

"All the tired horses in the sun/How am I supposed to get any ridin' done?"

UNCUT

DYLAN

UNHEARD | 69-71

"You don't force Bob to do anything..."

AN EXCLUSIVE TRIP INTO THE ARCHIVES...

AND
LOS LOBOS
LINDA THOMPSON
ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT
JULIANNA BARWICK
FRANK OCEAN

40 PAGES
OF REVIEWS

The Clash

The Civil Wars

Beck

The Rolling
Stones

Sly & The
Family Stone

and more...

MORRISSEY

Wrestling, saunas, ghosts and his greatest albums

NILSSON

'He redefined what a song could do'

SPRINGSTEEN

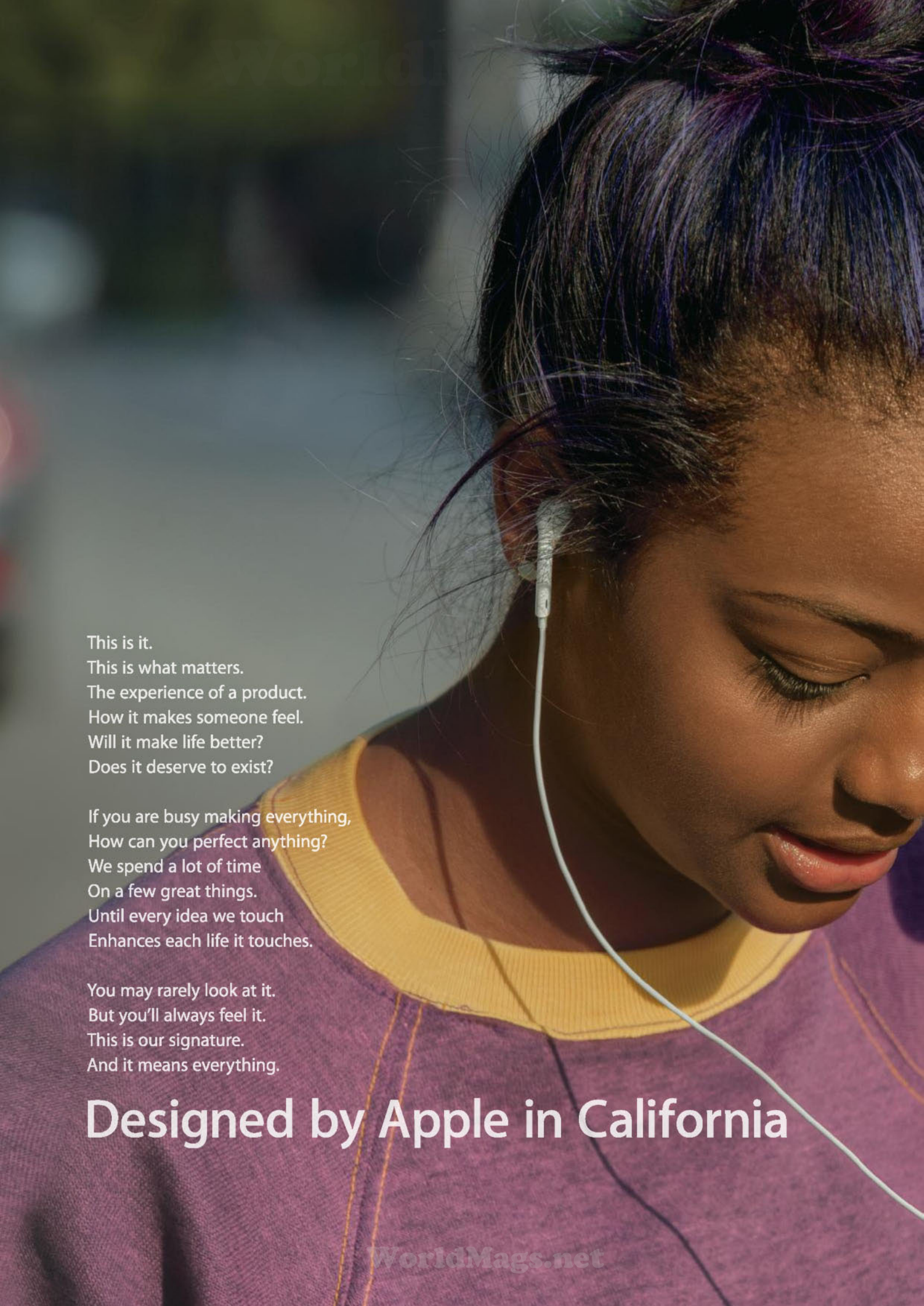
The Movie

The lost art of

IAN DURY

PLUS

CAITLIN ROSE
CANNED HEAT
THE FLAMING LIPS
ARMANDO IANNUCCI
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CONTENTS

1. BOB DYLAN
2. MORRISSEY
3. NILSSON
4. SPRINGSTEEN
5. IAN DURY

6 **Instant Karma!**

Ian Dury, Bruce Springsteen, Linda Thompson, Rocket From The Crypt, Doris Troy, Julianna Barwick

14 **Armando Iannucci**

An audience with the TV satirist

18 **Morrissey**

Viva Il Mozzalini! Bandmates, songwriters and producers tell all about the former Smith's first solo outings

26 **Caitlin Rose**

Nashville's new star sees country music as a forum for strong women – no wonder she's crazy for Patsy Cline

32 **Bob Dylan**

With the release of *Bootleg Series Vol 10: Another Self Portrait*, we examine the latest revelations from the archive and talk to the key players on the LP sessions

46 **Canned Heat**

The tortuous career of the Woodstock stars who put the boogie into blues-rock

52 **The Flaming Lips**

The making of "Do You Realize??"

56 **Harry Nilsson**

Singer, songwriter, hellraiser: the bloody-minded brilliance of a reluctant star: "He influenced The Beatles, for Christ's sake!"

62 **Los Lobos**

Album by album with the LA wolves

40 PAGES OF REVIEWS!

79 **New Albums**

Including: The Civil Wars, Pond, Booker T, Ty Segall, Julia Holter

99 **The Archive**

Including: Sly & The Family Stone, The Clash, the Allmans, Marc Bolan

114 **Film & DVD**

Alan Partridge, *Year Of The Horse*

118 **Live**

Beck, Frank Ocean, The Rolling Stones

133 **Books**

Tom Waits and more

134 **Not Fade Away**

This month's obituaries

136 **Feedback**

Your letters, plus the *Uncut* crossword

138 **My Life In Music**

Belle & Sebastian's Stuart Murdoch

Are we rolling?



I WAS SORRY to read in last month's *Uncut* that old-school country star Slim Whitman had died, news that had otherwise passed me by. Slim was a great favourite in our house when I was growing up, my father much enamoured of "Rose Marie", which Slim had taken to No 1 on the pop charts, where it stayed for 11 weeks in 1955. Years later, my dad was still playing it, and moved on occasions, usually inspired by drink, to actually serenade the household with his game if not entirely tuneful rendition of it.

I recalled brushing shoulders once with Slim, backstage at a show in Aberdeen. This was March, 1975. Slim had just come through the stage door, a big, raffish man. It was a foul night, rain sweeping the streets. Slim, I was impressed to notice, was dressed for the weather. He was sporting a Stetson that had been fitted into a clear plastic mould, shaped to accommodate every contour of his hat to protect it from the rain. It made him look like he was wearing an upturned chamber pot on his head, but seemed effective enough, even if when he doffed it to one of the ladies on the door he fair drenched the pour soul with the rainwater that had accumulated in its brim.

I was actually in Aberdeen that night to meet Wayne Nutt, otherwise known as 'The Singing Oil Man'. Until being discovered by CBS, Wayne had been working the off-shore rigs up here. Now he has an album out called *Oil Field Man*, which causes much hilarity when it's played in the offices of what used to be *Melody Maker*. He seems like a colourful sort, though, so I am soon on my way to Scotland where he's touring with Slim. Unfortunately, by the time I get there *MM*'s unflattering review of his album has just appeared. Wayne thinks I've written it and tries to hang me by my scarf from a lamppost. He's reluctantly talked out of stringing me up, but is clearly unhappy.

"Y'all were damn near dead and gone to hell," he says, with much

Off his Nutt: Wayne's hilarious album, *Oil Field Man*

snarling menace, walking off.

When I get to know him a bit better, Wayne turns out to be thoroughly obnoxious, an unpleasantly surly Texan, a genuine redneck, his conversation full of bar-room brawls, assaults and what he calls knock-down drag-outs just for the pure hellish fun of it.

"A good fight," he says, "is as good as a good drink. There's nothing like fighting just for the manly fun of it. You should try it some time. The worst beating I ever got was in Houston at The Polka Dot Lounge. Three old boys got to mouthin' off and I thought, 'Hell, there's only three of them.' I jumped and they proceeded to kick the livin' hell out of me. I was in hospital for four days, but what the hell?"

And then he's telling me how much he hates New York.

"The people there are damn Yankee idiots. I had six fights my first day there and I won them all, by God. The people were rude and intolerant. Don't have time for no one. Don't talk polite. Hell, where I come from, you talk to a man like that, he's gonna knock your damn head off. I stayed in New York a day and a half, fought my way from one end of Manhattan to the other."

A couple of nights after the Aberdeen show, we are at his home outside Dunblane. There's a dog named Rebel at his feet who looks as mean as Wayne.

"Rebel might look docile now," Wayne tells us, "but when he gets angry, even I wouldn't tangle with this old dog. If he's after you, he's gon' get you. Your soul may belong to God, but your ass belongs to Reb."

Wayne chuckles heartily at this and knocks back another large one.

"Anyone want to hear a nigra joke?" he asks then, the room emptying quickly, even Rebel giving him an appalled look.

Man Jones

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INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN | LINDA THOMPSON | ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT

'What a waste!...'

Unveiled: the remarkable art of IAN DURY

FROM THE BEATLES to Blur, The Clash to The Horrors, art school has been a constant strand of British pop, the place where misfits and musicians explore their creativity, refine their stage outfits and plan their first album.

For Ian Dury, a place at the Royal College Of Art was something more. There was no question of dropping out to form a band; after graduating, Dury plied a career as a painter and illustrator in the years before he "got sidetracked" into music, first with Kilburn And The High Roads (whose bass player was painter Humphrey Ocean), then with The Blockheads, with whom Dury became a punk hero and a national treasure.

This summer sees Dury's first exhibition, a collection of around 30 paintings and illustrations from 1961-'72 that fleshes out a fascinating, little-documented chapter in the star's life. "Everyone knows Ian went to art school, but no-one knows what he produced there," says Kosmo Vinyl, Dury's former confederate who is co-curating the show along with Dury's daughter, Jemima, and Jules Balme, one-time Stiff Records art director.

Entitled *More Than Fair*, the show is a revelation of pop-art portraits and pranks, many of them showing the influence of Peter Blake, who was Dury's mentor first at Walthamstow School Of Art, then at the RCA. Dury remarked of his painting that "I was good enough to know that I wasn't going to be very good", but there are canvases of real quality here, most of which have been tucked away in the plan chest of the Dury family home these past 40 years.

"The show started out with a Vera Lynn – and I don't mean with a tonic," says Kosmo, ever the Cockney dodger. "I tracked down a Vera LP cover that Ian had done and that set me off seeking out his paintings, and I discovered that Jemima had a load of unseen stuff.

"We wouldn't have had the Ian Dury we know and love without the art-school experience. He wasn't there because it was a soft touch; he was serious about it. He was an artist who switched

mediums – some of the canvases are just words, and at one point he decided to stop painting and just write the words. His personality is in the paintings... the connection to *New Boots And Panties!!* is obvious."

Dury, who painted in a drape jacket while listening to Woody Allen albums, favoured semi-naked women for his subjects, but there are

also portraits of Billy Fury, Tony Bennett and screen gangsters; "I did a lot of tits and trilbies," as he put it. All are delivered with a pop-art panache that attests to the influence of Peter Blake. "Perhaps I legitimised his interest in pin-up girls, cowboys and rock stars," says 'Peter the Painter' today.

For Vinyl, himself an artist, *More Than Fair* both honours an old comrade and "reminds us that none of the clichés about the 1960s fit Ian's trajectory. The odds were stacked against him, but he triumphed in the end. The show is also a reminder that art school is not an indulgence, but an investment. There is a pay-off!"

NEIL SPENCER

More Than Fair: Paintings, Drawings And Artworks 1961-1972 is on at the Upper Gulbenkian Gallery, Royal College Of Art, London until September 1



Ian Dury with Kosmo Vinyl, 1978 and (facing page) Dury's illustration *The Immortals* for *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 1966





A QUICK ONE

► Following Kim Deal's departure, the **Pixies** have a new Kim on bass: Kim Shattuck (ex-Muffs). Their world tour hits Dublin Olympia (Nov 18), Manchester Apollo (21), Glasgow Barrowland (22) and Hammersmith Apollo (24). New material is promised. One such track, "Bagboy", is free at pixiesmusic.com.

► Rare 1967 recordings made by **David Bowie** with The Riot Squad have been quietly released. "The Toy Soldier EP" (Acid Jazz) features a cover of the VU's "I'm Waiting For My Man" among its four tracks.

► **Lal & Mike Waterson's** *Bright Phoebus*, the landmark British folk album, remains out of print. Its songs, however, will be revisited on an October tour by the extended Waterson family, plus guests including Jarvis Cocker and Richard Hawley. Starts at London Barbican (11) and ends at Bristol Colston Hall (16).



Arcade Fire

► Two auspicious LPs just announced for October: **Arcade Fire's** as-yet-untitled fourth (Oct 29), co-produced with James Murphy; and **Pearl Jam's** *Lightning Bolt* (Oct 15), inspired by "Pink Floyd and punk rock".

► Finally, our new *Ultimate Music Guide* on **Depeche Mode** is on sale July 31, and there's lots of new content every day at uncut.co.uk.

Springsteen onstage in Manchester, June 2012



SPRINGSTEEN: THE MOVIE

The ties that bind

Springsteen & I reveals the powerful bond between the Boss and his fans. "Bruce is all about the heart," says director Baillie Walsh

NICK FERRARO STARTED out as an Elvis tribute act around his native Philadelphia in 1986. On October 19, 2009, wearing his full Vegas Elvis costume, he went to see Bruce Springsteen at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. Spotting Ferraro in the crowd, Bruce launched into "All Shook Up" before pulling him onstage to join in. As the song finished, Ferraro started singing "Blue Suede Shoes" before Springsteen politely took the mic from his hand and ushered him offstage with the legend, "Elvis has left the building."

Ferraro is one of many devotees whose story appears in a new doc, *Springsteen & I*. Assembled by former music video director Baillie Walsh from home-made footage submitted by Bruce fans, the film started life last November, when a call went out asking for submissions. "We received over 2,000 entries from around the globe, around 300 hours of footage," says Walsh. "Every single one of those people that sent films in made an enormous effort. The pattern I saw the most was this devotion to Bruce, and the way he is an inspiration in these people's lives, which I suppose we expected. But when you send out a call to fans, you wonder if you're going to get

crazies, and I can honestly say that we didn't. I suppose the craziest thing was some people sent in 60 films, but you can call that crazy or you can call it devotion. It was a pleasant surprise."

The executive producer on the project was Ridley Scott, who also produced *Life In A Day* – a similar crowd-sourced doc consisting of footage shot by people around the world on one specific day: July 24, 2010. The unifying theme here, clearly, is Springsteen, and how he's touched people's lives. "I was thinking about the idea of what other artists you could do a similar treatment on," says Walsh. "Dylan would be a good one, but in a way I think it would be much more about the heart than the heart – Springsteen is all about the heart."

Accordingly, we hear many marvellous stories. There is Fledge, an Englishman, who recounts how a mysterious benefactor from the Springsteen entourage upgraded his tickets to a show at Madison Square Garden; Kitty, who drives a truck and likes nothing better than listening to *Nebraska* as she "drives through the desert"; John, a Danish busker, who jammed with Springsteen on the streets of Copenhagen in 1988. And then there

is David, not a convert himself but whose wife is a diehard Bruce fan. "If I could say one thing to Bruce, what would it be?" he considers. "Can you make your concerts shorter?"

And those concerts are well represented here, in footage running from Springsteen's earliest shows – captured in grainy black and white – up to his Hyde Park gig in 2012 with Paul McCartney. But what of the Boss himself? Has he seen *Springsteen & I*?

"We had to approach the Springsteen organisation to get permission, as we needed the archive and the music," says Walsh. "They gave us their blessing; they didn't want to be involved in any way and didn't want any editorial control. I went to meet Bruce in New Jersey where he was playing, met him briefly backstage, and didn't deal with them again until we'd finished the film. We sent them a copy, nervously hoping they were going to like it, and luckily they did. Bruce really likes it, although there's a certain amount of self-consciousness involved."

MICHAEL BONNER

Springsteen & I is in cinemas now. It will be out on DVD and Blu-Ray later in the year

"I'm not one for dwelling on the past"

LINDA THOMPSON returns, with a little help from old friends, extended family and an unexpected "session player" helping out on guitar...



Linda Thompson in Brighton, 2013

LINDA THOMPSON'S PERSONAL and professional union with Richard Thompson ended in 1983, during the famously unhappy US tour for *Shoot Out The Lights*. Distraught and often "slaughtered", at times she was so enraged with her unfaithful husband she'd kick him on the shins while they were performing. Happily for everyone, relations are more amicable these days. Indeed, "Love's For Babies And Fools", the opening track on *Won't Be Long Now*, Thompson's first album since 2007's *Versatile Heart*, sounds just like old times, her cool, strong voice laid over Richard's elegant acoustic guitar. "I seem to have worked with him quite a bit in the past few years," she says. "I mean, you can't get a better guitarist, can you? A lot of people say to me, 'Oh, it must be hard to work with Richard.' But it's easy, as you know he's not going to fuck up. I'm not one for dwelling on the past. It was just

like having another session player, only a really, really good one."

Recorded in New York at leisurely intervals over the past few years, *Won't Be Long Now* marks a stirring return to Thompson's roots. "I love simple and I wanted it to be very folksy and plain," she says. Alongside her ex-husband it includes collaborations with numerous old friends, among them Dave Swarbrick, Martin Carthy and John Kirkpatrick. Above all, it's a family affair. Her version of Kate & Anna McGarrigle's "As Fast As My Feet" features all three of her children – daughters Kami and Muna, and singer-songwriter son Teddy – as well as Richard's youngest son from his second marriage, Jack, on bass. She also co-wrote two songs with Teddy. "Working with him is a nightmare," she laughs. "It's harder with family; you can't tell them when they've hit a bum note. It's easier to say that to people you're not related to. We don't have big barneys. We have ominous silences and then somebody leaves, but it works out in the end."

Thompson's collaboration with Ron Sexsmith, whom she met through Teddy, was less freighted with emotion. "We wrote 'If I Were A Bluebird' on the computer," she says. "You send Ron words and he'll send you back a tune five minutes later – he writes a lot of stuff, does Ron. I just love him. Having someone to bounce off is good. I don't know why I don't do it more often."

There will be no tour for *Won't Be Long Now*. For decades Thompson has suffered from hysterical dysphonia, a nervous affliction that tightens the vocal cords. In the studio with producer Ed Haber she's able to work around it, but onstage it's less easy, making live shows rare occurrences. "I'm even nervous talking," she says. "I don't like audiences very much; I'm a bit scared. I could get drunk and take drugs to do it, but I've done enough of that in my life." Instead, she's looking forward to recording a Thompson family album later in the year, "with all the kids and grandkids. That should be great." **GRAEME THOMSON**

Won't Be Long Now is out on **Topic** in October

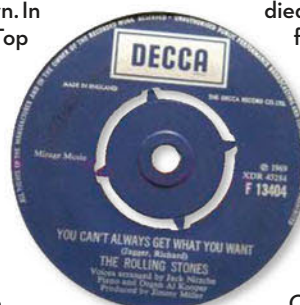
AND ON VOCALS... DORIS TROY

UNCUT'S GUIDE TO ROCK'S GREATEST SESSION PLAYERS

► Doris Payne started out singing in her father's choir, but it was while she was working as an usherette at the Harlem Apollo that she was discovered by James Brown. In 1963, Payne – now Troy – had a Top 10 US hit with "Just One Look" (a co-write credit proved lucrative thanks to covers by The Hollies, Linda Ronstadt, Nilsson and Bryan Ferry). Though only one 1964 single – "What'cha Gonna Do About It" – grazed the UK charts, Troy moved to England and recorded an album for Apple in 1969 – co-produced by her and George Harrison – before embarking on

a notable career as a session vocalist. A successful stage musical and film, *Mama, I Want To Sing*, was based on her life. Troy died in Las Vegas in 2004, aged 67, from emphysema.

KEY SESSIONS: The Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want", Nick Drake's "Poor Boy", Carly Simon's "You're So Vain", George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord", Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, Kevin Ayers' *The Confessions Of Dr Dream And Other Stories* and *Bananamour*, Humble Pie's *Rock On*, Viv Stanshall's *Men Opening Umbrellas Ahead*. **PHIL KING**



Soul of discretion:
Doris Troy



END OF THE ROAD GETS CLOSER

Join us for Q&As, secret sessions and more at our favourite festival

A gentle reminder that we'll be pitching up at the marvellous End Of The Road Festival later this month. This year, our favourite musical weekend runs between August 30 and September 1, at its traditional home of the Larmer Tree Gardens in North Dorset. And as we announced last month, *Uncut* will be hosting the Tipi Tent stage that features, among others, **Bob Lind, Daughn Gibson, Julianna Barwick, Mike Heron & Trembling Bells, John Murry, William Tyler and Valerie June**. Stick around after the scheduled bands have finished, too: we're organising a few secret late-night sets in there.

Somewhat earlier in the day, we're also pleased to announce that *Uncut* will be hosting a couple of Q&A sessions at the Tipi Tent. The first, on Saturday morning, is a chat with the excellent solo artist and producer **Ethan Johns**, the latest in line from one of rock's most auspicious control room dynasties. The second, 24 hours later, involves **Stuart Murdoch**, frontman of Belle & Sebastian (you can check out Murdoch talking about his favourite records on page 138 of this issue, incidentally).

Belle & Sebastian join **David Byrne & St Vincent** and **Sigur Rós** as headliners of a bill that also includes plenty more *Uncut*-friendly acts like **Eels, Dinosaur Jr, Matthew E White, Mark Mulcahy, Parquet Courts, Dawes, Savages, King Khan & The Shrines** and **Caitlin Rose** (who's interviewed at home in Nashville on page 26).

Tickets are still available for £175. To buy them, and for full details of what promises to be a fantastic weekend, have a look at www.endoftheroadfestival.com.



Rocket From The Crypt in their prime (Speedo, third left) and, below, on Yo Gabba Gabba!

TOP OF THE BILL

All systems go!

Relaunched! The name of the band is still **ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT**

A CHILDREN'S TELEVISION show featuring characters named Toodee, Plex and Foofa is not where you might expect a sweatily righteous rock'n'soul band to make their first live appearance in six years, but for Rocket From The Crypt, it made perfect (non)sense. In late 2011, the San Diego sextet played one song on *Yo Gabba Gabba!* at the invitation of the show's co-creator, joining a list of guests that stretches from Band Of Horses to Weezer. "It was a silly thing," explains guitarist and vocalist John Reis, better known as Speedo. "Something that didn't seem like a regular reason for us to get back together to do – which I think kind of appealed to everyone."

Silly thing or not, that one song (written for them) turned RFTC's thoughts to a consolidated reunion, and since then they've played a handful of European dates with more scheduled, plus select US shows including a Detroit festival in June, at Metallica's invitation. Of possible UK dates, Speedo says there is "nothing on the horizon", but that the band are keen.

Even at their mid-'90s peak – when major-label singles "Born In '69" and "On A Rope" turned them into bona fide UK chart stars and saw them appear on *Top Of The Pops* – RFTC stuck out like a proverbial sore thumb. Their amped-up, horns-blasted hybrid of alt.rock, soul, punk and hardcore was packed with complex arrangements that sacrificed none of their visceral immediacy, but marked them out from their post-grunge peers. They disbanded after



a Halloween show in 2005, but Speedo declares that neither personal nor musical differences were the reason. "It finished because it had played its course," he says, simply. "We really immersed ourselves in the band the first time around; we practised six, sometimes seven days a week and rehearsed 10 hours a day. That's all we did. In the final years, it felt a bit awkward, because as we were all getting older, everyone wanted to experience other things in life."

Part of the appeal of playing together in 2013 is that the pressure is very much off. Contrary to internet gossip, no new album is currently planned, let alone one produced by Dave Grohl. Says Speedo: "Everybody has their contented lives and no one's trying to revisit anything other than the noise that we made. We weren't even talking about playing again, but once we did start, it was like we'd never been away."

Second time around, RFTC's sole motivation is, says Speedo, "making that moment that we're onstage the best place on earth to be then, and to elevate it. That's the drive."

SHARON O'CONNELL

CIRCA: THEN!... How to buy Rocket From The Crypt



CIRCA: NOW!
CARGO, 1992
Their second album, which

secured the band's underground following. Recorded in four days, due to a police-ordered studio lockdown following the LA riots.

8/10



THE STATE OF ART IS ON FIRE
SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY, 1995

Part of 1995's "trilogy", along with *Hot Charity* and *Scream...*, this EP introduced trumpet player JC 2000. The first three tracks are all under the two-minute mark.

8/10



SCREAM, DRACULA, SCREAM!
INTERSCOPE, 1995

RFTC's major-label debut booted them into the UK mainstream. Produced by Speedo and yielding UK hit singles "On A Rope", "Born In '69" and "Young Livers".

9/10

Lost in music:
Julianna
Barwick



I'M NEW HERE

JULIANNA BARWICK

Recommended this month: Brooklyn's answer to Enya! Just don't call her ethereal...

"OH, I'M ALWAYS losing myself in my music," says Julianna Barwick. "I just start recording and get totally lost."

Increasingly, she's not the only one. Since 2011's *The Magic Place*, her debut album of haunting choral loops, the music world has been steadily falling under the spell cast by this 34-year-old Brooklyn resident. Sharon Van Etten recruited Barwick for *Tramp* and, more recently, Yoko Ono invited her to perform at this year's MeltDown festival. "We met afterwards," says Barwick. "She shook my hand, held it for a long time and stared deep into my eyes. It was pretty intense."

Barwick's latest album, *Nepenthe*, also came about by way of a famous fan. Alex Somers, the Sigur Rós producer and partner of frontman Jónsi Birgisson, contacted Barwick in 2011 out of admiration for her hazy polyphonic pop, and a year later they found themselves recording together in Iceland, creating tracks from scratch in Somers' house and in Sigur Rós' Sundlaugin studio, a converted swimming pool in Mosfellsbær, a town just east of Reykjavik. For Barwick, who'd previously worked alone in her bedroom, this new process of opening up in front of a producer in an alien environment proved quietly revelatory. "Everything I'd made up to that point had been super-private, hermit-y recordings; this was the antithesis of that. We knew we wanted to try strings and we also used a choir of teenage girls. I'm really proud of the record."

With contributions from local minstrels Múm and Amiina, there's a newfound sense of warmth and euphoria in Barwick's song cycles, most likely the result of Somers'

feelgood guidance, which leads to *Nepenthe* radiating a golden, quasi-profound glow. Pronounced "neh-pen-thee", the word is an archaic term for an antidepressant drug, references to which can be found in literature. "I thought it was a cool word, and one definition of it that I liked is that it was a potion used by the ancients to erase something painful or sorrowful. I don't mean it to be literal, like the album is a remedy for all the hurt in the world, but it does have a personal meaning."

Raised in churchgoing households full of music and singing in Missouri and Oklahoma, Barwick moved to New York at the turn of the century to study her other passion, darkroom photography, at the liberal Hampshire College of arts. "I didn't study music because I never wanted it to be a drag," she says. Instead, she knuckled down with a Loop Station effects unit and emerged with a distinctive sound that would be best realised on *The Magic Place*, a timeless record critics eagerly placed between Eno and Enya. "Being described as Enya doesn't bother me – my dad was obsessed with her and had all the Enya albums at home," she says. "But the word 'ethereal' bothers me more."

Now that music has become her job, does she still take photos? "Just on my iPhone," she sighs. "It's kind of sad, 'cos one of my favourite things to do is to get lost in a darkroom. The hours just totally disappear." **PIERS MARTIN**

Nepenthe is released by **Dead Oceans** (Aug 12). Julianna Barwick plays London St Giles Church (Aug 29), before gracing the Uncut-hosted Tipi Tent at the End Of The Road festival (Aug 30-Sept 1)

I'M YOUR FAN

"Julianna has a voice that creates beautiful, cloudy tapestries and makes you forget where you are. I find her music very healing. I often start the day with her song 'Cloudbank'. It makes me feel calm, like I am alone in a church"

Sharon Van Etten



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

BILL CALLAHAN

Dream River DRAG CITY

Lugubrious come-hithering, javelins, arrows and yet more river metaphors: another chapter in the dense, compelling Callahan odyssey.

ROY HARPER

Man & Myth BELLA UNION

First studio set in 13 years from the old rogue, featuring sensitive, expansive production from Jonathan Wilson and a handy Pete Townshend solo.

FACTORY FLOOR

Factory Floor DFA

Long-awaited debut album from London trio meticulously pulverises New Order, Moroder, Chris & Cosey and Kim Gordon into an acid pile-up.

WILCO

Live At Solid Sound Festival

NYCTAPER.COM

Tweedy and co blow apart their own festival with a remarkable set of cover versions. Check out the Nels Cline masterclass on "Marquee Moon".

MATTHEW WHITE

Big Love (Hot Chip Remix) DOMINO

Extended summer grooves, dub flutter, steel drums and the best makeover of its kind since Zero 7 remixed Lambchop's "Up With People".

KING KHAN & THE SHRINES

Idle No More MERGE

Garage-rock troupe channel their energies into a bracing Love/Stax/Make-Up hybrid.

VIEUX FARKA TOURÉ

Mon Pays SIX DEGREES

Strongest set yet from the Malian guitarist, including some duets with kora player Sidiki Diabaté that shadow the duels of their fathers, Ali Farka Touré and Toumani Diabaté.

ULTRAMARINE

This Time Last Year

REAL SOON

The Essex techno duo's return after 15 years is a characteristically discreet, enveloping pleasure.

ARBOURETUM

A Gourd Of Gold LATITUDES

After our editor's vigorous blog attack on Gordon Lightfoot, Arboretum mount a case for the defence: an EP of four stirring Lightfoot covers.

CHRIS THILE

Bach: Sonatas And Partitas, Vol 1 NONESUCH

The Punch Brothers' mandolin maestro goes to work on Bach's pieces for solo violin.

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



NEW MORNINGS

Your guide to this month's free CD

FREE CD!



1 HOUNDSTOOTH Francis

A pulsating start to this month's CD, as the Oregon newcomers roll out one of those great tunes where American choogle shifts gear into a motorik judder. From their excellent debut album, *Ride Out The Dark*.

2 POND Xanman

It's hard to see how Jay Watson and Nick Allbrook found time to record the fifth Pond album, given their rent-paying jobs in Tame Impala. Their foreman in that band, Kevin Parker, produces, adding a psych gloss to thunderous workouts like "Xanman" – akin to Led Zeppelin muscling in on T. Rex's glam market.

3 THE SHOUTING MATCHES Gallup, NM

Discreetly released on the Middle West label back in the spring, The Shouting Matches' *Grownass Man* might be one of the best things Justin "Bon Iver" Vernon has been involved with. Among shitkicking bar-band workouts, *Grownass Man* also contains this gentle groover. Check out the solo – needling kin of Nels Cline's work in Wilco.

4 WAXAHATCHEE Dixie Cups And Jars

A bunch of emerging US acts – EMA and Speedy Ortiz, for starters – seem to be spearheading a covert '90s indie-rock revival. Ditto Waxahatchee (aka Katie Crutchfield), whose raw and affecting music demands comparison with that of Kim Deal, at least in the latter's more reflective moments. There's another



serendipitous connection to Deal, too; Crutchfield also has a twin sister with whom she makes music.

5 LLOYD COLE Period Piece

A consummate rock classicist, Cole has rarely sounded better than on his recent comeback album, *Standards*. "Period Piece" has a New York throb, but it's the chiming Byrds, circa "Feel A Whole Lot Better", that's most artfully pronounced here.

6 TUNNG Embers

Plenty of British artists were fusing folk traditions with electronic innovation a decade ago, but none have pursued and finessed that concept with the diligence of Tunng. From their fifth album, *Turbines*, "Embers" is the perfect distillation of their craft: cycling, meticulous, pretty, unnerving.

7 STEPHEN KELLOGG Forgive You, Forgive Me

From Massachusetts, Kellogg has spent the past few years fronting a moderately acclaimed Americana band called The Sixers. His first solo album, however, suggests he might

do better by himself; robust and catchy songs like "Forgive You, Forgive Me" would sit neatly on some of the best Tom Petty records.

8 ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER Tomorrow Tomorrow

While brother Matthew has spent the Fiery Furnaces' hiatus making ever odder music, Eleanor Friedberger seems determined to corral her old band's quirks into much tidier and more satisfying pop songs. Exhibit A: the punchy "Tomorrow Tomorrow", co-written with John Wesley Harding.

9 SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS You're Mine

One of the less-trumpeted, more pleasing reunions of 2013 has been that of Joe Pernice and his old bandmates in the Scuds, back together for the first time in 16 years. As "You're Mine" shows, they've pretty much picked up from where they left off on *Massachusetts*.

10 DIRTMUSIC Wa Ya You

Aussies Chris Eckman (The Walkabouts) and Hugo Race (ex-Bad Seeds) channel the desert blues jams of Tinariwen and other Tuareg rockers with uncanny accuracy on their second Dirtmusic album, unsurprising given they recorded it with local musicians in Bamako.

11 JULIA HOLTER In The Green Wild

From the limber and intoxicating follow-up to 2012's *Ekstasis*, "In The Green Wild" finds Holter toying with Joni-ish jazz, before sliding into the kind of glassy soundscape that has brought the LA experimentalist so much justified acclaim of late.

12 THE LEE THOMPSON SKA ORCHESTRA Midnight Rider

Madness' airborne sax player and chums give a rocksteady makeover to the old Allmans chestnut. Amazingly, a much better idea than it sounds on paper.



13 AOIFE O'DONOVAN Lay My Burden Down

Another familiar song, since it figured on Alison Krauss & Union Station's *Paper Airplane* set a couple of years back. It was written, though, by O'Donovan, who does it justice on *Fossils*, her first solo album after time spent with Crooked Still and The Milk Carton Kids.

14 THE SAINTS Mini Mantra Part 1

No Ed Kuepper in the lineup (he's busy with The Bad Seeds), but Chris Bailey's latest reconfiguration of The Saints come up trumps on this seething throwback to their past glories at the forefront of Antipodean punk.

15 JAGWAR MA Four

To end an unusually Australia-dominated collection, Sydney's Jagwar Ma. Regularly cited as part of a baggy revival, the expansive "Four" reveals them to be something more appealing: a hazy electronic analogue to Tame Impala.



2013 RELEASES FROM BELLA UNION



JOHN GRANT **Pale Green Ghosts** **OUT NOW**

After a breakthrough year that saw his exceptional solo debut win MOJO's Album of 2010 and countless other accolades, John Grant has created a follow-up that underlines his uncanny and charismatic talents.

"A Masterpiece" - UNCUT (8/10)



LANDSHAPES **Rambutan** **OUT NOW**

Broad brushstrokes, big sounds and mournful melodies forged a new soundscape for a distillation of songs old and new, re-worked and fine tuned with a deft precision for the debut album from Landshapes.



LAURA VEIRS **Warp And Weft** **19TH AUGUST**

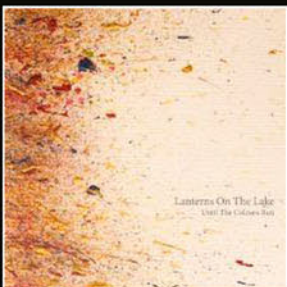
Building on the uniform praise and commercial success of 2010's "July Flame", Veirs' latest, primarily electric-guitar driven, offering could well be her best work to date.

Features Jim James, KD Lang, Neko Case, Brian Blade and more.



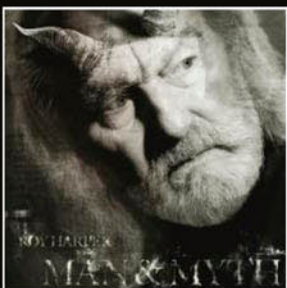
MONEY **The Shadow Of Heaven** **26TH AUGUST**

Shaping up to be one of the most anticipated debut albums of the year. This unique Manchester four piece embody the passion, creativity and optimism of a new generation of artists and musicians.



LANTERNS ON THE LAKE **Until The Colours Run** **9TH SEPTEMBER**

Following the success of their critically acclaimed debut in 2011, Lanterns On The Lake return with an exquisitely crafted blend of symphonic rock, folk and electronics on this new album.



ROY HARPER **Man and Myth** **23RD SEPTEMBER**

The first studio album in 13 years from one of the leading, most erudite and passionate orators of the British folk rock renaissance.

Man And Myth is incontrovertible proof of Roy Harper's persisting brilliance.

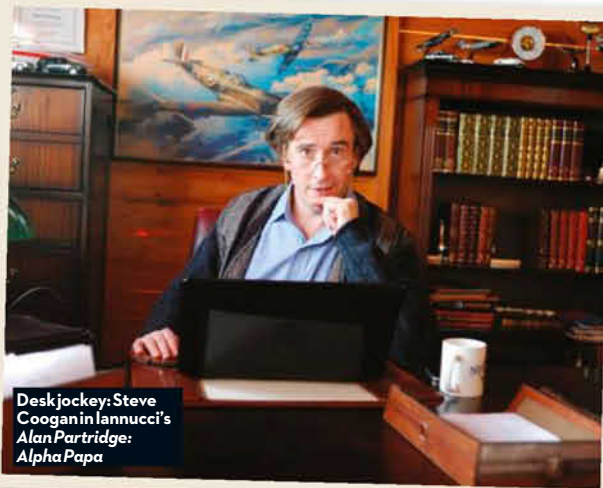
Armando Iannucci

Interview: Michael Bonner

Photograph: Chris McAndrew

The satirist behind Alan Partridge and *The Thick Of It* talks politics, decoding Chris Morris and the priesthood: "There was no way I could take a vow of chastity"

YOU SUSPECT THERE are never enough hours in Armando Iannucci's day. Although presently in New York, where he's working on "very early rehearsals" for season three of HBO's political comedy *Veep*, he is also simultaneously putting the finishing touches to *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa* – the big-screen debut of the character he helped create 22 years ago – which is due for release in a matter of weeks. Iannucci has been pivotal in the best British comedy shows of the past two decades, from *The Day Today* and *I'm Alan Partridge* to *The Thick Of It*. Right now, though, he needs to concentrate on Alan: "Alan's deepest desire is to become a franchise," he confides. "Half man, half franchise." But first, there's just time for your questions...



Desk jockey: Steve Coogan in Iannucci's *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*

that the *Porridge* film might have been good.

Telescopic dampers or rigid stays?
Leo, London

That's Alan. I think rigid stays. I'm inherently suspicious of anything telescopic. Do I often get people reciting lines from my television shows at me? Occasionally, but it's more in print, especially when you've got the online comments at the end of things. Whenever *The Guardian* does an Alan Partridge story, if you look

STAR QUESTION



Do you think you'd have been more successful if you'd been taller?

Chris Langham

Well, I don't know how successful I am, and therefore whether I'm in dire need of more or less success. I feel fairly comfortable for my height. Do I miss Chris' involvement on *The Thick Of It*? Yes. He was so funny and he brought so much depth and humanity to that role. It was such a shame, what happened. It would be nice to do something in the future.

I remember the 1997 Election Night Armistice that featured your surprisingly angry monologue about Paddy Ashdown. Is there any political figure you actively despise?

David, Hastings

There's a Labour guy called Ben Bradshaw, who's very, very loyalist Labour. I think he's MP for Exeter, and all his tweets are very dull:

'Congratulations to the people of Exeter for yet another fine display of road-management skills. No traffic accidents today in Exeter.' Which strikes me as the wrong use of social media. I would like it to go on record that George W Bush was the worst American president ever and caused untold damage to a lot of the world. There's also Eric Pickles. Why Eric Pickles? As local government minister he has presided over the biggest slashing and burning of local government, and seems to be enjoying it. With each round of cuts he seems to actively encourage George Osborne to cut even more.

What's the strangest thing Chris Morris has ever said to you?

Tyler Allen, Southampton

His emails are always in a slightly indecipherable version of English that only he speaks. Imagine those headlines in *The Day Today* and *Brass Eye*, but mashed up even further. If he's trying to say, "Do you want to meet tomorrow for lunch or a cup of tea?", it would be something more like, "How are your chops? Tea,

interesting?" You'd have to decipher it, but over the years I think I can work it out. He's directed some episodes of *Veep*, and he's going to direct some more for the new season.

Many successful UK TV comedy shows haven't been that good when transferred to the big screen. What's different about *Alpha Papa*?

John Perkins, South-East London

We kind of did it before in a way, with *The Thick Of It* and *In The Loop*, and basically you've just got to make sure you work very hard at it and think with a 90-minute framework rather than a 30-minute framework. The key to Alan is keeping his attitude and his world small, even though we're on a big screen. So it's all about exploring; when a world of opportunity opens up as it does for him in the film, does he go for it or stay loyal to his slightly smaller world that he feels comfortable in? Do I have any favourite film versions of old TV shows? No, they're all a bit of a blur. I think one of the *Steptoe* films was OK, and I have a funny feeling

STAR QUESTION



Which member/s of the Fantastic Four do you identify with?

Stewart Lee

With not using superpowers, Mister Fantastic, just because I always imagined myself being academic like him. But in terms of superpowers, I don't like his stretchy body. I think I'd go for the Human Torch myself, just because I like his destructive nature. I used to collect *The Fantastic Four* comics, right from the first issue. When I went to university, my mum threw them out. I told Stewart this and he gave me his entire *Fantastic Four* collection.

WorldMags.net

“Over the years
we’ve tried to
make Alan
Partridge more
real, less like an
unstoppable
idiot”





Loop guru: Iannucci directs Tom Hollander and Chris Addison in 2009's *In The Loop*

STAR QUESTION



Would John Milton have been more of a *Partridge* fan or a *Thick Of It/ Veep* fan?

Rebecca Front

He wouldn't have enjoyed the language of *The Thick Of It* and *Veep*, although to some of those words I'm sure he would have said, "Oh, I invented that." Milton came up with this fantastic character called Satan, who does magnificent vituperative speeches in Hell in *Paradise Lost*. Milton himself was Oliver Cromwell's spin doctor, in a way. He was called Secretary for Foreign Tongues and his job was to write in Latin defences of Cromwell and his republicanism to all the royal courts of Europe. I think, language aside, Milton would have been quite happy with *The Thick Of It* and *Veep*.

You once wanted to become a priest. What changed your mind?

Paddy Moen, Ireland

The more I examined it, the more I thought every aspect of it was ridiculous. If you analyse anything that you believed when you were a teenager, you realise it was all just obsession and irrational. You have to take a vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. Poverty was all right, but there was no way I could take a vow of chastity or obedience.

Do you think the future of television comedy has moved away from the BBC?

Angus Harrison, Bristol

A little bit, yes, in that there are more networks now putting money into comedy – Sky, Channel 4 and, indeed ITV, and that's a good thing. It's a good thing for the BBC because it will force them to raise their game. Don't get me wrong, the BBC has been great and most of my stuff has

been done for them, but I think there was a period where they were the only game in town, and that meant that fundamentally all of comedy was being determined by two or three people at the BBC. It's much healthier now, and also online is another outlet. I think what it means for the future of comedy is that it can go in one of many different ways and it's slightly unpredictable – and that's exciting. Of course, we did *Mid Morning Matters* on YouTube and the Foster's lager website. It reminded me of going back and doing Alan on the radio for the very first time. We had no idea what kind of reception we would get. Which was good. It forced us to really concentrate and work hard at it.

How has writing Alan Partridge changed from *On The Hour* to *Alpha Papa*?

Helen Steward, Surrey

In *On The Hour*, he was very much a heightened figure, and over the years we've tried to flesh him out and make him much more real and believable, less like an unstoppable idiot, and emotionally add a little more depth. How has the process of writing Alan changed? It's still fundamentally the same – it's us sitting in a room. It's one of the reasons why Alan Partridge only turns up every three or four years, because we've got to get to the point where we know we can spend a lot of time in a room working on it. We have Rob and Neil Gibbons, who've been writing with us on Alan for the past two or three years, and they're based in London; Steve [Coogan] is based in the UK when he's not filming; I'm in London three quarters of the year, so it still has been us in the room beaver away. But with the advent of Skype and FaceTime we can get Peter [Baynham] in as well, so that process hasn't changed.

Do you have any regrets?

Francis Reyes, Bristol

Although I enjoy collaborating on stuff, I regret that I haven't done one or two of my own personally written things. *The Armando Iannucci Shows* – which I did work on with some other writers – was my most personal series, and I would like to do more than that. I also regret that it took me a long time to make a film, because I want to do more films. What about fronting a show again? I don't feel inclined to do it. I enjoy being in front of an audience, and being myself in front of an audience, but what I want to do is that style from *The Armando Iannucci Shows*. I wouldn't mind doing that in a feature – that blend of fantastical yet ultra-real at the same time. Yes, that show was a favourite of mine. I felt it managed to do lots of things at once that I wanted to do, and was able to use comedy to explore themes in a slightly unusual way. Anyway, I was very pleased with how it emerged.

STAR QUESTION



What's your favourite scene in any of the programmes you've made?

Chris Addison

Wow. Right. I do have a soft spot for a scene in the first episode of *The Armando Iannucci Shows* where I sit down for dinner and Stephen Mangan plays someone who is very, very witty. I'm desperately trying to come up with witty stuff and fail. We're all being served pies and I realise that all his witty phrases are in his pie, and he's

surreptitiously taking them out and reading them, so he's being fed prompts in his food. I end up having a food fight with him, and very briefly I manage to get his pie and then I am very witty. It sounds terrible in the reciting of it, but it's all up on YouTube.

Do you think you and Chris Morris went too far with the *Observer* 9/11 'Absolute Atrocity Special'?

Bob Sharp, Glasgow

No, I don't think so... I've forgotten what we did with it, actually. I do remember the editor at the time saying, "Well, we did get actual human excrement through our letterbox, but that aside..." It's difficult to say, 11 or 12 years on, whether you would do that again. At the time, it felt like the coverage of 9/11 was so skewed. I remember Blair's attempt to own the tragedy. It just felt like something needed to be addressed in print. And that was our way of doing it.

How have your dealings with HBO on *Veep* differed from your dealings with British broadcasters like the BBC and Sky?

Steve Harper, Glasgow

If anything, I'd say that working with HBO reminds me of working with the BBC. HBO is very different from other American networks, where everything is done through committee – all the executives from the networks pile in with notes, everything is done through focus groups and so on. HBO is very much

hands off –

"We're here to protect you, we're here to give you the resources you need. It's your show – off you go." And any notes they give are not

mandatory, they're just their considered opinion; they're intelligent and, if anything, useful. I've been able to base myself in London. It's all UK writers. I go to Baltimore to shoot it, but I edit it in London and the cast come here to rehearse. HBO just wants it to happen, and tries to work out the best way to do that. That reminds me of working with the BBC when we were starting out with *On The Hour*. ☺

Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa is released on August 7



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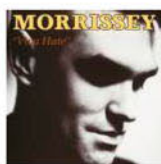
LITTLE MAN, WHAT NOW?

Wrestling matches with Vini Reilly! Ouija boards, sauna sessions and extravagant pastries! Brandy with Joan Sims! A secret love of Black Box's "Ride On Time"!... 25 years on, *Uncut* takes a forensic look at MORRISSEY's first acts as a solo artist: *Viva Hate*, *Bona Drag*, *Kill Uncle*, *Your Arsenal* and *Vauxhall And I*. The bandmates, songwriters and producers tell all: "It sounds too much like Waitrose. It needs to be more Harrods."

STORY: ROB HUGHES | PHOTO: JANE HUNTINGTON



VIVA HATE



RELEASED: March 1988
LABEL: HMV
PRODUCER: Stephen Street
RECORDED AT:
 The Wool Hall, Bath
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 1

Solo debut, issued six months after final Smiths album, *Strangeways, Here We Come*. Guitarist Vini Reilly [with Morrissey, inset below right] added descriptive ambience to songs like "Late Night, Maudlin Street" and "Bengali In Platforms", while Morrissey scored two major hit singles with "Suedehead" (No 5) and "Every Day Is Like Sunday" (No 9).

STEPHEN STREET, producer: Although it wasn't long after *Strangeways...*, there was some trepidation, because this was pastures new and there was no guarantee that it would work. When Morrissey and I first started thinking about who could be involved, I wanted a technically good guitar player. But most of all I wanted someone who was completely different, style-wise, from Johnny Marr. Vini comes from Manchester too, so I thought that would help bring a mutual understanding.

VINI REILLY, guitarist: Recording with Morrissey was one of the best experiences of my life. I think the fact we were both Irish gave us something in common; we understood each other and there were lots of similarities. And we'd both had difficult childhoods and the rest of it. It forged a friendship between Morrissey and me, and a mutual respect that was based on him taking the piss out of me.

ANDREW PARESI, drummer: There was a terrific forward momentum throughout the recording. It was as if we were recording it on the *Titanic* and had half an hour to get it done. It had that kind of feel. And in that environment I think you can spark some very interesting things.

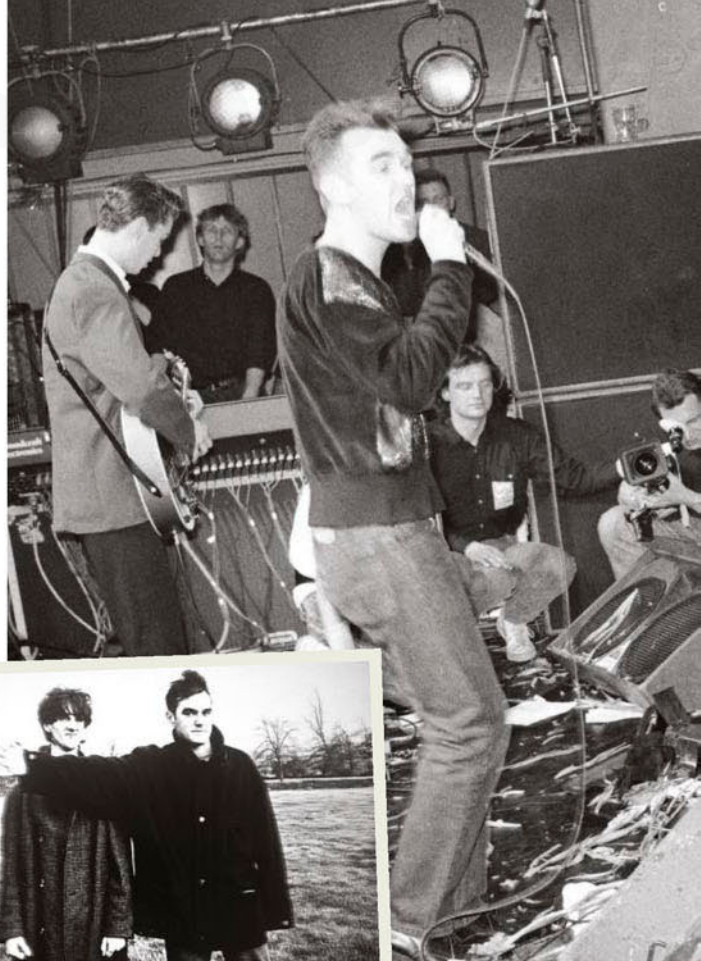
STREET: There was a tension in the sense

that we were all worried about how we were going to follow in the footsteps of The Smiths, but at the same time I think Morrissey found it refreshing to work with a new bunch of people. Andrew Paresi had a very wicked sense of humour and there was a lot of extremely witty, camp comedy flying backwards and forwards. It was actually fun times. I think he felt at home.

PARESI: Morrissey has a very acute understanding of funny, because he has a very firm grasp of the absurd realities of life. And you'll find that view in all of his songs. He just had this fantastically humorous, mordant outlook on life. Plus he had a really calm, quiet, good-natured demeanour. It was a complete relief from the gallery of pop knob-ends that I'd been working with. At that time there was still this post-Live Aid, boozy, snorting, dick-wad kind of sensibility.

Morrissey was the complete opposite. He could just as easily have been an ECM jazz musician, very esoteric.

REILLY: Me and Morrissey used to have wrestling matches. He was very physically together, very strong. We'd find a corridor, suddenly it would go off and no one knew



Irish hearts:
Vini Reilly
and Morrissey

what to do. Or me and Mozza would be in the sauna, stark-bollock naked. Everybody else was too stupid

about everything to do something like that, but Morrissey liked it: "What's all the big fuss about?" Morrissey was trapped by a lot of people's attitudes and stereotypes.

STREET: Every now and then Morrissey would come up with a reference. I remember him once referring me to Joni Mitchell. I didn't realise until that point that Morrissey was a

huge fan of hers. And that's what led me to write "Late Night, Maudlin Street". He told me: "I want a long, rambling track that loops round and round, à la Joni Mitchell." That was the way Johnny Marr had worked with him. You had to come up with a backing track that wasn't just a bunch of chords shoved down. I remember the night he did the vocals and just being absolutely stunned by the quality of the lyric and melody.

REILLY: There was a riff in my head for "Late Night, Maudlin Street". It had a very ambient, hypnotic vibe to it. I remember it being late at night in the studio and Morrissey did a vocal that we didn't expect. It made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up, because it was exactly the kind of vibe I was feeling. It was so perfect. That was why I'd always wanted to work with Morrissey, because I knew he had this instinctual sense of melody and atmosphere. Whenever he got up to do a vocal performance he'd absolutely astound you, because it changed from being my jumble of free-form guitar. You never knew what he was going to do.



Hate figure:
Moz favourite
Joni Mitchell

REVELATIONS!

JONI MITCHELL, SPARKS... AND LIONEL RICHIE

Some of the influences on *Viva Hate* are more surprising than others

Producer Stephen Street's declaration that portions of Morrissey's debut were influenced by Joni Mitchell and Sparks may not come as a total shock. But maybe the Lionel Richie connection will... The percussion loop on "Break Up The Family" was partly inspired by one of the Motown smoothie's mega-sellers. "I had this chord sequence and knew it had a nice jazzy feel," Street explains. "I was just eager to try to push Morrissey into terrain that hadn't been covered with The Smiths. Johnny Marr

was a huge soul fan, don't get me wrong, but they'd never attempted to do anything too funky. But in this instance I had this loop and just remember that pattern came from 'All Night Long'. I remember being quite a fan of the groove, the actual rhythm track, so we used it."

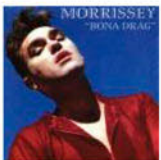
RETURN OF MOZ

The second coming:
“It was fucking chaos!”

On December 22, 1988, nine months after *Viva Hate* had been released, Morrissey played his first solo gig, at Wolverhampton Civic Hall. In what amounted to a virtual Smiths reunion, his band featured Mike Joyce, Andy Rourke and Craig Gannon. Admission was free for anyone wearing a Smiths T-shirt. After a prolonged period of terrace-style chanting, Morrissey finally appeared and launched into “Stop Me If You Think You’ve Heard this One Before”. He played six more songs – “Disappointed”, “Interesting Drug”, “Suedehead”, “Last Of The Famous International Playboys”, “Sister I’m A Poet”,

“Death At One’s Elbow” – and one encore, “Sweet And Tender Hooligan”. “As a kind of mark of respect, we decided beforehand that we weren’t going to do any Smiths songs that we’d already played live with Johnny,” recalls Joyce. “We didn’t want to give people the opportunity to judge whether they were better or not. The gig itself was just fucking chaos. There were people getting up on stage. For the first five minutes it was funny, but then leads were getting pulled and at one point it was just me and Morrissey. Andy’s bass pedal had been stood on and Craig’s lead had been yanked out. I thought it would’ve been better for people to see and hear a performance, rather than seeing chaos. Though in terms of the overspill of camaraderie that we’d had with Smiths fans, it was fantastic.”

BONA DRAG



RELEASED: October 1990
LABEL: HMV
PRODUCER: Stephen Street / Clive Langer / Alan Winstanley
RECORDED AT: The Wool Hall, Bath / Hook End Manor, Reading
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 9

Initially conceived as the follow-up to *Viva Hate*, *Bona Drag* instead morphed into a superior collection of singles (“Piccadilly Palare”, “November Spawned A Monster”) and killer B-sides (“Disappointed”, “Will Never Marry”, “Hairdresser On Fire”).

STEPHEN STREET: We made *Viva Hate*, then went back into the studio for the B-sides to “Everyday Is Like Sunday”. But the session was problematic in that there were quite a lot of mood swings from Vini Reilly at this point. So when we regrouped later in ’88, we decided not to use Vini this time. Instead it was like, “How about using Craig Gannon, Mike and Andy [Rourke]?” Enough time had passed by then, which got me thinking even more that The Smiths were going to re-form.

MIKE JOYCE, drummer: We’d tried carrying on [as *The Smiths*], but it was that thing about having one quarter of what you love taken away from you. Then I got a call from Morrissey about a year later, asking me if I wanted to do some more work. He pretty much gave me carte blanche, so we got Andy and Craig and it felt natural.

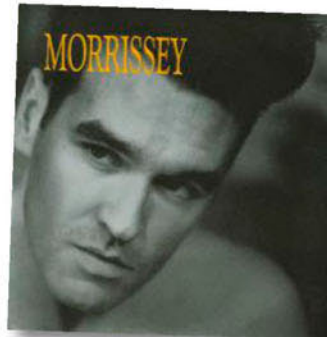
STREET: I’m not a keyboard player, but for “Ouija Board, Ouija Board” it was Morrissey’s request to do something more like Sparks. Then, when I was no longer on the scene, Langer and Winstanley did their version.

CLIVE LANGER, co-producer: It very nearly didn’t happen at all. We’d been put together by the record company. I wasn’t a big Smiths fan and

Morrissey wasn’t a Langer-Winstanley fan, though he liked Madness. So on the first day we were messing about with “Ouija Board...” and it just wasn’t sounding great. I didn’t want to put any pressure on him, so I said: “We don’t have to carry on with this.” And he said: “Fine, maybe we should just do this then leave it.” So we went to the pub. Then when we got back, the band had run through the tracks and they actually sounded pretty good. So we decided to make a start at some sort of relationship.

KEVIN ARMSTRONG, guitarist: I was quite open-minded about Morrissey. Obviously I realised that he’s an extremely sensitive, bright, intelligent artist. But on a personal level, I wasn’t really let in. I do remember Morrissey bringing in a record and us all dancing in the large studio room to “Ride On Time” by Black Box. It was his favourite record of the time.

LANGER: During the sessions, Morrissey made it clear that he was open to any of us giving him backing tracks. I wrote “November Spawned A Monster” on the piano and it sounded a bit Stones-like. He said he liked it, then did a vocal. When I realised what the subject matter was, I had this weird tune I’d been fiddling with and said: “How do you feel about me putting this in the middle as the ‘birth’?” And Morrissey said, “Let’s try it.” Then he suggesting using Mary Margaret O’Hara, so the whole thing was very organic. She was



“Morrissey gave me carte blanche, so we got Andy and Craig and it felt natural”

Mike Joyce

completely bonkers, unfathomable, really.

ARMSTRONG: The other person who visited those sessions was Joan Sims, with Morrissey being a big *Carry On* fan and all that. She liked a glass of brandy and a good story. Suggs was there for a while, too. He did a voiceover on “Piccadilly Palare”.

LANGER: Morrissey had Madness come down for dinner, and also Vic and Bob one night. He’d say: “Clive, could you invite so-and-so down?” And when they’d come, he’d have dinner, then disappear. So I’d have to entertain them, which was interesting because I didn’t really know why they were there.

ARMSTRONG: Morrissey employed a chef at great expense. I think she was billed as Princess Margaret’s chef, so I thought it’d be an opportunity to eat really good food. But it was largely cream and pastries. Morrissey was always eating toast, but then there were these heavy,

hearty, rich vegetarian meals. It wasn’t the worthy diet I expected.

PARESI: When you were having breakfast with Morrissey and something had got to him – whether it’s a criticism or a passionate feeling about something – he would look up and stare straight at you. It was right into your soul. You could actually feel your guts gripped. That was pretty impressive. What I remember is that sense of someone who was a beautiful savant, if you like.

● **ARMSTRONG:** Morrissey had the haunted master bedroom at Hook End Manor. It'd belonged to David Gilmour, but originally it was the Bishop of Reading's place or something, from the 16th Century. It's got a long history and there were creepy vibes in the house. I think Morrissey got quite into that. We did actually play ouija one night. All sorts of things were spelt out. Alcohol and various things had been taken, so I can't really remember. But we were in a darkened room with a candle.

KILL UNCLE

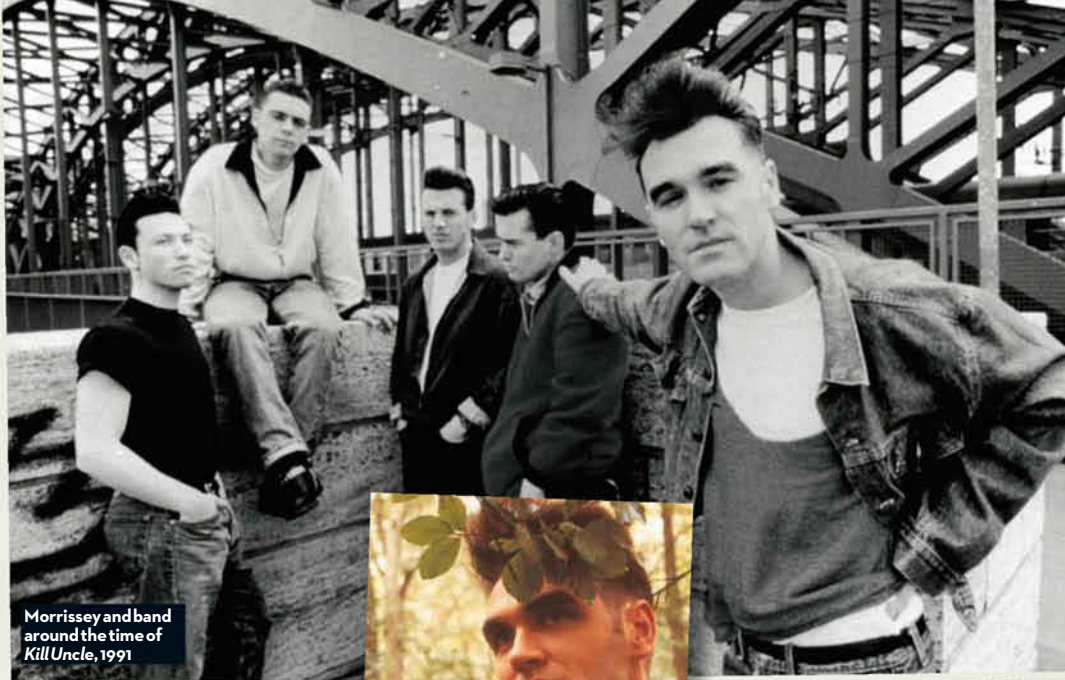


RELEASED: March 1991
LABEL: HMV
PRODUCER: Clive Langer & Alan Winstanley
RECORDED AT: Hook End Manor, Oxfordshire

HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 8

Morrissey's most underrated solo album, marked by fragile song-poems, atypical textures (piano, strings, vibraphone) and a belated rockabilly rush that pointed the way to the more cohesive *Your Arsenal*.

MARK NEVIN, co-writer: I was in the studio with Kirsty [MacColl], recording *Electric Landlady*, and got a call about Morrissey's manager wanting to speak to me. He just said to send him some music. So I sent these tapes off, addressed to 'Burt Reynolds', as I was told to write on the envelope. Then a postcard reply



Morrissey and band around the time of *Kill Uncle*, 1991

came, saying: "It's Perfect." [See below] I started to send more and I'd get these fantastic replies, first as postcards, then as brief letters in that spidery Morrissey scrawl. When it came to record at the studio, I was driving along and he was coming out of Hook End on his pushbike, exactly like one of the lookalikes from the "Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before" video. It was surreal.

LANGER: We weren't interested in musical fashions at the time, like the whole Manchester thing. That's why *Kill Uncle* got slated, because it didn't fit in and didn't sound like

The Smiths. But I thought that was its strength. Each song had a different story and feel. I wanted to pull out the colour in each song, without making it sound too over the top.

NEVIN: It was a bizarre experience. There was no sit-down or deciding what we were going to do. One reason was that Morrissey was so private and shy and wasn't forthcoming. So nobody really took the lead on it. Clive did quite a lot of different things than I'd originally imagined. Where I'd perhaps put an electric guitar, he'd put a piano, which was very much his style from the Madness thing. "Asian Rut" was a good example of trying to bring in different instruments. There's vibraphone, Indian violin and double bass bows. All these instruments hadn't been heard on a Morrissey record before.

PARESI: To use a parallel from the animal kingdom, it's as if Morrissey went into a chrysalis stage and

emerged out the other side as a rockabilly butterfly. Essentially that album was the changeover. It was like the driver going from the

local train to the express.

NEVIN: "Our Frank" was the first one we recorded. Clive and Alan [Winstanley] put a load of slapback echo on Morrissey's voice, so it was real Elvis style. Bedders [bassist Mark Bedford] and I were having this first-day-at-school giggly moment. The words of the song were very funny: "I'm gonna be sick all over your frankly vulgar red pullover". So we were laughing at that and also because we were nervous and it was Morrissey. The whole thing escalated into hysteria. I think Morrissey was delighted by the effect he had on us.

LANGER: We used to socialise a bit. All of us went to see the Buzzcocks one night and we went bowling once. Morrissey's pretty good at sports. We used to play football a lot and he was quite aggressive.

NEVIN: Around the dinner table there'd be lots of chat going on. Although Morrissey often wouldn't say anything, which could be very intimidating. He'd sit there silently presiding over our nervousness and awkwardness. I felt a bit like a new kid at boarding school.

PARESI: I remember one twilight night at Hook End in autumn. A lot of apples had fallen in the orchard and Morrissey picked some of them up. Then he walked down to the wire fence and started feeding the cows. They were really enjoying the apples and making a loud noise, which made Morrissey burst out laughing. It was absolutely the most touching thing.

LANGER: Morrissey and I used to go on really long walks in the forest. I felt like I got

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

KILL AUNTIE?

Know your Moz...

