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KATE BUSH - A NEW DAWN

UNCUT

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ALBUM FOR
THE 21ST
CENTURY..."

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THEIR NEW LP!

AND

STRAND OF OAKS
THE GUESS WHO
VASHTI BUNYAN
END OF THE ROAD

40 PAGES OF
REVIEWS

SCOTT WALKER

PRINCE

UNDERWORLD

RY COODER

GEORGE HARRISON

AND MORE...

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BEST SONGS OF
**LEONARD
COHEN**

**NEW
ORDER**

The confessions of
Bernard Sumner

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"16 years of
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BRIAN WILSON: THE MOVIE
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FEATURING

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Vashti Bunyan

Are we rolling?

A MONTH, PERHAPS, OF surprises. On the rather intimidating new Scott Walker and Sunn O))) album, there appears to be a joke about Michael Flatley's testicles. Somewhere in the elevated aesthetics of Kate Bush's *Before The Dawn*, there is an equally dubious comedy routine that hinges on the punchline, "HP and mayo, it's the badger's nadgers." And then, just as we were hurtling towards our issue deadline, the new U2 album suddenly materialised in iTunes, a bullish play to reassert them as the biggest pop group in the world.

It would be nicely self-aggrandising to pretend that *Uncut* saw all this coming. We did, however, have an inside track on another of 2014's most unforeseen musical events. For the past few months, Michael Bonner has been mapping *The Endless River*, from its source in 20-year-old sessions, to ending up as what one of the producers, Phil Manzanera, describes as "a Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century". En route, Michael discovered plenty, not only about the extraordinary working practices of David Gilmour and Nick Mason, but also how *The Endless River* became a kind of memorial to Rick Wright. Great piece, I think.

For my own part, I've spent this month writing up my springtime adventures in North Carolina with Hiss Golden Messenger, digging into new albums by Chris Forsyth and Steve Gunn, and reviewing that astonishing Kate Bush show (for a pointedly different perspective on *Before The Dawn*, Peter Beynon's letter on page 120 makes for interesting reading). There has also been another surprise album to savour – not one to match the militarised impact of *Songs Of Innocence*, exactly, but a lovely set by an enigmatic, neglected Chicagoan, Liam Hayes, whose music means a lot to me.

I first came across Hayes in 1994, when I made his debut as Plush, "Three-Quarters Blind Eyes"/"Found A Little Baby", Single Of The Week in *NME*. In the following 20 years, Hayes has managed to release four grandiose, thwarted chamber-pop albums (I've written a piece about them all at www.uncut.co.uk). The latest, called *Korp Sole Roller*, sneaked out as a download the other day via www.liamhayesplush.bandcamp.com, without anything remotely resembling the fuss it deserved. Give me a few more listens, and I'll try to do it justice in the next *Uncut*.

Until then; thanks, as ever, for your indulgence.



Carolina calling... Hiss Golden Messenger's *Lateness Of Dancers* LP

John Mulvey

John Mulvey, Editor

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I|N|S|T|A|N|T|K|A|R|M|A|!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring FLEETWOOD MAC | JIMMY CAUTY | STRAND OF OAKS

“On the second day,
I had to play and sing
‘Surf’s Up’... that was
one of the scariest
things I’ve ever done”

PAUL DANO



That's not me?

A first look at the new BRIAN WILSON biopic, *Love & Mercy*

ANY MOVIE ABOUT Brian Wilson wouldn't be complete without certain images all Beach Boys fans carry in their minds, whether it's the piano in the sandbox or their hero taking refuge in a great big bed. But while these must-haves are present in the first major feature film about Wilson, *Love & Mercy* is surprising in just about every other respect.

For one thing, it features two different actors playing Wilson at separate stages in his life. *There Will Be Blood*'s Paul Dano stars as Brian during his high-water mark of the '60s, while John Cusack tackles the more troubled '80s version.

Splitting up the duties is only one of many decisions that set *Love & Mercy* apart from so many other Hollywood-sanctioned portraits of musical icons. Its director and co-writer, Bill Pohlad, is happy to defy those conventions. "Brian has led a very dramatic life, an amazing life," says Pohlad at the movie's premiere at the Toronto Film Festival in September. "To try to cover it all in a film is impossible, so we did not have any desire to do a biopic – we tried to get more into who he was as a person."

To do so, Pohlad and his writers Michael Alan Lerner and Oren Moverman – who took a similarly adventurous approach to Bob Dylan in his work on *I'm Not There* – focused on what they believed to be the two most fascinating periods in Wilson's life. In the storyline starring Dano, Wilson attains new creative heights during the recording sessions for *Pet Sounds*, but remains vulnerable to the criticisms of his ex-manager father and his bandmates.

Cusack's section begins at the Cadillac dealership where he meets his future wife in 1986. Though Melinda (a brassy Elizabeth Banks) is drawn to this shy, strange figure, she's understandably leery of Dr Eugene Landy, the therapist who maintains a rigid hold over his most famous patient. Paul Giamatti's Landy is the perfect balance of SoCal touchy-feeliness and alpha-dog aggression.

While Dano captures the younger Brian's spark and sensitivity with remarkable grace, Cusack makes up for his lack of resemblance to the genuine article with a performance that wrenchingly conveys the older man's fear and confusion, as well as the new optimism Melinda inspires. When both halves of *Love & Mercy* are put together, the result is uncommonly powerful.

A veteran producer whose credits include *The Tree Of Life* and

Paul Dano as mid-'60s Brian Wilson in the forthcoming *Love & Mercy*

➔ *Brokeback Mountain*, Pohlada admits that he “grew up as a Beatles guy” and still doesn’t consider himself a Beach Boys aficionado despite his abiding love of *Pet Sounds*. “Personally, I think that’s a good thing,” he tells *Uncut* the afternoon after the premiere. “We talked to [Juno writer] Diablo Cody at one point about doing this and she’s a huge Brian Wilson groupie. But when someone is that close, it may be hard for them to tell the story to people who aren’t. We wanted to try for that balance, to intrigue or satisfy the Brian Wilson aficionados but also make it accessible for a wider audience.”

Yet whereas many musical biopics have strived for that accessibility by focusing on personal dramas rather than creative matters, *Love & Mercy* puts the songs at the centre of Wilson’s story. Pohlada enlisted real musicians to play the Wrecking Crew in the scenes of the younger Wilson at work, which were filmed in the same Los Angeles studio where most of *Pet Sounds* was recorded. The movie’s soundtrack is filled with their uncanny recreations of Beach Boys classics, albeit in the often fragmentary forms familiar from the *Pet Sounds* and *Smile Sessions* boxsets. Elsewhere, Trent Reznor’s regular soundtrack partner, Atticus Ross, provides dense and often disturbing collages that approximate the



MAC TO THE FUTURE

No longer going their own way: (l-r) Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, John McVie, Christine McVie

‘DON’T STOP, IT’LL SOON BE HERE...’

FLEETWOOD MAC welcome Christine McVie back in the fold, and plan a British return. “It’s all about you, Chris,” says Stevie Nicks...

THE NEWLY REFORMED 1970s blockbuster lineup of Fleetwood Mac starring Christine McVie will head to the UK for shows early next summer, singer Stevie Nicks tells *Uncut*, and their first ever Glastonbury is not being ruled out. “Chris is excited to come back to London. It’ll be soon, probably May,” says Nicks, as a rejuvenated Mac prepare to head out on their first US tour with the classic *Rumours* lineup since October 31, 1982, when the troubled five-piece played the final show of their *Mirage* tour. “Glastonbury? You never know. You have to weave festivals in [to the tour]. It’s being discussed.”

McVie, who quit the group in 1998, joined her former bandmates onstage for an emotional encore of “Don’t Stop” during their shows in London last September and became an official member again in January when the new tour, dubbed *On With The Show*, was announced. “The second people saw she was coming back, the tickets just sold,” says Nicks, “and I tell her: ‘It’s a good thing you’re in really great shape and you’re happy about this, because it is all about you.’ It’s fun to see it through her eyes, her being gone for so long, because she’s so excited.”

With the band not getting any younger, Nicks admits McVie’s return has plenty of benefits. “It’s less work when it comes down to it as Lindsey [Buckingham] and I don’t have to sing 50/50. Now we do a third each so it’s less singing and a little less physically difficult, so that’s nice. Her music is very different too, so it adds to everything.”

McVie, who at 71 is the oldest member, brings eight songs to the new set including “Say You Love Me”, “Little Lies” and “Everywhere”, which

haven’t been played in concert since the Mac’s one-off live special, *The Dance*, in ’97. “Christine may have been gone for 16 years but she sure didn’t forget anything,” says Nicks of the band’s seven weeks of rehearsals which began in LA at the start of August. “I look over at her and she looks exactly the same as she did when she left. And when she counts in the songs, she goes: ‘A-one, a-two, a-three’ in her English accent and she sounds *exactly* the same! It’s been a lot of fun as she has a raucously funny sense of humour that my serious singing partner and I don’t have. And then the other two English people in the band pick up the gauntlet and the whole thing becomes much more easygoing.”

Earlier this year Buckingham confirmed McVie had been involved in sessions in LA for a new Mac album – song titles include “Red Sun” and “Carnival Begin” – which Nicks missed partly due to solo commitments in Nashville where she recorded her latest LP, *24 Karat Gold – Songs From The Vault*. “I don’t know what Chris has written but she’s an amazing writer and she’s probably got 16 years of pent-up poetry,” says Nicks. “That’s probably why she started to think: ‘Why the hell am I out here in this castle, 40 miles outside of London, gardening and cooking? I’m a rock star.’ So I think she just got up one day and thought: ‘This is crazy – I’m going back to work.’”

“I’m just glad she’s back,” Nicks adds. “I’ve missed her very much.” **PIERS MARTIN**

Stevie Nicks’ 24 Karat Gold – Songs From The Vault is out October 6. The Mac’s *On With The Show* tour begins September 30 at the Target Center, Minneapolis



John Cusack and Elizabeth Banks in *Love & Mercy*

soundscapes that Wilson heard inside his head.

Dano acquits himself well with his musical performances, too. “I realised pretty quickly the best way into the character would be through the music,” says the actor at *Love & Mercy*’s premiere. “I feel like Brian’s truest self is in his music. I knew I had to try to dig in and sing my way into the part even if my singing didn’t end up in the film.” Though his voice would ultimately be blended with Wilson’s in several instances, it’s unadorned in his rendition of at least one crucial song. “On the second day of filming, I had to play and sing ‘Surf’s Up,’” says Dano. “That was one of the scariest things I’ve ever done.”

Even so, the bravery of *Love & Mercy*’s team is likely to be appreciated, judging by the movie’s rapturous reception in Toronto, where the crowd also gave a standing ovation to two people in the audience: Brian and Melinda Wilson. “He won’t go on and on about it,” says Pohlada, “but we know that he loved it.”

