

FREE CD! > 40-PAGE REVIEWS SECTION

"We've been through some things together/With trunks of memories still to come..."

UNCUT

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

NEIL YOUNG THE 2012 INTERVIEW

*You can't worry
about what people
think. I never do...*

AND

GRAHAM COXON
PHIL MANZANERA
PAUL HEATON
SUN KIL MOON
BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY
DAWES

STARTS
PAGE 63!

Featuring

Blur

Robert Plant

Roxy Music

Mazzy Star

The Gaslight
Anthem

and more...

WAYNE KRAMER ON MC5

'Detroit was
smoke, sirens
and gunfire'

PETER GABRIEL

'There's no
perfume
like success'

DIRTY PROJECTORS

Inside America's
most complicated
band

THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN

Postcard from China

PETER TOSH

Reggae's rebel spirit

PLUS

EDWYN COLLINS
ANIMAL COLLECTIVE
THE BEATLES
ANTONY HEGARTY

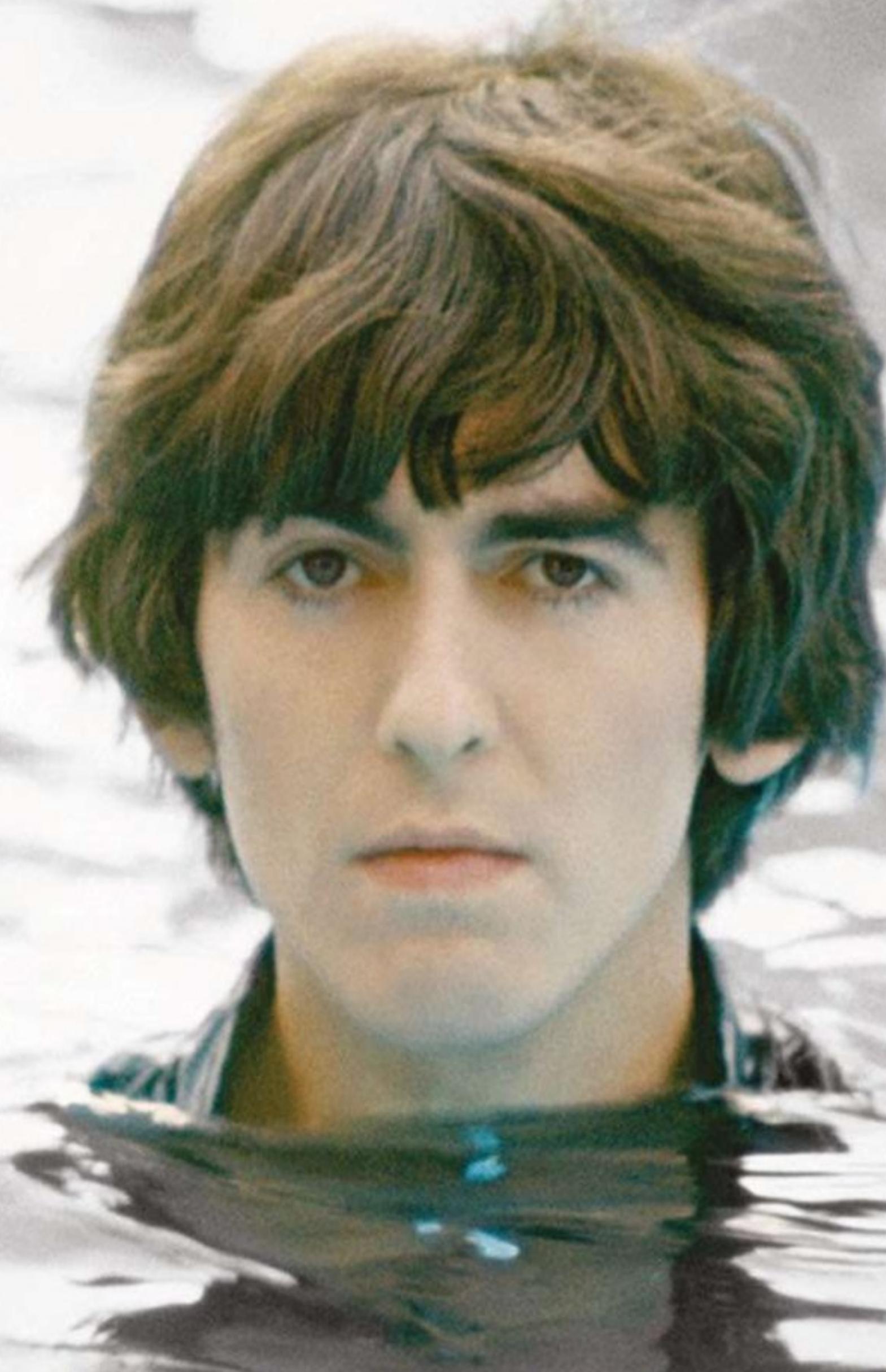
AUGUST 2012 | UK £4.80 | CAN \$13.99



UNCUT.CO.UK

GEORGE HARRISON

EARLY TAKES Volume 1



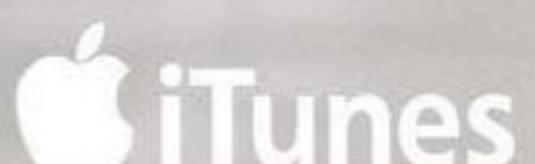
Daily Express

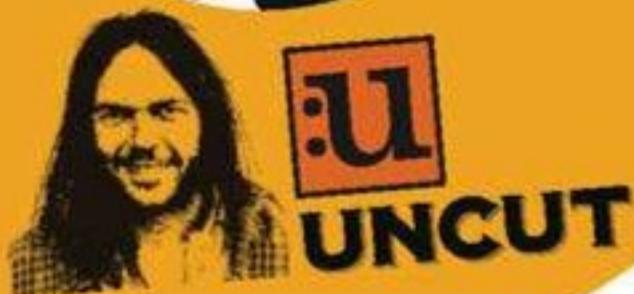
Independent

Rolling Stone

EARLY TAKES Volume 1 is the pivotal companion album to Martin Scorsese's stunning, critically-acclaimed documentary on the life of George Harrison 'Living in the Material World'

OUT NOW
CD/LP/Digital





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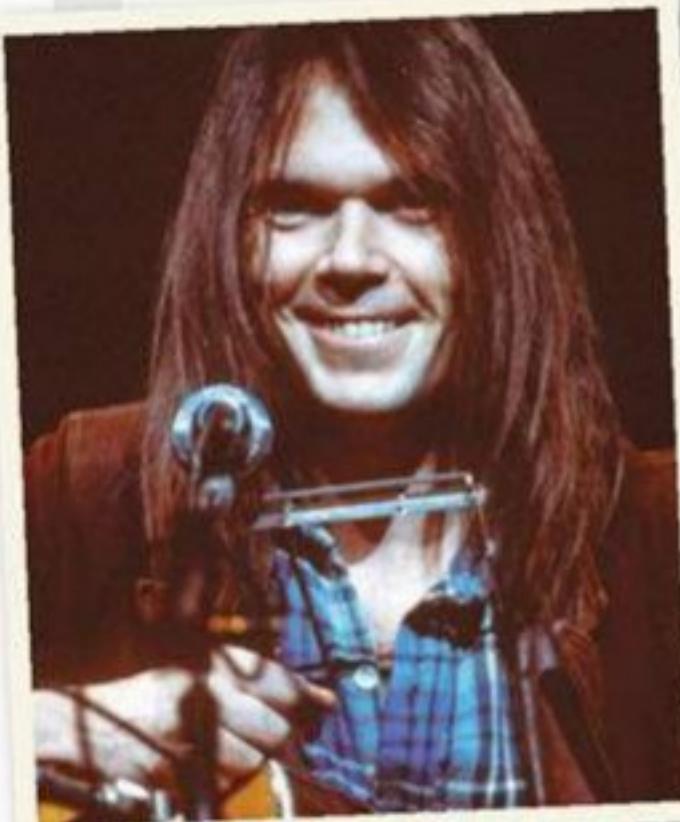
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Antony Hegarty

Are we rolling?



Neil Young, live and bedraggled at Hammersmith Odeon, March 28, 1976

WHEN NEIL YOUNG brings Crazy Horse to London in 1976, I'm four rows from the front of the stage at Hammersmith Odeon. It's late March, a Sunday night. I still have the tickets, somewhere, probably curled at the edges and yellow with age by now, a bit like most of us who were there at the time.

"It seems like I just got here from somewhere else," is the first thing Neil says, appearing unannounced on stage, standing in a spotlight blinking, shielding his eyes with a hand, like someone looking into the far distance, not sure what might be out there. He looks bedraggled, like he's spent the night in a ditch, dressed in a torn and clearly battered old suede jacket, a shirt he might have been wearing for a week and patched up jeans. Crows for all I know are nesting in his hair. He sits down behind a cluster of mics, as if he's giving evidence against the Mob at a congressional hearing, picks up a guitar and falteringly plays "Tell Me Why". This is followed by a monologue, during which he affects to believe he's in Germany. It's funny at first, then oddly disconcerting, although you're inclined to suspect his disorientation is a clever impersonation of someone too whacked out to know where they are. If he's truly this barbecued, it's a wonder he's conscious.

Anyway, his aw-shucks haplessness continues as he grapples with a banjo and a harmonica rack into which he fits a harmonica. There's a horrible noise when he blows into it. "Put it in upside down," he drawls somewhat distractedly. "Don't do that every night," he adds, although you suspect he probably does as part of a performance

whose haphazardness is possibly a carefully crafted illusion. He then plays a version of "Mellow My Mind" from *Tonight's The Night* whose rustic twang makes it sound more like "For The Turnstiles" from *On The Beach*. Three new songs quickly follow – "Too Far Gone", which we won't hear again until he includes it on 1989's *Freedom*, and "Day And Night We Walk These Aisles" and "Don't Say You Win, Don't Say You Lose", which nearly 40 years on remain unreleased. He finishes this opening set with "Heart Of Gold" and promises to return after a short break with Crazy Horse, "to keep this story moving".

Then, here they are: Neil and Crazy Horse. It's been seven years since *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* introduced us to the raw elemental noise they make together, a long wait to see them live at last, during which time they've lost original guitarist Danny Whitten to drugs and replaced him with the intimidating Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro, who's on stage now slugging it out with Neil on a malarial "Down By The River", which is full of swampy dread and festering malevolence. It sounds unbelievable. Elsewhere there are epic versions of "Southern Man" and "Cortez The Killer", the gloriously sloppy gospel hoe-down of "Let It Shine", from the Stills-Young album, *Long May You Run*, and ferociously dispatched takes on "Drive Back" and "Cinnamon Girl".

Best of all is something no-one's heard before, which Neil, deadpan, introduces as "another laidback song" and turns out to be one of the first ever performances of "Like A Hurricane". All night, people around me have been wondering aloud about what a huge industrial fan is doing on stage. We find out now, when it whirs noisily to life and what feels like a gale-force wind nearly blows the band off their feet, Neil's hair streaming behind him as he hunches into it, like someone walking home through a blizzard. The noise Crazy Horse are making behind him is the one, basically, they will go on making, on and off, for the next four decades, up to and including the new *Americana*, a great reunion they and Neil tell us all about in this month's terrific cover story by Jaan Uhelszki that starts on page 38. Enjoy the issue and if you want to get in touch, email me at allan_jones@ipcmedia.com

INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring ANIMAL COLLECTIVE | DAWES | EDWYN COLLINS





FAB SHOTS!

The Beatles, Studio Two control room, Abbey Road, Feb 25, 1964: (l-r) McCartney (back to camera), Lennon, George Martin, Harrison, Starr, and music publisher Dick James - road manager/lifelong associate Neil Aspinall is just out of shot

A hard day's work

"You can't do that!"... Unseen BEATLES photos included in a new book on Abbey Road Studios

FEBRUARY 25, 1964. Outside the walls of Abbey Road Studios, the atmosphere surrounding John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr is an unimaginable cocktail of feral pop fandom, awakened sexuality and loud screaming. It is so unprecedented, it has prompted the coining of a new word: "Beatlemania".

Inside Studio Two, however, a studious discipline prevails, as at one of their regular 10am-1pm sessions, The Beatles work on recording "You Can't Do That", the B-side to their forthcoming single "Can't Buy Me Love".

February has been a hectic month for the band. On the 7th, they touched down at New York's John F Kennedy Airport to be greeted by 3,000 screaming fans. On the 9th, they entered the lives of over 70 million further Americans with their first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, a feat they repeated with their second appearance on the 16th. In between the televised shows, they played concerts at Washington Coliseum (to around 8,000 people) and New York's Carnegie Hall (2,000 people).

Beatlemania tacitly finds its way into these recording sessions, too. In just a week's time, the band will begin their careers as motion picture actors in their debut feature film, *A Hard Day's Night* – a gently surreal and picaresque comedy that lightly fictionalises the boys' lives. What is required of them in the meantime is the completion of several songs for inclusion in the film and on the subsequent *A Hard Day's Night* album – among them the tender Lennon-McCartney ballads "And I Love Her" (which is tried out in an early version today) and the great "If I Fell".

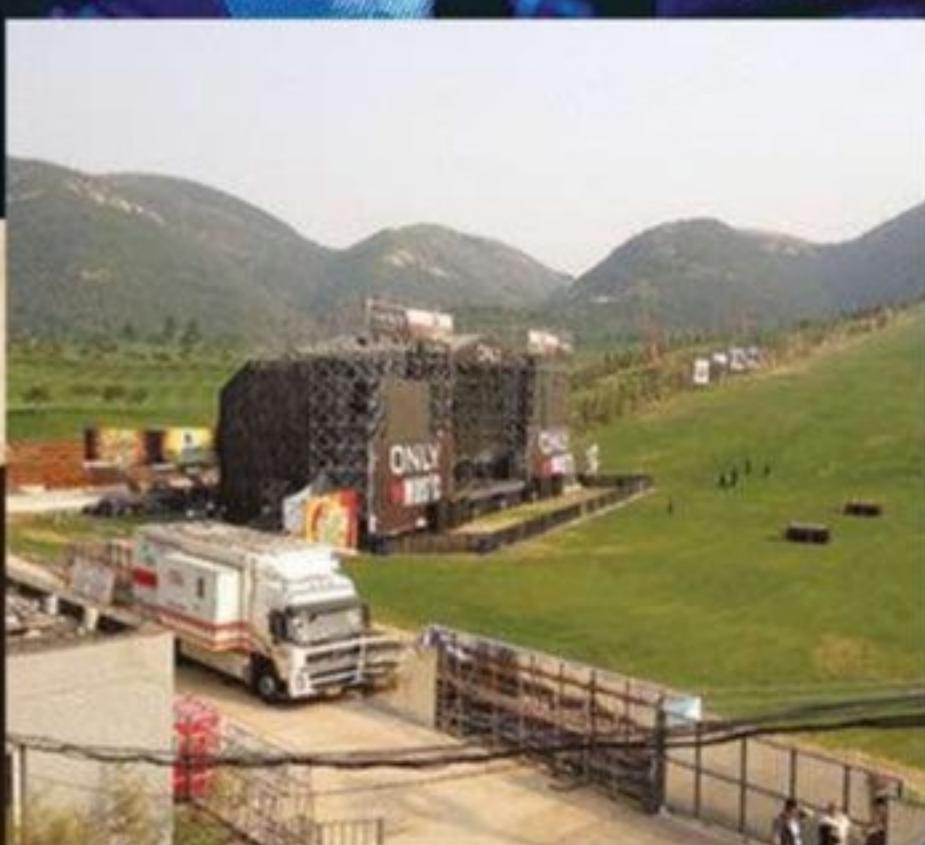
Several thousand miles away, the diplomatic stalemate that will become known as the Cuban Missile Crisis is building in intensity. Later tonight, Muhammad Ali will beat Sonny Liston to become Heavyweight Champion Of The World. Today is also George Harrison's 21st birthday. But inside Studio Two, it's The Beatles' songwriting that's truly coming of age.

JOHN ROBINSON

These pictures appear in Abbey Road – The Best Studio In The World, published by Bloomsbury on July 19, price £50



C/wise from topleft: Jim and William Reid go sightseeing; the Mary Chain onstage, with our man Phil King, centre; the stage at the China Music Valley Festival; a homemade JAMC T-shirt; Chinese fans' banner - note the band caricatures...



Far East And Out

Our man in THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN reports on the band's first ever trip to China. Stormy...

THEY WERE PLAYING NEIL YOUNG in the lobby of the Sheraton Beijing Dongcheng Hotel as we arrived after our 10-hour flight from Heathrow. It was like being home from home – I could almost have been in the *Uncut* office, where I'd been working as a picture researcher only a few days before. Also, when we walked out that evening to the square opposite the hotel, people were synchronised dancing to a Chinese version of Linda Ronstadt's take on the Buddy Holly song, "It's So Easy" (again, like the *Uncut* office – Ed).

The Jesus And Mary Chain were in town to play a show at the China Music Valley Festival, a three-day event at a ski resort a couple of hours' drive outside Beijing. The first day was mainly DJ sets, then on the Saturday the Mary Chain were headlining, supported by Glasvegas, White Lies, School Of Seven Bells and a Chinese band who sounded rather like Coldplay. Meanwhile, Joss Stone was headlining on the Sunday, with Pixie Lott and Friendly Fires supporting.

Bearded promotor Al Di, who met us at the airport wearing his Sonic Youth *EVOL* T-shirt, told us that groups like The Jesus And Mary Chain (and Lush, who I previously played with) were known in China, as fans had listened to

them on counterfeit recordings of their work. I was even told by one person that the 4AD label was popular because their unsold product had been seen sent out to China to be juked. Discerning Chinese artists had gone through the rubbish and been attracted to Lush albums and other 4AD releases by their distinctive sleeves. A better fate than copies of *Rudebox*

We could see lightning in the sky – a tree behind the stage was struck, resulting in a forest fire...

by Robbie Williams, which EMI sent out to China to be crushed, and which were used to resurface Chinese roads.

There had been talk of earthing problems at previous shows in China, so we were more than a little nervous as we started our performance during a thunderstorm on the Saturday night. We could see lightning in the sky up behind the

hills and heard afterwards that a tree in a forest behind the stage had been struck, resulting in a forest fire. We certainly didn't need a wind machine to blow around the stage smoke that we used and the rain that was lashing down on our equipment. Afterwards, Jim Reid said that his microphone stand was basically a lightning conductor.

Only the bravest and most loyal of fans stayed through the downpour. There were a few thousand huddled together down the front under their rain ponchos and umbrellas, cheering appreciatively and singing along. Some of them had come from as far away as Shanghai, a coach journey of over 800 miles, we had been told. Some fans had made a red banner with caricatures of The Jesus And Mary Chain on it which said 'I Love Rock 'N' Roll. I Hate Rock 'N' Roll. JAMC FANS', and backstage we signed a cute homemade T-shirt with drawings of Jim and William on it. I was even given a banner that said 'To Miki, Emma, Phil & Chris, we miss LUSH so.'

In the end, we had to abandon the stage a few songs earlier than expected as the weather was getting a little too wild for comfort, and were escorted from the stage by officials in black suits. The Jesus And Mary Chain's setlist had to be sent to the Chinese authorities to be given the once over – but nothing ended up being censored – not even "Teenage Lust". Unlike Public Enemy, who had to change their name to PE when they played the 2007 Beijing Pop Festival. The only censorship we had noticed in the rarefied confines of the Sheraton Hotel was that we couldn't get Hotmail or Twitter in the country.

At least we got to play "Happy When It Rains" to the sodden crowd. "Thanks a lot for staying," Jim told them. "And fuck you, those who left."

PHIL KING



FIRST LISTEN

'Four dudes crammed in a room with lots of volume!'

Merriweather Post Pavilion was Uncut's **Album Of The Year** in 2009. Now, **ANIMAL COLLECTIVE** unveil **Centipede Hz**. Will tuned-in aliens approve?

IT'S BEEN A little over three years since *Merriweather Post Pavilion* made Animal Collective into the most unlikely of breakout bands, this oddball group of Baltimore freak-folkies elevated to festival headliner status by the heady, electro-pastoral psych of songs like "My Girls" and "Summertime Clothes". In the interim, they went back to ground with 2010's lurid, goo-splattered "visual album" *ODDSAC*. But their return in September with their ninth LP proper, *Centipede Hz*, promises yet another mutation from this most reliably protean of groups.

Merriweather... featured a slimmed-down version of the band, with founder member Josh 'Deakin' Dibb on hiatus, and was largely written remotely, with the band scattered across the globe, communicating demos and song ideas over email. *Centipede Hz*, however, found the four returning to a more traditional creative process. Written in an intensive three months of sessions in a practice room in their native Baltimore, the likes of "Today's Supernatural" and

"Applesauce" have a bristly, feral energy that imagines a more structured, song-focused take on earlier albums like 2003's *Here Comes The Indian*.

"Being the four of us again, and the writing and recording process being so live, made it feel closer to older records than to *Merriweather*. But it didn't feel like a retread," says the band's Brian Weitz, aka Geologist. "When you write by file sharing, or write with more electronic instruments, a lot is done in headphones, which pushes you into a more cerebral, mellow headspace. But when you have four dudes crammed in a room with lots of volume, the energy comes from a more visceral place."

One constant from *Merriweather* is engineer Ben Allen, who co-produced the album at Sonic Ranch Studios in Texas in January and February. Elsewhere, though, Animal Collective are, perhaps familiarly, in a state of flux. Noah Lennox, aka Panda Bear, returns to sit-down drums for the first time since 2007's *Strawberry Jam*, while Deakin performs his first ever lead vocal on the song "Wide

Eyed". Dave Scher of Beachwood Sparks contributed lap steel and melodica to several tracks, while the recording is dotted with fuzzed audio collages of vintage TV and radio ads – an idea inspired by the thought of old radio transmissions reaching the ears of aliens. "When a radio wave goes to space it travels for a long time without interruption. Having had a radio show, my voice is out there, travelling for a period long beyond when I'm gone from this planet. I like that idea."

It's a little early to say what effect *Centipede Hz* will have on extraterrestrial life. Animal Collective, though, also have some more earthbound ambitions in mind. "Some of us did a DJ set in Belfast a few years ago where we played lots of rock and psych stuff and kept people amped for the whole night. We talked about trying to make the record feel like that DJ night. Really sweaty and energetic... that's what we're going for."

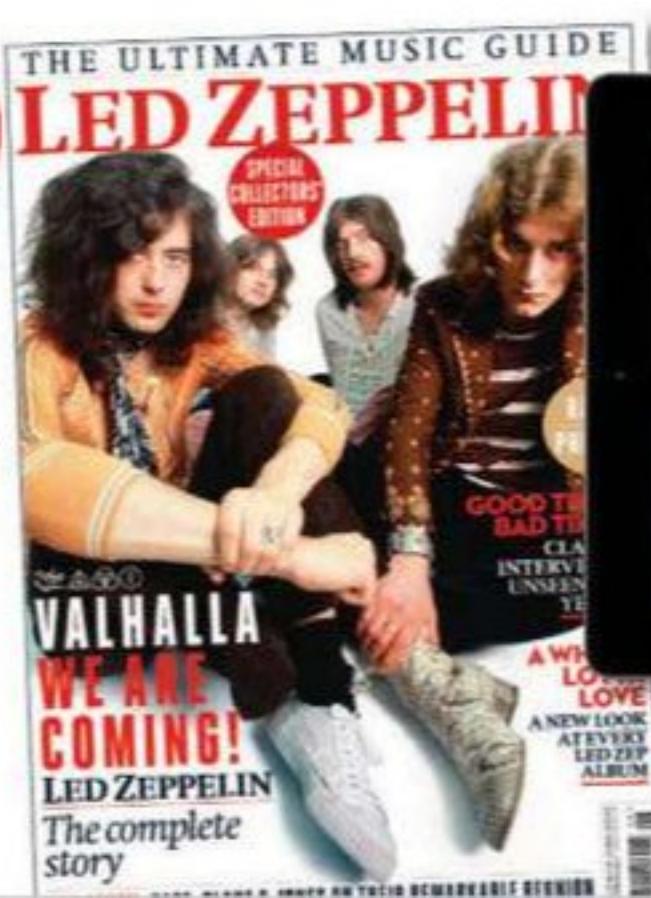
LOUIS PATTISON

Centipede Hz is out on Domino on September 3

LED ZEPPELIN AND THE BOSS

COMING SOON!

► A quick plug for two new Uncut specials. First up, our latest *Ultimate Music Guide* on Led Zeppelin: 148 pages of remarkable archive interviews and in-depth new reviews (visit www.uncut.co.uk for more info). Secondly, to coincide with Bruce landing in the UK, our Springsteen *Ultimate Music Guide* is now available as an iPad edition from Apple's App Store. You can, as they say, try before you buy, and download Chapter 1 (out of 5) for free.



A QUICK ONE

► Our monthly confusion over when the Stones are actually celebrating their 50th anniversary continues, with the news that *The Rolling Stones: 50*, a free photo exhibition at London's Somerset House, will run between July 13 and August 27, 2012. Unseen and rare shots are promised, and there's a book of the same name to coincide. As for the band's 50th anniversary shenanigans next year, latest unlikely reports suggest a career-closing performance at Glastonbury 2013.

► Peter Buck's solo career has got off to an unexpected start after "10 Million BC" surfaced last month online – a croaky, feral garage rocker



that's closer in spirit to Tav Falco or The Cramps than anything in Buck's back catalogue.

► Freak out! An auspicious forthcoming reissue programme begins on July 31, when Universal release the first 12 Frank Zappa albums. His entire Barking Pumpkin catalogue will follow in due course.

► David Byrne's latest collaboration brings him into the fertile company of Annie Clark, aka St Vincent. Their joint album, *Love This Giant*, is released by 4AD on Sept 11.

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



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FOR THE TURNSTILES

A track-by-track guide to your free CD of the month's best music

1 HOT CHIP

Flutes

Joe Goddard cited "maxi-12in extended mixes from the '80s" as one of the key influences on the London posse's fifth album – and you can hear where he's coming from in the looped samples, funky synths and dance beats of our opening track.

2 DONOVAN WOODS

No Time Has Passed

The Ontario-born troubadour's second LP appeared in Canada two years ago and really shouldn't have had to wait until now for international release. He claims he grew up hating his dad's collection of Donovan/Arlo Guthrie/Paul Simon albums – but has clearly undergone a major volte-face since...

3 DELICATE CUTTERS

You Want Her

Fizzing indie folk-pop from the Birmingham, Alabama quartet's third album. There's something irresistible about the juxtaposition of Janet Simpson's gorgeous voice and Kevin Nicholson's dancing fiddle that makes the Cutters sound quite unlike anyone else around at the moment.

4 THE DREAMING SPIRES

Strength Of Strings

Not the Gene Clark song of the same name, this shimmering, neo-shoegazing epic is from the debut album by the latest project from Robin and Joe Bennett, former stalwarts of British exponents of burnished Americana, Goldrush.

5 TY SEGALL BAND

I Bought My Eyes

It's only a couple of months since our CD featured a track from Segall's fine collaboration with White Fence. Before you can say *Nugget-y* psych-punk, the San Fran garage-rocker is back with this gloriously fuzzy freak-out from what is, surprisingly, the first album he's recorded with his regular touring band.

6 SUN KIL MOON

Sunshine In Chicago

Ex-Red House Painters man Mark Kozelek's fifth pared-back album as SKM is shot through with delicious wit – such as this droll, bittersweet reflection on exchanging the cute female fans of his old band 20 years ago for his current following of "guys in tennis shoes".

7 THE BARR BROTHERS

Deacon's Son

The second Canadian-based outfit on our CD – and another release that's taken an unduly long time to cross the Atlantic. Cosmic, Dead-styled noodling gives way to a hypnotic, loping riff and splintering guitars that suggest the Barrs have been listening closely to Tinariwen's timeless desert blues.

8 THE WELCOME WAGON

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Backed by Sufjan Stevens, the Rev Thomas Vito Aiuto and his wife Monique deliver the devotional hymns on their second album with a sweet but never cloying sincerity, fusing sacred tradition and contemporary alt.folk with an affecting front parlour intimacy.

FREE
CD!



INSTANT KARMA!

pulsating rhythm and insistent hook of this stand-out.

12 RICH HOPKINS AND LUMINARIOS

Friend Of The Shooter

The feedback-drenched spirit of "Cortez The Killer"/"Hurricane" rides epically on this fearful tale of murder, madness and guilt by association, from the umpteenth LP – 14 in 20 years if you're asking – from the prolific Hopkins and his Arizonan desert rockers.

13 ADMIRAL FALLOW

Beetle In The Box

The heartfelt songs on the Glasgow indie-folkers' second album defy the lazy 'Scottish Mumford & Sons' tag – and the vocal combination of Louis Abbott's accented lead and Sarah Hayes' lovely foil reaches apotheosis on the hymn-like bridge here.

14 MISSION OF BURMA

Semi-Pseudo-Sort-Of Plan

Angular, pulsating post-punk from the resurgent Bostonians' fifth LP – four of them since their 2002 reunion, making them possibly the only band whose reformation achievements have outstripped their original incendiary exploits.

15 SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE

A Thousand Birds

Ben Chasny reconvenes with some of his old Comets On Fire bandmates for some classic guitar shredding, squalling jams and Crazy Horse vibes on this exclusive *Uncut* taster of an album you're going to have wait until mid-August to get your hands on...

11 GO-KART MOZART

Retro-Glancing

The first GKM album in six years features some of Lawrence's best songs since the demise of Felt, full of eccentric wit and beguiling tunes, epitomised by the spoken-word junk-glam break-up drama,



Guitar crazy:
Ben Chasny
Six Organs Of
Admittance

16 NENEH CHERRY & THE THING

Dream Baby Dream

Now resident in Stockholm, Cherry joyously visits the jazz roots of her stepfather Don Cherry on this warm, hypnotically swinging version of a song first recorded by Suicide and later covered by Springsteen.

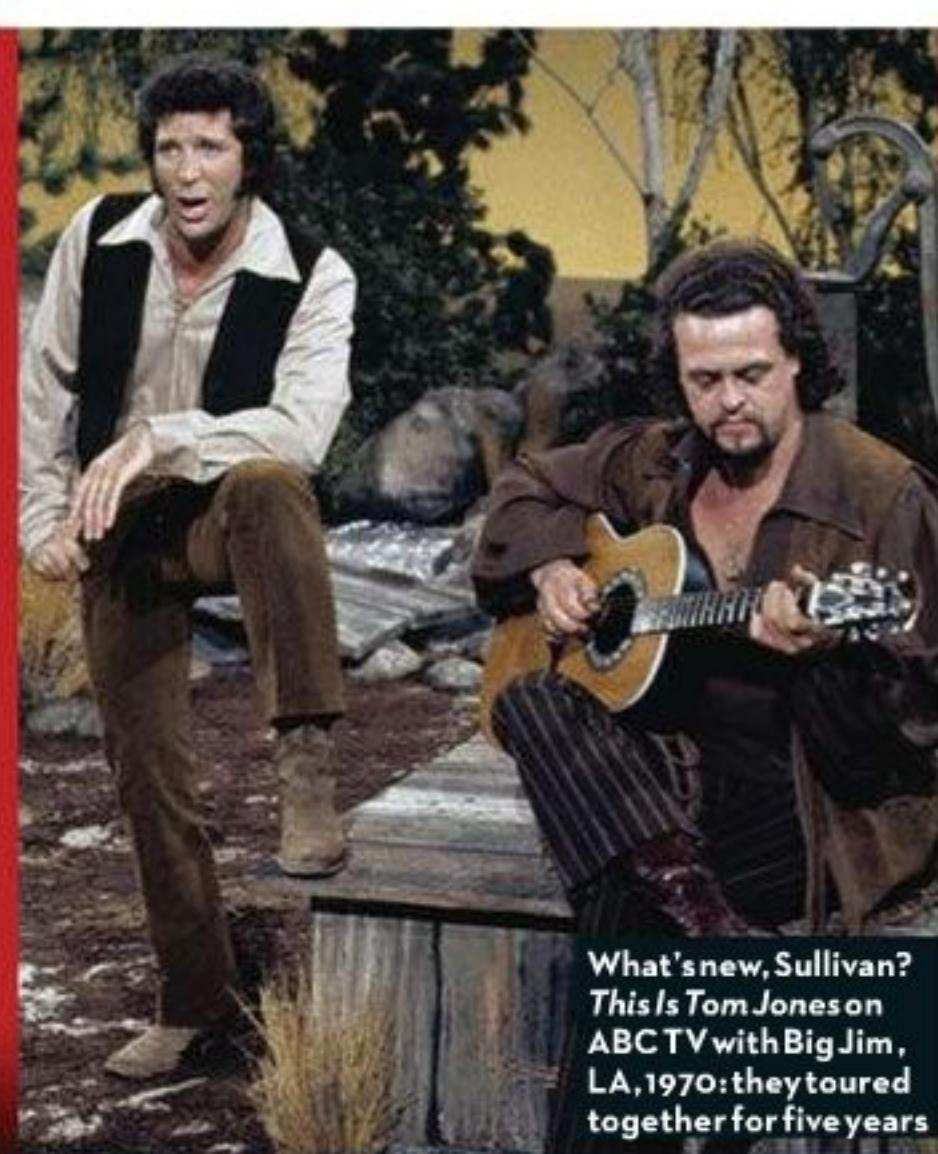
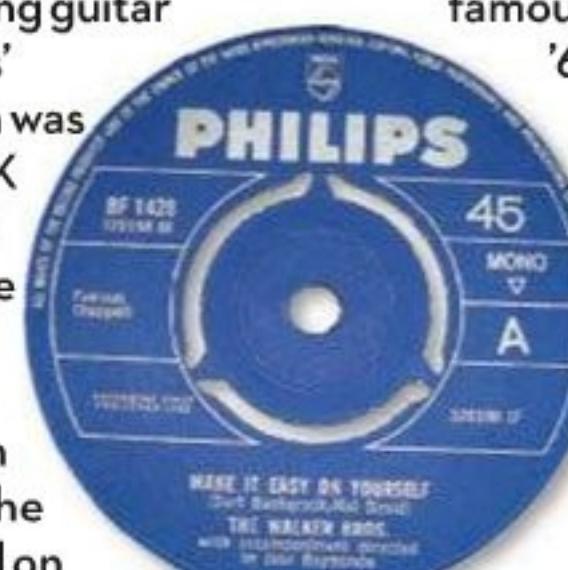
AND ON GUITAR... BIG JIM SULLIVAN

UNCUT'S GUIDE TO ROCK'S GREATEST SESSION PLAYERS

► *Uncut* readers of a certain age may best remember Big Jim Sullivan giving guitar tutorials on the Bay City Rollers' *Shang A Lang* TV show. Sullivan was one of the most sought-after UK session guitarists from the late '50s to the '70s, averaging three sessions a day and playing on over 1,000 chart hits. He was the first English guitarist to own a Gibson Les Paul, introduced the 12-string to the UK in '59, played on the first record in the UK to use a fuzzbox (PJ Proby's "Hold Me") and the first to use wah-wah (Dave Berry's "The Crying

Game"). He also made some solo LPs, the most famous one being *Sitar Beat*, cut in the late '60s, where he played sitar versions of contemporary hits. He practised the instrument with George Harrison at his Esher bungalow.

KEY SESSIONS The Walker Bros' "Make It Easy...", "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine...", Chris Farlowe's "Out Of Time", Donovan's "Catch The Wind", "Colours", The Small Faces' "Itchycoo Park", and countless others. He also played on George Harrison's *Wonderwall* and Frank Zappa's *200 Motels*. **PHIL KING**



ONDATRÓPICA

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ONDATRÓPICA RE-INTERPRETS THE TROPICAL MUSICAL HERITAGE OF LA MUSICA COLOMBIANA.



Colombian musician, Mario Galeano and English producer Will "Quantic" Holland, have joined forces to create Ondatrópica, released on Soundway Records on July 16.

Recorded in the legendary Discos Fuentes studios the album features musicians from Colombia's golden era, including Fruko, Anibal Velasquez, Michi Sarmiento, Alfredito Linares, Pedro Ramaya Beltran, Markitos Mikolta and Wilson Viveros, joined by a group of younger Colombian musicians from Mario's band Frente Cumbeiro and Quantic's Combo Barbaro.

Ondatrópica explores and expands the tropical sound of Colombia in its rawest form and marries it with contemporary influences from around the world, bringing together an iconic group of top Colombian musicians representing both the classic and more modern styles.

JULY LIVE SHOWS:

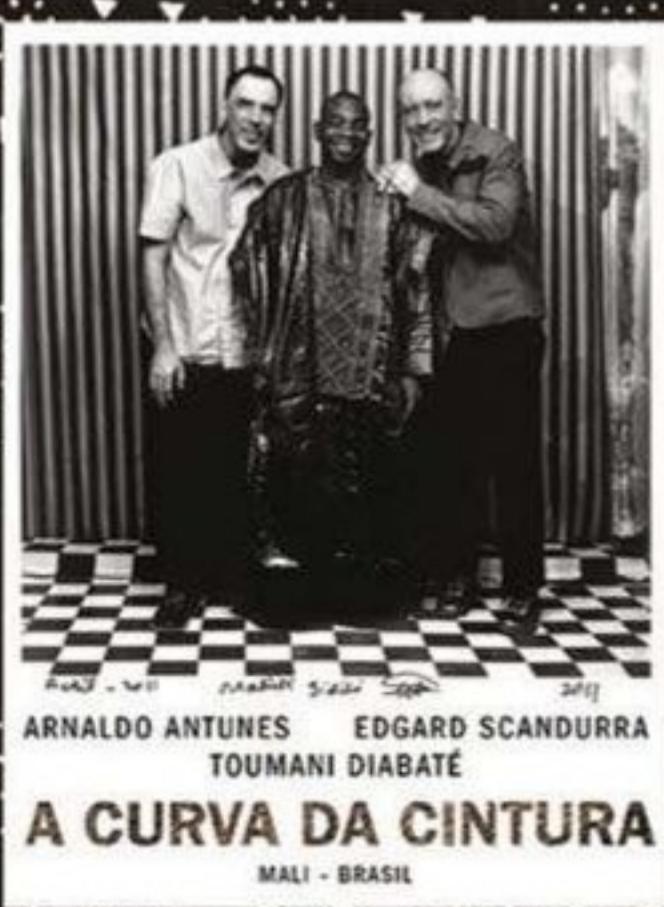
- 20/07 LONDON: Hackney Empire
- 22/07 LONDON: BT River of Music
- 27/07 NEW YORK: The Lincoln Centre

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★★★★ Songlines

"Top Of The World"

★★★★ Metro

★★★ Guardian

★★★★ Financial Times

Out Now.

A Curva Da Cintura is a collaboration between Malian kora legend TOUMANI DIABATÉ and two Brazilians, poet and rock star ARNALDO ANTUNES and guitar hero EDGARD SCANDURRA. Recorded in 2011 in Toumani Diabaté's Malian studio, the project first came together at the 2010 edition of the Brazilian festival BACK2BLACK where Diabaté joined Antunes and Scandurra in Rio for what was the start of this unique collaboration. Turning full circle, the act recently made their UK live debut at the London edition of Back2Black festival on 1st July. A Curva Da Cintura is available now in all good record shops.

★★★MAIS UM DISCOS★★★

www.maisumdiscos.net

k



WE'RE NEW HERE

Dawes

Recommended this month: the new LA favourites of Robbie Robertson, Jackson Browne and Bruce Springsteen

SOMEONE TOLD ME that Bruce Springsteen is aware of our band." At the end of a telephone wire some 5,000 miles away, 25-year-old Taylor Goldsmith drops his voice in amazement. "He's a huge hero so that would be a dream come true, but I still have a hard time believing it..."

He shouldn't, and not just because Dawes, the rising LA quartet led by Goldsmith's golden voice and timeless songs, are sharing the Hard Rock Calling bill with The Boss this month in Hyde Park. Dawes are a group who already boast more than their fair share of A-list admirers. Jackson Browne is a friend who sang on "Fire Away", a stand-out track on their tremendous second album *Nothing Is Wrong*. Robbie Robertson, meanwhile, asked Goldsmith to sing on his comeback album, *How To Be Clairvoyant*, and used Dawes as his backing band for all subsequent promotional duties.

For a group firmly connected to a classic country-rock bloodline it's slightly overwhelming. "When heroes who have inspired you and helped shape what you do not only acknowledge you but support you, it's one of the biggest rewards," says Goldsmith, who formed Dawes in 2008 with younger brother Griffin on drums and Wylie Gelber on bass. After gigging around LA with "no money, no label and a different fourth member each week", they hooked up with keyboardist Tay Strathairn and yet another high-profile advocate, Jonathan Wilson, who produced their 2009 debut, *North Hills*, and *Nothing Is Wrong*. Goldsmith describes Wilson as "the guru of Los Angeles music".

The sound they make and these

exemplary allies place Dawes firmly at the centre of the new Laurel Canyon scene, an affiliation of like-minded, analogue-friendly artists whose number include Wilson, Father John Misty, Blake Mills and the Chris Robinson Brotherhood. Does Goldsmith feel like Dawes are part of a cohesive artistic community? "There's definitely a particular thing about LA songwriting, and right now there are a lot of incredible songwriters coming out of LA, based on a traditional sense of what a song can do. Nobody lives in Laurel Canyon, though. I haven't been there in years, it's not where people hang, but I understand what the term means. There's definitely a communal feel – and hey, it adds to the romance!"

Goldsmith talks persuasively about *Nothing Is Wrong* "closing the gap between the show and the record – it felt more like how we want to represent ourselves". Their third album will be finished by the end of the year, and the challenge will be to meet mounting expectations. Wilson, for one, has few doubts. "Taylor has really gone way inside and found his voice, through literature, his playing, his singing. He has done what all great artists do: they stow away to that place, wherever it may be, and come back with a realised identity."

GRAEME THOMSON

I'M YOUR FAN
"I first heard of Dawes as the coolest young up-and-coming band of the area. They came up to my Laurel Canyon jam and played a Blind Faith tune. Blew my mind." **Jonathan Wilson**



Dawes' debut album, North Hills, has just been reissued in the UK on Loose. They play T In The Park, Kinross (July 7), Liverpool Kazimier (10), London Scala (11), Latitude Festival, Southwold (13), Hard Rock Calling with Bruce Springsteen, London (14) and Oxford Bullingdon Arms (15)

THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

GRIZZLY BEAR

Untitled WARP

A ravishing and intricate follow-up to 2009's *Veckatimest*. Find the opening track, "Sleeping Ute", on YouTube now.

SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE

Ascent DRAG CITY

Ben Chasny hooks up with his old Comets On Fire bandmates for what may be the finest psych jams of 2012 thus far.

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Centipede Hz DOMINO

A full-strength Collective reconvene on their ultra-dense ninth album... "I'm going hiking – are you coming hiking?" See interview on page 7.

SAM LEE

Ground Of Its Own

THE NEST COLLECTIVE

An auspicious new British folk talent, who conscientiously unearths old traveller songs and subjects them to subtle, radical new arrangements.

PLANT AND SEE

Plant And See

PARADISE OF BACHELORS

Terrific find from the archives: a first reissue for this, quote, "interracial swamp-psych band's sole album from 1969".



ANTONY & THE JOHNSONS

Cut The World

ROUGHTRADE

Before curating Meltdown next month, Antony reprises his greatest hits with sumptuous new live orchestrations. "Cripple And The Starfish" sounds better than ever.

FRANK OCEAN

Pyramids DEF JAM

Gorgeous 10-minute single from the hippest soulman in years, plucked from the disreputable Odd Future rap crew.

MINOTAUR SHOCK

Orchard MELODIC

Bucolic vibes, motorik thrust, electronic and acoustic sounds fused in the manner of Four Tet... an unlikely folktronica revival is afoot.

GONZALES

Solo Piano II GENTLETHREAT

The Canadian polymath shows, once again, that his true métier is as a meditative, George Winston-like piano man.

ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFFITI

Mature Themes 4AD

LA maven revisits the eccentricities of his early releases, this time with a budget. Sample song title: "Schnitzel Boogie".

For regular updates, check our blogs at www.uncut.co.uk and follow @JohnRMulvey on Twitter



‘Everything we do is going to be gorgeous!’

EDWYN COLLINS goes back to basics with his new label, **AED Records**. “We put the barcodes on ourselves!”

TO FANS OF POSTCARD RECORDS – the boutique label where Edwyn Collins cut his teeth with Orange Juice – there is much that is familiar about Collins’ new venture AED (it stands for Analogue Enhanced Digital). Postcard 45s had their sleeves hand-coloured in the company HQ, a flat in the West End of Glasgow. More than 30 years later, the same rules apply, the only difference being that Collins now owns the studio (West Heath, in North West London).

“I came up with the name, AED Records, ages ago, and decided to form a label with [ex-Rough Trade A&R] James Endeacott,” says Collins. “He’s the glamorous pin-up boy for the label – I’m too old for that carry-on!” Ironically, AED – company motto, “Today’s Technology Now” – was inspired by the collapsing budgets of the music industry.

“Times have changed,” Collins notes. “Back in the day, with Postcard, it was the [Buzzcocks’] ‘Spiral Scratch’ EP that got me going. Now everybody goes on about social media, saying that’s how you get your message out. Well, not really, because everybody’s doing that. I like the physical thing – the single, the record. We have noticed there is a small, discerning market for very lovely collectible things.”

“Everything we do is going to be gorgeous. You don’t need to be selling hundreds of thousands. It’s a shame for the groups that come onto our label, because our idea is to make them notorious!”

AED’s initial flurry of releases included a Collins

retrospective on six 45s, including the country-tinged “Down The Line”, from his forthcoming album. The set came housed in a generic “tape box”, with a poster, inspired by the giant montage issued with The Faces’ *A Nod Is As Good As A Wink...*, which decorates the wall at West Heath. “It’s made up of 220 little photographs. It took bloody ages! But it’s good fun. And we made an arse of the first batch because we didn’t have the pressing-down-the-sticker technique. We put the barcodes on ourselves!”

Also on the roster are Linden (Superstar’s Joe McAlinden), Colorama and London Mississippi (a collaboration between Colorama’s Carwyn Ellis, James & Rob Walbourne, and Luther & Cody Dickinson from North Mississippi Allstars). An informal collective of musicians plays on many of the recordings: James Walbourne is also in Dead Flamingoes, along with Kami Thompson (daughter of Richard and Linda). “It’s like the Stax house band,” laughs Collins.

It’s not just records. There are plans for books, art and films, as well as deluxe reissues of Edwyn’s solo recordings. “It’s kind of mad to be doing this at my stage in life,” Collins concludes with a gleeful chortle, “but so what? Bring it on!”

ALASTAIR MCKAY

Forthcoming releases include Linden’s debut album, Bleached Highlights (due late July); Colorama’s Good Music (August); the London Mississippi album (September); and, in November, a new album and solo retrospective boxset from Edwyn himself. For more info, check www.aedrecords.com

DAVID QUANTICK



Stop me, if you think you’ve heard this one before

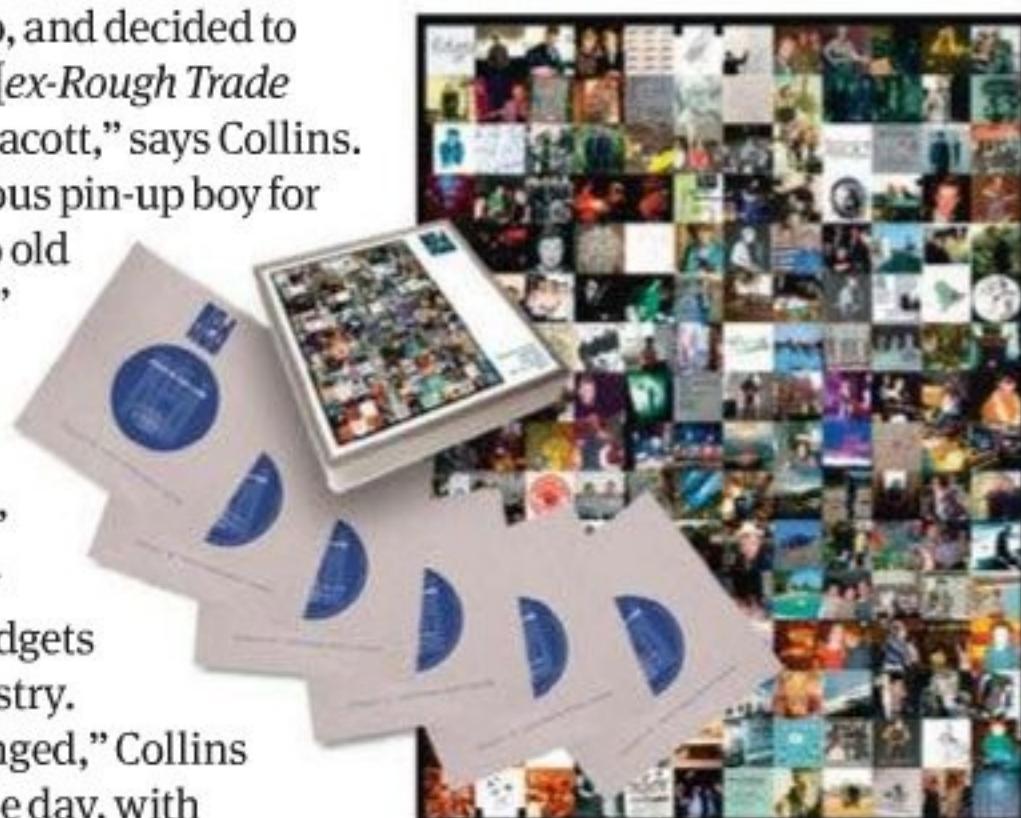
I NEVER MET The Beatles. I’ve got a picture of them sitting on Plymouth Hoe in 1967, and I worked out that I was about a mile away, at infant school, when they were taking a day off from making *Magical Mystery Tour*, but for some reason my dad (working a few hundred yards away) didn’t think to pull me out of double fingerpainting for the day. I never met John Lennon or George Harrison. I’ve been onstage with Paul McCartney, though. He was rehearsing in the grounds of Buckingham Palace and I was stood fairly near. And I was talking to Lenny Henry when Macca came over and chatted to him.

And I’ve actually met Ringo Starr. I was doing a radio show with Rowland Rivron (another great drummer and comic) when Ringo was a guest. He came in, was introduced to me, and gave me a big hug. “All right, big man?” he said. I was quite chuffed then and I still am.

Oh, and I was backstage at a Yoko Ono concert. Sean Lennon was there, with his then-girlfriend Elizabeth Jagger (if they’d had children, those kids would presumably have had to marry Damian Marley’s kids to create a unirock dynasty). Without prompting, I went on at some length to Sean about how much I liked Yoko’s show. Then I apologised for gushing, and said, “I’m sorry, I’m a very big fan of your mother’s.” “Yes,” he said, in the dry tones of his father, “you are...”

Which brings me to my weirdest moment. Interviewing Yoko Ono on another occasion, I asked her about the time she attempted a recording session with her official arch-rival Paul McCartney. Yoko recalled, with some relish, how uncomfortable Paul seemed with her freestyle vocalising, and added, “And strangely enough, there is no recording because when we played the tape back, there was nothing on it.”

At least, that’s what I think she said, because when I came to transcribe my interview with Yoko, when I played the tape back...



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Graham Coxon

Interview: John Lewis
Photo: Essy Syed

The eccentric solo artist and Blur guitarist answers your questions about jazz saxophone, his fear of screaming teenage girls and his favourite Oasis song...

G

RAHAM COXON IS telling us about his relationship with his Blur bandmate Damon Albarn, when he breaks off, mid-sentence.

"What's the word that's a bit like perceptive?" he ponders. "I think it begins with a P. And there's V there somewhere too."

Twenty minutes later, halfway into another question, the word suddenly occurs to him.

"Receptive! That's the word. Me and Damon are much more *receptive* these days. We're both a bit older now, at a time in life where you have to start thinking about what you want to achieve after pop music. Pop music is a strange, limiting form. And if you put that aside, it's a frightening and daunting prospect, but also quite exciting."

Such befuddled behaviour seems typical of Coxon. But let's not forget, like Albarn, Coxon has forged a rewarding career post-Blur. His eight solo albums, including the recent *A&E*, have covered folk and Krautrock, spiky indie and bubblegum pop. He also plays nearly everything on his records. "Drums, bass, guitar, vocals – everything except synthesisers," he says. "I don't really understand them."

After promoting *A&E*, Coxon will play a few summer shows with Blur – including the Olympic closing ceremony. Beyond that, he isn't certain of what the band's future holds. He is, however, sanguine about Albarn's suggestions that Blur's Hyde Park show might be their last. "If that's what Damon says, and what he really feels, then there's no reason to think otherwise. But we're getting on as friends better than we've ever done."

STAR QUESTION



What is your favourite Syd Barrett song and what music do you think he'd be doing today if he was still around?

Paul Weller

I really like that one that's got tons of guitars on it and loads of distortion: [sings] "You hold your head up high/You even try" ["No Man's Land"]. I read a Syd Barrett book which said that there were so many layers of distorted guitars that they stripped many of them away. I think that was a mistake, because that would have been 20 years ahead of its time. Hopefully,

had he continued to make music, he'd have been allowed to do the mad stuff he wanted to do, like multilayering guitars. He might even be an old, mad jazzier, which would be even better.

What are your memories of being on *Blue Peter* as a child?

Barry Fawcett, Norfolk

Our school were doing a production of [Smetana's] *The Bartered Bride*, and we were invited on to *Blue Peter* to do the tavern scene. I'd just discovered roll mops at the time, so I sat and ate loads of roll mops in the *Blue Peter* garden and then felt quite ill when we were doing it. Who was presenting it? It was Simon Groom, bless him. And the lovely Janet Ellis, and Peter



The more "receptive" duo: Coxon and Damon Albarn

Duncan. The classic '80s power trio. I particularly liked Simon Groom 'cos he was from Derby. He was a really nice bloke.

What are the next songs you'd most like to cover, excluding, for the purposes of fairness, any more damnably excellent *Mission Of Burma* songs?

Clint Conley, MOB

Ha! Thing is, like the Burma songs I did, my covers are always very faithful to the originals, so they're a bit... pointless. However, there was this tape I was given as a teenager by my friend Jeremy Stone and his flatmate, Oz. It contained really eye-opening stuff. "Dirty Blue Gene" by Captain Beefheart, "Hands 2 Take" by The Flying Lizards, "West One" by The Ruts, along with stuff by Sonic Youth and Big Black. I've always wanted to cover the whole cassette! I've also got an idea to cover Depeche Mode's *Speak And Spell*, but with guitars and drums instead of synths. I'd probably ruin the album, though.

STAR QUESTION



What's going on with Huggy Bear? And what is your favourite Britpop(ish) '90s band, besides Blur?

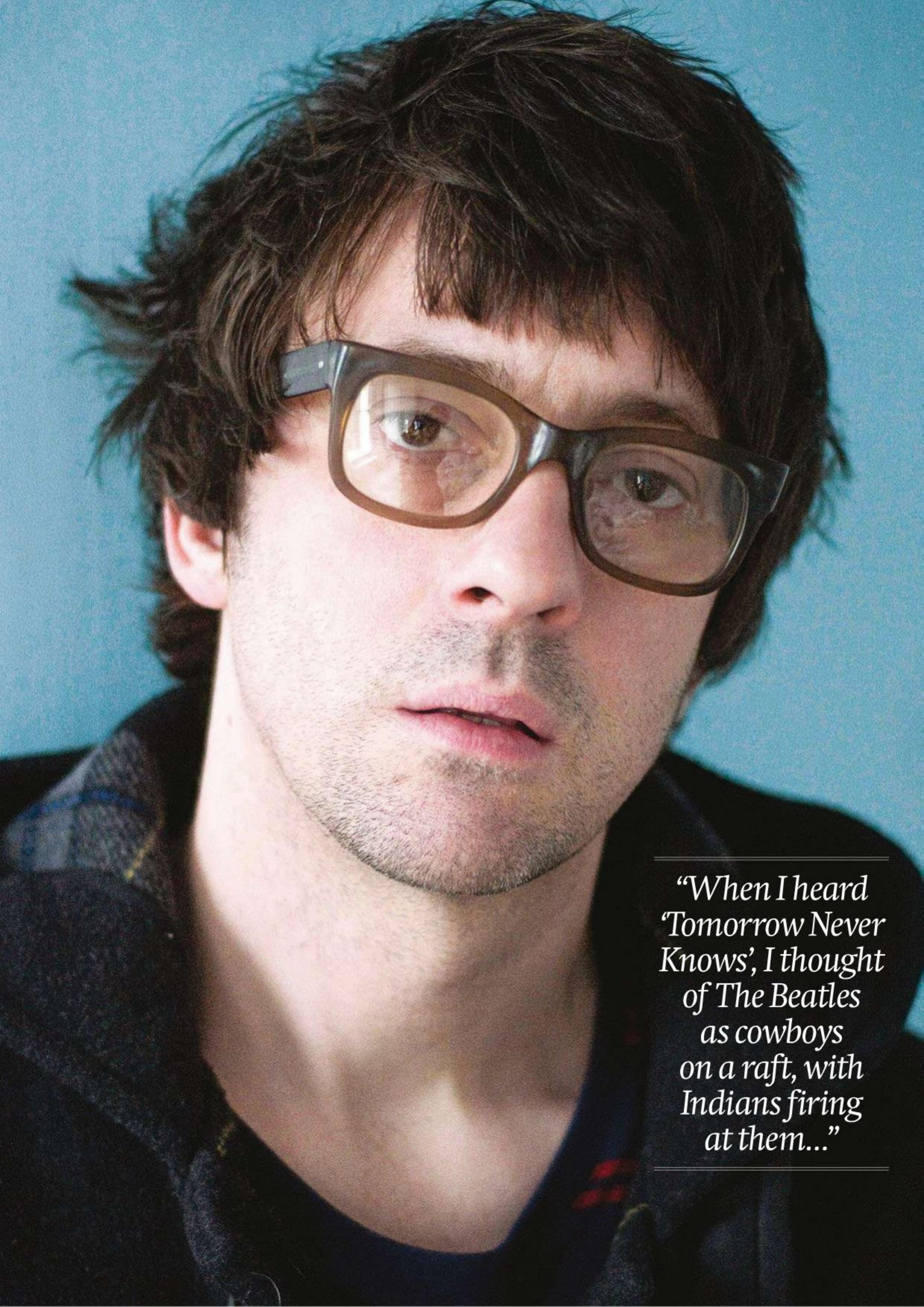
Stephen Malkmus

Whoah, my gosh. Malkmus! I don't know what's happening with Huggy Bear, but a hugely inspirational and talented lot they were, and hopefully they've still got some incredible ideas in them. And Britpop... well, just before Britpop, I remember loving Cardiacs and The Venus Beads. But it was never a stylistic genre, just some random groups deemed "Britpop" by music journalists. There was good stuff happening, but Super Furry Animals and Radiohead were never deemed Britpop, were they? I always thought Supergrass were a dead good band. I guess Pavement turned out to be my favourite Britpop band!

When working with Weller, ever get a chance to pick up one of his old Rickenbackers and thrash out "Billy Hunt"?

Jim Copley, Bournemouth

I did play Paul my recordings of "Billy Hunt" and "See-Saw", which I did as B-sides with Stephen Street a few years ago. He said: "Fucking hell, they sound more like The Jam than The Jam did!" How did we meet? He really liked a B-side of mine called "Click Click Click". And, weirdly, I was on the radio and he put his number through to the radio station. So I phoned him up. I was shitting it, though.



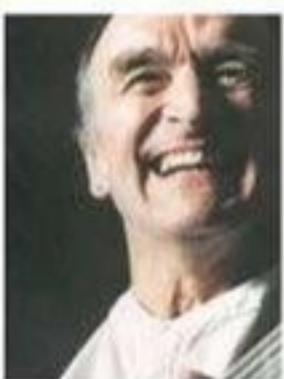
*“When I heard
‘Tomorrow Never
Knows’, I thought
of The Beatles
as cowboys
on a raft, with
Indians firing
at them...”*



Blur at London's Rough Trade East, June 15, 2009: (l-r) Coxon, Dave Rowntree, Damon Albarn, Alex James

→ And we started getting the "This Old Town" single together. I still love seeing Paul. It's always worrying though, 'cos he rarely plays a wrong note, whereas I do lots of wrong notes all over the place and feel slightly embarrassed.

STAR QUESTION



In your early days, was there ever a moment musically that changed everything? Mine was

hearing Big Bill Broonzy play...

Martin Carthy

What jarred me out of the usual stuff – The Beatles and The Kinks – was when I started to listen to things that were a bit looser. Things like Robert Wyatt, Van der Graaf Generator and The Velvet Underground really excited me. I played saxophone in an improv group called The Curious Band in Colchester, sort of like Soft Machine or Gong. The fact that you could have big areas of space to improvise and explore, that stays with me a lot. The other time was in the mid-'90s when Jo [Johnson] from Huggy Bear got me into things like Pavement and Slint and a lot of other small-label punk groups from the States – Universal Order Of Armageddon, Rites Of Spring, Fugazi. They used the guitar in an incredible way; making quite restrained noisy music, which I'd never heard English bands doing.

What's your favourite Oasis song?

Adam Hipwell, Manchester

Purely on an emotional level, I like the "Champagne Supernova" song. For chord progressions, I like one of

the later ones. It mentions "love" in the title. It has a big, Beatle-esque piano in it, quite midtempo, boom, cha, boom, cha. I can't remember the name, but the chords are like a C going to a B_b7 and then to an A minor, that Lennon-ish interval [we think he means "Let There Be Love"]. It's very beautiful. Yeah, it's weird I'm going out on tour with Noel [Gallagher]. I've never talked to him about music, it's always been shuffly feeted small-talk. Whenever we've met we've got on just fine. He's a pretty solid bloke, Noel. I don't know what was going on with the whole Blur/Oasis thing. I tried to stay out of it, really. Will we be jamming together? I dunno, but I'm definitely open to suggestions!

"Whoever my audience were, it was going to be wrong, 'cos I was a bit of a miserable sod, to be honest"

STAR QUESTION



When making *Parklife*, did you use samples from Sham 69's album, *That's Life?*

Jimmy Pursey, Sham 69

Jesus! Jimmy Pursey? I thought he hated me? Ha ha. I don't think we did sample it, not to my knowledge. I don't know if Damon was listening to Sham 69. But I guess it comes

from a similar place. Maybe we were covering similar ground to what Jimmy did, and maybe he thought we were ripping him off. But yeah, I'm a huge Sham fan, which is why I did that version of "Hurry Up Harry". For me, the best punk bands were Sham 69, The Damned and Alternative TV. They were proper, dirty urchins, making proper, greasy, horrible rock'n'roll.

When was the last time you picked up the saxophone?

James Cobham, Leicester

A couple of days ago. I play the alto sax. I've got back into it in the last few years. I practise a lot of jazz. Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Oliver Nelson, Roland Kirk, all that lot. I play along to Ornette Coleman albums and transcribe the solos. At the moment, Thelonious Monk is amazing me. My dad taught sax and clarinet and other instruments. He was a bandsman in the army, but he'd have a splinter group who would go off and go and watch a lot of jazz and play a bit themselves.

How do you react to being stopped in the street by fans? And can I apologise for chasing you around Tokyo in 1994?

Sanae Kido, Tokyo

Tokyo was always exciting, because people would follow you around. What did freak me out at shows was the audience. The sound of thousands of teenage girls screaming used to put the wind up me more than anything else. I don't know who I wanted my audience to be, but it was always going to be wrong, 'cos I was a bit of a miserable sod, to be honest. It gets a bit weird when people follow you into the toilets and stuff, but people are surprisingly polite.

What would be the title of your autobiography?

Hel Davies, Birmingham

Much Voodoo About Nothing. Is that a shit title? I have vague ideas for a book. I would like to section up my life into short stories about experiences rather than a chronological autobiography, which might be a bit drippy and boring. Did I read Alex's book [A Bit Of A Blur]? Oh yeah. I really enjoyed it. It would've been a lot more juicy if there were no lawyers! But yes, he's a reliable witness. I read it before Blur reformed and it made me feel quite sentimental. I've recently read books about Johnny Cash, John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk, along with Dave Van Ronk's *The Mayor Of MacDougal Street* and a Dylan biog called *Positively 4th Street*. I read a lot of fiction too – Paul Auster, Evelyn Waugh and Dostoevsky lately. I don't really understand much of it but I do it anyway, because it puts stuff in your head.

STAR QUESTION



As well as being a talented musician, you're also a stunning artist! Do you visualise the music you're creating, like a piece of art?

Kate Rusby

Oh Kate! She's brilliant. What art and music have in common is that sense of focus. I don't visualise my own music as I'm making it, but I've always been struck by visuals when I listen to other people's music. I always heard Beatles songs visually. I remember hearing "Strawberry Fields Forever" as a child and taking the "let me take you down" bit quite literally. I imagined them going down into a mineshaft with millions of diamonds. With eyes. And when I heard "Tomorrow Never Knows" I imagined cowboys on a raft. This is probably because George Harrison is dressed up as a cowboy on the back of *Rubber Soul*. And when I heard the "shloop! shloop!" sounds, which were probably tape effects, I imagined Indians firing arrows from nearby fir trees at The Beatles as they floated downriver! ☺

A&E is available now from EMI. In July, EMI release Special Editions of all seven Blur albums, as well as a 21-disc boxset called *21. Blur play London's Hyde Park on August 12*



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Log on to see who's in the hot-seat next month and to post your questions!

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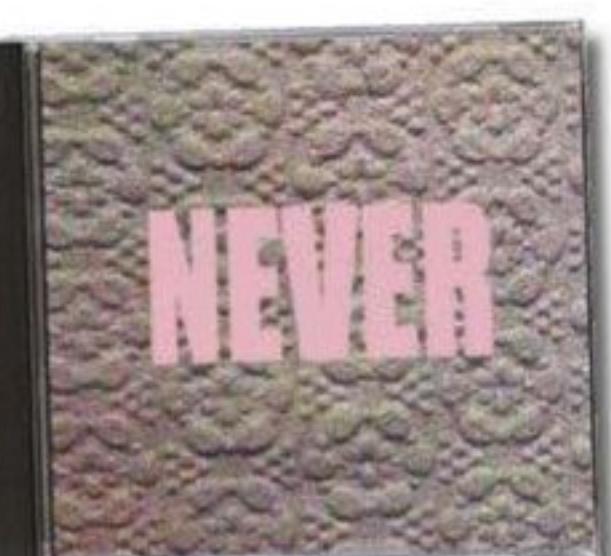
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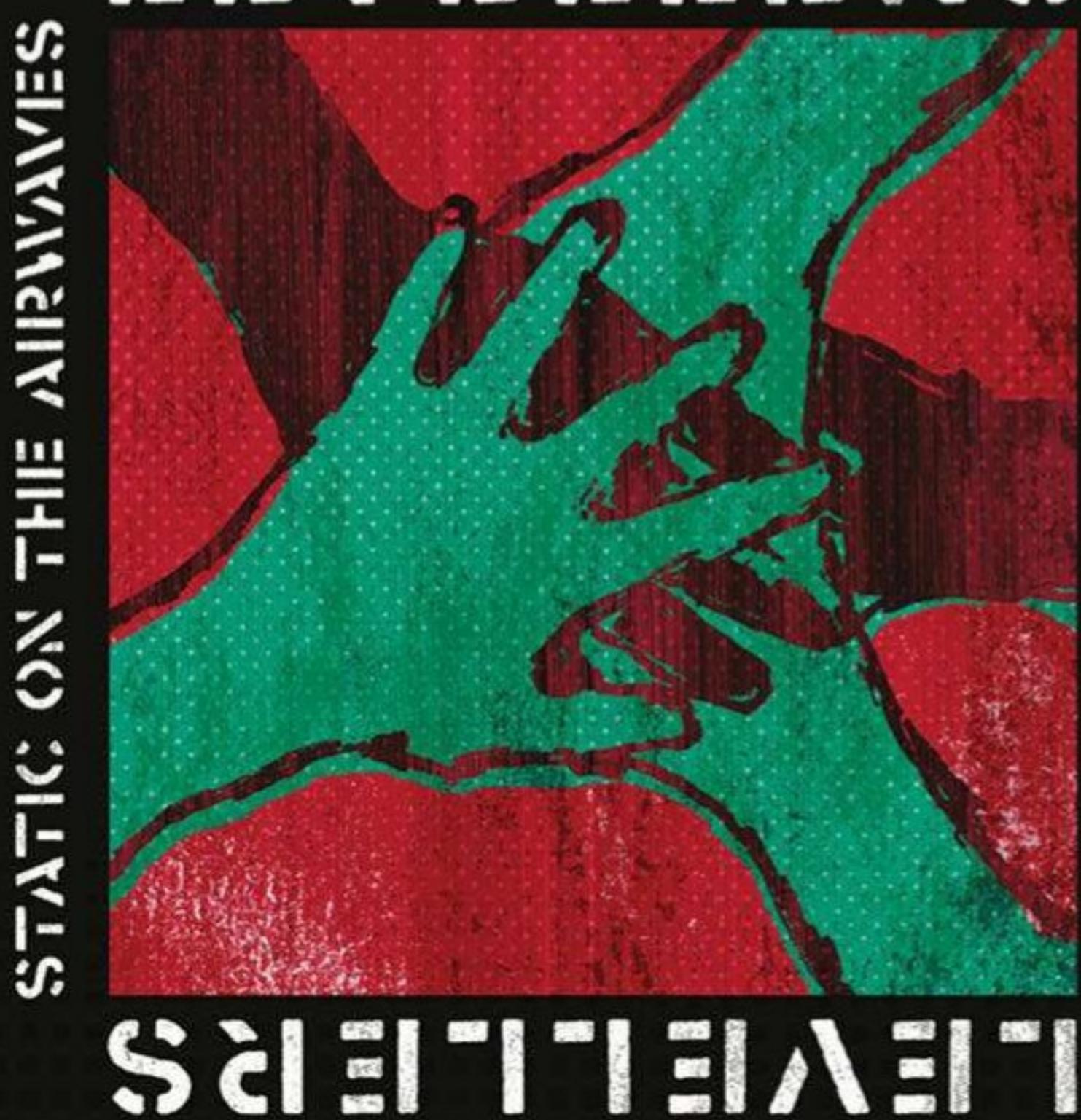


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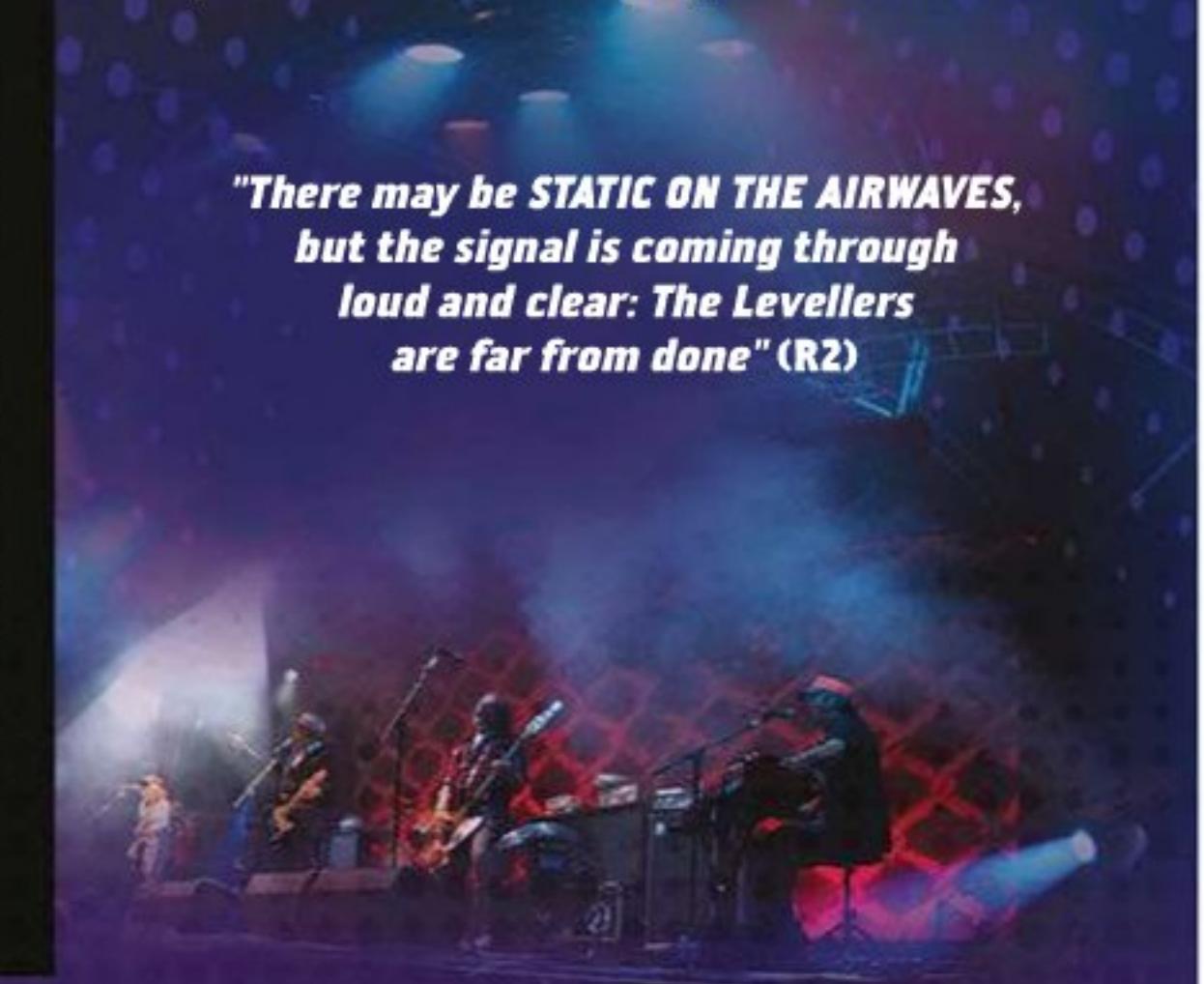
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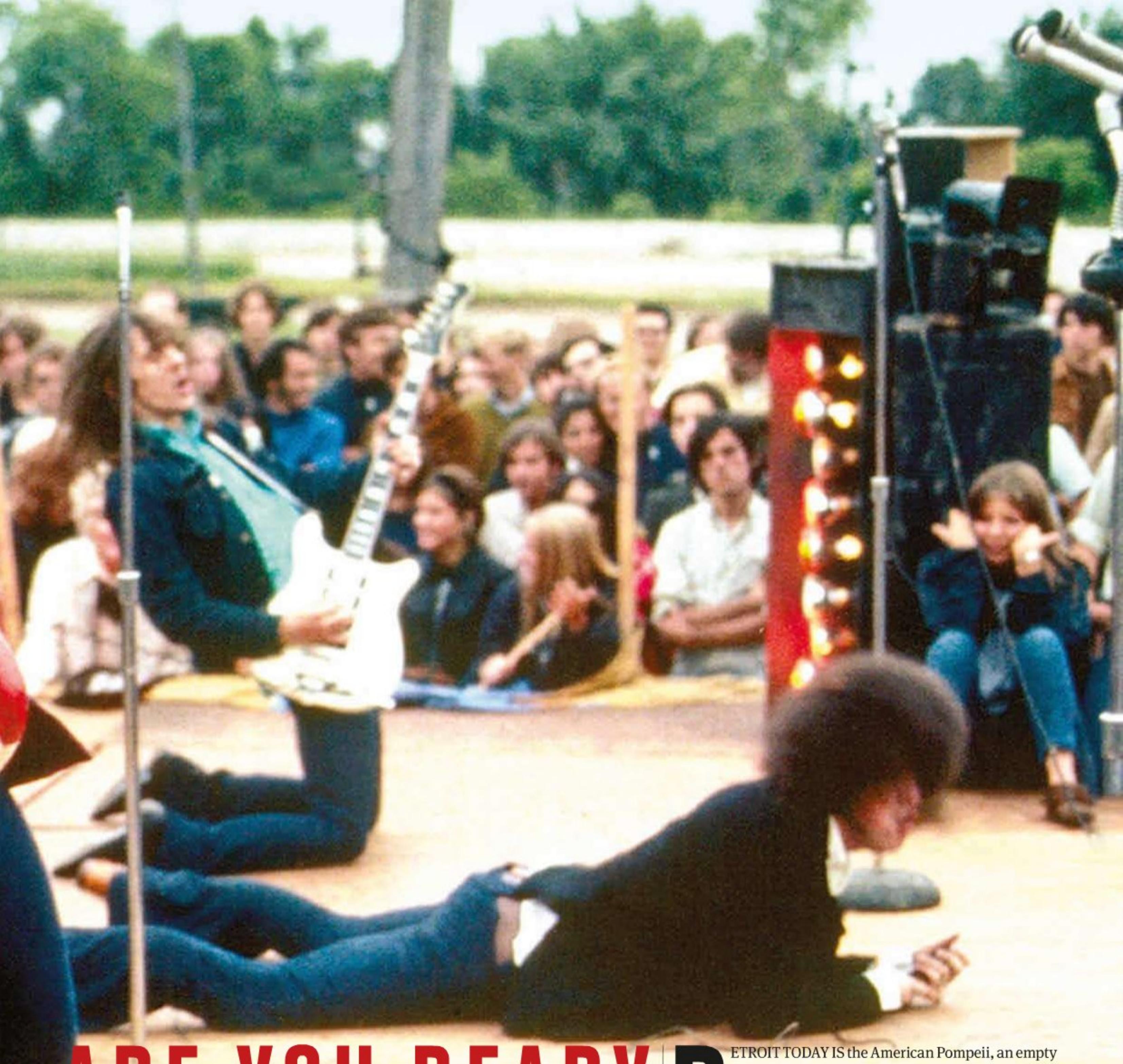
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LEN SINCLAIR/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GAMMA IMAGES

Stars and strife: the MC5 live in 1969 in Mount Clemens, Michigan: (l-r) Dennis Thompson, Wayne Kramer, Fred Smith and Rob Tyner



ARE YOU READY TO TESTIFY?

Words: Wayne Kramer
Photo: Leni Sinclair

Sonically speaking! *Uncut* proudly presents the confessions of **WAYNE KRAMER**, as he reveals the complete, revolutionary story of the **MC5**. How five men from Detroit made rock'n'roll history while "shooting dope and trying to destroy the government"...

DETROIT TODAY IS the American Pompeii, an empty city, a city of ruins. But when I was a boy, it was a boom town. Employment was abundant, wages were substantial and the city hummed with progress. It was a 24/7 city. The automobile factories worked three shifts around the clock and there was a flourishing nightclub scene, hundreds of bands playing hundreds of bars, until 2am all week long.

I grew up around Michigan and 31st Street, a thriving district on the west side of Detroit. I was mesmerised by rock'n'roll. When I heard Chuck Berry's guitar, Little Richard's singing, the drive of those rhythm sections, it was like they were speaking to me in code. I became obsessed with the sound of the electric guitar and the sexuality of rock'n'roll.

I auditioned for bands, but was never quite good enough so thought I'd start my own. This was 1964. My mother had moved out to Lincoln Park, a blue-collar white working-class suburb, and that's where I started asking around at school for people to join me. I had a friend, Ricky Derminer. His older brother, Bob, was a Beatnik and that amazed me. It was wild. He was an artist, lived in the basement, listened to jazz and thought rock was trivial. I'd explain to him how much fun it was to be in a band – the lights, the





Basement takes: the MC5 rehearse in John Sinclair's house, Ann Arbor, MI, 1969

→ sweat and people dancing. Later he renamed himself Rob Tyner after his idol, jazz pianist McCoy Tyner, and joined us.

Fred Smith played bongos, and I figured a band could use a bongo player, but the main thing he wanted to do was be in a band. The idea was he'd play bass, but Fred couldn't afford one. Tyner had a job, so he bought a bass on credit and I was going to teach him. But he couldn't get to grips with the bass, so switched to singing.

The original rhythm section was Bob Gaspar and Pat Burrows. They'd been in a lot of bands and were accomplished players. We played instrumentals by the Ventures and Ramrods but after the British Invasion we started learning Rolling Stones and blues songs. The idea of being rock stars hadn't occurred to us. We wanted to play clubs, sleep all day, take drugs and meet floozies. But after

TOM WRIGHT

"People had enough of police brutality and inequality, and America went up in flames"

WAYNE KRAMER

a while Fred, Rob and I realised that playing bars wasn't the goal. We didn't want to learn other people's songs, playing five sets a night, five nights a week. We wanted to write our own songs, play concert halls and travel. We wanted to be famous. In 1966, we recruited Dennis Thompson on drums and a bassist called Michael Davis, an art school friend of Tyner's who was handsome, a little older and worldly wise.

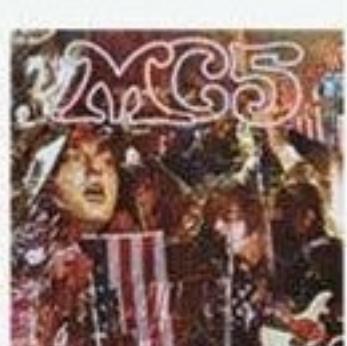
Tyner came up with our name. We thought about something traditional like Wayne And The Winchesters, but Tyner came up with MC5. We were from Detroit and it sounded like a part you'd get for your Dodge.

AT THIS STAGE, I was political only on a gut level. I knew something was amiss and it had something to do with the adult generation. They were saying and doing things that didn't make sense. But in 1965 I was still only 16.

HOW TO BUY

SHAKIN' STREET

Your guide to MC5 on CD



Kick Out The Jams

ELEKTRA, 1969

Recorded live at Detroit's Grande Ballroom, KOTJ was a high-octane mix of heavy rock ("Ramblin' Rose") and improvised mayhem ("Starship").

8/10



Back In The USA

ATLANTIC, 1970

Psychotically tight but brilliant rock'n'roll ("Tonight", "Teenage Lust", "Let Me Try") that manages to recreate the 1950s while inventing the Ramones.

9/10



High Time

ATLANTIC, 1971

Hard-rocking, unjustly neglected third album, with fine songs like "Poison" and "Over And Over" that continue to espouse a revolutionary theme.

8/10

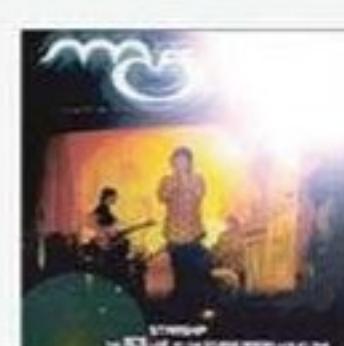


The Big Bang: Best Of The MC5

RHINO, 2000

Excellent compilation, with the pick of their album tracks plus pre-album singles such as "I Can Only Give You Everything" and live tracks.

9/10



Starship: Live At The Sturgis Armory, 1968

TOTAL ENERGY, 1998

Best of many live albums includes the free rock/jazz hybrid "Upper Egypt" and the improvised "Revolutionary Blues".

8/10



Technicolor revolution: (l-r from top): Michael Davis, Fred "Sonic" Smith, Dennis "Machine Gun" Thompson, Wayne Kramer and Rob Tyner

Vietnam hadn't touched my generation, that didn't happen until 1967 when we had the draft and the levels of acrimony increased on all sides. We had these long hot summers, poor people, black people, had enough of police brutality and inequality and America went up in flames. This was a defining time.

I left home at 17 and moved to the area around the university. It was cheap, full of students and stank of weed. John Sinclair was the nominal leader of a group called the Artists Workshop. I was intrigued because these people were giving voice artistically to things I only understood as a frustrated, confused teenager. I went to his house and said, "Hey man, Artists Workshop is meant to be for art in the community and I'm a musician in the community, and we need a place to rehearse." He said, "OK, come in, we'll smoke a joint and talk about it." We realised we were soul brothers. John became a great mentor and ultimately manager of the MC5.

Until 1967 we were a hard-rocking soul band playing R'n'B and blues, but John turned me on to free jazz. I liked that it represented a break from Western ideas of music, from tradition. Jeff Beck was also doing things with the guitar that intrigued me. The Yardbirds would do rave-ups, double the tempo, quadruple the tempo, then go out of regular music and into pure sound. I loved that and saw it chimed with what the free jazz guys were doing. If I could play my greatest Chuck Berry solo at maximum velocity, what next? I saw that as the goal for the MC5. We were a pretty good rock band, but maybe we could take it further.

It wasn't hard to persuade the others. We were all on the same wavelength, there was such incredible groupthink we probably qualified as a cult. We took a lot of acid and weed and believed we all had to be on the same page with our politics and our music. At first, our new sound didn't go down well. We'd let it loose on the last number and found we

could empty a dancehall in seconds. I liked that. That told me we were on to something. It was clearly powerful. We just had to convince people it was cool.

