York's Housing Works bookstore, has launched a creative partnership spanning tours, recording sessions and now this co-written album. But those hoping for a return to the glories of Byrne's Talking Heads will be disappointed. Based around a brass band and the tricksy drum programs of John Congleton, this 12-tracker succeeds in being technically impressive, but fails to engage the heart. The complex, Philip Glass-ish brass arrangements swamp both the melodies and the wistful, observational themes, leading to a collection that feels more art project than album.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

6/10

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Jake
Bugg



► Things are happening for Jake Bugg. Support slots with Noel Gallagher and The Stone Roses. The likes of Ian Brown and Damon Albarn pledging their fandom. His song "Lightning Bolt" played on the BBC, just before Usain Bolt streaked to gold in the 100 metres. But the 19-year-old Nottingham lad is playing it cool. "I'm just chuffing along, to be honest, taking every day as it comes," says Bugg. "Not letting it get to my head." Youthful he may be, but Bugg is no amateur. His first gig was five years ago, at school, in front of his classmates ("one of the toughest gigs you're ever going to play, but no-one said a bad word") and he's been working on his debut album ever since. *Jake Bugg* is clearly steeped in the lad-rock staples – Oasis, Arctic Monkeys, Miles Kane – but there's a gentle, rootsy edge that suggests Bugg's been doing his homework. "I really enjoy old folk and country music," he says. "I'm a really big fan of Donovan, Don McLean, Robert Johnson – a lot of the old Mississippi Delta bluesmen. I try to absorb as many influences into my music as I can. I'm still learning a lot... but you know, just getting on with it."

LOUIS PATTISON



JOHN CALE Shifty Adventures In Nookie Wood

DOUBLE SIX

Velvet Undergroundhog Day for ex-maniac Cleaning up his grubby and occasionally dangerous act after the

birth of his daughter in the mid-1980s, John Cale abandoned pop-psychosis for tastefully impersonal leftfield rock, big on 'textures' – short on tension. The 70-year-old's first full-length work in seven years, *Shifty Adventures* features Danger Mouse co-write "I Wanna Talk To You" and an unseemly amount of Cher-style vocoder, but barring weirded-out epiphany "Sandman (Flying Dutchman)", it all sounds closer to 1990s David Bowie studio funk than the man who once went commando with the likes of *Sabotage/Live and Music For A New Society*. Nice title, but there's no hanky panky.

JIM WIRTH

CHAPELIER FOU Invisible

ICI D'AILLEURS

Second outing by French electro 'one-man band' Proving that the bedroom synth boffin is alive and well comes Louis Warynski – aka 'Mad Hatter' – on

Invisible, the follow-up to his 2010 debut album, *613*. The 28-year-old Frenchman mixes his classically trained violin with ambient loops, beats and the occasional song, coming across as a quirky second cousin to the likes of Boards Of Canada. Opener "Shunde's Bronx" is a drum'n'bass bustle, "Cyclope & Othello" morphs from gentle ambience into an Orbital beats fest, "Le Tricot" (meaning knitting) and "Fritz Lang" offset keyboard noodling against aching violin and "Moth To Flame" has Ici d'ailleurs labelmate (and Bristolian) Matt Elliott crooning gently. It's all easy on the ear but lacks a killer centrepiece.

NEIL SPENCER



CODY CHESNUTT Landing On A Hundred

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

Handsome follow-up to decade-old debut Cody ChesnuTT's 2002 album *The Headphone*

8/10

Masterpiece was a unique, seductive curio – a neo-soul album that used drum machines, scratchy lo-fi production and none of the slickness of his peers. This follow-up is cleaner, from the grand arrangements to the lyrics about true love rather than tits and ass, but is never bland. ChesnuTT channels the boyish romance of early Marvin Gaye and the injured, weatherbeaten timbre of Bill Withers, and never takes the most obvious path – his gospel opener "Til I Met Thee" fades movingly into scattered improvisation, while "Love Is More Than A Wedding Day" cruises euphorically on a constant chorus to the six-minute mark.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

AMERICANA



7/10

RICKIE LEE JONES
The Devil You Know

CONCORD/DECCA

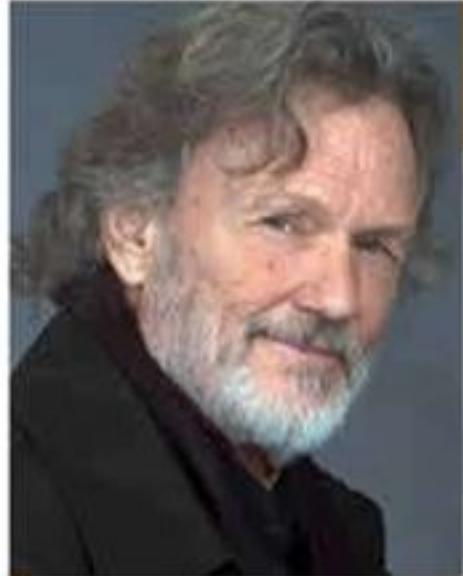
The old songs bring out the Devil in Ms Jones

Little over a minute into her funereal version of "St James Infirmary", Rickie Lee Jones lets out a sudden cry of anguish. Such is the sustained hush of *The Devil You Know* that it almost feels like an intrusion, a rupturing of some otherworldly spell. This is an album of covers that draws its power from the subtle expressionism of Jones' voice, backed by the most minimal of arrangements. She's no stranger to this game, of course. 1983's "Girl At Her Volcano" EP was a torchy set of jazz standards that found a later echo in *Pop Pop* (1991), which drafted in Charlie

Haden and Joe Henderson for a bunch of covers that veered from Sammy Cahn to Jimi Hendrix. Really, though, *The Devil You Know* is more akin to 2000's *It's Like This*, which took well-thumbed classics by Marvin Gaye, The Beatles and Steely Dan and stripped them back to the bones.

This time around, producer Ben Harper coaxes her through these gentle shifts in temperature and mood. The Stones' "Sympathy For The Devil" is the most striking realignment, in which Jones prudently forgoes the tribal rhythm of the original for a far more subdued approach. Van Morrison's "Comfort You" is equally muted, set against softly brushed drums and the occasional twang of a double bass. Not everything manages to stick. She adds little to The Band's "The Weight", while Neil Young's "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" has been done so many times that only the most radical treatment will relight its tired soul. But Jones really excels elsewhere, reworking Tim Hardin's "Reason To Believe" as a mournful Gaelic hymn and wringing beauty from Theodore Anderson's "Seems Like A Long Time", with its streaky guitar and deft rolls of Hammond organ. It's one of many standout moments on what is a discreet, quietly rapturous record.

ROB HUGHES



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► On the back of most recent studio LP, *Closer To The Bone*, and Light In The Attic's wonderful collection of early works - *Please Don't Tell Me How The Story Ends: The Publishing Demos*

1968-72 - **Kris Kristofferson** has lined up a selection of live dates for early December. There are shows in Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow and at London's Royal Festival Hall. A new studio album is reportedly in the works, too, though details are sketchy at the time of going to press. The 76-year-old is provisionally calling it *Feeling Mortal*.

Missouri singer-songwriter **Israel Nash Gripka** trails a new solo album, due out early in the new year, by playing a bunch of

UK dates this November. The rootsy folkster begins in London and ends in Bristol. Also worth catching is **Pokey LaFarge**, last heard on Jack White's *Blunderbuss*, who ends his October tour at London's Koko.

The recorded front finds excellent Toronto outfit **The Wooden Sky** issue new album *Every Child A Daughter, Every Moon A Sun* in early November. Released on the ever-dependable Loose, whose recent hit-rate includes Dawes and Deer Tick, the band promise heavy heaps of "introspective folk and classic Americana". Last up, ace US songwriter (and now novelist) **Josh Ritter** has issued *Bright's Passage* on audiobook. Ritter himself reads the novel on a 6CD set with an accompanying score. The package also includes a bonus music disc, *Five Angels*, featuring Chris Thile, Tift Merritt and Josh Kaufman. ROB HUGHES


THE COAL PORTERS
Find The One

PRIMA

Bluegrass with beat sensibilities

Kentucky-born, London-based Sid Griffin has been mining all manner of country styles with The Coal Porters for over 20 years, but his ever-growing obsession with bluegrass takes full flight on *Find The One*. Yet, while harking back to the form's origins he still manages to shoehorn a few (fractionally) more contemporary flourishes into the sound. "Ask Me Again" and "Brand New Home" are, in fact, thinly disguised beat group numbers, while Bowie's "Heroes" and the Stones' "Paint It, Black" survive their fiddle-and-mandolin makeovers surprisingly intact. Blessed with three original writers (Griffin, Carly Frey and Neil Robert Herd), the band confidently breathe new life into a vintage genre.

TERRY STAUNTON


DEERHOOF
Breakup Song

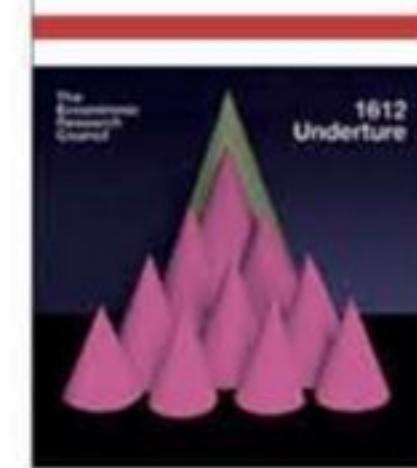
ATP RECORDINGS

Ungainly end to American avant-pop group's 'party-noise-energy music'

5/10

Deerhoof's greatest Achilles' heel - an unrelenting need to upturn expectations. This means you're never quite sure what you'll get on one of their records, which would be fine if they were consistently great, but instead they're endlessly variable - great pop albums like *Milk Man* rub up against clumsy curios like *Breakup Song*, where they're locking songs together with Lego construction kits. For every moment of pop bliss, like "Flower", there are messy slabs of failed experiment - see the faux-bombast of "To Fly Or Not To Fly". *Breakup Song* is all right, but ultimately, it's an unnecessary listen.

JON DALE


THE ECCENTRIC RESEARCH COUNCIL & MAXINE PEAKE
1612 Underture

FINDERS KEEPERS

6/10

Arch analogtronica duo hymn the**17th-Century Pendle witch trials...**

Born of a joint road-trip for Eccentric member Adrian Flanagan and English actress Maxine Peake, *1612 Overture* divines the story of the infamous 17th-Century Pendle witch trials as a hinge for a spry album of analogue electronic pop and droll, arch spoken-word from Peake. If it initially feels like fall-out from the 'I can't believe it's not hauntological' zone, bear with it - while the LP is patchy, some of the miniature studies for circuitry, essayed by Flanagan and collaborator Dean Honer, are beguilingly eldritch, and the second half's run of pop songs are joyous and odd in equal measure.

JON DALE



EGYPTIAN HIP HOP

Good Don't Sleep

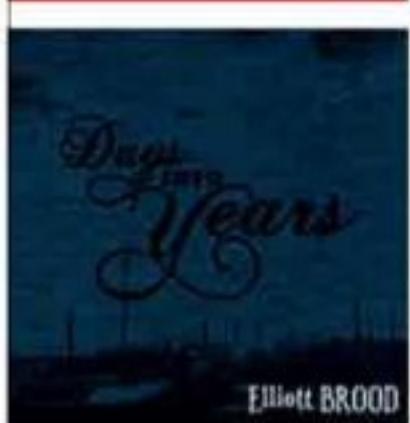
R&S

Intrepid, and long-awaited debut from the boy wizards

Like WU LYF or Late Of The Pier, teenage upstarts

and one-time blog darlings Egyptian Hip Hop are a band who, quite rightly, seem to have more ideas than ability. For *Good Don't Sleep*, produced to dreamy effect by Richard Formby (who helmed the last two Wild Beasts albums), the Manchester quartet have settled on a strain of indie that beds their more experimental tendencies with that racing, early-'90s jangle popularised by Cocteau Twins and Pale Saints – “The White Falls”, carried by Alex Hewett's choirboy sigh, evokes The Saints' “Sight Of You”. Some songs could be stronger, but “SYH”, a boozy Boards Of Canada, shows they're on the right track.

PIERS MARTIN

8/10

ELLIOTT BROOD

Days Into Years

PAPER BAG

Mesmerising alt. country from under-valued Toronto trio

Elliott Brood's subdued brand of Americana is

celebrated in their native Canada, their last LP having been shortlisted for the country's prestigious Polaris Music Prize, but they have barely registered on these shores. On their terrific Wilco-esque third album, the emphasis is on storytelling, inspired by a journey through the World War I battlefields of northern France and Belgium, where among the acres of graves, they found memorials to Canadian soldiers. Particularly memorable is “If I Get Old”, in which singer Mark Sasso contemplates mortality while longing for the innocent comforts of home. Stirring stuff.

FIONA STURGES

7/10

FAIRHORNS

Doki Doki Run

INVADA

Superior art-noise from the extended Portishead family

Signed to Portishead mainman Geoff Barrow's Bristol-based label,

Fairhorns is one of many pseudonyms for Matt Williams, formerly of arty noise-rockers Team Brick. This impressively dense debut is largely composed of quasi-instrumentals, thick with distorted keyboards and submerged vocal incantations, drawing on Krautrock and analogue electronica without falling into cliché. “Ragnarok”, 10 minutes of motorik shudders and synthetic bagpipe whines, could be a heavy-metal Sigur Rós or a more playful Mogwai. The drone-funk of “Worried Thrumm” has a fierce beauty, while the clatter-punk of “Doki Doki You're Fucking Dead” marries dark humour with brain-throbbing intensity.

STEPHEN DALTON

7/10

FLYING LOTUS

Until The Quiet Comes

WARP

Cosmic jazz meets bleep on LA beatmaker's sweetly textured fourth

The great-nephew of Alice Coltrane, Steven Ellison

made his name with a blunted electronica bearing the influence of the late Detroit hip-hop production maestro J Dilla. Over time, though, the jazz has seeped back in – notably on 2010's organic-feeling, mind-expanded *Cosmogramma*. *Until The Quiet Comes* further refines this synthesis, and is often reminiscent of the luxuriant prettiness of auntie's work, but with a solid beat underpinning. Dreamy lightness is his thing, but occasionally a nocturnal feel intrudes: see “Electric Candyman”, where Thom Yorke plays the vengeful spirit, looming from a cold fog of synths.

LOUIS PATTISON

8/10

BEN FOLDS FIVE

The Sound Of The Life Of The Mind

SONY

Reunion album effortlessly reconnecting with the past

Fronting his numerically inaccurate trio on record for the first time since the late '90s, Folds nonetheless stays true to his career-long mission to whisk up a melting pot of musical styles. Thus, we get Paul Simon introspection (“On Being Frank”), eloquent Beach Boys harmonies (“Michael Praytor, Five Years Later”), seductive chamber pop (“Away When You Were Here”), all underpinned by Folds' strident piano chords. The return of bassist Robert Sledge and drummer Darren Jessee allow for a fuller sonic palette, most effectively on the opening bombast of “Erase Me” and the raucous, rattling “Do It Anyway”. TERRY STAUNTON

7/10

REVELATIONS

Bruce Foxton is working with Paul Weller again, on his first solo album in three decades...



▶ “Paul called me when my wife Pat was in hospital being treated for cancer, and that meant the world to me, it was the rekindling of our friendship,” says Bruce Foxton of working with Weller for the first time since The Jam split in 1982. “Pat sadly died in 2009, and while I was getting my head together again Paul asked me to be on his *Wake Up The Nation* album. His studio was rammed with people, there seemed to be this air of expectancy about some kind of Weller-Foxton magic! I was a bit nervous at first, but it was so relaxing, it was like going home. Paul’s now helped me with three songs on my album, and I just said, ‘Well, you’ve got a free hand, mate.’ He ended up doing some vocals, playing guitar, Hammond, piano, even a bit of glockenspiel and flute! He took the songs to another level, he really did. I thought he might have just popped in for an afternoon, he’s a busy man, but he was really generous with his time and his ideas. I’ve got a gut feeling about these songs that I haven’t had since we did *All Mod Cons*.”

TERRY STAUNTON

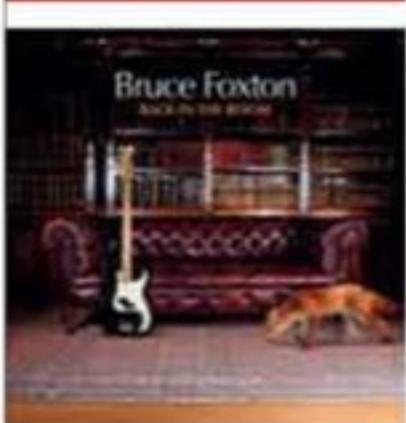
BRUCE FOXTON

Back In the Room

BASSTONE

Old friends, but new directions

Much will be made of the appearance of Paul Weller on three tracks of Foxton's first solo album for nigh

**6/10**

on 30 years (returning the favour from 2010's *Wake Up The Nation*), but it shouldn't distract from what the man himself has done. True, the mod soul groove of “Number Six”, with Weller's vocal back-up prominent in the mix, could have been lifted straight from The Jam's *Sound Affects*, but elsewhere Foxton proves himself adept at Steely Dan smooth jazz on “Don’t Waste My Time” (featuring Steve Cropper), chugging garage blues on “The Gaffa”, and pastoral psych on “Senses Of Summer”. A refreshing collection of songs, forsaking the nostalgia of his live work with From The Jam.

TERRY STAUNTON



GALLows

Gallows

VENN

Watford brawlers return, with new vocalist

Gallows' 2009 album *Grey Britain* was a flinty landmark in modern

UK punk, a dystopic regurgitation of UK Subs, Discharge and US hardcore that somehow cracked the Top 20. The departure of Frank Carter – the group's heavily tattooed vocalist, now fronting the more conventional, Springsteen-influenced rockers Pure Love – appeared to spell the end for the group. New singer Wade MacNeil, formerly of Canada's Alexisonfire, boasts something of Carter's obdurate roar, while “Outsider Art” and “Depravers” marshal some enjoyably hefty terrace choruses. Yet it's hard to shake the sensation that the band have become rather more ordinary as a result.

LOUIS PATTISON

JEFF LYNNE

Long Wave

FRONTIERS

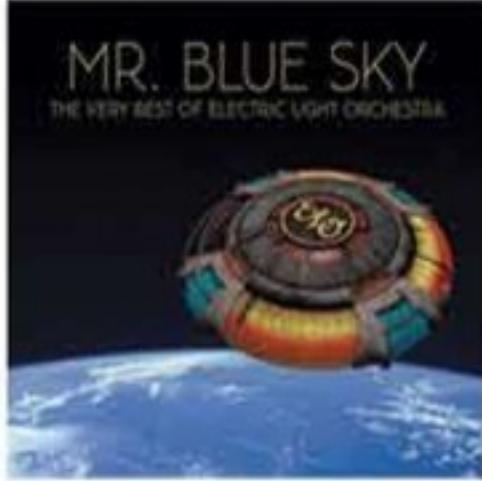
Mr. Blue Sky: The Very Best Of Electric Light Orchestra

FRONTIERS

ELO man upgrades his hits and re-imagines his youth. By Andy Gill



7/10



8/10

of the three, with the simultaneous release of a re-recorded greatest hits album and an album of teen favourites from the dawn of rock'n'roll. Can his life story be far behind, one wonders?

Unlike Kate Bush's career retrospective, *Mr. Blue Sky* (in which Lynne replays and re-records his old songs), doesn't seek to find new depths in any of ELO's classic hits, or re-contextualise them in the light of subsequent musical developments. The new versions are, to all intents and purposes, exactly the same as the old versions, they're just more so, if that makes sense. Like many a musician forever encountering their own back catalogue on random radio broadcast, Lynne seems to have become able to hear only the imperfections: rather than an ego-boost, it afforded him instead the nagging irritation that, surely, these tracks could sound so much better? And being a top studio boffin type and all-round musical polymath with state-of-the-art equipment at his everyday disposal, he realised he was perfectly placed to give these old hits the presence and pizzazz he felt they lacked.

One by one, the ELO songs were given the musical equivalent of a software upgrade. The effect is understandably more noticeable on the older tracks, like "Showdown" and "10538 Overture", than on the later material: the latter song, for instance, now has a spangly presence that distances it slightly from its Walrusian origins. But in general, this is a subtle restoration exercise that shouldn't annoy even the most obsessive of anorak fans. The bonus track "Point Of No Return", with its arpeggiated guitar figures, melodic logicality and sleek harmonies, sounds like a refugee from Tom

AT A CERTAIN point in their career, the successful rock star naturally leans towards a touch of retrospection, whether by way of an autobiography (as with Dylan's *Chronicles Vol. 1*), a variously revised, remixed or re-recorded edition of their oeuvre (as with Kate Bush's *Director's Cut*), or a sentimental indulgence in the kind of greasy-kidstuff radio fodder that first drew their attention to music (as in McCartney's *Kisses On The Bottom*). Never one for half measures, Jeff Lynne has opted for two out



SLEEVE NOTES

► Recorded at: Lynne's home studio, LA

Produced: Jeff Lynne

Personnel includes:
Jeff Lynne (guitars,
keyboards, bass,
drums, etc), Mark
Mann (strings)

Petty's Lynne-produced *Full Moon Fever*, which is fine by me.

Long Wave – named after the wireless waveband that carried the BBC Light Programme of Lynne's youth – takes a very different approach to its source material, which is re-imagined in ways that set it sometimes strikingly apart from the original versions. The older, pre-rock crooner tracks like "She" and "If I Loved You" are reminiscent more of the early Beatles covers of things like "Bésame Mucho", with arrangements stripped back to guitars and piano, and chiming harmonies illuminating complex melodies. Lynne's version of "Beyond The Sea" prances along on his swaggering bassline where Bobby Darin's glides, and there's a similarly lollypop bonhomie to his take on Charlie Chaplin's "Smile", a sort of lazy cowpoke trot that suits the song perfectly. The tone of relaxed confidence extends to Chuck Berry's "Let It Rock", which accrues a low-slung

gangster lean through being taken as a lazily galloping boogie rather than a motorvating rocker. And there's an interesting adaptation of Etta James's R'n'B inflections to suit Lynne's milder pop intonations on his version of "At Last". The most drastic re-imagining

occurs on a version of Don Covay's "Have Mercy" that harks back to Lynne's own youth in The Idle Race: here, there's a brash, primitive beat-boom attack to the guitar and drum groove that recalls The Spencer Davis Group's "Keep On Running", no mean thing to pull off on your own. Elsewhere, his take on Roy Orbison's "Running Scared" is suitably respectful as it climbs to its operatic climax, while the harmonies on the Everly's "So Sad" are so spot-on it's as if Lynne has located his inner Don for one pass, followed by his inner Phil for another. All in all, an interesting exercise, far less arch and shamateurish than *Kisses On The Bottom*.

Q&A

Jeff Lynne



Did you play all the ELO parts?

Yes, I played all the instruments myself, except for the string lines, played by Mark Mann.

Didn't you once play strings?

Not really. I could scrape out a crummy tune on a cello. Then I had frets put on my cello, to make it more tuneful. I used to love doing slides, but you could hear it on the frets: badumbadumbrrrrup!

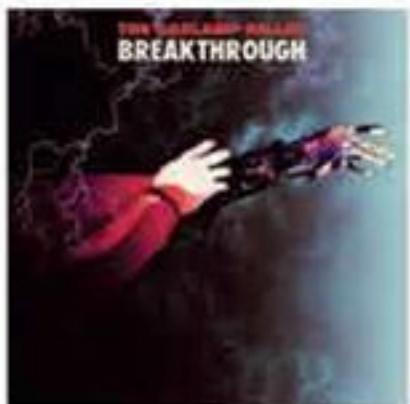
It's interesting how the earlier, pre-rock'n'roll songs are more reliant on melody than rhythm, compared to the rock songs.

Those chord structures are very, very complex.

You have to do a kind of tunnel-hearing thing, just listen to an individual instrument and think away those big arrangements that are fluffing all around it, with all those flutes and clarinets that obscured what the real chords were. If you listen in a different mode and just learn the guitar chords, they're actually very simple songs – but you would never know that from hearing those old recordings of them.

"Have Mercy" is effective in beat-boom style.

I tried to get a live feel, which is difficult to do when you're playing it all yourself – you can't really bounce off yourself: once you've laid down one track you can't think about it again, because you've got to try and get the next one to bounce against that one. The reason I know that song so well is that it was one of my favourites when we used to play it in The Idle Race, in the pubs and clubs of Birmingham. INTERVIEW: ANDY GILL



THE GASLAMP KILLER

Breakthrough

BRAINFEEDER

Gnarly SoCal hip-hop sound collages

Part of the LA-based Brainfeeder collective alongside Flying Lotus, Thundercat, Gonjasufi and others, The Gaslamp Killer specialises in chaotic instrumental hip-hop, full of creepy samples and bongwater murk. But where Flying Lotus' scatterbrain brings emotive grooves out of madness, GLK can only manage ugly, mostly boring sketches, like the connecting skits on a DJ Shadow record with none of the smashes. The breakbeats on "Dead Vets" and "Nissim" are frustratingly rote, and interesting moments like "Veins" (imagine "Eleanor Rigby" recut by Dario Argento) aren't multiplied beyond single ideas. It's like something your weed dealer has "been working on" between rounds of *Super Monkey Ball*.

3/10

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BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



HOLLY GOLIGHTLY & THE BROKEOFFS

Sunday Run Me Over

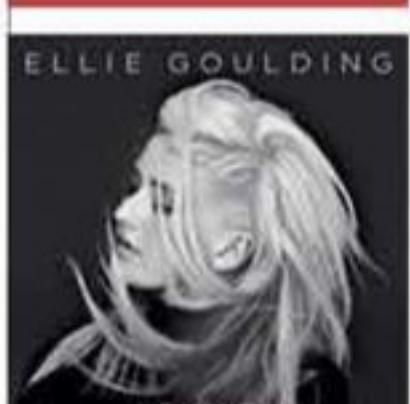
TRANSDREAMER

Another fine psycho country throwdown from ex-Headcoatee

7/10

"Tank", the most addictive track of this fifth long-player, is a bruising hop-and-skip country blues, as filtered through The Cramps, Nuggets, Hasil Adkins, Billy Childish and a raft of lo-fi DIY ranters. Naturally, a sugar-sweet cover of 1950s country standard "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know" makes this group's inimitable yin-yang complete. Like Golightly's solid output since burying Thee Headcoatees in the late '90s, *Sunday* revolves around amped-up reinventions of mid-century hillbilly, honky-tonk, blues and country, though a sodden run-through of the '80s-era Mac Davis laugher "It's Hard To Be Humble" threatens to steal the show.

LUKE TORN



ELLIE GOULDING

Halcyon

POLYDOR

Royals-endorsed electro-pop chanteuse clubs it up on her second

6/10

Goulding's 2010 debut, *Lights*, was a UK No 1 and ushered in the current fashion for powerhouse female vocals laid over poppy, indie-folk balladry, tricked out with huge choruses and contemporary electronics. There's no denying Goulding's impressive vocal range, nor her talent for an earworm chorus, but with its mix of electric piano and harp, gospel choir, distorted bass and rap (Tinie Tempah guests on a cover of Active Child's "Hanging On"), *Halcyon* seems uncertain where it belongs – low-lit lounge or heaving club. There's one appearance from Goulding's beau, US dubstep star Skrillex, but it's the Euro-house of David Guetta and Swedish House Mafia that has really made its mark.

SHARON O'CONNELL



GREEN DAY

iUno!

REPRISE

First in a trilogy from greying Cali pop-punks

Following their two "punk rock operas", 2004's *American Idiot* and 2009's *21st Century Breakdown*, *iUno!* finds Green Day approaching 'big' from a different angle. The first in a projected triptych of albums – *iDos!* and *iTré!* are due to follow over the next six months – this 12-song return tones down the pomp, in favour of a return to the band's breathless takes on Ramones/Buzzcocks pop-punk formula. "Let Yourself Go" is a reminder they can still write a cracking three-minute chug, but the ska-tinged "Kill The DJ" – an atrocious attempt to satirise dance music – suggests these former rebels are turning reactionary in their old age.

LOUIS PATTISON

6/10

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LOUIS PATTISON



MIM GREY

Chasing Tigers

RIGHT TRACK

Tom Jones' favourite female singer returns Barnet-born Grey luxuriates in cool West Coast vibes on her second album, her mix of laconic

jazzy folk and sun-kissed pop not a million miles removed from the radio-friendly fare of Sheryl Crow, with a smidgen of Rickie Lee Jones cool. An earthier and more assured collection than 2010's *Grey Matters*, she paints eloquent portraits of times past, like bunking off school with best mates (the impossibly catchy "Travelling Star"), idyllic holidays ("Chesapeake Bay") and the wisdom of elderly neighbours ("Lazy Daisy"). Grey's warm voice drapes itself across understated acoustic melodies, the understatement and intimacy best served on the swaying "Carry Me Home".

TERRY STAUNTON



GEMMA HAYES

Let It Break

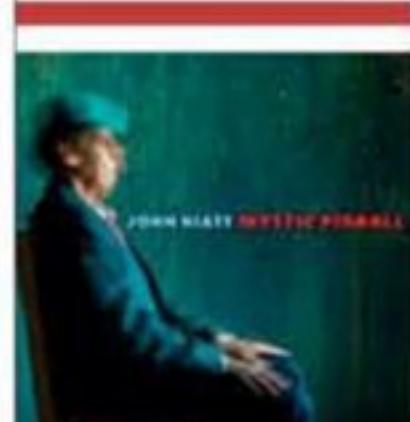
FULFILL

Fourth album from melancholic Irish singer-songwriter

Like many who've found Mercury Prize favour, Hayes' progress has

rather stalled since her debut, *Night On My Side*, was shortlisted a decade ago. Songs such as "There's Only Love" and the gentle indie-folk of "Sorrow Be Gone" could have easily come from that album. Although the theme here is allegedly "letting go of the need for control", the effect is rather the opposite: Hayes sounds comfortably cocooned in her familiar musical skin with little need to venture outside the safety zone. No real problem, for the soft contours of her melancholic voice are appealing, the songs are layered with artful electronics and the effect is frequently lovely.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



JOHN HIATT

Mystic Pinball

NEW WEST

Hiatt's 21st studio album: a convincing summary of his strengths

Over the past few years, just quietly, Hiatt has

been making some of his better albums. Any wider recognition of this excellent development has been hampered by the fact that he's been making records for so long, and also by the singer-songwriter's – not coincidental – disinterest in doing much besides purely pleasing himself, at this late stage. *Mystic Pinball* is another assemblage of breezy balladry ("It All Comes Back Someday", "I Just Don't Know What To Say") and snarling storytelling ("Wood Chipper", "One Of Them Damn Days"), delivered in the familiar Cookie Monster drawl.

ANDREW MUELLER



JOHN HIATT

Slow Turning

A&M, 1988

The pendulum swings back from the solemn confessional of *Bring The Family* to Hiatt's more playful side, resulting in an LP of breezy, hood-down narratives, suggesting a benignly grouchy uncle of The Boss. The title track and "Drive South" are irresistible fun.

8/10

ANDREW MUELLER

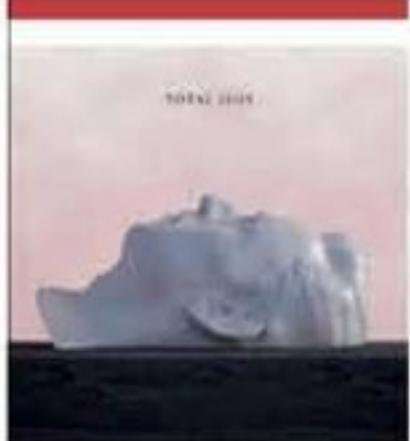

HIDALGO, NANJI & DICKINSON
3 Skulls And The Truth

PROVOGUE

Guitar-drenched blues summit hits the mark

After meeting improbably on a Hendrix tribute tour, Los Lobos' David Hidalgo, Mato Nanji of Native American rockers Indigenous and North Mississippi Allstars/Black Crowes alumnus Luther Dickinson were inspired to take their triple-guitar attack into the nearest studio. Hidalgo's Tex-Mex roots are set aside as he contributes blues-rock licks to a set of boogie work-outs penned by Nanji, Dickinson and producer Mike Varney. If Hendrix, Allman and Bloomfield had made a Southern rock album, it might've sizzled in similarly unrestrained fashion. Those awaiting the follow-up to Kings Of Leon's *Come Around Sundown* and Alabama Shakes' debut should approve.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

6/10
HOW TO DRESS WELL
Total Loss

WEIRD WORLD

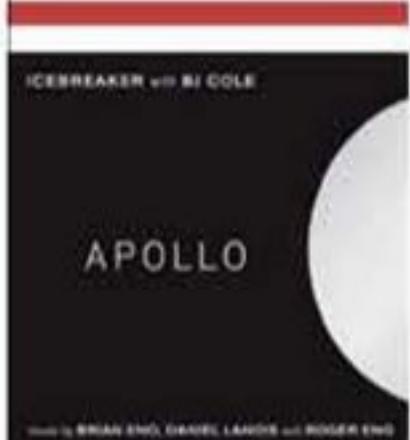
Shell-shocked second from R&B bro

Alongside the likes of Frank Ocean and The Weeknd, Tom Krell's

8/10

How To Dress Well persona brought an indie vulnerability to modern R&B with his bleakly beautiful 2010 debut, *Love Remains*. The Brooklyn singer-songwriter ups his game in every regard on *Total Loss*, notably working with The xx's innovative engineer Rodaidh McDonald, whose tender caress allows Krell's fractured falsetto and precious funk to really sparkle. Where before there was none, hope glints at the bottom of Krell's navel during "Cold Nites" and "Running Back", and he convincingly channels his inner Mariah Carey for "Struggle". An intriguing new artist has found his voice.

PIERS MARTIN


ICEBREAKER WITH BJ COLE
Apollo

CANTALOUP

Cosmic country subtly recast as chamber music

Brian Eno, Roger Eno and Daniel Lanois'

8/10

landmark ambient release of 1983 was first performed live by the Icebreaker ensemble at the Science Museum in 2009 in an arrangement devised by Woojun Lee, for the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. This performance now arrives on record just after the death of Neil Armstrong, a fitting epitaph for moonage daydreams. Eno's inspired decision to harness Lanois' pedal steel guitar to evoke the country tastes of the astronauts and the weightless glide of cosmic space is perfectly interpreted by BJ Cole, "Silver Morning" capturing something of the wide-eyed frontier awe of early American landscape painting.

STEPHEN TROUSSE

HIDALGO, NANJI & DICKINSON
3 Skulls And The Truth

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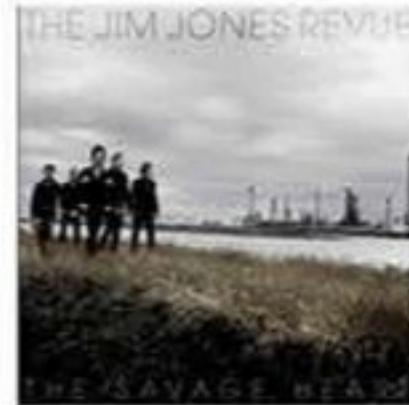
6/10
THE IRREPRESSIBLES
Nude

OF NAKED DESIGN

Decadent delights from orchestral ensemble

The chamber-pop outfit led by countertenor Jamie McDermott turned heads two years ago when they released their debut, *Mirror Mirror*, and vowed to bring showmanship and flamboyance back to pop music by dressing up as Flash Gordon and performing in amphitheatres. Sartorial considerations aside, their second LP is similarly arresting, showcasing a new semi-electronic direction while placing McDermott's voice – a tremulous falsetto somewhere between Alison Moyet and Antony Hegarty – once again at the fore. Autobiographical lyrics detailing McDermott's adolescent traumas reinforce the melancholy and melodrama that runs through the album, making it as courageous as it is uplifting.

FIONA STURGES

7/10
THE JIM JONES REVUE
The Savage Heart

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM/PUNK

ROCK BLUES

Caustic blues rock with a tougher kick

The venom and rage of the Jim Jones live

experience is captured more effectively on this third album than its predecessors, but there's also greater depth to the playing and writing. Jones the mad-eyed preacher with a cosh in his pocket bellows with fury on the barbed wire rock'n'roll of "Never Let You Go" and "7 Times Around The Sun", and brings hitherto unadorned narrative subtlety to the doom-laden howl of "Chain Gang" and the swamp noir of "In And Out Of Harm's Way". Key to the progression is new pianist Henri Herbert, whose pounding ivories provide a powerfully sinister backbone to proceedings.