JASON ANDERSON

Love & Mercy will be released in the UK later this year

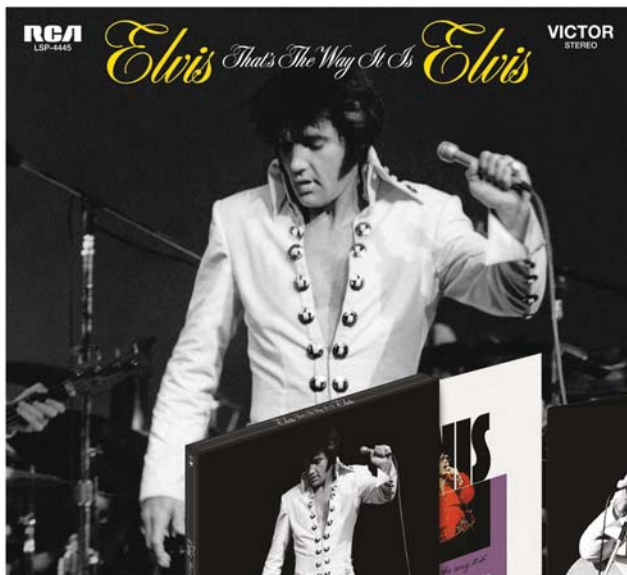
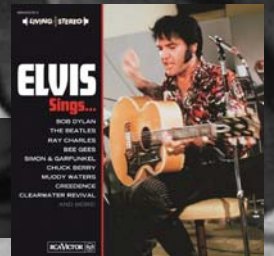
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NEW ART RIOT!

The KLF's JIMMY CAUTY unveils his radical new project, the Smiley Riot Shield. "A design classic!"

FEW RETIREMENTS HAVE been quite so dramatic as that of The KLF. In 1992, the stadium house duo invited Extreme Noise Terror to join them live at the BRITs, strafed the assembled music industry with machine-gun blanks, and dumped a dead sheep at the aftershow, deleting their entire catalogue in the bargain. And there was that business of burning £1 million. In a sense, though, Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty didn't so much pack it in as simply change medium. Both continue to work as artists, creating work much in the spirit of The KLF's blend of mischief and insurrection: see Cauty's latest work, the Smiley Riot Shield.

"They've got a strange sort of power, haven't they?" muses Cauty, today a gently rogueish, white-haired father of three. While conceding they are objets d'art, he's keen to point out his riot shields were designed with a real world use. In January 2012, Cauty's stepdaughter was one of the Occupy protesters camped outside St Paul's when rumours swept the site that the police were planning eviction by force. Hunting around in his studio, he came across a battered old riot shield from a previous piece and, on a whim, painted it yellow, adding an acid house-style smiley face. "I thought that's not going to get them into trouble, it's got a good message," he laughs. He made a few, although they never saw use in the field. "They got left in the tent, and it got trampled – a bit of a PR disaster. But last year, I was looking round the workshop for something to sell, and thought it's a bit of a goer, that. A design classic."

Riots are a preoccupation for Cauty. In 2011, his Riot In A Jam Jar project presented scale dioramas of civil insurrection, both real and imagined – from the death of Ian Tomlinson to Charles and Camilla being dragged from their motorcade by a regicidal crowd. His 2013 project The Aftermath Dislocation Principle Part One kept the 1:87 scaling,

but inflated the scenery into an urban dystopia covering 448 square feet. The shield project is less fiddly, but getting decommissioned police equipment presents its own problems. "It's all quite clandestine – I have to drive up north in a

van, meet a man on a farm. They have seen active service. The faces are painted on the back side of the polycarbonate, facing through the plastic. But the fronts are as they were, which means you get scratches, marks, strange liquids. Sweat and blood."

"The great shot would be 100 kids with Smiley Riot Shields, charging down Whitehall..."



Cauty's Smiley Riot Shields will be on show at London's Multiplied Art Fair in October, with a limited edition selling for £180 – less, reckons Cauty, than each costs to make. "We wanted to keep the price down, but of course the people we know who go on riots, they can't even afford 180 quid, so we shot ourselves in the foot, really." Once they're sold out, that's it, and Cauty will move on to new projects. A return to music, he thinks, is unlikely – "I have the equipment, it's the will that's lacking" – while he denies Billy Childish's intimations that both Cauty and Bill Drummond played on Childish's 2013 LP *All Our Forts Are With You*. "I have done stuff with Billy – I put together a mash-up of one of his songs with a Sex Pistols song, but it was an edit job. I'm in touch with Bill Drummond, we speak often, but playing together – I'm afraid not."

Perhaps, then, it's through artwork that Cauty's creative vision manifests clearest. "The great shot would be 100 kids with Smiley Riot Shields, charging down Whitehall," he muses. "I could always Photoshop it, but I try to steer clear of that these days."

LOUIS PATTISON

Cauty's Smiley Riot Shields will be sold at Multiplied Art Fair, Christie's South Kensington, London, October 17-20

A QUICK ONE

► A couple of new **David Bowie** songs will surface on November 17, along with a hefty new Greatest Hits package. "Sue (Or In A Season Of Crime)", clocking in at seven minutes and 40 seconds, is included on the



3CD *Nothing Has Changed* set. It will also appear as a limited-edition 10" single and digital download, with another 2014 song, "Tis A Pity She's A Whore".

► **Neil Young's** lively year continues apace, with this summer's feisty new Crazy Horse anthem, "Who's Gonna Stand Up", turning up in a horns-assisted version on www.neilyoung.com. A new album, meanwhile, is rumoured to be due in November. A German-born arranger, Chris Walden, has claimed on his website that an orchestral Young set, titled *Storytone*, is out on November 4.

► Noted children's author **Keith Richards** has finished a new solo album – his first in 22 years. While promoting his book, *Gus & Me: The Story Of My Granddad And My First Guitar*, Richards told *Billboard* that the record could be released in June 2015.

► For the latest news updates, plus plenty of reviews and essential *Uncut* interviews, keep a regular eye on www.uncut.co.uk.

KAREN O



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Tim Showalter aka Strand Of Oaks: "I look like a meth dealer and I'm fine with that"



I'M NEW HERE

Strand Of Oaks

Recommended this month: how a car crash and infidelity forced an artistic breakthrough from a hardboiled Jason Molina disciple...

"WRITING THIS RECORD was scary," says Philadelphia-based Tim Showalter, aka Strand Of Oaks. "I was just not of this earth. My wife would come home to find me on the floor with my 'phones on, crying or laughing or both. There were cases of beer to help me along. It wasn't the healthiest process, but my brain needed it. Something was working itself out beyond my knowledge."

The LP in question is *Heal*. An aptly titled diary of an intense period in Showalter's life, it finds him dealing with creative failure, infidelity, a troubled marriage and the effects of a near-fatal car crash. Easy listening it is not. Sliding synth-rock textures rupture into terse guitar noise, while Showalter's vocals veer from husky intonations to what amounts to primal scream therapy. Yet *Heal* is also a cohesive song cycle, an emotive purge that channels hurt and anger into something philosophical and, in the end, conciliatory. A key moment is "Mirage Year", which addresses his wife's affair while their relationship was faltering. "We encore with that song every night as I just can't play it earlier in the set," Showalter concedes. "I'm afraid I might lose my shit. I wanted the LP to be open about my life. No-one's the bad guy or good guy. We're just trying to figure out this complicated life together."

This bloodletting is very much at odds with Strand Of Oaks' prior form. His first three LPs – 2009's *Leave Ruin*, *Pope Killdragon* (2010) and *Dark Shores* (2012) – were gentle-sounding

exercises in stripped-back folk, with Showalter mostly forgoing personal revelation for surreal allegories about Dan Aykroyd, JFK and deep space. He cites the timidity of *Dark Shores* as an artistic tipping point: "After that, I just couldn't give a shit. I'd been meaning to make a record like *Heal* since I first learned to play guitar, growing up in Indiana. And 'cos I was a little scattered in my head, I was going on instinct. That's why the songs came so fast. They're much more visceral."

Another feature of *Heal*'s sonic boom came about after an incident last Christmas Day. He and his wife were driving home when their car skidded into two semi trucks. Showalter suffered severe head trauma and broke every rib on his right side. It was an experience that led to a complete remix of the *Heal* tapes, the idea being to "make this shit as loud as possible". Showalter admits to some trepidation over how these ultra-personal songs would be received, "but it's proved to be relatable to people, as the whole record is about listening to music and trying to get over bad times... I'm 32 now, I look like a meth dealer and I'm fine with living in the cliché of all that. Because it made me better. It really is what got me through it."

ROB HUGHES

Strand Of Oaks play Brighton The Hope (Sept 29), London The Lexington (30), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (Oct 1), Glasgow Mono (2), Dublin Whelan's (3), Manchester Deaf Institute (5), Bristol Louisiana (6), and London's Hoxton Bar & Kitchen (27).

Heal is out now on Dead Oceans

I'M YOUR FAN

"Tim is one of the good dudes. It's been a delight watching him and the songs grow into something better each time I see him."

Matthew Houck, Phosphorescent



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

BOB DYLAN

Odds And Ends COLUMBIA

The first tantalising taste of the *Basement Tapes* motherlode: a roistering, Garth Hudson-heavy alternate take.

SLEATER-KINNEY

Start Together SUBPOP

Another highly desirable boxset, as all seven excellent albums by the righteous '90s punks are remastered and reupholstered.

KHUN NARIN

Khun Narin's Electric Phin Band

INNOVATIVE LEISURE

A tremendous discovery from the outer limits of psych. In a remote Thai village, a revolving crew gather to play epic jams through their homemade sound system.

LIAM HAYES & PLUSH

Korp Sole Roller

BANDCAMP.COM

An elusive pop perfectionist returns, with more voluptuous Lennon/Bacharach/Jimmy Webb confections.

COOL GHOULS

A Swirling Fire Burning Through The Rye EMPTY CELLAR

This month's best addition to the Californian nouveau-Nuggets scene. Honourable mention: the self-titled Meatbodies LP on In The Red.

NATHAN BOWLES

Nansemond PARADISE OF BACHELORS

The avant-folk underground's favourite banjo player – yep – stretches out. The ghost of his old cohort, Jack Rose, loiters approvingly.

JULIAN CASABLANCAS + THE VOIDZ

Tyranny CULT

Sprawling electro-prog thrash? "Like doing a bucket of glue with the cast of *The Goonies*," reckons one *Uncut* staffer. Fun, we think.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART

Sun Zoom Spark: 1970 To 1972 RHINO

Maximum booglarization! A Captain's compendium, featuring a whole disc of unreleased blabber'n'smoke.

ARIEL PINK

Pom Pom 4AD

Further extravagant derangements courtesy of the lysergic Mr Pink. Kim Fowley adds extra spiked bubblegum vibes.

ARIEL KALMA

An Evolutionary Music (Original Recordings: 1972-1979) RVNG INTL

Potent New Age balms, not just here for the novelty of having two Ariels in the playlist...

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

"These songs are the memories - the 24 karat gold rings in the blue box. These songs are for you" Stevie Nicks

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ECLIPSED

Your guide to this month's free CD

1 JESSE WINCHESTER Ghosts

The tender, reflective voice of Jesse Winchester makes for a poignant start to this month's selection. Winchester finished his last album, *A Reasonable Amount Of Trouble*, a few weeks before he died from cancer last April. "When I look back on those old times, it always makes me blue," he sings, beautifully, delivering regret with a lightness that makes it even more touching.