NAPRIL 1967, John held a happening, the Detroit Love-In. That was a political education. We played on Belle Isle, this beautiful island park where generations of Detroit families have had summer picnics. But the police shut us down. There were some bikers there, and when the police started getting heavy, the bikers responded as bikers do. The police escalated the violence to a level I had never witnessed, mounted police galloping up and swinging batons at people's heads like they were playing polo. They beat kids mercilessly.

It happened again in July. The police raided an after-hours club in the heart of the black community where there was a party for two brothers who had got home from Vietnam. People got angry. It was their friends, their party, their club, their neighbourhood and they'd had enough. The city went to war, but the war was the police killing everybody else. Detroit was smoke, sirens and gunfire for a week until the President sent in the army. We were in the thick of it. We had a telescope in the window and the police thought we were snipers. They bust down the door and arrested everybody. There was a tank parked outside my house.

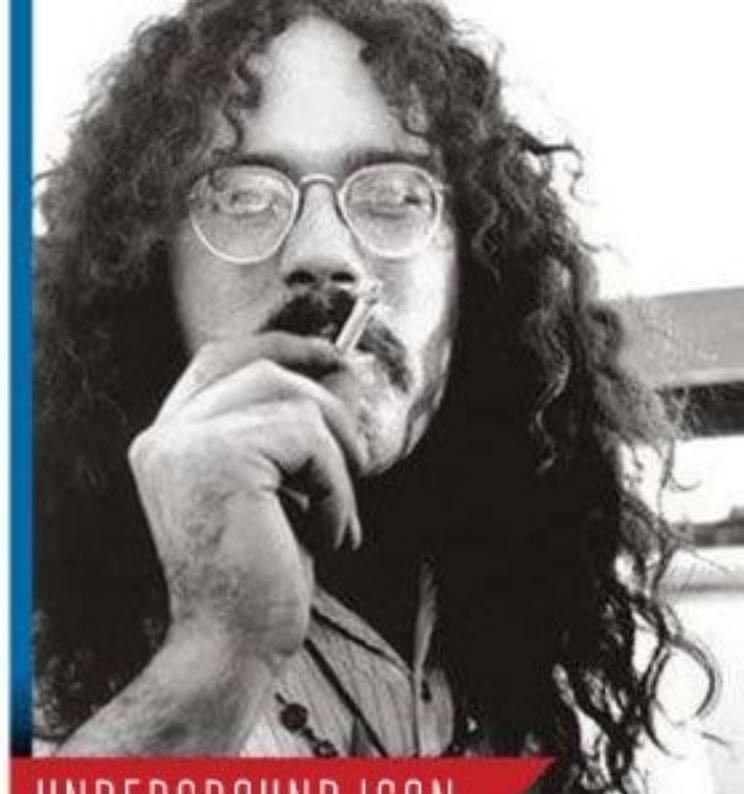
If you had any questions about the people who were running things, you were convinced they were all insane at that point. As our political rhetoric escalated and we adopted a more militant stance we attracted the attention of the government. They tapped our phone and filmed us. It became clear people of our generation were fighting for change and using the language and imagery of revolution and liberation. And it was clear these were our people. We were on one side and the establishment on the other.

We began to play benefits, anywhere, anytime anyone would ask us. If the local underground newspaper wanted us to play, we would play; if a radical group in

Milwaukee wanted us to play, we'd play. So when Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman called in 1968 and said they were putting on an alternative music festival at the Democratic Convention in Chicago, we agreed to play. You never know how these things will turn out. To me it was just another fascist, violent creep scene by the police. I didn't know it would go down in history. We weren't naïve, we knew there was a probability that things could get out of hand. Some people came prepared to fight the police. These were highly charged times and there was an atmosphere of intimidation from the police all the time. We knew there would be trouble, and there was. They didn't let us down.

It was tense when we got there, nobody was smiling. The Yippies were disorganised. They couldn't get a flatbed truck. Or a stage. Or a PA system. Or electricity. We borrowed electricity from a hot dog vendor. We set up on the ground in the middle of the park and played. The riots started almost as soon as we finished. We threw our gear in the van and raced back to Detroit. I've criticised the San Francisco bands for not showing up, but they did the smart thing.

WANTED REVOLUTION AND my idea was that the music could also be revolutionary. The people I idolised were James Brown, Sun Ra and The Who and I wanted to move in a more spectacular direction. I really wanted



UNDERGROUND ICON

"THE ONLY WEIRDOS IN DETROIT..."

John Sinclair on how he met and came to manage the MC5

► "I came out of prison for a six-month sentence for marijuana possession on August 5, 1966 and the next day they had a big party for me in the neighbourhood. I was the director of the Artists Workshop, a sort of bohemian embassy. We published a poetry magazine called *Work*, and were a bunch of artists, poets, writers and weirdos, the only weirdos in Detroit. At this party was a band that had recently moved to the neighbourhood called the MC5. Everybody started talking about how great they were and they played at the Artists Workshop and I just loved their music.

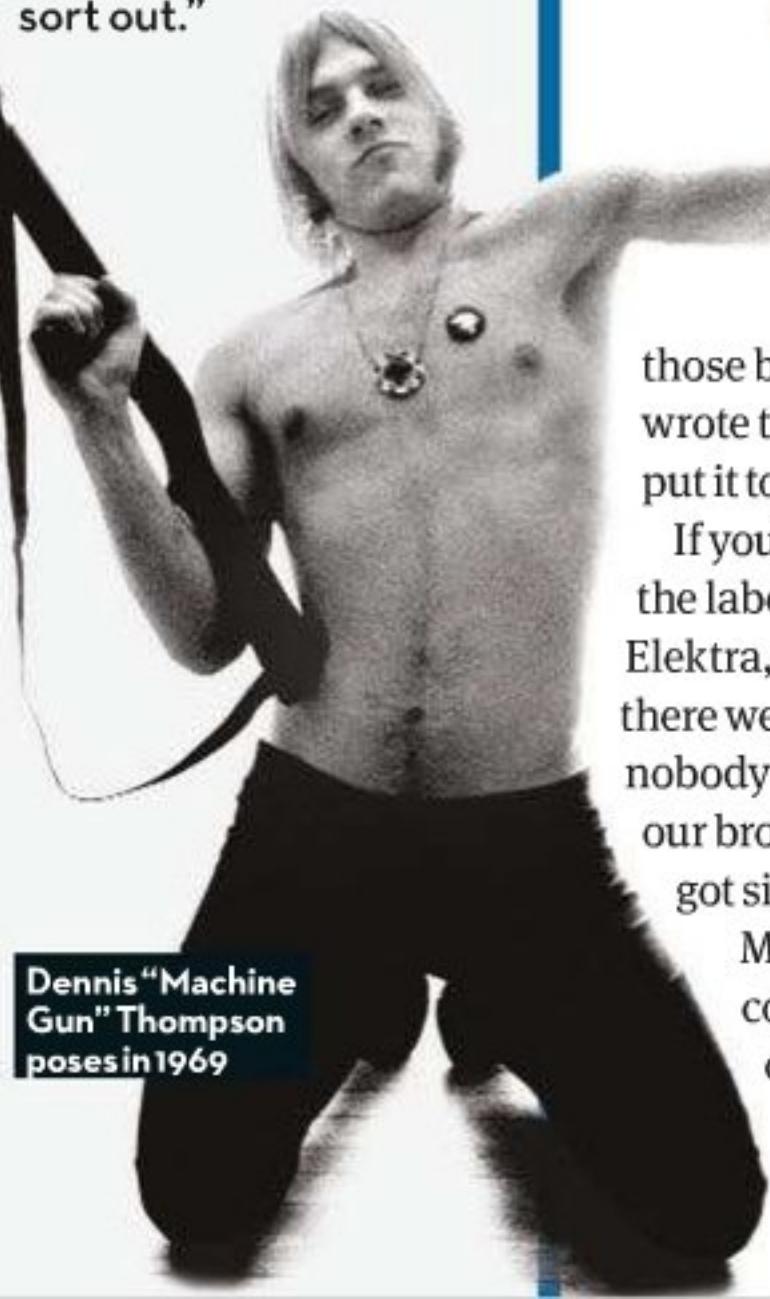
"The Beatles and Beach Boys weren't very exciting compared to Sun Ra or Howlin' Wolf. But then I heard what the MC5 were trying to do, combining blues and jazz, and ending shows with 'Black To Comm', which was different every night. For a year I went to every gig. In August 1967, I met the Grateful Dead's manager Rock Scully and saw they were even more fucked up than we were, but had a record contract and were on a national tour. So I thought what MC5 needed was somebody to manage them and that was something I could do, and I began to handle their affairs."

URBAN GUERRILLAS

"WE WERE ARMED..."

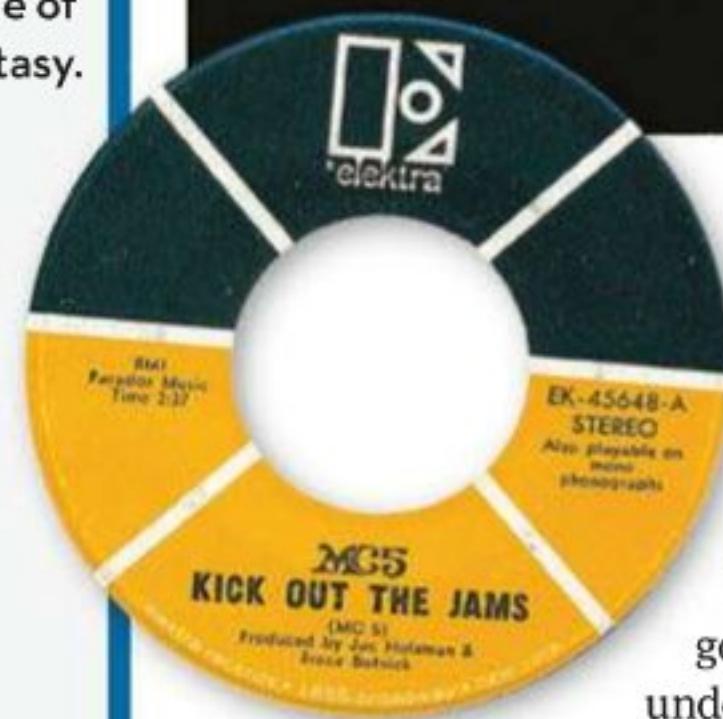
Kramer on forming the **White Panther Party**, a radical party dedicated to 'rock and roll, dope and fucking in the streets'

► "Huey Newton said there had to be a white group acting in parallel to the Black Panthers. We said, 'OK, that's us, we're good to go.' It was a way to express our frustration with the slow pace of change. Some of it was a romantic fantasy. The Black Panthers had guns and were ready to shoot it out with the Man, so we got guns. It was more than rhetoric and imagery. We were armed, somebody bombed the CIA office in Ann Arbor. I don't know who did it, but somebody did. But it was a big mistake. Embracing violence as a political strategy is not the best idea. We didn't know how serious it gets when you start using the image of the gun, but for the Black Panthers it resulted in death squads and for the MC5 it got us kicked out of the music business, indictments, harassment and prison. We did the FBI's work for them. It was a big mistake and took a long time to sort out."



Dennis "Machine Gun" Thompson poses in 1969

Ballroom blitz: the MC5 record *Kick Out The Jams* live at the Grande Ballroom on October 30/31, 1968, in Detroit



→ to make the MC5 a great performance band, with dance moves and costumes, bring a real theatricality about it, and not theatrical in the Broadway sense but in the gospel sense, in the underground sense.

By this time we were

living together. We were impossible to manage. Rounding everybody up to rehearse was the bane of my existence. So we determined the best thing was that we all moved in together. Later it took on a socio-political dimension, but at first it was pure expediency. We lived in an old dentist surgery and rehearsed in the store front. I'd take an amp into the kitchen and play riffs, and Tyner would pencil lyrics at the kitchen table.

That's how we wrote "Kick Out The Jams" and a lot of the songs on our first album. Rob had said that he wrote the lyrics for "Kick Out The Jams" to the band.

He felt we were trying to change him,

and there was a lot of that going

on, inter-band pressure to conform. But I think the song reflects our commitment to this idea of a high-energy performance, "*the sound that abounds and resounds and rebounds off the ceiling*" is all about Detroit's

Grande Ballroom, and how you could get a great guitar sound in that '30s ballroom with those big Marshall amps. "Starship" was all Tyner, he wrote the lyrics and the tune, and Fred and I helped him put it together. "Come Together" was a Fred riff.

If you're an unsigned band and can draw 3,000 people, the labels will find you. Danny Fields, the talent scout at Elektra, came to see us. During negotiations, he asked if there were any other bands like the MC5. I said, "No, there's nobody like the MC5, but there is a band you should hear, our brother band, The Psychedelic Stooges." Both bands got signed at the same time.

MC5 was unique. There weren't a lot of two-guitar combinations in the '60s and if you deconstructed our music, that's at the core. Fred and I developed

an ability to play off each other, independent but interconnected. We were conscious of this, we talked about it and worked on it and took a lot of acid together playing guitar for hours. Rob Tyner was unique as well. He was so original, with a big mind, a hungry mind. He was this skinny guy with a gap in his teeth, glasses and kinky hair. That shouldn't work in a rock band, but he was completely different to everybody else in the game and way better than everybody else. What an incredible dude he was.

The consensus was that the MC5 was at its best as a live performing band, so that's how we did the first album. We thought it was an unorthodox way to present a new band and we were all for breaking through orthodoxy. That period was the apotheosis of the MC5 and we wanted to capture that on record. We played the Grande Ballroom every week for two or three years, and we really refined and developed our performance there. We brought in this whole concept of a high-energy performance and we worked, danced, jumped around and they cheered us on.

That's where the MC5 found its connection to the audience, communicating on a level that no other

band could. We talked to the kids about what really mattered, the draft, the police and the war. We addressed these things head on. On a great night we were religious. We wanted to record that, make a historical document of a night at an MC5 show at the Grande Ballroom in 1968.

Kick Out The Jams was recorded around Halloween in 1968 and came out in 1969. Elektra told us if we didn't like the recording we could do it again, and I didn't like it. We were rattled by the pressure, and I hit a bum note on the first song, "Ramblin' Rose", when my low E went out of tune and that threw me off my game. But the rest of the band, Sinclair and Elektra insisted it was fantastic so I went with it. I wasn't happy but I've gotten over that. It's a great artefact of an MC5 performance. It's ragged, loose, but with incredible energy and enthusiasm. Elektra told us we had complete control over our advertising, so when Hudson's – a huge department store in Detroit – refused to carry the record because of the expletives, we had one of our artists make up an ad that said 'Fuck Hudson's'. We put the Elektra logo on and sent them the bill. They paid it and fired us.



Come together: MC5 and The Stooges pose for a photo with friends and record executives as they sign contracts with Elektra in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1968

WE WERE WITHOUT a label for a matter of days. We had national momentum, the band was riding the wave of the entire alternative youth movement and Atlantic saw us as the next level of progression in rock music. Jerry Wexler signed us as his passing shot to the music business – “I’m going to leave you a little something to remember me by. Good luck.”

When it came to our second album, *Back In The USA*, we talked to different producers but were kind of snobby about them. We talked to Brad Shapiro and Dave Crawford, who later had great success with The J Geils Band. We also talked to a British producer who showed me pornographic Polaroids of his girlfriend and kept asking where he could get cocaine. Then we met Jon Landau, who was one of the most respected rock writers of his day. He understood the band, the connection with the audience, the entire cultural context. When he came on board, we knew we were taking a chance, but we believed in taking chances.

We had very little experience in the studio. We were used to getting in and out in three hours because Edwin Starr was waiting, and none of the technicians understood that we liked having our guitars distorted. But it wasn’t the Detroit ethic, which was defined by Motown. It was a constant battle with technicians but we had a talented engineer for *Back In The USA*, Jim Bruzzese, and he worked out the tones of the instruments. But it was a gruelling process. For the first time, we had time to analyse what we were doing wrong but we didn’t know how to fix it. We’d do a take and find glaring problems. The rhythm section struggled. Tempos were all over the map. It was too loose. We had so much trouble with the bass we floated the idea of bringing in an outside player, but I ended up playing it.

With *Back In The USA*, I wanted to answer the critics. When you’re young and have your heart and soul invested in your music and people criticise you, I felt wounded, mortified that some critics didn’t like the MC5 and responded in a knee jerk fashion. I didn’t want to change the style of the band, I wanted to show people that my band could play. It was extremely tight, all the tempos were just right. The songwriting process was the same as before. Fred, Rob and I would write separately then get together in the kitchen with a guitar and work out how to time it right, trying 10 different riffs to find the one that fit the lyric. But the songwriting got much better, especially as Fred emerged with these great songs like “Shakin’ Street”.

I wanted the second album to be perfect but we swerved too far to the right. That was the MC5: we were all about over-reaction. We over-reacted to everything. We couldn’t see how radically different it was. It was full of these short, intense songs and old rock’n’roll covers from our early days



The 'Fuck Hudson's' ad that lost the MC5 their Elektra contract

– like Little Richard’s “Tutti Frutti” and Chuck Berry’s “Back In The USA” – during a time of endless noodling and 15-minute drum solos. It sounded completely different to the improvised, free rock of *Kick Out The Jams* and that confused our core constituency in Detroit even though it was still overtly political.

When I got out of prison in 1979, I came to London and started meeting punk musicians like Nick Lowe, Joe Strummer and Billy Bragg. They all told me they didn’t much like *Kick Out The Jams*, it was too wild, but they all loved *Back In The USA*. The British pop sensibility couldn’t handle *Kick Out The Jams*, but *Back In The USA* was tight, concise, focused.

Around the same time John Sinclair was sentenced to nine-and-a-half years in prison for possession of two marijuana cigarettes. He was the scapegoat for the MC5. We lost our mentor, our interlocutor to the outside world and were struggling, adrift. I tried to get Jon Landau to manage us. Maybe he knew it was too much trouble. He went with Springsteen in the end. Springsteen just wanted to succeed. He wasn’t shooting dope and trying to destroy the government.

REUNITED

"I NEVER THOUGHT THE MC5 WOULD GET A SECOND LIFE..."

Wayne Kramer on reforming the MC5 in 2003

► “One of the MC5 widows mistakenly allowed Levi’s to licence MC5’s image. We got in touch and offered them a solution – to get the surviving band members and special guests for a one-off show at the 100 Club that would be free for fans. We’d record the show and share it. They saw it was a good deal. We brought in Lemmy and Dave Vanian to play with us. We did the gig and it was great fun so we asked a booking



MC5: (l-r) Wayne Kramer, Dennis Thompson, Michael Davis, in London, 2003

agent to get an offer for three shows in Detroit, LA and New York, and in two days we had a world tour. It was like the whole world wanted to hear our music. It was an unexpected chapter in my life and great fun right up to the last show we played with Mike Davis last summer, but then Mike took ill and died. I never thought MC5 would get a second life. I’m very grateful they did.”

→ In 1971, we made a second album for Atlantic. *High Time* was our greatest achievement. Hard drugs had arrived but we were all still tight with each other because the music was all we had that was working. Making the record was gratifying. We knew we had written a bunch of great songs like Fred's "Over And Over" and Rob's "Future/Now" and we knew how to be creative in the studio. Dennis had used a click track for *Back In The USA* and that showed him how to tighten up his tempos, and if Michael Davis made a mistake on bass we would just keep going like we did onstage and we knew he could fix it later.

The co-producer, Geoffrey Haslam, was a great collaborator, a British guy who'd been in a band called The Undertakers and moved over to producing. He would get in among us as if he was a member of the band and gently nudge us. He didn't make us do one thing or the other, he worked with us, and the process was really enjoyable.

We thought we had one last chance with this album, maybe it would still be OK. We knew the formula we wanted – high-energy, guitar-dominated rock – and believed that when the world heard it, we could go out there and really be who we were and kick out the jams, become a significant part of the world community of musicians. And I think we knew if it didn't work out, it would be pretty hard to make anything happen. We needed a great record and I think we made one, but with no management, a terrible reputation on the touring circuit, huge bills at the record company, personal and drug problems, it was too late.

Ahmet Ertegun [head of Atlantic] didn't really know about the band except that we were trouble. I asked him for money to pay our taxes and he said, "I'm not sending good money after bad." Then he turned his back and began talking on the phone in French. I stood in his office with my dick in my hands. I was mad at him, but I poisoned myself. Atlantic took out one ad for *High Time*, a half-page in *Rolling Stone* we

shared with The Allman Brothers Band. That was it. The script had already been written, and it was, "Move over boys, there are new bands coming."

In 1972, we had a tour of Europe and Tyner wouldn't go. I was a drug addict and we were all alcoholics – we used vodka and heroin to dull the pain of failure, rejection and envy – and my bad behaviour bothered him. I don't blame him.

I was a mess. Dennis wouldn't go. Mike had been fired, so it was just me and Fred. We hired a bass player and drummer and met them in the dressing room on the first night. Needless to say, that tour was not a success. We split on New Year's Eve, 1972.

IT'S INTERESTING TO speculate what might have happened if MC5 had not self-destructed. Maybe if Albert Ayler and John Coltrane hadn't died and MC5 hadn't self-destructed, we'd live in a different world musically. It was like there was a combined effort to move in a direction with the free jazz and free rock movements that, combined with the political movement, was too powerful to survive. Instead, the music business grew by leaps and bounds and we were forgotten. Nobody looked back. Punk happened while I was in prison and I disassociated myself from it because punk had different connotations there, but when I got out I saw a generation had rejected the excesses of the '70s and gone back to the street. They looked back at music history for something valid and found The Stooges and MC5. I'm not objective. I'm hopelessly connected to the whole thing. But there aren't many bands that continue to be discovered by emerging generations. There have been tens of thousands of bands since 1968, they come and go, but the MC5 are still there, locked in amber.

It will always be that moment in time, these young guys who thought they could change music and change the world, with unlimited enthusiasm, militantly against nihilism, ethically committed to action. That's locked in time. You can always go back to get a piece of that. ☺



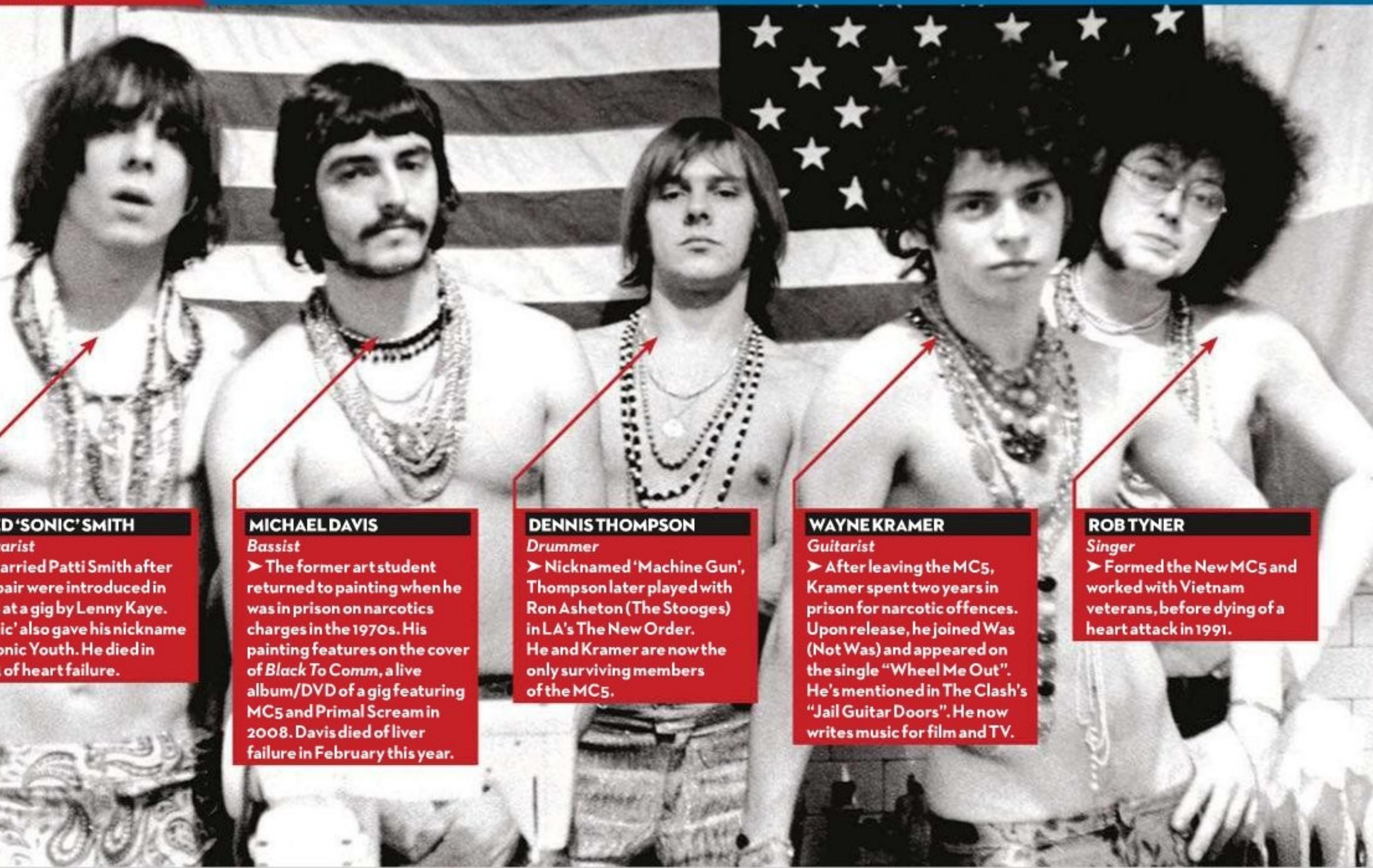
MOTOR CITY HEROES

"IT'S WHAT I ASPIRED TO..."

Wayne Kramer
on Motown, the real music of Detroit

► "The Beatles were pretty good, but man for man that Motown recording band was better. They were better musicians, jazz musicians applying skills to pop music. And they weren't playing down to pop, they played complex chord structures and melodies, and sophisticated rhythms. For a musician growing up in Detroit they were the cat's pyjamas, the high-water mark. If you could play like those guys, then you were saying something. But nobody could play like James Jamerson, nobody. But that's what I aspired to. It would have been the greatest gig in the world, working every day with guys that could play that well."

MEET THE BAND



FRED 'SONIC' SMITH

Guitarist

► Married Patti Smith after the pair were introduced in 1976 at a gig by Lenny Kaye. 'Sonic' also gave his nickname to Sonic Youth. He died in 1994 of heart failure.

MICHAEL DAVIS

Bassist

► The former art student returned to painting when he was in prison on narcotics charges in the 1970s. His painting features on the cover of *Black To Comm*, a live album/DVD of a gig featuring MC5 and Primal Scream in 2008. Davis died of liver failure in February this year.

DENNIS THOMPSON

Drummer

► Nicknamed 'Machine Gun', Thompson later played with Ron Asheton (The Stooges) in LA's The New Order. He and Kramer are now the only surviving members of the MC5.

WAYNE KRAMER

Guitarist

► After leaving the MC5, Kramer spent two years in prison for narcotic offences. Upon release, he joined Was (Not Was) and appeared on the single "Wheel Me Out". He's mentioned in The Clash's "Jail Guitar Doors". He now writes music for film and TV.

ROB TYNER

Singer

► Formed the New MC5 and worked with Vietnam veterans, before dying of a heart attack in 1991.



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Phil Manzanera

“We were hellbent on doing something innovative...” Roxy Music’s radical guitarist remembers a life in the musical leftfield

THE FIRST SOUND to be heard on Jay-Z and Kanye West’s 2011 collaboration *Watch The Throne* is Phil Manzanera’s guitar, sampled from his 1978 album *K-Scope*. The beautifully skewed, constantly progressive playing of this 61-year-old Anglo-Colombian has penetrated deep into popular culture, most notably via Roxy Music, of whose work he remains justifiably proud. “When I met the guys I knew immediately that I wanted to be part of it,” he says. “They were brilliant – and so grown-up. They all had cars and bank accounts!” Roxy aside, the list of Manzanera’s regular collaborators – Eno, John Cale, Robert Wyatt – reads like a Who’s Who of leftfield British innovators, a group to which he comfortably belongs.



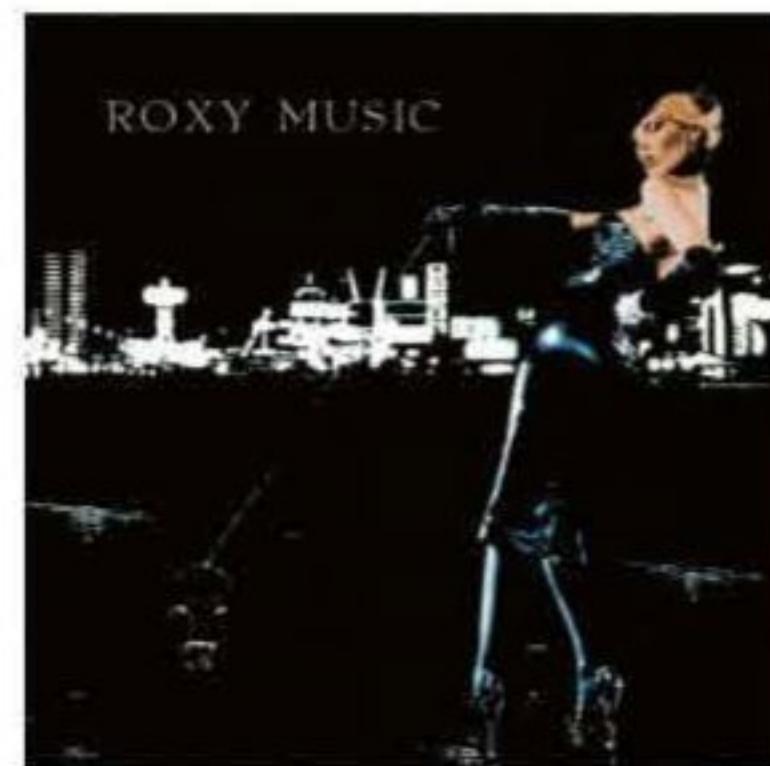
ROXY MUSIC ROXY MUSIC

ISLAND, 1972.
CHART POSITION: 10

Chic, smart, surprisingly raw. Arriving in Bowie’s slipstream, Roxy’s seismic debut exerted a massive influence on the music of the coming decade and beyond.

I’d been through a rigorous tutelage and I could tell the difference between what was good and what wasn’t. I met them at the audition and immediately thought, this is serendipity. I just knew it was going to work. I joined officially in the first week of February 1972. In the second week the first Roxy Music contract was signed, and by the beginning of March I was in the studio recording the first album. I think I must have been the lucky charm. We weren’t signed to a record deal, the management company was paying for it and wanted to keep it very cheap. They suggested Command, this old-fashioned BBC studio at the top end of Piccadilly. It was wonderfully atmospheric, very British. Our management also looked after King Crimson, so they suggested Pete Sinfield as producer. He was a wordsmith, so he could relate to how good the lyrics were and kept an eye on that. It was our first time in the studio, we were all nervous, but we’d been playing the stuff live so we just got stuck in. I listen back to it and think it could have sounded a million times better, but it did capture a moment. “Virginia Plain” wasn’t on the original album. We were of the mindset that it wasn’t cool to put singles on albums. We recorded it in August, after the album was out, and that became our foot in the door.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



ROXY MUSIC FOR YOUR PLEASURE

ISLAND, 1973. CHART POSITION: 4

A landmark record on which the songs become longer and more involved, the playing more daring, and Chris Thomas’ production crisper. Meanwhile Ferry takes the pop song to some strange and wonderful new places.

We’d made some inroads in America, and while we were in LA we met John Cale, who was A&R at Warner. We asked him if he’d produce our next album, and he suggested Chris Thomas. In the end we started recording with John Anthony – he produced “Pyjamarama” – but we felt it wasn’t going to work. By coincidence, Chris was remixing *The Dark Side Of The Moon* at the other end of AIR Studios. Contact was made and suddenly the other guy was out and we got Chris. He taught us everything we know about production. He had worked with George

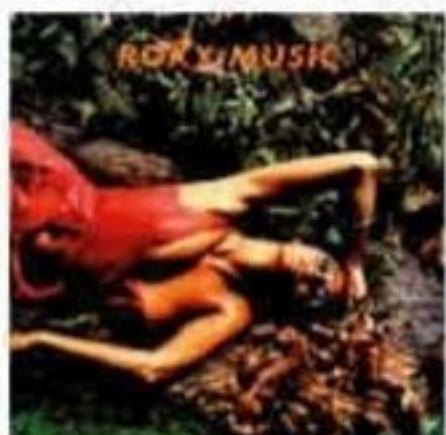
Martin and The Beatles, and we were lucky enough to become part of that legacy. The album still sounds absolutely amazing.

We were going out on tour in a couple of weeks so it was quite demanding, but we were very excited, and hellbent on looking forward and doing something innovative. I remember that moment when the backing track would be done and Bryan would come in to do the vocal, and we would have no idea what he was going to sing about: at the end of something like “In Every Dream Home A Heartache” you would literally cheer. He was coming up with absolutely fantastic words and a series of quite simple chords, to which we could then all put in all our own stuff to create this musical context for his lyrics, like all those solos on “Editions Of You”. There was a lot of space for that. It’s a very dangerous and exciting way of working, and that tension ran through the whole of Roxy.

It was quirky and a bit mad. The sense of fun was very much a part of it, but it started to get a little bit eggy with Eno towards the end of the record. He was starting to recognise that perhaps being in a band wasn’t for him. He wasn’t designed that way! He was feeling uncomfortable having to deal with band decisions all the time. There were strong views, creative tensions, and Chris Thomas had to deal with it. When Brian left after the album we seriously thought about jacking it all in, but me and Andy [Mackay] said, “Hang on, we’ve come this far. Maybe this is an opportunity.” We were pragmatic, and thank God we were. It was the end of that beginning phase, and we moved into Phase II.



Shades of Manzanera:
launching his *Firebird VII*
(Expression) album at
the Gibson showroom,
London, November 12,
2008. Left, in his famous
Roxy-era 'fly' sunglasses



ROXY MUSIC STRANDED

ISLAND, 1973.
CHART POSITION: 1

A mere six months after *For Your Pleasure*, Roxy reconvene at AIR

with Chris Thomas. The departure of Eno, replaced by Eddie Jobson, brings a new sense of cohesion.

I was very close to Brian and was very upset by his leaving, but I subsequently carried on working with him. During *Stranded* I was doing Eno's first solo album [*Here Come The Warm Jets*] down in Clapham from 12 'til six and then getting the tube up to Oxford Circus to do *Stranded*, but not mentioning it to the other Bryan. Without Eno we had to really think about how it was going to work. It forced the issue about us integrating more, and having Eddie brought a new musicality to it. We could try things like "A Song For Europe". The piano playing on that required a proper pianist, and it also brought in Andy's formal musical background. "Amazona" was my first Roxy co-write. I had this riff and this mad, mad machine which was made to simulate Eno's treatments on the VCS3 on the guitar. It only worked once properly, and that was on the recording of that track. It's extraordinary. I even managed to slip in a bit of 7/8 time signature without Bryan or anyone else noticing, although it meant for the next 35 years it was never played live because Bryan could never quite get the hang of coming in right on the beat. On the last tour we ended up playing it, but it was a struggle.



BRIAN ENO TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN (BY STRATEGY)

ISLAND, 1974.
CHART POSITION: N/A

Manzanera is credited as arranger, musician, co-writer and co-producer on Eno's second solo album, which marked the arrival of his famous Oblique Strategies system. Guests on the album include Robert Wyatt and Phil Collins.

As soon as [Roxy's fourth LP] *Country Life* was finished I was back in the studio with Brian. We just continued what we'd done in Roxy, experimenting and using the studio as an instrument. Brian had his little black book and would be writing the lyrics as we went along, and he was starting to develop the Oblique Strategies cards, which we had a lot of fun with. If we were ever stuck for ideas we'd draw them out and do exactly what it said on the card. If it said: GAFFER TAPE YOUR MOUTH, we'd all have to gaffer our mouths. "Now what?" It would make you listen without talking, that was the idea. There were more esoteric ones in there, of course, and we were so into it that all the musicians jumped on board. I introduced Robert Wyatt to Eno and they got on really well straight away, and Phil Collins was there because Brian had helped out on a Genesis album before. It was very low key and nice. There was no money in it, everyone was just helping each other out. We weren't being A&R'd at all. There was no supervision. You can probably tell...



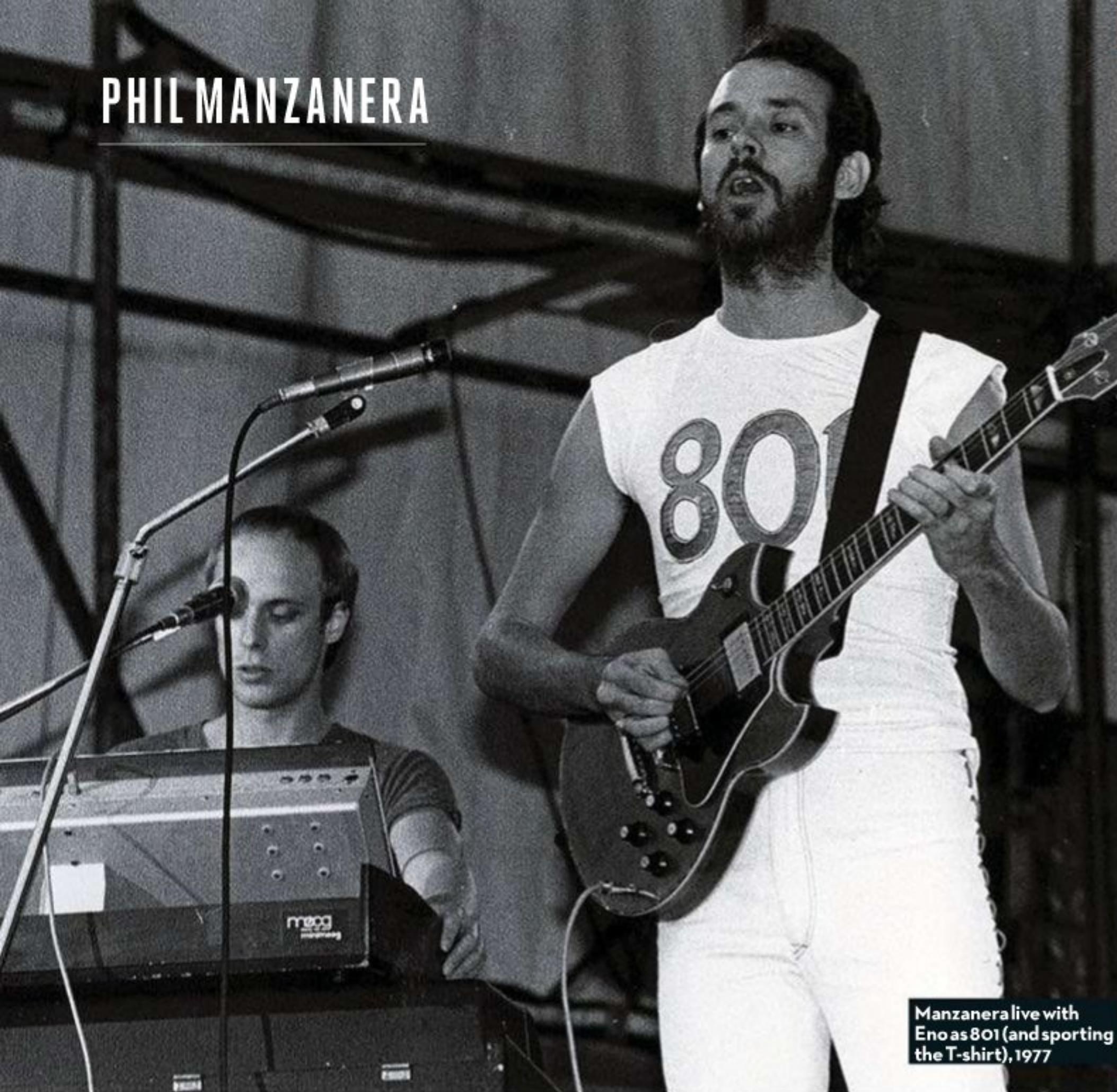
JOHN CALE FEAR

ISLAND, 1974.
CHART POSITION: N/A

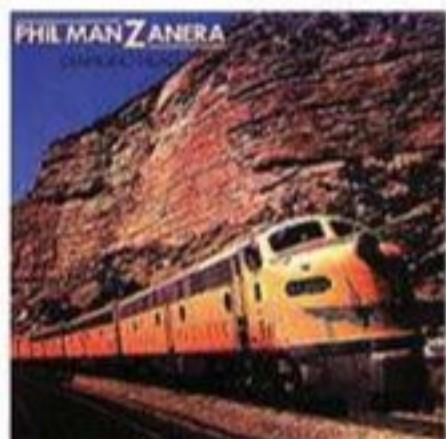
As executive producer, Manzanera plays both guitar and nursemaid on Cale's classic solo set. Eno and Richard Thompson also drop in.

Richard Williams at Island asked me to help John. I was 24 and The Velvet Underground were my heroes, so I swallowed hard – um, OK! I was amazed by the songs that John had. I was expecting really violent kinds of stuff, but it was a beautiful mixture. Living on the West Coast, he'd been quite influenced by Brian Wilson and so his more classical, melodic side came out. I used the drummer we'd used on *Taking Tiger Mountain...* [Fred Smith] and a bass player [Archie Leggett] who I loved for his work with Kevin Ayers. The four of us went down to a little rehearsal place on the King's Road, then did some tracks at Olympic, and eventually ended up at Sound Techniques in Chelsea, with the famous John Wood engineering. Richard Thompson passed by, all sorts of people. The album was progressing but John was going through some strange times with his wife and drink and drugs – he'd invariably not be there, or would come in a bit sloshed and go to sleep. So I invited Eno down and we started doing things to the tracks. John had the great songs there anyway, we were just adding to it. He was always great fun and great company, though. He can talk about anything. Probably talks too much.

PHIL MANZANERA



Manzanera live with Eno as 801 (and sporting the T-shirt), 1977



PHIL MANZANERA DIAMOND HEAD

ISLAND, 1975.
CHART POSITION: N/A

Briefly free of band duties, Manzanera

embarks on his first solo record with the help of Eno, Wyatt and most of Roxy.

Andy and Bryan had made solo albums, and I wanted to do one, too. It was just an excuse for me to get my friends in and have a good time. It was all about collaborating in the studio. I'd have a few chord sequences for a song and we'd all just finish it off. We made Robert [Wyatt] sing in Spanish on "Frontera". He got a dictionary and just copied some lines out. He had some history with Majorca and he could pronounce the words, but it wasn't grammatically correct. I'm fluent in Spanish,

"801 never would have lasted because by the end everyone was going to kill each other"

PHIL MANZANERA

and people in South America and Spain still ask me, "What the hell is that song about?" I say, "Oh, it's very Dada." "But it doesn't make any sense!" "No, but it sounds great!" The clock was ticking, I had to finish on a certain day and get on the plane to Toronto to start a tour with Roxy. I had a bit of a physical breakdown. I remember we arrived and got busted by the Mounties, the tour manager had

some dope or something. Bryan answered the door of his hotel room wearing a polka-dot smoking jacket – "Yeeeess?" – but I was petrified. That was the culmination of a pretty punishing schedule.

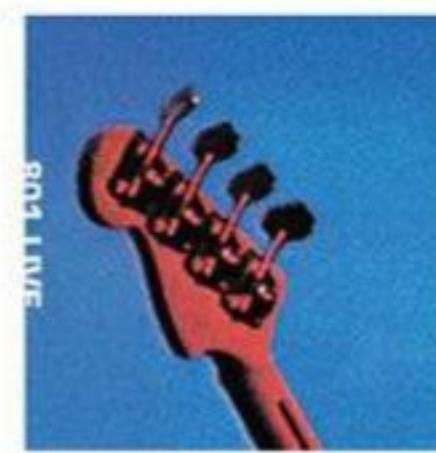


QUIET SUN MAINSTREAM

ISLAND, 1975.
CHART POSITION: N/A

Recorded concurrently with Diamond Head, Manzanera reunites

his pre-Roxy band to record an album of noodly, gently undulating prog rock. Without telling Island, I decided I was going to do a Quiet Sun album as well, five years after we'd split up. I left school in December '69 and spent a year trying to do Quiet Sun. When [bassist] Bill MacCormick left to join Robert Wyatt I thought, 'Oh well, that's it.' We'd been turned down by everybody. Muff Winwood turned us down and he ended up as studio manager at the place we recorded Mainstream, in Basing Street. After we finished I went up to him with his rejection letter and this fantastic *Melody Maker* review: "Up yours, mate!" I spent half the day upstairs doing Diamond Head, and then six to 12 downstairs doing Mainstream. Consequently a lot of the same people are on both albums. We recorded it live, really, then I just slipped it to the record company: "Oh, by the way, there's another album here." "Well, what the fuck are we going to do with it? And what kind of music is this?" I like it even more now than I did at the time. It came out and was pretty much forgotten about, but it seems to have a life of its own. People from the most bizarre places love it. It's got some magic about it.

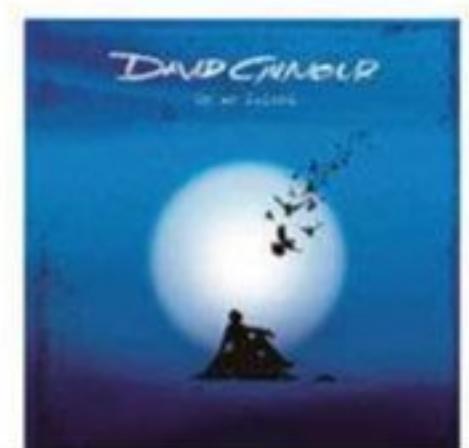


801 801 LIVE

1976, EXPRESSION.
CHART POSITION: N/A
Recorded live at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Eno and Manzanera's short-lived concept

pooled their repertoire alongside covers of "You Really Got Me" and a seven-minute "Tomorrow Never Knows".

Me, Eno, [writer and musician] Ian MacDonald and Bill MacCormick went to a cottage in Shropshire for five days with a tape recorder and came up with this idea of forming a band that would only last six weeks as a concept, and which would pitch musos against non-musos. The drummer, Simon Phillips, has become a master session player. He was only 19 at the time but was already amazing. And we had Francis Monkman from Curved Air, whose chops were incredible. The whole run of the thing was technique against non-technique, but no-one could understand what the hell we were doing. Really, it was a live version of mine and Eno's solo stuff from the previous two years. We cobbled together all our material and did three gigs: a tiny place in Cromer, the Reading Festival and the one we recorded. It never would have lasted because by the end everyone was going to kill each other. It self-destructed, which was the intention, but it has legs. We recently brought out these deluxe editions and they've been incredibly popular.



DAVID GILMOUR ON AN ISLAND

EMI, 2006.
CHART POSITION: 1
Manzanera played on Gilmour's first solo album for 22 years,

and then joined his backing band for the subsequent world tour.

I was taken to see David by my brother four years before joining Roxy to ask how you become a professional musician! So I had previous with him, and we'd kept in touch. We'd co-written "One Slip", on *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*, but this was different. There were great expectations, because he hadn't made a solo album for so long. The machinery needed oiling, and I was a catalyst to get the process going. It took a bit of time, but once he was engaged he was brilliant. He's got a wonderful sense of pitch and always wants everything to be bang in tune – I've built a career on being out of tune, so it was a challenge! I wanted to get over the fact he has a great voice. Everyone goes on about his guitar playing, which is immense, but I love his voice. It's totally distinctive, like Wyatt or Jack Bruce. A very British character voice. Bryan and John Cale have that, too. It was a lovely experience which led to a very happy tour. It was, unfortunately, Rick Wright's last tour before he died, but I have lovely memories. I was involved with a No 1 album, which kept me in the game, and to have a friend do well meant a lot.

Roxy Music's The Complete Studio Recordings boxset is released on July 30 on Virgin Records

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Stairway to Magellan,
Dirty Projectors, Greenpoint,
Brooklyn, May 2: (from top)
Dave Longstreth, Haley Dekle,
Amber Coffman, Nat Baldwin

Story: Louis Pattison

Are **Dirty Projectors** the most original and challenging band in America?

And what is the problem with their “incredibly intriguing” leader, **Dave Longstreth**?

Well, it's complicated...

Photos: Pieter M Van Hattem

DAVE LONGSTRETH GAZES out the window, eyes focused at a point on the Greenpoint street outside. He talks slowly and precisely, each word measured, like he's explaining a point he only wants to make once. "I love everyone in this band," he says. "We're all friends on a personal level. I believe in fairness, sharing, generosity and all of those amazing things. But on the level of the music I'm definitely a dictator."

Tell me about when you first met Amber Coffman, asks *Uncut*. There's a short silence. Longstreth excuses himself, stands, and walks out onto the street. Five minutes crawl by. Then, suddenly, he's back. He grabs his coat. "Let's go." Outside, Longstreth strides briskly up the street in the direction of the East River. He does not look back. On a spring day, Williamsburg looks like a dream. Craft beer breweries jostle for space on street corners with artisan bakeries, cycle couriers and Hasidic Jews rub shoulders with plaid-shirted dudes lugging guitar cases along tree-lined avenues.

Earlier that morning, though, the sky is grey with drizzle, and flyposters plastered up and down Bedford advertise today's general strike. Across the river, Occupy Wall Street gather in Union Square, and police in riot gear cluster in the city's financial district lest anyone gets funny ideas about pitching a tent. Greenpoint, in contrast, is all but silent. Traditionally a place of shipbuilding and industry populated largely by the descendants of Polish immigrants, in recent years Brooklyn's northernmost neighbourhood has been invaded by the city's creative class pushing north to populate cheap warehouse space and escape Williamsburg's ratcheting rents.

In a coffee shop on Manhattan Avenue sit Dirty Projectors' Amber Coffman and Haley Dekle. The duo behind the group's booming, contrapuntal vocal harmonies, both are

"It's not like we're Oasis. It's more detailed, more idiosyncratic than that"

DAVE
LONGSTRETH

beautiful – Coffman, Longstreth's girlfriend, slender with pale green, watercolour eyes; her old schoolfriend, Dekle, hiding her dark curls under a black hat sporting a badge that reads 'Imagine Peace'. If their schedule is getting to them, it doesn't show. The last few weeks have been spent in California, where the Projectors have been shooting a film to be released alongside their upcoming sixth studio album, *Swing Lo Magellan*. Longstreth himself is not yet here, having flown back east late last night, but Coffman and Dekle have been back in town a couple of days to perform backing vocals with The Shins, who are playing a three-night residency at Manhattan's 3,000-capacity Terminal 5.

"It's been really fun," beams Amber. "It's always interesting to step in and see how differently other groups communicate, or rehearse or whatever."

The film is, by all accounts, rather more than a music video. Directed by Longstreth with the help of Bobby Bukowski, a cinematographer who worked on *Arlington Road* and *Rampart*, it's an epic, 25-minute affair featuring several songs from the new record, filmed across locations from Malibu to San Diego's Anza-Borrego Desert. "There's bits shot in hills of wild flowers, nature scenes," says Coffman, "and we did two days at this weird ranch with dogs running everywhere." She shows *Uncut* a photo on her phone of a huge lemon left behind from a Sprite commercial, so large it has to be transported on a trailer. "There was all this stuff just lying around on the property, and things just found their way in." Dekle adds, "We were filming a scene and one of the Dalmatians just ran on set. You just run with it."

HERE DIRTY PROJECTORS' last studio album, 2009's *Bitte Orca*, unveiled an idiosyncratic indie-rock steeped in West African guitar music and the millennial R&B popularised by



→ Timbaland in the late '90s, *Swing Lo Magellan* explores a slightly darker, more introverted space. The cascading backing vocals have been toned back, sunny melodies supplanted by something more spontaneous-sounding and unstudied, while lyrics hint at environmental destruction ("Just From Chevron"), shallow materialism (the Coffman-sung "The Socialites") and, on "About To Die", a life frittered away in empty gestures: "Look there: the mirror, a zombie stands staring," sings Longstreth, "Vacant and glaring/ Pronouncing your name as his own..."

This shift in tone is no surprise, as Dirty Projectors have demonstrated consistency in never making the same album twice. In the past, this has manifested in elaborate concepts: 2005's *The Getty Address*, a "glitch opera" taking in the Aztecs, bird watching and the Eagles' Don Henley; or *Rise Above*, an Afro-pop echo of Black Flag's 1981 album *Damaged*, recreated entirely from memory. The one constant throughout has been Longstreth's remarkable voice – a cousin to Scritti Politti's Green Gartside's, all daring falsetto and darting melisma, never settling on one note when a half dozen might spin the sentiment somewhere new.

"I first saw Dave perform in 2003 at a coffee shop," recalls Coffman. "It was just him, solo, acoustic guitar... I was blown away. He just commanded the room. Three years later I was on tour with another band I was in and saw they were playing SXSW. I ran to the show by myself. This time it was a five-man band, totally amazing. After, I introduced myself, asked if we could trade CDs. About a week later Dave was on tour in LA and I went to that show. We started emailing, talking about me coming on tour, and it went from there."

What were your first impressions of him?

"I thought he was incredibly intriguing."

Is he an exceptional character?

"Yeah. Definitely one of a kind. He's most happy when he can be creative. But you need breaks even from that."

Because, you know, especially with him... he just puts the pedal to the metal. He goes until he can't go any more. That's just his style."

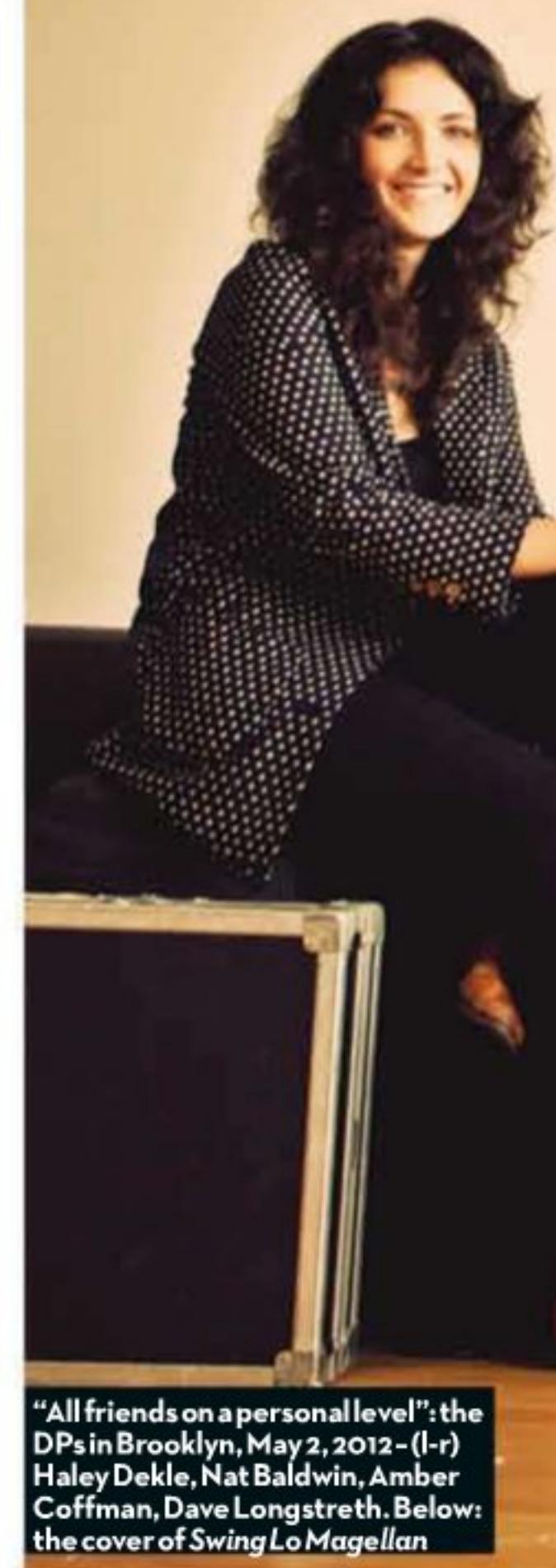
For 2009's *Bitte Orca*, there was the suggestion Longstreth was loosening his grip, with two songs, the R&B-channelling "Stillness Is The Move" and the chamber-pop heartache of "Two Doves" led by Coffman and Angel Deradoorian, respectively. "He was trying to be really generous to all the players in the band, crafting things so people could do what they were best at doing," says Coffman. "He created this illusion in a way that it was a 'band' band, like the Chili Peppers or Led Zep. When in actual fact, it's all him."

"There's always been the sense that Dave's searching for something just out of reach"

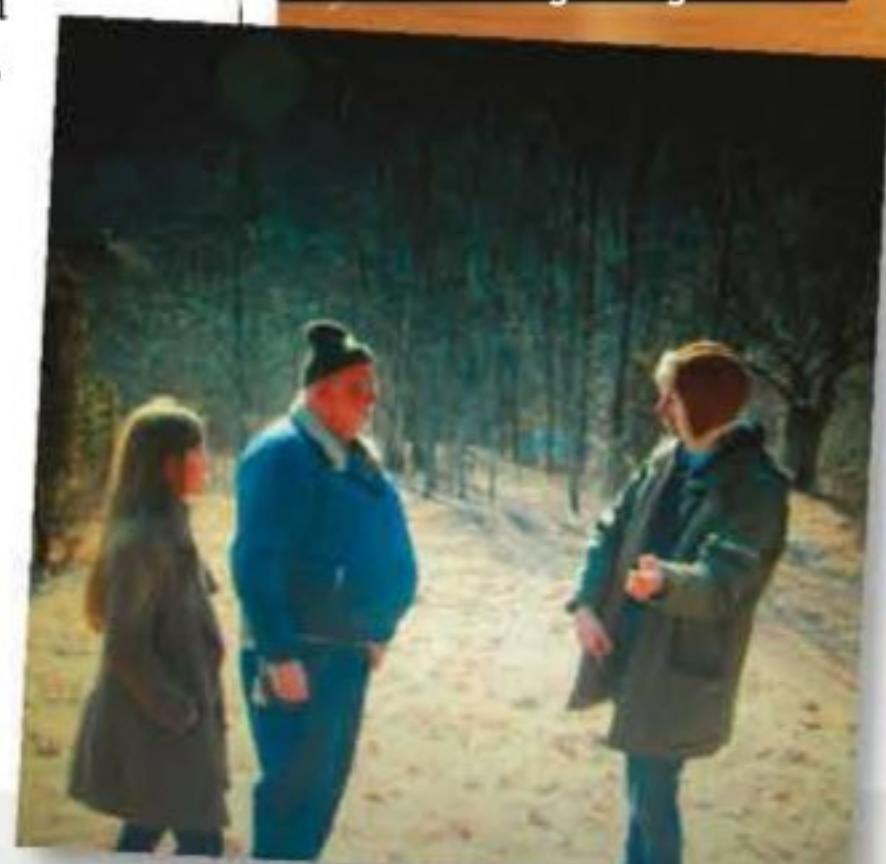
NAT BALDWIN

DAVE LONGSTRETH IS representative of an ambitious new breed of Brooklyn musician, one that emerged from the city's lofts and warehouse spaces over the last decade or so. A scholar of music from classic rock to the crankiest DIY experimentalism, cognisant in everything from lo-fi production techniques and classical composition, he's become a familiar creative presence on the New York underground. Prior to Vampire Weekend, Ezra Koenig played awhile in the Dirty Projectors live band, meeting Longstreth after he wrote a glowing review of the

Projectors' 2003 record *The Glad Fact*. Björk joined the lineup for 2010's "Mount Wittenburg Orca" EP, proclaiming herself "honoured" to sing with the band. For their 2009 charity project *Dark Was The Night*, Aaron and Bryce Dessner of The National teamed Longstreth up with David Byrne, Byrne supplying some lost 1970s Talking Heads lyrics that Longstreth reworked into "Knotty Pine". "It seemed to us that Dave Longstreth was the David Byrne of our generation, so the pairing seemed natural," says Aaron Dessner. "They're both incredibly



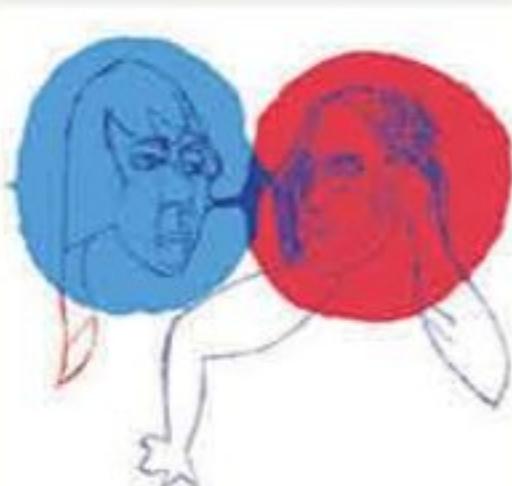
"All friends on a personal level": the DPs in Brooklyn, May 2, 2012 - (l-r) Haley Dekle, Nat Baldwin, Amber Coffman, Dave Longstreth. Below: the cover of *Swing Lo Magellan*



HOW TO BUY

ASTRAL PROJECTORS

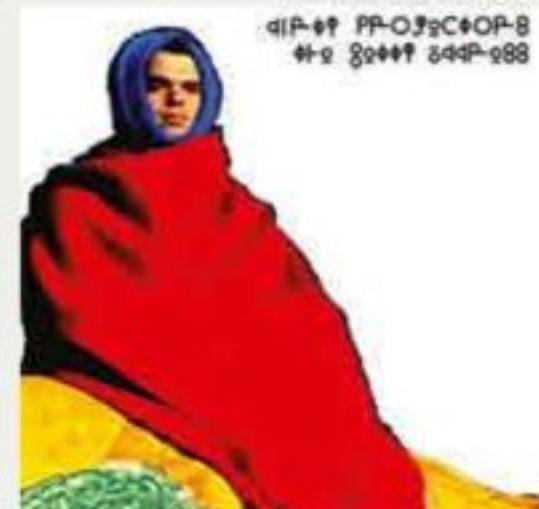
Your guide to Dave Longstreth and co on record



SLAVES' GRAVES AND BALLADS

(WESTERN VINYL, 2004) The first full flowering of Longstreth's songcraft in all its cryptic, visionary glory. A single album comprised of two 2004 EPs, the first half finds Longstreth's songs accompanied by a 10-piece chamber orchestra, while the second half pares things back to his yearning vocal and knotty, idiosyncratic guitar lines.

8/10



THE GETTY ADDRESS

(WESTERN VINYL, 2005) A sumptuously arranged, digitally edited "glitch opera" that constructs an epic mythology taking in the Aztecs, post-9/11 America, Big Oil and Longstreth's childhood hobby, birdwatching – all sung from the perspective of a fictional, imagined version of the Eagles' Don Henley.

7/10



RISE ABOVE

(ROUGH TRADE, 2007) Black Flag's 1981 LP *Damaged* provided source material for the group's breakout 2007 album – Longstreth's attempt to recall and reinterpret the American hardcore classic after not having heard it for 15 years. A smoking live band bring notes of Afro-pop and proggish tangle, plus Amber Coffman's ecstatic vocal bursts.

8/10



BITTE ORCA

(DOMINO, 2009) "Cannibal Resource" and "No Intention" finds Dirty Projectors closer than ever to transmuting high concepts and leftfield influences into colourful pop. Here and there, Longstreth throws focus onto his bandmates – Amber Coffman's R&B-inspired "Stillness Is The Move" and Angel Deradoorian's heartbroken "Two Doves".

9/10



MOUNT WITTENBURG ORCA

(DIGITAL, 2010; DOMINO, 2011) Björk plays the role of "mother whale" in this largely vocal EP, inspired by Amber Coffman's sighting of a pod off of California's Point Reyes National Seashore. First performed live as a benefit for advocacy group Housing Works, all proceeds were donated to the National Geographic Society's ocean initiatives.

8/10



innovative and the sort of musicians who are constantly pushing their craft forward into unexpected places."

Longstreth's collaborators routinely describe him in superhuman terms. Nat Baldwin, a double bassist and keen improviser who joined the band before 2006's "New Attitude", recalls his first tour as a Projector. "Dave had decided to play guitar right-handed, but the strings were still left-handed, so he just span it upside down and relearned. It sounded kind of fucked up, but it worked. That sense of challenge was a big part of things back then."

"Around the same time, he was putting together this pretty ambitious nine-person band... I remember a rehearsal where Dave was playing the guitar part, showing the drummer some complex rhythm, polyrhythmic to the guitar part, and singing this horn part that was more disconnected still. Like patting your head and rubbing your stomach..."

And doing something else with a third hand.

"Right. Such complex bits that people couldn't do it on their one instrument. But he could do, like, three at once."

One thing that's surprising is that as much as the band has changed over time, listening back to the very earliest records, it's all there.

"Right... he's always had a really clear vision. But there's always been the sense that he's searching for something else, something just out of reach."

Suddenly, Dave Longstreth is outside, tall and animated with a sharp gaze and hair down to his shoulders, talking quickly on a mobile phone. He comes in, greets *Uncut*, orders a wrap and sits down. We put it to him that a creative idea is not interesting if it's not challenging in some way. "That's definitely true," he nods. "There's something beautiful about simplicity, yet simplicity can seem like the hardest thing to achieve. To say something personal and true that is also just a self-evident, unforced statement... that is one of the pieces of the spirit of the new album. But yeah, I do like things that stretch what we collectively feel we can do."

For *Swing Lo Magellan*, Longstreth decamped to Delaware County, four hours north-west of New York. Settling in an old house amid 53 acres, he started writing and recording – a process that stretched out to 12 months. "Against the

deeply mobile, cosmopolitan nature of being a touring musician, it felt like a welcome contrast to go up there and be essentially alone."

It reminded him of his earliest musical recordings, he says, made while he was a student at Yale in the early noughties. A scholarly kid from rural Connecticut, Longstreth was accepted to the Ivy League university to study music and art, but soon found its culture rubbed him up the wrong way. "Knowledge wasn't an end to itself, it was a tool to the acquisition of influence and money. And the tone was self-important, haughty, but all about canons. Instead of cultivating the actual thing, a creative person, you're creating a weird kind of administrator. I felt I had to get kind of antagonistic not to get caught up in that. But those were super-formative months for me, in terms of creating a personal style."

Longstreth retired to his dorm room and started work on the music that would appear on his 2002 debut, *The Graceful Fallen Mango*. At weekends and holidays, he'd visit his brother Jake in Portland, Oregon, where he was switched on to the area's DIY underground – the likes of Phil Elverum's pre-Mount Eerie group The Microphones, Little Wings, Adrian Orange. "There I really learnt about underground music," he says.

AFTER 20 MINUTES of chat, conversation turns to Longstreth's working methods, where things start to go awry. A question about whether he "micromanages" his band invites a stern silence. Use of the term "control freak" elicits a lengthy monologue in which Longstreth talks about the art of filmmaking, invokes Rembrandt and culminates with "...so in the context of rock music, I guess you could say, yeah, I'm definitely [sourly] 'a control freak'."

But you object to the term.

"It's just fucking *dumb*. It's not like we're Oasis. It's not like we have some chords, a chorus, throw down a beat, maybe a fill. It's more detailed, more idiosyncratic than that."

Shortly after, Longstreth suggests we go elsewhere.

For 10 minutes, we follow him around Greenpoint as he

DIRTY ICON #1

"DEAR MR HENLEY..."

How DPs got in touch with the Eagles star...

► Just before the release of *The Getty Address*, Longstreth wrote to Don Henley to furnish him with a copy of their 2005 album, featuring a protagonist that, by no coincidence, shares the name of the Eagles vocalist.

In the letter, Longstreth talks of Henley's 2001 testimony to the US senate on the homogenisation of American FM radio in the hands of Clear Channel, waxes lyrical about *Hotel California* and describes the transformation of America at the hands of commerce: "...if Woody Guthrie were alive today, this would be his biggest concern."

Henley never responded, but Longstreth reveals that 2010's performances of *The Getty Address* gave him another chance to make contact. "When we did *Getty* in Los Angeles, we invited him to come down. I actually heard he wanted to, but it was his daughter's birthday that night. So he knows it exists in the world, in some way."



→ tells *Uncut* how we don't understand his band, how they shouldn't be judged by the standards of other rock groups, how there are many far more important things that he could be doing in the five days that he's back in New York. A few blocks later, our forced march halts at a café. Longstreth orders an iced coffee and plants himself on a bench outside. With impeccable timing, a woman walks over and asks us to mind her dog while she walks in to get a drink. The dog sniffs gingerly at Longstreth's hand.

Longstreth explains how *Swing Lo Magellan* plays down Dirty Projectors' past referential tendencies. "Rather than taking disparate strands of a cultural conversation and synthesising them into something of the moment, it was about finding something that felt personally true... like a little scribble on the earth."

With its lyrical visions of abandoned banks and cooking garbage, the song "Gun Has No Trigger" seems to allude to a cultural impotency, or a generation that has failed to discover its potential. I suggest that nothing he writes has a whiff of polemic, but Longstreth dislikes the implication his songs are cryptic. "I dunno... I did think of the lyrics on the new album as direct as I could. I thought of it as like a set of topical songs. I feel like so much music in the last 10 years is so obtuse, lyrically so abstract. The hardest thing is to write a song that stands by itself. That feels like what it feels like, means what it means."

You said earlier that the Dirty Projectors are unique. Why are people not taking the risks you might be?

"People shouldn't be like me. I'm not asking for that." He shrugs, looks a little bored. "In a way people are way more creative than they've even been, in our little part of the world."

Today, at least, Longstreth declares that he can't really address the lyrics of *Swing Lo*.... "The reason you write a song is that, y'know, that's the way you address something – the image isn't going to gain any force or power by unpacking it."

We can presume that 'Magellan' of the title track is Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer. The sense of a voyage, of exploration or (self-) discovery seems to echo throughout the record: see "See What She Seeing", a search for beauty through a world of "murk and uncertainty"; or the McCartneyish "Dance With You", which finds Longstreth teasing "There is an answer/I haven't found it" and crooning of wanting to "feel the breath/Of a force I cannot explain..." A sort of modern spiritual, *Uncut* ventures.

"It's a song about 'still not having found what you're looking for,'" he shrugs. "But that's the subject of a lot of the music that I write, one way or another."

LONGSTRETH CALLS A cab to Manhattan, where he plans to meet with editors to find someone to help him cut Dirty Projectors' mini-movie. We wander down to the jetty overlooking the East River, the Manhattan skyline stretched out before us. There, we chat about films ("I don't



Björk and Dirty Projectors
onstage at Housing Works
Bookstore Café's 'Live
From Home' benefit
concert series, May 8, 2009



"If you don't want to be here, I don't want you here. It's the best for everyone"

DAVE LONGSTRETH

care about Godard, Cassavetes, all that shit... the last film I enjoyed was *Bridesmaids*") and the ongoing renovation of Brooklyn. "New York changes so fast. The entire riverside here is going to be an open park."

Is that a good thing? Is the old New York being lost?

"Oh, it's a good thing. It's not like there are artists staging happenings in these warehouses... that's 30 years ago the other side of the river. There'll be park space," he says, gazing out across the water. "Girls walking around wearing short skirts, blowing in the breeze."

The cab arrives, and we pull off in the direction of the Brooklyn–Battery Tunnel. On the way, talk turns to singer Angel Deradoorian, who joined the band circa *Rise Above*, now on "indefinite hiatus". Where has she gone?

"Angel is in the midst of the first major relationship of her life, and touring can be pretty hostile to relationships," says Longstreth. "She joined the band when she was 19, and I think it was really great for her. But now, she's 25, she wants to be a songwriter – she needs to be on that quest. We had some long conversations about it and it was hard for us to be honest with one another. But in the end we both wanted the same thing."

This does give us a chance to reflect on the essential spirit of Dirty Projectors. "Being in this band, it's like a series of moments, and you have to want to be inside of that moment. You have to be fully in it. We're not a band that has a coherent brand identity. We've never had the consistency that would require, maybe to our detriment. For me, it's always been about music. If you don't want to be here, I don't want you here. I don't mean that negatively. It's the best for everyone."

We hop out on a teeming Manhattan pavement, and with that, Dave Longstreth is off, striding through the crowd, a man driven, with someplace to be and something high on his mind. ☺

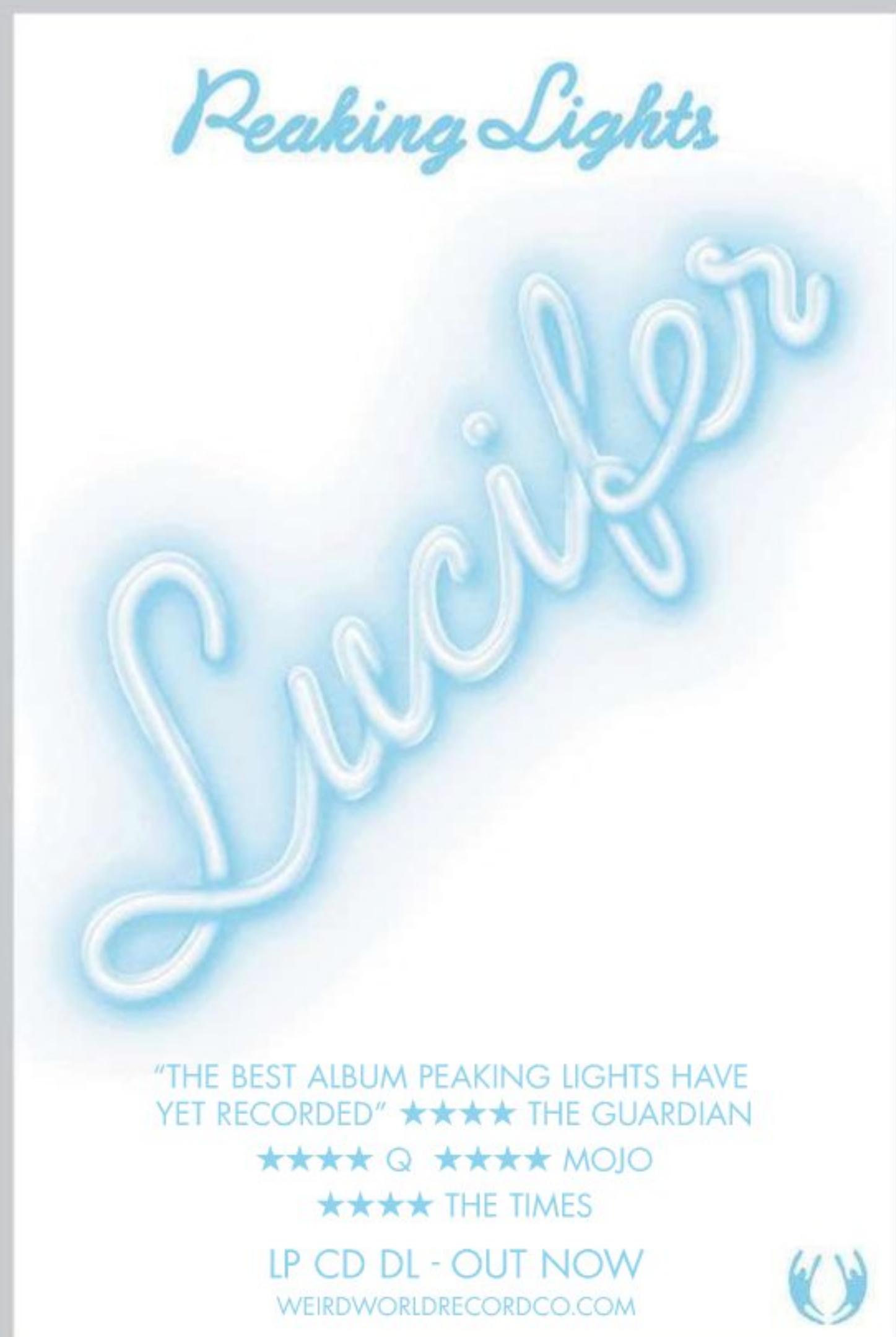
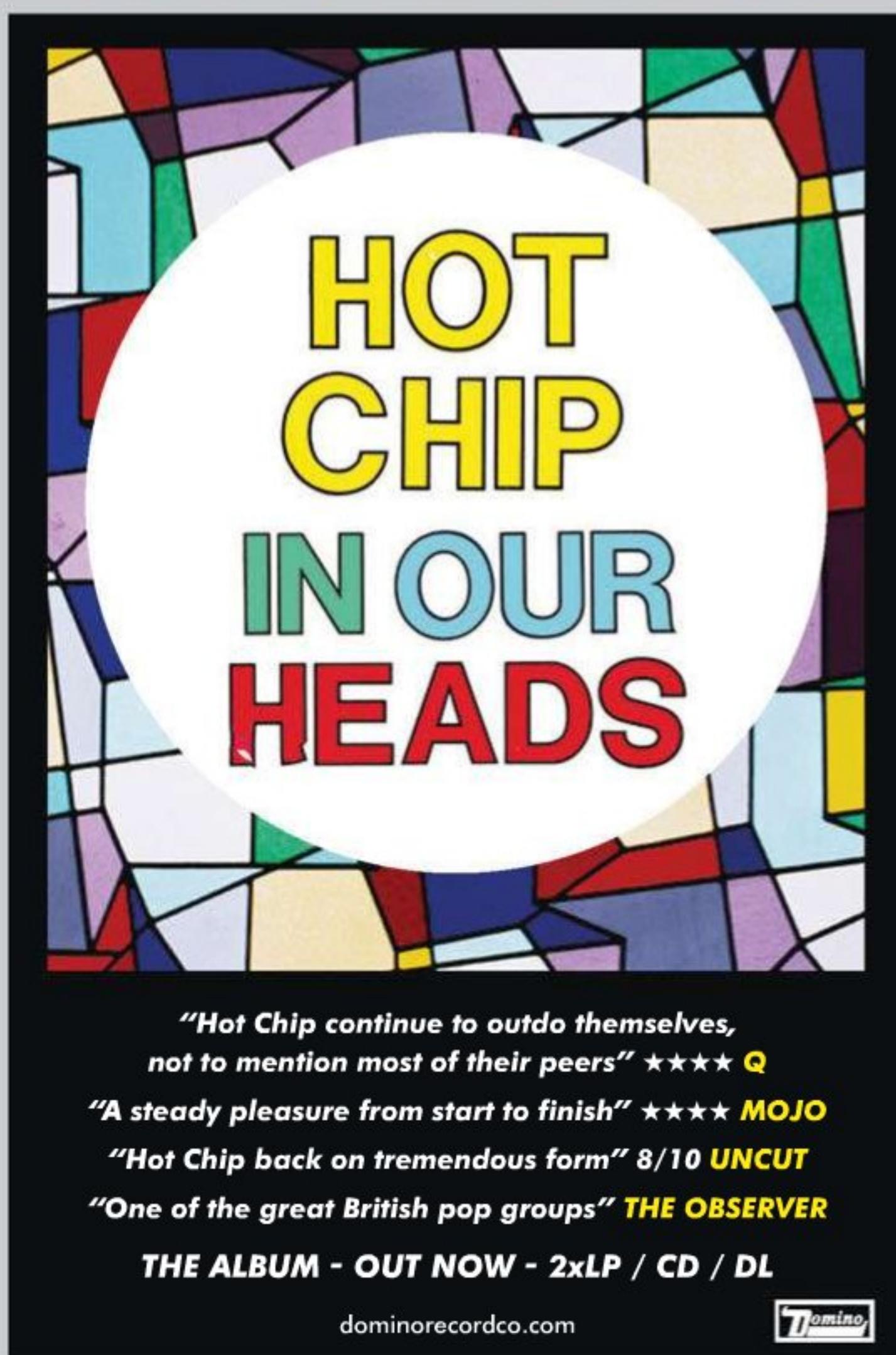
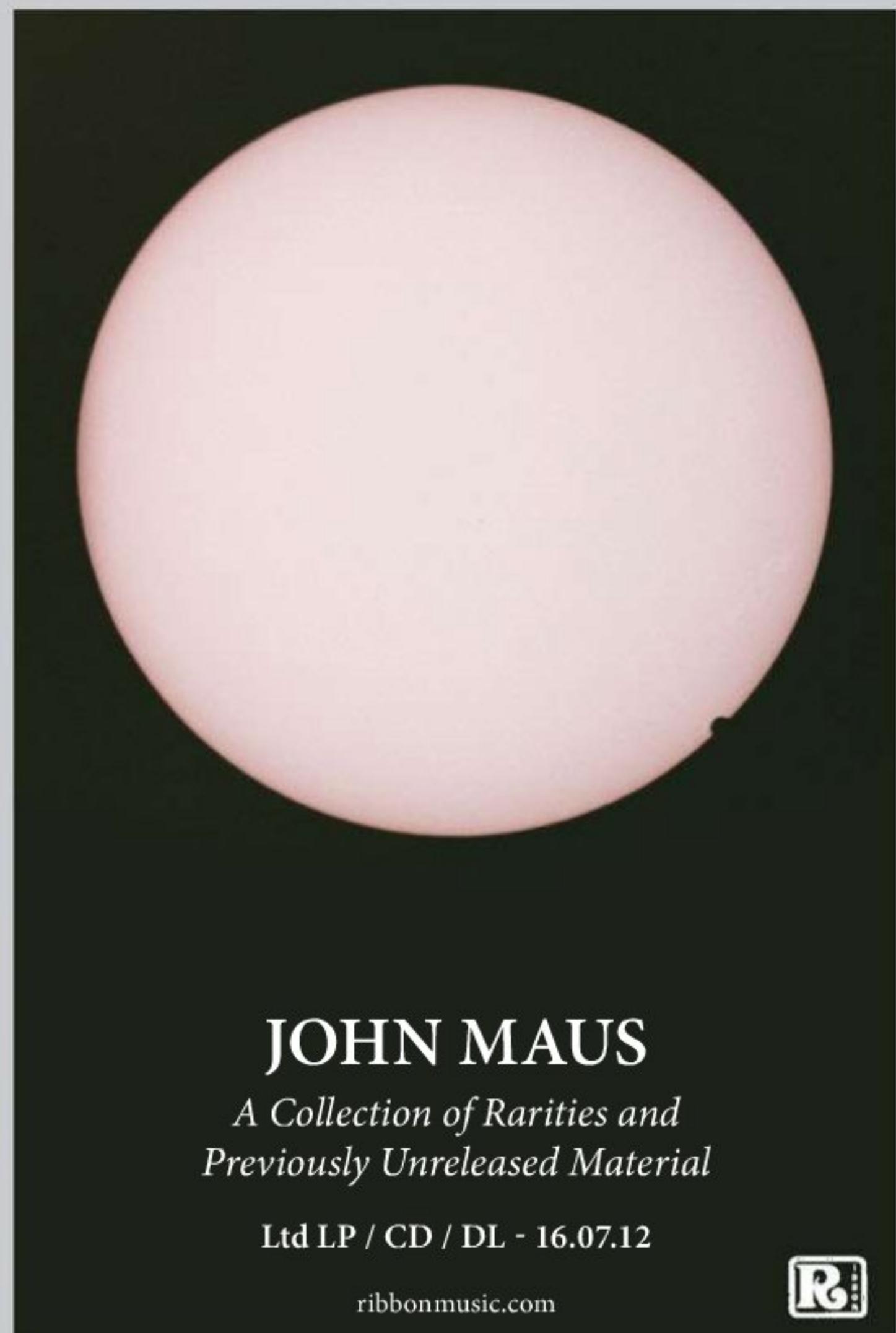
Swing Lo Magellan is released by Domino on July 6

DIRTY ICON #2

THE MAKING OF MOUNT WITTENBURG ORCA

How DPs collaborated with an Icelandic legend

► **Longstreth:** "Björk is a hero of mine. We first met through our mutual friend [Pitchfork writer] Brandon Stosuy, a board member of a New York organisation called Housing Works, an outreach centre for homeless people living with HIV and AIDS. He had an idea of us being on a bill together, some of our songs rearranged, some of her songs rearranged. But the idea that really excited me was the idea of writing songs together. Björk said she was a big fan of the way I arrange harmonies... we had this conversation about the roots of opera in old Italian theatres, and she was talking about how great it was to do a cappella in these spaces. Housing Works was just a small wooden room, so it was perfect to perform it that way. The recording was inspired by '50s rock'n'roll records, Sun Studio shit. I'm into negative space [laughs], I'm into emptiness. The less coming through the speakers, the bigger things sound."



CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Paul Heaton

Attention: Northern Scum! Pop's master contrarian recalls controversy with The Housemartins, superstardom with The Beautiful South... and the great taste of elephant piss!



WOMAD, MERSEA ISLAND, ESSEX, 1985

The Housemartins. The others came along for a laugh, it was me and Stan [Cullimore, front]'s band, really. Stan lived on my street and I'd put a note in my window saying, "Street musicians wanted." He walked straight into my house without knocking when I wasn't there, which is typical Stan. We were changing as songwriters here, because the Miners' Strike had just ended, and that was very politicising for me. I was writing four, five songs a week.