TERRY STAUNTON

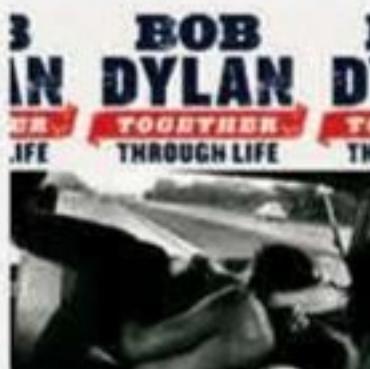
8/10
HOW TO BUY... DAVID HIDALGO

Multi-instrumentalist to the stars


LOS SUPER SEVEN
Los Super Seven

RCA, 1998

A Tex-Mex super-grupo also featuring Flaco Jiménez, Freddy Fender, Joe Ely, Rick Trevino, Ruben Ramos and César Rosas, yet somehow never sounds crowded. You can almost taste the tequila fuelling this set of south-of-the-border classics, sung in Spanish apart from a cover of Woody Guthrie's "Deportee (Plane Wreck At Los Gatos)".

9/10
BOB DYLAN
Together Through Life

COLUMBIA, 2009

Hidalgo's accordion shuffles in and out of songs such as "Beyond Here Lies Nothin'" and "Forgetful Heart" so purposefully that Dylan immediately invited him back for more of the same on *Christmas In The Heart*. Indeed, he's become an indispensable pillar of Bob's studio band and recently turned up on new album *Tempest*, too, this time playing fiddle, too.

10/10
TOM WAITS
Bad As Me

ANTI, 2011

It's not always easy to pick out individual textures in the Waitsian maelstrom, but Hidalgo contributes prolifically to half a dozen songs here. Try the crazed triple-blues-guitar riffing on "Hell Broke Luce" with Keith Richards and Marc Ribot (with whom Hidalgo tours as the roots duo Border Music) or the waltzing accordion on the lovely "New Year's Eve".

9/10

NIGEL WILLIAMSON


JOSEPHINE
Portrait

ARK

Engaging, eclectic debut from the Elbow-tipped Mancunian singer

Ten thoughtful, well-constructed songs

delivered with bell-like clarity – "an old soul singer in a young woman", as fan Guy Garvey has it – should be enough to seal the reputation of the mono-titled Josephine. Where she fits into the pop spectrum is a puzzle that producers Leo Abrahams and Jimmy Hogarth may not have solved, however. Single "What A Day" is upbeat and soulful, while "Portrait" is weepy, post-Adele MOR, and "I Think It Was Love" sultry and jazzy. Folk sympathies and an Afro-Jamaican upbringing also jostle on a slightly unfocused set that nonetheless confirms an original, unfolding talent.

NEIL SPENCER

7/10
THE KILLERS
Battle Born

ISLAND

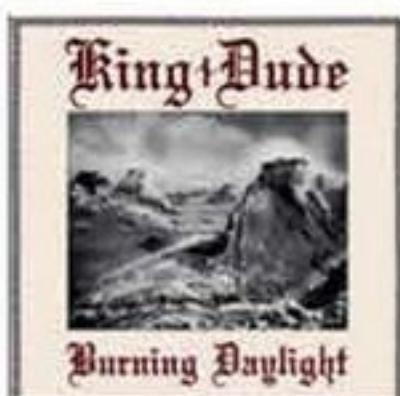
Vegas band's latest is full of sound and fury, signifying... WTF?

The Killers have chops to burn, but no sense of proportion, it seems.

Brandon Flowers and co spent a year making their fourth album, burning through no less than five A-list producers in the process, and got lost along the way. Aiming for Springsteen-like glory, they settle instead for overcooked melodrama on a parade of would-be anthems sufficiently over the top to make Muse envious. The lone exception is "Heart Of A Girl", recorded in an hour with producer/co-writer Daniel Lanois; here, they sound like a different band altogether, finding drama in restraint rather than excess. They'd be well advised to reconvene with the Canadian producer for an entire album.

BUD SCOPPA

4/10



KING DUDE Burning Daylight

DAIS

Dark country songs from the new *Man In Black*

8/10

King Dude is the nom-de-doom for one TJ Cowgill, a Seattleite whose given name sounds like a pseudonym in itself. His second album as the Dude expands on 2010's *Tonight's Special Death*, reviving folk and country modes with a broad streak of American Gothic. Cowgill has a storyteller's chops. On "Barbara Anne", he's a lovestruck suitor, pledging ever more murderous feats of destruction in a gravelly gurgle, while "You Can Break My Heart" is deceptively pretty doo-wop, delivered with suicidal intent. There is a knowingness to *Burning Daylight* that sometimes verges on pastiche, but Cowgill's mordant deadpan means the mask never slips.

LOUIS PATTISON



KING TUFF King Tuff

SUB POP

Vermont rocker's catchy-as-VD first for Sub Pop

8/10

While King Tuff can sometimes straddle that very fine dividing line between irritating novelty music and brilliantly catchy guitar-pop, he more than gets away with it. Indeed, it's pretty hard not to fall in love with the album as soon as you hear the opening track, "Anthem", a splendid bit of glam-pop with handclaps, drawled vocals and some wicked fuzz that sounds a little like the Bay City Rollers doing The Jesus And Mary Chain. The album, reminiscent of Jon Spencer at times, exudes a deep love of rock'n'roll on each track, from girl groups ("Unusual World") to sleazy Alice Cooper rock ("Loser's Wall") and belligerent R'n'B ("Stranger").

PETER WATTS



DIANA KRALL Glad Rag Doll

VERVE

Mrs Costello takes a joyride in the way-back machine with her hubby's buddy

8/10

supremely capable construction crew and a clear-cut premise. When Krall convened with these artisans around a stack of 78s introduced to her as a child by her record-collector dad, their brief was to bring immediacy to ragtime-era antiquity. The results are lively and irreverent; indeed, it's the liberties the musicians take with the material that enliven the performances, Marc Ribot ripping through these old-time tunes with his electric guitar and Krall bluesily slurring the quaint melodies. A smouldering take on Doc Pomus' "Lonely Avenue" is the curveball high point on a record even tastier than you expected.

BUD SCOPPA



BETTYE LAVETTE Thankful N' Thoughtful

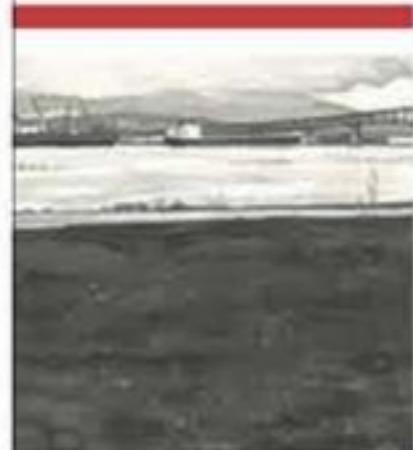
ANTI

R'n'B veteran celebrates 50 years in music in potent style

Like Mavis Staples and

Nina Simone, LaVette has a voice capable of taking any song on a cathartic journey. Dylan, Neil Young, Tom Waits *et al* are interpreted with visceral layers of deep soul even their authors could never have imagined. Producer Craig Street's customary forte is smoothness (Norah Jones/KD Lang etc) but the grittier Muscle Shoals influence he's channelled here is perfectly tailored. It takes a special voice to make you feel you're hearing standards such as "Dirty Old Town" and Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy" for the first time. And they don't come much more special than LaVette.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

9/10

LOSCIL Sketches From New Brighton

KRANKY

More grayscale ambient/electronic hum from deft Canadian producer

For the past decade or so, Vancouver's Scott Morgan has been patiently shaping a body of recordings that melds the spatial properties of dub-techno with the churchy drift-works of modern ambience. *Sketches From New Brighton* doesn't diverge from this template, and if you can make one complaint about it, it's that you wouldn't bat an eyelid if you found out it was 10-15 years vintage. But it's such an immersive listen, you can't fault its construction and dynamics: bleached-bone textures give way to flickering, needle-point glitches, while long-tone bells and susurations slowly blanch the window, like a snowstorm in action.

JONDALE

7/10

MALA Mala In Cuba

BROWNSWOOD

Ay caramba! Cuba meets Croydon, dubstep style

Less a culture clash than a cordial exchange, *Mala In Cuba* took shape after British dubstep architect Mala, one half of Digital Mystikz and a connoisseur of Jamaican sound systems, helmed studio sessions in Havana with local musicians last May for Brownswood boss and 6 Music DJ Gilles Peterson. More used to one-off dubplates, Mala finds his skills somewhat exposed across a whole album as he seeks to balance frisky Cuban percussion with his own muscular poise. For every Bacardi-ad number like "Revolution" he rolls out a fistful of heavyweight moochers such as "The Tourist" and "Changuito", which will keep the purists nodding.

PIERS MARTIN

MICHAEL MAYER**Mantasy**

KOMPAKT

Cologne DJ and label boss' second mixed bag

**7/10**

Kompakt founder Michael Mayer can be an inspired selector behind the decks, but in front of a mixing desk he struggles to express himself in any meaningful way. Perhaps he has no urgent desire to make (or even release) his own music, which could explain the substantial eight-year gap between solo albums. After the lacklustre *Touch*, *Mantasy* at least captures the bonhomie that permeates the best releases from his house and techno label: the title track and "Voigt Kampff Test" mince incorrigibly, while the sentimental naivety of "Baumhaus", with its birdsong and woodwind, and "Good Times", a sloppy Pet Shop Boys, is hard to resist.

PIERS MARTIN

**MENOMENA****Moms**

BARSUK

Wildly imaginative, manic indiepop thrills

With The Flaming Lips moving in ever-decreasing, over-indulgent circles,

there's a gap in the market for an ingenious, unhinged indie-rock act, and Portland's Menomena could be that band. Not that they're copyists: now down to a duo, their fifth album is full of clattering drums and noisy distortion ("Capsule"), frantic boogie-woogie piano-fuelled jams (the dubiously titled "Skintercourse") and the ambitious eight-minute, string-laden melodrama of "One Horse". At times their arrangements veer close to over-cluttered, but the sheer velocity with which they throw ideas out, especially on the sax-heavy "Pique", makes this a mighty exhilarating record.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



VAN MORRISON

Born To Sing: No Plan B

BLUE NOTE

A real return to form, though it can't match Van's best. By Graeme Thomson



7/10

THOSE WHO BELIEVE in omens could be forgiven for harbouring high hopes for Van Morrison's 34th studio album. It has, after all, been a while since he last dallied with true greatness. Somewhere around the early '90s the febrile, liquid promise that

powered his best music solidified into something grudging and workmanlike, but recently there have been signs that Morrison is waking up once more to the fact of his own peculiar genius.

His reimmersion in *Astral Weeks* via a series of spectacular concerts at the tail-end of 2008 seemed to spark a reconnection with what we might call Deep Van. Recent live shows have included choice cuts from some of his most transcendent albums: not only *Astral Weeks*, but *Into The Music*, *Common One* and *No Guru, No Method, No Teacher*.

We might, therefore, have hoped for fireworks from his first studio album since 2008's *Keep It Simple*. It hasn't quite worked out that way, though there is much here to enjoy and even treasure. The awkwardly titled *Born To Sing: No Plan B* finds Morrison recording for Blue Note, and while you wouldn't call it a fully fledged jazz album it's

certainly closer to that than some extended Avalonian exploration. Useful touchstones include the snappy soul shapes of *Moondance*, the punchy R'n'B of *His Band And The Street Choir* and the more languid contemplations of something like *Poetic Champions Compose*.

The opening "Open The Door (To Your Heart)" is archetypal, Morrison revisiting the breezy, accessible swing of "Wild Night", "Bright Side Of The Road", "Days Like This" and "Real Real Gone". The piano solo in the finger-clicking "Close Enough For Jazz" echoes its counterpart in "Moondance", while you could imagine Fats Domino tackling "Born To Sing", a solidly soulful affirmation of Morrison's sense of vocation. That voice is still a remarkably elastic instrument, variously growling, grunting, whispering, roaring, soaring and blowing bubbles. It's just a shame the sentiments it articulates are often so sour. This is a record not exactly bereft of grievances (he even takes a side-swipe at "phoney pseudo-jazz"; careful there, old boy), with several songs snarling at those modish whipping boys, greed and materialism. Disguised as a deceptively jaunty rolling blues, "Educating Archie" rants at pretty

much everything: the media, "slaves to the capitalist system", propaganda and, yes, "all kinds of shite". Elsewhere he cheerlessly approves Sartre's philosophy that "hell is other people", and even "End Of The Rainbow", a sweetly flowing meditation, is marred by malcontent.

It's a relief when he turns away from the flesh towards the spirit. The lovely "Mystic Of The East" harks back to his loose-limbed post-*Them*, pre-*Astral Weeks* Bang recordings. "Pagan Heart" is more agitated, a John Lee Hooker blues-trance which finds Morrison "down by the crossroads", contemplating Arcadia and damp with the humid Mississippi heat. "If In Money We Trust" is another black mantra against Mammon, but the spur this time is a biting awareness of divine absence. Combining the ominous edge of Van's own "Streets Of Arklow" with a touch of Aaron Neville's "Hercules", it's a malevolent minor-chord crawl, the dissonant stabs of piano punctuated by creeping horns and Morrison's wracked cry of "where's God?"

It's one of two truly great performances among these ten songs. The other is "Going Down To Monte Carlo", which starts unpromisingly with a piece of muttered map-reading – "25k from Nice" – but grows into a deep quest for peace. Unfolding over eight minutes, its ebb and flow allows for an *Astral Weeks*-esque acoustic bass breakdown and a touch of superior scatting. Not real gone, perhaps, but at the very least a bit transported.

If nothing else quite matches these twin peaks, *Born To Sing: No Plan B* remains a vibrant and timely reaffirmation of Morrison's talents. It is not the truly transcendent album some may have read in the runnes, but it contains several hints that such greatness may, finally, be within his grasp once more.

SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by:

Van Morrison

Recorded at: Culloden

Hotel, Belfast

Personnel: Van

Morrison (vocals,

guitar, piano, sax),

Dave Keary (guitar),

Paul Moran (keys,

trumpet, piano), Paul

Moore (bass), Jeff

Lardner (drums), Chris

White (sax), Alistair

White (trombone)

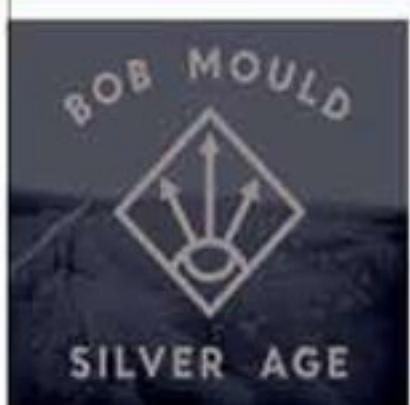

TIFT MERRITT
Traveling Alone

YEP ROC

Alt.country songstress nears *Wrecking Ball* territory on varied set Cut live off the floor by producer Tucker Martine (The Decemberists, My

Morning Jacket) and a handpicked crew including guitarist Marc Ribot and pedal steel player Eric Heywood, Merritt's fourth studio LP cements her status as Emmylou Harris' spiritual heir. At this point, she's got the silken roots ballad down cold – so much so that the very effortlessness of the several examples here lessens their impact. Conversely, the further Merritt strays from her default setting, the more affecting she is, as on the syncopated rocker "Still Not Home", the balmy soul workout "Spring" and the closing widescreen opus "Marks", which recalls early-'70s Stones epics like "Moonlight Mile" and "Winter".

BUD SCOPPA

7/10
BOB MOULD
Silver Age

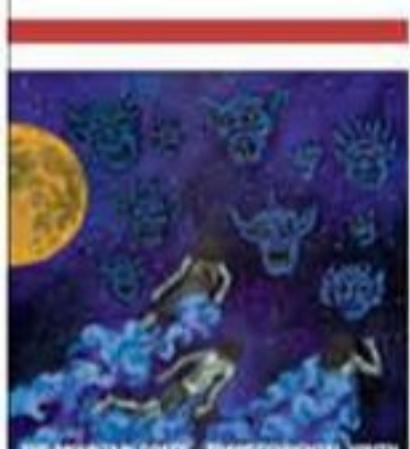
GRANARY MUSIC/EDSEL

Warehouse to warhorse for Hüsker Dü mainman

Pro-wrestling, dance music and a passion for hairy men – see his

autobiography *See A Little Light* for the occasionally graphic details – have made the once-tormented Bob Mould infinitely happier, to the extent that you can more or less hear him clocking on every time he straps on that soul-quake guitar sound. Conceived after a tour celebrating 20 years since his post-grunge pay-out, *Copper Blue*, *Silver Age* revisits Sugar's thick-set pop style. But while "Briefest Moment" encapsulates Mould's pioneering fusion of hardcore and The Beatles, his most celebrated musical summers – like his demons – could be behind him.

JIM WIRTH

6/10
THE MOUNTAIN GOATS
Transcendental Youth

TOMLAB

At last, as good as everyone has wanted them to be

Over more than a dozen albums dating back to the mid-'90s, The Mountain Goats have been stifled by a failure to know when to cease tempting hubris. On *Transcendental Youth*, however, founder and only constant member John Darnielle narrows his generally promiscuous musical and lyrical focus. This album pursues a theme of escape from the more lurid temptations of early adulthood, and Darnielle locates an aptly urgent yet reflective tone, coming on like an angry Elton John in "The Diaz Brothers", and like a slightly less whimsical Decemberists in "Counterfeit Florida Plates".

ANDREW MUELLER

8/10

Cut live off the floor by producer Tucker Martine (The Decemberists, My


MUNGOLIAN JETSET
Mungodelics

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND

Norwegian duo's endless boogie

Saying yes to every excess has long been a hallmark of Oslo's progressive disco scene, leading quite innocently to Lindstrøm's recent Ozric Tentacles pastiche *Six Cups Of Rebel*. Mungolian Jetset's bearded stargazers Knut Saevik and Paul Nyhus typically struggle to pen anything below five minutes and, true to form, this latest collection of Balearic chuggers, some laced with wind chimes and birdsong, suggests there's no end to their indulgence. This can be tiresome – "People On Strong Stuff" (Valium, clearly) plods without purpose – but equally provides passages of uncontained elation, notably "Revolving Door", sung by Unni Wilhelmsen, and "Smells Like Gasoline".

PIERS MARTIN

7/10
REVELATIONS

Marc Ribot's best-known employers


►TOM WAITS

Ribot's taut, nervy twanging has been an almost constant signature of Waits' albums since 1985's *Rain Dogs*, up to and including last year's terrific *Bad As Me*. It's Ribot's guitar that gives Waits' demented Americana its belligerent edge: where most American guitarists play loose and fluid, Ribot plucks each string like he's defusing something.

►ELVIS COSTELLO

Costello, doubtless aware of what Ribot had done for Waits, enlisted him for 1989's ambitious mélange *Spike*, and has since retained him for *Mighty Like A Rose*, *Kojak Variety* and *National Ransom*, among others; Ribot was also a part of Costello's late-'80s/early-'90s backing group The Rude 5.

►ROBERT PLANT & ALISON KRAUSS

Ribot played guitar, banjo and dobro on the unlikely pair's 2007 classic *Raising Sand*. Not for the first time, a record that could very well have lapsed into roots-rock cliché was taken somewhere else by Ribot's restless, genre-defying fidgeting. As ever, Ribot makes his mark without ever dominating proceedings: the dream sideman. ANDREW MUELLER


MUSE
The 2nd Law

WARNERS

Operatic sci-fi conspiracy rockers digest disco and dubstep Whatever your tolerance threshold for Matt Bellamy's Wagnerian prog

metal bombast, Muse deserve credit for scaling ever higher peaks of baroque'n'roll excess.

Named after that old rock standby, the second law of thermodynamics, the Devon trio's sixth album combines doomy warnings of global systemic breakdown with torrid love letters to Bellamy's screen-star fiancée, Kate Hudson. It is also their most rhythmically elastic to date, from the gnarly disco-funk of "Panic Station" to the Skrillex-inspired beats of "Follow Me" and the roaringly triumphalist Olympics anthem "Survival". Muse redeem high-camp absurdity with a genius for sumptuous arrangements, mighty pop hooks and irresistible melodrama.

STEPHEN DALTON

8/10
OMEGA MALE
Omega Male

FULL TIME HOBBY

Idiosyncratic debut from new Transatlantic duo

The latest project of Brighton musician David Best (Fujiya & Miyagi) and Brooklyn's Sammy Rubin (Project Jenny, Project Jan), Omega Male's blend of Krautrock and disco pop should win over those who like electronic music with a human thumbprint. There's veiled humour at the heart of the title track – "Why try when you're just gonna fail/ We are the Omega Male" – and in the funk-inflected "Testosterone" a paean to male folly and underachievement, made all the more effective by Best's deadpan delivery. Elsewhere pot shots are taken at George Osborne and his fellow political heavyweights' "delusions of grandeur". Fair to say, you won't hear anything else like it.

FIONA STURGES


THE PHEROMOANS
Does This Guy Stack Up?

UPSET THE RHYTHM

The world's first posthumous Peel fave An out-of-tune singer wittily deconstructing

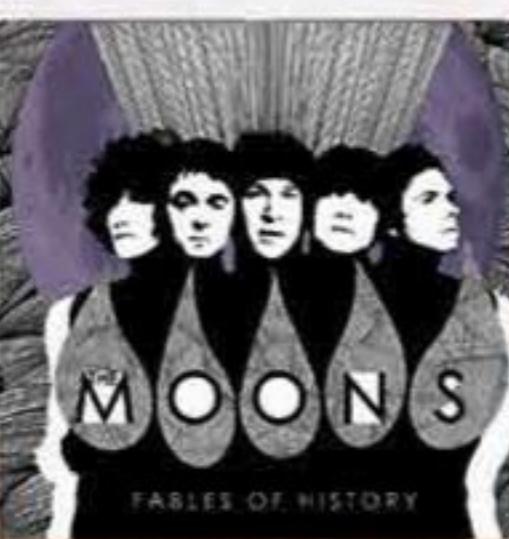
everyday life. Shambling music, equal parts garage, punk and early indie. An attitude that reeks of self-deprecation. If John Peel were alive, he would have Home Counties throwbacks The Pheromoans on heavy rotation. This fourth album delights through rudimentary drum-bass-guitar-organ janglings and the deadpan yelp of Russell Walker, who wittily jabbers on the theme of Modern Life Is Rubbish, taking in consumerism ("Power Watch"), his haplessness with women ("The Final Sugar Rush") and Christmas ("A Freak's Xmas"). It all has a winning, childlike charm.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

THE MOONS FABLES OF HISTORY

Fronted by singer, songwriter and guitarist Andy Crofts (usually found seated behind the Hammond organ in Paul Weller's band) The Moons' second album is a 12-tracker that interweaves garage rock, glistening orchestrations and infectious rhythms, underpinned with timeless British tunesmith sensibilities.

SCHNITZEL CD / 180 GRAM WHITE COLOUR LP



MARK EITZEL DON'T BE A STRANGER

"America's Greatest Living Lyricist" [The Guardian], Mark Eitzel of American Music Club returns from his longest absence with his best solo work to date. Producer Sheldon Gomberg has assembled a band of Los Angeles musical luminaries, added a full string section and the result is a beautiful record.

DECOR CD / 180 GRAM LP

RINGO DEATHSTARR MAUVE

"There is a direct line between My Bloody Valentine, the Jesus and Mary Chain and Ringo Deathstarr. And it stops at Slowdive Central. If you retain any fondness for those three - and are mentally aroused by a spot of melody-heavy guitar pop - you will adore the 'Starr'"

- THE GUARDIAN

CLUB AC30 CD / 180 GRAM MAUVE COLOUR LP



IRIS DEMENT SING THE DELTA

Considered "one of the finest artists of her generation" (ALL MUSIC), Iris DeMent has returned with her first album of original music in 16 years. Sing The Delta is uplifting and heartbreak, ripe with twang and soul. Dixie horns, weeping slide guitar balladry and bright, Gospeltinged piano swirl as Iris contemplates religion, love and family.

FLARIELLA CD / LP x 2

THE HIT PARADE PICK OF THE POPS (VOL 1)

A swish new compilation CD featuring 20 of the most memorable songs in the career of top notch indie band THE HIT PARADE. Purveyors of pure pop & one of the last remaining flag bearers of the twee and C86 music scene this collection features singles both cheerful and desolate in style. "The Hit Parade is the dream child of Julian Henry, a youthful romantic blessed with a rare talent for writing pure pop melodies" NME

JSH RECORDS CD



KREIDLER DEN

Recorded at the famous LowSwing Studio in Berlin, Kreidler move away from the drum-heavy, muscular sound of their last album, focussing instead on a more viscous musicality. 'Den' has a lot in common with Brian Eno or Arthur Russell's musical landscapes and underlines the ever growing development of this unique German post-rock / synth-pop group.

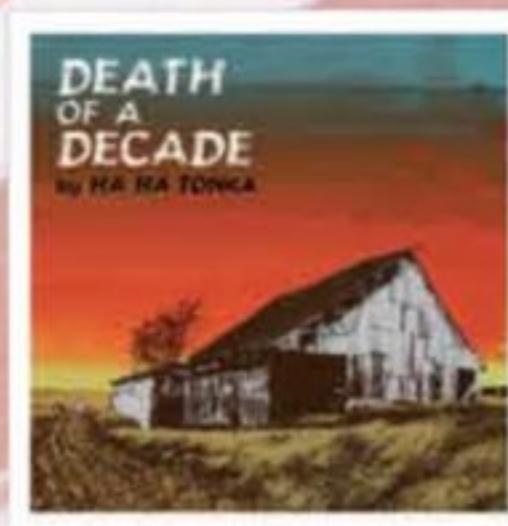
BUREAU B CD / LP

CORY BRANAN MUTT

"Majestic 3rd album" - UNCUT 8/10
"Darken My Door" bests anything Ryan Adams has written since Heartbreaker" - PASTE MAGAZINE

UK tour dates 2012 - Oct 16th Cardiff Solus, 17th Norwich Waterfront, 18th London O2 Academy Islington, 19th Brighton Concorde 2.

BLOODSHOT CD & LP



HA HA TONKA DEATH OF A DECADE

"A precocious, stammering rock record that bridges sweet-water gospel folk with sweltering Southern rock." - CMJ Essentials. "Buckle in the Bible Belt", Ha Ha Tonka's debut album is newly available on vinyl too.

Tour dates 2012 Nov 2 HMV Institute Birmingham, Nov 3 The Ruby Lounge Manchester, Nov 4 Notting Hill Arts Club London, Nov 9 Academy 2 Dublin

BLOODSHOT CD / LP

AMERICAN AQUARIUM BURN.FLICKER.DIE

American Aquarium can wrap the ugliest feelings in the most spirited soundscape. Sonically uplifting instrumentation and vivid, wrenching lyrics illuminate the dark side of hanging out in rock 'n' roll limbo. Produced by Southern rock artisan Jason Isbell (ex-Drive-By Truckers).

BLUE ROSE CD



ANDREA SCHROEDER BLACKBIRD

Once in a while, Germany produces a uniquely talented female singer, and Andrea is such an artist. Discovered and loved by such illustrious artists as John Lurie, Mike Watt and Slim Cessna, Schroeder's sound has elements of chanteuses Marlene Dietrich and Nico along with Tindersticks-style chamber pop.

GLITTERHOUSE CD / LP

THEE ATTACKS DIRTY SHEETS

Danish garage rockers Thee Attacks return stronger, groovier and heavier than ever. "So good...they'll easily move beyond the garage and could cross over to become a successor to the Hives"

MOJO

Catch them live in London at The Old Blue Last 25 Sept w/ Shiny Darkly

CRUNCHY FROG CD / LP



TILLY AND THE WALL HEAVY MOOD

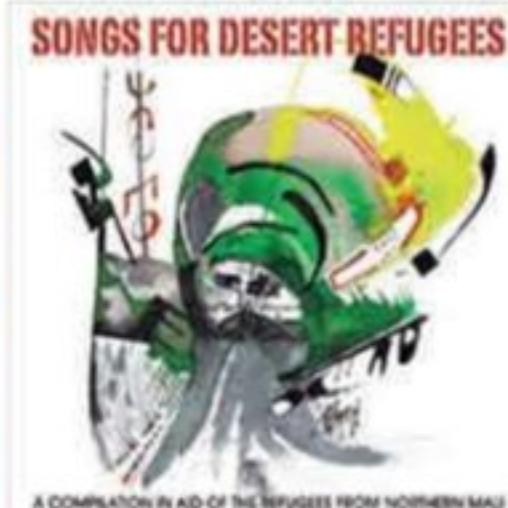
It's been four years since Tilly and the Wall released an album and the quintet has re-emerged decidedly wiser and more mature, but with all their child-like exuberance intact. 'Heavy Mood' reasserts their belief in the power of love & friendship via brash anthemic choruses urging the younger generation to let its own freak flag fly!

TEAM LOVE CD / LP

LYRES ON FYRE

Formed in Boston in the late 70s out of the ashes of the legendary DMZ, Lyres are one of the truly essential bands of 1980s garage and their fierce debut from 1984 has been a benchmark for the genre since then. Over the next few months Munster Records will reissue the complete Lyres discography on Ace of Hearts.

MUNSTER CD / LP



SONGS FOR DESERT REFUGEES VARIOUS

"A superb sampler of the finest sounds from the Touareg cultural renaissance"

4★★★★ SONGLINES

"Great music for a good cause"

4★★★★ EVENING STANDARD

"Uniformly excellent" 4★★★★ MOJO

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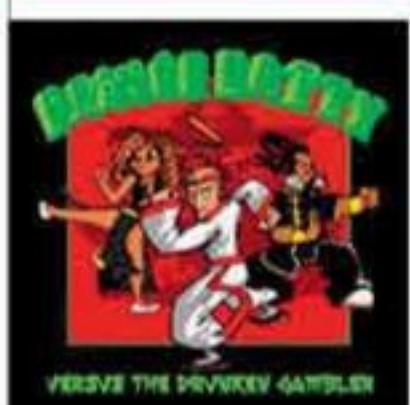
XIX/UNIVERSAL

Brits-assisted third from The King's daughter; T Bone Burnett produces Having introduced herself as a more countrified

6/10

Sheryl Crow in 2003 and hired Linda Perry to add pop-rock gloss to album number two, Lisa Marie Presley seems to have found her natural home. Ironically, it's Britain, where she now lives and where she's hooked up with co-songwriters Richard Hawley and Ed Harcourt. Hawley's twanging, noir-ish style especially is central to these bluesy, country-folk songs, steered by Presley's throaty vocals and washed over by lap-steel guitar. She's at her best on the lachrymose likes of "Close To The Edge" and "Just A Dream", less successful when angling for Grand Ole Opry classicism or – as on "Un-break" – flirting with funk-metal pop.

SHARON O'CONNELL



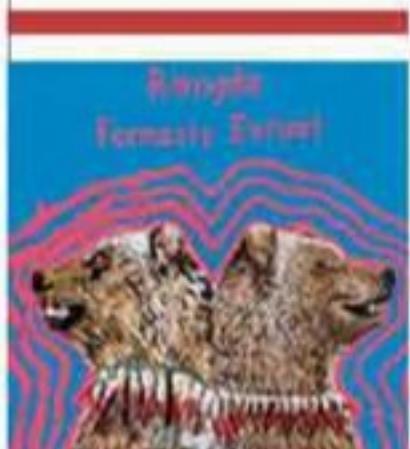
PRINCE FATTY
Prince Fatty Versus The Drunken Gambler

MR BONGO

Exquisite counterfeit dub readings of reggae and R&B classics

The third LP by Prince Fatty – aka London producer Mike Pelanconi – is by some distance the best. Instead of angling for hipster obscurantism, he and guests go for the pop jugular. Hollie Cook (daughter of Pistol Paul) affirms her role as the Lily Allen du jour with a horn-heavy reading of the Andrews Sisters' "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön", a gentle skank through The Whispers' disco classic "And The Beat Goes On" and a funky dub mash-up of ODB's "Got Your Money". Elsewhere, Alcapone, Horseman, George Dekker and Winston Francis serve up classics like John Holt's timeless "Ali Baba" with an R&B twist.

JOHN LEWIS

8/10

RANGDA
Formerly Extinct

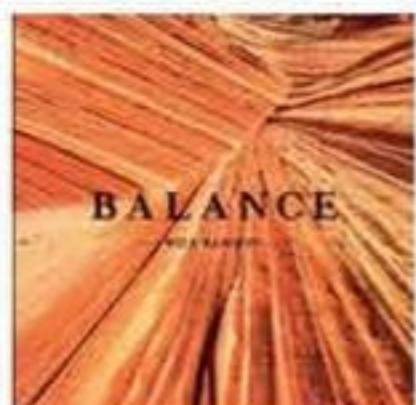
DRAG CITY

Formidable freak-power trio rides again

Picking up where 2010's *False Flag* left off, this parliament featuring Ben Chasny, Sir Richard

Bishop and Chris Corsano continue to fuse free instrumental rock with an interest in non-Western modes and scales. Throughout *Formerly Extinct*, Chasny and Bishop's surf guitar blades gouge troughs in Saharan dunes. "Silver Nile"'s 11 minutes begin mystical and brooding, mounting to a Can-like groove plastered with Bishop's sandstorm solo. The delightfully coiled guitar tracery of "Majnun" reaches the steppes of Led Zep's "Kashmir". Individually, these three hombres boast incredible pedigrees; together they achieve a level of fervent interplay that's exhilarating to hear.

ROB YOUNG

8/10**WILL SAMSON****Balance**

KARAOKE KALK

Hauntingly sentimental folktronica from Berlin-based Brit

You could be forgiven for mistaking 23-year-old

Samson's gentle, multi-tracked falsetto for Bon Iver's, but there's much more to this all-too-brief second album. Awash with Eno-esque ambience, and recorded late at night to cassette – the glitches and hiss adding to the dusky atmosphere – it's an unusually intimate collection, with tracks like "Oceans Are Wilder" so sparse as to be barely there. "Cathedrals", however, expands with a coda that Sigur Rós might recognise, while "Eat Sleep Travel, Repeat"'s sparse arrangement is enhanced by a spectral, muted trumpet solo. While melancholia lies at its heart, it's also strangely, hearteningly comforting.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

8/10

Having introduced herself as a more countrified

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**TY SEGALL****Twins**

DRAG CITY

Third full-length this year from workaholic West Coast wunderkind US garage-punk/psych-pop singer-songwriter and guitarist Segall has already

released two albums this year – one with White Fence and the other recorded with his touring band. Now, his sixth solo studio LP. Given Segall's insane prolificacy and his obvious nurturing of the *Nuggets* legacy, you might expect the churning of over-familiar ground, but his keen-eared blending of Beatles-style melodies and psych jangle with the snarling attitude of Mudhoney and Melvins' malevolent heaviness is oddly invigorating. Guitars are thickened by fuzz, white noise whines, but the wyrd folk-toned "The Hill" and acoustic "Gold On The Shore" prove Segall is much more than a single-note nostalgic.

SHARON O'CONNELL

SHOES**Ignition**

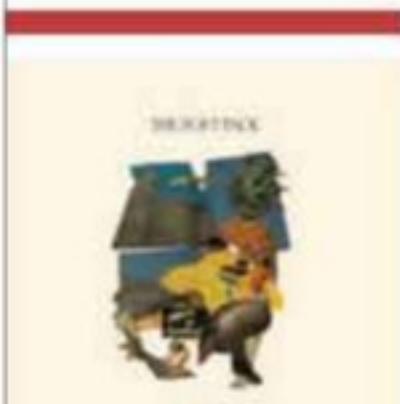
BLACK VINYL

Back-from-the-dead effort from Midwestern powerpop pioneers

Shoes came on – in their late '70s prime – like Cheap Trick's more kempt,

melancholic British Invasion-obsessed cousins. *Ignition*, their first studio recordings in nearly 20 years, stays true to the group's musical raison d'être. But the songwriting of brothers Jeff and John Murphy (plus their co-conspirator Gary Klebe) – adding tidbits of pre-Beatles rock and a certain drony quality – delves into an assortment of emotional dead-ends, an array of sobering challenges in hanging on to that once-youthful optimism (see especially, "Where Will It End" and "Diminishing Returns"). In sum, flawlessly performed, all-grown-up rainy-day guitar pop, marred only by a tinge of insular sameness.