2 STEVE GUNN Milly's Garden

Through a bewildering range of projects, Brooklynite Steve Gunn has become one of our favourite folk guitarists these past few years. *Way Out Weather* is his most focused set of songs to date, and reveals he can cut it as a drawling rocker, too: "Milly's Garden" harbours strong vibes of Little Feat and the Grateful Dead in its humming boogie.



3 EX HEX Waterfall

Mary Timony's been around for some 20 years now, most famously fronting Helium. Her latest band is an all-female trio, Ex Hex, with a hip, zinging take on the punkish end of power-pop. Exhibit A: the two swift minutes of "Waterfall", reminiscent of her sometime associates, Sleater-Kinney.

4 CHRIS FORSYTH & THE SOLAR MOTEL BAND I Ain't Waiting

The brilliant Philadelphia guitarist has a new band to jam with, featuring various ex-members and affiliates of The War On Drugs. Here they are in cascading form from the new *Intensity Ghost* album: the song title, borrowed from a "Marquee Moon" lyric, should give you an idea of their significantly elevated instrumental trajectory.

5 PHILIP SELWAY Coming Up For Air

On his second solo album, Selway has moved away from stripped-back acoustic rock, towards a more expansive, electronically adjusted sound not a million miles from what he creates as part of Radiohead. "Coming Up For Air" reflects that, and also the ominous stealth of Massive Attack circa *Mezzanine*.

6 LUCINDA WILLIAMS Burning Bridges

For her 11th album, the redoubtable Williams taps into the country-soul riches of her native South, realising her vision with the help of a stellar cast that includes Tony Joe White, Bill Frisell and Ian McLagan. The band's in full flight on "Burning Bridges", as Williams imposes her character on an effortlessly rewarding groove.

7 VASHTI BUNYAN Across The Water

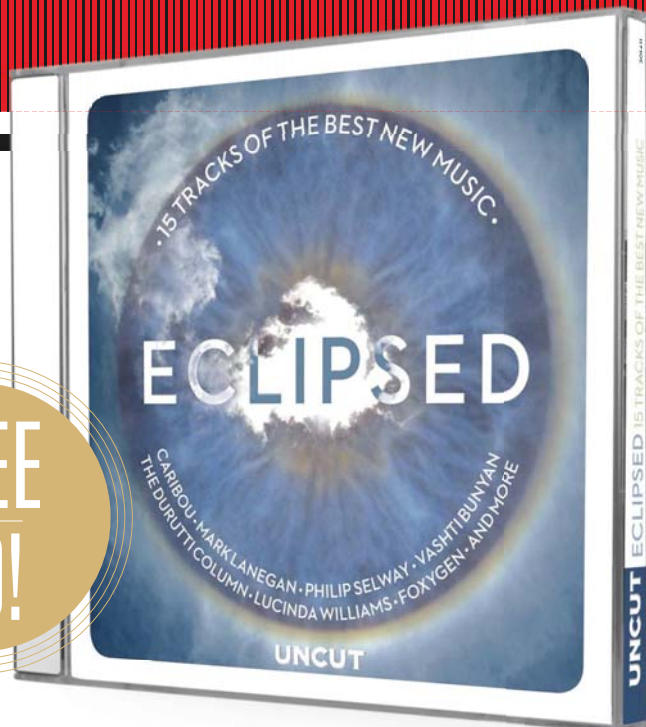
Something of a contrast in vocal styles here, as Williams' seasoned rasp is followed by the intimate whisper of Vashti Bunyan, back with her third album in 44 years. Bunyan claims *Heartleap*, from which the ineffably fragile "Across The Water" is extracted, will be her last record. A characteristically understated, and gorgeous, way to sign off.

8 FOXYGEN How Can You Really

LA duo Foxygen's *...And Star Power* is a sprawling 2CD set that frequently points up their kinship with the wilder impulses of The Flaming Lips. Nestling among all the psychedelic madness, though, are some terrific pop songs, not



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CD!



least "How Can You Really", that sounds like the work of both Todd Rundgren and Laura Nyro.

9 MARK LANEGAN BAND Floor Of The Ocean

2012's *Blues Funeral* ushered in an unexpected phase of Lanegan's illustrious career, encapsulated by the song title "Ode To Sad Disco". The new *Phantom Radio* LP pursues this satisfying, synth-heavy direction, never better than on "Floor Of The Ocean". Fans of New Order's "Elegia" are particularly encouraged to give it a listen.



10 MARTIN DUFFY Snowbound

Duffy's long tenure behind the keyboards in Primal Scream gives little indication of the enchanted miniatures that make up his first solo album. There are echoes of his early work in Felt here, but also a subtly jazzy gift for arrangements that maps out inventive new territory; Moondog is mentioned, approvingly, in our review on p 72.

11 MARK OLSON Poison Oleander

Now emphatically detached from the Jayhawks – "I don't want to talk about those guys ever again," he tells us on page 81 – Olson's third solo album is a collaboration with his wife, Ingunn Ringvold. She figures prominently on "Poison

Oleander", chiming raga rock that creatively expands Olson's old Americana remit.

12 FRAZEY FORD September Fields

Not unlike Lucinda Williams, Frazey Ford is a country singer (one third of The Be Good Tanyas) branching out into more soulful areas. "September Fields" finds her in Memphis with Al Green's old backing band, sounding as comfortably inspired as another singer who took a similar path a few years ago, Chan Marshall.

13 THE DURUTTI COLUMN Free From All The Chaos

A serene and welcome comeback, as master Mancunian guitarist Vini Reilly returns to action after serious illness. On this spectral track his guitar lurks discreetly in the mix, ceding the spotlight to a sombre piano line and the vocals of Caoilfhionn Rose Birley.

14 CARIBOU Can't Do Without You

Dan Snaith's journey from indie-electronica (initially as Manitoba) to widescreen psych rave-pop has been a quiet but effective one. Here, from *Our Love*, is one of his most straightforwardly joyous anthems to date. Hands in the air, everyone!

15 WEYES BLOOD Some Winters

...And rest. Weyes Blood is the alias of Natalie Mering, associate of Ariel Pink and Jackie O-Motherfucker, with a meticulous aesthetic that recalls Julia Holter and a gorgeous stentorian voice that stands comparison with Nico. A dramatic end to the month's business, for sure...



CHUCK PROPHET NIGHT SURFER – OUT NOW

It's got it's own groove and even some prog rock chops here and there. It was made whilst listening to some classic rock and some extraordinary Australian Glam mix tapes, the upshot of all of which are guitars that are in your face. Up your nose. They snake and harmonize. They jangle too, thanks in no small part to special guest Peter Buck on most songs.

"It brings a tear to the eye and blood to the Johnson" —JOHN MURRY

ON TOUR IN OCTOBER WITH JONAH TOLCHIN: 9th - The Haunt - Brighton • 10th - The Art Bar - Oxford • 11th - The Deaf Institute - Manchester • 12th - The Railway - Winchester • 13th - The Tunnels - Bristol • 14th - Bush Hall - London • 15th - Trades Club - Hebden Bridge • 16th - Workmans Club - Dublin • 17th - Cleere's - Kilkenny • 18th - Real Music Club - Belfast • 19th - Oran Mor - Glasgow • 20th - Oobleck - Birmingham • 21st - The Cluny - Newcastle Upon Tyne • 22nd - Rescue Rooms - Nottingham

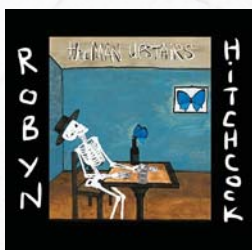
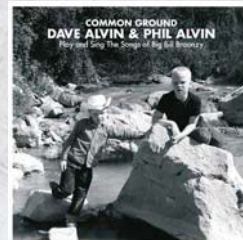
DAVE ALVIN & PHIL ALVIN COMMON GROUND: DAVE ALVIN AND PHIL ALVIN PLAY AND SING THE SONGS OF BIG BILL BROONZY - OUT NOW

"Fabulous" 9/10—UNCUT • "Bursting with humour and joy...their best album yet" ★★★★★—Q

"Celebrating both Big Bill and the Alvin's shared boyhood, this genial collaboration throws a warm light on both"—MOJO

"Proof that great music doesn't lose its edge when it's done right" 8/10—CLASSIC ROCK

ON TOUR IN OCTOBER: 22nd - Ruby Lounge - Manchester • 23rd - The Bullingdon Arms - Oxford • 24th - Islington Assembly Halls - London • 26th - The Tunnels - Bristol • 27th - The Maze at The Forest Tavern - Nottingham • 28th - The Art School - Glasgow • 29th - The Cluny - Newcastle Upon Tyne



ROBYN HITCHCOCK THE MAN UPSTAIRS – OUT NOW

"Some spectral, lingering, emotional thundercloud hangs over The Man Upstairs...harks back to that infinitely distant yet eternally resonant emotional big bang" 8/10—UNCUT

"His overlooked gift for romantic melancholia is highlighted. Hitchcock's own songs maintain the heartsick mood" 4/5—MOJO

ON TOUR SEPTEMBER 30th - Rough Trade East **OCTOBER:** 1st - Komedia - Brighton • 2nd - The Lantern - Bristol • 3rd - Hermon - Oswestry • 4th - St John The Evangelist - Oxford • 6th - The Junction - Cambridge • 7th - Arts Centre - Colchester • 18th - Musicport Festival - Whitby • 19th - Electric Circus - Edinburgh

MASTER MIX: RED HOT + ARTHUR RUSSELL OUT OCTOBER 20TH

Master Mix tells the story of Arthur Russell, exploring his life, music, and ongoing relevance to a new generation of artists. Showcasing the diversity of Arthur's musical worlds, each artist reinterpreted one of his tracks in their own style in tribute to his influence. Featuring tracks from Sufjan Stevens, Hot Chip, Phosphorescent, Devendra Banhart and more...



CHATHAM COUNTY LINE TIGHTROPE - OUT NOW

"Walk a narrow and near-solitary road between traditional bluegrass and modern acoustic folk...with such conviction that there's simply no point anyone else trying to overtake them" ★★★★★—Q

ON TOUR IN NOVEMBER with Mandolin Orange: 14th - Vulkan Arena - Oslo • 15th - Minnebroederskerk - Mechelen • 16th - Bush Hall - London • 17th - Brudenell Social Club - Leeds • 18th - Mono - Glasgow • 19th - Button Factory - Dublin • 20th - Raheen House Hotel - Tipperary • 21st - Deaf Institute - Manchester • 23rd - Paradiso - Amsterdam



JONAH TOLCHIN CLOVER LANE - OUT NOW

"Take-no-prisoners country-blues, which hovers around the box marked Americana" 8/10—UNCUT
"Adding raw, punk brio to a folk-blues template" ★★★★★—MOJO

ON TOUR IN OCTOBER with Chuck Prophet



THE STRAY BIRDS BEST MEDICINE – OUT OCT. 27TH

"Marvellous writing, superlative playing, astounding—The Stray Birds will become your new favourite band"—AMERICAN UK



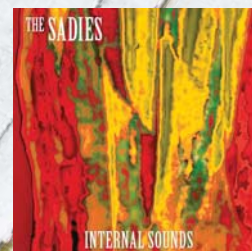
MANDOLIN ORANGE THIS SIDE OF JORDAN – OUT NOW

"Elegiac music at root, the noise of Mandolin Orange could well become an addiction" 8/10—CLASSIC ROCK COUNTRY
ON TOUR IN NOVEMBER with Chatham County Line

THE SADIES INTERNAL SOUNDS - OUT NOW

"is a sparkling conflation of '69-vintage Byrds, early Burritos and psychedelic country, helped along by the odd splash of boiling surf" 8/10—UNCUT

ON TOUR IN OCTOBER: 21st - Sticky Mikes - Brighton • 22nd - The Borderline - London • 23rd - The Tunnels - Bristol • 24th - The Cluny 2 - Newcastle Upon Tyne • 25th - The Deaf Institute - Manchester



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RECORDS

AN AUDIENCE WITH...