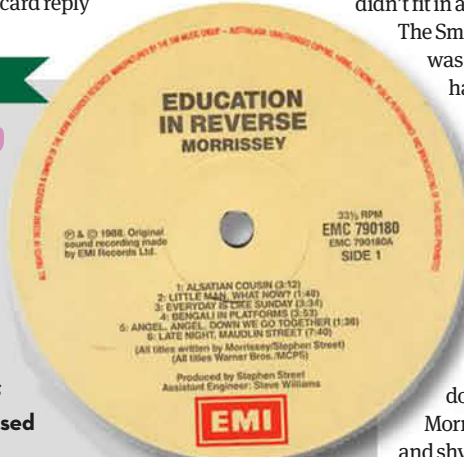
► The video for debut single "Suedehead" sees Morrissey visit the Indiana childhood home of James Dean.

► In Australia, copies of *Viva Hate* were mispressed under its working title, *Education In Reverse*.

► The name of the boys' school in the video for "Interesting Drug" was Hawtrey High, presumably named after Carry On favourite Charles.

► The title *Bona Drag* means 'nice outfit' in Polari.

► The opening track of Ryan Adams' *Heartbreaker*



consists of a debate between Adams and David Rawlings over the inclusion of "Suedehead" on *Bona Drag*.

► Keeping to theme, Joan Sims played a medium in the promo for "Ouija Board, Ouija Board".

► The working title of *Your Arsenal* was *Kill Auntie*.

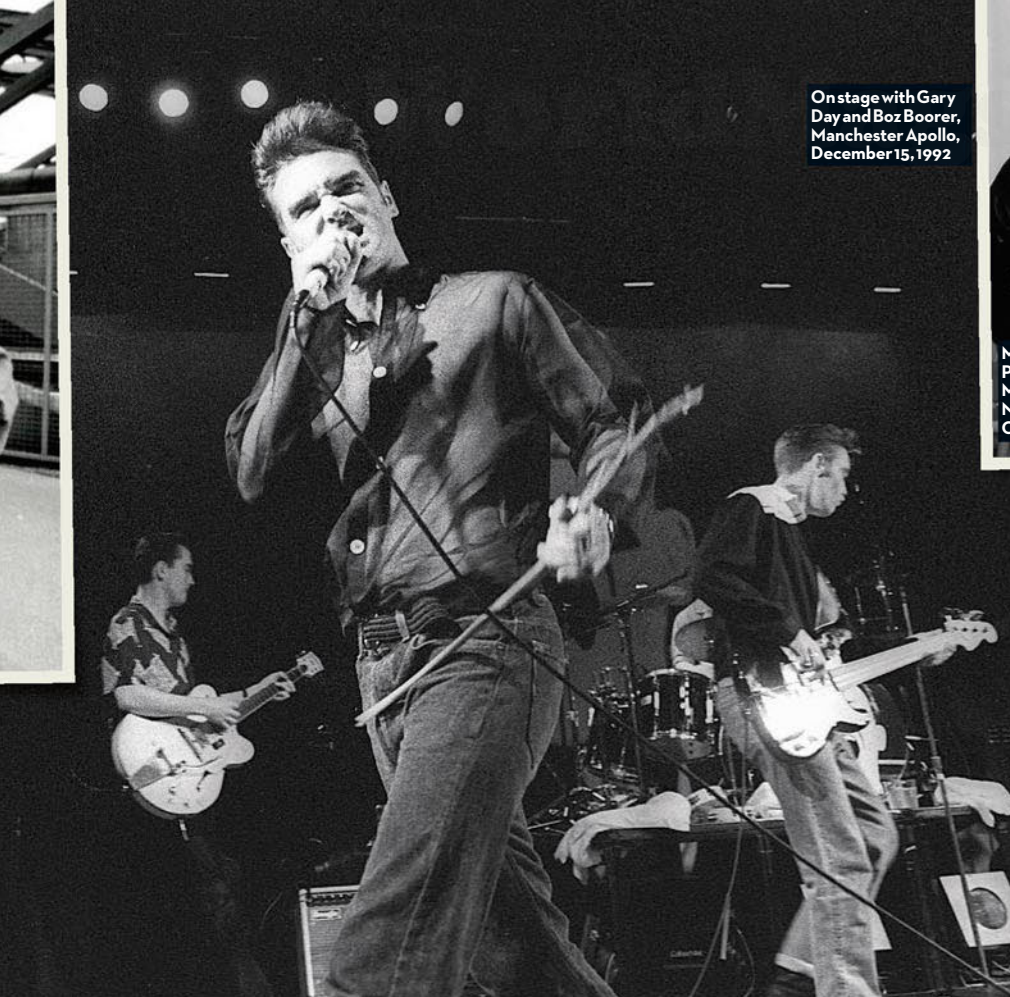
► The snippet of speech that closes *Vauxhall And I's* "Billy Budd" - "Don't leave us in the dark" - is taken from David Lean's 1948 version of *Oliver Twist*.

► Fellow *Vauxhall And I* track "Spring-Heeled Jim" samples 1959 documentary *We Are The Lambeth Boys*.



The video for "Suedehead"





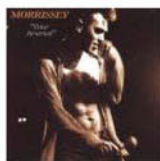
Onstage with Gary Day and Boz Boorer, Manchester Apollo, December 15, 1992



Morrissey with (l-r) Peter Hogg, Kirsty MacColl and Mark Nevin in Nevin's flat, Camden, 1991

pretty close to him and lived in his world for a year or so. And it's not a logical world. He lives by his own rules and you have to live those rules as well when you're with him. In a way it's a bit sad, because it was an intense experience, then when you finished working with him, that was the end. It feels like you've made a friend, then you don't hear from them again.

YOUR ARSENAL



RELEASED: July 1992
LABEL: HMV
PRODUCER: Mick Ronson
RECORDED AT: Utopia, London / The Wool Hall, Bath
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 4

With Bowie's onetime lieutenant as producer, and the arrival of what was to become his most trusted lineup (Boz Boorer, Alain Whyte, Gary Day), Morrissey embraced glam and his newfound love of rockabilly.

NEVIN: Due to prior commitments, I didn't do the *Kill Uncle* tour, but Morrissey said: "Let's do the next album anyway, I'd like us to write together." But in the end there were only two songs of mine on *Your Arsenal*. The rest had been scrapped. I think it was Morrissey's 'up yours' to me [for not going on tour]: you dumped me and now I'm getting you back. That was the implication.

NEVIN: Originally the *Your Arsenal* songs were all mine. He called me up and asked who we should get to produce it. I suggested Mick Ronson. At the time, Mick Ronson hadn't been seen or heard of for a long time. Morrissey said: "What a great idea, can you get hold of him?" So I put the word out to different people I knew. Then one day Mick Ronson called me from New

York: "I hear you want to talk to me about producing Morrissey. What's he like?" I said: "He's Morrissey, y'know, The Smiths." And Mick just went: "What are *they* like?" He'd never even heard of them. Then he said he was coming to London in a few days, so Morrissey asked if I could get him to come round to my house in Camden the following Friday. A week later, I opened my front door and there was Mick Ronson, looking like he'd been frozen in time since the Ziggy Stardust tour, with this blond mullet. He sat down in my front room, then Morrissey turned up, all quiff and glasses, with [assistant] Peter Hogg. And they just sat on the opposite sofa looking at each other. It was very awkward, but thankfully Peter Hogg was gobby. At one point he turned to Ronson and said: "So Mick, did David ever try to shag ya?" And Mick went: "Bloody tried to a few times. Never bloody succeeded!" I don't think we even spoke about the record. It was all so bizarre, then somewhere down the line it was arranged that Mick was going to produce it.

MORRISSEY: He asked me what kind of LP I wanted to make, and I said, "One people would listen to for a very long time," and he said, "Oh, all right then," as if I'd asked him to put the cat out.

SPENCER COBRIN, drummer: Mick Ronson was a lovely fella, completely understated, unassuming, soft-spoken. He was also very sick at the time. His spirit came out when he picked up the guitar. I remember sitting next to him at the console when he put down some eerie e-bow

guitar on "Seasick, Yet Still Docked". I noticed his fingertips were gnarly and calloused. I could see his passion for music by looking at those fingers of his.

MORRISSEY: I'd always pushed the vocal against the structure of the melody, and I didn't know how long this could work. Mick said, "You haven't even started." He'd learnt all writing systems, tunings and chord combinations the best way – by ear, which is usually the secret of great music. But he took me aside one night and said, "You realise your drummer can't actually play?" and I said, "Yes. But it isn't always a problem." Mick could have used this as a stick to beat me with, but his only instinct was to save all of us – drummer included – from the snake pit. There wasn't a single moment when Mick wasn't patient and understanding. We all absolutely loved him.

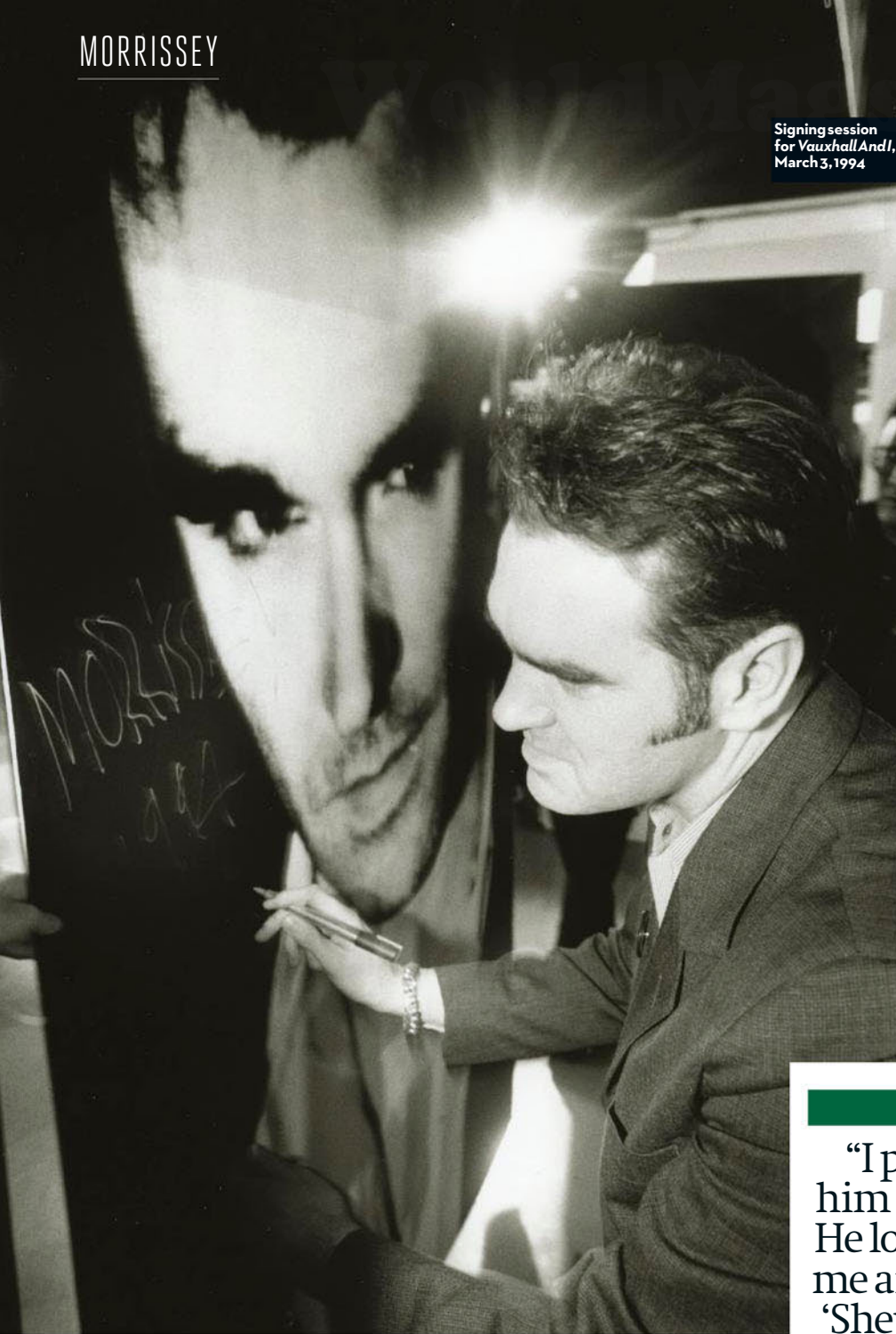
NEVIN: I did go to the studio to do "I Know It's Gonna Happen Someday", which is credited as being produced by Mick, but he wasn't there. He had cancer and was undergoing treatment at the hospital, so I did all that with the band. Although there was a very strange moment when Mick did come back and started listening to the song. It got to the end where it's doing that really obvious "Rock'n'Roll Suicide" rip-off and he looked at me as if to say, "Are you having a laugh?"

COBRIN: All I can remember of *Your Arsenal* was nerves and feeling totally under the gun. There was no real instruction given by Morrissey, or if there was it was probably something cryptic. On *Southpaw Grammar* [1995], for example, the directive for "The Boy Racer" was: "It sounds too much like Waitrose; needs to be more Harrods." So we'd listen to the rough demos and flesh out the tracks in the studio. I've no idea what instruction Morrissey gave to Mick in terms of production. But I think just having Mick there with his sensibilities was probably enough to shape the record.

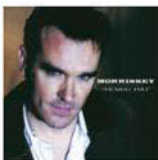
MORRISSEY: Mick had zero ego and cared only for the common good – he was without a shred of preciousness given the incredible turns his life had taken. Furthermore, he was blond-haired, blue-eyed handsome – still a shy smile. It struck me how he would have been magnificent for The Smiths' first LP, but any mention of a top-notch producer and Rough Trade would drop like '30s TB patients at the thought of having to pay for something.

"We all absolutely loved Mick Ronson. He had zero ego and cared only for the common good"
Morrissey

Signing session
for *Vauxhall And I*,
March 3, 1994



● VAUXHALL AND I



RELEASED: March 1994
LABEL: Parlophone
PRODUCER: Steve Lillywhite
RECORDED AT: Hook End Manor, Oxfordshire
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 1

Arguably Morrissey's finest solo work, in which he addresses the vagaries of a post-Smiths world in tones that veer from poignant and reflective to caustic and downright belligerent.

STEVE LILLYWHITE, producer: I'd mixed "Ask" for The Smiths, but I'd never met Morrissey until this album. He told me he'd booked the studio, so I phoned him back with a list of all Chris Dickie's credits, to convince him that this was the guy to use as engineer. And Morrissey just went: "Steve, stop. How long is his hair?" I said it wasn't very long, so he went: "Good. That's

all I need to know." So Chris Dickie got the job because he didn't have long hair!

JONNY BRIDGWOOD, bassist: There was a general air of excitement from day one. The feeling was that we were about to create something that was quite special. Everyone was keen and enthusiastic.

WOODIE TAYLOR, drummer: I learnt so much from Steve Lillywhite, who has the incredible gift of being able to draw the best performances from all those he works with. I think it certainly helped that there was a huge amount of new blood injected into the album. On the first sessions that he produced, Chris Dickie engineered, Danton Supple assisted, Jonny Bridgwood played bass, I drummed and Boz Boorer wrote the music – we had a lot to prove. Morrissey was singing better than ever, too.

LILLYWHITE: Morrissey looks at a song not as

verse-chorus-verse, but as a story. He didn't think like musicians do or really care about the nuts and bolts of it. I remember him coming in one day and we played him a track. He just looked at me and said, "Steve: Shepherd's Bush 1964, The Who." Then he just walked out.

BRIDGWOOD: Morrissey would come into the control room, have a listen and give his seal of approval, or not. Unlike other singers, he doesn't interfere in the musical process, although he'll steer it in a direction he's comfortable with.

LILLYWHITE: Boz [Boorer] and Alain [Whyte] would send Morrissey cassettes of music and when he had enough, he'd go: "OK, it's time to make a record." Then he'd send the songs back that he liked and they'd have song titles next to each one. So we'd record the tune without knowing what the vocals or lyrics were. I couldn't wait to do one called "Lifeguard Sleeping, Girl Drowning". When Morrissey eventually came to do the vocals, he had the song in a completely different way, so his chorus would sometimes start halfway through the verse. I did three albums with Morrissey, of which *Vauxhall And I* was by far the most satisfying. It was certainly a crowning moment for me.

BRIDGWOOD: When Morrissey did his vocals, we all cleared out for a few days and let him get on with it. So when we came back we didn't know what to expect. The vocal on "Lifeguard..." sounded totally different, but once you heard it, the whole thing made perfect sense.

LILLYWHITE: Morrissey would spend a lot of time in the bath or in his bedroom. We had this dice game that we used to love playing and he would occasionally join in. But he was always on the outside looking in. He'd watch as all

these other things went on, just observing.

BRIDGWOOD: I remember Woodie and me sitting at the back of the control room and Morrissey was talking to us. He asked how I got into playing bass. I told him I just loved the sound of it and he said: "Yes, but it's not the kind of thing that you want to do from the age of five, is it?" I thought that was very funny.

LILLYWHITE: There was a manager who looked after the biggest male artist of the time. I won't say who it was, but this guy wanted to manage Morrissey. So he flew from Los Angeles to Heathrow and got a car to drive him all the way

to Hook End Manor for this meeting. Morrissey glanced at him as he came in, then basically rushed off and disappeared. Two hours passed and there was no sign. It was all a bit embarrassing and eventually this guy left. In the end, Morrissey appeared from the pub. He literally said he didn't like the look of his hair. He'd only glimpsed the back of his head and that meeting never did happen. Aesthetics for him are everything. ☺

Morrissey 25: Live will be released by **Eagle Rock** in cinemas and on DVD later this year

"I played him a track. He looked at me and said, 'Shepherd's Bush 1964, The Who.' Then he just walked out"
Steve Lillywhite

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A good year for the rose

At the Country Music Hall Of Fame, *Uncut* meets a new Queen Of Nashville, CAITLIN ROSE. Two albums into her career, Rose has drawn comparisons with Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn, got the obligatory break-up album out of the way and, with the exceptional *The Stand-In*, broadened her vision to “try and make a Fleetwood Mac album... I’m not a glamour queen, I’m just a boozy old man in overalls!”

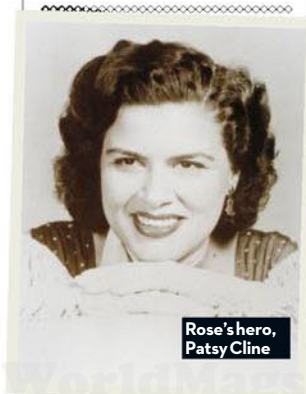
Story: Sharon O’Connell

Photographs: Jamie Goodsell

CAITLIN ROSE IS having “a moment”. She and her manager are guiding *Uncut* around Nashville’s Country Music Hall Of Fame And Museum and first stop is the temporary Patsy Cline exhibit. It features not only hand-written letters, costumes (including remarkable gold lamé pants and matching ankle boots) and – rather oddly – her collection of novelty salt-and-pepper sets, but also personal items salvaged from the 1963 plane crash in which she died, aged just 30. In one display case, a cigarette lighter, lip brush and – most poignantly – a tiny, bent wristwatch are potent reminders of the real woman behind the iconic profile. The usually talkative and engaged Rose has gone quiet and moved off by herself for a minute.

It’s not so surprising. The Dallas-born singer-songwriter and guitarist is a Cline devotee, recorded a cover of “Three Cigarettes In An Ashtray” for her 2008 debut, an EP called “Dead Flowers”, and has a sweetly lilting, clear and unfussy voice that often draws comparisons to the late star. Later that afternoon, when we’re calming our unsettled souls with beer and some live rockabilly and swing at splendid downtown bar Robert’s Western World, Rose admits that she was overwhelmed. “It was hard to be in that room,” she explains from beneath a stylish black picture hat, as we sit surveying the action from a small upstairs balcony, “although I couldn’t leave. It was strange to be in a room and feel completely miserable. Any time I hear her voice, I’m captivated, and if you’re captivated and sad, it’s a really weird feeling. People ask me how it

“I never aspired to be Patsy Cline, because it’s not possible... although, I am a bit of a broad!”



Rose’s hero, Patsy Cline

feels to be compared to Patsy Cline or Loretta Lynn,” she adds. “Well, I love both those artists with all my heart, so I could never say to anybody that it feels great, because I can’t a) rationalise it, or b) accept it. Those people are heroes. My favourite oldies are ‘Chantilly Lace’ and ‘Crazy’. We had an oldies station here for years – 96.3FM – which I used to call up to request ‘Crazy’ six times in six different voices, because I really wanted to hear that song. But I never aspired to be Patsy Cline, because it never occurred to me that it was possible. It’s not possible. Although, I am a bit of a broad, I’ll say that.”

HE IS INDEED. Rose, who’s just turned 26, likes a drink and a joke, is a keen smoker and enjoys the odd, well-aimed shot of rudeness in her lyrics. Take the disarmingly jaunty “Docket”, from her “Dead Flowers” EP, where she sings, “I got a fresh pack, I got a red BIC/the Surgeon General can suck on my dick/I’ve got a docket in my pocket/It says cancer’s never catching up to me...” Laughs Rose: “My dental hygienist gave me a lot of shit about that, because her kid was about 11 when it came out. But on the new album [*The Stand-In*] there’s the ‘f’ bomb [in her cover of The Felice Brothers’ “Dallas”], so hopefully the kid has grown up enough to deal with that. I love all the four-letter words – they’re all great.”

An enthusiasm for the odd obscenity aside, Rose’s songs are strong on narrative, balancing personal detail with the universality of experience and shared emotion that is a touchstone of country music. Her 2010 debut album, *Own Side Now*, channelled Cline, Linda Ronstadt and



Champion Rose: beside Webb Pierce's guitar-shaped swimming pool, Nashville, May 26, 2013

● Fleetwood Mac to her own bittersweet, country-pop ends and pulled few punches in its documenting of the hideous uncertainty and savage hurt of a break-up – but did so wryly and without self-pity. “It was entirely autobiographical,” Rose confirms. “A bedroom record is what I call it. It’s that year of your life where you have your first big break-up and you lie around in your bed all day smelling the air conditioner, and end up writing a bunch of songs because you’ve been so unproductive. That was about the boyfriend everyone knew about, and all the songs were very obvious and completely true to life. I mean, ‘Shanghai Cigarettes’ – I still have them on my coffee table.”

If she eased off a little on the frank confessionals for *The Stand-In*, it was only because Rose wanted to try a different creative tack – namely, writing in collaboration and from various assumed characters’ points of view, plus filling out her songs via beefed-up arrangements and rockier instrumentation. “My idea was to try and make a Fleetwood Mac album,” she declares, with typical directness. “That’s why there are backup singers; that’s why I started playing with a full band in general. I wanted to do something that wasn’t just me up onstage with a guitar, telling jokes half the time. Which is all I did when I was, like, 19. Nashville is the place where I honed my ‘craft’ because I could get up on a stage and play my out-of-tune guitar, tell jokes and still charm people. *The Stand-In* was easy; I had so much fun making that album. Maybe it was something to do with letting go and not being in a state of high anxiety. But I don’t go into a record saying, ‘This is how it’s going to be.’ I go in saying, ‘These are the players I want, these are the songs and I’m happy that they’re good enough.’”

IN SOME WAYS, Rose’s choice of career was perhaps inevitable. Her mother is Liz Jones, a Grammy-winning songwriter who’s co-authored hits like “Teardrops On My Guitar” and “You Belong With Me” for the unstoppable Taylor Swift, despite being almost 40 when she started out. “My mother is a mysterious woman,” laughs Rose. “She’s a Virgo and very impressive. She and my father got divorced when I was about 10 and she didn’t want to work in a bank, so she became a song plugger, and then when she started a publishing company she was in charge of the writers. One day, she sat in on a session and her partner was like, ‘You should write songs.’ She had great empathy, a great ear and knew music really well, so it just clicked.” Rose’s father, Johnny, was a singer-songwriter and a music buyer in Texas, until the family moved to Nashville when she was seven. There, he worked for MCA, among other labels. Despite her background, country music was not Caitlin Rose’s first love. That was riot grrrl and antifolk. “I don’t really remember how I got into the music itself,” she muses, “but I do remember the bands – Kimya Dawson, The Mountain Goats, Julie Doiron... These people were doing

HOW TO BUY

CAIT'S GREATS



DEAD FLOWERS

NAMES, 2008
Rose’s seven-track debut EP reveals her anti-folk roots, most strikingly on the comic “Gorilla Man”, which features just voice and tambourine. Includes covers of Patsy Cline’s “Three Cigarettes In An Ashtray” and the Stones’ “Dead Flowers”.

7/10



OWN SIDE NOW

NAMES, 2010
The singer-songwriter opens her diary to tell of her first serious break-up, in songs that source Cline, Fleetwood Mac and Linda Ronstadt. Features the touching “Shanghai Cigarettes” and her take on Stevie Nicks’ “That’s Alright”.

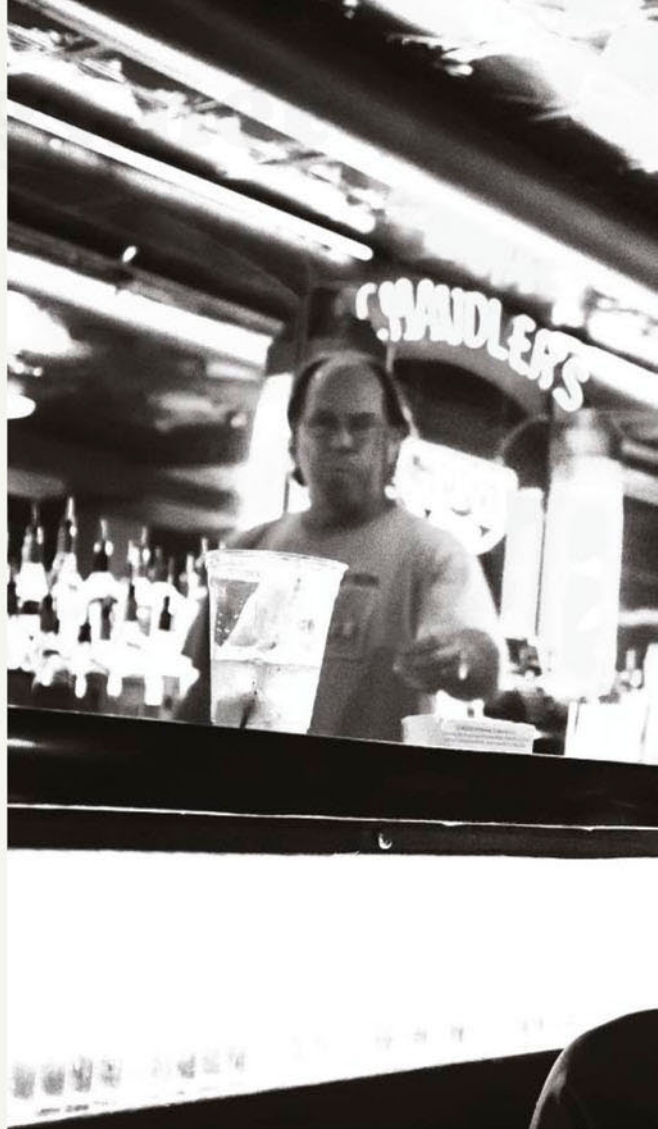
8/10



THE STAND-IN

NAMES, 2013
Rose goes for a self-described “high kick”, filling out her songs via a bigger band and backing vocalists, and applying a rockier swing. Includes two songs penned with The Jayhawks’ Gary Louris, plus a cover of The Felice Brothers’ “Dallas”.

7/10



something very different. Everything about it was non-mainstream. There was Kathleen Hanna and Bikini Kill, too, when I was about 16. My friends and I used to make day trips to Birmingham, Alabama to see shows. One time, we drove to Atlanta and back to see Le Tigre.”

Her country conversion came via The Mountain Goats’ cover of Merle Haggard’s peerless “I Think I’ll Just Stay Here And Drink”, which led her to buy a copy of his greatest hits. And that was it – Rose was smitten. She’s now sharing her deep and abiding love for country music from the one, mould-mottled table in the “garden” at Dino’s in east Nashville, which is where we’ve moved to as the sun dips. It’s the kind of tiny dive bar that risks giving diving a bad name, its brutally functional brick front suggesting an auto-parts supplier more than anything else. Inside, it’s all scruffy ease and ice-cold cans of Fat Tire. At one point, a bunch of young musicians who’ve set up in a corner ask if Rose will join them for one song. She doesn’t know them, but graciously steps up on backing vocals anyhow. Rose loves Dino’s and places like it. “You know how some people say they’re an old soul? I think I’m a boozy old man’s soul. My favourite thing to do when I was in high school was to go to a waffle house and sit around 60-year-old men who were smoking and reading the paper. It was one of the first places where I really felt at home – around truck drivers. I’m not a glamour queen; I’m just a boozy old man in overalls!

“It’s the misery, too,” she adds, more seriously. “It’s such a constant in country music and I was drawn to that. Instead of going into the emo singer-songwriter thing, I decided that country music is where it’s at, because no matter how miserable, these people still have a sense of humour. The things I was hearing before were always a little too self-conscious, whereas country music is always tongue-in-cheek. It’s self-aware misery and that’s another thing – I think if you’re not completely up-to-speed on your emotions,

JAMIE GOODSELL

“I’m not a glamour queen...” Caitlin Rose at the London Barfly, February 11, 2011





CAITLIN ROSE



"Country music is always tongue-in-cheek..."
Caitlin Rose in Melrose Billiards, Nashville

"In Nashville I could get up onstage, play my out-of-tune guitar, tell jokes and still charm people..."



gin' – so it's an easy way of dealing with things, maybe. Or at least, a funnier way."

William Tyler, guitarist with Lambchop and KORT, has played with everyone from Silver Jews to Charlie Louvin, and is the author of two solo instrumental albums. Rose supported KORT on their European dates in 2010, and Tyler once toured in her band when her regular guitarist wasn't available. He shares Rose's love of vintage country music, albeit with qualification. "Caitlin started out playing house shows when she was basically just out of high school, so I've known her for a long time," the Nashville native says. "I found it interesting that for someone of her age, she was so well versed in music that is really not stuff 'the kids' are into. The one time I went on tour with her, I don't think we listened to anything recorded after 1979. I've been wrestling lately with a lot of issues around cultural nostalgia, especially when it comes to music, because I think there are a lot of people just wallowing in it and wanting to replicate it. Caitlin is kind of a nostalgia junkie, but she's also a really great songwriter. I love her music. And I also think the most rebellious thing she could have done when she started playing out was to channel Patsy Cline or Linda Ronstadt, because people her age had a different kind of nostalgia – for punk and garage rock."

Rose acknowledges that it's the battered tropes of country music that have given it a bad name in the view of

then you're full of shit. [Merle Haggard's] 'Misery And Gin' is on the jukebox here, and it's one I play all the time. He's making fun of himself – 'Here I am again, mixin' misery and

ONE MORE DIME

CAITLIN ROSE'S COUNTRY JUKEBOX

10 of her current favourites

1 WILLIE NELSON Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain



It will forever remain my all-time favourite country song.

Writer Fred Rose knew when to cut the fat without taking away from the emotion. It's absolutely haunting.

2 WILLIE NELSON I Was Just Walkin' Out The Door



Cindy Walker said, "The best tunes are songs with a face. You

recognise them. It's like a person; they have a face that's outstanding." This song has a spectacular face, as does most every song penned by her.

3 PORTER WAGONER In The Shadows Of The Wine



Writer Dusty Rose was divorced three times, which

explains why this song feels eerily honest. Porter's voice helps bring out the real drunk in it – not a sentimental fool, but a man with a mind genuinely bent by alcohol.

4 PATSY CLINE Leavin' On Your Mind



Her last charting single. That lead melody always puts this sinking

feeling in my stomach. There's something wonderfully spooky about it.

5 RAY PRICE Crazy Arms



I first heard this sung by Linda Ronstadt, but eventually fell

for the original. Ray's vibrato is showmanship without the showiness.

6 GEORGE JONES Tender Years



I used to have a tape of this in my car. I'd never heard

the phrase "tender years" before and it felt like something that wouldn't hurt your feelings unless you'd been acting a fool.

7 LORETTA LYNN & CONWAY TWITTY



This is one of the best Loretta vocal performances

ever. She's practically yelling, but it comes across so smooth with Conway's voice. I love Loretta on her own, but to hear her soar like that – whoo-ee.

8 BLAZE FOLEY Picture Cards Can't Picture You



I'm on a Blaze Foley kick right now. I can't wrap my head

around how he wasn't more successful. "I saw daylight in your eyes" is one of the greatest lyrics anyone ever wrote down.

9 THE DAVIS SISTERS I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know



Chet Atkins and Jerry Byrd's guitar and steel work

is so great here, and hearing Skeeter's classic, buoyant vocal take a back seat to the more commanding tone of Betty Jack is a thrill in itself.

10 THE LOUVIN BROTHERS You're Running Wild



This is just close-harmony heaven.



I'M YOUR FAN

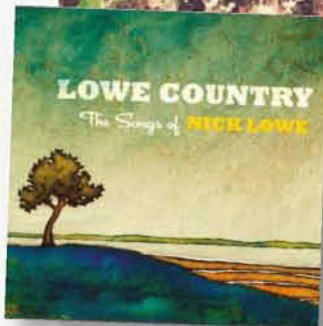
NICK LOWE
ON CAITLIN

"She's what we
used to call
spunky..."

"I first knew of Caitlin through my little boy. He directed me to this YouTube video of a kid singing one of Caitlin's songs. It was 'Own Side Now' and it led me to investigate the original, which I also really liked. I eventually met Caitlin when she came along to my show when I was playing in Nashville. She's a really super woman. She's what we used to call 'spunky' – it's a testament to her talent that she can plough her own furrow and still flourish in a town that's very conservative.

"What she brought to 'Lately I've Let Things Slide' is that it's a woman singing it. You tend to think of songs as being either male or female, so when the opposite sex sings one, it can make it quite... shocking. I thought it was a great choice of Caitlin's; she sings it in this clipped, prim way, which gives it extra poignancy. It's almost as if she's some school teacher who's run into trouble. Her

vocal's the key thing, but the rest of it is clearly done by people who know what they're doing, too. I think it's a really sweet version."



the uninitiated. Betrayal and the bottle, loneliness and (more) liquor, movin' on and melancholy verging on the maudlin – from Roy Acuff to Tammy Wynette, it's the stuff country music is made of. "We call it cheatin' an' drinkin',"

smiles Rose. "But the thing about any songwriting, not just country music, is that it's not the feeling that is clichéd, it's the way you express it. Also, it's how far you go into it – the cliché comes from giving people what they expect. I can't be Merle Haggard and I can't be Loretta Lynn, but they're both artists who very much brought their own existence into country music. I don't think updating the classic style is necessarily a goal of mine, it's just something that I've naturally always done. I don't know how to fake anything and I don't know how to write about something I don't understand. One of the first songs I wrote was 'Answering One Of These Bottles', which is about being in a bar and drinking. I was 15 or 16 at the time and sneaking into bars – this one included – and playing these three-chord country songs."

"A lot of
country
is about
women
becoming
more self-
reliant..."

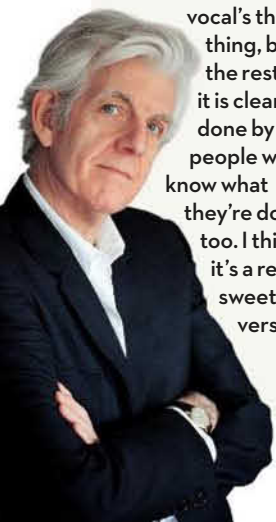
Florida and it had a strange, kind of creepy feeling to it. But she does it straightforward and it made me realise how good a song it is. It has good lyrics, a great melody and it's an evocative story, so it was nice to hear someone else sing it and to appreciate it as that. It's a fine arrangement and Caitlin's a great singer. The whole thing was a gratifying experience. There's some bad language in a few of our songs," he laughs, "and I'm glad she kept the 'f' word in."

Not that leaving it out was ever an option. Fortright self-expression with wry humour is more than just expected of Rose as a singer-songwriter working in country music; it's a matter of strong personal belief. And conflicted though the concept is, she does recognise something of the "sisterhood"

of women in the genre. Lula Clay Naff's savvy managing of the Ryman Auditorium from 1920-'55, Kitty Wells' frank "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels" (a *Billboard* No 1 in 1952, despite being originally banned by NBC from Grand Ole Opry broadcast), Cindy Walker's confident presentation of her "Lone Star Trail" to Bing Crosby when she was just the kid of a cotton picker, Patsy Cline's show at Carnegie Hall (she was among the first country stars to appear there), Dolly Parton's building of a vast business enterprise around her talent... there are countless examples that contradict the "stand by your man" principle of popular view. "Country music has a history of women pulling themselves up by the

bootstraps and establishing themselves," Rose agrees. "It allows empowerment, even if it's sneaking in under the noses of the men. A lot of aspects of country are progressive and are about women becoming more self-reliant. But I don't have an agenda," she adds, sparking up another cigarette before we head into the night. "I just want things to be... honest. I get tired of bullshit. Like, just tell the truth." ☺

Caitlin Rose plays the UK in Aug/Sep, including *End Of The Road* festival (Aug 30-Sep 1); *The Stand-In* is out via **Names Records**



FUCK BUTTONS

'SLOW FOCUS'

(ATP RECORDINGS) 2LP/CD

Slow Focus throws up images of unknowable galaxies and fantastic lifeforms at a hyper-accelerated rate."
- 4/5 UNCUT



CHARLES BRADLEY

'VICTIM OF LOVE'

(DAPTONE) LP/CD

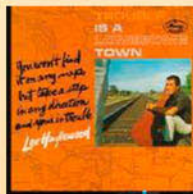
"Late-flowering soul man continues to blossom."
- Lead 4/5 review in MOJO

NAILS

'ABANDON ALL LIFE'

(SOUTHERN LORD) LP/CD

"You would be hard-pressed to find a more brutal and unrelenting 18 minutes of fury."
- 9/10 METAL HAMMER



LEE HAZLEWOOD

'TROUBLE IS A LONESOME TOWN'

(LIGHT IN THE ATTIC) 2LP/CD

"The end result is a tangible portrait of the most enticingly bizarre slice of surreal estate this side of Twin Peaks."
- 5/5 RECORD COLLECTOR



VARIOUS

'20 JAHRE KOMPAKT/KOLLECTION 1'

(KOMPAKT) 2LP/2CD

Just in time for KOMPAKT's 20th anniversary year. "A comprehensive compendium that does one of dance music's great legacies justice."
- 4/5 MIXMAG



VARIOUS ARTISTS

'HIGH VOLTAGE'

(FANTASTIC VOYAGE) 3CD

3CD salute to the pioneers of 20th century experimental and electronic music. "Lovingly compiled."
- 4/5 MOJO

TORO Y MOI

'ANYTHING IN RETURN'

(CARPARK) 2LP/CD

"The South Carolinian creates a world of dancey digital pop out of low-slung Cali R&B rhythms, blunted hip hop, Gallic dance pop and quirky house."
- 4/5 review in MOJO



MICHAEL CHAPMAN

'WRECKED AGAIN'

(LIGHT IN THE ATTIC) LP/CD

"Wrecked Again can only bolster Chapman's welcome critical rehabilitation" - 8/10 UNCUT



MELVINS

'EVERYBODY LOVES SAUSAGES'

(IPECAC) CD

"Enormous fun, but also a compelling showcase for this often wayward band's tastes and talents."
- Lead 8/10 review in METAL HAMMER



GROUPE

'THE MAN WHO DIED IN HIS BOAT'

(KRANKY) LP/CD

The music of Grouper creates a feeling that can only be defined as awe, an uncanny mixture of wonder and dread that nobody does better." - PITCHFORK 8.3

VARIOUS

'A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE AVANT-GARDE'

(LTM RECORDINGS) 2CD

"LTM's 26-track compilation offers a whistlestop tour of 20th century art music, blistering through Modernism, Futurism and Dadasim along the way."
- FACT MAGAZINE 'MUST-HAVE RETROSPECTIVES'



HEBRONIX

'UNREAL'

(ATP RECORDINGS) LP/CD

Solo project from YUCK frontman DANIEL BLUMBERG. - Lead review in NME: "This is warm, sleepy music that buzzes like a fridge. Best heard lying down."



UK DECAY

'NEW HOPE FOR THE DEAD'

(UK DECAY) LP/CD

UK Decay have stormed back to hold all of us who cherish punk's legacy to account."
- LOUDER THAN WAR



MATIAS AGUAYO

'THE VISITOR'

(COMEME) 2LP/CD

"Hypnotic, raw and sometimes dark. An hour of absorbing rhythmic transport, The Visitor fully satisfies the brief."
- 4 star lead review in MOJO



Story: Allan Jones
Photograph: Elliott Landy

When I restore my masterpiece...

For over 40 years, *Self Portrait* has been misunderstood, neglected and abused... Now, though, with the release of BOB DYLAN's *Bootleg Series Vol. 10: Another Self Portrait*, it's finally possible to see the whole picture. In a 12-page exclusive, *Uncut*'s editor examines the latest revelations from the Dylan archive. PLUS: we talk to the key players on the *Self Portrait* sessions, find out the details of the *Bootleg Series* team's "deepest ever archaeological dig" and ask Greil Marcus whether he still stands by his infamous review of the original album: "What is this shit?..." ➔

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ALSO: DYLAN LIVE IN DULUTH!
Reviewed by Low's Alan Sparhawk



Dylan outside his
Byrdcliffe home,
Woodstock, NY, 1968



Key moments: Dylan
in his living room at
Byrdcliffe, 1968



“THIS WAS THE deepest archaeological tape dig we’ve ever done with regards to Bob Dylan: the most obscure, rockiest trail, trying to find the path back to how these albums got made.

“What really started it was, about two years ago, we were going to re-master *Self Portrait*, because it hadn’t been re-mastered since 1989, when it first came out on CD. When I went to look for the original tapes, you get reels A, B, C and D, and I discovered reels C and D were badly defective. So we set out to try and find a new source for the re-mastering, and ordered in tapes both from Sony and the Dylan Vault.

“I got this two-track tape marked March, 1970, Nashville – which struck me as odd, because I was thinking, ‘This was recorded in New York, wasn’t it?’ I thought it was an original mix of ‘Days Of 49’. I put it on and I’m thinking, ‘Great this is the master. Uh, wait a minute, where’s everything else? Where are all the other instruments?’ Because it turns out to be just two guitars and voice – yet it’s clearly not a demo, because it’s the master vocal take. Now, some Dylan scholars would have known instantly this was how *Self Portrait*

was done: over a period of time, from these bare sessions in New York, then overdubbing later. But for me, this was the beginning of a fascinating process of discovery.

“After hearing that, I was wondering, ‘How much did they do like this?’ And, going through the tapes, we began unearthing the real breadth of material that they recorded back then. It turned out to be a goldmine. Listening to this stuff, with just the two guitars, it’s like a Doc Watson clinic. David Bromberg plays just spectacular guitar and Dylan sings his butt off.”

This at illuminating length is Steve Berkowitz, Senior Vice President of A&R at Sony and a veteran producer and engineer on the much-hurrahed *Bootleg Series* initiated by Dylan’s manager Jeff Rosen in 1991. He’s in New York, talking to *Uncut* about Dylan’s *Bootleg Series Vol. 10: Another Self Portrait*, which attempts something many would have said was impossible – the reclamation from its dingy reputation of Dylan’s 1970 album, *Self Portrait*, one of the most critically derided of all Dylan’s records, and perhaps also the most misunderstood.

ON RELEASE, *Self Portrait* inspired in critics not much more than hostility. “What is this shit?” Greil Marcus bluntly asked in the opening line of a review that might be better-recalled than the album itself, although you may wonder how many people can remember what further the outraged Marcus had to say about it. Whatever, his assessment gave crude voice to what a





“Going through the tapes, it was a goldmine. Dylan sings his butt off...”
Steve Berkowitz

the other was “Living The Blues”, a tepid re-write of “Singing The Blues”, a 1956 hit for Guy Mitchell that was also covered in America by Marty Robbins and in the UK by Tommy Steele, the toothsome Cockney entertainer.

For the rest of the album, Dylan was apparently reduced to a rag-bag of covers, mostly of country and western songs, sung in the suave croon he had first unsettlingly deployed on *Nashville Skyline*, an excursion into mainstream old school country whose general mawkishness had two years earlier so appalled a huge rump of Dylan’s 1960s’ constituency. What made *Self Portrait* even worse was that these covers were sometimes drenched in cloying

lot of people thought about *Self Portrait*. In the opinion of many, the album was embarrassing evidence that Dylan was washed-up, creatively bereft. They rather gleefully in some instances pointed out that of the 24 songs on the album, only eight were credited to Dylan – and two of those were instrumentals, the entire lyric of one was a two-line refrain, four were recorded at the 1969 Isle Of Wight festival with The Band, and

THE PLAYERS #1



CHARLIE McCOY

The Nashville studio multi-instrumentalist who played on every Dylan LP from *Highway 61 Revisited* to *Self Portrait*

WHEN DYLAN FIRST showed up in Nashville to record *Blonde On Blonde*, he hadn’t finished writing the first song. We ended up recording it at 4am. And we’d all been there since 2pm the day before. Dylan’s flight was late, and when he arrived he hadn’t written the first song he wanted to do. He said, “You guys just hang loose till I finish it.” So we sat around while he wrote “Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands”.

Dylan seemed a little uncomfortable in Nashville at first, because he was in a strange place, with strange musicians, although he had Al Kooper and Robbie Robertson on board with him. But he never said anything to us really, so it was hard to tell just what he was thinking or feeling. But, the next day, we came back to the studio, and from there it was business as usual: I mean, he still didn’t say too much, but he started playing his songs, and we started recording them.

But, like I said, he never said *anything*. I was session leader on that record, and when you’re session leader, you’re like the middleman between the artist and the producer. So, Dylan would pick up his guitar and play his song to us, and I’d hear it, and I’d start to get some ideas, and I’d say, “Bob, what would you think if we did this...” And he’d have the same answer every time: “I dunno, man. Whadda you think?” He was strange in that way, very hard to read.

When we did *John Wesley Harding*, I didn’t have any information prior to going in about what it was going to be like. But Nashville studio musicians, we

go to work every day, usually never knowing what we’re going to be doing. We hear the music the first time we walk into the studio. We’re used to that, it’s just the normal way it’s done here.

I noticed that there was a definite shift in the music, though, the style. After *Blonde On Blonde*, Dylan had that motorcycle wreck. I don’t know if that has anything to do with anything. But I know that that was a major happening to him in his life, one that had nothing to do with music. *Blonde On Blonde* took 39½ hours of studio time to record. *John Wesley Harding* took 9½ hours. Of course, the band was much smaller. Just Dylan, me on bass, Kenny Buttrey on drums. There was steel guitar on a couple tracks, too, but that was it. But as for Dylan himself, there was no change.

The same thing: he’d play a song and not say anything.

The next time round was *Nashville Skyline*, which again was a shift, a step into country. *John Wesley Harding*, especially those last

two tracks, seemed a kind of a bridge towards that sound, and Dylan had formed a friendship with Johnny Cash, so it didn’t surprise me at all. I think Dylan hesitated about coming to Nashville, as it has always been known as the capital of country music. But we were known as a country market, and this was the height of what, in Nashville, we called The Hippy Period: that San Francisco, Haight-Ashbury, whatever it was scene. And, of course, Dylan, 1966, was seen as the champion of that group, the king of it. He took a bold step by coming here. But *Nashville Skyline* was the last time he came to Nashville to record. *Self Portrait*, he wasn’t around. On some of the songs for that, Bob Johnston just brought us in recordings of Dylan, just guitar and vocal, and he asked Kenny and me to overdub bass and drums. And that was difficult, because Dylan’s tempos on those tapes really weren’t so steady. It was tough.

“Dylan never said anything. He was strange in that way, very hard to read...”

THE PLAYERS #2

DAVID BROMBERG

Virtuoso guitarist and multi-instrumentalist who studied his craft with the Rev Gary Davis, Bromberg was a key figure in the *Self Portrait* sessions and on *New Morning*

THE *SELF PORTRAIT* sessions were the first time I played with Dylan. At first, when I got a phone call from him – he called me himself – I thought it was a joke, somebody playing a trick. But I realised fairly swiftly that it actually was Bob Dylan on the phone. He'd come to various clubs in the Village where I was playing guitar for Jerry Jeff Walker, and I'd always assumed he was only there to hear Jerry Jeff. But I guess he was listening to me, too.

The way he put it to me was that he wanted me to help him “try out a studio”. It became clear to me pretty quickly that we weren't just trying out a studio – we were recording. But I was too much in the moment to worry about what was going to happen in the future. So “trying out the studio” turned out to be making *Self Portrait* and then *New Morning*.

Most of what I remember is that it was just Bob and me in there. For several days straight, maybe even a couple of weeks, just the two of us, sitting across from each other playing and trying things. I had some really nasty cold thing going on all through that – I had a fever, and I'd work all day, come home and fall asleep in my clothes, wake up, take a shower and then head back into the studio and do it all over again. The songs that I did with him, as much as I can recall, were mostly folk songs. I'm not sure I remember seeing any *Sing Out!* magazines [see panel, page 39], but *Sing Out!* published a couple of songbooks, and I remember that Bob had one or two of those. But he knew those songs. He might have referred to the *Sing Out!* books just to get a lyric here and there, but he knew those songs. Bob, as we all know, came up through the folk clubs, and he was really great at singing this music.

There was not a whole lot of discussion or direction. I think he liked how I played, and wanted to see what I'd come up with. Then he listened to the results, and what he really liked he used, and what he didn't, he saved.



New Morning was quite different. There were quite a few musicians in the studio, a whole group. Russ Kunkel was on that, playing drums, and playing with him was a big thing for me, because I was always a huge fan of the way he plays. Of course, Bob doesn't pick any losers. Ron Cornelius, was there, a fine guitar player. Ron played electric on that record, and I played acoustic and dobro.

In 1992, I produced another set of sessions with Bob in Chicago, and the great majority of those songs haven't been heard yet, although a couple turned up on the *Bootleg Series* record *Tell Tale Signs*. On those sessions, I

would have loved to have done some tunes that Bob wrote – but he didn't want to do those. And, in fact, he did a few tunes that I had written. In a strange way, I was almost relieved that they

didn't come out, because people would have accused me of forcing Bob to do my songs. But let me just tell you: you don't force Bob to do anything.

Recording sessions are all different. Bob has his own way of doing things, and it's one that requires the musicians to be intuitive. And, in a musical sense, that's one of my strengths. In a more prosaic sense, it's one of my weaknesses: you know, if we're going to do something, and I'm not told what we're doing, I generally won't figure it out. But when it comes to music, even if I haven't been told where we're going, I will figure it out. I'll see ahead. And that's kind of what's required on Bob's sessions. Perhaps the most important aspect of the process with Bob is that, Bob is very careful not to exhaust the material. And, as a result, there's a spontaneity that's present in all of his work. You'll do a song once or twice, and that's it: you've either got it or you don't.

“Bob has his own way of doing things, and it's one that requires the players to be intuitive”

orchestrations, cooing female voices, producer Bob Johnston coating the whole thing with a saccharine sheen sweet enough to make your teeth hurt.

What was Dylan thinking? Had he lost the plot completely? Was he taking the piss? Was *Self Portrait* some kind of fuck off to the fans whose demands upon him Dylan found to be so intolerable he didn't want them any more as fans, *Metal Machine Music* with pedal steel and Mantovani strings? It's a thought that has prevailed for years that Dylan deliberately sought with *Self Portrait* to sabotage his own career, make him unlistenable to the people who hung on his every word. There has equally been for years a suspicion that the point of the first Dylan album to get such a unanimous

pasting may not have been fully grasped, that its original intentions were misunderstood. In this view, the album in its original incarnation was somehow lopsided, may have offered only a distorted reflection of what Dylan had first envisioned, crucial elements missing that otherwise would have made more sense of the album as, among other things, a celebration of American music, American song, America itself at a time when the country was coming apart at every nail, in Neil Young's subsequent phrase. This was the bold idea, perhaps, behind *Self Portrait*, an ambition eventually betrayed by a sudden loss of confidence or interest on Dylan's part, or more likely just a poor or misguided track selection that favoured the schmaltzier end of the material he'd recorded, ignoring what amounted to very nearly another album's worth of tracks. These grittier covers of mostly old folk and country songs were performed in a manner whose familiarity to classic Dylan would surely have appeased *Self Portrait*'s many critics, as we can now tell from their rediscovery and release on the *Bootleg Series Vol. 10*. Here they can be heard alongside tracks that did make it onto the original *Self Portrait* but are blessedly stripped of the often superfluous and flowery arrangements added to them in Nashville after original sessions in New York, the best of them featuring Dylan with David Bromberg on guitar and Al Kooper on piano.

“It's a set that's rich, deep and very real,” says Berkowitz. “Bob was working through some songs with his friends. There's a really relaxed nature to these performances – I don't know how many of these were intended as ‘recording sessions’, on the clock all the time. It's Dylan playing with people he knows and seeming to enjoy it – you know, the tracks with him and George Harrison jamming, they just sound like they're having a really good time together. Skip the history, don't worry about the old reviews: these are the recordings that were left behind, and when you go back and hear what Dylan, Bromberg and Kooper did in particular, people are really going to reassess the history of that period.”

Berkowitz is right. The newly revealed tracks do much indeed to make us think again about *Self Portrait* and the circumstances in which it was made, and also the album that followed, *New Morning*, which Dylan had started before *Self Portrait* was released. To further appreciate both and the circumstances in which they were made, however, we may need to revisit Woodstock, where in early 1969 we would

From the Nashville
Skyline session,
Woodstock, 1968



have found Dylan, a couple of years shy of turning 30, struggling to write new songs, suddenly afflicted with what he later called 'the amnesia', bringing up a young family, deeply shocked by the recent early death of his father at only 56 and under siege, no other word for it, by his own fans, desperate for his word on the matters of the day.

YOU CAN IMAGINE them coming across the fields through a mist at dawn, a pilgrim drift. They would make their way towards his home, Hi Lo La, finding their way there as if they had been issued with maps, as he would later remark. Once, this place had been a refuge, a retreat from the madness that had previously attached itself to him, when he had been the high priest of '60s hipster cool, alert it seemed to the world's every fraudulence, at which he took ecstatic aim in songs that too many people for his own current comfort presumed had been written on their behalf.

"Moochers showed up from as far away as California on pilgrimages," he writes in *Chronicles*. "Goons were breaking into our place all hours of the night. At first, it was merely the nomadic homeless making illegal entry – seemed harmless enough, but then rogue radicals looking for the Prince of Protest began to arrive – unaccountable-looking characters, gargoyle looking gals, scarecrows, stragglers, looking to party, raid the pantry." A friend gave him a couple of guns, Colt single-shot repeater pistols, and he also had a clip-fed Winchester rifle to hand and there may have been times when he was tempted to take aim and fire, actually shoot one of these violators of his privacy,

"Skip the
history,
don't worry
about the
old reviews...
it's a rich,
deep set"

Steve Berkowitz



trespassing on his soul. Where once, as another friend would later put it, Dylan had brought 'the news of the hour to the children of the nation', there had been no recent bulletins from Bob, no statements, public announcements. What did they want to hear from him anyway? Did they think that a word of senatorial wisdom from him might bring an end to conflict, heal America's wounded heart and make all that was sick and dismal well again and no doubt blessed?

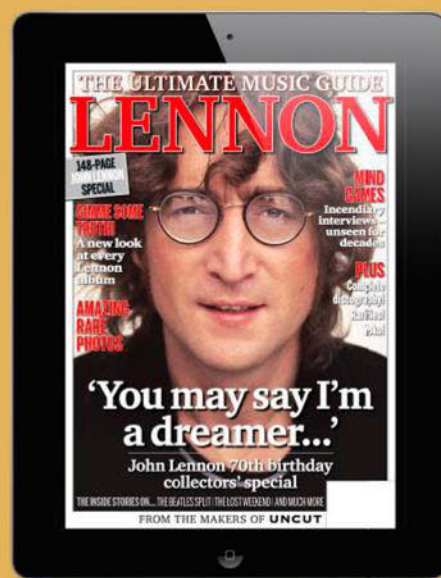
To his great concern, they did. The bedraggled apostles who made their way to his Woodstock fastness were inclined to regard the lyrics of certain of his songs as if they were sacred texts, illuminations that would not be out of place etched on tablets of stone in letters of fire, that kind of thing. It followed that the songs they wanted from him would be oracular, far-seeing, lightning flashes, brilliant and all-consuming. This was the Dylan they expected and it was one of the demands upon him that Dylan now most resisted – the idea of being a spokesman for this, or that, the voice of a generation. And so these people had been more than a little baffled by the pared-down dustbowl sound of *John Wesley Harding*, his first record since *Blonde On Blonde*, an album of parable, allegory and dire prophecy, its austerity eerie and startling at a time of psychedelic abandon.

The country and western sounds of *Nashville Skyline* were an even greater shock. What was Dylan thinking, aligning himself to such hick music? America at the time was at war with itself and the nation was divided over Vietnam. There were race

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THE PLAYERS #3

AL KOOPER

Along with David Bromberg, one of Dylan's favourite sidemen...

I'D PLAYED ON *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde*, but I'd left while Bob was doing *John Wesley Harding* and *Nashville Skyline*. Then I came back for what became *Self Portrait*.

From 1968 to 1972, I was a staff producer at Columbia Records in New York, so I was easy to contact. They just booked me for, I think it was five days of recording with Bob, like a Monday-Friday. There was Bob, David Bromberg and me. In some cases it was just the three of us, in others there was drums and bass in with us. It gets a little mixed up in my memory, because *New Morning* happened very, very soon after *Self Portrait*, and I worked very closely on that LP, probably as much as I'd worked on *Blonde On Blonde*.

I remember us doing a lot of stuff that didn't end up on *Self Portrait*. The first day I walked in to the studio, Bob had like a pile of *Sing Out!* magazines, you know the folk music journal, just a bunch of them, and he was going through them, songs that he'd known in the past,

and he was using the magazine to remind himself of them. So we were doing stuff pulled from *Sing Out!*, at least for a couple of days: "Days Of 49", that

kind of thing. As the week went on, Bob's choices got stranger and stranger. It got to the point where we did "Come A Little Closer" by Jay And The Americans.

When we did *New Morning*, though, he was doing his songs again. And he had a definite, stronger thing going on. You know: he didn't have to learn the songs, he wrote them. *New Morning* was very similar to *Blonde On Blonde*, in some ways, with the way I worked with Bob and acted as bandleader - and then, in the middle of the record, Bob Johnston just disappeared, and so for the second half of the record, I was actually producing it. I also had some arrangement ideas. Not that Bob always agreed with them. On the song "New Morning" itself, I did an arrangement where I put a horn

section on there, and in "Sign On The Window", I added strings, a piccolo, and a harp. I asked Bob's permission, and he said fine, and then I went and did it all while he wasn't there, because it didn't need to take up his time. But when I played them back for him, he didn't like them - he didn't throw the whole thing out, he kept like one little part of each of them on the record. But then he told me he was

going to erase all the rest of these parts, wipe the tapes. I asked if I could make a mix of it before he did that, because I had done a lot of work on it, and I wanted to keep

a copy of it, just for myself. So he said yeah, but the way it worked, I had to mix it right there and then, in front of everybody, and do it fast.

On this new record that's coming out now, they've included those sweetened versions of "New Morning" and "Sign In The Window". I had kept my tapes of those personal mixes for like 40 years, and when I heard about this new set, I sent them to Jeff Rosen, Dylan's manager, and Jeff said, "Well, I don't like the mix." And I said, "Yeah, it was a rush, but it's all there is, because Bob erased all the parts afterwards." And Jeff said, "No he didn't. All the parts are still here. Do you want to remix it properly?" So that was great news to hear, and I went and did that. I spent quite some time doing that, and those are now on the new set.

"New Morning was similar to *Blonde On Blonde*, in some ways, with the way I worked with Bob"



riots, assassinations, revolution in the air. There was a need to take sides and by his very public embrace of country music, Dylan seemed to be taking the wrong side, lining up with the forces of darkness. He was treated in some quarters as if he'd fallen in with Satan's hordes, grown horns and a tail, developed a taste for the flesh of suckling infants. Country music, after all, was the music of rednecks, illiberal Southern bigots, Mississippi cops, truckers, the Ku Klux Klan.

Fans who hadn't given up entirely on him by now hoped that Dylan's Nashville infatuation would soon pass, an aberration quickly put behind him, which seriously underestimated the centrality of this music to him. He had grown up with it, loving most of what he heard as much as anything he listened to and now in fact he had a hankering to record an entire album dedicated to covers of his country and western favourites and other popular tunes, which emerged eventually to a critical firestorm as *Self Portrait*. Who at a time of national crisis wanted to hear Bob Dylan smoothly essaying what at first listen sounded like blandly timid interpretations of

pop and country standards like "Blue Moon", "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know", "Take A Message To Mary" and "Take Me As I Am (Or Let Me Go)", his voice a honeyed croon, as smooth as Bing Crosby, Dylan sounding so relaxed he might have been in a coma, as deeply removed from the world as someone on a life support machine?

Surely, the whole thing must have been cooked up by Dylan as an elaborate joke, a way of getting obsessive fans off his back,

once and for all? This is what Dylan would subsequently claim, repeatedly. Such perversity hardly seems credible, however, when you look at some of the songs rescued from

"Bob had a pile of *Sing Out!* magazines full of songs he'd known in the past"
Al Kooper



Recording *Self Portrait*, in Nashville, May 3, 1969

Cutting *Self Portrait* with Charlie Daniels, May 1969, Nashville



the archives that feature on *Another Self Portrait*, examples of vintage Americana and the US folk tradition that Dylan holds so dear and continues to inform much of what he does. They are surely not the kind of songs he would want to demean through parody or reduce to pastiche.

BOB DYLAN'S *Bootleg Series Vol.10: Another Self Portrait* is in one version a 2CD set featuring 35 tracks culled from the period 1969-1971 and covering three Dylan albums, *Nashville Skyline*, *Self Portrait* and *New Morning*. There is also some convenient house-keeping with the gathering of three stray tracks recording during the same period.

The oldest of them is "Only A Hobo", which was originally recorded in 1963 during the sessions for *The Times They Are A-Changin'* but eventually not used (it would later appear on 1991's *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3*). Dylan later re-recorded the song with Happy Traum on banjo and backing vocals for *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits Vol. II*, when it was discarded again before being disinterred for the *Another Self Portrait* set, where it remains inferior to Rod Stewart's marvellous version on *Gasoline Alley*. Also collected here are the original piano and vocal demo for "When I Paint My Masterpiece" (a band version appeared on *Greatest Hits Vol. II*) and a previously unheard version of "Wallflower" with Ben Keith on pedal steel, discovered during the archive search for *Another Self Portrait*.

"For the entire *Another Self Portrait* set, we took the original tapes and did high-resolution transfers, not knowing the condition of the tapes and so not wanting to play them too many times before mixing in case of damage," Steve Berkowitz says. "And at one point, completely by accident, going through the digital files, we discovered this unknown version of 'Wallflower'. It showed up as this maroon blob on the screen and we thought, 'What's that?' We hit it and the song started and we said, 'What? Where did this come from?' I don't think anyone has heard that since the day that Bob recorded it. I don't think it's ever been bootlegged or copied and it's a *spectacular* nugget. It's an amazing performance, with really fantastic Dylan singing."

There are also two tracks from Dylan's appearance with The Band at the Isle Of Wight – a rollicking "I'll Be Your Baby

Dylan was treated as if he'd fallen in with Satan's hordes... Country music, after all, was the music of rednecks and the KKK

Tonight" and a revelatory "Like A Rolling Stone". The entire concert is released for the time on the four-CD deluxe boxset iteration of *Another Self Portrait*, which replaces the Isle Of Wight performance of "Minstrel Boy" that appeared on the original *Self Portrait* with a wonderfully woozy unreleased version recorded with The Band in the basement at Big Pink, on which they sound like a bunch of drunken sailors at closing time in a wild old bar. It's entirely debatable whether the world is in absolute need of another version of "Country Pie" – though the one here is spritely enough – but the unreleased alternative take of "I Threw it All Away" is very welcome. The version on *Nashville Skyline*, by some distance the best thing on an album not exactly overflowing with good songs,

was wonderfully poised, almost hymnal, whose sepulchral echo made it sound like it had been recorded in a small chapel. The version here is more secular, if you like, with the reverb turned down, making it warmer, even more intimate, the kind of thing you might hear a small combo playing in a bar at closing time, the lights down and lonely drinkers giving themselves up to the night's accumulating sadness.

This new edition of *Self Portrait* drops from the original tracklisting Dylan's quirky reading of Simon & Garfunkel's "The Boxer" (written by Paul Simon with Dylan in mind, allegedly) and his rather lovely version of Gordon Lightfoot's "Early Morning Rain", a song for which he had an evident fondness. Gone, too, are the covers of "Blue Moon", "Let It Be Me" and other standards that had caused bemusement and consternation on the original release. It retains, however, seven tracks, from which the overdubs supervised by Bob Johnston in Nashville and LA after initial sessions in New York have been happily stripped, including two Dylan compositions, "All The Tired Horses" and "Wigwam".

The Charlie McCoy/Kenneth Buttrey rhythm section that

Bob with Johnny Cash and producer Bob Johnston



had contributed so spectacularly to *Blonde On Blonde* and *John Wesley Harding* were again used by Johnston on the tracks he took with him to Nashville for completion, replacing the original rhythm tracks recorded in New York that featured Stu Woods on bass and drummer Alvin Rogers. By McCoy's own admission [see panel, page 35], this was hard work for him and Buttrey and their deletion from the tracks as they are presented here is no considerable loss. In fact, we can now hear how what they added rather slowed things down, made them drag somewhat, undermining therefore tracks that originally were clearly much more dynamic.

The raw New York versions, for instance, of "Little Sadie" and its companion piece "In Search Of Little Sadie", now featuring just Dylan and Bromberg, are fantastically spirited, the latter also bone-chilling. The sheer vitality of these tracks owes much to Bromberg's instrumental genius and intuitive interplay with Dylan and they are further illuminated by Dylan's electrifying singing, ably supported by Kooper on piano. The stripped-back version of the roistering "Days Of 49" is particularly powerful, Dylan clearly relishing a colourful tale populated by characters who could have appeared in many of the songs recorded with The Band in Big



Pink's basement, including such colourful rogues as Ragshag Bill, New York Jake, Poker Bill and old Tom Moore himself. The sound is driving, hard and as an evocation of a bygone era is like a sepia photograph from the Gold Rush come to vivid and extraordinary life. There's a previously unreleased third version of "Alberta" – two covers of which had already appeared on *Self Portrait* – that packs the same glorious wallop.

Two of *Self Portrait*'s most successfully realised tracks are similarly presented without Johnston's overdubs, and the wonderful moonshiner ballad "Copper Kettle" is rendered yet more beautiful and tenderly haunting, fragile enough to be blown away like smoke on a breeze. The version of "Belle Isle" reduced to just Dylan and Bromberg is similarly enchanting, with its echoes of "Girl From The Red River Shore".