LUKE TORN

**THE SOFT PACK****Strapped**

MEXICAN SUMMER

Business as unusual from sharp, Cali pop quartet

What's in a name? In the case of The Soft Pack – who were initially The Muslims

(really), but renamed themselves after a prosthetic penis made for cosmetic purposes – it's tempting to say, some rather puerile decision-making. But there's nothing juvenile about their second album, an energetic and idiosyncratic interpretation of post-REM alt. pop. Here are a dozen peppy, to-the-point songs tapped into the *Nuggets* aesthetic, the paisley underground and Flying Nun's back catalogue, played fairly straight, as on "They Say", or weirded-out, as on epic closer "Captain Ace". Fuzz and reverb are everywhere, but The Soft Pack are also refreshingly unafraid of the sax solo, as the '80s-styled "Bobby Brown" attests.

SHARON O'CONNELL



MARK EITZEL

Don't Be A Stranger

DÉCOR

More heartbreak and droll humour from one of America's underrated greats. By Jon Dale



7/10

many songs drawn from his early muse, Kathleen, are a case in point. But it also means that Eitzel can risk falling into self-parody, or at least predictability, a fine line that he walks through many of his albums. It may have been a long time since American Music Club earned their stripes, with the media attention around 1991's *Everclear*, but there's a case to be made for many of the songs on that album sitting, with a slightly less tortured rictus, on *Don't Be A Stranger*, his seventh solo studio album of original songs.

The album itself comes after a trying time for Eitzel, suffering from a heart attack in 2011, dealing with the passing of long-time drummer Tim Mooney in June of this year, and seeing the reformed

MARK EITZEL is a songwriter who repeatedly revisits old wounds and trauma, taking slightly different positions on the same handful of concerns – love, relationships, misanthropy. This repetition often yields great results – the

American Music Club disintegrate after two great albums, in particular 2004's unrelenting, almost claustrophobic *Love Songs For Patriots*. (More so than his lauded '90s classics, *Patriots* feels like Eitzel at his peak, his most essential.) On the flipside, he's also worked on a musical with Simon Stephens, *Marine Parade*, and had his new album funded by the most unexpected of routes – a friend gifting him studio time through a lottery win.

That studio time, working with co-producer Sheldon Gomberg, is both blessing and curse. Curse because, at its most polite, *Don't Be A Stranger* comes uncomfortably close to smoothed-over, rote singer-songwriter territory, with Eitzel's voice adrift in a hermetically sealed environment, no rough edges, no real character. It takes a leap of faith to read this as a seductive foil to Eitzel's tales of dejection, though really it's only his warmth and the occasional barbs in his lyrics that save the more lugubrious moments on *Don't Be A Stranger*.

Thankfully, more often than not Eitzel is on great form. He's already

said that he was hoping to make his *Harvest* or *Five Leaves Left* here, though Scott Walker's 1960s albums sometimes feel like closer companions: the strings that hover spectrally over "The Bill Is Due", an early highlight on the album, recall Walker's similarly eerie "It's Raining Today". This is also one of Eitzel's best vocal performances on the album, and indeed it's his voice that really stands out across *Don't Be A Stranger*'s 11 songs, a warm, understated thing that has lost the overt drama and dynamics of his times in American Music Club, and is all the better for it.

The other highlight is "We All Have To Find Our Own Way Out", where Eitzel sings to the piano about "broken child stars" and suicidal souls, with Eitzel addressing his other, "I don't love you enough for your despair". It's a beautifully sad moment on a record that could use a few more of them. If the 'American Morrissey' tag that Eitzel was once saddled with ever made sense – it generally didn't – it's because, like Morrissey, Eitzel's moments of droll humour deflect. He could serve to be yet more mordant, more dark-hearted. Much like The Smiths at their

most abject, Eitzel excels at, and in, misery. It's what makes his songs compelling – his forensic character dissections, and his disentangling of the fallacious language of love, both speak to an ability to write with both a brutal critical voice, and the artfulness of great poetics.

But with *Don't Be A Stranger*, Eitzel has traded some of that intensity for a slightly more pacific understanding of the vicissitudes of the real. Ultimately, it's a fair trade, revealing Eitzel, yet again, as an underappreciated, misunderstood, great American songwriter.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:**
Sheldon Gomberg
Recorded at: The Carriage House, LA
Personnel includes:
Mark Eitzel (vocals, guitar, string arrangements), Ben Peeler (lap Steel), Vudi (guitar), Pete Thomas (drums), Fred Bows (strings), BooHoo Institutional Choir (background vocals)

**SONNYMOON****Sonnymoon**

PLUG RESEARCH

Cosmic duo will vazzle your ears

Boston area duo Anna Wise and Dane Orr, aka Sonnymoon, offer a fresh and forward-thinking new voice in experimental electro-soul on this beautifully assured self-titled debut – a dazzling tapestry of polyrhythmic future-funk, fragrant dream-folk and silky space-jazz. A little too much tasteful subtlety creeps in around the midway point, but things turn enticingly weird again with the hypnotic post-dubstep lullabies “Watersboiled” and “Others By”, followed by the sublime finale “Just Before Dawn”, on which Wise coos melismatic sweet nothings over minimalist staccato brass. After this magical opening step, Sonnymoon could journey anywhere and everywhere.

STEPHEN DALTON

8/10**SPECTRE FOLK****The Ancient Storm**

VAMPIRE BLUES

Sonic Youth/Tall Firs/Magik Markers collide fruitfully

Steve Shelley's new label Vampire Blues launches with this splendid suite of droning, cat-calling guitars and leftfield melodies. Shelley drums; the band is led by Pete Nolan of Magik Markers and – it says here – Gimp Knuckle. Aaron Mullan of Tall Firs plays bass, and Peter Meehan (a writer with McSweeney's food quarterly *Lucky Peach*) plays guitar. The wonderful opener “Inchin' Worm” resembles Galaxie 500, with a glacial rhythm, a melody dripping in ennui, and a sense of weary numbness which all but causes the tune to collapse on itself (see also “Please Come Home”). The 14-minute “Knife” stretches patience, but eventually unfurls woozily.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

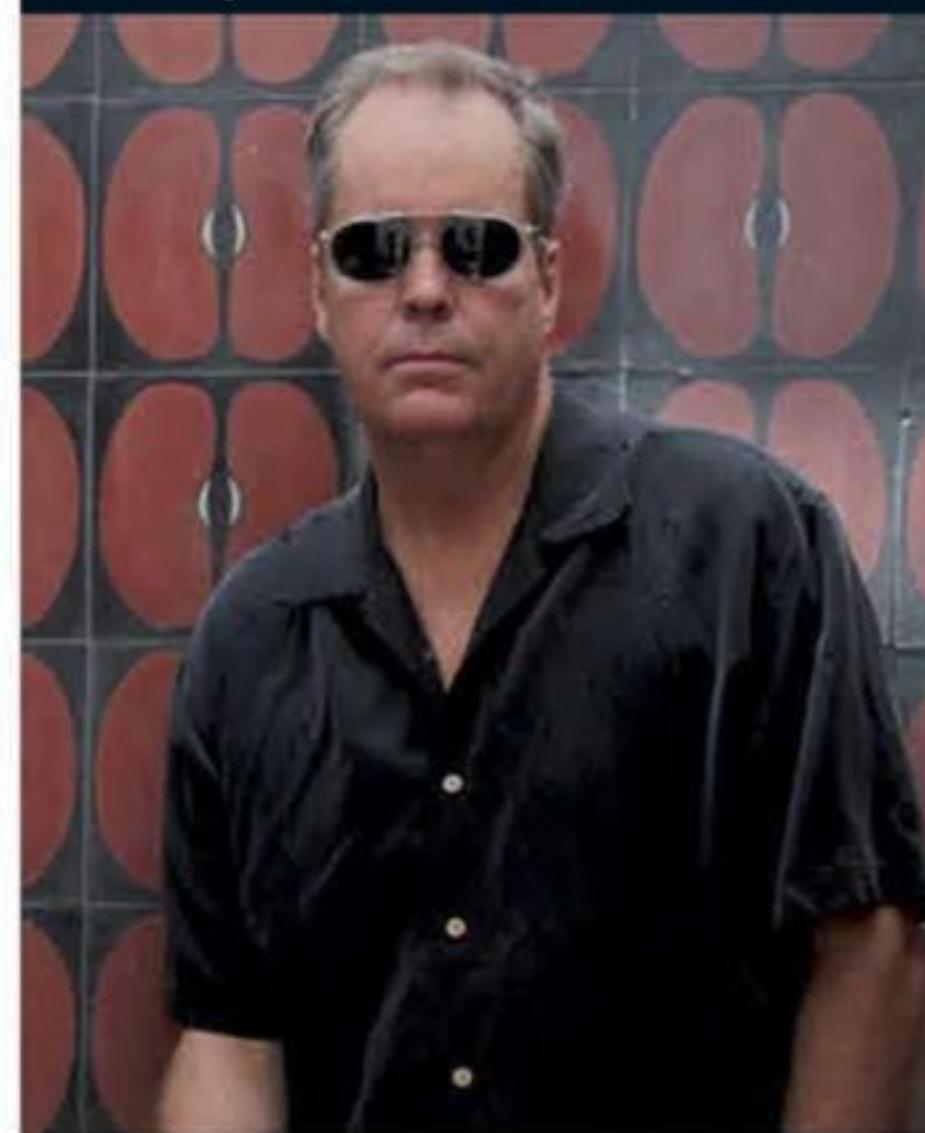
7/10**STATE BROADCASTERS****Ghosts We Must Carry**

OLIVE GROVE

Delicate second dish from ace Glasgow septetState Broadcasters' 2009 debut *The Ship And The*

Iceberg offered up a beguiling vision of Americana as viewed through the rain-spattered lens of Glasgow bedsit land, brimming with sad humour, sly insight and lovelorn blokes hopelessly pining for women they can never have. This follow-up is slightly more downbeat, though no worse for it. There's a warmth to even the most melancholic of tunes, be it the Mark Linkous/Vic Chesnutt tribute “The Only Way Home”, the very lovely “Kittiwake” or the crestfallen “New Year's Day”, the songs borne aloft on cushiony strings, brittle acoustic guitars and gentle boy-girl harmonies.

ROB HUGHES

7/10**REVELATIONS****Who is Marlowe Billings? He's mostly the real Dan Stuart...**

► “I'd say most of it is based on truth, with a little poetic licence,” says Dan Stuart of his alter ego Marlowe Billings, and the album that bears his name. “A lot of the action takes place in Mexico, where I've been living the last two years after seven years in New York. I had to get out of Manhattan, it's not the same as it was – even the dive bars are phoney, like they've been designed by someone uptown. I got divorced after 20 years, and spent time in psychiatric institutions. I'm OK talking about it, why not? People talk about how they broke an arm, so why should breaking your brain be any different? I guess my treatment helped form some of the songs, so it was a kind of musical therapy. Don't ask what was specifically wrong with me, though, 'cos even the doctors couldn't agree on a diagnosis. It was probably a build-up of stuff, the rock'n'roll lifestyle, going all the way back to Green On Red in the '80s. One of the shrinks said to me, 'Dan, I think you're borderline everything! I might use that for the next album title.'”

TERRY STAUNTON

**MALKA SPIGEL****Every Day Is Like The First Day**

SWIM

Blissful drone-pop from former Minimal Compact chanteuse

The 27-year romantic and creative partnership

between Polish/Israeli art maverick Spigel and Wire's Colin Newman has produced their own thriving cottage industry. The Swim label, a band called Githead, sundry video and visual arts projects, and this third Spigel set, which also features Newman, Johnny Marr, Alexander Balanescu, Julie Campbell aka Lonelady and the studio and talents of Stereolab's Andy Ramsay. The latter provides the biggest clue to the sound here, as Spigel's deadpan voice decorates the drones and drifts of Newman's atmospheric melodies. Evoking both the ruined grandeur of European cities and a dreamy optimism, this is an immersive art-pop gem.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

8/10**KEN STRINGFELLOW****Danzig In The Moonlight**

LOJINX

Posie blossoms, and keeps blossoming

With The Posies, REM and latterday Big Star, Ken

Stringfellow's skill with a sweet melody was clearly demonstrated. His fourth solo album – delayed by a dalliance with Norwegian rockers The Disciplines – is structurally ambitious, obtuse, and occasionally brilliant. There's no arguing with the honeyed loveliness of “110 Or 220” with its Neil-like harmonica, while “Pray” is a sugar-coated Al Green pastiche. (“Savior's Hands” recalls the other Green, of Scritti Politti.) A particular highlight is the country duet with Charity Rose Thielen, “Doesn't It Remind You Of Something”, possibly because it doesn't try too hard. “Superwise”, which sounds like Supertramp, is less endearing.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

7/10**DAN STUART****The Deliverance Of Marlowe Billings**

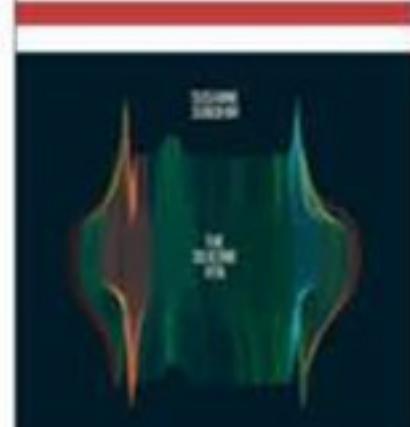
CADIZ

Back from the brink of despair, allegedly

If the back story accompanying the arrival

of the former Green On Red frontman's second solo album is to be believed, Stuart has spent the last few years living under an assumed name as a semi-recluse in Southern Mexico, patching his life together after a messy divorce and a stint in a psychiatric hospital. In the guise of Billings, he chronicles those low times in a series of oblique narratives that walk a thin line between urban cool and the caustic Americana of his old band. The garage-like crunch of “What You Laughing About?” and the sombre sea shanty “Searching Through The Pieces” add the most flesh to the tale, but it still sounds a tad on the tall side.

TERRY STAUNTON

8/10**SUSANNE SUNDFØR****The Silicone Veil**

SONNET SOUND

Magisterial art-pop from Norwegian prodigy

Sundfør's four previous albums have already

made her Norway's brightest young star. But *The Silicone Veil* sees the 26-year-old singer/composer – inspired, she says, by ‘apocalypse, death, love and snow’ – blend jazz, classical, folk and electro-pop into a dramatic noise. Collaborator and co-producer Lars Horntveth of Jaga Jazzist houses Sundfør's operatic voice inside fusions of orchestra, synth and beats that constantly soar and surprise, until the album becomes the euphoric score to a fantasy musical about eco-terror and impossible romance. If there is a more beautiful and ambitious song this year than “White Foxes”... well, there just isn't.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

The Specialist

Folk



Northern star
Kate Rusby: new
versions of old faves

OVER THREE ALBUMS, **Bellowhead** have blown brassy, big-band vigour into folk's hallowed canon, and **Broadside** (NAVIGATOR 7/10) proves a seamless sequel to 2010's acclaimed *Hedonism*, with producer John Leckie again overseeing rumbustious takes on well-worn standards. Drastic overhauls include "The Wife Of Usher's Well" rendered as hammering prog-folk, and "What's The Life Of A Man (Any More Than A Leaf?)" as East European jaunt. Jon Bowden, never short of theatricality, doesn't always have the vocal pipes to front his musical behemoth but the album is a blast nonetheless. *Bellowhead: The Musical* can't be far off.

Scots trio **Lau** have stretched boundaries with their intricate interplay of fiddle, accordion and guitar. Sufjan Stevens' producer Tucker Martine helps integrate subtle touches of electronica with instrumental prowess on third album **Race The Loser** (REVEAL 8/10), but it's still essentially chamber folk. Elegant soundscapes like "Torsa" and "Noltland Castle", inspired by highland and Orcadian scenery, rub shoulders with contemplative songs like "Throwing Pennies" and the beautifully sung "The Bird That Winds The Spring". Numbers change pace, shape-shift and surprise on a classy, beguiling creation.

Yorkshire's **Kate Rusby** celebrates two decades in the trade on **20** (PURE 7/10) with new versions of old favourites, many of them



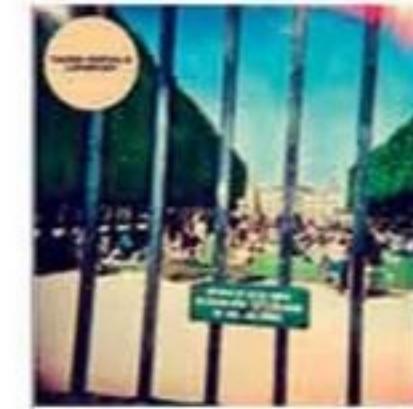
duets with luminaries like Eddi Reader, Nic Jones and Chris Thile. Rusby's fragile, wistful vocals can grow precious, but her guests add robustness, Paul Weller's earthy presence on the new "Sun Grazers" being a case in point. It works as both resumé and introduction.

No-one can accuse Hartlepool's **The Young'Uns** of fragility. Fourth outing **When Our Grandfathers Said No** (NAVIGATOR 6/10) pays tribute to Teesside fisherfolk and workers, with "The Battle Of Stockton" documenting the fight against 1930s fascism. There's squeezebox and guitar but the trio's full-throated harmonies are their calling card on originals and songs borrowed from Peter Bellamy, James Taylor *et al.* Folkies like to fight yesterday's battles, but today's social landscape deserves their attention.

Female six-piece **The Shee** maintain momentum on **Murmurations** (SHEE 7/10), their third, a spirited mix of balladry and instrumentals with a sharp Gaelic tang. Instrumentally gifted, with woodwind, harp and fiddle in the mix, the group's three lead vocalists alternate but join for a frisky version of "Three Knights" among other sweet fare.

Leigh Folk Festival's **Wrecks, Rucks, Riots & Resurrection** (THAMES DELTA 6/10) is a snip at a fiver – a whistle-stop tour of 23 acts, from Alasdair Roberts to Sharron Kraus, proving Britfolk roots remain sap-full.

NEIL SPENCER



TAME IMPALA

Lonerism

MODULAR

Kevin Parker's Oz bodes psych out

The title of one of *Lonerism*'s highlights, "Mind Mischief", provides a neat sub-heading for Kevin Parker's sun-blushed psych-rock adventures. Stirring late-'60s garage, vintage psychedelia, prog, jittery post-rave, electronica, The Beatles and The Beach Boys (most shamelessly on "Keep On Lying") into one brain-bending brew, *Lonerism* is more melodic and expansive than 2010 debut *Innerspeaker*, connecting the disparate dots with real élan. "Feels Like We Only Go Backwards" is lysergic dream pop with a dark, dislocated edge, swathed in swirling atmospherics. "Apocalypse Dreams" is a spiralling, unashamed epic, while "Elephant" sounds like The Sweet jamming with Hawkwind. Cosmic.

GRAEME THOMSON

TENDER TRAP

Ten Songs About Girls

FORTUNA POP!

Yesterday once more for C86 alpha female Indie-popper by night; chief economist at the Office Of Fair Trading by



7/10

day, Amelia Fletcher has led a 26-year musical career with Talulah Gosh, Heavenly, Marine Research and now Tender Trap that has not been marked by seismic changes of direction, but the purity of vision that makes a great cult performer. With the self-explanatory *Ten Songs About Girls*, Fletcher's three-chord trick comes up trumps once more, every sha-la-la-la, every woah-woah. "Step One" skewers Tender Trap's punked-up Shangri-Las ethos perfectly, but the spooked "Memorabilia" and the mellow Byrds of "Love Is Hard Enough" show Fletcher can do steely as well as brassy. Captivating stuff.

JIM WIRTH



THE TOURÉ-RAICHEL COLLECTIVE

The Tel Aviv Session

CUMBANCHA

Summit encounter between Mali axeman and Israeli keyboardist

6/10

Mali bluesman Vieux Farka Touré thought dreadlocked Israeli star Idan Raichel "a crazy hippy" when the pair met in 2008, but a friendship sparked and 2010 supplied the chance to play together. Happy vibes and deep endeavour pour from the impromptu session but it's no Ry-meets-Ali classic. Raichel, purveyor of cheesy prog pop, struggles with the intricacy of Touré's rolling lines, while the guitarist finds few ways into mid-Eastern pieces like "Alem". The addition of Ethiopian singer Cabra Casay evens up things on "Ane Nahatka", otherwise this proves a collaboration too far.

NEIL SPENCER


CORIN TUCKER BAND
Kill My Blues

KILL ROCK STARS

Original riot grrrl carries on screaming

A marriage and two kids on from her 1990s breakthrough with

Sleater-Kinney, Corin Tucker heralded a less frantic approach by billing her 2010 solo record *1,000 Years* "a middle-aged mom record"; its follow-up, *Kill My Blues*, is a reminder that parenthood and an impending 40th birthday party do not necessarily mean going soft. The hellion-howl of old slices through the equal-rights tirade of "Groundhog Day" and the bone-crushing R'n'B of "Tiptoe", but oblique manifesto "Outgoing Message" reins in the fury to beguiling effect. The pram is in the hall, perhaps, but the art remains in the right place.

JIM WIRTH

7/10
TWO GALLANTS
The Bloom And The Blight

FARGO

San Francisco duo make powerful return

We last heard from Tyson Vogel and Adam Stephens on Two Gallants' eponymous 2007 album. Perhaps with an eye on The Black Keys' ascent, the duo have turbo-boosted their grainy blues-folk-rock sound during their five-year hiatus. Hard'n'heavy opener "Halcyon Days" is followed by a series of similarly commanding high-octane assaults, before "Broken Eyes" and the wonderful "Sunday Souvenirs" return to the quieter acoustic landscape of 2007's "The Scenery Of Farewell" EP. Muscular but melodic, marrying a spiritual undertow to dark outlaw romance, the sense throughout is of awesome power, as effective simmering as it is unleashed.

GRAEME THOMSON

8/10
ULTRASOUND
Play For Today

FIERCE PANDA

Post-Britpop white elephants have it large again

A post-Verve approximation of Mountain, Ultrasound's

7/10

Nantucket sleighride to the knackers' yard came by virtue of their too-much, too-late debut album *Everything Picture*, which proved to be two CDs more than most could handle in 1999. Reactivated 13 years on, Andrew 'Tiny' Wood and friends' editing skills are moderately improved on *Play For Today*, and while those 'epic' dials are still turned up to 11, Ultrasound use them wisely. "Welfare State", "Sovereign" and "Between Two Rivers" (complete with colliery brass band) showcase their dole-ite Cecil B DeMille tendencies in fullest flight, delusional but unimpeachably grand.

JIM WIRTH


SUZANNE VEGA
Close-Up Vol 4: Songs Of Family

COOKING VINYL

Artists revisiting their best work in later life is a difficult concept. Joni Mitchell and Kris Kristofferson are among

those who've done it with aplomb, the ripe patina of subsequent experience enriching youthful versions of familiar songs. But Vega's desire to reinterpret herself verges on the obsessive. Between 1985-2007 she recorded seven albums of often striking and original songs. Since then, she's re-recorded almost everything from those albums on a series of four 'themed' releases. Quite why is a mystery, for as the final volume shows, rather than adding to the originals, these pleasant, stripped-down MTV *Unplugged*-style acoustic versions sound like demos for them. Baffling.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

5/10
WE'RE NEW HERE
Tame Impala


► Blame it on Western Australia. "In Perth being a muso is part of a whole lifestyle," says Kevin Parker. "It's a symptom of a directionless existence." Parker's dedication to turning a lack of focus into genre-busting psych-rock grooves started early. Now 26, by the age of 12 he'd developed a system of making music which involved "playing drums and then layering loads of different things over the top", which is largely how he still works. Having played in numerous local bands - "collaboration is very much a Perth thing" - Tame Impala evolved out of his former group, Dee Dee Drums. It's a somewhat schizoid project. In the studio it's just Parker laying out a "buffet of cosmic sounds". On stage the concept hardens into a slightly more conventional band format. Their 2010 debut, *Innerspeaker*, attracted its fair share of admirers, and *Lonerism* moves the story forward. "I wanted it to be less restrained, more open," he says. "I wasn't worried about sounding like a band, so I wanted to use as many sounds as I could. A guitar might just appear for one second on a song and then disappear. I guess it's more symphonic." Long may his mind wander. GRAEME THOMSON


SOLEDAD VELEZ
Wild Fishing

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Alt.folk reaches South America...

Despite the folk-based melodies, acoustic guitars, ukuleles and

banjos, Vélez is assuredly not Chile's answer to Laura Marling. This is folk exorcism in the same way as Nick Cave's *Murder Ballads* or PJ Harvey's *Let England Shake*, intended to challenge rather than to comfort. Citing Nina Simone and Diamanda Galás as her vocal influences, Vélez eschews girly charm for an edgy bravura warbling that will either entrance – or possibly have you wanting to throttle her. The opener, "Black Light In The Forest", stomps along as enthusiastically as the Mumfords. But it's deceptive. By the closing title track – a wigged-out homage to Robert Johnson – she's howling at the moon.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

7/10
MARTHA WAINWRIGHT
Come Home To Mama

V2

**8/10**

latest is apt given the recent travails of her and her family. Since her last album, Wainwright has given birth to a son nine weeks early and lost her mother to cancer. It's no wonder the album is marked by a lyrical maturity in which the singer largely abandons the sensationalism of previous albums while retaining the pith that has long been her calling card. Highlights include "I Am Sorry" where she notes "*the seven-year itch is quite a bitch*" and "All Your Clothes", about sorting through her mother's belongings. Smart, elegant and affecting, this is surely her best yet.

FIONA STURGES


THE WHITE BUFFALO
Once Upon A Time In The West

UNISON

Terrific UK debut from Oregon-born Californian

8/10

Jake Smith looks like he could have passed for an Allman Brothers roadie in a past life. His recordings as The White Buffalo, heading up what amounts to a rural-folk power trio, have already caused a stir in his native US, soundtracking TV shows *Sons Of Anarchy* and *Californication*. This mighty second LP, his first in these parts, is rammed with coming-of-age songs masquerading as outlaw tales, driven by Smith's happy knack for finely chiselled narratives and a great blustery voice that roars through bluegrass shanties like "How The West Was Won" and "Hold The Line".

ROB HUGHES

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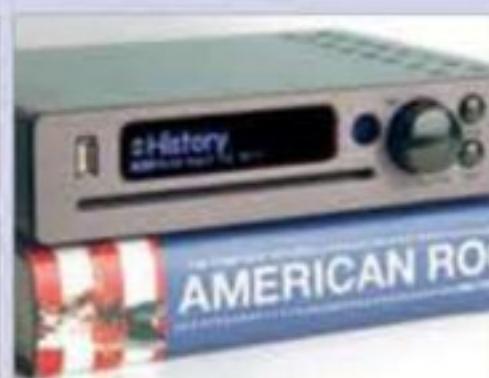
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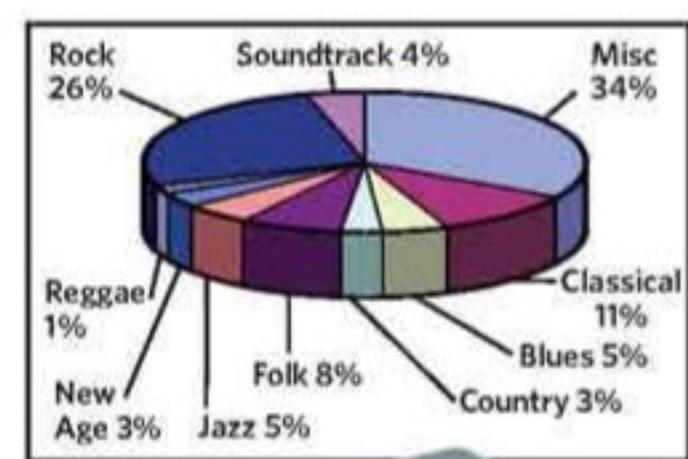


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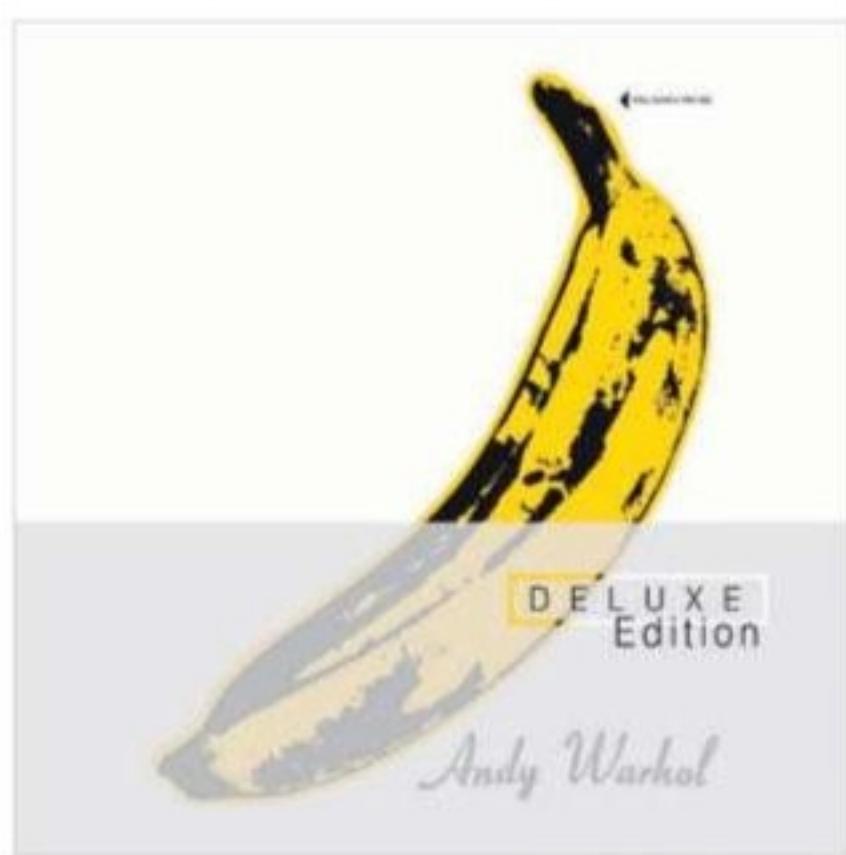
1 Poor!

SCORING: EXTRA MATERIAL

10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrapings

Outside the Underground:
(l-r) John Cale, Lou Reed
(foreground), Moe Tucker,
Nico and Sterling Morrison



TRACKLIST

DISC ONE

The Velvet Underground & Nico [Stereo Version]

- 1 Sunday Morning
- 2 I'm Waiting For The Man
- 3 Femme Fatale
- 4 Venus In Furs
- 5 Run Run Run
- 6 All Tomorrow's Parties
- 7 Heroin
- 8 There She Goes Again
- 9 I'll Be Your Mirror
- 10 The Black Angel's Death Song
- 11 European Son
- 12 All Tomorrow's Parties [Alternate Single
Voice Version]
- 13 European Son [Alternate Version]
- 14 Heroin [Alternate Version]
- 15 All Tomorrow's Parties [Alternate
Instrumental Mix]
- 16 I'll Be Your Mirror [Alternate Mix]

Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

The Velvet Underground & Nico

UNIVERSAL MUSIC ENTERPRISES

An exhaustive, enthralling boxset reissue of the iconic album – with rare and live cuts galore! By David Cavanagh

9/10

THE BANANA'S BACK. Not before time. Late last year, Lou Reed's reputation suffered a serious blow when his ill-fated collaboration with Metallica met with hostility not witnessed since *Metal Machine Music*. He even had death threats. This 45th-anniversary edition of *The Velvet Underground & Nico* is a timely reminder that Reed at his best had few peers and no equals, and that his writer's eye – literate, probing, explicit – was unflinching right from the start. He was always hardcore.

Recorded when Reed was 24, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* drops us into a Manhattan drug deal ("I'm Waiting For The Man"), ushers us into a dark room where a girl in leather boots is whipping a kneeling man with a belt ("Venus In Furs"), and

allows us to watch a syringe entering a human arm in real time ("Heroin"). Condemned in 1967 for breaking every taboo in the book, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* was a victim of wretched luck – mislaid master tapes, slashed budgets, negligible distribution – but stoically survived its punishing times like Beardless Harry riding the trolleys into Manhattan ("Run Run Run"). Then, like Van Gogh in early 20th-Century Europe, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* basked in posthumous recognition. It became a potent influence on David Bowie, Roxy Music, Bromley punks, Manchester post-punks, indie Glaswegians and hundreds – perhaps thousands – of others. Yet the album has always resisted attempts to imitate it. The music is too idiosyncratic to be anyone's

TRACKLIST *Continued*

DISC TWO

The Velvet Underground & Nico [Mono Version]:

- 1 Sunday Morning
- 2 I'm Waiting For The Man
- 3 Femme Fatale
- 4 Venus In Furs
- 5 Run Run Run
- 6 All Tomorrow's Parties
- 7 Heroin
- 8 There She Goes Again
- 9 I'll Be Your Mirror
- 10 The Black Angel's Death Song
- 11 European Son
- 12 All Tomorrow's Parties [July 1966]
- 13 I'll Be Your Mirror [Alternate Ending, July 1966]
- 14 Sunday Morning [Alternate Mix, December 1966]
- 15 Femme Fatale [December 1966]

DISC THREE

Nico, Chelsea Girl:

- 1 The Fairest Of The Seasons
- 2 These Days
- 3 Little Sister
- 4 Winter Song
- 5 It Was A Pleasure Then
- 6 Chelsea Girls
- 7 I'll Keep It With Mine
- 8 Somewhere There's A Feather
- 9 Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams
- 10 Eulogy To Lenny Bruce

DISC FOUR

Scepter Studios Sessions:

- 1 European Son [Alternate Version]
- 2 The Black Angel's Death Song [Alternate Mix]
- 3 All Tomorrow's Parties [Alternate Version]
- 4 I'll Be Your Mirror [Alternate Version]
- 5 Heroin [Alternate Version]
- 6 Femme Fatale [Alternate mix]
- 7 Venus In Furs [Alternate Version]
- 8 I'm Waiting For The Man [Alternate Version]
- 9 Run Run Run [Alternate Mix]

The Factory Rehearsals [January 1966]:

- 10 Walk Alone
- 11 Crackin' Up/Venus In Furs
- 12 Miss Joanie Lee
- 13 Heroin
- 14 There She Goes Again [with Nico]
- 15 There She Goes Again

DISC FIVE

Live at Valleydale Ballroom, Columbus, Ohio:

- 1 Melody Laughter
- 2 Femme Fatale
- 3 Venus In Furs
- 4 The Black Angel's Death Song
- 5 All Tomorrow's Parties [Lou Reed]

DISC SIX

Live at Valleydale Ballroom, Columbus, Ohio:

- 1 I'm Waiting For The Man
- 2 Heroin
- 3 Run Run Run
- 4 The Nothing Song



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO

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template. The songs' atmospheres are too nuanced, too twisted – delicate paranoia ("Sunday Morning"), ice-cold tragedy ("All Tomorrow's Parties") – for another band to be capable of creating them. In Reed's idea of people-watching, motives are complicated. Nobody is condemned for his or her predilection. The listener is credited with an open mind. And so, almost half a century later, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* still attracts quizzical visitors to its amoral museum.

Universal's 6CD boxset is by far the most in-depth reissue the album has ever had. Remastered, it contains stereo and mono versions, original singles, alternate takes, different mixes and an entire Nico LP (*Chelsea Girl*). Major incentives appear on disc four with the official release of two VU bootlegs: a 30-minute rehearsal at The Factory in January 1966, and engineer Norman Dolph's acetate of the Scepter Studios sessions in April, which formed the basis of the album. Discs five and six offer 94 minutes from a November 1966 concert in Columbus, Ohio (with Nico), bootlegged during the '80s on the LP *1966*. Thus a fan of "All Tomorrow's Parties", say, can hear it seven times: the double-voiced version in stereo and mono, the

single-voiced version, an instrumental version, an edited mono 45, a Scepter mix and a live recording.