Willie Nelson

Interview: Michael Bonner
Photograph: David McClister

The formidable outlaw countryman on songwriting, ageing, marijuana, martial arts and meeting Muhammad Ali: "I was thrilled to be able to know him..."

A

FEW DAYS BEFORE *Uncut* speaks to Willie Nelson, his famous Luck Ranch outside Austin, Texas, is damaged by a tornado. "Some towns got a lot worse," says Nelson pragmatically. "Luck is a tough town. It can be rebuilt." It seems there is little that can faze the 81-year-old musician, even the destruction of his beloved homestead. Nelson is currently on tour – he has two weeks on, then a

week off – and our interview takes place on his tourbus as it makes his way into Boston for the evening show. Currently, Nelson is on a writing roll – his recent LP, *Band Of Brothers*, features nine new songs. "I don't have a process," he explains. "It's more natural. I don't push it a lot. It helps if you have an incentive, and a reason to write or an LP you're working on."

When asked how many songs he's written in a career stretching back 60 years, he replies, "Not sure. A couple of thousand... I've never counted." His creative streak, thankfully, shows no signs of abating: "Sister Bobbie and I have a new LP called *December Day* coming in October," he reveals. "It's her and I and my band and there's several original songs and more covers like 'Alexander's Rag Time Band' and 'What'll I Do'."

And with that, he's ready to answer your questions on everything from his earliest attempts at songwriting, to his formidable martial arts prowess, to the best way for an octogenarian singer-songwriter to get stoned. Ever the gentleman, when our interview is concluded he signs off with, "Thanks for your time. See you down the road."



playing our first Farm Aid. Our next one will be in Raleigh, North Carolina. We've got a lot of the same guys playing. Neil Young, John Mellencamp, myself, Dave Matthews. There will be eight or ten other guys on there.

What motivates you to get up each morning and keep playing and writing music?

Nick Sharp, Luton

When you're going down the highway with three or four trucks, a few buses, a lot of equipment and a band and crew, it's like a circus. That's what we do. We go round the world playing music. It's a good reason to stay out here – everybody is making a pretty good living.

What advice would you give to a young musician starting out?

Robert Buckley, Isleworth

Well, if he's really good he wouldn't take my advice anyway. He'll go ahead and do what he wants to do. Some of the best advice I heard was from a relative: "Do what you want to." And that's pretty much my advice to everybody. What advice was I given when I was starting out? When I was in Texas playing clubs, I had a nice following, working all the clubs and dancehalls. I played pretty much all of them. Then I went to Nashville, and it was a little different there. No-one accepts ➔

STAR QUESTION



Do you consider "Crazy" to be in the top five greatest songs you've written?

Loudon Wainwright III

I guess... but a lot of its success was to do with Patsy Cline, one of the greatest singers ever, recording the song and just singing the heck out of it. No-one has really come close to her rendition of "Crazy", so she had a lot to do with making it the hit it was.

How important was Bob Dylan's speech at Live Aid on inspiring you to set up Farm Aid?

Chris Harper, Dorking
When I heard what Bob said, it got

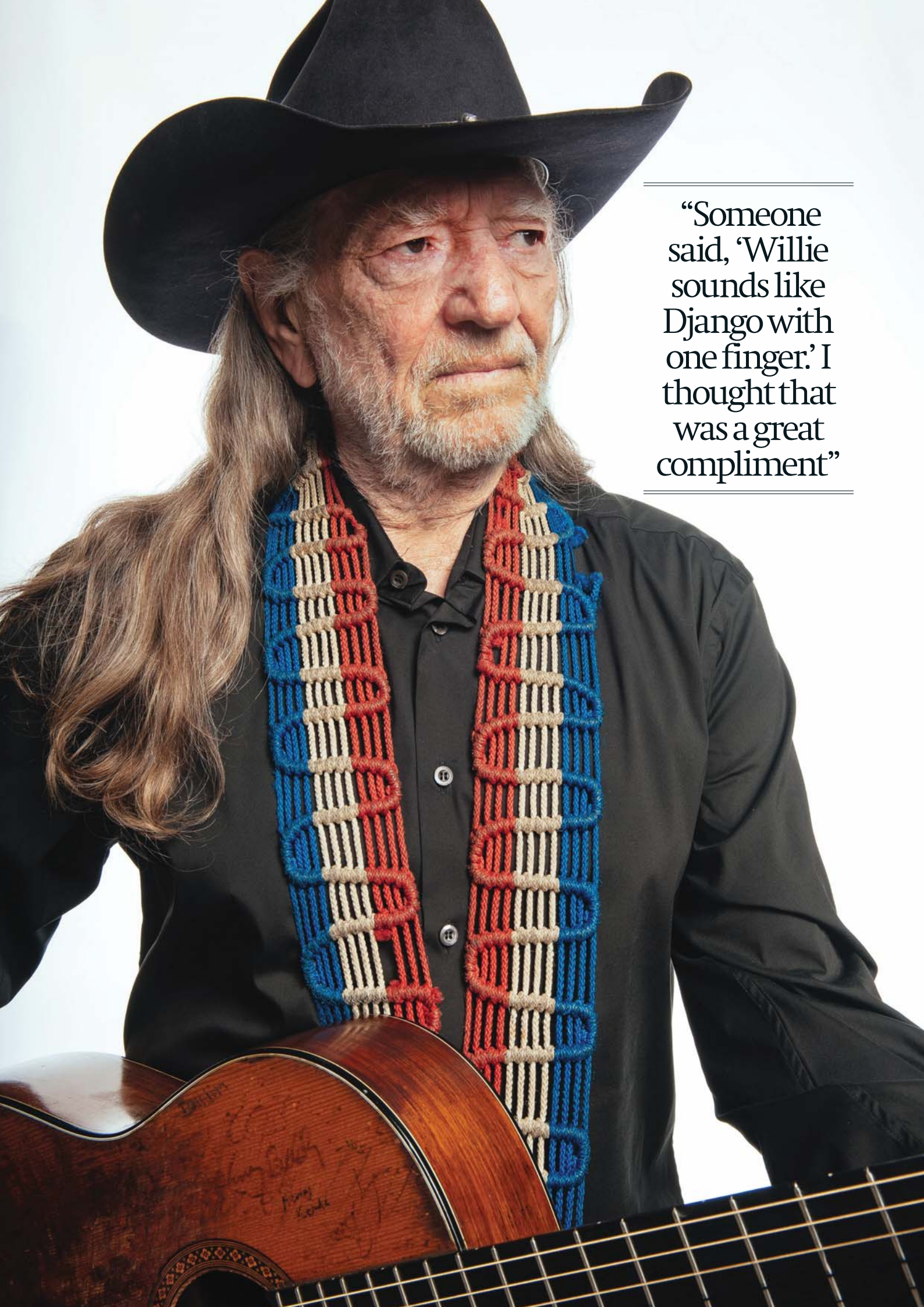


me thinking about maybe he was right, maybe we did have a problem here. So I started checking around with some of my farmer and rancher friends, and sure enough there was a huge problem in the farm belt and something needed to be done about it. So we started

Does getting old ever bother you?

Martin Carpenter, Essex

A while back, I had overbooked myself on my dates. Working harder than I should be. One day, I just couldn't go any further. I had some health problems, I had a shoulder that was bothering me and hands and things. So I took some time off and had some health work done and got better. But there was a time there when I had hit the wall. All those things concern you, when your hands are bothering you, and your shoulders and you're having problems with one thing or another. So, yeah, I was having some issues. But they're pretty much worked out by now.



“Someone said, ‘Willie sounds like Django with one finger.’ I thought that was a great compliment”

➔ you with open arms there. You have to prove yourself. So I wrote some songs and had some luck, but I moved back to Texas as that's where I enjoyed living and playing.

STAR QUESTION



You're a big fan of Django Reinhardt. Why is his music so special to you?

Jim James

He was the greatest guitar player ever.

Period. I used to play some of Django's songs and never got halfway close to as good as he played them. Norah Jones has a band, the Little Willies, and one of the members was talking about me and Django. You know, Django only had two fingers on his left hand that he played with, as he'd been hurt in a fire when he was 16 or 17. Someone said, "Willie sounds like Django with one finger." I thought that was a great compliment.

What do you do in your downtime? *Beth Twining, Leeds*

I like to go home to Texas or go to Maui for a few days and hang out by the ocean, play a little poker or golf. It's pretty much what I've done for time off over the years. I can't play but I enjoy trying. I have a golf course in Texas.

"I use a Vaporizer these days; they're better for your voice and lungs"

How old were you when you first started getting interested in playing music?

Sherry Daly, Toronto

I was writing poems before I was five. Once I started writing a few poems, I picked up a guitar when I was around six. I started writing melodies and it seemed pretty natural. My mum and dad were both musicians. I was raised by my grandparents and they were both music teachers and musicians and voice coaches and all that good stuff. So my sister and I had a lot of good teaching when we were young. Do I remember any of the poems I wrote as a child? The first one, I was about five or six years old and I did this poem in church: "What are you looking at me for/I ain't got nothing to say/If you don't like the looks of me/You can look some other way."



With The Highwaymen: Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, and Kris Kristofferson, onstage at Central Park, New York, May 23, 1993

Neil Young covered two of your songs, "Crazy" and "On The Road Again" on A Letter Home. What songs of his would you cover? *Jay Haynes, New York*

I've known Neil for many, many years. I'm a huge fan. He's a great writer and musician. He was there from the start for Farm Aid and has been there every year... he's a staunch supporter of Family Farmers. We've played together a few times. I'd do anything with Neil Young. It would be a good thing to do.

You've been playing the same guitar, Trigger, since 1969. What's your secret to keeping it in good working order?

Samantha Pond, Derbyshire

I've got to take good care of Trigger. He's had a couple of problems. We've had to go in and do some work on the inside, build up the woodwork in there a little bit over the years. But Trigger's holding up. Is Trigger a he or a she? I named it after Roy Rogers' horse, so I guess it's a he. It's a Martin Classical N-21.

When did you become interested in martial arts?