THE REAL REVELATIONS for fans, however, will be the nine previously unreleased tracks culled from the original *Self Portrait* sessions that include lovingly realised versions of country and traditional folk favourites like Eddie Noack's sombre "These Hands", "Railroad Bill" and a romping "This Evening So Soon". Even more notably there's "House Carpenter", a variation on "The Daemon Lover", the Scottish ballad that later inspired



and gets brought back. That's the song. The first version, it's like, yeah – who cares. But the second, it's like you're in a movie, and there's this character, and you see how scared he is, and he doesn't know why he did what he did. He's not repentant, he's not even sure that he wants to

WHAT IS THIS SHIT?

Greil Marcus on his original review of *Self Portrait* and what he thinks of the new *Bootleg Series* version



UNCUT: Your *Rolling Stone* review set the pace for thinking about *Self Portrait*. But do you think the review itself has been a little

misunderstood over the years?

GM: To me, that's the only way that review could start. Here's Bob Dylan, it's 1970, and everyone at that time, anyone remotely interested in music, and life as it's being lived, was still hanging on Bob Dylan's every word. So here comes this album, of mostly indifferent performances of, in many cases, very dodgy songs, whether they're old songs by other people, or half- or quarter-songs by Dylan himself. And everyone's talking about it, on the radio, on the street – and that's what everyone is saying: "What is this shit? This is awful!" So, the piece was meant to capture this conversation, and enter into it, about the way people talk about Dylan – it's long, and it includes quotations, commentary, from all sorts of different people, from DJs on the radio, other writers,

friends, my 12-year-old nephew. And, yes, it starts off saying, "What is this shit?" But then, the very next thing, I'm talking about the first track, "All The Tired Horses", and I'm saying, "This is lovely! This is beautiful. I could listen to this all day!" So it's constantly going back and forth. At one point I say, "Maybe this record is meant to keep you away." You know, put off anyone who wants "answers". And in his book, *Chronicles*, that's pretty much what Dylan said himself: that he put this album out to get people to leave him alone. And then that would give him the freedom to find out what he wanted to do, without the prison of expectation surrounding him at that time.

Were you surprised to hear *Self Portrait* was to be the focus for the new *Bootleg Series* record?

GM: When Jeff Rosen, Dylan's manager, said he was thinking

about putting out a different version of *Self Portrait*, or music drawn from that whole period, 1969-71, and asked if I would be interested in writing about it, he started playing me some of the Dylan-David Bromberg collaborations. It's just the two of them playing. And immediately, those songs just leapt out, they

"Dylan pretty much said himself that he put this album out to get people to leave him alone"

leapt out of all the overcoats that had been draped over them. You know: you suddenly saw people running through fields. It was just alive in a remarkable way. And I said, "God. I have to write about this. This is just terrific."

There are two versions of "Little Sadie" on this new collection – there were two versions on the other one – but the second one here just leaps out. The song is: guy shoots a woman, gets caught

get away. You're just trapped in this confusion of motives and desires – yet it's just two minutes of some old folk song. But it becomes terribly gripping and scary. I don't know why removing a few instruments from the mix does that, but it does. Some of the tracks on *Another Self Portrait* will be real revelations to people. But it's not just material from the *Self Portrait* sessions – a lot of the *New Morning* songs were recorded at the same time, in different versions. Also, there's three or four tracks on the original *Self Portrait* from Dylan's '69 Isle Of Wight performance – and for some reason, they picked the worst ones, the total duds. The best performance they did that day was "Highway 61 Revisited", and that's on this new collection, and it's just unlike any other version of the song Dylan ever played. It's like a racecar going round the track, almost spinning off on two wheels, but somehow staying on it.



Dylan onstage at the Isle Of Wight festival, August 31, 1969

● Dylan's "Man In The Long Black Coat" on *Oh Mercy*. Dylan blows up a harmonica storm here and Kooper's piano part is terrific. There are versions, too, of more recent songs – Tom Paxton's "Annie's Going To Sing Her Song" and a truly marvellous account of Eric Anderson's "Thirsty Boots", which bears a striking resemblance to "Workingman's Blues #2" from *Modern Times*. From the May 3 sessions for *Self Portrait*, there's also a noble solo piano version of "Spanish Is The Loving Tongue".

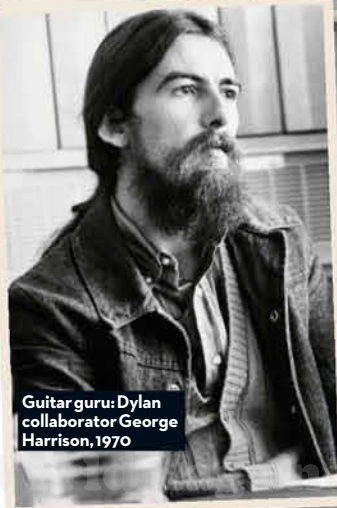
What's so great about these tracks is the way Dylan so fully inhabits them. Al Kooper recalls Dylan in the studio being surrounded by old copies of *Sing Out!* magazine and various song and lyric sheets, but you'd have to say Dylan doesn't sound at all like someone singing from a songbook. He sounds so utterly familiar with these songs you would be surprised if not entirely disbelieving if he had to be recently reacquainted

with them. The wholeheartedness of his performances here is sometimes breath-taking, a clear rebuke to the notion that *Self Portrait* was intended as a bleak and bitter joke at the expense of his audience and reputation. This is life or death stuff, most especially on a version of the traditional "Pretty Saro" that may be among the finest vocal performances Dylan has ever recorded. The thing is fucking

Some of this is life or death stuff... A version of "Pretty Saro" is fucking heart-breaking!



Dylan and wife Sara at Heathrow airport, September 2, 1969



Guitar guru: Dylan collaborator George Harrison, 1970

heartbreaking, certainly the most effective deployment of Dylan's softened *Nashville Skyline* voice, which here simply glides through the lyric, smoothly reaching top notes he rarely visits, right at the top of his register. It's enormously affecting and probably recorded as a tribute to his wife, Sara. Just as wonderful is the quite magical take on "Tattle O'Day", which features a menagerie of wondrous beasts, including a little brown dog that Bob has "learned how to whistle, sing and dance and run".

In ways that weren't as apparent when *Self Portrait* came out in 1970, these tracks are the link between the music Dylan had made with The Band at Big Pink, the so-called *Basement Tapes*, and *Good As I Been To You* and *World Gone Wrong*, the two fine albums of blues and folk covers that ushered in Dylan's late career renaissance with a genuine masterpiece, *Time Out Of Mind*. If only these earlier covers sessions had similarly inspired Dylan to such heights.

WHEN IT FOLLOWED *Self Portrait* within four months, *New Morning* was assumed to be a reaction to the critical pounding Dylan had so recently taken, the album seen as some kind of apology, an attempt to make up for the perceived

abomination of its predecessor, pretty much now confirmed as the lowest point in Dylan's career to date. The first *New Morning* sessions in fact preceded the release of *Self Portrait*.

On May 1, 1970, Dylan was booked into Columbia's studio on East 52nd Street with George Harrison for a session that produced reportedly hapless covers of, among other odd things, Sam Cooke's "Cupid", "All I Have To Do Is Dream" and even The Beatles' "Yesterday". Dylan and Harrison also came up with a piece of extemporised nonsense called "Working On A Guru", included here. It's a trifling thing, I suppose, but they both seem to be having fun and Harrison weighs in with some exciting guitar. On the same day, with Harrison again on guitar, Dylan essayed a serviceable first attempt at "Time Passes Slowly" – there's a second treatment featured here, from a session held on June 2, that was described to me by Jeff Rosen as "the Mad Dogs & Englishmen version", a roaring thing, with surging organ by Al Kooper, stridently supported by Ron Cornelius on electric guitar, Charlie Daniels on bass and Russ Kunkel on drums. At one point, *New Morning* was going to be a mix of Dylan originals and more covers, one of which is included here, a version of Lead Belly's "Bring Me A Little Water", the cold that afflicted Dylan through the June recordings sessions apparent in his rheumy vocal which anticipates by over four decades Dylan's current gravelly rasp.

The cocktail lounge jazz of "If Dogs Run Free" is widely regarded as a nadir for Dylan, but it always makes me laugh, usually out loud. The



BOB DYLAN AND HIS BAND

BAYFRONT PARK | DULUTH,
MINNESOTA | JULY 9, 2013

REVIEWED BY
LOW'S ALAN
SPARHAWK

FROM CENTRE STAGE, straight out and a little to the left, on the hillside that stretches down into Lake Superior, you can see the boyhood home of Bob Dylan. "Surely he'll say SOMETHING," one local elderly fan stammers. "It's Duluth!" It's a much anticipated return for a man who has only played Duluth twice before. I worked backstage at both. All I remember was clang clang crash screech "*she breaks, just like a little girl!*" This time I knew enough to listen closer.

Nestled between a pair of what could be described as refrigerator-sized open-flamed pyres, a vaulted, darkly scrimmed backdrop and giant, hovering Hollywood-style canister lamps, Dylan shines, in a suit that seems a cross between David Byrne's from *Stop Making Sense* and a classic Nashville Nudie – grey and boxy, with rhinestones. Leaving the guitar on the bus proves transcendent. He stands, defiant and sassy, left hand on his hip, half scolding, half "I ain't buyin' it." It's a confidence that carries him. His voice jumps and twists between a whispered growl and intimate coo. On the surface, it's a familiar gruff – one that has divided the public for decades – but here, as always, Dylan eludes and surprises. Always a great singer, even his latterday bark has the agility of an acrobat. Phrases ricochet and moan, then soar into the ether with his



punctuated falsetto. From time to time, Dylan floats over to his piano, standing, hand still on hip, rattling and banging through boogie and ballads.

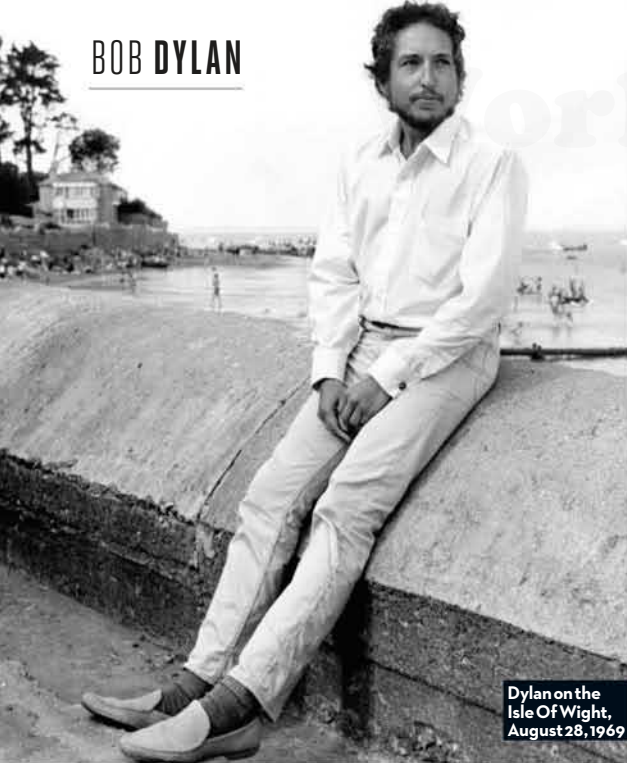
Dylan's band kept the skeletal, nuanced groove, while the native son led them through a set that has changed little of late, enhanced profoundly by the recently leaving-then-returning Charlie Sexton on lead guitar, their strengths laid bare and bold on "Duquesne Whistle", "Things Have Changed", and most heavily on "Blind Willie McTell", taking advantage of the song's unique turn on deep rhythm and blues. He shimmies, smiles, and plays a lot of harmonica. Not many people in the world today have played as much harp as Dylan, and it shows. He's a master, most obviously on "Simple Twist Of Fate".

He never speaks, an encore with a sublime "Blowin' In The Wind" being the only deviation from recent form. Was this his message to the hometown crowd or just the 51-year anniversary of the song's recording? It's enough. This is his gift; he never lets you know that he knows you know him... because you don't. In the end, Dylan takes a final pose with the group, and like the waves that rise and dissipate, he's off and away from us again.

SETLIST

- 1 Things Have Changed
- 2 Love Sick
- 3 High Water (For Charley Patton)
- 4 Soon After Midnight
- 5 Early Roman Kings
- 6 Tangled Up In Blue
- 7 Duquesne Whistle
- 8 She Belongs To Me
- 9 Beyond Here Lies Nothin'
- 10 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall
- 11 Blind Willie McTell
- 12 Simple Twist Of Fate
- 13 Summer Days
- 14 All Along The Watchtower
- ENCORE:
- 15 Blowin' In The Wind





Dylan on the Isle Of Wight, August 28, 1969

● alternative version offered here sounds terribly tired, though. Rather more rousing is the version of “New Morning” to which Al Kooper added a vibrant horn section, which makes more sense of the song’s promised rebirth than the lukewarm incarnation on the album to which it gave its name. You wonder how much better – or at least livelier – *New Morning* would have sounded if Kooper had replaced Bob Johnston a lot earlier in the proceedings, especially when you listen to what he does to the estimable “Sign On The Window”, the overlooked gem on *New Morning*, to which he adds an orchestra, throwing everything at the track bar the kitchen sink to ravishing effect. Contrastingly, the most completely beguiling of these unreleased *New Morning* tracks are the simplest – a stunning “If Not For You”, for example, featuring just Dylan on piano and an unidentified

violin player, the song slowed down to not much more than a crawl and more gratifying in every way than the jaunty blather of the ‘official’ release. Just as stark is the version of “Went To See The Gypsy” that opens *Another Self Portrait*, Dylan in tandem again with an inspired Bromberg creating a sense of allusive mystery missing from the take eventually preferred for inclusion on *New Morning*.

The album when it came out in October, 1971, went

The most completely beguiling of these unreleased *New Morning* tracks are the simplest

to the top of the UK album charts and No 7 in the US. It could not be said, however, that it lived up to its title’s promise of rejuvenation and rebirth, even if excitable types at *Rolling Stone*, which just four months earlier had carried Marcus’ damning appraisal of *Self Portrait*, now with a parping fanfare announced rather ludicrously above a review of *New Morning*: “WE’VE GOT DYLAN BACK!”

As one or two wags have been quick to point out, the piece didn’t say which Bob they were talking about and you wonder if they’d asked whether Dylan himself would have been able to tell them. ●

Interviews by Damien Love. **Bob Dylan’s *The Bootleg Series Vol.10: Another Self Portrait (1969-1971)* is out on Sony on August 26. Visit uncut.co.uk for the full tracklisting**

THE RESTORER

STEVE BERKOWITZ

A *Bootleg Series* veteran, on the restoration of the Isle Of Wight concert tapes

WITH THE NEW version we’ve done of the Isle Of Wight concert, the first thing you have to remember is the circumstances of the original recording. It’s 1969. There are no cell phones. Basically, you’ve got a couple of guys stuck in a truck, hundreds of yards away from the stage. It had to have been madness. They’ve been awake for three days straight, and they’re recording with no tangible connection to the stage or the board or what’s going on. You know: how many people are playing, where are the mics, who else is set up at the same time, what time do they play, how long do they play for, are they gonna move around, when’s the guitar solo coming...? It’s a true testament to Glyn Johns and Elliot Mazer, who did the original recording, that they got it at all.

Their tapes have all the information on there, albeit kind of distorted, and sometimes without a direct microphone on anything, and with tremendous leakage from microphone to microphone. But the tapes themselves were in good shape, eight channels. So, in the new mix, we’ve tried to bring back in something of the size and scope of what was happening.

For one reason or another, any time I’ve heard material from this concert in the past, the mix sounded small, close together, almost like a form of *Basement Tapes*, as if they were closed in together in a small space. But this was a huge open-air event, with tremendous anticipation, and, even at the time, some historic notoriety, because this was Dylan returning to the stage after three years away.

So we’ve tried to bring that back – make it live, make it as big as it was again, and have it feel like it’s out there, in this place, in the middle of hundreds of thousands of people, with excitement and energy bristling, both on stage and in the audience. The tapes are still kind of distorted in parts – but



that’s OK. When you hear it now, it brings back the excitement and the tension of that moment. You know: Bob and The Band are playing, and they’ve got The Beatles sitting right there in front of them.

A personal favourite

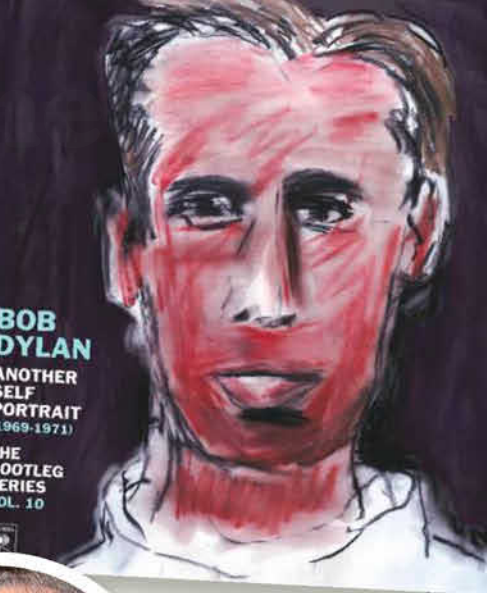
moment is the version they do of “Highway 61”. It sounds pretty clear that there are only overhead microphones over Levon Helm. And Levon sounds like he’s having a pretty good time: he’s hollering along with Bob, and you can really hear him – and I don’t think he even had a vocal mic at that time. I think it’s just these overheads are picking him up, because he’s singing it, screaming out so loud. It has fantastic life to it. And any

distortion or bleeding makes no difference, because those guys are just rocking. It’s thrilling.

I should add that we’ve mixed everything both completely analogue and digital,

and, for the people who care, I think the vinyl LPs that come from this will be pretty great. They’re made like records were made, from tape and analogue mixes. We wanted to be faithful to the period – 1969-71 – and we thought that the record should sound and feel and be of the dimension of its time. They’re pretty special.

“It was a huge, open-air event, and we’ve tried to bring that back, make it as big as it was again”



BOB DYLAN
ANOTHER
SELF
PORTRAIT
(1969-1971)
THE
BOOTLEG
SERIES
VOL. 10



Double fan-tasy: John and Yoko watching Dylan’s Isle Of Wight performance

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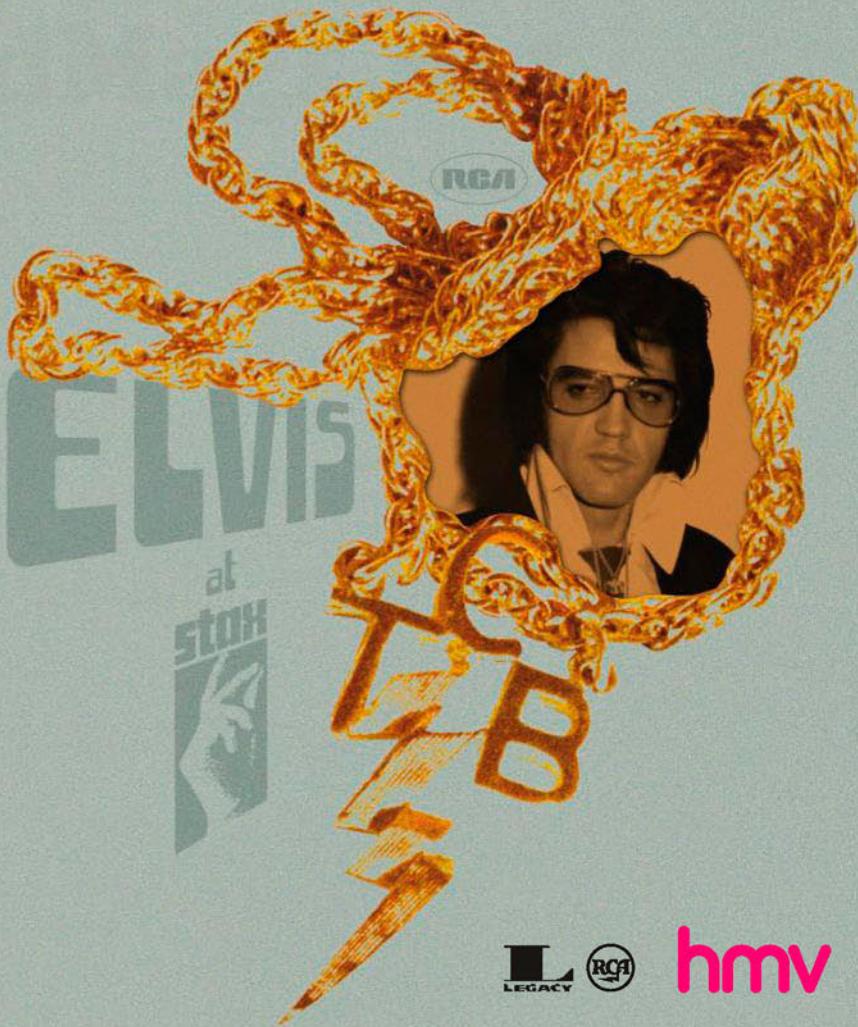
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Or: the strange tale of CANNED HEAT... How a bunch of blues scholars, party animals, trust fund dropouts and reclusive naturalists became the lords of American boogie

Story:
John Robinson

THE BLUES REPERTOIRE is filled with ill-starred encounters on fateful nights; peopled by characters condemned to walk the earth weighed down by their burdens. The suffering of Canned Heat, a superior blues band from Los Angeles, California, began in earnest on a night in October 1967. Booked to play at the Family Dog, a newly opened hippy venue in Denver, Canned Heat (fine musicians, a hit at the recent Monterey Pop festival, but variously obese, longhaired and carrying a quantity of tree leaves) arrived in the city at a time of open police hostility to precisely their kind of person.

After the Canned Heat show, the band returned to their hotel. With his responsibilities for the evening discharged, band manager Skip Taylor began to unwind in the company of a lady friend and assisted by a foil-wrapped block of hashish.

"Then there was a knock at the door," he recalls.

"It was the police. They said, 'We understand that you're the manager. Your clients have just been arrested for possession of marijuana.'"

This was a serious offence anywhere in 1967; particularly in Denver, a conservative city not delighted by its new status as a music mecca. Through Family Dog founder Chet Helms, Taylor found a top lawyer to bail the band, but with the city hellbent on a conviction, to fight the case would likely be a long process. Canned Heat were a promising band, but had as yet no hits, nor large income, so Taylor looked for other ways of funding what might well be a long legal proceeding.

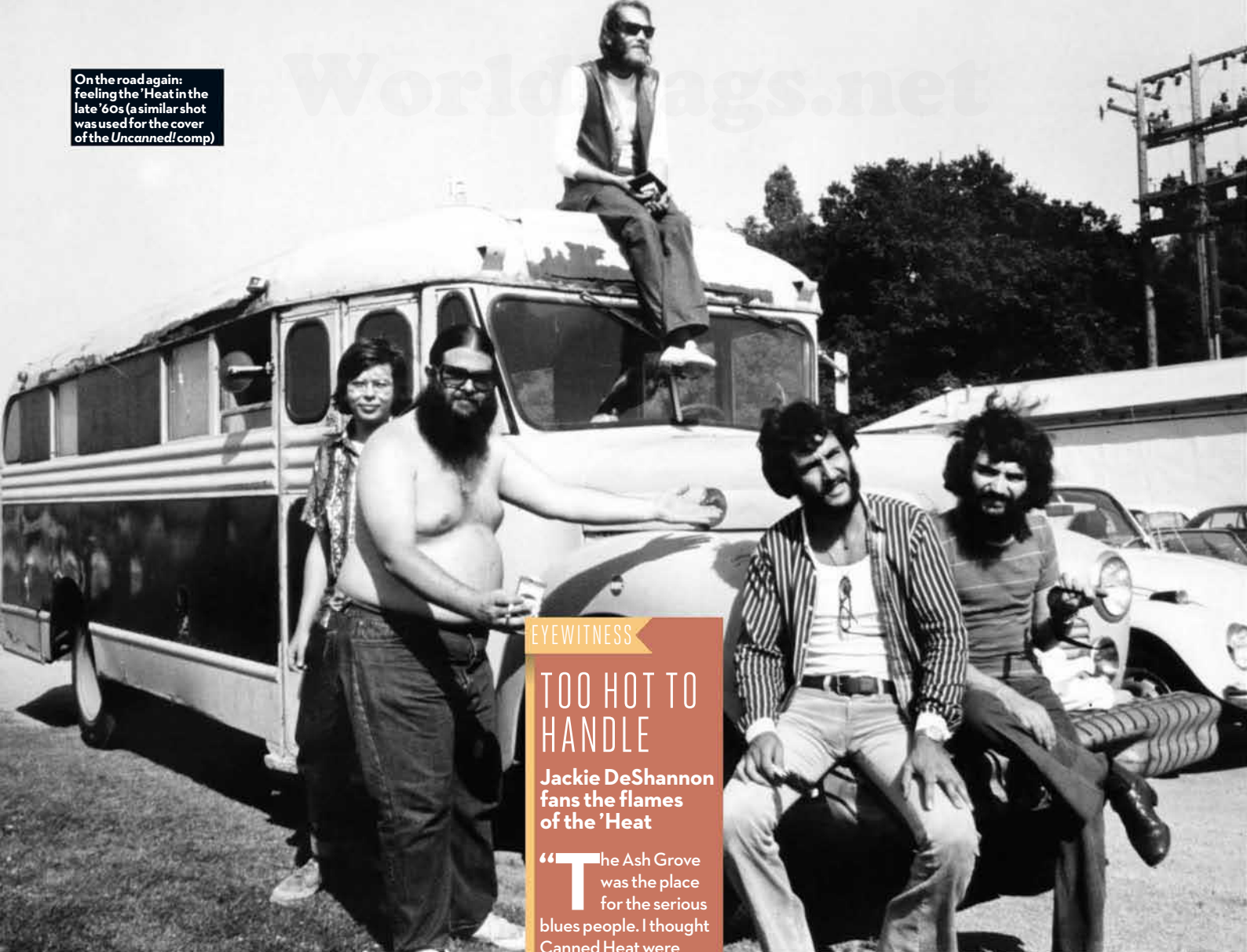
Back in L.A, he made the decision to exchange the band's share of their publishing contract for ready cash to fight the case. The band got out of jail, but in a way, their problems were only just beginning. Worse than a deal with the devil, Canned Heat had made a deal with a record company.





The classic '60s Canned Heat lineup: (l-r) Larry 'The Mole' Taylor; Adolfo 'Fito' de la Parra; Bob 'The Bear' Hite; Alan 'Blind Owl' Wilson; Henry 'Sunflower' Vestine

On the road again: feeling the 'Heat in the late '60s (a similar shot was used for the cover of the *Uncanned!* comp)



EYEWITNESS

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Jackie DeShannon fans the flames of the 'Heat

"The Ash Grove was the place for the serious blues people. I thought Canned Heat were fantastic: authentic, very true to the blues records that I loved. They were respectful to the music, and yet very original in the way that they played it.

"I went to see them a couple of times and I brought my then husband, Bud Dain. He was head of A&R at Liberty - I was adamant about how good they were and how they could be very big if they had a good contract.

"You have to imagine these guys: they were very dynamic. I've been drawn to people who were out of the loop, and the 'Heat were like that: not only did they play great music, to me it had a very commercial sound."



THE STORY OF Canned Heat is still being written today, by a band that after many dozen changes in personnel, again boasts three members [Harvey 'The Snake' Mandel (guitar); Adolfo 'Fito' de la Parra (drums) and Larry 'The Mole' Taylor (bass)] of the lineup that played the Woodstock festival in 1969. However, the band's story begins four years before that, and with another deal.

In 1965, the "American Primitive" guitarist John Fahey made his first East Coast tour. Fahey, a graduate musicology student at UCLA as well as a performer, was writing a thesis on the work of blues guitarist Charley Patton, and his supervisor had insisted that his work be accompanied by written musical examples - which, being unable to notate, Fahey couldn't supply. On tour in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Fahey found Alan Wilson: someone whose blues knowledge was as compendious as his own, but whose musicality was more disciplined. An enthusiast to the exclusion of everything else, Wilson could play guitar, harmonica and trombone, and had helped the recently rediscovered Son House re-learn some of his songs. He could also notate music.

Fahey offered him a deal: he would transport Wilson from the home he shared with his perplexed, despairing bricklayer father and set him up at his own place in California, a state of great natural beauty he had never visited. Wilson, in turn, would teach Fahey how to read and write music. Wilson accepted, enrolled at UCLA, moved into Fahey's Venice apartment and began hanging with him at the Ash Grove, the leftist cultural information centre and performance space at the heart of the West Coast folk/blues boom.

At the Ash Grove, Wilson met Bob Hite, an overweight man of insatiable appetites, particularly for record collecting. The three formed an informal jug band, which ultimately evolved

into Canned Heat: available for fraternity parties and public engagements. "The hearties would be like, 'We need a band for our party. Would you be able to put one together?'" recalls Stu Brotman, then also a UCLA music student, and bass player in the band. "People danced, drank beer and caroused."

Hite and Wilson were the yin and yang of Canned Heat, the good-time party song and the melancholic lonesome blues: opposites so inextricably linked that some actually conflated the pair (as Jackie DeShannon did) into "the big guy with the high voice". You could tell a lot about them by the way they played records. At Hite's parents' home, something like a show was put on. "Nobody could ever play a record with the kind of flair Bob did," recalls Barry Hansen, a friend of the band, now the radio personality and old-time music expert Dr Demento. "Like: 'You haven't heard NOTHING yet! Listen to this!' And he'd pull a record out of the cabinet and hide the label, and quite often he'd sing along - particularly to Elmore James."

At Hansen's Venice home, where Wilson briefly resided, a different atmosphere prevailed. "I had a four-LP box of the 12-tone music of Anton Webern," he says. "We'd turn off the lights and listen to it. He listened to every Indian album I had, bought a *rudra veena* and taught himself how to play it."

In 1966, William Morris agent Skip Taylor was invited to a fraternity party at UCLA where new bands were playing. First on was a jazz group, fronted by a poet. Second was a band performing electric re-imaginings of country blues. The next week, Taylor took meetings with representatives from both acts. From the first he met Ray Manzarek and Jim Morrison, and directed them to Jac Holzman at Elektra. After meeting Bob Hite and Alan Wilson, Taylor agreed to manage the 'Heat. "I didn't know what people would think when they saw them," says Taylor, "but talking to them, the potential was huge."

EYEWITNESS

"MOLE, OWL. OWL, MOLE..."

How the classic 'Heat got their nicknames

**Bob 'The Bear' Hite**

For a while, Skip Taylor managed PJ Proby, who nicknamed Hite 'The Bear'. "Sometimes he was the friendly bear and sometimes he was the ugly bear," says Taylor. "Depending on his alcohol or drug intake."

**Henry 'Sunflower' Vestine**

"We had this poster being made and we thought, 'Let's think of a name for everybody,'" says Skip Taylor. "There's Henry Vestine with his head bent over like a sunflower: Sunflower!"

**Larry 'The Mole' Taylor**

Again, a nickname derived from an onstage stance. "He was digging with his head and his body," says Taylor. "And if you ever see him, you'll know he's moling around to this day..."

**Adolfo 'Fito' De La Parra**

An affectionate diminution of Adolfo, which fitted snugly into the band's nomenclature. "It kind of went along with the blues culture," says Taylor. "Where every guy out there has a name..."

**Alan 'Blind Owl' Wilson**

"Alan had been called 'Blind Boy,'" says Skip Taylor of Alan Wilson. But 'Blind Owl' went with his environmental thing. And with his being nearly blind..."



Live at Wembley in '71. Below: the band plead their innocence in Denver to charges of marijuana possession, with attorney Francis Salazar (right), October 1967

AFTER LOSING DRUMMER Frank Cook to a career in medicine and Stu Brotman to a belly-dance troupe in Fresno, the classic Canned Heat lineup finally took shape in 1968, with the arrival of Fito de la Parra on drums and Larry Taylor, a hardened veteran of bands on the Strip, on bass. Joining Alan Wilson on guitar was Henry Vestine. Just like John Fahey, Vestine was a blues scholar from Tacoma, Maryland. The son of geophysicist EH Vestine (after whom a Moon crater is named), Henry had been on the 1963 trip where Fahey discovered Skip James in a Tunica, Mississippi hospital, but was now living off his trust fund in Pacific Palisades. There, having lately been thrown out of the Mothers Of Invention, he'd take methedrine and work on his vintage Indian motorcycles. "Zappa kicked him out due to his drug intake," says Skip Taylor. "But that wasn't a negative with Canned Heat. Henry would take amphetamines all week long, building and rebuilding his motorcycles and never sleeping, going back in the house and listening to records. Then he'd do the gigs on the weekend, take sleeping pills and sleep for two days. He did this year after year. This was his normal life."

Vestine's tearing lead guitar was a savage contrast to Alan Wilson's fluid bottleneck slide, and served notice that rather than a purist group, Canned Heat was on a more original mission. The word in use was "boogie". 1968's *Boogie With Canned Heat*, no bad record, nonetheless illustrates that the band's steady 12-bar business (like "My Crime", which retold the story of their Denver bust) was a mode best appreciated in the live arena. There, the band's burgeoning post-bust outlaw



"Worse than a deal with the devil, the 'Heat had a deal with a record company"

reputation meant they grew a decent audience of like minds: motorcycle enthusiasts, ex-convicts and, in later years, Australians. In truth, however, their legacy is best served, rather than by a single LP, by the magnificent songs of Alan Wilson. *Boogie...* features the funky, horn-assisted complaint "An Owl Song", but also the definitive Canned Heat composition, "On The Road Again". A mesmeric, epic tune starting with a Tambura drone, "On The Road Again" radically makes over Tommy

Johnson's "Big Road Blues" (1928) and finds a groove that all living humans should be able to vibe with. Today, it enjoys a popularity among motorists, but the song tells a traditional Wilson story: abandonment, loneliness, the tale of a man, unloved by woman, condemned to wander. "I never knew him to have an intimate affair with a woman," says Skip Taylor. "He tried many a time, but I don't know he was ever successful."

Whether for reasons emotive or automotive, "On The Road Again" (unpromoted by label or management) was picked up by a radio station in Austin, Texas. A hundred miles away in Houston, another DJ began playing the song. A hundred miles in a different direction, it was being played by a DJ in Dallas.

Pretty soon, the group had a song that was an FM radio hit in cities all across the country. The band streamlined their stage act, with each member gaining a nickname (see panel above). They travelled widely. Booking requests flooded in, as this group of social misfits played to enthusiastic male persons all over the United States. "Canned Heat had more male friends than any other band I was involved with," says Skip Taylor. "We used to have flyers that said, 'Women free.'"

THE FOLLOW-UP SINGLE to “On The Road Again” vibrantly compounded Wilson’s themes. “Goin’ Up The Country” was, musically speaking, a faithful treatment of Henry Thomas’ “Bull Doze Blues” from 1928, down to its eerie woodwind topline melody. In Wilson’s hands, the song became an expression of his desire for a personal escape into a rural retreat, but it also became something more. Although Wilson was an unlikely spokesman for a generation, the song nonetheless chimed with a yearning among young people for an Eden-like bliss outside of the mainstream. You will hear it a lot in the *Woodstock* film, and with good reason.

“He was sort of a sad personality; kept himself to himself,” says Larry “The Mole” Taylor. “He didn’t like crowds, didn’t like people. He liked reading books and collecting leaves.

“He fit in when we played music. That’s where he shined. His whole personality changed when we were onstage, even in the studio. Just his whole... self would be more out in the open when he played music.”

The more Canned Heat travelled, the more Wilson absorbed himself in nature – heading directly to wooded areas, to identify trees, as he proceeded with his own scattershot botanical education. “He bought himself a camper,” remembers Larry Taylor, “and every now and then we’d go up to the Sierras for four or five days of fishing and camping. And even out there, he’d roam off by himself. He’d be reading, and then he’d go out and collect leaves.”

Wilson’s ecological concerns found expression in other Canned Heat songs, like the great “Poor Moon”, a single from 1969. In a time of lunar exploration, Wilson considered how LA smog might prevent a person from even seeing the Moon – and expressed horror at a mooted contemporary idea to use the Earth’s satellite as a dumping ground for its waste. His band, meanwhile, were in constant danger of upsetting their own fragile balance. Shortly before Woodstock, Canned Heat played at the Fillmore West. “Henry was so drugged-out he had to sit down,” recalls Fito de la Parra. “It was horrible. There was Mike Bloomfield and Harvey Mandel at the show, great guitar players, and there was Canned Heat messing up. So Larry blew his top, onstage in front of everyone.”

“Henry started to do a lot of heavy psychedelics and it changed his whole outlook,” remembers Larry Taylor. “He was really into volume, but he’d be playing in another key. So we’d be out doing gigs, I’d be doing my best and he’d be playing in a different key and falling asleep onstage.”

Vestine was fired that night. The band hired Harvey Mandel, then flew east to play Woodstock. It was to be Alan Wilson’s last major engagement with Canned Heat.

Wilson’s camper van was the way he accessed his beloved nature, but in 1970 also how he expressed his increasingly fatalistic connection to the Earth. On one occasion, he drove it off the road: having lost control of the vehicle, he decided to see what would happen. Canned Heat sought medical advice, and after a spell in hospital, a psychiatrist released Alan into the care of Bob Hite. “Bob made sure he got something to eat,” says Taylor. “But that was about it.”

Almost exactly a year after Woodstock, the band were set to begin a European tour, so Skip Taylor arranged to meet the band at the airport in LA. “But Alan never showed. I said, ‘Bob, what’s going on?’ He said, ‘I thought he already left...’”

“I drove to Bear’s house and hiked the hill behind it,” Taylor recalls, “and there was Alan, with an empty bottle of gin and an empty bottle of Seconal pills, hands folded over his chest. He had the biggest Cheshire Cat smile, and he was dead. I called his father and we went down to the LA Morgue. It looked like Alan, but there was a total difference to what I saw on the mountain. The shell was there, but the soul had gone.”

It’s hard to imagine a more eloquent statement of the position in which Canned Heat now found itself. The band, with frontman Bob Hite now increasingly preoccupied by



Canned Heat in 1969, and inset above, live in the '90s

CANNED HITS

GREATEST HITS

Five standout Alan ‘Blind Owl’ Wilson songs

“On The Road Again”

The classic Alan Wilson/’Heat song. Plots a course between Howlin’ Wolf and Hawkwind.

“Time Was”

A mellow electric blues, it showcases how well the fragile Owl voice worked with his guitar.

“Poor Moon”

Environmental concerns, in Wilson’s classic Indo-blues mode. Futuristic arrangement with vocal drones disguises the blues root. Sounds, oddly, like Clinic.

“Going Up The Country”

Pretty much the theme song for Woodstock, in spite of Joni Mitchell’s best efforts.

“Change My Ways”

A high-voiced tale of heartbreak; retains a driving quality. Makes the same unexpected connection to rock’n’ roll made, at almost the same time, by Can.

drink and drugs, continued to work throughout the 1970s – nonetheless, “Disco” remains an unpopular word in the Canned Heat camp. Nor would the band’s hard times be softened by the royalties they earned from their classic 1960s recordings. When the band wanted to quit Liberty for a new deal with Atlantic in 1973, they needed to repay a debt of \$62,000 in unrecovered expenditure. Given the choice of staying and paying, or giving up the minimal mechanical rights that remained to them after their 1967 emergency post-bust buyout and walking, they chose to walk. Then, years later, came the compact disc. Having given up their rights, all money from Canned Heat reissues on the new format went to the label, not the band. “Who knew ‘Going Up The Country’ and ‘On The Road Again’ would become gold dust for Madison Avenue commercials and for movies?” says Skip Taylor. “No one could predict that.” So how much did they miss out on? “A million dollars,” says Taylor. “No question.”

AS THE BAND’S longest-serving member, cheerleader, sometime manager, even biographer, Fito de la Parra has been the de facto leader of Canned Heat for more than 30 years. His book *Living The Blues* is recommended: it’s a fruity read, including as many details of the band’s ill-advised attempt to enter the marijuana importation business as you might want, and rather more photos of his scary biker pals than you will ever need.

As his book explains at some length, Fito’s not wild about having missed out on his share of a million publishing dollars. Still, after some years apart, he reconnected with Skip Taylor in the mid-’90s. Their mission was to comprehensively rebuild the Canned Heat brand: in 1997, after Henry Vestine’s death (on tour in Europe, aged 52), Fito finally regrouped with Larry Taylor and Harvey Mandel under the band’s delinquent flag. A man with a strong sense of equanimity, Fito admits he cried for the future of the band when Bob Hite died of a drug overdose in 1981, but feels that by the time Henry died, “I knew it wouldn’t affect the longevity of the band.”

Ultimately, the ‘Heat’s many tragedies, he feels, are all part of a larger blues transaction. “We have had a lot of wonderful experiences,” he says. “But that has to carry a price.”



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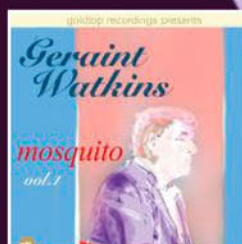
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10th: LONDON – CAMDEN UNDERWORLD

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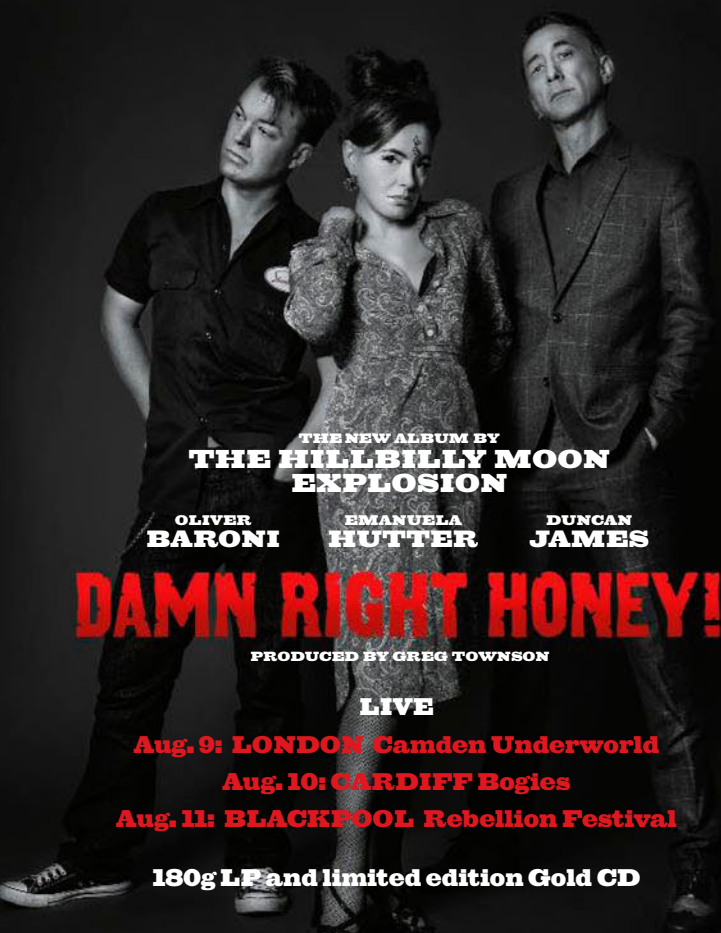
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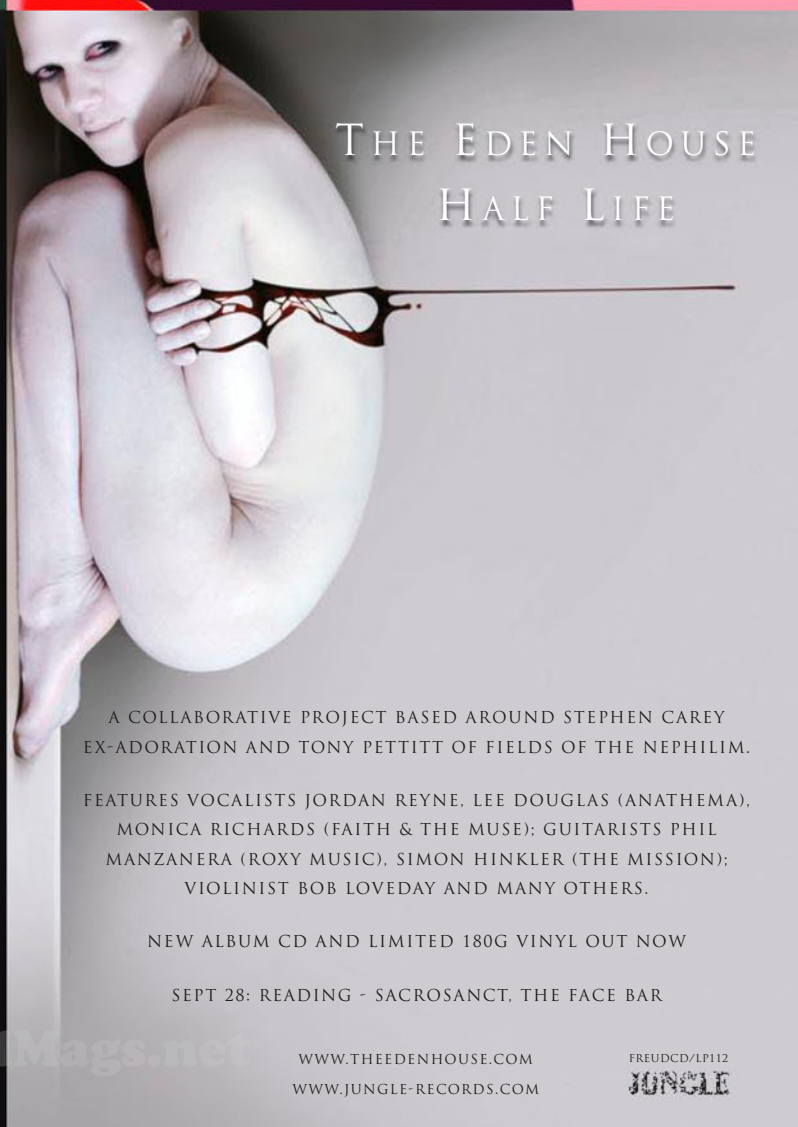
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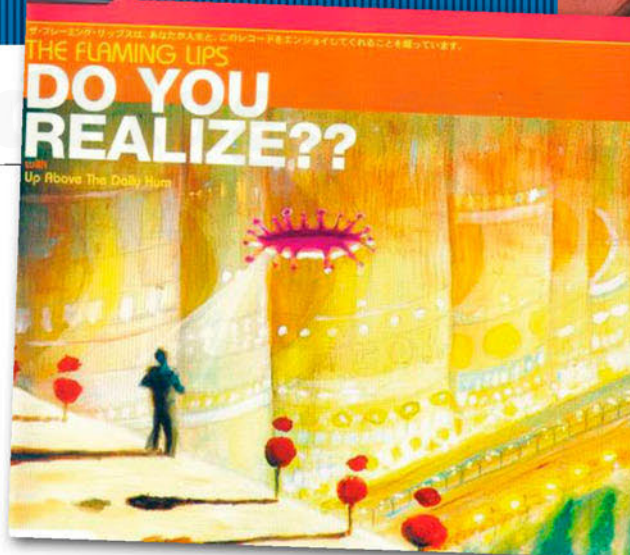
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Do You Realize??

THE FLAMING LIPS

How personal loss, heroin addiction and an odd Queen drumbeat inspired a “brutal” song about accepting the good and bad in life and making the best of it – “That’s the Flaming Lips message”

IN THE SUMMER of 2001, as The Flaming Lips worked in upstate New York on the follow-up to *The Soft Bulletin*, singer Wayne Coyne had a lot to contend with. Not least, the

worsening heroin addiction of the band’s musical lynchpin Steven Drozd, who seemed likely to die at any moment. “That was the worst time of my life,” Drozd recalls today. “I had nowhere to live, I was sleeping in a garage. It had gotten vicious.”

Along with the death of Coyne’s father in 1996, a stray phrase from Rick Wakeman on TV and an obscure Queen song, this precarious situation helped inspire “Do You Realize??”, the first single from what would become their biggest hit album, *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots*. With its pulsing acoustic guitars and dreamy Coyne vocal, the song’s key line – “Do you realise/That everyone you know someday will die?” – hit home with heartbreaking beauty. The emotional climax of their legendary gigs ever since – and until recently the Official State Rock Song of Oklahoma – it has become the most enduring song of the Lips’ 30-year career. “You can almost see the cynics in the crowd going, ‘It’s not going to get me, it’s not going to get me,’” laughs Coyne. “And we go, ‘Let’s get that guy.’ There are people around him literally crying. And if you’re going to resist that, you shouldn’t be at our show.”

“It connects in a way that’s beyond a hit song,” believes its co-producer, the band’s manager, Scott Booker. “A lot of our fan mail is, ‘You helped me get through cancer,’ or ‘My parents died in a car wreck, and we played ‘Do You Realize??’ Or it’s played at the birth of a child. It’s like ‘Happy Birthday’ now. And maybe in 100 years, at every funeral, instead of playing old Catholic dirges, they’ll play ‘Do You Realize??’” **NICK HASTED**

STEVEN DROZD: Tarbox Road Studios is 20 miles from anywhere. Western New York, out in the woods, in the middle of summertime, that’s where we were.

WAYNE COYNE: We were watching a documentary about Yes, and Jon Anderson had rung up Rick Wakeman at five in the morning, and Rick said, “Do you realise what time it is?” And we thought it was so funny. And it sparked these other things.

MICHAEL IVINS: That started this idea of, do you realise that you’re floating in space on the Earth?

SCOTT BOOKER: I remember when Wayne’d talk about realising how the Earth is just floating in space, which became a lyric in the song, it terrified him. But it’s also acceptance of the fact. He’s one of the most rational people I know. “Do You Realize??”’s ideas are very pragmatic.

COYNE: With the “We’re floating in space” line, I tried to encompass all the fragility of having an open mind. You think it’s just going to open you up to these wonders and things that are great, and then it opens you up to horrible things, as well. That feeling of having no control over what’s happening to you.

DROZD: We worked a little bit on “Do You Realize??” back in Oklahoma City. Wayne came over with those first couple of lines and a couple of chord changes. And my first reaction was, “I think you’ve really got something there.” Even

KEY PLAYERS



Wayne Coyne
Vocals



Steven Drozd
Multi-instrumentalist



Michael Ivins
Bass, engineer



Dave Fridmann
Producer



Scott Booker
Manager, co-producer

with him just singing and playing acoustic guitar, I thought it was mostly done.

COYNE: I was playing it to Steven and saying, “Is this OK?” Because it reminded me of a John Lennon song. It did the “do you realise” bit, and the lyric that said, “Everyone you know someday will die”.

I got to that and said, “What do you think of that?” And he said, “That’s classic.”

DROZD: We worked on a couple of little chord variations. We went up to Dave’s and started

working on it after that.

DAVE FRIDMANN: I don’t remember it being much of anything when I first heard it. Just acoustic guitar, and the melody. The words weren’t finished.

DROZD: We started piling stuff on to see what might stick. And I was really in love with a song off *Queen II* called “Funny How Love Is”, which has got an abnormal drumbeat. It’s almost like a Phil Spector production – it’s maracas and tom-toms and a big, swirling rhythm section. We were thinking it would be great to do something in that vein, and then we were listening to these old Dean Martin records that had these huge



Flaming stars (l-r): Steven Drozd, Wayne Coyne and Michael Ivins in 2002

choirs on them, and we wanted to meld those things together with electronica. So that was how it started.

COYNE: Steven and I both probably played some guitars and did some singing. But that was about all, on that first run-through. It was another three or four weeks before we went back, and when we played what we'd done to people at home, that track was already affecting them.

DROZD: Then we went back and worked on it again. It went through two or three incarnations, but they all had that same basic kind of chachacha-choochoochoo rhythm, and we double-tracked a 6-string and 12-string acoustic guitar and panned them left and right from each other, and that gives it that big, heaving sound.

IVINS: It's got a lot of weird percussive elements. That's what makes it feel the way it does – it never settles down into, "Here's the actual beat of the song."

COYNE: When I hear it now, it feels a bit reggae to me, and I think, "No wonder those hippies liked it so much..." [laughs] It's like a reggae ballad. Probably what gives it some of its secret power is that it's slightly hypnotic.

"When we play it and see people crying, that's powerful"

WAYNE COYNE

DROZD: I was interested in trying to do a slightly different chord progression every time the "Do you realise?" line came up, even though the melody's the same. That was what I really worked on with Wayne. Every time he sang "Do you realise?" it had a slightly different yearning, a different undercurrent of emotion.

FRIDMANN: You can barely tell what the chords are by listening to the acoustic guitars, which are so thin and tinny and weird. Then there's no bass and there's no rhythm element really to tell you what the chords are. So it's really just the vocals that are changing the chords as you listen.

COYNE: I'll be at a party to this day and there'll be an acoustic guitar and people'll say, "Wayne, play a little bit of 'Do You Realize?'" and I'll say, "I don't know how it goes." It sounds like anyone could figure it out, but when you go to do it, well, I don't know...

FRIDMANN: Yeah, it's a very strange, contrary thing that's occurring. There's another electric guitar that we eventually added that's hammering away on 16th notes, all distorted and messed up. It's urgent and frantic, and then the

vocals are this big expansive thing over the top. There's a lot of strange programming that is down there burbling away the whole time. They're creating these unsettled scenarios.

DROZD: After five years of heroin addiction, it was getting so I was either going to die, or end up in jail. Something was about to happen; it was all about to snap. But I also think we made some of our best music during that time. The good and the bad are always together. And "Do You Realize??" is like that. The song might be happy on the surface, but when you really hear it, you think, 'Jesus, that's brutal.'

COYNE: Every time the phone rang, you'd expect it to be someone saying, "We found Steven, and he's dead." All the time, building up for quite a few years. And knowing that I can't do anything about it. And I'm sure that played into my mind a lot. Yeah, I'm sure that's in the song. It's like you're at ease with these things that you realise are terrible, at the same time as you're crying and going insane.

DROZD: We had this blow-up on the way to the studio. Wayne never really gets seriously mad. But when he does, it's frightening. It's like my dad when I was a kid. He hit me a couple of times, and he was screaming, "Why are you doing this to us?" You know, all the things you would tell a junkie that you're at the end of your rope with.

COYNE: Was the lyric "Do You Realize??" partly directed at Steven? Not at the time. But



The furr-less freaks: Ivins, Coyne and Drozd in the Yoshimi...era

● when I say, “Everyone you know someday will die,” that was probably in my subconscious. When I played it for him, it wasn’t, “I have to play this to you so you’ll stop taking heroin.” We would never do that to each other. But in a sense, I probably ended up saying that.

DROZD: Back then, my whole reality was drugs, and music. So I knew it was a great song, but I wasn’t emotionally overwhelmed by it. After that confrontation with Wayne, that’s when I decided to try to get off heroin.

IVINS: My wife and I were living in Fredonia, the town where the studio is, and we said, “Just stay here.” Every morning we’d get up and hang out with Steven. And eventually he was able to live without heroin.

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** The Flaming Lips and Dave Fridmann
- **Performers:** Wayne Coyne (vocals, synths), Steven Drozd (synths, electric guitar, six-string and 12-string acoustic guitars, bass, backing vocals, programming), Dave Fridmann (drum programming)
- **Producers:** The Flaming Lips, Dave Fridmann and Scott Booker
- **Recorded at:** Tarbox Road Studios, Cassadaga, New York
- **Released:** August 19, 2002
- **UK chart position:** 32

wanted it before we let it go.

BOOKER: The first time I heard “Do You Realize??” I felt that it was special. And my second thought as the band’s manager was, “And the lyrics are kind of a downer!” It was the *Yoshimi* track that everyone was drawn to. But in the US there wasn’t a chance it would ever be on

FRIDMANN: “Do You Realize??” ended up surprisingly understated. We made a rough mix at the end of the first session when we were working on it, and sent it off to the label. And then out of the blue they called and said, “That’s the single! Stop! Finish the record so we can put it out!” We were like, “What are you talking about? We haven’t finished writing it...” “No, no, no, it’s done, it’s great.” I think we managed to get it where we



the radio, and it never really was a hit single. With The Flaming Lips, the greatest asset we have is the live show. And there was an immediate reaction there.

DROZD: It’s really come into its own live, because people just fucking love the song. It’s full-on distorted guitars and the drums are pummeling, and you’ve got the energy of the crowd singing. When I hear the recording now, it just seems really mellow!

COYNE: When we make it this final thing that we’re saying at the end of the night and you see people crying, that’s powerful.

DROZD: My oldest brother died about five years ago, and he was in prison for many years. He and I were listening to “Do You Realize??” together one time, and he was just weeping. He couldn’t believe that his little brother was in this band that made music that was so powerful. That’s pretty heavy for me to think about.

COYNE: That song had a time when people were completely embracing it. And some of those nights, you’d walk away going – and you wouldn’t be right – that’s the greatest song any group could ever play. Some of those nights, we’d walk away having already sung it 500 times and go, “Goddamn, that was fucking... that got me.”

DROZD: It’s almost as if the song was prophetic, as if it was warning us. I’ve lost a couple of siblings since we did it, but I’ve also had two children. So for me personally, the song is loaded with all kinds of heaviness. It seems richer now than when we did it.

COYNE: I was in my early forties when I wrote it. And was wondering, what are our lives going to be? And now, whatever bad was going to happen probably already has.

DROZD: I would say that song is the summation of Wayne’s lyrics and his singing. The duality, the good and the bad, the brutal message, and, hey, let’s try to enjoy it while we can – that’s the Flaming Lips message. That’s our signature song. ●

The Flaming Lips play at Bestival on September 6

TIMELINE

June 2000 The Lips return to Dave Fridmann’s Tarbox Road Studios to start work on the follow-up

to 1999’s *The Soft Bulletin*. The *Christmas On Mars* film and soundtrack are worked on

Summer 2001 Steven Drozd’s heroin addiction reaches crisis point. “Do You Realize??” is recorded

Winter 2001 Drozd goes cold turkey
July 16 2002 *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots* is released

August 2002 “Do You Realize??” is released. In ’09 it becomes the Official State Rock Song of Oklahoma.

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Story: Graeme Thomson
Photograph: Michael Putland

"I'd just call HARRY NILSSON a genius," says Van Dyke Parks. "And by the way, I haven't met any others. He redefined what a song could do." As a 17-disc boxset of Nilsson's work arrives with a thud, Parks, Peter Frampton, Chris Spedding, Bobby Keys and Herbie Flowers revisit the three brilliant and contrary records he made in the early '70s. Success? Schmucksess!

'I SANG MY BALLS OFF FOR YOU, BABY!'

WHILE HIS BIGGEST hit, "Without You", continues its reign at the top of the British and American charts, Harry Nilsson is attending to the pressing business of bussing in 30 senior citizens from the Stepney & Pinner Choir Club to Trident Studios in London's Soho. Having invited the somewhat bewildered OAPs to sing on his protest against the indignities of ageing, "I'd Rather Be Dead" (*"than wet my bed"*), Nilsson has decorated the studio with balloons, handed out party hats and laid on sherry, whisky and the mellifluous sounds of the Henry Krein Quartet. Despite the potential awkwardness of asking his ailing guests to sing "*If I have to be fed, then I'd rather be dead*", everybody has a fine time. At the end of the session, Nilsson invites Tom, an 84-year-old tenor with a squeaky wooden leg, to play on the next album. "OK," says Tom. "If I'm alive."

Best known for two cover versions – "Without You" and "Everybody's Talkin'" – a novelty song about a coconut, and getting trashed with John Lennon during his infamous Lost Weekend, Nilsson's escapades, such as those described in March 1972, have tended to distract from his four-octave voice, brilliant mind and seemingly inexhaustible supply of gorgeous melodies. "We forget that he influenced The Beatles, for Christ's sake, with him stacking his vocals and writing these unbelievably great songs," Peter Frampton tells *Uncut*. "We knew how talented he was. All the musicians had his records. He was just phenomenal."

"He was the smartest person I ever met in the music business," says Van Dyke Parks. "He was operating at the highest creative level imaginable. I wouldn't call him a musical genius – I'd just call him a genius. And by the way, I haven't met any others. He redefined what a song could do, with incredible intimacy: beautiful and consoling and illuminating and clear."

A new biography – *Nilsson: The Life Of A Singer-Songwriter* – and a new 17-disc boxset, *The RCA Albums Collection*, aim to bolster Nilsson's

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

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World



Nilsson (left) and Richard Perry (far right) with the Stepney And Pinner Choir Club, March 1972



In London, 1972



EYEWITNESS

HARRY'S HOUSE

Nice place, shame about the history

Nilsson's London base throughout the '70s was a top-floor, one-bedroom crash pad at 9 Curzon Place (now 1 Curzon Square) in Mayfair, handily located for his favoured hangouts: Tramps and the Playboy Club. "From one balcony you could read the time from Big Ben," he said. "And from the other balcony you could watch the Bunnies go up and down." When he was away he would loan it out to friends - two of whom died there. In 1974, Mama Cass Elliot was living *chez* Nilsson when she expired from "fatty myocardial degeneration due to obesity". Later, Keith Moon moved in and also died there, from an overdose of Heminevrin tablets. Nilsson never went back to the flat, and soon sold it to Pete Townshend.

• wider reputation. At its centre are the three records he made at the peak of his commercial success in the early 1970s: his two London recordings, *Nilsson Schmilsson* (1971) and *Son Of Schmilsson* (1972), and the standards album, *A Little Touch Of Schmilsson In The Night* (1973). The first two are a good-cop-bad-cop pairing of perfect piano pop, mock-country weepies, bawdy soft-rock, beautiful ballads, subverted Tin Pan Alley, joke songs and childlike incantations. The third, recorded with a full orchestra and Sinatra's arranger Gordon Jenkins, was at once behind the times and decades ahead of them, and as such confused everyone. "If he had stuck to one thing he would have been a superstar," says Frampton. But if he had stuck to one thing he wouldn't have been Harry Nilsson.

PART OF THE group of defiantly non-countercultural American songwriters that included his friends Randy Newman, Jimmy Webb and Van Dyke Parks, Nilsson arrived in London in June 1971 on the cusp of 30. A Brooklynite resettled in California, he had signed to RCA in 1967 and quit his job working as a computer operator in a bank. His second album, 1967's *Pandemonium Shadow Show*, was fêted by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, partly for its precocious reinterpretation of "You Can't Do That", which referenced 23 Beatles songs in 140 seconds. It was a typically Nilssonian creation: a novelty number with substance, lightly wearing its dazzling technical skill. His version of Fred Neil's "Everybody's Talkin'", recorded the same year, became a hit in 1969 as the theme to *Midnight Cowboy*.

"That song in the long run annoyed him immensely, because he hadn't written it, it was unrepresentative, and it was his biggest hit," explains Van Dyke Parks. "Fred Neil was very bitter about it, too. He told me, 'You tell Harry to write something for me.' If he had known how his song had troubled Harry, he might have been less bitter."

When Nilsson hooked up with producer Richard Perry, whose credits included Captain Beefheart and Tiny Tim, he was looking to streamline his airy baroque-pop into something more robust and commercial. They both wanted to record in London, where the studios were technically superior. "Harry was totally blown away with Trident Studios," confirms Herbie Flowers. "It was a bit like a dungeon, and he was entranced with this lovely grand piano they had. He was forever tinkling about with it."

The core band for *Nilsson Schmilsson* constituted Flowers and Klaus Voormann on bass, Jim Keltner and Jim Gordon on drums, Chris Spedding and John Uribe on guitar, Bobby Keys and Jim Price on horns and Spooky Tooth's Gary Wright on piano. "All I knew was that he was an ex-banker from New York," says Bobby Keys. "He didn't look like any banker I'd ever seen, and he didn't sing like a banker either. He had this beautiful instrument for a voice."

The preciousness of his voice was lost only on Nilsson himself, who during the sessions sat behind the piano chain-smoking, using a saucepan as an ashtray. Perry would ask him repeatedly not to smoke so much, or swap his high-strength fags for low-tar. Chris Spedding recalls that artist and producer "would go at it half-jokingly, half-seriously" - when their creative differences reached a head, the pair met for tea at the Dorchester to discuss it "like gentlemen". Perry pointed out that when they had first decided to work together, Nilsson had agreed that the producer would call the shots. "I lied," Nilsson answered.

He knew exactly what he wanted, even if he felt no need to let anyone else in on the secret. Van Dyke Parks: "Harry was an intuitive talent, and serene in his vision, but then he'd have maybe 12 people in a studio, with no music written, having to organise an arranged performance. He mapped that line between the extemporaneous and the written process, and he did it very comfortably."

For the musicians, it was a labour-intensive way of working. "My abiding memory is having to do lots and lots of takes," says Chris Spedding. "I think we got to take 50 on 'Let The Good Times Roll', and we started flagging towards the end. We went home and came in the next day, and I got the impression when we came back, by the amount of cigarette stubs in the ashtray, the fug in the room and the looks on their faces, that they had been there since the previous night, listening to take after take after take. He was very professional, very serious and committed to his music. When we were in the studio, there wasn't much larking about."

"He was a perfectionist," agrees Bobby Keys. "He would go over and over and over a part until it was exactly the way he wanted it. It could sometimes be a bit tedious, but it worked."

I just loved the way his mind worked. He wasn't limited by anything other than his own imagination."

Herbie Flowers: "Harry totally trusted people. It was always, 'Take your time, have a cup of coffee, let's have another go.' It was very convivial. We would laugh at his thoroughness, because it seemed like he was being picky, but you couldn't knock the results."

Recorded in two weeks, *Nilsson Schmilsson* is as straight as Nilsson ever got, but it's still appealingly crooked. The cover photo of him in a bathrobe, looking both vulnerable and seedy, underlined the idiosyncratic nature of the music, which moved from heartrending ballads ("Without You", "I'll Never Leave You") to mawkish lullabies ("The Moonbeam Song"), jaunty pop ("Gotta Get Up", "Driving Along") and loose funk-rock ("Down", "Jump Into The Fire"). It's both sublime and silly, often at the same time, and no more so than "Coconut", a tropical comedy calypso sticking on the chord of C7, which came together quickly in the studio.

"We had a tea break, came back in and suddenly he was chugging away, and that turned into 'Coconut'," says Flowers. "Jim Gordon is going boom-da, boom-da, and I'm doing my thing, kind of jazzy. To share all that with Harry was great fun. He went upstairs to listen to it and Richard Perry chopped what was a 10-minute riff into a four-minute song." Nilsson and Perry came up with the idea of introducing a narrator, a sick woman and a doctor in the lyrics, each sung as a distinct character. "Harry loved playing with words," says Van Dyke Parks. "He got married at the Marriott simply because he liked the way it sounded."

"Jump Into The Fire" was also boiled down from a long studio jam. "It was a bit of buffoonery. It went on and on, because what Jim was doing on drums encouraged us all just to enjoy the groove that was cooking," says Flowers. "A lot of editing was done to shape it up. It might be better than it should have been!" The song starts like *Exile*-era Stones meeting 1999 Prince and spends the last three of its seven minutes flirting with Krautrock, with its fiercely regimented drum pattern and Flowers' detuned bottom-bass string rumbling up and down the fretboard.