Most of the boxset takes place in mono, so we need to understand right away that the difference between stereo and mono, for the Velvets, was stark. A good illustration is what happens to "European Son". The song is amazing by any standards, a

frantic, dissonant drone with a mad banjo-like guitar making avant-garde use of feedback. In stereo, it's as heart-stopping a rollercoaster as the Velvets ever took us on. But in mono, the walls narrow and the claustrophobia kicks in. Crank it loud and it's a bass-heavy rumble punctuated by ear-splitting screams. We can't hear Moe Tucker's drums, so we lose the beat and feel disorientated. It's quite an uncomfortable sensation. In essence, stereo

In essence, stereo gave the Velvets depth – but the mono versions give them violence

gave the Velvets width – but mono gives them violence. The cacophonies border on sadism; they really must have wanted to frighten people.

The Factory rehearsal in January 1966 and the Scepter sessions in April reveal a few insights into how arrangements took shape. In January, Nico was being considered for "There She Goes Again". "Venus In Furs" was still a work-in-progress, with Reed dictating the lyrics ("comes... in bells...") to an onlooker while someone off-mic sang Bo Diddley's

HIDDEN TREASURES

BENEATH THE BANANA SKIN

EUROPEAN SON (alternate version) (Disc One)

This previously unreleased version of the epic album closer is a real find. Reed's guitar, isolated way out on the right, sounds like a crazy mountain boy wrestling his banjo like an alligator. Robbie Robertson once said of Reed's guitar-playing, "He ain't nothin'." He hadn't heard this.

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

(single version) (Disc Two)

How different everyone's lives might have been if this 45, released in July '66, had been a hit. Edited down from six minutes to just under three, the Nico-sung lament sank without trace. This version is mastered quieter than the one on the *Peel Slowly And See* boxset.



WAITING FOR THE MAN (alternate version) (Disc Four)

Recorded at Scepter Studios in April '66, when the Velvets were hoping to sign a deal with Columbia. This version chugs away in an almost polite manner, with none of the May re-recording's wild bass runs or atonal pianos. Still, it's an enjoyable prototype and it shows how much the song changed in a month.

MISS JOANIE LEE (Disc Four)

From the January '66 rehearsal, an 11-minute fast blues on one chord. Not dissimilar to "Run Run Run". Reed, probably improvising, directs Cale when to sing harmonies before setting off on a long jam. Cale's bass has a terrific 'razor' sound. At one point they rock like Creedence on "Keep On Chooglin". DAVID CAVANAGH

"Crackin' Up" to the chords. By April at Scepter, Reed's voice was adopting a snarl on "Heroin", far removed from his woozy delivery on the final version. And "Venus In Furs" had structure, even if Reed sang it with none of the sinister dreaminess of the May re-recording.

The live set, captured by a fan in November, sees the Velvets 'promoting' an album that their label MGM-Verve had frustratingly not yet released. The tape is old and beset by general wear-and-tear, but it's striking how faithful the Velvets are to their beloved ballads ("All Tomorrow's Parties", "Femme Fatale") and even to some of the heavier material ("Run Run Run", "The Black Angel's Death Song"). They play them as if they're proud of them, which is the best way to play them. The true chaos is reserved for a pair of mammoth improvisations, "Melody Laughter" and "The Nothing Song", which bookend the concert in shrieking feedback and ominous drones.

Though its intensity can intimidate, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* was clearly made in a spirit of fun. It's often forgotten that Reed laughs several times on the album, and we can imagine the grin on Cale's face, too, as he hammers away at his piano on "I'm Waiting For The Man". They moved from dispassionate reportage to touching tenderness, from a "whiplash girl-child" to a poor Cinderella in dowdy clothes. They reconvened in April 1967 (minus Tucker) to record Nico's fine solo LP *Chelsea Girl*, by which time journalists and DJs were telling them, to their dismay, that their banana was rotten.

the VAULT



The VU in '66: into S&M, not free love

NYC, 1966: The debut album, hatred of hippies and the beginning of the end



UNCUT
12/2009

APRIL, 1966. Scepter Records Studios, West 54th St. This is where the VU record the bulk of their debut LP in four days, with a total recording time of 10 hours at a cost of \$1500, split between Warhol and CBS sales executive Norman Dolph, who also engineers the sessions.

Warhol will eventually be credited as producer, but if that's what he is, it's in the sense of a movie producer. He's set this up, financed it, made it somehow possible. But his active involvement in the making of the record is minimal. Sometimes he's there, as often not.

"We did it quickly, yes," says Cale. "But why should it have taken any longer? We'd been rehearsing those songs for a year and a half. We knew exactly what we wanted the record to sound like, which was how we sounded live, and just as loud. The only problems we had were with the engineers, who kept telling us to turn it down, that everything was going into the red and distorting. We said, 'That's how it's supposed to sound.' We were never gonna turn it down. They kept saying, 'This won't work.' To which my response was, 'Either make it work or get out of our way.' We only did things our way. We were arrogant, perhaps, in thinking we knew best. We were also right. We did know best."

MAY, 1966. While Norman Dolph hawks around the acetate of the album to mainly disinterested, sometimes openly hostile, labels, the entire Exploding Plastic Inevitable, including Warhol, fly to LA. They've been booked into the Trip on Sunset Strip for two weeks. The Mothers Of Invention, with whom they almost immediately fall out, open for them. In the crowd on the opening night: Sonny and Cher, John Phillips and Cass Elliot, The Byrds, Ryan O'Neal and the young Jim Morrison, who goes on to become another of Nico's smitten lovers. The next night, the club's virtually empty. On the third, it's closed by the police following complaints that the VU's

performance is "pornographic". For contractual reasons, they have to stay in LA for the duration of the original booking to collect the full fee for the cancelled shows. They hate it there. "The West Coast was too flowery for words," Cale recalls. "Flower power? Fuck off. We hated the bands. We hated their music. We hated their politics. And we hated the way they dressed."

Mary Woronov: "The Velvets hated hippies. We all hated hippies. We wore black, they wore colours. We wore boots, they went barefoot. They believed in free love, we believed in S&M. We believed in mind-fucking, not community-fucking. They took acid. We took amphetamines. They didn't read. We were all pretty literate. I mean, no matter how insane some poor fag was, he was well-versed in opera. They were love and peace. And we were, fuck you."

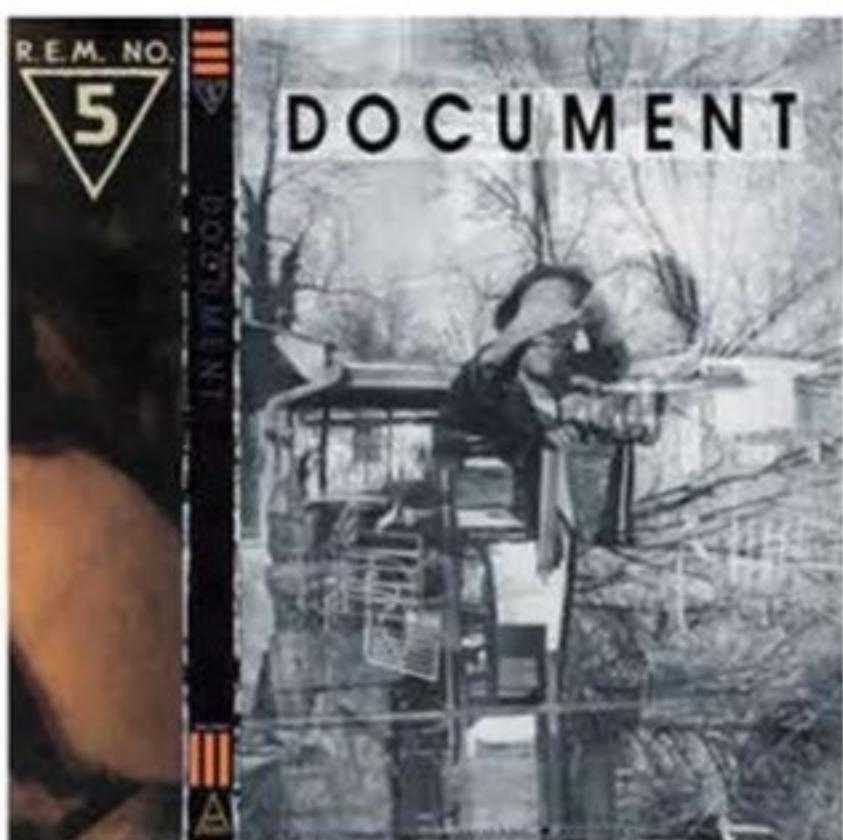
The band spend at least two days in TTG Studios with producer Tom Wilson, who's worked with Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel, and wants to sign them to MGM/Verve, which he does, though he's more interested in Nico, whose solo LP, *Chelsea Girl*, he produces. The band re-record three songs from the New York sessions: "I'm Waiting For The Man", "Venus In Furs" and "Heroin". Lou now re-writes the first line of "Heroin", which ever since they started playing it has been: "I know where I'm going..."

Lou changes this to: "I don't know where I'm going..." It's an apparently minor amendment that excites Cale's considerable wrath. "He blew it completely. It was a good song once. The whole song was much more powerful with that positive statement. 'I know where I'm going.' You're committed when you do that. When he sang, 'I don't know where I'm going,' it was like Lou was stepping back into folk music, turning into Joan Baez again."

"That's when the relationship between John and Lou started to deteriorate," Moe Tucker recalls. "Not a lot, but it had started." "I was furious," Cale recalls. "I just went on a rant. He said, 'You'll get over it.' That's something else he got wrong. I never did."

ALLAN JONES

"We only did things our way. We were always right, we did know best!" – Cale



TRACKLIST

- 1 Finest Worksong
- 2 Welcome To The Occupation
- 3 Exhuming McCarthy
- 4 Disturbance At The Heron House
- 5 Strange
- 6 It's The End Of The World As We Know It...
- 7 The One I Love
- 8 Fireplace
- 9 Lightnin' Hopkins
- 10 King Of Birds
- 11 Oddfellows Local 151

REM

Document

EMI

The 25th-anniversary reissue, accompanied by a contemporaneous live show. *By Andrew Mueller*

9/10

"I DON'T KNOW if I have any commercial expectations for this one at all," Peter Buck told *Rolling Stone* prior to the release of REM's fifth album. "I don't see this as the record that's going to blast apart the chart. Although you never know. Weirder things have happened."

Indeed. If 1986's *Lifes Rich Pageant* had marked the beginnings of REM's emergence from their cocoon of indie diffidence, 1987's *Document* was where they first properly reconciled themselves to their destiny as the only group of the 1980s American college-rock milieu to graduate to stadiums, and stay there. This remastered 25th-anniversary double-CD edition of *Document* – also available in 180-gram vinyl – is packaged with a complete concert, recorded on the subsequent

"Work" tour on September 14, 1987, at Utrecht's Musiekcentrum Vredenberg: the previously unreleased show just about triumphs over a tinny, clattering sound, amounting to a 20-track Greatest Hits of REM's pre-Warners period. The Dutch crowd, clearly still unfamiliar with the new work, don't quite hit their cue on the "Leonard Bernstein!" exclamation, but are properly hushed for the mournful, half-paced closer of "So. Central Rain".

For all Buck's pre-release expectation-lowering vis-à-vis *Document*, it is barely conceivable that the man who'd just recorded the guitars on "The One I Love", which sounded like a Byrds song played by U2, was entirely astonished when *Document* went swiftly platinum (Buck would have had cause, however, to be baffled when "The One I Love"



Q&A

Mike Mills



What do you think of *Document* now?

"It's a very strong record. We always thought of it as Peter's record, because it's so guitar-oriented."

Did you have a sense at the time that it was going to be the album that turned REM into a major-league act?

"We had noticed that every record had sold more than the previous. And we'd been touring a lot for years. These just sounded to us like the kind of good, sturdy rock songs that we would enjoy playing for a long time."

Was there an intention to make A Statement?

"We were pretty upset about the political state of America, and we enjoyed having a platform. It's hard to feel like you have a voice when your government is letting you down, and private citizens don't get the opportunity to say things on a large stage. We felt like we were giving a voice to people who felt the same way we did."

Was the title supposed to underpin the idea that *Document* was a manifesto of sorts?

"Peter and I wanted to call it 'Lee Marvin'. We were pretty excited about that title, but others in the group weren't. We thought his image would suit the album, but *Document* is a fine title. It reflects the years of record-making beforehand as much as this record."

Are any of the tracks on *Document* particular personal favourites?

"'Welcome To The Occupation' was always a favourite, especially live. Side B, though, after 'The One I Love', is such an odd collection of songs. It's oddly ruminative. Those last four songs always make me feel lonely. Like Athens on a quiet Saturday afternoon." ANDREW MUELLER

became a popular wedding tune, hopefully only among couples who hadn't quite heard the bit about "A simple prop/To occupy my time".

Document was appropriately titled. It was fairly straightforwardly – in conception if not execution – intended as REM's state-of-the-nation address. Given that the nation whose state REM were addressing was the piously purse-lipped yet triumphantly patriotic United States which had been dominated for seven years by Ronald Reagan, it does REM considerable credit – though the United States possibly less so – that *Document* has weathered a quarter-century so well. Some of the praise for this should be directed towards producer Scott Litt, beginning a long association with the band. Litt disdained most of the defining sonic tropes of the late 1980s – although a suspicion that Mike Mills applies his thumb to the bass in the coda of "Finest Worksong" cannot be ruled out.

Document mostly endures, however, because REM resisted the temptation which often overwhelms the youngish and politically agitated: at no point did *Document* seize by the lapels and rant, instead making its points with an obliqueness that verged on the Dada. The elegiac "Fireplace" reacted to the "Crazy crazy world" and these "crazy crazy times" by commanding "Clear the floor to dance". Wire's "Strange", rendered even more fidgety and frenetic than the original, was recalibrated as the inchoate

indignation of someone slowly figuring out that the world isn't fair (the line "There's something going on that's not quite right" could have been an alternative title of the album). "It's The End Of The World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" was (13 years early) a 21st-Century "Subterranean Homesick Blues", a playful and deliriously jumbled portent of apocalypse.

Even when *Document* was relatively obvious, the emphasis was firmly on the "relatively". "Welcome To The Occupation" was a hazy survey of the same Central American frontlines previously depicted on "Flowers Of Guatemala" and "Green Grow The Rushes". The jaunty "Exhuming McCarthy" – a template for the subsequent "Stand" and "Pop Song 89", more of what Buck once defined as REM's "vampire surf guitar funk" – invoked Senator Joe McCarthy, the demented Wisconsinian witchhunter of the 1950s, as the eternal bogeyman of REM's fellow fretfully paranoid liberals. The sample of US Army counsel Joseph Welch's famous rebuke to McCarthy – "Have you no sense of decency, Sir?" – was, in this context, another iteration of the question asked of America by generations of protest singers, in whose ranks REM had formally, if hesitantly, enlisted themselves.

EXTRAS: Liner notes by journalist David Daley, 6/10 four postcards, and a complete, previously unreleased concert.



THE BE GOOD TANYAS
A Collection 2000-2012

NETTWERK

Winning retrospective from folksy Canuck trio, with new tracks

Initial encounters don't

come more wholesome than a meet at a Vancouver tree-planting camp, and the Tanyas always exuded a cheery optimism to offset the gloom of folk tradition. Though they favoured the same vintage frocks as Gillian Welch, the trio of Frazey Ford, Trish Klein and Sam Parton (early compadre Jolie Holland soon left) were innocents by comparison. "The Littlest Birds", from 2000's *Blue Horse*, remains their theme tune, and when they ventured into "Rain And Snow" or Townes Van Zandt's "Waitin' Around To Die" you feared for their survival (not so Gillian's).

While their quavering harmonies suggested fragility, the Tanyas also showed resilience and invention. They were early champions of the banjo revival, and breathed unlikely life into worn-out material like "Oh Susanna". If they never bettered *Blue Horse*, then 2003's *Chinatown* and 2006's *Hello Love* were also winners, with Ford originals like "Dogsong" and "Junkie Song". When they dissolved (they are back on reformation terms) they spawned Po' Girl and a Ford solo album. *A Collection* is a fine validation, with the closing "Gospel Song" a splendidly forlorn addition to their always heartfelt oeuvre.

EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER

SANDY DENNY
The Notes And The Words: A Collection Of Demos And Rarities

UNIVERSAL

9/10

Oodles of unheard Sandy – just when you thought there were no more sad refrains

2010's 19CD boxset of Sandy Denny's complete recordings sold out instantly, to the chagrin of many British folk collectors. Now Universal have assembled this 4CD set featuring just the rare, unreleased and demo tracks from that box. Thankfully, such a focus offers much more than just unreleased barrel-scrapings. Her 1970s demos, alone on piano or acoustic guitar, often outshine the over-produced official versions. "No More Sad Refrains" and "One Way Donkey Ride", recorded at home in Byfield for her final album *Rendezvous*, could have stood alone without subsequent, lush arrangements.

Her early working-out of "Who Knows Where The Time Goes?" bears the hallmarks of the Jackson Frank/Bert Jansch school of candlelight folk; while her 1973 acoustic Peel version of the song achieves an anthemic grandeur, shimmering with tremolo effects. Between her teenage explorations and the unbearably poignant "Makes Me Think Of You" (the last lyrics jotted in her notebook before her death in 1978), there are too many highlights to list, but anyone familiar only with the official canon will find a whole new dimension to this perennially satisfying artist here.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB YOUNG

JOHNNY CASH

The Complete Columbia Album Collection

COLUMBIA LEGACY

Motherlode: Spanning the decades with the Man In Black – 59 albums-plus, across 63 discs. By Luke Torn



10/10

JOHNNY CASH WAS, and remains, the Mighty Oak of 20th-Century popular music: singer, songwriter, collector, seeker, provocateur, folklorist, storyteller, historian, family man, outlaw, moralist,

drug addict, TV and movie star, joker, preacher, philanthropist, spokesman for the downtrodden, musical bridge from the Carter Family to Nine Inch Nails... visionary. His high presence touched us all, even if some of us are only dimly aware of it.

The Complete Columbia Album Collection, duly correcting decades-long, over-merchandising abuses of the Cash catalogue, collects every official LP between 1958-1985 as a monster 63-disc box. Along with countless hits and iconic songs, it turns up many dark corners and oddball efforts within a prolific, oft-bewildering discography: Christmas and children's discs, obscure soundtracks, import-only live LPs, and historical/religious epics, plus three bonus discs of 1954-1958 Sun output and another 56 singles and guest spots. Bonus tracks and Bootleg Series material of more recent issue are conspicuously absent. Cash was, of course, an artist utterly without guile. If he sang it, you knew he connected with it, that he believed in it. His rugged, authoritative, whooping, growling, sometimes talk-singing vocals – featuring that Voice of God baritone – married to endless variations on the trademark Tennessee Three *boom-chicka-boom*, defined his spartan



musicality. Country, blues, rock'n'roll, gospel – it all just ended up sounding like Johnny Cash music. It was less about musical expansiveness than how much heart and soul (and faith, grace, humour, social justice and humanity) he could pack into the grooves, a stubborn, less-is-more motif that served him well. The true beauty in Cash's work came in flashing imagery of America ("Big River"), rich storytelling with a piquant edge, and as an eloquent, compassionate observer of human nature. And especially, when he spoke up for the poor, hopeless, imprisoned, which he did often: The sweeping sentiments of his signature song, "Man In Black", are emblematic of a large swathe of his work: That is, that the human soul is worthy and deserving of redemption.

He was hardly a conventional star, though; his career took a peculiar arc. His best-known work intersected with popular tastes and collective interests at key moments; other times, his stubbornly chosen path resulted in works of little fanfare. *Everybody Loves A Nut*, a vastly strange 1966 LP, shows just how off the rails Cash could go. With its Shel Silverstein novelties and egg-sucking dogs, it was anti-

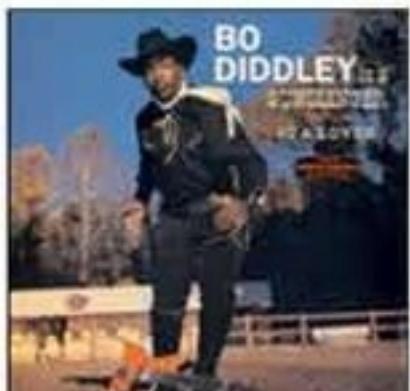
album, his *Metal Machine Music*. *America*, a drab (career-killing?) 1972 historical opus, was overboard the other way, static and bombastic.

Beyond the weird stuff, the religio-documentarian sidesteps, and fine if arch concept albums, lay works of unequivocal grandeur, particularly 1968-72. In covering talented, diverse writers (Kris Kristofferson, Tim Hardin, Jack Clement), and composing his own inspired, down-and-out anthems, came a barrage of sublime moments – "Sunday Morning Coming Down", "To Beat The Devil", "A Boy Named Sue", "See Ruby Fall". Cash stumbled circa 1973-79, succumbing to a treacly sentimentalism; his once-vast audience moved on. The downturn, yielding many spotty LPs but intermittently fabulous songs, is ripe for re-evaluation: "Hit The Road And Go" (1977) is restless road song du jour; "My Old Kentucky Home" (1974) challenges Randy Newman's original; the down-and-out Jean Ritchie nugget "The L&N Don't Stop Here Anymore" (1979) is a natural.

He turned a corner in 1980-1983, producing a rousing trilogy: *Rockabilly Blues* (with son-in-law Nick Lowe and Rockpile), the Billy Sherrill-produced *The Baron*, and *Johnny 99*, which proved that, given proper material – two from Springsteen's *Nebraska* – he could be devastating as ever. No-one much noticed, though. They would, finally, some 10 years later, courtesy of one Rick Rubin.

Hills and valleys, warts and all, *Complete Columbia* is simply a singular, staggering body of work, throwing down challenges in all directions.

EXTRAS: None.



BO DIDDLEY
**Is A Gunslinger/
Is A Lover**
HOODOO

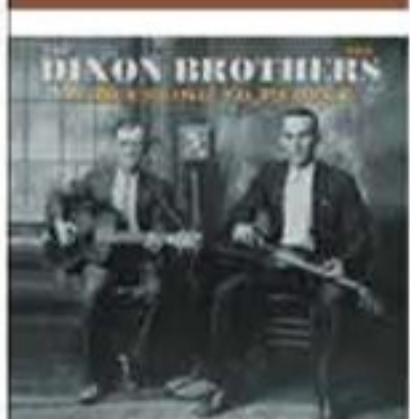
Twofer from the man no-one knew as Ellas McDaniel
If this album was called 'Bo Diddley Is A Pig'

8/10

'Farmer', or 'Bo Diddley Is A Architect', you could still be pretty confident in what you were going to be getting. Some exuberant and amusing songs that extolled the prowess of Bo Diddley in his chosen thematic profession ("Bo Diddley's the finest architect around/He'll build you a house on level ground..."). Some powerful use of the patented Diddley hambone rhythm. Some strong instrumental R'n'B, Diddley's own rhythm guitar filled out by the insistent maraca rustle of Jerome Green. This twofer is a blast, two concise albums respectively from 1960 and 1961, both recorded at Bo Diddley's home studio in Washington DC featuring Peggy Jones ("Lady Bo") on lead guitar. The first half, thanks particularly to "Gunslinger" ("Bo Diddley is a...") and "Cheyenne" feels a little spicier than the second, but "Hong Kong, Mississippi" is an amusing rewrite of "Diddy Wah Diddy" and it's impossible to hear something like "Call Me (Bo's Blues)" with its sung "harmonica" parts and not be minded of The Doors, as The Doors were often profitably minded of Bo Diddley.

EXTRAS: Five bonus tracks of 1960-1961,
6/10 four recorded at home; one ("Lazy Woman") at Chess in 1959.

JOHN ROBINSON



THE DIXON BROTHERS
**A Blessing To
People**
BEAR FAMILY

Old-time Carolina duo's complete recordings, plus solo

Depression-era hillbillies

8/10

who looked like a bonier version of Flanders and Swann, The Dixon Brothers were a big stink in the Carolina States during the heyday. This terrific four-disc set includes the 55 tunes they cut for RCA-Victor between 1936 and '38, the vast bulk of them written or arranged by older sibling Dorsey. The pinched harmonies and nasally voices share common ground with AP Carter or Dock Boggs, though it's the combination of Dorsey's finger-picked rhythms and Howard's steel guitar that give the duo their gently descriptive sound. Their most famous song, "Wreck On The Highway", became a major hit for Roy Acuff in 1942, but the brothers never attained the wider fame their talent demanded. Much less the fortune, as Dorsey's was a life marked by hardship and poverty in the unforgiving textile mills of the region. His faith in the Almighty remained steadfast though, as essayed in many of the devotionals here, including "Shining City Over The River" and "The Blood Of Jesus Saved Me". At times the songs are stark and austere, at others lighthearted (the brilliantly named "Intoxicated Rat"), while there's also a riveting batch of tunes recorded by Dorsey in the wake of Howard's death in the early '60s.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



RORY GALLAGHER
Calling Card
(reissue, 1976)
SONY

Mid-'70s highlight heads up five reissues
Released in remastered form alongside *Against The*

Grain (1975), *Photo-Finish* (1978), *Top Priority* (1979) and *Jinx* (1982), Gallagher's 1976 album ranks among his very finest studio recordings. There is no filler and the clean, unfussy production has aged well. Most importantly, Gallagher's superb guitar playing – ranging from scorching lead to jazzy twists, sobbing slide and deft acoustic picking; always executed with admirable economy and without unnecessary flash – is at the service of some terrific songs. The snappy title track is one of his touchstone pieces, fusing jazz and blues to fluid, easy effect, while "Country Mile" goes off like a firecracker. The driving "Moonchild" and "Secret Agent" are similarly kinetic rockers, but the slow, soulful "Edged In Blue" and "I'll Admit You're Gone" demonstrate not just the underrated quality of Gallagher's voice, but also his winning way with more downbeat material. Time hasn't transformed the lumpy, overlong "Jack-Knife Beat" into a thoroughbred, but "Barley And Grape Rag" provides a sprightly finale.

EXTRAS: Each reissue comes with one or two
6/10 bonus tracks. In the case of *Calling*
Card, the previously unreleased "Where Was
I Going To?" provides a fitting coda to a
wonderful record.

GRAEME THOMSON

9/10



THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE
Live At Berkeley
(reissue, 2003)
UNIVERSAL

Post-Noel Redding
May '70 gig reissue

The Experience brand is a little misleading in this instance. Rather than the Jimi Hendrix Experience of the guitarist's first three albums, the mind-bendingly odd and well-produced psychedelic pop artefacts on which his reputation was made, this is the so-called "Cry Of Love" band – in which Hendrix retains the services of army pal and Band Of Gypsies man Billy Cox on bass, and is joined on drums by Mitch Mitchell, after a moot Experience reformation failed. This complete second set from May 30, 1970 has been issued before in 2003, and if it's not a compelling or essential recording, it does reveal Hendrix's evolutionary attitudes to his material both good (a killer "Purple Haze") and less good (a version of "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" taken at an unsatisfying clip). Most interesting is probably "Machine Gun", which, though good, goes some way to showing just how essential the backing vocals of then-drummer Buddy Miles were to the haunting, definitive version available on *Band Of Gypsies*. Outlandish things are said about Michael Jeffery, Hendrix's manager, but if the man pushed Hendrix too hard, at least he pushed him into being filmed – the parallel DVD release may be the purchase for the curious.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN ROBINSON

6/10

REVELATIONS

Late Jimi Hendrix on film



DICK CAVETT SHOW/AT WOODSTOCK

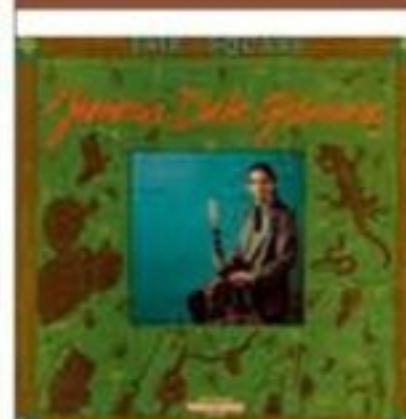
Two 1969 appearances that show the freeform craziness of the Gypsy Suns, Moons and Rainbows band – in full, bongo-powered effect at Woodstock, and then in much reduced number on Dick Cavett's show. "They had the million-dollar baby, which was Jimi, Noel and Mitch," says percussionist Juma Sultan. "They didn't want to hear anything other than that."

RAINBOW BRIDGE

An odd spin on a concert film, shot in Hawaii by Warhol associate Chuck Wein. "It was called a colour sound vibratory experiment," explained Melinda Merryweather, a friend of Jimi's. "Jimi was taught how to turn his musical notes into colours," she continues. "He wanted to do two bars of green, two of purple, two of yellow."

BLUE WILD ANGEL/ JIMI AT THE ISLE OF WIGHT

The last professionally filmed concert, captured by Murray Lerner's crew. "They tell me there were more people there than at Woodstock," says Billy Cox. "We didn't see it, 'cos it was a field at night-time." JOHN ROBINSON



JIMMIE DALE GILMORE
**Fair & Square/
Jimmie Dale
Gilmore**

FLOATING WORLD



JOE ELY
**Lord Of The
Highway/Dig
All Night**

FLOATING WORLD

**Solo Flatlanders
reconsidered**

If Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Joe Ely had done nothing beyond The Flatlanders, their position in the pantheon of Texan music would be secure. But, in

truth, their diverse talents are best experienced in their solo work. Ely is better known, thanks to his late 1970s tour with The Clash, but these two albums (from 1987-'88) find him settling into muscular, melodic rock'n'roll. "Settle For Love" is a Tom Petty-ish anthem while "Me And Billy The Kid" blends the narrative style of Guy Clark with the swagger of Joe Strummer. Gilmore is a more original talent. He abandoned music for 16 years after The Flatlanders. His first two solo albums catch the development of his solo style. The first has a rockabilly undertow; the second has more twang. At his best, he's a mystical Hank Williams – "Trying To Get You" offers this puzzler: "I would have killed myself, but it made no sense/Committing suicide in self-defence".

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



IAN HUNTER The Singles Collection 1975-83

7T'S

Familiar beginnings, but mostly not The Hoople
Hunter's initial solo career didn't find him straying too far from the Mott The

Hoople template. His 1975 debut single, "Once Bitten, Twice Shy", was typical of his old band's glam-tinged theatrical swagger, as was the piano-pounding intro to "England Rocks" a couple of years later. It's instructive, however, to compare that latter recording with Hunter's own 1979 remake, "Cleveland Rocks", the song overhauled as a guitar-sodden anthem to all things American. Yet, although Hunter turned his attention more and more towards a transatlantic sound dominated by generic rock shapes, he would occasionally doff his cap at dear old Blighty; 1981's *Short Back'n'Sides* album was co-produced by longtime collaborator Mick Ronson and The Clash's Mick Jones, its lead single "Lisa Likes Rock'n'Roll" driven along by Topper Headon's punkish staccato drums. At times, Hunter's oh-so-English vowels seem at odds with the slick American productions, but retain a humble charm on the Jim Steinman co-write "All Of The Good Ones Are Taken", melding beautifully with Clarence Clemons' sax. Following the period covered by this set, Hunter wouldn't make a record for six years, but he bowed out in fine style on the Lennonesque anti-war rant "Somethin's Goin' On".

EXTRAS: None.

TERRY STAUNTON

7/10

Hunter's initial solo career didn't find him straying too far from the Mott The



BERT JANSCH

Heartbreak

OMNIVORE

One of Jansch's better efforts from his 'wilderness years'
Released in 1982 when Jansch had been recording on an ad hoc basis for

various small labels, he accepted an offer from two young Californian brothers who had never produced an album before to record over in LA. Guitar retailers Rick and John Chelew assembled a bunch of musicians new to Jansch, including Albert Lee – then on a break from touring with Eric Clapton. *Heartbreak* is one of the most consistent albums Jansch recorded at a time when he was drinking heavily and treading water creatively. Accordingly, it mixes the familiar – "Blackwaterside" and "Wild Mountain Thyme", with additional vocals by Jennifer Warnes – with new material. *Heartbreak* includes two fine previously unrecorded Jansch songs, both deeply introspective – "Is It Real?" and "Up To The Stars". The real surprise is an unlikely version of "Heartbreak Hotel", with an unusually spirited vocal by Jansch and a fine understated solo by Lee. Advised by Ralph McTell to keep the tapes rolling at the end of each session, "And Not A Word Was Said" is the result, a sprightly Pentangle-style jam.

EXTRAS: A focused, unreleased solo set from **7/10** the intimate McCabe's Guitar Shop in June 1981 including Jackson C Frank's "Blues Run The Game" and the rarer "Kingfisher" from *Avocet*.

MICK HOUGHTON

7/10



KING CRIMSON

Larks' Tongues In Aspic (reissue, 1973)

PANEGYRIC

40th-anniversary edition of Crimson's blistering improv album
Larks' Tongues is the one Crimson LP to feature

Jamie Muir, an improv percussion veteran whose arsenal of objects and textural effects pushed new drummer Bill Bruford to raise his already impressive game. Appropriately, then, the title track's "Part One" begins with the percussionists, drizzling a gentle waterfall of thumb piano, finger cymbals and xylophone over the sound stage before the whole band blasts the calm into a thousand fragments. Crimson's collectivity was rarely more pronounced; new bassist John Wetton handles vocals on three tracks; David Cross' viola adds a pastoral sheen to "Exiles"; while Robert Fripp's guitar and mellotron are submerged into the whole, only occasionally surfacing as a crisp backwards-effect (on "Book Of Saturday") or as a static burst on "Easy Money". This album remains a diamond in the roughage of Crimson's discography and its tight musicianship and collective dynamism still sound astonishingly zesty.

EXTRAS: Like the rest of the Crimson 40th **8/10** anniversary series, *Larks' Tongues* has been remastered in 5.1 Surround Sound, DVD-Audio, etc. A limited 13CD boxset includes eight CDs of live material from bootlegs, plus four discs of alternate takes and mixes, making this the most definitive version conceivable.

ROB YOUNG

9/10

KLUSTER

Klusterstrasse 69-72

VINYL-ON-DEMAND

Evacuated industrial architectures by pre-Cluster free-music outfit
Kluster was the brainchild of the late, great Conrad

Schnitzler, a German electronic music legend and one-time member of Tangerine Dream – he appeared on their first album, 1970's *Electronic Meditation*. By then he'd formed the Ensemble Kluster, a free-improvising collective, with Wolfgang Seidel, Klaus Freudigmann, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius. The recordings on this mammoth 8LP box only feature Schnitzler, Seidel and Freudigmann, and they're particularly revelatory, exploring a side of Kluster even closer to outfits like Musica Elettronica Viva or Ennio Morricone's Gruppo Di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza than the better-known Kluster albums like *Klopfzeichen* and *Zwei-Osterei*. The atmosphere is at times open and expansive, other times full of industrial threat, and the interplay between their various instruments – hovering organ droneology, sputtering floods of guitar, manipulated amp and tape-loop fuzz, and strained sighs from strings – is frequently astonishing, reaching a group mind all the more breathtaking for its formative enterprise. Roedelius and Moebius eventually detached from the mothership and formed Cluster, while Schnitzler would release a prodigious amount of solo electronics. Here's the starting point.

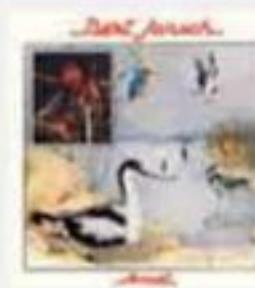
EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE

9/10

HOW TO BUY... BERT JANSCH

The wilderness years



BERT JANSCH

Avocet EX LIBRIS, 1978

The guitarist's Charisma deal began well with 1974's *LA Turnaround* before the label lost interest – licensing the instrumental *Avocet* from a Danish label. "Bittern" echoes Pentangle, while "Avocet" reflected Jansch's fondness for Julian Bream.

8/10



BERT JANSCH

The Ornament Tree

RUN RIVER, 1990

Jansch sounds energised alongside Pentangle's Peter Kirtley and Nigel Portman Smith, plus Maggie Boyle and Steve Tilston, even revisiting "Three Dreamers", about himself, Robin Williamson and Clive Palmer.

7/10



BERT JANSCH

When The Circus Comes To Town

COOKING VINYL, 1995

This album brought Bert Jansch back from anonymity, even rekindling his social conscience, while "The Lady Doctor From Ashington" acknowledged the woman who aided his recovery from alcoholism.