Angus Stewart, Glasgow

In Abbot, there wasn't a lot to do but fight and throw rocks. I got into it from the comic books, judo and ju-jitsu, Charles Atlas and Bruce Lee. I got into kung fu in Nashville. For the last 20 years, I've been into taekwondo. It's fun and probably good for you. I've got a fifth-degree black belt. Talking of sports, I'm a good friend of Muhammad Ali. Kris Kristofferson introduced us. I've

always been a fan, all the way back to when he was Cassius Clay. He came on my bus one time. I've got a punch bag in the bus and I got him back there punching it. I was thrilled to be able to know him.

What was it like working with The Highwaymen?

Bea Sheridan, Farnborough

Some of my best memories were working with them, Kris, John and Waylon. We went around the world a couple of times on tours, had a couple of albums together. I had a whole lot of fun working with those guys.

Do people mythologise your marijuana intake?

Toby Speller, Essex

It's probably not exaggerated a lot. I enjoy smoking. But I use a Vaporizer these days; they're better for your voice and lungs. There's no smoke and heat on it. Even though marijuana smoke is not as bad as cigarette smoke, any time you put any kind of smoke in your lungs it takes a toll of some kind. ☺

Band Of Brothers is out now on Sony Legacy

STAR QUESTION



I read in one of your books that you had a golf cart with a stereo. Is there some way you

can facilitate those for the real world? *J Mascis*

I've had a couple of those. I had one, one time, that had a cover, an air conditioner, a radio and a TV. But it didn't help my golf game any. My longest running game has been at Pedernales Country Club, outside of Austin. The course is a little rocky, but the greens roll true.

Is it true you wrote down "On The Road Again" on an airline sick bag? *Natalie Ember, Luton*

Yeah. I was on a plane with Sydney Pollack and Jerry Schatzberg, who was the director of *Honeysuckle Rose*. They were looking for songs for the movie and they asked me if I had any idea. I said, "What do you want the song to say?" and Sydney said, "Can it be something about being on the road?" It just started to click. I said, "You mean like, 'On the road again, I can't wait to get on the road again?'" They said, "That's great. What's the melody?" I said, "I don't know yet."

With Trigger, 2013



What was the first song you wrote? *Jude Parvarian, Edinburgh*

The first songs I wrote back in the early days that were recorded were "Family Bible", "Night Life", "Crazy", and I didn't realise how good they were going to work out. I was tired of travelling, playing all over the world, so I decided I'd take a year off to just write songs. I lived in Tennessee on a farm and raised horses, hogs and cows and had a good time just staying home writing songs. I could have done that forever, and never had to travel, but I enjoy playing the music, so eventually I went back on the road.

Who are your favourite lyricists?

Christian Harper, Leeds

Hank Williams, Vern Gosdin, Bob Wills, Johnny Mercer, Hoagy Carmichael, Irving Berlin... they write good songs!



UNCUT.CO.UK

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

MARK LANEGAN BAND PHANTOM RADIO



The new album released 20th October

Includes the single "Harvest Home"

Available on black and white vinyl, CD and download

Deluxe CD and download include the EP "No Bells On Sunday"



“Are you a good person, or are you a twat?”

That’s how you should judge people, says BERNARD SUMNER. Whether in JOY DIVISION or the returning NEW ORDER, he’s dealt with both kinds. Now the author of a memoir, Bernard meets *Uncut* to discuss Ian Curtis, scooters, Wishbone Ash, and pointedly, his former colleague Peter Hook. “He likes the attention,” says Bernard, “I think he resented the fact he wasn’t the singer in New Order”.

Story: John Robinson | Photograph: Sheila Rock



"Anyone can do this..." New Order, 1985: (l-r) Gillian Gilbert, Bernard Sumner, Peter Hook and Stephen Morris



Joy Division on Waterloo Road, Stockport, near Strawberry Studios, July 28, 1979: (l-r) Peter Hook, Ian Curtis, Stephen Morris, Bernard Sumner

BERNARD SUMNER MEETS *Uncut* wearing the all-purpose attire of the downtime celebrity: nondescript baseball cap, dark glasses, neither of which he removes. He drives a black Mercedes sports car – as it turns out, at considerable speed, allowing his passenger to experience the picturesque environs of this semi-rural, footballery part of Cheshire as a rapid montage of looming, ivy-covered walls, concealed entrances and tight turns. The white-knuckle journey to a suitably quiet and interview-friendly pub is made additionally piquant by the driver's jetlagged yawning. "Hot, isn't it," he says, this most amiable and un-starry musician. "Should have worn shorts."

We meet Bernard in July, just returned from America, where New Order have played a short two-week tour of sold-out, big theatre dates. These followed the band's recent trip to South America where the band played as part of a Lollapalooza bill, and debuted two new songs, "Plastic", and "Singularity". They hope to have a new album in the shops in the spring. When it arrives, it will be on Mute.

Bernard, though, is in a retrospective frame of mind, as – not uncommon among musicians from the north-west in the past year or two – he has written a memoir, *Chapter And Verse*. The book covers his early life in working-class Salford, where he lived with his stepfather, his disabled mother, and her parents, and how this impacted on his music. It details the short life of Joy Division, and the saga of Factory and the Hacienda. It is great, particularly, on the career of New Order. When it goes right, as it has for the band's albums and wonderful standalone singles, it can feel transcendent, the Man-Machine running smoothly, with a loved-up attitude.

Still, New Order's recent history hasn't been completely untroubled. In 2007, the group's original bassist, Peter Hook, departed the group in a strange and fairly acrimonious manner. Tension had been growing since

Hook bought from the nightclub's receivers, the name and trademarks of the Hacienda, and escalated to a point where Hook announced the band had split. While Bernard is unwilling to get drawn into a war of words, he's able to address some elements of Hook's departure.

UNCUT: Does it feel unusual to be making New Order music without Peter Hook?

BERNARD SUMNER: No, it doesn't, because he was in the position where he didn't like being with us particularly. There was this resentment directed at me in the last couple of years, and I don't miss that. I think he lost the trust of the band when he bought the name of the Hacienda. Let me get this right, we didn't push him out of the band. He claimed that the band had split up, without consulting the band. He seemed to be hating it, particularly hating me.

Why? I don't know. I think he always felt everyone always sided with me. But that may be because my ideas were a bit more rational, and were less business-orientated. I think when Rob [Gretton, *New Order* manager] died [in 1999], he saw it then as a chance to seize power in the band. I think he may have felt that I felt the same way, but I didn't.

How else did you differ? He wasn't particularly interested in being in the studio and loved playing live – and I preferred being in the studio, that way. Perhaps he wasn't that interested in electronic music, and wanted to make music of a more throbbing nature, shall we say. I just think that he's very competitive, and I'm not really – and he couldn't stand that. I could be a miserable cunt on tour – because I didn't want to be on tour with him.

He's had a lot of bands, hasn't he? Do you think he



Young Bernard outside his home on Alfred Street, Salford

likes keeping busy? I think he resented the fact that he wasn't the singer in New Order. I didn't fight for the role – it was Rob who decided I should be the singer, and I'm always up for a challenge. I just thought, 'OK, why not? Maybe I'll learn something.' I think Hooky likes attention.

Can you remember why you were friends, though? Yes. Because we were both at the bottom of the class. We sat together. It wasn't because there was any great musical enlightenment that we shared, we were the scum at the back of the class.

Your book makes Salford sound terrifying back then. Kids would sometimes find swords up the chimneys when houses had been pulled down – they'd been hidden there when soldiers returned from the Crimean war. If you walked down the wrong street there was a chance you'd be chased by a gang – and if you were really unlucky, that gang would have a sword or two.

Just the couple of swords. I don't think I put in the book about the spears. When I was a scooter boy me and Hooky got chased by a gang near Salford precinct. They must have broken into a school or something and taken all the javelins. It didn't happen all the time, but there was violence.

“Hooky and I were friends 'cos we were the scum at the back of the class”
BERNARD SUMNER

And then in the room above they had a stereo and they would play Free, Santana and The Rolling Stones. So you could go between the two.

Were scooters a big deal? You were either a rocker or a scooter boy. I remember being told as a scooter boy – “Don't ever go to Macclesfield, it's full of greasers. It's weird there.” And then I ended up forming a band with two guys from Macclesfield. And a girl, of course. It was better than getting a bus, and good for attracting girls because it made you look cool. It wasn't mod. It was post-mod: the first wave of skinheads going into suedeheads.

Were you one of those people primed for punk? I was quite happy with the music I was listening to, but the people that made it were remote. When punk came along, we felt that these working-class scumbags we could relate to. It felt like it belonged to us. Of course, it didn't. But with the Sex Pistols, you knew they were just a bunch of working-class twats like we were. There was a great energy to it, which felt like a renewal. I was going to say it wasn't a revolution in the sound of music, but it was, because it took it back to its basic elements.

What was Ian Curtis into? He had a different set of influences from us, and he worked in a record shop. He liked The Doors, The Stooges, The Velvet Underground. I met him

in clubs. I went round his house and *The Idiot* had come out that day [March 1977] and he said, “Listen to this, listen to this...” and he played “China Girl” and I was an immediate convert to Iggy Pop. Ian loved Love. He had great taste in music.

Joy Division is a band with a very heavy story and mythology. With the films and so on, do you ever think, ‘Was that really me?’ People's understanding of people in bands can make them out to be some sort of caricature, but it's not that. People have more subtle hues to their personality.

You tried past-life regression with Ian, didn't you?

He seemed to have got himself into a mental lockdown about the situation he was in – not a bizarre love triangle, but a distressing love triangle. He was torn between his wife and daughter and Annik [Honoré, Belgian journalist]. He didn't know what to do, he was always asking people what to do – he didn't want the responsibility of the decision. But it was a question only he could answer. He seemed locked in indecision – and the longer he was locked in indecision, the more harm it was doing him mentally. I guess the hypnotism was a juvenile attempt to clear the blockage and find out what he should do.

BERNARD'S BOOK CORNER

LEAVES LIKE US

Bernard's Cold War-themed current reading. “The atmosphere was very much like *Unknown Pleasures*.”

A SPY AMONG FRIENDS

BEN MACINTYRE

“About Kim Philby. He wrote his own story under the auspices of the KGB. But I think this one gets closer to the truth. Although you still don't know what really motivated him to betray his own country and friends. Was he mad or bad? I think he was blackmailed.”

THE GREATEST TRAITOR

ROGER HERMISTON

“About George Blake who was a Soviet spy in British intelligence. Just about to read this.”

NOTHING TO ENVY

BARBARA DEMICK

“About life in North Korea.”

LOVE IN THE SUN

LEO WALMSLEY

“A love story set in Fowey in Cornwall in the 1930s, a very innocent snapshot of the place, the period and the author.”

BEN MACINTYRE A SPY AMONG FRIENDS

KIM PHILBY AND THE GREAT BETRAYAL



GREATEST TRAITOR

THE SECRET LIVES OF AGENT GEORGE BLAKE



EVIL RELATIONS

The Man Who Beat Winston Against the Moors Murders



AGENT ZIGZAG

Lower Traitor Hero Spy



JOHN LE CARRE THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD



EVIL RELATIONS

DAVID SMITH WITH CAROL ANNE LEE

“This is the guy who turned the Moors Murderers in. That horrible episode affected anyone who was a child in Manchester in the '60s.”

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

HG WELLS

“A short but strange story.”