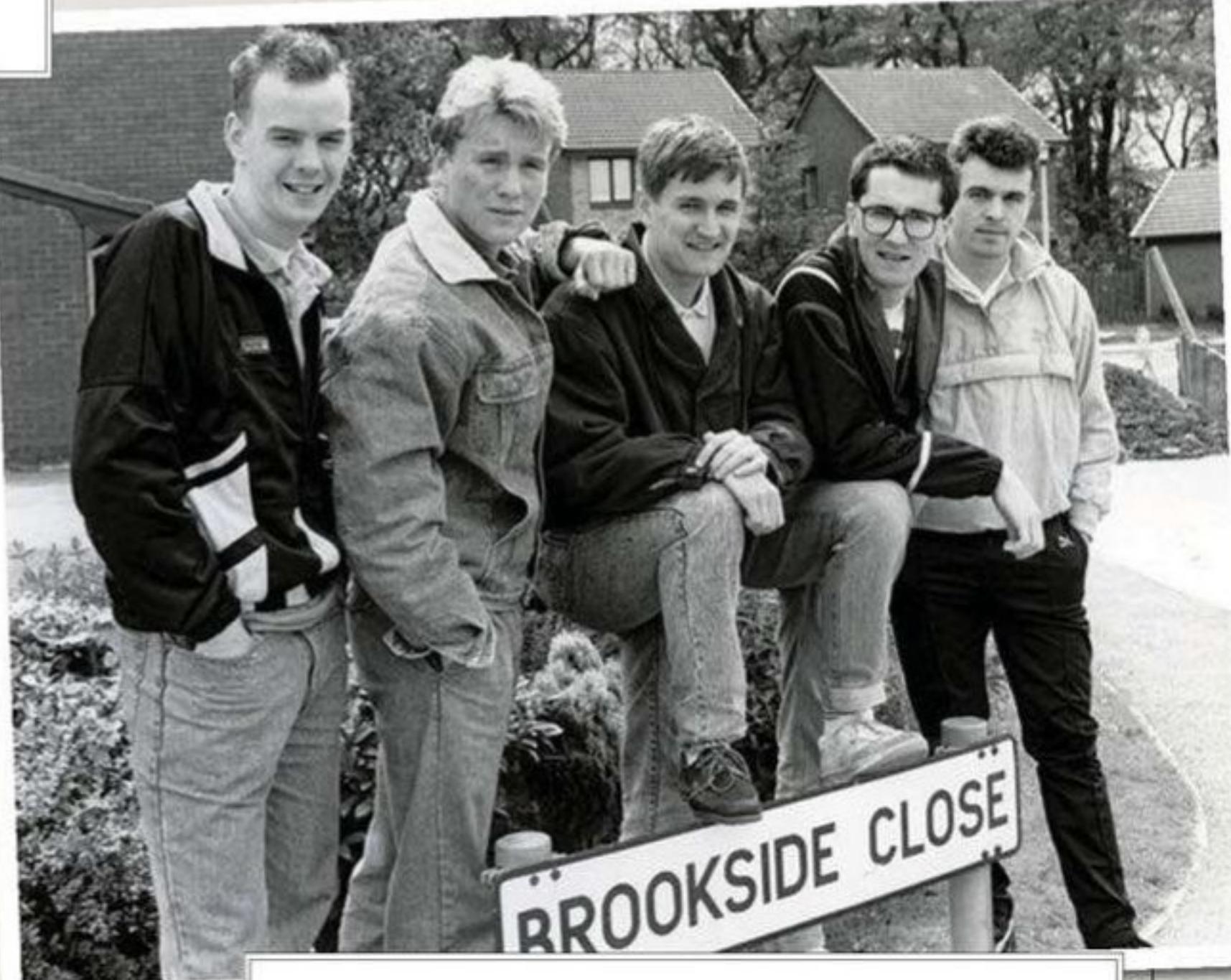
"HAPPY HOUR" VIDEO, 1986

The video was a big thing for us. The record exploded, but the video did, too. It was just after that when *The Sun* made things unpleasant, for no reason other than politics, with a series of quite upsetting, made-up articles. Things like being called gay, and I was playing Sunday football, and it'd be, "Mark him close... not too close, he's got Aids." In the changing rooms, I felt the others would think I hadn't told them the truth.



HUMBER BRIDGE, 1987

I was trying to play down my eccentricities in The Housemartins. I was just trying to be one of the lads and I've never been one of the anything, really. That's the sort of thumbs-up Paul McCartney does, like I'm just a normal bloke. It's no coincidence to me that two of us got married that year. You're famous and feel you haven't got your feet on the ground, so you get married, and you give the thumbs-up everywhere you go...

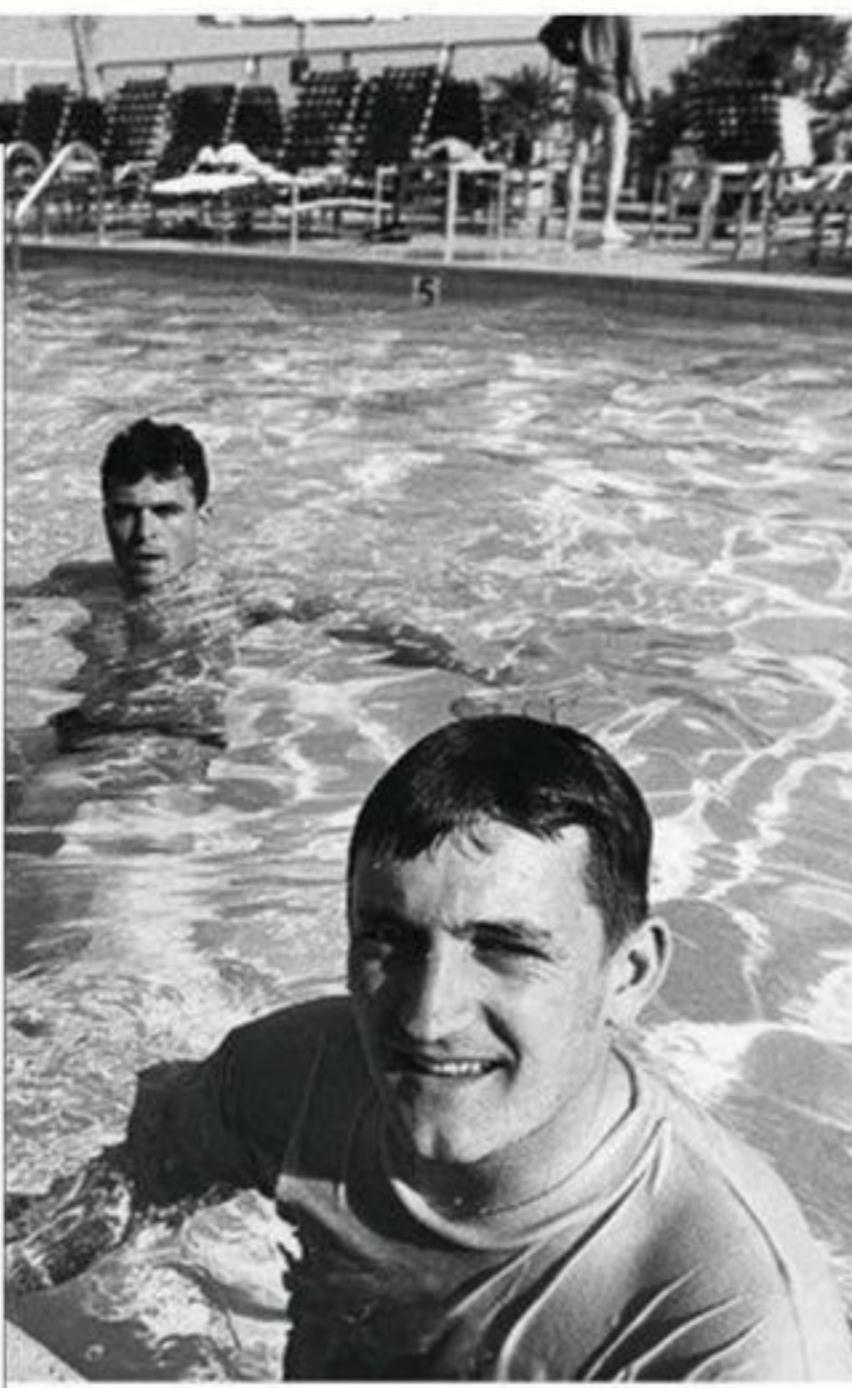


BROOKSIDE SET, LIVERPOOL, 1987

That's Rod The Plod second left, who not surprisingly was a policeman. I'd played some charity football matches and the women from Puma said, "Come along on the *Brookside* set, 'cos we give Damon Grant a load of stuff." Norman [Cook, left] had joined. He was a good laugh, Norman. He was already listening to hip-hop, go-go, New Jack Swing. He'd heard it on *John Peel* and was playing it in the van. To a mixed response.

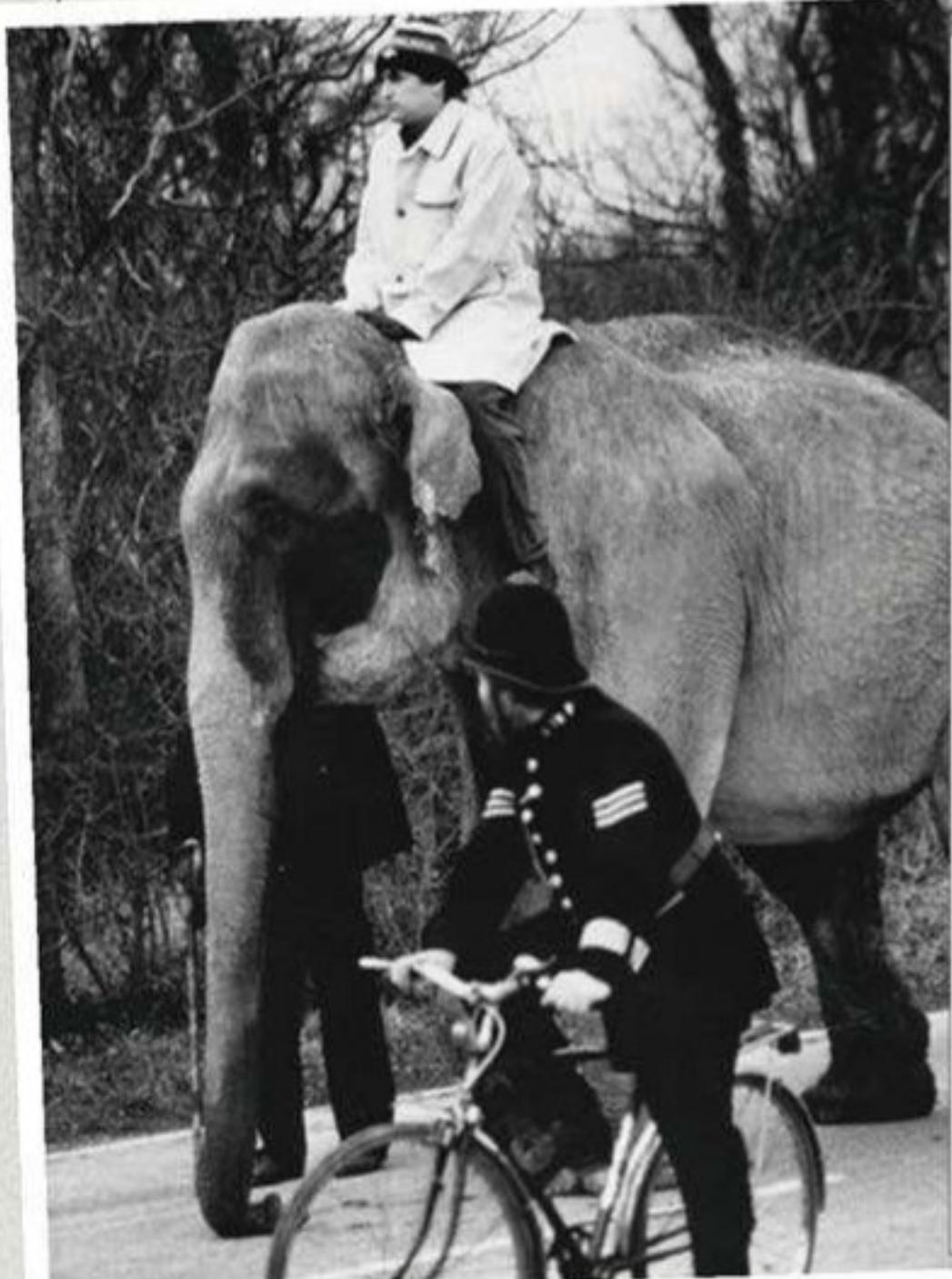
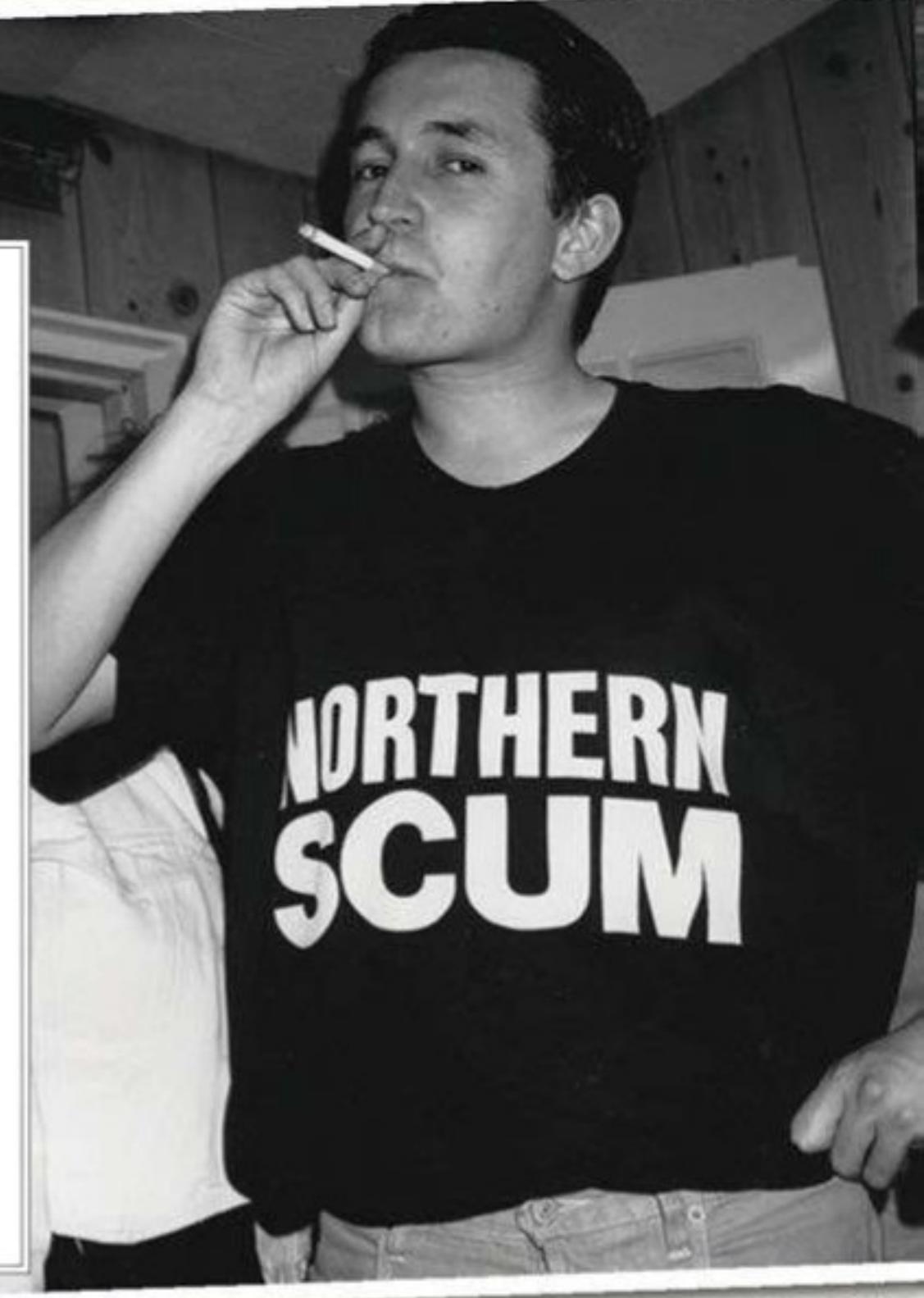
LOS ANGELES, 1990

The Beautiful South in LA. The sun was shining, we dipped in the swimming pool, we were brought gin and tonics and pizza. And the photographer, Derek Ridgers, just stood there and said, "It doesn't really seem like Tuesday, does it, Paul?" Which we often used after that. The Beautiful South gave themselves the nickname The Bumkin Billionaires, which was a strip in *Whoopee!* comic. We felt like that. Like the wrong sort of people for it to happen to.



ON TOUR, 1991

That's when I started smoking. It was the beginning of me wanting to do myself in, if you see what I mean. Not as in suicide, but you disrespect yourself. That fringe, even though I've got it swept back, used to go below my chin. I used to wear an alice band playing football, to wind people up. The Northern Scum T-shirt was one I came up with. They sold well everywhere. We just didn't sell them in Northern Ireland...



SURREY, 1994

The "Good As Gold" video. The elephant was a nightmare. But I did do one thing which not many people have done. I went for a piss, and the elephant went over and drank out of the puddle that I'd pissed in. So when the elephant went for a piss, I put my finger on the road and licked it. I reckon I was the only person in the whole world who drank elephant's piss from the same elephant who'd drunk mine.



LONDON, 1994

The Beautiful South had a good laugh during this period, especially with Jacqui Abbott, who joined as singer here. We went from being underdogs to being overdogs with the *Carry On Up The Charts* comp around that time. I'd been against it, saying to Andy MacDonald at Go!, "What are you doing a Greatest Hits for? There's no point." I was obviously proved wrong. It was a big do for us.

ON TOUR IN THE US, 1995

I was sporting those Calvin Klein pyjamas all across America. I thought it might catch on. I was going a bit mad, I think. Not eating for three days, and talking to yourself, and being a total tit to the people who loved you. Just Oliver Reed behaviour, really. But I've still got most of my friends from that period. I particularly like the mother of my children who had to put up with it... she's one of my greatest friends now.



THE FLYING HORSE HOTEL, ROCHDALE, 2010

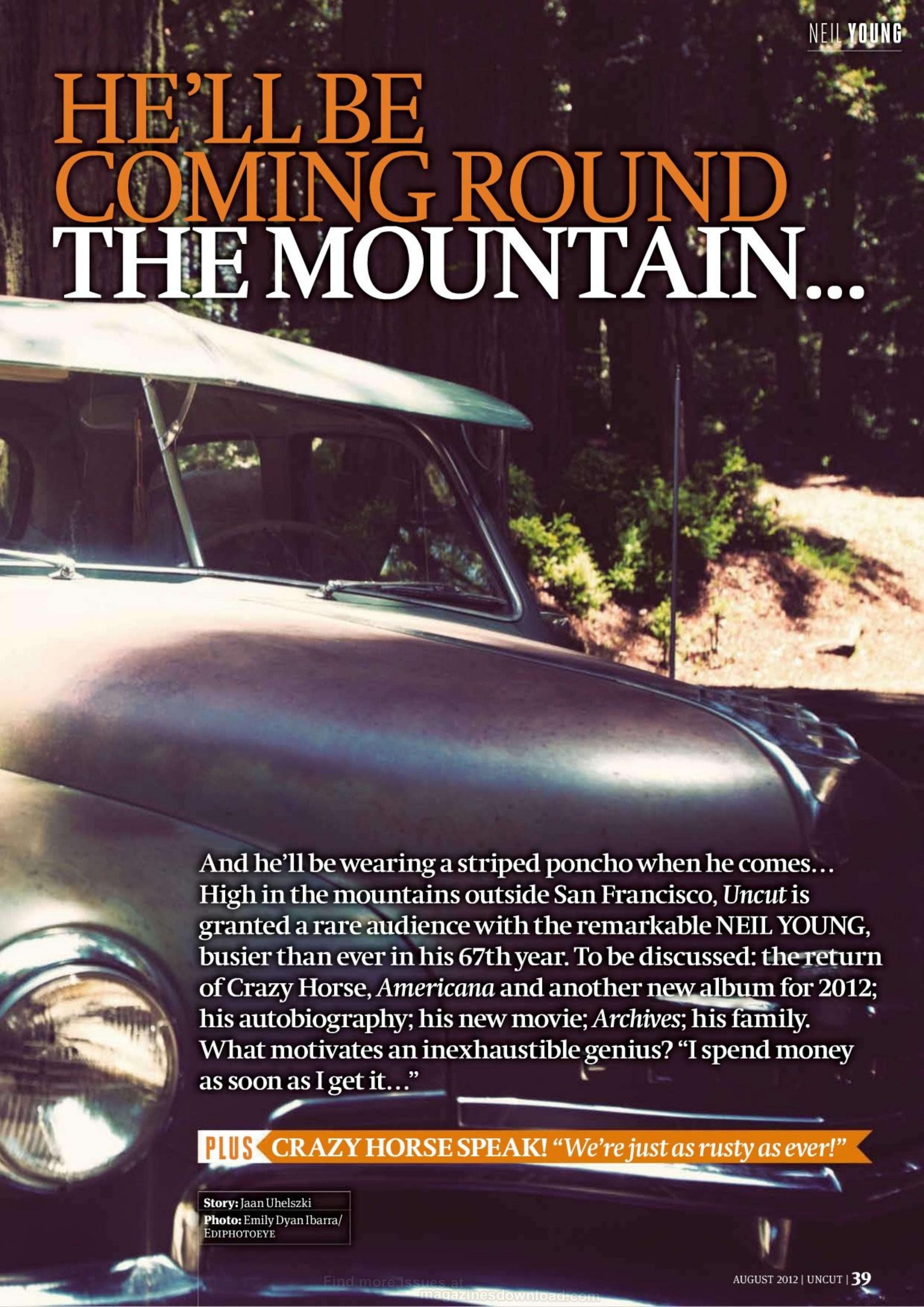
The first gig of our Pedals And Pumps tour [touring pubs on a bicycle]. Weirdly enough, all those days in The Beautiful South, I can hardly remember any gigs at all, and since I've been doing these pub ones, I remember every one, 'cos you meet people who trigger memories. What would remind me of Sheffield Arena? Nothing. I didn't speak to anybody!



Paul Heaton Presents... The 8th is out on Proper, July 2. He tours from July 8



HE'LL BE COMING ROUND THE MOUNTAIN...



And he'll be wearing a striped poncho when he comes... High in the mountains outside San Francisco, *Uncut* is granted a rare audience with the remarkable NEIL YOUNG, busier than ever in his 67th year. To be discussed: the return of Crazy Horse, *Americana* and another new album for 2012; his autobiography; his new movie; *Archives*; his family. What motivates an inexhaustible genius? "I spend money as soon as I get it..."

PLUS CRAZY HORSE SPEAK! "We're just as rusty as ever!"

Story: Jaan Uhelszki

Photo: Emily Dyan Ibarra/
EDIPHOTOEYE



Saddling up the Horse: (l-r)
Molina, Talbot, Whitten, Young
and Jack Nitzsche soundchecking
at San Francisco's Fillmore East,
March 6, 1970

ALATE SPRING DAY, and it is upwards of 80 degrees inside Neil Young's customary hangout in Northern California, the Mountain House. Young, though, has sat himself in front of a roaring fire, and is trying to appear oblivious to the heat, wearing as he is a thick poncho, of all things.

In less than a week, a full moon lunar eclipse will signal the release of Young's 34th studio album, *Americana*, his first with the doughty Crazy Horse for nine years. "Neil had us come over to the ranch every month on the full moon," says guitarist Frank "Poncho" Sampedro of the recording sessions that resulted in both *Americana* and another new album, the latter scheduled for release in the autumn.

"We were in the groove right away," Young says. He is talking about his reunion with Crazy Horse. "There was nothing for us to get over. We were already there. We didn't have to work at it."

Working at something seems anathema to everything that Crazy Horse stand for. They have always been the passionate rough riders accompanying Young on his more harrowing musical excursions, playing songs from the inside out: perverting rhythms, harmonies and sonics, dismantling sound until it becomes more a prickly Zen kōan than a piece of music.

After the 1986-87 tour, though, you said you were never going to work with Crazy Horse again.

"Never is a huge word." By the fire, the left side of Young's face is becoming redder and redder, but he refuses to move, or even take off the poncho.

That's all you're going to say?

He smirks, the son of a journalist who knows all the tricks and never makes it easy. "That's all I'm going to say."

FORTY MINUTES OR so from San Francisco, Broken Arrow Ranch is located high in the mountains that encircle Stanford University – home to countless Nobel Prize-winners, one American president and past

HOW TO BUY...

Gear Of The Horse

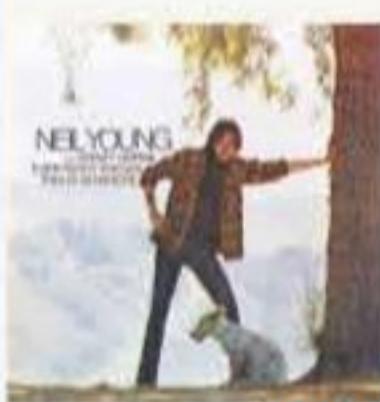
The 10 essential Neil Young & Crazy Horse albums



prime ministers of Japan and Israel, as well as three poet laureates and novelists Ken Kesey and Jeffrey Eugenides. When Young bought the ranch for \$340,000 cash back in 1970, it consisted of 140 unruly acres. Over the years, he has bought up adjoining properties, cajoling neighbours into selling parcels of land, until the original homestead of a log cabin, a pond and a visiting flock of red-winged blackbirds has grown tenfold, now taking up over 1,500 acres of mountainous terrain and farmland.

The ranch can only be reached by a thin two-lane ribbon of highway that pirouettes and dips through the aggressive topography of the Santa Cruz foothills. In this primeval redwood forest, mobile coverage is unreliable, and risks of wildfires, flash floods, mudslides, landslides and seismic activity are common. Dangerously inaccessible territory for a wilfully inaccessible man, perhaps, where a sign on the unpaved road reads, 'Time Stops Here'. At the very end hangs a rusty railroad sign to warn off trespassers one last time. It may date from the late 19th Century; nevertheless, the sentiment is more threatening than kitsch.

That may be as good a way as any to describe *Americana*, too, with its philosophical and sonic reworking of some late 19th-Century murder ballads, Dust Bowl-era folk songs and, of course, "God Save The Queen". It is



EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE

(1969)

Released six months after his self-titled solo debut, Young had only been playing with the struggling three-piece formerly known as The Rockets a couple of months when they recorded this. But it set the template for everything to come, moving from country-tinged garage into long jams like the 10-minute-plus "Down By The River".

ZUMA

(1975)

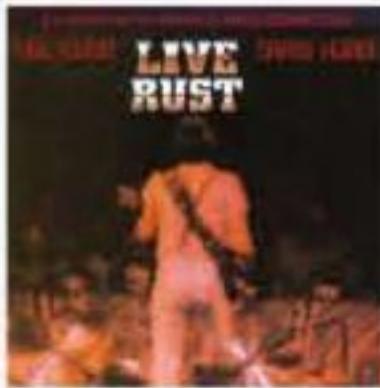
The original Crazy Horse played on three tracks on 1970's *After The Gold Rush* but six years passed before another full "Neil Young & Crazy Horse" album. In the meantime, original guitarist Danny Whitten's 1972 death inspired "The Needle And The Damage Done", and informed the mood of Young's "ditch trilogy" albums. By contrast, *Zuma* seemed a defiant celebration, showcasing Young's most "pop" writing in years ("Don't Cry No Tears"), as well as one of his most hauntingly burnt-out excursions, "Cortez The Killer".



AMERICAN STARS 'N BARS

(1977)

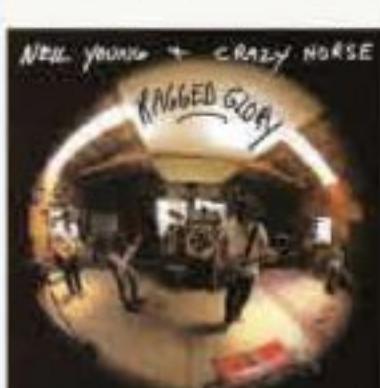
A ragbag sampler of Young's ever-changing moods, patched together from various sessions dating back to 1974, including those for the aborted *Homegrown*. Almost throwaway - although there is the little matter of "Like A Hurricane", of course.



LIVE RUST

(1979)

Crazy Horse assembled for *Rust Never Sleeps'* crunching electric side, but this document of the album's tour is arguably their definitive statement. Replicating the parent record's structure, it evolves from wasted acoustic numbers into raging electric meltdown.

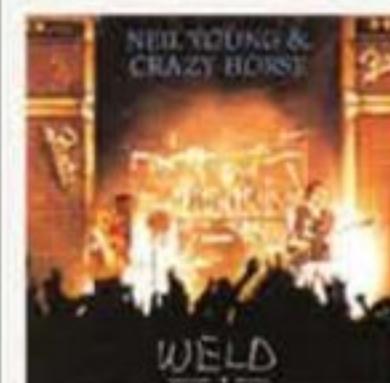


RAGGED GLORY

(1990)

Young's "difficult" 1980s produced probably the weakest Crazy Horse records, 1981's *Re-Ac-Tor* and 1987's menopausal *Life*. Having seen off the decade with the highs of *This Note's For You* and *Freedom*, he led the Horse back into the garage for this sublime reunion. Embracing their status as touchstones for Nirvana and Dinosaur Jr, it's practically the

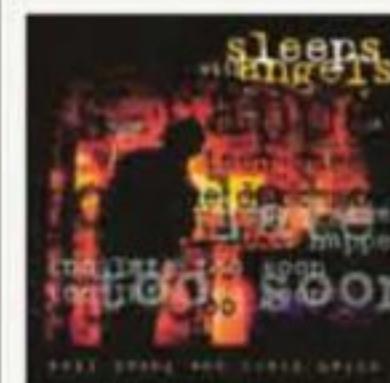
post-grunge sequel to *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*.



WELD

(1991)

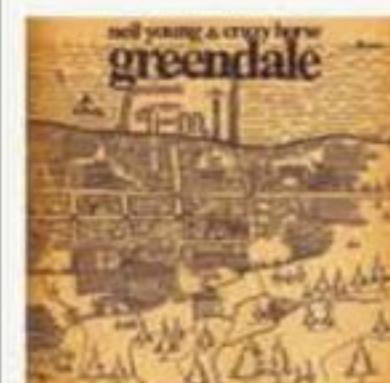
This howling document of the *Ragged Glory* tour echoes *Live Rust* - with one key difference. This time, with Young revelling in his position as distortion's elder statesman, there are no acoustic numbers. The original limited-edition release included *Arc*, a disc of nothing but feedback.



SLEEPS WITH ANGELS

(1994)

Inspired by Kurt Cobain's suicide, Young's most musically diverse record in years finds echoes of *After The Gold Rush*'s poignancy ("My Heart") and ditch-y desolation ("Blue Eden") alongside classic Horse jams ("Change Your Mind") and glorious garbage ("Piece Of Crap").



GREENDALE

(2003)

Loopy concept album about a fictional small-town divided critics, but most deemed it a leap in the right direction after 1996's water-treading Horse album, *Broken Arrow*. The real question, though, is whether it can really be considered a "Crazy Horse" record without guitarist "Poncho" Sampedro, who sat out when Young decided his story only wanted one guitar.



LIVE AT THE FILLMORE EAST

(2006)

The first release from Young's Archives flashes back to March 1970, and the *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* tour. 34 years after his death, Danny Whitten's loss is rendered breathtakingly clear as his and Young's guitars mesh telepathically on questing forays like "Cowgirl In The Sand", and his voice rings out on "Come On Baby Let's Go Downtown".



AMERICANA

(2012)

A decade after *Greendale*, Young and Crazy Horse reconvene for an album even more bonkers: men in their mid-sixties playing "Jesus' Chariot (She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain)" as though they were a mid-'60s garage band. Somehow, it works.

DAMIEN LOVE



→ ostensibly because of *Americana* that Young has consented to this interview – though, as ever, he has a glut of other projects on his mind, not least an autobiography, *Waging Heavy Peace*, due in October, and a third film with Jonathan Demme, *Neil Young Journeys*.

“My boss is my muse,” says Young. “If I had an idea for a song, I’d get up right now and go. I’ve learned if I don’t get it, it’s gone. It’s a gift. If you don’t pick it up, what kind of respect are you giving it? Whatever it is, I’ll go do that first. I just follow the idea to where it leads me. That’s what I do. It’s just the way it is. It’s easy that way. I’m lucky.”

A 10-minute ride uphill from Broken Arrow, Mountain House is an old loggers’ roadhouse that was turned into a restaurant in 1989. For the past 30 years Young has been a patron of this place, hidden in a redwood grove at the top of King Mountain. It featured in his *Greendale* film and in his “Unknown Legend” video, and you can occasionally find him there, drinking beers out of longneck bottles at the panelled bar, or with his family, picking at buffalo steaks and salads – dressing on the side – in the dark, rustic dining room. Among the sporting paraphernalia on the wall, there is a Fender guitar emblazoned with seven *Sticky Fingers*

decals and four scrawled autographs. The polished brass plate beneath it reads: “Rolling Stones Guitar compliments of John Lydon.”

Lydon, it transpires, is an unlikely friend of the Mountain House’s owners: he won the guitar and donated it to them. Young, meanwhile, does not appear to have allowed any of his personal arcana to be mounted on the mauve and dull orange walls. The next day, National Public Radio host Terry Gross tells Young that she thought the version of “God Save The Queen” on *Americana* was the Sex Pistols song.

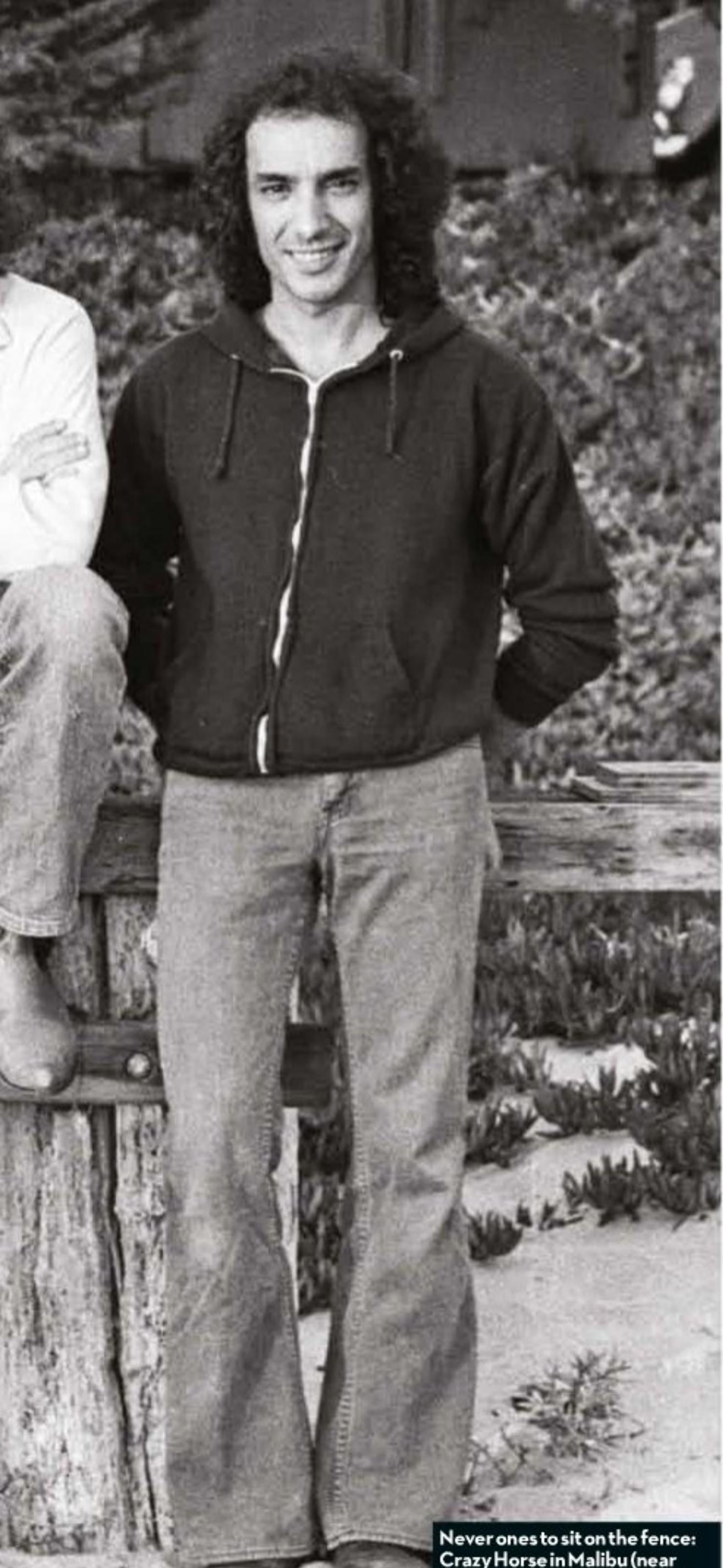
Never one to miss a chance to make things awkward and unsettled, Young answers Gross deadpan, with a remark that hangs in the air for 10 seconds.

“Who are the Sex Pistols?”

JUST AFTER TWO o’clock, Neil Young carefully pilots his 1950 Plymouth Super Deluxe sedan down the steep gravel driveway of the Mountain House, bringing it to an elegant stop in front of a split-rail hitching post. Once a dull asparagus green, the post-war behemoth has big splotches of pink surface rust that resemble whole continents on its hood, door and top. What would Young

*“Crazy Horse
don’t have
to overplay.
They’re not
going on
American Idol”*

NEIL YOUNG



Never ones to sit on the fence: Crazy Horse in Malibu (near Neil's beach-house), November 17, 1975, with an unknown blonde passer-by and favourite dog Art (unfortunately, later shot by a farmer for chasing cattle)

have used as a leitmotif for his career if Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh hadn't artfully dropped the "rust never sleeps" line into "My My, Hey Hey..." back in May 1978?

The phrase endures, as prophetic and as revelatory as the day Young commandeered it from Devo. "It relates to my career," he told Los Angeles DJ Mary Turner in 1979. "The longer I keep going, the longer I have to fight this corrosion."

"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," says film director Jonathan Demme, a regular Young collaborator. "It's something that you see in people who arrive at a moment in their life, often by having a car wreck because they were driving drunk, or who have a horrendous drug overdose experience but survive. It's called the 'Lucky To Be Alive Club'. We know people like that, people who just like change. So that's Neil's version of the Lucky To Be Alive Club. It was a giant watershed moment. It's allowed him to take bigger risks."

Young exits his car with an almost rigid posture – despite a lifetime of back problems – and with a rather formal bearing, resembling a whole class of rugged leading men from the 1940s. But instead of a grey flannel suit, he's

MEET THE HORSE #1

"Neil can be so vanilla"

Who's who in Crazy Horse: guitarist Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro



► Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro was introduced to Neil Young by Crazy Horse's bassist Billy Talbot in November 1974 – almost two years to the day after Danny Whitten died from an overdose. To their credit, the members of the Horse never asked him to be another Whitten. "I can't be Danny Whitten, and Danny couldn't have been me," Detroit-raised Poncho tells us. "I think I brought Detroit to Neil. It was a little harder edge and more rock'n'rollish than Danny. I'm not that much of a finesse player and I think it changed the way Neil plays guitar a little. But Neil still can be so vanilla. I look at the vanilla stuff and go, 'I could never play that.' *Harvest Moon? Forget it.*"

Despite that, in addition to having played on eight Crazy Horse records, Poncho also guested on *Comes A Time*, *Trans*, *This Note's For You*, *Freedom* and *Are You Passionate?*.

The secret to Crazy Horse's enduring success? "We are just simple," Poncho cackles. "But at the same time, we play like it's the most complicated piece of music that has ever been played. We put all of our heart and soul into it, and even if it's two chords, it becomes meaningful to us. I don't know how to explain it, really. It's just the passion. We're not great musicians, but there's a lot of guys that could play two chords for about three minutes and go, 'I'm bored.' We can play it until Neil stops us."



Neil Young in stills from *A Day At The Gallery*

cloaked in a shapeless poncho that brings to mind Clint Eastwood in *A Fistful Of Dollars* or, maybe more accurately, Bob Dylan during his *Ronaldo & Clara* period.

It's the same poncho he sports in *A Day At The Gallery*, a 40-minute silent film to accompany *Americana*, though today his eyeliner and rakish black hat from the movie are absent. He wears it again when Patti Smith interviews him at BookExpo America on June 6. Perhaps he is role-playing an *Americana* character come to life, conveying an artistic and aesthetic continuity, much as he used an old buckskin jacket to reconnect him to his youth when Buffalo Springfield reformed briefly last year.

Easing himself into a low-backed wooden chair by the fire, Young is fractionally more friendly than usual – often a bad sign for interviewees. Elliot Roberts, his manager since 1967, brings a plate of grapes and some perfect squares of Monterey Jack. Young peels the cheese off the white porcelain plate with great deliberation, as if they are playing cards, then looks at them before he consumes them without any particular enjoyment. He picks up a small branch of fat red grapes and begins eating them one by one, unobtrusively slipping them into his mouth, silently chewing as he listens to the questions.

Why did you decide to make an album of traditional songs that you heard as a schoolboy?

I was writing a book, and I was remembering and writing about when I was in Thunder Bay, Ontario in 1964, playing with my band, The Squires. We had a gig at a coffeehouse there called the Fourth Dimension, and there was a band played there called The Thorns. Tim Rose was the leader of the band; he was kind of a pioneer of folk rock at that point. They did "Oh, Susanna". When I heard them do it, I was really impressed with the arrangement, and so I had my band, The Squires, learn it. While I was writing the book, I had an idea to do a lot of other songs like that. I was looking for songs in this genre, old classics with a

MEET THE HORSE # 2

“We did it Horse-style!”

Who's who in Crazy Horse: drummer Ralph Molina



► It's because of Ralph Molina that doo wop classic "Get A Job" is included on *Americana*. "I used to walk around at the studio with Neil singing it," Molina explains. "That song fits with what Neil is saying now. What's happening all over the world, really, so I think that's why it's on the album."

Doo wop is Molina's first musical love. As a teenager in New York's Lower East Side, he served in a cappella groups with names like The Enchanters before accepting an invitation in 1963 from his cousin Lou to head to California and sing the high part in a vocal group called Danny & The Memories, with Billy Talbot and late guitarist Danny Whitten. Except for a short stint playing the snare drum in high school, Molina had no ambition to play an instrument –

until he, Talbot and Whitten saw The Byrds play in a little club in San Francisco's North Beach. Almost 47 years later, Molina doesn't regret a thing. Even the fact it's been close to a decade since Crazy Horse last worked with Young. "Americana was great, because we did it Horse-style. But the way we play with Neil and he plays with us, it's like if we had been playing continuously we might not be together today. Beethoven had a saying that I love: 'To play without passion is inexcusable.' I think Crazy Horse have always played with passion."

→ slightly dark tinge in the lyrics, that used to be kindergarten songs and schoolchild songs. Old American classics. I finally found enough songs, and I was recording at the time with Crazy Horse.

So the idea to work with Crazy Horse again came first? It wasn't that you had these dark, harrowing old songs and decided that the Horse was the right band to execute them?

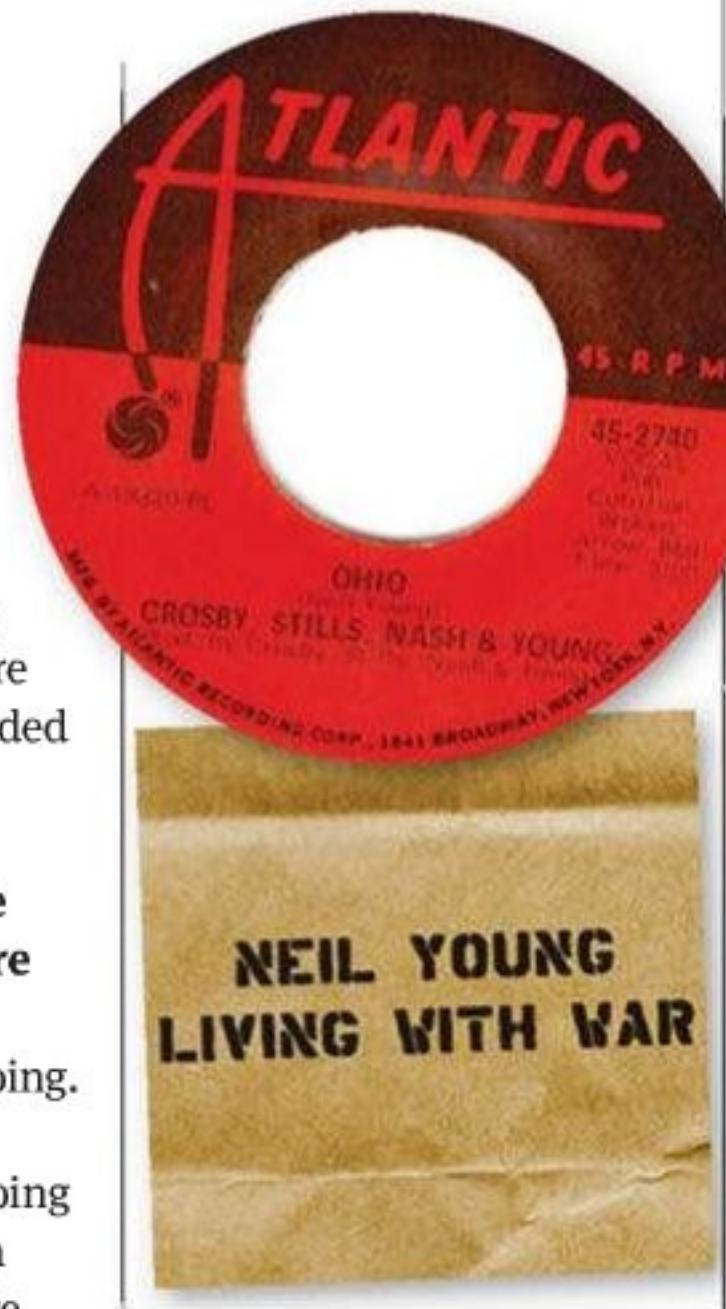
Yeah. It was just a matter of time. I was writing the book, and I had brought Crazy Horse to the place where we were going to record. I hadn't written any new songs, so I decided to do those old songs.

Did these传统als function as a warm-up for the "real" Crazy Horse album due in the autumn, or were you always planning to release them?

I did it because they were the only songs that I felt like doing. I didn't know how many there were going to be when I started, but we started with a few and then we just got doing more. Then I got an album. We worked a couple of days a month for three months. I'd learn more songs, I'd arrange them, we'd come back and do them. About two and a half months ago, I went in and played it for Reprise [Records] for about 100 people. After the playback of the record, the president of Reprise got up and told everybody about how cool it was that, in these times, we had gone in and recorded these old songs of America that reminded us of where things started and what it used to be like, and what the spirit of America is like. I was going, "Wow, that's pretty deep. I hadn't thought of it that way."

When we got going in the studio I realised that I was making a record – and I had a name for it before it was done. I was already calling it "Americana". I wrote liner notes, since it really ended up a concept album.

Was there a concept in mind when you did the second album?



"I get what I deserve from Crazy Horse. And they get what they deserve from me"
NEIL YOUNG

No. Just what's happening. My concept was, let's create songs that speak, that I can enlarge upon instrumentally. So if there was a concept there, that's why the songs are incredibly long. Because they all have excursions on them between the verses, and so that's what I do [Young told BBC Radio 4's *Front Row* programme that the second album material was so long – one track lasting 26 minutes – that it may be a double CD release].

So there wasn't any intention to make a political statement like *Living With War*?

Well, *Living With War* is sort of like "Ohio". But instead of one song, it was a whole album.

The folk-rocker-protest-singer part of you?

That's always been there... Well, not always. It wasn't there in the very beginning, but it grew, showed up.

Did you realise that there was going to be a second album early in the process?

I realised I was in a groove. Right around the time *Americana* was finished, I started writing again, so I just kept on going. Pretty soon I had enough songs for a second album. This time I was doing all my own songs.

How do you feel about Crazy Horse today?

They're great. I love Crazy Horse. I love all of them. I love Poncho, Billy and Ralph, and I love Danny [Whitten].

How do you know when it's time to work with Crazy Horse?

I can just feel it. And I can feel it for a long time. Comes for a while, doesn't just arrive. So yeah, it's just naturally arrived.

Do you all stay in touch? Or do you just call them when it's time?

We stay in touch in our own way. We're not hanging out together all the time, but we're in touch. There's no need for us to hang out. We just are. We've been through a lot together. It's still part of our lives; it's not going anywhere.

It's a musical home for me. I've been in a lot of places that I really liked. But nowhere as much as this. I'm tapped in to the source when we're all together. It's not like a technical thing. The expertise is not that great. We don't have to be; we just connect on this emotional thing. A soul level.

What would happen if they got really good? Rehearsed a lot and got really tight and then sprung that on you?

That'll never happen. No. They're not interested in that. The way they play, they play from the soul. They don't play any other way. It could be as great and as technically great as they could ever be, and it wouldn't make any difference to how they sound. They don't have to overplay. They're not going on *American Idol*. They don't have to overdo it. They don't have to over-accentuate all the surface things.

There are maybe five or six unreleased Crazy Horse albums: *Homegrown*, *Chrome Dreams*, *Toast*, *Oceanside/Countryside*, *Meadow Dusk*...

There's quite a... there's a few.

What are the criteria for which Crazy Horse sessions come out and which don't?

Time. Time and space. Just how much time I have to put things out. Sometimes I finish things and I go, "I don't want to put this out. I don't want to put it out now." But that's a different thing from playing it. Making it.

What's the mystique around *Toast* [an album recorded in San Francisco in 2000 with Crazy Horse, at the same studio used by John Coltrane. It was announced as part of Young's Archives series in 2008, before

A color photograph of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a straw hat with a dark band and a grey poncho over a plaid shirt. He is standing in a forest, looking slightly to the left. The background is filled with large, textured tree trunks and green foliage.

Forever Young: outside
the Mountain House
restaurant, May 29, 2012



A lot on their plate: on tour in Copenhagen, Denmark, March 16, 1976: (l-r) Ralph Molina, Neil Young, Billy Talbot, Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro

MEET THE HORSE #3

"There's a lot to it..."

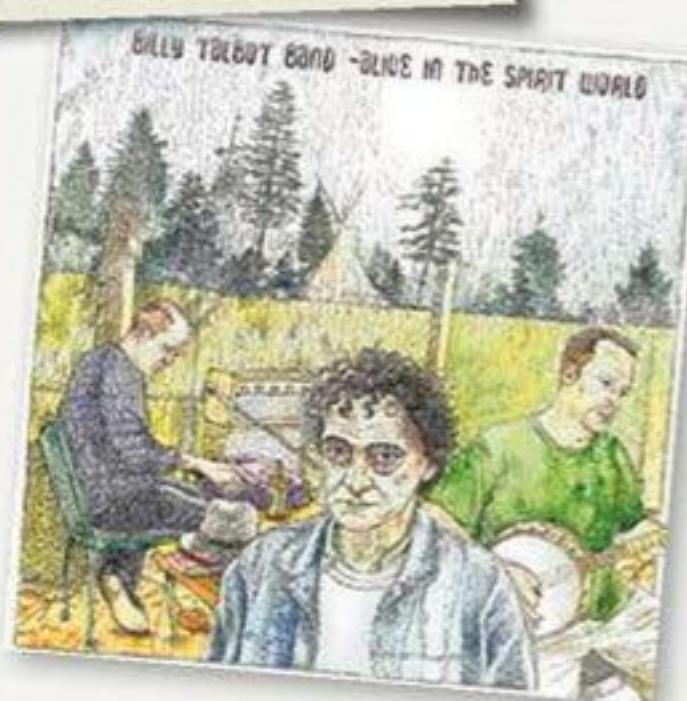
Who's who in Crazy Horse: bassist Billy Talbot



► **Billy Talbot** is the one member of *Crazy Horse* who appears to have something approaching a profile outside the band. When not playing with Young, the New Yorker fronts the *Billy Talbot Band*, who released one album, *Alive In The Spirit World*, in 2004 and have another, as yet unreleased, in the bag. Talbot also collaborates with Ralph Molina as *The Wolves*, playing with 26-year-old guitarist, Ryan James Holzer.

While his Horse colleagues were sceptical about recording traditional tunes instead of originals on *Americana*, Talbot was moved by the way the songs came out.

"I especially love 'High Flying Bird,'" he admits. "I love the way Neil's singing these songs. He's putting a lot of heart and soul into it, and he's singing really well in a way that he hasn't sung before on record. So there's a lot to it and it has a lot of depth." As for the next *Crazy Horse* record they're working on? "The next one will even have more depth," he laughs, stopping himself before he divulges too much. "What I can tell you, if *Americana* is in black and white, which it isn't, then whatever the next record is, is in colour and 3D."



→ *disappearing from the schedules?*

Toast is a good record. It's a very dark record. Some people are not going to like it; some people are going to really like it. There are some songs on *Toast* that were on *Are You Passionate?*, and there are some songs on *Toast* that were maybe on something else, I don't know. But none of them sound like they do on *Toast*.

Is there a plan for it to come out?

It will come out, because it's done. And we've mastered it. I mean, it's ready to go. It's not a perfect record but it's really an essential record. But I don't want to get in the way of what I'm doing right now. There'll be a time for it.

I remember you saying that *Crazy Horse* would never do covers.

I don't look at these as covers. People call them covers but they're not covers. Who's covering "Clementine"? That's not a cover of "Clementine". It's a version of "Clementine". It's our interpretation. Those songs have been done by so many people that we're not covering anybody. Everyone owns them. They belong to everyone.

Could you give me thumbnail sketches of *Crazy Horse*?

What would surprise us about Ralph, Poncho and Billy?

Well, the real thing about *Crazy Horse* is not the individuals. I'm just part of it. I'm no more important than anyone else. I happen to be known, whereas they aren't. People say they can't figure it out, and say, "Well, hell, they don't do anything except when they work with Neil." But they do things. They just don't do things that are in the public eye, but they're exploring their music. They're doing things they believe in.

And when they work with me, they get seen. They do things that are just as valid when they're by themselves as they do when they're with me. It's other people's perceptions that are different. So it's a group. There's no one person that makes it happen. Take away one of those pieces and it's gone.

You said after Danny Whitten died that you couldn't get back the chemistry, but there was a different kind of chemistry.

Oh, yeah. Can never get it back. Just like I can't do any more of the Ben Keith songs.

I didn't know that you'd made that decision.

Yeah. Had to.

You've also said about Crazy Horse that they bring a Coltrane type of guitar sound out of you. How does that work?

Well, it's not so much that it's Coltrane. Could be it's the landscape that Coltrane and Miles and everybody lived in. There's a world that you can walk in and they get me there. We go together. We don't go individually.

You've said you like them because you can yell at them, but I think there's another part, because you said in another interview they're never intimidated by you.

Oh, they can yell at me, too.

Are they the only ones that you'll take it from?

No, I'll take it from anybody who does it.

You do seem to like it when people tell you the truth. I always thought that was part of what you liked so much about David Briggs and Jack Nitzsche.

That's really true. And most people actually like to be told the truth.

But you're an imposing figure. I'm not sure everybody does tell you the truth.

I know they don't, but I know that I get what I deserve from Crazy Horse. And they get what they deserve from me. It's a group, we're together. Living together in the world.

CRAZY HORSE, SAYS drummer Ralph Molina, is the place where "all the egos are checked at the corral. There's no bull, Neil can be Neil. There's no pretence. We're just real, and we rock. I guess when he plays with other people it's like he has to be the God they kneel to... Not that he wants to. But when he plays with us he's like a fourth member.

"People get intimidated by him," continues Molina, calling from his home near San Luis Obispo on California's central coast. "You know what? I still am."

"I'm someone who is not really sure, but leans more towards things happening randomly," bassist Billy Talbot adds late one Sunday night, from his hometown in Northern California (population: less than 700; known more for fried artichokes than the distinguished celebrities who reside there). "The first time we played it was really natural. With Danny, there was something that just fit. Then, when we brought Poncho in that just fit, too. Those moves were made when we were in our early twenties or early thirties, and it had more to do with the circumstance and happenstance than anything else. But at the same time it's worked all these years better than anything else that any of us have ever tried or done.

"Neil says he's the most him when he plays with Crazy Horse. I think I'm the most myself as well. I think that when we're at our best there's a spiritual thing that happens in concert, that people are left with. And when they leave there they remember feeling that, even though they can't necessarily decide what it was. Or if it was anything."

LONG MAY YOU WRITE

"SOME-TIMES MY MEMORY DOESN'T WORK..."

What happened when Neil met Patti...

► On June 6, Neil Young and Patti Smith appeared onstage in New York's Jacob Javits Center during the publishing industry's annual trade fair, BookExpo America. Both had released new records two days previously - Young's *Americana* and Smith's *Banga*, which includes a cover of "After The Gold Rush" - but their presence here was ostensibly for literary purposes. Smith - whose memoir *Just Kids* won the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2010 - was here to interview Young about his upcoming autobiography, *Waging Heavy Peace*.

Attendees in the Special Events Hall used to seeing authors like Dean Koontz or Jo Nesbø talking up their novels found Smith grilling Young about his creative processes, *Americana*, his father Scott, *Waging Heavy Peace*, and ageing in the arts.

"I have read much of your book," said Smith, "and one of the things I liked most about it is that there's no barrier between the reader and you. It's intimate. You're talking. And it's



Patti and Neil at the BookExpo America, New York, June 6, 2012

chronological, but memory is not chronological."

"That's how my memory is, at least," replied Young. "Not only does it not work chronologically but sometimes it doesn't work."

For the audience, this was a rare look into a relationship that reaches back to 1996, when Smith played at Young's Bridge School benefit. As for

their artistic kinship? Young told Smith: "Our books are the same, Patti, because we have the same heroes. I'm kinda highways and landscapes. You are cities and bricks, a lot of painted bricks. I'm out on the prairie, travelling... what I like to do. You travel, too, in cities and down streets... We're on similar paths, but in different geographic places." But not for long. The Patti Smith Group will join Neil Young and Crazy Horse on the road this autumn, in what some are already calling the Crazy Horses Tour.

Waging Heavy Peace is published in October by Blue Rider Press

"Neil can change his mind 200 times... he just gets caught up in what's in his head"

PONCHO SAMPEDRO

WHEN YOUNG AND Jonathan Demme previewed *Neil Young Journeys* in Toronto last year, the singer told the audience that his first reception there was really frigid.

You said, "I knew I was good, but I knew this was the wrong place."

Uh hum.

I can't believe you said that to your people.
They weren't ready for me. But I was ready.

Were you born believing that your thoughts were always right?

No, I just did what I wanted to do. The way to do something is to do it. I didn't want to do something else and be known for not doing what I wanted to be known for.

MOTION PICTURES

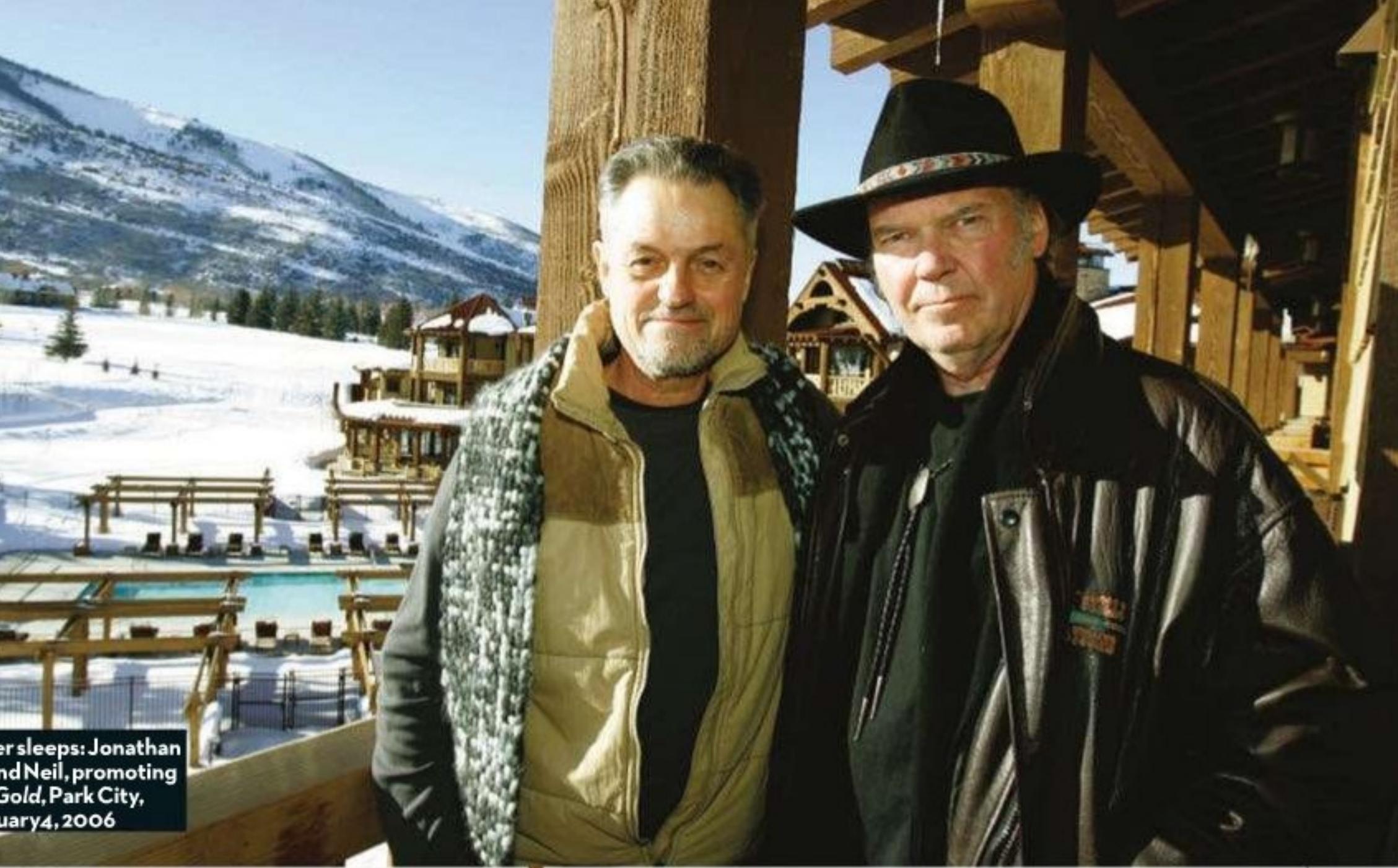
"IT CAN BE ANXIETY PRODUCING..."

Film director Jonathan Demme on working with Neil Young

► Neil Young Journeys marks the third time Academy Award-winning director Jonathan Demme has worked with Neil Young in just over six years. This trio of films – which also include 2006's *Heart Of Gold* and *Neil Young Trunk Show* in 2009 – represent a considerable personal achievement for Demme, a fan since Young's earliest musical adventures.

"Back in the '60s, in this world The Beatles opened up, there were bands that gave you as much as The Beatles," begins Demme. "One of those was Buffalo Springfield, and in particular the songs by Neil Young. Then there was the horror of the Buffalo Springfield breaking up, and the thrill of a Neil Young solo album. Maybe we shouldn't rank our loves, but at the top of my loves is Neil and his music."

While *Heart Of Gold* and *Trunk Show* were both straightforward concert films, ...Journeys is a mix of road trip and performance – following a May 2011 drive from Young's hometown of Omemee, Ontario to Toronto for two shows at Massey Hall.



Frost never sleeps: Jonathan Demme and Neil, promoting *Heart Of Gold*, Park City, Utah, January 4, 2006

"I wanted to film the shows," explains Demme. "But I knew this film had to be completely different from the others. So I proposed that maybe we could go up to Omemee and take a drive and see what happened. My pitch was: you can always put whatever we do in Archives."

Although they first worked together back in 1993, on the soundtrack to *Philadelphia*, Demme claims he still finds Young challenging company. "You never know what's going to come out of this man," he laughs. "You never know what he's going to say. And that can be anxiety producing. Exciting. And he really can say anything he wants, as far as I'm concerned."

Neil Young Journeys will open in the UK in the autumn

Your father was a famous journalist and wrote 45 books. Did he give you any advice?

He told me if you start writing, you'd be surprised what comes out. He said, 'Even if you can't think of anything to write, go sit where you write.' I used to do that in the morning and suddenly I started writing about stuff. Some days I wouldn't write anything.

Did you hear his voice in your head while writing?

I can still hear him, but not so much when I'm writing as when I'm thinking. Writing was a very easy thing to do. Things came out: What do you do, where do you go a lot? What are the recurring themes of your life?

You've talked about how your patterns are easy to discern: "My career is built around a pattern that keeps repeating itself over and over again. There's nothing surprising about it. My changes are as easy to predict as the sun coming up and down."

It's repetitive. I'm just a creative person, writing songs and making albums and doing anything that I can do to distract myself from doing one thing too much.

WHAT NEIL YOUNG sees as repetitive, others call ruthlessness. "Neil scares me a lot," Graham Nash told Jimmy McDonough for his 2002 biog, *Shakey*. "I don't understand him. I don't understand his ability to change his mind ruthlessly."

"I've had to do all kinds of things that as a human being I felt bad about," Young told me in 2005. "Working with different musicians, you have to be able to sever the ties and say, 'I'm sorry. I'm going this way and you're not coming with me.' Someone said to me recently, 'You're quite ruthless.' I woke up in the middle of the night and couldn't get back to sleep for a couple of hours thinking of all the people I've worked with. People's feelings are hurt, because their lives are changed. But I can't help that. I'm ruthless for the music. It's a tough thing, but that's how you save the music."

Young does keep returning to familiar artistic territory and stoical collaborators, but there is no regular or discernible timetable for when he might revisit them.

For Crazy Horse in particular, it must be hugely frustrating. From 1969 to 2003, Young appeared to be pulled inexorably back to them every two or three years. The nine years between *Greendale* – which Frank 'Poncho' Sampedro did not appear on – and *Americana* was the band's longest hiatus to date. "It's usually right on time, when Neil wants

→ After you signed the contract for *Waging Heavy Peace* you said "writing books fits me like a glove". Was it really easy for you?

Really easy. I just sat down, and I decided I'm going to write a book. Nobody told me to write a book. The whole story is in the book of why I wrote the book, how I started, what got me started, everything about it.

The Archives got you started, right?

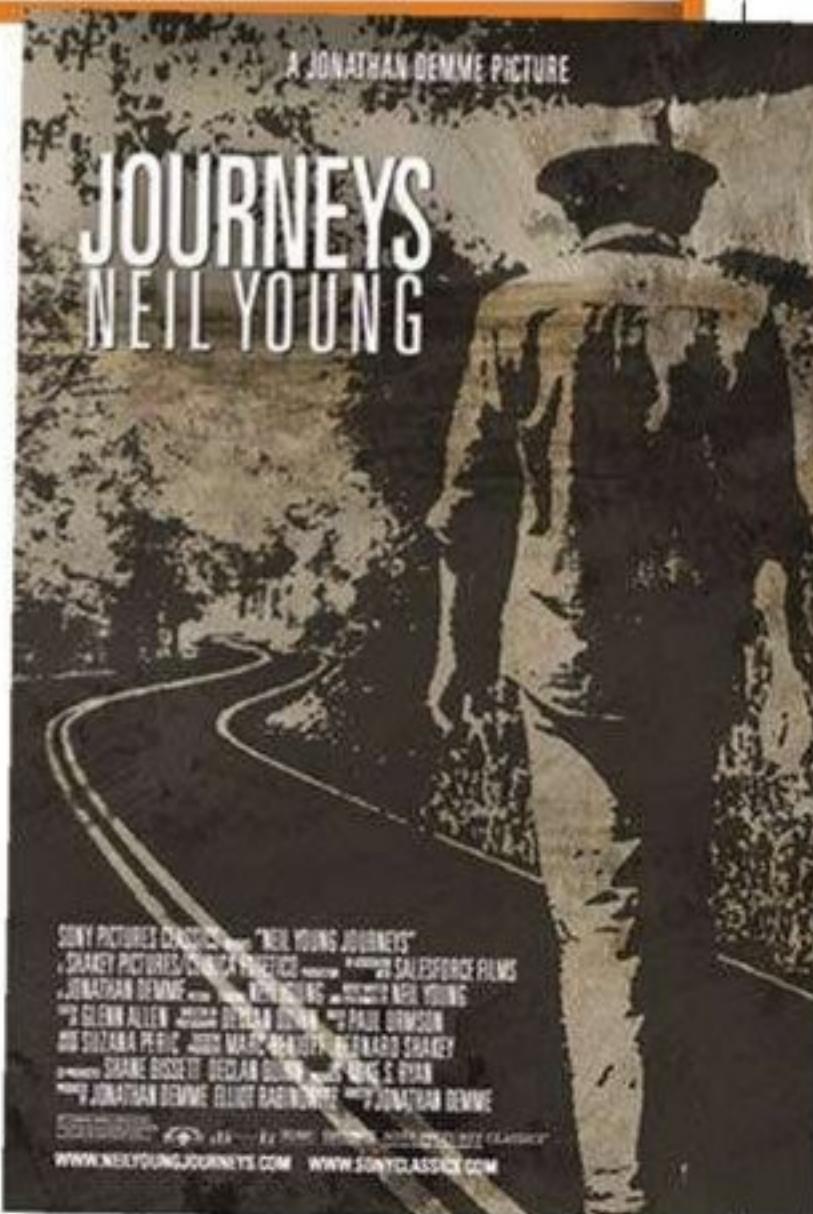
No. No. It's in the book. The book's coming out. You'd rather read it in the book.

Honestly, I'd rather you told me right now.

Well, I guess you'll have to wait, because I'm not. Ha ha.

Did you have a drill, writing every day at the same time?

I'm not Vonnegut. I like to write in the morning. Like the time I was in Hawaii I'd get up at five o'clock in the morning and start writing, and I'd write until I was tired of writing and then I'd go paddleboarding. Then I'd come back and I might write a little more, but if I started getting tired I wouldn't write. Yeah, just forget it. And then when it came back, it came back.



Still Crazy Horse after all these years: (l-r) Molina, Sampedro, Talbot and Young at Broken Arrow, 1997



to do Crazy Horse," says Talbot. "This time, it was almost a little too long."

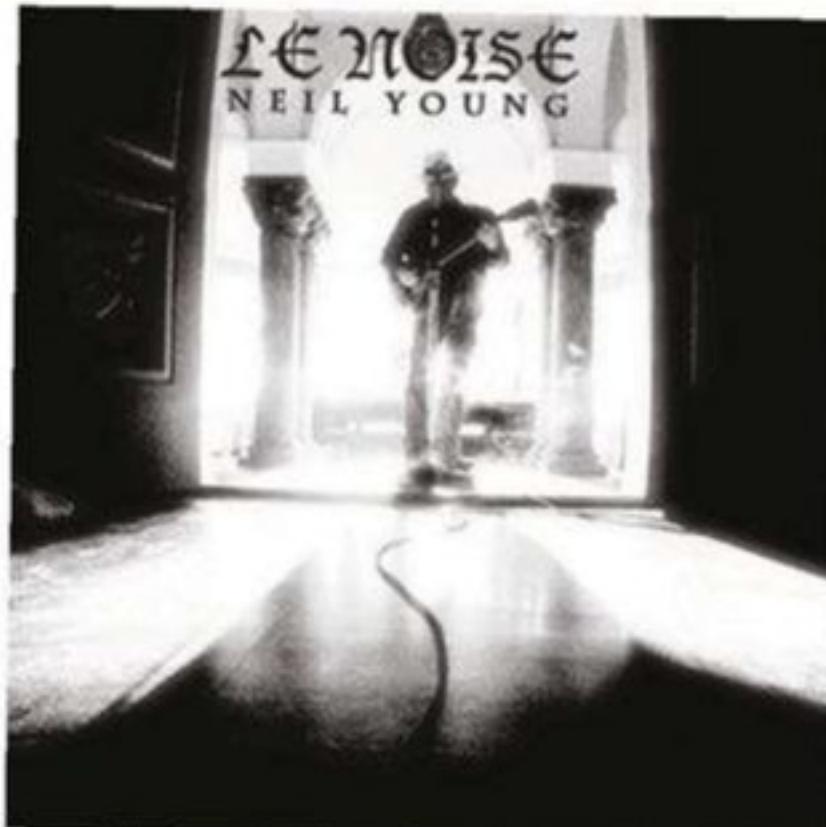
Sampedro calls from his beachfront home in Hawaii, where he lives next door to Clint Eastwood's ex-wife Maggie and grows organic fruit. The guitarist joined Crazy Horse in 1975 to record *Zuma*, two-and-a-half years after the death of Danny Whitten, but he still feels something of an outsider. "After 37 years I'm still the 'new guy,'" he laughs, but when he laughs, he is actually at his most serious.

In 2010, it seemed as if Crazy Horse were being reconvened, for the batch of songs that became *Le Noise*, Young's collaboration with Daniel Lanois, and a solo record that, thanks to Lanois' technological and intuitive genius, sounded not unlike a Crazy Horse jam.

"That was a weird record, wasn't it?" says Sampedro. "That was our record, but here's what happened. We got together before he did that. We played a few of those songs at Ralph's house, and we did it two or three times, and then he just took off. I think what happened is he had everything he wanted to record and it was really urgent to him, and it was just taking too much time to reel the band in – I was still working at *The Tonight Show* [as an engineer for bandleader Kevin Eubanks, working on sequencing and Midi for the ensemble]. Sampedro retired in 2010 to grow fruit in Hawaii]. So he just went on without us. But we could have killed 'Love And War', boy. It's funny because when I just left the ranch last week, we were standing outside and Neil started singing that, and I looked at him, I said, 'Oh yeah, we could do that. We don't have to practise that. Just call it.'

"Neil can change his mind 200 times then change it back. I've had a couple of nightmares. I had my heart broken a couple times by Neil, and actually it's just something you have to learn about him. He's not intentionally doing it; he just gets caught up in what's in his head."

"But man, I was crushed. Even on the last tour, we were in Florida and all of Ralph's relatives were there. He planned to



*Writing a book
is not that
different from
writing songs.
It just doesn't
have a melody"*

NEIL YOUNG

see them after the show. Everybody knew it but something happened and Neil wanted to split, so everybody had to split. Ralph was pissed off. We stopped somewhere up the road and Neil came on our bus and said, 'Look, Ralph, man, I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to do that to you. I am really sorry – but I'll probably do it again.' You can't say Neil's not honest about himself. He knows he does it and he just can't stop himself.

"In my early days with Neil, I used to be frustrated all the time waiting to play, and as time went by I just learned that he's going to go through his rotation of CSNY and Stray Gators, and then playing solo acoustic, but he's always going to come back, so it's something that you just know is there. As I got older, I developed a little more patience. And I'm always ready, and I always think we're going to play, and I never, ever had the thought that we'd never play again."

Even when he said he wouldn't, after the 1986-87 tour?

"He says he'll never play with us, but he doesn't mean that. I think he's just clearing his head to get on to the next thing. I think what happens is that Neil says those things because when he starts a new project he totally believes in that project, and whoever he's playing with is the band he's going to play with forever at that moment. And he really feels that, and he sinks himself into it 110 per cent, and that's who he becomes."

But is he the most himself when he's with Crazy Horse?

"I don't know. I'd like to say that, but I've played with him solo acoustic, and the people that show up for those tours are just as enthusiastic as any Crazy Horse crowd. I do know this – we're the only group that he really can just jam with. We use the song as a catalyst to get to the ending where we can just freeform. And then the fun starts, and depending on how good the crowd is responding and how good we're in touch with each other that night, it can go out the window or it could be a disaster, but we don't care."

What would happen if you, Ralph and Billy secretly



Head poncho: Neil outside the Mountain House, May 29, 2012

rehearsed and became the tightest band in the world when you met up with Neil?

"What, we're not? Ha ha. We always think we are tight and ready. When I worked at *The Tonight Show*, I actually learned how to practise and became a much better guitar player, but I think, all in all, that didn't pan out with *Crazy Horse*. I hadn't played in a few years when we got together, and I was just as rusty as ever. But we just played from our hearts, and that's more important than knowing a lot of chops and being able to fly and be slippery on the guitar. We need to just bash away and find places that we can get comfortable, that's when we're at our best."

Why do you think it's been almost 10 years since you've worked with Neil?

"Well, he had other things to do."

What did you think when Neil first told you he wanted to do these old, old songs?

"I was pretty uptight about it, but once we started playing 'Clementine', I was screaming and jumping around. I sang background parts on 'Tom Dula', and I didn't have a mic, but I was singing so loud it bled through all the mics. Flying over to the first session, I watched *Year Of The Horse* on the plane and I was thinking, 'God, I hope these guys don't expect me to jump around and scream and all this stuff I used to, I'm 63 now. Not going to happen.' We started playing, that's exactly what I did."

Did you look at *Americana* as a kind of rehearsal before you got to the second album?

"No, I never looked at it like that at all. When we did finish it and we played, we just started jamming. I didn't even know it was a song, I guess Neil had it in his head but we played a song for 22 or 23 minutes and it was just a blast, because it was such a release from the other thing. There was no structure, and hopefully that album will come out and we'll get to enjoy it. You never know with Neil... 150 unreleased songs, and we're probably on half of them..."



"I'm doing anything that I can do to distract myself from doing one thing too much"

NEIL YOUNG

NEIL YOUNG, PREDICTABLY, doesn't seem worried about any of that. He's working on moving his Archives project to the internet, and insists that "eventually everything will come out". Meaning the book, and the movie, and whatever else happens to occur to him.

"Writing a book was a distraction from doing one thing too much. It means that they paid me some money to write the book, and that means I don't have to go on the road. Because 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. So I don't save money."

So you have to keep making it?

Yeah. But I don't want to just be out there pounding the boards to make money. So writing a book is great. It's a whole other way to do it. It's a whole other thing, and it's not that different from writing songs. It just doesn't have a melody. It's the only difference.

What is working with Jonathan Demme like? Do you use him as your foil?

We just respect each other. We work well together. He's an artist; a complete filmmaker. And I let him have his way, and he lets me have my way, and we talk about shit. We're not intimidated by each other. He's great. Very, very reinforcing.

This film is called *Neil Young Journeys*. Journeys have always been a theme for you...

Before you start constructing something out of it, I want you to know Jonathan titled it. Ha ha. He titles all my movies. They're his movies. He's the director. He's the writer. He's taking care of me. It's still me. I don't worry about it. Only if he asks me what I think do I tell him. He can do whatever he wants. He's going to do the right thing.

Do you have other relationships that are like that? No. Not really, no.



(l-r) Talbot, Sampedro, Young and Molina at Audio Casa Blanca studio. Photo taken by assisting engineer Mark Humphreys during a break in recording the *American* album

Maybe with your wife Pegi?

Well, that's different, I respect what she says all the time. But on a creative level, Jonathan's every bit my peer, if not better. So that's how I look at it. He says something, I'm saying to myself, 'Just listen to the master.' I'm going OK, great.

How was driving through all those places in Northern Ontario in the movie? Did it bring up a lot of emotional stuff for you?

It did. I hadn't been to any of those places in a long, long time. My brother took us to all those places. It was very cool. Trip with my brother taking us, hauling that old Cadillac he has? Like an '80 Cadillac or whatever the hell it is.

This is the third movie you've done with Demme.

Will there be more things with him, now that you've completed a trilogy?

Well, it is a trilogy now. But I think there'll be more things. I certainly wouldn't say no. We've always talked about doing a trilogy, but we didn't really talk about what we'd do after we finished doing a trilogy, because we didn't think we were going to do it this fast. But when he saw the tour for *Le Noise*, he went, "Whoa. I think this is something we have to get."

He said that the entire film took only four months to make. Do you feel like you work particularly fast? I remember Linda Ronstadt talking about how fast you recorded *Harvest*; that it made her anxious.

Well, with Linda and James Taylor, you've got two of the best singers on the planet singing with you. You know the song and they're learning it, they're doing it for the first time – it has to be disconcerting. There's preparation. Nobody sees the preparation. The preparation just happens in the background of a lot of the things that are happening.

You can't worry about it. Or what people think. I never do. I never did, really.

ALMOST TWO WEEKS after the interview, Neil and Pegi Young are playing hosts at Letters Home, an exhibition of artwork by their daughter, Amber Jean Young. The venue is the Michael Rosenthal Gallery in San Francisco's Mission district, owned by a former Stanford University Vice Provost, a well-known artist himself.

When I walk into the tiny jewel box of a gallery, Neil Young is pouring Chardonnay into plastic cups for the 50 or so attendees, while Pegi Young greets guests and poses for photos with her daughter. More affable and relaxed than at Mountain House, Young takes a thin pair of granny glasses out of a pocket beneath his, yes, poncho, and slips them onto the bridge of his nose. He walks over to the south gallery wall and closely examines every one of the six or seven canvases there – most of them with red dots on them, indicating that they're sold. He stops longest at a pastel piece embellished with a flowery purple script that reads, "When I remember I have mental illness somehow I feel less crazy." He leans in close and remains that way for a while.

Many of the pieces have quite unnerving sayings on them. But then the show invitation states that Amber Jean Young's work explores "interpersonal, familial relationships and personal history... and addresses the issues, coping mechanisms and complicated emotions such as disappointment and failure that are derived from her experience." Amber Jean's words are not unlike lyrics, and I ask her whether she does any other sort of writing.

"I don't," she says. She has a tattoo of a jellyfish on her left arm, exposed by her hot pink sheath dress. "I write mainly when I have a dream. I'm the one who bolts upright and says 'Where's the paper, where's the pen?'"

It makes me think of something Ralph Molina said the day before: "Music comes from the heart. Art comes from the heart and soul."

When I leave, Neil Young is standing outside on the cement, in the cooling evening, talking to a young man. He is still wearing the granny glasses and that poncho, still cradling a half-empty plastic cup.

I touch his arm, and tell him he should be proud. "I am," he says, fixing me with his steady blue stare.

Did you always suspect she had this in her? All the emotion, all the pain, the talent?

"I did," he says proudly.

"I guess you must have. Didn't you write 'The Painter'...?" I stop, not quite certain if the 2005 song from *Prairie Wind* was for his mother, Rassy (also an artist) or for Amber.

"Yes, I did write 'The Painter' for her," he says. For once, Neil Young's guard slips, and the rarest of things crosses his face; a faint, but perceptible and satisfied, smile. ☺

THE PAINTER

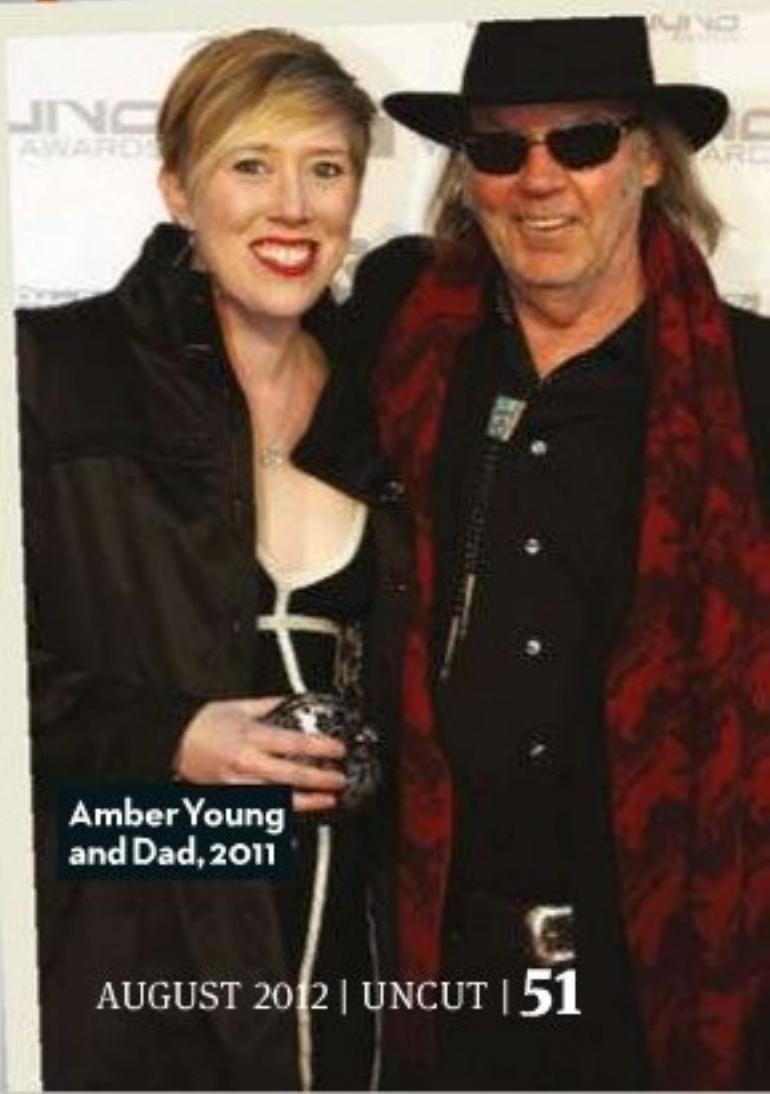
"SHE PICKED THE COLOURS FROM THE AIR..."