7/10

MICK HOUGHTON



INXS

Kick (reissue, 1987)

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

Pop-rock sextet's singles-studded smash reissued – for the second time

No-one could have picked London rapper Professor

Green as an INXS fan, but it was their "Need You Tonight" that he chose to sample for his UK 2010 hit of (nearly) the same name. Adele, too, has declared herself smitten by their "Never Tear Us Apart". Both feature on the band's career-defining *Kick* from 1987, which catapulted them into the international premier league and is reissued in both deluxe (two CDs) and super-deluxe (three CDs with DVD) version to mark its 25th anniversary. Previously, Australia had successfully exported both classic blues-rock and edgy art-punk, but it had never quite "done" the kind of punched-up, slick rock fusion that constitutes *Kick*. A deceptively simple, hook-heavy hybrid of funk, rock and blue-eyed soul, strafed with saxophone and horns and in debt to Prince, the Stones and Elton John, it's strikingly of its time, from the swaggering insistence of the title track to the "Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting)"-reliant "Devil Inside" and easy-swinging "Mystify". *Kick* may not have made INXS cool, but it certainly made them contenders.

EXTRAS: The super-deluxe edition's sprawl **5/10** of demos, "guitar versions", B-sides, live recordings and remixes is strictly for the fanatical.

SHARON O'CONNELL

7/10

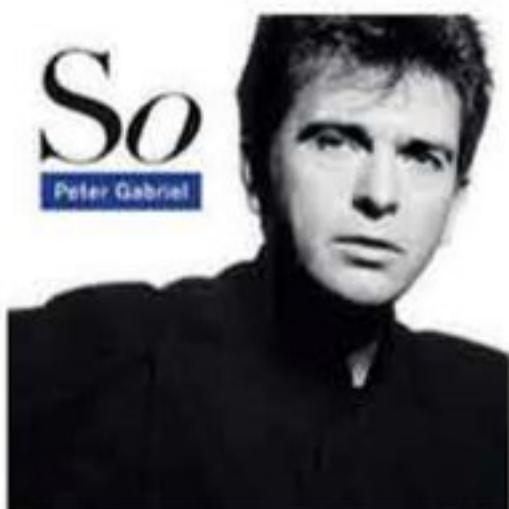


PETER GABRIEL

So - 25th anniversary boxset

VIRGIN/REAL WORLD

The classic '86 solo album, lavishly packaged with extras. By John Lewis



8/10

A POP STAR isn't supposed to have his biggest hit at the age of 36, 16 years after his debut and six albums into his solo career. And, as we're constantly told, prog rock dinosaurs were supposed to have been slain in the *événements* of 1977. Peter Gabriel, of

course, seemed magnificently unconcerned by such details. *So* is the sound of a man who has slowly absorbed each new wave – post-punk, New Pop, synth pop, Afrobeat – and syncretised them into an LP that would transform this cult experimentalist into one of the big beasts of global pop.

Has it dated? So much '80s music – or, to be specific, pop recorded between those wilderness years of '83 and '88 – is rendered almost unlistenable today, due to those hallmarks of high '80s production: gated reverb on the snare, glutinous DX7 pianos, Simmons electric tom-toms, heavily chorused guitars, and so on. From the thunderous Linn drums and fretless bass that open "Red Rain", much on *So* can be carbon-dated by these tropes, though it's not always a problem. Sometimes the state-of-the-art production is part of the appeal. The digi-funk bombast of "Big Time" is a defining totem of high-end '80s production, pitched somewhere between Scritti Politti's "Wood Beez" and Trevor Horn's "Owner Of A Lonely Heart". And the funk shuffle of "Sledgehammer" now sounds almost timeless, thanks to it being a much-sampled hip-hop fixture. Elsewhere, the production interferes, like the bell-like Fairlight sounds that mar "That Voice Again", or the whistling ambient accompaniment on "Mercy Street" (the orchestral recreation of the latter track on last year's *New Blood*

is possibly preferable). Laurie Anderson's co-write "This Is The Picture (Excellent Birds)" is a series of jerky abstractions in search of a song and never really fitted here; conversely, it's the oft-overlooked "We Do What We're Told (Milgram's 37)" that's one of the best tracks: an Eno-esque miniature that ends just as it starts getting interesting.

This is a lavish package, with extras including a two-hour *Live In Athens* DVD and a second DVD featuring the excellent hour-long *Classic Albums* documentary on the making of *So*. But the most interesting disc is the "DNA CD", tracing the "audio evolution of *So*". Each track glues together several different versions of each song, taken from various stages in their development. We start with the rawest demo – usually just Gabriel accompanying himself on a digital piano – and then, with every verse, gradually revert to subsequent, more polished demos of the song until, by the end

of the track, we are left with a rough template for the finished version. They are unique glimpses into the recording process, a format that you can expect to be copied on other reissue packages. "Red Rain" and "Sledgehammer" both start with just a spartan, clunky piano riffs, with Gabriel singing gibberish, wordless lyrics. "Big Time" starts as a jangly gospel piano instrumental, then mutates into a guitar-led funk jam, slowly adding garbled synth horns. You can hear a ghostly tenor saxophone wailing in the background of "Mercy Street", and you can hear how Tony Levin's syncopated, kora-like fretless bassline, which now sounds so central to "Don't Give Up", turns out to have been a last-minute addition to a song which started out as a country Baptist hymn (with Dolly Parton initially earmarked for Kate Bush's role). The package also includes a 12" single featuring three tracks. There's an intriguing piano-led gospel version of "Don't Give Up", and two previously unheard tracks: "Courage" is a weirdly appealing Talking Heads pastiche that wouldn't sound out of place on *Remain In Light* ("I've been beating my head against a rubber wall"), while "Sagrada Familia" is another promising unused demo, mixing African high-life guitar, Tony Levin's rubbery bass and some frenetic Latin percussion with an intriguing lyric about Antonio Gaudi and Sarah Winchester. Both sound utterly untouched by the high-'80s tropes mentioned earlier – it would be fascinating to hear an entire album like this.

Q&A

Daniel Lanois



Was *So* a conscious attempt to make a "pop" record?

Not in a cynical way, but Peter did want to make proper songs. I said, "I know you hate hi-hats and cymbals, but you've made five fucken' albums without them, so just get over it! Some of us like songs that groove, ferchrissakes!" And that liberated him to explore a more funky, soulful, playful, emotional side to his character.

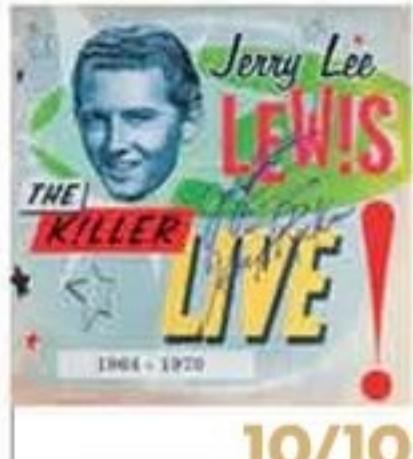
Was it a laborious process?

I was living in Peter's house for a year, in what I call the Bell Tower. We spent nearly six months

on preps: not only setting up sounds but providing Peter with rock solid advice about which way to go. And we wrote the songs as a tight trio – just me, guitarist David Rhodes and Peter with his beatbox. We only proceeded with ideas if there was a spark of magic in that format. The bass and drums came much later, which is the opposite of how you'd usually work.

It sounds like there were dozens of versions of each song recorded...

When you work with Peter, there are lots of ideas flying around all the time. You have to become a master librarian just to keep track. I was an obsessive notekeeper, so I logged every take and synth sound, which meant that I was able to get back to any sound that Peter liked. So for every one of these songs, you can find at least a dozen versions. *INTERVIEW: JOHN LEWIS*



JERRY LEE LEWIS
The Killer Live 1964-1970
UMC

Four albums of Lewis at his swaggering, snarling peak

These three discs contain four '60s-vintage live albums: 1964's *Live At The Star Club, Hamburg* and *The Greatest Live Show On Earth*, 1966's *By Request: More Of The Greatest Live Show On Earth*, and 1970's *Live At The International, Las Vegas*. *The Star Club* album has long been widely hailed a definitive document of live rock'n'roll, and rightly: Lewis, backed by The Nashville Teens, storming and annexing the stage upon which The Beatles had recently learnt their craft. But the underrated treasure here is the 1970 Las Vegas set, recorded during the period in which Lewis had been gradually rescuing his reputation by establishing himself as a country singer, as the scandal of his third marriage ebbed – the woman in question nearing voting age. Lewis' versions of Tom T Hall's "The Ballad Of Forty Dollars" and Kris Kristofferson's "Once More With Feeling" are perfectly judged: Vegas cheese laced with Lewis' venom. The overdue inclusion of the previously unreleased "Stagger Lee" from the same show rectifies an incomprehensible dereliction.

EXTRAS: By way of additional enticement, not 8/10 that it should be required, there are 16 further outtakes from the two latter albums, 10 of them previously unreleased.

ANDREW MUELLER

TIM MAIA
Nobody Can Live Forever
LUAKA BOP

Oddball Brazilian funkster resurrected from 1970s

Even when cloning others' music, Brazil goes its own

way. Hence the country's response to slick funksters like Sly Stone was a chubby eccentric from Rio who sang in English and Portuguese and mixed funk and soul with dashes of samba, rock guitar and strings. As central to Maia's legend – he was enormously popular until his death in 1998 – were his carnal appetites (five marriages, kilos of drugs), and his dalliance with a new age UFO cult called Racional Cultura, whose beliefs he promoted on two albums before disenchantment set in.

The tracks Luaka Bop have wrangled here exclude many of Maia's big, early hits, but there's much to entertain and sometimes dumbfound. "O Caminho Do Bem" ("The Good Way") is a slinky Fender Rhodes piece familiar from the *City Of God* soundtrack, and "Over Again" and "Que Beleza" are catchy variants on George McRae and War, respectively. At the bizarre end of things comes the orchestral overkill of "I Don't Care", and the 12-minute exposition of "Rational Culture" with a wailing neo-Isleys guitar. To subtitle its pastiches as a 'World Psychedelic Classic' is a stretch, but it's an interesting minor constellation in the Brazilian cosmos.

EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER

8/10



THE STEVE MILLER BAND
Sailor
(reissue, 1968)
EDSEL

When The Steve Miller Band reconvened with Glyn Johns to record their second album

Sailor, it was on the home territory of Wally Heider Studios in San Francisco rather than Olympic in chilly London. And more importantly, both Miller and wingman Boz Scaggs were into their stride as songwriters, so *Sailor* brimmed with diverse invention, from Miller's satirical showstopper "Living In The USA" to Scaggs' tart rocker "Dime-A-Dance Romance". Johns' production skills again segued tracks into a satisfying whole, not least in the opening "Song For Our Ancestors", which flowed from evocative foghorns into graceful flanged guitars, before leading gently into the McCartneyesque love song "Dear Mary". Elsewhere, an equally charming "Quicksilver Girl" – written for an associate of another San Francisco band – would make such an impression on a young Gillian Welch that she would later mention it in one of her own songs, while a cover of Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's "Gangster Of Love" would provide Miller with the first of the pseudonymous alter-egos that would accrue through subsequent albums. This is the best of the batch of five early SMB reissues, which also includes the glorious 1969 album *Your Saving Grace*, one of the highpoints of pianist Nicky Hopkins' career.

ANDY GILL

9/10



NICO
The End...
(reissue, 1974)
UNIVERSAL

Weird scenes inside the ex-Velvet's goldmine

In June 1974, Nico appeared at London's Rainbow Theatre with

Kevin Ayers, Brian Eno and John Cale, and performed a nine-minute version of The Doors' "The End", along with her harmonium. The previous year she had recorded it as the maudlin centrepiece to her fourth solo album, originally released on Island. Cale produced and played an abundance of instruments; Brian Eno provided synths and electronic textures (including Moog noise on "Innocent And Vain"): an unexpected foreshadowing of his ambient experiments. And that 'shadowing' is telling: *The End* is almost as bleak and bleached as 1970's *Desertshore*, with Nico's lonely lieder backed by little more than her own yawning harmonium. "We've Got The Gold" is a tense, volatile compound of marimbas, glockenspiel, prowling bass and outbursts from Phil Manzanera's guitar. One false note is sounded by her deadpan take on "Das Lied Der Deutschen" (aka "Deutschland Über Alles") – an ambiguous and unnecessary gesture. This sullen album did indeed mark the end of Nico's 1970s music career: personal issues and drug addiction kept her refrigerated until 1981.

EXTRAS: Nico's Rainbow Theatre performance 7/10 is included in the double set, alongside Peel sessions and an *Old Grey Whistle Test* appearance.

ROB YOUNG

ELVIS PRESLEY
Prince From Another Planet: 40th Anniversary Edition
SONY/LEGACY

The King's Big Apple concert debut, doubled

By 1972, a bit of the bloom

of Elvis' mind-bending 1968 comeback was off the rose. Though still capable of the occasionally dazzling single ("Burning Love"), he was inexorably sliding into decay, and his catalogue into an endless mire of mediocre live product and superfluous repackagings. This expanded concert memento, though, part of which was rush-released that June as *Elvis: As Recorded At Madison Square Garden*, holds up, a measure of the magic – not to mention verve, humour and peerless interpretive skills – he conjured as a performer virtually to the end. Fronting a fine band (led by guitar great James Burton), leaning on contemporary covers (Hoyt Axton's "Never Been To Spain"), pop standards ("Can't Help Falling In Love"), and old hits, Presley's voice routinely lifts even also-ran material into the realm of the sublime. When matched with Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" and the indubitable classic "Suspicious Minds", the results are combustible.

EXTRAS: The complete hour-long afternoon set, 8/10 including "Blue Suede Shoes". Lenny Kaye's 5,000-word essay chronicling that historic weekend in New York City. On DVD: a 20-minute press conference, plus recently discovered amateur footage of parts of the afternoon set.

LUKETORN

REVELATIONS

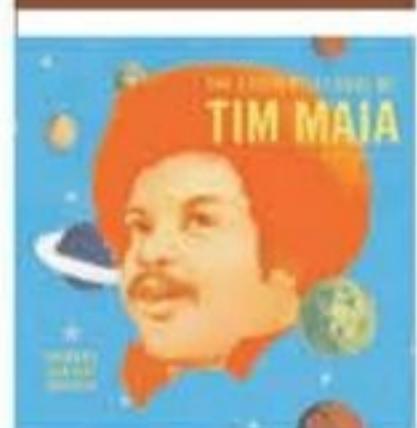
Tim Maia: from cult concern to Brazilian pop chart fame



► Revelations? Tim Maia had a few in his 56 years on planet earth. Most famous was his 1974 conversion to 'Racional Cultura', a Brazilian new age cult whose headquarters included 'a motel for aliens'. The chubby singer had been notorious for his cocaine and whisky intake and for his no-shows at gigs. After his conversion, Maia cleaned up, lost weight, garbed his band in white and handed out LSD to his audiences, soon renouncing the cult and reverting to his old lifestyle.

Maia started his career in his teens before moving to the US for several years, the final six months of them spent in jail after a marijuana bust. His exposure to black America spawned his personal hybrid on hits like "Azul Da Cor Do Mar" and "Primavera" in the early '70s, on which he mixed soul, samba and slushy ballads. He remained an irregular presence in the national charts and shortly before his death was lining up a political career as a socialist candidate.

NEIL SPENCER



TIM MAIA
Nobody Can Live Forever
LUAKA BOP

Oddball Brazilian funkster resurrected from 1970s

Even when cloning others' music, Brazil goes its own

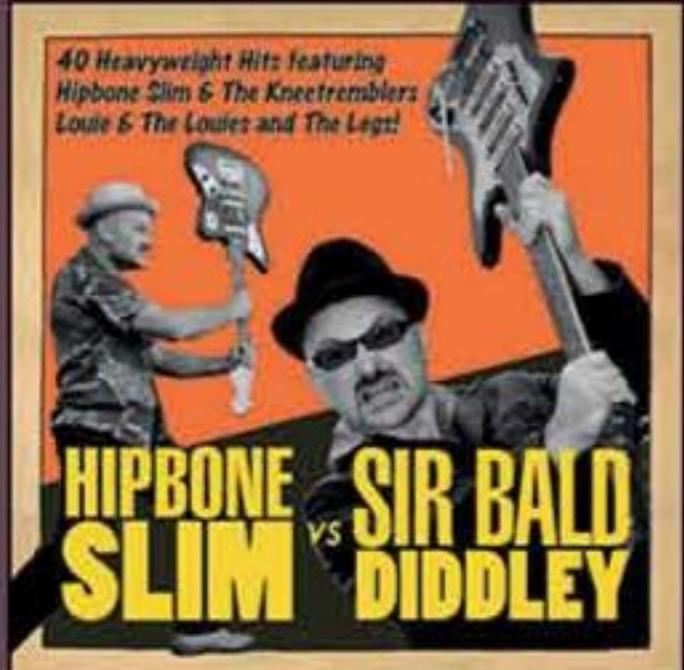
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EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER

8/10



HIPBONE SLIM

HIPBONE SLIM VERSUS SIR BALD DIDDLE

12" VINYL LP / £10

An epic garage rock'n'roll surf rockabilly rhythm'n'blues battle of the bands - in the red corner, Hipbone Slim; in the blue corner, Sir Bald. Let the battle commence!



MASERATI

MASERATI VII

12" VINYL LP / £10

The mighty psych-dance-electronic-rock hybrid returns with their first new album conceived after the untimely death of drummer Jerry Fuchs. Face-melting, brain-bending, club-worthy Moroder Metal.



CHRIST

CATHEXIS MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

12" VINYL LP / £10

4th album by ex Board of Canada collaborator. A beautiful electronic soundtrack to Japanese animation movie "Cathexis". A film about the AUIK people and their interactions with nature and technology.



THE CHARLATANS

TELLIN' STORIES AGAIN

To mark the 15th Anniversary of their LP 'Tellin' Stories', this DVD features a documentary on its making, and a live concert film of the band performing the LP in its entirety at Glasgow's Barrowlands"

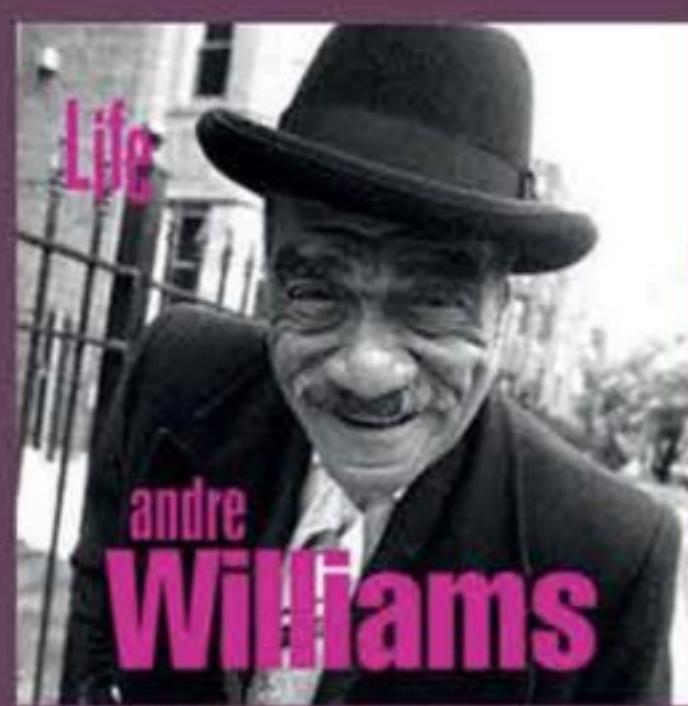


BOSTON SPACESHIPS

THE GREATEST HITS OF BOSTON SPACESHIPS (OUT OF THE UNIVERSE BY SUNDOWN)

12" VINYL LP / £10

Available for the first time outside the States, Boston Spaceships fused surreal humor with some of the most poignant, profound melodies/lyrics Robert Pollard's ever written.



ANDRE WILLIAMS

LIFE

12" VINYL LP / £10

"Life" was recorded this past winter in Detroit, the city where his musical career first began in the 1950's. Produced by Matthew Smith, the album's sonic palette recalls the work of Norman Whitfield's Motown productions, 70's Rolling Stones, as well as Andre's own doo-wop and funk history.



BALMORHEA

STRANGER

12" VINYL LP / £10

The most forward-leaning of their catalog, Stranger presents worlds of tenderness, aggression, estrangement, & freedom using an expanded sonic palette including guitar loops, vibes, synthesizers, ukulele, & steel pan drums.



OKKULTOKRATI

SNAKERIGNS

12" VINYL LP / £10

Snakereigns is the title of the second album from Norwegian punk rock band Okkultokrati. Nine tracks of ugly, black rock'n'roll played on heavy metal equipment and with a punk attitude. Simple and profound. Produced by the band and Emil Nikolaisen of Serena-Maneesh.

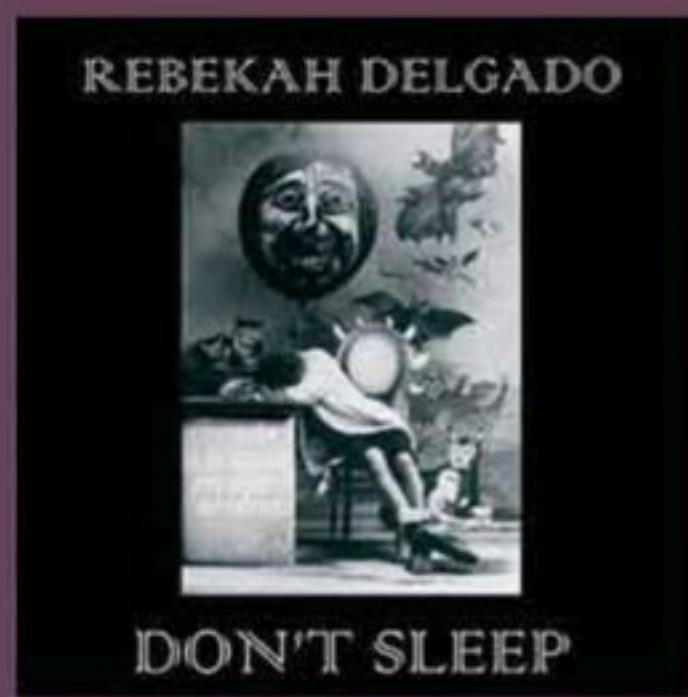


COWBELL

BEAT STAMPEDE

12" VINYL LP / £10

Cowbells debut album of full bodied Garage-Soul & Rock n' Roll with nods to both sides of the Atlantic. Includes their singles 'Never Satisfied' and 'Oh Girl', both heavily featured on Radio 2 and 6 Music and is on CD and lovely 12" vinyl.



REBEKAH DELGADO

DON'T SLEEP

12" VINYL LP / £10

"A female Nick Cave" - Tom Robinson. A dark yet confidently eclectic debut album, tinged by the brooding disquiet of opener Little Boy Blue.



DIVA

MOON MOODS

12" VINYL LP / £10

Having honed her pop dynamic to a gloriously melodic precision, the new album from LA's Diva Dompé contains ten tracks filled with wonder and electro pop enchantment.



WE ARE THE PHYSICS

YOUR FRIEND, THE ATOM

12" VINYL LP / £10

"The Glasgow sci-fi new wave punks return with fourteen blistering tracks of stop-start jerk-pop, including recent singles 'Goran Ivanisevic' and 'Applied Robotics'."

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Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



JOHN CARPENTER & ALAN HOWARTH

Halloween II (1981)

Halloween III: Season Of The Witch (1982)

DEATH WALTZ RECORDING COMPANY

Put the knife down, Michael. Horror legend's cult soundtracks resurrected...

The secret to a great horror soundtrack? "Silence," says Alan Howarth, the Hollywood suspense maestro who composed the *Halloween II* and *Halloween III: Season Of The Witch* scores. "Keep things quiet and small and when it's time to get scared, go big." Howarth learned first-hand from the master, John Carpenter, whose low-budget 1978 film *Halloween* not only pioneered the horror-movie franchise, but also introduced cinema to the modern electronic horror soundtrack. Coming from the school of Carpenter, Howarth favours the minimalist approach and he abides by

that for these two haunting early-'80s synth works, both of which drag Carpenter's icy staccato refrain into murkier territory. Soundtracks seldom make satisfying albums and only hardcore fans will really get a thrill playing these back-to-back. Fitting, as Howarth has remastered both for special vinyl editions in time for *Halloween*.

Howarth got involved with Carpenter after a chance meeting in Paramount Studios where, a former keyboard roadie for Weather Report, he was creating sound effects in the first *Star Trek* film. Production commitments to *The Thing* meant Carpenter, who only directed the superior original *Halloween*, handed over the sequel's soundtrack to Howarth. Understandably, there's a sense on *II* that he's treading too faithfully in Carpenter's footsteps, but he comes into his own on its rotten sequel *Season Of The Witch*, using new technology to heighten tension and devise the menacing "Halloween Montage", the Silver Shamrock ad jingle. He went on to compose for *Halloween 4, 5* and *6*, with mixed results. "I love *Halloween* 'cos I'm making money when I'm sleeping," he says. "Halloween ringtones are very popular."

PIERS MARTIN

I'M YOUR FAN

"What sounded like noise to some people sounded like music to Alan."

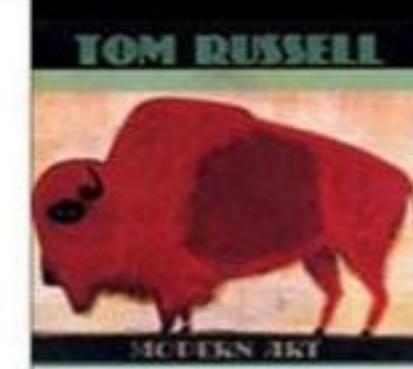
- JOHN ELLIOTT,
EMERALDS



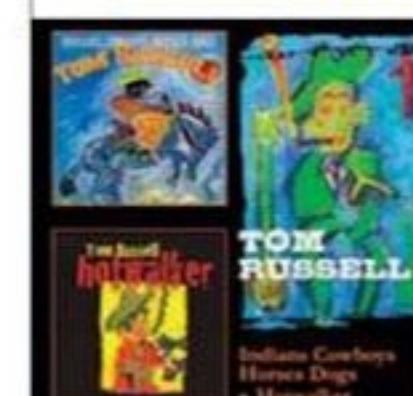
7/10



8/10



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TOM RUSSELL

**Borderland/
Modern Art**

FLOATING WORLD

**Indians Cowboys
Horses Dogs/
Hotwalker**

FLOATING WORLD

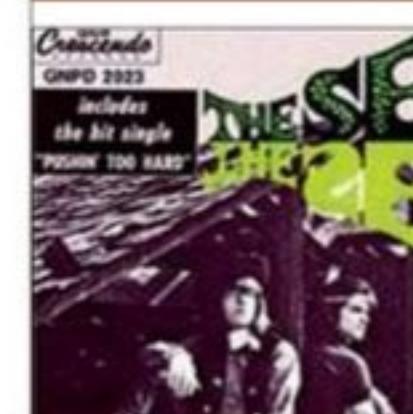
Folk-art outsider's recent work reconsidered

The reissue series of the California songwriter continues with two double-sets, from 2001-'05.

Borderland (2001) is one of his most accessible works, as he skirts the US-Mexican border playfully citing Orson Welles' *Touch Of Evil* in the title track, a poignant song of lost lust. *Modern Art* (2003) is patchier, but it has some fine songs, not least "The Kid From Spavinaw", a tribute to the baseball player Mickey Mantle, while Russell's correspondence with Charles Bukowski spawns the haunting montage of "Crucifix In A Death Hand/Carmelita". *Indians Cowboys Horses Dogs* (2004) is a collection of dense narratives stretching from the borderlands to Minnesota, and includes perhaps the best ballad ever written about a rocking-horse chair ("Little Blue Horse"). The Bukowski link is more fully explored in *Hotwalker* (2005), a concept album narrated by a circus midget. The second part of Russell's Americana trilogy, it's frequently bonkers, but occasionally great.

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



8/10

THE SEEDS

**The Seeds
(reissue, 1966)**

BIG BEAT

A high-energy web of sound

Against the grain of LA-spawned folk-rock of the mid-'60s, The Seeds

were an unrefined garage band with an odd sound defined by Jan Savage's fuzztone surf guitar runs and Daryl Hooper's ethereal electric piano. Fronted by their own Jim Morrison, the uninhibited Sky Saxon, his sneering vocals and free-association

ramblings made him a compelling figure on Sunset Strip. Unlike other rush-recorded debuts from 1966, *The Seeds* isn't weighed down by filler tracks and the album's three extracted A-sides are all bona fide classics. The first of these (released in July 1965) was the brooding, magnificently snotty "Can't Seem To Make You Mine" (later covered by Alex Chilton and Johnny Thunders). By the end of the following summer, it looked as if The Seeds were history until their fizzing, pounding, two-chord wonder, "Pushing Too Hard", broke out of local radio to become a Top 40 hit a year after release. The Seeds would never top the song's proto-punk vitality and lost the plot spectacularly over the next three years.

EXTRAS: Early recordings with wholly uncharacteristic nods towards the likes of Buddy Holly and Little Richard and album outtakes including a relentless, fuzz-fuelled, free-form, 15-minute version of "Evil Hoodoo".

MICK HOUGHTON



SENSATIONS' FIX

Music Is Painting In The Air (1974-1977)

RVNG INTL

Spotless introduction to ornate Italian prog ensemble
Led by the resourceful

8/10

Franco Falsini, Sensations' Fix were a Florentine Pink Floyd who made a string of enchanting, largely instrumental albums in the mid-'70s, releasing three in 1974 alone. Obscure enough to be sampled by DJ Shadow in 2002 and to inspire the title of 2008's *Sonic Youth, etc: Sensational Fix* roving exhibition of the New York band's artier side, they produced a body of work characterised by Falsini's evocative guitar pieces, treated keyboard sounds and tape experiments which, combined with his long hair and metaphysical bent, gave songs such as "Dark Side Of Religion" and "Fragments Of Light" that po-faced cosmic sensibility in vogue at the time.

Freshly mixed from original tapes and compiled with little regard to chronology by Falsini and his son Jeyon, *Music Is Painting In The Air* follows last year's reissue of Falsini's 1975 synth affair *Cold Nose*, excerpts from which crop up here, and conveys for first-time listeners the group's well-rounded crepuscular mood. From tight-crotched prog to gilded fretwork and space-age electronics, this survey makes a strong case for Sensations' Fix being the finest Krautrock outfit that Germany never produced.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN

VARIOUS ARTISTS

FAC. Dance 02: Factory Records 12" Mixes & Rarities 1980-1987

STRUT

7/10

Superior serving of off-kilter disco and dub

One can never be sure how great the demand for A Certain Ratio dance mixes is in 2012, but the guys at Strut are clearly on to something: this is the second 2CD round-up of the Manchester label's lesser-known output in 12 months. It is also the first to be thoughtfully curated by James Nice, a former Factory worker who knows the label intimately, having written a book on it. Beyond the big guns, Tony Wilson and Alan Erasmus' imprint became an unlikely hub for tribal jazz, cappuccino funk and druggy high-NRG, much of it from Belgium. How many times, say, did the chino chintz of Kalima's "Land Of Dreams" or Anna Domino's "Take That" echo around an empty Haçienda?

New Order may not feature, but their fingerprints, inked by Shep Pettibone and Arthur Baker, are everywhere. Bernard Sumner smears sleaze over Shark Vegas' "You Hurt Me" and 52nd Street's "Can't Afford". As Be Music, Gillian Gilbert and Stephen Morris helm Thick Pigeon's new wave romp "Babcock And Wilcox", while Peter Hook champions Hull's own New Order, Nyam Nyam, whose "Fate" he sealed. In a Nice touch, Hook's cover of Joe Meek's "Telstar", recorded with Tony Wilson's wife, closes proceedings.

EXTRAS: Liner notes by James Nice.

5/10 PIERS MARTIN



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Sofrito International Soundclash

STRUT

7/10

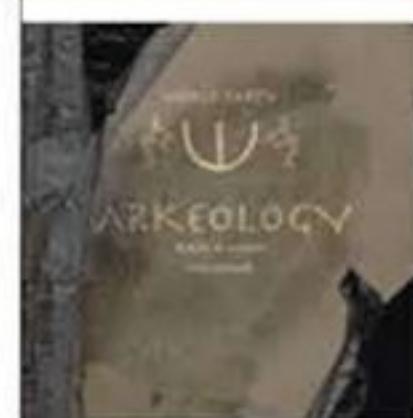
Hot DJ set of vintage and modern tropicália

Sometimes it's best to let the professionals make the playlists. Sofrito – aka DJs Hugo Mendez and Frankie Francis – have an international reputation built on selections like this second genre-hopping album. Dusty sides rescued from the vaults provide the backbone of the 15 tracks; brassy cumbia like Las Pesada's "Cumbia Y Tambo", loping Zairean soukous like Kiland's "Pour Chercher Le Magot" and the Afro-funk of Cameroon's Bell'a Njoh, complete with squealing proto-synth.

The resurrection of such antiquities has caused more than one group of old-timers to reform – Haiti's Les Difficiles de Pétion-Ville (present here) being one, while Kenya's Owiny Sigoma Band came from a bunch of Londoners calling on two Kenyan veterans. The latter's "Nabed Nade" is a swaying acoustic piece not normally found on a DJ set, but it offsets the tougher material, as does "La Zorra", a modern call-and-response that shows Colombian music is not all cumbia. Guadeloupe's Mas Ka Klé are another living combo, whose "Lésé Yo Palé" proves a revelation. There's no sign of Concept Neuf reforming, but given the popularity of "The Path" that may change. Something different for the weekend dancefloor.

EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER



WORLD PARTY

Arkeology

SEAVIEW RECORDS

Sprawling five-disc collection of rarities

In the early '90s, ex-Waterboy Karl Wallinger was briefly touted as a wizardly Welsh

hybrid of Brian Wilson, Paul McCartney, Prince and Bob Dylan, and for a while – notably on World Party's terrific second album *Goodbye Jumbo* (1990) – he rose to the challenge. Declining commercial returns and an aneurysm derailed things somewhat, although Robbie Williams' cover of "She's The One", included here in a live *Later...* recording, kept Wallinger fed and watered. Like most archaeological digs this sprawling compendium of outtakes, live tracks, B-sides, demos and doodles unearths a mixture of dross, curios and treasure: live versions of "Message In The Box" and "Ship Of Fools", a fistful of *White Album* Beatles covers, a soulful stab at Dylan's "Sweetheart Like You". Some excellent shelved originals – including the rolling Celtic ballad "Another World" and Hammond-drenched "Another One" – sit next to World Party's first new material since 2000's *Dumbing Up*, notably the breezy, ELO-ish "Everybody's Falling In Love". Fusing soul, sex, folk, ecological doomsaying, funk, country, comedy, psychedelia and classic pop, Wallinger's singular vision was ultimately too stoned and scattershot for the mainstream, but it created a wonderful world of music. He named his band providently.

EXTRAS: None.

GRAEME THOMSON

COMING NEXT MONTH...



As the albums desk begins to wrap up against the chill of a rather spartan-looking release schedule, there are still a few noteworthy coals around which it can warm itself.

This is of course the time of year for the hastily thrown-together seasonal repackaging, so it's good to see that before year's end, that trend will be bucked by **The Rolling Stones**, who will celebrate their 50th anniversary in a rather classier style. And certainly in a plentiful number of formats. Recently embracing the possibilities of multi-platform releases, the band will present this *GRRR!* over three CDs (50 tracks), four CDs (80 tracks) and good old vinyl (50 tracks). Most exciting are two new tracks, recorded in Paris this summer: "Doom And Gloom" and "One Last Shot".

Other new material arrives, too – another film soundtrack from Radiohead's *Jonny Greenwood*, for a start – but most anticipated is probably the debut album from LA's *Allah-Las*. Another scion of the city's faintly retro-minded indie rock scene, the band have shown their good taste already via a sequence of tasteful mixtapes at Allah-las.com. Now, their

self-titled debut confirms them as makers of a Byrdsy, Nuggetsy type of folky, indie rock, that never quite ends up as plain old indie.