The abrupt shifts in style, approach and emotional sincerity in Nilsson's music were ingrained in his personality. A legendary bon vivant, he also exuded a deep melancholy, which Van Dyke Parks attributes to his father abandoning the family when he was three. "Harry was very private, an amazing man of contradictions," he says. "He was trying to protect everyone from the raw truth that he'd had a miserable life, which he was still trying to figure out – a miserable childhood, with unspeakable poverty."

Nilsson had a fourth-floor apartment on Curzon Street in Mayfair, but "he sometimes came and stayed in my house with my family", reveals Flowers. "I think he was quite homesick. I'd say, 'Come on, let's go to mine. We'll walk over Hyde Park, have some fish and chips.'"

"To me, he was focused on having a good time and enjoying life," notes Keys. "He was a very bright person, well read; he didn't just talk to hear his head rattle. After sessions we would go out and have a drink and would carry on talking, in a restaurant or a bar, and sometimes that would lead to the next bar! He was so opinionated. We would argue all the time and get really loud with each other, but it was silly stuff, for the sake of entertainment. He was straight on. He was a sociable person, but he had no time for stupid people."

IN THE SHORT time between the release of *Nilsson Schmilsson* in November 1971 and the start of sessions for *Son Of Schmilsson* in March 1972, Nilsson became a bona fide pop star. The album reached the Top 5 in the US and UK, while "Without You" was a worldwide No 1. Collectively

"He redefined what a song could do"

Van Dyke Parks



EYEWITNESS

WHEN HARRY MET RINGO

The life-long friendship of Nilsson and Starr

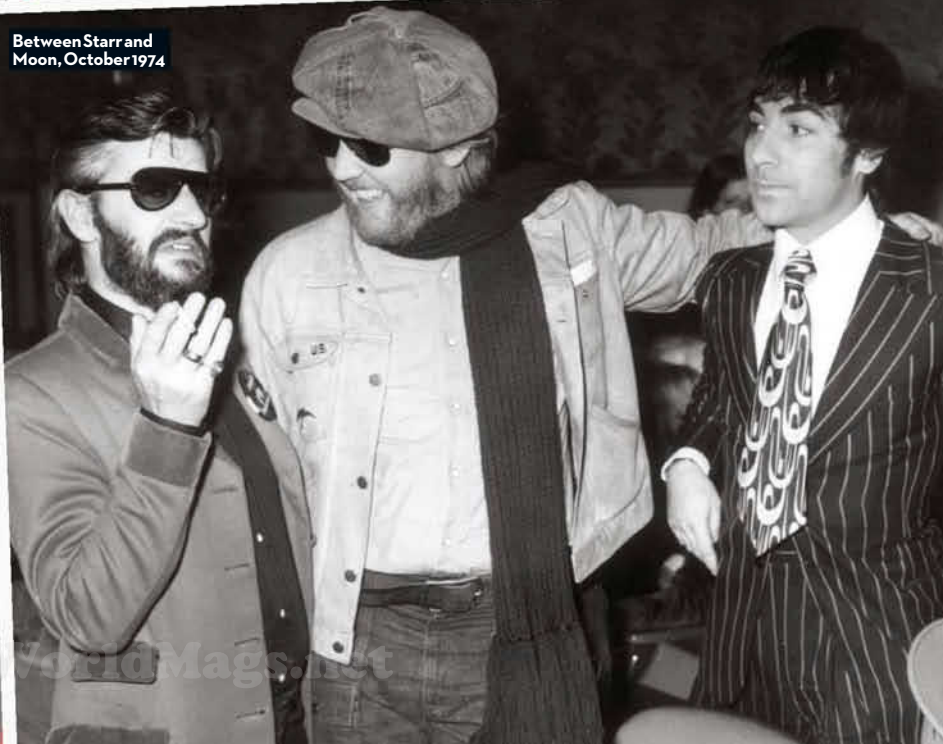
Befriended by The Beatles when he first came to London in 1968, Nilsson became particularly close to Ringo Starr, a bond sealed in alcohol and general japey as members of the Hollywood Vampires fraternity alongside the likes of John Lennon, Alice Cooper and Keith Moon. After working together on *Son Of Schmilsson*, the pair

co-starred in rock'n'roll vampire film *Son Of Dracula* (1974), a boozy indulgence featuring numerous star pals that was never properly released and has yet to come out on DVD. Starr drummed on *Pussy Cats* (1974) and *Duit On Mon Dei* (1975), while Nilsson popped up on Ringo's *Rotogravure*. There were further, more unusual collaborations: in 1977, Nilsson sang

backing vocals on Starr's commercial for Simple Life Leisure Suits in Japan, while they made screen tests for a Hanna-Barbera cartoon series that would have featured live action footage of the pair capering against an animated backdrop. Nilsson's last ever performance was with Starr's All-Starr Band, duetting on "Without You" at Caesar's Palace, on September 4, 1992.

FRANK EDWARDS/GETTY IMAGES

Between Starr and Moon, October 1974



EYEWITNESS

MONTY PYTHON & THE LIFE OF HARRY

How a joke Nilsson tribute song backfired on Eric Idle

A scatty '20s pastiche written and sung by Eric Idle, "Harry" is a winking tribute - "Come and have a smoke or two, with Harry" - initially given to Nilsson as a birthday gift. It later became the opening track on his final studio album, 1980's *Flash Harry*, despite the fact that Nilsson didn't write, play or sing on it. "Eric was a great chum of Harry's," says English songwriter Charlie Dore, who sang with Idle on the track. "He asked me to come in and duet with him. I did a fake Jane Birkin bit and other silly things, and it was sent off to Harry. The next thing Eric knew it appeared on *Flash*

Harry, which was a real shock. Harry didn't ask him, or say he was going to do it - it just appeared on there! I think Eric had mixed feelings about it, because it was a private joke. Eric said in passing later, half-joking, 'Huh, never got any bloody royalties for it.' But Harry loved it so much. At his birthday party he kept playing it to people all night. He was charming and very drunk."



Nilsson in the mid-'60s, around the time of his debut album

and not follow it up like everyone expects me to do.' That wasn't Harry."

The album still contains moments of exquisite beauty, not least the minor hit "Remember (Christmas)", a companion piece to "Without You" sung tenderly to Nicky Hopkins' piano accompaniment and Paul Buckmaster's strings. But *Son Of Schmilsson* was, intentionally or otherwise, a momentum killer. Its fate wasn't helped by Nilsson's refusal to perform. He had tried playing live a handful of times in the late '60s and hated the experience.

"He didn't buy into the idea that you must go out and get clapped at and approved of in public to make a living," says Van Dyke Parks. "That was a problem - he wasn't seen. Occasionally he would do a TV performance, a cameo appearance here and there. He wanted to be Hitchcock in his own great movie."

"He did a couple of TV shows and he looked very uncomfortable," claims Frampton. "But it was unfortunate he never toured. He had such a great personality; he would have wrapped the audience around his fingers."

Instead, he executed another swift volte-face with *A Little Touch Of Schmilsson In The Night*, recording songs from the great American songbook with Gordon Jenkins and an orchestra. Nowadays, everyone from Rod Stewart to Robbie Williams does it. In 1973, it was a radical step. Richard Perry refused to have anything to do with it. "That was just Harry," says Keys. "He'd want to do something and he would stick with it all the way through. He wasn't wishy-washy. When he got a purpose in his mind, he damn well did it."

Despite being, as Flowers says, "a beautiful album", it was met with blank stares and sold poorly. Nilsson's career never quite recovered, particularly after he ruptured his vocal cords partying with Lennon and Starr in Los Angeles during the making of the unlovely *Pussy Cats*. His inspiration drifted into wilfully contrary self-indulgence, spotlighted with sporadic reminders of his singular gift. His last album, *Flash Harry*,

"His voice went straight to the heart"

Herbie Flowers

was released in 1980, and he died of heart failure in 1994.

"It's a sad story in the end, Harry Nilsson," concludes Van Dyke Parks. "But it was a not a self-inflicted tragedy. It was meted out. He illustrates how America neglects its own. He was too smart for the business at that time, but that's why his music endures. It has absolute durability and deserves to migrate to new generations." ☪

The RCA Albums Collection is available now. **Nilsson: The Life Of A Singer-Songwriter** by Alyn Shipton will be published by OUP USA in August

EYEWITNESS

THE STORY OF "WITHOUT YOU" The tragic history of a monster hit

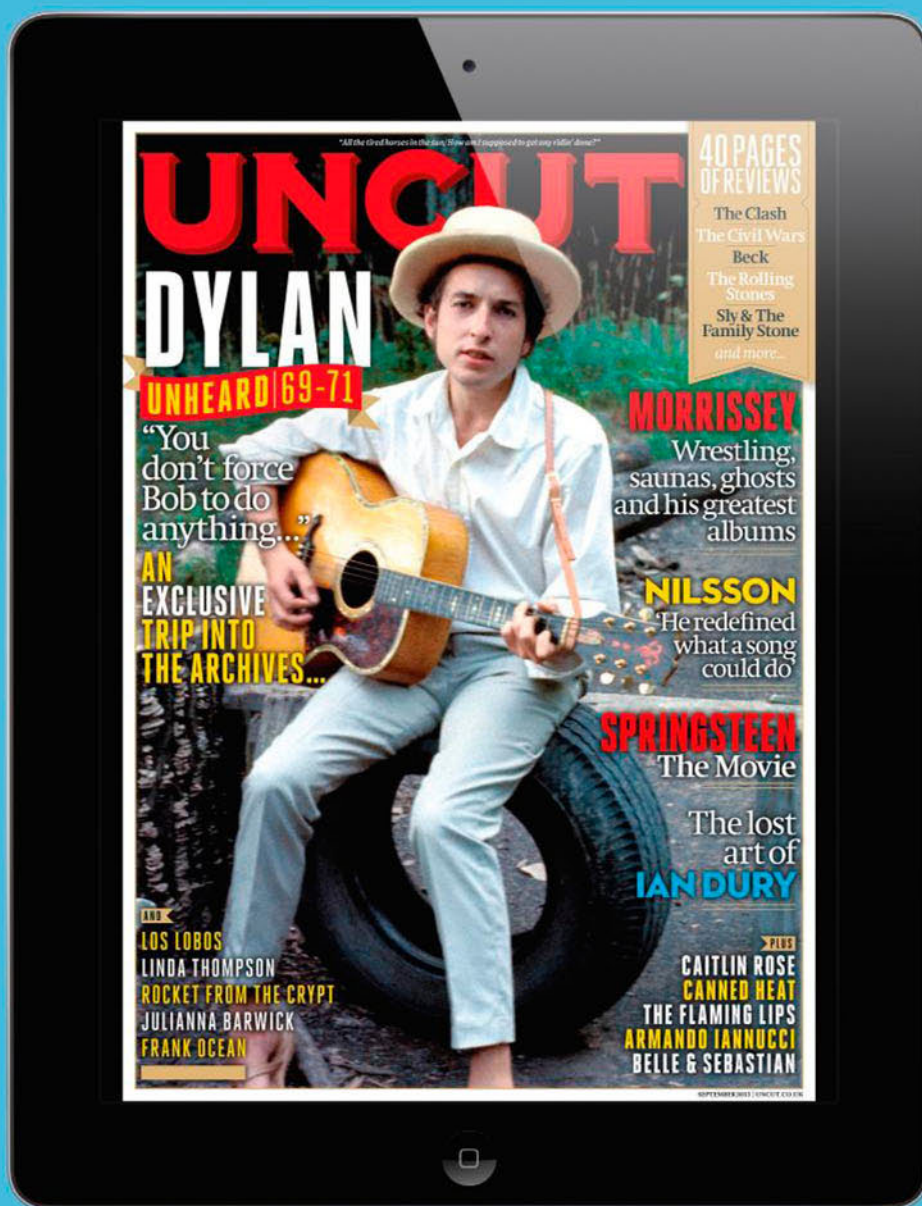
When Nilsson first heard "Without You" at a friend's house, he assumed at first it was a "lost" Beatles track. He wasn't far wrong: it was written by Pete Ham and Tom Evans of Fab protégés Badfinger, and had appeared on their 1970 Apple album *No Dice*. Nilsson felt the song already had hit potential, but it was his extraordinary vocal performance that transformed it. "Nobody was singing like Harry," says Herbie Flowers. "He

had the voice of an angel; it went straight to the heart." In February and March 1972, "Without You" spent four weeks at No 1 in the US and five weeks in the UK. According to producer Richard Perry, it invented a new style of "big ballad with a heavy backbeat. Although many artists have cut songs like it since, no one was doing it then." Its grandstanding emotional drama - "I can't live, if living is without you" - appeared tragically close to the bone when both

composers later committed suicide: Ham hanged himself in 1975, aged 27, while in 1983 Evans was found hanging in his back garden. Nilsson had his own demons, of course. Says Charlie Dore: "I think the thorn in his side was that he didn't write the song that he was most famous for."



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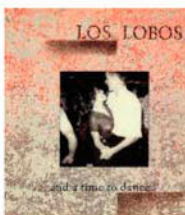
Los Lobos

The East LA chicano-rock pioneers talk us through their Great American Music

SINCE SELF-RELEASING their 1978 debut, *Just Another Band From East LA*, Los Lobos have operated outside the mainstream, making consistently brilliant LPs on limited resources. Drummer Louie Pérez, singer/guitarists David Hidalgo and César Rosas, and bass player Conrad Lozano formed the band soon after graduating from Garfield High School in 1973, stirring together trad Mexican music, rock'n'roll, blues, R'n'B, country, folk and Tex-Mex, eventually rising to the exalted status of Great American Band. Lobos reminded audiences of their greatness while touring the US and Europe this summer with Neil Young & Crazy Horse. "It's a great match – two bands who love to play real raw rock'n'roll, says Hidalgo. "It's a real honour and treat to get to play with our friends and musical compadres."



Los Lobos in Los Angeles, 1984, and, right, in 2010



LOS LOBOS ...AND A TIME TO DANCE

SLASH, 1983

Los Lobos' seven-track Slash Records debut formed their blueprint with its mix of originals,

a Mexican folk song and a Ritchie Valens cover. **DAVID HIDALGO:** When the Lobos started, we were learning Mexican folk. It was like looking for the blues; we were trying to find our roots. We grew up with Mexican music all around, but we didn't pay attention. When we tried to play it, it opened the door to our own culture. The EP was pretty much what we were playing live and our first attempt at writing for the band.

STEVE BERLIN (saxophonist/producer): I was a member of the Blasters, who were in the process of falling apart, so I threw myself into being around Lobos as much as possible, which wasn't hard to do since they were playing so much, not only all over town in the clubs but also their neighborhood thing, where they'd play for weddings, *quinceañeras*, political rallies. I was also hangin' around Slash and bugging [label head] Bob Biggs to sign Los Lobos, which he did, although he didn't think there was anything there. The deal was, I was gonna produce them and, as I had produced hardly anything, Biggs said, "Why don't we get T Bone [Burnett] in?" We cut the EP in less than two weeks. Since Biggs had signed them just to get his friends off his back, we just wanted to get it out and see what happened. We wound up winning a Grammy, and somewhere in there, I ceased being a Blaster and became a Lobo.



LOS LOBOS HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE?

SLASH/WARNER BROS., 1984

The band's first widely heard record puts them on the map. They tied for 'artist of the year' with Springsteen in the *Rolling Stone* critics' poll.

HIDALGO: After the EP came out, we realised that somebody's listening, so we should have something to say, and "Matter Of Time" was the first commentary about our situation.

BERLIN: We had risen up the food chain, and Slash had been subsumed by Warners, so this time we weren't trying to sneak in the back door any more – we were making a real record. One day in rehearsal, Dave came in and started playing the chords of "Will The Wolf Survive?", and I thought to myself, 'This song changes everything', and it did. It was the first time we'd assimilated all our stuff and created something that was quintessentially us. It was an epiphany.

HIDALGO: The way "Will The Wolf Survive?" came about was, Dave Alvin [of the Blasters] said, "You guys need an anthem," and I took it to heart. We were flippin' through a *National Geographic* and it had a wolf running across a frozen lake. The next story showed this old farm hand sitting by the side of the road. We put the last verse together about the punk rockers, because the punk scene blew it wide open for the roots-rock movement. That was our in, because we were playing Mexican folk music and started mixing up Tex-Mex with rock'n'roll.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



LOS LOBOS KIKO

SLASH/WARNER BROS., 1992

The title song from Taylor Hackford's 1987 Valens biopic *La Bamba* vaulted

Lobos to No 1, but the next few years proved to be a dispiriting slog. Figuring they had nothing to lose, Hidalgo and Pérez let their imaginations run wild. Cue dreamlike excursions ("Dream In Blue"), hardscrabble narratives ("Short Side Of Nothing"), and fiery blues-rock ("Whiskey Trail").

HIDALGO: Sometimes the most painful stuff you go through results in your best work.

BERLIN: This was post-"La Bamba", *La Pistola Y El Corazón* [1988] and *The Neighborhood* [1990], which was really hard to make and took forever. We came home from the tour that followed *The Neighborhood* broke, frustrated and pissed off. So we licked our wounds for a while, and when it came time to think about the next record, it was a tough time because we'd wasted so much money. We figured we had nothin' to lose – we were just gonna do what we wanted and not listen to anybody. We cut about six demos, and me, Louie and Dave went over to Warners to play them for [label president] Lenny Waronker. He loved them and gave us the green light – every one of those demos wound up on



the album – but he wanted us to work with Mitchell [Froom] again.

HIDALGO: Mitchell had produced the single of “La Bamba” and “Angel Dance” on *The Neighborhood*, so we were friends, and he brought in [engineer] Tchad [Blake]. We had a few things started when we got back to the studio, and I remember saying, “Man, some backwards guitar would sound good on this.” Tchad flips the tape and says, “Go ahead, try it.” “Just like that? It’s that easy? Wow.” That’s when I discovered you can have fun in the studio. Before that, it was always a pain. Louie and I had a few ideas, and we took them in, and we’d just go in and try to capture that first impression. So that was a big step for us, and we learnt a whole lot. It was a great time. Thank God the material was comin’. When it’s time to do an album and you try to put material together, you don’t know what you’re gonna come up with, and sometimes you get lucky.

BERLIN: A lot of the sound of that record was us not knowing the songs at all – it was the spark and the heart and the sound of searching. Pete Thomas played drums, and he was really key to the process as well. He was so inventive and always wanted to try crazy shit. Everybody who was involved in that record was pulling on the same side of the rope. It was an extraordinary experience – every initial idea sounded magical.

LOUIE PEREZ: With *Kiko*, there was just something going on that was otherworldly while it was happening; we just watched it twist and turn and float around in front of us.



LATIN PLAYBOYS LATIN PLAYBOYS

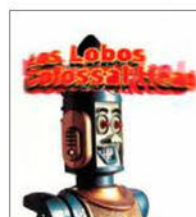
SLASH/WARNER BROS., 1994

A side-project begun by David Hidalgo on a

four-track tape machine in his kitchen that soon expanded to include Pérez, Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake.

HIDALGO: I had such a good time doing *Kiko* that I was enjoying that newfound freedom. So we just kept going, and when the family would go to sleep, I’d set up my little four-track player/recorder in the kitchen and go through drawers looking for stuff to play. I was playing slide with a butter knife and skewers. I was writing just to see what I could do, and it was a fun process, so I just kept going with it. When I played the stuff for Louie, he said, “Wow, this is different, man. This isn’t Lobos, this is something else. We should do something with this.” So he took the tracks and he wrote lyrics, then he gave them back to me and said, “OK, now you match them up.”

Then we got together with Mitchell and Tchad, and Tchad had this whole catalogue of sounds. Wherever he’d go – India, Africa, Australia – he would walk down the street with an adapter in his pocket and stereo mics in his baseball cap, so he had all this stuff catalogued. That had a lot to do with the sound of the album. We decided to make it a band, and there was a group in East LA called The Latin Playboys, so we stole it.



LOS LOBOS COLOSSAL HEAD

SLASH/WARNER BROS., 1996

The band embraced Chicago blues motifs on the

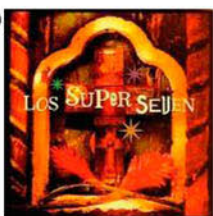
second of their trilogy of envelope-pushing projects with Froom and Blake.

BERLIN: When we hooked up with Robert Rodriguez to do the soundtrack to *Desperado*, he wanted an hour and 10 minutes of music for an hour-and-20-minute movie. It was insane to try to come up with so much music, but we’d also locked in our time to go into the studio with Mitchell and Tchad, so the morning after we finished *Desperado*, we started *Colossal Head*. Robert had sucked every shred of an idea out of us. When we walked in the studio with literally nothing, Dave said, “Well, what would Jimmy Reed do?” So we started making *Colossal Head* with the idea of making a Jimmy Reed record, and I really hear that in all the underpinnings of the songs.

HIDALGO: Willie Dixon produced “Who Do You Love?”, the Bo Diddley song, for the *La Bamba* album. People think the blues is just about feeling – expressing yourself. But Willie came in and orchestrated the thing. That inspired me to try stuff like that. So a lot of the songs on *Colossal Head* are blues-based. I was just trying to use what I’d learnt from Willie. *Colossal Head* was one of my favourite albums.



An older, wiser Los Lobos: still putting faith in their muses (and guitars) today



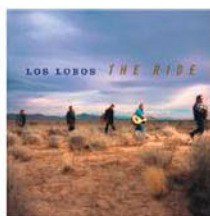
LOS SUPER SEVEN LOS SUPER SEVEN

RCA NASHVILLE, 1998
In another freewheeling side project, Rosas, Hidalgo and Berlin

hooked up with members of Los Texmaniacs and Aztex to form a one-off Tex-Mex supergroup. Also in attendance: country/blues/Tex-Mex legend, Doug Sahm. **HIDALGO:** The core band consisted of Max Baca, Joel Guzman, César, Steve and me. Each person that was featured had the say on what they wanted to do, and we backed them up. The first day, we were gonna do a song with Freddy Fender. He didn't have a nylon-string guitar, but he sees the acoustic bass, and he goes, "I haven't played bass in a long time; I'll play bass on this." That started the whole attitude towards the *Los Super Seven* album – it was like, let's just make do with what we got. It all went by fast, and it was a lot of fun to do.

BERLIN: In a weird way, the whole notion of the record was all about Doug Sahm's life – the combination of white and brown and the mixing of the cultures. Doug was hanging out at the studio the whole time, but on the last day of recording, we realised that we hadn't gotten him down on the record. He was pulling out of Cedar Creek Studios, and I went running down the driveway and caught up with him.

I said, "Doug, I'm so sorry, but would you consider coming back in and singing the bridge to 'Rio De Tenampa' for us?" So he says, "Yeah, sure." He outs the car in park with the engine on and the door open, walks back down the driveway into the studio and sings the bridge in one take – knocked it out of the park. He said goodbye again, and that was the last time I ever saw Doug.



LOS LOBOS THE RIDE

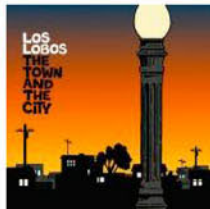
HOLLYWOOD, 2004
Los Lobos celebrated their 30th anniversary by throwing an extended party at Rosas' home

studio – with the tape rolling.

HIDALGO: What was cool about that was that we got to work with our heroes and friends. The thing that moved me the most about it was that it just took a phone call. We called Elvis [Costello]: "Hey, we're doin' an album, do you want to be a part of it?" "Sure." Same thing with Rubén Blades, Mavis Staples, Richard Thompson, Tom Waits, Dave Alvin – all our heroes and friends. That meant a lot to me. It's a friendly record.

BERLIN: The first one was Bobby Womack, who sang the crap out of his track [a medley of "Wicked Rain" from Kiko and his own "Across 110th Street"]. Bobby was all cut live, and César overdubbed his vocal, once he got up the courage.

CESAR ROSAS: Just to be in the same room with Bobby Womack was awesome. Thirty seconds after we met, he's singin' my song to me, sayin', "What do ya think about this?" It was remarkable to me 'cause I didn't really know him, but he hung out, he told stories, we had a meal together. At one point he goes, "Al Green called me and wanted me to be on his record, but I told him I was busy working with you guys." We're like, "You turned Al Green down for us!?"

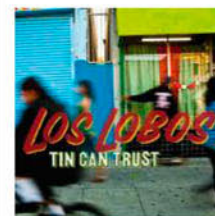


LOS LOBOS THE TOWN AND THE CITY

HOLLYWOOD, 2006
The band cooks up a concept album from scratch: an ambitious, emotional song cycle probing the Mexican-American experience.

PEREZ: Some records take on their own lives, and this one sure took on a stubborn-ass life. We had about a month before we were scheduled to go into the studio, so we spent it writing, or attempting to write. We were getting desperate when David came up with "The Valley", and this atmospheric thing that was going on made it feel like this is the place where everything starts – literally and metaphorically – because all the swirling sounds gave it the feeling of a creation myth or something. At that point, the idea of the lyric started to come – the idea of travel or a journey and finally settling into a place. I imagined indigenous people or migrants coming over a hill and looking down into this valley, and they realise that they've finally arrived at a place they can call home. So I wrote it, gave it to David and he said, "Great – let's cut it." As David kept giving me new stuff, I started to get an idea of where to take the rest of it, but everything was still a mystery that was unfolding, and I had to just go with it. At that point, we realised that "The Valley" was the beginning of this journey or adventure, and then it finally settles down, and the epilogue is "The Town", which is about going

back to where you started from. It was like it had come from deep inside ourselves. This was the one where we finally decided not to hold anything back.



LOS LOBOS TIN CAN TRUST

SHOUT! FACTORY, 2010
On their 14th and most recent studio album, the seasoned East LA músicos still

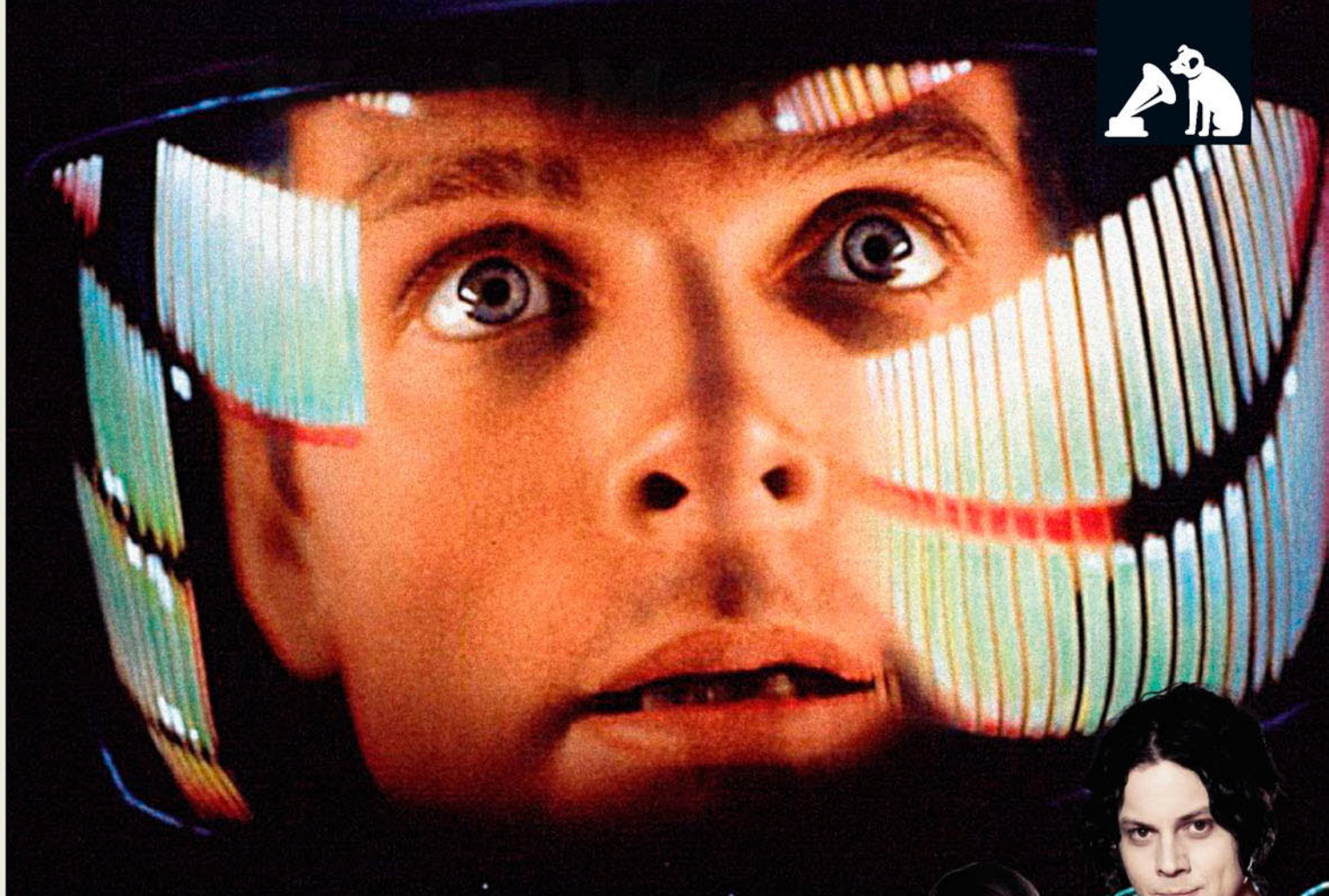
manage to deliver at a remarkably high level.

BERLIN: *Tin Can Trust* was done outside César's studio for the first time in three albums and 10 years, which was very healthy for us. Working in a real studio again, funky as it was, put us back in a place where we could just go with the vibe of the room, and it rewarded us greatly just to play together.

It was also evocative for everybody to be back in East LA after 30 years. We weren't trying to go retro, but it inevitably fell that way by virtue of what we were doing and where we were, and the fact that the songs were unadorned and put together on the spot. That was the shape the record told us it wanted to be. We always put our faith in our muses when we start a record. When we look back on that one, I think we'll realise that it was miraculous in a way.

HIDALGO: Right in the middle of it, César and I went out on the road with the Experience Hendrix tribute, but we had a deadline and needed to get the album done. So whenever we had a day off somewhere – San Francisco, Denver, Fort Worth, Chicago – Steve would come out and record us in whatever studio he could book. That was a little bit trying, but it still beats working. ☺

David Hidalgo is a special guest on the current Frampton's Guitar Circus Tour, 2013



hmv & UNCUT

present 6 decades of unforgettable entertainment

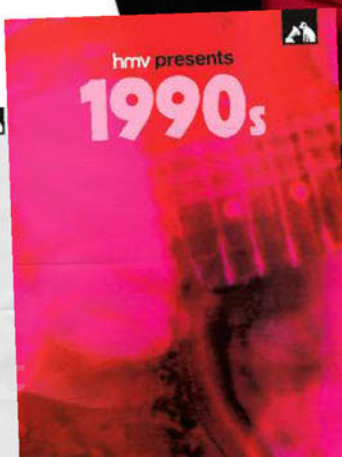
MUSIC AND MOVIES remain for many of us twin passions, almost inseparable, and you can never get enough of either. So the news that hmv, newly returned to robust good health after last year's much-documented rough times, has listened carefully to its customers and rebuilt its stock of classic albums and films is especially welcome.

hmv's range of the very best music and films is in other words now back to full strength, and its high street stores are in perfect shape to satisfy the needs of customers who have told them clearly that one of the key attractions historically of visiting hmv stores was the opportunity to dig deep into their music and film catalogues.

It seems a perfect moment, therefore, for hmv in collaboration with *Uncut* to celebrate 'six decades of unforgettable entertainment' with great prices on many of the albums and films that have not only defined the times in which they were made, but continue to inspire, excite and provoke today.

The 60 titles highlighted on the following pages are merely representative of hmv's restored catalogue. There are thousands more available in every hmv store, waiting to be discovered, possibly by you.

WRITTEN BY ALLAN JONES | JOHN MULVEY | MICHAEL BONNER | JOHN ROBINSON





hmv presents 1950s



Popular music as the decade opened was dominated still by post-war big bands and crooners, including Sinatra who produced a string of sophisticated classics as cool as the new modernism that Miles among others was introducing to jazz. By the mid-'50s, however, rock'n'roll was in a roaring ascendancy, wreaking seismic cultural change to the horror of an older generation faced with what seemed like open teenage rebellion. Cinema audiences, meanwhile, were thrillingly discovering international alternatives to Hollywood, where the studio system that had presided over its so-called Golden Age would within a decade be replaced by an upstart generation of so-called Movie Brats.



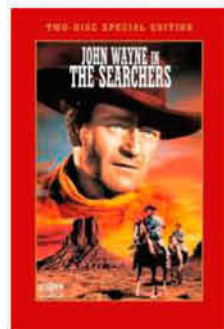
VERTIGO

DIRECTOR: ALFRED HITCHCOCK (1958)

£4.99

DESCRIBED DRYLY BY the director as "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy meets girl again, boy loses girl again", Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller concerned the doomed relationship between James Stewart's damaged policeman and Kim Novak's mysterious beauty who may be "Madeleine", but may also be "Judy". An especially dark film – even by Hitchcock's standards – *Vertigo* was a

technical tour de force that pushed the director's preoccupations with obsession and identity to the limits. A key influence on Brian De Palma, Pedro Almodóvar and David Lynch.



THE SEARCHERS

DIRECTOR: JOHN FORD (1956)

£4.99

JOHN FORD AND John Wayne's ninth collaboration was based on a true story – a Comanche raid on a settlement in East Texas in 1836, the abduction of nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker and her uncle's long, unsuccessful search for her. In Ford's hands, the story assumed a morally ambiguous tone, inverting Wayne's heroic screen persona as we discover that his Confederate veteran Ethan Edwards plans not to restore his niece to her family, but – believing her tainted by Indians – to kill her. "We'll find them in the end, I promise you. We'll find them. Just as sure as the turning of the earth."



12 ANGRY MEN

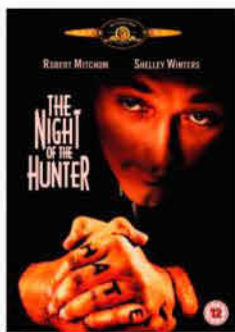
DIRECTOR: SIDNEY LUMET (1957)

£4.99

AFTER JOINING CBS at the start of the decade as a trainee director, Sidney Lumet launched his cinema career with this landmark courtroom drama – which had also started out in TV, as a live production in 1954. Starring Henry Fonda as "Juror 8", whose doubts about the accused's guilt gradually overcome the prejudices of the other jurors, the film's taut atmosphere was sustained by Boris Kaufman's camerawork and fine performances from Fonda, Martin Balsam and Lee J Cobb. Lumet's origins as a director of TV drama may be obvious here, but arguably perfectly suited to the material.



hmv & UNCUT present 6 decades



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THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

DIRECTOR: CHARLES LAUGHTON (1955)

£4.99

DESPIITE ITS SWELTERING, Southern Gothic setting, *The Night Of The Hunter* was in fact directed by a Yorkshireman – actor Charles Laughton, in his only stint behind the camera. The film is best known for Robert Mitchum’s compelling performance as Harry Powell, a menacing killer posing as a priest, in pursuit of two children who know the whereabouts of a stash of stolen money. The mix of noir thriller and “nightmarish sort of Mother Goose tale” (as Laughton described it), shot in monochrome during the new age of Technicolor, is unique and unmissable.



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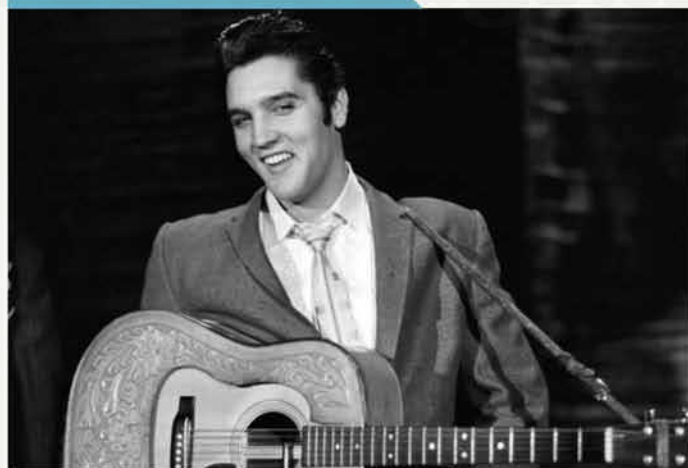
SUNSET BOULEVARD

DIRECTOR: BILLY WILDER (1950)

£5.99

WHEN SAM MENDES collected an Oscar for *American Beauty* in 2000, he cited Wilder’s *The Apartment* as a key inspiration. But by having Kevin Spacey narrate *American Beauty* from beyond the grave, Mendes took a leaf from another Wilder classic: corrosive Hollywood melodrama *Sunset Boulevard*. Focusing on an ageing silent film star (Gloria Swanson) and the feckless young screenwriter (William Holden) who becomes her kept man, Wilder’s film was a cold-blooded look at the transitory nature of fame at a critical phase in the industry’s life.

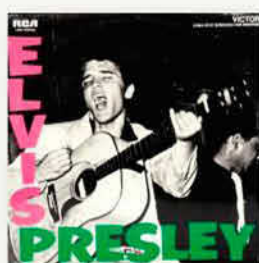
THE '50s CLASSIC ALBUMS



ELVIS PRESLEY

ELVIS PRESLEY (1956)

£7.99



PRESLEY’S RCA DEBUT, “Heartbreak Hotel”, had gone to No 1 on the US charts and was eventually the best-selling single of 1956. But would his teenage fans buy an entire album? Of course they would. Elvis Presley was the first rock’n’roll album to top the national charts, becoming the first million-dollar-earning pop album. Such statistics barely hint, however, at Presley’s astonishing cultural impact, especially the spectacular desegregation of his repertoire, which blurred the boundaries between ‘white’ and ‘black’ music. After Elvis entered the building, nothing was ever the same again.

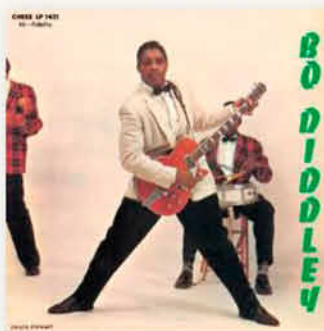


BILLIE HOLIDAY

LADY IN SATIN (1958)

£5.99

ON HER PENULTIMATE album, Billie Holiday’s once-gorgeous voice evidenced the ravages of the hard living that 17 months later would kill her, one of the greatest vocal talents of the 20th Century extinguished at the relatively young age of 44. Although Ray Ellis’ decorative string arrangements proved distracting to many of Holiday’s fans and critics, the album was a personal favourite of the singer’s, and the roughened texture of her voice invests the standards covered here with an often unbearable poignancy, hurt and yearning.



BO DIDDLEY

BO DIDDLEY (1958)

£7.99

THE UNDISPUTED KING of rock’n’roll self-mythologising, Bo Diddley (aka Ellas McDaniel and Ellas Otha Bates) wrote songs in which he was lover, fighter and hero, as well as composer – many accompanied by his patented quasi-Latin hambone rhythm. On this album, compiling his first three years of singles for the legendary Chess label, he hewed out his primal rock’n’roll commandments. “Who Do You Love” was covered by The Doors and “Diddy Wah Diddy” by Captain Beefheart – but only Bo Diddley could really sing Bo Diddley with the self-confidence of Bo Diddley.



FRANK SINATRA

IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS (1955)

£5.99

EVEN WHEN YOU bought his work on sheaves of 78s, Frank Sinatra’s albums pointed the way ahead: themed song suites, to be consumed at a single sitting. His were records for dancing, lovers, or – as here – for when love had departed. This record contained theatrical, full orchestra music, but the delicacy of Nelson Riddle’s arrangements and the sensitivity of Sinatra’s singing and phrasing achieved something far more intimate and consoling. This was a guy that you wanted on your side in the bad times as well as the good.



MILES DAVIS

KIND OF BLUE (1959)

£3.99

AT TIMES IN his storied career, it seemed as if Miles Davis could change the tempo and reset the agenda of jazz on a whim. One such occasion came with 1959’s *Kind Of Blue*, wherein Davis and his accomplices – including John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Paul Chambers and, crucially, the pianist Bill Evans – dialled back the frenzy of hard bop and created a cool, elegant, modal new music. More than 50 years on, *Kind Of Blue*’s subtleties endure; a seductive and inscrutable exploration that feels essential to most any collection, not just those of jazz aficionados.

DIS PHOTO ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

of unforgettable entertainment

#hmvDecades





hmv presents

1960s



Where to begin? *Psycho*. Bob Dylan. Greenwich Village. *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*. *The Loneliness Of The Long Distance Runner*. The Cuban Missile Crisis. The Beatles. The JFK assassination. The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Kinks. Vietnam. The Byrds. *The War Game*. The Doors. Haight-Ashbury and the Summer Of Love. The Grateful Dead. Jefferson Airplane. Love. Buffalo Springfield. The Monterey Pop Festival. *Point Blank*. Pink Floyd. Jimi Hendrix. The Velvet Underground. Andy Warhol. Tamla Motown. Stax. Van Morrison. Paris '68. *Rosemary's Baby*. The Manson Murders. Altamont. You couldn't have packed more into the '60s if you'd added another 10 years to the decade.



JAMES BROWN
LIVE AT THE
APOLLO (1963)

£5.99

SO SUCCESSFUL WAS this 1963 album for the man already styled "the hardest-working man in showbusiness", he returned to the Apollo again in 1968. Brown was in 1962 a hit-maker and businessman, but this live record served to extensively showcase all the man's

talents. Impassioned soul singer ("Try"; "I Don't Mind"). Taskmaster band leader. And most importantly, electrifying stage performer – Brown had it all. Of documentary value as well as musical legend, the crowd's squeals of pleasure are audible throughout – their performance nearly as ecstatic as that by Brown himself.

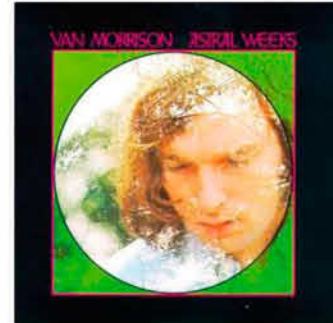


THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO (1967)

£5.99

AN INTOXICATING MIX of sound art, brittle ramalam and deviant squalor, The VU's propulsive drones and New York street incantations would probably have ended up pretty influential without the input of their manager, Andy Warhol. Warhol, though, fixed up Lou Reed, John Cale, Sterling Morrison and Mo Tucker with a new singer, the German model Nico, whose dark mien and monotone added even more gravity to what would be recognised, not long after the band split, as a truly revolutionary debut album.



VAN MORRISON
ASTRAL WEEKS (1968)

£5.99

AS FRONTMAN OF semi-feral garage band Them, then spirited R'n'B bawler, Van's career up to 1968 had been bracing rather than transcendental. The release of *Astral Weeks*, though, changed everything, stretching his Celtic soul inclinations into extended reveries that imbued his Belfast upbringing with mystical portent. The poetry tumbled out of him, while the musicians – mostly seasoned NY jazzmen – followed his wayward path with such intuitive sensitivity that the whole thing sounded as if it was being recorded at the point of creation; James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness in musical form.

hmv & UNCUT present 6 decades



LOVE FOREVER CHANGES

(1967)

£5.99

"SITTING ON A hillside, watching all the people die..." Curiously, one of the landmark albums of '60s hippy music was also one that anticipated a dark climax to the extended Summer Of Love. *Forever Changes*, Love's third LP, finessed a certain baroque strain of psych to its logical end; pastoral, ornate, even decadent. But if the music was sumptuous, the words of songwriters Bryan MacLean and, especially, Arthur Lee told another story: that, in their hometown of LA, idealism was being overtaken by the reality of conflict, strife and hard drugs, as well as a more wistful loss of innocence.



THE BYRDS SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO

(1968)

£5.99

FOR MOST BANDS, the loss of one great singer-songwriter should be fatal. To lose two seems unthinkable. The departures of Gene Clark and David Crosby did nothing to stem the creativity of The Byrds, though: Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman simply recruited yet another great singer-songwriter. Enter Gram Parsons, who propelled The Byrds to a rapprochement between rootsy tradition and countercultural vibrancy. 'Cosmic American Music' they christened it. And while *Sweetheart...* might not have sold millions, those bands who followed its example – notably The Eagles – made huge fortunes.

THE '60s CLASSIC MOVIES



STANLEY KUBRICK COLLECTION



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

DIRECTOR: STANLEY KUBRICK (1968)

£4.99

FROM HOMINIDS AT the dawn of time to murderous computers and travels beyond the infinite, Stanley Kubrick's spin on a short Arthur C Clarke story was originally given the tongue-in-cheek working title, 'How The Solar System Was Won' – an indication, perhaps, of the unforgettable endeavour Kubrick brought to his film. The scope and vision for the work – from the space docking sequence choreographed to Strauss' *Blue Danube* to the Star Gate footage – remains undiminished. That the film also predicted tablet computers shows just how far ahead of the curve Kubrick was.



BONNIE AND CLYDE

DIRECTOR: ARTHUR PENN

(1967)

£4.99

CANNELLING THE FRENCH New Wave, frank in its depiction of sex and extreme violence, cheerfully amoral and brilliantly edited by Dede Allen, *Bonnie And Clyde* was a turning point for US cinema. A strutting, cocksure Warren Beatty played opposite a smouldering Faye Dunaway as the Depression-era bank robbers, who met their fate in a hail of slow-motion bullets: one of the great endings in modern cinema. "Who'd want to see a picture about a couple of rats?" asked one executive at Warner Brothers, who funded the film. Plenty, was the answer.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

DIRECTOR: SERGIO LEONE

(1966)

£4.99

THE FINAL PART of Sergio Leone's trilogy that provided Clint Eastwood with his breakout role as The Man With No Name, this film also paved the way for Leone's later epics – *Once Upon A Time In The West* and *Once Upon A Time In America*. Concerned with the hunt for buried Confederate gold by three men – Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef and Eli Wallach – it was accompanied by Ennio Morricone's most famous score, the sweeping widescreen photography capturing the breathtaking landscape and epic scale of Leone's story.



LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

DIRECTOR: DAVID
LEAN (1962)

£5.99

A WIDESCREEN FILM IN the truest sense, Lean's great film cast Peter O'Toole as the mercurial WWI officer who leads an Arab uprising against the Turks before becoming the unwitting pawn of his British superiors. Shot over two years in Jordan and Spain, Lean's biopic succeeded in being simultaneously intimate and epic, intelligent and accessible. On screen for almost the duration, O'Toole was accompanied by Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins, Claude Rains and – making one of the most memorable entrances in film history, atop a camel – Omar Sharif.



THE WILD BUNCH

DIRECTOR: SAM
PECKINPAH (1969)

£4.99

THE FIRST WORDS of dialogue spoken in Sam Peckinpah's western were "If they move, kill 'em," – a mission statement, if you like, for a film bookended by two of the most violent shootouts in cinema history. In between, Peckinpah explored notions of camaraderie and loyalty among a band of ageing outlaws, men out of time, facing obsolescence and death along the US-Mexico border. Peckinpah's recurring themes of male friendship and its betrayal were never better articulated than here, and though much imitated, *The Wild Bunch* retains its savagery and moral strength.





hmv presents 1970s



The early-'70s ushered in the era of the stadium band, in which all-conquering context The Rolling Stones, The Who and especially Led Zeppelin thrived, the latter defining the self-indulgence and decadent excess of the new rock aristocracy that a few years later inspired an unholy backlash. More sensitive souls were soothed by the sounds of Laurel Canyon, while others found cerebral pleasure in the convolutions of prog rock, from which first glam and then punk offered welcome deliverance. Disco was ubiquitous. Hollywood, meanwhile, seemed overrun by a brilliant new generation of film-makers, including Coppola, Spielberg and Scorsese, who enjoyed huge freedoms before the crushing debacle of *Heaven's Gate* restored power to the studios.



JAWS

DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG (1975)

£5.99

COMPARED TO THE budgets of today's blockbusters, it might seem quaint that the only 'special effect' deployed by Steven Spielberg while making *Jaws* was a temperamental mechanical shark, aka Bruce. Nevertheless, the power of *Jaws* remains undiminished. Essentially, a small-scale story of a great white terrorising a resort, *Jaws*' enduring qualities stem from the director's mastery of

tension and the human drama at the story's heart, as Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss and Robert Shaw risk all to land the shark. Shaw's monologue on the sinking of the *USS Indianapolis* is a highpoint in modern cinema.



THE GODFATHER

DIRECTOR: FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA (1972)

£5.99

OF THE FOUR landmark films Francis Ford Coppola made during the '70s – the first two *Godfather* movies, *The Conversation* and *Apocalypse Now* – it's the first of those films, *The Godfather*, that stands as a touchstone of modern cinema. Its considerable riches lie not only in its layered depiction of family (and Family) life, but also a splendid showcase for the actors who would dominate the coming decade – Pacino, James Caan, Diane Keaton, Robert Duvall, John Cazale – alongside, of course, that transformative performance from Marlon Brando (only 48 at the time) as Don Vito Corleone.



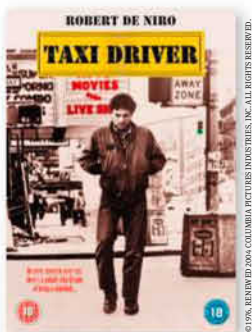
MANHATTAN

DIRECTOR: WOODY ALLEN (1979)

£4.99

MORE OF A love letter than a film, Woody Allen's masterpiece *Manhattan* had three recipients. First, to the city of writer/director/star Woody Allen's birth, beautifully rendered in pristine monochrome; second, to the music of George Gershwin, whose "Rhapsody In Blue" is the film's unofficial theme tune; and finally, to the comic brilliance of Diane Keaton, in her sixth film with Allen. Allen himself plays a TV comedy writer – what else? – struggling with his love life and harbouring dreams of becoming a great novelist; Keaton is the alluring neurotic with whom he falls in love.

hmv & UNCUT present 6 decades

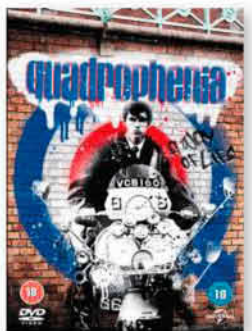


TAXI DRIVER

DIRECTOR: MARTIN SCORSESE (1975)

£4.99

ALONG WITH *RAGING BULL* and *The King Of Comedy*, *Taxi Driver* forms part of Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro's ongoing exploration of the darkest recesses of the male psyche. Here, De Niro's Travis Bickle – a homicidal combination of Norman Bates and Dirty Harry – cruises New York at night, disgusted by the pimps, junkies and streets lined with hookers. Describing himself as “God’s Lonely Man”, Bickle was a dangerously wounded man at odds with the world – a role that would define De Niro for much of the rest of his career.



QUADROPHENIA

DIRECTOR: FRANC RODDAM (1979)

£4.99

ONE OF A number of projects green-lit at The Who Films Ltd following the 1975 success of *Tommy*, *Quadrophenia*'s sparky cast of then-unknowns – Phil Daniels, Leslie Ash, Phil Davis – would presumably have been too young to recall the 1964 May Bank Holiday scraps between mods'n'rockers in Brighton that provides the story's backdrop. Distilled from The Who's '73 album, in the hands of director Franc Roddam, *Quadrophenia* is a thrilling, vérité-style evocation of life in the early '60s, a rites of passage drama as intoxicating as the tiny blue pills the characters pop with reckless abandon.

GETTY IMAGES

THE '70s CLASSIC ALBUMS



JONI MITCHELL

BLUE (1971)

£5.99

IN THE SONGWRITING set that coalesced around Laurel Canyon, Joni Mitchell was a totemic figure long before her fourth album was released in 1971. *Blue*, though, was her first masterpiece; a stripped-back, poetically sophisticated rumination on love, composed in the wake of her break-up with Graham Nash. While many perceived Mitchell to be a folk singer, the minimal settings on *Blue* were encrypted with a much broader and more idiosyncratic musical vision. Here, stealthily, were the jazzy nuances that would come to the fore in her work later in the decade.



CAN

TAGO MAGO (1971)

£7.99

THEIR MUSICAL explorations might have been profound, but Can's approach to hiring frontmen was not quite so diligent. The quartet's second vocalist, Damo Suzuki, was spontaneously recruited after they found him, in 1971, busking in Munich. The match proved inspired, however; for all the German quartet's avant-garde learning, their music had a looseness born of jazz improv, and the Japanese singer's featherlight scatting was the ideal complement to such radical grooves. *Tago Mago* was the heavy motherlode, with ritual jams that could – and, in the case of “Halleluwah”, probably should – have gone on forever.

Dr. Feelgood



Down By The Jetty

DR FEELGOOD

DOWN BY THE JETTY (1975)

£9.99

AFTER THE SOPHISTICATIONS of prog rock, audiences were hungry for an empathetic live music experience. Dr Feelgood, a Canvey Island band dedicated to raw R'n'B were destined to serve it up to them, with no fancy trimmings. This debut album was raw indeed (it was recorded in purist Mono; the way you heard records on the radio), and captured the energy of magnificent Wilko Johnson compositions like “Roxette” – in particular the amphetamine savagery of his choppy guitar playing. Punk rockers, you can be certain, were listening closely.

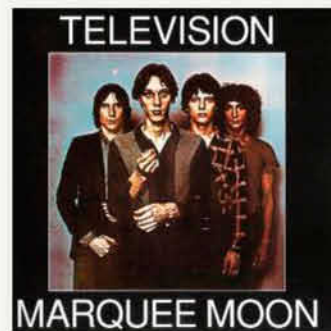


SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

THERE'S A RIOT GOIN' ON (1971)

£5.99

A TEXAN MUSICAL PRODIGY, Sly Stone's musical career began at a gallop, as he and his phenomenal band charged through four albums in two years. At the cusp of the '70s, though, hard drugs and a maturing political consciousness had slowed down and radicalised their art. Hence *There's A Riot...*, where Stone's militantly doomy worldview was played out over music that replaced the band's old psychedelic exuberance with a new sound; malign, forlorn, yet still blessed with a profound funkiness even in its darkest moments.



TELEVISION

MARQUEE MOON (1977)

£5.99

IT'S ONE OF the ironies of musical history that a key punk rock album foregrounds many of the things – virtuosity, extended guitar solos, cerebral engagement – that were supposedly anathema to the movement. But Tom Verlaine brought a streetwise edginess to his poeticising, and his serpentine guitar face-offs with Richard Lloyd had a fresh, unnerving tension, even as their implicit debts to Fairport Convention and the Grateful Dead were still audible. Less a landmark of punk, then, than a masterpiece of New York culture, where the scuzzy and the elevated could intertwine in revelatory new patterns.

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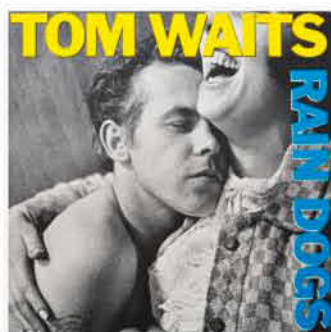


hmv presents

1980s



For some, the most significant musical event of the decade was Live Aid, whose idealistic intentions barely survived the posturing of pop's assembled nobility. For many more, the '80s were defined by the impact of Thatcherism – unemployment, riots, the Falklands War, the Miner's Strike, all soundtracked early on by The Specials, Elvis Costello, Paul Weller and Billy Bragg and later by acid house and rave. American music meanwhile was revitalised by the emergence of what became alt.rock, best represented by REM and the Pixies, who by the end of the decade were to go supernova. The Top 10 grossing movies of the '80s were undemanding escapist entertainments, in whose company films like *Raging Bull*, *Platoon* and *Scarface* were brilliantly livid aberrations.



TOM WAITS

RAIN DOGS (1985)

£5.99

OUTSIDE, IT WAS the middle 1980s. For Tom Waits, writing in a New York basement, he was in a place remote from the gloss of the era. A work based around the lives of the urban dispossessed, the album marked Waits' continuing artistic evolution (or devolution) from late-night piano man into an unknowably strange artist, propelled by a demented sense of rhythm and his own manic energy. Here, policemen, ailing relatives and Cuban sailors all tottered into Waits' dissolute scenarios, propelled by the crab logic of the music. You're right, it was just the kind of place Keith Richards might show up – he did.



DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS

SEARCHING FOR THE YOUNG SOUL REBELS (1980)

£5.99

A WEIRD CAREER OF conceptual shifts, personnel overhauls, erratic hits, epic hiatuses and intense music hit its first peak in 1980, as "Geno" reached No 1 and Dexys' debut LP unveiled the full 'new soul vision' of Kevin Rowland. He aligned a questing, indignant Anglo-Irish perspective to the pumping brass of Stax, gave his band a fierce discipline and became a fantastically odd pop star. Soon, though, his demands had alienated most of his bandmates, leaving behind this vital document of Dexys' brief, extraordinary Phase I.



THE REPLACEMENTS

LET IT BE (1984)

£5.99

BORN INTO MIDWESTERN punk, by '84 The Replacements had evolved from drunken shambles into the writers of wayward, brilliant rock'n'roll. Tapping into the shattered vulnerability of Big Star, Paul Westerberg could also write pop songs, heartbreakers, pratfall anthems ("Gary's Got A Boner"), all of which the band broached with their haphazard attitude. The closest the band ever came to commercial success was getting REM's Peter Buck to play mandolin on the great single "I Will Dare" – but as *Let It Be* proved, failure was still a noble course.



PIXIES

SURFER ROSA (1988) **£5.99**

NOTORIOUSLY, Black Francis advertised for bandmates by requesting a combination of Hüsker Dü and Peter, Paul & Mary. By the time the Boston-based quartet recorded their full-length debut, though, the Pixies' music had become significantly more macabre: a cranked-up, scabrous distillation of a decade of US punk, further deranged by the singer's howled transgressions. Pixies had other weapons in their arsenal, too: a singing bassist called Kim Deal (aka Mrs John Murphy) who could also write a mean song; and a strangely poppy immediacy that would inspire a generation, including one Kurt Cobain.



NWA
STRAIGHT OUTTA
COMPTON (1988)

£5.99

AKINETIC DISPATCH FROM the ganglands of Southern California, *Straight Outta Compton* was excoriated as much it was celebrated, thanks to its vivid depiction of a particularly violent and amoral street lifestyle. But if the initial result of NWA's debut seemed to be a tsunami of mediocre Gangsta Rap, it now sounds more like a bold and exciting high watermark for hip-hop, with Ice Cube, MC Ren and Eazy-E's raps witty as well as thuggish, and the massive, high-rolling bounce of Dr Dre's production setting a standard that even he has struggled to live up to in recent years.

WARNER BROTHERS/EVERETT/REX FEATURES

THE '80s CLASSIC MOVIES



BLADE RUNNER

DIRECTOR: RIDLEY SCOTT (1982)

£4.99

AFILM THAT LITERALLY keeps on giving, there exist seven different versions of Ridley Scott's future noir – of which 2007's *The Final Cut* is, as the title suggests, the most authoritative. What is it that keeps drawing Scott – and, of course, us – back to this film? Partly, it's the ageless existential struggle faced by Harrison Ford's Chandler-esque cop Rick Deckard in his pursuit of a group of escaped 'Replicants' led by Rutger Hauer. But also it's the look of the film itself – in particular, effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull's extraordinary visualisation of Los Angeles in 2019 rendered in highly detailed model work.



**ONCE UPON A
TIME IN AMERICA**
DIRECTOR: SERGIO LEONE

(1984) **£4.99**

ONCE UPON A *Time In America* was an anomaly for Sergio Leone. Butchered by its US distributors, who balked at its length (269 minutes) and complex structure, Leone's film nevertheless stands as a towering achievement for the director. Stylistically bold and visually stunning, it follows a former Prohibition-era Jewish gangster returning to Brooklyn after 30 years, it starred Robert De Niro and James Woods. To make *Once Upon A Time...*, Leone turned down the chance to direct another epic story of immigrants and criminals – *The Godfather*.



SCARFACE

DIRECTOR: BRIAN DE PALMA (1983)

£4.99

AFILM FULL OF excess, Oliver Stone and Brian De Palma's brutal update of Howard Hawks' 1932 gangster movie charts the rise of Cuban immigrant Tony Montana, whose addiction to power and "yayo" drive him to the top, and promptly over it. Memorable as much for its garish '80s fashion moments and Giorgio Moroder score as it is for extremely violent scenes involving chainsaws and assault rifles, the volatile centre of *Scarface* is Al Pacino as Montana, bringing a tragic grandeur to his performance as the mounds of cocaine become ever higher and the bodies pile up.



RAGING BULL

DIRECTOR: MARTIN SCORSESE (1980)

£4.99

RAGING BULL COMES freighted with its own personal history. The benchmark for actorly transformation, Robert De Niro gained 60lbs to play brutal, paranoid yet charismatic boxing champ Jake LaMotta in later sequences. While De Niro justifiably won the Oscar for Best Actor, the award for Best Film was – criminally – won by *Ordinary People*. Beyond this, though, Martin Scorsese's film captures LaMotta's mad, compelling life in pin-sharp monochrome, from harrowing scenes of domestic upheaval to the unforgettable fight sequences themselves.



PLATOON

DIRECTOR: OLIVER STONE (1986)

£4.99

ONE OF THE most successful of the '80s cycle of Vietnam movies – it won Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director – *Platoon* can also claim to be arguably the most authentic. Based on the first-hand experiences of director Oliver Stone – a decorated combat veteran – *Platoon* focused on the conflict between a charismatic sergeant (Willem Dafoe) and his ruthless staff sergeant (Tom Berenger), with Charlie Sheen as the raw recruit caught between them. Stone, meanwhile, returned to Vietnam for 1989's *Born On The Fourth Of July* and 1993's *Heaven & Earth*.

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hmv presents 1990s

By the early-'90s, Seattle seemed like the music capital of the western hemisphere, home of grunge and the all-conquering Nirvana and Pearl Jam, whose spectacular chart success inspired countless hirsute imitators. Manchester had already spawned The Smiths, Joy Division, New Order and The Stone Roses, and now gave the world Oasis, whose crowd-pleasing anthems were central to the escalating popularity of Britpop. As ever the most interesting music lurked more in the margins in the shape of Pavement, PJ Harvey, Tricky and Massive Attack. In cinemas, Tarantino ruled, *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* the kind of creative works that rekindled a love of films dulled by a decade of witless blockbusters.



PULP FICTION

DIRECTOR: QUENTIN TARANTINO (1994)

£5.99

1994 WAS QUENTIN TARANTINO's year. After unleashing his ferocious debut *Reservoir Dogs* two years previously, Tarantino returned with this sensational portmanteau crime drama that not only dominated the year (it won the Palme d'Or at Cannes and an Oscar) but also launched its own adjective – 'Tarantinoesque' – and a whole sub-set of genre imitators. But viewed now, Tarantino's film – with its anti-

chronological structure, expansive storytelling and hard-boiled dialogue – still stands up as an audacious mix of high and low culture, and arguably the filmmaker's finest achievement.

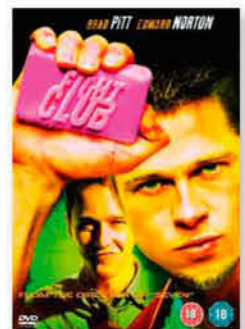


THE BIG LEBOWSKI

DIRECTOR: THE COEN BROTHERS (1998)

£4.99

PERHAPS THE ONLY film on this list to have its own annual festival, *The Big Lebowski* is arguably the best representation to date of Joel and Ethan Coen's deadpan hilarity and love of shaggy dog yarns. Swirling around a Chandler-esque plot involving a kidnapped heiress, Jeff Bridges as the amiably flaky Dude leads a cast of Coen regulars – John Goodman, Steve Buscemi, John Turturro – in a caper that includes, variously, nihilist electronic groups, a ferret, White Russian cocktails, a fantasy bowling sequence, an enigmatic cowboy and a Vietnam vet. After all these years, the Dude still abides.



FIGHT CLUB

DIRECTOR: DAVID FINCHER (1999)

£3.99

THERE WERE FEW films that channelled the millennial panic as powerfully as David Fincher's blackly comic adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's novel. Championing an apocalyptic philosophy of salvation through self-destruction, *Fight Club* found Brad Pitt's charismatic soap salesman Tyler Durden launching a guerrilla war against capitalism. An unsettling film, Fincher's great achievement here was to use disruptive subliminals, freeze frames and fantasy cutaways to create a convulsive, end-of-days agitprop. 'Tyler Durden' became a pseudonym for many a protestor in the Occupy movement.



SCHINDLER'S LIST

DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG (1993)

£7.99

SANDWICHED BETWEEN TWO *Jurassic Park* movies, *Schindler's List* marked a turning point for Steven Spielberg. The director's most serious film since '87's *Empire Of The Sun*, it signalled a shift away from popcorn movies to more refined, thoughtful films: *Amistad*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Munich*, *War Horse* and *Lincoln*. A seven-Oscar winner, this bold b/w drama about a German businessman who saved the lives of Polish-Jewish refugees during the Holocaust had a breakthrough performance from Ralph Fiennes as brutal SS-Lieutenant Amon Göth, taking pot shots from his balcony at prisoners below.



GOODFELLAS

DIRECTOR: MARTIN SCORSESE (1990)

£4.99

WHEREAS SCORSESE'S previous mob films had been more intimate, *GoodFellas* found the director operating on a lavish, operatic level as he charted the rise and fall of Brooklyn wise guys from the 1950s onwards. Pivoting around Ray Liotta's role as a freshman gangster who becomes involved with De Niro and Pesci's seasoned mobsters, Scorsese's kinetic production paved the way for *Casino* and *The Departed*, which continued the director's ongoing exploration of the mob milieu. *GoodFellas*, though, remains a benchmark – his best film of the '90s, and a model for *The Sopranos*.

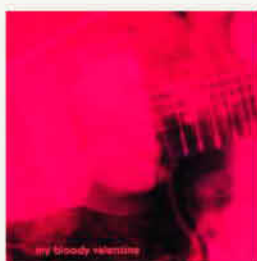
THE '90s CLASSIC ALBUMS



MY BLOODY VALENTINE

LOVELESS (1991)

£9.99



THE AMBITIONS OF Kevin Shields, an introverted but clearly rather stubborn Irishman, seemed straightforward in 1991: to shape friction, guitar distortion and disorienting frequencies into a new kind of rock music, and to more or less bankrupt his label (Creation) in the process. The resulting album (MBV's second) became the standard to which all other noise-poppers, shoegazers and putative avant-gardists aspired. None, though, could match Shields' uncanny gift for combining melody and abrasion in such innovative ways – not even Shields himself, it transpired, since it took him until this year to release a follow-up (the excellent *m b v*).