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

MARLON BRANDO

“It's not about acting, it's about him and how he thinks. I found it very interesting.”

A VOYAGE FOR MADMEN

PETER NICHOLS

“About a yacht race in the late '60s, but so much more than that. A very exciting book.”

AGENT ZIGZAG

BEN MACINTYRE

“About a wartime double agent. An excellent, true and fascinating story.”

THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD

JOHN LE CARRE

“The atmosphere is so austere it kind of enlightened me as to what people saw in the music of Joy Division. The atmosphere here is very much like *Unknown Pleasures*.”



New Order in 1987, taping ITV's *The Roxy*, to promote "True Faith"

❖ **You taped the session.** The tape ended up with Debbie [Curtis, Ian's widow], and she gave it back to me. I couldn't bring myself to listen to it, but I had it transcribed and found it fascinating. He mentioned the Hundred Years War. I think he mentioned the name of the law firm he worked for.

How did you get into all that kind of thing? I read a book on hypnotism, before I knew Ian. We used to do it when we were hanging out in people's houses. You could stick a pin in someone's hand and no blood would come out. It was weird. Then I read a book about hypnotic regression – a couple of books, actually. I tried it out on Ian and it worked. I did it twice actually, once at rehearsals and once at my house. I just thought it may help him in some way. One of the books was about how your problems in current life are caused by problems in your past life. I thought I'd give it a go. It didn't sort him out, though. I never did it to anyone else after what happened to Ian, because it made me a bit paranoid about it.

You were about to go on tour with someone who had just tried to commit suicide... I spent two weeks with him before he died. I remember talking about the first time he attempted suicide. We got the bus back to Peel Green where I lived then and purposefully walked through the cemetery to try and bring it home to him the reality of death. I got this idea that it had become a fantasy in his head about dying. His lyrics came from fantasy, and he would often talk about things in unrealistic ways. I thought it might bring the reality of being dead to life. "This could have been you."

You didn't think he'd try suicide again? He was an extremist, he always wanted the music to be manic and extreme. He always wanted to push it as far as possible. We didn't think he would commit suicide, so when he did, even though he tried it once before, it was a total shock. I felt depressed and sad and angry, frustrated and confused.

It was the end of the band. There was some anger in the band that he'd done that. You may have your own hardships, but you're not torn apart like that person. You don't have the problems they have, they're tortured souls, you're not. So you're angry in a selfish way, because you've done so much work.

"FUCK OFF"

How bad 1970s customer service hastened punk

BERNARD: "I bought a couple of albums I didn't like because I liked the cover – *Argus* by Wishbone Ash and Yes' *Tales From Topographic Oceans*. When I got them home I just really really didn't like them. I tried to take them back to the shop to get my money back, and the guy told me to fuck off. Literally. It looked like it was potentially interesting music – but it wasn't to me, it was empty and soulless. So I was a bit lost after that.

"We met Irvine Welsh in Chicago and he told us exactly the same story – with the same record. 'Would they let me have me money back? Would they fuck!' Customer service in those days was terrible."



Do you think Ian was still into it?

He really wanted to be successful in a band – he went apeshit at me once for taking a holiday because it was getting in the way and was slowing things down. But when he got what he wanted, he realised he didn't want the reality of it. He wanted to leave and set up a corner bookshop, then a couple of days later would change his mind. But he was a good person, basically. He wasn't a twat. And that's how you should judge people – are you a good person? Or are you a twat?

How did you manage to make moving on a positive thing?

It was like climbing up a mountain. You'd got up so far then the rope you'd used was cut away – you could only use the rope that was ahead of you. We didn't have any choice but to carry on. Plus we'd had a taste of it – we really liked being in a band. One of my prime motivations was to have fun – regardless of all the emotional pain, being in a band was a good way of having fun.

An interesting image of the period is you with a soldering iron – building the future. There were a couple of reasons

for that. We could hear this exciting technical music, but the technology you needed – we couldn't afford it. The other was that I suffered really badly from insomnia. The choice was either, listen to Truckers' Hour, or get my soldering iron out. There was a magazine called *Electronics Today*, which had a thing in it one day – "Build your own synth". I ordered the kit. I built the sequencer that drove the instruments on "Blue Monday" and the Vocoder I used on "Blue Monday".

How did you write? The less we thought about it, the better the music was. The best thing to do was talk about what we watched on telly the night before until we were extremely bored then pick up our instruments and start playing. Then we'd write good music. We didn't think about success. Our prime motivation was to have fun. The more success you get, you'll be more famous, you won't be able to get up to what you get up to – I'll leave that to your imagination – because the papers will start writing about it.

When did you feel you were getting somewhere?

Success for us was to write a song and say, yes, that's progressed from where we were two months ago. We'd get in clubs free, get drinks tickets... meet a lot of nice young ladies. And travel the world having fun with our friends. We had the right face in the right place at the right time.

You were clear that it was about experimenting with the new technology...

The acoustic songs would be jammed. The electronic ones, the aim was to make it sound like it emanated from machines, not human beings, because that's the aspect of Giorgio Moroder's work that we liked. I'm not saying it's better – but it sounded fresher to us if it sounded like a machine had written it. There was a popular misconception at the time, that you could hit a button, press



'record' and a hit record would come out. It's not like that at all: if you put shit in, you get shit out.

You hit an extraordinary run of form from *Brotherhood* to "True Faith/1963". What

was your secret? We were on a roll, maybe more confident in ourselves. Stephen Hague did a great job, but we worked with producers primarily so they could take the shit, be diplomats, politicians in the band. Instead of me saying "Hooky, can you turn your bass down a little bit?", Stephen would ask him to do it.

You revived the idea that singles should stand alone from albums. We didn't really understand why a single had to be on an album, we thought it was boring. You could buy a single and buy an album – Factory didn't really give a fuck. "True Faith/1963" is something that blows everything I've said in this interview out of the water.

How so? It was a time when I set out to write a hit single. I think we got a rather large tax bill, and we sat down with Stephen Hague to write a Top 40 hit. I had an idea for a bassline, Gillian had some string ideas, Stephen got some drums down. When we got the track going, I was sent off to the flat we had in London with a bottle of Pernod and told not to show my face again until I'd written the lyrics. We had "1963" as well so I wrote them one after another. I did one, one day, the other the next – I didn't like being in the flat on my own.

Did you think it was as good as it is? I thought, it's another song. It's not good to look directly into the sun, you know? You should just carry on with what you're doing.

You mentioned Factory. That and the Hacienda were and are such exciting ideas – but do you resent the fact that you were footing the bill? I resent the fuck out of it. There's a lot of stupidity went down – it could have been done in a cleverer way and in a more business-like fashion. We came from punk, and Tony [Wilson] believed in anarchy, so it was done according to the anarchist's handbook. We did lose a hell of a lot of money, but the success outweighs the loss. What's the opposite word to success?

Failure. Well, it wasn't a failure. It was a cultural experiment that cost us dearly. We lost a lot of money, but you know what? I'm not skint – I've got everything I want. Just done two great tours, so rather than cry over spilt milk, I concentrate on the present, which is great – what's done is done.

In your book you identify good New Order gigs and also bad ones... The worst gig we ever played was in a place called Aarhus in Denmark. We were playing with Miles Davis – Miles played for longer than he should have, and we'd been drinking. So by the time we went on we were drunk – and Gillian was very drunk. Someone had pushed the pitch wheel up and sent her whole synth up a semitone – the worst interval in music. She was so pissed she didn't notice she was playing a semitone above everyone else. I was trying to pitch between the synth and the band, and it was just terrible. We were drunk, out of tune, really terrible. The police had to be called for our own protection.



Was drink often your undoing? We used to get too drunk... we'd be completely shitfaced onstage. We also used to do the set before we went onstage, so we'd either put a bum set together that just didn't work, like all the tempos and keys would clash. Or we'd put in a song we hadn't rehearsed for five years. On top of that, we'd be really drunk. After about 28 years, we sussed this was a problem, and rectified things by playing pretty much the same set, but changing a couple of songs in it.

One of the things I like about New Order is that you've not seemed to have to change who you are to get to the level you're at. Would you agree? That goes back to the whole point about punk – that anyone can do this. You've got to know what's good – and I

believe if you've got a great love for music, if you can hear a piece of music and find it earth-shatteringly beautiful – you can reverse the process, like a mirror. You can reverse it and make music like that after a period of time learning a certain set of skills.

What do you want from New Order in the future? You can't reinvent the wheel, can you, but we did to a certain extent with "Blue Monday". To reinvent music is a bit of a tall order. When we wrote "Blue Monday" and "Everything's Gone Green", it was the future, weird and new. Electronic music isn't the future anymore, is it? It's the present.

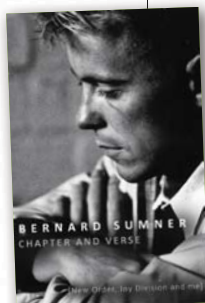
"At one gig, the police had to be called for our own protection"
BERNARD SUMNER

AS BERNARD DRIVES me back to the station, he chats about the family time he has for the next few weeks, and his plans for the rest of this extremely pleasant day. "Feels like a barbecue night tonight," he says, this person who can with some justification claim to have

altered the course of music. "Think I'll drop by the supermarket in a bit." After that, he thinks, a well-earned rest before dinner.

"Get on a lounge with my Speedos on," he grins. "Not a pretty sight." ☺

Chapter And Verse: New Order, Joy Division And Me by Bernard Sumner is published by Bantam Press



GET READY!

The word on the new NEW ORDER songs

THEY WERE JUST written after Christmas. I've

decided to write titles, then write a song and choose a title. "Singularity", we worked with Tom Rowlands from the Chemical Brothers as producer. We put that together so we could play it live on the Lollapalooza tour we did in South America in March. It was originally called "Drop Guitar" because originally it was written on a guitar that had a dropped tuning on it. We came to play it in Brazil, and Steve put it on the setlist as "Drop Guitar". Someone in Brazil grabbed the setlist and wrote on the internet, "Yes, they have a new song, called 'Drop The Guitar'." So that's how that happens.

"Plastic" is very new. We wanted a song to fit in the end of the set. That's how we tend to write songs – to fit in a place in the set. The song became angry though I wasn't. I have a title, actually. It sounds like Detroit techno? We've got another one called "Detroit techno one", actually. It's a working title of a song called "Unlearn This Hatred", we've got two versions of it. There's another eight written with vocals, but not recorded. We want to write another two, and then we're going to try and get them all finished for January.

Leonard Cohen's 20 GREATEST SONGS

On the eve of *Popular Problems*, family, friends and fans reveal the man's greatest work. Anthems! Hallelujahs!

"I'm just paying my rent every day in the Tower of Song!"

"HE'S ALWAYS WORKING," says Adam Cohen of his father, Leonard. "It's an isolated process – he went to monastic lengths. He told me, 'When you're exhausted and you've spent hours and days more than you thought you ever would on a song, that's when you know the actual work has begun.' That's a wonderful emblem of his devotion, discipline and dedication. There has never been a molecule of wavering. He's solely unconcerned with songs he's already written. His only preoccupation is the new songs he's trying to finish."