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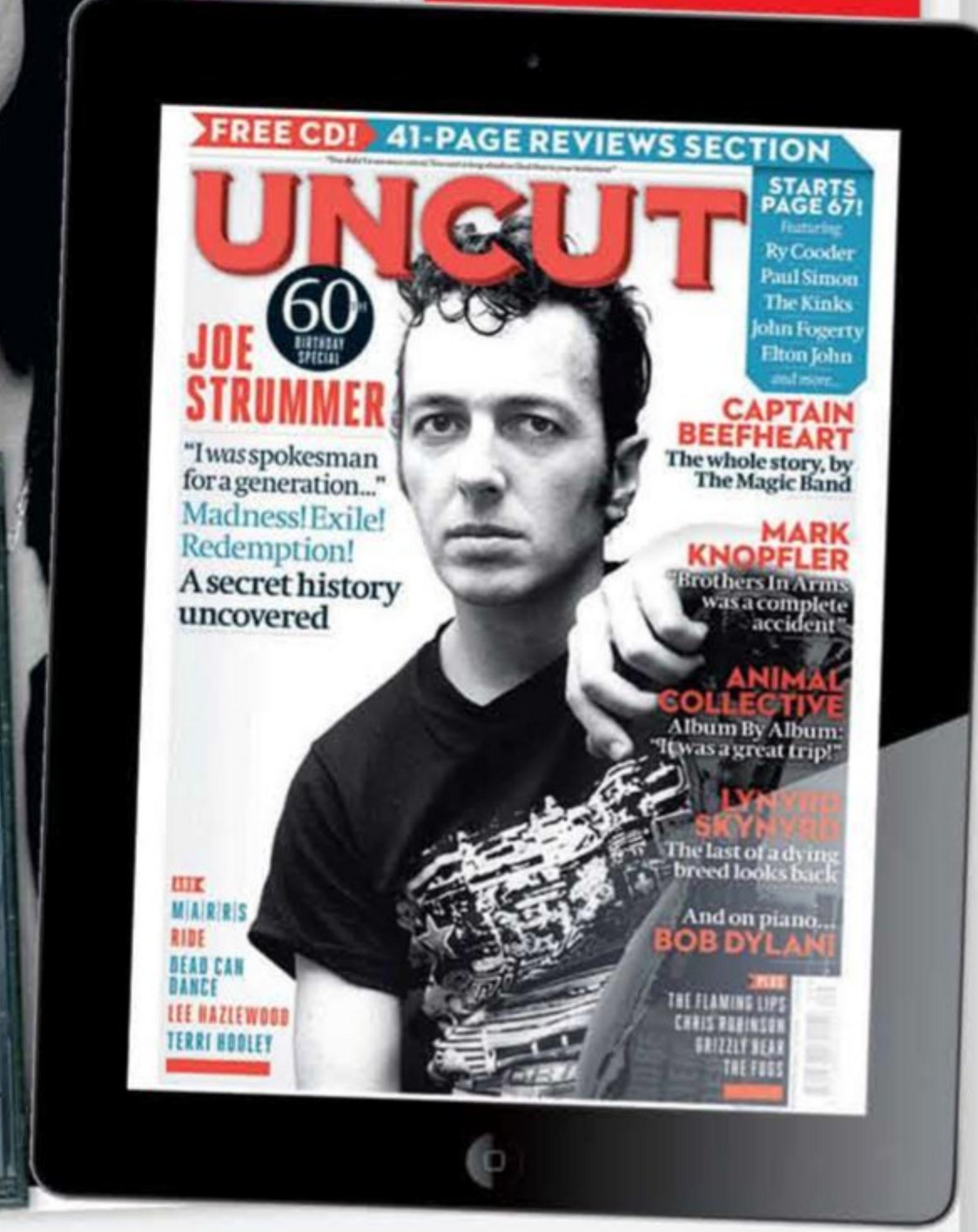
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THIS MONTH: BJÖRK | PETER GABRIEL | DEATH WATCH | SAINT ETIENNE

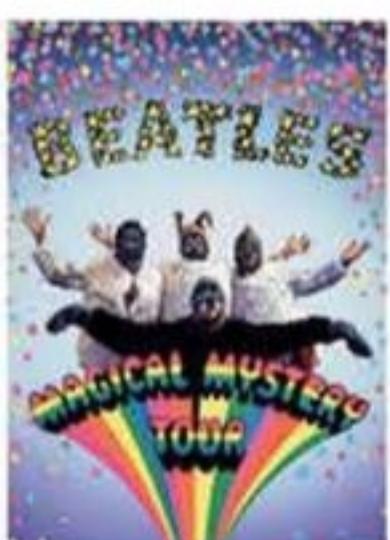
The Beatles perform "Your Mother Should Know", West Malling Air Station, Kent, September 24, 1967



MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

APPLE/EMI (DVD & BLU-RAY)

Roll up for the definitive remaster of the Fab Four's car-crash Christmas television special. By Rob Young



8/10

Beatles boarded a coach with a film crew, actors, hangers-on and The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band on September 11, 1967, there was no end in sight.

Anyone with even basic knowledge of The Beatles will feel they know *Magical Mystery Tour*: roll up!, the bus careering round the racetrack, and all that. Yet it has rarely been screened in full since its BBC premiere on Boxing Day 1967, and previous releases have been poor-quality dubs. This restoration, with revealing special features, finally gives the piece its due.

Viewing the film then must have been a vastly different experience from watching it now (and not only because it was transmitted in black

and white). The Beatles were at their critical and creative height, even as the psychedelic cauldron was just coming off the boil. Incredibly, no-one from the Beeb asked to view the material until shortly before transmission. If they had, they might have balked at the realisation that the world's wealthiest group were smuggling a lysergic home movie into the Christmas schedules.

A few weeks before filming began, they spent a week with the Maharishi in Bangor on a Transcendental Meditation camp. While there, they received the devastating news of Brian Epstein's death – the epochal moment that marked the group's ensuing three-year disintegration. *Magical Mystery Tour* promises wonders, but behind the flimsy curtain of illusion is a forced hysteria; a tail-chasing quest and a scattering of bitter-tasting comic interludes. Softened up by Petula Clark's shows, TV audiences may well have found it baffling, with its Godardian editing techniques, crumbling storyline, and borderline-manic cameos (Victor Spinetti as a spluttering army recruitment officer; Ivor Cutler as Buster Bloodvessel, an unsmiling, severe bus conductor). It's Python-esque and just plain silly at times, but the 'dialogue' and voiceover feel sarcastic and slightly bullying, like a drunk on a train who loudly wonders why no-one's having a good time.

Meanwhile, the four ex-moptops seem too self-conscious to get in the mood. George keeps his shades on. We see almost nothing of John for the first half-hour, though he steals the show at the end as a greasy Italian waiter, shovelling spaghetti onto a dining table. Ringo banters with his larger-than-life Aunt Jessie. Paul remains a tanktopped presence whose beatific state of mind is perhaps expressed in the "Fool On The Hill" clip.

The film is, of course, peppered with musical turns. The "I Am The Walrus" segment is vintage Beatles; Technicolor paisley and wyrd animal masks; a parade of policemen ranged on a wall; a carnival of 'eggmen'. George busks "Blue Jay Way" by candlelight, on that very LA road. Viv Stanshall fronts the Bonzos for a psychotically risqué "Death Cab For Cutie", complete with Raymond Revuebar stripper. "Your Mother Should Know" is a Busby Berkeley-style finale, shot in a Kent aircraft hangar, which almost didn't happen due to a malfunctioning generator and mutinous cast.

It's a difficult one to grade. As a film, such a technical and narrative shambles only merits a 3. As a Beatles artefact, though, it's up in the 8s or 9s: completing this project did, after all, occupy all four members for the entire last three months of what was arguably the most significant year in the group's existence so far. They shaped and controlled the edit. But *Magical Mystery Tour* also gets high marks as a captivating pop-cultural period piece. It could be The Beatles' love/hate letter to GB, in all its pettifogging absurdity and geographical littleness. In the film's faded-Kodak visual ambience, you sense the September light beginning to fail towards winter. The bus is a music hall full of nostalgic baggage for vanishing communalities, and even The Beatles' own lost innocence ("She Loves You" is heard once, played on a steam organ). You say you want a revolution? The wheels on the bus go round and round.

EXTRAS: Paul McCartney director's commentary; **9/10** Making Of; cast interviews; Beatles promos; outtakes.



BJÖRK

Later... With Jools Holland 1995-2011

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

Charting the Icelandic icon's progression via the medium of Jools

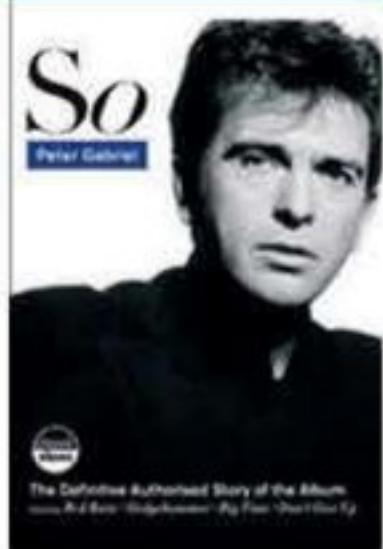
This history of Björk on *Later...* takes us from a relatively straight(ish) "Hyperballad" to a loopy "Crystalline", during which time

the tunes get more opaque, and the clothes (and hair) more outlandish. The theatrics are fun but simply watching Björk sing still remains one of life's unalloyed pleasures, particularly on a voice-and-harpsichord version of "Venus As A Boy" and a spine-tingling "Possibly Maybe". A fine précis of a compelling journey.

EXTRAS: None.

GRAEME THOMSON

8/10



PETER GABRIEL

Classic Albums: So

EAGLE VISION

The unsatisfying story of the record that made Gabriel a superstar

Fuelled by the hit singles "Sledgehammer", "Don't Give Up" and "Red Rain", Gabriel's 1986 album catapulted him from admittedly sizeable cult favourite to

mainstream A-lister, this record selling five million copies in the US alone. Certainly, it qualifies as a classic album, but this is a perfunctory tale of application and efficiency, the artist, co-producer Daniel Lanois and a roll call of top-flight session musicians spending a year constructing just nine songs, but it's painfully light on anecdote or intrigue.

EXTRAS: Extended footage, promos.

6/10

TERRY STAUNTON

6/10

THE LANDLORD

STUDIO CANAL

Overlooked Ashby comedy that bravely tackled American racial issues

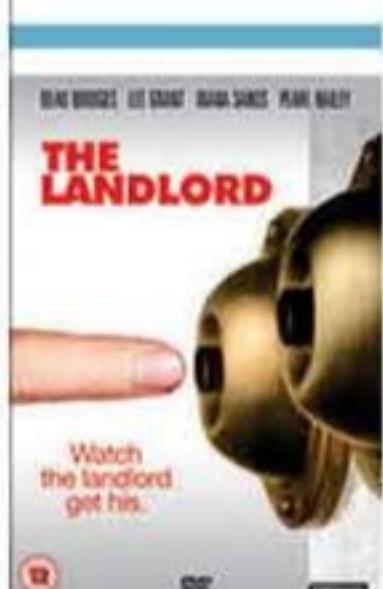
Dating from 1970, the directing debut of the late Hal Ashby (best known for helming *Harold And Maude* and *Shampoo*) gives Beau

Bridges one of the best roles of his career as a rich kid who comes to own a rundown tenement in Harlem, and, moved by the problems and character of his various tenants, decides to move in among them. If not quite up to the level of the movies that made Ashby's legend, the freewheeling, hectic air, the liberal heart and the wicked delight in the offbeat are all in place. It's holding up well.

EXTRAS: None.

DAMIEN LOVE

6/10



LAST SHOP STANDING

PROPER FILMS

A paean to the lesser-spotted record shop

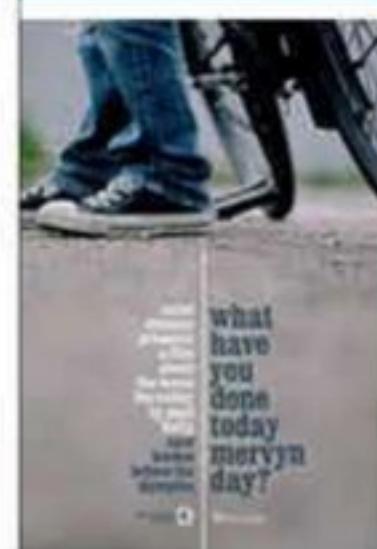
Independent record shops, as author Graham Jones tells us, are a good thing. Discoveries can be made there, and enthusiasms kindled. Guests like Paul Weller, Richard Hawley and

Billy Bragg tell us much the same. Beyond that, no-one seems very sure what the story is in this doc, which is a pity as some points hinted at here (the collusion of high-street shops in assisting the outmoding of vinyl by CD; the industry's covert war on the "specialist" music fan) could themselves have carried a longer and considerably more interesting film.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN ROBINSON

5/10



SAINT ETIENNE PRESENT...

What Have You Done Today, Mervyn Day?

HEAVENLY FILMS

Poignant portrait of pre-Olympic East London

In summer 2005, Saint Etienne's Bob Stanley and filmmaker Paul Kelly spent six weeks filming

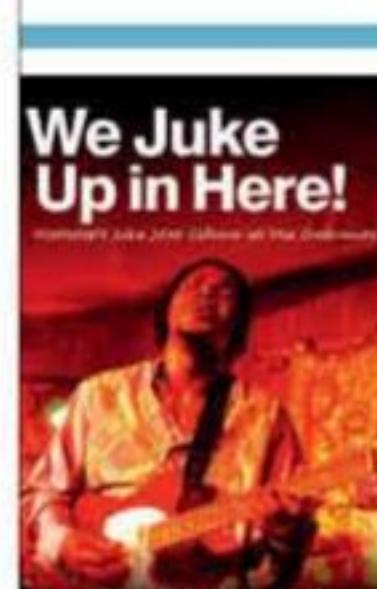
in the Lower Lea Valley, a derelict part of London that had just then been announced as the site for the 2012 Olympic park. In this 45-minute film, Kelly hangs onto a slight narrative (a boy delivering newspapers round key Lea locations) a melancholic, though potent, psycho-geographical exploration of the area's forgotten history as the hub for British industry in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

EXTRAS: Soundtrack CD.

6/10

MICHAEL BONNER

7/10



WE JUKE UP IN HERE!

BROKE & HUNGRY

Another visit to the Deep South for some more modern blues

A sequel to their 2008 film *M For Mississippi*, here Jeff Konkel and Roger Stolle again travel to the Delta to film the vanishing "juke" scene – the often rural

bars at which live electric blues is the main entertainment. It's nicely filmed (it makes you want to visit, immediately), and the turns from players like Louis "Gearshifter" Youngblood are often good. But the two guys never fully address the fact that this aspect of blues culture is not one that can be preserved by their patronage alone.

EXTRAS: Performance CD, deleted scenes and outtakes.

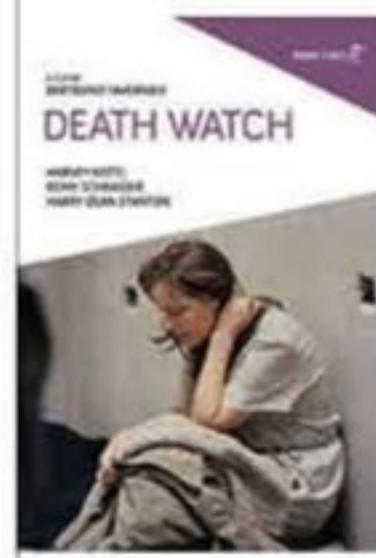
JOHN ROBINSON

7/10



DEATH WATCH

PARK CIRCUS



Reissue for criminally unknown Euro-sci-fi, shot in the bombed-out Glasgow of 1979

Filmed by French director Bertrand Tavernier around Glasgow in 1979, *Death Watch* had a tiny UK release in 1981, followed by a solitary late-night BBC broadcast shortly after. Never issued since here, it remains unknown, despite a cast that blends American

icons – Harvey Keitel and Harry Dean Stanton – with key faces from Europe's arthouse, Romy Schneider and Max Von Sydow.

Adapted from DG Compton's 1974 novel, *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe*, *Death Watch* is set in a future where medical advances have practically eradicated death from all causes except old age, and a producer at a vast TV network (Stanton, sly) senses the appetite for a new show: find someone who is dying young, and film their final weeks, for viewers to feed on the experience and wallow in vicarious loss.

His tool is devoted cameraman (Keitel, understated), who has allowed the station to implant a camera behind his eye, so everything he sees feeds to the studio. All they need is a star, and she appears in the shape of Katherine (Schneider, luminous), young, beautiful and about to be informed she's terminally ill.

Two decades before *Big Brother*, Tavernier is dealing in issues of intrusion, exploitation and manipulation that dominate any discussion of reality TV today.

What renders the film unique, though, is its melancholy, and its strangely lyrical picture of past and future in collision. In painting his nameless city of tomorrow, Tavernier employs the strategy Godard used when shooting *Alphaville* in '60s Paris; he doesn't dress the place up as some future metropolis, all white suits and flying cars. Instead, he films the dirty streets as they are, fascinated by the faded 19th-Century grandeur and brutal modernity.

Despite the sci-fi trimmings, Tavernier's movie is deeply human, examining loss, lies and the truths we refuse to acknowledge. Rescued from memory, a revelation.

EXTRAS: New Tavernier interview, galleries, new trailer.

DAMIEN LOVE

Films

BY DAMON WISE

This month: We jazz up for some Beat action, hear some Kubrick konspiracies and get swept away by Hurricane Katrina

IF NOTHING ELSE, *On The Road* is a reminder that before Steppenwolf, there was another generation that kept the motor running. With its free love, hard drugs and driving bebop jazz, Jack Kerouac's 1957 Beat novel has everything a good road movie needs, and a big-screen adaptation has been mooted for so long, its arrival at last almost seems like an anticlimax. Francis Ford Coppola had the rights for much of the '70s, which would have been the optimum time for him to make it, sandwiched between the stately first two *Godfathers* and his brash pulp teen movies (*Rumble Fish*, *The Outsiders*) of the '80s. Instead of Coppola, however, we have Argentina's Walter Salles at the helm, and although he handles the period detail beautifully, his take on this specifically American story feels a little over-fussy and styled, never really tearing things up as its characters (try to) do.

Salles hasn't changed much from the original text, and as adaptations go, it's very faithful, telling the story of blocked middle-class writer Sal Paradise (*Control's* Sam Riley), his loose-cannon friend Dean Moriarty (Garrett Hedlund) and their postwar odyssey by car from New York to San Francisco. As a travelogue it is stunning, but as a movie it is lacking; very little happens along the way, and a cheerfully bizarre cameo from Viggo Mortensen as Old Bull Lee, living in New Orleans with his "old lady" Jane (Amy Adams) gives it a brief Benzedrine buzz.

More so than the book, for obvious reasons, this *On The Road* embraces its origins in fact, and its real-life inspirations – Beat Generation luminaries such as Allen Ginsberg and William S Burroughs – give it the flavour of a biopic. As a result, it's hard to know how ordinary cinema-goers will see the film, lured in by a supporting cast that includes Kristen Stewart and Kirsten Dunst, as Moriarty's successive spouses, in fairly thankless roles. Still, this is about as good a film of a somewhat dated, sexist tome that there was ever likely to be.

► **Rust And Bone** is the follow-up to Jacques Audiard's 2009 breakout hit, *A Prophet*, the story of a young French Arab boy sent to prison who moved up the ranks while playing different gangs against each other. *Rust And Bone* could not be more different, being about a nightclub bouncer who befriends a paraplegic whale trainer, but there are certain similarities nevertheless. This is being touted as French star Marion Cotillard's film, since she does a very good job of losing her legs and being upset about it, but the real standout is



arguably Belgium's Matthias Schoenaerts as a man, who, like the boy in *A Prophet*, finds he has a lot of growing up to do.

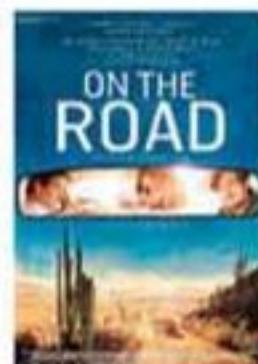
Schoenaerts doesn't look like some little boy lost: he's thick-set, gets into bare-knuckle boxing, and when he first meets Cotillard's Stéphanie he stops her getting more than a bloody nose in a nightclub fight. Alain takes her home, only to find that Stéphanie has a not-very-happy partner – an uncomfortable situation he doesn't even seem to register. The friendship is rekindled when she loses her legs in a work accident, and, though the relationship isn't sexual at first, Stéphanie unexpectedly finds Alain to be a rock, unfazed by her circumstances and a courteous swimming companion.

When Stéphanie wants to go a little deeper,

though, Alain reveals himself as a cold-blooded, selfish loner, and the film becomes a study of his alienation, wondering not just whether the two will ever get together but whether Alain will ever wake up from himself at all. Audiard never strays into sentimentality or histrionics, and it's a strangely beautiful achievement to go from one minute showing whales formation-dancing to Katy Perry's "Fireworks" to the next having bloodied, bare-chested men banging their heads into gravel.

► **Beasts Of The Southern Wild** is a film of contradictions. On one hand, it seems to come from a place of pure post-apocalyptic fantasy while simultaneously being grounded in the very real world. It's a film riddled with CGI and special effects but one that also feels handcrafted and

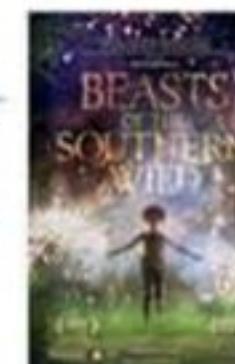
Reviewed this month...



ON THE ROAD
Director Walter Salles
Starring Sam Riley, Garrett Hedlund
Opens Oct 12
Certificate 15
6/10



RUST AND BONE
Director Jacques Audiard
Starring Matthias Schoenaerts, Marion Cotillard
Opens Nov 2
Certificate 15
8/10



BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD
Director Benh Zeitlin
Starring Quvenzhané Wallis, Dwight Henry
Opens Oct 19
Certificate 12A
9/10



RUBY SPARKS
Director Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris
Starring Zoe Kazan, Paul Dano
Opens Oct 12
Certificate 15
6/10



ROOM 237
Director Rodney Ascher
Starring Bill Blakemore, Buffy Visick
Opens Oct 26
Certificate 12A
8/10



Quevenzhané Wallis
and Dwight Henry
in *Beasts Of The
Southern Wild*

The big-screen adaptation of On The Road is about as good a film of a somewhat dated, sexist tome that there was ever likely to be

human. The vibe is elemental, since this is a film about earth, water and fire, with characters that are variously grubby and drunk, but so spontaneous and carefree that it actually begins to seem that their poverty might be empowering. Terrence Malick's *Days Of Heaven* is a useful reference point.

Hushpuppy (Quevenzhané Wallis) lives alone with her single father Wink (Dwight Henry); Wink is sick and their home far down on the Louisiana coast (a town prophetically called The Bathtub) is flooded when a Katrina-like hurricane strikes. Now displaced, Hushpuppy and Wink try to get their territory back by any means necessary. It's hard to say exactly what happens next, since Benh Zeitlin's ragtag fantasy is simultaneously a road movie, a right-of-passage movie and an eco-doom movie, replete with a pack of giant marauding warthogs

("aurochs") that seem to portend the end of civilisation. But there's a joyous spirit and creativity here that make this one of the most fascinating and unexpected films of the year, made all the more remarkable by the knowledge that its two shock-haired leads are non-professionals, two not-at-all-feral city-dwellers, picked at an open casting in New Orleans.

► **Ruby Sparks** is the first film from husband-and-wife directing team Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris since their 2006 hit, *Little Miss Sunshine*. This film does share some of its predecessor's DNA – famous people in small roles, a journey for self-knowledge, a climactic physical performance – but *Ruby Sparks* has little of that film's 'feelgood' factor. Here, they reteam with Paul Dano, who plays novelist Calvin Weir-Fields, a former wunderkind, now in his late twenties, who cannot top his teenage best-seller. He is also experiencing a downturn in his romantic fortunes. Visiting his shrink (a wonderfully avuncular Elliott Gould), Calvin is encouraged to write about something he loves, no matter how terrible that writing is. He decides to write about a girl, Ruby Sparks, who appeared to him in a dream – soon Calvin is delighted to discover he has a doorstop's worth of fresh material. He is, then, more than a little surprised when Ruby herself appears in his house one day, apparently unaware that she is Calvin's literary creation.

Ruby, played by relative newcomer Zoe Kazan (who also wrote the screenplay), is the glue that binds the film. Your full enjoyment of *Ruby Sparks* is predicated on your response to her – whether she is cute and winsome or irritating and awful. The script is naïve at times, but there are some good, interesting moments here, particularly an absorbing party scene where Calvin meets the ex who sent him into tailspin and we find out some of the perverse details that went into creating Ruby – such as the reason why she is an artist, and how she came to be attracted to older men.

► Seeing **Room 237** is a good way to prepare for the re-release next month of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. This eye-opening documentary is a suitable reminder of the film's endless power to fascinate. Drawing on the interpretations of the film by its weirdest, most obsessive fans, *Room 237* offers some of the most insane readings of the film you're ever likely to hear. The most plausible is that the film is a comment on the genocide of Native Americans, since Kubrick and the novel's author, Stephen King, make play of an ancient burial ground, and the Overlook Hotel – where Jack Nicholson's Jack Torrance is the caretaker – is plastered with Native American art.

Where things start to get very strange, however, is when we start to hear that the film is actually about the Holocaust, due to the recurrence of the number 42, the year the Nazis proposed the Final Solution. We're shown the Overlook's reception area – piled high with suitcases – and told that Jack is using a German typewriter, and though such things seem trifling, we learn that Kubrick was reading a lot of WWII material at the time. Next up is the film's centrepiece, the theory that the director helped fake the 1969 moon landing – again, a preposterous idea given curious credence by NASA's very generous loan of deep-space camera lenses to help him film 1975's *Barry Lyndon*.

To enjoy *Room 237*, it helps to have a little knowledge of the film and its famously pedantic director. But, really, this isn't a film so much about *The Shining* as about meaning, and though you won't come away converted by the tribes of conspiracy theorists who present their various cases, some facts and figures will linger – and you'll definitely never see the film the same way again.

Also out...

TAKEN 2

OPENS OCTOBER 4

Liam Neeson is back, whacking more bad dudes who're out to cause harm to his family. Don't they ever learn?

HIT SO HARD

OPENS OCTOBER 5

Doc about Hole drummer Patty Schemel, mixing Schemel's own home movies with new talking heads interviews.

LIBERAL ARTS

OPENS OCTOBER 5

Coming-of-age campus comedy from US sitcom actor, Josh Radnor, falling for Elizabeth Olsen.

SINISTER

OPENS OCTOBER 5

True crime novelist Ethan Hawke moves his family into the house where a family was murdered. Guess what happens next.

PUSHER

OPENS OCTOBER 12

Nicolas Winding Refn's Copenhagen crime drama is relocated to Dalston, with its mimsy coffee shops and "urban" hairdressers.

FRANKENWEENIE

OPENS OCTOBER 17

Expanded 1984 stop-motion short from Tim Burton, about a boy who brings his dog back from the dead.



GINGER AND ROSA

OPENS OCTOBER 19

Sally Potter's latest, with *Mad Men*'s Christina Hendricks and Elle Fanning, about teenage girls living in London.

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

OPENS OCTOBER 26

Googie Withers in kitchen sink precursor from 1947, as a Bethnal Green housewife coping with post-war poverty.

SKYFALL

OPENS OCTOBER 26

Javier Bardem sports a truly frightening hairpiece as the villain this time out, taking on Daniel Craig and some bad puns.

STITCHES

OPENS OCTOBER 26

Ross Noble plays a clown who returns from the dead to terrorise a children's party. With hilarious results.

THE WOODEN SKY

EVERY CHILD A DAUGHTER, EVERY MOON A SUN

THE NEW ALBUM OUT 8TH OCTOBER

"Superior alt.country from Canadian collective. The Wooden Sky mine a deep seam of US influences - from the Violent Femmes to The Replacements, while anyone who fell in love with Ryan Adams around the millennium will find much of the rest easy to love." - **UNCUT**

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- 2 - WINCHESTER, Railway
- 3 - CARDIFF, Buffalo Bar
- 4 - LONDON, Windmill
- 5 - PRESTON, Mad Ferret
- 6 - MANCHESTER, Black Rooms
- 9 - LONDON, Slaughtered Lamb
- 10 - GLASGOW, Captain's Rest
- 11 - HARTLEPOOL, Studio
- 12 - SUNDERLAND, Independent
- 13 - OXFORD, Oxjam



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- FRIDAY 23rd
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- SATURDAY 24th
LIVERPOOL THE BLUECOAT
- SUNDAY 25th
NORWICH ARTS CENTRE
- MONDAY 26th
LEICESTER THE MUSICIAN
- TUESDAY 27th
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- THURSDAY 29th
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Books

BY ALLAN JONES

JIMMY PAGE WILL probably need some persuading if he reads it, but it's possible, I suppose, that when he started **Trampled Underfoot**, Barney Hoskyns intended it as a celebration of Led Zeppelin and the infernal majesty of their music. The gripping 550-page oral history he has delivered, however, could barely be less flattering if the author had deliberately set out to permanently tarnish the reputations of most of the book's principal characters, which includes not only the band themselves, but also their henchmen and associates, particularly legendarily bellicose manager Peter Grant, whose ruthless devotion to the band bordered on the deranged, and the evidently odious Richard Cole. Cole was employed by the group as tour manager but was used more by the monstrous Grant as an enforcer, someone who dependably provided the muscle when required and would unquestioningly go to any extreme demanded of him by the band or Grant. He did even their most obnoxious biddings with an almost servile relish and sadistic glee, and was thus their perfect employee.

Fans will be perhaps disappointed at the lack of serious and extended attention to what Zeppelin themselves will want to be remembered for, which is their music. There is testimony aplenty to the band's collective genius, the almost occult power of their increasingly epic live shows and the untrammelled excitement they inspired, especially among a certain kind of American rock fan, for whom, as Hoskyns puts it, Led Zeppelin "songs became battle cries for a lost generation of disowned teenagers searching for dark magic in their suburban shopping mall lives". But more often than not, what commentary there is about the music from the many people Hoskyns has interviewed tends more towards generalisation and hyperbole than illuminating insight.

Hoskyn's own comments on their recorded legacy are similarly confined to sweeping overstatement in the short linking chapters that introduce the book's four sections. This is rather a shame. In his last book, *Lowside Of The Road*, a biography of Tom Waits, Hoskyns wrote so persuasively about Waits' music he successfully encouraged me to listen again to albums I had previously not much liked and wholly change my mind about them. As a long-time Zeppelin agnostic, often unmoved down the years by their annihilating roar, I would have welcomed the opportunity to be similarly enlightened, a full conversion shortly following.

Much that is revealed in these pages about Zeppelin's debauched antics will be familiar to many readers from Stephen Davis' *Hammer Of The Gods*. Davis' scurrilous version of events, based on the lurid recollections of an eventually embittered Cole, who had by then been unceremoniously discarded by Zep, has always been keenly contested by the band. But there is ample articulation here of the group's unfettered carnal indulgence, particularly Page's obsession with underage groupies, a massive collective appetite for narcotics,



Dark magic: the mighty Zep live during their second American tour, May 1969

and the unhinged behaviour of the violent, alcoholic John Bonham, whose increasingly monstrous demeanour, vividly documented, made him someone you'd throw yourself under a train to avoid.

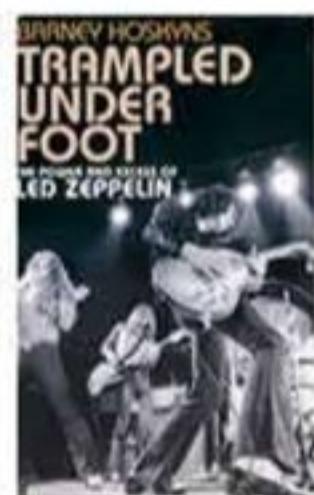
For Hoskyns, the Zeppelin saga is "a morality tale that starts with thrilling promise, climaxes with intoxicating splendour, and declines into pitiful addiction and violence", a story he tells via an artful orchestration of multiple voices, drawing on the usually vivid recollections of the band, former employees, friends, road crews, journalists who covered Zeppelin in their heady pomp and assorted eyewitnesses to their spectacular rise and final tawdry, unravelling world they created, with themselves as its gilded centre, gods of a kind, lackeys catering to their every whim, colossally pampered and indulged to the point where they seem to have lost touch with reality and each other. By the end, Bonham is dead, Page is a barely functioning heroin addict, John Paul Jones seems to have lost interest, Grant is a psychotic recluse, his fortune squandered on cocaine, and Plant is

grieving for his dead son, at odds with Page, and also what Zeppelin had become, which was nothing more in the present than woe and ruin, where once he had seen a true kind of glory.

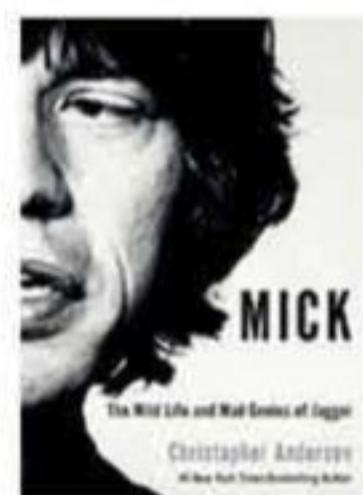
► Christian Andersen's **Mick: The Wild Life And Mad Genius Of Jagger**, by any standards of biographical writing an abysmal book, is more interested in who Jagger has shagged than the songs he has written, the music he has made. While LPs by the Stones as great as *Beggars Banquet*, *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile On Main Street* between them get probably less than a page of text, entire chapters are devoted to Jagger's pursuit and bedding of such lovelies as Angelina Jolie, Uma Thurman and Carla Bruni. Mick's serial philandering consumes the bulk of the book, in fact, with Andersen throwing into the mix homosexual flings with, we are asked to believe, Bowie, Clapton, Andy Warhol and Rudolph Nureyev. Whatever your opinion of Jagger, he deserves better than this.

► Peter Hook's **Unknown Pleasures: Inside Joy Division** is a refreshingly no-nonsense account of the band's brief career and tell us something about them before their history was re-shaped by the suicide of singer Ian Curtis. Hook's story-telling voice is generally gruff and often hilariously droll. There's a lot of guilt here, too, however, about Curtis and how the band, their management and record company could have done more to rescue him from himself. The current bitterness between Hook and Bernard Sumner is also foreshadowed, a rift opening between the two from almost the very beginning of Joy Division that over the years has only deepened.

Reviewed this month...



Trampled Underfoot: The Power And Excess Of Led Zeppelin
Barney Hoskyns
FABER
9/10



Mick: The Wild Life And Mad Genius Of Jagger
Christopher Andersen
THE ROBSON PRESS
4/10



Unknown Pleasures: Inside Joy Division
Peter Hook
SIMON & SCHUSTER
8/10

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD

Cohen: skipping
and jogging at 77

SETLIST

FIRST SET

- 1 Dance Me To The End Of Love
- 2 The Future
- 3 Bird On A Wire
- 4 Everybody Knows
- 5 Who By Fire
- 6 Darkness
- 7 Sisters Of Mercy
- 8 Amen
- 9 I Can't Forget
- 10 Come Healing
- 11 Waiting For The Miracle
- 12 In My Secret Life
- 13 Going Home
- 14 Anthem

SECOND SET

- 15 Tower Of Song
- 16 Suzanne
- 17 Night Comes On
- 18 Heart With No Companion
- 19 The Gypsy's Wife
- 20 The Partisan
- 21 Democracy
- 22 Coming Back To You
- 23 Alexandra Leaving
- 24 I'm Your Man
- 25 Hallelujah
- 26 Take This Waltz
- 27 So Long, Marianne
- 28 First We Take Manhattan
- 29 Famous Blue Raincoat
- 30 Save The Last Dance For Me



LEONARD COHEN

WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON, SEPTEMBER 8, 2012

"A lazy bastard living in a suit"? Hardly: the gentleman genius takes another epic, sprightly victory lap

AT FIRST, NO-ONE is sure whom to applaud. Several besuited, behatted figures slouch onto a barely illuminated Wembley stage, any one of whom could, from this distance and in this dusky light, be Leonard Cohen (or, come to that, Lord Lucan). The one who ultimately proves to be Leonard Cohen arrives last, and in the last way you'd imagine Leonard Cohen taking a stage, short of descending from a trapeze: he absolutely jogs to the mic. Cohen is a little less than a fortnight short of his 78th birthday: he'll leave the stage tonight three and a half hours closer to

this milestone, give or take the intermission. It's a performance of Springstonian proportions, 30 songs in all, reaching back over four and a half decades since the release of *Songs Of Leonard Cohen*. It is, at the risk of appearing ungrateful, over-generous. Cohen's songs, unlike those of most artists capable of filling arenas – this is the first of two nights at Wembley – demand to be appreciated, rather than merely enjoyed. This requires a certain amount of concentration by both performer and audience, and Cohen's momentum drifts somewhat in the second half of the first set, as he coaxes along songs from the current *Old Ideas*

album; so, judging by the drift to the bars, does the crowd's attention.