PAVEMENT

SLANTED AND ENCHANTED (1992)

£7.99

THE SEISMIC IMPACT of Nirvana's *Nevermind* meant that, soon, the US rock underground was being scoured for more potential superstars. Pavement, an unsteady band somehow based in California and NYC, proved to be one of the more unlikely and enduring candidates – they were rickety, literate, obtuse, clearly influenced by The Fall, and had a wayward hippy drummer who couldn't stay put behind his kit. They also, amazingly, had great tunes and even greater charm; so much so that this '92 debut became the sacred text for a multitude of skewed college rockers.



BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

IF YOU'RE FEELING SINISTER (1996)

£5.99

A CHURCH CARETAKER obsessed with the music of Felt, Stuart Murdoch came late to fronting a pop group, after making a 1996 debut album as coursework for a music business degree. By the end of that year, though, B&S had coalesced into a full band and had recorded their delicate masterpiece. *If You're Feeling Sinister* drew on fey indie pop, but allied it with classic songwriting that referenced folk and Love. Murdoch, meanwhile, had rapidly matured into an uncommonly sensitive lyricist; the most adept bard of bright outsiders since one of his critical influences, Morrissey.



TRICKY

MAXINQUAYE (1995)

£5.99

THE CABAL OF artists clustered around Massive Attack in early '90s Bristol produced some of the most distinctive music of the decade; at once edgy and laidback. Alongside Portishead, Adrian "Tricky" Thaws became the star of the city's second wave, a curdled West Country rapper and a producer of soundscapes that were intense and paranoid even by the standards of the scene (now codified as trip-hop). Named after his late mother, *Maxinquaye* showcased not just Tricky's skills – a wired, intimidating mutterer in a wedding dress – but those of his muse, the diffident singer Martina Topley-Bird.



PJ HARVEY

RID OF ME (1993)

£5.99

POLLY JEAN HARVEY has now spent two decades as one of Britain's most serious, imaginative and wide-ranging artists. In the early '90s, though, PJ Harvey was actually the name of a band; a power trio whose second and last album together asserted their taste for visceral American rock (it was recorded by no-nonsense legend Steve Albini). A suite of songs about a break-up, *Rid Of Me* hovered compellingly between control and abandon. And if one thing has been neglected in Harvey's subsequent career, it's the forceful impact of her guitar-playing, showcased brilliantly here.

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#hmvDecades



hmv presents

'00s



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At the start of the decade, electronic music and hip-hop were dominant, with Eminem its best-selling artist. Elsewhere, a new generation of super-divas came brashly to the fore. Less ostentatiously, Americana flourished, mutating into something not always recognisable as the country music that had inspired it. The decade was also significant for the rejuvenation of Bob Dylan, whose 2006 album *Modern Times* gave him his first US and UK No 1 album since *Desire* in 1976. Guitars made a comeback, too, with The White Stripes and The Strokes. SFX-dominated blockbusters packed out the multiplexes, though the most critically lauded films could have come from the New Hollywood of the '70s, including *There Will Be Blood*, *The Hurt Locker* and *Winter's Bone*.



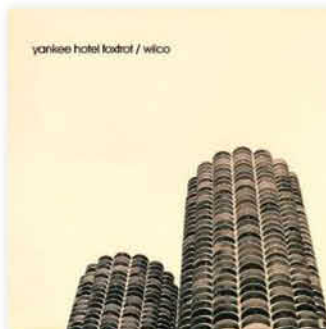
THE WHITE STRIPES

WHITE BLOOD CELLS (2001)

£7.99

THE DETROIT DUO of Jack and Meg White had spent a few years quietly building up a reputation in the US, before a short and incendiary UK tour in summer 2001, and the subsequent release of their third LP, established them as one of the world's most exciting bands. *White*

Blood Cells was breathtaking: a radical mix of garage rock, minimalist blues, McCartneyesque pop, nursery rhymes, games, pranks and intriguing obfuscations. There were extraordinary solos, too, announcing Jack White as a guitar hero for a generation who hadn't realised they needed one.



WILCO

YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT

(2002)

£5.99

JEFF TWEEDY'S REPUTATION as a brilliant, if mostly orthodox, purveyor of Americana was reconfigured by the eventual release of this, the fourth Wilco LP. A fractious gestation saw Wilco losing a label and a key member (Jay Bennett, multi-instrumentalist and songwriting foil), as Tweedy conspired with leftfield maven Jim O'Rourke to plant his songs in a hailstorm of radio static. The theme was disconnection, bad communication, but *YHF* ironically brought Tweedy's mournful and meticulous art to a larger audience than his more straightforward music had ever reached.



THE ARCADE FIRE

FUNERAL (2004)

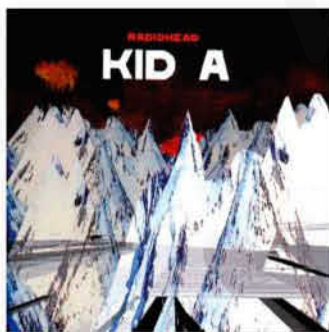
£7.99

IT TELLS YOU something about the personal, self-dramatising nature of the Arcade Fire that they titled their debut album after the death of two of the bandmembers' grandparents – as if this wasn't a commonplace occurrence. Still, from this source material, the Canadian band made a moving, epic, but intricately detailed album, a place where folk tunings met the scale of U2. A rare example of a critical consensus, it remains the band's best and certainly most approachable work, the only place yet where their bombast has been kept somewhat in check by their melody.

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RADIOHEAD

KID A (2000)

£7.99

WHEN IT FIRST appeared in 2000, Radiohead's fourth LP was initially perceived as a calculated retreat from fame, from the complex and emotional rock music that had made them one of the biggest bands in the world. In fact, *Kid A* proved to be something much subtler and more effective: a way for Radiohead to retake control of their destiny, by emphasising their leftfield tastes – for avant-electronica, post-rock, Krautrock, jazz, modern classical – and recalibrating them for the mainstream. A liberating and radical album, that also liberated and radicalised a large tranche of bands inspired by Radiohead's ambition.



FLEET FOXES

FLEET FOXES (2008)

£7.99

F MOST AMERICANA artists worked earnestly towards a sort of horny-handed authenticity, Robin Pecknold and his Seattle bandmates were, as a rule, a lot more silvery and ethereal on their 2008 debut. Contemporaries Bon Iver and Grizzly Bear were obvious kin but, at times, the Foxes' high and pure harmonies recalled The Beach Boys, albeit a Beach Boys gone camping deep in the Pacific North-West forest. A folksy and otherworldly pleasure, not least because Pecknold's songs – and, indeed, the quietly driven Pecknold himself – turned out to be a lot more robust than they first appeared.

THE '00s CLASSIC MOVIES



THE DARK KNIGHT

DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

(2008)

£4.99

FOLLOWING UP HIS *Batman Begins* from 2005, this was the second – and best – instalment in director Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight Trilogy*. Deploying themes and tropes familiar from his earlier films – meaty ideas of identity, duality and obsession – Nolan crafted a psychologically rewarding take on the Batman and his arch-rival, The Joker (a brilliant Heath Ledger in his final film role), as two oppositional but complementary forces. A third villain – Aaron Eckhart's Harvey Dent – may have muddied the waters slightly, but there was no mistaking Nolan's film as one of the best comic book movies ever made.



THERE WILL BE BLOOD

DIRECTOR: PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON

(2007)

£5.99

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON'S first film since *Punch-Drunk Love* in 2002, *There Will Be Blood* was a bone fide US epic that seemed carved out of the very earth. It was built around a fine performance from Daniel Day-Lewis as Daniel Plainview, a prospector turned oilman in the early 20th Century, and his conflict with Paul Dano's preacher Eli Sunday. Anderson's themes of money and religion were mapped out with precision and patience – as they would be again, in Anderson's next film, also about two oppositional but equally charismatic men, *The Master*.



NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

DIRECTOR: THE COEN BROTHERS

(2007)

£3.99

COMING OFF A disappointing run of movies, *No Country for Old Men* partly recalled the Coen Brothers' grim, unforgiving debut, *Blood Simple* – another noir-ish story about greed and murder in a small Texas town – and also *Fargo*, in the way it examined the way violence impacts on a remote, peaceful community. Adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel, the film found fine performances from Tommy Lee Jones as the taciturn sheriff trying to track down Javier Bardem's remorseless killer, and his quarry, Josh Brolin – who has crossed some very bad men indeed.



CITY OF GOD

DIRECTOR: FERNANDO MEIRELLES

(2002)

£5.99

TAKING SEVERAL CUES from the later films of Scorsese, this sprawling, dynamic Brazilian drama covered the rise of drug-fuelled crime through Rio's favelas from the '60s to the '80s. Ostensibly focusing on aspiring photographer Buscapi, Fernando Meirelles' film is stolen by cold, brutal gang boss, Little Zé. A lively film, full of split-screen, slo-mo, jump cuts and whiplash pans, and populated by a cast of amateur actors, *City Of God* was a great calling card for Meirelles, who followed it with the equally impressive (but very different) adaptation of John Le Carré's *The Constant Gardener*.



MOON

DIRECTOR: DUNCAN JONES

(2009)

£5.99

A TRIBUTE TO THE pioneering model work of pre-digital effects wizards like Douglas Trumbull, director Duncan Jones' directorial debut was an intimate two-hander set aboard a lunar base, where Sam Rockwell's engineer was coming to the end of a three-year stint, his only companion a robot, GERTY (voiced by Kevin Spacey). More psychological drama than space opera, this recalled the great sci-fi movies of the '60s and '70s. Jones – the son of David Bowie – would go on to direct *Source Code* and the forthcoming video game adaptation, *Warcraft*, although *Moon* is his best film so far.





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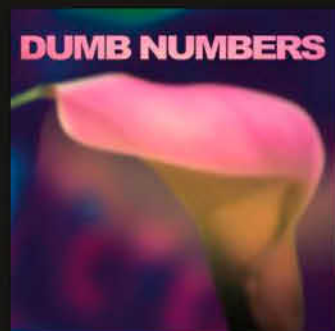


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DUMB NUMBERS

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TRACKLIST

- 1 The One That Got Away
- 2 I Had Me a Girl
- 3 Same Old Same Old
- 4 Dust to Dust
- 5 Eavesdrop
- 6 Devil's Backbone
- 7 From This Valley
- 8 Tell Mama
- 9 Oh Henry
- 10 Disarm
- 11 Sacred Heart
- 12 D'Arline

THE CIVIL WARS

The Civil Wars

SENSIBILITY RECORDINGS/SONY

The final conflict? Roots revivalists find harmony in discord on self-titled second album. *By Graeme Thomson*

8/10

THE VOCAL BLEND between Joy Williams and John Paul White is one of those effortless tongue-and-groove combinations that traditionally implies a bond forged in either church or kindergarten. In fact, the pair were thrown together in 2008 in the more prosaic surroundings of a Nashville songwriting camp.

Californian Williams had spent most of the previous decade making white-bread Christian pop albums; White, 10 years her senior, grew up in Alabama steeped in the work of Kris Kristofferson and Townes Van Zandt, and was once in a band named after Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Nuthin' Fancy*. Their coming together was an odd-couple pairing that shouldn't have lasted the



New Albums

→ afternoon. Instead, within three years they had won a handful of Grammys for The Civil Wars' self-released 2011 debut, *Barton Hollow*. Easy on the eye and even easier on the ear, their instant appeal is no great mystery. The Civil Wars make a patchwork quilt out of American roots music, stitching together a little bit of everything: gothic folk, sensitive singer-songwriting, razor-edged bluegrass, dainty parlour pieces and corporate country, folding in slivers of Mazzy Star's melancholic haze and the pop-Americana of The Pierces. Sleek but not slick, their songs have the gift of familiarity; many sound almost instantly like old friends.

The catalytic element, however, is the chemistry between White and Williams. They are married, not to each other, but the potency of their entwined voices lends their music an air of passionate intimacy, which, in the past, they haven't been shy about amping up on stage, presumably in the knowledge that a little of that on-the-edge Tammy'n'George frisson doesn't hurt ticket sales.

Intriguingly, life has recently begun to imitate art, with the drama implicit in the songs seeping into the duo's personal relationship. Shortly after the basic tracks for their second album were recorded, at the end of 2012 The Civil Wars posted a message on their website announcing the immediate cancellation of all tour dates "due to internal discord and irreconcilable differences of ambition", which, as an excuse, certainly beats "unforeseen circumstances" or "exhaustion".

"The reality is, this was a really difficult album to make," Joy Williams tells *Uncut*. "There were tensions in the band that we couldn't ignore. There was a breakdown in communication, and we had to find new ways of working together." At the time of writing it's not entirely clear whether this record will be remembered as a bump in the road or a full stop.

The off-stage commotion offers plenty to chew on for those inclined to sift through the lyrics for clues. Opener "The One That Got Away" – a dark little tale regretting bad choices that, like much of the album, foregrounds White's crunching electric guitar – wishes that "I'd never ever seen your face". The anthemic "Eavesdrop" begs

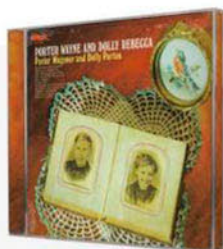
"There were tensions that we couldn't ignore. There was a breakdown in communication"



An outbreak of hostilities: The Civil Wars' John Paul White and Joy Williams

THE PATH TO... THE CIVIL WARS

Four more albums by intense his'n'hers duos...



PORTER WAGONER & DOLLY PARTON *Porter Wayne & Dolly Rebecca* RCA, 1970

Another couple who weren't averse to creating the illusion of high-stakes drama behind closed doors. The vocal dynamic of Wagoner's baritone and Parton's high, pure tone finds a modern echo in Williams' and White's harmonies.

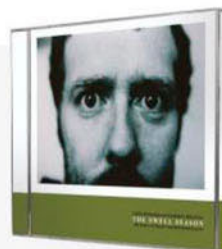
8/10



GILLIAN WELCH & DAVID RAWLINGS *Soul Journey* ACONY, 2003

Closer to the soil than The Civil Wars and lacking that pop edge, but in the same neighbourhood. The expansion of Welch and Rawlings' initial spare sound to include electric bass and drums mirrors the sonic progression between *Barton Hollow* and *The Civil Wars*.

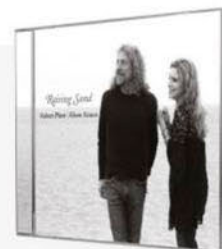
7/10



THE SWELL SEASON *The Swell Season* OVERCOAT, 2006

The debut album by the folk-rock duo of Glen Hansard and Czech singer and pianist Markéta Irglová, stars of the film *Once*. Both its sense of intimacy (they were a real-life couple) and stark singer-songwriter elements have parallels in *The Civil Wars*.

7/10



ROBERT PLANT & ALISON KRAUSS *Raising Sand* ROUNDER, 2007

A similarly promiscuous and sparsely rendered blend of Americana styles, unified by two voices that are plenty powerful and distinctive in their own right, but sound sublime when brought together by producer T-Bone Burnett.

9/10

"don't say that it's over," while "Same Old Same Old", a sublime ballad with a hint of Whiskeytown's "Reasons To Lie" about it, is a pitiless account of a calcified relationship. White sings "I want to leave you, I want to lose us"; Williams counters with: "I'm gonna break things, I'm gonna cross the line". We can draw our own conclusions.

Of course, these layers of subtext very possibly did not exist when the songs were being written. In which case, *The Civil Wars* proves more than capable of producing its own dark drama. This is an album that steadfastly refuses to get happy. Of the dozen songs here, only "From This Valley" offers a ray of light. A rousing country-gospel strum that makes a virtue of its simplicity, it could have been written at any time during the past century.

Much of the rest runs the spectrum from twilight regret to simmering dread. Several songs feature Williams as the archetypal good woman willing to transgress in order to save her errant man. On "Devil's Backbone", a flinty minor-chord mountain stomp, she has fallen for a sinner on the lam from the hangman. On "Oh Henry" she cautions some local ne'er-do-well that "we don't need one more grave in this town", over a distorted bluegrass raga not a million miles away from the opening song-suite on Laura Marling's *Once I Was An Eagle*. Williams switches tactics for the bleakly beautiful "Tell Mama", disguising her predatory impulses beneath the veneer of maternal concern, her whispering entreaties bathed in the country darkness of weeping pedal steel and mandolin.

If Williams' voice and full immersion in her characters has star billing, musically much of *The Civil Wars* leans towards White's

swampy Southern roots, taking the title track of *Barton Hollow* as its departure point and heading further into amplified Appalachian blues and heavier rhythms. On "The One That Got Away" and "I Had Me A Girl" in particular, he's like a one-man Plant and Page deep in hillbilly country, with some White Stripes thrown in for good measure. Elsewhere the songs strike out towards

even more unexpected places. With its weary drum tattoo, drifting atmospherics and slow-pulsing bass line, "Dust To Dust" sounds like late-period Blue Nile drizzled in moonshine. The racked "Disarm", mostly delivered by White, recalls the bleached melancholy of Low.

Only on the final two songs do *The Civil Wars* hark back to the more restrained prettiness of *Barton Hollow*. "Sacred Heart" is sung by Williams in French, and the distancing effect of a second language lends this delicate chamber piece a cool formality, a welcome respite from the torrid heat of what has gone before. The mood of quiet valediction bleeds into the closing "D'Arline", which has all the unadorned immediacy of a field recording, two voices pitched soft and high as a lone dobro weaves its way between.

For those still hunting for clues, "D'Arline" sounds awfully like a farewell – "Happiness was having you here with me" – but we should hope that the story of *The Civil Wars* doesn't end just yet. On the evidence of their second album, things are just starting to get interesting.

SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at:

The Art House, Nashville, August 2012-January 2013

Produced by:

Charlie Peacock

Personnel includes:

Joy Williams (vocals, piano, organ), John Paul White (vocals, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, dobro, banjo, mandolin, bass)



Q&A

Joy Williams on how the new album transformed her

Presumably you felt some pressure having to follow the enormous and unexpected success of *Barton Hollow*?

Of course I felt pressure. I aspired not only to equal *Barton Hollow*, but to surpass it. John Paul was more of the ilk that it would happen organically; I was more of a mind to push the envelope and get out of our comfort zone. But despite all the tension and struggle, I think we made something even more universal, honest and beautiful than *Barton Hollow*.

Did you still write together in the same way?

Yes and no. The way we wrote was the same – in a room together, writing lyrics together, building a melody and harmonies together. But the energy was different. The former ease on some level became replaced by struggle, and I think we both wrestled with how to navigate that creatively.

How was this record made?

We tracked for two weeks in the studio last autumn, recording our performances live together exactly as we did for *Barton Hollow*. Same room and everything. John Paul played acoustic and at times brought out the electric, which seemed to make him really happy. While he was working out electric parts to record, I was nursing my baby boy upstairs in between takes.

In places this is a considerably heavier record than *Barton Hollow* – both lyrically and musically...

Literally, I don't see this album as heavier, just more vulnerable at points. We've always specialised in sad. Sonically, this album has more grit, at times a more electrified sound. What prompted the change? We didn't want to make the same album twice. I'm the type of person who always wants to plough new ground, to uncover more parts of myself. Lyrically, this album touches on a myriad of emotions – regret, loss, absence and desire.

Rick Rubin assisted on one track, "I Had Me A Girl". What did he bring to the process?

Rick was really encouraging, peaceful and almost like a shaman. I can still remember him with his tanned skin, board shorts, white T-shirt, white-grey beard, lying on his back, eyes closed and rocking his head to the music while we sang. He encouraged us to "sing it like it's the very first time you've ever sung this song", and he sent us on our way with encouragement to keep writing on the road. People like to idealise being off the road to write the next record, but sometimes the best songs are written while in motion.

You sing "Sacred Heart" in French. Why? And what is it about?

I took French starting at third grade. I am not fluent, but I've always loved the language. I guess I was channelling my inner Edith Piaf. "C'est La Mort" on the last record had a French title, with lyrics in English. We thought it would be fun to turn it around on this record: song title in English, with the lyrics in French. We were in Paris for a photo shoot, and John Paul brought out his guitar and started fiddling with an idea he'd been working on. All of a sudden, lyrics and a melody started flowing. I can still remember having a direct view of the Eiffel Tower that night, drinking a strange concoction of Coca-Cola and red wine, which I later called Rednecks in Paris. When we were working on the lyric, John Paul and I conjured

up the image of two people in a long-distance relationship saying they would meet at a certain spot, at a specific time in Paris. But one of them never shows.

Given the circumstances, do you have mixed feelings about the record?

When I think about this album, the thing that sticks out in my mind is that I'm not the same person I was when I began it. I can't say this

album is completely autobiographical, but we left a lot of tracks in the snow. The process of writing and recording it changed me, and I'll never be the same – a lot of hard lessons learnt. But you are what you overcome, and I'd like to think that this struggle has made me more awake, aware, alive and compassionate. **INTERVIEW: JAAN UHELSZKI**

"We didn't want to make the same album twice. I always want to plough new ground"



TRACKLIST

- 1 Whatever Happened To The Million Head Collide
- 2 Xanman
- 3 O Dharma
- 4 Aloneaflameaflower
- 5 Giant Tortoise
- 6 Hobo Rocket
- 7 Midnight Mass (At The Market Street Payphone)

POND Hobo Rocket

MODULAR

Aussie psych-rockers make a splash with their tightest album yet. Tame, it ain't. *By Allan Jones*

8/10

POND, FOR THE past couple of years, has been the noise Jay Watson and Nick Allbrook make

with like-minded confederates when they aren't touring with Tame Impala. This particular arrangement has made it sometimes seem like Pond are a Tame Impala spin-off, a kind of hobby – Jay, Nick and their mates going into the studio as the mood vaguely takes them, the equivalent of some blokes retreating to a garden shed to potter aimlessly about, smoke some weed, goof off.

There's a possibility this perception will even survive Nick's recent departure from Tame Impala, although it would continually rather wrongheadedly ignore the fact that Pond have a thriving history of their own that goes back to Nick's early band, Mink Mussel Creek – who featured a pre-Impala Kevin Parker – and also includes four previous albums, *Psychedelic Mango* (2009), *Corridors Of Blissterday* (2009), *Fron* (2010)

and last year's *Beard, Wives, Denim* – alongside Japandroids' *Celebration Rock*, the most exultant rock album of 2012.

At one point it seemed there might be two new Pond albums this year, the other being the splendidly titled *Man, It Feels Like Space Again*, whose songs were written first but won't now be recorded until September, the band's enthusiasm for the newer material evidently making *Hobo Rocket* a more immediate priority. *Beard, Wives, Denim* was a sometimes anarchic sprawl in which explosive elements of The MC5, Stooges, Hendrix, early Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin were flung into a highly combustible mix. It was sexy, loud, debauched, brash and mind-blowing. The terrific *Hobo Rocket* has many of the admirable assets that made *BWD* great, but there's a sense in the album's overall finesse that things as far as possible are being taken perhaps a little more seriously than hitherto. Which is not to say Pond have become



Q&A

Nick Allbrook



Do people still think of Pond as a Tame Impala spin-off? I have no idea what people think. Band names and album titles and songwriting credits... it gives everyone really concrete definitions to grasp on to. I guess the easiest thing would probably be to invent a new name to tag onto the whole gamete of shart that comes from our mob. Everything we do is a spin-off of something bigger, something probably too fun and pure to put a silly ol' name to. It worked for Wu-Tang, ya?

Where does *Hobo Rocket* take Pond that they haven't been before? Well, it's the only time we've wanted anything to be really heavy, then listened to it after and said, "Wow, that is really heavy." So that's pretty grand. It's also a whole lot more sonically interesting, lyrically interesting, cohesive, barbaric...

What are your own plans now that you've left Tame Impala? Well, I just finished the book I was reading, so I'll need to go find another one. Showering is a must, too, although it's sunny and I woke up at one o'clock, so I should get a move on. Oh, and I'm gonna do some stuff with my spin-off band, Pond. *INTERVIEW: ALLAN JONES*

CD), "Aloneaflameaflower" and "Giant Tortoise", with their blistered layers of guitars, synthesisers, subatomic rhythm tracks and Allbrook sounding here and there like something brightly feathered making a racket in a rainforest. The dreamy "O Dharma" deviates from this pummelling template, introducing a mood of lysergic nostalgia, the kind of poignant wistfulness you might associate with Barrett-era Floyd or The Beach Boys of "In My Room" and "Caroline, No", a gorgeous interlude about halfway through recalling something serene and drift by Groove Armada.

"Hobo Rocket" itself is a magnificent thing, a funky psychedelic groove with Allbrook on lead guitar, Ryan on sitar and far-out phlegmy vocals from Cowboy John, a colourful local character befriended by the band, probably over drinks. "Where do I find my horse with wings?" Cowboy John demands, in such full-on declamatory

mode it makes you wonder if, in some alternative Pond-designed universe, Jim Morrison, instead of dying in a Paris bathtub, might have somehow made his way undetected to Perth where, for the past 40 years, he has been propping up a bar in Western Australia waiting for Pond to find him. "What kind of drugs you on, man?" he finally enquires, before invoking the prophet Ezekiel and hilariously berating Pond for being unprofessional. The closing "Midnight Mass (At The Market Street Payphone)", meanwhile, is simply beautiful, its long instrumental coda making you feel as if you're falling through space in a suit of lights.

SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by: Kevin Parker and Pond

Performers: Nick Allbrook (vocals, guitars, bass), Jay Watson (guitars, synthesisers, vocals, zither, piano, drums), Joe Ryan (bass, guitars, synthesisers, sitar, backing vocals, drums, tambourine), Jamie Terry (synthesisers, bass guitar, acoustic guitar), Cam Avery (drums, slide guitar), Dave Parkin (saxophone), Cowboy John (vocals)

suddenly as serious as monks, a glum-fest in brooding cloisters, but merely to acknowledge *Hobo Rocket*'s greater focus, concentration and concision. At seven tracks, it's half the length of *BWD*, which was exhausting enough in parts to make you feel like you'd been subjected to a vigorous waterboarding.

Hobo Rocket is more like a series of tracks that go off like target-specific drone strikes than *BWD*'s wider field of fire and its ballistic spray of passably random blasts, salvos and window-shattering detonations. They are still capable of making a wonderfully infernal din, but there's conspicuously less errant cacophony here, not so much mucking about. "Whatever Happened To The Million Head Collide" starts the album spectacularly. There's a lulling wash of synthesisers and what sounds like something scratching beneath the floorboards, before Joe Ryan's bass walks into the room with a Bo Diddley swagger accompanied by war drums and sibilant vocal effects that recall the way Kevin Parker's whispering on "Be Above It", the opening cut on Tame Impala's *Lonerism*, became part of the song's rhythm track. You may also be reminded of something like Pink Floyd's "Pow R. Toc H".

This is heavy stuff, man, and things get heavier still on "Xanman" (featured on this month's free

AtoZ

COMING UP THIS MONTH...

- p84 BOOKER T
- p86 JOHNNY DOWD
- p88 JULIAN COPE
- p90 JAY-Z
- p92 SARAH NEUFELD
- p93 TY SEGALL
- p94 THE POLYPHONIC SPREE
- p96 JULIA HOLTER
- p97 LAURA VEIRS



ACID WASHED

House Of Melancholy

RECORD MAKERS

Encore de disco-house! With Miss Kittin

Their name – that of a grisly '80s fashion turned ironically hip – smacks of

8/10

insufferable self-awareness, but despite the Parisian duo's reliance on vintage synths, there's more to their second LP than retro regurgitation. Tapping the first waves of techno and house, as well as Italo disco, French touch and Balearic beat, they've engineered a seductively warm and deeply groovy hybrid that delivers emotionally on the title's promise. If "Golem's Dance" lacks substance, it's only when compared to sun-glazed, 3-D epic "Nautilus", or the terrific title track, which injects 808 State with a shot of John Carpenter. Immersive and downbeat or tripped-out and euphoric – however they play it, Acid Washed's aim is true. *SHARON O'CONNELL*



ARP "More"

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND

New York City synth doyen finds his voice

7/10

Until "More", Alexis Georgopoulos' Arp

project – he is also a member of The Alps – was best known for its dainty kosmische pieces that were impeccably presented if a little sterile. In a radical shift, this third album sees him turn to songwriting for the first time as he channels his inner Lou Reed for a free-wheeling take on New York art-rock, singing and playing every instrument. You have to wonder why he didn't do it sooner, chiefly because his wit and warmth shine through on the baroque pop of "High-Heeled Clouds" and "A Tiger In The Hall At Versailles", and he can finally be himself.

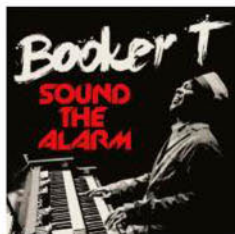
PIERS MARTIN

BOOKER T

Sound The Alarm

STAX

Soul legend's latest stacks up well against the classics. *By Andy Gill*



8/10

BOTH BOOKER T'S last couple of albums – 2010's *Potato Hole*, recorded with the Drive-By Truckers, and last year's *The Road From Memphis*, on which he was accompanied by The Roots – banked the keyboard legend Grammy Awards for

Best Pop Instrumental Album. Which makes it slightly surprising that for this historic return to Stax he should bring in a host of guest singers rather than continue mining the instrumental vein.

But not to Booker, it doesn't. He's always considered himself a writer and producer first and foremost, claiming that he only stumbled into the instrumental thing by accident, when he and his fellow session musicians had a hit with "Green Onions". His forte – borne out by his stewardship of countless Stax hits and subsequently Bill Withers' early albums – is for hearing great singers and understanding how to present them, and what material might best suit their style and sound. On *Sound The Alarm*, he draws on both new and established talent to create an album that oozes relaxed, soulful vibes, a characteristic blend of warm with cool.

Best of the established artists is Anthony Hamilton, a model of understated gospel fervour on "Gently", which taps into the classic confluence of church and civil rights via lines like "We got a long road and a short time to get there". It's a classy piece of work, as is "Your Love Is No Love", a Southern soul number featuring Vintage Trouble's Ty Taylor, a singer with a smoky, pleading edge to his delivery. Vintage Trouble provide a self-contained backing group for the track, while elsewhere the likes of Raphael Saadiq, Jam & Lewis and new axe hero Gary Clark Jr help out with the backing tracks: Saadiq's clipped rhythm guitar driving along "Broken Heart", a sort of cross between "Midnight Train To Georgia" and "Fuck You", and Clark's terse, Steve Cropper-style guitar helping stitch together the reflective organ instrumental "Austin Blues Idea".

Most tracks, however, are produced by Booker with the Avila brothers, Bobby Ross and Issiah, a couple of Hispanic siblings from East LA who bring a dash of spice to the rhythms. Of the newer vocal talent, Luke James is featured on "All Over The Place", a fluid guitar groove with occasional "Theme From Shaft"-like horn punctuation, while coming soul star Mayer Hawthorne opens the album in fine style with the title track, whose backing-vocal congregation accentuates the gospel feel of a song urging us to "Keep on marching/Like a million soldiers". But most satisfying of the newcomers is Bill Withers' daughter Kori, with

SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by:

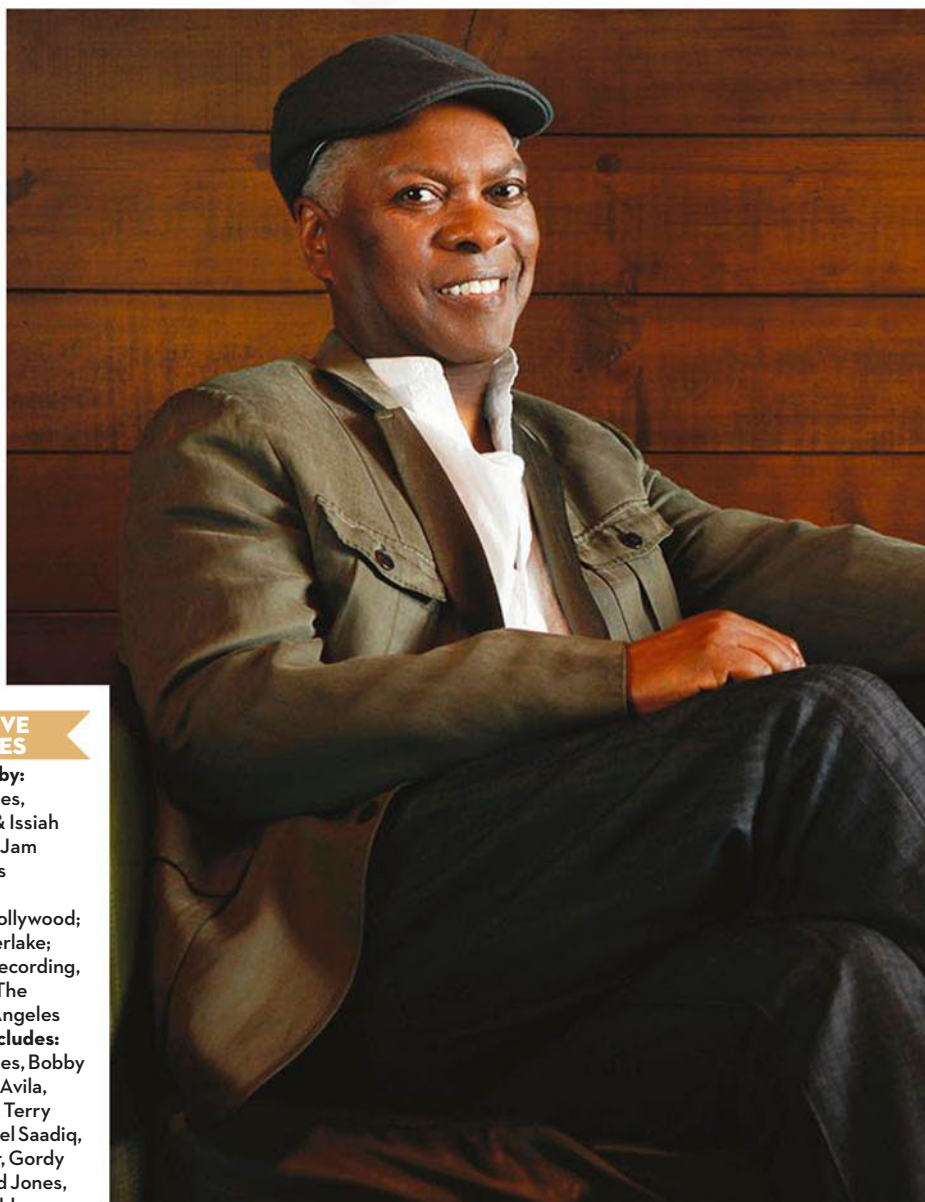
Booker T Jones, Bobby Ross & Issiah Avila, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis

Recorded at:

East West, Hollywood; Redstar, Silverlake; Skip Saylor Recording, Northridge; The Village, Los Angeles

Personnel includes:

Booker T Jones, Bobby Ross & Issiah Avila, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Raphael Saadiq, Gary Clark Jr, Gordy Sampson, Ted Jones, Vintage Trouble, Poncho Sanchez, Sheila E, Mayer Hawthorne, Luke James, Kori Withers, Anthony Hamilton, Estelle, Jay James



whom Booker shares vocals on "Watch You Sleeping": her cute, affectionate tone is entirely beguiling on a baby song to rival "Isn't She Lovely".

Punctuating the album are a clutch of instrumentals, the best of which are "66 Impala", a Santana-esque Latino-soul piece on which the Avila Brothers get to stretch out with percussionists Poncho Sanchez and Sheila E; and the aptly titled "Fun", a punchy dance groove in MG's manner that's like "Tears Of A

Clown" with a fat Stax backbeat, staccato horn punctuation and an infectious party ambience. It's the most obvious link here to the distant history of Booker's earlier Stax career, bristling with light-hearted good times and tipsy bonhomie: a reminder that, for all the changes in music since his '60s heyday, Booker T can still effortlessly access the pleasure principle that transcends musical trends and fleeting fashions, with an instinctive grasp of groove and momentum that speaks directly to heart, feet and head alike.

Q&A

Booker T

Your new LP is a return to Stax...

Yes, both legally and spiritually, it's a return to Stax, for lack of better words. I'm actually signed to the Stax label like I was 50 years ago, and I'm making R'n'B music that Stax would probably have continued to release had they not had the problems and changes that they went through.

They've rebuilt the place on the same McLemore Avenue site, I believe?

Yes, it's a replica, and it's pretty accurate. They contacted Steve Clark and got all the dimensions

– he was one of the original kids that ripped out the seats and all that stuff when they converted it, so he would know! And it feels really close. It's not really a working studio any more, though; it's more of a museum.

You have Gary Clark Jr on the album too – he's blowing up now.

Yes, I met Gary by accident almost three years ago, at Apple up in Cupertino. We were both premiering songs for iTunes up there. He was downstairs and I heard his music when my music stopped, so I went downstairs to listen and there he was, just him and his drummer, and I was fascinated. I gave him my phone number and we became friends. I thought I could help him, but he didn't need my help! *INTERVIEW: ANDY GILL*



BARBAROSSA **Bloodlines** MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Electronic respray for young London folkie on dreamy second album

6/10 James Mathé cites Vincent Gallo's *Buffalo*

'66 movie as the prime influence on his second album. But Gallo's use of Yes and King Crimson for key scenes is less relevant here than the current vogue for going a bit James Blake. Cue sweet, dreamy hymnals that hook Mathé's choirboy voice up to reverb-drenched synthesizers and stately rhythms. The post-punkish synth-funk of "Pagliaccio" and the "Unchained Melody"-referencing 6/8-time epic "Saviour Self" add variety, but beneath the sonic modernism lies an artist rather too eager to be Hot Chip's more earnest little brother.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



JULIANNA BARWICK **Nepenthe** DEAD OCEANS

More earth songs from New York City singer-songwriter

6/10 This album is business as usual from Julianna

Barwick: beautiful loops of her voice layered into candyfloss clouds, with piano chords and strings to add heft. Despite the slightly emboldened backing, featuring musicians from Iceland (where the album was recorded) including Amiina and a teenage girls' choir, it's not much of a move forward, and arguably in places a step back: the melody of "One Half" is lifted from earlier demo "You Were Waiting", and the clarity of the latter is missed as the album rolls into yet another shimmering choral number. But for the uninitiated listener, this is majestic ambient.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



BELLE ADAIR **The Brave And The Blue** SKYBUCKET

Languid Americana from Muscle Shoals

8/10 The debut album from

this Alabama-based five-piece begins with a piece of misdirection. "Be Brave" is 2.45 minutes of fuzzy electricity. Thereafter, the sonic experiments are kept in the margins, pushed aside by the sweetness of songwriter Matt Green's voice, which carries obvious echoes of Jeff Tweedy, notably on the hazy, beautiful "Clouds Never Break". The band, too, are like Wilco when the roots were still showing, with flashes of The Byrds ("Golden Days") and a note of country sadness sustained by Daniel Stoddard's pedal steel (the gorgeous "Unwelcome Guest").

ALASTAIR MCKAY



JON BYRNE **Built By Angels** SPLITTING THE ATOM

Second offering from Barrow-In-Furness busker

6/10 Byrne's 2009 debut, *It's Boring Being In Control*,

won admiration for its witty cameos of street life. This follow-on lurches uncertainly between the same and more sophisticated aspirations. It's still driven by sturdy strumming and Dylanesque harmonica and delivered in a cheesegrater voice that recalls Kevin Coyne. Yet the stand-out, "Suddenly I Was In Love", is almost dreamy, and the short title track is similarly warm and philosophical. Woeful, faux comic tales like "The Bitch + Her Greed" and "Living The Dream" (ie, busking for rent) seem slight by comparison, and moaning about the music business ("Hollywood Calling") simply pointless.

NEIL SPENCER

HOW TO BUY... **TIM RUTILI** A Califone directory



RED RED MEAT **Bunny Gets Paid**

SUB POP, 1995

On their third album, Rutili's wrecking crew Red Red Meat upped their stakes considerably, smelting their dysfunctional blues into buckled, abstract sculptures. They still rocked fiercely - "Chain Chain Chain" and "Rosewood, Wax, Volt & Glitter" - but elsewhere things got seriously strung out, with "Sad Cadillac" as diffuse as anything from Big Star's *Third*.

9/10



CALIFONE **Sometimes Good Weather Follows Bad People**

GLITTERHOUSE, 2000

Compiling their first two EPs and filling the cup with unreleased action, *Good Weather...* is a great introduction to Rutili's longest-running project. Califone feel both more experimental and more pastoral than Red Red Meat, their songs taking deep breaths, with spindly folk-blues figures navigating a crooked path through piano clutter and muggy field recordings.

8/10



CALIFONE **Roots And Crowns**

THRILL JOCKEY, 2006

Rutili has thrown some wild curveballs over the past decade (the *Deceleration* series), but *Roots And Crowns* is the masterpiece of that era, taking in music hall, outlaw country, old-timey strings and radio interference. The cover of Psychic TV's "The Orchids" really grasps the original's magical melancholy.

8/10

JONDALE



THE CAIRO GANG **Tiny Rebels** EMPTY CELLAR RECORDS

Wonderful solo album from Bonnie 'Prince' Billy's sideman

8/10 Clocking in at six tracks that pass in less than

20 minutes, The Cairo Gang's superb, weighty, meticulous album still manages to pack a mighty punch. The band is basically Emmett Kelly, a long-time Bonnie 'Prince' Billy collaborator, who wields a 12-string guitar and embraces reverb and double-tracked vocals, creating songs that simultaneously chime, jangle and drone. "Take Your Time" has a raga-Byrds feel, "Shake Off" flirts with rockabilly, "Father Of The Man" has a God-vibe while "Shivers" is a jaw-dropping cover of an ode to bad loving written by Rowland S Howard and first performed by Nick Cave's The Boys Next Door.

PETER WATTS



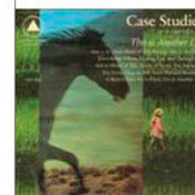
CALIFONE **Stitches** DEAD OCEANS

Driftworks and broken blues, bled to tape by Chicago hermits

8/10 They've been one of America's best-kept secrets for more than a decade,

a gang of agrarian surrealists, led by Tim Rutili, whose prior form in distressed blues-rock invests their songs with a lurching, unstable quality. But if on first blush Califone's *Stitches* comes across as their most straightforward album, listen deeper: there are all kinds of sidereal, psychedelic touches buried in the mix, like the spiralling vocal glitchology of "Frosted Tips", or the dubbed-out clatter trickling through the McCartney-esque pop of "Magdalene". There aren't many groups whose experimental cojones nestle comfortably alongside arch-classicist songwriting, but Califone solved that thorny equation long ago.

JONDALE



CASE STUDIES **This Is Another Life** SACRED BONES

Folk-rock from downbeat Seattleite

6/10 Jesse Lortz's last band, The Dutches and The Duke, had a pleasingly rambunctious edge, rough-

housing acoustic Dylan and the Stones into stomping indie-folk shapes. His solo project, delivered under the name Case Studies, walks more sullen territory, recalling by turns early The National ("In A Suit Made Of Ash") and Leonard Cohen ("You Say To Me You Never Have To Ask"), but particularly the heavy-hearted bar-band rock of the late Jason Molina's Magnolia Electric Co. The spread, encompassing piano and mellotron, is pretty; the songs rather maudlin. But there are lifts in "Villain", a duet with Marissa Nadler, and the wryly delivered Southern boogie of "Driving East, And Through Here".

LOUIS PATTISON

AMERICANA



BEST
OF THE
MONTH

DO THE GARGON JOHNNY DOWD



JOHNNY DOWD

Do The Gargon

SEVEN-SHOOTER MUSIC

Southern-born, New York-based pensioner with ungovernable love of weird old rock and funk

Distinct and uncompromising, Johnny Dowd has trodden a lonely path since his breakthrough in the late-'90s as a master of Charles Bukowski-meets-Johnny Cash Southern Gothic murder ballads. The 65-year-old's musical capriciousness knows few bounds. A love of effects pedals, funky basslines, synths and general headfucking has taken him away from Jim White-esque weird Americana into a jagged, eclectic universe that is almost entirely of his own making,

7/10

albeit with Tom Waits and Captain Beefheart as acquaintances.

On *Do The Gargon's* fusion of funk, punk, metal, blues, trash rock and disco, Dowd assumes the character of Gargon, some kind of sleazy monster who likes to dance, touch girls and wear Nancy Sinatra's go-go boots and may or not be an alter ego Dowd assumed after getting abandoned in a petrol station in 1953. Is it Americana? Yes, in the sense that it is defiantly American and shot through with a love of Beats, noir, Harry Partch and B-movies. Dowd's spoken-word delivery emphasises his literate leanings and his stories are strange and rhythmic. But while most Beat poetry unspools over polite jazz, Dowd's backdrop is the apocalyptic lo-fi din created by his guitar combining with Michael Stark's keys and Willie B's percussion and bass pedals. Dowd is a James Brown fan and there's a lot of funk on *Do The Gargon* ("Pussywhipped" and "Gargon Knocks" especially), but he also explores swamp metal on "Pretty Boy" and heavy rock ("Metal Turkey"). While his love of effects pedals can sometimes get the better of him ("Shaquille" and "Gargon's Disco Balls" are pretty unlistenable), Dowd shows his tuneful side on tracks like "Nancy Sinatra", which sounds like The Cramps covering "Tequila", and drops the cacophonous backbeat entirely on spooky stalking song "Just To Touch Her Cheek". It's idiosyncratic, inimitable, rich entertainment. **PETER WATTS**



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► The new-release schedule is starting to stack up. Late September sees the return of fiery roots-punks **Deer Tick**, whose fifth LP, *Negativity*, is the result of the Rhode

Island quintet recording in Portland with Blasters producer Steve Berlin. It's informed by a difficult recent past for leader John McCauley. His father was imprisoned for tax fraud, while the singer's wedding engagement "collapsed under the weight of his excessive behaviour and impossible lifestyle."

Altogether less traumatic was the making of *The Reconciliation*, **My Darling Clementine's** follow-up to excellent 2011 debut, *How Do You Plead?*. This time around,

the country duets of Michael Weston King and wife Lou Dalglish are augmented by guest spots from Kinky Friedman and The Brodsky Quartet, with Richard Hawley's band on backing. Look out too for new offerings from US psych-folk maestro Doug Paisley (working title: *Strong Feelings*) and swamp-soul man Tony Joe White: *Hoodoo*, due in September, includes "9 Foot Sack," which details White's upbringing as one of seven growing up on a Louisiana cotton farm.

The literary front sees the publication of *Lupus Rex*, the debut children's novel from **John Carter Cash**. Written in the tradition of *Watership Down*, it also has an accompanying LP, co-written with Nashville Grammy-winner Tim O'Brien. It's dedicated to father Johnny, who introduced his son to "the wonders of nature and the limitless mysteries concealed therein". **ROB HUGHES**



ADRIAN CORKER

Raise

VILLAGE GREEN

Soundtrack composer's rich excursions into experimental jazz

8/10 Though he's indulged in restrained, electronic post-

rock with Coker/Conboy and helped out Bomb The Bass, Adrian Coker has enjoyed most acclaim as a film-score writer, including Robbie Coltrane's last *Cracker* outing and a morris-dancing documentary. This solo collection, however, finds him in improvisational mood, the results amorphous yet compelling. Both "Interdependence"'s echoing piano lines and the ominous strings and creaking chairs of "Lunar Detachment" nod to Norwegian label Rune Grammofon's jazzier flavours, but it's the Talk Talk "Chameleon Day" atmospherics of "Circle Song" – with Portico Quartet's Jack Wylie on saxophone – that linger longest. **WYNNDHAM WALLACE**



CROCODILES

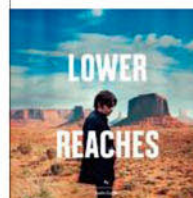
Crimes Of Passion

ZOO MUSIC

Snot-and-reverb fuzz poppers from San Diego release mixed fourth album

6/10

Crocodiles' fourth outing kicks off with the sneering "I Like It In The Dark", a hurricane of piano boogie, metal guitar, echoes, poetry and reverberation that the rest of the LP can never quite match. The band, the JAMC-worshipping vehicle of Brandon Welchez and Charles Rowell, repeatedly attempt to derail their own instinct for snotty pop-punk – throwing "Marquis De Sade" off its stride with a torrent of feedback, adding a fat Broadway chorus to "Heavy Metal Clouds", blissing out on the Scream-like "Un Chant D'Amour" – but never go quite far enough to escape the shadow of their influences. **PETER WATTS**



JUSTIN CURRIE

Lower Reaches

IGNITION

Son of Glasgow given a Lone Star kick-start

Justin Currie's post-Del Amitri solo work has, up to this point,

7/10

been attractive but underwhelming; two previous albums of well-executed, competent melodic rock that lacked an indefinable spark. Enlisting an outside producer for the first time in Mike McCarthy (Craig Finn, Patty Griffin), and calling upon a wealth of Austin, Texas, session talent, *Lower Reaches* shifts him up a gear. There's a rich atmosphere of Americana on the faith-questioning "Falsetto" and the hop-skipping hoedown "On My Conscience", while the lover's lament "Priscilla" and emotional navel-gazing of "Half Of Me" find him dallying on the outskirts of John Grant pop grandeur. **TERRY STAUNTON**



DAWES
Stories Don't End
HUB/MERCURY

Third-album ennui sets in for SoCal roots-rockers

7/10

The decision to record in the North Carolina hills, rather than stick to their native Los Angeles, has had little effect on the Dawes sound. As with 2011 breakthrough *Nothing Is Wrong*, the defining tropes of *Stories Don't End* are distinctly Californian, namely the smooth exhalations of Jackson Browne or Crosby Stills & Nash. Frontman and songwriter Taylor Goldsmith can still summon up a wearily heartbroken lyric and, as in "From A Window Seat", a dry worldview. But while diehard fans may warm to such easy familiarity, the overriding impression is of a band steadfastly refusing to take any chances.

ROB HUGHES



DELLA MAE
This World Oft Can Be
ROUNDER

Five feisty women go country with auspicious results

6/10

Less glossy than the Dixie Chicks but not as visceral as Gillian Welch or Diana Jones, the all-female quintet Della Mae graze in the same acoustic folk/country/bluegrass pastures that have seen various Avettts, Punches and their brethren sell millions. Lead singer/songwriter Celia Woodsmith is clearly a star in the making and on "Heaven's Gate", "Hounds" and the title track, the high harmonies and spirited picking evoke a delicious dream-teaming of Allison Moorer fronting The Be Good Tanyas. Like all the best debuts, it's lovely enough in its own right, but redolent with a promise that the best is yet to come.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



DEPEDRO
La Increíble Historia De Un Hombre Bueno
WARNERS

Calexico contributor has his own album to make

6/10

"A good man's incredible story" is a cute title, but hard to live up to, and the latest from this Spanish rocker, aka Jairo Zavala, duly falls short. He sings ably enough and, with Calexico's Burns and Convertino on board, tracks like "Sanity" and "A Veces" have an inviting, languid atmosphere. Yet rather than crossing borders, the songs remain stuck in earnest Euro-rock, plodding where they could dance, even when mighty drummer Tony Allen guests on "Invulnerable". Of Tex-Mex cantinas there is no trace. The sentiments are similarly hazy; yearning, but with little urgency, they are simply lost in the dust.

NEIL SPENCER



DIANA
Perpetual Surrender
JAGJAGUWAR

Expansive debut from on-trend Toronto four-piece

7/10

Hipsters playing tropical rhythms with '80s ostentation through an afternoon-drinking brain fug are 10 a penny right now, but Diana do it better than most – unlike so many of their peers, they have tunes rather than just a bunch of plundered analogue gear set to 'SXSW BBQ' setting. "Born Again" has a irony-blasting melody that could burst from Twin Shadow's most expansive tracks; songs like "That Feeling" recall Toro Y Moi's chlorinated garage-boogie; and the guitar, saxophone and synthesiser solos throughout are moments of gleeful oversharing. A potential Urban Outfitters house band, yes, but very far from just brainless cool.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

REVELATIONS

Life after Del Amitri for Scots songsmith Justin Currie



► "They didn't really know about Del Amitri. They'd heard 'Roll To Me' on the radio as kids, but that was about it," says Justin Currie of the twentysomething Austin-based musicians on his third solo album, *Lower Reaches*. "All their references were really cool. They kept going on about Nick Lowe and playing riffs out of the Keith Richards good-taste catalogue."

Most players were brought on board by producer Mike McCarthy, having used them on The Hold Steady frontman Craig Finn's solo LP, *Clear Heart Full Eyes*. "I loved what he did on that record; it sounds loose and tight at the same time. Musicians are falling out of the trees in Austin, but Mike knows the very best."

Currie's old band indirectly landed him a spot on a forthcoming Jimmy Webb duets album. "I got a message out of the blue on Facebook from Jimmy's producer Fred Mollin, telling me he was a big Del Amitri fan; he'd played Jimmy some of my stuff and he loved it. At first I thought they'd got the wrong guy. You look at the other people on the record – Brian Wilson, Kris Kristofferson, Carly Simon – then you get to my name and think, 'Who the fuck is he?'"

TERRY STAUNTON



TIM EASTON
Not Cool
CAMPFIRE PROPAGANDA

Ohio-bred, Nashville-based veteran goes rigorously retro on ninth studio album

7/10

Singer-songwriter Easton turns hepcat on *Not Cool*, a plucky homage to Sun Records-era rock'n'roll, with quick detours into the blues on the greasy, Dylanesque "Tired And Hungry" and the Elmore James-inspired "Gallatin Pike Blues". These cuts value style over substance, although Easton manages to slip in some fanciful autobiographical detail with "Crazy Motherfucker From Shelby, Ohio". But the mood of the album deepens significantly on the last two tracks: the title song, an earthy ballad whose narrator is lied to and betrayed by the woman he pines for; and the wordlessly eloquent mandolin and fiddle elegy "Knock Out Roses (For Levon)".

BUD SCOPPA



EL-P AND KILLER MIKE
Run The Jewels
FOOL'S GOLD

State-of-2013 rap masterclass, free to download

8/10

The former is the erstwhile Def Jux kingpin and producer of perhaps the most celebrated album in underground hip-hop history, Cannibal Ox's *The Cold Vein*. The latter, an Atlanta rapper and Outkast associate who made waves last year with the politicised "Reagan". Accordingly, the pair's *Run The Jewels* hits hard but has brains to spare. EL-P's production is futuristic but never obtuse, a flurry of snares and stabs, and the pair go at the beat like a couple of high-school wrestlers trying for the pin. Few guests – most wouldn't get a look in – but Big Boi spars with them on the knock-about braggadocio of "Banana Clipper", while "Twin Hype Back" features a cameo from Prince Paul in the role of louché, pill-shaking lover man.

LOUIS PATTISON



EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY & DAVID WINGO
Prince Avalanche OST
TEMPORARY RESIDENCE LTD

Lights, camera, (instrumental) action

7/10

These soundscapers are no strangers to the cinematic world; they've both part-written and performed the score for the *Friday Night Lights* movie and its TV spin-off, and their music featured in *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly*. Now, they've hooked up with composer and fellow Texan David Wingo for the OST to an offbeat tale of two road workers on a desolate US highway. The set ranges across elegiac piano/guitar pieces, buoyant orch-rock, luminous electronica and drone fugues, made all the more visually potent because it stands alone (as yet, the movie has no UK release date). It's an ensemble work, but the tremulous "An Old Peasant Like Me" is especially affecting.

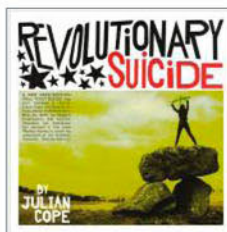
SHARON O'CONNELL

JULIAN COPE

Revolutionary Suicide

HEAD HERITAGE

Armed with intellectual acumen, the arch-drude baits religion – and the Turks. By David Cavanagh



8/10

IN THE SAME month that the MC5's Wayne Kramer tells an interviewer that "embracing violence as a viable political strategy" was "the biggest mistake we made", Julian Cope – an MC5 fan and John Sinclair scholar – releases an album with

an AK-47 flaunted on the cover and a quote from Les Rallizes Dénudés inside: "Sometimes you have a guitar. Sometimes you arm yourself." Reading the booklet, we find a block of text printed above the word 'Kalashnikov', asking if the time "could be right for suicide". Faced with this kind of rhetoric, one wonders what kind of endgame Cope envisages.

Since his politicisation on *Peggy Suicide* (1991), Cope's albums have documented the world around him in indignant polemics and idiosyncratic gonzo verse. *Revolutionary Suicide* is among his finest recent work, equal parts mission statement and sonic eccentricity, an album produced with one foot on a mellotron pedal and the other in Lee Perry's Black Ark. There's a terrific pop song ("Paradise Mislaid") about a pair of ex-clubbers regretting that they got married. More beatific melody follows ("In His Cups"), as though Cope has channelled "Sunspots". The soapbox rag "Mexican Revolution Blues" surrenders to a sublime coda that materialises like a Harold Budd interlude in a Phil Ochs tune. Cope, who performs most of the album himself, has given his listeners plenty to like.

But other parts of *Revolutionary Suicide* are far from blissful. One of his most controversial themes – that Christianity and Islam have no place in an enlightened society – shows signs of hardening into an obsession. The 11-minute "Destroy Religion", a sound collage featuring bizarre vocalisations and an erratic synthesiser, may not be quite the diatribe one expects from its title, but other songs go much, much further. "Hymn To The Odin" calls for priests to be "erased" and "every mosque" to be felled. Specifically identifying Islam as homophobic and misogynistic, "Why Did The Chicken Cross My Mind?" attacks liberals who decline to debate the issue, implying that they're no better than Neville Chamberlain backing out of a confrontation with Hitler. Cope's criticism of Islam is some of the most outspoken to come from a public figure – while at the same time being lucid and in no way open to misinterpretation.

Those jaw-dropping sentiments are followed by "The Armenian Genocide", lasting just over a quarter of an hour, in which Cope excoriates modern-day Turkey for refusing to recognise the crimes of the Ottoman Empire. Adopting the character of an Armenian traveller caught up in the death marches of 1915, Cope is initially implausible as he recounts the tale of a brutal mass starvation while strumming four simple chords over and over. But then something extraordinary happens. He may



SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by: Julian Cope
Recorded at: Sphincter Relactant, N. Wilts
Personnel: Julian Cope (vocals and musical instruments), Antronhy De La O (bongos and drums)

not have the accent for it, let alone the personal experience, but he has knowledge and outrage on his side. He adds more and more musical ingredients to the mix, symbolically mirroring the desecrations heaped on the marchers at each stage of their route, and our disbelief is suspended long before his narrative unfolds into a 20th-Century catastrophe. Reiterating a one-word humanitarian mantra ("people...") for minutes on end, this intensely moving song points a bony finger at the world's conscience and demands the ratification that Armenians have awaited for a century. Cope has, in the space of two very different pieces lasting a combined 24 minutes, shown himself to be

compassionate, erudite, condemnatory and unafraid of whom he angers.

In 2007, Cope released an album called *You Gotta Problem With Me*. Nobody did, because he was preaching to the converted. But that album title may prove prophetic. Cope has

described himself as a "shaman standing on the edge of whatever is current". *Revolutionary Suicide* brings Cope's shamanic reportage into the sharpest possible focus. It asks us to accept that Cope is not just clever ("Mao and Nixon sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G-E-R"), but intellectually correct. It asks us to explain what we defend, and why. It asks what precisely we want, and how much we can sanction, from Julian Cope.

Q&A

Julian Cope

What do you mean by revolutionary suicide?

The album is named after [Black Panther leader] Huey Newton's autobiography. Newton said that all revolutionaries are doomed. I take him to mean doomed in the ancient sense of 'judgment' – as in the Domesday Book. What is revolutionary suicide? For me, it's Hunter S Thompson, a practitioner of Western thought to the max, who did all he could and quit honourably [ie, committed suicide]. In a secular country, where we're all supposed to be our own Pope, surely we can also be our own hangman if it gets too much?

You mention *Peggy Suicide* in your sleeve notes. Are the two albums connected in your mind?

They both recognise what I call atavisms. *Revolutionary Suicide* reconfirms the links to everything that I value. I'm really on the same riff as ever, but now I'm saying I'm armed and extremely dangerous. I've got extra information. I don't have to be fearful of using an alarmist symbol like the AK-47, because I know that the AK-47 stands for freedom, so much so that it appears on the flag of Mozambique.

You end the album with an 11-minute song called "Destroy Religion"...

Everyone'll be going, 'Oh, he's slagging off religion again,' but I just thought it was an opportunity to say it the best way. And the best way is doing it like Amon Düül I with William Blake on lead vocals. I found Christianity wanting for the first 11 years of my career. Then, when I learnt more, I found the other religions wanting, too. INTERVIEW: DAVID CAVANAGH



JULIE FEENEY **Clocks** MITTENS

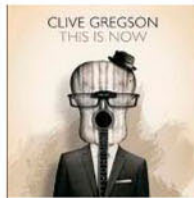
Stunning third from classically trained Irish songstress

For this LP, atmospherically recorded in a Gothic church in remote Connemara,

8/10

Feeney plundered several generations of family history to come up with a captivating set of storied songs of romance, loyalty, sacrifice and heartbreak. Her ethereal voice, somewhere between Enya and Agnetha Fältskog, glides with supreme elegance over string orchestra, harp, harmonium, trumpet, piano and electric bass to create a glorious symphonic pop confection, full of haunting counterpoint and baroque arpeggios, as echoes of Pachelbel and Bach ("Dear John") mix joyously with Celtic folkiness ("If I Lose You Tonight"). Ambitious, imaginative and momentous; no surprise that her next project is an opera based on Wilde's *The Happy Prince*.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



CLIVE GREGSON **This Is Now** GREGSONGS

Sweet-voiced pop splendour with country flourishes
Much in demand for his songwriting skills

7/10

(Nanci Griffith, Mary Chapin Carpenter), the country side of Clive Gregson's character is still evident on his 10th solo release, but there are a few instances of him reconnecting with the beat-group roots of his days fronting Any Trouble in the '80s. "My Kind Of Girl" bounces along, punctuated by sprightly horns courtesy of Jools Holland's Big Band, while the jangling "Supposed To Do" is awash with the kind of minor chords that The Hollies used to kill for. Lyrically, Gregson stays true to the heartbreak territory of his best work, laced with sly, self-deprecating humour.

TERRY STAUNTON



LUKE HAINES **Rock And Roll Animals** CHERRY RED

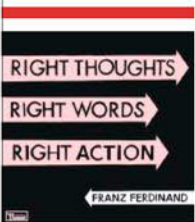
Ex-Auteurs group o'furry animals

Reduced to rummaging through the dustbins

7/10

at pop culture's back door, Auteurs mainman Luke Haines' recent output has included a "psychedelic meditation" on 1970s wrestling and an imaginary history of England including the immortally titled "Enoch Powell - Space Poet". Similarly silly and transcendental, this featherweight caper tracks the ill-fated odyssey of Nick Lowe the badger, hep cat Gene Vincent and Jimmy Pursey, a frisky fox, and congeals into "Rock And Roll Animals In Space", a lugubrious slice of Pulp noir dividing the righteous (Deep Purple MkII, the Soft Machine) from the profane. Full of sound and furry.

JIM WIRTH



FRANZ FERDINAND **Right Thoughts Right Words Right Action** DOMINO

Stylish intelli-popsters' fourth album

7/10

When their "Darts Of Pleasure" debut broke in 2003, it marked out FF as very modern pop practitioners swimming against the tide of garage-rock revivalism and whose aim was to get girls up on the dancefloor. That's still their hope, but now an intriguing '70s vein runs through their articulate, '80s white funk/synth-pop hybrid. "Bullet" suggests Badfinger as played by Buzzcocks, while "Treasure! Animals" recalls Iggy and The Doors; there's even a song about key parties ("Brief Encounters"). Producers Todd Terje and Björn Yttling (of Peter Björn And John) help effect a subtle but distinct shift, without sacrificing FF's identity. Well played.

SHARON O'CONNELL

WE'RE NEW HERE **Houndstooth**



► In the wake of noise lords Endless Boogie and the folksier Doug Paisley, the latest must-hear act from New York's No Quarter label is Portland quintet Houndstooth. Debut LP *Ride Out The Dark* is a dreamy wash of drone-pop and psychedelia, marked by Katie Bernstein's mellifluous vocals and the spidery guitar figures of John Gnorski. The band describe it as "Southern rock", but they're not exactly pitching a Skynyrd revival. "The kind of Southern rock we identify with is more along the lines of the Muscle Shoals sound and stuff like The Meters or Booker T And The MG's," explains Gnorski. "When things get real wild at our live shows you might hear a serious country riff, but it's just as likely to sound like Television or Can."

Formed in 2011, Houndstooth actually comprise two Southerners, two Detroit natives and a Canadian. The free-spirited vibe of their adopted town also played a part. "Portland is such an 'anything goes' kind of place that you're pretty much free to do whatever moves you. And the rugged, dark winter allows for lots of fireside songwriting sessions. There's a great music community here." ROB HUGHES



NICKY HASLAM **Midnight Matinee** CHERRY RED

WTF? vanity album from wealthy socialite and his famous pals

2/10

After a facelift and a stint as a cabaret crooner, the 73-year-old interior designer continues his late-life crisis with this baffling vanity album. He teams up with soundtrack composer David Ogilvy to croak out some old show tunes (pitched somewhere between Anthony Newley and Noël Coward) and mumble through a Casiotone version of The Motels' "Total Control". He's indulged by a phalanx of celeb pals: Bryan Ferry, Cilla Black, Helena Bonham-Carter and, erm, AN Wilson share vocals; Bob Geldof, Tracy Emin and Rupert Everett read poetry and prose. It elicits a range of emotions - horror, hilarity and disbelief - before you finally alight on pity.

JOHN LEWIS



GOLDEN SUITS **Golden Suits** YEP-ROC

Bittersweet romantic post-mortem from indie-rock Randy Newman

6/10

A storybook of wry soft-rock ballads inspired by a painful break-up and its aftermath, *Golden Suits* marks the solo debut of Fred Nicolaus, part of the Granddaddy family and co-founder of Department Of Eagles: imagine John Grant without his bracingly toxic bitterness. Nicolaus mostly strikes a delicate balance between aloof wit and lovesick longing, whether hoping to revive a long-dead passion on the jaunty folk-tinged jangler "Swimming In '99" or begging to prolong a doomed affair on the mellifluous "Under Your Wing". The bittersweet tone becomes a little samey, but the terrific closing track, "Dearly Beloved", is a shimmering indie-gospel processional spiked with agreeably wonky guitar work.

STEPHEN DALTON



HOUSTOOTH **Ride Out The Dark** NO QUARTER

Mildly psychedelic debutants from Portlandia? Check!

8/10

Confusion within the nebulous parameters of Americana recently, with Oregon's Houndstooth emerging around the same time as the Rough Trade signings Houndmouth, from Indiana. Unaffiliated with Alabama Shakes, Houndstooth feel at this point the better band: reverberant, diffident indie-rockers whose songs often devolve into short guitar jams that are as compelling as they're nonchalant. There's something of the early, Americanophile Fairport Convention to the likes of "Wheel On Fire", while "Francis" and "Canary Island" happily recall more recent kindred spirits Oakley Hall and Avi Buffalo. Whatever happened to them?