Neil and his artist daughter

► Amber Young is fortunate enough to have been immortalised in song by her father not once, but twice. He introduced "Amber Jean" into his live sets while on tour in America with the International Harvesters in 1984, weeks after her birth. "The Painter", which opens 2005's *Prairie Wind*, is also about her.

Young graduated from San Francisco Art Institute in 2010. For her graduation show, she exhibited a 20-foot high walk-in wedding cake. Her work includes fabric, crochet, sculpture, painting and photography. Aside from two exhibitions – 2011's *Thank You For Listening* in New York and *Letters Home* in San Francisco – her artwork has also graced her father's projects. She contributed album cover art to 2000's *Silver And Gold*, and the DVD sleeve art for 2006's *Living With War*.

MARK HUMPHREYS, PHOTOSHOT



Amber Young and Dad, 2011

THE MAKING OF...



Sledgehammer

PETER GABRIEL

Out with the experimentation and in with a bona fide hit: Gabriel's stylish Stax tribute, created in rural England with help from Daniel Lanois and Aardman Animations...

AFTER DOING THE soundtrack to *Birdy*, we'd had our fill of experimental stuff," Peter Gabriel tells *Uncut*. "I didn't want to do another instrumental album, or another album without cymbals or hi-hats! I wanted to take my time and do a proper pop record, with strong songs and strong melodies."

One of those was "Sledgehammer". What started as a funky jam session ended up as one of the biggest singles of the '80s, transforming Peter Gabriel into a global chart-topper and MTV icon.

Like his previous albums – his fourth self-titled release and *Birdy* – it was recorded in Gabriel's studio in the grounds of Ashcombe House, the country house north-east of Bath that was his home from 1978 to 1986. The studio was an old cattle barn, a one-storey stone building, surrounded by cows and spectacular views of the Somerset countryside. For over a year, the key participants (producer Daniel Lanois, guitarist David Rhodes and engineer Kevin Killen) stayed in Gabriel's house, working long days.

"There was a lot of hilarity and fun," says Killen. "But we started to go a bit stir crazy after a while. When the female backing singers arrived to record the vocals for 'Sledgehammer', I remember Dan and Peter tying me to a chair because I'd barely seen a woman in months."

Like most of *So*, "Sledgehammer" started with Gabriel playing song ideas on a keyboard, accompanied by a drum machine, while Rhodes and Lanois jammed along. Lanois and Killen would then edit these jams down to the best bits. "The bass and drums would come last," says Lanois. "It's the complete opposite of how you'd usually work, but it was perfect for this project."

JOHN LEWIS

PETER GABRIEL: My soundtrack to Alan Parker's *Birdy* established the core trio for *So*. I had guitarist David Rhodes, a long-term collaborator since about 1979, and he introduced me to Daniel Lanois, who he'd met through his work with Jon Hassell. Dan was a great source of ideas and inspiration, some of which he'd acquired from working with Brian Eno. He was able to slow things down and get me to work with sound and ambience. And he was crucial to shaping the ideas I came up with into songs.

DAVID RHODES: Some people claimed that "Sledgehammer" was the last song we recorded on the album. It was actually the first! We started jamming around that riff towards the end of the *Birdy* sessions. It set the mood – playful, experimental, improvisatory – for the whole of *So*.

KEVIN KILLENS: Dan and David would play guitars, and Peter would operate a drum machine and play a Prophet 5. Sometimes he'd play a Yamaha CP70, or an Emulator.

DANIEL LANOIS: Peter was working with a beatbox, and he had the basic groove for "Sledgehammer" for a long time. It was a basic hip-hop shuffle, and Peter would play this syncopated organ stab over the top, while

KEY PLAYERS

Peter Gabriel
Vocals,
songwriter,
keyboards

Daniel Lanois
Producer,
guitars

David Rhodes
Guitars

Kevin Killen
Engineer

Wayne Jackson
Trumpet

David Sproxton
Animator

singing this wordless melody. We had these yellow construction hats hanging around the studio, Peter got us to wear them. I was the foreman: "OK guys, I'm gonna ding the workbell and you won't get another ding until lunch break. Now, let's hit it with a sledgehammer!"

RHODES: We certainly wore the yellow hats, on and off, throughout the album. It was a nice touch. Peter's very good at lightening the mood when things get too heavy.

LANOIS: So you had this beat and Peter's sustained organ line. But it needed something fast on the top of this relatively slow groove. So me and David would play 16ths over the top, on our guitars. The kind of thing that Stevie Wonder would play on a Clavinet – chicka-chicka-chicka-chicka – but



we were playing them on surf guitars. That's how it came to life.

GABRIEL: I was also playing around with this new box of tricks called an Emulator, and it had this nice, exotic shakuhachi flute sound. We thought that would sound odd on a funk track!

LANOIS: When we were jamming the song, the best bits would come when the fixed part of the arrangement ended. I tried to leave a good five or six minutes of outro, which is when Peter and David would start going crazy. Peter's a real improv master: all those vocal inflections – "I kicked the habit", "This is the new stuff...we go dancing in", "Show for me and I will show for you" – these were all Peter's vocal ad-libs. Because we were working to a click track, it was easy to edit the best ad-libs down

and then splice them into the song. I'd then ask Peter to take these random, wordless ad-libs and turn them into proper, structured lyrics.

GABRIEL: What are the lyrics about? What do you *think* they're about? Isn't it obvious? Ha ha!

LANOIS: It's the kind of sexual metaphor that you get in blues songs.

"Squeeze my lemon 'til the juice runs down my leg." That's the sledgehammer, I guess!

GABRIEL: You could see the whole of So as a homage to black pop music – be it from Africa, Latin America or the United States – but "Sledgehammer" was the most obvious R'n'B

a lot of syncopation to work. Peter tended to work with rock drummers – [adopts primitive, grunting sound] boom-CHA, boom-boom CHA – and we recorded lots of them on that song, but none of them really worked. I started going a little crazy. "Can't anyone play a fuckin' shuffle? You Brits, this ain't fuckin' skiffle!" Then there was this Senegalese guy, George Acogny, who was working with Peter, and he suggested his friend Manu Katché...

KILLEN: Manu came over from Paris, and he was amazing. He got into the groove immediately. Did it in one take, and then left to catch a train back to London!

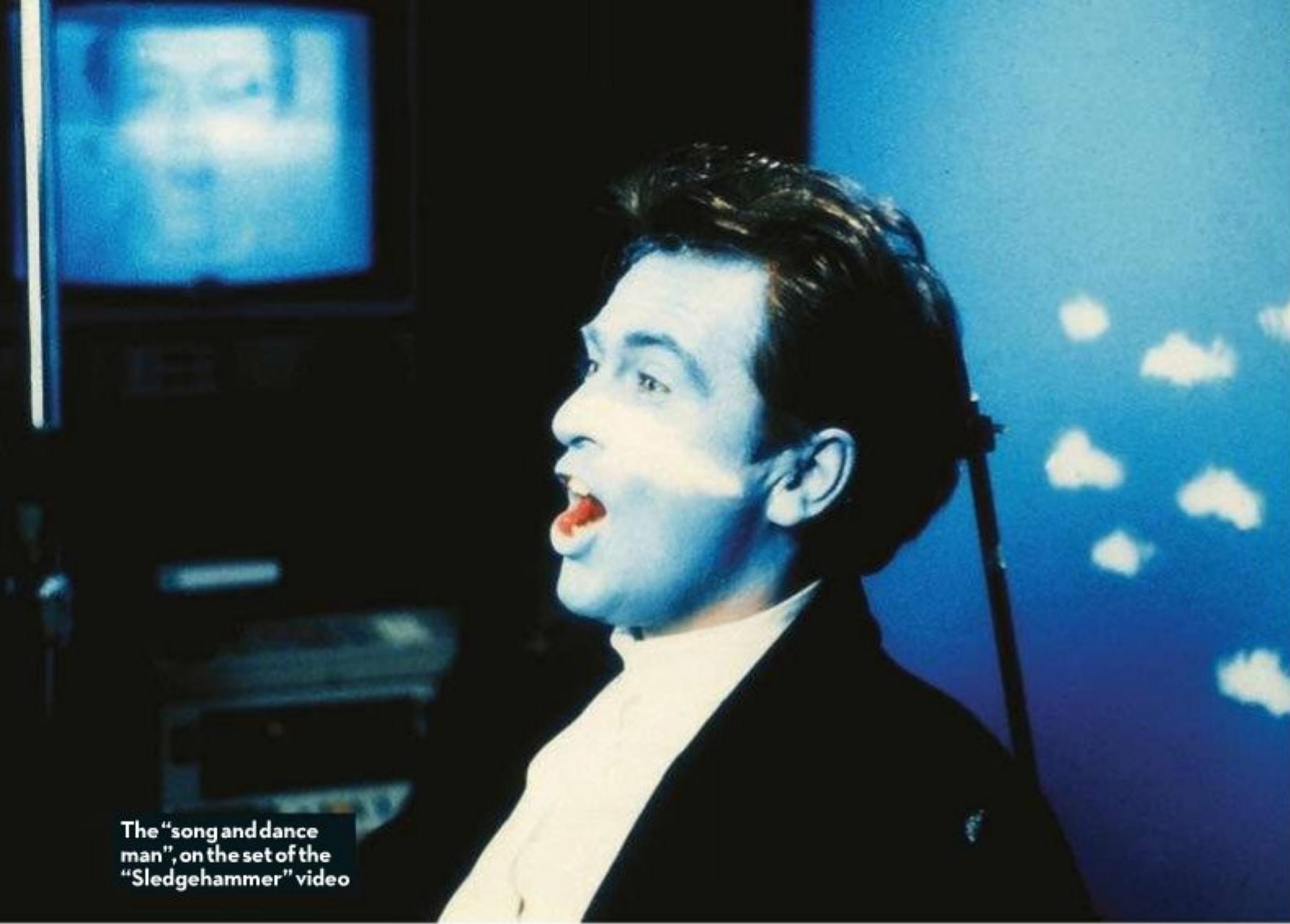
LANOIS: Peter's dream was to get the Memphis Horns to play on it. I only felt confident to ask them once we'd locked down a groove with Manu Katché, and Tony Levin recorded his amazing bassline. Then I felt I could go face the Memphis Horns with my head held high!

WAYNE JACKSON: I got a call from Peter's people and flew over to New York to record at The Power Station. Peter and Daniel were

"The most painful thing was having the sky painted, frame by frame, on my face..." PETER GABRIEL

rip-off. In terms of groove, lyrics and melody, it's my tribute to that Stax-y kind of soul music.

LANOIS: My worry was that it didn't groove enough. It was quite slow and so it needed quite



The "song and dance man", on the set of the "Sledgehammer" video

→ there. The weird thing was that it was pretty much the only session I ever played without my man Andrew Love, tenor saxophone in the Memphis Horns [Love passed away on April 12, 2012]. He was playing a session down in Dallas, Texas. So I had to hire two hip New York guys to take his place: Don Mikkelsen on trombone and Mark Rivera on saxophone. We played on "Sledgehammer" and "Big Time".

GABRIEL: It was incredibly exciting to have Wayne there. He'd played at the best gig I'd ever seen in my life – Otis Redding at the Ram Jam Club in Brixton when I was 16.

JACKSON: Peter was incredibly knowledgeable about my work. I do remember that gig in Brixton. Intimate venue, absolutely packed, sweat dripping off the roof, that kind of place. Peter's got a great soul voice. He knows how to let rip, like the best soul singers.

LANOIS: We talked a lot about "izzums". That was our word for anything in music that gets expressed but isn't heard. The Memphis Horns play with tons of "izzums". It's not just the notes – it's about the tonguing, the hesitations, the inflections, that's what comes out in the record. They're insinuated. We played Wayne the basic horn line and he filled it with izzums.

JACKSON: The track was already quite well developed, but it needed something in the mid-range to kick it off. I wrote the horn part the way I wrote all the old Stax parts. Playing by ear, I wrote the fanfare and arranged the harmonies for the tenor and trombone to play.

KILLEN: You lose all perspective when you're working on an album for more than a year, but when the guys from Virgin – and the Americans from Geffen – came down to the studio, they were incredibly excited. It became clear that "Sledge" was going to be the lead single.

GABRIEL: I took a risk and decided to spend quite a lot of money on the video for "Sledge". I was introduced to this wonderful director, Stephen R Johnson. He introduced me to the Quay Brothers; I introduced him to David Sproxton from Aardman Animations.

DAVID SPROXTON: Peter and the director Stephen Johnson wrote a very rough storyboard – three sheets of A3 with some sketches. Then Stephen came down to Bristol, where me, Pete Lord, Nick Park and a few others started filling this storyboard out. We had three weeks of prep before the filming – we started to build the sets, work out the animation, make models. One idea was to have an ice block in the shape of Peter's head so we could smash it with an axe. We did a face cast of Peter and turned it into a vinyl mould, filled it with water and put it in a deep freeze. We thought we'd have enough time to make half a dozen ice heads prior to the shoot, but it took a lot longer to freeze than we thought. We ended up with just the one!

GABRIEL: It's a shame how so many artists just spent a couple of hours with a video director and let them illustrate their music. It's an important part of what you do. You have a responsibility to learn about it.

SPROXTON: We shot it in our old space in Wetherell Place in Clifton, Bristol – a 2,000-square-foot Victorian warehouse where we shot the first *Creature Comforts*, the adverts for Lurpak and Cuprinol and most of *A Grand Day Out*. You had four or five separate stages dotted around the space, filming simultaneously. You had the claymation models of Peter's head. You had Steve and Tim Quay doing their animations with wooden objects, fruit and fish. You had Peter on his back, under a sheet of glass, as they moved objects on top and around him. And you had Nick Park doing his dancing chickens sequence. We were going to make them in latex, but Stephen demanded fresh chickens. So Nick – who's actually a keen

ornithologist! – bought some from a supermarket, filled them with aluminium wire and started animating them. If you watch the footage, you can see them start fresh and pale pink and quickly getting red and grotty under days of hot studio lights.

GABRIEL: David and Nick told me that they were going to use me as an animated model. So I spent a couple of days, lying under a glass screen, being filmed with bright lights and a rostrum camera, being painted, having my hair played with, everything. The most painful thing was having the sky painted, frame by frame, on my face. The clouds would be moved across, and my skin got very sore after the clouds had hit the halfway point!

SPROXTON: It was a week of solid filming. We started it on Monday morning, just after Easter in 1986. We started at 8am and worked late most nights. On the Saturday we worked through the night until Sunday afternoon. The last bit, with the backing singers on the chairs, was shot at the Glynne Wickham Studio Theatre, part of Bristol University's drama department. The beauty of that space is that it had fly rails at the back, rails from which you can swap scenery. So, by constantly swapping those backdrops, we were able to animate the wallpaper and the windows.

GABRIEL: That final scene was me being a song and dance man. That was a long day's work!

SPROXTON: Everyone was exhausted by this time. We all mucked in for that final scene. You can see me and Nick Park and everyone else in those shots. The only reason why the girls playing the singers sit down on chairs is because they were tired of standing! But Peter was incredible. He had more energy than all of us combined. He was jumping around, standing for hours, never getting tired. So we finished it on the Sunday. The film went for developing on the Monday, was edited on the Tuesday and Wednesday and – amazingly – on the Thursday it went out on *Top Of The Pops*! It sounds like a remarkable turnaround, but that was standard for a music video.

GABRIEL: The success of *So* – largely fuelled by "Sledgehammer" – was also a great facilitator. Many of the things I love to do today – Witness.org, thetoolbox.net, theElders.org, Gabble and Womad – would have been a lot more difficult to realise without the opportunities that success can bring. There's no perfume like success, but whichever class you travel, it's the same bags in the hold. ☺

ON RECORD Peter Gabriel's *Secret World Live* is released on DVD on July 2; a Special Edition of *So* will be released in the autumn

December 1984 Gabriel and Lanois complete the soundtrack to *Birdy*

January 1985 Recording starts for the *So* album.

The first version of "Sledgehammer" is jammed
December 1985 Manu Katché records drum track; Gabriel

completes the lyric
January 1986 Horns recorded at The Power Station, New York
April 1986 Video made in Bristol

April 21, 1986 "Sledgehammer" single is released
May 1986 Reaches No.4 in the UK
May 31, 1986 *So* is

released; tops chart in UK and US, spends 76 weeks on the UK chart
July 26, 1986 "Sledgehammer" reaches No.1 in US

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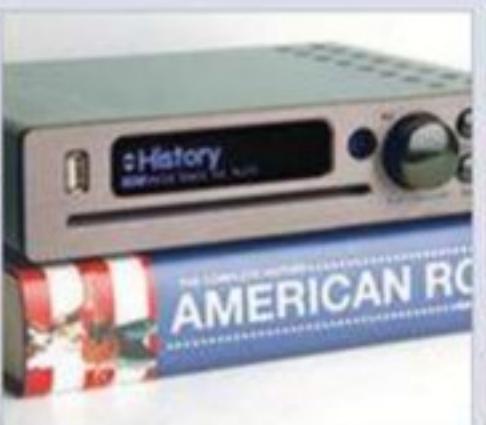
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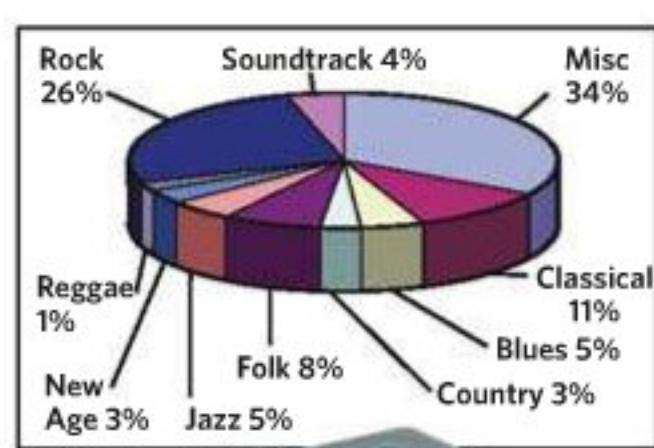
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‘I cause the *lightning* to *flash* and the *thunder* to roll!’

The tempestuous life of **PETER TOSH** was filled with vampires, malevolent ghosts, UFOs, witches, car crashes and brutal beatings from the police. Twenty-five years after his murder, *Uncut* and Tosh's colleagues celebrate a true radical – and the incredible music that he made. “I lie,” he said, “beyond the ordinary...”

Story: Neil Spencer **Portrait:** Peter Mazel/Sunshine/Retna

WHEN BOB MARLEY saw the state of his friend, tears came to his eyes. On the floor of a Kingston town police cell Peter Tosh lay covered in blood, twitching and barely conscious, holding his right hand, clearly in agony.

Marley, by then the most famous man in Jamaica, quickly arranged for Tosh to be taken to Kingston Public Hospital, paying Tosh's bail. Later he would return to the police station to complain about the brutal treatment meted out to his fellow Wailer, and to threaten legal action. He was free to do so, a policeman said, “But remember when they call yours and Peter's name in court they are going to hear 'Deceased your honour'.”

“Peter had been waiting for us, his musicians, but we were late,” recalls Robbie Shakespeare, Tosh's bandleader. “When we reached the police station there was a lot of noise, shouting and bawling. Peter had been picked up for a tiny spliff, he boxed off the guy who tried to grab him and then he walked to the police station. That beating was his reward.”

Such was the power of the police at the height of Jamaica's reggae insurrection Tosh claimed he was set on by several cops and beaten for over an hour, until he feigned death. Though Tosh's apparent crime on September 19, 1978 had been to be caught with a spliff by an undercover cop at the busy junction of Half Way Tree, many suspected his real offence had been committed five months earlier, when the singer had delivered a foul-mouthed outburst about ganja laws, police brutality and the political “shitstem” at the One Love Peace Concert on April 22.

The concert had been organised by Bob Marley to try to quell the murderous gunplay between ghetto gangs linked to Jamaica's political parties, the leftwing PNP of Prime Minister Michael Manley and the rightwing JLP led by Edward ‘CIA’ Seaga. Marley ended the night joining the bitter rivals in a

The mid-'60s Wailers: (l-r) Bunny Wailer, Bob Marley and Peter Tosh



symbolic onstage handshake. By then, the show had been stolen by Tosh, fronting a band that had Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare as its rhythm section. His set included his ganja anthem, “Legalize It”, and “Equal Rights”, whose lyrics flew against the evening's mood by declaring “*I don't want no peace, I want equal rights and justice*”. To emphasise his point Tosh broke off to deliver a 30-minute tirade against the way the “underprivileged sector” were “hassled by police brutality time and time again”. In a calculated insult, Tosh then fired up a spliff to massed cheers from the crowd.

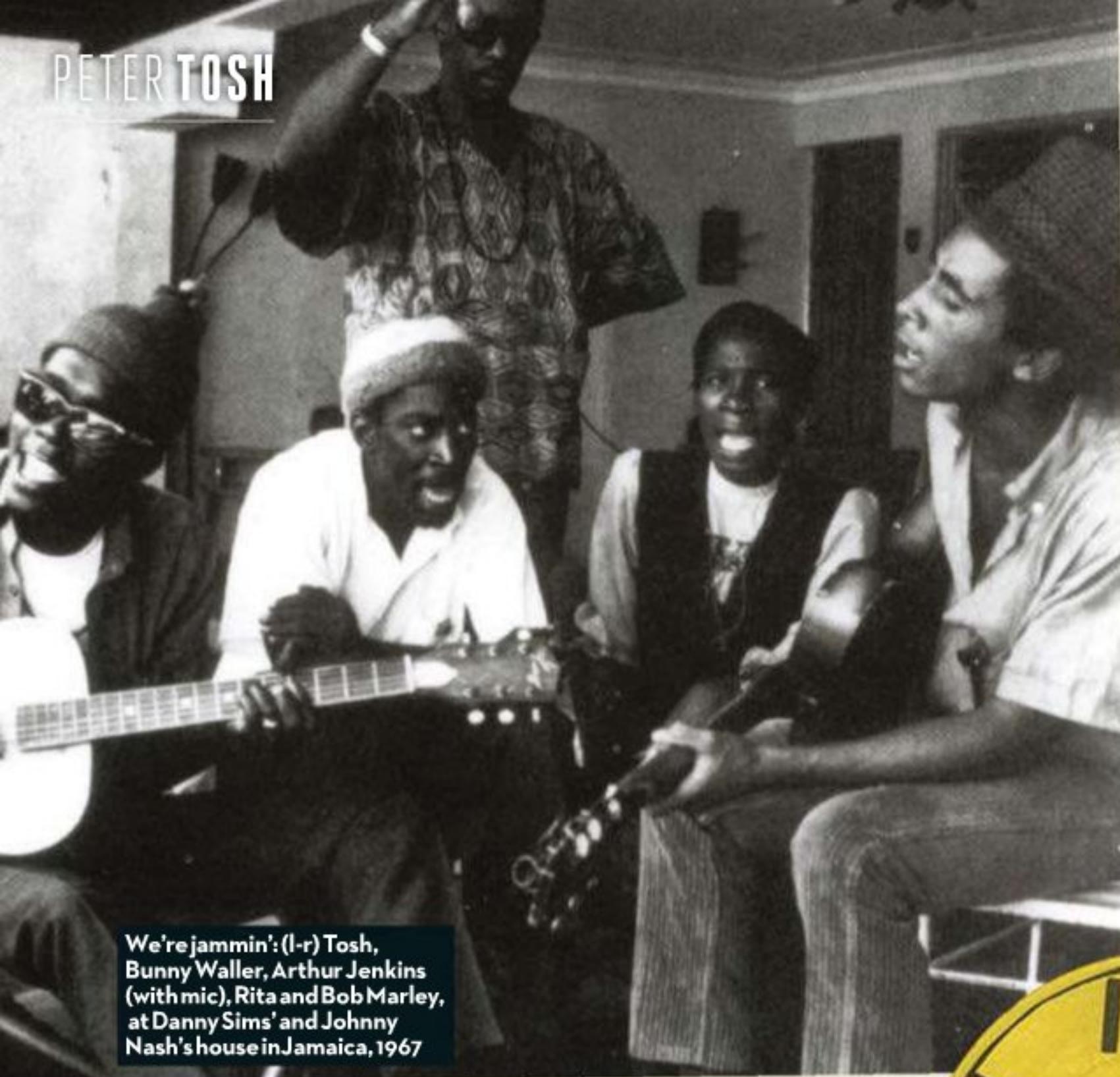
“We had no idea Tosh was going to say those things,” says Shakespeare, “but it was a good speech and what he was saying was the truth. If you listen carefully he doesn't say those swear words ('bombaalaat', 'raasalaat'), except once.”

Whether or not Tosh fully pronounced the crassest insults in ghetto vocabulary, it is hard to overstate his affront – today's equivalent might be Kanye West lighting up on the White House lawn and dissing the Washington Police Department – and if the notoriously arrogant Tosh thought there would be no payback from his gesture, he was, as they say, tripping. “It was a spectacular speech but foolhardy,” says Lee Jaffe, producer of Tosh's *Legalize It*. “Peter was genuinely angry, though, both on behalf of the people and because he himself had had several run-ins with the cops.”

COURAGE AND RECKLESSNESS ran through Winston Hubert McIntosh in equal measure. “I'm The Toughest”, written in 1962 at age 18, was his first theme tune, and later he became “The Minister Of Herb”, the karate-wielding “Stepping Razor” and “Bush Doctor”. Early in his career he'd also bill himself as ‘Peter Touch’. Yet the swaggering, fearless face Tosh showed the world concealed a life-long private terror that, in the words of his friend Michael Robinson, “someone or something was trying to harm him”, a fear horribly realised when Tosh was gunned down at the age of 42 on September 11, 1987.

Tosh's visitations by what he termed “spiritual evil forces” started when he was in his teens, when he'd





We're jammin': (l-r) Tosh, Bunny Waller, Arthur Jenkins (with mic), Rita and Bob Marley, at Danny Sims' and Johnny Nash's house in Jamaica, 1967

have nightmares of vampires drinking his blood. He'd wake to find himself unable to move, a condition known as sleep paralysis and which plagued Tosh for the rest of his life.

"Peter was tapped into that spooky frequency," says Wayne Jobson, director of 1992 Tosh doc *Stepping Razor: Red X*. "But the vampires he saw were really premonitions of the three guys who came to his house to kill him."

Tosh's private terrors were hinted at in his music, on sides like the crepuscular "Vampire", but his fiery public persona rarely slipped. It was in full blaze when Bob Marley and Bunny Livingston first encountered him in 1960, finding Tosh playing guitar on a street corner. Then aged 16, Tosh was already a force of nature; tall and handsome, possessed of ready wit, enormous self-confidence, a rich baritone voice and a guitar, one of the very few to be found in dirt-poor Trenchtown. Bob and Bunny instantly recruited him into their nascent group, The Teenagers. Modelling themselves on The Impressions, Bob, Bunny and Peter became The

Wailers, honing their vocal harmonies under the tutelage of Trenchtown luminary Joe Higgs. Their ascent to Jamaican hit-makers in the 1960s, and to international stardom in the 1970s, has recently been told in Kevin Macdonald's documentary, *Marley*. It's Bob's movie, meaning Tosh's contribution to the Wailers' saga is underplayed.

Nonetheless, the film's finale, "Get Up Stand Up", an anthem co-written by Bob and Peter, is a reminder that Tosh composed a substantial portion of the Wailers' founding songbook – numbers like "400 Years" and "No Sympathy" – and brought a brooding, militant presence to the group – Malcolm X to Bob's Martin Luther King.

The blend of the three Wailers' voices was matched by the blend of their personalities; introspective Bunny, outgoing Bob, strident Peter. When they broke up in 1974, after two acclaimed but, let's not forget, low-selling Island albums (*Catch A Fire* and *Burning*), bitterness was inevitable. Some blamed Marley's ambition for the split, or the machinations of Island boss Chris Blackwell ("Whiteworste" in Tosh-speak). But Bunny's refusal to tour what he deemed the "freakshows" of Europe and America made a change inevitable, and with Marley now the group's focal point, Tosh had little option but to go solo.

He recorded *Legalize It* in the summer and autumn of 1975 with Lee Jaffe as producer. A New York photographer and filmmaker, Jaffe was a fellow traveller with the Wailers (he played harmonica on *Natty Dread's* "Rebel Music"). Now he became deal-maker, recording supervisor and image maker, taking the iconic cover photos of Tosh puffing away in a Westmoreland ganja field.

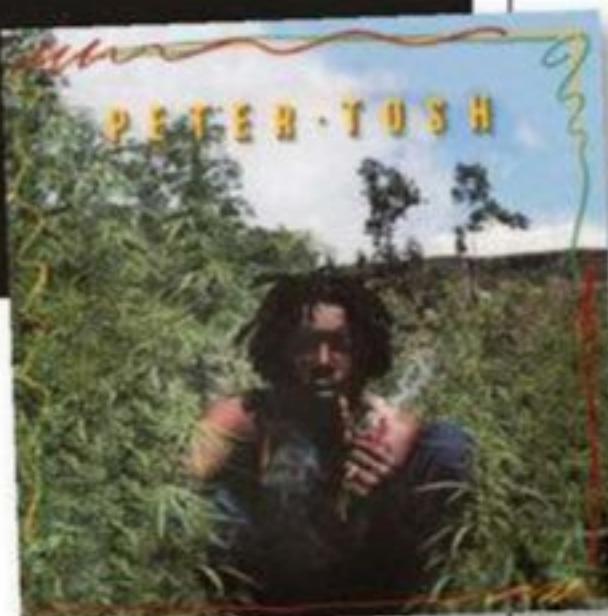
"People think there was a conflict with Bob but that wasn't the case," maintains Jaffe. "Part of the problem was that Peter couldn't face another Wailers record that didn't feature his songs – he had two albums' worth written. Bob lent Peter the money to get *Legalize It* underway – for starters he gave us three reels of virgin tape.

"The initial sessions were at Duke Reid's Treasure Island studio above Reid's Kingston record shop, an old place with fluorescent lighting and an antique eight-track console but with tremendous atmosphere. We recorded with the Wailers band – Family Man and Carlton Barrett, Tyrone Downie, Al





Tosh, goggled up in the '80s. Below: the LP sleeve for *Legalize It*



Anderson – and it was quickly done. The songs had been in Peter so long, he knew what he wanted. I'd learned a lot from the *Natty Dread* sessions and we both had a lot to prove."

The *Legalize It* sessions were overshadowed when, on November 11, 1975, Tosh's notoriously manic driving resulted in a head-on collision following an ill-advised U-turn on Kingston's Spanish Town highway. The accident killed Tosh's 21-year-old girlfriend, Yvonne Whittingham, and left him with a severely fractured skull.

"Peter was a reckless driver, always tailgating and darting in and out of traffic, and he was very much responsible for Yvonne's death," says Jaffe. "She was beautiful and brilliant and the two of them were inseparable – he only agreed to go on the first two Wailers US tours if she could come along. The accident broke Peter's jaw, which he refused to have reset properly, and left him with scars. His features were perfect before that. He wasn't the same man after the crash."

TOSH'S CAVALIER ATTITUDE, mania for fast cars and ability to self-mythologise were all in evidence when I interviewed him in Jamaica in 1976, during the recording of *Equal Rights*, successor to *Legalize It*. Tosh held court sitting on the bonnet of his car, a jungle green Sunbeam Talbot stickered with African flags, with his ganja pipe in hand. It proved less an interview than a declamation of Tosh's magnificence in his ornate vocabulary. He was, he assured me, "a man who expects the unexpected. Nothing surprises me because I know the earth is my father and the

"I'm not here to get rich, I'm here to wake up the slumbering mentality of the oppressed"

PETER TOSH



Tosh and Richards in friendlier days

EYEWITNESS

When Peter met Keith

"Things were accelerating into somewhere dark..."

► Keith Richards had become enamoured of Jamaica during the Stones' visit to the island to record *Goats Head Soup* in 1972, and owned a home on the north coast, in the hills above Ocho Rios, a house Tosh decided to "capture" in 1982 during Keith's absence. When he heard about this, a furious Richards caught the first flight to Montego Bay and rang his home. Tosh told him he was waiting there with a machine gun. "Well, you better have the magazine loaded, Peter," snorted Richards, "because I'm on my way." By the time the irate Stone arrived an hour later, Tosh had vacated the property. "I get there and the place was deserted except for goat shit," Richards told writer Roger Steffans. "It was trashed up. That's when I saw the dark side of Peter. I had no connection with him in his last years, when he was with girlfriend Marlene, though I could see things were accelerating into somewhere dark."

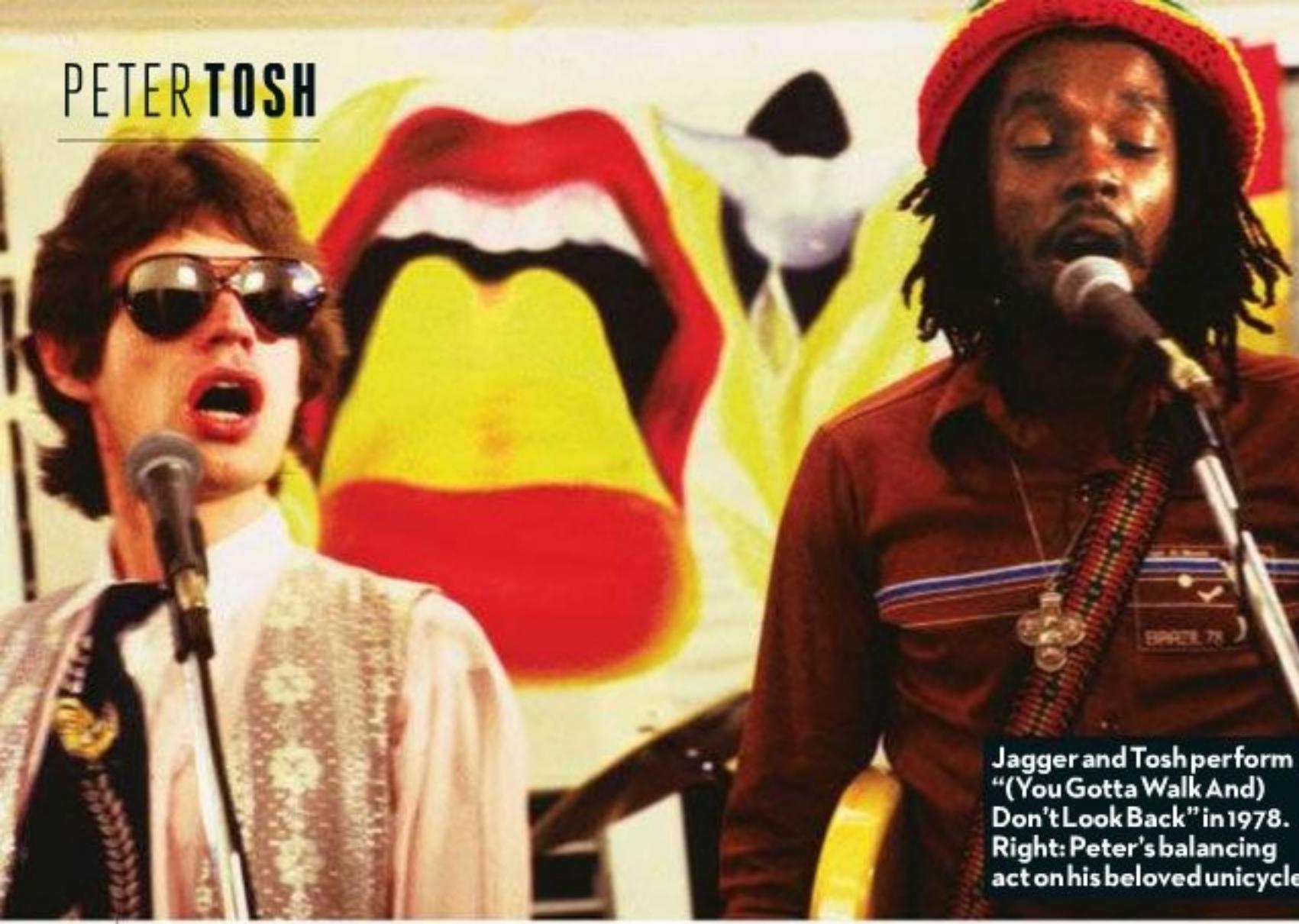
fullness thereof. I'm not here to grasp after material things or to get rich and buy a Lincoln Continental, I'm here to wake up the slumbering mentality of people irrespective of where or who you are, as long as you are oppressed or downpressed."

Then came a history lesson about colonialism and slavery and the likes of Henry Morgan and Francis Drake, "who defame and incriminate and degrade black people and tell them they were born in sin and shit and must go to church."

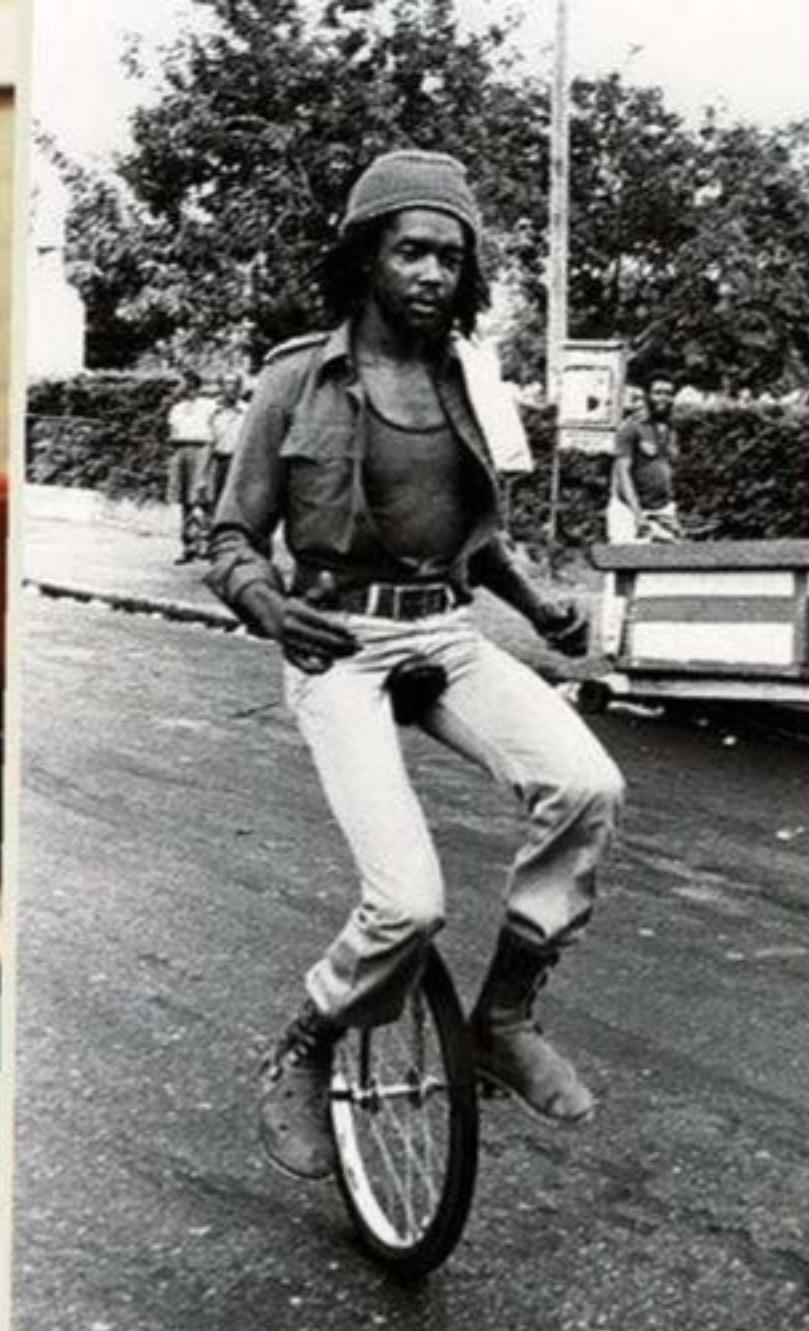
Asked about his karate skills, Tosh claimed he was self-taught, and that he did "African martial arts, 'cos though they took me out of Africa they can't take the African out of me." Later, presumably because I was with two women – a fellow reporter and photographer – he told us that there were "certain times in the month" when women were not allowed to communicate with or even approach him, much to my companions' bemusement. "What I am showing you is so heavy that for ordinary minds to penetrate it is very hard," he assured us. "But I lie beyond the ordinary." A roll of thunder was greeted as validation of this assertion. "Jah Rastafari!" yelled Tosh, "I am a man who cause the lightning to flash and thunder to roll." Then, as the first fat drops of a tropical downpour stirred up the Kingston dust, Tosh roared off with a mighty spin of wheels.

LEGALIZE IT HAD made Tosh an international name, but 1977's *Equal Rights* was his masterpiece, a heavily politicised record that confirmed his position as one of the most outspoken artists of the 1970s. Opening with his version of "Get Up Stand Up", the album included "African", outlining Tosh's vision of a pan-African diaspora, and "Stepping Razor", initially credited to Tosh, though the number had been written by his old mentor Joe Higgs a decade before (in 1985, Higgs successfully sued for ownership of the song). The sleeve featured Tosh, in a beret and his big goggle glasses, looking more like the leader of a renegade paramilitary outfit than a musician.

Despite the record's militant mood, Robbie



Jagger and Tosh perform "(You Gotta Walk And) Don't Look Back" in 1978. Right: Peter's balancing act on his beloved unicycle



→ Shakespeare remembers the sessions as "upful. I'd just started playing with Sly [Dunbar] and was in charge of the band. We worked as a unit, Peter would start to sing, and things just fell into place."

Equal Rights also featured "Apartheid", a blast against the South African regime. Tosh "kept himself abreast of the various liberation struggles, their detractors and supporters," says his road manager Herbie Miller, who testifies to Tosh's meetings with US black power leaders Kwame Ture [Stokely Carmichael] and Angela Davis.

Miller also honours another side of Tosh, his love for pets and gadgets like the unicycle on which he'd pose: "He had a grand sense of humour. He was a complex human being, and certainly an under-appreciated musician." Robbie Shakespeare concurs. "Peter was a guy who always had a lot of joke. Yes, he was militant – but then everyone was at the time – and he could talk seriously. But when people portray him as violent, that's nonsense. He was a quiet person."

In April 1978, Tosh performed at the One Love Peace Concert. In the audience was Mick Jagger, who, impressed by Tosh's performance, signed him to Rolling Stones Records. That summer, Tosh toured America with the Stones, and a single, a duet with Jagger on The Temptations' number "Don't Look Back", became an international hit – though an old Motown song hardly represented Tosh's persona, still less did Mick's camp performance in the video and on *Saturday Night Live* in December. Yet, here was a breakthrough to a new audience – and Keith Richards added guitar to Tosh's *Bush Doctor*, which came with a ganja-scented 'scratch 'n' sniff' cover patch. "That Stones tour was a real learning experience," says Shakespeare. "The Stones made us comfortable, but we were new to touring at that level, playing to so many. The major problem was the food. Peter always wanted fresh fish, Ital food. We couldn't afford our own cook."

As the 1980s unfolded, Tosh's recorded output grew less exciting, though Robbie Shakespeare says there was a conscious decision to "get a more listening audience. The records were slightly more commercial, but we wanted a wider scope than just Jamaica and suffering." Tosh's relationship with the Stones also soured – shortly after his cameo appearance in the video for the band's 1981 single "Waiting For A Friend" he left the label.

For the 'roots' generation of the 1970s, these were uncomfortable times, with the totemic figure of Marley gone, reggae in the embrace of 'slack' dancehall culture, and Jamaica increasingly loaded with cocaine and guns. For Tosh, a break-out US hit in 1983 with a reggaefied "Johnny B Goode" was all very well but hardly chimed with his 'Mystic Man' persona, nor did his adopted stage costume of Arab

Sheikh. One can't help but wonder whether

Tosh's mental balance had recovered from either his crash or his beating by the police. In interviews, he'd started to talk about visiting UFOs, whose engines, he said, were powered by diamonds. In the final phase of his life, Tosh's conviction that malevolent spirits were on his tail grew, and he told friends that his upmarket Kingston home needed to be purged of some 49 "duppies" (ghosts). That his lover, Marlene Brown, was rumoured to be a witch – an obeah woman – fed into the vortex of negative energy that seemed to swirl around the singer. He visited Nigeria to elicit help from a celebrated – and costly – local shaman, who offered protection from both ghostly forces and bullets.

PETER TOSH'S MURDER by an old Trenchtown associate on September 11, 1987 – an act described as "an unnecessary fuckery" by Robbie Shakespeare – cut short a career the singer was intent on re-activating. Shockingly, at the time of his death, he hadn't been on stage for several years. The slide of his reputation in the years

since strikes a note of injustice, though a restoration of his credentials as one of reggae's founding fathers is underway, a campaign backed by, among others, Jamaica's former finance minister, Omar Davis. Last year saw deluxe editions of *Legalize It* and *Equal Rights*, while a 6CD boxset gathering Tosh's five other solo albums, two live LPs and outtakes has just been released. An annual free festival in Tosh's honour has been established near his Jamaican birthplace, and his name allied to pressure groups his estate think represent his views; Amnesty International and US Legalise cannabis campaigns, NORML and the Marijuana Policy Project. "My dad stood

for a lot of issues that people still face," says the youngest of Tosh's 10 children, Niambe, a Boston teacher who also administers her father's estate. "The African Americans I teach are still dealing with oppression."

Already there is talk of a biopic further down the line. There is no shortage of biography to stuff into any such movie. "All kinds of people have been granted Jamaican national honours," points out filmmaker Wayne Jobson. "Marley obviously, and Bunny Livingston, too, but Shaggy and Luciano are also there and without disrespect to them, Tosh was a more important artist. The problem is that he was a rebel, he fought against the government and was nasty to some powerful people. They haven't forgotten." 

Peter Tosh 1978-1987 is out now on EMI Catalogue

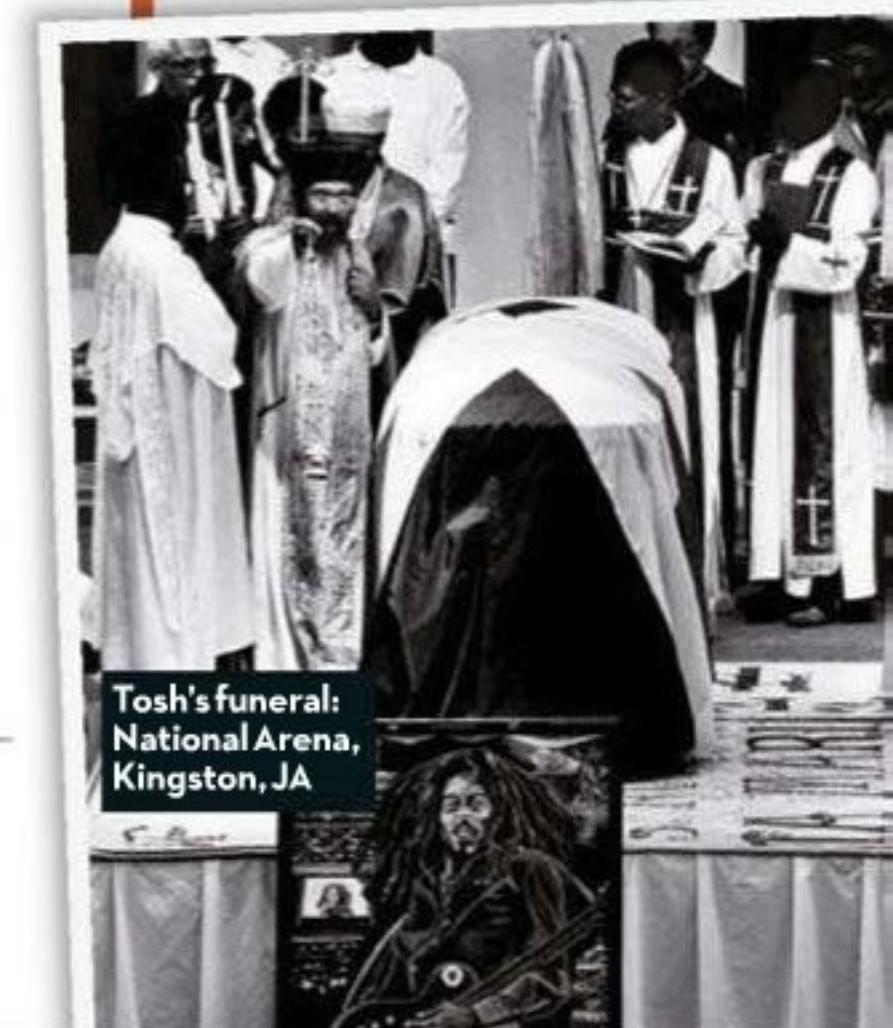
EYEWITNESS

THE MURDER OF PETER TOSH

September 11, 1987

► Dennis 'Leppo' Lobban was a piece of Peter Tosh's Trenchtown past he couldn't shake off, a crony from way back. In 1986, after serving a 12-year sentence for armed robbery and attempted murder, Leppo started hanging round Tosh. Leppo had once taken the rap for the singer when police found a pistol in his car, and felt he was 'owed'. Tosh would give him hand-outs. Leppo's arrival at Tosh's home on Plymouth Ave in September 1987 was not therefore a complete surprise, though Michael Robinson, a friend of Tosh's who answered the door, didn't recognise the two men with him. As soon as the trio gained access to the yard they produced 9mm pistols, marched into Tosh's living room, ordered everyone there to "get flat" and demanded cash from the host and his guests – girlfriend Marlene Brown, his drummer Santa Davis, radio DJ Jeff Dixon and his wife, his friends Michael Robinson and Doc Brown. Tosh's promises to get money from the bank next day cut no ice with the gunmen, whose real motive, Santa Davis felt, was murder – "You gwan dead tonight," he was told. Tosh was executed as he lay on the marble floor of his living room. The volley of bullets that followed also killed Jeff Dixon and Doc Brown, leaving the other guests wounded.

The gunmen were soon apprehended and tried, with Leppo's death sentence later commuted to life imprisonment. He still denies his guilt. Conspiracy theories continue to circulate, principal among them that his killing was sanctioned by the authorities. Others point out that being held up and killed in one's home is not uncommon in Jamaica – Wailers drummer Carlton Barrett had died in similar circumstances earlier that same year.



Tosh's funeral: National Arena, Kingston, JA

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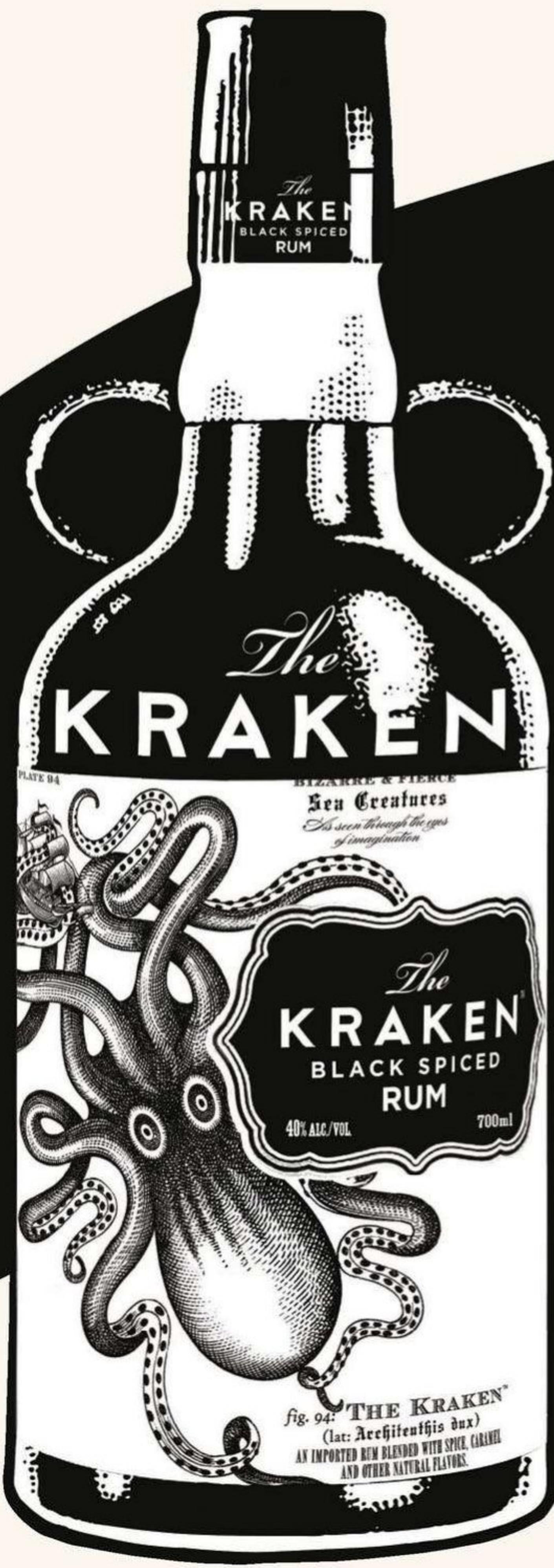
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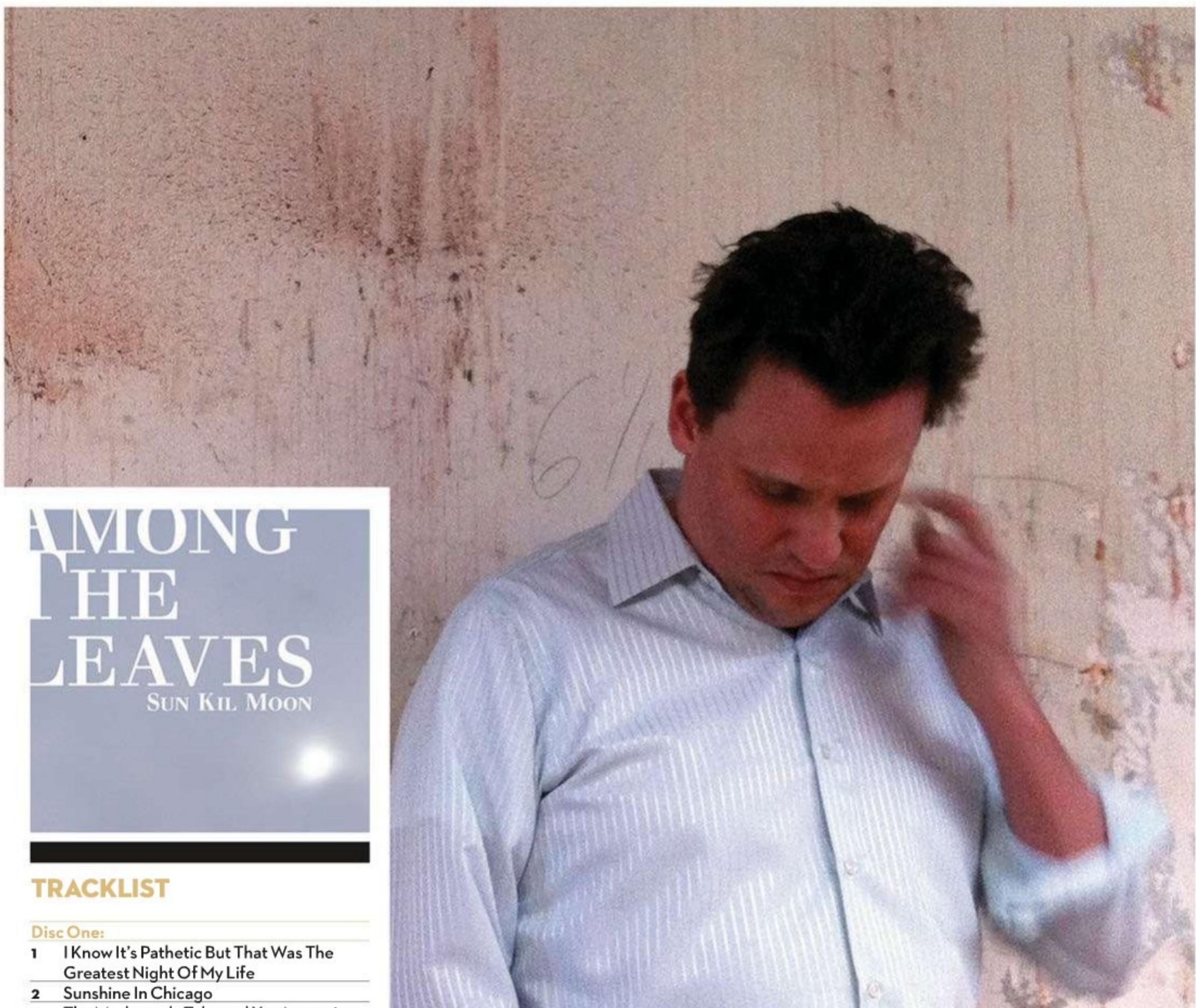
UNCUT

New albums

OUR NEW SCORING SYSTEM:

10 Masterpiece 9 Essential 8 Excellent
7 Very good 6 Good but uneven
4-5 Mediocre 1-3 Poor

THIS MONTH: GASLIGHT ANTHEM | TY SEGALL | DIRTY PROJECTORS



GABRIEL SHEPARD

AMONG THE LEAVES

SUN KIL MOON

TRACKLIST

Disc One:

- 1 I Know It's Pathetic But That Was The Greatest Night Of My Life
- 2 Sunshine In Chicago
- 3 The Moderately Talented Yet Attractive Young Woman vs. The Exceptionally Talented Yet Not So Attractive Middle Aged Man
- 4 That Bird Has A Broken Wing
- 5 Elaine
- 6 The Winery
- 7 Young Love
- 8 Song For Richard Collopy
- 9 Among The Leaves
- 10 Red Poison
- 11 Track Number 8
- 12 Not Much Rhymes With Everything's Awesome At All Times
- 13 King Fish
- 14 Lonely Mountain
- 15 UK Blues
- 16 UK Blues 2
- 17 Black Kite

Disc 2 (Limited Edition):

- 1 Among The Leaves (alt version)
- 2 The Moderately Talented Young Woman (alt version)
- 3 That Bird Has A Broken Wing (live)
- 4 UK Blues (live)
- 5 Black Kite (live)

SUN KIL MOON

Among The Leaves

CALDO VERDE

The loneliness of the long distance singer-songwriter...
A sadcore potentate lightens up. By John Mulvey

8/10

TWENTY YEARS OF touring and

recording, of inspiration and graft for moderate acclaim, and it comes down to this. Mark Kozelek, the pivot of first Red House Painters and now Sun Kil Moon, is engaged in one more slog around Europe. It is not going well.

In Helsinki (spoilers alert), he foists a bunch of new songs on an audience who want him to play early '90s perennials, flirts unsuccessfully with a local girl, and ends up back in his hotel room weeping for a dead cat. In London, a city Kozelek plainly despises, he is

given a lunchtime festival slot only to be drowned out by a "retro '80s band" (scrutiny of the lineup and site map for Field Day 2011 suggests he may be referring to Connan Mockasin). There are "fucking shuttle buses", poorly attended gigs on boats, nights of "horseshit" in pubs, further thwarted seductions and, finally, a show in Belfast where Kozelek performs to a "half-empty room full of clowns". "When I was done," he sings, "some drunk Irish man said, 'Worst night I've had since Bill Callahan.'"

At which point does a singer-songwriter stop romanticising his misery and, to some degree, →

New Albums

start making a joke out of it? For Mark Kozelek, the penny seems to have dropped in time for his 12th studio album, *Among The Leaves*. The European tour yarns are drawn not from a weary interview, but from "UK Blues" and "UK Blues 2", two songs near the end of this long, engrossing and unexpectedly droll record. Homesickness has been a recurring theme in Kozelek's work; from the Red House Painters' "Over My Head" (1995), to Sun Kil Moon's "Third And Seneca" (2010). But where once it would be presented as a numinous poetic condition, now it is played for laughs as much as for pity; as if Kozelek has finally completed the transition from a protracted sensitive adolescence to a self-aware, albeit somewhat grouchy, maturity.

In many ways, though, *Among The Leaves* is entirely consistent with the rest of Kozelek's fine catalogue: a familiar tragic history, repeated as comedy. His songs unravel slowly and delicately, freighted but not overwhelmed by the work of Nick Drake, Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon and Andrés Segovia. Mostly, they consist solely of Kozelek's voice – a voice that cannot help but sound dolorous, it seems – and his exquisite playing of a nylon-stringed classical guitar. There are songs about women he has loved, tried to love and wanted to love; songs about his hometown of San Francisco, and how he feels when he's away from it; numerous allusions to boxers and cats.

The difference this time is that a fair number of the 17 tracks sound more spontaneous than usual – more like sketches, or documentary clips, than finely wrought reveries. The opening "I Know It's Pathetic But That Was The Greatest Night Of My Life" tells of another failed pick-up at a gig, this time in Moscow, and feels like an extract from a Sun Kil Moon song rather than a complete one; at 1:47, it's roughly a third of Kozelek's default length. But as *Among The Leaves* progresses, the fragments begin to flow gracefully into one, thanks to the sustained tone (sceptics would doubtless conclude that Kozelek's songs all sound the same) and his artful knitting together of themes.

For a while, the songs dwell on promiscuity and deeply flawed old relationships. One lover is a crackhead who has run away from hospital ("Elaine"). Another leaves Kozelek for a substantially richer man ("The Winery"); she dines "at French Laundry, burning through money"; he's "eatin' pistachio nuts over by the taco truck". Money

Kozelek: "My career has been a rollercoaster"



SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Hyde Street Studios, San Francisco
Produced by: Mark Kozelek
Personnel: Mark Kozelek (vocals, guitars, additional instruments), Michi Aceret (viola), Mike Stevens (drums), Dave Muench (drums on "UK Blues"), Eric Embry (banjo, additional vocals on "Young Love")

remains an intermittent concern, though Kozelek's management of his own label Caldo Verde, with its

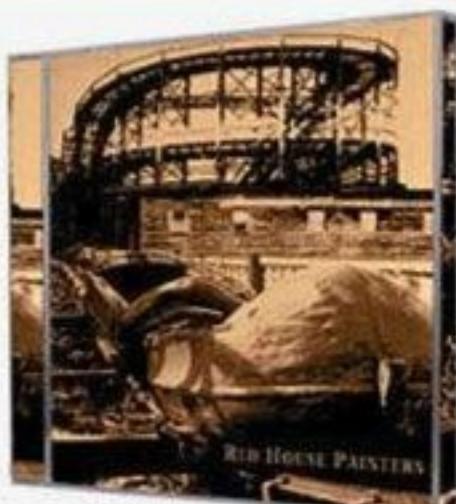
frequent live albums, rarities comps and special editions, should provide a model for minimalist singer-songwriters looking to earn a living out of their cult status.

If those loyal fans fetishise Kozelek as a doomed romantic victim, he is keen to put them right on *Among The Leaves*, and in some cases ridicule them. "My band played here a lot in the '90s when we had lots of female fans and fuck they all were cute," he

reflects in "Sunshine In Chicago", "now I just sign posters for guys in tennis shoes." "That Bird Has A Broken Wing", meanwhile, suggests that Kozelek's old penchant for covering AC/DC songs was due to an unexpected empathy with Bon Scott's lusty sensibilities. "I'm half man, other half alleycat," he claims, after complaining of a burning that turns out to be an STD picked up on tour ("Cipro" – presumably the antibiotic Ciprofloxacin – is cited as useful in these circumstances).

In the 2002 introduction to his book of lyrics, *Nights Of Passed Over*, Kozelek says of his formative

HOW TO BUY... MARK KOZELEK The best of Red House Painters and Sun Kil Moon on CD



RED HOUSE PAINTERS

Red House Painters [aka Rollercoaster]

4AD, 1993
After the demos released as *Down Colorful Hill*, Kozelek obsesses in the studio over this 2CD magnum opus. A defining record in the early '90s sadcore scene.

9/10



RED HOUSE PAINTERS

Ocean Beach

4AD, 1995
The fourth RHP album is mellower, less neurotic, with unaffected love songs like "Summer Dress". Folk by disposition, Kozelek's voice is improving, even if the songs don't quite match the 1993 glut.

8/10

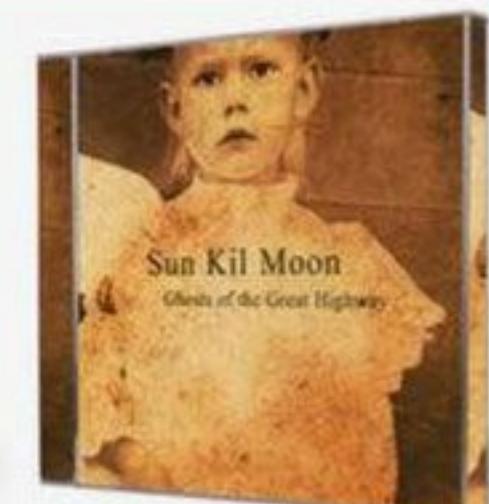


RED HOUSE PAINTERS

Old Ramon

SUB POP, 2001
Delayed for three years, Kozelek's farewell to the RHP brand showcased the two distinct sides of his developing sound: fragile acoustic songs; and heavy jams, of which "Cruiser" remains one of his best.

8/10



SUN KIL MOON

Ghosts Of The Great Highway

JETSET, 2003
Kozelek enters his second decade with a new DIY ethos, a pragmatic sideline as a solo artist and a new trade name for his main project. *Ghosts*, however, refines the formula of *Old Ramon*. A career highpoint.

9/10



SUN KIL MOON

Admiral Fell Promises

CALDO VERDE, 2010
The last SKM album tackles many of the same themes as *Among The Leaves*, albeit in a more reflective fashion. An entirely solo recording, focused on Kozelek's latest infatuation, the classical guitar.

8/10



Q&A

Mark Kozelek talks us through his highs and lows...

AMONG THE LEAVES feels like a departure: more spontaneous, more conversational, funnier. **Was that a conscious decision?** My old approach sort of died, at least for the time being. I was working on a song and realised I'd already written it 100 times. I've done the romantic approach to death and wanted to have a laugh this time. You tend to get a little sick of yourself after 20 years, unless you're My Bloody Valentine! They seem to quite enjoy their early work, or is it their only work?

Is "UK Blues" more about your homesickness than your dislike of the places in the song? Or do you really hate London, Bristol and Manchester?

I'm homesick everywhere I go, but England has a negative effect on my spirit to a profound degree. That trip from Heathrow into London is worse than the flight over there. It's just so grey, and the traffic in London gives me a heart attack. It's not a comforting place on any level, to me.

There are also points where you describe the creative process as a "chore"; "Songwriting's lonely, songwriting hurts, a relentless itch..." Is being a songwriter a kind of curse?

Absolutely. Songwriting isn't a choice: you're called upon to bear the burden, or you're not. It's not all fun and games. Read any autobiography about any successful songwriter, and you'll see a lot of drug abuse, divorce, lawsuits, friends who died along the way. I'm off to Australia, Poland, Japan, Korea and China in the next two months – you think my girlfriend is happy about that? If you're a working musician, there's always tension in your life.

A lot of people who haven't listened to your songs closely might be surprised by the wit and the promiscuity. Do you think you've been misunderstood over the years?

The promiscuity shouldn't come as a big surprise, I've been open about that in my writing for years – I had a song called "Mistress" 20 years ago. Anyone who has been following me for a while knows I'm a human being. I'm pretty relaxed onstage, make jokes, whatever. I was pretty guarded in those early years, stood there like a cardboard cut-out, and there's a stigma that still hangs around a little. But the wit and the other stuff, it was always there, you've just gotta listen close. I do all the things other musicians do, sign autographs, pose for photos. I'm a pretty nice guy, not hard to approach.

I remember a lot of guys in tennis shoes at the shows 20 years ago, in London at least...

Oh fuck yes. I make cracks about it at every show. How can I not? I can't count the amount of shows that the entire front row consists of lonely-looking middle-aged dudes and maybe a woman who looks like one! Fucking depressing! I'm like, 'Don't any of you have girlfriends?' They sit there holding their phone like it's their only card in life.

I mean, I'm glad they paid for the ticket, but it's a very uninspiring front row to look at, honestly.

Over those 20 years, which record are you most proud of?

Admiral Fell Promises, hands down. Bury me with that one. That's me at my best, my most focused. It's cohesive, beautiful and my

playing was inspired by Andrés Segovia.

"England has a negative effect on my spirit to a profound degree"

Are you pleased with the way things have turned out, on the whole?

Yes. I did an interview for a book on 4AD recently, and it took me back 20 years. That *Rollercoaster* album cover was very prophetic in its own way. My career has been a rollercoaster of highs and lows. But I'm looking at the Golden Gate Bridge as we speak, meeting my absolutely beautiful girlfriend for lunch in an hour, and I got a little money in the bank! Life could be worse. *INTERVIEW: JOHN MULVEY*

records, "My younger, higher pitched voice had me cringeing. And fused with some melodramatic lines and cliché rhymes, I felt embarrassed." Treasured as those Red House Painters albums may be, it is easy to see his point when comparing these wry narratives with some of the less nuanced angst on *Down Colorful Hill*, his 1992 debut. Nevertheless, a couple of outstanding group performances here do explicitly recall Kozelek's earlier work: the title track, with its nimble, brushed beat, would have sat neatly on *Ocean Beach* (1995); while the electric churn of "King Fish" harks back to the stunned Crazy Horse jams that proliferated between *Songs For A Blue Guitar* (1996) and *April* (2008). Kozelek guested with old bandmates in similar settings on their Desertshore album earlier this year ("UK Blues" is a co-write with them), but it would be nice to see him grapple with that sound more extensively once again.

Perhaps a full band project is financially impractical as well as aesthetically undesirable. If *Among The Leaves* is an accumulation of anecdotes from the past two decades, "Track Number 8" reveals where Mark Kozelek actually finds himself in 2012. The title is unnecessarily self-effacing – "I wrote this one and I know it ain't great/Will probably sequence it track number eight" – and the subject matter is songwriting itself. The itch that was an STD earlier in the album is now the creative impulse, which Kozelek describes as something of a curse, namechecking contemporaries – Elliott Smith, Mark Linkous, Acetone's Richie Lee, Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon – who he implies fell victim to it.

In the same song, though, he remembers as a child dreaming "of a life close to what I'm livin'." He loves his neighbourhood, the local stray cats, and his girlfriend. "Sure there were others, but nothin' this nice," he sings artlessly of her, and one last shocking revelation about Mark Kozelek comes slowly into focus: at 45, for all the grumbling and snarky jokes, he might just have found contentment.



TRACKLIST

- 1 45
- 2 Handwritten
- 3 Here Comes My Man
- 4 Mulholland Drive
- 5 Keepsake
- 6 Too Much Blood
- 7 Howl
- 8 Biloxi Parish
- 9 Desire
- 10 Mae
- 11 National Anthem

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

Handwritten MERCURY

Fourth album signals a slight shift. But is it in the right direction, wonders Andrew Mueller

7/10

WHEN THE GASLIGHT Anthem's Brian Fallon last spoke to *Uncut*, as he drove

home to New Jersey from Nashville after finishing work on *Handwritten*, he promised that the new album would sound like "Tom Petty songs played by Pearl Jam or Foo Fighters". This was both a surprise and a relief. A few months previously, Fallon had been heard muttering that he was "just bored" with what he'd been doing, and "didn't want to write any more rock'n'roll songs" – an ennui that resulted in the establishment of a side project, The Horrible Crowes, to explore a budding interest in balladry. On the deafening

evidence of *Handwritten*, he has exorcised whatever angst was plaguing him.

The Gaslight Anthem's major-label debut is rambunctious, unreconstructed, garage-rattling rock'n'roll: it sounds, indeed, a lot like Tom Petty songs played by Pearl Jam or Foo Fighters. Which is to say, of course, that *Handwritten*, sounds much like The Gaslight Anthem's previous recordings. It would be churlish to complain overmuch about this: The Gaslight Anthem bristle with damn-the-torpedoes bravado, and at their brilliant best have been – and, at the risk of giving away the ending, are – revelatory.

But four albums in, they have developed, as



distinctive artists tend to, a template of tropes that they know work for them and their audience. They relax into this once or twice too often on *Handwritten*, on such cuts as "Howl" and "Desire", cranking out spiralling spindly riffs and throat-parching, fist-pumping, neck-straining *oh-woah-oh* choruses. At these points, the thought that this album by The Gaslight Anthem is a fine thing in and of itself can become somewhat tempered by the recollection that one already has three of these.

The best of *Handwritten*, however – which is most of it – abides with the unbound exuberance of its predecessors. Fallon also wasn't kidding when he assured *Uncut* that enlisting Bruce Springsteen's recently preferred producer Brendan O'Brien was the soundest possible insurance against untowardly resembling their mentor. *Handwritten* flourishes a sharper metallic edge than anything The Gaslight Anthem – certainly the E Street Band – have previously attempted. "Too Much Blood" and "Biloxi Parish" rifle for riffs in Led Zeppelin and Thin Lizzy records, and mark the addition of an intriguing gloomy tone to The Gaslight Anthem's familiar palette of breezy barroom rock (the

Q&A

Brian Fallon



Handwritten is both heavier and softer than its predecessors. Was that deliberate, or organic? Live, I'd started to notice that a lot of our older songs have this even pace, and I had this urging for extremes.

Did you bring anything of the Horrible Crowes project back to this? I'm thinking of "Mae" and "National Anthem". With "Mae", I'd always wanted a song that builds, that lets you know something big is coming. "National Anthem", always a dream to have an acoustic song with a few strings.

Did the thought of being on a major label for the first time prompt any self-consciousness?

We had enough problems of our own that it didn't affect us. After *59 Sound* came out, everyone was writing that we were going to be the next Springsteen, then *American Slang* wasn't the next Springsteen. On this record, I felt so much like I had something to prove. Like I was holding a bat and just going to smash whatever came at me as hard as I could. If we're not what everyone thinks we are, we'll at least be what we think we are.

INTERVIEW: ANDREW MUELLER

lugubrious "Keepsake" lumbers a bit, though). And when they do reconnect with the unself-conscious vim that has hallmark their best songs before now – "The '59 Sound", "Stay Lucky", et al – they're terrific. The first two songs, "45" and the title track, are glorious, joyous surges, the exclamations of wide-eyed punks who just got guitars and *London Calling* for Christmas.

But for all the fine furies collected on *Handwritten*, the most memorable moments are those on which The Gaslight Anthem shift to lower gears. "Here Comes My Man" is a pretty acoustic pop tune not a million miles from its near-namesake by the Pixies (and

appears to be sung, boldly, from the perspective of a woman wearied of waiting for an itinerant musician to come home). "Mae" is a rueful, stately beautiful paean to some siren with "Bette Davis eyes" – Fallon, not for the first time, appreciates the Proustian potency of quoting older songs in his own.

And the closer, the gently plucked, lightly string-drenched "National Anthem", at once sounds less

like The Gaslight Anthem than anything they've previously done, and like it might be the best thing they've ever recorded. Fallon, roaring through most of what has gone before, drops to a Westerberg-ish whisper for an epic of loss and regret. There's a possible lesson for future reference here, about how one can see more when one slows down a little. There's nothing wrong with The Gaslight Anthem's Gaslight Anthem songs, but they've got nothing left to prove on that front.

SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at:
Blackbird Studios,
Nashville, Tennessee
Produced by:
Brendan O'Brien
Personnel: Brian
Fallon, Alex Rosamilia,
Benny Horowitz, Alex
Levine, Ian Perkins

A to Z

COMING UP
THIS MONTH...

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p70 ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO

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p80 TODD SNIDER

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ARNALDO
ANTUNES,
EDGARD
SCANDURRA
& TOUMANI
DIABATÉ

**A Curva Da Cintura:
Mali - Brasil**

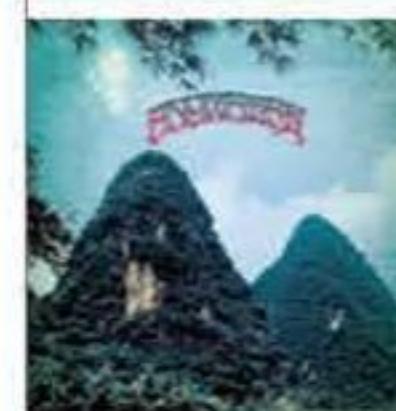
8/10

KARTEL

African genius goes Brazilian

Following his leading role on AfroCubism's Grammy-winning *Mali Cuba*, kora maestro Diabaté invited Brazilian rock veterans Arnaldo Antunes and Edgard Scandurra to Bamako to essay a similarly styled cross-cultural experiment. The Brazilians contribute to all but one of the songs – but the ancient African strings provide most of the magic. Toumani's gently rippling playing lends poise and elegance to ballads such as "Grao De Chaos" and "Psiu". On the funkier numbers, his son Sidiki's electrified kora takes over, meshing thrillingly with the rock guitars. Global fusion at its most accessible.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



ANYWHERE
Anywhere

ATP

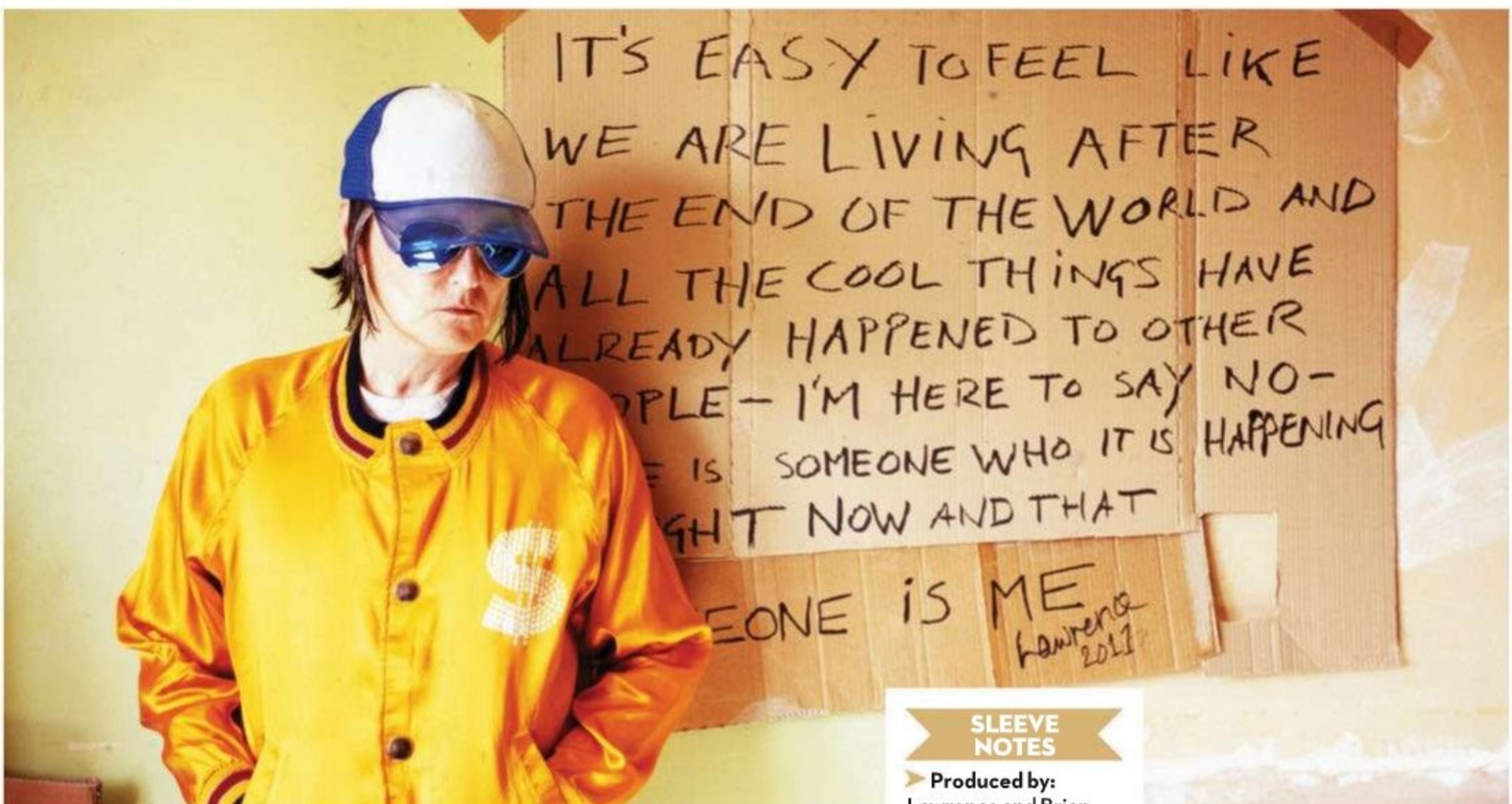
West Coast psych-rockers look East for inspiration

Anywhere were formed on the West Coast as an LA/San Francisco

7/10

collaboration but are infused with the spirit of the East. Christian Beaulieu and Mars Volta man Cedric Zavala deploy brain-melting layers of acoustic guitar over Indian raga rhythms while Rachel Fannan, once of psych-rockers Sleepy Sun, brings Jefferson-style throwback chant-singing on tracks like the mesmeric centrepiece "Dead Golden West". It makes for a heady brew, one imbued with the memory of 1960s Bay Area rock, but updated for the 21st Century and relentlessly Eastward-looking in its overall inspiration, as on the gorgeous rage raga of "Anywhere" and the dreamy "Shaman Mantra".

PETER WATTS



GO-KART MOZART

On The Hot Dog Streets

WEST MIDLANDS RECORDS

Lawrence unveils his Novelty Rock masterpiece. By Piers Martin



8/10

Kelly's *Lawrence Of Belgravia*, which completed a sold-out cinema tour in May and also doubles as a 90-minute plug for *On The Hot Dog Streets*, his third Go-Kart Mozart album, while in January a French publisher put together a beautiful book on Felt, Lawrence's first, widely cherished band.

Just last year, US janglers Real Estate covered Felt's "Sunlight Bathed The Golden Glow"; Girls went one further and released a doe-eyed tribute called "Lawrence". Love for Lawrence and his groups – Felt in the 1980s, Denim in the '90s and latterly Go-Kart Mozart – has never been in short supply, but he hasn't helped himself, nor his idiosyncratic quest for an old-fashioned kind of pop stardom, by releasing a series of eccentric, silly and occasionally brilliant records.

With Denim's *Novelty Rock* in 1997 he minted his own peculiar genre of bubblegum synthpop – a high-concept, deeply unfashionable blend of T-Rex and the theme from *Sorry* – that he's continued to explore in great detail with Go-Kart Mozart. Their tacky, seemingly tongue-in-cheek

ditties like "Wendy James", "Drinkin' Um Bongo" or "On A Building Site" sit awkwardly beside Felt's precious catalogue, but the cult of Lawrence is such that even today, 23 years after the last Felt album, his admirers tend to overlook his Novelty Rock follies in the hope that he'll one day return to more romantic means of expression. He'll argue that it's taken him years to perfect the short pop song; in Felt, he says, he found that difficult.

As it happens, *On The Hot Dog Streets* is the final instalment in Lawrence's Novelty Rock phase – naturally, he hopes a new generation of bands will take up the mantle – and it's also his richest, most enjoyable and conceptually solid record since Denim's '92 debut *Back In Denim*. As always, his lyrics are a joy: a droll mix of intimate autobiography ("I Talk With Robot Voice"), rock-star fantasy ("Lawrence Takes Over") and social commentary ("White Stilettos In The Sand"), he conjures a grubby cartoon Brummie Britain stuck in his default vision of the '70s, when the synthesiser was a thrilling new instrument, the charts meant something and the whole country would watch *Top Of The Pops*. "You're a lollipop cross on a municipal grave/A short set of numbers not even a name", he sings on the chug of "Retro-Glancing", and touches on political satire in the

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:**

Lawrence and Brian O'Shaughnessy

Personnel: Lawrence

(singing), K-Tel (synthesisers, vocals), WH Smiffy (synthesisers), Tony Barber (guitar), Malcolm Powder (vocals, Kaoss Pad), Rusty Stone (bass), PG Phipps (Simmons kit)

nearly contemporary "Blowin' In A Secular Breeze": "We're chanting down with Westminster sleaze, my boys/If only Blair was secular he could stop the war and reflect on a full-blown 20th-Century disease" – set to the kind of longhaired pub-rock sing-along that crops up on *TOTP2* from time to time.