The peaks, however, are breathtaking. Such has been the acclaim visited upon Cohen's recent renaissance as a touring artist that it's vaguely tempting to play heretic, to suggest that all that separates Cohen from any other hoofer who cares more about paying bills than protecting their reputation – not an unreasonable arrangement of priorities – is a neat line in deadpan and a raffishly tilted titfer. But it's obvious within half a verse of opening fanfare "Dance Me To The End Of Love" that one should prepare to be astounded. His band



Cohen clearly adores his band, and rightly: Cohen should know better than anyone that these songs have never sounded so good (2009's *Live In London* album can be thought of as a pretty definitive Best Of). He cannot be accused of rushing this multinational dream band together: guitarist Mitch Watkins and bass player Roscoe Beck first played with Cohen on the Recent Songs tour in 1979. But it's the acoustic specialists who make these versions of these songs so special: Moldovan violinist Alexandru Bublitchi and Spanish multi-instrumentalist Javier Mas. Mas' sweet flamenco trills on "Everybody Knows" and the subtly rollicking bluegrass trundle they conjure for "Democracy" are emblematic of the difference between these renditions and their recorded equivalents. Cohen's idea in surrounding himself with lumbering synthesisers may have been to say something about the impotence of humanity, but the songs don't half sound better when it feels like they're on the same side as the singer.

The first set closes with "Anthem", after which Cohen thanks each of the band individually and effusively, followed by the sound technicians and the lighting riggers, and just at the point at which it seems he's about to thank everyone in the audience by name, he skips – literally, skips – into the shadows behind the curtains. The crowd returns to find Cohen behind a keyboard, preparing to unburden himself of "Tower Of Song" (a song which, among much else, confirms that Cohen would have made a heck of a journalist: it is impossible to think of a better question to ask Hank Williams than "How lonely does it get?"). He spots the disproportionate acclaim that attends his meticulous plinking through the solo for the affectionate teasing that it is, and nods his head. The line about his "golden voice" earns an ovation of its own. "Your generosity," he smiles, "is undiminished."

In the latter half of the second set, Cohen cedes the spotlight for two songs. The Webb Sisters take lead vocals on "Coming Back To You", and his long-serving collaborator (and third backing vocalist) Sharon Robinson does the same for "Alexandra Leaving". Cohen returns for "I'm Your Man", mildly play-acting every incarnation the song's bewildered narrator inhabits: boxer, doctor, driver, lover. Then it's "Hallelujah", reclaimed from the legion of preeners and dullards who have given the poor thing such a mauling over the years, and a delicious, delirious swirl through "Take This Waltz". The first encore, "So Long, Marianne" prompts the first full-scale singalong of an otherwise mercifully decorous night. "Aw, you sing so sweetly," says Cohen, and it doesn't appear to be his usual gently mocking schtick; it's a lovely moment, at which he appears as amazed by these extraordinary songs as anyone. The show is closed out with "First We Take Manhattan", the clap-along to the introduction silenced by his utterance of the opening line, "Famous Blue Raincoat", and a version of The Drifters' "Save The Last Dance For Me", delivered from beneath a backdrop of a Star of David which has had one of its two constituent triangles bent into a heart shape. He skips off again at the end, as well he might.

ANDREW MUELLER



Cedric Bixler-Zavala:
ATD-I's Latino punk Jagger

At The Drive-In

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON,
AUGUST 28, 2012

The reunited avant-punks achieve closure. More or less...

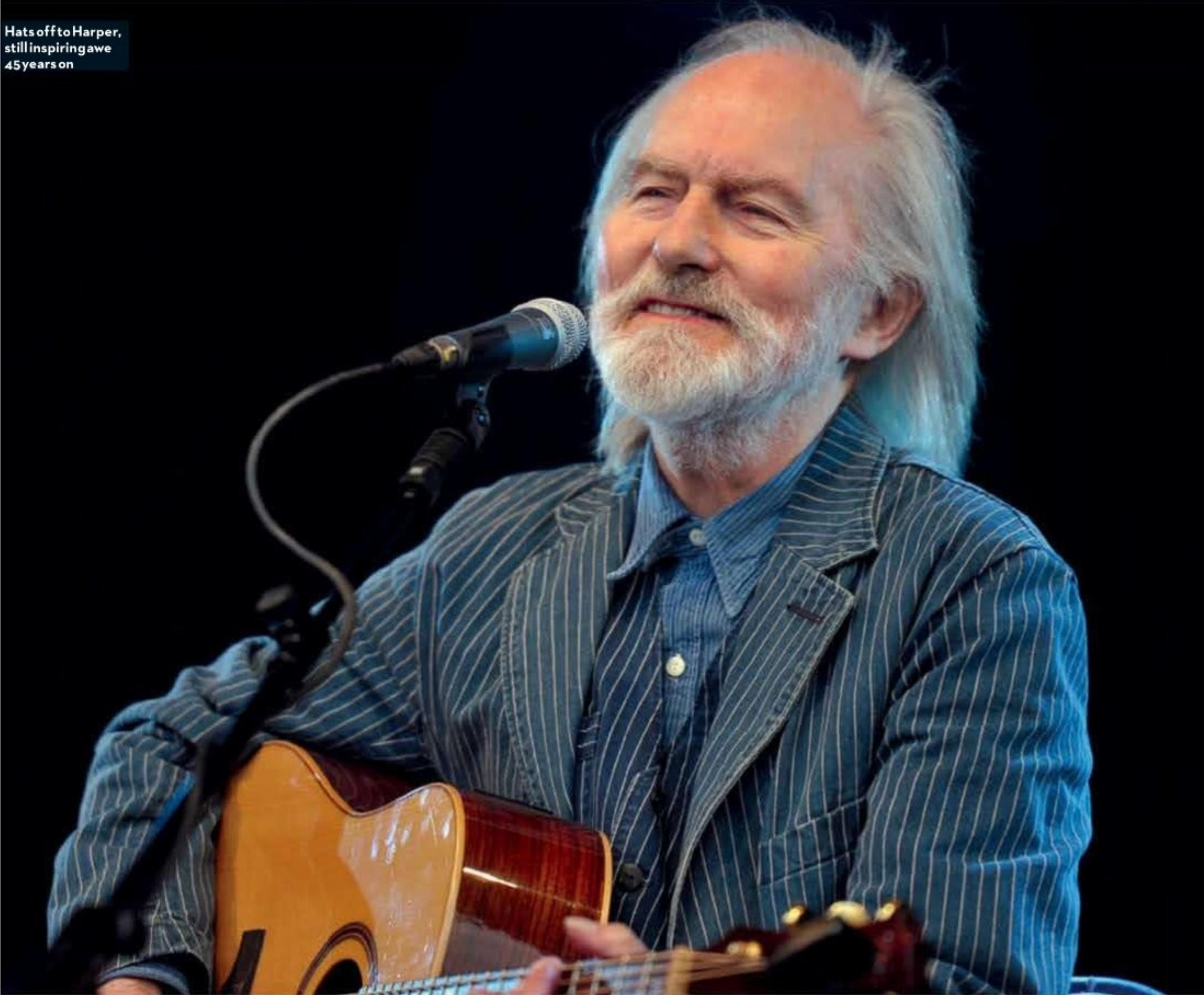
THE FIRST LIFE of El Paso, Texas' At The Drive-In ended in 2001, when the pioneering post-hardcore group – then on the cusp of mainstream adulation following 2000's *Relationship Of Command* – disintegrated on the road. The official reason given was "complete mental and physical exhaustion". What soon became clear, however, was that there was more than fatigue behind this rupture, vocalist Cedric Bixler-Zavala and guitarist Omar Rodriguez-López spinning off in punk-Floydian outfit The Mars Volta, as guitarist Jim Ward, bassist Paul Hinojos and drummer Tony Hajjar reconvened in the more ordinary post-hardcore group, Sparta.

In the years since, a legend has grown around ATD-I, for the intensity of their live shows – YouTube the quintet's *Jools Holland* performance for a taste – as well as the suspicion the group's potential was never quite realised. Bluntly, this is a reunion that has been facilitated by rather a lot of money. And if Bixler-Zavala can still summon up some of the firecracker energy of his youth – a Latino punk Jagger, springing cat-like off speaker stacks and twisting deftly across the stage – his wingman, Rodriguez-López, is quite clearly dialling it in. Stock-still, cap pulled down over his curls, he approaches the jagged, frenetic post-hardcore of "Arcarsenal" and "Pattern Against User" skilfully but without commitment, like a Grand Master tasked with hosting lunchtime chess club.

The songs, luckily, largely transcend such uneven delivery. "Enfilade" shows off ATD-I's skill for lacing hardcore dynamics with Latin flourish. Vaya-era tracks like "Metronome Arthritis" and "198d" suggest the group's synthy, progressive tendencies far predicated The Mars Volta. And finally, an acrobatic "One Armed Scissor" ("the song that introduced us to Steve Lamacq," says Bixler-Zavala) makes for a fittingly valedictory bow. "We consider this the last show of the Relationship Of Command tour," says a choked Jim Ward. "It's taken us 12 years to get here." For him, at least, closure was worth more than the cheque.

LOUIS PATTISON

Hats off to Harper,
still inspiring awe
45 years on



END OF THE ROAD

LARMER TREE GARDENS, DORSET, AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 2, 2012

The highlights of *Uncut*'s favourite festival – notably Roy Harper's masterful occupation of the crease

IF YOU HAPPENED to see Jonathan Wilson's set at End Of The Road, nestled deep in the heart of rural Dorset and one of the last festivals of the year, you might have spotted a white-haired, bearded figure periodically poking their head around the curtain at the back of the stage. Though you imagine he has too much self-belief to actually get nervous, you could see why Roy Harper might want to check out the crowd – as well as his new producer, Wilson – before starting his first major gig in almost a year.

The 'cult' legend isn't the only one making a return at End Of The Road: Grizzly Bear and Beach House showcase their new albums in headline slots; Grandaddy close the festival with a sublime rendition of

"He's Simple, He's Dumb, He's The Pilot"; and Van Dyke Parks weaves together originals, calypso covers and Mississippi riverboat songs with just a drummer, a bassist and his scything wit for support.

Other highlights of the weekend include Jeffrey Lewis, who intersperses his caustic songs with a rap about murdering mosquitos, and a sonnet skilfully rewriting Sonic Youth's "Dirty Boots"; Robyn Hitchcock, who performs his luminous Love tribute "The Wreck Of The Arthur Lee"; and Woods and Graham Coxon, who each bring some stunning, noisy guitar work-outs to the generally genteel lineup.

Yet Harper undoubtedly provides the most transcendent performance of this year's festival. Entering with a

jokey "Where am I?", he's on jovial, relaxed form. While a new album recorded with Wilson is on its way, there are no new songs, more's the pity, but a set of Harper's 'greatest hits' – stoned and profound classics like "Another Day", "Highway Blues" and "One Man Rock And Roll Band" – do just fine. It seems this singular eccentric is a perfect act for End Of The Road, as he flits effortlessly around the fluid borders of folk, rock, political protest and out-there comedy.

Harper's voice has become deeper and a little shakier in the past decade, but this afternoon it swoops and soars to peaks it previously conquered 40 years ago. "Twelve Hours Of Sunset", in particular, sees Harper's lithe voice transform into an awe-inspiring instrument, echoed

and cavernous. His declamations on "I Hate The White Man" still flicker with disgust, and the melismas on "Another Day" continue to smoulder with desire and regret, as if these late-'60s songs were written yesterday, the hurts and passions still fresh.

If the intense, poised pieces he plays are no laughing matter, his customary between-song yarns certainly are – this is a very different Harper to the one *Uncut* saw stopping mid-song to berate a noisy audience member 10 years ago. Topics spewing from the depths of his unwieldy, literate mind this hour include Norwegian mountains and "other women", anti-war riots and French and Belgian priests with a predilection for young hitchhikers.

As 1971's tender 13-minute epic, "Me And My Woman", cascades from the stage, it's heartwarming to see such a huge, hushed crowd in adoration of an artist who's essentially a 'cult', difficult concern. Harper, appreciative of the reverence, ends with one of his own favourites, "When An Old Cricketer Leaves The Crease". "I'll finish with this," he says, introducing the song, "and I'll make it... no, I won't make it short."

TOM PINNOCK



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029 2022 4488

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SATURDAY 01 BRIGHTON CENTRE MATINEE SHOW ADDED

0845 576 3000

MONDAY 08 BOURNEMOUTH B.I.C.

0845 148 1460

TUESDAY 04 PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS

0843 373 3000

THURSDAY 06 NOTTINGHAM CAPITAL FM ARENA

0844 8000 400

FRIDAY 07 LIVERPOOL ECHO ARENA

0844 483 8666

SATURDAY 08 NEWCASTLE METRO RADIO ARENA

0844 395 4000

MONDAY 10 GLASGOW SECC

0114 256 5856

TUESDAY 11 SHEFFIELD MOTORPOINT ARENA

0844 388 0000

THURSDAY 13 BIRMINGHAM LG ARENA

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FRI 28	NORWICH UEA	01603 508 050
SAT 29	BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000

OCTOBER

MON 01	LEAMINGTON SPA ASSEMBLY	0844 854 1358
TUE 02	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	0845 413 4444
THU 04	BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
FRI 05	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
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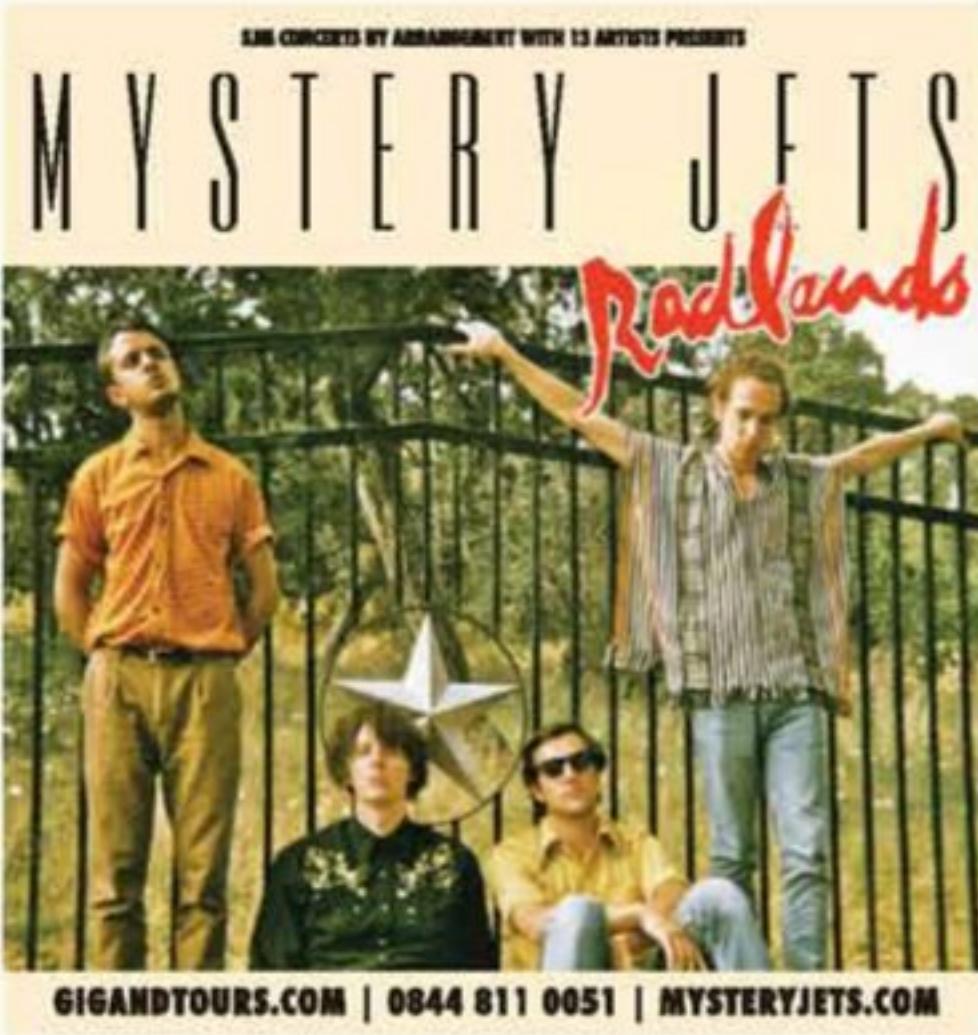
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Manchester Warehouse Project
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Friday 21st December
London O2 Academy Brixton
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SUN 04 / 0844 477 2000	OXFORD O2 ACADEMY
MON 05 / 01223 511 5111	CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION
WED 07 / 01273 673 311	BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2
THU 08 / 0844 477 2000	BOURNEMOUTH OLD FIRE STATION
FRI 09 / 01603 508 050	NORWICH WATERFRONT
SAT 10 / 0844 477 2000	LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY 2
MON 12 / 0113 243 6743	LEEDS MET UNIVERSITY
TUE 13 / 0844 499 9990	GLASGOW ORAN MOR
WED 14 / 0844 477 1000	LIVERPOOL KAZIMIER
FRI 16 / 0844 477 1000	PRESTON 53 DEGREES
SAT 17 / 0844 248 5117	MANCHESTER HMV RITZ
SUN 18 / 0114 221 2828	SHEFFIELD LEADHILL
MON 19 / 0844 248 5037	BIRMINGHAM HMV LIBRARY
THU 29 / 0844 847 9910	London ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL



Band of Horses

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HMV INSTITUTE
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FRI 16 NOVEMBER
GLASGOW
O2 ACADEMY
0844 499 9990

MON 19 NOVEMBER
MANCHESTER
ACADEMY
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TUE 20 NOVEMBER
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Fri 23 Nov Bournemouth O2 Academy 0844 477 2000
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Tue 27 Nov Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall 0844 871 7527
Wed 28 Nov Southend Cliff Pavilion 01702 351 135
Fri 30 Nov Birmingham Symphony Hall 0121 709 3333
Sat 01 Dec Manchester O2 Apollo 0844 477 2000
Sun 02 Dec Sheffield O2 Academy 0844 477 2000
Tue 04 Dec Leeds O2 Academy 0844 477 2000
Wed 05 Dec Nottingham Royal Concert Hall 0115 889 5555
Thu 06 Dec Norwich UEA 01603 508 050
Sat 08 Dec Newcastle City Hall 0191 277 9030
Sun 09 Dec Glasgow O2 Academy 0844 477 2000
Mon 10 Dec Liverpool Philharmonic Hall 0151 709 3789
Wed 12 Dec London HMV Forum 0844 347 2405
Thu 13 Dec London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 0844 477 2000
Fri 14 Dec London Indigo2 0844 477 2000

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FRI 16 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 0161 832 1111
SUN 18 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION 01223 511 511
MON 19 BIRMINGHAM HMV INSTITUTE 0844 248 5037
TUE 20 LONDON HMV FORUM 0844 847 2405

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Wed 17	Preston 53 Degrees	01772 893 000	Fri 02	Manchester HMV Ritz	0844 248 5117
Thu 18	Sheffield Leadmill	0114 221 2828	Sat 03	Stoke Sugarmill	0115 9454 593
Fri 19	Leeds Uni Stylus	0113 244 4600	Mon 05	York Duchess	08700 600 100
Sat 20	Oxford O2 Academy 2	0845 413 4444	Tue 06	Darlington The Hub	0844 477 1000
Thu 25	Brighton Concorde 2	01273 673 311	Wed 07	Birmingham HMV Institute	0844 248 5037
Fri 26	Reading Sub 89	0118 959 5395	Thu 08	Gloucester Guildhall	01452 503 050
Sat 27	Nottingham Rescue Rooms	0845 413 4444	Sat 10	London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire	0844 477 2000
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22 OXFORD NEW THEATRE
23 PORTSMOUTH GUILDFHALL
25 NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CENTRE
26 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
27 LONDON HMV HAMMERSMITH APOLLO
29 GUILDFORD G LIVE
30 MANCHESTER PALACE THEATRE

OCTOBER

02 SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
03 IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE
04 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
06 BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE
07 GLASGOW CYLDE AUDITORIUM
08 GATESHEAD SAGE
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SATURDAY 01 DECEMBER
GLASGOW SWG3
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SUNDAY 02 DECEMBER
MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2
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TUESDAY 04 DECEMBER
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SAT 10	LEEDS COCKPIT	0113 245 5570
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19	wakefield the hop	08444 771 000
20	manchester sound control	0871 220 0260
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23	london dingwalls	0844 871 8803
24	bristol louisiana	08444 771 000
25	cambridge portland arms	0871 220 0260
26	leeds brudenell social club	0113 245 5570
27	preston mad ferret	0871 220 0260

december

15	glasgow barrowland	0870 220 1116
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A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

rachel Sermanni

SEPTEMBER 2012
WED 26 LONDON, BUSH HALL
THU 27 BIRMINGHAM, GLUE CLUB

OCTOBER 2012
TUE 02 PORTRUSH, PLAYHOUSE
WED 03 BELFAST, VOODOO
FRI 05 DUBLIN, WHEELANS
TUE 09 BRISTOL, THE KLA
WED 10 CARDIFF, TEN FEET TALL
THU 11 SOWERBY, THE PUZZLE INN
FRI 12 GLASGOW, ARCHES
SAT 13 AViemore, CAIRNGORM PTARMIGAN
MON 15 EDINBURGH, THE PLEASANCE THEATRE

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DIAGRAM8
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Jay Malinowski • Rocky Votolato

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17th Oct // Norwich Waterfront
18th Oct // London Islington Academy
19th Oct // Brighton Concorde 2
20th Nov // Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms
21st Nov // Oxford Academy 2
22nd Nov // Manchester Academy 2
23rd Nov // Nottingham Rescue Rooms
24th Nov // Birmingham Ballroom
25th Nov // Glasgow Garage
26th Nov // Newcastle Northumbria Uni
27th Nov // Bristol Thekla
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Lee

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- GLASGOW, ORAN MOR 04
- LEEDS, THE COCKPIT 05
- LIVERPOOL, KAZIMIER 06
- SOUTHAMPTON, CELLARS 10
- 11 CARDIFF, CLWB FOR BACH*
- 12 WOLVERHAMPTON, SLADE ROOMS*
- 17 LONDON, ELECTRIC BALLROOM*
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- 19 BATH, KOMEDIA*
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Father John Misty

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- 27 Gateshead The Sage
- 28 Norwich Arts Centre
- 29 Bristol Thekla
- 30 Brighton Blind Tiger

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Darrel Higham • Slim Jim Phantom • Al Gare

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- 6TH BRISTOL, THEKLA
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- 7TH MANCHESTER, RUBY LOUNGE
[alt-tickets.co.uk](http://ALT-TICKETS.CO.UK)
- 8TH GLASGOW, KING TUTS
[ticketmaster.co.uk](http://TICKETMASTER.CO.UK)
- 9TH NEWCASTLE, THE CLUNY
[alt-tickets.co.uk](http://ALT-TICKETS.CO.UK)
- 15TH LONDON, DINGWALLS
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11 BRISTOL Fleece
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12 GLASGOW SWG3
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13 OXFORD The Bullingdon
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27 October Newcastle Cluny 2 The Tyneside Irish Festival www.tynesideirish.com

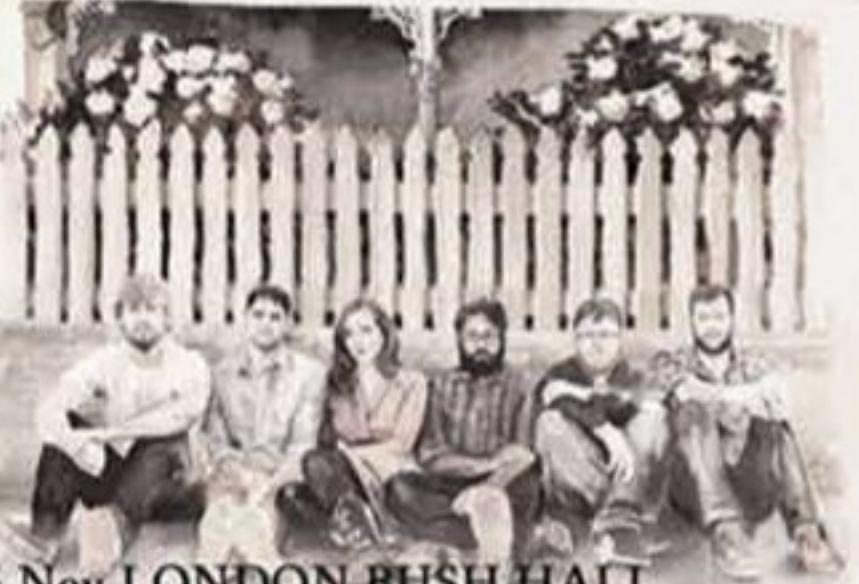
28 October Manchester Academy 3 www.alt-tickets.co.uk

29 October Southampton The Talking Heads www.joinerslive.co.uk

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New album 'Almighty Love' Out 1st October damiendempsey.com meanfiddler.com

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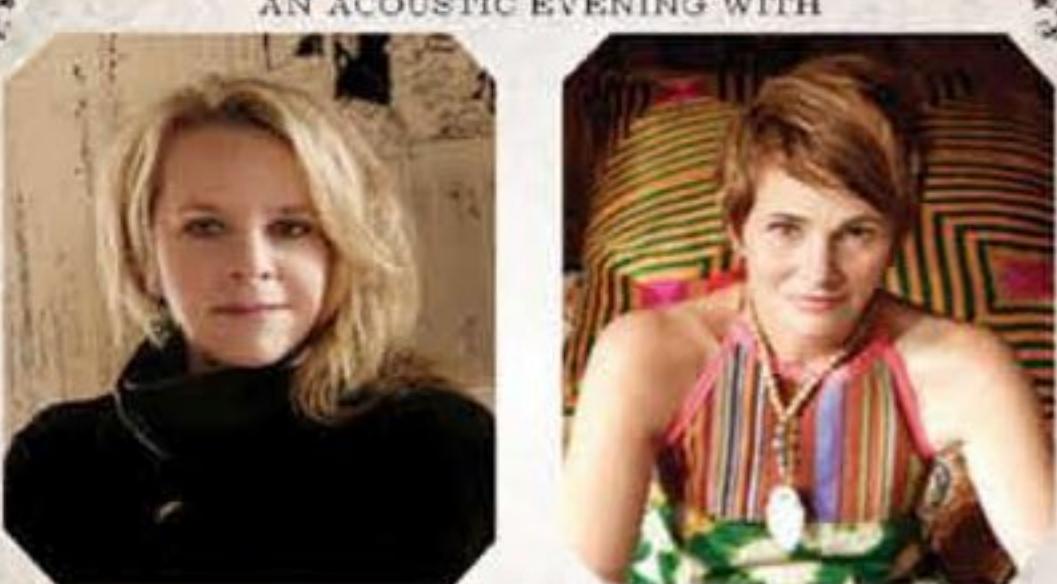
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SYMPHONY HALL 0121 345 0498 : thsh.co.uk
THE USHER HALL 08444 990 990 : giggituscotland.com
PHILHARMONIC HALL 0151 709 3789 : liverpoolphil.com
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WEDNESDAY 10 OCTOBER • LEEDS CITY VARIETIES 7pm / cityvarieties.co.uk

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IAN McNABB
plus special guests
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CAMBRIDGE

JUNCTION 2

MON 8 OCT

LONDON

O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

TUES 9 OCT

CARDIFF

GLEE CLUB

WED 10 OCT

SHEFFIELD

QUEENS SOCIAL CLUB

LIARS

+ THE HAXAN CLOAK

Wed 10 October
Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Thur 11 October
SW3, Glasgow
Sat 13 October
Norwich Arts Centre, Norwich
Sun 14 October
Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth
Mon 15 October
Junction, Cambridge
Tue 16 October
Scala, London
Thur 18 October
Rainbow Warehouse, Birmingham
Fri 19 October
Clwb Ifor Bach (SWN Festival)
Sat 20 October
The Bullingdon, Gathering festival
Sun 21 October
Sound Control, Manchester

Presented by arrangement with CAA

DIRTY PROJECTORS

+ Callers

Gorilla, Manchester

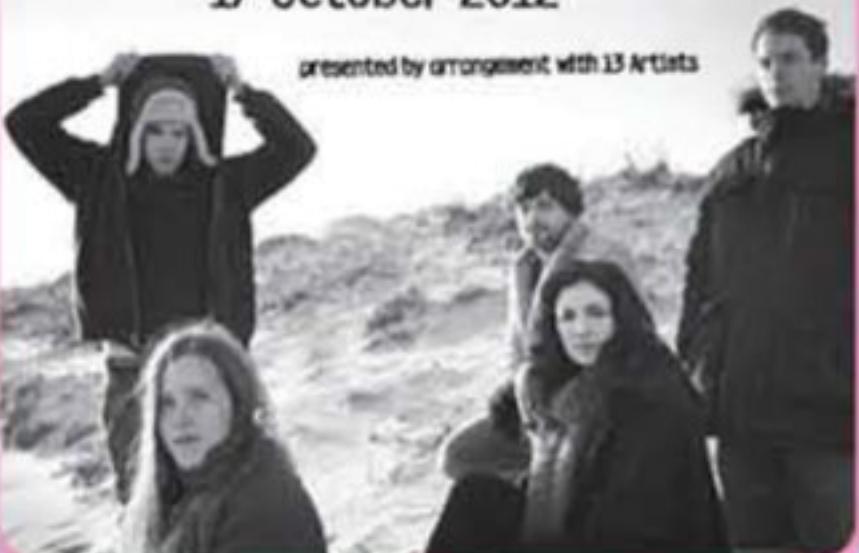
14 October 2012

The Arches, Glasgow

15 October 2012

The Roundhouse, London

17 October 2012



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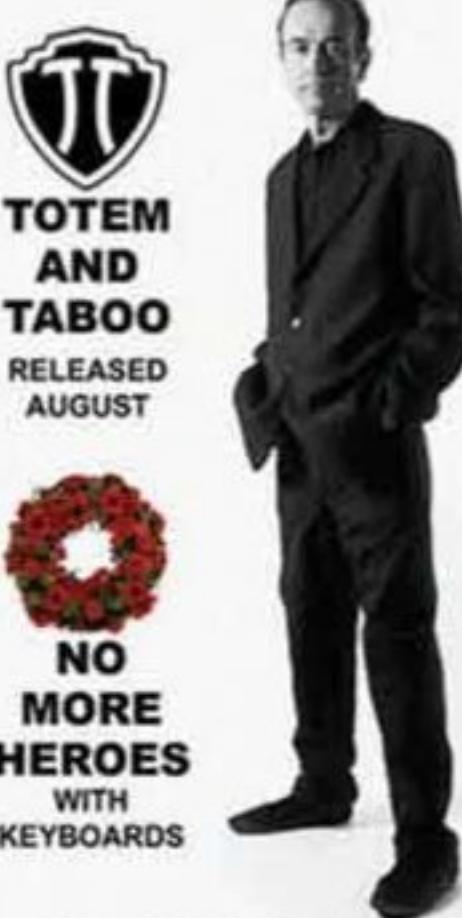
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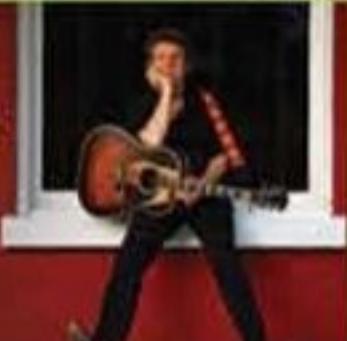
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Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

HAL DAVID

Legendary lyricist

1921-2012

IT HELPED TO have an extraordinary vehicle, our muse Dionne Warwick, to make the most difficult things seem easy," reflected Burt Bacharach on his classic songwriting partnership with lyricist Hal David. "Hal's real genius was that he could take these meaningful words and make them sound, and fit, so great on my musical notes."

After first meeting in 1957 at New York's Brill Building, where they were both staffers at Famous Music, Bacharach and David went on to write some of the most memorable and enduring pop hits of the post-war era. Their '60s work for Warwick alone resulted in "Don't Make Me Over", "Do You Know The Way To San Jose?", "Anyone Who Had A Heart" and "Walk On By", which has since been covered by everyone from Isaac Hayes to The Stranglers. The duo's 20-year relationship with Warwick yielded nearly 40 chart-making singles, while they also created hits for, among others, Aretha Franklin ("I Say A Little Prayer"), Sandie Shaw ("(There's) Always Something There To Remind Me"), the Carpenters ("Close To You") and BJ Thomas ("Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head"). The latter won Bacharach and David an Oscar for its use in 1969's *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*. They won another Academy Award for best score.

David, whose lyrics veered from plangent to wistful, crestfallen to euphoric, scored his first major success with Sammy Kaye's "The Four Winds And The Seven Seas" in 1949. His own

Oscar-winning wordsmith David at his peak in the '60s



aim, he once explained, was to impart "believability, simplicity and emotional impact" in his writing. Among David's other work with Bacharach were the movie themes to *Alfie* and *What's New, Pussycat?*, plus *Casino Royale's* "The Look Of Love", alongside compositions for Broadway. Though it was disagreements over 1973's film musical *Lost Horizon* that signalled a serious rift. "Hal and I didn't speak for 10 years

except through our lawyers," rued Bacharach later. "What we might have written in those 10 years we'll never know."

The pair eventually reunited in song in 1993, when they co-wrote "Sunny Weather Lover" for Dionne Warwick. In 2011, Bacharach and David became the first writing team to be awarded the Gershwin Prize For Popular Song by the Library of Congress.

GETTY IMAGES; JAMES MURCHISON

GEORGE GALLACHER

Poets frontman

1943-2012

GEORGE GALLACHER'S introduction to Andrew Loog Oldham was as bizarre as it was utterly unexpected. "It was a Sunday morning," he later recalled. "I was still in bed and my mother came in and said: 'George, were you expecting the manager of The Rolling Stones?'" The singer had caught Loog Oldham's eye when his band The Poets appeared in Scots music magazine *Beat News*, in 1964. Under Loog Oldham's tutelage, The Poets' chiming blend of R'n'B and freakbeat, wed to a dandyesque image of velvet jackets and ruffled shirts, breached the Top 40 in October '64 with "Now We're Thru".

But despite a fanatical following in their native Glasgow, it was to be their only success. By 1967 Gallacher had turned away from music and begun working as a turner at a pneumatic tools plant. He and the remaining Poets reunited briefly in December 2011.

KEITH GRANT

Chief engineer, Olympic Studios

1941-2012

KEITH GRANT, WHO helped shape recordings by The Beatles, Cream, Scott Walker, Dusty Springfield, The Troggs and many more, made his reputation as manager and chief engineer at Olympic Studios in London. The Beatles arrived in May 1967 to record "Baby, You're A Rich Man", with Grant working alongside George Martin and

finishing everything in a mere six hours. "I'm a terrible pusher on sessions," he offered. "The Beatles said this was the fastest record they'd ever made." In later years, Grant mixed myriad scores for films, including *The Madness Of King George* and *The English Patient*.