JOHN MULVEY



IKONIKA *Aerotropolis* HYPERDUB

Second album of strident synth stuff from Hounslow's Sara Abdel-Hamid. Along with Hyperdub labelmates Cooly G

7/10

and Laurel Halo, Ikonika is proving that post-dubstep doesn't have to be a boys-only adventure. Ravishing house tune "Beach Mode (Keep It Simple)" – featuring vocals from Jessy Lanza, whose own excellent album follows in September – is the perfect example of how even the faintest of feminine touches can really lift a minimal club track. "Mr Cake"'s winning combo of jaunty Mega Drive jingles, electro-funk basslines and whipcrack beats is equally appealing, but elsewhere the album tends towards generic, blocky sci-fi-tronica. Rustie does this kind of thing with a little more élan.

SAM RICHARDS



JACKSON AND HIS COMPUTER-BAND *Glow* WARP

Swashbuckling Parisian's glam-goth romp

8/10

The rococo electronica of Jackson Fourgeaud's startling 2005 debut, *Smash*, inspired a rash of imitators, not least Justice and Hudson Mohawke, but left the Frenchman creatively stumped to the extent that he's taken eight years to produce this raucous follow-up. A true master of digital psychedelia, Fourgeaud conceivably spent all that time gilding every micro-second of *Glow*. The result is a provocative and sensual album that slurps up the juice squeezed out of, say, Royal Trux ("Dead Living Things", "G.I. Jane") and LFO ("Arp#1", "Blood Bust") to birth a deviant new strain of techno, as if David Cronenberg made disco.

PIERS MARTIN



JAGWAR MA *Howlin* MARATHON ARTISTS

Party like it's 1989! Indie-dance returns, from Australia

7/10

This Australian trio sit on the cusp between classicist indie rock and dance music, and are much praised by Noel Gallagher – neatly illustrating the sound of the one and the vanity of the other. On this enjoyable debut, "Uncertainty" (propelled by the guileless vocals of Gabriel Winterfield and Jono Ma's sequencer) recalls the "Baggy" of Noel's coming-of-age, while elsewhere ("The Throw") the band channel some of the Beatles' big beat of his jaunts with The Chemical Brothers or Amorphous Androgynous. Songs like "That Loneliness" can make Jagwar Ma sound a little clean-living, while the ingenuous "Let Her Go" simply bowls you over with sun-bleached pop-psych.

JOHN ROBINSON



JAY-Z *Magna Carta... Holy Grail* DEF JAM/ISLAND

Dad rap: Timberlake, "Mrs Knowles" on mainly glorious 12th. As Jay-Z is acutely aware, hip-hop is a narrative

7/10

more about the struggle than the success. *Watch The Throne*, his 2011 album with Kanye West, basked in his glory, but Jay-Z is a more cerebral artist than that and here attempts to balance his great wealth, tough history ("Picasso Baby" ponders if he really wants a status artwork) and new responsibility ("Jay-Z Blue" is about fatherhood) while retaining his grit. *Magna Carta...* generally pulls it off. "Fckwithmeyouknowigotit" sounds like Boards Of Canada, oddly, while the album gets tougher as it goes on, tracks like "F.U.T.W." and "Heaven" sounding as spartan and martial as Wu-Tang.

JOHN ROBINSON



REVELATIONS

Bass supremo Charlie Jones' amazing CV

ROBERT PLANT

I worked with Plant for 13 years. In that time I played on a Page & Plant LP called *Walking Into Clarksdale*, and co-wrote "Please Read The Letter", which was re-recorded for Robert's album with Alison Krauss. Years later I got this call from my manager saying, "Did you hear? You've won a Grammy." They'd sent me a certificate in the mail, but I hadn't opened it. I didn't read the letter!

GOLDFRAPP

Alison and Will asked me to do a session on the *Black Cherry* album, and later invited me to join the band. I'd been playing Led Zeppelin songs for years, so musically it was a change. The lifestyle was also different: I went from private planes to shared rooms and tour buses.

SOLO CAREER

Years ago I made an album with vocals but it didn't work, so I made one without a singer. I wanted to leave more to the listeners' imagination. The melody is implied, but it's not there. What is there is atmosphere. It's the result of years of experimentation and it comes from the heart.

FIONA STURGES



JOHN WIZARDS *John Wizards* PLANET MU

Impatient with everything? So are John Wizards

6/10

Sending out missives from their home in Cape Town, South Africa, John Wizards suffer from the same laptop attention deficit disorder as Rustie, although not quite as hyper-maximalist. There's also something of the 'accelerationist aesthetic' about them: check "Limpop"'s brazen reworking of Shangaan electro. Indeed, it's the brazenness of John Wizards that's appealing, the duo pulling threads from township jive, yacht-rock, R&B, electronica and beyond, daring to keep the seams untied. So, while it's not a great record, the world would be a marginally better place if people were drooling over John Wizards rather than Vampire Weekend.

JON DALE



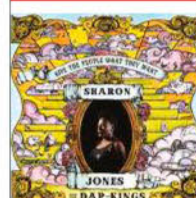
CHARLIE JONES *Love Form* STRANGER RECORDS

Bass-player debut coming to a cinema near you. Possibly

7/10

For years Charlie Jones has been a jobbing musician, playing bass with Goldfrapp, Page & Plant and Siouxsie Sioux and earning a Grammy for co-writing a song on Robert Plant and Alison Krauss' *Raising Sand* LP. Now he is going it alone with a hugely ambitious instrumental LP recorded on vintage equipment. *Love Form* is a darkly atmospheric work, a movie soundtrack waiting for a movie, which is informed as much by jazz and modern classical as it is by the rock and pop bands that have sustained Jones' career so far. Among the highlights is "Big Hair", a jittery, jazzy Mo' Wax number infused with the sounds of a North African souk.

FIONA STURGES



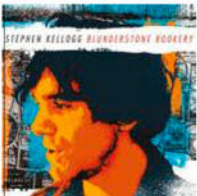
SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS *Give The People What They Want* DAPTONE

Superior retro sounds from veteran Southern soul diva

8/10

Sharon Jones was recently diagnosed with the first stages of cancer, treatment of which will prevent her from promoting this album. But her indomitable personality shines through every note. It has all the Motown horns, Muscle Shoals beats and endless tales of wronged women and untrustworthy men that you'd expect. But it's the bits in between the notes – the tonguing for each baritone horn stab on "Stranger To My Happiness"; the hesitation before guitar flourish on "Ain't Nobody"; the Morricone-ish echo on "Retreat" – that rescue this from the status of pointless fidelity and make it so compelling.

JOHN LEWIS



STEPHEN KELLOGG

Blunderstone Rookery

BREAD & BUTTER

Soul-baring solo outing from Sixers frontman
Stephen Kellogg fronts a Massachusetts outfit

7/10

called The Sixers, and this is his first solo album since the band took a temporary break last year. It covers similar territory – Springsteen-ish blue-collar rock, acoustic-guitar-led balladry, earnest harmonies, fist-punching choruses – but this is a much more soul-baring affair, particularly on “Men And Women” (a meditation on parenthood) and “Thanksgiving” (a 10-minute biographical epic that starts with a church choir). And, while Kellogg locates himself in the alt.country camp (“*Jackson Browne to Levon Helm/All the things I care about*”), tracks like “Good Red Wine” and “Crosses” suggest he could be an in-demand Nashville songwriter.

JOHN LEWIS



BILL KIRCHEN

Seeds And Stems

PROPER

Americana veteran picks through his back pages

7/10

Nicknamed the Hammer of the Honky Tonk Gods, Kirchen – and his fluid guitar style, an alluring combination of western swing and jet-fuelled rockabilly – packs barrooms across the United States. This album, however, was recorded in London on days off during a two-week tour, and revisits highlights of both his solo work and his days with Commander Cody And His Lost Planet Airmen. Witty takes on mortality (“Rockabilly Funeral”), “Womb To The Tomb”) showcase Kirchen’s weather-beaten country voice, but it’s his six-string eloquence that warms the heart on Dylan’s “It Takes A Lot To Laugh...” and the breakneck brilliance of “Hot Rod Lincoln”.

TERRY STAUNTON



THE LAST HURRAH!

The Beauty Of Fake

RUNE GRAMMOFON

Norwegian’s ersatz grand tour

8/10

For those who have pondered the nation’s wealth and progressive social policies and wondered why the rest of the world is not more like Norway, guitarist HP Gundersen has created a one-track mind-meld where it really is. The Last Hurrah!’s second outing is a blissful 35-minute trip East in the company of an array of exotic instruments and the delightfully squeaky-voiced Heidi Goodbye. Divided into subsections that take in the Middle East, India, Japan and Hawaii, its musical relatives in far-off places include *Bad Timing*-era Jim O’Rourke and Popol Vuh in wide-eyed tantric bliss mode. Fingerpickin’ good.

JIM WIRTH



THE LUCID DREAM

Songs Of Lies And Deceit

HOLY ARE YOU

Cumbrian foursome wear their influences on their sleeves

7/10

Hotly tipped since a 2010 EP, this Carlisle quartet’s debut LP is a pleasingly scruffy collection of bubblegum psychedelia that recalls so many sources – Phil Spector, C86, Spacemen 3 – that it invites accusations of ‘record-collection rock’. “Heartbreak Girl” is a wonderfully simple two-minute confection, all “Be My Baby” drums and surf guitars; “In Your Eyes” is a piece of shambolic dreampop; while the Indo-tinged guitar and organ drones of “A Mind At Ease Is A Mind At Play” suggest a familiarity with wiggly ’60s freakbeat. Throughout, Mark Emmerson’s vocals are buried deep in the mix, overwhelmed by a sea of Mary Chain distortion.

JOHN LEWIS



DAVID LYNCH

The Big Dream

SUNDAY BEST

Auteur’s second disc of self-penned electro-blues

5/10

Two solo albums in as many years suggests either that Lynch is really enjoying this music thing, or he’s tying himself in knots trying to top *Inland Empire*. *The Big Dream* has signs of its maker’s hand – twangy guitars, a surface calm undercut by subliminal unease – but what’s here feels a bit decaffeinated, downbeat Moby-ish electronica over which Lynch speaks or sings in a shaky blues croon. The lascivious narration of “Say It” conjures up some genuine menace. But a cover of Dylan’s “The Ballad Of Hollis Brown” is pretty perfunctory, while haunting closing track “I’m Waiting Here”, sung by Lykke Li, suggests *The Big Dream* might have fared better with a talented female collaborator on the mic.

LOUIS PATTISON



IAN McNABB

Eclectic Warrior

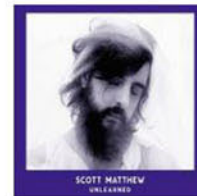
FAIRFIELD

All guns blazing, with an occasional quiet detour

8/10

McNabb’s 10th solo outing is largely a return to the cranked-up guitars and extended riffing of *Head Like A Rock*, the 1994 Mercury-nominated album he made in the company of Crazy Horse. Backed here by young Liverpool power trio Cold Shoulder, the former Icicle Works frontman rages against false idols (“No Hero To Me”), the inevitability of defeat (“The House Always Wins”) and even venue managers who won’t let him smoke in his dressing room (“Smirtin’”). His softer side gets an airing on the ghostly “Woman Killed By Falling Tree” and the hopelessly romantic “She Don’t Let Nobody”, the latter a nod to the melodic pop of Badfinger.

TERRY STAUNTON



SCOTT MATTHEW

Unlearned

GLITTERHOUSE

Aussie indie-folk busker unplugs favourite songs

Featuring songs by Radiohead, John Denver, Neil Young and more in

7/10

stripped-down acoustic versions, mostly on guitar and ukulele, this covers collection by Australian-born alt-folkie Scott Matthew soon transcends its hipster novelty feel. Spine-shivering stand-outs include “Help Me Make It Through The Night”, featuring Matthew’s father, Ian, on guest vocals, and an achingly raw reading of Moz’s “There’s A Place In Hell For Me And My Friends”. Self-pitying, passive-aggressive narcissism never sounded so lovely. But not every experiment works: Matthew’s glacially paced over-emoting on JD’s “Love Will Tear Us Apart” merely proves, like all previous remakes, how unassailable the original was.

STEPHEN DALTON



MEDICINE

To The Happy Few

CAPTURED TRACKS

First album in 18 years from one-time Creation noiseniks

8/10

Following last year’s reissue programme and props from the likes of M83 and Caribou, the Californian MBV have reformed. Always one of the more interesting shoegaze bands, Medicine still trade in wilting West Coast psych-pop, blasted with noise until the colours run. *To The Happy Few* is more nuanced than their blaring early-’90s efforts and tangible melodies are scarce, but when one does penetrate the sunstruck haze – “Once in a while, burn a bridge, make a change” chimes Beth Thompson sweetly, halfway through shapeshifting mini-epic “Butterfly’s Out Tonight” – it’s all the more rewarding. Like a blurrier version of Tame Impala’s *Lonerism*, each listen reveals further pleasures.

SAM RICHARDS



MIDNIGHT JUGGERNAUTS

Uncanny Valley

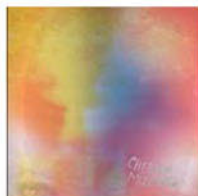
REPUBLIC OF MUSIC

Francophile synth-rock nostalgists stay up all night to get lukewarm

6/10

Steeped in a hazy Instagram retro-fantasy of analogue retro-synth oscillations and fuzzy-warm falsetto harmonies, Aussie trio Midnight Juggernauts appear to have bought into the French school of knowingly nostalgic soft-rock electronica wholesale, even to the extent of recording this third LP in France. Named after the graph that charts the point where humanoid robots stop being cute and start looking creepy, *Uncanny Valley* mostly just splashes around pleasantly in the easy-listening shallows. But the harp-driven swoosh of “Deep Blue Lines”, the doomy early ’80s Cold Wave pastiche “Another Land” and the ambient-disco glide of “Melodiya” make it worth the journey.

STEPHEN DALTON



CHEYENNE MIZE

Among The Grey

YEP ROC

Gorgeous second album from Louisville song thrush

8/10

Anyone familiar with Cheyenne Mize's spare 2010 debut album, *Before Lately*, or even the prior set of centuries-old parlour tunes she cut with Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, may well be taken aback by the more robust feel of *Among The Grey*. Both the title track and "Wait For It", especially, echo the strident tones of Grace Slick or The Duke Spirit's Liela Moss. Her real métier, however, is the conjuring of moods via soft layers of twangy guitar, piano and understated strings, her voice bringing an impressionistic air to stand-outs like "Have You Seen" and the balladic "Wouldn't Go Back".

ROB HUGHES



MODERAT

Moderat II

MONKEYTOWN RECORDS

German trio's (con)sensual second album

6/10

Production team Modeselektor (Gernot Bronsert and Sebastian Szary) and ambient electronicist Apparat's (Sascha Ring) second album as Moderat dispenses with the celebrity guests (no Thom Yorke) and is epic in both scale and feel, but reads too much like a summary of moody IDM down the years. It's not without some interesting moments (the compellingly looped "Milk" suggests My Bloody Valentine, had Kevin Shields started life as a clubber, rather than a punk). Still, Ryuichi Sakamoto, The Future Sound Of London, Kruder & Dorfmeister, Burial and James Blake are all detectable. Seductive, maybe – but it rather lacks character of its own.

SHARON O'CONNELL



MONEY

The Shadow Of Heaven

BELLA UNION

Literate Mancunian dreamers issue confident debut

7/10

Money certainly talk a good game – early interviews have covered everything from the death of religion to the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. With its studiously hushed, hymnal sound, *The Shadow Of Heaven* suggests Grizzly Bear's *Veckatimest* performed with the cocksure swagger of Echo & The Bunnymen. Unusually for a new British guitar band, Money don't come across as desperate for airplay; all their songs unfurl slowly, gracefully... and some might say a little laboriously. Luckily, singer Jamie Lee has a voice that can just about carry his lofty lyrical themes. Definitely ones to watch.

SAM RICHARDS



MÚM

Smilewound

MORR MUSIC

Icelandic minstrels' homespun seventh compels

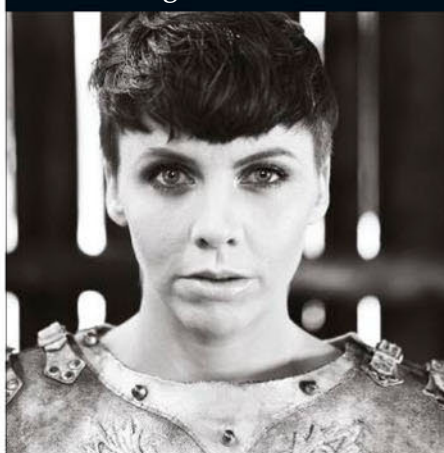
6/10

Impervious to musical trends since the late '90s, part of the appeal of Múm's lavender-scented folktronica is that, like a flat white from your trusted coffee shop, you know what you're getting. Bar a surprise appearance by Kylie on whimsical bonus track "Whistle", recorded for a film, *Smilewound* finds the woolly jumpered collective coasting through another set of impressionistic glitch-pop and clockwork exotica. At times Múm come close to parody – "I am just a tree on fire", a twee voice coos on "Underwater Snow" – but the unorthodox funk of "When Girls Collide" and "The Colorful Stabwound" compels you to explore further.

PIERS MARTIN

REVELATIONS

Violinist Sarah Neufeld has more strings to her bow



➤ These are busy times for Sarah Neufeld. Alongside her main jobs as violinist with Arcade Fire and Bell Orchestre, and occasional live outings with The Luyas and Esmerine, this year she has also recorded her debut solo album.

"This is all about trusting my own ideas and developing my identity as a violinist after years of the protection of a band," Neufeld explains. "When you make a solo album, you have no one to blame but yourself. It's daunting, but also pretty exciting."

Hero Brother was composed over the course of 18 months and recorded in just 10 days in Berlin, with the pianist and producer Nils Frahm. The pair recorded in different locations using vintage recording equipment with the aim of exploring varying acoustic atmospheres. "We used this recording hall that used to be the radio broadcast compound for the GDR, so there was this huge history," Neufeld recalls. "There was also an abandoned geodesic dome that had this wind-tunnel sound, which was very haunting. When you're in a studio, you play as slickly as you can and you end up getting this robotic sound. But these different spaces change your energy as a vessel for the music. It gives the music more character and flexibility." FIONA STURGES



SARAH NEUFELD

Hero Brother

CONSTELLATION

Arcade Fire fiddler goes it alone

Sarah Neufeld is best known for being a musical cog in the sprawling machine that is Arcade

8/10

Fire. She is also co-founder of the instrumental ensemble Bell Orchestre and, more recently, of Montreal art-popsters The Luyas. Yet despite her already formidable workload, the Canadian violinist has managed to squeeze in this intense and atmospheric instrumental debut, recorded variously in a disused geodesic dome, a subterranean car park and a concert hall in Berlin for maximum acoustic magnificence. And very magnificent it is, too, moving between minimal melancholy, as on "Breathing Black Ground" and "You Are The Field", and rousing, rhythmic stompalongs such as "Hero Brother".

FIONA STURGES



NO AGE

An Object

SUB POP

Noise-pop duo's compelling fourth

Considering the scene that's coalesced around LA's all-ages punk venue The Smell, drummer/

8/10

vocalist Dean Spunt and guitarist Randy Randall are now getting on a bit. But they've always been bigger than the milieu from which they emerged, pushing punk and hardcore past their trad markers into the fields of art-rock, noise, psych electronics, even shoegaze. Their latest reflects their on-going love affair with both Joy Division and MBV and Fugazi and Ramones, but contact mics, bass and prepared speakers help shape songs that crackle and blurt with possibilities. The contrast between the gnarly "Circling With Dizzy" and whacked-out "Commerce, Comment, Commence" is typical of a record that's complex, inventive and terrifically free-spirited.

SHARON O'CONNELL



AOIFE O'DONOVAN

Fossils

YEP ROC

Solo flight from liberated country songbird

After a decade fronting progressive bluegrass band Crooked Still,

8/10

O'Donovan lights out for broader frontiers on her solo debut. Her hushed, sensual tones on the opener, "Lay My Burden Down", call to mind Alison Krauss (who has already smartly covered the song), while the closer, "Oh Mama", is a gilded slice of Southern country-soul that Bonnie Raitt should cover immediately. In between, gentle pedal-steel weepies ("Briar Rose") and shimmering, folk-rock beauty ("Glowing Heart") are testament to her new-found freedom. Inspired production, too, by Tucker Martine, who lent a similarly simpático 'live' feel to Beth Orton's 2012 comeback, *Sugaring Season*.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

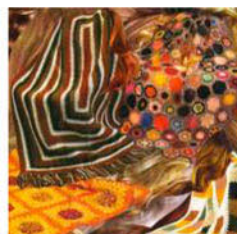
TY SEGALL

Sleeper

DRAG CITY

The hyperactive garage-rocker puts his feet up. Briefly...

By John Mulvey



7/10

FOR ALL HIS flailing locks and dazed expression, Ty Segall does not make a particularly convincing slacker. In a short promotional clip for his new album, released on YouTube back in May, he pretends to be asleep

in bed, on his couch, in a garden and then, preposterously, up a tree and at the wheel of a moving van. Last year, Segall made three excellent albums, and seemed to play gigs on the rare nights when he wasn't recording. This year, his alleged plan was to take it easy, reacquaint himself with domesticity, maybe catch up on his surfing. The film, and the record that accompanies it, tell a different story: Ty Segall finds the act of making music so essential, he even does it in his sleep.

In the dog days of grunge, of course, J Mascis, Evan Dando and the most prominent slackers nurtured a fastidious work ethic behind the stoned mien. Like Kurt Vile, Segall is very much a throwback to that time – echoes of Nirvana can be detected on a bunch of his records – though his productivity would put most early '90s grafters to shame. Indeed, even by the fecund standards of the Bay Area garage-rock scene from which he emerged, Segall is peculiarly unstoppable. Since 2008, a conservative estimate suggests he has made nine original albums with his name on the front cover, and God knows how many singles and EPs. Quantity has, unusually, meant quality, too: the variegated psychedelic ramblings of 2012's *Twins*, *Slaughterhouse* and *Hair* (the latter with White Fence) were collectively the best work of his breakneck career thus far.

Sleeper, in contrast, is styled very much as a pause for thought. With his usual bandmates dispersed, Segall multitracked the 10 songs by himself in San Francisco, with only K Dylan Edrich, providing viola and violin on a couple of songs, for company. *Sleeper* begins, with dissolute strumming, in a not dissimilar way to 2011's *Goodbye Bread*. But while that album broadened out into a showcase of Segall's songwriting range, this one keeps the focus tight and intimate.

"I wanna sleep all day/I wanna go away/OK I want to sleep all day with you" he drawls, in what passes for the album's manifesto, while Edrich's droning strings turn the song – it's the title track, "Sleeper" – into a sort of rickety baroque.

If anything, there's a rather British air to proceedings, a sense that Segall has been assiduously studying those records on the cusp of the '70s where psychedelic whimsy evolved into something woodier, folkier, more self-consciously 'natural', only for the prospect of glam to loom distantly on the horizon. His love of Marc Bolan has already been telegraphed by two "Ty Rex" covers EPs, and "Crazy" is a pinched trinket that



SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded by:

Ty Segall

Recorded at: 515

Natoma St, San

Francisco, CA

Personnel: K Dylan

Edrich (viola and violin

on "Sleeper" and "She

Don't Care"), Ty Segall

(everything else)

could only be improved by Steve Took on bongos. "The Keepers" – a buccaneering, mildly apocalyptic dirge, the best song here – and "The Man Man" are both heavily redolent of Michael Chapman circa *Fully Qualified Survivor*. Segall's voice on his last few records has often recalled that of John Lennon, but he's never sounded quite so quaintly, unnervingly English.

At times, the mellow ambience does a disservice to the songs: "Come Outside", in particular, feels like a demo requiring a more full-blooded band treatment. And the closing "The West" would have benefited from some Everly-style harmonies with Mikal Cronin, Segall's

regular bassist, currently touring his own fine album, *MCII*. Mostly, though, *Sleeper* sounds a lot more crafted and complete than all the lethargic mythologising would have you believe.

Segall, it should be noted, has another album out in September, as part of a Blue Cheer-loving sludge-rock band called Fuzz. A second solo promo clip, meanwhile, again finds

him dozing on his sofa, before being rudely slapped awake by an unseen figure who cackles, "Time for tour, sleepyhead!" US dates run through August and September. The hiatus, if there ever was one, is officially over.

Q&A

Ty Segall

So what happened to the year off? Ha ha. I definitely took some time off from touring, maybe a couple of months, and it was nice to take a moment away from music. Always a good idea. I need to refresh my mind, and the music you make after a break is always better because of it. I realise now that I'll never stop writing and recording. It's just too much fun.

How did *Sleeper* come about? It started as just a couple of demos of different-sounding songs than I usually do. It was more of a purge, really.

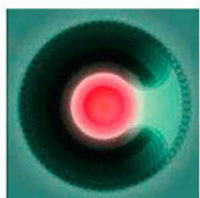
There was no intention behind it to become a record. I think that's why I like it so much.

Have you always wanted to make a quieter, relatively introverted record like this one?

I have, but it's never been the right time. I feel like whenever I've gone down that road, it's sounded like I was trying too hard.

Should we expect you getting back to the normal schedule of three albums in 2014? And will the band, with Mikal Cronin, be getting back together? Not three albums! No way! Hopefully just one in 2014. And yes, the band should be coming back over with Mikal, Emily and Charlie next summer...

INTERVIEW: JOHN MULVEY



OUT COLD

Invasion Of Love

HEAVENLY

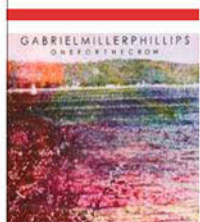
Cherry Ghost man takes to the dancefloor with celebratory electro-pop

7/10

There's little in Simon

Aldred's previous work as Cherry Ghost to suggest he might be a disco bunny at heart. Yet this new project finds him hooking up with Metronomy producer Ash Workman for a glistening series of electro-pop songs that borrow from house, Philly soul and beyond. Unlike the rainy acoustics of Cherry Ghost, the mood here is celebratory, basking in the warmth of bubbling synths, fizzy rhythms and dance beats. Aldred's voice has also upped a register, his yearning falsetto perfect for pocket space opera "Progress" or the lubricious Al Greenisms of "Fingers Through The Glass".

ROB HUGHES



GABRIEL MILLER PHILLIPS

One For The Crow

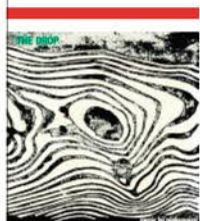
WHYTEHOUSE RECORDS

Dark musings from Brooklyn debutant, produced by Phosphorescent's Alex Lipsen

7/10

While recuperating from illness, Miller Phillips spent two years bedridden in a house on the Massachusetts coast and filled the endless days writing songs about isolation. "All my friends have moved on/I'm a ghost who no one knows" he sings on the haunting "Memorial Drive". But there's no self-pity; just a graceful honesty shining through the darkness, his voice swooping like a cross between Jeff Buckley and Elliott Smith over synths, cello and reverb guitar. A wonderfully spooked reimagining of Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" in Dirty Three style slots richly into the mood.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



PINKUNOIZU

The Drop

FULL TIME HOBBY

Danish quartet throw in the rainbow-coloured kitchen sink

8/10

From the Spacemen 3, pitch-shifting opening drones of "The Great

Pacific Garbage Patch" to the rustic psychedelia of "Down In The Liverpool Stream", Copenhagen's Pinkunoizu's second collection manages to be both disorientating and mesmerising. Fearlessly leapfrogging genres – like compatriots Oh No No – they pastiche Kraftwerk on "Necromancer" before breaking into noisy space-rock, spike the hypnotic, motorik "Pyromancer" with detuned guitars, and even rattle through one-chord psychobilly on "Tin Can Valley". It's a colourful, cartoonish world they inhabit, but its trippy qualities are packed with ambitious detail and worthy of serious attention.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



THE POLYPHONIC SPREE

Yes, It's True.

CHERRY RED

Finest album yet from choral indie innovators

8/10

The blissed-out troupe

led by Julie Doyle and former Tripping Daisy member Tim DeLaughter haven't been able to translate their ecstatic live show into great albums. Until now. This fifth set sees PJ Harvey producer Eric Drew Feldman helping to hone the Spree's symphonic sunshine pop into 10 beautifully crafted songs that mainly take their cues from mid-'80s pop-rock. Unbounded optimism still reigns over highlights "Popular By Design" and "Hold Yourself Up", while the gorgeous "Heart Talk" neatly reinvents *From Langley Park*...-era Prefab Sprout. Yes, it's true – this is a great record.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



PURE BATHING CULTURE

Moon Tides

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Sometime Vetiver members head for the coast

8/10

Plenty of indie bands have doted on Fleetwood

Mac recently, while failing to grasp that there's much more to *Rumours* than wafty vocals and reverbed strumming. Portland-based duo Pure Bathing Culture, however, have discovered the optimum mellow/melancholy ratio. Their romantic, mystical tangos in the night are anchored by a keen knowledge of '80s bedsit pop (EBTG, Felt, Kirsty MacColl). Expertly produced by Richard Swift, songs such as "Twins" and "Dream The Dare" feel airy and effortless, belying the artful songcraft beneath. A perfect summer record for those who found the last Beach House album too wintry.

SAM RICHARDS



RAFFERTIE

Sleep Of Reason

NINJA TUNE

Avant-soul electronica with plenty of xx factor

8/10

A virtuoso of artfully knotted beats, squelchy electronics and digitally mashed vocals, the

classically trained composer Benjamin "Raffertie" Stefanski invents a kind of *haute couture* techno-soul on this classy debut. Deploying his plaintive smoked-glass voice in the mix, Stefanski inhabits similar haunted noir-step terrain as James Blake and The xx, only more overtly club-friendly and more bracingly experimental. While the spectral piano and gothic solemnity of "Window Out" feel too close to Blake for comfort, the veiled Mariah Carey homage on "Build Me Up", the desiccated rhythmic cluster bomb of "Gagging Order" and the mighty future-gospel uplift of "Back Of The Line" suggest a truly original talent at work.

STEPHEN DALTON



THE RIDES

Can't Get Enough

PROVOQUE

Super session men: Stills, Goldberg and Shepherd got the blues

6/10

A homage to the *Super Session* album of 1968

(in which Stephen Stills and Mike Bloomfield fronted a studio band helmed by Al Kooper), this pairs *Session* veterans Stills and Barry Goldberg with Kenny Wayne Shepherd, a younger man with considerable blues guitar chops. It's a steady set of blues covers with a couple of ill-advised choices (Iggy and the Stooges' "Search And Destroy" is a couple of jeans sizes too small, particularly), but the band carve out their own territory on the self-composed title track, "Can't Get Enough Of Your Love", in which Stills' passionate delivery is accompanied by a sensitive, soulful backing from the band.

JOHN ROBINSON



CÜNEYT SEPETÇİ & ORCHESTRA

Bahriye Ciptetellisi

LM DUPLICATION

Turkish clarinetist released by A Hawk And A Hacksaw

8/10

In the UK, a wedding band is that unhappy aggregation in cheap suits playing "Come On Eileen". In Istanbul, the vibe is very different – a competitive market in which Cüneyt Sepetçi and his seven-piece band (Dolapdere is Istanbul's Roma quarter) are top dogs. A wedding is a strange mixture of solemn and joyful, and so is this thrilling set. This is music steeped in history and accomplishment ("Gogocular" is an ecstatic, centuries-old folk dance in 9/8 time), but also in unbounded, immensely agile swing – "Gayda" is as technical as bebop, but as unselfconscious as old-time New Orleans blowing. A toast to this happy union!

JOHN ROBINSON



SOFT METALS

Lenses

CAPTURED TRACKS

Late-night electronica for tired dancers

6/10

Much like their new home – Los Angeles – Portland's Soft Metals

suffer from a dose of style over substance. Brought together by a love of vintage synths, Ian Hicks and Patricia Hall combine Ash Ra Tempel electronics with contemporary dance, her languid, somewhat detached vocals draped over polished production. Sadly, too often the results sound like what they are: the result of extended jam sessions. The title track offers hints of early Aphex Twin and The Orb, and eight-minute finale "Interobserver" provides an engrossing ambient throb. Elsewhere, aside from the squelchy hypnotism of "In The Air", it's often a little aimless.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



SPIDER JOHN KOERNER WITH CHIP TAYLOR SMITH

What's Left Of Spider John

HORNBEAM

7/10 Spider John was one of those alongside Bob Dylan on the Minneapolis "Dinkytown" folk scene of the early 1960s. Not for Koerner however a journey east, or going electric. This is a man who instead has kept close to his origins: hard-picked acoustic guitar and an eclectic, often humorous take on American folk song. This work, recorded over a couple of days in London with fiddler Chip Taylor Smith, reinforces that close-to-the-ground ethos: on the likes of "Creepy John" and "The Leather Winged Bat" you could be in the room, as these men of a certain age convene to play. In spite of the primitive feel, the session radiates bonhomie and maintains an eccentric swing.

JOHN ROBINSON



SUPERCHUNK

I Hate Music

MERGE

"Slack motherfuckers" 10th LP... As the final notes of The Breeders' *Last Splash* anniversary tour die away and before the release

7/10 of Sebadoh's first new album in 14 years, Superchunk arrive to carry the '90s melodic punk-pop baton. They broke their nine-year recording silence in 2010, but *I Hate Music* still deserves a cheer – and not just because it's proof of their survival. Impassioned, sparking with energy and absurdly bouncy, it's a reminder of everything the North Carolina quartet did well – full-throttle drive, fizzing, Catherine wheel-melodies and buzz-saw riffs, all expressing life's highs, lows and so-so's with a smart lyrical mix of eagerness and cynicism. "Void" and the grungey "Low F" score particularly highly on the grin-ometer.

SHARON O'CONNELL



SURF CITY

We Knew It Was Not Going To Be Like This

FIRE

Splendid second album by Kiwi reverb-revvers

7/10 Surf City might be mistaken for doggedly retro psychedelists, were their blissed-out period pieces not entrancingly corrupted by local influences. In the 1980s, Surf City's native New Zealand boasted a singularly vibrant indie scene, curated by the Flying Nun label. Surf City were clearly fans, which is why "It's A Common Life" is haunted by the ghost of Snapper, a sort of Antipodean Suicide, while the likes of "I Had The Starring Role" and "What Gets Me By" recall the prettier moments of Straitjacket Fits and Bailter Space.

ANDREW MUELLER



TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

Made Up Mind

SONY MASTERWORKS

Third time's the charm for husband-and-wife-fronted big band

8/10 This 11-piece ensemble of accomplished veterans

positively struts on its third LP since forming in 2011, with horns blaring and double drums thundering, coming off like a modern-day Delaney & Bonnie & Friends. Tedeschi, who sounds determined to shed those Bonnie Raitt comparisons, busts out her inner Chaka Khan on the delectably funky "Misunderstood" wails like Bonnie Bramlett on "Do I Look Worried" and evokes Tracy Nelson on the aptly titled "Sweet And Low". For the most part, Trucks limits his featured moments to compact mid-song slide solos, all the more jaw-dropping for their biting concision, before finally opening up Duane-style on bluesy epic "The Storm".

BUD SCOPPA



➤ "I've been living in Berlin for five years now. It's lovely, a great balance and pace. It's a slower pace than London. But if you want it to go fast, it goes fast. We didn't actually plan to take five years off from putting records out, but we all wanted to spend time with our families. In this industry, you see a lot of rock widows, rock orphans. So I wanted at least to spend a bit of time with my son. He's like the best song you'll ever write, so you might as well try to produce it properly.

"In that time, we were still making music; all of us were. Andy was learning how to play classical piano. Dougie was still writing, recording. Neil was just driving very fast cars. Historically, I've written everything and then the band come in and we deliver demos and build the demos into songs. But this time I didn't want to do it that way, and it was a lot more collaborative. Andy's written a couple of songs, Dougie's written three songs. We've always just done our own thing, and the zeitgeist passed over us, we got hit by that bolt of lightning. When it happens, it's pleasurable and painful in equal measure. I think I'd think twice about letting it happen again."

LOUIS PATTISON



TYTHE

And Also With You

SUNDAY BEST

Lavish, uplifting electronica from David Lynch remixer

7/10 Although a superficial listen to London-based producer Julian Peck's debut album might suggest a lack of musical focus, it's united by the long shadow of Ibiza euphoria that hangs heavy over his genre-crossing dance music. Beginning and ending with twinkling ambience – closer "Motorik" is albeit more dynamic than opener "Alpine Dawn" – it also finds him casting Merz on the more formal, but nonetheless beatific, songwriting of "Summerbelly", while "Careless Woman" offers a slick, nostalgic Balearic groove. The loose, Weatherall dub of "Set In Drone" and the more ominous "Sabreteeth" provide the late-night comedowns.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



TRAVIS

Where You Stand

RED TELEPHONE BOX

Seventh album by Scottish indie survivors Briefly in the late '90s, Travis were the biggest band in Great Britain, their watercolour indie the

perfect tonic for a music scene recovering from years of Britpop excess. Nowadays they're of more select appeal, and *Where You Stand* suggests they're actually quite comfortable with that. Fran Healy writes music of subtle gesture, apparently allergic to anything that might come across as excess showiness. The opening "Mother", a mildly glammy thing of big chords and spirited piano, strikes a note of slightly forced celebration. But Healy takes more naturally to more low-key moments: the buttoned-up emotion of "Another Guy" ("You can cry all you like/But it won't change a thing") or the scuffed electronic shuffle of "New Shoes".

LOUIS PATTISON



VARIOUS ARTISTS

After Dark 2

ITALIANS DO IT BETTER

Immaculate collection from Portland's neo-disco family

8/10 Post-Drive, the stock of Johnny Jewel – the Portland dance producer whose works director Nicolas Winding Refn used as both soundtrack and aesthetic inspiration – has never been higher. Perfect time, then, to follow up *After Dark*, the 2007 label comp that introduced his Italians imprint's acts to the wider world. Joy abounds, especially on Glass Candy's beatific "Warm In The Winter", while the vocoder disco of Mirage's "Let's Kiss" and Chromatics' "Camera" feel very now, being essentially what Daft Punk were after on *Random Access Memories*. But it's the darker numbers in which Jewel's muse gleams brightest, such as the Claudio Simonetti-style synth chill of Symmetry's "Heart Of Darkness".

LOUIS PATTISON

JULIA HOLTER

Loud City Song

DOMINO

Gigi, Muzak and Barbara Lewis built into a dreampop grand projet. By Ben Beaumont-Thomas



9/10

JEAN COCTEAU, EDWARD VIII, Marcel Proust, Brigitte Bardot, Barbra Streisand: just some of the patrons of Maxim's, a Parisian restaurant in grand Art Nouveau style, open since 1893. This place, and its pan-generational glamour, is at the

heart of this exceptional third album by LA singer Julia Holter – the looking-glass entrance into a stunningly realised metropolis that's surreal in that word's true sense: hyper-real, so vivid as to become hallucinatory.

A scene from the musical film *Gigi* set in the restaurant was the initial creative catalyst for Holter, and a pair of songs here called "Maxim's" conjure it up again: first in an etherised shoegaze lullaby, later in a camp and deranged knees-up in an orchestra pit – each using the same lyrics. This is a favourite Holter tactic, taking a specific image or reference and extrapolating from it – "Marienbad", from 2012's *Ekstasis*, was inspired by a topiary garden, for instance, while her 2011 album, *Tragedy*, drew from the Euripides play *Hippolytus*. But this isn't a neat replica film set: the loud city of the title is so intensely full of life that it stops being Paris and instead becomes a Campari-hued dreamscape, the backdrop to a quest for meaning, love and human connection.

The timelessness of the setting, or rather a sense of living across times, is sealed with Holter's choice of instrumentation and arrangement. These are essentially dinner-jazz songs, with twanging double bass, creamy strings and delicate piano, but they become unmoored from place and history through brilliant authorial flourishes. Creepy panting enhances the chase sequence that is "Horns Surrounding Me", which, like other parts of the album, recalls Meredith Monk's energetic sense of theatre; Fairlight-esque new-age synth has bulging trombone wrapped around it on the intro to "This Is A True Heart". This and "In The Green Wild" are utterly exquisite exotica – Muzak for the perfume counter of a heavenly department store. Her cover of "Hello Stranger" by 1960s R'n'B singer Barbara Lewis, made beatless and drifting, is similarly magnetic. Holter's closest analogue is Scott Walker, who has also in his time used easy listening, folk and pop forms as gateways to inverted worlds.

The clear-headed production from Holter and Cole Marsden Greif-Neill – a onetime member of Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti and husband to Nite Jewel, aka Ramona Gonzalez, who provides backing vocals here – is a well-chosen shift from the hazier bedroom vibe of previous albums, allowing the songs to stand proud in their strange clothes. Her lyrics, meanwhile, are poetic and imagistic to the point of near-incoherence. For Holter, the city is so psychically overwhelming that reality becomes splintered into shards. The French writer Guillaume

Apollinaire once described the Cubist painter's mission as representing "the immensity of space eternalising itself in all directions at once", and there's something of that in Holter's songs: only through jumbled images can the disorientating centrifuge of modern city life be truly captured.

There are also echoes of those Cubist contemporaries TS Eliot and Ezra Pound: workaday scenes tip into ecstatic paranoia. Apparently innocuous symbols of birds and people wearing hats recur with increasingly fiendish mystery. And there are patches of violence amid the pellucid glow. "Say it to my face if you want to be starting something", Holter croons with the chilling

SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Bright Street, San Fernando Valley, California

Production and arrangement:

Cole Marsden Greif-Neill and Julia Holter

Personnel: Julia Holter (keys, vocals), Brian Allen (trombone), Matt Barbier (trombone), Corey Fogel (perc), Ramona Gonzalez (bk vcls), Devin Hoff (double bass, fretless bass), Chris Speed (sax), Andrew Tholl (violin), Christopher Votek (cello)

insouciance of a psychopath, and the album ends: "Screamers on the balconies, soldiers on the roofs, trombones on the roofs, the screamers who fell in love or died, city appearing". She watches Maxim's burn. Is this a euphoric armistice, a bacchanal, or the beginnings of civil breakdown?

Like any new city, this album may take some getting used to – there's beauty everywhere, but the streets are far from a neat grid. But as you walk them, Holter's genius as a sonic town planner reveals itself. She has not only built a unique modernist architecture; she has populated it with the lovers, enemies and friends that make life worth living.

Q&A

Julia Holter

What kind of world were you trying to create?

"Maxim's II" was the song that spawned the whole record, about a girl who walks into a restaurant and everyone stops what they're doing to gossip about her in unison. It's a scene from the musical *Gigi*, and I thought the social dynamic of the individual versus gossiping society was intriguing, because it was so different from the inner-looking things I was doing in my last record. All of *Loud City Song* explores the individual navigating her way through a superficial society.

What were you dwelling on when you were making it? The few times I have seen paparazzi chase a celebrity, I have been really terrified for the celebrity running away, and that's what I tried to evoke in "Horns Surrounding Me". I'm really affected by the loudness of the media.

Why did you choose to cover "Hello Stranger"?

In *Gigi*, there is a song called "I Remember It Well" where two middle-aged people reminisce about a small intrigue decades earlier, both remembering it differently. The vagueness and mystery of their romance, and the foggy memory, was reminiscent of "Hello Stranger", which also is about a past romantic encounter, but is devoid of detail. It's all sentiment.

INTERVIEW: BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



LAURA VEIRS *Warp And Weft* BELLA UNION

Oregon indie-folk singer on a career high with ninth LP
Like its predecessor *Tumble Bee*, Laura Veirs'

9/10

ninth album is significant of a time and place in the singer-songwriter's life, in this case pregnant with her second baby and beset with anxiety for her children's future. In "Dorothy Of The Island", she examines the life of the motherless child, while in "America" she expresses a broader discomfort concerning her home country in which "*the cart has come unhitched from the horse*". Yet despite the palpable unease, there's a steely beauty at the album's core reflected in a more muscular, guitar-driven sound than of old. A work of lyricism and maturity, this is one of Veirs' finest yet.

FIONA STURGES



WHITE LIES *Big TV Fiction* FICTION

Million-selling London trio in ludicrously grandiose album shocker
Harry McVeigh and

4/10

co's third album shows no great deviation from the indisputably successful formula laid out on their previous efforts: portentous electronic rock made for audiences that stretch out as far as the eye can see, and choruses pilfered from a mid-'80s instalment of *Now That's What I Call Music!*. Certainly, Simple Minds, Depeche Mode and Tears For Fears might be due a slice of the royalties here, although the deep shame of lines like "*My love changes with the weather/My heart's red imitation leather*" on "Tricky To Love" might just prevent them from staking a claim.

FIONA STURGES



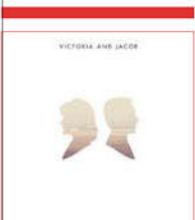
BARRENCE WHITFIELD AND THE SAVAGES *Dig Thy Savage Soul* BLOODSHOT

Boston indie-R'n'B monsters reconvene, party like it's 1984

8/10

Whitfield and co's second full-length since their 2011 revival stares down middle-age stasis with a dozen pulsing, *Nuggets*-y guitar-and-horn-driven blasts, barely pausing for breath. Whitfield's caustic yowl is in fine fettle, veering from midnight blues ("I'm Sad About It") to Huey 'Piano' Smith-style stomps ("Bread"), and raising Howlin' Wolf from the dead on "Daddy's Gone to Bed". Their secret weapon, though, is ex-Lyre Peter Greenberg, whose fiery guitar riffage and left-field songwriting sizzle. Metalloid, head-bang boogie "Hangman's Token" and down-and-dirty tribute "Oscar Levant" highlight an irresistible set.

LUKE TORN



VICTORIA AND JACOB *Victoria And Jacob* FIKA RECORDINGS

Cambridge duo plunder dance music history
Assorted dance-pop acts of the past 20 years flip

6/10

through the mind like a Rolodex on listening to Victoria Harrison and Jacob Mayfield's debut album. On the opener, "Thea Mania", Harrison's vocals retain the same wearily non-committal vibe of The xx's Romy Madley-Croft and Everything But The Girl's Tracey Thorn, while elsewhere the electronic arrangements echo those of Pet Shop Boys and Goldfrapp's Will Gregory. There's no denying Harrison and Mayfield's ear for a melody, nor the propulsive properties of tracks such as "Festival", "Desire" and "Believe The Boy", but overall they prove too derivative to capture the imagination.

FIONA STURGES

REVELATIONS Laura Veirs does not believe in pregnant pauses

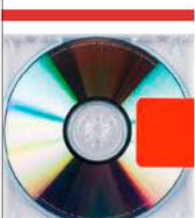


➤ Parenthood has been known to have a mellowing effect on musicians, but not Laura Veirs. The Oregon-based indie-folk singer began writing her ninth album, *Warp And Weft*, a few months after she had her first child in 2010, and recorded it when she was eight months' pregnant with her second. Among the most prominent themes are war, violence and suicide.

"There are some heavy topics in there, for sure," says Veirs. "Realising that life is so precious puts an edge on things. There's a lot of beauty in being a parent, but other things come into focus, like the fact that there's bad stuff happening in the world."

The album also signals a return to a harder, more guitar-based sound, as explored in earlier albums such as *Year Of Meteors*. "The pendulum's swinging back, for sure," she explains. "My last album, *July Flame*, was pretty stripped back, so I was ready to make rock music. It's been fun to dig into that sonic realm again. I'll also be touring this autumn with a full band for a change. After all this time spent dealing with kids' stuff, I'm ready to let my hair down."

FIONA STURGES



KANYE WEST *Yeezus* VIRGIN

The ego has expanded: rap auteur explores his messiah complex
From its title to its production, an unsettling churn of brutalised

7/10

electronic noise, jarring beats and one track that sounds like a robot Glitter Band ("Black Skinhead"), West's sixth solo album feels built to confront. *Yeezus* is simultaneously skilful and maddening, eloquently tackling materialism and racism on "New Slaves", even as he spins a sample of Nina Simone singing "Strange Fruit" into a protracted gripe about his romantic life and drops the odd line Roy 'Chubby' Brown would wince at (something about Asian women and "sweet n'sour sauce"). But there's much knowingness in his brazenness, and it's a mark of his talent that he stares hubris in the eye and nearly gets away with it.

LOUIS PATTISON



ZERVAS & PEPPER *Lifebringer* ZERODEO

Zinging sophomore set from Welsh 'cosmic folkies'

7/10

Zervas and Kathryn Pepper sensed it after meeting in a Cardiff folk club. A partnership (and romance) blossomed. Their lofty meld of voices, accompanied by the power strum of jumbo acoustics and the discreet whine of steel, cannily recalls Crosby, Stills and Nash, an impression boosted by lyrics about canyons, big skies, "Lookout Mountain" and "Buffalow Crow", the latter relating native American shamanism. There's some grit – "Living In A Small Town", "Hobo's Ticket" – but their sound is sweet and summery, beautifully played, needing only a few more shadowy moments for balance.

NEIL SPENCER



ZOLA JESUS *Versions* SACRED BONES

String-driven takes on goth's back catalogue

Zola Jesus is Niki Danilova, a kind of gothic-Delphic seer whose strident

6/10

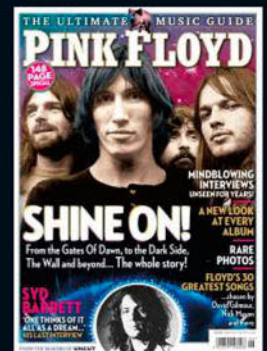
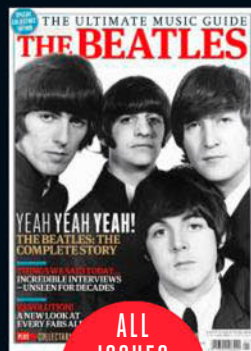
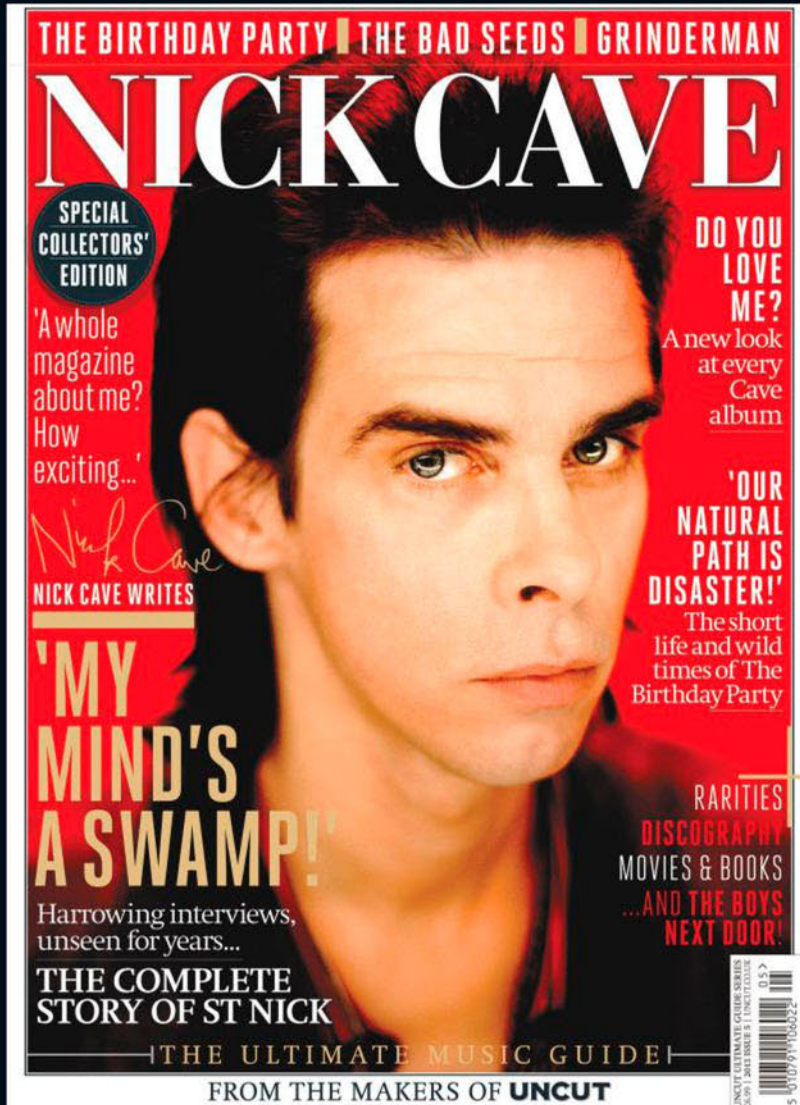
anthems place her somewhere between Diamanda Galás and Florence Welch. Here, dramatic anthems from her previous albums are rearranged by JG Thirlwell (aka, industrial producer Foetus) and performed with him and a string quartet. Thirlwell's tinny beats are no match for the drama of the originals, but the strings create a chamber immediacy, a little like Björk's live performances around the time of *Homogenic*. Like Welch, Danilova's vocals have a cadence that hovers between uplifting and exhaustingly overwrought, but fans at least will love these vivid, live-feeling renditions.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

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LEE MARSHALL



SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

Higher!

EPIC LEGACY

Lovingly presented 4CD boxset honouring a brightly burning, revolutionary talent. *By Neil Spencer*

TRACKLIST

DISC ONE: 1964-1967

- 1 I Just Learned How To Swim - Sly Stewart (Autumn Records single, 1964)
- 2 Scat Swim - Sly Stewart (Autumn single, 1964)
- 3 Buttermilk (Part 1) - Sly (Autumn single, 1965)
- 4 Dance All Night - Sly and Freddie (1965, unissued)
- 5 Temptation Walk - Sly (Autumn single, 1965)
- 6 I Ain't Got Nobody (For Real) (Loadstone single, 1967)
- 7 I Can't Turn You Loose (Loadstone single, 1967)
- 8 Higher (mono Epic single, promo only, 1967)
- 9 Underdog (mono Epic single, 1967)
- 10 Bad Risk (mono Epic single, 1967)
- 11 Let Me Hear It From You (mono Epic single, 1967)
- 12 Advice
- 13 If This Room Could Talk
- 14 I Cannot Make It
- 15 Trip To Your Heart
- 16 I Hate To Love Her
- 17 Silent Communications (1967, unissued)
- 18 I Get High On You (version one, 1967, unissued)
- 19 I Remember (1967, previously unissued)
- 20 My Woman's Head (instr demo, 1967, unissued)

9/10 SHOW BUSINESS IS never short of tragic tales, but few come as poignant as the fall of Sylvester Stewart, aka Sly Stone. A flamboyant musical revolutionary, the very embodiment of '60s optimism, the man who took everyone 'higher' at Woodstock in 1969, Sly tumbled into the 1970s a drug-addled shadow of his former self, beginning a long decline into addiction and creative sterility. The 21st Century found him living in a camper van.

This 77-track boxset lends a fresh perspective to the tale, gathering most things of worth that Sly produced between 1966 and 1974, salting the well-played greatest hits with rarities, unheard

demos and live cuts, and providing a detailed commentary via liner notes in a richly illustrated 104-page book. It's the complete package – although, of course, Sly's four later, flat albums for Warners are excluded.

Foregrounded are half a dozen singles cut for San Francisco's Autumn Records in 1964-65, when 'Sly Stewart' held down a job as A&R and producer with the label, handling rock acts like The Beau Brummels, while 'Sly Stone' was a DJ for the city's KSOL station, where he perfected his patter and mixed up soul sides with Beatles and Stones tracks. Both gigs were a prequel for what came when Sly formed the Family Stone in early 1967 – transgressed boundaries, blurred

DISC TWO: (1967-1968)

- 1 What's That Got To Do With Me (1967, unissued)
- 2 Fortune And Fame (1967, unissued)
- 3 What Would I Do (1967, unissued)
- 4 Only One Way Out Of This Mess (1967, unissued)
- 5 I Know What You Came To Say (1967, unissued)
- 6 Dance To The Music (mono Epic single, 1967)
- 7 Ride The Rhythm
- 8 Color Me True
- 9 Are You Ready
- 10 Don't Burn Baby
- 11 We Love All
- 12 Danse A La Musique - The French Fries (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 13 Small Fries - The French Fries (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 14 Chicken (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 15 Into My Own Thing
- 16 Life (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 17 Love City (1968, unissued mono mix)
- 18 M'Lady (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 19 Dynamite! - Featuring Johnny Robinson on vocals (1968, unissued)
- 20 Undercat (instr, 1967, unissued)

DISC THREE: 1968-1970

- 1 Everyday People (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 2 Sing A Simple Song (mono Epic single, 1968)
- 3 I Get High On You (version two, 1968, unissued)
- 4 Wonderful World Of Color (instr, 1968, unissued)
- 5 Pressure (unissued)
- 6 I Want To Take You Higher (mono Epic single, 1969)
- 7 Seven More Days (unissued)
- 8 Feathers (instrumental, 1968, unissued)
- 9 Somebody's Watching You
- 10 Sex Machine
- 11 Hot Fun In The Summertime (mono Epic single, 1969)
- 12 Everybody Is A Star (mono Epic single, 1969)
- 13 Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin) (mono Epic single, 1969)
- 14 Stand! (Live at the Isle of Wight Festival, Aug 30, 1970)
- 15 You Can Make It If You Try (Live, as above)
- 16 Dance To The Music (Live, as above, unissued)
- 17 Music Lover / I Want To Take You Higher / Music Lover (Live, as above, unissued)

DISC FOUR: 1971-1977

- 1 Luv N' Haight (Epic single, 1971)
- 2 Family Affair
- 3 Brave & Strong (Epic single master, 1971)
- 4 Runnin' Away (Epic single master, 1971)
- 5 (You Caught Me) Smilin' (Epic single master, 1971)
- 6 Spaced Cowboy
- 7 You're The One - Featuring Little Sister (Live on Don Kirshner's Rock Concert, Sept 1973, unissued)
- 8 In Time
- 9 If You Want Me To Stay (Epic single, 1973)
- 10 Frisky (Epic single, 1973)
- 11 Skin I'm In
- 12 If It Were Left Up To Me (Epic single, 1973)
- 13 Time For Livin' (Epic single, 1974)
- 14 Can't Strain My Brain (Epic single, 1974)
- 15 Loose Booty
- 16 Le Lo Li (Epic single, 1975)
- 17 Crossword Puzzle (Epic single, 1975)
- 18 Family Again (Epic single, 1976)
- 19 Hoboken - Sly Stone (unissued, 1975-1977)
- 20 High - Sly Stone (1975, unissued)



The family that plays together C/wise from top): Larry Graham, Freddie Stone, Gregg Errico, Sly Stone, Rosie Stone, Cynthia Robinson, Jerry Martini

distinctions between black and white pop, social-message songs with sneaky humour.

The Autumn singles like "Buttermilk" remain derivative curios (check the Beach Boys vocals on "I Just Learned How To Swim"). By contrast, the Family Stone – the lineup included brother Freddie, cousin Larry Graham and, later, sister Rosie – arrived almost fully formed. At their debut, *A Whole New Thing*, and first hit, "Higher", (reworked into their signature tune a couple of years later), their trademark sound is already in place: a crisp horn section, Graham's pulsing 'slap' bass, male and female voices in elaborate interplay and harmony, led by Sly's keyboards and quicksilver vocals, which turned from croon to cackle in an instant.

The musical fusion was mirrored by an equal-opportunities arrangement of black and white, male and female – a radical statement in itself. They were garbed in the finest excesses of the hippy era and fronted by Sly, sporting the world's largest Afro. Sly's ethos came into full focus a couple of albums down the line, with

"Everyday People", a wondrous piece of gospel pop with a Beatlesque ring to its lyrics ("There is a blue one who can't accept the green one") and a catchphrase, "different strokes for different folks", that passed into

the vernacular, but early songs like "Don't Burn Baby" and "Color Me True" also address race issues.

At a time when the USA was convulsed by the slaying of Martin Luther King and by riots in Watts, Detroit and elsewhere, the Family Stone represented nothing less than a new incarnation of the nation. Nor was Sly's vision pie-eyed utopia; "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey" is an aware, confrontational song, written as Sly came under pressure from black militants to drop white band members.

In the two years it took for the Family Stone to become that important in the culturesphere, Sly worked at a furious rate, delivering four albums inside 24 months. As discs two and three of *Higher!* show, there was endless experimentation; one minute Sly was crooning deep soul on the unissued "I Know What You Came To Say", the next pushing the band into psych-outs like "Danse A La Musique", a hilarious, fuzzy, heavy remake of their hit "Dance To The Music", replete with Stylophone. *Higher!* is also littered with unissued funk instrumentals like "Undercat" and "Feathers" that most bands would have died for.

With 1969's *Stand!*, Sly hit the motherlode. "I Want To Take You Higher", "Everybody Is A Star" and "Stand" caught a mood of delirious liberation – "You are free... at least in your mind if you want to be" – while on stage the Family Stone were a force. Four tracks from 1970's Isle of Wight



Four hidden gems

Unsung singles and album cuts

TEMPTATION WALK (1965)

Sly's early singles owe plenty to Booker T And The MG's. The stinging guitar here is pure Steve Cropper, while Sly contrives a dirty organ sound and hippy bongo beats that recall Hank Jacobs' "So Far Away", over which he bumbles happily.

WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ME (1967)

A fascinating, previously unissued glimpse into Sly's methodology, with the Family Stone chiming out the hook line before Sly sings with a purity that owes more to doowop than '60s soul and a bizarre opening line: "I was a nobody right from the start".

SOMEBODY'S WATCHING YOU (1969)

The sunny, mid-tempo melody is deceptive; this is a song that is partly about paranoia, partly about people not getting away with things. "Shady as a lady in a moustache" is the pick of the witty, challenging lyrics.

IF IT WERE LEFT UP TO ME (1973)

From *Fresh* comes this winding, thoughtful piece. It's voiced by Rosie Stone but the sentiments are all about Sly's habits, acknowledging that he'd rather "live in a bubble" and that he'll try to stay out of trouble. It proved false optimism. NEIL SPENCER

festival show the band's Woodstock performance a year previously was no fluke.

But the group could only deliver if they showed up. Of 80 scheduled gigs in 1970, 26 were no-shows, a symptom of the havoc wreaked by a pharmaceutical intake that included PCP. Increasingly, Sly retreated to his rented Bel Air mansion to record on his own, with visitations by kindred spirits like Bobby Womack and Billy Preston. The resultant *There's A Riot Goin' On* (1971) crowned the charts, helped by its single, "Family Affair", the best of a record sunk in torpor and pessimism. Its murky production crystallised the comedown from the 1960s, just as *Plastic Ono Band* and *What's Going On* had done, but the album remains a brilliant mess. Time has done it few favours; the drum machines of "Spaced Cowboy" now sound as novel as a clockwork toy. Glaringly, there are no out-takes from *Riot*, just a barely listenable live cut, "You're The One".

By comparison, 1973's *Fresh* and 1974's *Small Talk* have been under-rated. *Higher!* fillets them nicely – the stalking bass (played by Sly) for "If You Want Me To Stay", with its oblique relationship narrative ("For me to stay here I got to be me"), is seductive, still modern. "If It Were Left Up To Me" and "Time For Livin'" show a similar determination to blend recent experience and former optimism.

That both albums promised more than they delivered was indicated by their covers. *Fresh's* shot of a lithe, leaping Sly was captured by him lying on a glass table; the idyllic young couple of *Small Talk*, Sly and wife Kathleen Silva, split up six months later, when she sued for divorce. The closing track here – an unissued 1975 "High" – is a desperate attempt to capture a long-gone mojo.

Still, by then Sly had helped invent funk – Clinton, Isleys, Kravitz, Prince and more all owe him – and, with the most gracious and fun-loving of smiles, transformed American pop. Salute!



Q&A

Cynthia Robinson recalls Sly Stone as a father figure with a vision for the future

When did you first meet Sly and what impression did he make?

I was at high school and at a junior choir in Sacramento. He came up to Sacramento for a boys' car club. He liked my girlfriend. He drew up at the kerb and there was a guitar in the back of the car, so we ended up playing a little; I was playing mellophone at the time. I was entranced, because he was so confident, kind and intelligent.

You knew him as a DJ first?

I had been listening to KSOL, but only for Sly Stone – "Hey all you cats and kitties and hippies and squares" – I thought he was so cool, but I didn't know that was Sylvester Stewart. When I found out, I got my boyfriend to take me up there. We were in a group, The Chromatics. We took our record up there. Sly did dedications. He played things you never heard elsewhere; he did his own commercials. One time the equipment failed, so he played piano and sang until it was fixed. His show was free form, spontaneous. I loved it.

How come you were a lady trumpeter?

Because there weren't any – still aren't!

You're right. I have seen a female hold a trumpet in her hand in a Beyoncé video, but she didn't actually play it!

The Family Stone were a racial and gender mix-up. That was a first...

Yes, but I didn't think that was anything special at the time. It was right up my alley, because we rehearsed so much. That helped me to grasp things. I didn't have a good ear; all I could do was read music. The fact that we rehearsed until my lips were raw was good for me. I was able to build chops and get down the songs.

Sly was a taskmaster?

People might say that today, but not me. When you're doing what you love, it's not work. Even today, if I get an invite to a show without rehearsal, that bothers me. I like to know what I'm doing. We would play gigs, and right after we

would stay and rehearse new stuff for three hours. I was happy to do that, because we were getting better. We just enjoyed playing together. We weren't thinking of becoming stars.

Four albums in two years was quite a pace...

What you have to understand is that Sly had a plan, a vision. Every time we convened he had worked out everybody's part. He was driving us towards something that we couldn't see.

He was the father figure?

Sly looked after us and we were acting like a bunch of kids. After a while that drained him, because he was dealing with the powers that be and us. He looked out for us, made sure we got a shake, because they only wanted to deal with him.

How were your dealings with Epic Records?

The label gave us crappy advances, 300-400 bucks apiece – but then they realised that Sly was the one writing all the music, the lyrics, the arrangements, so they only wanted to sign Sly. He had to fight to get us a decent pay cheque, then he had to fight to get us to show up on time. Epic Records at that time was something of a throwaway label. We were a tax loss – they gave people tiny advances and didn't expect them to sell. They didn't promote us until *Dance To The Music*, when they started wondering, "Who are these people?"

It started going wrong in 1970...

Sly is just flesh, blood and bones, so he started kicking back and enjoying the things that came to him monetarily. He's just a human being. All of us are guilty of things going downhill, not just him. He always took responsibility as the leader, even when it wasn't his fault. I don't think he was disappointed in the music; he was disappointed in the admin, the upper echelons. Things

happened that have to stay off the record.

What are your enduring thoughts about Sly?

I will say that Sly told everyone to respect women. He looked after the girls in the group, and I don't see that happening today. If you are a girl, you are on your own. Sly doesn't take credit for everything he did. If you want to know who Hemingway is, read his books. If you want to know who Sly is, listen to his songs.