At 50, Lawrence seems to have a teenage preoccupation with sex, though from his lyrics it's hard to tell

how he really feels about girls. He can amuse – "There's no one sweeter than my underage cheetah when she's just drank a litre of wine", from "Queen Of The Scene"; and bemuse – "I don't want any girl to hurt me anymore/I'm sick and tired of their abuse/Yet I admit I'm still susceptible to vaginas' allure", from "I Talk With Robot Voice". But still it's hard to take him seriously when the music is a cocktail of '70s French disco, skiffle, glam and Xenomania cyberpop. One could conclude the reason bands rip off Felt and not Go-Kart Mozart is because most bands lack imagination.

Sadly, excellent though it is, *On The Hot Dog Streets* is not the album that will lead to Lawrence travelling by private jet between sold-out stadiums, but given the momentum behind him and the opportunity presented, no-one is going to be disappointed.

Q&A

Lawrence



Thanks to the film, this album is enjoying the biggest push out of all your records.

I'm really happy, because I believe in spending money on promotion. I love that aspect of the business where you can be on billboards, like The Doors' first album on Sunset Boulevard. I've never had the chance, but luckily for me we've got this momentum going and we haven't spent a penny.

Any lyrics you're particularly happy with?

Lyrical it's probably my best work, there's not a bad line on there. Mind you, I say that about every record I make. Hopefully every tune is a pop classic. Every song is like the most pop anything could be – the poppermost.

There's an entertaining Go-Kart Mozart miscellany on the inner sleeve.

I've invented a record label of the mind: West Midlands Records. Everything on the cover is part of this world I've invented. I want everyone to be part of it. We can all live in this perfect world where there's this one label and all the influences and books and records, all in this perfect world, untouched by reality. *INTERVIEW: PIERS MARTIN*



A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS

Worship

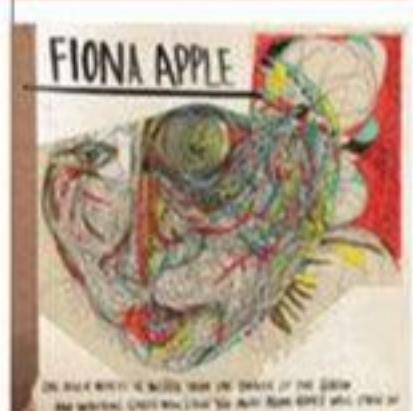
DEAD OCEANS

Noisy New Yorkers flirt with orthodoxy

6/10

Strangers is about locating the point where rock'n'roll starts to break and bleed. And indeed, the highlights of their third album appear to have been forged rather than recorded. "Revenge" is scalding, like Motörhead playing Thin White Rope, while "Alone" is propelled by Dion Lunadon's murderous bass, Oliver Ackermann's lupine bark and what sounds like sheet metal melting. Elsewhere, however, their resolve seems to weaken: "Fear" is rather orthodox rock, "Dissolved" Joy Division-lite, while "And I'm Up" repays an ongoing debt to JAMC to diminishing effect.

GRAEME THOMSON



FIONA APPLE

The Idler Wheel...

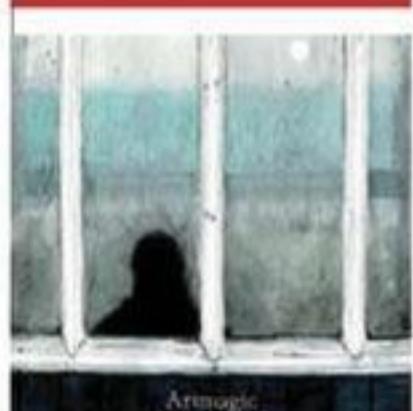
CLEAN SLATE/EPIC

The anti-diva's most uncompromising work – and that's saying something

8/10

Apple boils down her high-strung sensibility to its tortured essence on her first album in seven years, inviting the listener to examine the gnarls of her scarred psyche. *The Idler Wheel Is Wiser Than The Driver Of The Screw, And Whipping Cords Will Serve You More Than Ropes Will Ever Do* – to give the album its full title – features little more than Apple's husky contralto, her stabbing piano chords and percussion. "Daredevil" and "Regret", the riskiest pieces here, are too raw to be called performances, yet it's Apple's refinement as a writer – her fusion of technique and idiosyncrasy – that makes this harrowing psychodrama so gripping.

BUD SCOPPA



ARTMAGIC

Become The One You Love

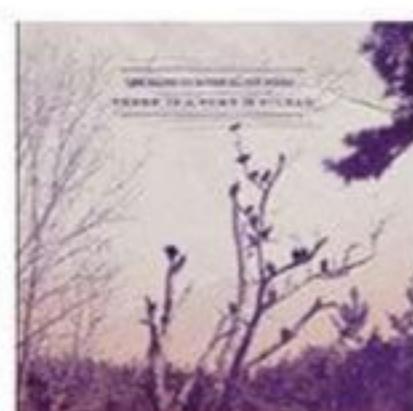
ARTMAGIC MUSIC

Little magic on Suede man's mediocre debut

5/10

Brett Anderson's solo career has sustained him, and original guitarist Bernard Butler was never in the Suede reunion picture, so how might replacement Richard Oakes have passed the time between break-up and make-up? By reliving the mid-'90s and discovering the Elton John within him, it seems. Oakes has teamed up with singer-songwriter/studio hand Sean McGhee, whose CV namechecks Britney and Sugababes, but Artmagic's first has none of their panache. It's rather an MOR, melodic pop affair that reveals Suede channelling Dame Elt ("The Gift Of Flight") and Manics-lite ("You"), with "Heaven Is Here" a hellish hybrid of Levitation and A-ha.

SHARON O'CONNELL



LEE BAINS III & THE GLORY FIRES

There Is A Bomb In Gilead

ALIVE NATURALSOUND

Strong debut from cosmic Southern outfit

After a spell in The

Dexateens, guitarist and singer-songwriter Bains returned home to Birmingham, Alabama where he assembled The Glory Fires. Guitarist Matt Wurtele is a major find. There's no disguising the influence of Mick Taylor and Paul Kossoff in the band's boisterous facelift to the music of the Deep South. Their roots still show; "Everything You Took" shamelessly lifts the intro to "Hold On I'm Comin'" while "Righteous, Ragged Songs" revels in the dovetailed guitar boogie of early Allmans. Best are the swaggering, lashing, Stonesy rockers "Centreville" and "Magic City Stomp". A glorious ruckus.

MICK HOUGHTON

8/10

HOW TO BUY... FIONA APPLE

The best of the NYC songwriter on CD



Tidal

CLEAN SLATE/WORK, 1996

The debut album revealed a precocious 19-year-old writer/singer/pianist graced

with Renaissance beauty and an exposed-nerve sensibility, a duality she played to the hilt on the defining song "Criminal", with its still-disturbing Mark Romanek-directed video.

8/10



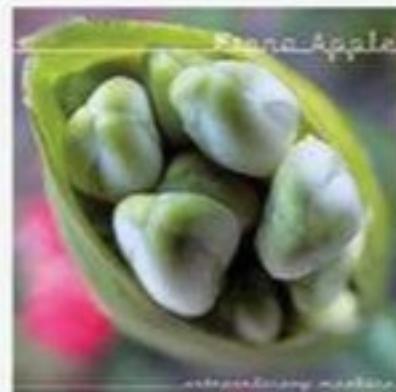
When The Pawn...

CLEAN SLATE/EPIC, 1999

The 90-word title, a characteristic flipping of the bird at convention, got the most initial

attention, but Apple's second outing had much to recommend it. She showed off her prodigious talent with powerful songs like "Limp" and "Paper Bag", delivered in partnership with a killer studio band led by producer/multi-instrumentalist Jon Brion.

9/10



Extraordinary Machine

CLEAN SLATE/EPIC, 2005

Apple's third album was recorded twice, with the original Jon Brion-produced sessions replaced by a second

version helmed by Mike Elizondo, causing a fan furore when the Brion LP was leaked online. The two lushly orchestrated Brion holdover tracks frame 10 edgier Elizondo cuts, highlighted by the sultry "O'Sailor" and the self-flagellating "Tymps".

8/10

BUD SCOPPA



BARONESS

Yellow & Green

RELAPSE

Crossover-primed third from Savannah, Georgia rockers

Initially purveyors of a sludgy, progressive metal of impressive

complexity but niche appeal, passing years – not to mention a string of tour dates supporting Metallica – have seen Southern rockers Baroness undergo a startling evolution. Now a much more colourful specimen, double album *Yellow & Green* seems plotted to show off their newfound range. Brawny, anthemic hard-rock chug remains their backbone, but the John Frusciante-like "Mtns. (The Crown & Anchor)" explores dreamier climes, while "Stretchmarker" finds them decamped to the back porch, two acoustic guitars twining in some countryish fingerplucking.

LOUIS PATTISON

8/10



MAGGIE BOYLE

Won't You Come Away

WILD GOOSE

Deep-rooted, hearty folk song

Boyle has recorded more than a dozen albums in collaboration with the

likes of John Renbourn and Steve Tilston but averages only one solo album per decade since 1987's *Reaching Out*. She draws regularly from Irish songs, many learnt from Oliver Mulligan of County Monaghan, who was part the London-Irish community she grew up in. Contemporary sources include the unsung Steve Ashley's "Once In A While", where Boyle's divinely pure voice is enhanced by some exquisite clarinet. Elsewhere, Paul Downes' Planxty-like guitar, Boyle's flute and the ubiquitous Jon Boden's fiddle combine to create the perfect setting for Boyle's criminally overlooked voice.

MICK HOUGHTON

8/10



BRAD

United We Stand

V2

Grunge side-project, still going strong

Conceived as a side-project for members of Pearl Jam and Satchel, Brad have been going

for 20 years, but this fifth album marks a bid to move the band on to a more permanent footing. It begins strongly, with the mellow, soulful "Bound In Time" and "A Reason To Be In My Skin", a grungey anthem that would most likely have received heavy rotation on MTV when Brad were first born. After that, however, things get a bit more leaden ("Last Bastion") and unfinished ("Waters Deep"), and while there are still some occasional bright spots – the thoughtful "Make The Pain Go Away" – it never quite regains its earlier momentum.

PETER WATTS

6/10

AMERICANA



7/10

ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO

Big Station

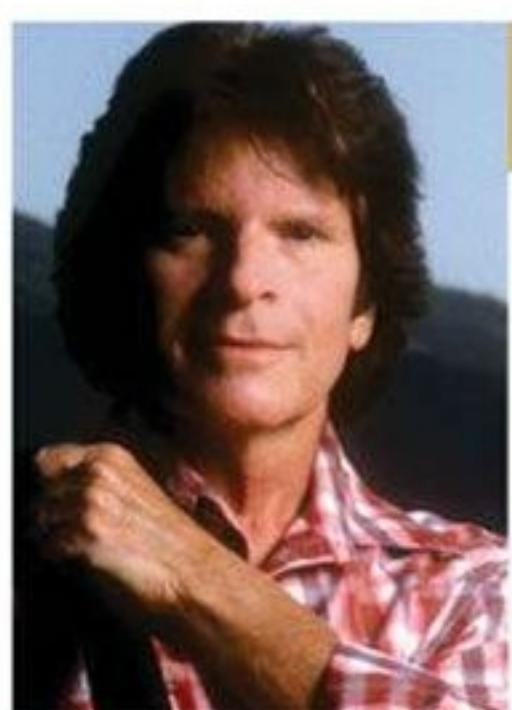
CONCORD/DECCA

BEST
OF THE
MONTH

Californian rock'n'roller digs deep into his roots

IT'S ALARMING TO read that Alejandro Escovedo, an uncategorisable rock'n'roller often cited as a founding father of alt.country, should have turned to a Roland TR-808 drum machine to provide inspiration for the songs on *Big Station*. It's odder still to hear that he did this as a way of getting back to the music which inspired him in his youth. The equation is made no less quixotic by the presence of Chuck Prophet – the guitarist who put the blues in Green On Red – as a co-conspirator.

But such fears are unfounded. *Big Station* does not sound like Texan electro. It avoids the uncertain embrace of hip-hop attempted by Steve Earle on *Washington Square Serenade*. The beats, when they appear, are percussive. On "Party People", they sound cheap, but mostly they offer Prophet and Escovedo a shortcut to a groove. In terms of inspiration, the roots that Escovedo was excavating were the warped vines of Joe Strummer's Mescaleros, via the conversational swing of Mink DeVille, and – less, obviously, perhaps – the relentless swagger of Suicide. Sometimes, it's hard to remember who's influencing who. The gnarly, anthemic "Man Of The World" sounds a lot like Tom Petty. "Sally Was A Cop" addresses the Mexican drug wars in the narrative voice employed by The Hold Steady's Craig Finn (though, musically, it's a jazzy lament). Escovedo departs most notably from his Border Radio template on "Headstrong Crazy Fools", a narrative lyric about the good old self-destructive days: it has a Supremes drumbeat, and a reflective lyric which begins, more or less, with the line: "You see Dylan dropped acid in the limelight/rode away on his Triumph one lonely night". There are gentler moments, notably a dreamy cover of the Latin standard "Sabor A Mi", while "Bottom Of The World" has the fury and romance of early Springsteen. Here, alas, the metronomic percussion is too pronounced. As producer Tony Visconti should have pointed out: when you write an anthem, you need drums. ALASTAIR MCKAY



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► New albums by **John Fogerty** and Old Crow Medicine Show are lurking in the schedules for this year. Fogerty's *Wrote A Song For Everyone*, issued on Vanguard, is a collection of fresh tunes and revamped

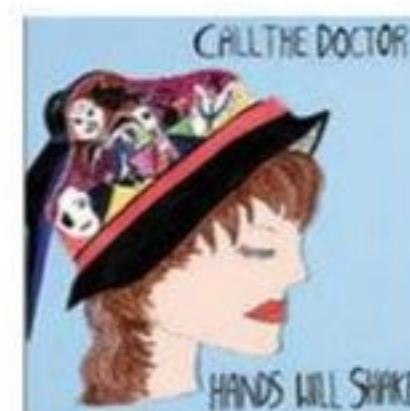
Creedence classics, recorded with Foo Fighters, Bob Seger, Dawes and more. Meanwhile, **Los Lobos** are reissuing 1992's career highspot *Kiko* as a 20th anniversary edition in August. The original album comes with unreleased takes and a live CD/DVD from 2006.

Following the recent online streaming of 17,000 full-length field recordings collated

by **Alan and John Lomax**, the Association For Cultural Equity has now issued *Jail House Bound: John Lomax's First Southern Prison Recordings, 1933* via the digital-only Global Jukebox. See www.culturalequity.org for details. While anyone heading over to the US South this summer may well fancy the annual Americana Summer Celebration, which takes place in late July on Blackberry Farm amid the idyllic Smoky Mountains. Headlining acts include **Rosanne Cash & John Leventhal**, and **John Oates**, who, minus Daryl Hall, is now exploring his country roots.

Last up, congratulations to **Bonnie Raitt**, who will be this year's recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Americana Music Association bash at the Ryman in September.

ROB HUGHES



CALL THE DOCTOR

Hands Will Shake

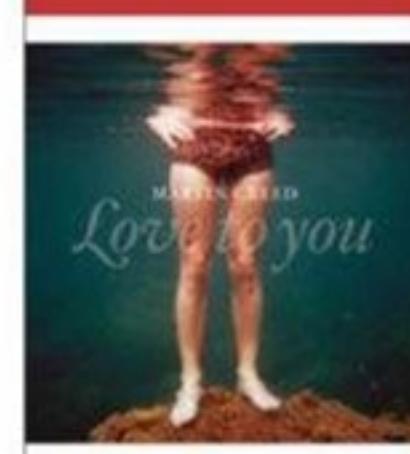
GLASSTONE RECORDS

Catchy debut from Sleater-Kinney-loving four-piece

8/10

In the past few years, guitar bands have continually been deemed unfashionable in a business still curiously fixated on outré electro-pop music, but if any act is in a position to buck the trend it's Bristol newbies Call The Doctor, led by the charismatic New Zealand-born Patti Aberhart and named after the band's favourite Sleater-Kinney song. Their debut LP is crammed with punchy, plucky guitar-pop songs that lack the scuzz and grit of their idols but show a winning ear for a hook, most deftly revealed on the opener "Closer To Home" and the terrific Blondie-esque "Take It Out".

FIONA STURGES



MARTIN CREED

Love To You

MOSHI MOSHI

More songs about numbers and swearing

8/10

Best known for winning the Turner Prize in 2001, Martin Creed combines work in sculpture, video, sound installation and ballet with his own lo-fi punk-pop band. Several tracks on this belated debut are over a decade old, but they still sound more fresh and vital than most contemporary indie-rockers. The declamatory lyrics are minimal and packed with playful wordplay while the music is mostly percussive, propulsive, punk-funk clatter. Creed's YBA generation may have strong family ties to Britpop, but conceptual gems like "I Can't Move" and "Words" evoke an earlier golden age of art-school crossover, specifically Talking Heads in their Eno-mentored prime.

STEPHEN DALTON



DAN LE SAC

Space Between The Words

SUNDAY BEST

Essex DJ takes a hip-hop sabbatical and... makes a dance album

8/10

The laptop musician best known for his albums with pop-poet Scroobius Pip has assembled a crack team of vocal collaborators for his terrific first solo LP. Singer-songwriters Merz and Emmy The Great, performance poet Joshua Idehen and US rapper B Dolan are among the contributors to this collection of dance tunes that are as eclectic as they are inventive. There's a distinct pop sensibility to "Play Along" while the experimental "Memorial" recalls Portishead at their most morose. Most eye-opening is the cover of Rhythm On The Loose's house classic "Break Of Dawn", reworked as a melancholy synth ballad.

FIONA STURGES



DOPE BODY Natural History

DRAG CITY

Inspired dude-rock from Baltimore longhairs

Dope Body are not the sort of band to title a song "The Shape Of Grunge To Come" without tongue planted firmly in cheek, but in this case, it does articulate something about their blend of ragged basement heaviness and progressive intent. Much like Harvey Milk and No Age, their cranky scuzz punk revels in its sly intelligence and sense of mischief: "Twice The Life" is laced with calypso melodies, while "Beat" comes on like a melding of Melvins and *Licensed To Ill*-era Beastie Boys. Best of all is "Weird Mirror", though, a celebratory guitar-drums rumpus that switches between euphoric peaks and heads-down chug.

LOUIS PATTISON

7/10

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LOUIS PATTISON



DOSEONE G Is For Deep

ANTICON

Loopy and lovely eighth from avant hip-hopper

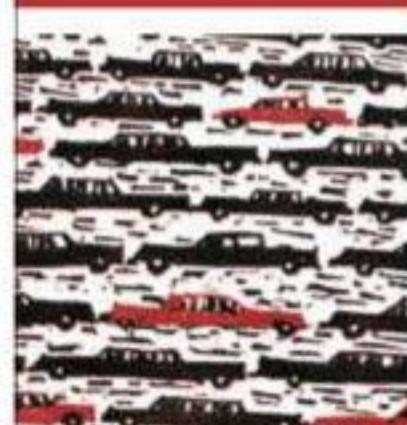
Despite his dependence on laid-back beats, Adam Drucker is no slacker. Over his 15-year career, he's been a linchpin of psychedelic hip-hop collective cLOUDDEAD, a member of Themselves, Subtle and 13 & God, founded the Anticon label and released seven solo albums as Doseone. His latest is an(other) exercise in densely layered, Technicolor adventurism, his reverbed vocals wrapped in woozy soundscapes that are variously booted by bass blasts, strafed with fx and studded with synths. The hallucinatory "Last Life" may suggest Prince unravelled by Panda Bear, but Doseone's keen ear for a pop melody and hip-hop's punch keeps him on course.

SHARON O'CONNELL

8/10

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SHARON O'CONNELL



THE DREAMING SPIRES Brothers In Brooklyn

CLUBHOUSE

Oxford outfit's country jangle debut

Siblings Robin and Joe Bennett cut their musical teeth with Brit Americana merchants Danny & The Champions Of The World, and on their own band's calling card there's a stronger focus on specific US influences. They've clearly listened to a lot of The Byrds and Big Star growing up, but there's more than just lazy mimicry to the sun-scorched twang of "Everything All The Time" and "Just Can't Keep This Feeling In" with their power pop hooks and sweet harmonies. A more pronounced Englishness makes its presence felt on the piano-led balladry of "Woman That You Are", closer to the wordy tranquility of Clifford T Ward.

TERRY STAUNTON

8/10

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TERRY STAUNTON



NATALIE DUNCAN Devil In Me

VERVE

File under: "Most likely to duet with Jools on a Nina Simone cover"

Expect big things of this

Nottingham songstress: an impressively soulful singer who writes her own material and accompanies herself on the piano, playing with the mitteleuropean flourishes of Freddie Mercury. Verve, however, aren't sure if she's the new Adele (on heartbroken ballads "Old Rock" and "Find Me A Home"), Eva Cassidy (the drippy "Songbird") or Laura Nyro (the jazzy gospel of "Lonely Child"). Production, from Americana specialist Joe Henry, is a little too respectful; it'd be nice to hear more like the Portishead-ish "Sky Is Falling" or the spartan jazz of "She Done Died". A promising debut nonetheless.

JOHN LEWIS

7/10

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JOHN LEWIS



FUNERAL SUITS Lily Of The Valley

MODEL CITIZEN

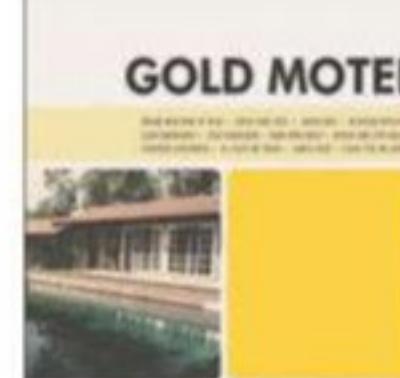
Darkness reigns in Dublin quartet's world

There seems to be little to smile about in Dublin four-piece Funeral Suits' world: their Stephen

Street-produced debut is full of harsh synths and rigid rhythms, contributing to an intense, often claustrophobic, collection. Though opener "Mary's Revenge" begins with sweet Brian Wilson harmonies, they're blasted apart by what sounds like a particularly irate Tubeway Army, while "Health" repeats the trick so effectively it recalls the LA band of the same name had they been classically schooled. "Hands Down" briefly showcases a gentler side, but the levity is short-lived, with "Stars Are Spaceships" and "Machines" brimming over with fury and frustration.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

7/10



GOLD MOTEL Gold Motel

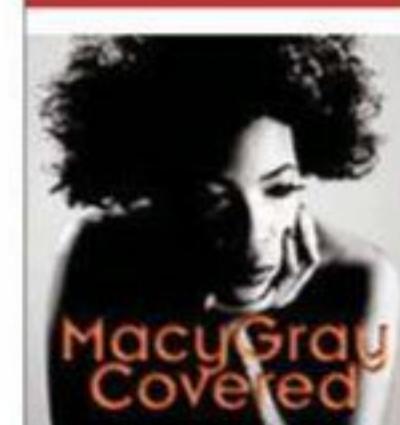
GOOD AS GOLD/
THIRTY TIGERS

An LA-spawned, Chicago-based band with an advanced case of the CBGB's

8/10

Following up their engaging 2010 debut *Summer House*, this female-fronted quintet continues to connect the tuneful aggression of Blondie with the SoCal sassiness of Rilo Kiley. The high-spirited Greta Morgan – whose cooing alto is a dead ringer for Debbie Harry's – maintains a commanding presence throughout this spunky set, keeping her cool amid her bandmates' high-revving grooves and slabs of distorted guitars. The band shows its range on the midtempo "Slow Emergency", which gives way to "Cold Shoulders", with its "Heart Of Glass"-like chorus and climax that echoes the Pretenders' "Mystery Achievement".

BUD SCOPPA



MACY GRAY Covered

ISLAND

Eccentric covers album from erratic US star

The alarm bells started ringing overtime on the news that Gray was

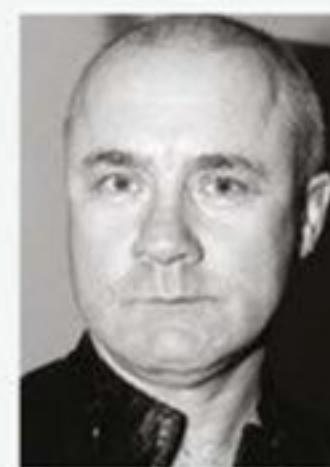
making a covers album – but as she's frequently done in her career, she confounds expectations with a Hal Wilner-produced collection that is witty and engaging and confirms her as one of the most singular, if erratic, R&B divas of our times. Her inspiration here seems to be Nina Simone, who covered any song she pleased and didn't give a damn – in which spirit Gray wraps her deliciously off-the-wall rasp improbably around songs by Radiohead ("Creep"), Arcade Fire ("Wake Up") and Metallica ("Nothing Else Matters"), interspersed with comedy skits.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

7/10

REVELATIONS

Different strokes: three BritArt/Pop crossovers...



DAMIEN HIRST

The Bono of BritArt directed the chart-topping "Country House" video for his fellow party-loving rock mates in Blur. Later scored his own

No 2 hit "Vindaloo" as part of Keith Allen's Fat Les collective alongside Alex James, and designed a Red Hot Chili Peppers album sleeve.



SAM TAYLOR-WOOD

English filmmaker, photographer and visual artist Sam Taylor-Wood recreated an iconic Annie Leibovitz shot of John Lennon and Yoko Ono with

her former boyfriend Henry Wood as an artwork in 1993, later directing the Lennon biopic *Nowhere Boy*. She has also created public murals and concert film pieces featuring Alex James, Elton John and the Pet Shop Boys.



JEREMY DELLER

A Turner Prize winner whose conceptual collaborations often have witty music and youth culture connections, Deller's 1997 project Acid Brass mixed house and techno tunes with traditional brass bands. He has also collaborated with Manic Street Preachers, co-directed a documentary about Depeche Mode fans and organised a street parade through Manchester that commemorated local music icons.

STEPHEN DALTON

OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW

Carry Me Back

ATO

Definitive statement from the whip-smart, uncompromising string band. By Bud Scoppa



9/10

After relocating from upstate New York to the Appalachian village of Boone, NC, Old Crow caught the ear of Doc Watson while playing in front of a local drugstore, which landed them their first big break – a slot on Doc's MerleFest in 2000. Soon thereafter, they moved to Nashville, where they were taken under the wing of Marty Stuart, who booked them on the Grand Ole Opry. They also hooked up with Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, which led to Rawlings producing their first two LPs, 2004's *O.C.M.S.* and 2006's *Big Iron World*. During that period, Old Crow became regulars on National Public Radio show *The Prairie Home Companion*, giving them a national profile with precisely the right audience.

Meanwhile, "Wagon Wheel", a single from *O.C.M.S.* that Secor had written as a teenager around the chorus of an unfinished Bob Dylan song, was selling consistently as a download, yet spreading almost exclusively via word of mouth in an improbable collision of digital technology and the oral tradition. That timeless-sounding tune has sold more than 600,000 units while being performed nightly by countless groups in bars and on college campuses. The band's catalogue, also including 2008's Don Was-produced *Tennessee Pusher*, is now up to 700,000 in album sales. Since their beginnings, they've been touring their asses off, including jaunts with Stuart and Merle Haggard, while in 2011 they joined Mumford & Sons and Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros on a train tour, the subject of the documentary feature *Big Easy Express*. What's more, mandolin player Cory Younts is currently on loan to Jack White as a member of his "male" band. And if OCMS still aren't on the mainstream radar in their native country, the band is undeniably a grass-roots phenomenon of uncommon scale.

Clearly, this hard-working, virtuosic string band has reached a pivotal moment in its career arc, with the all-important fourth album on a new label – Dave Matthews' ATO – produced by Ted Hutt (Gaslight Anthem, Dropkick Murphys, Flogging Molly). During the sessions, they welcomed back Fuqua, who'd split a while back, and parted ways with Watson – but not before

SINCE 1998, WHEN old-time music buffs Ketch Secor, Critter Fuqua and Willie Watson first joined forces as travelling buskers, the Old Crow Medicine Show have survived and prospered through a combination of serendipity and resourcefulness.



the latter contributed significantly to the new album, most notably on the group's signature wood-grain-textured high harmonies. If this is Watson's swan song, it's a hell of a way to go out. *Carry Me Back* is the apotheosis of Old Crow's distinctive musical recipe, which juxtaposes homespun original songs that sound like they're coming off scratchy 78s with an attitude laced with punk-like exuberance, as they address contemporary themes with compassion and conviction, much like their forebears, from Seeger to Dylan.

This drum-less, all-acoustic band has never sounded more supercharged than on the Civil War narrative "Carry Me Back To Virginia", the amphetamine square dance reel "Sewanee Mountain Catfight" ("girls gone wild/on the Tennessee line"), the sly Hank Williams salute "Country Gal" ("honey let's have a roll in the hay/good-lookin' country gal") and the lathered-up "Mississippi Saturday Night". The latter song harnesses a Jerry Lee Lewis-like abandon to a

resonant example of what Secor calls "the topical format", as the narrator sucks down "forties in a Skylark" amid the physical and emotional ravages left on the land and its inhabitants by Katrina and the Gulf oil spill.

The sombre subject matter of "We Don't Grow Tobacco" and "Half Mile Down", laments for rural Southerners who have lost what had been the basis of their lives for generations, is offset by spirited, life-affirming performances.

With all the percolating energy that the album delivers, its three most memorable songs are ballads: the gut-wrenching, Dylanesque "Levi", the true story of a country boy who was killed in the Iraq War, and the hardscrabble anthems of endurance "Ain't It Enough" and "Ways Of Man". In "Ain't It Enough", Secor and his bandmates raise their earthy voices on what could serve as the credo for this single-minded populist band: "Throw your arms round each other/and love one another/for it's only one life that we've got/and ain't it enough?"

SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Sound Emporium, Nashville, Tennessee
Produced by: Ted Hutt
Personnel include: Kevin Hayes (guitar, vocals), Morgan Jahnig (bass, percussion), Gill Landry (banjo, vocals, dobro, resophonic guitar), Ketch Secor (fiddle, vocals, harmonica, guitar, banjo), Willie Watson (guitar, vocals, banjo, percussion), Cory Younts (mandolin, vocals, percussion, guitar, keys)

Q&A

Ketch Secor



I hear The Band, the Stones and The Byrds in your music. What we have in common is a reverence for US folk songs, for artists of the generation before them. The real kinship between us lies in our record collections.

What sets you apart from other roots bands? We really are playing music of the South, not to a dance beat with electronic instruments. We've

written new songs with a contemporary focus, but using the instrumentation of our region.

There's nothing academic about your approach. The tendency with a lot of bluegrass and old-time bands is to play those instruments from behind the glass case they're in, and we just wanted to bust them out. These instruments are meant to be not just played but beat on. We started on street corners, where the test is, can you play louder than howling dogs and ambulances?

It feels like your moment has arrived. The fact that it coincides with the passing away of Doc Watson is a profound coincidence.

INTERVIEW: BUD SCOPPA



HILARY HAHN & HAUSCHKA

Silfra

UNIVERSAL/DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

Classical titan meets avant-garde giant... in Iceland

8/10

Iceland where two tectonic plates meet – a suitable metaphor for the Reykjavik encounter between American classical violinist Hahn and German pianist Volker Bertelmann aka Hauschka. Both are musical explorers, Hahn regularly forsaking Bach for Josh Ritter, Chris Thile and others. Something of the empty landscape seeped into their improvisations, most of which are serene and haunting, Hahn's violin playing skylark to Hahn's earthy 'prepared' piano (he ties things to its strings). "Krakow" is slow and Satie-like, "Bounce Bounce" volcanic, there's little discordance but much invention and beauty.

NEIL SPENCER



PETER HAMMILL

Consequences

FIE!

Van der Graaf Generator singer's solo 31st brings the bad news, again

7/10

Hammill has focused with growing fixity on what he sees as our delusions of freedom on the path to fated ends, climaxing with 2009's *Thin Air*, chillingly haunted by his 2003 near-death from a heart attack. This follow-up, as usual recorded alone, offers "All The Tiredness", surely rock's first look at ageing's crippling exhaustion, hemmed in by basslines circling like sharks. Solo Hammill can often seem sparely aesthetic, coldly intellectual. But on piano ballads such as "Bravest Face", the one-time "Hendrix of the voice" sings with tender love of people pressing on even as luck, and life, implacably expire.

NICK HASTED



ROBERT HAMPSON

Répercussions

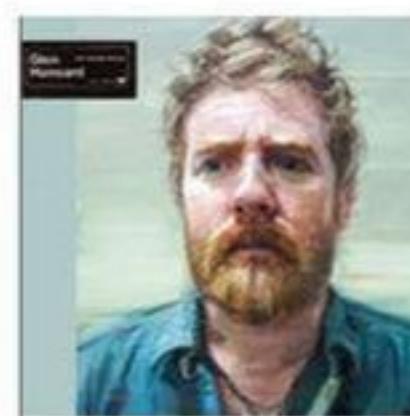
EDITIONS MEGO

Underground ex-rocker re-wires the academy

8/10

It's been a long, strange trip for Robert Hampson, from drone-rock leviathans Loop through 'industrial metal' pioneers Godflesh, to the dissection of rock dynamics in Main. *Répercussions* consists of two lengthy explorations of denuded sound, one created for French institution GRM, and a final, elegiac dedication to John Cale, "Antarctica Ends Here". Hampson has a discerning ear for when and how to place sounds to best offset each other, taking percussive noises and stripping them of context on the title track, such that recognisable clusters of piano shock when they emerge, startled, from the dense scrum of circuitry.

NICK HASTED



GLEN HANSARD

Rhythm And Repose

ANTI-

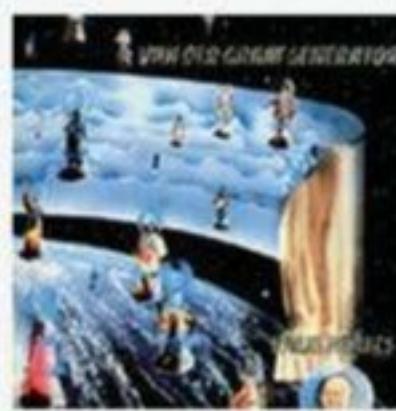
Oscar-winning Irish singer-songwriter bares his solo soul

This is the first solo effort from Glen Hansard, the Frames and Swell Season mainman and unlikely star of the award-winning indie movie, *Once*. The album was written during an 18-month stay in New York while overseeing the film's reworking as a Broadway musical, and finds Hansard wearing his heart very much on his sleeve and reflecting upon relationships past and present. Simple acoustic guitar, piano and orchestral arrangements elegantly frame the singer's sensitive yet robust vocals, although lyrically the tone is disappointingly mawkish with Hansard spouting platitudes seemingly borrowed from *The Little Book Of Calm*.

FIONA STURGES

HOW TO BUY... PETER HAMMILL/VDGG

The prog original's finest moments



VANDER GRAAF GENERATOR Pawn Hearts

CHARISMA, 1971

"Now, staggering madly, over the brink I fall," Hammill howls on the 23-minute

"A Plague Of Lighthouse Keepers", one of prog's ultimate statements of almost-reached possibility. You can hear the rivets popping in Trident Studios, as the band ram the day's technology into the red. Drained, they temporarily split afterwards.

8/10



PETER HAMMILL Nadir's Big Chance

CHARISMA, 1975

Famously part of Johnny Rotten's punk Year Zero-defying Capital Radio playlist in 1977.

VdGG played on this solo effort months before reuniting, while Hammill adopted the petulant alias Rikki Nadir. The title track feels like a punk premonition, and the closing "Two Or Three Spectres" sneers disgust at a bloated music biz.

7/10



PETER HAMMILL Thin Air

FIE!, 2009

Hammill's vision makes his rapidly growing recent catalogue daunting. But the stakes are

raised on this harrowing, post-heart-attack work. Casual acquaintances vanish in murky circumstances ("Your Face On the Street"), relationships expire ("The Mercy"), and phantom 9/11 planes prepare to crash.

8/10

NICK HASTED



PAUL HEATON

**Presents...
The 8th**

PROPER

Studio version of unfocused "soul opera"

Seems everyone is at this opera lark these days, some more successfully than others. *The 8th*, which premiered at the 2011 Manchester International Festival, uses an eclectic cast (including King Creosote, Cherry Ghost and ex-Beautiful Souther Jacqui Abbott, though Heaton himself makes only a brief appearance) to embody the seven deadly sins before introducing a new one: gossip. *The Wire*'s Reg E Cathey gets stuck in as the bad-preacher narrator, but it's not clear that even he knows what message Heaton is trying to convey. The story is terminally confused, the soggy soul textures dated. Maybe it all makes sense onstage.

GRAEME THOMSON

HEAVY BLANKET

Heavy Blanket

OUTER BATTERY

All-instrumental jams from J Mascis and 'friends'

The debut from Heavy Blanket is what you might call a pure dose of J Mascis, a man for whom the articulation of words and sentiments has sometimes appeared to be merely the thing that fills the gaps between two guitar solos. Here, the Dinosaur Jr frontman and two mysterious comrades, bassist Johnny Pancake and drummer Pete Cougar – let's go out on a limb and assume they're Mascis himself – indulge in six tracks of sprawling guitar pyrotechnics with shades of Blue Cheer and Japanese psychers Flower Travellin' Band. Certainly, we should salute his indefatigability, even if over 37 minutes, *Heavy Blanket* should weed out the part-timers.

LOUIS PATTISON



FAY HIELD

Orfeo

TOPIC

Pleasing excursion into English folk archives

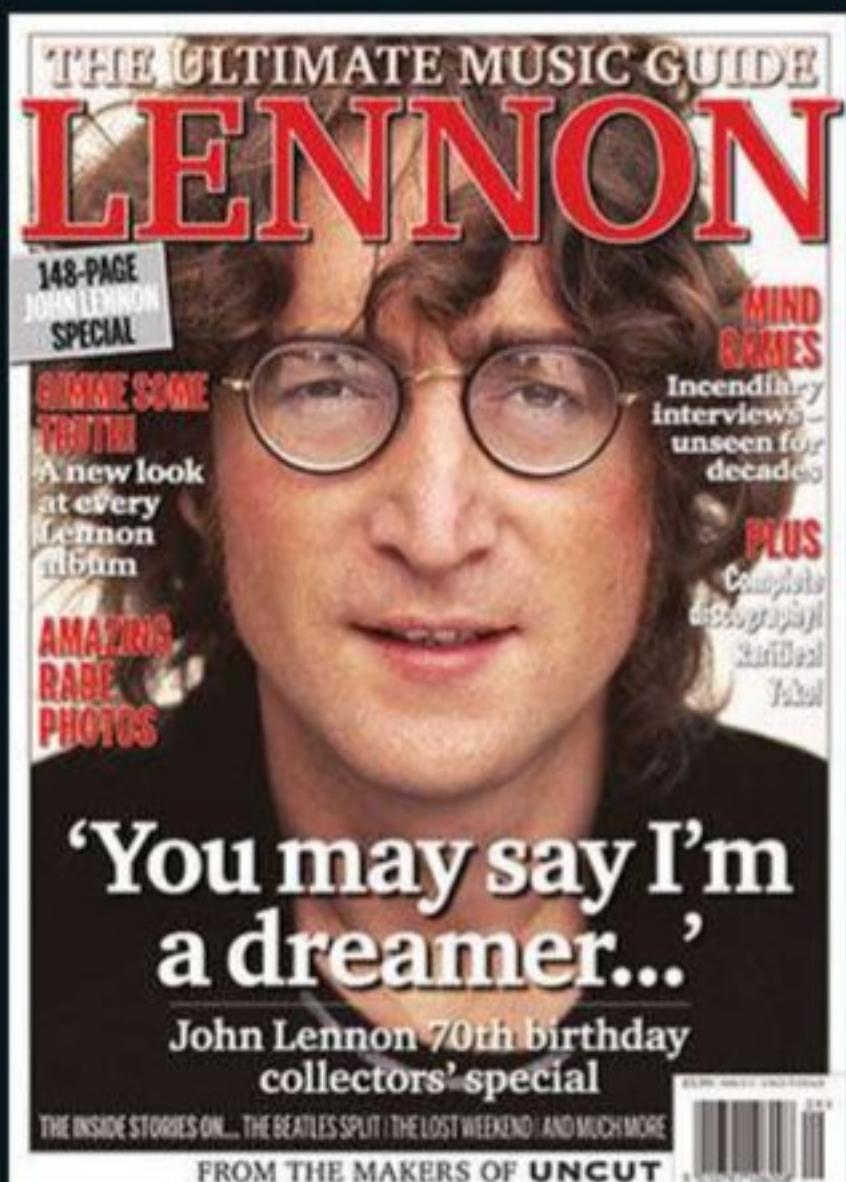
The partner of Bellowhead's Jon Boden, Hield's twin attributes are a strong, unshowy voice redolent of her Yorkshire roots, and a gift for arranging lesser-known traditional songs. Despite featuring crack musicians, including Boden and Martin Simpson, *Orfeo*'s spare soundscape can sometimes seem a bit frugal, but Hield proves a versatile frontwoman, as comfortable tripping lightly through "The Weaver's Daughter" as digging into darkness on "The Cuckoo", which traverses the same lowering landscape as Fairport's "Reynardine". Elsewhere, the a cappella harmonies on "Pretty Nancy" are as tight as a pair of sailor's britches.

GRAEME THOMSON

UNCUT

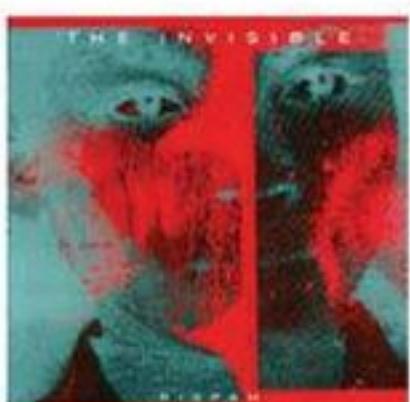
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THE INVISIBLE

Risbah

NINJA TUNE

Mercury-shortlisted post-rock trio find a home on Ninja Tune

The Invisible are three musicians – guitarist Dave Okumu, bassist Tom Herbert and drummer Leo Taylor – individually known for their jazz work, but none of that jazz baggage survives here. Instead their debut for Ninja Tune specialises in a woozy, TV On The Radio-style post-rock, all burbling effects, shoegazy guitars and finger-bleeding basslines. Okumu's voice – a soft baritone that usually whispers in falsetto – adds a calming, dreamlike quality to the sound. The melodies drift rather aimlessly – even after three listens, few earworms lodge themselves in your brain – but the wonderfully groggy textures will stay with you like the best kind of sonic Valium.

JOHN LEWIS

7/10

JAGWA MUSIC

Bongo Hotheads

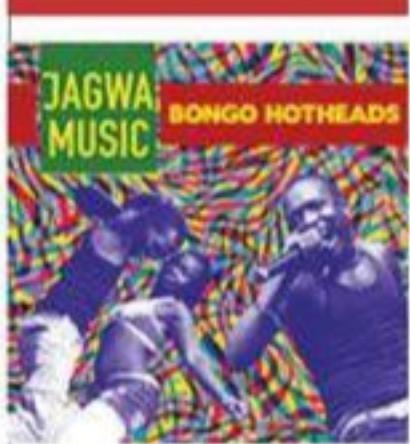
CRAMMED

Supercharged street music from Tanzania, recorded live

Urban African music continues to mutate oddly. Spurred by the success of its *Congotronics* series, Crammed have unearthed another homemade phenomenon in this young troupe from the 'burbs of Dar Es Salaam. Their sound, Mchiriku, is as speedy as its Congo counterpart but less weird, consisting of an antique Casio keyboard fed through a distorted amp and supported by a battery of hand drums and plastic pipes. It's gritty and urgent, but the powerful lead vocals are melodic and traditional, and the lyrics eloquent: "They call us masters of chaos" is, as Jagwa live shows attest, no idle boast.

NEIL SPENCER

7/10



JEREMIAH JAE

Raw Money Raps

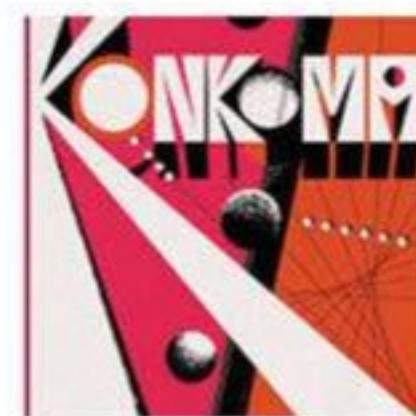
BRAINFEEDER/NINJA TUNE

Woozy experimental hip-hop from Chicago – surprise appearance from Eric Idle!

Being an art-school dropout and the son of Miles Davis cohort Robert Irving III probably doesn't help Jeremiah Jae's gangsta rap credentials, but it does put his extraordinary music into context. His debut album lurches between woozy sampladelica, Daisy Age optimism and doomy horrorcore, mixing addled rhymes with the kind of unhinged beats you associate with his pal Flying Lotus. "Guns Go Off" throbs and gallops with a terrified excitement; "Money" – which opens with a long Monty Python sample – is a slow jam with double-time rapping; "The Great Escape" suggests a spliffed-up Martin Denny. An LP that reaffirms your faith in hip-hop.

JOHN LEWIS

8/10



KONKOMA

Konkoma

SOUNDWAY

Retro Afro-funk from London

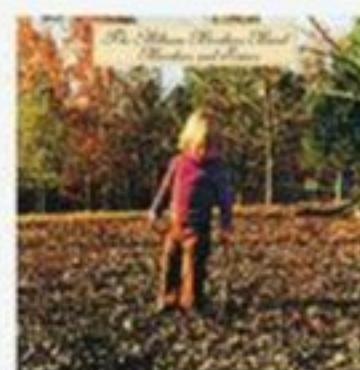
Having released classy compilations of 1970s West African music, the Soundway label have signed a living Ghanaian band newly built around two veterans, guitarist Alfred Bannerman and keyboard player Emmanuel Rentzos. Konkoma's sound is rooted in 1970s Afrobeat, complete with blasting horn section and gloriously fuzzy organ, but shot through with touches of highlife, funk and rock. Their debut fizzes from the first note of the Fela-esque opener "Lie Lie". Bannerman delivers dizzy space-rock riffs on "Sibashaya Woza", there's hard funk on "Kpanlogo", dub effects on "Another Day" and a five minute acoustic chill-out to close. Classy.

NEIL SPENCER

7/10

HOW TO BUY... CHUCK LEAVELL

The pianist's classic guest appearances

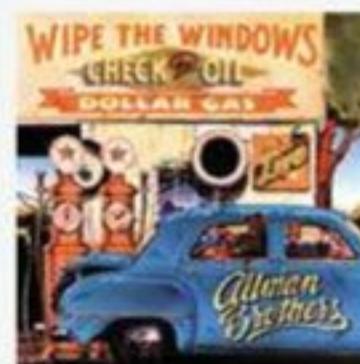


ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND Brothers And Sisters

CAPRICORN, 1973

Leavell was just 20 when he joined the Allmans on the band's first effort following the deaths of Duane Allman and Berry Oakley. Like Duane and brother Gregg in the original lineup, Dickey Betts and Leavell engaged in heady, intricate guitar-keyboard interplay on tracks like "Jessica", "Southbound" and "Ramblin' Man".

8/10

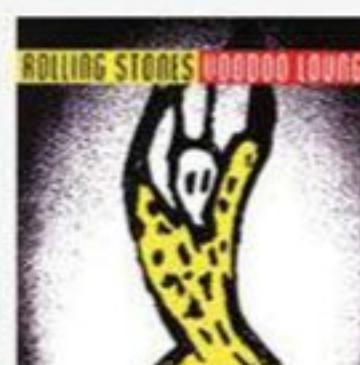


ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND Wipe The Windows, Check The Oil, Dollar Gas

CAPRICORN, 1976

Recorded at various shows in 1973-74, this set demonstrates the Allman Brothers Mk II remained a formidable live band. The Betts-Leavell tandem provides plenty of fireworks on the *Brothers And Sisters* tunes, and the dual keyboard work of Leavell and Gregg Allman is scintillating on "In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed" and "Come And Go Blues".

7/10



THE ROLLING STONES Voodoo Lounge

ROLLING STONES/

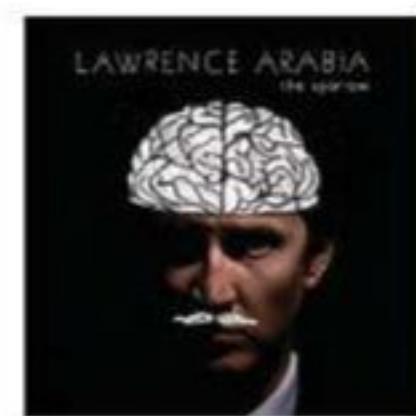
VIRGIN, 1994

Leavell has been an unofficial member of the Stones since 1983's

Undercover, and while numerous latter-day Stones LPs were initially hailed as returns to form, *Voodoo Lounge* was more deserving than most. Leavell contributes significantly to "New Faces" (harpsichord), "Out Of Tears" (piano) and "I Go Wild" (organ).

8/10

BUD SCOPPA



LAWRENCE ARABIA

The Sparrow

BELLA UNION

Elegant birdsong from fine Kiwi songwriter James Milne may have questionable taste in stage monikers, but his excellent taste in music is irrefutable. This self-produced third from the London-based Kiwi attaches John Lennon's melodic sense and vocal style to settings that evoke everyone from Lee Hazlewood and Serge Gainsbourg to John Grant and Rufus Wainwright. There's wit and lyrical precision to match the stunning tunes and arrangements, particularly within the wry observational angst of "Travelling Shoes" and "The Bisexual". *The Sparrow* benefits hugely from Milne's recent rejection of digital technology, creating a quiet storm from classic instruments expertly played.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

LIANNE LA HAVAS

Is Your Love Big Enough?

WARNER BROS

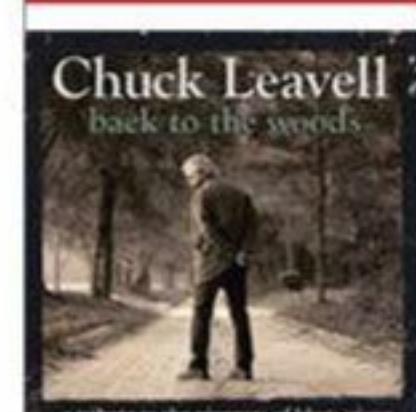
Debut from Prince's favourite neo-soul songstress



6/10

An art-school drop-out from Streatham, La Havas has been touted as this year's big soul noise, helped by an impressive turn on *Later...* and endorsements from a certain diminutive Minneapolitan. Her first LP goes some way in demonstrating what the fuss is about, throwing her smoky Dionne Warwick vocals to the fore and showcasing some pleasant soul numbers, among them the harmony-laden "Don't Wake Me Up", and the Willy Mason duet "No Room For Doubt". But the singer runs out of steam in the second half, opting for a succession of cloying ballads that, despite her beguiling voice, leaves the listener unmoved.

FIONA STURGES



CHUCK LEAVELL

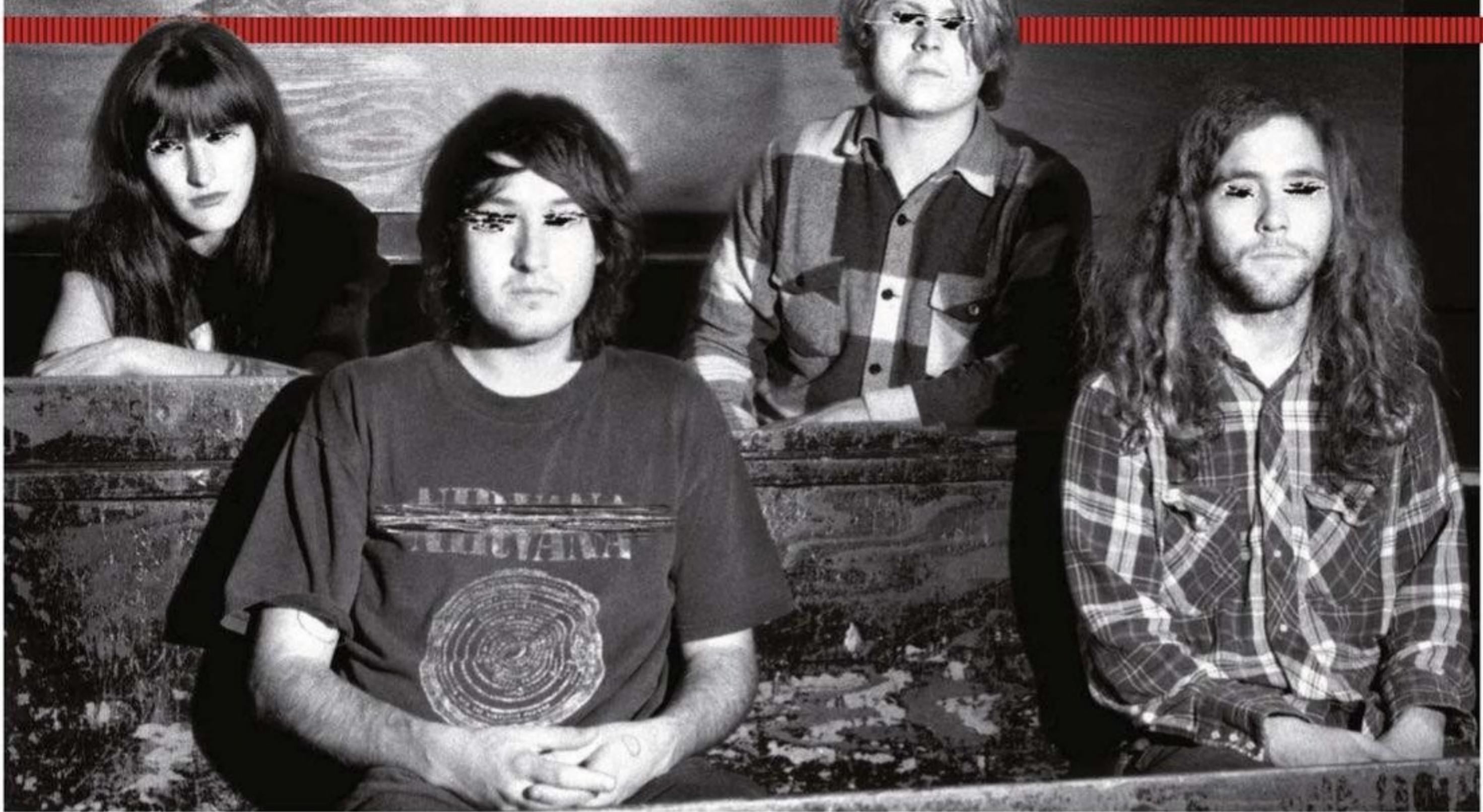
Back To The Woods

EVERGREEN ARTS

Piano blues classics get a virtuosic but studied treatment

Leavell, who has brought his prodigious piano chops to the Allman Brothers Band, the Stones and Sea Level over the years, salutes 15 blues pianists from Skip James to Ray Charles on this impeccably performed tribute. His detailed notes, co-written with historian Larry Cohn, add value to the package. What's missing is a sense of urgency, and the primary problem is that Leavell, though game, isn't much of a vocalist. Soul great Candi Staton, who appears on two tracks, brings some much-needed heat, as do the guitars of Keith Richards and John Mayer on an atypically spontaneous work-up of Otis Spann's "Boots And Shoes".

BUD SCOPPA



TY SEGALL BAND

Slaughterhouse

IN THE RED

The crown prince of garage rock goes from strength to strength – at speed! *By Louis Pattison*



8/10

cherub appearance. A young drummer and guitarist from Laguna Beach, Segall's name first started showing up on the sleeves of records by a string of luridly named Bay Area beat combos – the likes of Epsilons, The Traditional Fools, Party Fowl, Sic Alps and The Perverts – while his solo releases, kicking off with 2008's cassette-only *Horn The Unicorn*, have come similarly thick and fast. 2011 saw a string of LPs and EPs released on the likes of Goner Records, Southpaw Records and Drag City, while this year has already yielded one fine album, an elegantly trippy collaboration with Tim Presley of White Fence entitled *Hair*.

Like fellow travellers Kurt Vile, Thee Oh Sees' John Dwyer and the late Jay Reatard, Segall is enamoured with the guitar music of the past, but crucially, not beholden to it. Weaned on The Beatles, *Nuggets*, The Stooges and The Troggs, he nonetheless errs towards the fast, the loud and the chaotic, rating grit over polish and in-the-moment instinct above porings over pages from the rock'n'roll encyclopedia. A listen to last year's measured, psychedelic *Goodbye Bread*, a glance askance at the current musical fashion for sun-baked West Coast dude culture, might have left you with the impression he was softening as his early twenties bit. But *Slaughterhouse* – to be

SINCE HIS
EMERGENCE from
the Californian rock
underground
somewhere in the
last decade, Ty
Segall has
maintained a
frenzied workrate
that feels rather at
odds with his
sleepy-eyed, fallen-

released digitally and on two slabs of 10" vinyl – suggests quite the opposite; a head-first plunge into the psych-punk muck. Recorded with full live band (two former Epsilons comrades, guitarist Mikal Cronin and bassist Charles Epstein, plus drummer Emily Rose Epstein), it is, as Segall has explained it in interview, his stab at "evil, evil space rock... put a little Satan in space and you got the sound". You'd probably struggle to find a better description for the opening "Death". Commencing with around a minute of the sort of mangled guitar squall that Nirvana used to finish shows with, it emerges as a pagan psych-rock, chanted vocals and smoking guitar powered along on propulsive, Hawkwind-style blanga. It more or less sets the tone for what follows. "I Bought My Eyes" sounds like a lost '60s psych LP track spun at 45, at least until the rhythm section blasts in, lending Segall's hazy lamentations the sensation of a slide into some infernal abyss. "Tell Me What's Inside Your

Heart" takes the sort of sweet courtship entreaties beloved of the '60s beat groups and rewrites it as jerky garage-punk ramalama. A cover of Fred Neil's "That's The Bag I'm In" undergoes something close to desecration, led by a sunny bassline but delivered with unearthly shrieks and buzzing guitar amps that sound on the verge of checking out for keeps.

Curiously, *Slaughterhouse* reminds of another In The Red record, the Black Lips' "flowerpunk" 2005 debut *Let It Bloom*. Respectively, they share a degree of knowingness in their love of '60s psych and garage material, but both are delivered with such gusto that any trace of irony or pastiche is dashed away. The difference is that where *Let It Bloom* played it lysergic and trebly, the Segall band are roughneck and heavy, like they want to pin you to the studio back wall.

At the close, as if conscious they've rattled through an album's worth of material in nearer to half that time, final track "Fuzz War" stretches out to 10 minutes of gurgling feedback and caveman drumming. For an album that makes such capital out of the short sharp shock, it seems a bit of a shame. Far better to reshuffle and check out on track eight, a scorching cover of Bo Diddley's "Diddy Wah Diddy". "Here we go... extra fast," instructs Segall at the beginning, but he may have bitten off more than he can chew. "Fuck this fucking song," he bawls, as things fall apart magnificently. "I dunno what we're doing... wait, rewind it, let's go again." And you do. Because it's that kind of album.

Q&A

Ty Segall



Slaughterhouse is quite the break from *Goodbye Bread* – was that a conscious decision? My idea is that hopefully I'll never make the same record twice. What was so fun about making *Slaughterhouse* was that it was written and played by my whole touring band. A total collaborative record. We're all really into Hawkwind, Sabbath, Blue Cheer, Alice Cooper, so that's where we were coming from as a band.

Tell me about your choice of covers on the LP.
I like to cover songs you shouldn't be allowed to, like "Diddy Wah Diddy" or "Paranoid", as there is such a preconceived association... if you play them, you're an asshole. To me, it's just funny.

What's the story behind "Fuzz War"?
I tend to make more pop records, so putting a 10-minute noise song on a record is something I haven't had a chance to do. "Fuzz War" is meant to represent the sounds of war and death.

What's next? I gather you have another release coming from Drag City...
Yes, it's done. I like how it turned out; a lot of fuzz!
INTERVIEW: LOUIS PATTISON



LEVELLERS

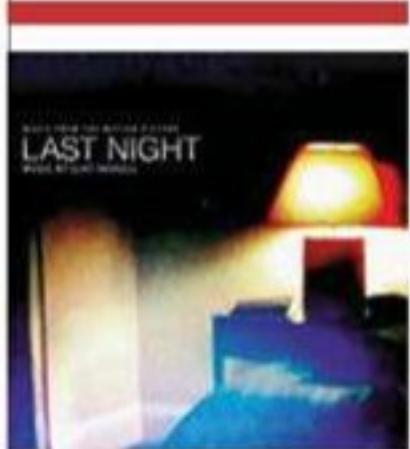
Static On The Airwaves
ON THE FIDDLE RECORDINGS

Long-serving refuseniks wonder what the world has come to

4/10

persuasion from anarcho-folkies the Levellers and you certainly don't get it on their 10th LP, which is as overtly political and defiantly irritable as anything they've done. "We Are All Gunmen" imagines a world immune to celebrity tittle-tattle, where people drink in moderation and "*all nations come in peace*", "Forgotten Towers" reflects on the death of the British high street while "Second Life" grumpily tackles online time-wasters. While you applaud singer Mark Chadwick's passion for consciousness-raising, listening to *Static...* is much like being bludgeoned repeatedly with a copy of *Socialist Worker*.

FIONA STURGES



CLINT MANSELL

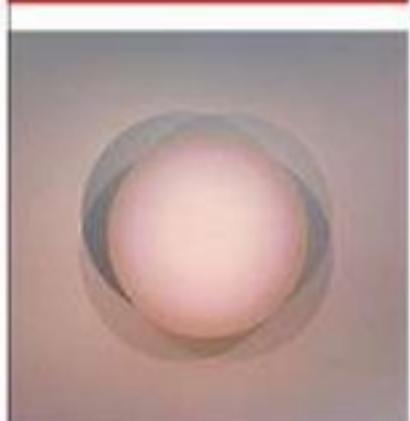
Music From The Motion Picture Last Night
MILAN

Soundtracks will eat themselves

8/10

behind him, Clint Mansell has become one of the most respected and scarily cool soundtrack composers of the 21st Century, whose work on Darren Aronofsky's *Pi* and *Requiem For A Dream* redefined the way soundtracks work with the content of their host movie. Mansell's music for *Last Night* (a 2010 vehicle for Keira Knightley and Sam Worthington) is something of a sidebar to his bigger work, being a step outside his usual mixture of intense orchestral post-rock and intense moodiness, a collection of melancholy piano pieces that work just as well without the film. A slight collection, but excellent for all that.

DAVID QUANTICK



THE MARBLE VANITY

The Marble Vanity
SLOW FIZZ

Lovely chamber pop from Chicago debutants

7/10

Marble Vanity's fine debut album, epitomised by the sweet trill of birdsong that underscores the brisk guitar pop of "Autumn Woods" and the jingle jangle of "The Snow Falls". The band come from Chicago and two of them run garage rock label Trouble In Mind, but this is far more laidback, with a strong retro feel. Highlights include the semi-psychedelic '60s throwback "You're Older Now", "Nothing Left", which has the cheery swing of a Monkees track and the Stonesy samba intro to "What Could Go Wrong?", the latter embellished by some soulful flute.

PETER WATTS



MICACHU & THE SHAPES

Never
ROUGH TRADE

Inventive auteur's urban pop

Classically trained but raised on grime and garage, 25-year-old Micachu (aka Mica Levi) is a post-rave Harry Partch, using found noises, homemade instruments and, on "Easy", her Hoover to create thrillingly deconstructed urban pop music. Building on 2009's excellent *Jewellery*, several songs are under two minutes but pack in an enormous amount. Setting machinery on a collision course, the queasy rhythms of "Sick" and "OK" recall the see-sawing abrasion of Graham Coxon's *A+E*. The title track is Bowie's "African Night Flight" fed through a blender, while "Fall" is ghostly late-night noir. Wilful, perhaps, but also a hugely inventive joy.

GRAEME THOMSON

8/10



MISSION OF BURMA

Unsound
FIRE

Post-punk legends continue their fruitful second coming

This is Mission Of Burma's fourth album

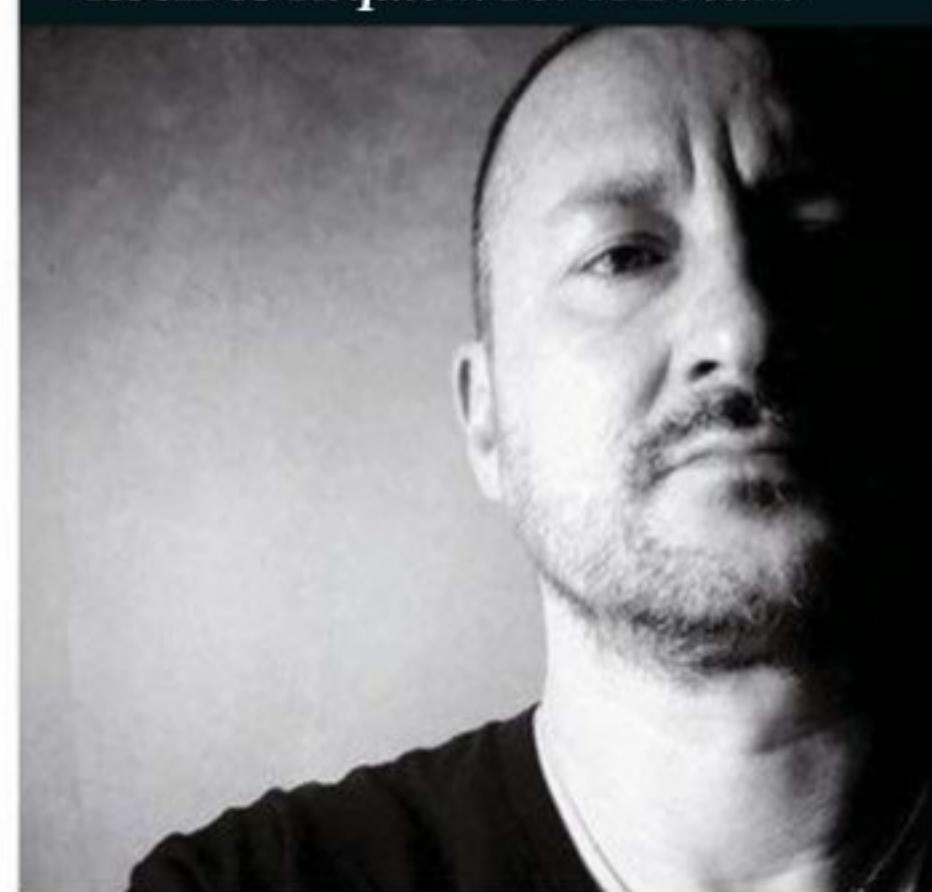
since they reformed in 2002, making it about as an emphatic a comeback as you could hope to see. And *Unsound* is a corker, sounding fresh and full of great hooks and ideas, such as the excellent post-punk "Semi-Pseudo-Sort-Of Plan". As ever, singing and songwriting is shared between three bandmembers, bringing genuine variation to the sound, while Bob Weston's tape loops keep things unusual. Jittery mantra "This Is Hi-Fi" is another highlight, as are Peter Prescott's bellowing drums on the raw, raging "Second Television" and the intense feedback of "ADD In Unison".

PETER WATTS

8/10

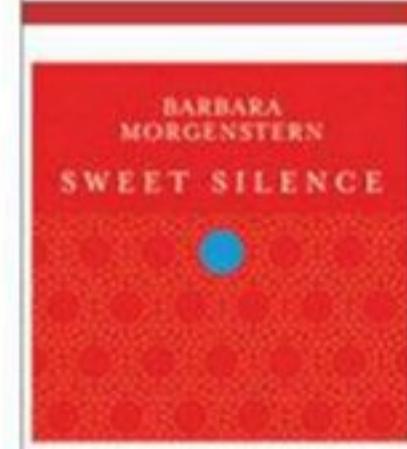
REVELATIONS

Clint Mansell: from *Pop Will Eat Itself* to *Requiem For A Dream*



► The journey from Clint Poppie to Clint Mansell was a long, strange one. Once the lanky co-vocalist of *Pop Will Eat Itself*, Mansell was the band's most popular member, affable and slightly less acerbic than his bandmates. When PWEI's career fizzled out, Mansell found himself in his early thirties, living in New York and at something of a massively low ebb. Striking up a friendship with Darren Aronofsky, "just talking about what we were gonna do when we got the chance", Mansell became his musical collaborator on Aronofsky's intense, uncomfortable *Pi*, creating a unique blend of rock, dance and sampled fisticuffs from Bruce Lee movies. The pair worked together again on *Requiem For A Dream*, the movie that established both their reputations. Written in a "suicide loft" (his words) in New York, Mansell's title theme becoming one of the most recognised pieces of film music this century when it was retooled for the *Lord Of The Rings* trailers. Since then Clint has become a major figure in the new wave of film composers, many of whom (like Cliff "Drive" Martinez, former Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer) come from rock music, and his work on films like Duncan Jones' *Moon* is effective both as soundtrack and in live performance.

DAVID QUANTICK



BARBARA MORGENSTERN

Sweet Silence
MONIKA

Mature electropop from Berlin

2010's career overview

7/10

Fan No.2 charted Morgenstern's progress from the lofi electronica of Berlin's late-'90s *Wohnzimmer* (living room, where the gigs took place) scene to something approaching the lush *Couchtischtechno* (coffee table techno) of, say, late Everything But The Girl. *Sweet Silence* is her sixth album, and though it's the first all sung in English, it's no departure: rather a refinement of her spacious electropop, detailing urban *Weltschmerz* (on "Need To Hang Around" she sighs, "*I could have experienced the very peak of my creativity, but I was too busy*"), distinguished by a voice that renders German a language of exquisite, erotic delicacy.

STEPHEN TROUSSE



OM

Advaitic Songs
DRAG CITY

A reminder that stoners are generally tedious

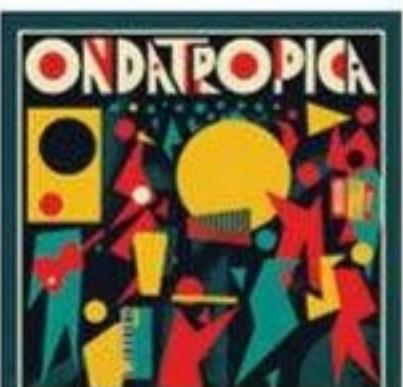
Last month, Sleep's stoner-metal classic *Dopesmoker* was

3/10

reissued, and its attitude and wit contrasts starkly with this new release from Sleep vocalist Al Cisneros and his band Om. Their ragtag religious signifiers, stretching from the Mediterranean to Bengal, feel like gap year blog entries, and Cisneros' wizened sage delivery is ludicrous – when he was talking about "marijuanauts" and "weed priests" on *Dopesmoker*, it worked because it was silly, but po-faced it feels phony. Cellos and Indian percussion draw out some involving melodies, but the signature riffs feel safe, and, again like a story from a stoned traveller, the whole thing goes on interminably.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

New Albums



ONDATROPICA

Ondatropica

SOUNDWAY

2CD Anglo-Colombian odyssey, with added Black Sabbath

British DJ and bandleader Will Holland still makes fine records as Quantic, but he's spent most of the past five years living in Colombia, increasingly immersing himself in local music. Last year he assembled an album of obscure vintage recordings; here he teams up with Bogotá bandleader Mario Galeano Toro to track down some veteran Colombian musicians. Disc Two adopts the orthodox *Buena Vista Social Club* approach of documenting old genres, but the first disc brilliantly marries alien forms (vocal beatboxing, rap, ska, dub, even a version of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man") with the cumbia's clattering rhythms and wheezy accordions.

JOHN LEWIS

7/10

TOM PALEY'S OLD-TIME MOONSHINE REVUE

Roll On, Roll On

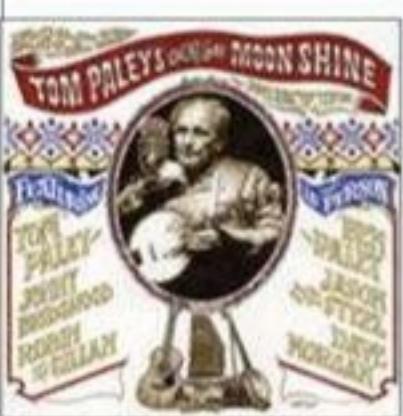
HORNBEAM RECORDINGS

Old-time fun'n'fiddlin'

Tom Paley recorded his first album for Elektra in 1953 before forming The New Lost City Ramblers, whose Folkways recordings provided the backbone for the old-time string band revival. Resident in England since 1965, this delightful new album rolls back the last 60 years. Paley's vocals rasp like old hooch, and the sheer exuberance and expertise of his banjo and fiddle playing permeates these traditional gospel tunes, railroad blues and mountain ballads. Paley's own "Beelzebubbles", about the Devil's daughter, set to a Charlie Poole tune, is a hoot. Special stuff, no wonder he's idolised by the likes of Dylan and Cooder.

MICK HOUGHTON

9/10



PASSION PIT

Gossamer

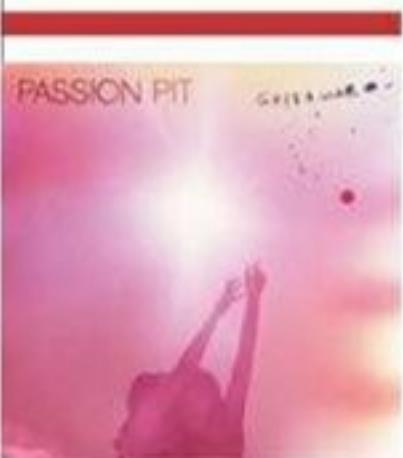
COLUMBIA

Big hits from the hipster stadium band in waiting

Passion Pit channel the kind of hyper-emotionality beloved of *Glee* and *Twilight* followers, who don't so much gaze at their navel as take an Instagram of it and post it on Facebook. Luckily they are also one of the few bands with stadium heft and the tunes to pull it off, rendering their big-heartedness euphorically justified. Their trademark sound is similar to Coldplay's arena-fluoro on *Mylo Xyloto*, with a touch of Hudson Mohawke's glossy glitching, and comes in 'epic' or 'ridiculously epic' – a bit of shame, as the Timberlake-worthy R&B ballad "Constant Conversations" shows they can do slow just as brilliantly.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

8/10



PETER & KERRY

La Trimouille

BELIEVE RECORDINGS/TAPE CLUB

Indie-pop operettas from this lo-fi boy/girl duo

8/10

The debut album by the duo of Peter Lyons and Kerry Leatham lurches, stylistically, between OMD synth pop and Cherry Red whimsy. But what's most impressive is their ability to tell stories in song. Each lyric plays like a tightly plotted Ken Loach script, with the duo sharing the vocals and playing male/female roles. "Split For The City" is a mini-opera of marital ennui; "Annie" is Dean Friedman's "Lucky Stars", set in a Goldie Hawn movie and backed by Hot Chip; other tracks tell tales of emigration, depression, long-distance love and disastrous holidays in France. Even at its most banal, each is uniquely arresting.

JOHN LEWIS

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Emily
Portman



► "Old stories with new skin" is how Emily Portman described her 2010 debut, *The Glamoury*. It turned out she meant more than re-singing folk standards. Instead, she interwove the magical elements of antique tales with her own imaginings, using an ethereal mix of harp, strings and her bright vocals to create an otherworldly realm of shape-shifting sirens. Raised in Somerset, relocated to Tyneside, steeped in folk from childhood, 29-year-old Portman understands the power of forest, moor and seascape, though she finds magic in the city too. "Hinge Of The Year" on *Hatchling* is based on a character from *Nights At The Circus* by Angela Carter, who has been a big influence," she says. "Her retelling of the fairy tale *Ashputtle* also inspired 'Ash Girl'." Portman's faerie land is often disturbing. "I do like the dark stuff," she admits, "though *Hatchling* has a lighter feel. It's also more cohesive because Lucy Farrell (viola) and Rachel Newton (harp) and I have been playing together for a few years." Nonetheless, *Hatchling* retains its share of spookiness, even on lullabies. "They aren't just for kids," says Emily. "Scorching Sun", written after reading Marina Warner's history of fairytales, *From The Beast To The Blonde*, is an example. A good bit of fear never harmed anyone."

NEIL SPENCER



EMILY PORTMAN

Hatchling

FURROW

Intricate, entrancing second album from English folk songstress

8/10

the bar high, but *Hatchling* follows on seamlessly, another bundle of ancient folk and modern magical realism, though more musically varied. "Hinge Of The Year" is a tale of "vodka, wine and blood in the gutters" set to cellos and harp, a saw wailing eerily behind. Banjos cluck on "Hatchlings" and "Sunken Bells", while "Sleeping Beauty" has a poised semi-classical arrangement. Portman keeps her vocals spare and haunting, adding kindred spirit Alasdair Roberts to "Scorching Sun", and the mix of lullabies, madrigals, mermaids and nightingales casts a powerful spell.

NEIL SPENCER



PURITY RING

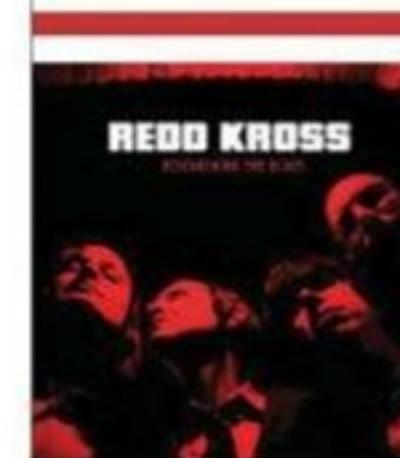
Shrines

4AD

Goth-step couple's fun if frigid debut

Purity Ring are a kind of wholesome *Twilight* version of witch-house bad-boys Salem. The moody stares and awkward gait are in place, but in Megan James they've a singer who transforms the skittering R&B and glacial synths of partner Corin Roddick into something approaching bubblegum pop, even conjuring a cute Elizabeth Fraser gobbledegook with songs called "Ungirthed", "Obedear" and "Belispeak". Like new labelmate Grimes, *Shrines* sees this young Canadian duo tamper with generic electro to create often sparkling results. It's conceivable Purity Ring's sugary take on trap-rap will scoop up all those Skrillex fans craving something a little more tuneful.

PIERS MARTIN



REDD KROSS

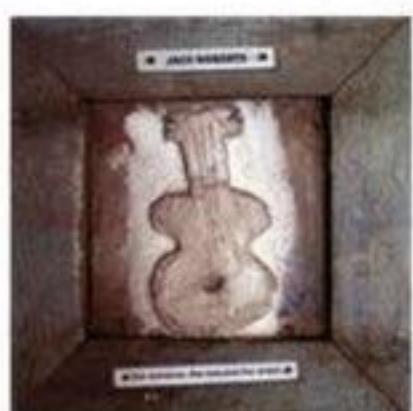
Researching
The Blues

MERGE

LA punk pioneers' first album in 15 years

Apparently wound tight from a 15-year recording hiatus, Redd Kross' comeback is a stunner, taut hyper-melodic songwriting and heavenly harmonies wed to a veritable barrage of fierce hooks and riffs. Songwriter Jeff McDonald here distills everything making the group special – glorious tunes ("Meet Frankenstein", "One Of The Good Ones"), a propulsive instrumental attack (the *Nuggets*-like title track), and playful sonic, neo-psych touches ("Hazel Eyes"). Moving beyond their Hollywood trash/thrash origins, McDonald's songwriting is transcendently wide-lens, best reflected in "Choose To Play", this masterpiece's flagship song.

LUKE TORN



JACK ROBERTS

The Romance, The Row, And The Wreck

TIP TOP

Scouse journeyman's postcards from home

Nearly two decades on from his major-label

debut, the now-60-year-old Roberts continues to chart a folky path on a collection of songs inspired by his beloved Liverpool hometown. The budgets may be more modest these days, but it hasn't diluted his articulate but weary view of life and love filtered through black humour. The most obvious templates are Leonard Cohen (the poetic ruminations of "You'll Be Sorry When I'm Dead") and early Tom Waits (the cinematic sea shanty "Sleepwalking"; the jazz rap of "The Lights Are Going Out"), but Jack's own personality makes its mark on the evocative balladry of "The Mermaids".

TERRY STAUNTON

7/10



RYAT

Totem

BRAINFEEDER

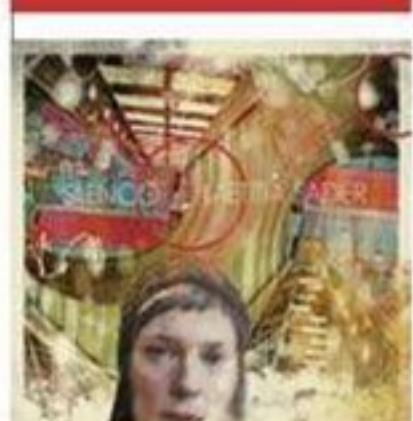
Sporadically dazzling avant-pop from Flying Lotus protégée

Signed to the boutique imprint headed by avant-jazzoid techno alchemist

Flying Lotus, it is no surprise that LA-based Christina "Ryat" McGeehan inhabits a heady otherworld of glitchy beats, warptronic whirls and perfumed psych-folk vocals. Björk and Joanna Newsom are unavoidable reference points for her hiccupping poetic whimsy, especially as each track is inspired by its own "spirit animal". Strip away the bejewelled sonic scaffolding and she sounds deflatingly conventional on piano ballad "Hummingbird". But there are enough bleeps and exotic twists here to give McGeehan her own bewitching oddness. The acid-fairground euphoria of "Seahorse" sounds particularly magnificent.

STEPHEN DALTON

7/10



LAETITIA SADIER

Silencio

DRAG CITY

Second solo album since Stereolab split

Stereolab are on hiatus, but their singer Laetitia Sadier continues to ply their blend of bustling metropolitan pop and lugubrious balladry. She's in finer voice than ever, a little more sonorous now in her deeper moments, and, on "Moi Sans Zach", makes sandwiches and crudités sound like the most elegant things imaginable. Where Stereolab wittily satirised bourgeois tastes by framing their postmodern lounge tracks as Space Age Bachelor Pad Music, here the songs are sometimes merely decorative, and the occasional socially conscious lyric is either bracingly direct or awkwardly facile depending on your generosity. But mostly, this is spry, melodic and totally charming.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

8/10



THE SEE SEE

Fountayne Mountain

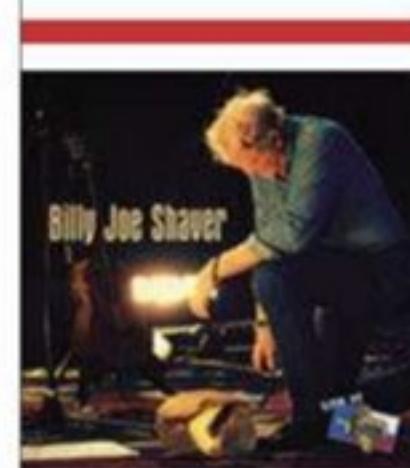
DELL'ORSO

Psychedelic revivalists make decent second album

Less than 12 months after the release of their debut LP, and fresh from touring with The Raconteurs and The Brian Jonestown Massacre, East London's principal exponents of jangly, '60s-flavoured dream-pop, led by singer Richard Olson (formerly of folk-rockers The Eighteenth Day Of May), return with a collection of breezily confident tracks that come with echoes of The La's, Ride and The Beach Boys. While there's nothing especially groundbreaking about *Fountayne Mountain*, it remains an accomplished and atmospheric work full of pretty harmonies and memorable choruses that might just find an audience when the sun comes out.

FIONA STURGES

6/10



BILLY JOE SHAVER

Live At Billy Bob's Texas

SMITH MUSIC GROUP

No-nonsense live set from outlaw country's elder statesman

An outsider even as he was country music's hottest songwriter – see covers by Waylon Jennings, Elvis Presley, and scores more – Texan Billy Joe Shaver is a force of nature, more prolific than ever at 72. This 22-track set, a 'best-songs-live' deal – Shaver backed by a meat-and-potatoes three-piece band – is pure Texas roadhouse: rough in places, endearing in others, hillbilly poet start to finish. Hardly the most disciplined or versatile singer, Shaver gets over on the strength of his writing, from early gems "Black Rose" to new ones, like "Wacko From Waco", a mythmaking tale of his 2007 barroom shooting.