LOUISE CLARKE

Pan's People dancer

1949-2012

DANCE TROUPE PAN'S PEOPLE were a weekly fixture on *Top Of The Pops* from 1968 through to April '76, when their final appearance saw them perform to The Four Seasons' "Silver Star". Founder member Louise Clarke, who'd formed the outfit in 1966 with Flick Colby, Babs Lord, Ruth Pearson, Dee Dee Wilde and Andi Rutherford, had begun



Head Poet
George Gallacher
live in the '60s

SCOTT MCKENZIE

"San Francisco..." singer

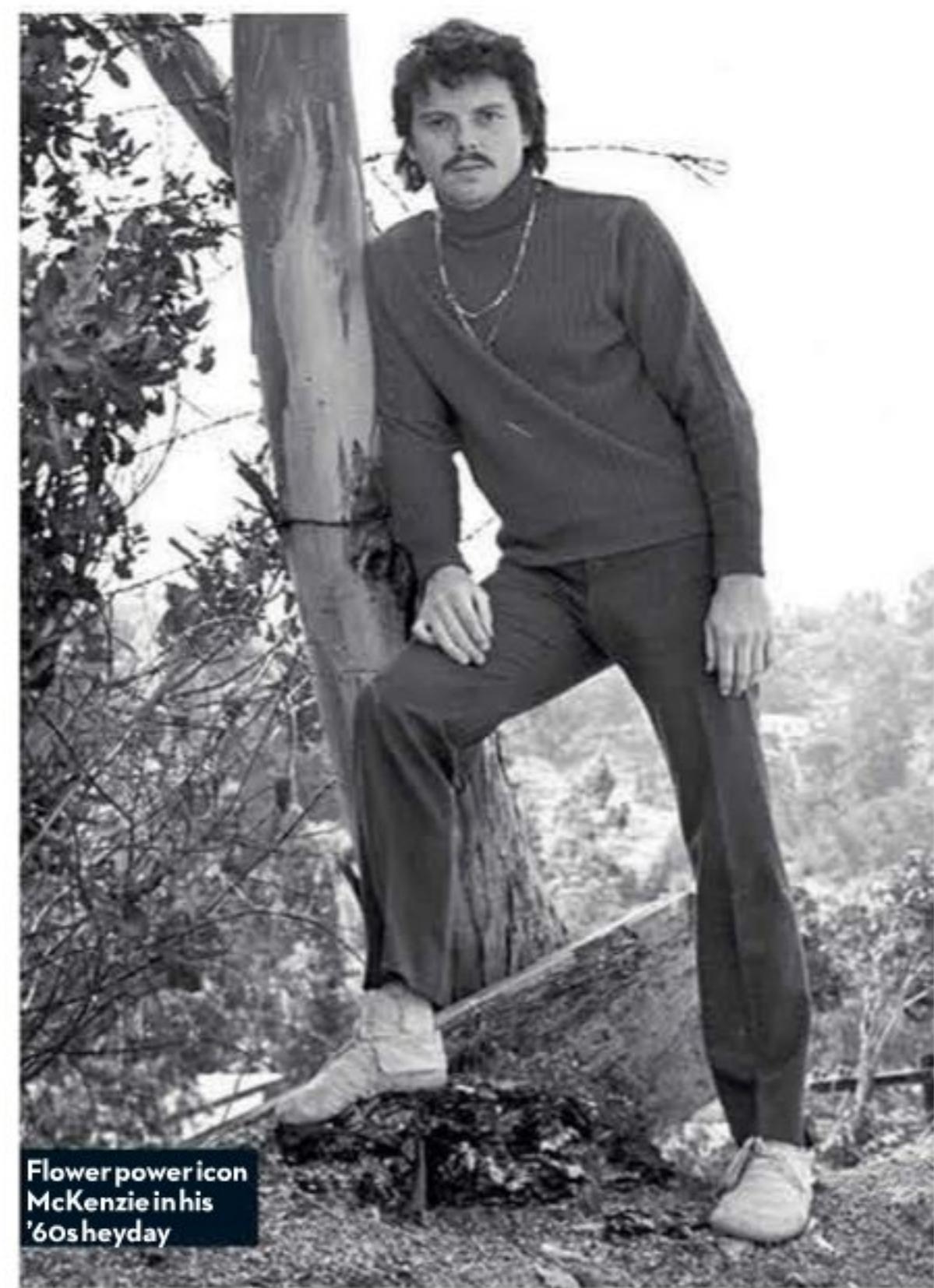
1939-2012

NO SONG CAPTURED the perfumed ideal of the '60s hippy movement quite like "San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)", a mammoth worldwide hit for Scott McKenzie in the Summer Of Love of 1967. Written and co-produced by The Mamas & The Papas' John Phillips, it served as a rallying call for the burgeoning counterculture in the US and went on to sell over seven million copies.

Florida-born McKenzie had known Phillips as a teenager in Virginia, where they decided to form a vocal quartet called The Abstracts, based on a mutual love of The Four Freshmen. Relocating to New York in 1959, they renamed themselves The Smoothies and began playing the traditional nightclub circuit. They cut two singles for Decca before McKenzie, Phillips and banjo player Dick Weissman hooked

up as folk trio The Journeymen, recording three albums and appearing on popular '60s TV show *Hootenanny*. When the band split in the wake of Beatlemania, Phillips invited McKenzie to join his new venture, The Mamas & The Papas. McKenzie declined, explaining later that "I was trying to see if I could do something by myself. And I didn't think I could take that much pressure."

It would be another two years before McKenzie followed Phillips to California, signing to Lou Adler's Ode label. In keeping with the love beads-and-patchouli vibe of his signature tune, the singer wore a garland of flowers during the studio session for "San Francisco", while a group of friends meditated at his feet. The song formed the centrepiece of debut album *The Voice Of Scott McKenzie*. Follow-up single "Like An Old Time Movie", however, barely scraped the Top 50. And after second LP *Stained Glass Morning* stalled in 1970, McKenzie withdrew from the music industry altogether. He only re-emerged in 1986, joining a new touring version of The Mamas & The Papas. In 1988 he co-wrote The Beach Boys' US No 1 hit "Kokomo", with Phillips, Mike Love and Terry Melcher.



Flower power icon
McKenzie in his
'60s heyday

her career at the London Palladium in the Cliff Richard pantomime, *Aladdin*. She also featured on BBC2's *The Beat Room*. Publicist Philip Day remembered Pan's People as "loyal to a fault and the very best at what they did".

BOB BIRCH

Elton John Band bassist

1956-2012

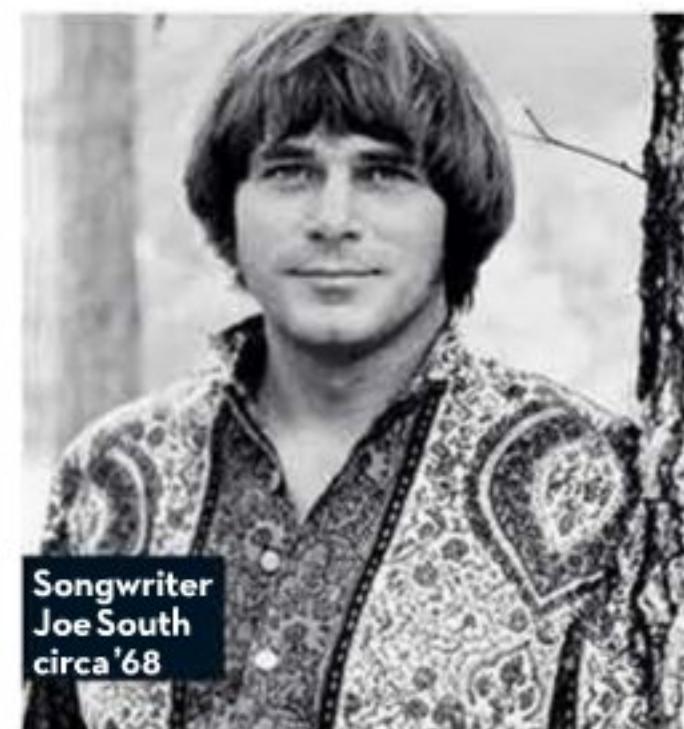
ROBERT WAYNE BIRCH began playing sax as a teenager in Detroit, but soon fell in love with the sound of local Motown bassist James Jamerson. A graduate of Wayne State University, Birch started out in LA with ill-starred '80s outfit Fortune, before joining José Feliciano's touring band. But his big break arrived in 1992, when he took up what became a 20-year residency as bass player for Elton John. "He was one of the greatest musicians I've ever worked with," said Elton. "And in all our years on the road he never played or sang a bad note."

JOE SOUTH

Songwriter, guitarist and singer

1940-2012

ATLANTA GUITARIST/songwriter Joe South first scored a minor novelty hit with 1958's "The Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor", but his career essentially began as a noted session player in the '60s, where his credits included



Songwriter
Joe South
circa '68

Aretha Franklin's "Chain Of Fools" and Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde*. His major breakthrough arrived in 1969 with "Games People Play", a soulful country-pop ballad that showcased a creamy baritone and knack for a winning melody. The song earned him two Grammys and has since been covered by James Taylor, Jerry Lee Lewis and Dolly Parton. His other great popular success was "(I Never Promised You) A Rose Garden", a huge global hit for country singer Lynn Anderson in 1971. South was also covered by Deep Purple ("Hush"), Elvis ("Walk A Mile In My Shoes") and Ry Cooder ("Down In The Boondocks").

CARL DAVIS

Soul producer

1934-2012

THE DISTINCTIVE SOUND of Chicago soul was due in no small part to producer Carl Davis. The defining moment of his early career

arrived in 1962, when he oversaw "Duke Of Earl" by Gene Chandler, who he'd previously recorded as singer of local doo-wop group, The Dukays. Later that year Davis took a job at Columbia offshoot Okeh, where he produced Major Lance's "The Monkey Time" and "Hey Little Girl". He also scored hits as architect of Jackie Wilson's "(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher & Higher" and The Chi-Lites' "Oh Girl".

RANKING TREVOR

Jamaican toasting innovator

1952-2012

DJ RANKING TREVOR, who has died in a motorcycle accident in Kingston, helped pioneer the use of toasting, the Jamaican form of rap that served as a precursor to hip-hop. He cut his first record aged just 15, before achieving success in the UK reggae charts in 1977 with "Cave Man Skank" and "Three Piece Chicken And Chips". Recording mostly at the fabled Channel One Studio, further singles "Pure & Clean" and "Rub A Dub Style" led to a deal with Virgin's reggae imprint Front Line, who issued Trevor's debut LP, *In Fine Style*, in 1978.

MAX BYGRAVES

Singer and entertainer

1922-2012

THE FIRST OF MAX Bygraves' 20 Royal Variety Show appearances

came in November 1950, when he began cementing a reputation as an all-round entertainer, combining music hall comedy and song. Within two years, he'd sung alongside Judy Garland in New York and had undergone several successful tours of the US. He's perhaps best remembered for his "I wanna tell you a story" catchphrase and *Sing Along With Max* albums, though it was his continuous stream of '50s hits – including "Meet Me On The Corner", "Tulips From Amsterdam" and "You Need Hands" – that shunted him into the multi-millionaire bracket.

ILHAN MIMAROGLU

Producer and composer

1926-2012

A ROCKEFELLER SCHOLARSHIP at Columbia University first brought Turkish electronic composer Ilhan Mimaroglu to New York in the '50s. As an early exponent of *musique concrète* and the explorative possibilities of the synthesiser, he studied under Paul Henry Lang and Edgard Varèse before taking a job with fellow countrymen Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegun at Atlantic in the mid-'60s. There he began producing Charles Mingus, working with the bassist-composer until shortly before his death in 1979. Mimaroglu also collaborated with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard and composed part of the score for Fellini's 1969 fantasia, *Satyricon*. ROB HUGHES

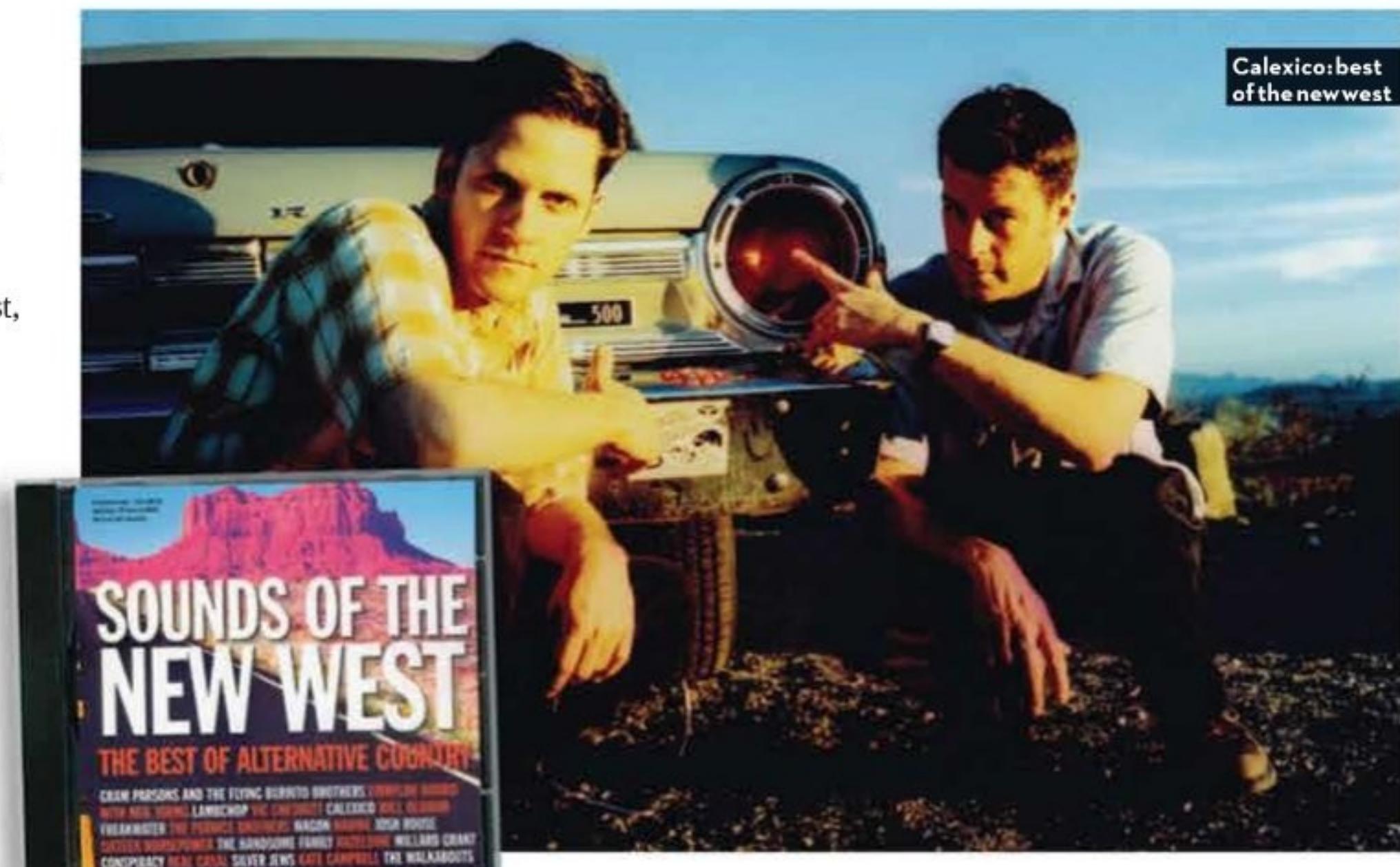
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LETTER OF THE MONTH

RICHER SOUNDS

I AM A long-time reader of *Uncut* and bought and enjoyed it even before you started giving away free CDs. To be honest, I wasn't expecting too much in the way of quality from the cover-mounts. I remember you did a couple that featured classic movie themes that I couldn't even bring myself to play and I basically wondered why you'd even bothered. Then came your *Sounds Of The New West* comp in September 1998 and what a revelation that was! That one CD introduced me to a whole new world of music that I quickly came to love and I've since bought every album by bands I first heard on that CD, including Lambchop, Will Oldham and Calexico (I'm playing their new album, *Algiers*, as I write, and it's a tremendous return to form). There have been some brilliant CDs since that have been devoted to single artists/bands like Neil Young, Dylan, Bowie, Springsteen, The Clash, the Stones, The Faces, Nick Cave and Johnny Cash. I've also loved the specialist comps like *Woke Up This Morning*, which was an outstanding collection of classic blues, and *Let The Good Times Roll*, which celebrated the music of New Orleans. The CDs I always preferred, though, were your *Unconditionally Guaranteed* series – even though they used to cost me a fortune as there were so many tracks by bands I'd never heard of that turned out to be so good they made me want to hear the albums they came from. There were some disappointments when I got the albums, but a lot of the time I was grateful for the introduction to music I'd have



Calexico: best of the new west

missed if it hadn't been for *Uncut*. Anyway, this is a long-winded way of saying big thanks for the recent run of cover CDs that have returned to the *Unconditionally Guaranteed* format, featuring the best music of the month. Without them, I doubt I'd ever have heard Ty Segall, Anaïs Mitchell, The Deep Dark Woods, Elephant Micah, Six Organs Of Admittance and tons more. In one way I'd be better off if I never read *Uncut* or listened to your CDs, but in more important ways I'd be a lot poorer.

Desmond Henry, via email

Apologies for putting a strain on your bank balance, Desmond. I just hope you haven't had to do anything drastic to make ends meet, like remortgaging your house or selling your relatives. – Allan

CAVE RAVE

What a great interview with Nick Cave in the last issue. I laughed out loud at his memory of meeting Brad Pitt on the Lollapalooza tour and the state he was in that seemed to frighten Brad off. "I wasn't in showroom condition!" Priceless! And what a great OST to the *Lawless* movie. Thanks for highlighting that. Ralph Stanley covering Captain Beefheart and The VU has to be heard to be believed. Sheer genius!

Ted Stevens, Stevenage, Herts

THE DEAD ZONE

Just to let you know a game I play upon receiving my monthly *Uncut* is to try to find the words "Grateful Dead" in the magazine, and each month I never get let down. You can imagine my pleasant surprise when I saw their name written on the cover [October issue]! It was a great article on the Dead, and long overdue. However just one small correction is needed. The article said that Tom Constanten left the

band after their first show of the year, in New Orleans on January 30, 1970. In fact, the band had played over a dozen shows already that year, culminating with a five-night stand in Honolulu right before the (in)famous New Orleans gig. Just a minor correction, but for us Deadheads, something we obsess about for sure! Anyway, if this letter gets printed, I won't have to look far for their name in the next issue!

Tim Horpinitch, Mahé, Seychelles

...Heartfelt congratulations on your Grateful Dead layman's guide: entertaining, erudite and overdue. I can honestly say I've seen every gig the Dead ever played on English soil – from the Hollywood Festival to Spring '90, as well as some in Paris and Amsterdam plus a few across the pond when I was a houseguest of one of their managers. I've never thought of myself as a Deadhead, though, because although I've always known them to be one of the greatest US bands and certainly

the greatest ever psychedelic one, I never went for the tie-dye uniform and obsessive taping. Some of those Deadheads were very spaced out. But while I congratulate you on the article, and concede that Jon Dale knows his Dead chronology and has an ear for a hot show, I have just one question to ask him: dude, what is your problem with *Infrared Roses*? Please listen again in the right circs (if your kids will let you).

Paul Bandey, Paris

MISSING THE MARK

I'm a relative newcomer to *Uncut* but have derived great enjoyment from my subscription; and have bought plenty of music on the basis of the reviews. Mostly on song they were, too. However, I have to take issue with the "guide to the best of Mark Knopfler". Either half of it was missing, or whoever compiled the guide has half missing, or has only listened to half of Knopfler's output. The last few albums have been just outstanding in depth,

concept, romance, playing, drama, production and whatever else makes up brilliant songwriting and execution. I accept there has to be a limit on what to include and a cut-off point, but *The Very Best Of Dire Straits?* And *Local Hero?* Fine music, no doubt, but please!! There again, I should have known something was going wrong when happening upon the comment that his music "now resembles" Van's. Ahem....

Owen Salmon, via email

THE EX FACTOR

It never ceases to amaze me how unknown British singer-songwriters resurface years after everybody thought they were dead. The latest case is Bill Fay. This does illustrate what a golden treasury of Brit pop lays dormant and Fay's song "Be Not So Fearful" is a marvellous example of an undiscovered classic song.

In the same spectrum as Fey is another hugely underrated British singer-songwriter who has quite a story to tell. John Howard produced

an excellent album entitled *Kid In A Big World* back in 1975 and was heralded as a star of the future. His career never really took off but he re-surfaced a number of years ago and is now producing fine music that combines pathos, beauty, intelligence and even glam. Indeed one of his EPs features a fine version of "Be Not So Fearful". I am sure one thing shared by Howard and Fay is their love of producing music that enthralled and intrigues and makes you ask the question, "Why are these talented people so overlooked when we have a society that celebrates the mundane and turns talentless clones from *X Factor* into global superstars, albeit for just a few months in our throwaway society?" The answer is that the likes of John Howard and Bill Fay are still producing their own brand of music 40 years after they started. I doubt the same will be said for today's *X Factor* wannabes in 2050.

Peter Steward, Norwich

UNCUT AND HALFCUT

I read with interest Andy Hemsley's letter [October issue] re: his drunken rant [September issue] that you printed and thought, 'Blimey, that sounds exactly like the sort of thing I would do.' I then read the follow-up letter and concur about his going to the boozer with *Uncut* and some 'phones and indulging in beer and new music – sounds like heaven: "Uncut and Halfcut". Even better would be if I had some sad muso like myself to argue with for hours on end. So if anyone is in DA12 when the next *Uncut* is due out and fancies a beer, find me on Facebook – I'm the miserable one with a recreation of Dylan's '66 "No Direction Home" photo at the now decrepit Aust ferry ramp (an undiscovered treat). Great mag – I genuinely get excited when it comes through the door and I'm 46.

Tim Masters, via email

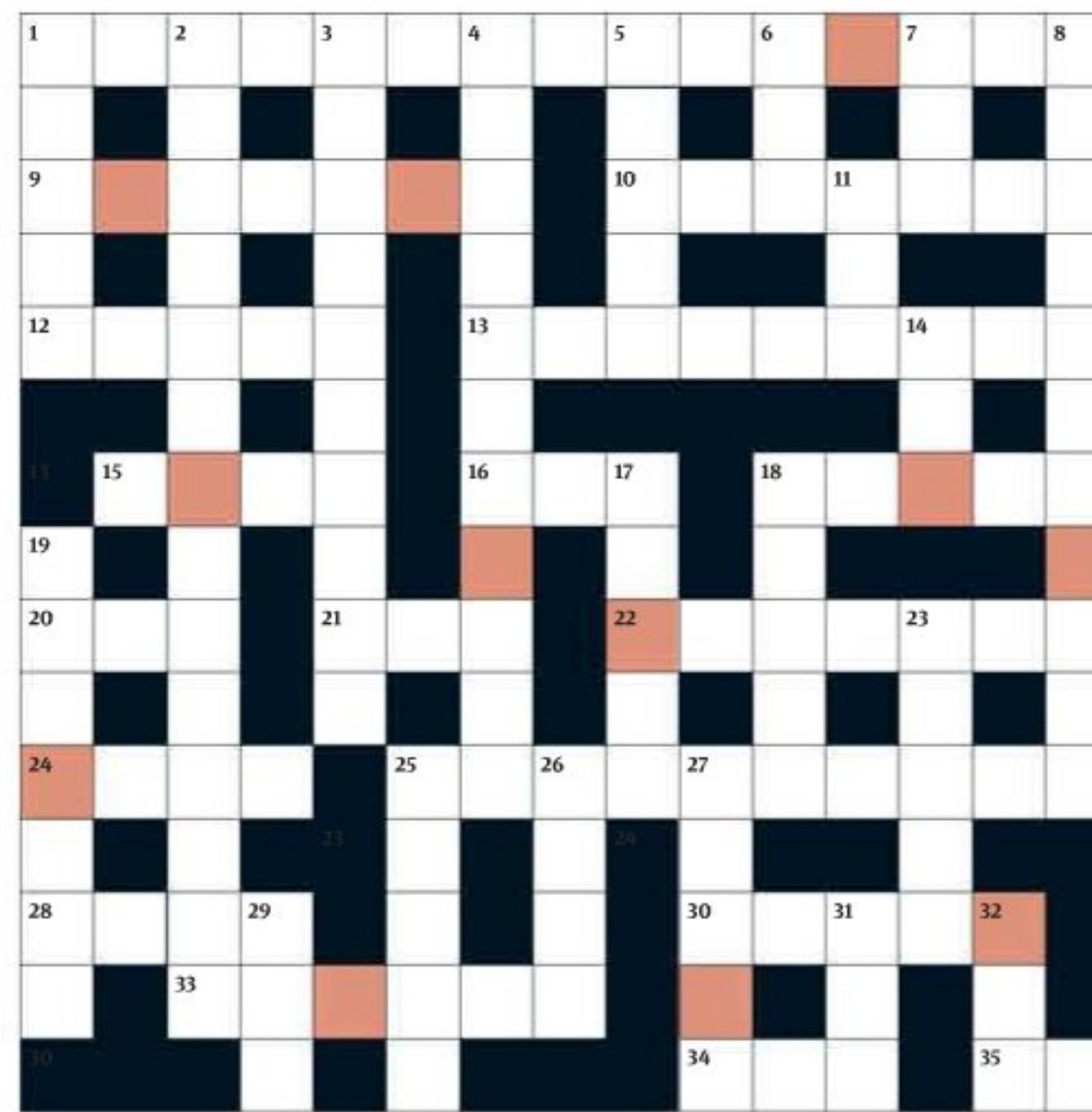
Readers, over to you. – Allan

WRONG TROUSERS

I know you magazine chaps love to be criticised, positively thrive on it, so felt it my duty to mention that you missed out the best part of the gag in your piece about Vivian Stanshall [October issue]. Once he and Keith Moon had finished "testing" the supposedly strong trousers by ripping them in half, a one-legged man, secretly hired by themselves, would hop into the shop and shout "Just what I'm looking for, I'll take a pair." I tried this prank myself, but was arrested and charged with "disturbing retail stock".

Tim Bick, via email

Disturbing retail stock? I'm sure you could have been transported for that once. – Allan



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by The Byrds. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* November 2012 Xword Comp, 9th floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU. The first correct entry picked at random will win a prize. Closing date: October 22, 2012. This competition is only open to European residents.

ACROSS

1 The thoughts of Ian Hunter and Mitt Romney (4-2-9)
 9+33A Never try to see a reworking of a Dire Straits performance (2-5-6)
 12+10A "The frantic pace, the constant chase to win the race turned my heart cold inside", 1968 (5-3-4)
 13+30A "I had to put up some kind of a fight", 1969 (5-4-5)
 15+19D "One more job oughta get it, one last shot 'fore we quit it, one for the road", 1976 (4-7)
 16+18A Chicago group whose hits include "Have You Seen Her" (3-5)
 20 "Misty Mountain ____" by Led Zep or "At The ____" by Danny & The Juniors (3)
 21 Leather ___, Swedish post-punk band or Flying ___, New Zealand indie label (3)
 22 Tom ___, guitarist with Rage Against The Machine and Audioslave (7)
 24 Bloc Party with an album or just a number (4)
 25 The Small Faces had to think about where to look (2-5-3)
 28 Barclay James Harvest's leader is into Nat King Cole especially (4)
 30 (See 13 across)
 33 (See 9 across)
 34+35A (See 1 down)

DOWN

1+34A+35A Album by John Cale and Brian Eno needs some turn-over (5-3-2)
 2 Cruel! Secret pins spread all over the

place to reveal name of US psychedelic group (8-6)

3 "My buddies and me are getting real well known", 1964 (1-3-6)
 4 Horror movie gets a sweet ending with Jesus And Mary Chain music (11)
 5 Sonic Youth's first drummer involved in a hundred songs (5)
 6 "The Thin ____" lay on the ground before the track "Another Brick In The Wall Part 1" (3)
 7 Time to finish off Queens Of The Stone Age album ____ *Vulgaris* (3)
 8+14D Bauhaus album - heavens above, it's a real turn-off (3-4-4-3)
 11 "I thought the only lonely place was on the moon", 1973 (3)
 14 (See 8 down)
 17 Tony ___, ever-present member of Black Sabbath (5)
 18 Sensational piece missing from ex-Moodists' Dave Graney's band The ____ Yellow Mist (5)
 19 (See 15 across)
 23 Feudal lord (somewhere in Belgium?) to complete Fairport Convention album ____ *And Lief* (5)
 25 Written by Barrett Strong, covered by numerous acts including The Beatles (5)
 26 Siouxsie & The Banshees get stuck into the caramel tart (4)
 27 The Kills make an album without any distortion in pitch (2-3)
 29 Astute inclusion of an early Beatle (3)
 31 The might of Queen (3)
 32 Formed by Klaus Dinger and Michael Rother after leaving Kraftwerk (3)

ANSWERS: TAKE 184

ACROSS

1+17D That's Why God Made The Radio, 9
 Chasing Cars, 10 Sun, 11 Elenore, 12+33A Night Of Fear, 14 DJM, 15+26D Jimmy Cliff, 17+27D The

Lost Tapes, 20 Ian, 24 Syd, 27 Tocsin, 29 Biafra, 30 Drive, 31+34A Marc Cohn, 32 Home.

DOWN
 1 Tucson, 2+23A Analog Man, 3 Spirit, 4+22A Higher Love, 5 Graveside, 6 Disco, 7+19D Amused To

HIDDEN ANSWER

"Tommy Gun"

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford

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MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Karl Wallinger

The World Party man's jumbo record collection: features "psychosexual problem" grooves and a Neil Young/Lindisfarne crossover



One of my earliest musical memories

Hey! Baby

Bruce Channel 1962

This is one of the '50s tunes that influenced The Beatles; it has a descending bassline and a harmonica, so there's a bit of a "Love Me Do" thing going on. It was one

of the records that was around when I was a small child of about four and my sisters, who were seven years and nine years older than me, would be dancing around the room to it.



A song that impressed me as a seven-year-old

Moody's Mood For Love

Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames

1964

This is from an early album and everything about it is great – the keyboard angle, the organ and the vocal. I was fascinated with Fame, a young organist from a Northern town whose siblings were miners. My brother was an arts student in London and once, when he came back to North Wales, this was one of the hip things he brought with him.



The first single I ever bought

Somebody Help Me

The Spencer Davis Group 1966

It was the first time I ever realised there was something as cool as a groove, plus the vocal was fantastic. Steve Winwood was, what – about 12 when he sang that? Well, he was 17, but he sounded like Ray Charles and it was all just very... cool. It was simple beat music and for me, the groove has always been important. I don't know why; it must be some psychosexual problem I've got.

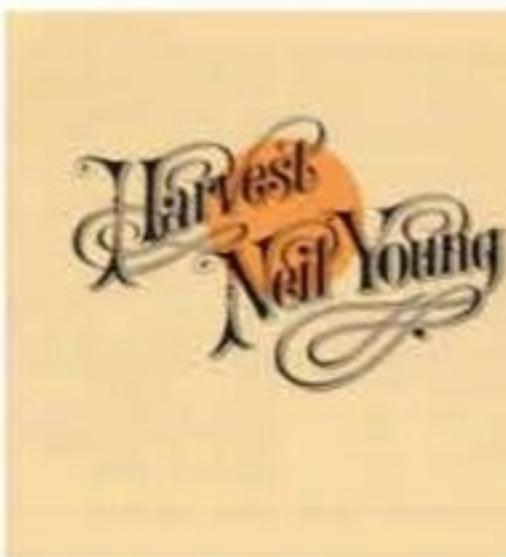


A stimulus to my pre-teen imagination

The Beatles

The Beatles 1968

I disagree with George Martin that they should have made a single LP; I thought it was great that they made this meandering double. I was 11 when it came out and very self-aware. The pull-out photographic montage that came with it showed them lying in baths with beards, with reprints of diplomatic invitations – a great piece of graphic art. I still have the record player I used to play this on.

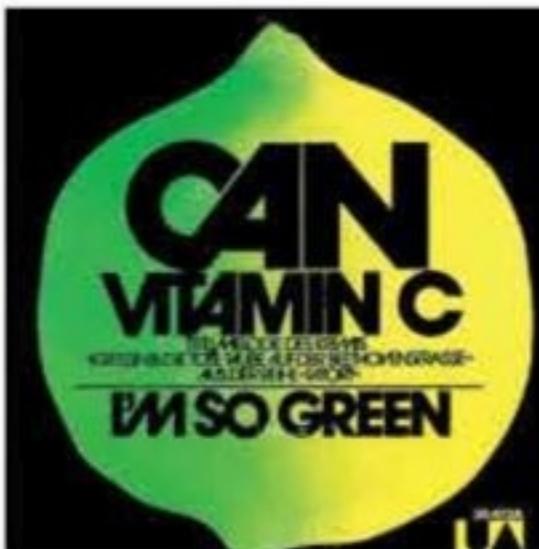


An album I love for its emotional simplicity

Harvest

Neil Young 1972

I bought this together with Lindisfarne's *Fog On The Tyne*, and although they were obviously completely different, they were similar in being essentially an acoustic guitar with a drumkit, bass and maybe a bit of piano. It's when the songs were getting to me – this has a way of saying a lot with very little. This and *After The Gold Rush* are Neil Young for me, not the *Arc-Weld* stuff.

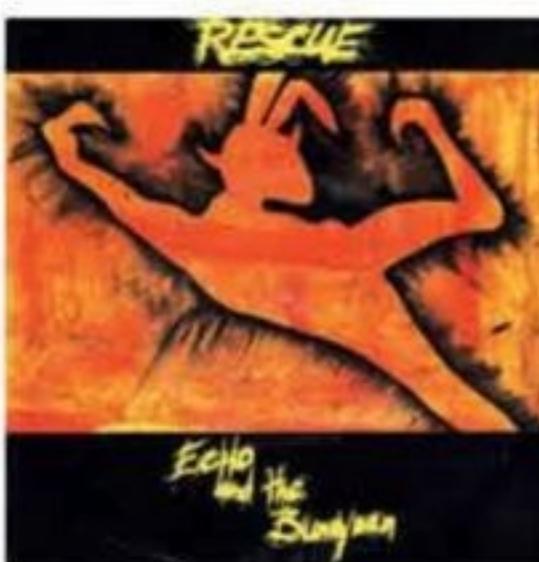


Music that tore up the rulebook

Vitamin C

Can 1972

I love the unfeasible looseness of this. They were a pretty interesting bunch and I'd started having fun in various different ways by this time, so... They were all amazing musicians and locked themselves away in a cinema or something to record *Ege Bamyasi*. They decided to break things down, and the music really appealed to me, along with the band's disregard for personal safety.

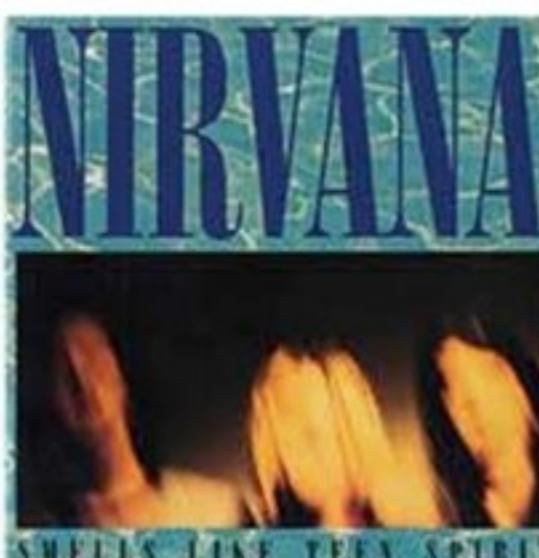


Part of the soundtrack to my party years

Rescue

Echo And The Bunnymen 1980

This band have so many great tunes, but "Rescue" introduced me to them. I remember it coming into the house where I was living in King's Cross. It had a great feel – there's Mac's big, fruity baritone and Pete de Freitas was a much-missed drummer; the idea of playing with brushes was very unusual then. It was the soundtrack to my "lost weekend" that went on for about five years.



A song that stunned me on first listen

Smells Like Teen Spirit

Nirvana 1991

This blew me away the first time I heard it, when I was flicking through the heavy-metal channel, for some reason. It was completely unfeasible in terms of chords and the vocal line had to fit on top of them in such a unique way, but the whole thing was amazing. Kurt Cobain was a great singer and a great writer and what happened was a tragedy. We really lost somebody there.

World Party play their first UK shows in a decade during October and November. *Arkeology*, a 5CD comp of unreleased tracks, is out now

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