INTERVIEW: NEIL SPENCER

"Sly made sure we got a shake, because the record company only wanted to deal with him"



DISCS INCLUDED

CD1	The Clash
CD2	Give 'Em Enough Rope
CDs 3-4	London Calling
CDs 5-7	Sandinista!
CD 8	Combat Rock
CD 9	Sound System Extras 1 (Singles, EPs and B-sides)
CD 10	Sound System Extras 2 (Outtakes, singles and B-sides)
CD 11	Sound System Extras 3 Extracts from The Clash's first ever recording session, at Beaconsfield Film School, 1976 Polydor Demos - The Clash's second recording session, Jan 1977, Produced by Guy Stevens Live at The Lyceum, London, December 28, 1979
BONUS DVD	Nine promo videos, interviews with Tony Parsons, Sussex University 1977, Don Letts/Julien Temple archive material

THE CLASH

Sound System

CBS

Great things come in crazy packages. Newly remastered albums, plus remastered ephemera. *By John Robinson*

8/10 YOU CAN BAKE your tapes. You can preserve the oxides, future-proof your masters against all coming music formats. But you'll never improve on the authenticity of a group talking into a journalist's tape recorder in 1976. Barely audible through the background noise (clanking coffee cups; rattling tube train carriages), on one of the early tracks collected here, the young Clash are interviewed by Tony Parsons about whether they think they will succeed in "changing stuff". Joe Strummer (for all the slogans on his shirts, a realist) is certain: "I don't think we'll ever have the power," he says. "You just have to do what you can do."

Sound System (pitched as "best boxset ever") reminds us that one thing The Clash did succeed in changing was The Clash. Not a band shy of drawing an ideological line in the sand as far as music was concerned, whether that was "White Man In Hammersmith Palais" or "1977" ("No Elvis, Beatles or The Rolling Stones..."), The Clash still refused to be painted into a corner by punk. In

a time when bands defined themselves by what they opposed, The Clash were about an embracing of possibilities.

It was a policy that alienated as many people as it thrilled. If you were the kind of punk who couldn't understand that a band from your subculture had given you the keys to a city filled with Zydeco, hip-hop, funk and dub, then you probably wouldn't be the person to enjoy *Sandinista!* – and indeed you were discouraged from buying it by the singer in the group. For all their military chic, The Clash didn't want an army – they wanted free-thinkers.

Sound System poses the question of just how free-thinking a Clash fan is these days. Is there anything "punk" about a boxset that collects the band's first five albums and three discs of rarities into a box styled like a boombox stereo? Initial fan reaction would suggest not – not even when it includes repro fanzines, posters, stickers and Clash "dog tags". As with the legacy material of Jimi Hendrix, Clash fans have a clear idea of what they want, rather than simply lapping up what

Q&A

Paul Simonon



What determined the look and feel of this box?

I wanted to have something which would reflect the members of the band. I had a photo I had taken with my girlfriend at the time's camera of Joe's foot kicking these four cassette machines and I thought, 'That's it.' Because these things, these cassette machines, were what we carried around the whole time when we were on tour, in a hotel, or in an airport, or in the bar, even. It's your own music – there wasn't much on the radio, and everywhere you went, you could share it with people.

There's new fanzines, dog tags, and a big cigarette...

There's a major contribution from people who were involved with The Clash back in the day,

and I asked them – people I've not spoken to in 20 years or more – to write about their experiences in The Clash. It's quite an interesting perspective on that period, really. It's good to see what someone else has to say, rather than me blabbing on. I still wear the dog tags. The cigarette? It's a bit big to go behind your ear... It's playful.

What was it like hearing the remasters?

There are departments within The Clash, and that's down to Mick. He made a lot of discoveries about things that weren't right. Tapes were deteriorating, so they had to be preserved to be played for at least one transition so they could be transferred to digital. He found that there was something missing off the tape head, so you weren't getting all the music – I'm still getting my head around it now. Guitars are in the mix, but they aren't where they should be. When you hear *London Calling*, you'll hear stuff that you hadn't heard before. Mick's the music professor of our lot, and he seems pretty happy.

INTERVIEW: JOHN ROBINSON

they're given. In the former list of demands are a live album from the band's 1981 stand at Bond's Casino in New York and an issue of *Rat Patrol From Fort Bragg*, the moot double album from which *Combat Rock* was ultimately derived.

Clash completists won't be overwhelmed by *Sound System*. The "Extras" discs do contain interesting items: the band's 1976 Beaconsfield Film School recordings with Julien Temple, as well as the Guy Stevens first LP demos. Joe Strummer thought these left "White Riot" sounding "like Matt Monro" because the producer insisted he pronounce the letter "t". The accompanying DVD provides evocative film medleys of the early Clash from the collections of Temple and Don Letts. While these discs help with your Clash housekeeping, collecting B-sides and the scarce "Capital Radio" EP, actual unissued rarities are limited to the first two tracks of *Rat Patrol*: "The Beautiful People Are Ugly Too" and "Idle In Kangaroo Court" (formerly "Kill Time"). Completists will have the unedited "Straight To Hell" and "Midnight To Stevens" from *The Clash On Broadway*.

This, after all, is not a treasure trove – it is a handsome box with a poster tube shaped like a cigarette. Still, the limited extras obliquely provide more evidence for the band's spontaneous creativity – there wasn't a lot "spare". As we know, "Train In Vain" was delivered too late for a sleeve credit on *London Calling*, and much of *Sandinista!* was written

in the studio. Even after their demise, The Clash were driven by spontaneity, not strategy: as recently as 2010, a mooted 30th anniversary reissue of *Sandinista!* simply failed to materialise. The mood, we imagine, just wasn't right.

Instead, it and its partner albums are collected here in book-style sleeves (a bit more recording detail wouldn't have hurt) in remastering by Tim Young that is crisp, punchy and detailed. The debut benefits particularly from the enterprise, revealing anew how Mick Jones' Mott-like lead lines served to elevate the group's playing. Hearing *Give 'Em Enough Rope* as an enormously loud military epic helps rehabilitate it somewhat, even if it can't work miracles on what is basically just three strong opening songs.

The true breakthrough, *London Calling*, could retain a thrilling room sound played down the line from a red phone box, and inevitably does so here. With their last two albums, as we know, the band attempted (not always successfully) to create empathetic music, without boundaries. With songs like "The Magnificent Seven" and "Rebel Waltz" or "Straight To Hell", however, we're hearing just how profoundly The Clash had enacted a revolution on themselves – from a hard line, to music that was without orthodoxy or dogma of any kind.

So maybe the path to this point hadn't totally "changed stuff". The Clash had done what they could do – now society needed to follow their example.



ANGRY SAMOANS Back From Samoa DRASTIC PLASTIC

Popped in, grossed out; SoCal deviants' nihilist HxC epic

9/10

A nasty jock/nerd aggregation, the Angry

Samoans centred around the talents of sometime *Creem* journalists 'Metal' Mike Saunders and Gregg Turner. Resurrected on suitably garish coloured vinyl, the only thing that can match the misanthropic fury of their 1982 masterpiece, *Back From Samoa*, is the band's evident loathing for each other. "At any given moment, any two members of the band were ready to kill each other," remembered Turner, now a maths professor. Saunders paid typically gushing tribute to his former cohort by describing him as a "motherfucking lying son of a dog turd". Similar rhetorical devices crop up throughout the 18-minute, magnesium-strip blaze of impotent rage that is the Samoans' second LP, from "Gas Chamber" (as covered by the Foo Fighters) to "Homo-Sexual" (later reworked by Matmos side-project The Soft Pink Truth). It reaches some kind of grim climax on "Ballad Of Jerry Curlan", which concludes in an expletive hurricane positing that, in fact, the nice young neighbour Turner's mother always wanted him to be "sucks puke, pukes through his mouth, drinks toilet water, takes it up the ass, buttfucks his dog, sucks horsey dick, is a shitbrain". Smugster parody or fleabag losercore, it's an ugly, stupid marvel.

EXTRAS: None.

JIM WIRTH



CABARET VOLTAIRE Red Mecca MUTE

Mid-career highlight for industrial pioneers

8/10

In 1981, Chris Watson, these days a celebrated sound

recorder who has found acclaim capturing the sounds of birds and bumblebees for programmes such as BBC's *Springwatch*, was still a member of Sheffield's Cabaret Voltaire. Perhaps coincidence, but that year's *Red Mecca* was very much sensing something in the air. Rioting had broken out in England's inner cities. Out east, the Islamic revolution was in full swing, while way out west, the Christian right were gaining a stronghold in American politics. All this fed into an album that felt sweltering and paranoid, still in touch with the solder-wire invention of the group's earliest recordings, but possessed with a stiff funkiness that pointed forward to their later flirtations with the charts. The album is bookended by "A Touch Of Evil" and its reprise, an eerie exotica indebted to Henry Mancini's score to the Orson Welles noir. In between, it grooves, Stephen Mallinder's hissed vocals and roaming, hungry bass edging through a wreckage of Beefheart-indebted guitar mangling, clacking drum machine and the creepy trill of Watson's Vox Continental organ. *Red Mecca*'s real voice seems to simmer up from the depths, though, half-buried samples of ranting preachers and tape-looped voices that exhort, dreamily, to "wash away your sins... wash away your sins..."

EXTRAS: Remastered by Stefan Betke of Pole.

7/10 LOUIS PATTISON

Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



R STEVIE MOORE

Personal Appeal

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

7/10

Three decades plus of lo-fi American surrealism

"Old-fashioned word of mouth," is R Stevie Moore's response when asked how he wants people to discover his ever-proliferating body of recorded music, which now tops the 400-albums mark, "and the sheer excitement of turning your friends onto something special you've discovered." Indeed,

that's often the way listeners used to find out about Moore's music, back in the '70s and '80s when he was pumping out tape after tape of weird-beard surrealist pop, mostly circulated via his own label, the R Stevie Moore Cassette Club.

Moore's legend has slowly grown over the years, at least partly due to the seductiveness of the idea of the 'misplaced genius', the bedroom-studio songwriter with roomfuls of reels overflowing with 'the hits that never were'. The continual patronage of figures like Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and metaphoric prodigal son Ariel Pink has doubtless also helped. Indeed, after hearing R Stevie Moore's most inspired moves, you may feel like ditching your collection of Pink albums in the nearest skip. This, of course, is only part of Moore's story. As music writer Matthew Ingram perceptively pointed out recently, Moore's songs aren't "designed to fail": he's a talented, ingenious songwriter, with a great ear for pop arrangement. The songs on *Personal Appeal*, his 42nd compilation album (no, really), may be from the stranger side of his tracks, but they're still filled with seductive, compelling details – Moore really knows how to work those reel-to-reels.

He's also got a wicked take on both the world and the self, directly addressing his own situation with "Why Can't I Write A Hit?" (by opening *Personal Appeal* with this song, Moore really one-ups his critics), or getting meta on rock'n'roll – "in the minor leagues", apparently. But if it can all seem a little "knowing", Moore would beg to differ. "I just create," he says with a shrug. "No intentions. This is what comes out of me."

JON DALE



CHAS & DAVE

Gertcha! The EMI Years

EMI

Plenty of rabbit, but much more besides

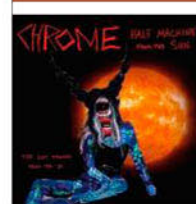
The ongoing reappraisal of the work of Messrs Hodges and Peacock

7/10

reached dizzying heights with an in-depth BBC4 documentary last year, so a compendium of their early work would seem the next logical step. However, seeing as they parted ways with EMI in the early '80s, it means their sublime orchestra-driven masterpiece, "Ain't No Pleasing You", appears only on the bonus DVD of a live show from 2005. The contents of the three CDs showcase their comic-tinged Cockney knees-up material that many dismissed as a novelty. Yet, in among the gags and japes around the Joanna, the likes of "The Sideboard Song", "Love And Days Gone By" and "Edmonton Green" paint colourful pictures of a changing London and its inhabitants, maybe not as literate as Ian Dury's odes to the capital, but no less well observed. It's down to the DVD to illustrate the duo's development as sophisticated pop tunesmiths, the tearstains of the aforementioned "Ain't No Pleasing You" also evident on the barrelhouse rock'n'roll of "I Wonder In Whose Arms" and "Long Time No See", both taking a leaf out of the Fats Domino songbook. A much-loved band of the people, cherished far beyond the earshot of the Bow bells.

EXTRAS: None.

TERRY STAUNTON



CHROME

Half Machine From The Sun: The Lost Tracks '79-'80

KING OF SPADES

Minimalist, mantric acid-rock, peeled from the original master tapes

8/10

The myth of Chrome, San Francisco's outer spaceways, acid-rock legends, rests on their two glorious albums from the late '70s, *Alien Soundtracks* and *Half Machine Lip Moves*, and 1980's *Red Exposure*. Although leader Damon Edge had already released one LP of passable psych-rock, *The Visitation*, it took guitarist Helios Creed joining up in '76 for Chrome to really find their groove, a coruscating, face-peeling take on rock form that's surprisingly hard to pin down: your best bet, maybe, is Can covering AC/DC while routed through Suicide's patch bay. Although they were often read as an industrial duo, due to their connections with The Residents and Ralph Records, Chrome were really only industrial as descriptor: guitars like paint-stripper, synths that are toxic, corrosive, blistered. *Half Machine From The Sun* mops up unreleased tracks from sessions for *...Lip Moves* and *Red Exposure* and it's just as great as you'd imagine, although a little more 'naked' – some of the layers of brittle, trebled-out effects have been removed, revealing Chrome as uncompromising minimalist rock thugs. So while there's nothing on here as killer as their finest moments, like "Meet You In The Subway", this shit'll still flay the skin from your bones. Amen.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE



THE CULT Electric Peace

BEGGARS BANQUET

Wolf Child and co, pre- and post- their Rick Rubin makeover

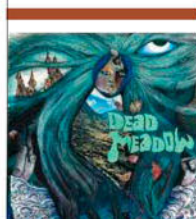
In the late 1980s, an “indie disco” was simply a room in which The Cult’s

8/10

“She Sells Sanctuary” was played. That song, much like its parent album, *Love*, paired a gothy seriousness with an Old West mythology, hinting that there was a brawnier rock band hiding beneath The Cult’s flanging guitar effects – a theory ultimately borne out by their 1987 album, *Electric*, produced by Rick Rubin. As he did with other great records of that year (Beastie Boys’ *Licensed To Ill*; Slayer’s *Reign In Blood*), Rubin removed The Cult from the 1980s and vice-versa – exposing the band’s riffs, hitherto hidden beneath the reverb. This wasn’t a decision that the band arrived at immediately, however. As this interesting double CD reveals, the band initially recorded the songs for an album called *Peace* with Steve Brown at the Manor studio in Oxford. Good songs (“Peace Dog”; “Wild Flower”) are barely recognisable, the band sounding like The Cure covering Mötley Crüe. That they ditched the *Peace* sessions suggests an intelligence that not everyone will have suspected in The Cult. Rubin uncovered the band’s influences (Stones; AC/DC; the word “baby”), and allowed their absurd, fun, rock’n’roll to shine through.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN ROBINSON



DEAD MEADOW

Dead Meadow
(reissue, 2000)

XEMU RECORDS

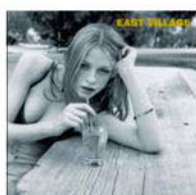
Stoner veterans’ out-of-print first LP remastered
Dead Meadow’s first album was originally released in 2000, and while much of

8/10

the band’s vision and technical prowess was already evident, *Dead Meadow* is heavier, darker and more sprawling than later releases. It begins with a Jimmy Page solo on “Sleepy Silver Door” and ends with the bombastic “Rocky Music High”, and in between comes prime stoner rock, soaring psychedelia and hip-shaking metal played with screaming guitars and huge amounts of wah-wah as the band pay homage to Led Zep, Black Sabbath, Kyuss and Neil Young. Much like those forefathers, there’s a repeated yearning for nature on display, as the band explore the great outdoors on tracks like the Young-esque “At The Edge Of The Wood” and lovely acoustic comedown “Greensky Greenlake”. They also love to switch dynamics, so “Greensky Greenlake” slips into a slowcore wah-wah solo, while the album’s undoubted high point, the heady “Beyond The Fields We Know”, starts off all gluey and suddenly breaks into a wonderfully gentle jam before concluding with a coruscating starburst of guitars. These contrasts between heavy and light are artfully manipulated by Greg Calbi’s remastering, while Jason Simon’s feminine vocals now sit more prettily atop the swirls and sludge.

EXTRAS: None.

PETER WATTS



EAST VILLAGE

Drop Out
(reissue, 1993)

HEAVENLY

Pop perfection, via Buckinghamshire...

East Village are firmly implicated in the web of personality and pop

10/10

mythology that is Saint Etienne – bass player Martin Kelly manages St Et, while guitarist Paul Kelly has made several films with Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs – but East Village deserve far more than simple footnote status. Formed in the mid-’80s as Episode Four, they released a small clutch of singles, a few of which were released on Heavenly magnate Jeff Barrett’s early label, Sub Aqua, before recording *Drop Out*, funded by Stanley, in 1990. The group split the following year and the album was picked up by Heavenly and released posthumously, in 1993. Although they supported groups like The House Of Love, East Village always were a world away from both the portentous introspection and unappealing twee-ness of much British indie music, their vision of pop far more closely related to the exploratory, chiming guitar pop perfected by The Byrds and subverted by Love, while their melancholic edge echoes time spent listening hard to classic late-hours soul sides. Too many great songs here, although with “Freeze Out”, “Circles” and “When I Wake Tomorrow” they nailed a perfect, breathless run of pop genius. *Drop Out* is the true lost classic of its era.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE

REVELATIONS

East Village’s Paul Kelly accosts Bob Dylan, almost



➤ “I’m still surprised at how many people come up to me and mention East Village,” reflects filmmaker Paul Kelly on his tenure with the little-known, but justly legendary, indie group he formed in the ’80s with brother Martin and friends Spencer Smith and Johnny Wood. “Martin and I lived in a small village in Buckinghamshire. We were in easy reach of Friars Aylesbury and High Wycombe Town Hall, both of which were on the main UK tour circuit during the late ’70s and early ’80s, so we were able to catch a lot of great bands.”

Their desire to sound like The Hawks in ’66 could have come to fruition when Bob Dylan walked into Rock On records in Camden when East Village were there on a break from rehearsal at Dingwalls. “I was elected to go and ask him if he would like to come back and play some songs with us,” remembers Kelly. “I just couldn’t face the possibility of a rebuke from Bob, so, despite being alone in the shop together for about 20 minutes, we left without ever speaking to him.” JON DALE



EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS

Live At The Rainbow 1977

CHERRY RED

Cracking live album from rollicking Essex rockers

Dubbed ‘pub rock’ and

8/10

later recast as proto-punks, the Hot Rods were always a garage band at heart, influenced by The Sonics, Yardbirds, MC5 and The Who, and this live album finds them itching to kick out the jams to an appreciative audience who had not yet discovered punk. The show catches them firing unrelentingly through covers like “Gloria” and “Get Out Of Denver” alongside rip-snorting originals. Filmed and recorded by Island, the concert tape got its first release here and finds the band in epic form from a glowering “Wooly Bully” onwards, charging through the excellent “Horseplay”, the MC5-like “Teenage Depression” and the jabbering wig-out “On The Run” in front of a delirious crowd. Graeme Douglas, who guests on a couple of tracks, was soon to join the band permanently and help them move in the power-pop direction that produced “Do Anything You Wanna Do”. But this could be their peak, a reminder that while punk may have been aimed at the aristocracy of British rock, bands like the Hot Rods were its biggest victims.

EXTRAS: DVD of entire concert, featuring

7/10 unforgettable shots of the drummer, who spends the entire set wearing only Y-fronts and knee-length socks.

PETER WATTS



MICHAEL FENNELLY

Love Can Change Everything: Demos 1967-1972

SUNDAZED

Twenty-four never-heard gems from Crabby Appleton leader

9/10

Known, at least by the ’60s-rock cognoscenti, as a key member of Curt Boettcher’s sunshine popsters The Millennium and as singer/writer for Crabby Appleton (“Go Back”, a driving dual-guitar rocker, was their 1970 hit), Michael Fennelly is hardly a household name. But this eye-opening set, tracing a shadow history from his halcyon Sunset Strip days through to his 1972 solo LP, *Lane Changer*, proves him a formidable, unjustly obscure talent. A chameleonic songwriter, Fennelly is adept at everything from soft balladry (“Leanna”) to Nuggets-style garage rockers (“Breakdown”), with plenty of nimble dark pop and folk-rock in between. He rarely writes about much other than the thrills and gut punches of love, but his brittle melodies, as on the haunting, hangdog “I Couldn’t Find The Words,” one of five superb demos recorded with The Millennium in 1967 and sung in a high, vulnerable falsetto, are indelible, inescapable. The later stuff is no less terrific – akin to Pete Townshend’s *Scoop* – dynamic acoustic material just waiting for full-band arrangements. The stripped-down strum on a demo of “Go Back” is tense and taut; another early ’70s cut, “Dark Night”, all spidery guitars and sad desperation, is spellbinding.

EXTRAS: None.

LUKE TORN



HONEY LTD. The Complete LHI Recordings

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

Lee Hazlewood's
long-lost girl group

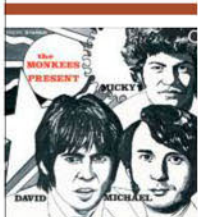
Four beautiful teenage girls
and Lee Hazlewood: what
could possibly go wrong?

7/10

Not much, although Honey Ltd. never achieved the success that must have seemed inevitable. Laura Polkinghome, Marsha Jo Temmer, and sisters Joan and Alexandra Sliwin hailed from Detroit, and – as the Mama Cats – were looked after by Bob Seger's manager, Punch Andrews. Polkinghome was the main songwriter; Temmer the choreographer. In 1967, they moved to LA and auditioned, stoned, for Lee Hazlewood. He renamed them and teamed them with arrangers Mike Post and Ian Freebairn-Smith, who fashioned baroque pop from their audacious, four-part harmonies. As you might expect from a Hazlewood project, there are subtexts, so when these sweet girls sing about losing their minds and beauty being a painted wall (on "Come Down"), the psych colour-coding is clear, even if the music is all milky innocence and testcard rhythms. Their deconstruction of "Louie, Louie" is extraordinary – the song is rolled flat, its menace replaced with marzipan. On "Tomorrow Your Heart", the harmonies offer a pre-echo of Queen. There are three previously unissued tracks, the pick of which is "I'm So Glad", with heavenly voices bouncing into the controlled cloudburst of a distorted guitar.

EXTRAS: A 32-page booklet featuring
7/10 interviews with the band members.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



THE MONKEES The Monkees Present [Deluxe Edition]

RHINO HANDMADE

Lavishly intricate
archaeology into Prefab
Four's archive continues

8/10

For a little-noticed, late-in-the-game effort by the once-mighty Monkees, this 87-track expansion of a standard, 12-track LP takes revisionism to new, absurd levels. On the other hand, each of the principals – Jones, Nesmith and Dolenz (Tork is MIA) – pour their all into these '69 sessions, eager to prove mettle, stake out new territory and escape a cartoonish past. As such, *Present* is sporadically riveting. Like a petri dish of currents running through pop circa the tail end of the '60s, The Monkees try it all here: Jones' jazzy vocal whims, Dolenz' surprisingly gonzo workouts ("Mommy and Daddy"), horn-and-rhythm-styled rockers ("Steam Engine"), straightforward guitar numbers ("Circle Sky") and, best of all, Nesmith's nascent country/rock excursions – of which the hooky "Listen To The Band" and steel-drenched "Hollywood", coupled with the plaintive sweep of "Crippled Lion" and "Carlisle Wheeling", foretell the brilliance of The First National Band. There's highly suspect, dated material (exhibit #1: "Ladies Aid Society") galore; Jones' sappiness grates; and only hard-cores will obsess over the minutiae of backing tracks and alternate mixes. But as an unjustly buried chapter of an artistic, if not commercial, comeback, *The Monkees Presents* delivers.

EXTRAS: None.

LUKE TORN



THE MOUNTAIN GOATS All Hail West Texas

MERGE

Welcome reissue of the
highlight of Mountain
Goats' boombox years

7/10

Prior to signing to 4AD in the early years of this century, Mountain Goats' songwriter John Darnielle cultivated a cult following with a sequence of DIY recordings. Wilfully lo-fi to the point of obtuseness, Darnielle disdained even the fripperies of four-track, preferring to sing and play into the condenser microphone of a Panasonic RX-FT500 boombox. Darnielle's accompanying essay, recalling making this album at home in Ames, Iowa, emphasises the banality of his process: "I'd watch baseball or old horror movies on cable and go through my notes, and mute the TV when I found something I wanted to work on." The sound quality, inevitably, is atrocious. The songs – mostly beguilingly, occasionally frustratingly – are not. "The Best Ever Death Metal Band In Denton" and "Fall Of The Star High School Running Back" are especially glorious, recalling the deadpan character sketches of Todd Snider. "The Mess Inside", a Ben Folds-ish contemplation of domestic regret, also twinkles brightly amid the murk. Of the seven new tracks included here, the beautiful, baleful "Indonesia" and "Midland" especially prompt the wistful thought that a wholesale re-recording might have been in order, rather than a mere re-release.

EXTRAS: None.

ANDREW MUELLER



THE PROCLAIMERS The Very Best Of: 25 Years 1987-2012

CHRYSALIS/PERSEVERE

A quarter-century
of life's finest

8/10

The Proclaimers have always been a glorious anomaly. When they emerged in 1987, much was made of their novelty (being spectacle-wearing twins from Auchtermuchty), but Craig and Charlie Reid's defining quality has always been single-mindedness. The power of their earliest recordings, when the sound comprised two voices, one guitar, a bongo and handclaps, remains intact. In truth, the twins have sometimes struggled to match the stark brilliance of "Joyful Kilmarnock Blues" and "Letter From America" (heard here in its less appealing, Gerry Rafferty-produced band version). The highpoint of their fuller sound is "Sunshine On Leith", a country hymn that transcends the geography of the song's sentiment, and their biggest hit remains the chugging "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)", thanks to its appearance in *Shrek*. Latterly, The Proclaimers have adopted a soulful sound that works well live, but sometimes sounds generic on record, but this double set highlights under-appreciated songs from their later years, notably the tender "Shadows Fall", the improbably sad "On Causewayside" and a moving tribute to their late father, "Act Of Remembrance".

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

HOW TO BUY... THE MOUNTAIN GOATS More kids' stuff from John Darnielle



Tallahassee 4AD, 2002
Mountain Goats emerged
from cultish home-recorded
obscurity with their debut
for 4AD, a concept album of
sorts chronicling the travails

of a rancorous married couple. Critics made approving references to The Go-Betweens, Guided By Voices and Tennessee Williams.

8/10



**The Life Of The World
To Come** 4AD, 2009

Darnielle was scarcely the first songwriter to have cracked his King James for inspiration, but few have been so explicit. Every song here is named for a Bible verse, so "Psalms 40:2" is a Bad Seedsy rumble of redemption; "Genesis 3:23" a country song about banishment.

8/10

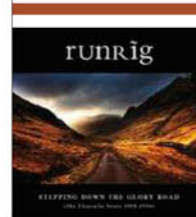


Transcendental Youth
MERGE, 2012

Probably Darnielle's most coherent work to date, musically defined by an invigorating brass-splashed sound provided by avant-jazz composer Matthew E White, lyrically by a cockeyed, wry deadpan evocative of Eels and Magnetic Fields.

9/10

ANDREW MUELLER



RUNRIG Stepping Down The Glory Road

EMI

Skye's biggest band
gets the big-box
treatment

6/10

Hard not to admire the only band to take a Gaelic-language song into the UK Top 20, even if "An Ubhal As Àirde" ("The Highest Apple") did sound regrettably like Macca's awful "Mull Of Kintyre". It's included in this six-CD set along with everything else from the five studio albums released on Chrysalis between 1988-96, after the band had crossed over from their Scottish dance-band origins to find mainstream pop success, and before the departure of lead singer Donnie Munro to stand as a Labour parliamentary candidate. At its best, Runrig's stirring mix of anthemic rock, Celtic folk airs, cultural pride and electrified jigging and reeling had something in common with The Waterboys' 'big music', heard to fine effect on "The Greatest Flame", "The Edge Of The World" and the lovely "Flower Of The West". In their clunkier moments, they could jar like a céilidh band playing U2 songs at a Hogmanay knees-up. Fortunately, there's more of the former than the latter.

EXTRAS: A generous 44 bonus tracks
7/10 comprising singles, out-takes
and concert recordings. The live material is exhilarating and terrifying in equal measure, particularly on their trad concert closer, "Loch Lomond", on which the tartan hordes thunder like an invading army.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

MARC BOLAN

...At The BBC: Radio Sessions And Broadcasts 1967-77

UNIVERSAL

Six-disc document of Bolan's evolution. By Garry Mulholland



8/10

THE TREASURE TROVE of classic rock material recorded for the BBC has become a key part of the vintage reissue catalogue. But few artists possessed a destiny so intertwined with Auntie Beeb that it could produce a six-CD boxset. As the excellent Mark

Paytress liner notes – designed to look like early '70s 'inkie' music press coverage – explain at length, this is largely down to the extraordinary relationship between former Stoke Newington mod Marc Feld and laconic Liverpoolian hippy music crusader John Peel, which coincided with the launch of Radio 1 in September 1967. Peel's promotion of his androgynous, elfin, rockabilly-loving friend on the alternative margins of the BBC's new pop channel was so persistent that, at one point on this fascinating set, Peel feels compelled to make an on-air denial of the rumours that he has a financial stake in Bolan's success. Famously, the pair fell out abruptly and terminally as Bolan made the transition from underground purveyor of Tolkien-esque acoustic whimsy to pop star so huge that he invented a genre – glam rock – and caused scenes of teen hysteria so uncontrolled that Britain's tabloids routinely compared 'T.Rextasy' to Beatlemania. The music that made this phenomenon is all here. But what makes *Marc Bolan At The BBC* a great boxset is that, through live shows, interviews and even oddly barbed announcements of T. Rex tracks, it tells the story of Bolan's rise, fall and tragically terminated redemption in the manner of a good documentary.

The first two discs document the struggle of an ambitious, prolific writer of inspired hippy gibberish to find an audience beyond a relatively small coterie of 'freaks'. Discs three and four place the glory of one of the greatest rock'n'roll noises ever created within the context of Bolan's often startling hubris, pretentiousness and defensiveness when faced with an interviewer. And the final two discs chart a genuinely depressing creative decline, yet more hubris, increasing disrespect from BBC voices and the beginnings of a humble, self-mocking comeback before a car crash at Barnes Common deprived us of a unique figure in British music. Whether this is the cunning agenda of compiler Clive Zone is unclear. But the story is so vivid that there's absolutely no need for a narrator.

For Bolan fans hungry for new music, the first two discs are the gold mine. Kicking off with five tracks from Bolan's strange Simon Napier-Bell-instigated stint as songwriter-guitarist with proto-punk troublemakers John's Children, the abrupt switch just four months later to the mystical acoustica of



the Tyrannosaurus Rex partnership with bongo player Steve Peregrin Took possesses a breathtaking chutzpah, and flags up Bolan's ability to make abrupt U-turns that worked. Through sessions, concerts and even a poetry recital or two, the base Bolan elements take shape and coalesce into something increasingly special; the rockabilly themes of cars and girls reinterpreted through a personal mythology of meetings with wizards and bucolic imagery, with the generation gap between square adults and The Kids presented as a metaphorical netherworld – a Middle Earth of star-children prancing carefree to the funky strums and crackling vocals of Pied Piper Marc.

By the time Mickey Finn replaced Took in late 1969, electric guitar is making its first tentative appearance, and songs like "Fist Heart Mighty Dawn Dart" and "By The Light Of The Magical Moon" are becoming a new kind of pop music, reaching for the James Burton licks, proper drums and Tolkien-meets-Little Richard teen poetry that finally changed everything for Bolan with the success of "Ride A White Swan" in October 1970.

Many of the tracks covering the 1971-72 imperial phase here are simply the Tony Visconti-produced studio backing tracks with Bolan overdubbing new guitar and vocals. They show off what a pro Bolan was even in the most rudimentary studio situation, but, in the end, just sound like more sonically muffled versions of the superior originals. It's the interviews that become increasingly fascinating, as even the most friendly question about the possibility that Bolan has lost the support of his underground audience is met with increasingly lofty pronouncements where he compares himself to Dylan and Hendrix and suggests that both critics and old fans are too thick to understand the complex political messages hidden in lines like "She's faster than most and she lives on the coast, uh-huh-huh".

Marc Bolan At The BBC lays this story bare, and, as well as thrilling you with at least four discs' worth of great music, feels like the most poignant release of Bolan's posthumous career; a sad, frustrating unmade movie about a doomed rock star. But the soundtrack is a thriller.

EXTRAS: None.

Q&A

Bob Harris



How did you first meet Bolan?

It was at John Peel's basement flat in Fulham in late 1967. Marc looked amazing, with corkscrew hair and silk trousers, sitting on the carpet strumming a guitar. It was the trigger moment for a great friendship.

You compered the T.Rextasy tour in early 1971...
It was bedlam. After the first gig in Portsmouth there were hundreds of girls waiting outside

waving scissors, trying to get locks of Marc's hair. These scissors were coming at us at eye level.

Was the sudden change from cult hippies to glam rockers contrived or natural?

Both. The most important element was that Marc's music was always underpinned by his huge love for, and knowledge of, early rock'n'roll.

The Bolan At The BBC booklet reveals your take on the abrupt end of the Bolan/Peel relationship. Not Marc's hubris after all?

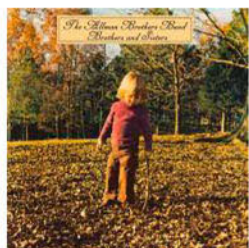
No. John wrote a hurtful review of T. Rex in *Disc And Music Echo*. He had a track record of doing this. After I started on *Whistle Test*, he stopped talking to me, too. **INTERVIEW: GARRY MULHOLLAND**



THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

Brothers & Sisters UMC/MERCURY

Deluxe four-disc reissue of first post-Duane album. By Andrew Mueller



8/10

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS began work on their fifth album at Capricorn Sound Studios in their adopted hometown of Macon, Georgia, in October 1972. It must still have been as much as they could do to get out of bed in the mornings. It was

only a year since the group's leader, influential guitar prodigy Duane Allman, had been killed in a motorcycle accident in Macon, aged 24. The group had not been able to bring themselves to replace him, instead promoting his abundantly capable duelling partner, Dickey Betts, to sole lead guitarist to finish 1972's *Eat A Peach*, and eventually fleshing out their soulful boogie with the addition of pianist Chuck Leavell.

On November 11, 1972, not long after the Allmans had cut an amiable choogle called "Ramblin' Man", bass player Berry Oakley's motorcycle collided with a bus, a few blocks from where Allman had crashed just over a year earlier. Oakley died a few hours later; he, too, was just 24 years old. An understandably careworn Gregg Allman later sighed to *Rolling Stone*'s Cameron Crowe, "It was so hard to get into anything after that second loss."

Somehow, Allman – and the Allmans – summoned the will to continue, finishing *Brothers & Sisters* with new bass player Lamar Williams. The result was their indisputable commercial peak and arguable creative apogee – and at the very least, an extraordinary recovery from the loss of virtuosi of the calibre of Allman and Oakley (the former, in particular, ranks as one of the most tantalising, heartbreaking, career-that-never-was

hypotheticals in all of rock'n'roll). It's likely that the sales and acclaim *Brothers & Sisters* gathered upon release were inflated somewhat by a forgivable sympathy vote. But if one can make the effort necessary to hear it as other than a brave and determined confrontation of grief – or distraction from it – *Brothers & Sisters* is a comprehensive summary of the virtues of what is now known as Southern rock.

"Ramblin' Man", which became the album's – and the Allmans' – biggest hit, was a deceptive choice of lead-off single. It's a cute, sweet country rocker with trilling harmonies, surely inspired in part by The Eagles' debut album – with particular reference to "Take It Easy" – which had been released a few months previously. The rest of *Brothers & Sisters* is altogether more ambitious. It is more than anything else a showcase for Dickey Betts, who wrote most of the album and stamped it with one of the great solo guitar performances:

Q&A

Dickey Betts



It's hard to imagine more difficult circumstances for an album to be recorded in. How close did you all come to giving up on *Brothers & Sisters* altogether? Under the stress

of losing band members at a young age, we thought about breaking up the band, but decided to stick it out – and we're glad that we did. We came up with a wonderful album under the worst of circumstances.

subtly melancholy on the slow blues "Jelly Jelly"; laying down the tracks for Stevie Ray Vaughan and subsequent blues swaggerers on "Southbound"; sprightly and frisky on the instrumental "Jessica" (now better known as the theme from *Top Gear*).

There are two versions of this reissue of *Brothers & Sisters*. The two-disc package contains the original album as well as a mildly diverting bunch of rehearsals, outtakes and a new track recently disinterred from the archive – entitled "A Minor Jam", it is, regrettably, exactly what it says it is, for 16 somewhat trying minutes.

Of considerably greater interest is the concert performance included with the four-disc incarnation. Recorded live at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom on September 26, 1973, it captures the Allmans at their unbound best, for better (the meandering versions of "Jessica" and "Southbound" are glorious, unselfconscious recollections of a time when rock'n'roll musicians saw themselves as explorers of musical worlds yet unconquered) and for worse (there are drum solos). It ranks as a lost post-Duane companion piece to the live album that founded the reputation the Allmans were trying to protect – 1971's *At Fillmore East*.

Brothers & Sisters would turn out to be as good as it got for the Allmans. Ahead lay drugs, hubris, fallings-out, ill-advised reunions and worse-advised marriages to Cher. But when they were great, the Allman Brothers were magnificent: defining their own time, and the parameters of a still-evolving genre. Southern rock started here.

EXTRAS: None.

Were you surprised by the success of *Brothers & Sisters*? And were you all able to enjoy that success fully? Yes, I was surprised. At the time, we were trying not to be an FM pop band and avoided that type of music. And yes, I have enjoyed the success.

What do you think of the album now? I still think it's a great album to this day.

What do you think of the version of "Jessica" that gets used as the theme for *Top Gear*? I don't know much about *Top Gear*. That was a deal my manager made. Anytime my music gets heard, I think it's a great thing.

INTERVIEW: ANDREW MUELLER



SAMUEL PURDEY

Musically Adrift

TUMMY TOUCH

Brighton duo go back, Jack, do it again...

Plush studio workouts may have made millions for Steely Dan and The Doobie

7/10

Brothers in the 1970s but, a couple of decades later, the fastidious and technical Samuel Purdey were not quite so successful: their sole album, the conspicuously expensive-sounding *Musically Adrift*, was only ever released in Japan in 1999. Since then, however, various ironic, heartfelt and post-ironic takes on this music, culminating in Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*, have made Barney Hurley and Gavin Dodds' vision somewhat less eccentric. "Only When I'm With You" even pre-empts Daft Punk by placing a Vocoder at the forefront of the manicured LA funk. And while *Musically Adrift* could do with a little of Fagen and Becker's snarkiness, there's no mistaking their assiduous love for and mastery of this music (Hurley maintains a Steely Dan fansite at samuelpurdey.com/jivemiguel), on "Santa Rosa" especially. A couple of Dan vets – guitarist Elliott "Reelin' In The Years" Randall and vocalist Frank Floyd – contribute, professionally. It may be galling, though, to discover on "Lucky Radio" that the line between consummate '70s flashbacks and Jamiroquai (Dodds' former employer) is less pronounced than one might have hoped.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN MULVEY



SPIKE

Orange Cloud Nine

GOLF CHANNEL

Dutch jester's new wave treasure

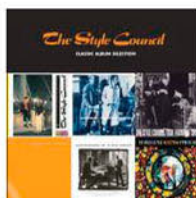
At 60, Spike Wolters has spent most of his life out of it. "I must admit

9/10

that I have been stoned every day since March 1973," the Dutchman said in a 2011 interview. A conscientious objector to pretty much everything – he was officially certified a "fool" by psychologists in 1986 after declaring himself unfit for work – Wolters nevertheless dedicated himself to music, and in the early '80s he managed to self-release four albums of his own quite enchanting psychedelic pop. For *Orange Cloud Nine*, New York's Golf Channel label selected 16 nuggets from this obscure quartet that zone in on Wolters' capacity for gently fried funk and utopian synthesizer ballads in the vein of *McCartney II*. A resourceful, melodically gifted performer, Wolters has the chops to pass for a lo-fi Dire Straits on "The Golden Eye" and "Fooling Around", and you can imagine fragrant confections such as "Baby Love" and "Your Time Has Come" nestling alongside Felt on Creation or Cherry Red. Hearing his doorbell ring on "Goodnight", you're reminded of the enduring appeal of primitive recordings of excellent songs. Given Wolters claims to have worked fewer than 70 days in his entire life, perhaps there's more to come.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN



THE STYLE COUNCIL

Classic Album Selection

UNIVERSAL

Mid-price collection of the Council's five studio LPs. The reappraisal starts here...

7/10

If it seems heretical to suggest these were Paul Weller's finest years, it's also true that his best work – from *Sound Affects* to *22 Dreams* – has often seen him pushing at boundaries and defying expectations. The Style Council was an endless voyage out of Weller's comfort zone; a continual work-in-progress, backed by itinerant musicians and guest singers. The anything-goes enthusiasm – represented here by 1983's *Introducing...* comp and 1984's *Café Blue* – delivers at least a dozen pearls. You could argue that Weller and Mick Talbot ran out of steam after 1985's chart-topper *Our Favourite Shop*, and it's true that the unreleased final LP, 1989's *Modernism: A New Decade*, is a wretched stab at Chicago house (though, even here, the presence of Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Pee Wee Ellis on "That Spiritual Feeling" is intriguing). But *The Cost Of Loving*, Weller's badly received 1987 love-letter to Jam & Lewis-style R&B, has a few blue-eyed soul classics ("Heavens Above", "Walking The Night"); while Side One of their hugely underrated '88 swansong, *Confessions Of A Pop Group*, is a pretty magnificent way to sign your own commercial suicide note.

EXTRAS: *Modernism: A New Decade*,

previously only available on the now out-of-print *Complete Adventures*.

JOHN LEWIS



REVELATIONS

Be very afraid of the Swamp Dogg

➤ Surely the most outrageous, outside-the-box artist coughed up in the golden years of soul/R&B, Swamp Dogg's career stretches back to 1954, when he was known as Little Jerry Williams. Production stints in the '60s and scattered singles followed, plus hits for others, like "She's All I Got", a crossover smash for Johnny Paycheck. None of it braced fans for what was coming: a barrage of sex, drugs, politics, cultural satire, class and race send-ups, and *Total Destruction To Your Mind*, Dogg's southern-fried, LSD-tinged, country-funk masterpiece. "Late in the '60s," he once observed, "we started writing some acid-type lyrics. But there was no call for it. People'd say, we don't want this shit. What is this shit?"

Undeterred, Dogg cut *Rat On!*, *Gag A Maggott*, a dozen more, taking songwriting (and album covers) where others fear to tread: "God Bless America For What?", "Call Me Nigger", "The Love We Got Ain't Worth Two Dead Flies", "I was daring early in my songwriting... but people were afraid of it," he once observed, later surmising, "Nobody likes everything the Swamp Dogg does. If they did, I'd be afraid of them!" LUKE TORN



SWAMP DOGG

Gag A Maggott

(reissue, 1973)

ALIVE/NATURALSOUND

Soul-sound underground: Maverick soul-funk legend's long out-of-print masterpiece

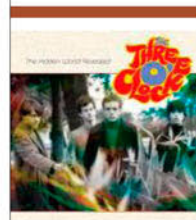
8/10

For his fifth album, Virginia native Jerry Williams (aka Swamp Dogg) scaled back, if just minutely, the outré songwriting that marked him – circa 1971's *Total Destruction To Your Mind* – as R'n'B's most unpredictable (and psychedelic) voice. In fact, a biting cover of Wilson Pickett's classic "Midnight Hour" pays righteous respects to the Wicked One, and marks this as a more traditional effort, while its most alluring song, the pure Southern soul of "Please Let Me Kiss You Goodbye", remains ripe for a (mainstream) chart-topping cover. Still, from the album's trash-infested cover art to the leering lead track, "Wife Sitter" (do the math), the Dogg most transcends when pushing the envelope. So it's the frantic, Stax-style "I Couldn't Pay For What I Got Last Night", with its manic crescendo, and the stone-sober social reality within the smooth melody and keyboard/guitar groove of "Mighty Mighty Dollar Bill" ("In this world of mass confusion/Where brotherly love's a foul illusion") that seal *Maggott* as essential.

EXTRAS: Two live tracks from a 1972 radio

broadcast, including a funky, brassy run-through of the Stones' "Honky Tonk Woman"; new Swamp Dogg liner notes.

LUKE TORN



THE THREE O'CLOCK

The Hidden World Revealed

OMNIVORE RECORDINGS/
FRONTIER

Paisley Underground's most anglophilic upstarts
As surely the '80s LA

8/10

underground band with the weirdest career arc, The Three O'Clock, led by singer Michael Quercio and guitarist Louis Gutierrez, began as neo-psych, indie post-punks The Salvation Army and closed up shop six years later with a hideous, over-produced LP, *Vermillion*, released on Purple One Prince's Paisley Park. *The Hidden World Revealed*, though, traversing both familiar album tracks and unheard demos and alternate takes, concentrates mostly on their initial, unsullied jangle-pop glory – raw, ringing Rickenbackers, angelic, hyper-active keyboards, Quercio's chipper, British boy-next-door vocals, and dizzying melodies of a grandeur to rival their idols – *Revolver*-era Beatles, Byrds, early Bee Gees. The songs, the best of them playful, irresistible (see wacky signature tune "With A Cantaloupe Girlfriend") and the stomping, transcendent "Jet Fighter"), are deceptive – blissfully escapist on the surface, loaded with lethal hooks and an unbridled sense of wonder within. A thumping run-through of Pink Floyd's "Lucifer Sam" betrays their darker affections; signature cuts like "Stupid Einstein" and "A Day In Erotica" bristle with yearning ebullience. "In Love In Too", a long-lost fan-club single boasting a winsome tune and tangles of reverbed guitar figures, is the most revelatory rarity.

EXTRAS: None.

LUKE TORN

The Specialist

Indie-Pop



None more indie-pop: exponents of the bowl cut, The Hangman's Beautiful Daughters, and (inset) Television Personality Dan Treacy

► Scared To Get Happy: A Story Of Indie-Pop 1980-89

CHERRY RED 7/10 is a five-disc, 130+ track survey of British indie through the 80s that manages to be paradoxically both more and less than meets the eye. With its title – a mangling of the line from Hurrah!'s "Hip Hip" (not included here), which inspired the fanzine, that birthed the Sarah Records label – and sketchy bowlie boy cover star, *STGH* is selling itself as the definitive, *Nuggets*-y story of the rise of indie-pop.

But the vagaries of compiling such a boxset hamper this aim. The reluctance of key players like The Pastels or The Vaselines to be involved means that, as a reliable historical account, *STGH* leaves something to be desired. The aegis of Cherry Red also means that certain labels – Mike Alway's elegantly eccentric él, for example – are more heavily represented than you might



expect. The sheer capacious sprawl of the collection means that the genre is stretched to bursting point, with everyone from The Hangman's Beautiful Daughters to the TV Personalities. Squint and you can just about see Lloyd Cole as indie-pop, for example (especially in the light of Camera Obscura's homage), but Prefab Sprout? The Milltown Brothers? Big Flame?

Still, these contingencies frequently work in the collection's favour. Post-C86, the reification and overdefinition of "indie-pop" (a well-trodden path leading from Buzzcocks and Orange Juice to Belle and Sebastian, via Pastels, Creation and Sarah) has resulted in a rarefied international scene where new groups base careers on re-creating the ambience of a solitary flexi disc by The Wake or a Shop Assistants B-side.

STGH is engaging for its haphazard trip through the back roads of '80s guitar groups. Like a tape of some random mid-'80s Peel Show or flicking through an old *NME*, it restores the vivid mess of history, before it was tidied into canons and genres. The chronological sequencing on the first disc canters from Dolly Mixture's "Everything And More" to Prefab Sprout's "Lions In My Own Garden (Exit Someone)" via the The Nightingales, Scars, Jane, Farmer's Boys, The Room and Weekend. The variety diminishes as the set progresses, (disc three, particularly, is a canonical reunion of the usual C86 suspects). Still, the fact the compilers find space for outliers like Jamie Wednesday and The Shamen encourages the idea of indie as an endearingly varied place. **STEPHENTROUSSE**

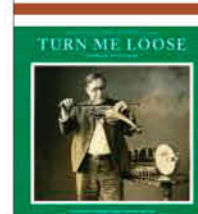


THE UNDERTONES An Introduction To... SALVO

22 tracks from Derry's perfect pop-punks, as well as an excellent doc
As you'd probably expect from one of the finer,

funnier and more engaging punk bands to emerge in the late-'70s, The Undertones are already well served when it comes to comps – 2008's 2-disc *An Anthology From Union Square Music* has most of what you need. So what makes *An Introduction To...* worthwhile is the second disc DVD to go alongside disc one's great-but-not-unexpected 22 tracks of three-minute gems. This first disc features "Teenage Kicks" and "Here Comes The Summer", of course, placed non-chronologically alongside lesser-heard classics like "There Goes Norman" and "Julie Ocean", but doesn't have enough from overlooked 1983 album *The Sin Of Pride*. The DVD makes up for that, though, containing the original promo films for seven singles, a concert from 1980, footage from *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (1978) and *The Tube* (1983) and an excellent 2004 documentary that has the band looking back at their career, from their formation in strife-torn Derry in the mid-1970s to their reunion in 2003. This film features copious amounts of John Peel, who interviews the band with the enthusiasm and sympathy expected from such a longtime fan.

EXTRAS: DVD featuring live and promotional films, and 65-minute documentary *Teenage Kicks – The Story Of The Undertones*. **PETER WATTS**

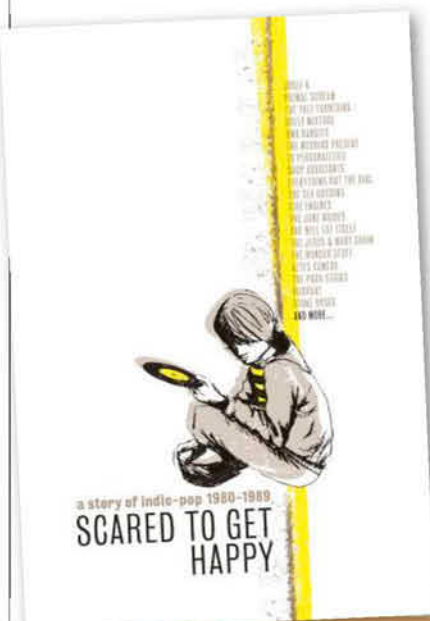


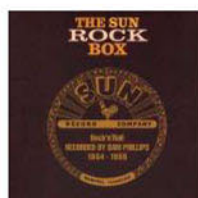
VARIOUS ARTISTS Turn Me Loose (Outsiders Of "Old Time" Music) TOMPKINS SQUARE

Transmissions from older, weirder America
Harry Smith's *Anthology*

has established the idea that folk music in the pre-rock era was a fluid form played by oddballs and weirdos. Frank Fairfield, a contemporary kook with vintage manners, goes further, curating a collection of obscure 78s that demonstrate the playfulness of Anglo-American vernacular music in the earlier part of the 20th Century. Observe Lemuel Turner, a white man playing sparse, slow blues on slide guitar; not unusual after the 1960s, but his "Way Down Yonder Blues" was recorded in Memphis in 1927. Then there is "The Whale Did, I Know He Did", a comic retelling of the story of Jonah by Mustard & Gravy, a group comprising Frank Rice and Ernest Stokes, who played guitar, sang, and made "non-vocal sounds" (kazoo, possibly) in South Carolina in 1938. Many of the recordings are frenetic, as if a lifetime's ambition is being exhaled. Willard Hodgkin's "Don't Get One Woman On Your Mind" sounds as if the singer is still writing the song. And Ernest Rogers' "Mythological Blues" is a real find. He's Lyle Lovett circa 1928, reframing Greek mythology as comedy: "Cyclops with that one big eye, vamped all the women till they thought they'd died."

EXTRAS: None. **ALASTAIR MCKAY**





VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Sun Rock Box 1954-1959

BEAR FAMILY

Ten hours of upstart rock'n'roll from the vault Sun just wouldn't be Sun without Elvis, Jerry Lee and

9/10

Carl Perkins. But it's testament to the breadth of talent that Sam Phillips recorded that the high quality of this hulking eight-CD set rests on the lesser-known names. Originally issued in 1986 and now appended with a further 33 cuts, there are alternate takes, demos, studio chatter and rare sides by such forgotten figures as Curtis Hobock, Jesse Lee Turner and the wobble-voiced Narvel Felts. It's not all hopped-up rock'n'roll, either. Gene Simmons (no, not that one) offers up some dreamy Tex Mex on "Down On The Border", Tracy Pendarvis delivers the haunted white blues of "Southbound Line" and the doo-wop-scented "The Fools Hall Of Fame", later covered by Johnny Cash, comes courtesy of Rudi Richardson, billed as 'America's only male torch singer'. It's tempting to imagine that many of these underground singers dreamt of following Elvis into the big time. But instead their stories, brilliantly catalogued in the accompanying 224-page book, are riddled with woe and dashed ambition. Still, it's invigorating to revisit the raw thump of Sonny Burgess, Billy Riley or wildcat yelper Rosco Gordon. As such, this is an essential (albeit pricey) companion piece to Bear Family's other recent Sun boxes on country and blues.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Country Soul Sisters Vol 2

SOUL JAZZ

Feminist C&W, with Dolly, Tammy, Patsy, Loretta, Wanda et al

As with the first volume,

7/10

these 24 songs document country songs sung by women, recorded at a time when their voices were getting more strident. This being plain-talking Nashville, the gender politics don't hide behind elliptical metaphors; instead these are bold women airing their grievances in public. The troubled Jan Howard sings "your woman's getting tired of being your handyman"; Jeannie C Riley gets deep into evangelical feminism with "The Rib"; Loretta Lynn lobbies for gender parity in "Working Girl"; as does the country-tinged Cher in the rather fabulous "Chastity's Song". But even the tracks that lack sociological bite often take chances musically. Unburdened, perhaps, by macho notions of authenticity, female country singers were often more likely to stray into rock or R'n'B than their male counterparts. Bobbie Gentry's "Okolona River Bottom Band" is a wonderfully woozy slice of fuzz-funk; Aussie-born Diana Trask's "Don't Let It Get Away" is a soulful, Fender Rhodes-led guilty pleasure. Elsewhere, Kitty Wells tackles (and, dare I say, improves) Dylan's "Forever Young", Linda Ronstadt does the same with "Baby You've Been On My Mind", while Linda Martell twangs up The Wintons' soul classic "Color Him Father". All good stuff.

JOHN LEWIS

EXTRAS: None.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Philly ReGrooved 3: Tom Moulton Remixes

HARMLESS

Blissed-out Philly Sound mixes, lovingly edited by 'The Master'

8/10

Though a New York boy, remixer Tom Moulton is best known for his ongoing connection with the Philly Sound – Moulton was so seduced by the productions coming from Philadelphia, he moved there in the '70s to build his then-nascent remixing career. Moulton is one of the key figures in dance music, revolutionising the dancefloor by using the edit to stretch a song's ability to reach the endless nameless at the heart of dancing; when he grabbed hold of Gloria Gaynor's *Never Can Say Goodbye* and turned the first side into an epic disco suite, he also helped change the way the dance-music community thought about the album. *Philly ReGrooved 3* collects 18 new mixes from Moulton. While he's best known for rebuilding songs to fit the contours of the dancefloor, on songs like Blue Magic's "Look Me Up", Moulton's edits also really wring the emotional core of the basic material dry; from here, into a graceful take on The Philly Devotions' "I Just Can't Say Goodbye", and then onto a dreamlike drift through Bettye Swann's peerless "When The Game Is Played On You", Moulton grabs the heart of every song while stretching its grooves out to eternity.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE



VENOM P. STINGER

1986-1991

DRAG CITY

Classic, raw-as-a-skinned-rabbit rock, '80s Australia style

Australian music ruled the world in the '80s; most

9/10

people simply didn't notice. Venom P. Stinger are exhibit number one, their brutalised blues-punk, like Beefheart tackling The Germs' back catalogue with the bastard child of Rudolph Grey on guitar, the *ne plus ultra* of the Australian underground. For most of their days, they were made up of vocalist Dugald McKenzie, bassist Alan Secher-Jensen, guitarist and ex-Sick Things/Fungus Brains member Mick Turner, and drummer Jim White (the latter two would later unlock an entire generation's 'man feelings' in the Dirty Three). 1986-1991 compiles their two albums and two singles, a small but near-perfect body of recorded output, fronted up by the primitivist head-charge that is *Meet My Friend Venom*, topped by their classic single "Walking Around". But some of the more revelatory songs are hidden toward the end, like the strained, punch-card dynamics of "Inside The Waiting Room", songs that pull the kind of destructo-rock moves beholden of Australian rock at the time (see also: Bloodloss, feedtime). It's not the full story: their unreleased third album, *Tearbucketer*, snuck out in the late '90s on Silbreeze. But it'll get you up to speed pretty damn quickly.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE

COMING NEXT MONTH...



➤ Traditionally the finest time of year for album releases, late summer-early autumn 2013 is no exception, in which artists from across the *Uncut* spectrum – established, new,

deceased or very much alive – offer up fresh stuff for your enjoyment.

Elton John's *The Diving Board* is a pleasant surprise from this biggest of names. If his collaboration with Leon Russell still retained something of a showbiz flourish, this new one is more understated. That's a relative concept, of course, but the tunes are much in evidence, the schmaltz much less so.

A different kind of bigness is offered by **Repave** from **Volcano Choir**, the stadium post-rock band fronted by Justin Vernon, and there's a lot of reason to be very optimistic about both **AM**, the new one from Arctic Monkeys (now with reduced Josh Homme) and also **The Worse Things Get, The Harder I Fight, The Harder I Fight, The More I Love You**, from **Neko Case**.

Elsewhere, there's the comparatively sedate delights of a new **Mark Lanegan** album, on which he covers tunes he enjoyed in his parents' record collection, and over in the Archive section, the big kahuna: an 18-disc

John Martyn boxset,

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Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

Aha! Alan Partridge gets a captive audience, Saudi society is scrutinised, Linda Lovelace is laid (almost) bare, an indie auteur returns and Johnny Depp looks for a hi-ho silver lining...

ALAN PARTRIDGE: ALPHA PAPA For Steve Coogan, Alan Partridge's big-screen debut represents a pivotal moment in his relationship with his most famous creation. You sense that Coogan has been trying to escape the character's gravitational pull for some years now – but as the relative failure of yet another non-Partridge project (Paul Raymond biopic *The Look Of Love*) proved, audiences find it difficult to separate Coogan from Alan. So is... *Alpha Papa* a testimony to Alan's timelessness, or an admission that Coogan will never manage to shake off the character?

In many respects, *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa* feels very much like a straight continuation of the TV series. Alan is unchanged by the upgrade to the big screen: as ever, what drives the film are his grotesque and clumsy attempts to further his career. Where perhaps the film doesn't quite work is moving Alan into what you might loosely term a "real world" situation. For the most part, *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa* takes place in the offices of North Norfolk Digital, where Alan currently broadcasts his *Mid Morning Matters* show. As Alan's co-creator, Armando Iannucci, explains in this issue's An Audience With..., "The key to Alan is keeping his attitude and his world small, even though we're on a big screen."

As the film opens, we find Alan mithering over predictable concerns – "Which is the worst monger?" he asks listeners. "Fish, iron, rumour or war?" But North Norfolk Digital has been taken over, its core brand values reimagined; it has been renamed Shape and given a particularly meaningless new tag-line: "The way you want it to be". This leads to presenter Pat Farrell, who's been sacked in the takeover, laying armed siege to the station's offices, holding a group of hostages to ransom. Alan, inexplicably, finds himself liaising between the police and Pat. (For the record, Alan's favourite siege is the Iranian embassy.) What follows is mostly very funny, in particular the jaw-dropping awfulness of Alan's attempts to use his role as hostage negotiator to his own ends. Fans of the show will be pleased to see the return of Alan's long-suffering assistant, Lynne, as well as Georgie Michael and rival DJ Dave Clifton.

➤ **Wadjda** is the first full-length feature film shot entirely inside Saudi Arabia, a conservative



Hands up who likes REO Speedwagon: (l-r) Nigel Lindsay, Simon Greenall and Steve Coogan in *Alan Partridge: Alpha Male*

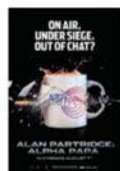
Islamic country where women are denied civic freedoms or any public role. It's director is Haifaa Al-Mansour, a Saudi-born female filmmaker who now lives in Bahrain. While shooting on location in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, Al-Mansour had to hide in a production van, directing her actors via walkie-talkie, because she could not publicly mix with her male crew. Although her film is ostensibly an intimate story about an 11-year old girl living in Riyadh who dreams of owning a bike, nevertheless it projects a deeper message about Saudi society. Wadjda, played by Waad Mohammed, is a precocious young Saudi girl from a lower-middle-class family in Riyadh; her spirit and tenacity are considered problematic by her school teachers, while Wadjda herself is perplexed by the Kingdom's restrictive culture towards women. Much as women are not allowed to drive cars, girls – Wadjda learns – cannot ride bikes. Seeing no logic in this, Wadjda sets out to learn passages from the Quran for a school competition, her plan

to use the prize money on offer to buy a bike.

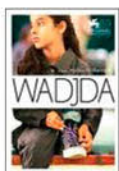
With its simplicity and clarity, Al-Mansour's film owes much to Italian neo-realism – a plucky young child and a bicycle notwithstanding – but also Jafar Panahi's films about the experiences of women and children in modern-day Iran. Wadjda – and her mother, played by Reem Abdullah – are both struggling with the social barriers they face in Saudi society. Wadjda's mother appears to be unable to conceive another child, so her husband is looking to take another wife. This is a country where the trappings of contemporary living are prized – high-end cars, giant flat-screen televisions, shopping malls – yet where an 11-year-old girl isn't allowed under law to ride a bicycle. "Don't leave the Quran open," warns her mother, "in case the Devil spits inside it." Unmissable.

➤ **Lovelace** In 1972, Linda Boreman became briefly notorious as Linda Lovelace, the star of *Deep Throat*, an adult film that became a catalyst

Reviewed this month...



ALAN PARTRIDGE: ALPHA PAPA
Director Declan Lowney
Starring Steve Coogan, Colm Meaney
Opens August 7
Certificate 12A
7/10



WADJDA
Director Haifaa Al-Mansour
Starring Waad Mohammed, Reem Abdullah
Opens July 19
Certificate PG
9/10



LOVELACE
Director Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman
Starring Amanda Seyfried, Peter Sarsgaard
Opens August 23
Certificate 15
7/10



UPSTREAM COLOR
Director Shane Carruth
Starring Amy Seimetz, Shane Carruth
Opens August 30
Certificate 15
6/10



THE LONE RANGER
Director Gore Verbinski
Starring Johnny Depp, Armie Hammer
Opens August 9
Certificate 12A
5/10



for swirling social and historical forces. The film was targeted by Nixon and the FBI, while its director, Jerry Damiano, became an unlikely counterculture hero, battling against charges of distributing obscene material. Allegedly funded by the Mafia, the film is reported to have grossed a staggering \$600 million – of which the star apparently saw only £1,250. Lovelace herself, meanwhile, became celebrated as the liberated girl next door until her autobiography, *Ordeal*, revealed her as the victim of her manager/husband, Chuck Traynor.

A 2005 documentary, *Inside Deep Throat*, covered a lot of this ground, but Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman have revisited Lovelace's life for a full biopic that, while sympathetic, lacks the nerve to fully detail the injustices she suffered at Traynor's hands.

We start with her oppressive childhood in working-class Florida with her parents (Robert Patrick and – brilliant – Sharon Stone) from which she's rescued (in the form of Amanda Seyfried) by charming hustler Traynor (Peter Sarsgaard) and introduced to director Damiano (Hank Azaria), ushering in her career as the first bona fide porn star. Along the way, James Franco cameos as Hugh Hefner, and there are brisk turns from Chris Noth, Wes Bentley and Chloë Sevigny. Despite Epstein and Friedman's

decision to shoot key sequences of Linda's story from different viewpoints – presumably to expose Traynor's Machiavellian influence – and some excellent work from Seyfried, the film drifts a little too far into *Boogie Nights* territory, and seems less inclined to probe deeply into the details of the story. As decent as Sarsgaard is as Traynor, you can't help but wonder what, say, John Hawkes, or James Woods in his prime, would have made of the role.

➤ **Upstream Color** When Shane Carruth's debut, *Primer*, was released in 2004, it seemed wilfully inscrutable. Shot on a budget of \$7,000, it was a cerebral time-travel movie, light on special effects but high on theory, that won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival but left many baffled. If anything, Carruth's second film, *Upstream Color*, is likely to polarise audiences even more than its predecessor. At its best, this is challenging experimental cinema; though I suspect many will find it pretentious and deliberately oblique.

If *Primer* was characterised by a very formal austerity, *Upstream Color* is, in contrast, lush, symphonic and sensual. Kris (Amy Seimetz) is a victim of a figure referred to as the Thief, who uses a hypnotic drug fashioned from parasitic grubs to extract financial information from his marks, leaving them with no memory of the events afterwards. So Kris finds herself broke, jobless and homeless, which is when she meets Jeff (Carruth himself), who has also been a victim of the Thief. Although they have no recollection of their experiences, they sense they are connected. Carruth's film drifts further and further into allegory, its final, fragmentary third section a beautiful, near-wordless tone poem that forgoes conventional narrative for something more sensual and aesthetic. And I haven't even mentioned the stuff with the pigs.

➤ **The Lone Ranger** Released two weeks' after a new print of *Heaven's Gate* reaches cinemas, *The Lone Ranger* arrives dragging with it a pile of bad reviews and poor box office receipts. In truth, it's not entirely the dog's dinner that many American critics have claimed it to be. Nevertheless, this re-tooling of the old western TV series marks a turning point for its star, Johnny Depp. Although reuniting Depp with producer Jerry Bruckheimer and his *Pirates Of The Caribbean* director Gore Verbinski seemed like a good idea in a boardroom at Disney, there are obvious flaws. The death of the western at the box office is critical here; and God help us, remember the last comedy Western – *Wild, Wild West* – nearly derailed Will Smith's career. There's also, tellingly,

a consensus that audiences are perhaps beginning to tire of Depp's schtick. Although, Depp's Tonto – wearing a dead crow on his head, vibes by Buster Keaton, make-up via Gene Simmons – is a better creation than his dialled-in Barnabas Collins from *Dark Shadows*.