LUKE TORN

6/10



SIR RICHARD BISHOP

Intermezzo

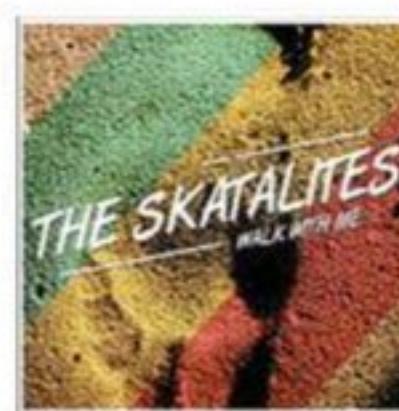
IDEOLOGIC ORGAN

A beautiful flickbook of six-string sonnets *Intermezzo* is one of Sir Richard Bishop's most welcoming collections;

an exemplary introduction to the man's nuanced understanding of the lexicon of the guitar. Here, the ex-Sun City Girls member takes in backwards guitars, unwinding as if from a malfunctioning reel-to-reel, tightly wound swing numbers that betray his debt to Django Reinhardt, and weeping desert laments for slide. A great guitarist who sits just outside of any 'school' you could imagine, he's as singular and idiosyncratic a master of his chosen instrument as, say, Munir Bashir is on the oud, or Keiji Haino on the electric guitar.

JONDALE

8/10



THE SKATALITES

Walk With Me

WRASSE

Jamaican fixtures blow on

With just one original member standing – alto player Lester Sterling – The Skatalites are an

example of how a group can evolve into an institution. Their sound today is a scrubbed-up version of the aggressive, lop-sided jazz cooked up in the mid-'60s, but it rolls along sweetly enough. "Lalibela" is a stand-out, led by the kind of byzantine riff the founding fathers favoured (and comes with a cool dub take). A version of Horace Silver's over-covered "Song For My Father" seems filler by comparison. Doreen Shaffer's fine vocals appear, bafflingly, only once (the title cut), and the fine, intricate solos (Sterling's on "Little Teresa" has the old magic) don't quite dispel a sense of routine.

NEIL SPENCER

SLIM CHANCE

The Show Goes On

FISHPOOL

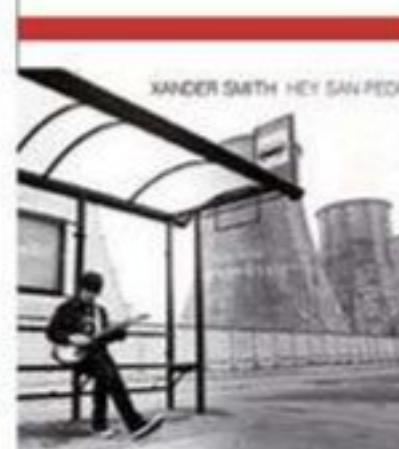
Ronnie Lane's old band pay homage...

When Plonk's old chums reformed a couple of years ago to honour his memory, they sensibly

6/10

made no attempt to find a new frontman. Instead, his former colleagues take it in turns to step up to the mic as they deliver amiable versions of Lane's freewheeling songs – a couple from the Faces, a brace from the album he made with Pete Townshend [1977's *Rough Mix*] and the rest from Slim Chance's first, frolicking mid-'70s incarnation. It's beautifully played and clearly delivered with much love. But it's the songs themselves that are the main attraction, and you can only agree with the poignant small print of the album credits: "Thanks to Ronnie Lane".

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



XANDER SMITH

Hey San Pedro

SONG & DANCE

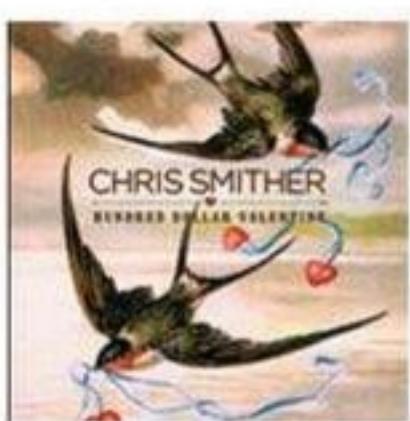
Unlikely connection: a Herb Alpert-mentored indie-folk artist

The leader of LA band Run Run Run has designed his first solo LP

7/10

from the blueprint drawn up by Elliott Smith (no relation): aching songs of loss and longing put across with sparing precision by delicately fingerpicked guitar and fragile double-tracked vocals. Smith has a knack for capturing bedroom solitude with this simple recipe, and his arching chorus hooks, embellished by fluttering multitracked harmonies cut through the existential gloom of laments like "Down", "Moving On" and "Lost Along The Way". Providing a welcome lift are the shimmering "Sunday Afternoon" and a spiky cover of Tegan And Sara's "Walking With A Ghost".

BUD SCOPPA



CHRIS SMITHER

Hundred Dollar Valentine

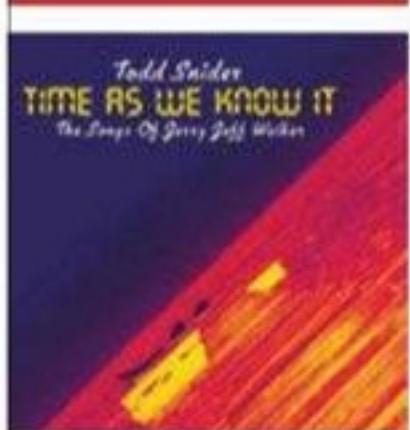
SIGNATURE SOUNDS

Soul-searching country/blues from journeyman-turned-master of the genre

With his dark, gravelly baritone, nimble fingerpicking and ramblingly magnetic songs that traipse through tangles of American roots – sparkling acoustic blues, Dylan-esque folk, populist country – Chris Smither is pure throwback. ...*Valentine*, his 12th studio effort in 40-plus-years, is typically sturdy – piquant observation and low-key philosophy played against an impeccable musical backdrop. The lovelorn Lightnin' Hopkins-style title track is precious (Gillian Welch should cover); the flashing imagery of "What They Say" shines, and the haunting, otherworldly "All We Need To Know", are even better.

LUKE TORN

8/10



TODD SNIDER

Time As We Know It: The Songs Of Jerry Jeff Walker

AIMLESS

Alt.country troubadour tips his battered hat

It was a teenage night out to see Jerry Jeff Walker that set Snider on his path, demonstrating that one could be both a country singer and a liberal iconoclast. Snider repays the debt with an affectionate collection of Walker's songs, produced by Don Was and abetted by passing friends, including Kix Brooks, Elizabeth Cook and Amy LaVere. This pick-up band have grinning knockabout fun with the likes of "Moon Child" and "Pissin' In The Wind", but Snider's tribute rings truest at its most reflective. Walker's most famous song, "Mr Bojangles", has been sung by many: Snider's version makes it sound like it was written for him.

ANDREW MUELLER

8/10



SNOWGOOSE

Harmony Springs

OPEN HEARTH

Fair-to-middling convention for C86 sidemen

The Bellshill class of '86's appetite for sunshine pop is almost as fearsome as their mania for collaboration; approximately eight people in Glasgow have never been in a band with anyone from The Soup Dragons or Teenage Fanclub. Bell-voiced singer Anna Sheard's decision to team up with Jim McCulloch, Raymond McGinley and Dave McGowan in Snowgoose has reduced that total to seven. Pentangle via *Pebble Mill*, *Harmony Springs* meanders pleasantly between the trad-arr Trembling Bells of "Sycamore" and the Fifth-Dimension Sandy Denny of the title track. Not as pretty as Gerard Love's *Lightships* record, but some groovy little numbers nonetheless.

6/10

JIM WIRTH



THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES

Throw It To The Universe

PARLOPHONE

10/10

Ladies and gentlemen, the greatest rock and roll band in the world... There really was, and never will be anything like them. Formed from the remains of Swedish punks Union Carbide Productions, and loved by Noel Gallagher (Oasis' "Lyla" is a musical nod to them), TSOOL wrote songs from the lost Stones album between *Satanic Majesties* and *Beggars Banquet*. They claim this is their last album, and it's magnificent. The title track and "If Nothing Lasts Forever" are wide-eyed guitar monoliths while "You Are The Beginning" and "Shine On (There's Another Day After Tomorrow)" are anthems of melancholy joy from the great terrace in the sky. A brilliant album.

DAVID QUANTICK



SPACE-GHOSTPURRP

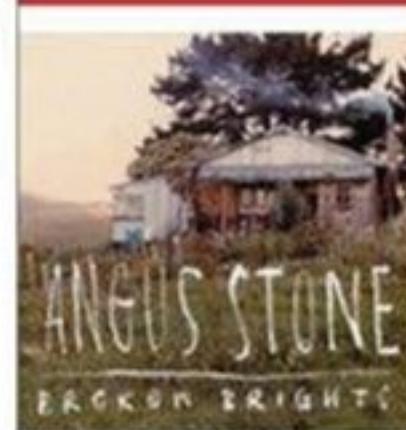
Mysterious Phonk: Chronicles Of SpaceGhostPurrp

4AD

7/10

aghast at 4AD's first foray into the uncouth world of US rap will no doubt be up in arms at the casual misogyny and brinkmanship banter trotted out by Florida producer and MC SpaceGhostPurrp, an affiliate of A\$AP Rocky's mob. Delve deeper into 21-year-old Muney Jordan's murky milieu, however, beyond the smut of "Suck A Dick" and "Grind On Me", and you encounter a nifty wordsmith (he rhymes top-notch with butterscotch) whose drawled delivery complements the menace of his woozy productions – "Osiris Of The East" and "Bringing The Phonk" a blend of early Neptunes and Three 6 Mafia.

PIERS MARTIN



ANGUS STONE

Broken Brights

DESERT HARVEST

Sydney-born Stone sibling strikes out on his own

After six long years of touring, and nearly a million records

sold alongside his sister Julia, Angus Stone releases his first solo LP under his own name (in 2009 he released *Smoking Gun* under the moniker Lady Of The Sunshine). One's enjoyment of this record will largely depend on the ability to endure a man doing an uncanny impersonation of a youthful Bob Dylan. Should you overcome this obstacle there's much to enjoy in this laidback work in which pretty folk ditties sit comfortably alongside more adventurous tracks veering into desert rock ("The Blue Door"), symphonic rock ("It Was Blue") and subtle shades of Afro-pop ("Be What You Be").

FIONA STURGES



SYD ARTHUR

On An On

DAWN CHORUS

More Frank than Syd, actually

Usually described as the sons and heirs of the renowned Canterbury musicians from '60s

7/10

underground bands Soft Machine and Caravan, Syd Arthur are indeed Canterbury based and have certainly adopted the same penchant for musical complexity. True enough, but with strong compositional ideas and a sound hinged around guitar and, more dominantly, violin (played by Raven Bush, Kate's nephew), Syd Arthur more closely resemble King Crimson or *Hot Rats* period Frank Zappa. Guitarist Liam Magill's pop/soul vocals are occasionally at odds with the free-ranging riffing which is best heard on the album's closer "Paradise Lost", a career piece performed live in the studio.

MICK HOUGHTON



DIRTY PROJECTORS

Swing Lo Magellan

DOMINO

Brooklyn brainiacs go back to basics? Not quite, says Sam Richards



8/10

Timbaland and Mahlerian wind writing" – you always wondered what Dirty Projectors would sound like once they shed the conceptual baggage and went back to basics.

And here's the answer, kind of. For six months last year, Longstreth sequestered himself away in an abandoned house in rural Delaware County to write the songs for this sixth Dirty Projectors album. Making the time-honoured pilgrimage upstate seems to have mellowed his approach. Previously, his music has rejected, even mocked the idea of heritage rock; on *Swing Lo Magellan* you can hear whole clumps of Townshend riffage and McCartney melody floating to the surface. That doesn't mean it's an easy listen. The album

FOR ALL THEIR grand designs – the glitch operas, the whalesong cycles, the earnest attempts, as bandleader Dave Longstreth puts it, to "construct some sort of dialogue between West African guitar music and US hardcore, or between mid-2000s

remains magnificently wordy – "this next one's a little ditty called 'Impregnable Question!'" – and Longstreth's wriggling vocal lines and counter-intuitive, clip-clopping rhythms still require some getting used to. But once you've tuned into the DPs' frequency, you're rewarded with a relentlessly novel album that's generous with its wisdom and often exhilarating in its execution.

When those blinding harmonies burst out of nowhere, you're reminded that this band always set out to excite rather than confound or confuse. "Dance For You" is particularly irresistible, Longstreth singing gaily of boogying down "gargoyle streets" hoping to "feel the breath of a force I cannot explain". Amber Coffman's lead vocal turn on "The Socialites" isn't quite as arresting as her Aaliyah tribute "Stillness Is The Move", but the understated arrangement highlights a ravishing melody.

Overall, *Swing Lo Magellan* is closer in spirit to the choral campfire vibe of David Byrne collaboration "Knotty Pine" than much of predecessor *Bitte Orca*. Its freshness can be attributed to

Q&A

Dave Longstreth



How much did the abandoned house where you wrote and recorded *Swing...* influence the atmosphere of the record?

Turns out an unfinished room is a pretty nice place to make stuff that doesn't exist yet. But I would not overplay this narrative of the house and the rural upstate. Basically, New York is an amazing place to absorb music and culture, but I don't think it's ever been a good place for writing music – unless it's angular, claustrophobic dissonance you're after.

Was it a new approach for you to start writing individual songs without any grand plan?

It was. When you're writing a story, like *The Getty Address*, the writing is done when the story's done. This time, it was much more open. It felt like, "I'm going to open this window and just collect these leaves as they blow off the tree."

Why did you choose not to overdub or redo all the little imperfections?

Perfection is such an over-esteemed virtue right now. I can understand it in the Renaissance when it was hard, but a lot of music at the moment has got this cheap, digital perfection to it. I felt that showing a bit of rawness or vulnerability made these songs feel more true to themselves. A lot of the vocals are the first time I ever sang them.

INTERVIEW: SAM RICHARDS

a 'first take best take' recording policy that lends each song a remarkable immediacy. Plenty of bands boast about "leaving in the mistakes", as if a bit of sloppy guitar work will somehow transform their mediocre din into something raw and vital. But when you hear Dirty Projectors fluff a cue or miss a beat, it genuinely feels as if they're too wrapped up in the songs to care.

Conversely, the lyrics leave nothing to chance. For the first time, Longstreth's words offer real value, rather than just verbose decoration – even if his cautionary, quasi-Biblical tales feel like they're sometimes working at odds with the playful optimism of the music.

"Offspring Are Blank" unfolds like a sinister creation myth, in which the "marriage of eagle and snake" leads to "shadows that lengthen from the sky to the ground/And a silence that can swallow sound". "Gun Has No Trigger" is a solemn fable about a Philistine getting their comeuppance. Meanwhile, the figure of 16th-Century circumnavigator Ferdinand Magellan is invoked on the title track as a symbol of our yearning to venture off the map in lives that often feel tediously pre-ordained.

Of course, there's the ever-present danger that Longstreth's intellectual swaggering will come across to many as smug and superior. For an album he intended to be more direct and personal, it's only on the closing track – a gloriously punch-drunk ballad called "Irresponsible Tune" – that he really comes close to opening up.

"With our songs, we are outlaws/With our songs, we're alone," he notes, glumly acknowledging his outsider status in a "world crooked, fucked up and wrong". Without music, Longstreth concludes, "life is pointless, harsh and long". For that reason, we should be grateful that he continues to boogie down gargoyle streets to his own strange, alluring, irresponsible tune.

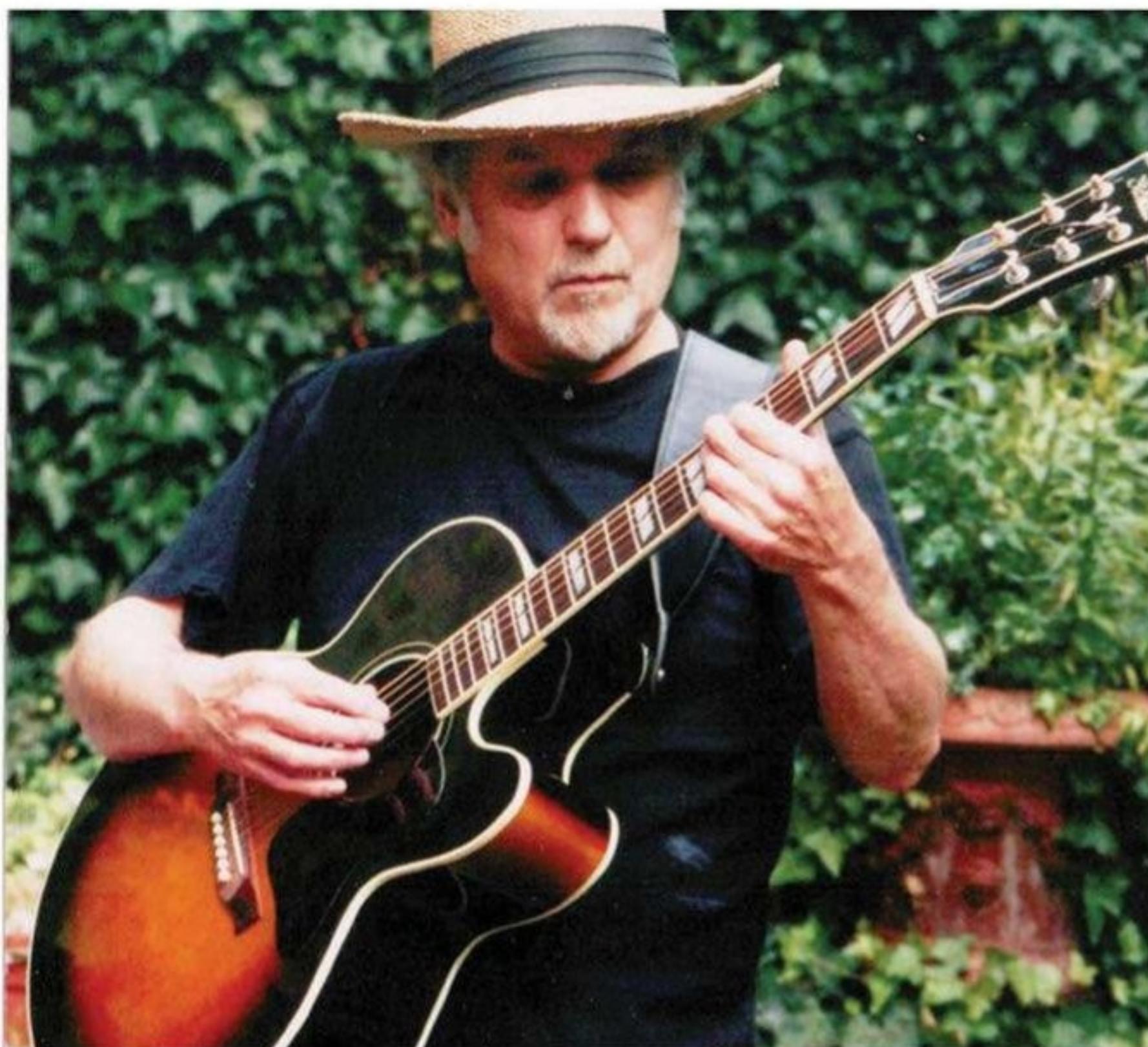
SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by:

Dave Longstreth
Personnel: Dave Longstreth, Amber Coffman, Nat Baldwin, Brian McOmber, Haley Dekle, and feat. Rob Moose (violin), Nadira Sirota (viola), Clarice Jensen (cello), Alex Sopp (flutes), Hideaki Aomori (clarinets, sax), CJ Camerieri (trumpet, horn)

Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



DUFFY POWER

Tigers

DUSK FIRE

8/10

New album from rocker's past 10 years of recording

Remarkably, *Tigers* is Duffy Power's first new LP in 40 years, his smoky, sorrowful voice as imperious as ever. From the 1963 start of his career, this was a voice to rival contemporaries such as Chris Farlowe and Long John Baldry, but denied even their one-hit-wonder success. Power began as one of Larry Parnes' boyish

'50s rockers, beside Johnny Gentle and co, Parnes typically renaming him after Tyrone Power. After six featherweight singles for Fontana, Power ditched Parnes and embraced London's jazz and blues scene. He recorded only the second cover of a song by Parlophone labelmates Lennon and McCartney, "I Saw Her Standing There", utilising the Graham Bond Quartet. Initially rejected by The Beatles as too jazzy, it flopped anyway, alongside singles he made with The Paramounts and The Fentones. Undeterred, Power threw in his lot with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated and appears on *Red Hot From Alex, Sky High and Blues Incorporated*. Highly

prolific between 1965 and '67, Power recorded informal sessions with John McLaughlin, Jack Bruce and the pre-Pentangle Danny Thompson and Terry Cox. These were eventually released on Transatlantic in 1971, titled *Innovations*, Power's debut.

Confusingly, the unauthorised Duffy Power suddenly turned up on *Spark*, an LP that dredged up solo folk-blues demos recorded by Donovan's manager Peter Eden. In his career, Duffy Power has suffered considerable time dislocation between recording his material and actually seeing it released. Only Power's self-titled 1973 album on the GSF label (a project that involved Andrew Oldham), was released at the time the material was recorded. The 1970 sessions for a CBS album (feat. Argent) went unreleased until 2007. It was one of a slew of welcome reissues mopping up Power's rare and lost work (notably "Leapers And Sleepers" and "Vampers And Champers") until at long last, the incomparable Power is back with an album he has sanctioned. Though mostly his own soul-searching compositions, *Tigers* memorably features Power's improbable take on the Doris Day belter "Secret Love" – a reminder of his first Parlophone single from February 1963, a breath-taking version of "It Ain't Necessarily So".

MICK HOUGHTON

I'M YOUR FAN

"Duffy Power had an amazing voice and he refused to play ball or give it away... I couldn't resist contact with this man and his voice."

ANDREW OLDHAM



TWIN SHADOW

Confess

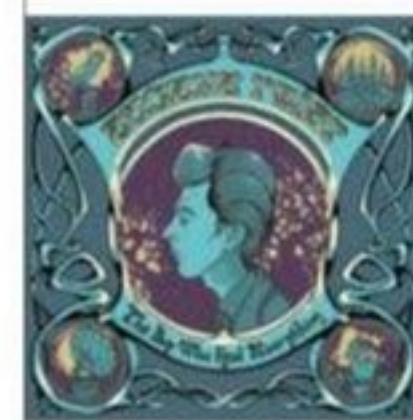
4AD

More lush Lynch-pop from Brooklyn

Released at the tail-end of 2010, George Lewis Jr aka Twin Shadow's debut album *Forget*

initially seemed a more accomplished take on customary chillwave '80s nostalgia, but gradually revealed itself as an authentically impressive pop artefact in itself. *Confess* is if anything even more polished, conjuring a sparkling dreampop: "Golden Light" feels like Prince plunged into the Cocteaus' echo chamber, while "You Call Me On" suggests AR Kane jamming on Don Henley's "Boys Of Summer". A couple of tracks, including lead single "Five Seconds", too blatantly play for the soundtrack of some future Ryan Gosling vehicle, but *Confess* is largely an impeccable sequel to an immaculate debut.

STEPHEN TROUSSE



EUGENE TWIST

The Boy Who Had Everything

TOUGH ACT

Mature classicism from gifted Glaswegian

Clearly wiser than his years, 25-year-old

Eugene Twist has already won acclaim in Scotland, and though his debut may be short – eight songs in 30 minutes – it provides evidence of an intriguing talent. "If There's Love Where I'm Going" combines Calexico with sax squeals; "Gauguin"'s playful, carefully constructed arrangements are as timeless as Ed Harcourt's or Jens Lekman's, while "Talk Of Roses" night-time lament is interrupted by guitars borrowed from The Bad Seeds. It's the heartfelt closer, "Actress On A Mattress", that clinches the deal, however, its barebones acoustics haunted by ghostly saws and distant pedal steel.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



ULTRAVOX

Brilliant

EMI

Electro-classical quartet revisit New Romantic roots

Highly successful synth-rock pioneers who bowed out at Live Aid,

the classic early-'80s Ultravox lineup reunited for a well-received comeback tour in 2009. Always out of step with the chilly Cold War minimalism of post-punk, their baroque mini-symphonies owed more to Liszt or Bartók than Kraftwerk. This first new album in 28 years picks up where they left off – in a cinematic Old European demi-monde of grand boulevards, sweeping choruses and cod-classical keyboard fanfares. Midge Ure's portentous bellow remains as preposterous as ever, but there is still a glorious melodrama about Kate-Bush-goes-Krautrock anthems like "Live Again" and "Remembering".

STEPHEN DALTON



THE VERY BEST MTMTMK

MOSHI MOSHI

Eclectic sounds from modern Africa

On their 2009 debut, *Warm Heart Of Africa*, Malawian vocalist Esau Mwamwaya and

Swedish producer Johan Hugo created a very modern synthesis of '80s Afrobeat, rap, electro, dub and Auto-Tuned chart pop. The follow-up is similarly energetic and eclectic, pumping with unbridled positivity. "Adani" surfs huge rave-y waves to heart-bursting effect, while "Kondaine" is a squelchy, joyous rush. Cameos are legion. Experimental raga "Bantu" finds room for both Amadou & Mariam and Baaba Maal, and K'naan appears on "We OK", a big grin of pan-African unity which, like much of the album, is sufficiently euphoric to rise above its rather banal bottom line.

GRAEME THOMSON

7/10



THE VIEW

Cheeky For A Reason

COOKING VINYL

Scottish scamps spice up slice-of-life salvos on fourth album

In the five years since their No 1 debut *Hats Off* to *The Buskers*, Kyle Falconer's band have faced diminishing commercial returns. Here Kings Of Leon associate Angelo Petraglia lends ballast to three songs and a safe production from Mike Crossey (Razorlight, Foals) loads Falconer's punk spiky bouquets with Glitter stumps and terrace chants ("Bullet"). It's the endearing closer, the melodically sweet "Tacky Tattoo" that's the highlight, though. *Cheeky For A Reason* presents a moderately successful overhaul, but the often whimsical worldview at the core of these songs is a reminder that underdog charm has an ultimately limited appeal.

GAVIN MARTIN

6/10



DAVID WARD

The Arrival

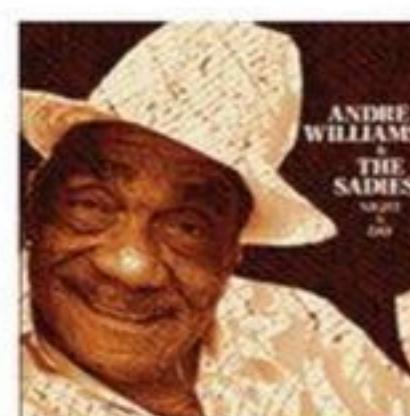
DAVID WARD MUSIC

Deluxe folk-pop from Canuck vocal acrobat

Imagine Jeff Buckley's untethered falsetto blended with Stevie Wonder's warm, grainy tenor. Vancouver-based singer-songwriter and theatre school graduate David Ward has mastered both, plus all points between. Divided into three sections, *The Arrival* mostly consists of airy acoustic arrangements peppered with tricksy beat-skipping time signatures, from the silky Laurel Canyon folk-pop cascade of "No More Troubles Under The Sun" to the easy-breezy sunshine-soul of "Sweet Girl". The Wonder homages become slightly too brazen during the closing suite of burbling lounge-jazz numbers, but when he pushes beyond busker-pop pastiche, Ward is clearly a versatile and ambitious talent.

STEPHEN DALTON

6/10



ANDRE WILLIAMS & THE SADIES

Night & Day

YEP ROC

Winning union of Detroit soul ledge and Canadian roots boys

Now into his 76th year,

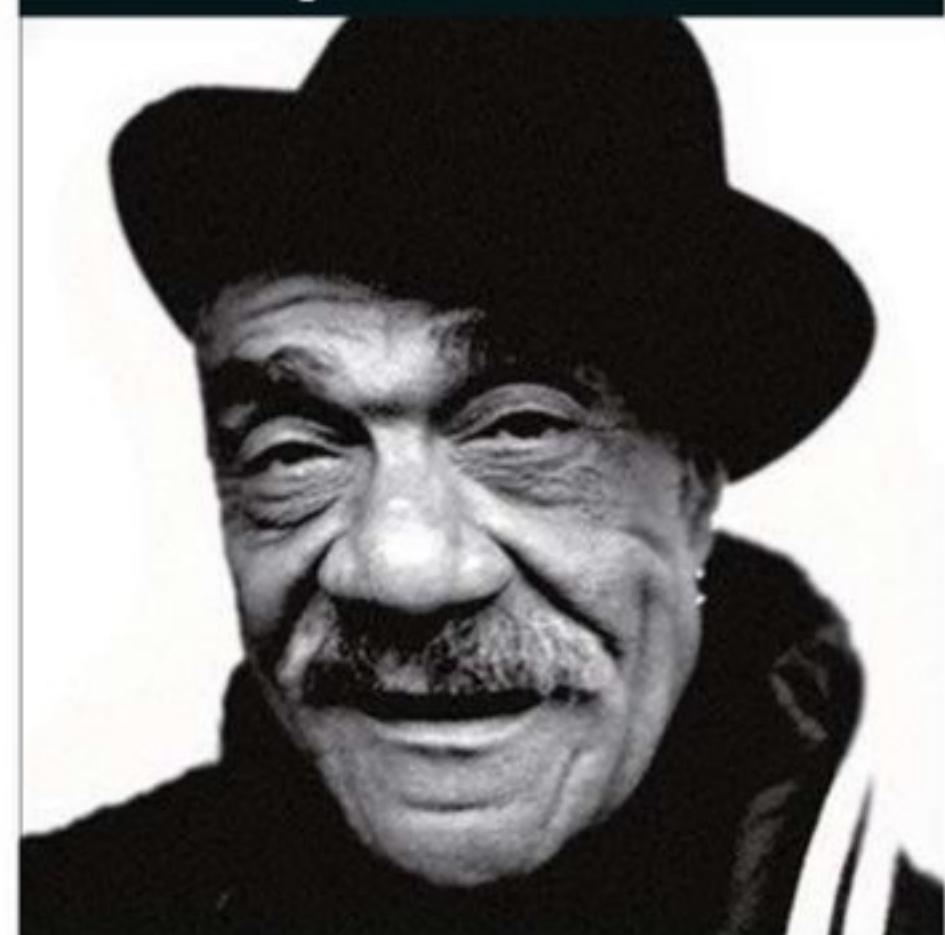
Williams has a reputation as a man of dangerous appetites, his boozing and drugging landing him in plenty of bother with the law down the years. This wholly unexpected treat, initially begun with The Sadies in 2008, finds him newly clean and sober and in imperious fettle. Special guests abound – Jon Spencer, Kelly Hogan, the Mekons duo of Sally Timms and Jon Langford – though it's the gravitational pull of Williams' great jowly voice that remains the defining feature of an often vitriolic set of songs that veer between snake-hipped R'n'B and blasted soul'n'roll.

ROB HUGHES

8/10

REVELATIONS

The Andre Williams guide to surviving in rock'n'roll



► Andre Williams' reputation as R'n'B sleaze king was shaped by late '50s minor classics like "Shake A Tail Feather", "Jail Bait" and "Bacon Fat". The latter was covered by The Cramps, with Lux Interior proclaiming that Williams "makes Little Richard sound like Pat Boone".

He landed jobs at Motown and Chess, but by the time he produced Ike Turner in the '70s, he'd sunk into serious cocaine addiction. "It was fun, but the wrong kind of fun," he says today. "We both had bad habits, it was like pouring gasoline on top of a fire."

Williams spent much of the next two decades as a boozer and junkie, spending several years homeless in Chicago. There were spells in prison, too, until his career was revived in the '90s by collaborations with The Dirtbombs, Jon Spencer and others. Sessions for his latest album with The Sadies, *Night & Day*, began in 2008 when Williams was still drinking and drugging, but ended with him clean and newly sober. Now 75, he likens his new life to "hitting a home run on two strikes. I guess a lot of it's down to luck, I just decided to quit the things I was doing. My advice to others? If they just took a chance, they'd find out there's a better way to live. Life is so good now that it's scary!"

ROB HUGHES



JAKE WILSON

All's Well

JAKE WILSON MUSIC

Excellent folky tribute to ice-cold explorer Captain Scott

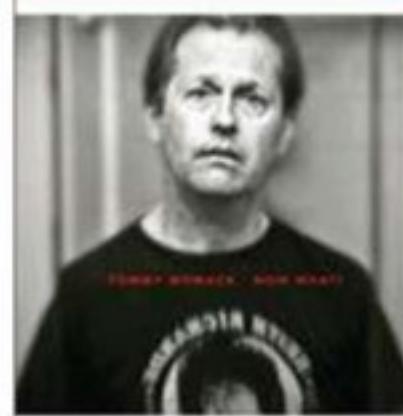
Jake Wilson's self-

recorded debut is a

thoughtful tribute to the five British explorers who perished in the South Pole on Captain Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition in 1912. Set against a folky backdrop of acoustic guitar and vocals reminiscent of early John Fahey but with a tinge of Early Modern classical, the focus is squarely on the lyrics, with five songs, each dedicated to a different man. The pick is the title track, detailing the thoughts of Edward Wilson, while "Black Was The Flag" is a contemplative, moving tribute to Scott himself. An unusual album, beautifully packaged with photographs from the expedition.

PETER WATTS

7/10



TOMMY WOMACK

Now What!

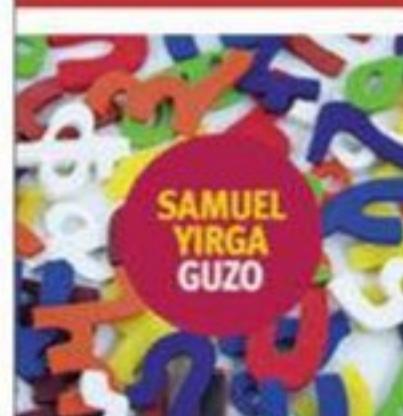
CEDAR CREEK

Midlife crisis exposé, part two: Nashville enfant terrible's first disc in five years

7/10

Like John Prine or James McMurtry gone all nutty, ex-punk-rocker Womack ('80s/'90s outfit Government Cheese) explodes the country/folk-singer template with a mix of the funny, poignant, blunt and sardonic. It's a 21st-Century lost highway here – emotional, financial, sexual desperation awaiting around every corner. *Now What!* doesn't quite rival his 2007 gem *There, I Said It!* as a portrait of the going-nowhere-fast fortysomething blue-collar schmoe, but hits its share of frayed nerves anyway, not least in his fine blues "I'm Too Old To Feel That Way Right Now": "All anyone can do is carry on," he sings wearily. Indeed...

LUKE TORN



SAMUEL YIRGA

Guzo

REAL WORLD

Impressive debut from Ethio-jazz pianist

Twentysomething Yirga is a man on a

mission – to become

Ethiopia's greatest

pianist. He's surely halfway there. The best tracks here align him convincingly with the rediscovered 'Ethio Jazz' of the 1960s – "Twista", with its serpentine melody and "Abet Abet" with its funky one-string fiddle, both entice. Yirga's experiences with fusion ensemble Dub Colossus – the group's architect, Nick Page, produces – come to the fore on "My Head" and a routine cover of Rotary Connection's "I Am The Black Gold Of The Sun". Yirga wears his influences (Herbie Hancock especially) too obviously on the introspective solo pieces, but these are early days.

NEIL SPENCER

7/10



THE BEAT

2 CD + DVD digipak sets



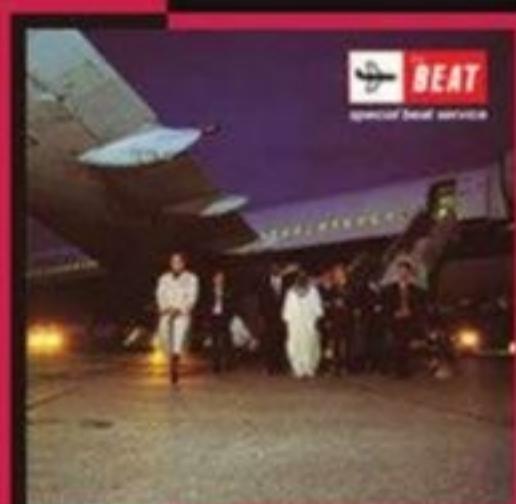
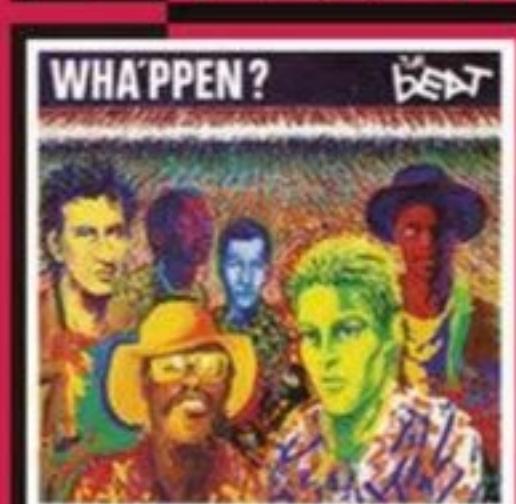
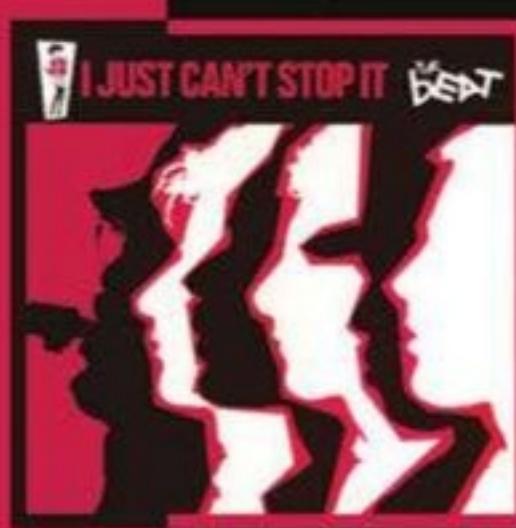
The booklets feature **individual notes especially written by Rhoda Dakar of The Bodysnatchers** along with the **lyrics and photos, memorabilia and ephemera from the band's own collection**.

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Special Beat Service

- **26 bonus tracks**, including seven previously unreleased BBC radio sessions
- **DVD** features two promo videos, two TOTP appearances, two songs from OTT and three songs and an interview from an outdoor concert, broadcast on The Tube.
- "Save It For Later", "Jeanette", "I Confess", "Can't Get Used To Losing You", "Ackee 1-2-3"



TWIN SHADOW
CONFESS
THE NEW ALBUM 9TH JULY

4AD

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SCORING: THE ORIGINAL ALBUM

10 Masterpiece

1 Poor!

SCORING: EXTRA MATERIAL

10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrapings

Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS

Doggone definitive:
Blur at Walthamstow's
greyhound racing
stadium in 1994

PAUL POSTLE

TRACKLIST

- DISC 1 LEISURE (Remastered)
- DISC 2 LEISURE (Bonus material; associated B-sides and Fan Club Single)
- DISC 3 MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH (Remastered)
- DISC 4 MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH (Bonus material; associated B-sides)
- DISC 5 PARKLIFE (Remastered)
- DISC 6 PARKLIFE (Bonus material; associated B-sides, unreleased acoustic session)
- DISC 7 THE GREAT ESCAPE (Remastered)
- DISC 8 THE GREAT ESCAPE (Bonus material; associated B-Sides incl. Live At Mile End and Live At The Budokan)
- DISC 9 BLUR (Remastered)
- DISC 10 BLUR (Bonus material, associated B-sides incl. live acoustic session and Live In Utrecht)
- DISC 11 13 (Remastered)
- DISC 12 13 (Bonus material; associated B-sides incl. remixes and demos)
- DISC 13 THINK TANK (Remastered)
- DISC 14 THINK TANK (Bonus material; associated B-sides, remixes, alternate version, fan club single, demo and unreleased XFM session)

BLUR

Blur 21

PARLOPHONE

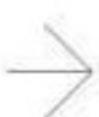
Holding on for tomorrow... The definitive British '90s band unveil their 21-disc boxset. By David Cavanagh

9/10

BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT. It's got dancing dogs, xylophonists, gymnastic troupes, puppeteers.

It's got a band from Colchester with shoegaze haircuts and a drama student singer. But critics in 1992 find Blur shallow and their new single, "Popscene", isn't selling. Tonight they're in Plymouth as a support band on The Jesus And Mary Chain's Rollercoaster tour. In the hotel bar, someone's playing piano. Classical repertoire. Then some Brecht-Weill. Then moody jazz. This guy knows his stuff. Finally, Damon Albarn closes the piano lid and wanders over to rejoin his bandmates. What a dark horse he suddenly seems.

Albarn's hidden depths were Blur's passport to vindication and longevity. Two years later, they celebrated their first No 1 album (*Parklife*) and chart-toppers they remained, whether producing music of heartbroken desolation (13) or venturing into a Moroccan heatwave (*Think Tank*). Hearing Blur tear up their manual and repeatedly reinvent themselves on this 21-disc boxset, it's tempting to wonder if a more diverse collection of songs has ever been released in such a format before. The genre that made them famous was Britpop – conceived by Albarn in a unilateral act of artistic defiance, according to Alex James – but the deeper we delve into *Blur 21*, with its bundles of B-sides



TRACKLIST (Continued)

DISC 15 RARITIES (Seymour & Leisure)

- 1 Dizzy (Seymour Rehearsal & Demo)
- 2 Mixed Up (Seymour Rehearsal & Demo)
- 3 Birthday (Seymour Demo)
- 4 Sing (To Me) (Sing Demo) (Fan Club Single)
- 5 Fool (Seymour Four-Track Demo)
- 6 She's So High (Seymour Rehearsal)
- 7 Won't Do It (Demo) (Fan Club Single)
- 8 I Know (Falconer Studio Demo)
- 9 Repetition (Falconer Studio Demo)
- 10 High Cool (7" Master)
- 11 Always (I'm Fine Early Version)
- 12 Come Together (Demo) (Fan Club Single)
- 13 I'm All Over (Demo)
- 14 Wear Me Down (Demo)

DISC 16 RARITIES 2 (Modern Life Is Rubbish)

- 1 I Love Her (Alt Version)
- 2 Popscene (1991 Demo)
- 3 Beached Whale (Four-Track Demo)
- 4 Death Of A Party (Demo) (Fan Club Single)
- 5 Pap Pop (Four-Track Demo)
- 6 Pressure On Julian (Demo)
- 7 Colin Zeal (Demo)
- 8 Sunday Sunday (Demo)
- 9 Never Clever
- 10 Advert (Demo)
- 11 Star Shaped (Demo)
- 12 She Don't Mind (Blue Jeans Demo)
- 13 Coping (Andy Partridge Version)
- 14 Sunday Sleep (Sunday Sunday Andy Partridge version)
- 15 7 Days (Andy Partridge Version)
- 16 Kazoo (Turn It Up Early Version)
- 17 The Wassailing Song
(The 7" Giveaway at Hibernian Club, Fulham)
- 18 When The Cows Come Home (Demo)
- 19 For Tomorrow (Mix 1- Early Demo)
- 20 Magpie (Early Demo)

DISC 17 RARITIES 3 (Parklife & The Great Escape)

- 1 Parklife (Demo)
- 2 Clover Over Dover (Demo)
- 3 Jubilee (Demo)
- 4 One A Minute (One Born Every Minute Demo)
- 5 Badhead (Demo)
- 6 Far Out (Electric Version)
- 7 The Debt Collector (Demo)
- 8 Trouble In The Message Centre (Demo)
- 9 Rednecks (Take 1)
- 10 Rednecks (Take 2)
- 11 Alex's Song (Demo)
- 12 Cross Channel Love (Home Demo)
- 13 Ernold Same (Demo)
- 14 Saturday Morning (Demo)
- 15 Hope You Find Your Suburb
(AKA Eine Kleine Lift Musik Vocal Demo)
- 16 Rico (Fade Away Demo)
- 17 Bored House Wives (Entertain Me Early Version)

DISC 18 RARITIES 4 (Blur, 13, Best Of & Think Tank)

- 1 Beetlebum (Demo)
- 2 On Your Own (Mario Caldato Jr Mix)
- 3 Woodpigeon Song (Original Full Length)
- 4 Battle (Jam, Mayfair Studios, August 11, 1999)
- 5 Caramel (Ambient Version)
- 6 So You (Alternative Version)
- 7 Squeezebox (Music Is My Radar Alternative Version)
- 8 Jawbone (Black Book Alternative Version)
- 9 "1" (Bill Laswell Session, 2000)
- 10 "3" (Bill Laswell Session, 2000)
- 11 Sir Elton John's Cock
- 12 Avoid The Traffic
- 13 Money Makes Me Crazy (Deepest Darkest Devon Mix)
- 14 Don't Bomb When You're The Bomb
- 15 Nutter
- 16 Piano
- 17 Kissin' Time (with Marianne Faithfull)
- 18 Fool's Day (Record Store Day 7")
- 19 Track tbc

DISC 19/DVD 1 SHOWTIME: Live at Ally Pally, Oct 7, '94

DISC 20/DVD 2 THE SINGLES NIGHT: Live at Wembley, December 11, '99

DISC 21/DVD 3 RARITIES (Live 13 at London Depot, March 10, '99, TV performances and promos)

7" SINGLE Superman (by Seymour) (Recorded Dec 1989 at The Square in Harlow, Essex)

■ PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED

DVDs

- 1 Showtime 2. The Singles Night
- 3 Rarities. Over two hours of previously unreleased footage, with two live shows and a disc of video rarities



DOUBLE CDs

The studio albums, remastered, with bonus material: *Leisure*, *Modern Life Is Rubbish*, *Parklife*, *The Great Escape*, *Blur 13*, *Think Tank*

and dozens of outtakes, the more it becomes apparent that Blur were as experimental and as crafty as any band in British history. Their finest songs, if you stacked them together, would confirm Blur as the definitive '90s model of the classic '60s art-school group. Yet Albarn was just as likely to compose an oompah tune or an eccentric, Swiss-sounding waltz. The admirable thing about Coxon, James and Rowntree was that instead of laughing at these songs and refusing to play them, they would rush to their instruments, widening the parameters of Blur to allow in elements – humour, foolishness, a gleeful adaptability – their indie contemporaries would have haughtily disdained as uncool. Over the course of the boxset, we watch Blur grow into their personalities as if they were the children in Michael Apted's *7 Up* series. On their first album (*Leisure*), they're cute indie sock-puppets with the vocabulary of a Dick & Dora book. On their next (*Modern Life Is Rubbish*), they're acerbic social commentators with bad hangovers and a resentment of America. As young adults, they become cagey and unwilling to reveal too much (*Blur*), but are later reduced to mumbling, shattered victims of failed relationships (*13*) who, as Coxon remarks in the boxset's beautifully presented book, have travelled so far from "strange little stories about funny men on trains" that their music is now "like a blood-letting".

Narratives and perspectives proliferate on the journey. You could piece together a parallel history of the '90s from their B-sides, or spend weeks immersed in their outtakes. There are 65 previously unreleased tracks, spread across four discs, from a rehearsal in 1989 (when they were called Seymour) to a crazed violin-and-melodica dub workout that didn't make it onto *Think Tank* in 2003. The Seymour stuff is frantic, with Albarn warbling in a Morrissey baritone and James slapping his bass strings. The aesthetic is like something out of post-punk Bristol. Pigbag, perhaps, without the horns. It's not a good look. Their future seems unpromising.

But as the outtakes reach 1990, Blur tighten up. Albarn finds his voice. Coxon accumulates his pedals. They devise a sound that embraces pop and leaves just enough room for chaos. They get better and better, tracing a remarkable trajectory from student favourites to household names. The mind-boggling number of discs (18 CDs, three DVDs)

HARDBOUND BOOK

The story of Blur's 21-year career with extensive liner notes based on new interviews with the band and including previously unseen photos



7" SINGLE

"Superman"
(recorded Dec 1989, previously unreleased)

begins to seem justified. Little connections start to do our heads in. A weird plucking noise made by Coxon's guitar on a 1998 "Caramel" outtake sounds familiar, but from where? You skip back through four hours of tracks and eventually find it: he attempted something similar on Seymour's demo of "Birthday" nine years earlier. It's a typical example of Blur making a leap in the dark by revisiting an episode from their past. Coxon, brilliant from day one, was up among the planets on the sessions for *13*, operating in stratospheric Hendrix realms. An unreleased 'jam' of "Battle" has his guitar roaring and vibrating like the first jet aircrafts slamming up against the sound barrier. The noises he produces as he heads towards the savagely distorted climax are simply indescribable. If Albarn was the writer with the vision to steer Blur through each career-threatening chicane (Suede, Nirvana, Oasis), Coxon was the brooding alchemist who made concrete from Albarn's concepts. In a nice illustration of their relationship, Albarn – whose solo demos provide crucial glimpses of the writing process – adds a lead guitar part to his "Beetlebum" demo, obviously intended for Coxon to duplicate when they record it. Coxon ignores it completely.

In the final stretch, after abandoning pop, Blur tunneled deep into a dubby underworld. An improvised prototype of "Music Is My Radar" ("Squeezebox") is as far from gutlords marching through London parks as you can get, with insidious disco loops and aromas of Africa. *Think Tank*, which they made after Coxon's departure in 2002, groped for an ambitious, *Sandinista!*-like omnitude that embraced the rhythms of many continents, as if the only thing that could replace Coxon was everything. A band who'd been marketed as four cartoons on the cover of their Best Of were ultimately slaves to their own chameleonic evolution, nomadically following their music where it led them.

With record labels trying increasingly fiendish ways to repackage the past, *Blur 21* has the sparkle of something quite special. It's a smart, stylish, audio-visual blowout, with three in-concert DVDs and a sumptuous book containing revealing interviews and virtually every photo they ever posed for. But the stunning breadth of the music is the real story. You don't get bands like Blur very often. They deserve great boxsets, and this feels like one.



RARITIES CDs
Demos and more:
1) Seymour & Leisure 2) Modern Life Is Rubbish
3) Parklife & The Great Escape
4) Blur, 13, Best Of & Think Tank)



"Better than therapy..." Blur reunited in 2009

Q&A

Alex James on the Blur bounty – “It’s a big old box of pick ‘n’ mix. A monumental fucking thing...”

This is a really extensive boxset, isn’t it? “It’s a whopper. It was a year in the making. It took enormous amounts of time. We’ve all been through our attics and combed our archives. We’ve found all kinds of crazy stuff that’s triggered avalanches of memories.”

The way you’ve presented it, it has a real sense of honesty. With the outtakes and demos, did the band make a conscious decision to really let people see the unvarnished truth?

“Blimey, no. There’s some stuff that I’m determined will never see the light of day. Our version of ‘Video Killed The Radio Star’ will forever remain a secret, ha ha! But there’s other things, like our very first rehearsal, where we had a cassette running, and that’s the rehearsal where we wrote ‘She’s So High’. It’s lovely to put out a precious memory like that. There was only one cassette of that rehearsal, which Graham went home with, so I’m really glad to finally get my hands on it.”

Blur’s career straddled indie, Britpop, post-rock, African influences... Did you register all the musical changes as they were happening, or were some of them too subtle to notice?

“You’re not aware of it at the time. It’s only now that I can see it. Looking back now, it’s amazing how much ground we covered. But I do think we had a conscious desire to evolve. It’s what kept us going. It’s what makes you feel good about yourself, isn’t it? Creating something new and impressing each other.”

How should Blur fans listen to this boxset? Which discs do you recommend?

“Well, I know they’ve been absolutely desperate for it on Twitter. I don’t know what you’d do with

a boxset like this. I mean, I’ve got the boxset of James Bond films, but I don’t watch them all in a row. Sometimes I’ll have a bit of *Quantum Of Solace*. Sometimes it’s a *Dr No* day. It’s just nice to know that you’ve got them all there. I do think some of our early B-sides are cracking. Some of the 13 outtakes, too. It’s a big old box of pick ‘n’ mix. It’s a monumental fucking thing.”

You admit in the sleeve notes that Blur came close to splitting up several times. What stopped you?

“Sheer force of habit... and the music. There’s something very healing about playing music together. It’s better than therapy. Blur played together for two hours every day, and that’s how we got good. We were young, drunk, exhausted. There was lots of fighting. But it was like a sibling relationship. There was definitely a sort of stability there. I don’t know what it was. I think we just liked each other. We were young and arrogant, but we did all right.”

The boxset does a pretty effective job of confirming Blur as the band of the ‘90s.

“I’m not sure about that. Are we a band of the ‘90s? I know we’re playing a gig this summer [Hyde Park, August 12]. There was so much good music around in the ‘90s, that was the thing. It was an incredible time to be in a band. But now, I don’t know. Bands are like farms. The big ones are getting bigger and the small ones are disappearing.”

“Looking back now, I do think we had a conscious desire to evolve, it’s what kept us going”

Will there be another Blur album?

“I have absolutely no idea at all. It depends what day of the week it is, and who you ask. But we do see a lot of each other and that’s nice. I don’t think anybody really knows if there’ll be another album. I certainly don’t. I’m just the bass player.”

INTERVIEW: DAVID CAVANAGH

Five buried treasures

These are the highs! The best previously unheard selections from the *Blur 21* rarities discs

SHE'S SO HIGH (Disc 15)

Eleven minutes of a 1989 Seymour rehearsal. They’re working on the song that will be Blur’s first single. Damon (raucous vocals), Graham (Robert Fripp-like sustained notes), Alex (slap bass!) and a drum machine. Dave had a proper job in those days.

BEACHED WHALE (Disc 16)

Damon demo from 1992. Written in the ‘hungover’ style of “Peach” and “Blue Jeans”. Needs colouring-in and fleshing-out by Blur, which it never got. Note the foretaste of Parklife’s busy high streets: “The inner-city flora that grows around my feet.”

CROSS CHANNEL LOVE (Disc 17)

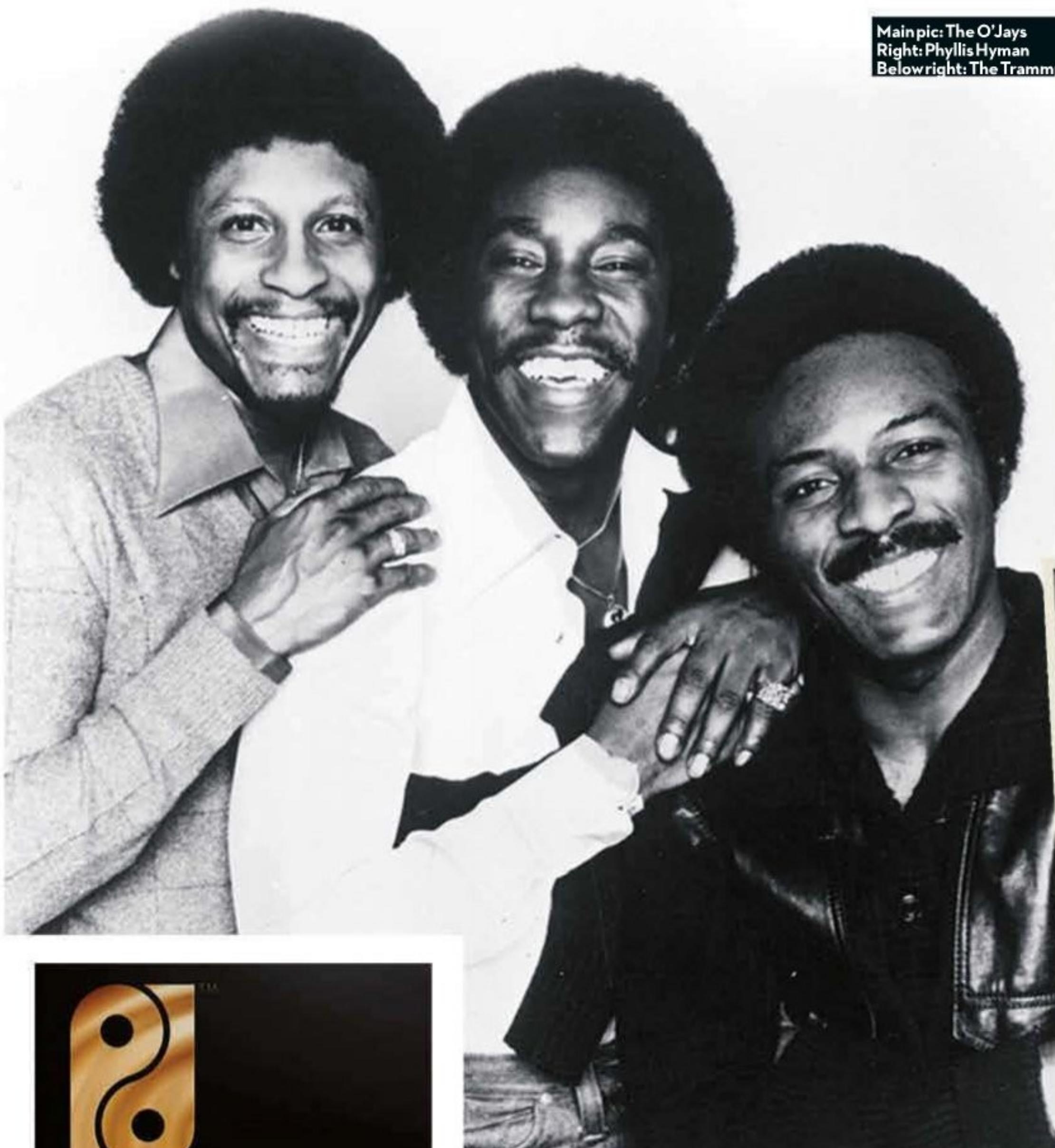
Demoed for *The Great Escape*. Curious staccato vocals tell an odd story about passengers on a ferry terrified they’re going to drown. Imagine a nautical version of Roxy’s “In Every Dream Home A Heartache”.

“I” (Disc 18)

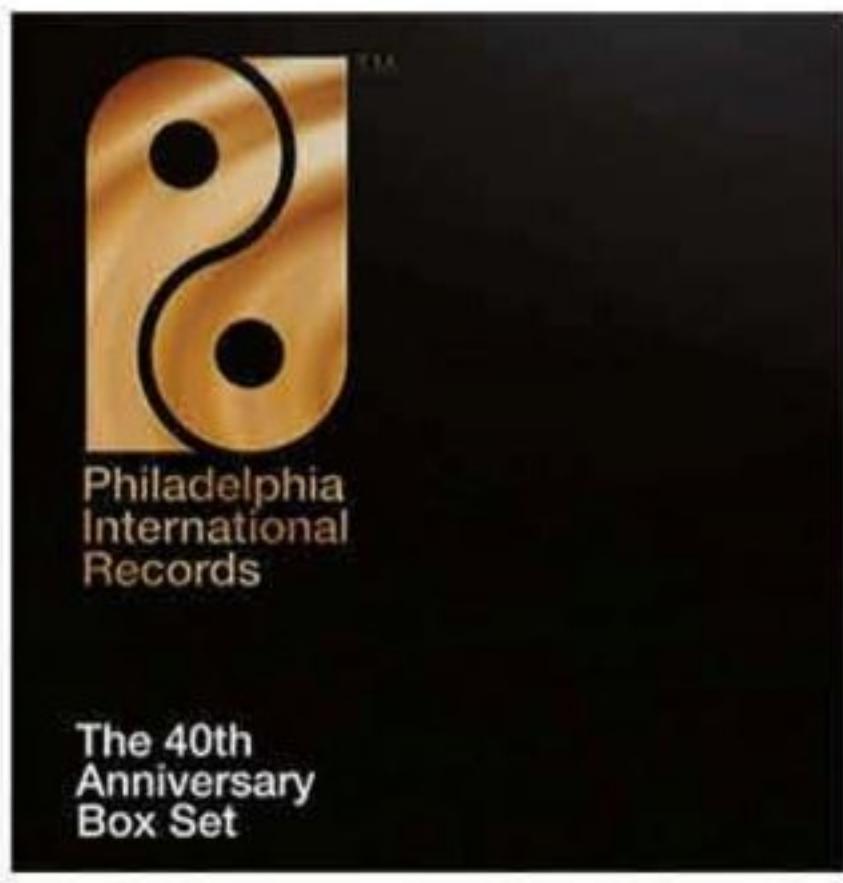
From an unreleased session produced by Bill Laswell in 2000. Tinkling vibraphone, echoes of Beck, then a surprising – almost old-fashioned – return to the bright pop sounds of 1994, which is possibly why Blur consigned it to the vaults.

SIR ELTON JOHN'S COCK (Disc 18)

Excellent outtake from *Think Tank*. Albarn plays the chords to Lennon’s “Imagine” and improvises fuzzy lyrics about the end of the world. A more romantic section begins, slightly suggestive of “The Universal”, but the fun stops abruptly after 84 seconds.



Mainpic: The O'Jays
Right: Phyllis Hyman
Belowright: The Trammps



TRACKLIST

- CD 1 including: The O'Jays, The Intruders, Archie Bell & The Drells
- CD 2 including: Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, MFSB, The Three Degrees
- CD 3 including: The Ebbons, Bobby Bennett, The Ethics, Carolyn Crawford
- CD 4 including: Jean Carn, Anthony White, Bunny Sigler, Instant Funk
- CD 5 including: The Jacksons, Dee Dee Sharp Gamble, Archie Bell & The Drells
- CD 6 including: Teddy Pendergrass, Dexter Wansel, Jerry Butler
- CD 7 including: Leon Huff, Norman Harris, Phyllis Hyman, The Rojas
- CD 8 including: Billy Paul, The Futures, Silk, McFadden & Whitehead
- CD 9 including: Jean Carn, The Jones Girls, The Stylistics, Lou Rawls
- CD 10 including: The Dells, Shirley Jones, Patti LaBelle

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Philadelphia International Records: The 40th Anniversary Box Set

HARMLESS

Sleek, mammoth 10CD box from '70s soul's orchestral kings. By Neil Spencer

8/10

FOR MOST OF the 1970s Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff ruled soul music like twin emperors. They weren't the era's most influential presence – that accolade belongs to James Brown – or the most artistically inspired – for that, squabble about Sly, Marvin, Stevie and Curtis – but in terms of relentless chart success their productions swept all aside.

Using 1960s Motown as their template, Gamble and Huff created a hit factory with an array of acts defined by the 'Sound Of Philadelphia', a woozy orchestral overload which could punch on the dancefloor with The O'Jays' "Love Train", go into sob meltdown on Harold Melvin And The Blue Notes' "If You Don't Know Me By Now", or play sexy sophisticate on Billy Paul's "Me And Mrs

Jones". Along with The Three Degrees' "When Will I See You Again", these and other tunes reached way beyond black America and its devotees to become a global presence. That these creations have never really gone away testifies to a songwriting team comparable to that of Leiber/Stoller or Rodgers/Hammerstein. Like them, Gamble/Huff were products of Tin Pan Alley, working out of Philadelphia's Schubert Building, where they clocked in, wrote, made records with their own group, The Romeos, and hustled for production jobs, landing Dusty Springfield and Laura Nyro among others. In 1972 they founded Philadelphia International Records (PIR).

Their breakthrough was instant with The O'Jays' *Back Stabbers* (1972), still the group's and

Q&A

Gamble and Huff



There's a huge gap between your early productions – 'Northern Soul' to us Brits – and the sound of PIR. What happened?

Gamble: We were evolving fast, but the essential thing was adding the orchestra, the sound of a French horn or a string section, and the rapid development of technology through 2-, 4-, 12- and 24-track consoles.

Huff: We had a great team, and the Romeos became supreme players. We were travelling at the speed of thought, eh Gamble?

G: I marvel at how in the world we did it all.

There were always message songs amid the love tunes – even in a disco number like "Clean

the label's finest hour. It married Eddie Levert's gritty vocals to classy arrangements by Thom Bell, a key player in the PIR team. Writers McFadden and Whitehead were another key part of this, penning many of the album's lyrics, including those to "Love Train", a triumphant, gospel-tinged call for global unity.

After that Gamble and Huff went on what they term "a creative rampage". Spotting that Harold Melvin's drummer, Teddy Pendergrass, was a far better vocalist than Harold himself provided them with a sexy new star, and they fashioned another from 37-year-old local crooner Billy Paul with the adulterous "Me And Mrs Jones", a number that might have been in Sinatra's repertoire a decade before. Much of what PIR produced was amiably bland, including "TSOP", which became the theme tune to US TV's pivotal *Soul Train*, but the formula of fat drums, sweet strings and polished horn parts was a winner, and was easily applied to a roster that included old-timers like The Intruders, Lou Rawls and Jerry Butler, and younger acts like The Jacksons (off Motown without Michael), The Jones Girls and Jean Carn.

As at Motown, PIR's production line inevitably blurred acts' identities, but The O'Jays were always handed strong material, with their *Ship Ahoy* album a powerful commentary on slavery (on the 10-minute title track), greed ("The Love Of Money"),

**Up The Ghetto" by The Philadelphia All Stars...**

G: We wrote to make people dance, to feel but also to think. There was an O'Jays song, "Music Is The Message", but the real message is always love.

Who were your inspirations?

G: James Brown's "Say It Loud – I'm Black And I'm Proud" is the most inspirational song ever.

What is your favourite Philly song, and which did you feel got away?

H: "Love Train".

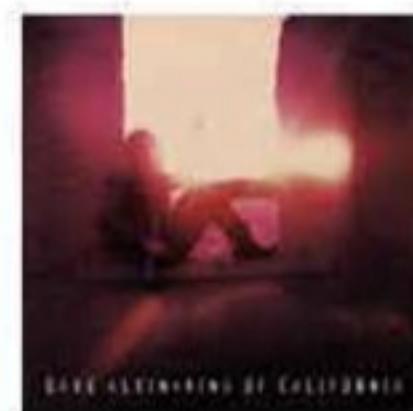
G: Everything is in that record, Huff!

H: Some of our best productions were B-sides – like Jerry Butler's "Brand New Me" which became a hit for Dusty.

You guys call each other by your surnames?

G: I can't ever recall a time I called him Leon or he called me Kenny!

INTERVIEW: NEIL SPENCER



DAVE ALVIN
King Of California
FLOATING WORLD

Double package of mid-'90s gems

Alvin's early solo releases were more subdued than his fiery output with The Blasters, and on 1994's *King Of California* he turned the volume down further. Essentially an unplugged story-so-far collection of reworked previous material, the campfire intimacy of "Every Night About This Time" and "Border Radio" throws a brighter spotlight on Alvin's knack for condensing the incident and character of a novel into three- or four-minute songs. His half-spoken

delivery is perfect for the mournful narration of the likes of "Bus Station", and the stripped-back acoustics give his hitherto unheralded steel guitar playing room to breathe. The live *Interstate City* (1996) finds him in what is considered his natural habitat, a busy boozy bar, in this instance Austin's famed Continental Club. Though amped up, it's more measured and controlled than his youthful beginnings, The Blasters' frenetic "So Long Baby Goodbye" reupholstered as a zydeco shuffle and "Long White Cadillac" stretched out to a nearly eight-minute blues groove. The songs benefit from being liberated from the studio, seemingly feeding off a live audience, never more so than on the witty whirling dervish of "Romeo's Escape" with Alvin channelling Jerry Lee Lewis.

EXTRAS: None.
TERRY STAUNTON

THE BEAT

I Just Can't Stop It
(reissue, 1980)

EDSEL

**Pick of the reissues by 2-Tone-era titans**

The Beat's three albums were bashed out in

successive years at the beginning of the 1980s. Like the works of their peers – The Specials, Madness, The Selecter – they've held up well, not least because the ska bands of the period piously disdained '80s production. *I Just Can't Stop It* was a stunning debut, both a reverent acknowledgement of its roots (they covered Prince Buster's "Rough Rider") and a genial refusal to be bound by genre (the other cover was a lovely version of Andy Williams' "Can't Get Used To Losing You"). The Beat's own songs were unembarrassed by the comparison, especially the breathy, paranoid "Mirror In The Bathroom" and the exquisite "Best Friend", twisting on a riff of Johnny Marr-ish prettiness. Even the obviously overtaken-by-events "Stand Down Margaret" remains potent, an enduring insert-own-bogeyman-here protest song.

EXTRAS: All three albums are reissued this month, packaged with bonus discs of alternate versions, remixes and radio sessions. The *I Just Can't Stop It* disc includes, crucially, both sides of The Beat's 1979 debut single: the anthemic "Ranking Full Stop", and a vivacious version of Smokey Robinson's "The Tears Of A Clown".

ANDREW MUELLER



PiL

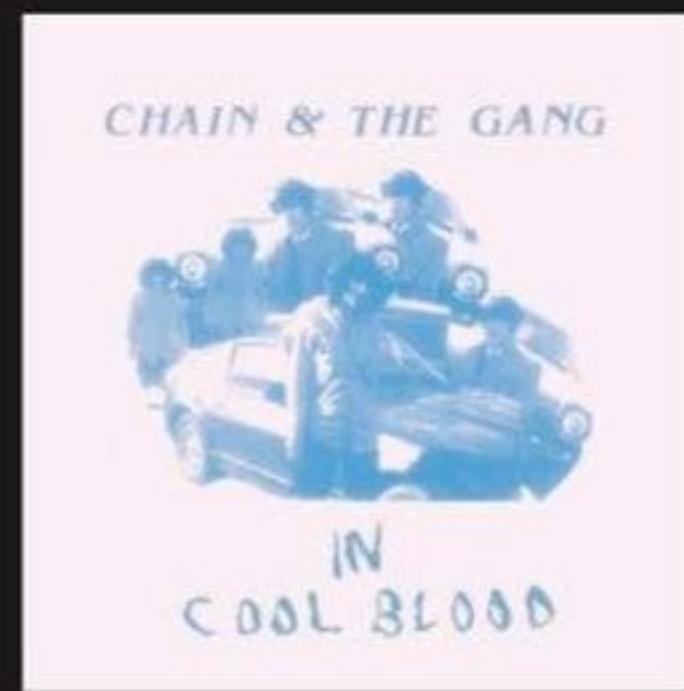
THIS IS PIL

PIL OFFICIAL LTD / CD / LP & LIMITED 2 DISC SET INC DVD
'This Is PiL' is the first Public Image Ltd studio album in 20 years. The self-funded 12 track album is released May 28th on their own 'PiL Official' label.

BEAK>

>>
INVADA CD / 2LP

Hot on the heels of his Quakers hip hop project, and the Judge Dredd inspired / Drokk soundtrack collaboration, Geoff Barrow unveils the second Beak> album the krautrock inspired band formed with Billy Fuller and Matt Williams.



CHAIN & THE GANG

IN COOL BLOOD

K RECORDS LP / CD

Rock n' roll to fill a yawning chasm where fun, personality, charm, & content fit in. Their punk spirit is as natural as falling off a log, and emits the pure expression of a feral child with finger paint.



DEAD RAT ORCHESTRA

THE GUGA HUNTERS OF NESS

Critical Heights LP CD

Originally recorded as the soundtrack to the BBC Documentary The Guga Hunters of Ness, DRO's new album uses unconventional instrumentation to create precarious and powerful abstract-folk.



MISSION OF BURMA

UN_SOUND

FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

Making the decision to deliberately stretch their boundaries even further, Unsound is the Boston post-punk legends' most rewarding album to date.



FANG ISLAND

MAJOR

SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

Brooklyn's beloved guitar-anthem optimists Fang Island return with an album befitting its title: Major. The follow up to their celebrated 2010 ST debut, Major is evermore confident, triumphant & brimming with infectious enthusiasm.

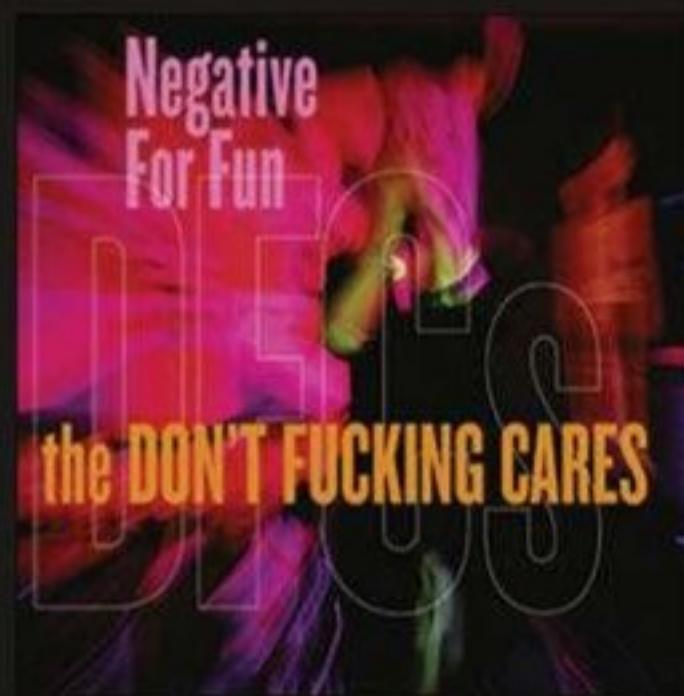


CARLOS CIPA

THE MONARCH AND THE VICEROY

DENOVALI LP / CD

Influenced by Max Richter, Eric Satie and Claude Debussy, Carlos Cipa's piano music impresses particularly because of its intensity and great attention to detail.



THE DON'T FUCKING CARES

NEGATIVE FOR FUN

RÖKA! RECORDS CD

Seditious guitar filled riot-pop --- Underground voices strike back with tales of sleaze and retribution on their new album out NOW on RÖKA! Hot!



SHRAG

CANINES

FORTUNA POP! LP / CD

Shrag's finest work. "Canines" is a visceral pop record bristling with urgency, melody & danger. "Brighton's boy-girl scuzzpoppers Shrag flash back to the heyday of such personages as Prolapse or Delta 5." Uncut.



SAFFRON KEIRA

A NEW LIFE

DENOVALI 2LP / 2CD

"A researcher of the possibility of expression offered by currently available technology - interesting for people who like FENNESZ, MURCOF, MAX RICHTER or ARVO PART"



YOUNG MOON

NAVIGATED LIKE THE SWANS

WESTERN VINYL LP / CD

RIYL : Nick Cave / Leonard Cohen.

Similarly, if you heard the remarkable "A Reason" from a distance you might even think you were hearing The Boss covering Mazzy Star.



DIIV

OSHIN

CAPTURED TRACKS LP / CD

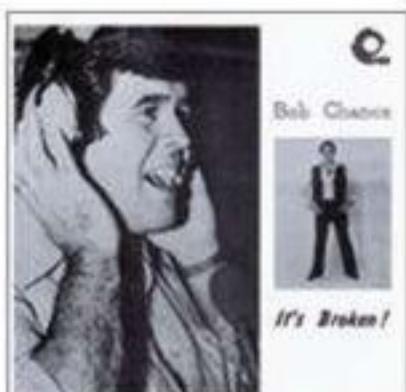
One part THC and two parts MDMA, Oshin is the much-anticipated debut LP from DIIV. "Sanding out within a sonic template that sublimates individuality by definition." Pitchfork best new track.

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**BOB CHANCE**

It's Broken!
(reissue, 1980)
TRUNK

US journeyman's outsider disco curio

In recent years, little-known singer-songwriter Bob Chance's privately pressed 1980 album *It's Broken!* has become a coveted item among disco connoisseurs who marvel at the off-beam majesty of a 10-minute sci-fi rug-cutter also called "It's Broken!" that channels Rod Stewart by way of Giorgio Moroder. Nothing wildly remarkable there, perhaps, but in the context of the record and Chance's long career, it's a thrilling anomaly. Born Robert Wahlsteen, Chance appeared on *Opportunity Knocks* aged 12 and was a teenage crooner in Atlantic's blue-eyed ensembles The Raiders and The Enchanters before joining the US Marines for four years. This seven-track album emerged after that. The schmaltz of "Brown-Skinned Girl", "Honey Lips" and "I See Her" tie *It's Broken!* to Chance's past, but the remaining numbers find the thick-set multi-instrumentalist veering off-piste with the title track, described by DJ Shadow as "hairy forearm disco", and "Jungle Talk", a psychedelic instrumental. As compelling is "The Van Man", in which Chance sings of stalking girls in a tricked-out passion wagon. One wonders how he squares such a red-blooded affair with his lightweight Christian album, 2000's *Fresh Air*.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN

8/10

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EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN

KEITH CHRISTMAS

Fable Of The Wings (reissue, 1970)

Pigmy (reissue, 1971)
TALKING ELEPHANT

7/10

Not enough Christmas presence

After releasing his debut album, *Stimulus*, Keith Christmas' more lasting claim to fame in 1969 was that he played acoustic guitar on David Bowie's "Space Oddity". Intrinsically appealing as they are, these albums are frustratingly inconsistent. *Fable...* is

largely routine singer-songwriter fare aside from the title track and "The Fawn", a delicate duet with labelmate Shelagh McDonald, a prodigious talent who retired from music in early 1972. *Pigmy*'s two halves present five simple acoustic songs enhanced by Robert Kirby's string arrangements and three lengthier songs, where Christmas plays fine electric guitar aided by musicians from Mighty Baby and Argent. By contrast, "Timeless And Strange", where Kirby's arrangements really shine, coupled with angelic vocals by Christmas, recall Tim Buckley's *Goodbye And Hello*. As before, such peaks overshadow the rest, but Nick Drake fans will find plenty to enthrall them.

EXTRAS: None.

MICK HOUGHTON

7/10

MICK HOUGHTON

**CRYSTAL SYPHON**

Family Evil
ROARATORIO

Primitivist West Coast psych, ready for the SF Nuggets cabal

Hailing from Merced, California, about three hours south-east of San Francisco, Crystal Syphon are yet another 'great lost' '60s West Coast psych group. Formed in 1965 by the Sanders brothers and friends, they would go on to find their place, second on the bill (or on new band nights) as part of the Ballroom circuit, playing alongside The Grateful Dead, Crazy Horse, Quicksilver Messenger Service and their peers. So far it's hardly a unique story, but unlike the scene's many almost-rans, Crystal Syphon had great songs on their side, borrowing the best moves from primitivist garage energy, adding the glass-spun guitars and the warp and weft harmonies of The Byrds, and then dosing further with just the right amount of psychedelics. Particularly staggering are several longer cuts, like "Fuzzy And Jose" and the live "Winter Is Cold", where the quintet stretch the songs with sinuous organ and needlepoint guitar solos that are period-piece perfect. Of course, their desire for full creative control means the group never hooked up with a label in their lifetime, so this is your first chance to hear these previously hidden nuggets of horizontal San Fran psych movement. It's about time.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE

8/10

REVELATIONS

Three lost monsters of the psychedelic underground

STEPHEN DAVID HEITKOTTER

Heitkotter

EGO/PRIVATE PRESS, 1971

1971 was a particularly heady year for the psych underground. This was Heitkotter's only solo recording, and it's spectacular, predicting the primitive disconnect of Jandek via some furiously out SoCal garage-psych moves.

9/10

**ROOTS OF MADNESS**

Girl In The Chair

PRIVATE PRESS, 1971

Elsewhere in California, Don Campau and his crew were recording as Roots Of Madness. *Girl In The Chair* bumps rudimentary blues guitar against noise cut-ups, all in a maze of improvisation.

8/10

VIRGIN INSANITY

Illusions Of The Maintenance Man

PRIVATE PRESS, 1971

In deepest Texas, husband-and-wife duo Bob and Eve Long self-released *Illusions Of The Maintenance Man*. These placid acid-folk songs hide some seriously heavy, spiraling psychedelic movement.

8/10

JON DALE

**DICKS**

Kill From The Heart
(reissue, 1983)

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

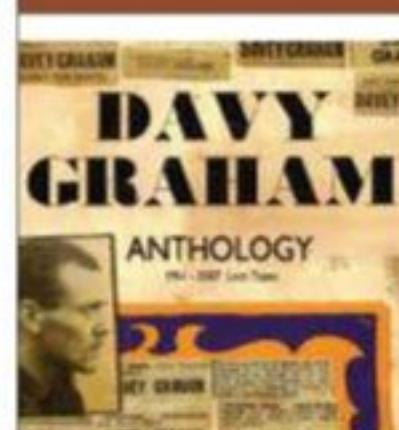
Top Marx for "commie faggot" Texans
For all of the Lone Star State's conservatism, early 1980s Texas

produced a rash of gay hardcore frontmen who were further out than even their most liberal East and West coast counterparts: MDC's Dave Dictor, Biscuit from the Big Boys, and Austin-via-Arkansas behemoth Gary Floyd. Celebrated with suitably bug-eyed cowpunk glee on the first Butthole Surfers album, Floyd fronted Yippie-approved firebrands the Dicks, whose long-unavailable 1983 SST debut blazes with sun-roasted fury. Pink Floyd rails against the Klan and the middle classes ("I wanna see your little kids beheaded," he yowls on the typically unpasteurised "Bourgeois Fascist Pig") but – in a move that might have shocked Chairman Mao – did not hide his passion for young boys' feet. Dicks burned out fast – 1985 follow-up *These People* posits the possibility of a leftist Bon Jovi, and even *Kill From The Heart* is only fluffed up to full length by a cover of "Purple Haze" and an 11-minute closing jam – but the red mist of their early work shows no sign of clearing.

EXTRAS: Features all three songs off their 9/10 £500-rated 1980 debut single, including Mudhoney favourite "Dicks Hate The Police". Crushingly intense, it may be the best punk song America ever produced.

JIM WIRTH

8/10

**DAVY GRAHAM**

Anthology: 1961-2007 Lost Tapes

LES COUSINS

New routes through guitarist's unheard private archive

This 3CD set of unreleased music

confirms Graham's position as the great polystylist of British folk, blues and beyond. It includes his five-track audition tape from 1962 and a spoken explanation of the origin of the guitarist's Gordian knot, "Anji". A 1963 Hootenanny version of "She Moved Through The Fair" is exhilarating, extrapolated folk. There's a lo-fi tape of a 1965 gig with Shirley Collins, although sadly only Graham's spots are included. The 10-minute "Blues Raga" is a terse demo for an unreleased LP, and there are four tracks from a 1969 Peel show.

In many ways Disc Three, covering 1970-2007, is the most enjoyable: Graham's exploratory repertoire grew even broader in middle and old age, from the Latin flavours of "Blue Bossa", the Iberian classical "DeVisee Suite" and "Rumores De La Caleta", and ragas and Arabic modes on his trusty oud. While the package and booklet contain some amazing photos from Graham's private collection, it's let down by lack of documentation – the tracks have little recording info, and guest musicians are uncredited – a poor editorial choice which fogs the picture. A shame, as this collection is a valuable hoard.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB YOUNG

7/10

BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY

Arise Therefore (1996)

Joya (1997)

I See A Darkness (1999)

Ease Down The Road (2001)

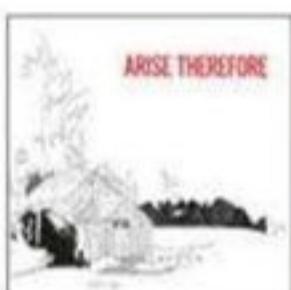
Master And Everyone (2003)

Sings Greatest Palace Music (2004)

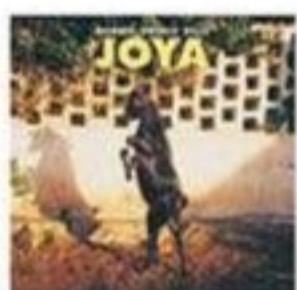
DOMINO

The six core, transitional works of Will Oldham's canon remastered.

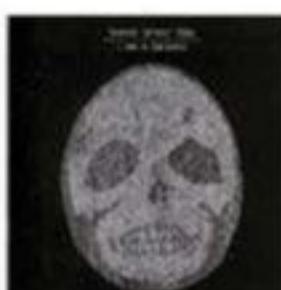
By Rob Young



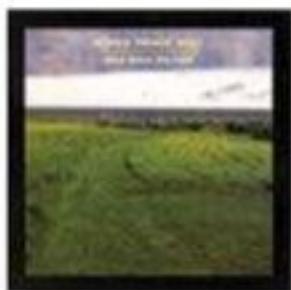
8/10



9/10



10/10



8/10



8/10



5/10

HOW DO YOU solve a problem like Will Oldham? His guarded public persona seems to shelter both a shyness and a singular self-confidence; he's obsessed with wolves and European monarchy; his songs make uneasy bedfellows of Christian ecstasy and private desolation; and he's recorded with everyone from Björk to Johnny Cash, Tortoise, Current 93 and Kanye West. A wariness with the press means precious little of this crazy trajectory has been satisfactorily explained, although he comes much further out of his shell than usual in Faber's recent, highly recommended book of autobiographical interviews with writer Alan Licht.

Now these six albums, delineating the core of Oldham's music to date, have been remastered and put out to graze again. In fact they marked the transition from the restless aliases of his early years (Palace, Palace Brothers, Palace Music, Will Oldham, etc) to the more stable Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, and have all now been retrospectively released under that name. *Arise Therefore* was Oldham's fourth album, originally credited to Palace Music, though no name actually appeared on the front cover. Steve Albini recorded it at Pachyderm Studios in Minnesota, an establishment notable for lying in the middle of an ancient forest next to a trout stream.