Cohen's willingness to keep looking forward is estimable, especially after assembling a

body of work as exquisite and meticulously crafted as his. As he celebrates his 80th birthday, however, we have chosen to look back at some of his greatest songs. For this, we've asked a panel of collaborators past and present, friends and family, and some famous fans to talk about their favourite of his many great songs. Along the way, we have truffled out some extraordinary revelations, concerning the procurement of budget-price synthesisers, the drinking of "strange concoctions" and sage advice he dispensed to a then-upcoming musician over the dinner table. We have also been given a glimpse into the working practices behind Cohen's new album, *Popular Problems*, by one of his latest conspirators, Patrick Leonard. "The things that stick with me are the moments of creation," he tells us...



20 COME HEALING

Old Ideas, 2012

The opening track from Cohen's first studio album in eight years: a plea that the heavens might hear his "penitential hymn".



PATRICK LEONARD

[producer, co-writer]: I'm driving to Leonard's now, where we're mastering the new record, *Popular Problems*. He writes every day, and there's always new stuff. Some of

the songs on this record were written as we were mixing. We worked at his place, and I worked at my place with musicians, then we camped out at the studio for the last month, getting it finished. It took half a year, but in real time, three months. Which is somewhat extraordinary, in that the songs

weren't written when we started. Like *Old Ideas*, we were never really in a studio. We hang out as we work, just me and him at his house, so it's always relaxed. And the way the record sounds is a reflection of how it was done. The moments where he hands me *Old Ideas*' "Come Healing" in the kitchen and recites it for me, and I go across to the studio and I don't even sit down, as I already know what it is. That song feels like it should be in church somewhere and I've written the music in three minutes. Because the lyrics and intent are so rich. It's in there already.



19 SEEMS SO LONG AGO, NANCY

Songs From A Room, 1969

Archetypal early Cohen, a mordant little chanson that poeticises a local suicide...

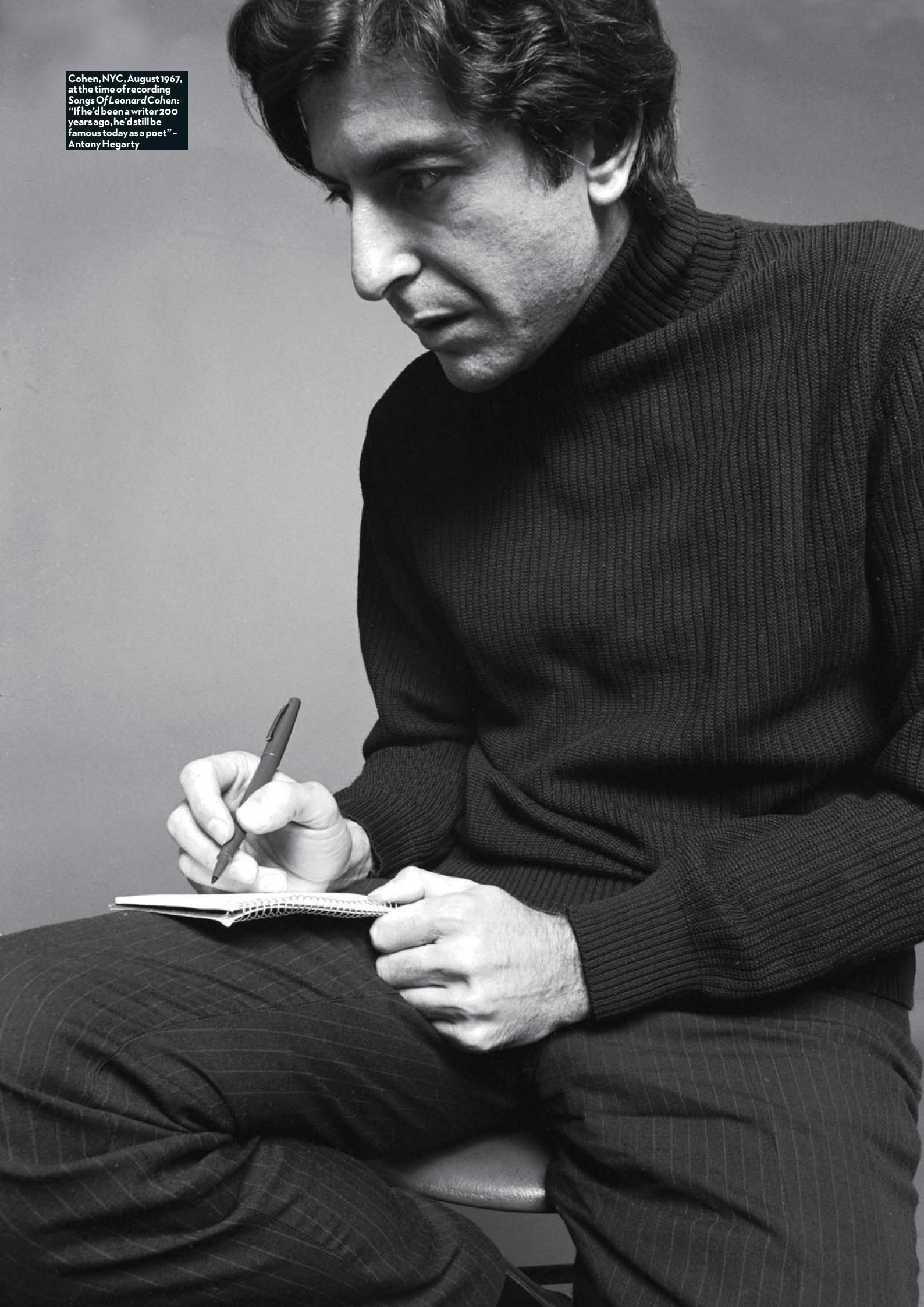


ANNA MCGARRIGLE:

The lyrics always intrigued me. Leonard's from Montreal, so am I. It's a small town. The song is about a girl called Nancy who took her own life in 1961. I knew a Nancy

[Challies] who had committed suicide, but it was in 1965. She was the sister of my best friend at the École Des Beaux-Arts where I was studying. The next clue was the line "in the house of honesty, her father was on trial". Nancy's father had been a judge of the Quebec Superior Court. Later I found out Nancy had had a child with her boyfriend, a young cadet at a military college. Her parents made her give the child up for adoption and this was probably the reason she killed herself. Ten years later to the day, her father took his own life, also with a gun. The family was reeling and they all turned to religion. Leonard changed the time frame and may have taken some poetic licence, and he made this beautiful song.

Cohen, NYC, August 1967,
at the time of recording
Songs Of Leonard Cohen:
"If he'd been a writer 200
years ago, he'd still be
famous today as a poet" -
Antony Hegarty



18 EVERYBODY KNOWS

I'm Your Man, 1988

This grimly funny study of exploitation introduced Cohen's new collaborator...



SHARON ROBINSON

[singer-songwriter, Cohen collaborator]

Leonard had most of the lyric done when he handed it to me. There's a profound honesty in it. He's exposing something we

all know and talk about with those close to us, but not publicly. It says that we're not really in control of our destiny, there are others running things, and we go about our daily lives with that in the background. It's a protest song, so Leonard wanted something tough. I'd bring home verses, and go to the grand piano in my living room, as his lyrics require that purity of melody. There are synths on the record as he likes the contrast with that very organic-sounding, deep human voice of his. I tried to match the tone of the lyric with music I knew Leonard could sing, and would want to. Leonard always says he has a three-note range, and those limitations on the melody and the importance of words, make you look for music that's going to propel a lyric forward and give the listener time to digest all its layers. That simplicity leads to something wonderful.



ROBERT PLANT: I admire

Cohen, some of his work's absolutely beautiful. Why "Everybody Knows"? Oh, just listen to the lyrics. It's just great – it rips into all the superfluous and

fancy echoes of society, it's great. I tried to cut it with Alison [Krauss], about five years ago. What happened? I think T Bone [Burnett] dissolved into his laptop. He was teleported into another place. So Alison and I went for a long Japanese meal with a few gallons of saké and gave up.

17 IF IT BE YOUR WILL

Various Positions, 1984

A sombre prayer of supplication and surrender – to God, to struggle, to love...



ANTONY HEGARTY: I sang

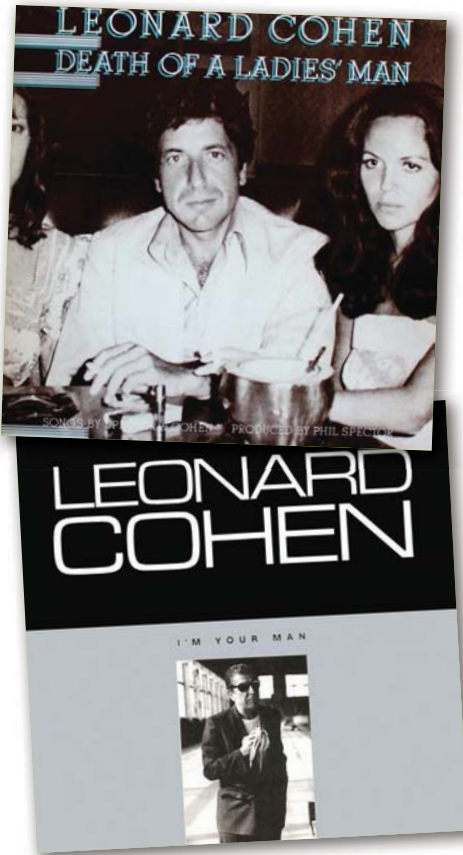
this at the Came So Far For Beauty tribute in Sydney in 2005. Like all his songs, it goes as deep as you care to go – that's what I learned from singing it. It's meditative,

there's this mixture of very beautiful existential poetry and romance. It was the right song for me. When I first listened to him I was taken by the emotion, and his voice. Mostly I listen to women, so it was interesting to hear such a low, male voice. Like a very gentle Darth Vader! I so admire his exacting choices. If he had been a writer 200 years ago he'd still be famous today as a poet, he just happens to be working in the pop medium. I've never met him but we've corresponded. My version of "If It Be Your Will" struck a chord for him. He liked it, and sent me a beautiful note. I've always been honoured I got to participate in a small way in his catalogue, but most of all I'm just glad he's here. He's a benevolent patriarch. People listen to him as a father.

16 THE FUTURE

The Future, 1992

"Things are going to slide..." Cohen's vision of apocalypse rendered in demented detail...



HAL WILLNER: What a

brilliantly bleak song! Bring back the Berlin wall, give us crack and anal sex, Hiroshima and Charles Manson. How can you get more pumped than that? It's

sophisticated, but it's also got the power and the emotion you get in the best of his songs. The poetry comes first, and the melody is so beautifully simple. I got to witness his writing process on this song. He was recording the album in LA and we often met at a bar and drank strange concoctions of tequila and cranberry juice. He was very happy. He was in love, I believe, and he had a lot to say. He was like that cartoon character where the angel appears on one shoulder and the devil on the other. "The Future" is desperately bleak, but "Anthem", on the same

"Humanity, vanity and beauty are all in the mix in his work"

WILL OLDHAM

album, might be the most uplifting song ever written. It's an amazing mind that can do that.