And certainly, *The Lone Ranger* is a better film – Verbinski making satisfactory nods to John Ford and Sergio Leone – although, as is the case with every megamovie these days, it's at least 30 minutes too long. Depp, though, needs to decide where to go next. It would be creatively more prudent for him to return to more projects like *The Ninth Gate*, *Blow* or *Finding Neverland* – though one would dearly love for another film as good as *Dead Man*, the best western Johnny Depp has ever made.

Is...Alpha Papa a testimony to Partridge's timelessness, or an admission that Steve Coogan will never manage to shake off the character?

Also out...

HEAVEN'S GATE

OPENS AUGUST 2

Michael Cimino's legendary Western is digitally restored for maximum viewing pleasure. Fans of old *Uncut* rejoice.

ONLY GOD FORGIVES

OPENS AUGUST 2

Ryan Gosling and Nicolas Winding Refn reteam for brutal art house goings on, much derided at Cannes this year.

RED 2

OPENS AUGUST 2

More mature carnage from Bruce Willis, Helen Mirren and John Malkovich. Also stars both movie incarnations of Hannibal Lecter – Brian Cox and Anthony Hopkins.



DAVID BOWIE IS HAPPENING NOW

OPENS AUGUST 13

Somehow, the V&A exhibition comes to Picturehouse cinemas for a one-off nationwide event. Expect talking heads and iconic costumes.

KICK-ASS 2

OPENS AUGUST 14

Weird Twitter rants notwithstanding, Jim Carrey is a new cast addition to the swearsy, violent, vigilante comic book adaptation.

ELYSIUM

OPENS AUGUST 21

Sci-fi from *District 9* director Neil Blomkamp, with Matt Damon facing off Jodie Foster's nasty government official.

THE WAY, WAY BACK

OPENS AUGUST 28

Presented to us as being in the mould of *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Juno*, this comedy charts a 14-year-old boy's summer vacation with his mother. Steve Carell, Toni Collette and Sam Rockwell star.

BONJOUR TRISTESSE

OPENS AUGUST 30

David Niven, Deborah Kerr, Jean Seberg, the French Riviera. What's not to like?

PLEIN SOLEIL

OPENS AUGUST 30

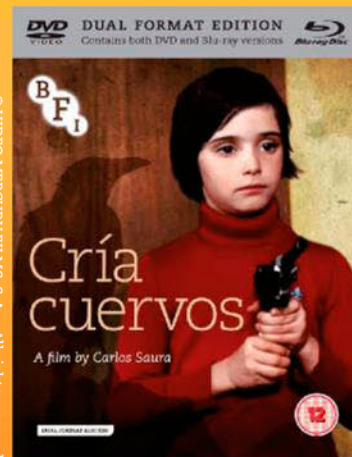
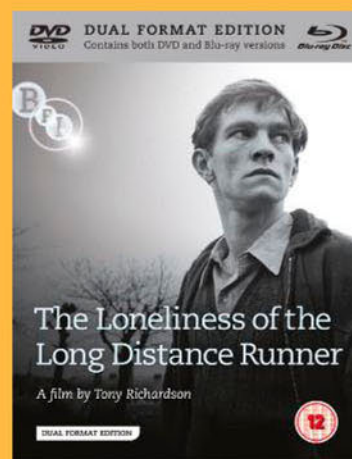
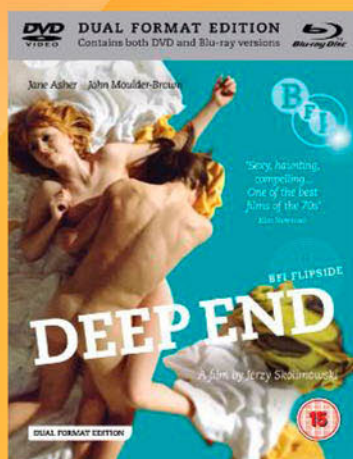
The first iteration of *The Talented Mr Ripley*, with Alain Delon as Patricia Highsmith's sociopathic killer. C'est bon!

PAIN & GAIN

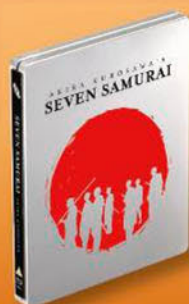
OPENS AUGUST 30

"Crime comedy" from Michael Bay, with Mark Wahlberg and the actor formerly known as The Rock blowing shit up.

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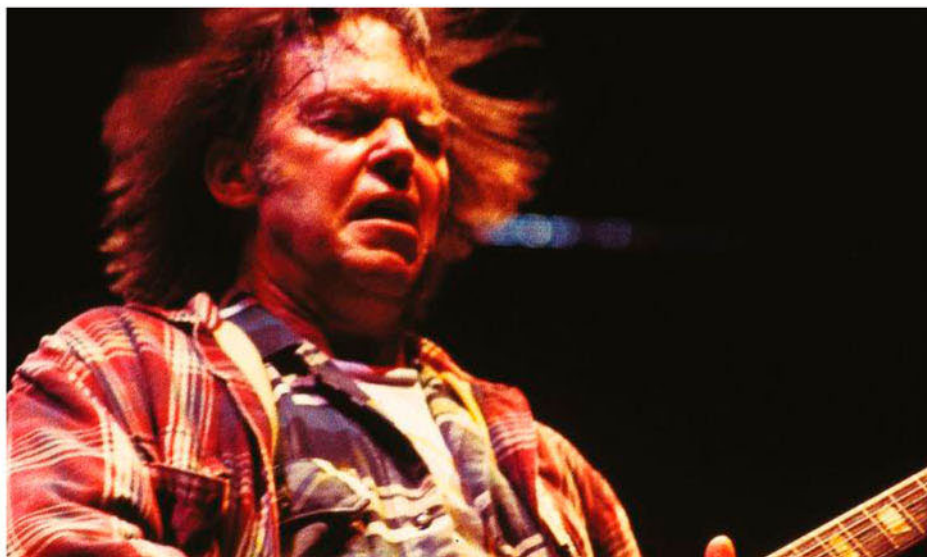
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SCORING:

10 A true classic 9 Essential 8 Excellent
7 Very good 6 Good 4-5 Mediocre 1-3 Poor

THIS MONTH: NEIL YOUNG, HANNIBAL, THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES

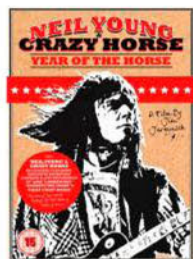


NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE

Year Of The Horse

UNIVERSAL/OCTOBER FILMS

DVD debut of long-unavailable concert footage from 1996, with bonus backstage access. *By Andy Gill*



8/10

AS THEIR RECENT shows confirmed, there are few more glorious sights in rock'n'roll than Neil Young & Crazy Horse in full flow, a bunch of grizzled old geezers galumphing round the stage like golems trying to party. In this Jim Jarmusch concert documentary shot in 1996, that quality is splendidly on show throughout the

live segments, most notably the raw, raucous version of "Fuckin' Up" that seems to smoulder right through the screen.

This isn't older musicians trying to sustain some delusion of youthful potency; this is a bunch of middle-aged men, led by a surly, stomping guitarist in baggy knee-length shorts and a nondescript T-shirt. But the very lack of self-conscious stagecraft carries with it the implication that what you're being given is something purely musical, unmediated by modern digital strategies that demand everything be a multi-platform, multi-media, interactive experience. It's pure rock'n'roll, as the introductory tag-line explains, "Made loud to be played loud. CRANK IT UP!"

Jarmusch filmed a couple of dates, at a Roman amphitheatre in Vienne, France, and at The Gorge Amphitheatre, in Washington state, on Super-8 film, the grainy quality of which matches both the attitude of the band's performance and the earlier backstage footage from 1976 and 1986, which, along with more recent interviews, punctuates the music. It's all neatly stitched together – the "Fuckin' Up" performance, for instance, slips

straight into a backstage argument from Rotterdam in 1986 between Young and bassist Billy Talbot about somebody fucking up that performance: Young is heated, furiously demanding, and Talbot gives as good as he gets in return, an indication of the untrammelled flow of energy within the band. Elsewhere, we get to see the 1976 band in dumb rock-tour mode, burning fake flowers in a Glasgow hotel room, and there's a brilliant, brief moment from that tour showing Young smashing his head on a table in mock-exhaustion as he's about to be interviewed by Richard Williams.

It's far from the ideal Neil and Crazy Horse setlist, with only a handful of classics – including a version of "Tonight's The Night" following a segment about the deaths of Danny Whitten and Bruce Berry – sprinkled parsimoniously through the show. But it barely matters: as Young maintains, "It's all one song," an ongoing flow of music hewn into eight-to-ten-minute chunks. And any technical effects are kept to a minimum, and used subtly, as when stage footage of the band playing "Slips Away" is blended with a tour-bus shot of passing sky and landscape.

The most dramatic moment, though, comes during "Like A Hurricane", which begins in usual manner, as if the song is being wrenched physically from the ground, like a tectonic plate shifting free, the kind of suitably elemental approach that no other bunch of dad-rockers would dare attempt – then suddenly, seamlessly, the footage segues into a younger, thinner-faced Neil playing the song at Hammersmith Odeon in 1976. It's a startling *coup de cinéma* that illustrates perfectly Young's earlier contention that "the older we get, the more we realise how special it is".



HANNIBAL SEASON 1

STUDIOCANAL

Lecter returns for the ultimate TV dinner

Not a prequel, not a sequel – *Hannibal* throws you right into the Lecter story right where you know it from the movies. Therein lies some of the show's genius, confining all its references

8/10

to one episode and otherwise focusing on the courtship between psychiatrist Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) and his client, nervy FBI profiler Will Graham (Hugh Dancy). It's a suspenseful update, featuring crime bloggers, new art references – more Marc Quinn than Francis Bacon – to the fleshing out, so to speak, of the characters. A feast for friends.

EXTRAS: Commentaries, deleted scenes.
6/10 JOHN ROBINSON



THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES

STUDIOCANAL

Star-studded yet lacklustre drama

Derek Cianfrance's overcooked Oedipal drama is very powerful in patches, but undermined by its own portentousness. The three-part screenplay evokes

6/10

memories of Alejandro González Iñárritu's equally contrived *21 Grams*. This time, Ryan Gosling (in familiar, minimalist Steve McQueen mode) is a motorbike stunt rider who takes to robbing banks to support a son he didn't know he had. Bradley Cooper is the young cop who becomes his nemesis. Cianfrance elicits excellent performances from his leads, but the generation-spanning narrative is cumbersome.

EXTRAS: Deleted and extended scenes,
6/10 Making Of, trailer
GEOFFREY MACNAB



THE RETURNED

UNIVERSAL

The flipside to *The Walking Dead*

Channel 4's ratings hit French-made supernatural drama owes a clear debt to the slow burn atmosphere of Nordic Noir, but laces its story with motifs that recall the off-kilter world of *Twin Peaks*. Long-deceased men,

8/10

women and children start to reappear in an isolated Alpine town, bringing both fear and joy to their loved ones while forcing them to confront their own pasts. And why is the water level at the local reservoir dropping...? Eerie and intriguing, the puzzle continues when Season Two starts shooting early next year.

EXTRAS: Unconfirmed.
TERRY STAUNTON

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD

SETLIST

BARBICAN

- 1 **The Last Polka**
(Gita Harcourt-Smith and Leafcutter John)
- 2 **Eyes That Say I Love You**
(Joan As Police Woman)
- 3 **Old Shanghai**
(Conor O'Brien)
- 4 **The Wolf Is On The Hill**
(The Pictish Trail)
- 5 **We're Making Our Own Entertainment** (poem by Luke Wright)
- 6 **Saint Dude** (Guillemots)
- 7 **Sorry** (Michael Kiwanuka)
- 8 **Please Leave The Light On When You Go** (Beth Orton/Sam Amidon)
- 9 **Ye Midnight Stars**
(James Yorkston)
- 10 **What Does It Mean To Love Music** (poem by Kate Tempest)
- 11 **Title Of This Song**
(The Irrepressibles)
- 12 **America, Here's My Boy**
(Sam Amidon)
- 13 **Why Did You Make Me Care** (Jarvis Cocker)
- 14 **Saint Dude** (Franz Ferdinand)
- 15 **Leave Your Razors By The Door** (Franz Ferdinand)
- 16 **We All Wear Cloaks**
(The Mighty Boosh)
- 17 **Just Noise** (Beck, Charlotte Gainsbourg & Connan Mockasin)
- 18 **Now That Your Dollar Bills Have Sprouted Wings**
(The Staves)
- 19 **Zodiac T-Shirt** (poem by Simon Armitage)
- 20 **Don't Act Like Your Heart Isn't Hard** (Beck)
- 21 **I'm Down** (Beck)
- 22 **I Wrote The Songs/Necrophilia** (poems by John Cooper Clarke)
- 23 **Do We, We Do**
(Beck, Joan As Police Woman, Conor O'Brien)
- ENCORE:**
- 24 **Rough On Rats** (everyone)



BECK

BARBICAN, LONDON, JULY 4/UNION CHAPEL, LONDON, JULY 7, 2013

Where he's at... Beck tackles his backlog of songs, with a little help from his friends

NEARLY TWO DECADES after his debut album, Beck is at a curious point in his career. He still has the swagger and mystique of a big star, but his recording career seems to be in an indefinite furlough. He wrote and recorded another LP that year, which would have been his 12th, but it remains unreleased, apparently a victim of Beck's self-doubt and perfectionism. He's since thrown us a handful of songs for film soundtracks (including five wonderful fragments for *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World*) and two stand-alone singles but, instead of recording his own work, he's tended to hide behind other people's.

Beck, of late, seems happier as a back-room presence, producing records for the likes of Thurston Moore, Stephen Malkmus, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Jamie Lidell, Childish Gambino or Philip Glass; or getting together with his pals (Devendra Banhart, Tortoise, Jeff

Tweedy, for example) to cover entire albums by the likes of INXS or Joni Mitchell in a single day for his Record Club Sessions.

It's tempting to see this as a massive case of writer's block, but his first UK date in five years is proof of quite the opposite. "Song Reader Live" is a massive variety show at the Barbican, in which Beck joins a host of guests to perform numbers from last year's *Song Reader* collection of sheet music – proof that he's (literally) penned at least two dozen proper songs in recent years. Some of the tunes are as good as anything he's ever written, and an impressive 11-piece house band turn the dots on the page into pop gold, with help from assorted guests. So Joan "As Police Woman" Wasser makes "Eyes That Say I Love You" a pulsating piece of gospel rave; Villagers' Conor O'Brien renders "Old Shanghai" a 1970s-style guilty pleasure; and Jarvis Cocker transforms "Why Did You Make Me Care" into a hilariously melodramatic,

Scott Walker-does-Jacques Brel waltz. There are other tremendous performances: by The Staves, by Beth Orton and Sam Amidon, and by a reunited The Mighty Boosh (here performing "We All Wear Cloaks" as a piece of Brechtian vaudeville, with Julian Barratt a rather nifty guitarist).

Weirdly, the only off-note in this tremendous gig is Beck's own versions of his *Song Reader* compositions. He seems faintly uncomfortable throughout, mumbling "I'm Down" and messing up the middle-eight of "Just Noise". Speaking to *Uncut* last year, he was adamant that he wasn't going to play any of these songs live. "The whole point is that it's up to other people to do their versions," he said. Perhaps he should have stuck to his word. The primacy of interpretation is illustrated earlier in the evening, when the song "Saint Dude" is tackled by two different bands: Guillemots turn it into a mournful country ballad; Franz Ferdinand do it as jerky punk-funk with



Bar-band (l-r): Alex Kapranos, Beck, Jarvis Cocker and Charlotte Gainsbourg

Frank Ocean

BRIXTON ACADEMY, LONDON, JULY 10, 2013

How deep is the Ocean? An end-of-the-bed confession for 5,000 intimate associates

IT'S A TELLING moment. Near the close of tonight's set, Frank Ocean appears to briefly grab his crotch, and the crowd's relentless squealing instantly becomes a deafening paroxysm of desire – this despite the fact that the 25-year-old singer may well be simply adjusting his double-handed grip on the mic.

What you see is not necessarily what you get with Ocean, the least calculatedly obnoxious and the most creatively compelling member of the Odd Future collective. On the back of a mixtape (2011's *Nostalgia*, *Ultra*) and debut album proper (*Channel Orange*, No 5 in *Uncut*'s Best Albums Of 2012 chart), he's made his name thanks in part to an agenda-bending honesty that touches on existential uncertainty, suicide and his own bisexuality.

Still, it's apparent from opening new song, "Feel California", that Ocean and his band won't be tearing the roof off this venue. Not because of poor sound or lack of stage presence (he may say little, but the singer isn't short on charm or charisma), but because his songs are intensely intimate in pitch and slyly seductive in tone. They're the stuff of end-of-bed confessionals, made for the cocooned solitude of headphones-listening or at the very most a small bar, not a 5,000-strong communion. If the recorded complexity of album centrepiece "Pyramids" is reduced to its EDM component parts, and the furious drumming and electronics on "Novacane" threaten to submerge the star, then the deceptively breezy "Crack Rock", the head-nodding ode to privileged Generation Y'ers that is "Super Rich Kids" and the perkily poignant "Lost" replicate most of their studio magic. Ocean's voice, too – equal parts smooth soul croon, sweet falsetto and gritty *sprechgesang* – is a fine match for songs whose lustrous hooks and solar glaze invariably betray a core darkness.

That he's already earned his position on a continuum that stretches from Marvin Gaye to Kanye West, via Shuggie Otis and Prince, is hard to deny. As is the feeling that, inevitably, we'll soon lose Ocean to the enormodomes.

SHARON O'CONNELL

Beatles harmonies. "Neither of us is wrong," says Alex Kapranos. Indeed, Beck's presence at this recital seems to violate the DIY spirit that everyone at the Barbican seems to be celebrating.

Three nights later, a mile-and-a-half up the road, a low-key gig at Islington's Union Chapel suggests that Beck Hansen appears to be rebuilding his career; almost learning how to be "Beck" once more. For this acoustic session he's occasionally joined by bass guitarist Rory McCarthy and French pianist Vincent Taurelle. But for much of the show Beck is alone, self-contained, with an acoustic guitar and a harmonica on a neck rack.

He did a similar gig at this venue a decade ago for a BBC broadcast, but this is a more confident affair, one in which selected parts of his back catalogue are reworked as woozy Americana. One of his earliest compositions, the Dylanesque "Pay No Mind (Snooter)", is introduced as being "from those heady protest days of 1991". Much of *Sea Change* is elegantly reworked, and there's a rare reading of "Rowboat", a country shuffle he wrote for Johnny Cash. Even the excursions into Prince-ish R&B sound like the work of the lone, backwoods troubadour: "Debra", the last track on *Midnite Vultures*, sees Beck alone onstage, sparring with a temperamental Korg drumbox, turning it into a hilarious Flight Of The Conchords slow-jam.

And, as a nod to his endless Record Club projects, there are a lot of covers. There are lovely, limpid versions of Big Star's "Kangaroo" and Chris Bell's "I Am The

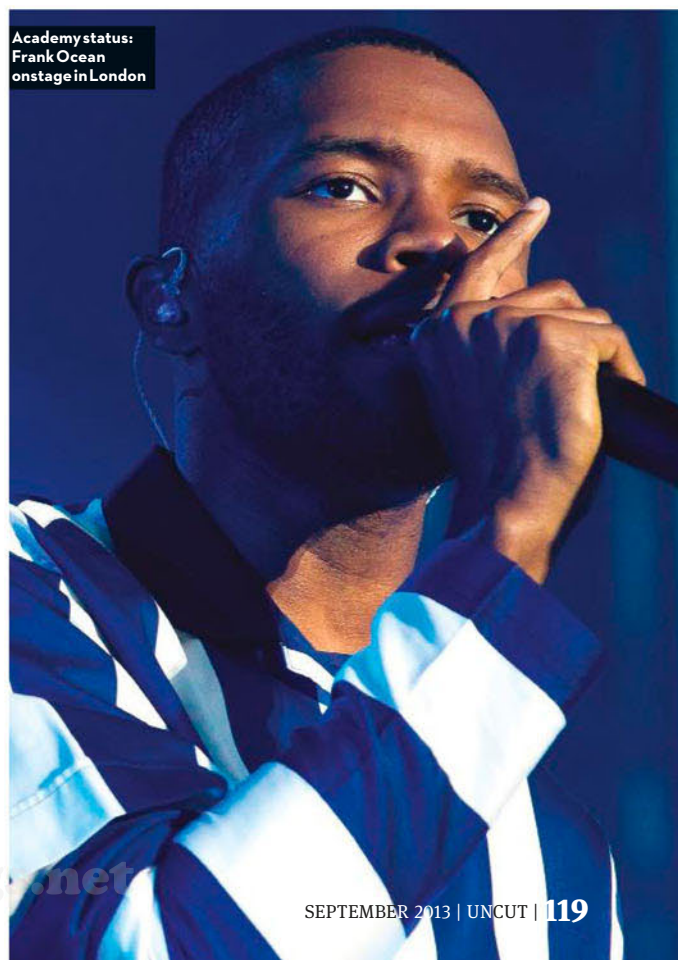
Cosmos", plus his familiar take on The Korgis' "Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime", while Bobby Gillespie joins him for the encore to sing harmonies on Hank Williams' "You Win Again" and the Stones' "Dead Flowers". Earlier in the evening, a stray beat on his drumbox encourages Beck to improvise a weird mash-up of "Billie Jean" and "Get It On", segueing both of them into his own song "Sissynneck". It's all approached with an endearing informality, and even his two children (son, Cosimo, and daughter, Tuesday) join him onstage to bang tambourines. When Beck shrieks out the "Billie Jean" line "The kid is not my son", Cosimo slaps his own forehead with perfect comic timing.

It's a performance that's more about consolidation than breaking new ground. Although there's rumoured to be at least one acoustic Beck album due this year, he doesn't do much new material, aside from a handful of *Song Reader* numbers (which retain the same problems as his performances at the Barbican), a solo blues track (which owes something to Blind Willie McTell's "Mama, Tain't Long Fo' Day"), and an intriguingly glitchy, rumbling, modal song with full band and an off-kilter drumbox.

Beck remains in a curious position. There's no doubt he's a great producer who knows his way around a studio, a terrific songwriter, a charismatic performer. It remains to be seen whether he can put all three together once more.

JOHN LEWIS

Academy status:
Frank Ocean
onstage in London



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Gathering no moss:
Wood, Watts, Jagger
and Richards, Hyde
Park, July 6, 2013

THE ROLLING STONES

HYDE PARK, LONDON, JULY 6/13, 2013

Mick and the gang's 50 & Counting campaign ends with two nostalgic shindigs in Hyde Park

WHEN THE ROLLING Stones appeared here in 1969, they played on a stage so flimsy it could have been towed away afterwards on the back of a truck or broken down on the spot and sold for scrap. Unlike the Stones, it was not built to last.

For what turns out to be a triumphant return to Hyde Park, the Stones have built a stage as big as Luxembourg flanked rather preposterously by two plastic oak trees, 70-feet high ("It's like a tree house for Boris Johnson to live in," says Mick Jagger at the second show, a week later). The many fake branches create a tangled, leafy arch over the proscenium and twine around the lighting rigs. The whole gigantic edifice turns into a huge multi-sided video screen, a blazing cube that often displays multiple images of the Stones simultaneously, to increasingly dizzying effect, the band appearing in sometimes frightening detail. Whenever Keith Richards comes looming massively into view, it's like watching Godzilla lumbering out of a primeval murk to wreak havoc on the world.

Over the course of four decades playing the largest venues available to them, the Stones have created an astonishing machine, of which they remain the most vulnerable part. Irrespective of the high-tech

spectacle with which they surround themselves on tours that are planned like military campaigns, there is still something admirably fallible about them. You'd think, after so long doing this, they'd be so well-drilled there should be no off-moments to speak of, no dropped notes, miscues, fluffed lines, missed parts, fumbled climaxes. With the Stones, though, the potential for calamity seems always to lurk mischievously in the wings, which adds a welcome unpredictability to things.

Tonight begins with such a howler. I'm not sure whether Keith simply fluffs the intro to "Start Me Up" or there's some technical glitch. Either way, his guitar sounds like a cat retching up a hairball.

It's a quickly forgotten mishap, however, because the Stones are quickly into their imperial stride and everything that follows is essayed with raffish panache, the set loaded with what it's really no exaggeration to describe as some of rock's most immortal classics.

Highlights of the first 30 minutes

include a wonderfully rowdy "It's Only Rock 'N' Roll", with Keith suddenly on fire, a fantastically swaggering "Tumbling Dice", a hard-driving "All Down The Line" and, best of all, a "Beast Of Burden" that crackles with the same gnarly defiance and weathered obduracy that Keith later brings to a terrific version of "Before They Make Me Run".

For "Honky Tonk Women", Jagger appears in a kind of white smock that's clearly designed to recall the infamous Mr Fish dress he wore in 1969 (he later puts on a jacket embroidered with butterflies, in another cute reference to the original show). This is the first of five songs played

tonight that were also on the 1969 setlist and it absolutely rocks, with great guitar from Keith and rollicking piano from Chuck Leavell, pleasingly prominent in the mix.

The rather stolid young American blues guitarist Gary Clark Jr is plucked from the afternoon's largely undistinguished undercard and hauled out for a go at "Bitch", but it's

Mick Taylor who predictably turns out to be the star guest, back in the park where he made his debut performance with the Stones. Now a burly man in middle age when then he was a sylph-like 22, or whatever, Taylor weighs into "Midnight Rambler" with a solo of piercing clarity, Keith replying with something slurred and grubby, the performance assuming a breathless momentum as Keith, hunched, turns to face Charlie, the song reaching an absolutely furious climax. The Stones by now aren't so much on the home straight as a premature victory lap, the last half hour a triumphant procession through "Gimme Shelter", "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (Keith and Ronnie joyfully tearing it up), "Sympathy For The Devil" (played out against what looks like a backdrop of flames, with a scorching Keith solo) and "Brown Sugar".

A week later, the Stones' 50 & Counting manoeuvres come to an end. There are a few tweaks to the setlist: "Ruby Tuesday" ("something romantic," says Mick); "Emotional Rescue", amazingly played live in Europe for the first time; and "Street Fighting Man", a song whose countercultural thrill isn't dampened by the event's byzantine levels of corporate tiers, luxury restaurants, sponsored bars and credit-card branding.

The encores, once again, are a lovely "You Can't Always Get What You Want" and "Satisfaction", before the final bows, with Mick Taylor in the middle – symbolically, at least, back in the very heart of the Stones. The last thing we see up there on the giant screens is Keith putting his arm round Charlie as they walk offstage into the wings, swallowed up by the blackness.

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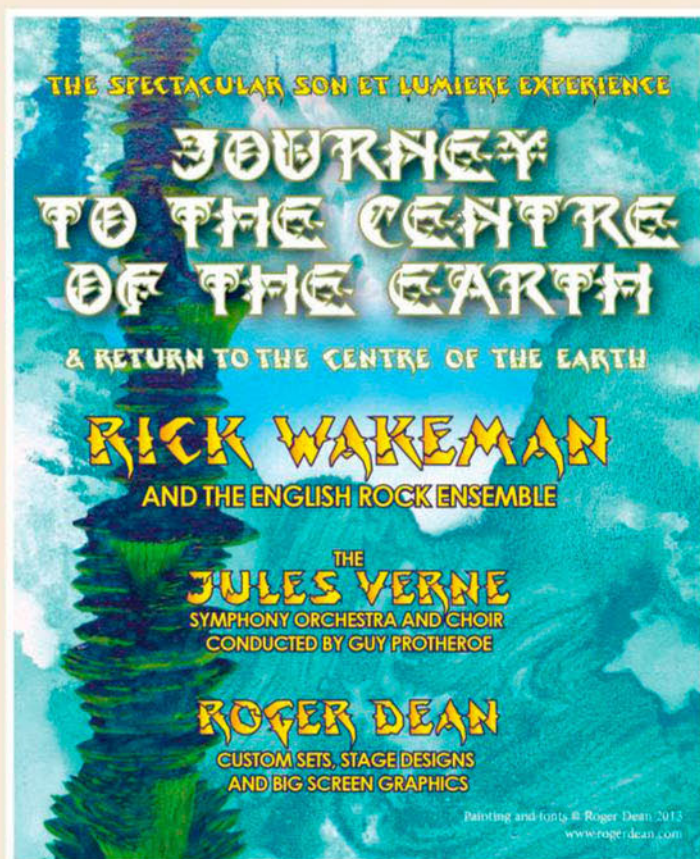
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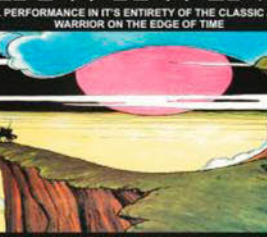
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Lloyd Cole



FRIDAY 18 OCT - **WORCESTER** - HUNTINGDON HALL
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SPECIAL GUEST
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THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER THE GREYSTONES - SHEFFIELD

STEVE HARLEY
& Cockney Rebel

Fri 16 Aug
Holmfirth Picturedrome

Weds 6 Nov
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Thurs 7 Nov
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THURS 10 OCT - MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE
TUES 15 OCT - SHEFFIELD GREYSTONES

A black and white photograph of a man, likely James Taylor, playing a piano. He is looking down at the keys with a focused expression. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and hands.

**JAMES
TAYLOR
QUARTET**

Thurs 26 Sep - St Ives Guildhall



Focus

FRI 11 OCT
TAVISTOCK
WHARF

SAT 12 OCT
FALMOUTH
PRINCESS PAVILION

**Martha
Wainwright**

Sat 17 Aug
The Picturdrome
Holmfirth

A black and white portrait of Martha Wainwright, looking slightly to the right. She has light-colored hair and is wearing a dark, patterned top. The portrait is positioned on the right side of the poster, partially overlapping the text.

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28 BRISTOL ST GEORGE'S
29 BIRMINGHAM GLEE CLUB

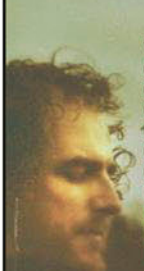
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NOVEMBER

- 01 BRISTOL, Thekla
- 03 CARDIFF, The Globe
- 04 BIRMINGHAM, Glee Club
- 05 LIVERPOOL, The Kazimier
- 06 MANCHESTER, Gorilla
- 07 HEBDEN BRIDGE, Picture House
- 09 EDINBURGH, Pleasance
- 10 ABERDEEN, Lemon Tree

- 11 GLASGOW, Oran Mor
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19 CARDIFF, THE GATE

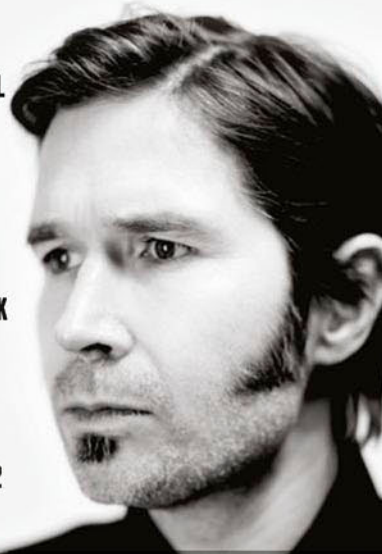
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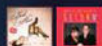
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- 18 LONDON, Roundhouse
- 20 MANCHESTER, The Ritz
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- 26 QUEEN'S SOCIAL CLUB, SHEFFIELD
- 27 THE RUBY LOUNGE, MANCHESTER
- 28 ELECTRIC CIRCUS, EDINBURGH
- 29 THE GRAND, CLITHEROE
- 30 O₂ ACADEMY2, LEICESTER

DECEMBER

- 01 GULBENKIAN THEATRE, CANTERBURY
- 03 THE STABLES, MILTON KEYNES
- 05 O₂ SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON
- 07 NEW GREENHAM ARTS, NEWBURY
- 08 CLWB IFOR BACH, CARDIFF
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27 STEVENAGE	Concert Hall	01438 363200			

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02 SOUTHSEA	Kings Theatre	023 9282 8282	18 DUMFRIES	DG One	01387 243550
03 TUNBRIDGE WELLS	Assembly Hall	01892 530613	19 LIVERPOOL	Philharmonic Hall	0151 709 3789
04 BRISTOL	Colston Hall	0117 9223 686	20 YORK	Barbican	0844 854 2757
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06 HIGH WYCOMBE	Swan Theatre	01494 512000	26 CHATHAM	Central Theatre	01634 338338
12 BUXTON	Opera House	0845 127 2190	27 BRIGHTON	Theatre Royal	0844 841 7650
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02 BLACKPOOL	Opera House	0844 856 1111	21 INVERNESS	Eden Court Theatre	01463 234 234
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FRI	25	NORWICH UEA THE NICK RAYNS LCR
SAT	26	LONDON ROUNDHOUSE
MON	28	BRISTOL O ₂ ACADEMY
TUE	29	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
THU	31	LEEDS O ₂ ACADEMY

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FRI	01	MANCHESTER ACADEMY
SUN	03	GLASGOW O ₂ ACADEMY
MON	04	NEWCASTLE O ₂ ACADEMY
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13 Bristol	Colston Hall	24 Ipswich	Regent Theatre
14 London	Hammersmith Apollo	25 Cambridge	Corn Exchange
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Books

IT COSTS ABOUT as much as it would to fund an interventionist war in a far-off country, but if you are a fan of either Tom Waits or photographer Anton Corbijn and have the money to spare, then this beautifully designed and presented tome, **Waits/Corbijn '77-'11**, will make a handsome addition to your library. Don't expect much change out of £200, though. The thing is as heavy as a small car, so you may also want to think about reinforcing your bookshelves. I wouldn't even consider putting it on a coffee table unless it has steel legs that won't sag under its buckling weight.

Corbijn first photographed Waits in Holland in 1977 and has continued to work with him regularly since, so the images collected here, 145 of them, cover three decades of Waits' life and career, Waits looking in many of them like he has been assembled from the parts of others, such is the angular dissonance of his contortionist's body, with its long, twiggy arms and legs and a face that even in what passes for Waits' youth looks like something people have walked over, some of them stopping to stub out a cigarette butt or scrape something off the bottoms of their shoes.

Over many pages, we see Waits advancing into gnarly maturity, successive sessions marking his progression from young bar jockey with a taste for late nights and wife-beater vests to latter incarnations where he sometimes looks like something sprung to life from an Edward Gorey illustration – as in the wonderful sequence of Waits on a California beach in 2002, where he hams it up with various props, including a chair, a violin and a gramophone horn. There's not much sense in any of these pictures of the 'private' Waits, who clearly doesn't do unguarded moments, nothing that illustrates what Waits is like when he's not being the Tom Waits he wants us to see in these photos, where consistently he had the look of a wily raconteur, someone who might entertainingly fleece you with card tricks, patter and sleights of hand. Waits' own pictures, the 'Curiosities' of the book's subtitle, appear in a 53-page coda, a colourful collection of strange and disparate images, junk of all kinds appearing in these pages alongside scraps of text, lists and even more discarded paraphernalia, oil stains on concrete and a couple that look like Waits took them with the lens cap still on his camera. **ALLAN JONES**

➤ Some good writers have come unstuck when they've tried to write fiction based around rock music and the people who play it. Jonathan Lethem, for instance, author of wonderful novels like *The Fortress Of Solitude* and *Chronic City*, stumbled horribly with a book called *You Don't Love Me Yet* and there are probably people who started reading Don DeLillo's *Great Jones Street* around the time Elvis Costello's first album came out who are still struggling through it.

Ted Heller's **West Of Babylon** promises a more realistically funky tale of a once-popular



Tom Waits for no man: advancing into gnarly maturity in one of many photos by Anton Corbijn

band called The Furious Overfalls, now in the sad dog days of their career. Where once in the days of hit albums and sold-out stadiums, they travelled in luxury, fleets of attendants to cater to their every whim, they are now reduced to humping their own gear, do their own driving, sharing ratty hotel rooms, playing to crowds who barely remember them in run-down clubs. They're now on what appears to be their final tour, collectively and individually beset by financial, psychological and physical problems. One of them is dying, another wants to quit. The book is passably entertaining, but the narrative is rambling, repetitious and shapeless, the writing baggy. Heller's previous books, especially *Slab Rat* and *Funnymen*, are much better. And as for good novels about rock music, I'd recommend Zachary Lazar's *Sway* and Dana Spiotta's *Eat The Document* and *Stone Arabia*. **ALLAN JONES**

➤ Getting it together in the suburbs seems to be a peculiarly middle class rite of passage – the moment when city living is no longer tenable and a migration in pursuit of wider spaces, cleaner living and better schools is required. Such considerations

are behind the decision taken by Nathaniel and Julia Noailles, who with their young son Copley exchange their life in Boston for a more spacious existence in Dolores Woods, a large development on the outskirts of an un-named Midwestern city, in Patrick Flanery's cracking new novel, **Fallen Land**. Nathaniel and his family have recently bought the flagship property in the Woods and Flanery follows the history of the house and the land on which it was built and the people who live there. There is Louise Washington, a retired black school teacher who knows that the Noailles house is built on the site of a filled-in sinkhole that conceals the corpses of the local mayor and Louise's grandfather, who were lynched together in 1919. And there is Paul Krovik, a property developer who bought the land from Louise and watched his dream for Dolores Woods unravel, first due to subsidence and latterly the financial crisis. Abandoned by his family, Paul now lives covertly in a secret fallout shelter built beneath what was once his own home, the house bought by the Noailles. Unravelling, Krovik has taken to stealing at night into his old house, moving the furniture around and covering the walls with graffiti, for which the Noailles at first suspect Copley is responsible.

In places, the book vaults into high-end dystopian satire, and you might think a little of Don DeLillo in Flanery's depiction of suburban anxiety. But there is also something poignant about Flanery's three protagonists. All of them have worked for what they believed to be a better America, and all of them have watched their dreams fail. For an epigraph, Flanery quotes Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House Of The Seven Gables*: "In this republican country, amid the fluctuating waves of our social life, someone is always at the drowning-point." In *Fallen Land*, it seems as if an entire country has reached the drowning-point. **MICHAEL BONNER**

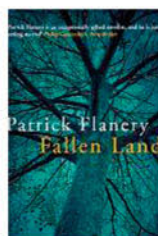
Reviewed this month...



Waits / Corbijn '77-'11
Photographs By Anton Corbijn.
Curiosities by Tom Waits
SCHIRMER/MOSEL
8/10



West Of Babylon
Ted Heller
CREATESPACE
INDEPENDENT
PUBLISHING
PLATFORM
6/10



Fallen Land
Patrick Flanery
ATLANTIC BOOKS
8/10

Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

BOBBY 'BLUE' BLAND

R'n'B legend

1930-2013

BOBBY BLAND UNDERWENT a number of transitions throughout his musical life, but perhaps the most telling followed his discovery of Baptist preacher CL Franklin, father of Aretha. "That's where I got my squall from," he told author Peter Guralnick, referring to Franklin's stirring sermons. "After I had that, I lost the high falsetto. I had to get some other kind of gimmick to be identified with."

The result was 1958's "Little Boy Blue," the song that announced the arrival of Bland's signature vocal style, an emotive croon that earned him the sobriquet "Frank Sinatra of the Blues". It was a rich amalgam of his native Southern vernacular and the big-band sophistication of the likes of Nat King Cole and Charles Brown.

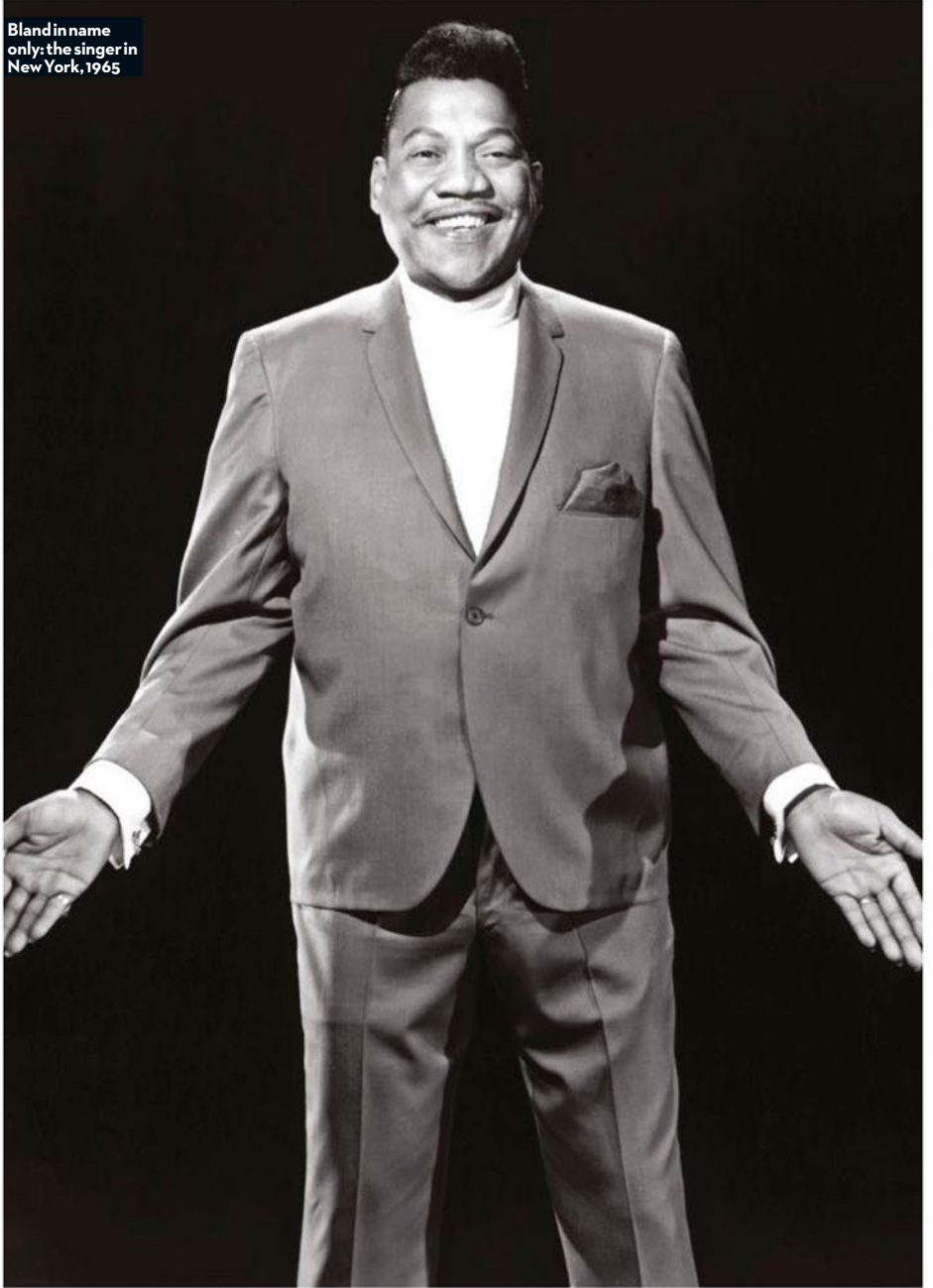
Bland never achieved the kind of crossover success enjoyed by peers BB King and John Lee Hooker. Indeed, across a recording career that spanned more than half a century, only four of his singles ever made the *Billboard* Top 20. Yet he was a huge influence on the '60s generation of white blues-lovers.

Van Morrison covered "Turn On Your Love Light" with Them, later including his take on "Ain't Nothing You Can Do" on 1974's live solo, *It's Too Late To Stop Now*. The song also became a regular fixture of the Grateful Dead's shows as signature song of Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, while The Band recorded a version of "Share Your Love With Me" for *Moondog Matinee*.

In 2001, Jay-Z sampled Bland's "Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City" (already the subject of a heavy Whitesnake cover) on *The Blueprint*. As recently as 2008, lifelong fan Mick Hucknall devoted an entire album to Bland's repertoire on *Tribute To Bobby*. BB King, with whom he recorded two LPs in the '70s, once said of Bland: "There's no better singer in any genre."

Bland was born Robert Calvin Brooks in Millington, Tennessee. Having moved some 20 miles south to Memphis as a teenager in 1947, he began singing gospel and spirituals in local group The Miniatures. Two years later he became part of The Beale Streeters, a revolving collective whose ranks, at one time or another, included Rosco Gordon, Johnny Ace and King. Of the latter, Bland once told *The Washington Post*: "He'd let me hang around and get some kind of experience. I drove his car; I did anything I could to get my foot in the door. He gave me the opportunity." He also cut sides for several labels, among them Chess and Modern, under the stewardship of Sun Studios' founder-producer, Sam Phillips.

Bland in name only: the singer in New York, 1965



Bland returned from a two-year spell in the US Army in 1954. It was then that he started pouring his love of blues, gospel and country into tough-edged songs like "I Can't Put You Down" and "Farther On Up The Road," his first major success on the R&B chart. "I'm Not Ashamed", from 1959, marked the onset of 26 consecutive Top 30 R&B hits, through to "Driftin' Blues" in 1968. A key element of Bland's sound was trumpeter and arranger Joe Scott, who framed his soulful entreaties with lush, horn-rich backdrops.

The demands of constant touring led to Bland developing a drink problem by the late '60s, although he recovered to deliver the more

pop-centric *His California Album* (1973) and the following year's *Dreamer*. In 1985 he began recording a flurry of albums for the Mississippi-based Malaco label, the last being 2003's *Blues At Midnight*.

Despite being inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 and receiving a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award five years later, he remained disarmingly modest. "I'd like to be remembered as just a good old country boy that did his best to give us something to listen to and help them through a lot of sad moments, happy moments, whatever," he told *House Of Blues Radio Hour* in one of his final interviews.

ALAN MYERS

Devo drummer

1955-2013

DEVO HAVE EMPLOYED half a dozen drummers over their 41-year lifespan, but easily the most prominent was Alan Myers. On hearing of his death from stomach cancer, aged 58, Devo co-founder Gerald Casale took to Twitter to state simply: "Alan, you were the best – a human metronome and then some." Casale wasn't alone in his assessment. So precise were Myers' beats, it was often suggested Devo forsook him for a drum machine on their recordings. His angular minimalism also presaged the math-rock boom of the '90s. "Alan's abilities allowed us to do what we were trying to achieve: to recreate what people were doing with machines, but use humans to do it," singer Mark Mothersbaugh told *Rolling Stone*. "He helped shape the organised, aggressive sound Devo were attempting back then."

Myers was an integral part of the band's remarkable 1978 debut *Q: Are We Not Men?*

A: We Are Devo!, plus follow-ups *Duty Now For The Future* (1979) and '80's *Freedom Of Choice*, albums that defined a compelling new strain of absurdist art-rock. Devo had already been through two drummers by the time he auditioned in 1976, as replacement for Mothersbaugh's brother Jim. Another Mothersbaugh, guitarist Bob, had met Myers in a West Akron café. "Alan looked like a complete nerd," recalled Casale. "He was wearing a stocking cap and hoodie, way ahead of his time."

Myers left the band after 1984's *Shout!*, citing a lack of creative fulfilment. Perversely, most beats on the LP were from a drum machine. Mothersbaugh later confessed to regrets over allowing him to leave, while Casale offered: "I begged him not to quit. He couldn't tolerate being replaced by the Fairlight and autocratic machine music. I agreed." Myers then set about pursuing music "off the beaten path". He played alongside then-girlfriend Greta Ionita in Babooshka and as part of Eastern-flavoured pop band Jean Paul Yamamoto. More recently he was in Skyline Electric, with wife Christine, and Swahili Blonde, with daughter Laena.



Rhythm ace: Myers in his Devo days



ROGER LAVERN

The Tornadoes' keyboardist

1947-2013

The Tornadoes were deep into a Norfolk summer season with Billy Fury when Joe Meek called them to a recording session in 1962. Setting up in his London home, the quintet, including organist Roger LaVern, began recording Meek's new ode to the world's first communications satellite. The producer had modified LaVern's piano by adding drawing pins to each hammer, giving the sound a resonant jangle. "It was done quickly," LaVern once recalled, "as we had to drive back to Great Yarmouth for the evening show. Joe also wanted the track finished and released while everyone was talking about the Telstar Satellite." The resulting "Telstar" topped the charts on both sides of the pond, with The Tornadoes becoming the first British group to land a US No 1. Other hits included "Globetrotter" and "Robot", although LaVern quit in late '63 after a royalty dispute, after which he recorded with The Microns.

CHET FLIPPO

Rolling Stone journalist

1943-2013

Chet Flippo was fresh out of the US Navy when he landed his first writing assignment for *Rolling Stone* in 1970, an account of fellow Texan Janis Joplin's high-school reunion. Within four years, Flippo was heading up the New York bureau. He became senior editor when the magazine relocated from San Francisco in '77. Flippo was perhaps most notable for championing country music at a time when it was still deeply unfashionable. In '72 he boosted the profile of Willie Nelson and followed up with eloquent pieces on Waylon Jennings and Dolly Parton. He left in 1980 to write the first of six books, *Your Cheatin' Heart: A Biography Of Hank Williams*. Latterly he was *Billboard*'s Nashville bureau chief and editorial director at country channel CMT.

MARK FISHER

Stage designer

1947-2013

Never one to be constricted by budgets or parameters, Mark Fisher instead built a career every bit as spectacular as the stage sets he created for Pink Floyd, the Stones and U2. The idea, he explained, was to provide "a series of big visual spectacles that, taken sequentially, make up a narrative". After graduating from the Architectural Association in 1971, his first major

commission was a menagerie of beasts for Floyd's *Animals* tour. His association with the band lasted until '94, when Fisher designed a 40m-high steel arch for the *Division Bell* shows. He trumped that three years later when his giant golden arch, joined by a 30m cocktail stick and speakers disguised as a huge basket of fries, became the centre-piece of U2's *PopMart* extravaganza. Besides originating monster cobras and telescopic bridges for the Stones, he also served as executive producer for the London Olympic ceremonies.

ALASTAIR DONALDSON

The Rezillos' bassist

1955-2013

Bandmate Eugene Reynolds credited bassist Donaldson with creating a distinctive signature sound for the music of The Rezillos. Better known as William Mysterious, Donaldson initially joined the Scottish new wave outfit as sax player in 1976. Months earlier he'd featured on the self-titled debut



Alastair Donaldson

from Edinburgh folkies Silly Wizard. He was a key part of 1978's sole Rezillos album, *Can't Stand The Rezillos*, although he quit later that year. When Reynolds and singer Fay Fife returned as The Revillos, Donaldson joined up again for 1980 single, "Scuba Scuba", and debut LP, *Rev Up*. After leaving again and briefly going solo on his own Mezzanine label, he mostly forsook music in the late '80s for his original career as an architect.

T. MODEL FORD

Blues singer and guitarist

UNKNOWN-2013

The story of T. Model Ford's life often seemed too tall to be true, even by blues standards. He didn't begin playing until he was 58, after his fifth wife walked out, leaving him a guitar as a farewell gift. Ford stayed up all night practising, a bottle of moonshine at his side. The technique he developed, based on the stylings of heroes Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters, was a raw hybrid of Delta and Chicago blues. By then the Mississippi-born Ford, who claimed to be 93, despite official records suggesting he was born in the early 1920s, had already held jobs as lumber-yard foreman and truck driver, punctuated by two years on a chain gang for a murder he claimed was self-defence. Fat Possum's Matthew Johnson discovered Ford in 1995, who issued the first of five albums for the label – *Pee-Wee Get My Gun* – two years later. **ROB HUGHES**

Feedback...

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MEMORIES OF A FREE FESTIVAL...

Lovely nostalgic piece on the Stones in the Park in the August issue (only recently lost my *Evening Standard* souvenir edition). I was wearing a lime-green, lace-look shirt teamed with purple crushed velvet flares. And you thought Jagger looked a bit dodgy in his frock? I don't recall the shoes I wore, but I bet they were louder than the Stones, though obviously not up to the volume of the wonderful Roger Chapman and Family. We were about two-thirds of the way back in what seemed a massive crowd, shouting at Keith Richards that his guitar was out of tune. Then in the evening we had tickets for the Pop Proms at the Albert Hall – where the poor old penguin-suited security staff struggled to stop the Teds from destroying the place because they thought Chuck Berry hadn't played for long enough. Ah, the Stones, Family, Chuck and The Who all in the same day. You tell that to the kids today, they won't believe you.

Kit Galer, Hitchin, Herts

...The best thing about the Stones' show and many others in those days was that they were held in The Cockpit area of Hyde Park, a natural amphitheatre where pretty much everyone had a good view. I was there, aged 15, sitting cross-legged with pals most of the day apart from the odd trip to the subway loos by Speakers' Corner, the nearest facilities available (apart from behind the trees). It was a perfect day weather-wise, while music-wise the highlight for me was King Crimson blowing everyone's minds with "21st Century Schizoid Man" – nobody had heard anything like it before, a sign of the future and the pinnacle of sci-fi prog rock.

When the Stones came on we were all pretty bemused by Mick's dress, his eulogy to Brian and all the butterflies, but nevertheless nodded respectfully, waiting for the band to start and to get a look at new boy Mick Taylor. It was obvious they were a bit rusty, but things got slowly better as the set went along, culminating in that unforgettable "Sympathy For The Devil" with the African drummers.

I went to many of the free gigs in Hyde Park, including the first one



with Pink Floyd in 1968, and years later wrote a potted history of every gig (16 in all) with Jeff Dexter, which was published in the *Masters Of Rock* programme when the shows were revived as fully commercial and corporate events in June 1996 (with The Who, Dylan, Clapton, etc). One of the most intriguing facts we stumbled upon in our research was "the one that got away" – a show planned for September 6, 1969 starring CS&N, Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead, which was cancelled at the last minute due to "problems in America", according to that week's *NME*, thereby leaving the Stones as the park's most iconic show, with Blind Faith and Richie Havens the month before coming a close second.

David Stark, London

...My mum, Barbara, attended the Stones concert. She was 18 and came down on the train with a couple of friends, I believe arriving crazy early. As a result, she got a space very near the front, and can be seen in footage of the day. Although she loved The Beatles, James Brown and Miles Davis more than words, the Stones were her band, and Brian was her favourite. She had first seen them in '64, when she was 13. When I was 13, she took

me to see this same lot in 1990 at Wembley. They seemed old to me then. Who coulda thought they'd go on another 20-odd years! She passed away, aged 61, from cancer last May. In 10 days I shall repeat her pilgrimage: I'll see the Stones in Hyde Park. I feel emotional thinking about it, so goodness knows what it'll be like when I get there.

Liz Tray, via email

...As fresh-faced 15-year-olds, myself and two friends set off from the London suburbs, one armed with his father's ex-army binoculars and sandwiches our mums had made. I remember Third Ear Band opening things and later Screw. I'd never heard of them before and haven't heard of them since, but they did offer a spirited version of Captain Beefheart's "Gimme Dat Harp Boy". The Stones were, as everyone says, rusty but great. As with many of your senior readers, we've all been to countless gigs and shows subsequently, but this one always stands out as some sort of cultural totem. I was 15, it was sunny and the Stones played for free. No merchandising, no wristbands, tickets, lanyards, or mobiles – let's just watch the show. What's not to like?

David Rush, Epsom, Surrey

WORTH THEIR WEIGHT

I checked out cover versions of "The Weight" mentioned in your wonderful Big Pink article (August issue). The new ones to me were by Aretha, Joe Cocker, and Rickie Lee Jones. I love Aretha, but her version didn't come across as being particularly special. The Rickie Lee one was certainly different.

I would say you would have to be really trying to make a dud version of that song. I guess I preferred the Cocker version. Still, you failed to include my favourite one, by Gillian Welch, David Rawlings and Old Crow Medicine Show. Fantastic.

Martin Fennell, via email

NY STATE OF MIND

I really enjoyed John Mulvey's piece on the UK dates of Neil Young and Crazy Horse's Alchemy tour (August). Having looked at prior setlists and knowing Neil Young is a contrary fellow, I thought their gig at the LG Arena in Birmingham was fantastic, although other people there seemed to think it was indulgent. I did think the feedback piece at the end of "Walk Like A Giant" was fantastic and reminded me of the two Swans gigs I'd attended earlier this year (and that NY's *Dead Man* soundtrack

influenced Earth's "Hex"). But NY did play a few nice new songs and some acoustic crowd-pleasers ("Heart Of Gold", "Blowin' In The Wind") – so I'm wondering what fans were expecting from NY and band? In Birmingham, they opened with "Love To Burn" (rather than "Love And Only Love") and played an excellent version of "Surfer Joe And Moe The Sleaze". You got three songs from *Psychedelic Pill* – John is right that "Ramada Inn" is the one. Maybe the rap-thing during "Fuckin' Up" was a bit indulgent, but the rest was a dream NY/CH gig for me: "Cinnamon Girl", "Mr Soul", "Cortez The Killer", "Hey Hey, My My (Into The Black)", and an encore of "Powderfinger". Who could argue with those selections?

***Jason Parkes, Pershore,
Worcestershire***

CREAM DE LA CRÈME

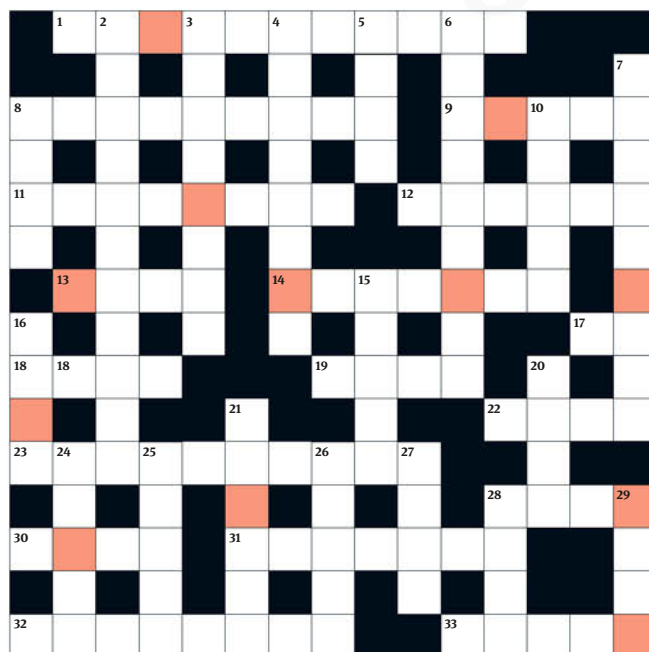
What a treat your article on Cream was (May issue). It triggered a flood of memories, all the way back to October 20, 1968. That's when Cream rolled into San Diego. By that time, *Fresh Cream* enjoyed steady rotation on Dad's hi-fi. Although only when he wasn't around.

I was 13, a drum student and part of a garage trio that included Tom Wilson, first-chair cellist with San Diego Youth Symphony who'd recently discovered the joys of electric guitars. We covered Cream, Hendrix and Led Zeppelin. Not great, but well enough to get us invited to more parties.

Tom's mum bought two tickets to Cream, with Deep Purple and Buddy Miles Express opening. Mind, I'd seen Jimi the year before at Balboa Stadium and was still in remission. Now I was off to see the drummer whom I tried to copy so hard, I'd have polyrhythmic nightmares.

What blew my teenage mind was how huge Cream sounded, even in their lighter moments. It was an endless stream of freeform leads and solos that were, as noted in John Robinson's article, more jazz-like than heavy blues or rock. Whether it was Jack Bruce wailing on harmonica, Eric playing liquid runs, or Ginger reinventing loud-quiet-loud drumming, it was one long highpoint.

Before Cream finished the first bar of music, everyone was standing on their chairs, where we stayed for the next hour or so. I occasionally glanced around at others. I saw people with jaws re-located to their waistline, one guy with hands on his cheeks appearing to cry. It was an amazing concert from three amazing musicians who had a wonderful impact on my appreciation of music. **Frank Bish. Gold Coast, Australia**



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Bob Dylan. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: Uncut September 2013 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: Aug 27, 2013. This competition is only open to European residents.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 OK, I can grant Hart does actually have a point there (3-8)
8 Sounds like Lloyd Cole's new album is full of popular oldies (9)
9 (See **2** down)
11-24D A very meaty album from Roxy Music (5-3-5)
21 "Next week they'd say my _____ on the radio, and all my dreams would come true", from The Rolling Stones' 'Far Away Eyes' (6)
13 Hugh Cornwell's solo album coming back with the flow (4)
14 (See **8** down)
17 Beach Boys' album was a bit slapdash (1-1)
18-19A Every personal requirement comes supplied with Air (3-1-4)
22 (See **31** across)
23 Perhaps a soul bit on Muse album (10)
28-27D "Well, I've been in town for just about fifteen minutes now, and baby I feel so down", 2001 (4-4)
30-3D Had one TV left, re-tuned it to pick up a Bob Dylan recording (4-3-5)
31-22A A close community wearing close fitting jumpers listening to The Climax Blues Band (7-4)
32 Under which name brother of Peter and Robin Sarstedt had hits in the 60s (4-4)
33 (See **16** down)

CLUES DOWN

- 2+9A Could be a state of nirvana. Could be the state of Nevada. Either way, it's the Cocteau Twins (6-2-3-5)
3 (See 30 across)
4 Shadows' number with a close connection to 'Apache' (8)
5 On the face of it, difficult to see how Bauhaus, Vangelis and Roger Glover all had albums with this title (4)
6 No need to worry, it's Nirvana (9)
7 Spaced out person with a Duran Duran album (9)
8+14A Their line-up included Robert Wyatt and Hugh Hopper (4-7)
10 Crystal _____, country singer best known for 'Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue' (5)
15 Human League music just part of a massed opera (5)
16+33A Good idea, take a choir - with music by The Allman Bros included (3-1-5)
20 Courteeners' album, Crib's single or an early Beatles' cover (4)
21 Echobool album that came from Lulu, strangely (6)
24 (See 11 across)
25 "If everybody had an _____ across the USA, then everybody'd be surfin' like Californ-i-a", The Beach Boys (5)
26 Not an entire single from Iron Butterfly's frontman (5)
27 (See 28 across)
28 Graham _____, partner of Bernard Gallagher in '70s duo (4)
29 Sounds nonsense, but he was one of Bob Marley's Wailers (4)

ANSWERS: TAKE 194

ACROSS

- 1 Once I Was An Eagle, 9
These Days, 10 Rat Race, 12
Drive On, 15+11A+24A Yes
Sir, I Can Boogie, 18+22D
Adult Net, 19 Opus, 20+14A

She's A Lady, 21+32A In The City, 26 Saxa, 28 Battle, 30+34A Nina Sky, 31+13A Ready To Die, 33 Wink.

DOWN
1+28D Old Red Eyes Is Back
2Curtains, 3 Insane, 4
Antenna, 5 American Pie.

6 Ege Bamyasi, 7 Gray, 8 East-West, 13 Doubt, 16 S.O.S. Band, 17 Rico, 23 Everly, 25 Go Now, 27 Amen, 29 Toys

HIDDEN ANSWER

“Point Blank”

Compiled: Trevor Hungerford

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MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Stuart Murdoch

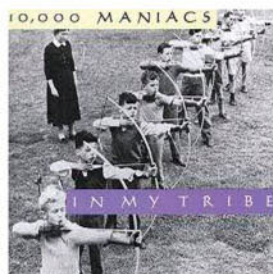
Belle & Sebastian's frontman reveals eight life-changing records. "In my mind I was as out-there as Mark E Smith..."



My favourite Go-Betweens album

Tallulah
The Go-Betweens 1987

When I moved to Glasgow from a provincial seaside town, a new sound was seeping into my blood, something more poetic and arty. I remember going to a club in Greenock and hearing The Go-Betweens for the first time. Their new record then was *Tallulah*. Great melodies, great stories – and they had two great songwriters, a rarity. This was a point in my life when music superseded every other ambition I had.



The album that got me really obsessed with music

In My Tribe
10,000 Maniacs 1987

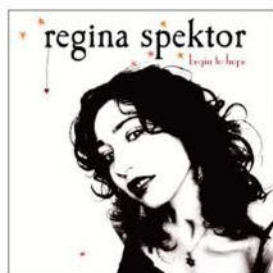
Natalie Merchant ticked all my boxes. She was quite weird, a bit hippyish and punky, but with gorgeous melodies and a unique voice. I love singers who seem to delight in the words they conjure up. Before this, pop and rock was just something I consumed, but this was a step up, becoming obsessed with this area of music.



The album that made me stay up all night

Bend Sinister
The Fall 1986

This was the first time I got to grips with The Fall and fell in love with them. This was a golden period – they were firing on all cylinders, and they had Brix Smith in the band mixing it up. I didn't know what Mark E Smith was talking about half the time, but in my mind I was as out-there as him, staying up reading Nabokov and walking down the street with the madness of being up all night.



A song that sums up making music

Fidelity
Regina Spektor 2006

This captures one aspect of the job I do better than anything else. It's about having a romance with the creation of music itself – it goes to a point where the writer doesn't need anything else. She says, "I never loved nobody fully/Always one foot on the ground", because music is always her first thing, and at any moment a song might come along and will demand more of her than that person could.



The song that proved everyone has a shot

She Plays Me Like A Theremin
Lenzie Moss 2012

This fella, aka Finley Macdonald, who's been knocking around Glasgow since the '80s, sent me this song he did. I can't stop listening to it and thinking, 'Who'd have thought this guy had a voice like that?' He's doing nothing that hasn't been done before by anyone who's heard the Velvets, but that's the endearing charm and possibility of music – it doesn't take much to do something slightly differently.



The song that inspired my film

Tinsel Town In The Rain
The Blue Nile 1984

I've listened to this song a few hundred times in the past couple of years while I've been making my film [musical drama *God Help The Girl*] and I never get tired of it – every line takes on a different meaning, you can see it like a film in your head. I'll listen to it in 10 years and think, 'God, I remember being stuck in that little box room trying to finish the frigging script.' But it did its job.



My favourite soundtrack

Harold And Maude
Cat Stevens 1971

I've always loved the film, but I didn't realise how big a part the music played in it. Apparently, Cat Stevens and [director] Hal Ashby talked as if they were writing this little opera. Now I've actually made a musical film I can see how well they did it. When the drama's done, Cat Stevens' voice comes in and takes it to another place. When he first comes in with "Don't Be Shy", it's a beautiful moment.



The hymn I sing to my baby son

Praise To The Lord, The Almighty, The King Of Creation
Joachim Neander 1680

When I'm alone with my wee boy, I've been singing old hymns to him. This is one of my favourites. Hymns work in the same way as pop music – I prefer the old ones, as they've been filtered down over the years. You're looking at the "Yesterday" and the "Paint It, Black" of heaven. It's the purest form of soul music.

Belle & Sebastian headline *End Of The Road* (Aug 30-Sep 1) and play *Bestival* (Sep 5-8). Their new rarities comp, *The Third Eye Centre*, is out on **Rough Trade** Aug 26

IN NEXT MONTH'S UNCUT: "If he had survived, he would have changed the face of music in a more profound way than he did already..."



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