All of Oldham's distinctive traits are here: the loose-knit, studiedly unrehearsed ensemble



playing; the maudlin romanticism of the lyrics; his bleak, lupine whimper. 'Maya Tone', an analogue rhythm box, chuffs and pops in time in a half-dead sort of way. The provocatively titled "You Have Cum In Your Hair And Your Dick Is Hanging Out" has none of the pornographic content suggested by the title, but is a maudlin meditation on the presence and loss of a loved one. A starker, more alienating opening line than "How could one ever think anything's permanent?" is hard to imagine.

From its opener "O Let It Be", *Joya* (originally by 'Will Oldham') is a spunkier affair: live drums and the post-rock guitar of Papa M's David Pajo – plus some groovy clavinet on "Be Still And Know God (Don't Be Shy)" – let in a mess of fresh air. But would it have been too much to bundle in the "Little Joya" EP included with the original?

With *I See A Darkness*, he crowned himself Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, a permanent alias that allowed him to maintain a distance from the songs. Because the key to understanding Oldham is to recall his early years as a film actor. Looking for autobiographical truths in these songs is a red herring: you will not find the man here, but a series of masks, usually tragic but occasionally the smiling one, portraying intense emotional

states and psychological dramas. Johnny Cash picked up on the title track, easily among his finest compositions, but most of *Darkness* is disaffected and depressive, hiding from the sun in a roomful of fetid air.

Ease Down The Road and *Master And Everyone* sound more mature, both in content and in the expanded lineups, including country fiddles, organs and guest singers. Tracks like "Grand Dark Feeling Of Emptiness" and "Master And Everyone" rope the barest song-elements together, tossed in a basket and hung out to dry. "Just To See My Holly Home" is unapologetically ragged country rock. The folksy "Three Questions" is exquisite and eerie, with Oldham doubletracking himself with a second, chorus-effected vocal line.

By the time he got to revisit his own back catalogue in 2004, the masks were starting to take on a life of their own. Some find *Sings Greatest Palace Music* High Conceptopolis, Illinois; but for me it's Dullsville, Tennessee. His royal highness gets the full Nashville session treatment, lacquering his great youthful songbook with a kitsch veneer. His is a music that suits the pretender, not the king.

EXTRAS: None.



**PETER GREEN
SPLINTER GROUP**
Blues Don't Change

EAGLE

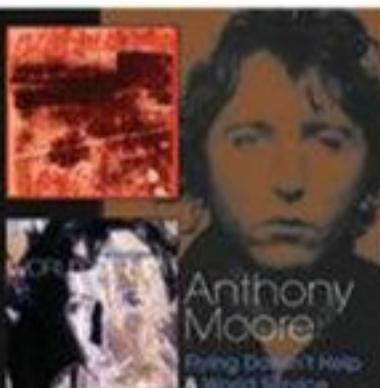
4/10

First full release for 2001 LP by Fleetwood Mac's lost genius

This covers collection was given limited circulation four years into Green's comeback from the debilitating effects of drugs and mental illness. The novelty of the returning legend and the formula, established on the Splinter Group's '97 debut and running into the Robert Johnson set that preceded this LP, was certainly showing signs of wear. Often a distressing sight in performance, Green displayed flashes of inspiration live but no longer extended to the compositional splendor of "Man Of The World". Sounding burned out and in frail voice, but encouraged to reacquaint himself with songs that initially influenced him, his relationship to the material here is often thin. The amiable stroll through "Don't Start Me Talking" has nary a hint of the incandescence of Sonny Boy Williamson's original, BB King's "When It All Comes Down" is similarly woebegone. The rural folk setting of "Honey Bee" with its shuffling guitar-harp interplay is kinder to his reduced talents. A spine-tingling run on a prayerful take of Freddie King's "Help Me Through The Day" generates the most excitement but, as with most of Green's second coming, the interest's not so much in the quality of the work, but that it exists at all.

EXTRAS: None.

GAVIN MARTIN



**ANTHONY
MOORE**
**Flying Doesn't
Help/World
Service**

FLOATING WORLD

8/10

Barbed, intelligent, exploratory pop

After two early

minimalist albums, Moore was a founding member of the self-consciously tongue-in-cheek Slapp Happy. Their mismatched merger with Henry Cow drove Moore towards a solo career in 1977. He released *Out* for Virgin before he was dropped and recorded *Flying Doesn't Help* for the independent Quango label as Anthony More. By far his most consistently accessible work, it slotted neatly into the potent post-punk world of the late '70s. Opening track "Judy Get Down" was in sync with the jagged new wave pop of Costello and XTC, while the deliberately mannered vocals and exaggerated piano motifs on "Lucia" and "Caught Being In Love" would not have been out of place on a John Cale album. *World Service* is darker, as if Moore had now exorcised his purer pop sensibilities. It incorporated the more exotic ideas that Peter Gabriel and David Byrne were exploring. Alex Patterson makes an early appearance in his Orb guise and old stager Ollie Halsall delivers an incomparable guitar solo on "Still Nowhere To Go", which is bleak enough to have served as an audition tape for Pink Floyd; Moore going on to provide lyrics for *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* and *The Division Bell*.

EXTRAS: None.

MICK HOUGHTON



MÚM
Early Birds

MORR MUSIC

Intriguing collection of early obscurities by Nordic glitch-pop gang

Beats-based electronica is such a well-weathered feature on the current pop

7/10

landscape it's now almost impossible to imagine a time before it. Radiohead's game-changer *Kid A* ushered in the millennium, along with Animal Collective's first LP and the debut 45 from cLOUDDEAD, but although popular memory casts these three as the earliest micro-house adaptors in alt.pop, mÚm were right there with them. Arguably, they were there before. The Icelandic band's debut album, *Yesterday Was Dramatic – Today Is OK*, was released in 2001, but as this compilation of unreleased, lost and forgotten tracks shows, they'd been mining their own seam of glitch-pop since 1998. At that time, Gunnar Örn Tynes and Örvar Þóreyjarson Smárason were travelling around Europe as a duo making field recordings, which they then reconfigured without much interest in structure, before becoming a quartet and developing their distinctive style of song-based electronica. Unsurprisingly, these 15 tracks range far and wide – from accordian-bedecked drum'n'bass and playful, DIY folk to tuneful, minimalist soundscapes and even a deranged exercise in mutant prog/hair-metal. It's a fascinating charting of a band's gradual evolution through experiment.

EXTRAS: None.

SHARON O'CONNELL



**PAULINE
OLIVEROS**

**Reverberations:
Tape & Electronic
Music 1961-1970**

IMPORTANT

7/10 Not just a museum piece, a museum

One of the founding members of the San Francisco Tape Music Center alongside such venerable gurus as Morton Subotnick, Terry Riley and Steve Reich, the Texas-born composer Pauline Oliveros was among those assembling the language and methodology of early electronic music. Mammoth 12CD box *Reverberations* assembles a broad cross-section of her 1960s work, beginning with in-studio compositions where she worked with tape delay systems, investigating feedback echo, and moving onto later live works that made use of the resonance of physical space. Above all, Oliveros' intention was to make the listener really listen: her concept of 'sonic awareness' encourages the re-tuning of the ear to a broader canvas of sound. Disc Four is a good 'in', collecting four improvised pieces made in one day at the University Of Toronto. Squealing feedback and dry gusts of tape echo vie for dominance, but it's the use of depth of field that is really striking. *Reverberations* is not an undertaking to enter into lightly, but along with the recent Daphne Oram box, it provides a fascinating insight into early electronic music.

EXTRAS: Box, 34-page booklet featuring **8/10** essays, tape delay diagram.

LOUIS PATTISON

HOW TO BUY...
POST-MAC PETER GREEN
Rough diamonds from a fitful career



**The End Of The
Game** REPRISE, 1970

He'd ditched the blues and lost the plot, but Green could still play with a glorious expansiveness.

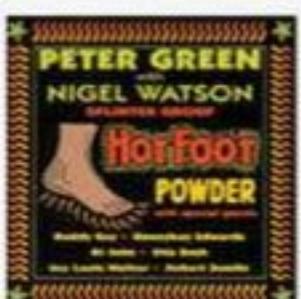
At the time fans were mystified by the free-form jams of his solo debut. Listening today, the disappointment is that he never fully developed this innovative free-rock direction.

7/10

A Case For The Blues

NIGHT LIFE, 1985

Green's first comeback produced five mediocre solo LPs in the late '70s/early '80s. They're out-done by this ace blues-boogie session under the name of Katmandu with Ray Dorset and Vincent Crane et al, cut more-or-less live in the studio.

6/10

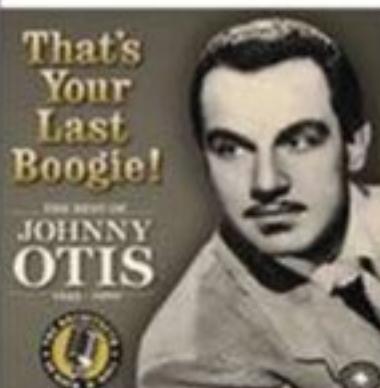
Hot Foot Powder

SNAPPER, 2000

His second comeback was patchy – but the two LPs he recorded of Robert Johnson material contain heartfelt performances. This second collection is the superior of the two, not least because the likes of Dr John and Buddy Guy lend a hand.

6/10

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



JOHNNY OTIS
**That's Your Last
Boogie!**

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Welcome retrospective of the bandleader and musical clairvoyant

Only popularly known for the 1958 Billboard smash "Willie And The Hand Jive", Johnny Otis had an extraordinary career as a talent scout, composer and arranger after forming a 16-piece jazz swing band in 1946, scoring his first hit with the slinky "Harlem Nocturne". In 1948, he opened the Barrelhouse Club in LA's Watts district, the first nightspot featuring nothing but R'n'B acts. There Otis discovered and recorded newcomers such as 13-year-old Little Esther Phillips and The Robins. After he took his R&B Caravan on the road he found Big Mama Thornton, producing her original version of "Hound Dog". Johnny Ace also fell in with Otis, who was behind Ace's 1954 signature hit "Pledging My Love".

This 3CD set rounds up many of the jump and jive recordings Otis was associated with between 1945 and 1960, including Etta James and Little Richard. As the '50s wore on and rock'n'roll took hold, The Johnny Otis Show fronted a string of novelty hits including "Ma (He's Making Eyes At Me)" and "Willie And The Hand Jive". Otis claimed that its Bo Diddley beat was a rhythm he first used in the '40s, then known as 'shave-and-a-haircut, six-bits'.

EXTRAS: None.

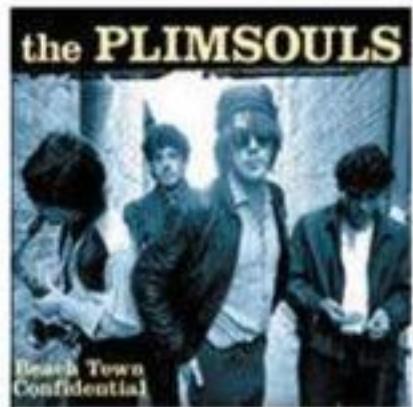
MICK HOUGHTON

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EXTRAS: None.

MICK HOUGHTON



THE PLIMSOULS

Beach Town Confidential
ALIVE NATURALSOUND

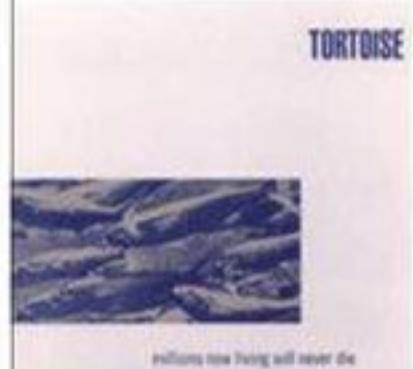
Electrifying set from LA powerpoppers in their prime

9/10

Though ostensibly part of LA's late-'70s new wave skinny-tie brigade, anyone with ears could tell The Plimsouls, led by songwriter-supreme Peter Case, ran deeper and darker than the legions of fly-by-nighters (see The Knack). With their Beatles-meets-Nuggets roots, ragged harmonies and driving guitars, they were already old-school in the synth/pop, nouveau MTV early '80s, as evidenced here by blistering, all-heart covers of Bo Diddley, Moby Grape and the Flamin' Groovies and more. As great as some of Case's songs were, from the apocalyptic "Zero Hour" to the immortal "A Million Miles Away" – the group's studio recordings could be a little dry. *Beach Town Confidential*, documenting an epic 1983 Huntington Beach set, puts things straight. Catching the group in full splendour, hard rhythms accented by guitarist Eddie Muñoz' masterful mix of melodic texture and unholy racket, the group snakes from one classic to another: the pure, breathless adrenaline of "How Long Will It Take?", the reverb-drenched sustain-and-release of "Magic Touch", the group slamming its all into the cascading melodies of shoulda-been smashes "Now" and "A Million Miles Away". One for rock'n'roll posterity.

EXTRAS: None.

LUKE TORN



TORTOISE

Millions Now Living Will Never Die
(reissue, 1996)

THRILL JOCKEY

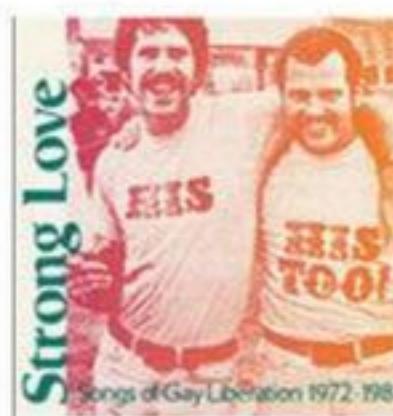
Post-rock foundation stone back on vinyl as part of extensive reissue campaign

9/10

Originally released in 1996, *Millions Now Living...* was strictly speaking Tortoise's second album. But in practice it was the moment this disparate collection of Chicago musos – including Doug McCombs from Eleventh Dream Day, John McEntire of Bastro and, new for this record, David Pajo from Slint – first properly became Tortoise in earnest. It was certainly the record that made their name in the UK and inadvertently forged a genre. It's now re-released on vinyl as part of Thrill Jockey's year-long reissue campaign covering the group's entire back catalogue, and if ever an album was made to be heard across two sides this is it: all the better to appreciate the audacious 20-minute, multi-part sprawl of opening track "Djed" across the entire first side. These days the summoning of spirits from Neu! to Steve Reich to Eno to *On The Corner*-era Miles Davis feels canonical, even commonplace, the stuff of an LCD Soundsystem skit, but "Djed" still feels exploratory and revelatory. After "Djed", the flip definitely feels like a B-side, but wonders still abound, notably the spangled noodling of "Glass Museum" and the cosmic twang of "Along The Banks Of Rivers".

EXTRAS: None.

STEPHEN TROUSSE



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Strong Love - Songs Of Gay Liberation 1972-81
CHAPTER MUSIC

Much-needed comp of overlooked gay male anthems-in-waiting

Bubbling under through the '60s, the gay liberation movement broke through into mass consciousness after the Stonewall riots of '69; the '70s proved a period of consolidation and reflection, and a decade where the queer community gathered its strength. Of course, disco was the soundtrack of that gay decade, but Guy Blackman's cannily compiled *Strong Love* instead collects music by gay men for gay men, usually in earnest folk singer-songwriter mode, though these tend to be the weakest songs. The real achievement lies in corralling some of the movement's weird, outsider moments, like Smokey's titular contribution, which is glam on a nickel-and-dime budget; Chris Robison's hallucinatory falsetto and homespun power-pop confection, "Big Strong Man In My Life", and the brilliantly warped country ballad that is Lavender Country's "Crying These Cocksucking Tears". While it's not a perfect comp, it doesn't claim to be broad-ranging – these are songs of gay male liberation, not queer, not GLBTQ. But it does what it does admirably, digging out private-presses and rarities from the decade, and it's nice to have a comp where Tom Robinson represents the populist high-watermark, not the 'exception'.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE

7/10



VARIOUS ARTISTS

WTNG 89.9 FM: Solid Bronze
WTNG/NUMERO GROUP

Midwest label's heartfelt survey of vintage yacht-rock

As a reissue and archive imprint dealing in

obscure funk and soul, Chicago's Numero Group has had a lot of success on the back of other people's failures. But for *WTNG 89.9 FM*, a wry Record Store Day tribute to those local US radio station compilations of the 1970s and early '80s that served as a kind of regional battle of the bands, the selectors actively sought acts who got nowhere or left little in the way of a legacy. In searching for that authentic American blend of hope and hopelessness, they uncovered 11 cuts of soulful cheese (Roach Band's "Aladdin") and smooth rock (Cream & Sugar's "Between Us"), each one beautifully produced and none truly terrible. Much of this companion to *WTNG 89.9FM*, a temporary Chicago station Numero ran for five weeks around last year's RSD, breezes by on a bed of twinkling Rhodes and avocado funk, though highlights include "I Got'cha", an amorous jingle by six-piece soul outfit Greenflow who plied their trade in US military bases in '70s Germany, and J Michael Henderson's rousing "Nite People", one of the better Steely Dan knock-offs on here. Ultimately, there's a good reason why these acts weren't household names, but in the eyes of Numero Group, they're all winners.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN

7/10

HOW TO BUY... POWER POP

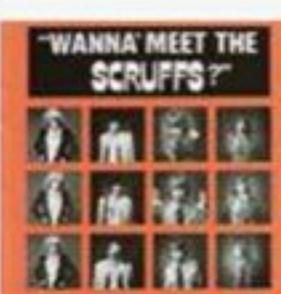
Three melodic retro gems



BLUE ASH
No More, No Less
MERCURY/COLLECTORS' CHOICE, 1973

The Clevelanders' debut is almost a power pop template. A cover of The Beatles' "Any Time At All" states their intentions, but their own songs should have blanketed early-'70s radio.

9/10



THE SCRUFFS
"Wanna Meet The Scruffs?" POWER PLAY/ NORTHERN HEIGHTS, 1977

Memphians The Scruffs were like Big Star's nervous cousins. Stephen Burns' songs of teen angst prefigure skittish pop combos from The Feelies to The dB's.

8/10

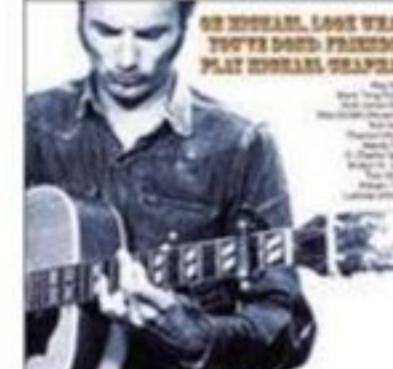


PHIL SEYMOUR
Phil Seymour
BOARDWALK/COLLECTORS' CHOICE MUSIC, 1980

Alumni of the Dwight Twilley Band, Seymour knew his way around a pop melody. "I Found A Love" and a cover of Bobby Fuller's "Let Her Dance" are pop perfection, and everything else isn't far behind.

9/10

LUKE TORN



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Oh Michael, Look What You've Done: Friends Play Michael Chapman
TOMPKINS SQUARE

Anglo-American tribute to rediscovered folk maverick

7/10

His witty psych-folk of the late '60s is one reason Chapman's been hailed by the next generation, but his prowess as a guitarist has also won him younger fans, especially in the US. Hence *Oh Michael...* is a predominantly American affair with four instrumentals, drawing on all periods of Chapman's prolific output. Thurston Moore takes the first song of the first LP – "It Didn't Work Out" from *Rainmaker* (1969) – and turns it from stomping folk-rock into acoustic melancholy, a mood in keeping with Lucinda Williams' ravaged "That Time Of Night" (2003), which relocates Yorkshire gloom to Arizona. Almost opposite is Maddy Prior's understated a cappella "The Prospector" a wry snipe at corporate greed from '79's *Life On The Ceiling*, whose title track becomes an Appalachian hoedown in the hands of Black Twig Pickers. Young guitarists Nick Jonah Davis and William Tyler show they are up to the intricacies of the Fahey-esque "Little Molly's Dream" (2008) and "Naked Ladies And Electric Ragtime" (1969), respectively. Among others, Rick Kemp, on the little heard "Vanity And Pride" (2003) and Bridget St John, with "Rabbit Hills" (1970) do their old friend proud. Oh Michael indeed.

EXTRAS: None.

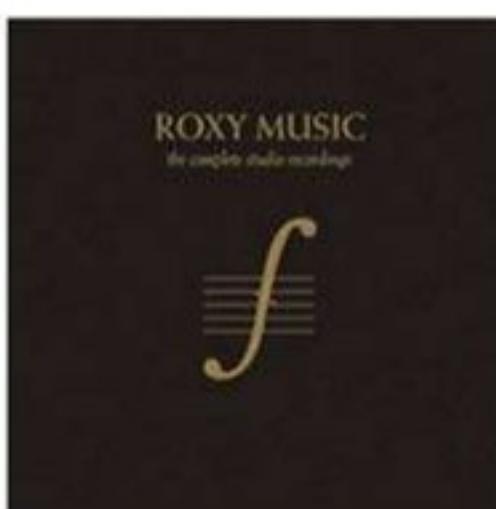
NEIL SPENCER

ROXY MUSIC

The Complete Studio Recordings 1972-1982

VIRGIN

Remastered, if not remade or remodelled: Roxy's radical motherlode. By Stephen Troussé



10/10

bearings. What's the date again? (it's so dark in here) 1962 or 20 years on?

So wrote Simon Puxley in the sleeve notes to Roxy Music's eponymous debut, hoping to conjure something of the record's timeslip glamour, struggling to live up to the gatefold photos depicting band members as delegates from some galactic parliament. Forty years on, remastered for this latest anniversary boxset, the band has lost little of its uncanny, atemporal enchantment.

By delicious serendipity, Roxy Music's debut was released just one week after *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*, as though part of some co-ordinated campaign to declare the '70s officially open. Yet, for all its genius, Bowie's album nevertheless sounds unmistakably 1972, sci-fi in content but almost trad in form. Roxy Music, by contrast, still sounds intoxicatingly unplaceable.

"Re-Make/Re-Model" makes things almost too plain, mapping the co-ordinates of this strange new world, pausing to quote from Duane Eddy, The Beatles, Cecil Taylor, King Curtis and Robert Moog (mystifyingly absent from the V&A's exhibition last year, the song is in fact the birthcry of the postmodern sensibility). Elsewhere things are more richly suggestive: "Ladytron" conjuring a capering Joe Meek moonman funk, "Chance Meeting" evoking the Noel Cowardly dreamers of *Brief Encounter* trapped in some ghastly purgatory, "If There Is Something" reaching a pitch of Piafian desperation. The effect is something like the London of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*: pre-war romance rewired by steampunk tech, curdled by very modern terrors.

Acclaimed almost immediately as one of the greatest debuts of all time, in truth *Roxy Music* is not perfect. Not even remastering can bolster Pete Sinfield's tinny production, and "Bitters End" closes things on an almost Bonzo note of bathos.

They were just getting warmed up. Just nine months later *For Your Pleasure* was the full flowering of the band's first incarnation. *Roxy* was indisputably Bryan Ferry's baby, but in Andy

PICCADILLY 1972: taking a turn off main-street, away from the cacophony and real life relics, & into outer spaces myriad faces and sweet deafening sounds of rock'n'roll. And inner space... the mind loses its



Mackay, Phil Manzanera and Brian Eno the band had enough maniacs and visionaries for countless bands, scenes, movements. The presence of so many creative personalities in one group could have been merely extravagantly chaotic, but *For Your Pleasure* is a marriage of true minds unmatched in British pop. "Do The Strand" is a peerless single, a breath-taking balance of Broadway wit and superpop bravado, but it's an aperitif before the full feast of the album. "The way you look... makes my starry eyes shiver," Ferry croons on "Beauty Queen", and by some supernatural synesthesia he could be describing the auditory swoon of the record. Yet the cinemascope opulence has a heart of darkness. With "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" and "The Bogus Man", Ferry's opulent screen dreams are stalked by dread, as though Powell and Pressburger were filming the work of JG Ballard.

It's fascinating to wonder where this crew might have voyaged after *For Your Pleasure*, how the starcharts of '70s pop might have been redrawn, but Eno's departure following the album's release renders such speculation forever moot. The loss might have capsized a lesser band, but in practice it actually steadied the ship – possibly too much. Even Eno had to acknowledge that *Stranded*, incredibly released just eight months later, was possibly the group's masterpiece. It was certainly a commercial success, with "Street Life" even tacking towards the mainstream. But for all the polished majesty of "Mother Of Pearl" it was hard to escape the suggestion that some crucial engendering antagonistic grit had been lost.

It's not to belittle the splendours of *Country Life*

and *Siren* – "The Thrill Of It All", "Bitter-Sweet", "Love Is The Drug", to name but three – to describe them as further refinements of an already perfected blueprint. 1979's second-act comeback *Manifesto* was a bold, intriguing response to punk – "I am for a life around the corner, that takes you by surprise," Ferry declared on the title track – but too little of what was to follow could deliver on those aspirations. 1980's *Flesh + Blood* tellingly featured two covers, "In The Midnight Hour" and "Eight Miles High", resolutely free of any of the wit of the earlier solo album "readymades" and was notable chiefly for Ferry's progress towards what's become his signature mid-Atlantic gilded funk. He arrived at his destination on 1982's *Avalon*, the title evoking some timeless never-neverland of misty longings. Ironically, it's the most dated-sounding album here, the fretless, burbling bass, the wistful horns, the twanging Manzanera guitars forever evoking early '80s easy-listening elegance.

As 2010's *Olympia* made clear, it's where Bryan Ferry remained ever since, like a time traveller whose machine had finally gone on the fritz. But this immaculate box is ample testament to the fact that, for an unparalleled five or six album run, Roxy Music were the most distinguished adventurers British pop has ever known.

EXTRAS: The Roxy catalogue has been so **2/10** thoroughly repackaged over the years there's little left to bring to light. Most of the B-sides and non-album singles appended to the albums were previously available on 1995's *The Thrill Of It All* boxset. The few tracks here new to CD are single and US versions, generally simply edited for radio.

The Specialist

Doo Wop



Doo wop players:
Washington DC's
The Cap-Tans,
formed in 1948

ALTHOUGH THE TERM wouldn't appear in print until as late as 1961, the roots of doo wop go back more than 20 years earlier. Close-knit vocal harmony groups like The Ink Spots and The Mills Brothers were US radio favourites throughout World War II and beyond, and both show up on the opening instalment of this ambitious series from renowned archive label Bear Family.

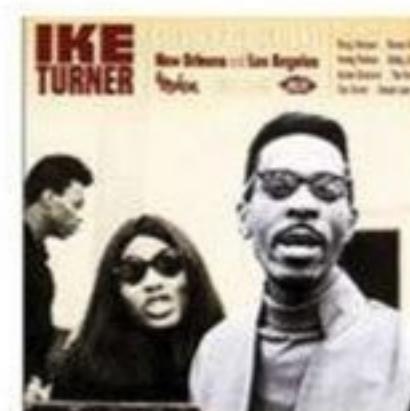
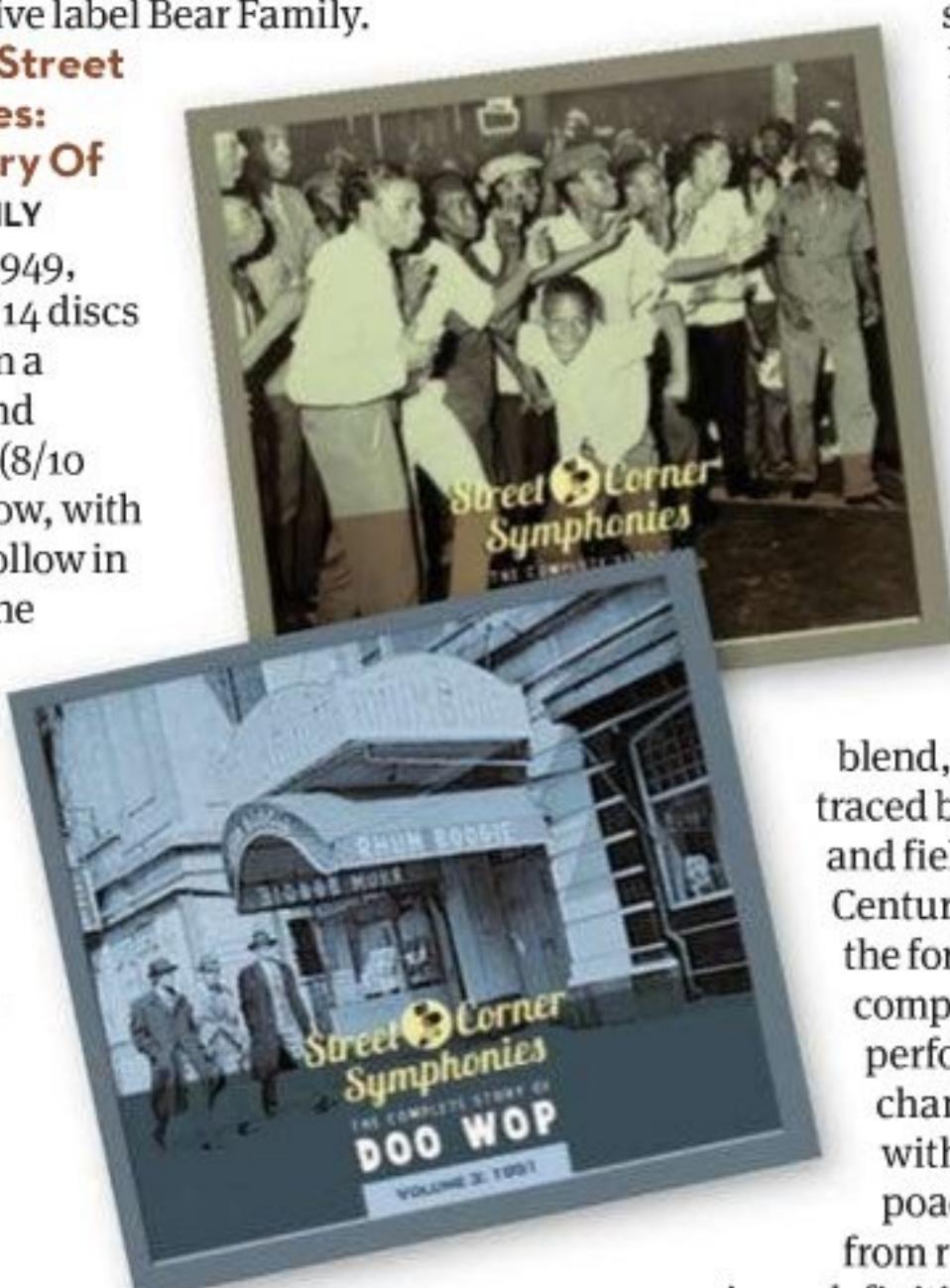
The first volume of *Street Corner Symphonies: The Complete Story Of Doo Wop* BEAR FAMILY (8/10) covers 1939 to 1949, with each of the next 14 discs in the run focusing on a specific year, up to and including 1963 – five (8/10 each) are available now, with the remaining 10 to follow in the months ahead. The clue is in the title; singers would congregate outside tenement buildings or at urban crossroads to ply their trade, so in some respects doo wop can be seen as the ancestor of rap and hip-hop.

Unlike their future generation counterparts, however, the early doo-woppers rarely engaged in social commentary about their impoverished surroundings and lack of opportunities (that would come later, on '50s hits like The Coasters' "Shoppin' For Clothes" or The Silhouettes' "Get A Job"). In the main, it was meticulously arranged common or garden love ballads, led by

a sweet tenor, often followed by a bass vocalist delivering the second verse as a spoken narration, the aforementioned Ink Spots' "If I Didn't Care" a prime example. As rhythm and blues (or "race music", as labels and magazines categorised it) grew in popularity, doo wop began to incorporate more uptempo elements, often with the singers' own handclaps bolstering percussion on dance cuts like The Sultans' "Lemon Squeezing Daddy" (Vol 3: 1951) and The Clovers' "Good Lovin'" (Vol 5: 1953). What didn't change was the intricate vocal

blend, which can be traced back to the spirituals and field hollers of the 19th Century, the majority of the form's leading lights comprising black performers. The changing of lineups, with groups constantly poaching members from rivals, means

mapping a definitive doo wop family tree is a hugely complicated task. A handful of names emerged as enduring stars, like The Coasters and The Drifters (the latter's lead crooner Clyde McPhatter features in three outfits on these first five volumes), but with a minimum of 30 tracks per disc there's a wealth of obscurities to investigate that are worth singing about. **TERRY STAUNTON**



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ike Turner Studio Productions

ACE

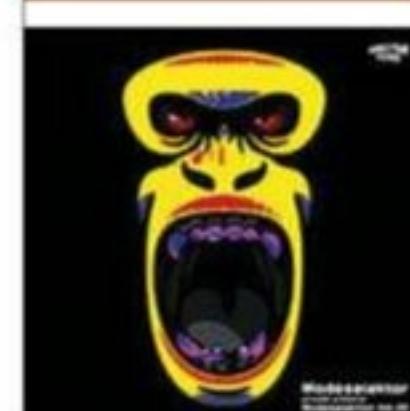
Notorious maverick's wall of soulful sound

While the broader historical picture

continues to primarily paint Ike Turner as an appendage of his multi-platinum famous wife, since his death in 2007 the media shorthand of a cruel wife beater is being gradually counter-balanced by reappraisals of his musical worth. This collection of 27 tracks focuses on his tenure as ad hoc house producer at the celebrated Cosimo Matassa studios between 1963 and 1965, when the success he'd already achieved as a writer and performer earned him a far-ranging contract with the local Modern Records. Tina's name crops up just twice, on a previously unheard take of the soulful lament "All In My Mind" and the gritty blues of "Five Long Years", but Ike's most regular muse of choice during this period was arguably Vernon Guy, whose JB-inspired soul howl gets a rigorous workout on the shuffling "They Ain't Lovin' Ya" and the melodramatic testifying of "You've Got Me (Just Where You Want Me)". Turner's default setting production style was to push horns and drums to the fore, thereby forcing his vocalists to kick it up a notch just to be heard, an approach that reaps spectacular dividends on the Jimmy Thomas and Stacy Johnson numbers included here.

EXTRAS: None.

TERRY STAUNTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Modeselektor Proudly Presents Modeselektion Vol 2

MONKEYTOWN

7/10

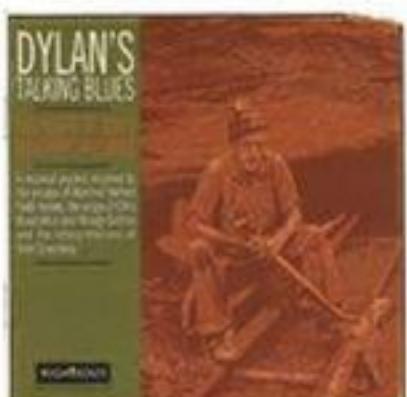
Quirky, quality selection from Thom

Yorke's favourite electro duo

Stalwarts of the Berlin club scene, Gernot Bronsert and Sebastian Szary are widely respected outside dance music circles. They've remixed Radiohead and Björk, and collaborated with Thom Yorke and many more. Under their Modeselektor alias, the duo are known for their goofy sense of humour and genre-hopping tastes, even though their previous DJ selection from 2010 stuck within German techno and UK bass music limits. This sequel is more experimental, spanning the precision-tooled glitch-pop of Mouse On Mars, the layered Kraftwerkian lushness of Lazer Sword, Monolake's post-dubstep clank-beats, Frikstation's dazzling percussive collages and other emergent voices from the fringes of club culture. The mood is darker, although comic relief comes from Prefuse 73's haircut-themed avant-jazzoid cut-up "Death By Barber Pt 1" and more. Many of these tracks are not conventional club tunes, leaning heavily on quirky vocal samples, broken beats and disruptive sound effects. A connoisseur-curated selection that manages to combine inspired innovation with wit, rich melodies and irresistibly squelchy basslines.

EXTRAS: None.

STEPHEN DALTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Dylan's Talking Blues: The Roots Of Bob's Rhythmic Rhyming

RIGHTEOUS

7/10

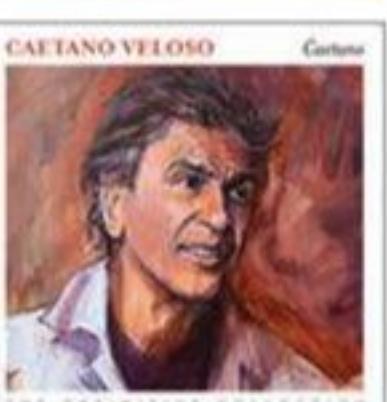
Fascinating study of the rural idiom

that stoked up Bob Dylan

The origins of the talking blues style, marked by rhythmic speech and rhyme, usually over a picked acoustic guitar, supposedly came about by chance. Chris Bouchillon, known as 'the talking comedian of the South' takes credit for inventing it, largely because his singing voice was by all accounts so awful. But it was Woody Guthrie who popularised the form in the post-war years, stripping back the rural-shtick nonsense for a valid form of protest song. Both men feature heavily on this absorbing comp, alongside Pete Seeger, The New Lost City Ramblers and the odd novelty effort by Tex Williams and Red Murrell. The Guthrie-Dylan link is an obvious connection here (Woody's "Talking Columbia" and "Talking Sailor" both fetched up on Bob's *Minnesota Party Tape* bootleg from 1960), but a more obscure influence seems to be a '50s Folkways LP by folklorist John Greenway. Five of his interpretations of Guthrie, Ernest Tubb and Tom Glazer make the final cut and the similarities to early Dylan songs suggest that Greenway's *Talking Blues* was lurking somewhere near the front of Bob's record pile in the Village.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



CAETANO VELOSO

The Definitive Collection

WRASSE

9/10

Well-judged introduction to prolific Brazilian

Where to begin with a wildly diverse back catalogue of 60 albums and 500 songs? The compilers of this 2CD retrospective faced a daunting task, but their aim is mostly true in selecting 40 gems recorded over 40 years, from Veloso's '67 debut to 2006's *Ce. In between* came imprisonment by Brazil's military junta, exile in London, the bombing of his home and finally recognition as a national treasure. Every twist of his extraordinary life has been soundtracked by a torrent of wonderfully original music, an eclectic synthesis of samba, bossa nova, poetry, pop, jazz and rock in the tropicália style which Veloso pioneered with Gilberto Gil. Duets with Gil and Os Mutantes are among the highlights, as are the handful of tracks sung in English, such as "London London" and "Nine Out Of Ten", which vividly evoke his early '70s exile. Yet even in Portuguese or Spanish, his sublimely poetic voice strikes to the heart. The most glaring gap is the absence of anything from his brilliant NYC-produced albums of the late-'80s/early '90s with Bill Frisell, Arto Lindsay et al. But there's still a horde of treasure to entice Veloso newcomers and satisfy the already converted.

EXTRAS: None.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



GARETH WILLIAMS AND MARY CURRIE

Flaming Tunes (reissue, 1985)

BLACKEST EVER BLACK

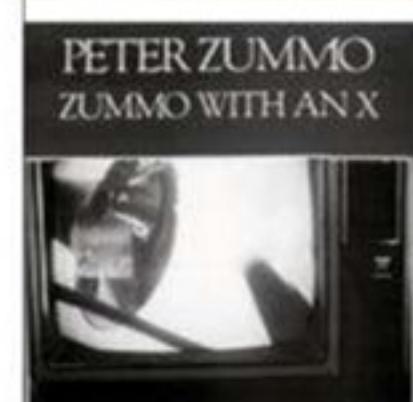
9/10

Leftfield magic from late This Heat vet

As the flailing post-punk trio This Heat began to disband in 1981, the band's Gareth Williams left for India to study Kathakali – a dance style full of exaggerated gestures set to chaotic percussion. Its influence can be heard in *Flaming Tunes*, a cassette release from 1985 that Williams made with friend Mary Currie and now being released for the first time on vinyl: tablas echo through "Restless Mind", and "Golden Age" recalls the constant devotions of Indian raga. But this feels like a quintessentially English album, particularly thanks to Williams' unadorned London voice; it's the sun-bleached plastic patio furniture to the finely wrought wicker and wood of 1960s folk. The fractious energy of This Heat is reframed as naivety, using piano, organ and scratchy guitars, though the tape experiments are still there, giving a supernatural edge to nursery rhyme tunes. Indeed, the LP is preoccupied with recorded sound, radio, memory and serendipitous discovery, but anchored to stunning songs like the wonkily Balearic "Breast Stroke". At times it sounds like Arthur Russell's more spartan work, or a budget version of *Another Green World*, but in the end won't slip into any box you try to make for it.

EXTRAS: None.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



PETER ZUMMO

Zummo With An X (reissue, 1985)

OPTIMO MUSIC

Long-lost trombone minimalism, from Arthur Russell collaborator

A musician on New York's '80s Downtown scene, Peter Zummo is today best known for his work with Arthur Russell, the cellist and producer beatified following his death from AIDS in 1992. Zummo's trombone work can be heard on many of Russell's songs, from the disco strut of Dinosaur L's "Kiss Me Again" to the more experimental 'lost' works collected on 2004's *Calling Out Of Context*, but less still is known about his solo work; a shame, as *Zummo With An X* deserves a place in the reappraisal. Originally released in 1985 in a run of 500 copies, it is very much a record of two halves. Side One consists of seven brief pieces called things like "Chromatic Fourths" and "Four Notes, Large Intervals" that employ minimalist horn motifs alongside strings and subtle percussion. Diverting, but paling in comparison to the second side – a single, 20-minute track named "Song IV", in which Zummo and Russell jam together over a simple, spooling rhythm. Zummo's horn parts are warm and dolorous, while Russell's cello zig-zags around the beat in strange syncopations, and he occasionally offers breathy, wordless vocals, like a ghost voice caught on tape. Hypnotic and wonderful.

EXTRAS: None.

LOUIS PATTISON

8/10

COMING NEXT MONTH...



Next month is fast shaping up to be a great month for musicians who have bent the rules in all sorts of ways, but nonetheless remain representatives of that enduring, supremely flexible archetype, the English Eccentric.

English? That's not perhaps the first word that springs to mind when we think of **Antony Hegarty**, the artist with a background in confrontational cabaret performance art on the Lower East Side, who emerged into the public eye alongside Mr New York himself, Lou Reed. But Chichester-born Hegarty is English enough to qualify for (and win) the Mercury Prize, and his clipped tones can be heard all over his new album *Cut The World*, released to coincide with his curating of the Meltdown festival in London, and comprising orchestral versions of songs from across his four albums.

It's great, and provides a fresh look at familiar ingredients, as do a couple of great Archive releases coming soon. First up, there's **The Kinks' Radio Sessions** boxset, a self-explanatory collection of their transmitted work. Then there's the hitherto lost, much-bootlegged 1974 album *Men Opening Umbrellas Ahead* from Bonzo Dog supremo

Viv Stanshall, featuring, among others, Steve Winwood, Ric Grech and Reebop Kwaku Baah. Nothing so odd about that, really.

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The image shows the front cover of an UNCUT magazine. The title 'UNCUT' is at the top in large red letters. Below it, a large photo of Neil Young is the central focus. Text on the cover includes 'WORLD EXCLUSIVE!', 'NEIL YOUNG THE 2012 INTERVIEW', and a quote: 'You can't worry about what people think. I never do...'. To the right, there's a list of artists: 'STARTS PAGE 63! Featuring Blur, Robert Plant, Roxy Music, Mazzy Star, The Gaslight Anthem and more...'. Below that, another section is titled 'WAYNE KRAMER ON MC5' with the subtext 'Detroit was smoke, sirens and gunfire'. Further down, 'PETER GABRIEL' is mentioned with the quote 'There's no perfume like success'. On the right edge, 'DIRTY PROJECTORS' is listed with the subtext 'Inside America's most complicated band'. At the bottom, 'THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN' is mentioned with the subtext 'Postcard from China'. Another section on the right is for 'PETER TOSH' with the subtext 'Reggae's rebel spirit'. The free CD in the foreground is titled 'FOR THE TURNSTILES' and '16 TRACKS OF BRILLIANT NEW MUSIC'. The CD cover features a yellow circular design with the title and track information. The CD itself is orange with the title and artist names.

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DVD & Blu-ray

THIS MONTH: SEBASTIAN BERGMAN | TOM PETTY | WALLANDER

SCORING:

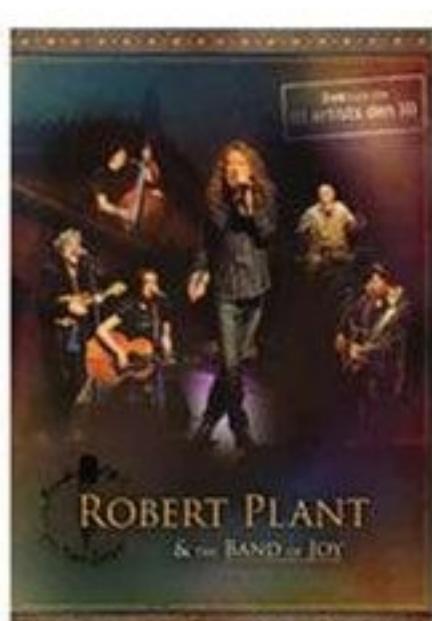
10 A true classic 9 Essential 8 Excellent
7 Very good 6 Good 5-6 Mediocre 1-3 Poor



ROBERT PLANT & THE BAND OF JOY

Live From The Artists Den ARROW FILMS

Relaxed session from the Golden God of Nashville



8/10

IN THE INTERVIEW included as one of the Extras on this live DVD, Robert Plant muses upon the history of his Band Of Joy, from its original '60s versions as, firstly, a soul group playing Otis Clay covers, then a hippy combo that would effectively join forces with The New Yardbirds to form Led Zeppelin, through to its more recent incarnation in which his interests

in Americana and psychedelia have become ingeniously braided. "Who would have known," he says, "that in my 62nd year The Band Of Joy would become trippy again?"

Who indeed? Although, admittedly, Plant's course didn't actually involve that big a jump from the *Raising Sand* experience that revitalised both

his musical and commercial profiles, with guitarist Buddy Miller retained as a sort of roots guru, Patty Griffin substituting for Alison Krauss, and Darrell Scott bringing an extra multi-instrumental dimension to the sound. But this time, the show recorded at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Plant's current home, Nashville, reveals a band looser in approach, tighter in feel, and unafraid to take liberties: the opening version of "Black Dog", for instance, is taken at a languid swagger, rootsier than the Zep original, though not lacking for bite courtesy of Miller's snarling lead solo.

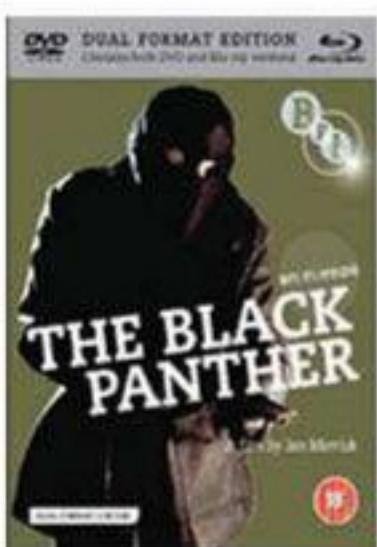
Both Miller and Scott look like grizzled extras from a Peckinpah western, and Griffin is a picture in her black leather mini-dress; Plant, meanwhile, is as genially leonine as ever: he could play the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard Of Oz* without overly troubling the make-up department, and his smiles reveal a man well at ease with his direction. Los Lobos' "Angel Dance" suits him perfectly, its rolling groove like a big warm hug, with Griffin's harmonies setting off Plant's delivery, which throughout is relaxed rather than raucous, teasing

meaning from lyrics rather than wringing them dry. At the song's heart, though, is drummer Marco Giovino, using unusual beaters to get that floppy-boot sound, and cloths to damp the hi-hat.

The interplay between Miller and Scott is crucial to the Band Of Joy sound: Scott's mandolin on Richard Thompson's "House Of Cards" is set off beautifully by Miller's wiry lead, a blur of string-bending curlicues, while the new, countrified approach to Zep's "Houses Of The Holy" matches Miller's lead with Scott's whining pedal steel. Both guitarists, along with Griffin, get individual vocal showcases, Plant's bluesharp wailing behind Miller on "Somewhere Trouble Don't Go", and Scott's aching delivery of "A Satisfied Mind" serving as a teasing taster to his own new album.

Plant's always had a folk-rock spirit, even in his hard-rock days, and here he gets to give it freer rein than ever, on a hauntingly sombre "Satan Your Kingdom Must Come Down" and an "In The Mood" incorporating fragments of "Come All Ye". Even the Zep back-catalogue is reinterpreted in this light, with a folk-rock "Ramble On" and "Gallows Pole" on which Scott's banjo picks over the skirling swirls Miller draws from an odd-looking guitar. "Rock And Roll", by contrast, is done as a rockabilly stinger, with a hefty swing and a tribute to John Bonham's signature drum figure at the end. Finally, the band downs instruments to join forces on an a cappella "I Bid You Goodnight". It forms the perfect bridge between Plant's memories of The Incredible String Band, and the American players' gospel-country heritage: different routes now leading to the same place.

EXTRAS: Interview with Plant; *Inside The Artists Den* documentary; picture gallery.
6/10
ANDY GILL



THE BLACK PANTHER

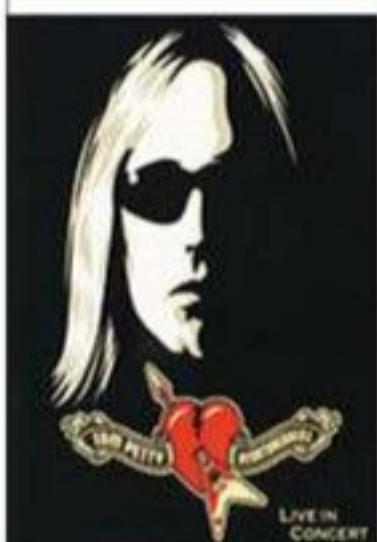
BFI

Grisly, banned real-life drama

Donald Neilson became Britain's most wanted after a violent crime spree in the mid-'70s that culminated in the incarceration of a teenage heiress in an underground cistern. This 1977 fictionalisation,

banned in its day, tells the story up to Neilson's arrest, and largely from the so-called Black Panther's point of view. Michael Armstrong directs with a forensic sensitivity to the criminal eye and doesn't flinch from the grisly details, while Donald Sumpter portrays Neilson with chilling ruthlessness. Bleak landscapes, sparse dialogue and a creepy electronic soundtrack by David Hewson rack up the tension further.

EXTRAS: Recluse short, recce footage, booklet. **7/10** ROB YOUNG



TOM PETTY & THE HEART-BREAKERS

Live In Concert

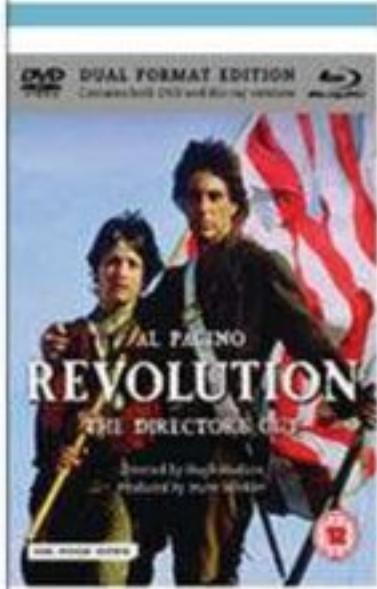
UNIVERSAL

Impressive, blues-tinged TV performance

Most rock'n'roll concert videos look and sound dreadful, because the performances they capture were not enacted primarily for television. *Live In*

Concert was filmed for a PBS *Soundstage Special* in 2003, and therefore looks HD-ready and sounds pristine. The Chicago location inspires Petty to scrabble in his blues roots – the 22 songs include spirited covers of chestnuts such as "Baby Please Don't Go", "Little Red Rooster" and "I Got A Woman". Petty's own material is well served, though there's no "American Girl".

EXTRAS: None. **7/10** ANDREW MUELLER



REVOLUTION: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

BFI

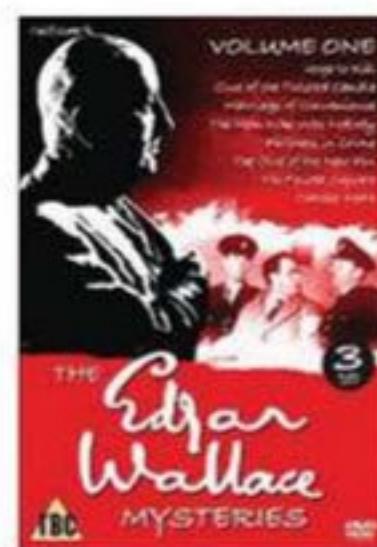
Historical epic gets a welcome rework

Director Hugh Hudson (*Chariots Of Fire*) and Al Pacino have kept faith with this American War Of Independence epic, slammed on its 1985 release. Trimming

10 minutes and adding a new voiceover, *Revolution*'s intentions – to present war seen from the gutter – are uncovered with greater clarity. Post-dubbed speech and Pacino's voiceover lend the tale – a man and his son caught up in the conflict that shapes America – a dreamy rhythm that recalls Malick's *Thin Red Line*. Cliché-free dialogue and great location work also make this well worth revisiting.

EXTRAS: Making Of docs, deleted scenes, trailer, booklet. **8/10**

ROB YOUNG



THE EDGAR WALLACE MYSTERIES VOLS 1 & 2

NETWORK

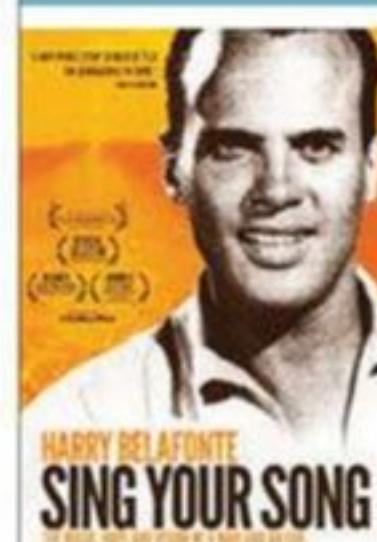
Spiffingly restored Britcrime B-movies

Edgar Wallace gave us *King Kong*, but he's best known as the author of hundreds of crime stories in the 1920s. The low-budget outfit Anglo-

Amalgamated produced this series of updated adaptations at their Merton Park Studios in the early 1960s, hour-long quickies aimed at the bottom end of double bills. Stuffed with sterling faces – Bernard Lee, Michael Gough, Harry H Corbett – and odd quirks, they're highly watchable, politely sinister tales of the (not particularly) unexpected.

EXTRAS: Other Wallace adaptations and **8/10** Merton Park thrillers, notes, stills. **DAMIEN LOVE**

7/10



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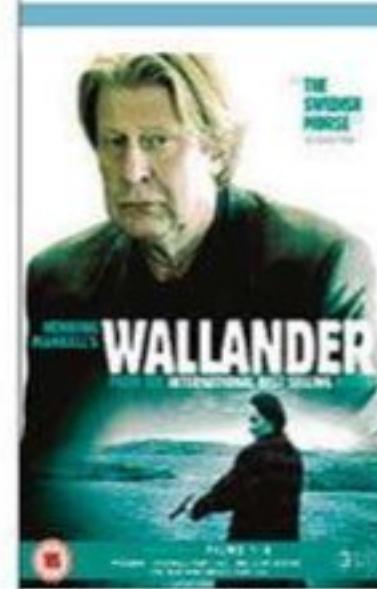
Mixed portrait of singer's unknown heroism

Anyone who knows Harry Belafonte primarily as a crooner will be given a jolt by Susanne Rostock's documentary. Her focus is on Belafonte the civil rights activist, and the footage here that really resonates

is of Belafonte on the front line of marches, alongside Martin Luther King, or lobbying ferociously for Nelson Mandela's release. Belafonte is an impressive and courageous figure, and the doc is fascinating social history: nonetheless, it also feels evasive. This is not a critical portrait in any sense. It skims over its subject's acting and singing career as well as his family life in very superficial style.

EXTRAS: Interview, music performances. **6/10** GEOFFREY MACNAB

6/10



WALLANDER

ARROW FILMS

Before *The Killing* and *Borgen*, there was...

Long before "Nordic Noir" and broadsheet features on every show broadcast on BBC4, there was the *Wallander* collected here. Rather than the quietly depressed, dogged but inspirational detective later portrayed by Krister

Henriksson, this earlier iteration starring Rolf Lassgård (currently owning it as unlikeable profiler Sebastian Bergman) is a series which appears plenty more expensive but which leans harder on that TV staple, the cop who uses his professionalism to paper over the cracks in his personal life. Still, these are good films, the disconnect between cause and effect held together by strong direction and Wallander's actorly understanding of human motivation.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN ROBINSON

8/10



Back on the
Norse: Rolf
Lassgård, right,
as Bergman

SEBASTIAN BERGMAN

ARROW FILMS



7/10

Scruffy psychologist takes on Sweden's killers A dishevelled criminal profiler, down on his luck and plagued by inner demons and vices, is engaged by a reluctant police force to help track down a killer. Yes, this could be the pitch for *Cracker* – but here it's successfully used as the premise of this month's essential piece of "Nordic

Noir". There are clear parallels between Robbie Coltrane's Fitz and Rolf Lassgård's title character beyond the bear-like frames of both actors, although where Fitz was a slave to a destructive gambling habit, Bergman's weakness is women. The subtext to both series is that it takes a troubled mind to get inside another troubled mind, but while *Cracker* spun on Fitz's intuition, Sweden's *Sebastian Bergman* functions as more of a standard police procedural.

When we first meet Sebastian, he's sorting through his recently deceased mother's house and contents, and notices the arrival of detectives to question a murder suspect next door. It's the same crack team he worked with 12 years earlier. The script only hints at the reasons for their falling out, and his co-opting onto the investigation ruffles the feathers of familiarly drawn squad members – the weary and jaded lead cop, a no-nonsense ambitious fast-track female sergeant, a younger idealistic rookie.

This opening two-parter, "The Cursed One", introduces the mesmerising Lassgård, previously seen as a detective in the original Swedish *Wallander*. He plays Bergman as a relatively taciturn and benign force (far removed from Coltrane's ebullient Fitz), understated but wise. He never really seems to do much, but you can't take your eyes off him. Bergman's personal tragedy of having lost his wife and young daughter in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami may veer too close to soap opera for some, but as a set-up for an unlikely new hero, it ticks a satisfying number of boxes.

EXTRAS: None.

TERRY STAUNTON

Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

THIS MONTH: Cronenberg and cars, a contender for the year's best music doc, Willem Dafoe, Adrien Brody and a "kind of a Shins-meets-Sesame Street thing"

Cosmopolis In the years since his last self-penned film, 1999's *eXistenZ*, David Cronenberg has become a shrewd adaptor of other writers' material. Encouragingly, Don DeLillo's 2003 boutique novella *Cosmopolis* shares many of Cronenberg's preoccupations – viruses, transgression, technology, madness, controlled environments. It fits, too, with the discursive, intellectual direction of his recent films. Here's Eric Packer, a 28-year-old billionaire, who travels across New York by limousine to get a haircut, on a day when the city is gridlocked by a rapper's funeral, political demonstrations and a visit from the President – "barriers set up, entire streets deleted from the map". In a wry piece of casting, Cronenberg's Packer is *Twilight* star Robert Pattinson, whose android handsomeness is perfect for Packer, recessed into the darkness of his limousine, eyes hidden behind sunglasses, splendidly vampiric. Packer, lost in calculations and predictions and currency markets, "acquires information and turns it into something stupendous and awful". Bored and distant, he asks, "Show me something I haven't seen before." He holds meetings in his limo with his work associates, has sex, undergoes a prostate examination. There is a "credible threat" against his life. The limo interior itself is beautiful, sleek and hi-tech. Around Pattinson, Cronenberg casts Juliette Binoche, Samantha Morton, Mathieu Amalric and Paul Giamatti – all of whom are excellent. Cronenberg lifts DeLillo's dense dialogue verbatim, his cast use a disconnected, stylised delivery that becomes increasingly hypnotic the longer you go with it. So, while this isn't a muscular genre piece like his recent triumphs, *A History Of Violence* and *Eastern Promises*, this very specific, very literal adaptation feels like Cronenberg's most experimental and thoughtful film for years.

► **Searching For Sugar Man** There's a batch number of high-profile music documentaries out this year – Kevin Macdonald's *Marley* and Joe Berliner's Paul Simon film *Under African Skies* have already arrived, with the Rolling Stones, the Stone Roses and Fillmore East projects yet to come. But truffle a little deeper and you'll find some less well-known but equally rich stories deserving attention. Chief among these is *Searching For Sugar Man*, a fascinating unscrambling of a 30-year-old mystery about Sixto Rodriguez, a Dylan-y singer-songwriter from Detroit who disappeared after his



A haircut to die for:
Robert Pattinson calls
the shots in Cronenberg's
Cosmopolis

two albums tanked in the early '70s, but unwittingly became an unlikely icon for white liberals during Apartheid in South Africa.

Malik Bendjelloul's film loops through a number of strands – who was Rodriguez, why did he become so big in South Africa, and what happened to royalties from the 500,000 copies he sold there of his debut album, *Cold Fact*? Each gives up fascinating moments – reports that he's committed suicide on stage; a difficult interview with his former label boss (and one-time Motown chairman) Clarence Avant regarding the whereabouts of the royalties; a revealing tour of the Archive of Censored Material in Johannesburg. But the pay-off is a present-day interview with Rodriguez. Now aged 69 and looking like a Mexican Johnny Cash, he lives modestly in downtown Detroit, where he

still works "hard labour, demolition, restoration... it keeps the blood circulating."

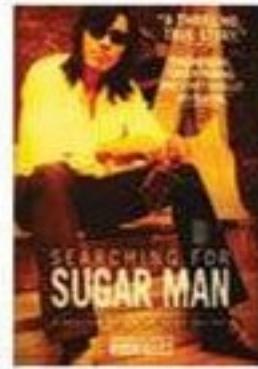
Frustratingly, Bendjelloul's film spends too long on Rodriguez' South African success – the first hour is almost all interviews with enthusiastic SA musicians and industry professionals testifying to the artist's brilliance – that could have been judiciously edited to half the length. You sense that the sketchy but evocative accounts of Rodriguez in his absent years as "a wandering spirit round the city... not much more than a homeless person" merit much deeper investigation.

► **Detachment** If you've heard of Tony Kaye before, it's probably as the director of 1998's *American History X* – a film that assumed heavy-duty notoriety in its day due to the spat between

Reviewed this month...



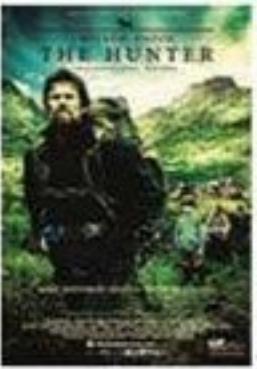
COSMOPOLIS
Director David Cronenberg
Starring Robert Pattinson, Paul Giamatti
Opens June 15
Certificate 15
8/10



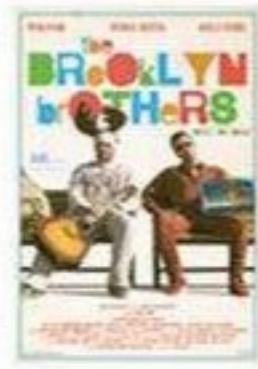
SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN
Director Malik Bendjelloul
Starring Sixto Rodriguez
Opens July 27
Certificate 12A
8/10



DETACHMENT
Director Tony Kaye
Starring Adrien Brody, James Caan
Opens July 13
Certificate 15
6/10



THE HUNTER
Director Daniel Nettlheim
Starring Willem Dafoe, Sam Neill
Opens July 6
Certificate 15
6/10



BROOKLYN BROTHERS BEAT THE BEST
Director Ryan O'Nan
Starring Ryan O'Nan, Michael Weston
Opens July 20
Certificate 15
7/10



Cosmopolis feels like David Cronenberg's most experimental and thoughtful film for years

Kaye, the film's star Ed Norton and distributor New Line. After taking a Catholic priest, a rabbi and a Buddhist monk to a meeting between himself and New Line studio executives, Kaye attempted to get his name taken off the film. The refusal from the Director's Guild of America to accept his suggested replacements – 'Humpty Dumpty', or 'Ralph Coates', after the former Spurs winger – caused Kaye to retaliate with a \$200 million lawsuit. Around the time of the World Trade Center attacks, Kaye began dressing as Osama bin Laden. It's hard to think how much more damage one man could wilfully inflict on his own career.

Detachment is Kaye's first film to be released since the *American History X* debacle – an abortion documentary, *Lake Of Fire*, was well-received in 2007, though another feature, *Black Water*

Transit, from 2009, is still without a distributor.

Detachment is essentially a left-field addition to the canon of inspirational high-school dramas. Adrien Brody – who himself has fallen far from the tree in recent years – plays a substitute teacher drafted into a New York high school. Just as the school itself is ailing – "You're in a foxhole, and you're fucked," Marcia Gay Harden's principal is told – Brody's Henry Barthes is in crisis. His dying grandfather is in care, but the carers are incompetent. There is some unspecified trauma from his childhood involving his mother. Henry is afraid of emotional attachments, but finds himself drawn into three, with a fellow teacher (*Mad Men*'s Christina Hendricks), an overweight but gifted pupil (Betty Kaye) and a teenage prostitute (Sami Gayle). Nothing good will come of any of this. Kaye has pulled in some big-name support – James Caan, Blythe Danner and Lucy Liu are great as harassed fellow teachers – and while *The Awfulness Of It All* begins to grate after a while, Brody's stoic calm provides a welcome respite.

► **The Hunter** Such is the lot of the jobbing actor, it's sometimes hard for audiences to remember what it was they liked about them in the first place. For too long now, Willem Dafoe has made presumably lucrative but seemingly undemanding forays into Hollywood studio movies like Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* and the dismal *John Carter*. In *The Hunter*, he plays Martin, a mercenary dispatched by a pharmaceutical company to the Australian wilds to track the rare Tasmanian tiger, thought to have been extinct since the 1930s. Martin watches grainy black-and-white footage of the last known specimen, which, with its elongated jaw and strange, dog-like face and striped body, looks unnatural and alien. He takes digs with the family of a missing eco-activist, Jarrah, and there are run-ins with unfriendly locals – there's the tacit suggestion they have might been responsible for Jarrah's disappearance. The film's at its best in a series of long, near-silent sections when it's just Dafoe out in the wilderness, tracking his prey. Now in his mid-fifties, Dafoe's rugged features mirror the craggy landscape he navigates so purposefully. It reminds us of how engrossing Dafoe can be on screen – something that seems to have been forgotten under the latex and special effects of his recent movies.

► **The Brooklyn Brothers Beat The Best** A lo-fi music comedy, this is the debut of Ryan O'Nan – a man with plenty on his plate – who writes, directs, stars and provides the soundtrack. As Alex, he's a struggling musician whose career peak thus far seems to be performing for handicapped children as "Alex the musical moose". At a personal and professional low, he reluctantly teams up with self-proclaimed musical genius Jim (Michael Weston) and heads off on a road trip from New York to California for a Battle Of The Bands contest. Their music? A "kind of a Shins-meets-Sesame Street thing".

The film hinges on the dynamic between neurotic, introspective Alex and the eccentric Jim, a collector of musical toys and arrant bullshitter, who secures one gig at a rock club by claiming Stone Temple Pilots' Scott Weiland will be joining them onstage. They subsequently win over audiences with their winsome indie-pop sounds.

If this all sounds like a cross between *Flight Of The Conchords* and *Juno*, you'd be right. O'Nan is a personable lead, reminding one a little of Paul Rudd doing his exasperated everyman. An unexpectedly effective cameo from former Brat Packer Andrew McCarthy as Alex's Christian elder brother brings a reflective beat to the film's final third. But the vibes are upbeat, the mood positive, and O'Nan's trick isn't to make it too quirky, too twee.

Also out...



THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

OPENS JULY 3

Reboot for the superhero series, with Andrew Garfield as the new Tobey Maguire.

QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

OPENS JULY 3

Something evil lurks in the Underground in this digital dust-off for Nigel Kneale's doughty British scientist.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

OPENS JULY 4

Low-budget satire about a dying man who decides to end his days killing celebrities and bigots.

TOTAL RECALL

OPENS JULY 6

Ahead of the Colin Farrell remake, you can see Arnie back in the cinema for a re-release of Paul Verhoeven's 1990 version.

MAGIC MIKE

OPENS JULY 11

Channing Tatum takes the lead in Steven Soderbergh's latest, as a male stripper showing the ropes to a newbie.

CHARIOTS OF FIRE

OPENS JULY 13

The British are coming! Get in the Olympic spirit with a re-release of this film about running.

ICE AGE 4: CONTINENTAL DRIFT

OPENS JULY 13

Very successful animated film about animals during the Ice Age. Not much else to say here.



THE DARK KNIGHT RISES

OPENS JULY 20

The last instalment of Christopher Nolan's Batflicks. Much anticipated, to say the least.

I AM BRUCE LEE

OPENS JULY 20

An antidote to the Bat, perhaps? Acclaimed doc about the martial arts legend.

RED DESERT

OPENS JULY 27

No Olympics for you? How about a re-release of Antonioni's post-industrial drama, with Monica Vitti unravelling.

THE VIEW

CHEEKY
FOR A
REASON



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GLASGOW	- 02 Academy	12 JULY
STOCKTON-ON-TEES	- Ku Bar	28 JULY

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Books

BY ALLAN JONES

THIS MONTH: A Dylan biography, the new Richard Ford novel, a celebration of the Stones' dubious 50th, and fear and loathing in the Tudor court of Henry VIII...

THERE'S MUCH TO like about David Dalton's *Who Is That Man?*, not least a lot of good writing in one place. Dalton has a slick, finger-clicking style, full of hip patter that at times he maybe pushes a little too hard in an apparent attempt to evoke the rhythms of what he calls "Dylan's beatnik blues", the über-cool vernacular of '60s Bob, his speedy raps and incredible verbal riffing, but is otherwise well-suited to his subject.

This somewhat racy style at least makes this book more readable in many ways than the often stodgy workmanlike prose of other notable Dylan commentators, among them Michael Gray, Clinton Heylin and Howard Sounes. But does Dalton have anything to substantially add to what they've already told us about Dylan? Not really.

As entertaining as it is, there's no real sense here that we are being told anything that will make us look at Dylan or his music as if something that had never previously occurred to us has been unexpectedly revealed, some hitherto overlooked truth brought into sharp and dazzling focus.

The question Dylan fans most want an answer to, Dalton announces in his introduction, is what goes on in Bob's brain? His book, he hints, will tell us, or at least bring us to a closer understanding. But since the person best-placed to answer the question Dalton asks is Dylan himself, who is unlikely to provide one, Dalton's attempts to 'get inside Dylan's head' and illuminate that seething cavity are pretty much doomed from the start. He doesn't even give it much of a shot, actually. There's a lot of rather predictable stuff about Dylan's hardly covert inclination towards self-mythology, the many personalities he has created for himself, but very quickly Dalton's book becomes a straightforward biography, re-hashing an entirely familiar chronological trajectory, with copious reliance, not always clearly acknowledged, on the research of earlier biographers like Anthony, Scaduto, Shelton and Heylin. The biggest disappointment, though, is the almost abject lack of attention to late-period Dylan. With disturbing haste, Dalton wraps up the past 20 years of Dylan's life and music in a meagre 25 pages.

► The opening of Richard Ford's terrific new novel, *Canada*, briefly suggests a return to the hard-boiled territory of something like *The Ultimate Good Luck*, one of his earliest books. "First, I'll tell you about the robbery our parents committed. Then about the murders, which happened later," Ford writes, in the voice of Dell Parsons, now a retired English teacher, looking



How to get inside the head of über-cool '60s Bob, that is the question

back 50 years at the events of a few weeks in 1960 that destroyed his family. What follows, however, is less lurid caper than rueful meditation, told in the unhurried, meticulously crafted prose of Ford's later trilogy of novels, *The Sportswriter*, *Independence Day* and *The Lay Of The Land*.

Dell is 15 when his family – father Bev, mother Neeva and twin sister Berner – fetch up in Grand Falls, Montana. Bev is a familiar archetype of a certain kind of American fiction, a feckless charmer whose make-a-buck schemes invariably unravel, often calamitously. Here an illegal business deal puts Bev in a tight spot with severely disgruntled partners demanding money he owes them but can only repay by robbing a bank. Things of course do not go well. Bev and Neeva are arrested, Berner disappears. Dell is smuggled across the border to Canada, delivered into a life of purgatorial grimness. The story he tells is his attempt to understand the family he lost on his way to where he is now, which unfolds with measured sadness, an almost implausible deliberation that will no doubt irk anyone in search of more up-tempo thrills even as it consumes the more sympathetic reader.

► **The Rolling Stones: 50** marks an anniversary the Stones have been curiously reluctant to celebrate, Keith Richards even suggesting the band's 50th birthday won't be until 2013, when it will be a half-century since Charlie Watts joined. This hasn't stopped them, however,

from contributing to this hefty, handsomely presented photo-led history (over 1000 images across 350 pages), which we are also asked to believe they also compiled, although their input was probably rather more negligible.

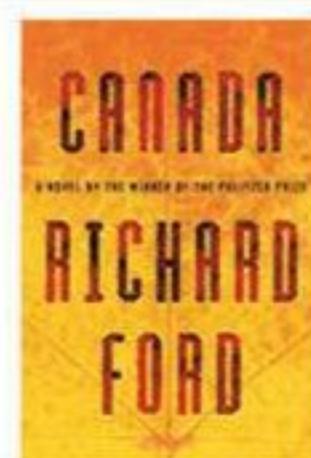
There are individual introductions by Mick, Keith, Charlie and Ronnie that couldn't be less revealing if they'd been written by people who'd never heard of the band ("We couldn't have done it without you!"). The picture captions they've supposedly provided are equally anodyne, paltry annotations in virtually every instance, as the band are called on once again to revisit their glorious past.

► Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up The Bodies* is the follow-up to the mega-selling, prize-winning, must-read *Wolf Hall*, and therefore the second in her projected trilogy about the Tudor court of Henry VIII and the role played in it by the king's enforcer, Thomas Cromwell, after Henry, the most powerful man in England and as greatly feared. *Wolf Hall* was dense with necessary historical background and detailed introductions to many characters that reappear here. Now we are familiar with context and cast, Mantel drives her narrative with a remorseless streamlined energy, as Cromwell plots the downfall of the overreaching Anne Boleyn, who, unable to give Henry the male heir he craves, must be sacrificed, and takes simultaneous revenge on his enemies in a manner that recalls Michael Corleone taking care of "all family business" in *The Godfather*.

Reviewed this month...



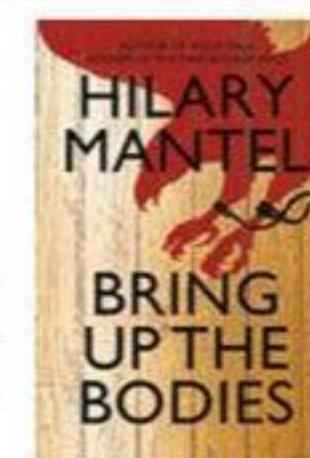
**Who Is That Man?
In Search Of The
Real Bob Dylan**
David Dalton
OMNIBUS
7/10



Canada
Richard Ford
BLOOMSBURY
9/10



**The Rolling
Stones: 50**
Mick Jagger, Keith
Richards, Charlie
Watts and Ronnie
Wood
THAMES & HUDSON
6/10



**Bring Up The
Bodies**
Hilary Mantel
FOURTH ESTATE
9/10

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD



SETLIST

- 1 Blue Flower
- 2 Disappear
- 3 Ghost Highway
- 4 Halah
- 5 Still Cold
- 6 She Hangs Brightly
- 7 Look On Down Through The Bridge
- 8 Spoon
- 9 Fade Into You
- 10 Lay Myself Down
- 11 Flyin' Low

ENCORE

- 12 Common Burn
- 13 Ride It On
- 14 So Tonight That I Might See
- 15 I've Been Let Down

MAZZY STAR

O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON, JUNE 3, 2012

Hope springs eternal! The shadowy return of Sandoval and Roback

MAZZY STAR WERE effectively born just down the road in Hammersmith in 1987, on the night Kendra Smith flung her guitar to the floor and fled the stage where Opal were supporting The Jesus And Mary Chain. When eventually found, she recommended David Roback hire Hope Sandoval to take her place. They continued to tour for the next year as Opal before changing their name, but it was clear from the start that Mazzy Star were a very different band.

Squint through the gloom of the underlit Empire tonight, and you might think a few months had passed rather than a quarter of a century. Centrestage in mini-dress and knee-high boots, pale face moonlike between jet-black veils of hair, dashing a tambourine languidly against a hip, Hope Sandoval seems to be ageing in the imperceptible fashion of Isabella Rossellini or Morticia Addams. Stage right, lurking in yet deeper shadow, beneath the back projections of wheeling starcharts and moonlit tides, Roback is impassive under a hat and

behind shades. Even the band comprises original drummer Keith Mitchell and keyboardist Suki Ewers, albeit augmented by Colm Ó Cíosóig (evidently My Bloody Valentine's hiatus is continuing a little longer) and Paul McQuillan, Sandoval's bandmates in her latterday project, The Warm Inventions.

"Hello," they mutter as they slope onstage, and it's practically the last word they say all night. No explanations, no apologies. Between songs the soundman fades up recordings of lonesome train whistles



Mazzy Star, "as contemporaneous as at any point since the mid-'90s"

and ambient harp strums to mask the blatant lack of repartee and to try to hold the mood, the spell. Mazzy Star's last album was 1996's *Among My Swan*, where their impeccable formula seemed to be at last wearing a little thin. Since then: a string of guest vocals from Sandoval for the likes of the Chemical Brothers, the Mary Chain and Massive Attack, plus a couple of albums with The Warm Inventions. Roback, perhaps in some velvet emulation of Lee Hazlewood, seems to have spent the better part of the last decade in Scandinavia, surfacing only to appear in Olivier Assayas' 2004 film, *Clean*, playing himself, and writing and producing a couple of casually sublime songs for Maggie Cheung's recovering smackhead diva.

With studious perversity, they kick off after all this time with "Blue Flower", the most brazenly Velvety number from their 1990 debut, which is actually a cover of a far more obscurely hip Slapp Happy tune. From his days in The Rain Parade, Roback's talent was always sufficient to transcend the *Nuggets* nerdery of the Paisley Underground. But, like Godard finding Karina or Lynch finding Laura Dern, it took until the hook-up with Sandoval to help

really channel his work. Thanks to her voice and sheer presence, Mazzy Star escaped the more studied retrospection of the '80s; she was able to transform even his laziest pastiches and genre exercises into something genuinely oneiric. Sandoval's dreamy drawl is still pitch perfect – a West Coast fantasy blend of some frosty Greenwich Village siren midway between Karen Dalton and Nico.

Last year's unexpected comeback single "Common Burn" makes plain the debt to Dalton, its smoldering torch song blown alive by a jazzy breeze of vibes. It was a cannily timed comeback, choosing a moment when, thanks to the success of obvious heirs such as Beach House, and the more general Lynchian mood of leftfield pop, Mazzy Star seem as contemporaneous as at any point since the mid-'90s. Tonight it fits perfectly in a set that draws equally from all three albums. Along with the single's B-side, "Lay Myself Down", there are just two more new songs: the rumbling, Sandy Bull-ish acoustic drone of "Spoon", and the swampy riffing of "Flyin' Low". Perhaps the absence of much new material is understandable in a set largely designed for the festival season, but it doesn't exactly augur well for the prospect of the new album the band have been talking up since at least 2000.

But much of the crowd tonight seem content to be here for one song: "Fade Into You", the breakout hit from 1993's *So Tonight That I Might See*. Across the hall, thirty/fortysomething couples turn to each other and mouth the words, "I look to you and I see nothing" as though it were "The Lady In Red" for middle-aged indie kids. But the song's narcotic swoon remains untarnished. Having survived appearances in Diet Coke ads, *Starship Troopers* fight scenes and even a beach montage in the Guy Ritchie/Madonna atrocity *Swept Away*, it clearly has the requisite indestructibility of the modern standard.

Funnily enough, it's the band's worse performance of the night, Sandoval seemingly out of tune for the first half of the song, the musicians lumbering on oblivious. But it certainly satisfies the audience. After barely an hour the band leave the stage and, though there's no great clamour for more, they dutifully return for a brief encore, kicking off with "Common Burn" and ending with "I've Been Let Down" from their last album. "I've been let down but I'm still coming round for you," drawls Sandoval. It's a characteristically downbeat conclusion.

While at no point does the show feel like a triumphant homecoming, it's certainly no anticlimax. But we may have to wait for that much anticipated new album, the opportunity to take the band and their music back to their natural environment – alone, heartsick, some 3am of the soul – to see if they still hang brightly, or whether this is just the light from a star that burned out long ago.

STEPHEN TROUSSE

FURTHER DATES

► Mazzy Star perform in Zurich (July 18) and Copenhagen (August 6), and at Gothenburg's Way Out West festival and St Malo's La Route Du Rock in August.



Dedicated followers of Chilton: Ray Davies, with Mike Mills (left) and Norman Blake (right)

Big Star Third

BARBICAN, LONDON, MAY 28, 2012

A tribute to Alex Chilton: inconsistent, suitably enough

ALEX IS DEFINITELY here," announces drummer Jody Stephens, at 59 the only surviving member of Big Star. A noble sentiment, but as the Big Star Third project's luminaries gather to refloat Alex Chilton's rock Mary Celeste, he doesn't sound that convinced.

Never one to wallow in nostalgia – unless the price was right – Chilton might have felt a little ambivalent about this homage to his abandoned 1974 opus, a 'luded-out cocktail of petulance and longing. He would have cracked a smile, however, to hear so many ardent admirers reach for *Sister Lovers*' high notes and miss.

Directed by Chilton's one-time sideman, Chris Stamey, this tribute has its cynicism-busting moments, nonetheless. Introducing a freewheeling "Kanga Roo" – the only song where this Beale Street Green Preservation Society deviate from the recorded version – Stamey marvels at having watched Chilton perform it in the late 1970s. "I didn't know it could be played," the ex-dB says, and hearing some bits of the incorporeal *Third* made flesh evokes similar awe; Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor ghosting round every curve of "Nightime", Sharon Van Etten letting "Dream Lover" wash over her. However, with a different singer taking the stage for each song, it does turn into a bit of a pop penalty shoot-out: rejoice as Norman Blake scuffs "Stroke It Noel" in off the post – wince and look away as REM's Mike Mills sticks "Jesus Christ" into Row Z.

As many hits miss in a second set of Big Star and Chris Bell classics, which takes a sharp turn for the unlikely when Ray Davies shambles on for a closing salvo of "Till The End Of The Day" and his old Memphis neighbour's Box Tops hit, "The Letter". "He used to lend me his guitar," recalls the Kink weepily. "And he charged me for it." For that moment at least, Alex was definitely there.

JIM WIRTH



THE GREAT ESCAPE

UNCUT STAGE, PAVILION THEATRE, BRIGHTON, MAY 10-12, 2012

Three long, dark nights with Uncut and friends: EMA, Toy, Forest Swords, Django Django and The Black Belles

AFTER WEEKS OF being shoved aside by an apparently infinite rain cloud, the summer decides, handily, to break through in time for Brighton's annual festival of new music. At the Pavilion Theatre, however, the sunny mood has been replaced by something less convivial. Over three days, many of the bands on this stage curated by *Uncut* create a glorious noir atmosphere. From Forest Swords to EMA, they construct their own shadowy worlds, rich in imagery.

Seeing newcomers **Toy**, long of hair and black of rollneck, take the stage on the first night, it's not hard to guess the Krautrock seam they mine. Debut single "Left Myself Behind" is, in the grand tradition of "Little Johnny Jewel" or "Re-Make/Re-Model", a manifesto; an autobahn from which all their other songs branch. Their pulsing motorik, with

echoing guitar, makes for a thrilling sound, if not a totally original one. Time will tell whether the quintet have enough substance to match their style.

Letting in some light are Thursday's headliners **Django Django**. More confident than when they played here three years ago, the Scots seamlessly weave Afropop and electronics into their brittle indie on "Wor", and unravel "Waveforms" into an exhilarating extended electro coda of the kind Super Furry Animals once specialised in.

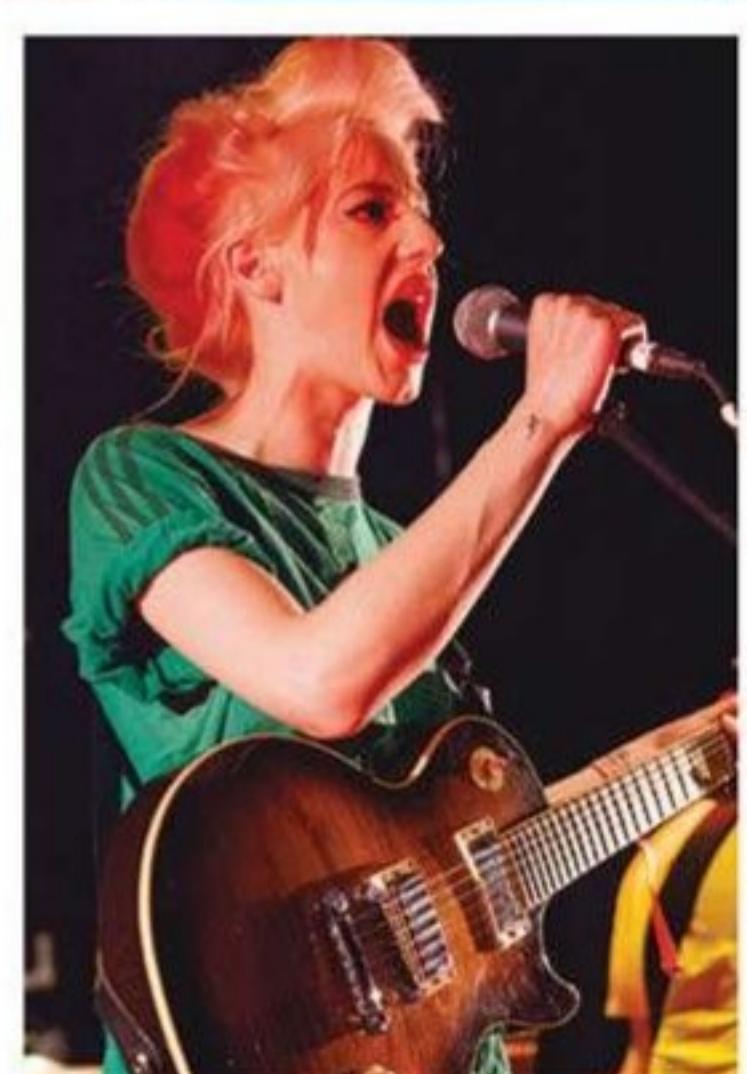
Friday night is opened by Jack White protégées **The Black Belles**, whose gothic garage-rock draws a large crowd. The black-clad trio share White's ability to wring revelations from timeworn riffs and, though there's an undeniable element of pantomime, songs such as "Honky Tonk Horror" and "The Wrong Door" are Halloween garage gems, stuffed

with killer riffs and bloody hooks.

Forest Swords, meanwhile, moves the action from an old-timey Salem wood to a gloomy modern-day thicket. One apt comparison would be Burial, yet Matthew Barnes' ghostly electronic sounds are warmer and dubbier, conjuring up underground pagan spaces rather than crepuscular council estates.

Beth Jeans Houghton & The Hooches Of Destiny, playing on Saturday night, are more traditional and a bigger hit with the crowd. Jeans Houghton, hair piled up like a blonde Winehouse, warbles through "Atlas" and urges her band to tell dirty stories, while they whip up a galloping, soulful folk storm; yet Jeans Houghton's banter and lyrics, especially on "Prick AKA Sean", can grate.

Saturday's show actually opens with more sophisticated sounds: fine bar-room rock from Brooklyn



raconteur **Hans Chew**. Joined only by guitarist Dave Cavallo, the pianist's expansive, witty songs, especially "Queen Of The Damned Blues", are more impressive when divorced from his rhythm section, presumably less cost-effective and thus left in New York.

Uncut's final headliner of the weekend runs the gamut from dramatic spoken word to primitive electro-grunge. At times there are almost too many tangents to keep track of, but **EMA**'s presence and sense of theatre bind her stylistic shifts together. Whether wrapped in a cloak of fairy lights for "Marked", accompanied by eerie electric violin on "Fargo", or thrashing at her Fender Jaguar like an angst-ridden Cat Power, Erika M Anderson's humble dressing-up box seems to open up into a deep, dark world of imagination that is very much her own. **TOM PINNOCK**

UNCUT Reader Survey

READER OPINION IS vital to us here at *Uncut* in making sure every month we deliver exactly what you want from us, and so is knowing as much about our readers as possible. Hence this survey, which if you have a few spare minutes we'd be grateful if you could complete and send to us.

There's something in this for you, too – completing the survey automatically guarantees the chance to win the following in a prize draw: **• FIRST PRIZE** is a stunning framed print of Led Zeppelin lead singer Robert Plant holding a dove during the 1973 show at San Francisco's Kezar Stadium, courtesy of Sonic Editions. (Photo by James Fortune) **PLUS:** £100 worth of vouchers to spend at HMV and a copy of the new *Uncut Ultimate Music Guide*, dedicated to Led Zeppelin **• FOUR RUNNERS UP**, meanwhile, will each win £50 worth of vouchers to spend at HMV, plus a copy of the new *Uncut Ultimate Music Guide*, dedicated to Led Zeppelin...

We hope to be hearing from you soon!



SONICEDITIONS.COM/UNCUT

Q1. Which genres of music do you listen to? (Tick all that apply)

'50s Rock'n'Roll	01	Chart Pop	10	Heavy Metal	19
'60s/'70s Rock	02	Classical	11	Jazz	20
'80s/'90s Hip Hop	03	Contemporary American Indie Rock	12	Prog Rock	21
'80s/'90s Indie	04	Contemporary British Indie Rock	13	Punk	22
Americana	05	Contemporary R&B/Hip Hop	14	Reggae	23
Art Rock	06	Country	15	Soul / Funk	24
Avant Garde	07	Electronica	16	World Music	25
Blues	08	Folk	17		
Britpop	09	Glam Rock	18		

Q2. Which of the following magazines do you buy, and how often? (Please tick one in each row)

	Every issue - subscriber	Every issue - non subscriber	2 out of 4 issues	1 out of 4 issues	When I like who is on cover	Never - I read other people's	I never buy/read
Uncut	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mojo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Word	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Classic Rock	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rolling Stone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Empire	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total Film	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esquire	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Decanter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q3. When you buy *Uncut*, where do you buy it from?

Local supermarket/corner store	1
Big ('out of town') supermarket	2
High street supermarket	3
High street newsagent	4
Petrol station	5
Online shop	6
I'm a subscriber	7

Q4. Have you ever bought one of the *Uncut Ultimate Music Guides*? i.e. special issues as illustrated below.

The Clash	1	Rolling Stones	5
David Bowie	2	John Lennon	6
Pink Floyd	3	Bruce Springsteen	7
The Who	4	None of these	8

Q5. How long do you spend online each day?

Less than an hour	1	2-5 hours	3
1-2 hours	2	5 hours plus	4

Q6. Where do you normally download magazines from?

(e.g. via Apple's Newsstand app or Zinio?)

Q7. How often do you download magazines?

Every issue	1
Now and again	2
Only to read issues that are no longer on sale	3

Q8. How much time do you spend on MUSIC-based websites?

Less than an hour a day	1	2-5 hours	3
1-2 hours	2	All of my time	4

UNCUT READER SURVEY

Q9. Which of the following music websites do you visit?

(Tick all that apply)

Uncut.co.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>	01
NME.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	02
Pitchfork.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	03
Drownedinsound.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	04
Thequietus.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	05
Hypem.com (The Hype Machine)	<input type="checkbox"/>	06
Mojo4music.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	07
Qthemusic.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	08
Rollingstone.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
Wordmagazine.co.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Other, please state		

Q10. How often do you visit Uncut.co.uk?

Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Every week	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Every day	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Every month	<input type="checkbox"/>	3			

Q13. Which of the following types of media do you use to gather music related information? (Tick one in each row)

	Uncut	Internet	Newspapers	Other music publications
Gigs Listings/Live Ads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Features on artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News on artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To discover new artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To keep in touch with what's going on in film	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To help me feel connected to popular culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Album reviews to keep me up to date with new releases/reissues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Album reviews to help me choose what to buy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Film reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q14. When you are reading Uncut and notice the music adverts, which of the following do they do for you?

(Tick all that apply)

They make me go online to sample the music before I buy	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
They remind me to buy the product when I next visit my favourite online store	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
They give me an idea of the music I want to download	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
They act as a reminder to buy the product when I'm next at my favourite high street music retailer	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
They announce the latest new music which will appeal to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
They provide me with latest music releases I can tell friends about	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
They inform me of upcoming live gigs/shows and prompt me to purchase tickets	<input type="checkbox"/>	7

Q15. How many DVDs/Blu-rays do you own?

(Please write in approx number)

Q16. Where do you buy DVDs/Blu-rays from?

HMV (in-store)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Zavvi.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
HMV.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
Amazon.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	ebay	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
Play.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

Q17. How often do you buy DVDs/Blu-rays?

More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	3			

Q11. Which of the following social networking/sharing sites do you use? (Tick all that apply)

Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	01	Google Circles	<input type="checkbox"/>	06
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	02	Stumbleupon	<input type="checkbox"/>	07
YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/>	03	Digg	<input type="checkbox"/>	08
MySpace	<input type="checkbox"/>	04	Delicious	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
Tumblr	<input type="checkbox"/>	05	Pinterest	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Other, please state					

Q12. Which of the following music streaming sites do you use? (Tick all that apply)

Last FM	<input type="checkbox"/>	01	MySpace	<input type="checkbox"/>	06
Spotify (free)	<input type="checkbox"/>	02	Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	07
Spotify (paid)	<input type="checkbox"/>	03	YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/>	08
eMusic	<input type="checkbox"/>	04	We7	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
Soundcloud	<input type="checkbox"/>	05	Deezer	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Other, please state					

Q13. Which of the following types of media do you use to gather music related information? (Tick one in each row)

	Uncut	Internet	Newspapers	Other music publications
Gigs Listings/Live Ads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Features on artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News on artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To discover new artists/bands/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To keep in touch with what's going on in film	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To help me feel connected to popular culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Album reviews to keep me up to date with new releases/reissues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Album reviews to help me choose what to buy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Film reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q18. Where do you rent films from?

Love Film (subscription)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Blockbuster	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Tesco Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Netflix	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Local independent rental shop	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	iTunes	<input type="checkbox"/>	6

Q19. How often do you rent?

More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	3			

Q20. How often do you buy and download films/TV programmes online - e.g. from iTunes?

More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	3			

Q21. Please give a list of up to 3 current TV programmes about music you enjoy

1.

2.

3.

Q22. Please give a list of up to 3 current Radio shows you listen to regularly (e.g. 6 Music / Jarvis Cocker)

1.

2.

3.

Q23. On average how much do you spend on the following per MONTH?

	<£9.99	£10-£19	£20-£29	£30-£49	£50-£99	£100-£199	£200+
Single/Album Downloads	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
CD/Vinyl (new)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
CD/Vinyl (re-issues/re-mastered)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Gig tickets	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Music DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Film DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Film Downloads	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Cinema Tickets	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Other live event tickets - i.e sports	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Spirits/Beer/Lager	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Grooming products	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Fragrance/Aftershave	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

Q24. Where do you buy CDs/Vinyl from?

Fopp	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Zavvi	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
HMV (in-store)	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
HMV.com	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	ebay	<input type="checkbox"/> 08
Amazon.com	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	Independent music store	<input type="checkbox"/> 09
Play.com	<input type="checkbox"/> 05		
Other, please state			

Q25. How often do you buy CDs/Vinyl?

More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/> 3		

Q26. Where do you download music (MP3s) from?

iTunes	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	eMusic	<input type="checkbox"/> 04
Amazon	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	Napster	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
HMV.com	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	Tesco.com	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
Other, please state			

Q27. How often do you download music?

More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/> 3		

Q28. Do you have any big purchases planned for 2012?

Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	House	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Car	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	TV	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
PC/Laptop	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Audio System	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

Q29. If you own a smart phone, what do you use it for (other than calling or text messaging)?

Do not own a smart phone	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Apps	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
Browsing the internet	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	Playing games	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
Emailing	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	Taking photographs	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
Listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/> 04		
Other, please state			

Q30. If you own a tablet device, who is it made by?

Do not own	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Asus	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
iPad	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	HTC	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
Samsung	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	HP	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
Sony	<input type="checkbox"/> 04		
Other, please state			

Q31. What brand is your home HiFi equipment?

Monitor	<input type="checkbox"/> 01
KEFF	<input type="checkbox"/> 02
Sonos	<input type="checkbox"/> 03
Cambridge	<input type="checkbox"/> 04
Bose	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
B&O	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
Brennan	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
Naim	<input type="checkbox"/> 08
Denon	<input type="checkbox"/> 09
Sony	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Phillips	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
Other, please state	

Q32. What type of system is it?

Wi-Fi multi-room	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Media centre - linked to iTunes/central database	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
iPod dock	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
DAB radio	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Separates/Speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Q33. How much did you spend on your audio system?

£0-£100	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	£750-£1000	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
£100-£250	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	£1000-£1,500	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
£250-£500	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	£1,500-£2,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
£500-£750	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	£2,000+	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

Q34. What brand of headphones do you own?

Sennheiser	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Sony	<input type="checkbox"/> 04
Shure	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	AKG	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
Beats	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	Phillips	<input type="checkbox"/> 06

Other, please state

Q35. How much did you spend on your headphones?

£0-£25	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
£25-£50	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
£50-£100	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
£100-£150	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
£150-£200	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
£200-£300	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
£300-£400	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
£400-£500	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
£500+	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

UNCUT READER SURVEY

Q36. Which 3 beer/lager/cider brands do you consume most regularly?

Stella	01	Guinness	09
Foster's	02	Old Speckled Hen	10
Gaymers	03	Tiger	11
Aspall	04	Peroni	12
London Pride	05	John Smith's	13
Bombardier	06	Tuborg	14
Greene King IPA	07	Bulmers	15
Hobgoblin	08		
Other, please state			

Q37. Which 3 spirit brands do you consume most regularly?

Smirnoff	01	Gordon's Gin	09
Jack Daniel's	02	Sailor Jerry Rum	10
Famous Grouse	03	Bacardi	11
Johnny Walker	04	Bell's	12
Glenfiddich	05	Drambuie	13
Jameson	06	Jägermeister	14
Russian Standard Vodka	07	Jose Cuervo Tequila	15
Absolut	08		
Other, please state			

Q38. What car do you currently drive?

BMW	01	Toyota	06
Mercedes	02	Ford	07
Alfa Romeo	03	Renault	08
Seat	04	Nissan	09
Audi	05		
Other, please state			

Q39. Which of the following grooming brands do you use?

Nivea	01	Gillette	04
Right Guard	02	Wilkinson Sword	05
Bic	03		
Other, please state			

Q40. Which of the following aftershave brands do you use?

Armani	01	Hugo Boss	08
Lacoste	02	Calvin Klein	09
Davidoff	03	Paco Rabanne	10
Diesel	04	Paul Smith	11
Ralf Lauren	05	Dolce & Gabbana	12
Emporio Armani	06	Giorgio Armani	13
Yves Saint Laurent	07		
Other, please state			

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

IF YOU LIVE IN THE UK: Please return your completed questionnaire, no need for a stamp, to FREEPOST RRYY-HASZ-KJGU, Uncut Reader Survey, NSM Research Ltd, PO Box 354, Kidlington, OX5 9BR

IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK: Please return your completed questionnaire, you will need to add a stamp of the correct value, to Uncut Reader Survey, NSM Research Ltd, PO Box 354, Kidlington, OX5 9BR

Simply tear out the questionnaire or you can photocopy the survey.

Your replies will be kept strictly confidential and used for statistical purposes only. To qualify for the free prize draw complete the form below and return your questionnaire by August 2, 2012.

Q41. Are you male or female?

Male 1 Female 2

Q42. What is your age?

(Please write in)

Q43. Marital status

Single 1
In a relationship 2
Living with partner 3
Married/In a civil partnership 4
Divorced/Separated/Widowed 5

Q44. How many children do you have?

(Please write in)

I don't have children - Go to Q46

Q45. What age are your children?

0-11 months 1 11-15 years 5
12-23 months 2 16-20 years 6
2-4 years 3 21+ years 7
5-10 years 4

Q46. What country do you live in?

(Please write in)

Q47. If you live in the UK, which region?

(Please write in)

Q48. Employment status

At school 1
Higher education 2
Not working/Unemployed 3
Working Part Time 4
Working Full Time 5
Retired 6

Q49. What is your gross personal income per annum?

None 1
Less than £10,000 2
£10,000-£14,999 3
£15,000-£24,999 4
£25,000-£29,999 5
£30,000-£39,000 6
£40,000-£49,000 7
£50,000+ 8

Title _____ First Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode/zipcode _____

Country _____

Tel no _____

Email address _____

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From Uncut and IPC From carefully selected third parties
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Closing date for the prize draw is August 2. Only one entry per person. No purchase necessary. IPC will select the winners after the closing date. Winners will be chosen at random and notified within 30 days. The editors decision is final on all matters relating to the prize draw. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferrable.

metropolis music present

RICHARD HAWLEY

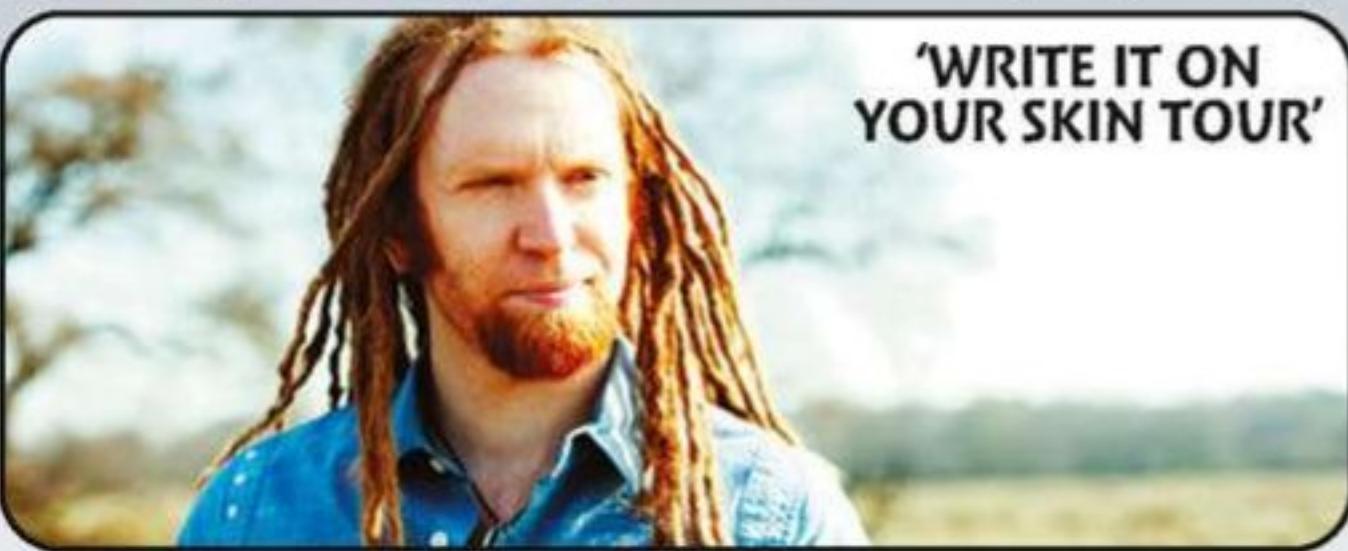
PLUS GUESTS



17/09	NORWICH UEA	01603 508 050
18/09	PORTSMOUTH PYRAMIDS	02392 824 355
19/09	BRIGHTON DOME	01273 709 709
21/09	BATH PAVILION	01225 330 304
22/09	BIRMINGHAM HMV INSTITUTE	0844 248 5037
23/09	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL	SOLD OUT
25/09	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
26/09	MANCHESTER ACADEMY	0161 832 1111
27/09	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
28/09	GLASGOW BARROWLAND	08444 999 990
30/09	LINCOLN ENGINE SHED	0844 888 8766
01/10	DERBY ASSEMBLY ROOMS	01332 255 800
	EXTRA DATE ADDED	
02/10	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL	0114 278 9789
03/10	LONDON O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON	0844 477 2000

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MON 15	OXFORD NEW THEATRE
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WED 03	GLASGOW O2 ABC
	08444 999 990
THU 04	INVERNESS IRONWORKS
	08444 999 990
TUE 09	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY
	0844 477 2000
WED 10	MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO
	08444 777 677
THU 11	LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
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"Utterly astonishing soul-baring drama, triumphant"
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"A magical, majestic performance"

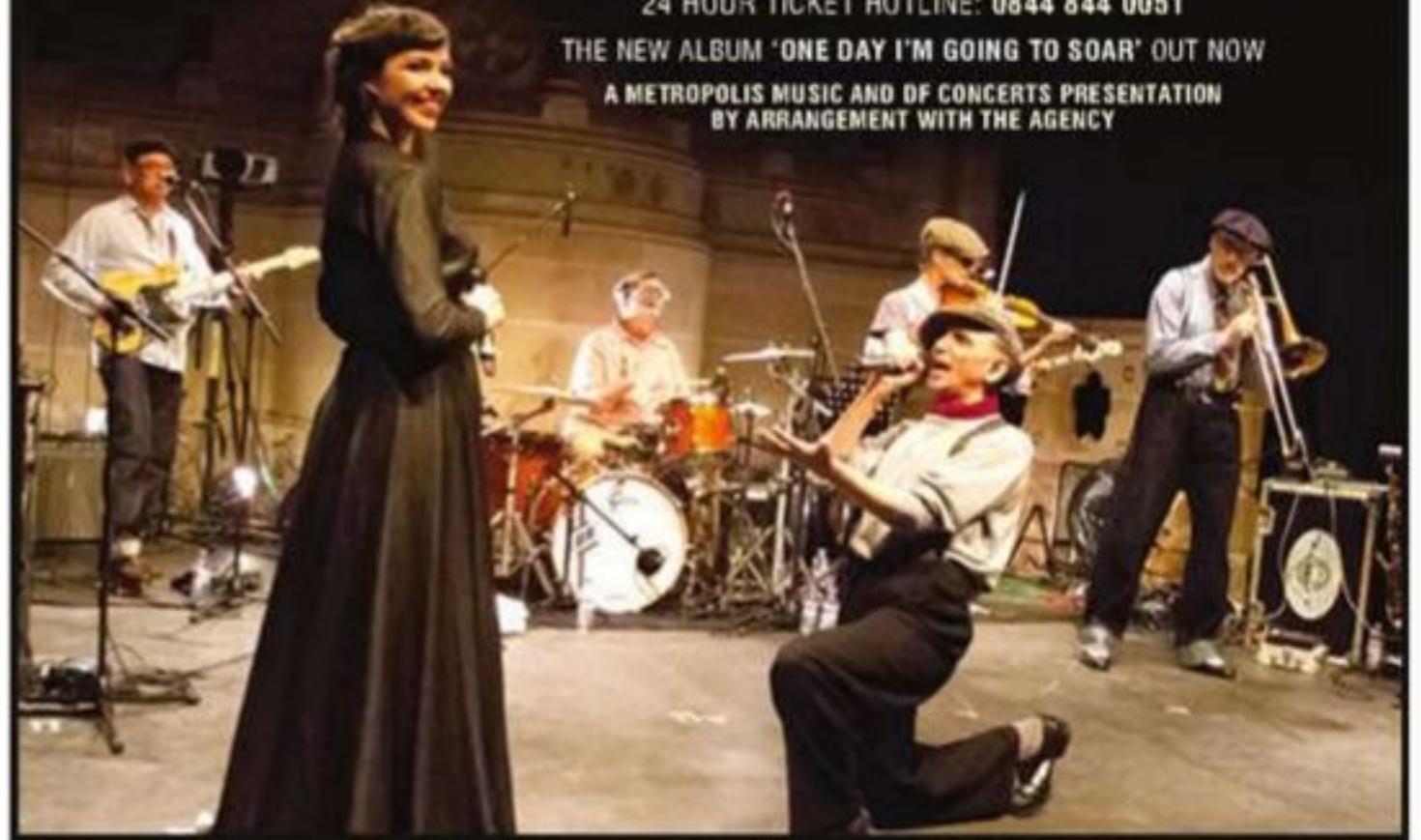
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SUN 16	LONDON BARBICAN
MON 17	GATESHEAD SAGE
TUE 18	EDINBURGH QUEEN'S HALL
THU 20	BRIGHTON DOME
FRI 21	MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
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AND HER BAND



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OCTOBER 2012

05 EDINBURGH HMV Picture House
06 MANCHESTER HMV Ritz
07 CARDIFF Coal Exchange
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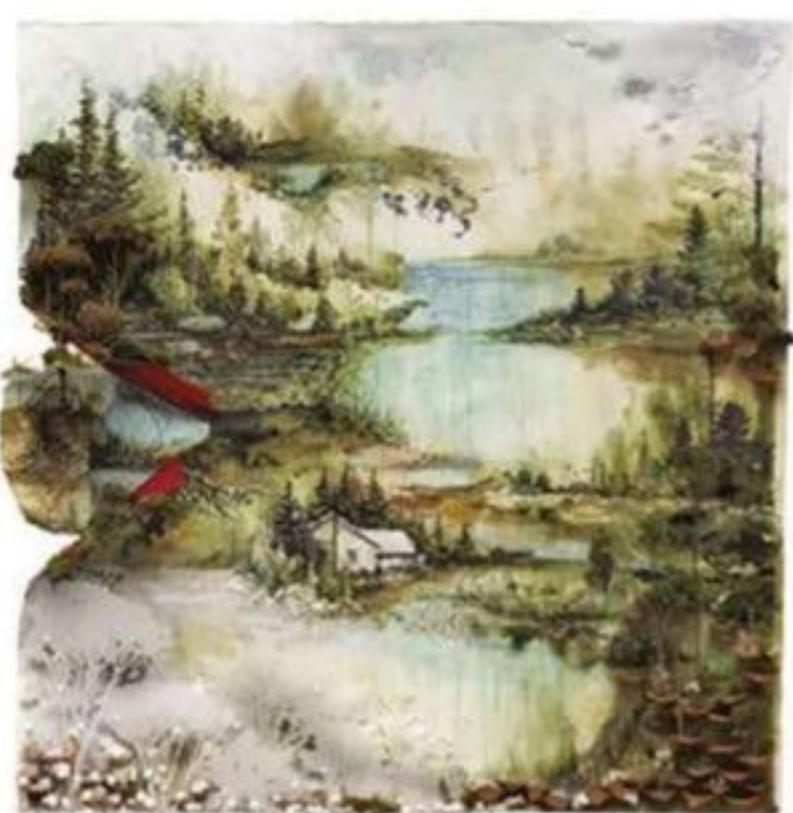
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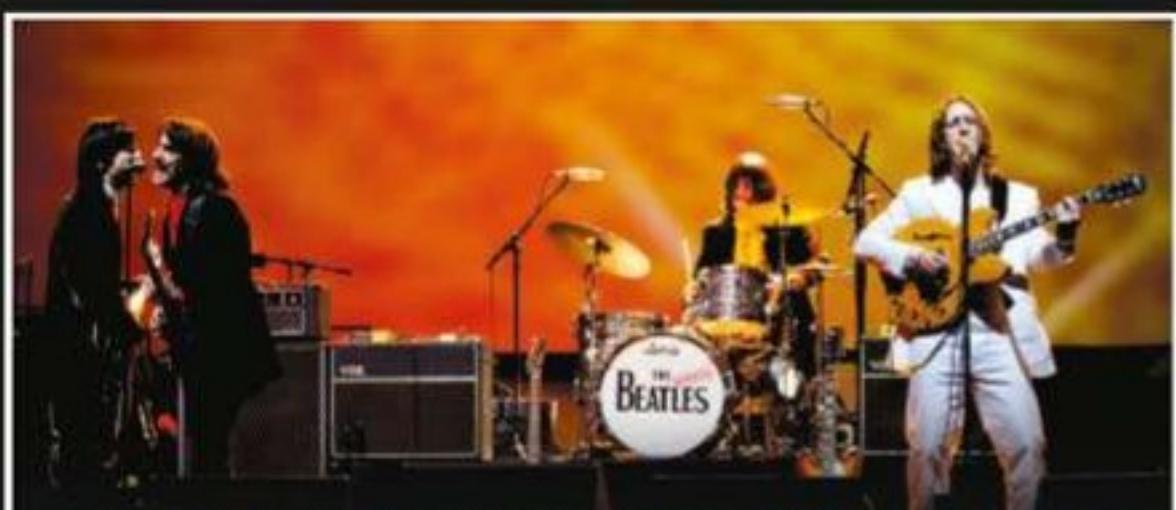
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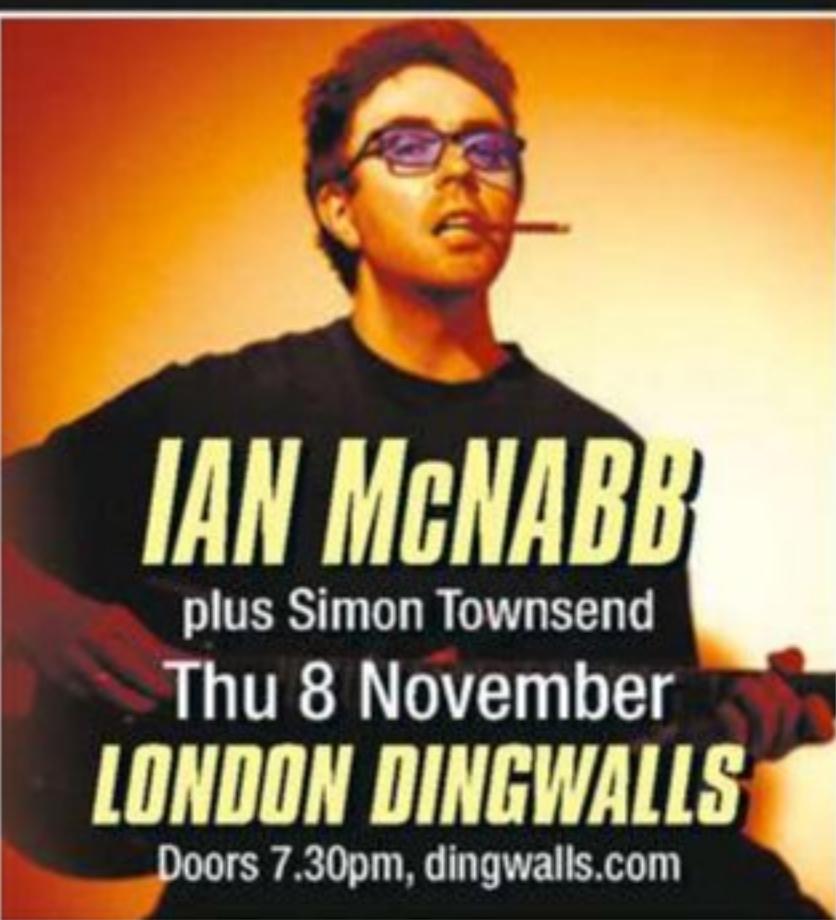
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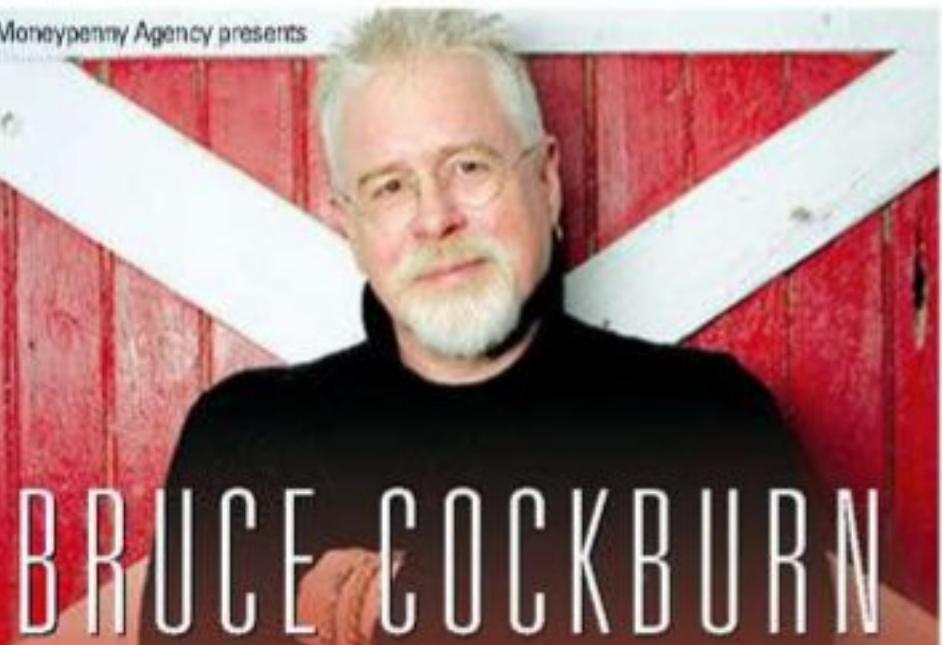
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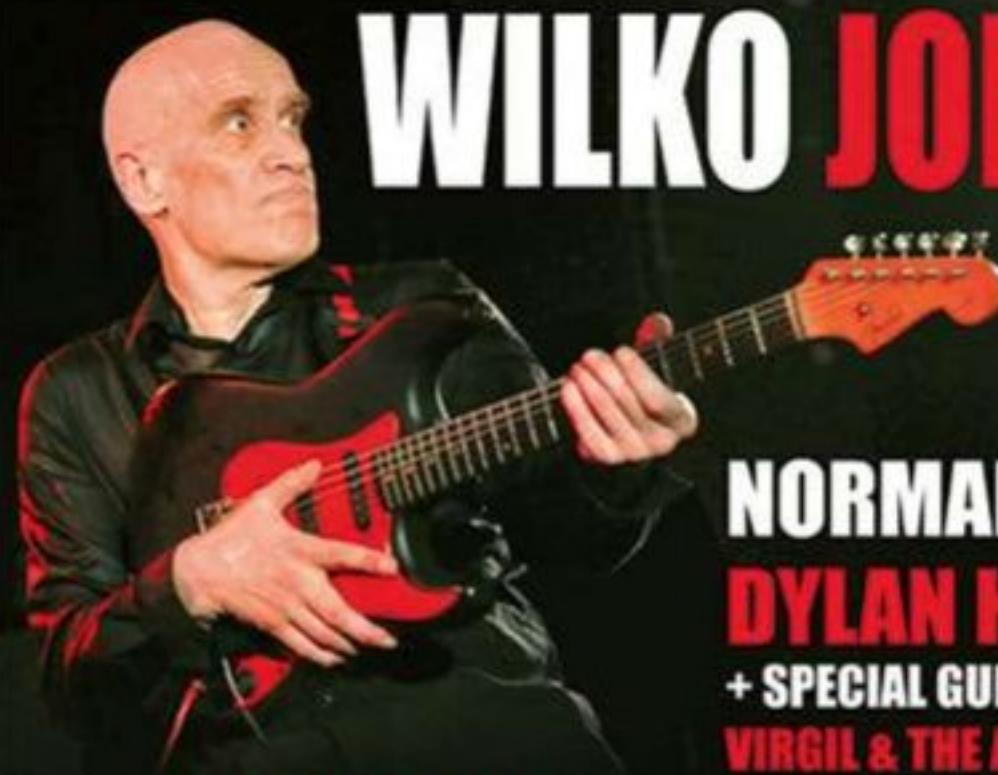
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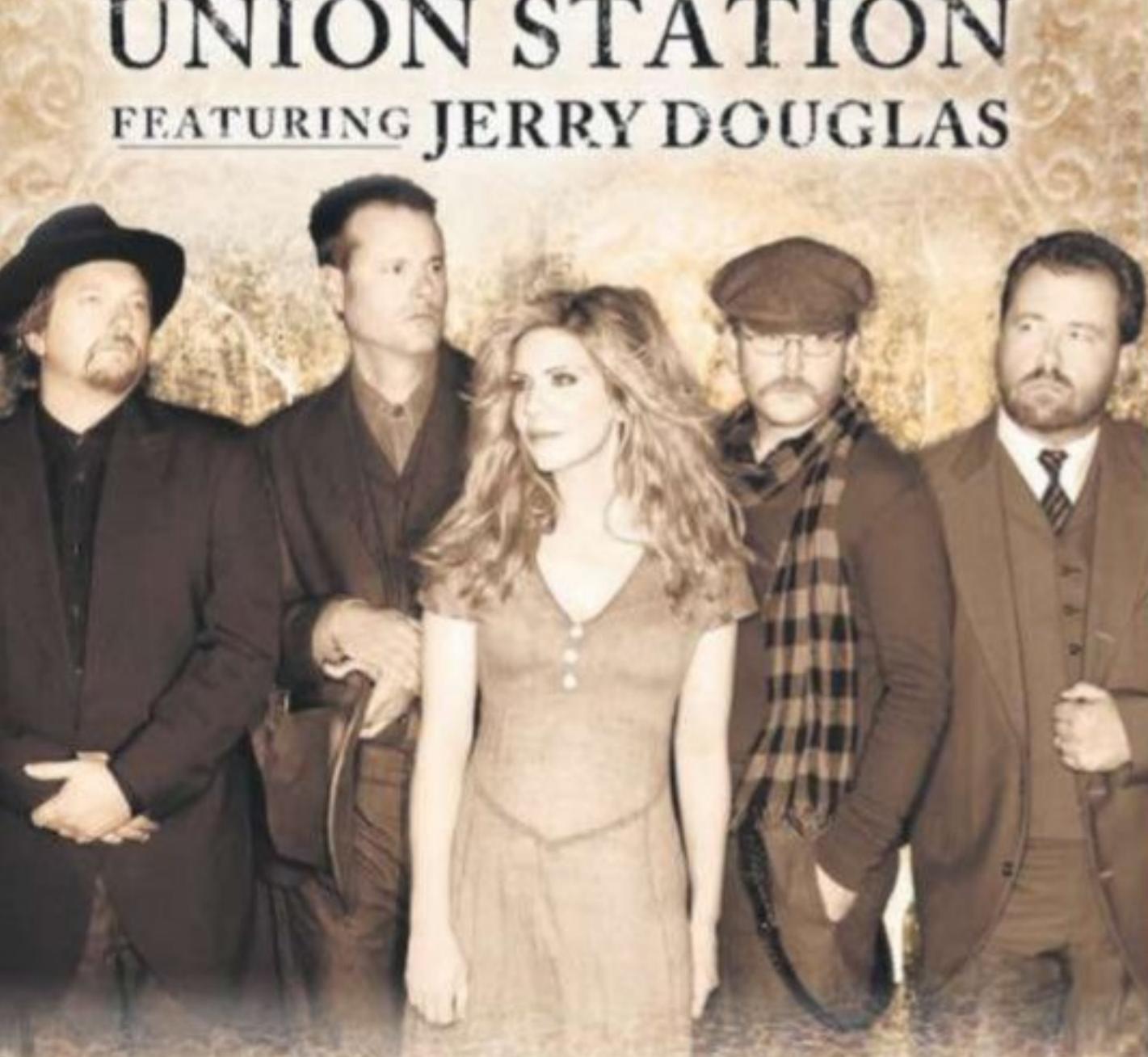
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Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

ROBIN GIBB

Bee Gee, singer and songwriter

1949-2012

NOT ONLY DID Robin Gibb have a hand in writing almost all The Bee Gees' numerous hits, both for the band and an array of other A-list artists including Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand, Kenny Rogers, Dionne Warwick, Celine Dion and Destiny's Child. He also possessed an utterly distinctive singing voice. A quavering, soulful sob which acted as a vulnerable counterpoint to Barry Gibb's smoother and more assertive delivery, it perfectly lent itself to more emotionally resonant narratives such as "I Started A Joke", "World" and "Massachusetts". It doesn't seem overly fanciful to describe him as the heart of the band.

Gibb, his twin Maurice and older brother Barry spent their early life in Manchester. Initially the twins would tag along with Barry's skiffle group, but after relocating to Redcliffe, Brisbane in 1958 the three began working seriously as a sibling harmony band. Following gigs at the local speedway circuit, billed as The Rattlesnakes and Wee Johnny Hayes & The Bluecats, they caught the eye of local DJ Bill Gates, who suggested they take their name from his initials. The Bee Gees released their debut single in 1963 but struggled to make a breakthrough in Australia. As soon as they achieved their first significant hit in 1966 with "Spicks And Specks", they plotted a return to Britain, where they convinced mogul Robert Stigwood they were "the new Beatles".

Stigwood engineered a five-year contract with Polydor, and success was almost instantaneous. Their second UK single "New York Mining Disaster 1941" reached the Top 20, and was followed by "To Love Somebody", co-written by Robin and Barry. The band's first bona fide classic, it stormed the US in the summer of 1967 and has since been covered by everyone from Janis Joplin to Leonard Cohen.

Further hits such as "World" and "Words" rapidly followed, but there were tensions, too, both personal – Robin Gibb felt overwhelmed by sudden fame and developed an amphetamine addiction – and professional. On the first two albums The Bee Gees were a band with two lead vocalists, but Robin became increasingly upset that Stigwood favoured Barry as frontman. He left in 1969 to pursue a solo career, but while "Saved By The Bell" was a substantial hit, his awkward demeanour and oddly intense manner seemed ill-suited to solo stardom.

He quickly returned to the sanctuary of The Bee Gees, who by the early '70s had reached a creative impasse. They returned to prominence by bending their talents to fit the tenor of the times. Encouraged by Arif Mardin, with "Jive Talkin'" and "You Should Be Dancing" they embraced R&B, striking a rich seam of what Gibb



The heart of The Bee Gees, Robin Gibb, 1967

later described as "groove songs you could harmonise to, with great melodies". When Stigwood asked them to write the soundtrack to *Saturday Night Fever* in 1977, they were propelled to a new stratosphere of success. The album spent 18 consecutive weeks at the top of the UK charts (24 in the US), shifting a total of 15 million copies.

So closely were The Bee Gees aligned to the disco phenomenon that when the bubble burst they suffered. As they fell into a hiatus in the 1980s, Gibb released three solo albums: *How Old Are You?*, *Secret Agent*, and *Walls Have Eyes*, each only modestly successful. He maintained a solo profile even after The Bee Gees returned in 1987 with their global No 1 single "You Win Again".

Although not averse to poking a little fun at the band's legacy – he collaborated on the 2009 Comic Relief version of "Islands In The Stream" – Gibb drew obvious pleasure from the fact that

in recent years the songwriting prowess, versatility and enormous commercial clout of The Bee Gees was finally given due kudos: in the history of popular music only Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks and Paul McCartney have outsold them.

Following the death of Maurice in January 2003, Barry and Robin ended the band. The same month Gibb released his fifth solo album, *Magnet*, and in 2004 he received the CBE. Despite being gravely ill, he and his son Robin-John (the only child from his second marriage; he had four children in total) recently completed a classical work, *The Titanic Requiem*, which premiered in April. By then Gibb was in the final stages of the colorectal cancer which claimed him. His final performance was in February, at the Coming Home charity concert held at the London Palladium in support of injured servicemen and women.

DONALD 'DUCK' DUNN

Booker T & The MG's bass legend 1941-2012

IN 1980 DUCK DUNN appeared as himself in *The Blues Brothers*, declaring that "we had a band powerful enough to turn goat piss into gasoline". The bassist may not have been lying. As a member of Stax house band Booker T & The MG's, Dunn not only played on some of the most enduring records ever made, but helped shape the sound of Southern soul.

Born in Memphis, Dunn was self-taught, ditching the guitar as a teenager because "it had two strings too many". His bass style was "very unique", said his lifelong friend and colleague, guitarist Steve Cropper. "It's not locked into anybody's schoolbook."

In 1964 Dunn joined Cropper, drummer Al Jackson and Booker T Jones in the MG's, replacing original bassist Lewie Steinberg. As part of Stax Records' house band he delivered the groove in countless soul classics, including Otis Redding's "Respect", Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour" and Sam & Dave's "Hold On, I'm Coming". Dunn was a core member of a mixed group of musicians at the forefront of helping music transcend racial boundaries, not least when backing Otis Redding at the Monterey Pop

Festival in 1967. "Everyone loved Duck, but none more than Otis," noted Jones.

The MG's enjoyed a parallel career, recording their first album, *Hip Hug-Her*, in 1967, and pushing the boundaries of instrumental music with *McLemore Avenue* (1970), a reworking of the Beatles songbook, and *Melting Pot* (1971). Although Jones and Cropper left Stax in the early '70s, the MG's reunited numerous times in the following decades, minus Jackson, who was murdered in 1975. They were the house band at Bob Dylan's 30th anniversary concert in 1992, the same year as their induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. They later memorably toured as Neil Young's backing band.

During this time, Dunn also played with Stevie Nicks, Tom Petty, Rod Stewart and Eric Clapton, and became one of Levon Helm's RCO All-Stars. Alongside Cropper, he joined the Blues Brothers Band, appearing in the iconic film and its 1998 sequel. He received a Lifetime Achievement Grammy in 2007.

Dunn died in May after a show with Cropper at the Blue Note in Tokyo. The guitarist later wrote: "Today I lost my best friend, and the world has lost the best guy and bass player to ever live."



DOUG DILLARD

Gene Clark collaborator, country-rock pioneer

1937-2012

AS ONE OF the first bluegrass groups to electrify their instruments and use a drummer, Doug Dillard's band The Dillards exercised a profound impact on the evolution of folk rock, country-rock

and progressive bluegrass in the late '60s, helping to popularise forms of music many considered passé. "When they hit town, they completely blew everybody away," recalled ex-Byrd Chris Hillman.

Born in Salem, Missouri, Dillard started out playing guitar, but switched allegiances at 15 when he received his first banjo as a Christmas present. So devoted was he to the instrument that he asked

his father to drive him to the home of Earl Scruggs, where he asked the legendary banjo player to install his tuners on the instrument.

Encouraged by the Scruggs stamp of approval, Dillard formed the Ozark Mountain Boys with his brother Rodney. In 1958 the brothers struck out on their own, forming The Dillards and in 1962 decamping to Los Angeles, where they signed to burgeoning folk-rock label Elektra and released their major-label debut *Back Porch Bluegrass* (1963). While recording the follow-up, *Live!!! Almost!!!* (1964), at the Mecca nightclub The Dillards were spotted by a television executive and invited to appear on *The Andy Griffith Show* as mountain family The Darlings. The TV exposure and success of their Elektra albums did much to broaden the appeal of bluegrass, while their progressive take on traditional music made the band prominent players in the '60s acoustic boom.

Dillard left the band in 1968 to work with former Byrds singer Gene Clark. As Dillard & Clark the pair released two under-appreciated albums, *The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark* (1968) and *Through The Morning, Through The Night* (1969), containing some of the earliest stirrings of country-rock.

He went on to release a number of albums as a solo artist and also with The Doug Dillard Band, formed in the mid-'80s, as well as

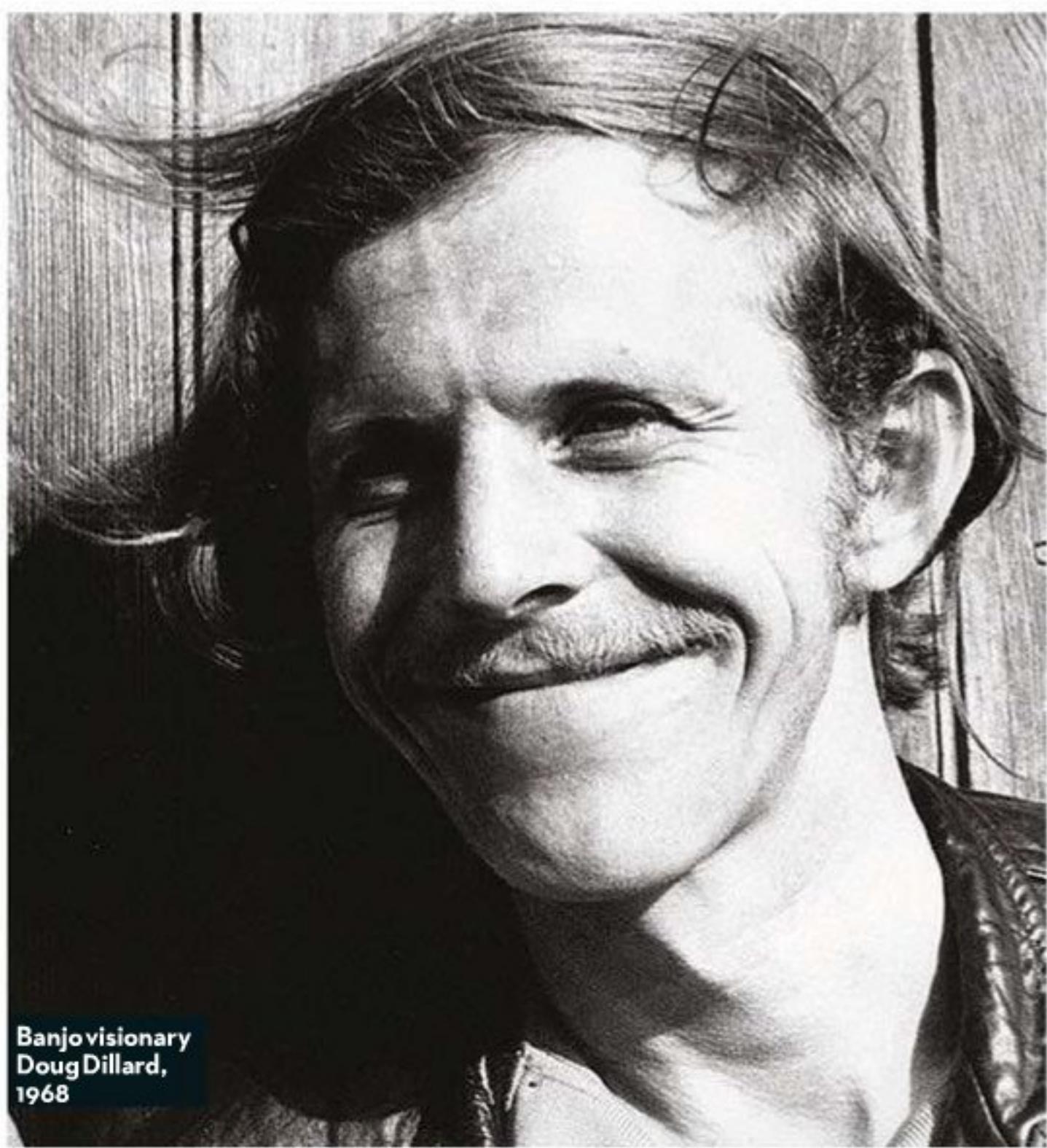
working with his brother from time to time; the pair can be seen backing Harry Dean Stanton in the 1979 film, *The Rose*. As a member of The Dillards, Doug was inducted into the Bluegrass Hall Of Fame in 2009. "I would put him at the very top level of proficiency on the banjo, right up there with Earl Scruggs," said Hillman. "He was a great musician, and he greatly influenced me."

PETE COSEY

Miles Davis guitarist

1943-2012

PLUCKED FROM THE blues clubs of Chicago to join Chess Records' house band in the mid-1960s, Pete Cosey played on Muddy Waters' *Electric Mud* and *The Howlin' Wolf Album* and toured with Aretha Franklin before joining Miles Davis' band in 1973. The trumpeter later explained that Cosey "gave me that Jimi Hendrix and Muddy Waters sound that I wanted": using banks of effects and wild alternate tunings, his experimental style was central to some of the most out-there records of Davis' career, among them *Pangaea* and *Dark Magus*. After leaving Davis in 1975, Cosey played on Herbie Hancock's 1983 album *Future Shock*, and more recently appeared in Martin Scorsese's epic documentary *The Blues*.



Banjo visionary
Doug Dillard,
1968

OBITUARIES

DONNA SUMMER

The Queen Of Disco 1948-2012

ALTHOUGH LADONNA Gaines was crowned the Queen Of Disco and The First Lady Of Love, her string of hits across the '70s and '80s are testament to a talent which recognised few stylistic boundaries. The daughter of a practising minister, she started singing in church choirs before cutting her teeth around her native Boston: first in Motown-inspired girl groups, later in psych-rock band The Crow. As a cast member of the touring version of *Hair*, she put roots down in Munich then Vienna, marrying Austrian actor Helmut Sommer and changing her stage name to Summer.

In Germany she met Pete Bellotte and Giorgio Moroder, with whom she co-wrote "Love To Love You Baby". Initially intended for another artist, after hearing Summer demo the song, Moroder was convinced she should release it herself. The result was a daring 17-minute hymn to sexual nirvana, punctuated by orgasmic sighs, sumptuous strings and lubricious rhythms. Summer later revealed that she channelled the spirit of Marilyn Monroe to create an appropriately breathy effect. The song and attendant album became enormous hits in the States in 1976. "I Feel Love" swiftly followed, the peak of her collaboration with Moroder. The song predicted a future in which disco's priapic pulse came married to a darker, European electronic palette, creating a music at once alienating and thrilling.

In the final years of the '70s, Summer was a phenomenon. "MacArthur Park", "Hot Stuff", "Bad Girls" and Barbra Streisand duet "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)" gave her four No 1 singles in 13 months. Even after splitting from Moroder she displayed an innate gift for reinvention. Whereas the Quincy Jones-produced "State Of Independence" was innovative, sassy working-girl's anthem "She Works Hard For The Money" was clinically commercial but no less fun. For her '89 hit, "This Time I Know It's For Real", she even punched the clock at the Stock Aitken & Waterman hit factory.

The song was Summer's last notable success, but her profile remained buoyant. She made a gospel album, performed at Barack Obama's 2009 Nobel Peace Prize concert, and popped up on *America's Got Talent*. Her last studio album, *Crayons* (2008), gave Summer her first Top 20 US album since 1983. She died of lung cancer at her home in Florida.



The First Lady Of Love, Donna Summer, 1976

BOB WELCH

Fleetwood Mac guitarist

1945-2012

AFTER FLEETWOOD MAC lost Peter Green in 1970 and Jeremy Spencer in '71, the first to LSD, the second to Jesus, they turned to a man who had studied at both UCLA and The Sorbonne, majoring in "smoking hash with bearded guys five years older, living on rice and

beans and sleeping on the floor". The son of Hollywood producer and screenwriter Robert Welch and actress Templeton Fox, Bob Welch possessed all the requisite credentials.

Welch's first instrument was the clarinet but he gravitated towards the guitar, spending his formative years between Los Angeles, Paris and countless struggling bands, including The Seven Souls and Head West. In 1971 a mutual friend

arranged a meeting with Fleetwood Mac. He was hired as rhythm guitarist without playing a note.

Welch missed the group's golden age, later defining his time as "the bridge era" between "Albatross" and *Fleetwood Mac*. The influence of his melodic sensibility, however, was significant. His song "Sentimental Lady", originally recorded for *Bare Trees* (1972), exemplified the softer, more mainstream rock style that the band would later perfect. He appeared on *Heroes Are Hard To Find* (1974), which broke through into the US Top 40, but left soon after, citing tensions with the McVies. He was replaced by Lindsey Buckingham.

Although he remained close to Mick Fleetwood – who managed his career into the '80s and played on his greatest solo success, 1977's *French Kiss* – Welch's relationship with his former band was strained. In 1994, he sued the original members for underpayment of royalties, settling in 1996. When Mac were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1998 he wasn't invited. "It was an important period in the history of the band," he said. "Now they want to write me

out. It hurts." Relations apparently improved in recent years.

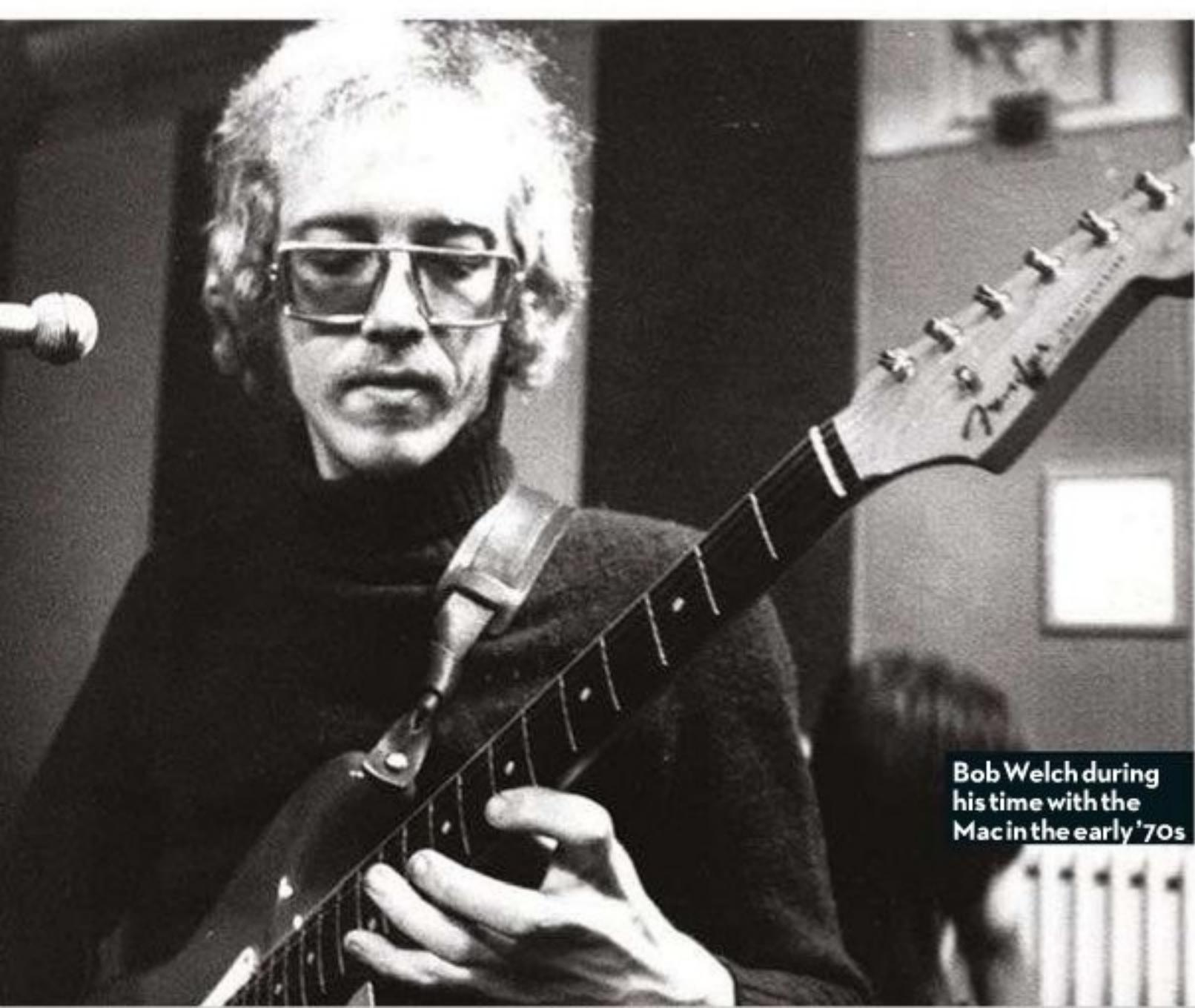
French Kiss yielded three US hit singles, including the revamped "Sentimental Lady", but Welch's career declined in the '80s, during which time he became addicted to heroin. After cleaning up in 1986 he wrote for Kenny Rogers and The Pointer Sisters, and later returned to recording, releasing *His Fleetwood Mac Years And Beyond Vol I and II* (2003/2006) on which he re-recorded songs from the Mac days alongside solo material. He had suffered declining health after undergoing spinal surgery, and committed suicide at his home in Nashville.

CHUCK BROWN

The Godfather of go-go

1936-2012

ONLY RARELY CAN a musician lay claim to the ownership of a distinct musical style; even more rarely to bestriding an entire city. Chuck Brown's signature 1979 hit "Bustin' Loose" minted the funk subgenre go-go, the dominant music of black Washington for the past three decades. In 2009, one block of 7th



Bob Welch during his time with the Mac in the early '70s

Street NW in DC was renamed Chuck Brown Way in his honour. It's fitting that the singer, guitarist and songwriter was a favourite of DC crime novelist George P Pelecanos, who often namechecked him in his books. Brown's life and music were similarly hard-boiled. He got his first guitar while serving eight years for murder, trading cigarettes for the instrument. On his release in the mid-'60s, he played with Jerry Butler & The Earls Of Rhythm before edging towards a tough, percussion-heavy form of funk which incorporated soul, Latino and early rap. "Bustin' Loose", a substantial R&B hit later sampled by Nelly on "Hot In Herre", was the totemic song of the genre.

It was called go-go, said Brown, because "the music just goes and goes". Backed by his group The Soul Searchers, his concerts often lasted over three hours, with each song running directly into the next, connected by a driving non-stop beat. A natural frontman, Brown worked tirelessly, whipping the audience into a frenzy with his spirited call-and-response routines. "I'm not retired because I'm not tired. I'm still getting hired, and I'm still inspired," he rapped in 2006. "As long as I can walk up on that stage, I want to make people happy. I want to make people dance."

HERB REED

The last of the original Platters

1928-2012

IT WAS HERB Reed who came up with the name of the most popular vocal group of the 1950s. "I used to listen to DJs refer to records as platters," he said. "That's where I got the idea." As the quote suggests, Reed's career spanned several eras: he started out when the 45 was king and was still performing well into the digital age.

Reed was born in Kansas, Missouri. Orphaned at 10, by 15 he'd landed in LA, working odd jobs while singing on street corners. He formed The Platters in 1952 but it was only after signing to Mercury in 1955 that the group embarked on their imperial period, releasing harmony-rich renditions of "Only You", "The Great Pretender", "My Prayer" and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes". Reed sang bass in the quintet, and although he rarely took a lead vocal, his rich voice anchored the harmony, while his humorous stage presence formed a major part of their live appeal.

By the mid-'60s, popular tastes had changed. The Platters' hits had

dried up and only Reed and tenor David Lynch remained of the original line-up. In the subsequent decades he continued performing as The Platters (or Herb Reed & The Platters), fighting vigorously to retain the right to use the name and filing several successful lawsuits against rival incarnations. With over 200 million sales to their name, The Platters were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1990, while Reed maintained a rigorous touring schedule until the onset of chronic heart disease forced his retirement in June 2011.

PETER JONES

Former Crowded House drummer

1963-2012

WHEN PAUL HESTER abruptly left Crowded House in 1994, the band turned to a Liverpool-born former schoolteacher to fill the drum stool. A member of Harem Scarem and Stove Top, Jones was a familiar face on the Melbourne music scene. Following the demise of Crowded House in 1996 (he appeared briefly on their *Farewell To The World* DVD) Jones joined bassist Nick Seymour in Deadstar, but did not return to the ranks when Crowded House reformed in 2007, though he continued making music with local artists. He died of brain cancer. A statement from Crowded House recalled "a warm-hearted, funny and talented man, who played with style and spirit".

JIM McCRARY

A&M's chief photographer

1939-2012

IT WASN'T JUST the music that made *Tapestry* one of the most culturally resonant records of its age. Jim McCrary's cover image depicting Carole King in bare-footed contemplation did much to capture the funky, homespun, intimate mood of longing which spoke to a generation; it was his idea to add the cat at the last minute. Joining A&M Records as head photographer in 1967, McCrary shot more than 300 album covers for the label and was responsible for classic portraits of Gram Parsons and The Flying Burrito Brothers in their Nudie-suited pomp. Feeling "disconnected" from the prevailing musical trends, he moved away from rock photography in the late '70s, founding the Pix Camera store in Hollywood.

GRAEMETHOMSON



ARTHEL "DOC" WATSON

Folk lodestar and father of flatpicking

1923-2012

WHEN BILL CLINTON presented Doc Watson with the National Medal Of Arts in 1997, the President commented: "There may not be a serious, committed baby-boomer alive who didn't at some point in his or her youth try to spend a few minutes at least trying to learn to pick a guitar like Doc Watson." Watson was instrumental in introducing the flatpicking style to folk music in the '60s, giving authentic mountain music a forward-facing spin while at the same time legitimising the acoustic guitar as a lead instrument with his fast, flashy picking style. Bob Dylan likened his playing to "water running".

Born to a family of musicians and storytellers in Deep Gap, North Carolina, Watson was blinded by an eye infection before his first birthday. Influenced by The Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers and The Louvin Brothers, he began playing on the streets around his hometown, where he was nicknamed Doc in reference to Sherlock Holmes' sidekick.

He became a professional musician in the early 1960s, regularly accompanying veteran banjo player Clarence Ashley onstage. After solo appearances in Greenwich Village and at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival Watson recorded his eponymous first album for Vanguard in 1964, and quickly became a leading light in the folk revival. The following year he began playing with his son Merle, with whom he recorded more than a dozen albums. The pair made a notable appearance performing "Tennessee Stud" on the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's landmark triple set *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* (1972), and remained a unit until Merle died in a tractor accident in 1985. In 1992, Watson released *Remembering Merle*, a collection of '70s live recordings featuring father and son.

Watson rallied in his later years. A collaboration with banjoist David Holt, *Legacy*, earned a 2002 Grammy, one of eight that he won, including a 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award. As well as a supremely gifted guitarist and banjoist, he possessed a rich, resonant baritone and could write impressively. The poignant "Your Long Journey", composed with wife Rosa Lee, was recorded by Alison Krauss and Robert Plant on their 2007 album *Raising Sand*. His humility, warmth and wit were much remarked upon, and although he played less frequently in recent years, he made a point of always attending MerleFest, the annual musical gathering held every April since 1988 in memory of his son.

Feedback...

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

IVIVA UNCUT!

MY NAME IS ORIOL and I'm an *Uncut* reader from Barcelona. I've been reading you guys almost every month for about 15 years, which means that *Uncut* has been with me literally half of my life. I'm writing this after reading your leading article on the magazine's 15th anniversary [June issue]. An article that honestly made me feel very nostalgic, since I did purchase and read your third issue. Yes, that was August 1997. Back then I was 15, and my parents had sent me to the south of England. The reason I was there was to study English, but as you can imagine I learned much more. Those were the days before the internet, when you couldn't access the huge amounts of information we have today online. So to me, as a 15-year-old, visiting those small record stores in Hastings, Brighton and London, discovering records and bands I'd never before heard of, was like jumping into a whole new and exciting universe.

And that's when *Uncut* came into my life. It's been almost 15 years, but I can still remember walking into that bookstore on the Hastings seafront and seeing that black-and-white shot of Dylan on your cover (and that "Rebels And Hellraisers" minibook you gave away with that issue: that was great!). I took the magazine and had a look inside, and I quickly decided I had to buy it. There were those amazing shots of young Dylan in Greenwich Village, but also a fantastic article on Jeff Buckley (who had passed a couple or so months earlier), a feature on an album called *Gris-Gris* by Dr John (that was where I first ever read his name!), and a review of



Springsteen's Tom Joad tour (I saw him live recently on the Wrecking Ball tour and he looks much younger now than he did 15 years ago!). I still keep that third issue of *Uncut* with me, and every time I take a look at it, I remember that foggy late July morning when I first met you guys in that bookstore.

Going back to Barcelona, I was wondering if I would ever be able to get more issues of *Uncut*. I don't know if the magazine was available over here back then, but I was lucky enough: those days my dad used to travel a lot to England because of his job, so at least once every two or three months he brought me your latest issues, which were always exciting. Finally, about 10 years ago, I discovered I could buy *Uncut* every month at some of my local bookstores, and since then I've made sure not to miss any issue. So now I'm 30, and looking back on those 15 years I realise how much *Uncut* has not only informed and entertained me, but also taught and shaped me. It was through your pages where I learnt

what Americana is about and I discovered Whiskeytown and Ryan Adams. It was *Uncut* who introduced me to Howlin Rain, The Libertines, The Black Keys (long before they became one of the biggest bands in the world) and Marah (still one of my favourite bands). So all I can say is congratulations for those 15 years. And THANK YOU SO MUCH for being there every month. In some sense, I can say that I've grown up with *Uncut*. And believe me, it's been AMAZING.

Oriol Serra, via email

Thanks, Oriol. I hope you enjoy *Uncut* for many more years to come. - Allan

GOLDEN YEARS

Having just begun to browse your July [Take 182] issue, I was drawn to the short piece on Harold McNair. During the late '60s, much of the music I listened to emanated from the USA, while a good friend of mine's tastes were homegrown in the UK. Once a month we would meet at each other's homes to play tracks from our most recent vinyl acquisitions, demonstrating just what the other had missed.

On one such evening in December 1968, he played me a couple of tracks from John Martyn's *The Tumbler* album and I was instantly converted. The standout track for me being "Fly On Home", which featured the incredible flute of Harold McNair. I bought the LP the next day, and that track sits to this day on my special playlist.

McNair's death in 1971 was a tragedy. At only 39 years old, one often wonders what he may have achieved. And 41 years on, I thank you for not allowing his memory

to fade. It's 45 years this year since I saw my first live gig, which developed into a habit that has been a major part of my life since. And along the way I have met some hugely interesting people and shared some special moments.

► Like giving John Lee Hooker a lift to the station after a gig and being given an old 3d bit for our trouble.
► Like seeing the Muddy Waters Blues Band's first tour playing electric with Otis Spann on piano.
► Like seeing Beefheart with the Magic Band in a small club in Nottingham in '69. I was early and they were late, having "broken down" on the way. I was speaking with a bunch of guys at the bar who told me they were a band travelling to London from Newcastle and had stopped off to see the gig. They offered to play free to fill time, and the owner let them, even though they were unknown and he'd not heard them. It turned out to be Rory Gallagher and Taste and they were amazing. Even Beefheart

when he arrived said as much.

► Like interviewing Jayne County (then Wayne) after a gig, expecting to find it hard work. Yet finding her so easy to talk to and so articulate. She remains a friend, and her book *Man Enough To Be A Woman* is a special read.
► Like watching Brian Wilson debut *Smile* with tears dripping off my chin thinking of what might have been.
► And after many years waiting, finally seeing Howe Gelb play solo in a small club and hearing live at last "Wearing The Robes Of Bible Black".

My memories of those 45 years are still very clear, and very important. And that small article brought back the moment in 1968 I first heard John Martyn and Harold McNair play "Fly On Home". Thank you for that.

Alan Walker, Nottingham

You gave John Lee Hooker a lift? Wow. That's a special moment, for sure. - Allan

YER SO GOOD

I thoroughly enjoyed the interview with Tom Petty in June's issue [Take 181]. Since reading it, I certainly have a clearer picture of the man behind the music now.

Inspired to dig out a copy of *Full Moon Fever*, I was reawakened to a true American great. Let's face it; his capacity as a songwriter and musician is without question not too far behind Dylan, Springsteen or Young. I loved reading about his first meeting with George Harrison especially and how Harrison grabbed both his hands and looked him in the eyes instead of just a simple handshake. This must have been an incredible moment for Petty, who was so inspired by The Beatles in his youth. Interviews don't get much better than this!

Hats off to *Uncut* yet again, wonderful stuff indeed!

Seamus Quaide, Elton, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick

CROSSWORD

WIN!



...one of 3 copies of
Americana by Neil
Young & Crazy Horse

SIMPLE TWIST OF DATE

Thanks for a consistently excellent magazine – I have just read your June issue and found the article on Tom Petty particularly interesting, more so as I'd just seen Peter Bogdanovich's superb documentary on the man. However, the photo of Petty with Dylan on p47 is captioned 1992 – surely this is from the 1986 True Confessions tour. I hate to be picky, but his Bobness looked very different to that in 1992.

Peter James, Cardiff

He did, too. – Allan

THIS BARN'S ON FIRE

I've just finished reading the Levon Helm feature in the latest *Uncut* and felt the need to put pen to paper (or fingers to keys). In 2009 I made my own pilgrimage to Woodstock. The atmosphere, the barn, the music and the man were even more remarkable than I had expected. Although Levon had lost his voice at this point his musicianship and his charm made up for this. Just before the show began, Levon came over and almost whispered to me, as he warmly clasped my hands in his, "Thanks for comin'," words that still ring in my ears today. He was nothing short of a true gentleman and that August night in Woodstock he had the whole audience in the palm of his hands, and as well as his words ringing in my ears I can still see him behind his kit with the biggest grin on his face, just absolutely loving the moment. With his passing we have lost not just a great musician but a great man.

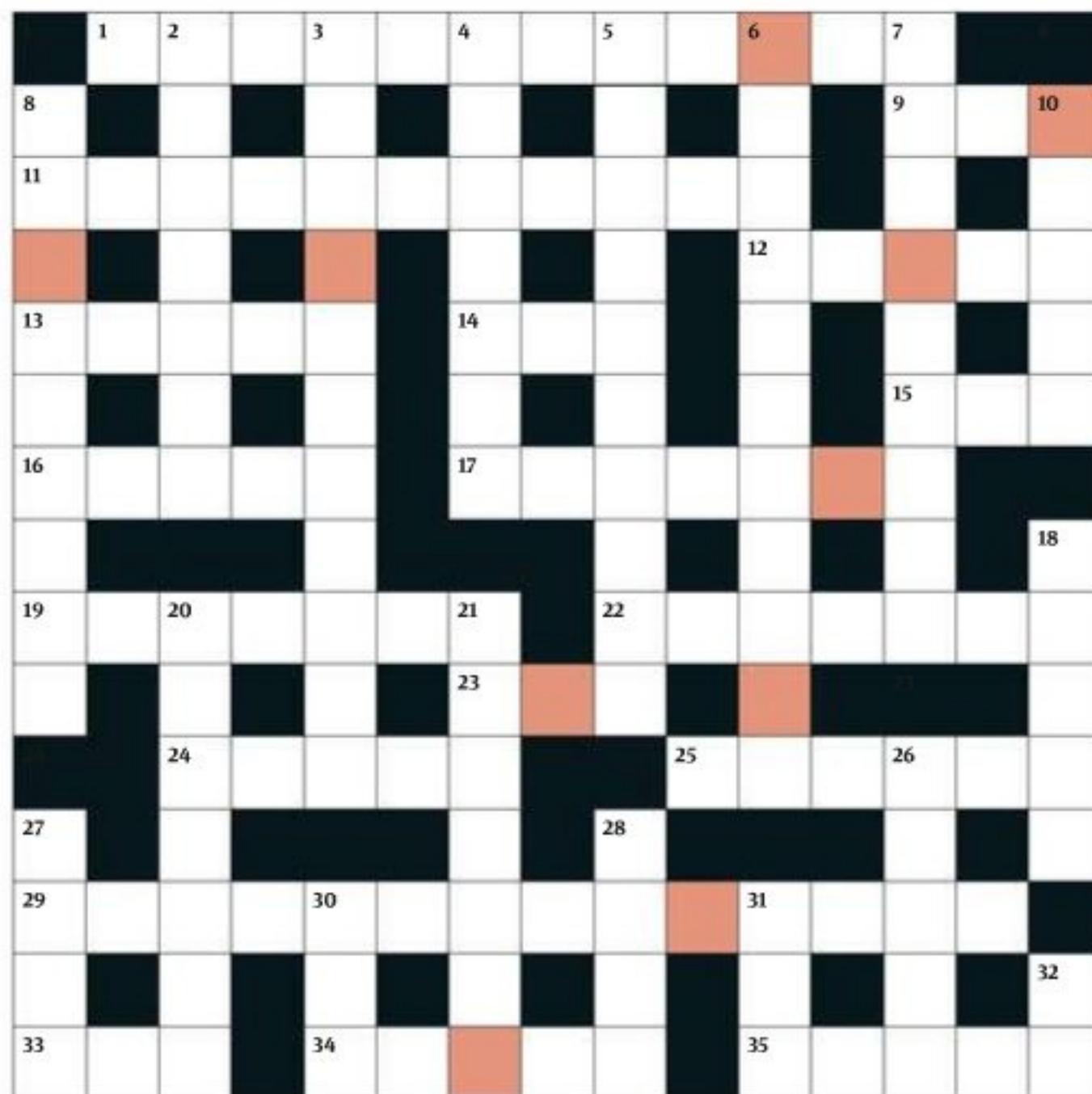
Andrew McDiarmid, Dundee

SWEET MYSTERY

I just wanted to thank you for the excellent interview with Jack White [May issue, Take 180]. Your cover story on White only reiterated what I've always felt about him: I believe him, I believe in him, I believe in what he's doing, and I believe his passion. I don't care if he colour-coordinates his clothing onstage. I'm not shaken by the sense of mystery or confusion surrounding him. I don't care if his lyrics are stitched up with lies or if they're his reflection in an internal looking glass. Without it all, we, the listeners, the viewers, the detectives, would lose the magnetic fascinations we have with White.

The uncertainty White brings to his art is what makes him so electric (the riffs don't hurt, either). I'm pleased with the angle he has taken with his solo career, and can only expect it to better with time. I pray he continues his ambiguity for a little longer for the selfish reasons of those of us who love to guess.

Mia Sato, via email



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Neil Young. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* August 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: July 26, 2012. This competition is only open to European residents.

ACROSS

- 1 It's just Gossip, but we're happy to hear it (1-6-5)
- 9 Garbage drummer and top quality producer (3)
- 11 "I'm just trying to find a mountain I can climb", eventually located by The Strokes (5-6)
- 12 Roxy Music album that carries a warning (5)
- 13 (See 10 down)
- 14 Peter Gabriel album proves a bit too vocal (3)
- 15 "To think I might not see those eyes, makes it so hard not to cry", 2003 (3)
- 16 "You gotta lose me in another world, Send me to the ____ / I'm free to leave", Genesis (5)
- 17+27 D The Rolling Stones are still going strong (3-4-4)
- 19 Strangely unclear performance from Ryan Adams (7)
- 22 "So I'm on BBC2 now, telling Terry Wogan how I made it", 2004 (7)
- 23 It's U2 on the end of the telephone (3)
- 24 (See 6 down)
- 25 A bit of a sullen non-entity associated with The Beatles (6)
- 29 Theme tune for *Top Of The Pops* in the '70s (5-5-4)
- 33 Band that changed their name from Mabel Greer's Toyshop in 1968 (3)
- 34 (See 6 down)
- 35 The Stray Cat swaggered on to the scene doing the "Stray Cat ____" (5)

DOWN

- 2 "Go play your hand you big-talkin' man, make a big fool of yourself / Yeah, go to ____", 1987 (7)
- 3 You don't need to give that Albert Hammond Jr album back ever (5-2-4)
- 4 Tyrannosaurus Rex's imaginary beast of an album (7)
- 5 Bonnie Raitt was cutting it fine on this album (4-2-4)
- 6+24 A+34 A It's too short notice for someone from The Damned to play one of the seven dwarves (1-4-4-2-5-5)
- 7 On reforming in 1997, Echo & The Bunnymen showed they had remained fresh and vital (9)
- 8 Neil Young's homeland music roots showing on his new album (9)
- 10+13 A Band that covered "Sympathy For The Devil" in 1995 (4-1-5)
- 18 From Battle to a "Strangeland" (5)
- 20 In collusion with The Band on an album (7)
- 21 One of his first groups was Mike Sheridan & The Nightriders, which evolved into The Idle Race (3-4)
- 26 House Of Love song completed in one verse (5)
- 27 (See 17 across)
- 28 Simply Red's last album ensured they would remain in a certain place (4)
- 30+32 D Fed up with Humble Pie after this album (3-2)
- 31 Liverpool lads who were on their "Way Out" with debut single (3)
- 32 (See 30 down)

ANSWERS: TAKE 181

ACROSS 1 Out Of The Game, 7+10 A Mr Crowley, 11 Neneh, 12 Yes, 13 Barton Hollow, 16 Tobacco Road, 19 Essence, 20 Mr Jones, 23 Trojan, 26 Cheers, 28 Monde, 29 Strip,

30 Cher, 31 Tabor, 33 Yo-Yo, 34 Davy.

DOWN 1+9 D Once Bitten Twice Shy, 2 Two Tribes, 3 Falco, 4+15 A Hey Joe, 5+28 D Gentle On My Mind, 6+24 D Mungo Jerry, 8 Rooster, 15+14 D John Lee

Hooker, 17 Can, 18 Dr John, 21+22 A Sister Ray, 25 Nasty, 26 Cop, 27 Ed Lay, 31 TV, 32 OK.
HIDDEN ANSWER
"Liars A To E"
Compiled by
Trevor Hungerford

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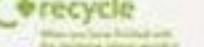
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IPCI **INSPIRE** 

MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Antony

Antony Hegarty prepares for Meltdown with a trawl through his record collection. "Fevered delirium of suffering" a speciality!

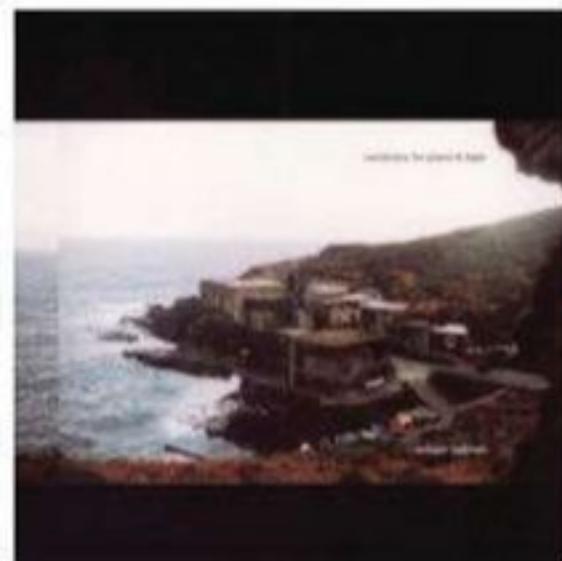


The outlet for my teenage emotions

Torment & Toreros

Marc And The Mambas 1983

This was very influential on me, all the way down to the artwork. It's very different music from Soft Cell – piano-driven, with a string quartet called The Venomettes – and was quite a scandal. It was Marc Almond's *Berlin*, and a tremendous feat. It was a double LP stuffed full of a maniacal expression of feeling – a kind of fevered delirium of suffering. Marc was flagrantly, angrily effeminate.



The music I've listened to most

Variations For Piano & Tape

William Basinski 2006

He's an ambient composer from New York and one of my best friends. In the early '90s, he'd composed all these tape loops that would play for hours, days, even months at a time, written as soundtracks for his partner's paintings, and when I was in my early twenties I used to sit in his house, which was kind of a sanctuary for me. The music had a strangely curative effect – almost homeopathic.



A mystical folk favourite

Desert Doughnuts

Metallic Falcons 2006

This is a side project of Sierra Casady from CocoRosie – a collaboration with Matteah Baim – and a "doughnut" is a US term for when you turn your car in a circle. CocoRosie and Matteah are extremely inspiring to me, but this has such a mystical sound; it's on the frontier of things that are homemade but also otherworldly. It's darker than CocoRosie's music, but pastoral and very beautiful.



An utterly unrivalled record

Big Science

Laurie Anderson 1982

Anderson was integrating electronic music into instrumental music and no record has sounded the same since. The rhythm choices she makes in terms of the narrations are so unusual, I don't think they could be repeated. What's also striking is the imagery – these stark narrations with futuristic themes, in many cases slightly bleak. And her voice is comforting yet strangely disconcerting.



My favourite Nina Simone album

Baltimore

Nina Simone 1978

I'm one of many who count Nina Simone among the greatest musicians of the 20th Century. I got this record when I was about 21 and learned so much. She didn't like the album because she had a bad memory of recording it, but it's one of her most heartbreaking and shows her at her most vulnerable. A few songs on it are so wrenching, especially a cover of "Everything Must Change".

MEREDITH MONK
TURTLE DREAMS



An extreme vocal recording

Turtle Dreams

Meredith Monk 1983

She has a very expressive vocabulary as a singer and composer; she works a lot with microtones and unconventional phonetic approaches – sometimes you might think you're listening to a John Cage record for voice. The pieces are formal and exacting, but primal because she strikes upon things that are like sound archetypes. She mines the human voice – almost like a sound library.



A true folk heroine

Vurulduk Ey Halkim Unutma Bizi

Selda 1976

Selda Bağcan was a revolutionary folk singer in the '60s and '70s who pioneered a kind of psych music. Politically persecuted as a younger woman during a difficult period in Turkish history, she's the singer I've listened to more than anyone else in the past few years. Her voice has a kind of tear-shaped diamond at its core. The Edith Piaf of Turkey!



One of my favourite vocalists

The Source

Jimmy Scott 1969

A peer of Billie Holiday, he's really the last of that generation. One of my favourite singers, he has that androgynous, otherworldly croon, and an incredible sense of rhythm – he sings so far behind the beat. The first song is one of my favourite recordings of all time – "Exodus" – and later on there's "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child", which is one of his signature songs.

Antony & The Johnsons' live LP, Cut The World, is out Aug 6. The 2012 Meltdown festival, curated by Antony, runs at London's Southbank Centre, Aug 1-12.

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