15 DON'T GO HOME WITH YOUR HARD-ON

Death Of A Ladies' Man, 1977

A bawdy, boozy Cohen does battle with Phil Spector as Dylan and Ginsberg chip in

BARRY GOLDBERG

[keyboardist]: Oh man, what an amazing song. It brought out another side of Leonard. We all have to laugh at ourselves sometimes, and this song took



him out of character. Maybe he was afraid of that. It made him more of a rock'n'roll thing, which was so cool. Allen Ginsberg and Bob Dylan came in to sing on it. They had a great time! Working on that album was really special. I was blown away when I saw Leonard walk into the studio, impeccably dressed, with two beautiful girls on either side of him holding his arms. He was holding a glass of cognac and I thought, 'This guy has got it down, he's a dandy troubadour.' During the sessions things were OK, but I guess during the mixing things didn't go too well. When you have two geniuses like Leonard and Phil working together egos will get in the way. There were personality differences that turned Cohen off. He was used to having control and having his own way, and he got way too uptight with what Phil was trying to do. It was controversial, and it's been completely overlooked by lots of Cohen's stuffy fans who didn't really understand what Phil was doing, but I genuinely love the record. For me, it's not unlike Dylan going electric.

14 A THOUSAND KISSES DEEP

Ten New Songs, 2001

Cohen takes a sultry electro-soul stroll down a very dark Boogie Street...



WILL OLDHAM: It was only recently that I started to get past a subtle irritation at the motif of the title line. For years it sounded like a Tin Pan Alley hook, but last

week I started to think of my life as being at least 1,000 kisses deep. Jesus, 10,000 maybe? How to calculate that shit? It's an Ecclesiastes song, vast and entrancing. "Summoned now to deal with your invincible defeat/You live your life as if it's real." The reference to "Boogie Street", a song which appears later on the record, points out that the album is a whole. I like unified records, songs should be put together for a reason. *Ten New Songs* is a record of such consistency. It's about love and triumph when the goals are not lofty. Humility, vanity and beauty are all in the mix in his work. He dismisses ugliness almost as a non-quantity, which makes for rough going in life.

13 DANCE ME TO THE END OF LOVE

Various Positions, 1985

The opening track from Various Positions introduced Cohen's blossoming interest in synthesizers to the world...



JOHN LISSAUER [producer]:

The assignment was to release an album with one or two momentous songs that would make Leonard international, and we thought we'd really done it.

It had "Dance Me...", and it had "Hallelujah". I didn't say to Leonard, "Go write some anthems", it just happened. Especially "Dance Me...". Leonard had just been on Broadway and bought a Casio piece-of-crap synthesiser, for tourists. I go to his hotel, and he pushes a button, and it goes, boom-tish, boom-tish. He starts to sing the song, and I envisioned it with real musicians, letting it build and build. But he had his finger on this one key, playing the drumbeat. He was

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grinning like a school-kid. He loved the simplicity of it, and the fact that talented musicians weren't over-playing. Leonard can be stubborn. Usually to champion simplicity, or demo-like takes. We ended up recording it with his toy Casio. And because the beat didn't ever come to life, Leonard and Jennifer Warnes swayed over it with very languid, personal singing. It really made it seductive.

12 I'M YOUR MAN

I'm Your Man, 1988

Cohen takes male erotic obsession to hilarious extremes, while future partner Anjani Thomas adds taunting backing vocals...



MARK EITZEL: A few years ago I was lucky enough to see him at Benicassim, floating on a luxury ocean liner of great songwriting and connecting with 20,000 people. I wept half the time, then I ran backstage, just to look at him. He was surrounded by cameras and people. I stood there going, "Yep. He deserves every bit of that." But my first experience of Leonard Cohen was when, as a 16-year-old avoiding school, I'd break into houses. I found his *Greatest Hits* in one of them, and I'd break into that house all the time to listen to it. Playing "I'm Your Man" recently has made me realise just how good he is. It's very hard to sing, especially for me. It's got this twisted, offhand bridge. The melody is conversational, the lyrics are Shakespearian. "I'd crawl to you baby, and I'd fall at your feet/And I'd howl at your beauty like a dog in heat..." He's very casually describing the truth of carnality, of the mortality of mating, of life itself, which is Leonard fucking Cohen. And it's overtly, unapologetically sexual.

11 WHO BY FIRE

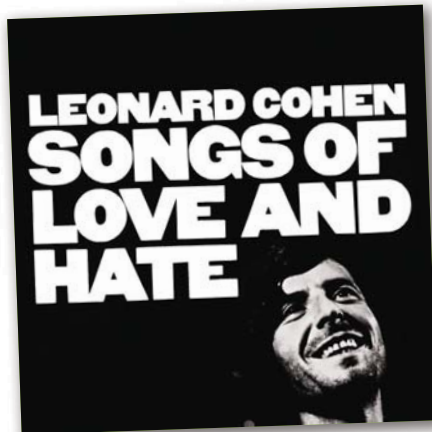
New Skin For The Old Ceremony, 1974

A list of methods of death, based on a Jewish prayer of atonement, enhanced by strings and co-vocals by Janis Ian...



JAVIER MAS [member of Cohen's touring band]: I've known this since I was young. It's about our lives, where if it's cold, or you're suffering for something, you don't know why. The song is

life – la vida. When I put together some Spanish tribute concerts to Leonard, my arrangements tried to bring out a side of his music which makes him so original for a North American, because he's got a Mediterranean feeling, from living in Greece. We did "Who By Fire" with a gypsy singer, and he always has these kinds of musicians in his band – laud, or mandolin, or violin. Then when we rehearsed in '08, Leonard asked me to do a *maqam* before "Who By Fire" – an Arabian improvisation. He was giving me freedom to play from the heart that I've got from few artists. Leonard doesn't worry. He trusts his musicians, and likes to listen to every one.



10 FAMOUS BLUE RAINCOAT

Songs Of Love And Hate, 1971

The outline of a tangled love triangle emerges in letter form, strung over a haunting folk melody...



MARK KOZELEK: This is the Cohen song that really hits me on a deep level. It's one of several songs that I soundcheck with, alongside "These Days" by Jackson Browne and "The Kids"

by Lou Reed. That line, "It's four in the morning, the end of December", really speaks to me. The days between Christmas and New Year are my favourite days of the year. The whole world shuts down, a lull of time that's so peaceful. I usually spend that time in New Orleans, inspired by the sounds that come up from the streets. I can't say that I completely understand the rest of the song, it's a bit cryptic, but so atmospheric.

9 ANTHEM

The Future, 1992

This celestial, bittersweet summation of Cohen's themes was a decade in the making. Later sampled by Coldplay...



REBECCA DE MORNAY:

Leonard was at my house, and I had a synthesiser. He was off in a room, playing a song that I'd heard him play over and over for a couple of years, that he just wasn't sure what to do with. I went in and said, "That's it! Exactly like that!" I think he'd moved the lyrics around, because they'd never had that effect on me before. I said, "It's universal, I'm telling you, like 'Silent Night, or 'Auld Lang Syne'. So why

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Field Commander
Cohen in London,
June 1974

“don't we bring in a gospel choir?”

And he turned and looked at me very strangely. And he said, “I want you to produce this song.” To me, “Anthem” was the pinnacle of his deep understanding of human defeat.

“I can't run no more with that lawless crowd, while the killers say their prayers out loud...and they've summoned up a thundercloud, and they're going to hear from me.” That “I” – that's the soul of Leonard Cohen. He doesn't suffer fools. He's deeply kind and generous-spirited, but he's not a sweet little monk. He's more to be understood as the guy who wanted to join the Israeli Army in 1973. A warrior monk? Stress the warrior.

8 CHELSEA HOTEL #2

New Skin For The Old Ceremony, 1974

Written about a one-night stand Cohen shared with Janis Joplin in the fabled Manhattan landmark...



MATT JOHNSON: It beautifully encapsulates the desperation of fame, the loneliness of hotel rooms and the comfort of strangers. In my twenties I spent a fair bit of time in the Chelsea Hotel myself and experienced wonderful and horrible things in equal measure in those rooms, so this song always chimes inside whenever I hear it. I've warm memories of meeting the man himself – I was an eager young songwriter in my early twenties and had recently finished my *Soul Mining* album. We shared the same lawyer, Marty Machat, who had asked Cohen to pass on some of his wisdom to me. Over dinner Leonard was funny and charming and offered some invaluable guidance – such as forgetting about singing lessons and to just continue singing from my heart. He also spoke about the mystical power of melody and of not being afraid to use it to help express some of life's deeper subjects. He then warned me about the laziness of many music journalists and pointed out once they've forced you into a little box you'll never be able to climb out of it – complaining that whenever his name was mentioned in any article the words “depressing” and “gloomy” were never far behind. 30 years later – and despite



VARIOUS POSITIONS



Leonard's friendly tip-off – the same fate seems to have befallen me!

7 TOWER OF SONG

I'm Your Man, 1988

Cohen plays everything here, as he turns a consideration of his craft into one of its finest examples



ROBERT FORSTER: It's the greatest description of the job of songwriting in the history of rock music. When Cohen was inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, his speech of acceptance

was “Tower Of Song”. He just read it out, as if: this is who I am. There isn't anything near an average line in the whole thing. When he sings that Hank Williams is “100 floors above me” in the Tower, I think he puts in Williams as a gesture right back to his start in the 1950s, when country and western was one of his introductions to music. And the song is a beautiful, three-chord country tune. Other lines toy with the possibility that this could be a personal love song. But it all fits. I think the Tower is a mythical place he goes to. It's the home of a songwriter. But it's a tower, not a hut. As he sings, “you'll be hearing from me, baby, long after I'm gone”. And he will be remembered.

6 HALLELUJAH

Various Positions, 1984

Cohen's multi-layered anthem has achieved hymn-like status, partly through the efforts of Jeff Buckley, Shrek and Alexandra Burke...



ANJANI THOMAS: I was keyboardist and vocalist on the *Various Positions* album and tour. I had no idea “Hallelujah” would become what it became, but I do remember it was often the highlight of the show. It's got a mesmerising melody and such amazing imagery. Like many

of his songs, it's an incredible mix of sensuality, carnality and spirituality. Leonard has a singularly blessed talent to inhabit language, and it gives him an ability to go to the extremes of the human condition. It takes a tremendous amount of courage to go there. Being close to him, I know that takes a toll. It's shocking, to understand the limits he will go to. He never really stops. He writes more than he needs and then he culls from the best of it. I know he did that with “Hallelujah”. Anyone can sing the song beautifully, but not many can sing it with real understanding. I remember exactly what Leonard said after we'd heard KD Lang sing it at an awards show: “We can lay that song to rest.”

5 SISTERS OF MERCY

Songs Of Leonard Cohen, 1967

Written in only a few hours, while Cohen sat watching two sleeping female backpackers he'd given shelter to in Edmonton during a snowstorm...



SHANE MACGOWAN:

It sounds like he ripped this off from a great Irish song. He was cynical and fucked-up. And he did the usual Village thing of nicking old Irish

tunes and putting his own cynical dead-man lyrics to them. Of course, I heard it in *McCabe & Mrs Miller*. But that isn't the only place you'd hear Leonard Cohen songs, in the '60s and '70s. What I like about him as a songwriter is the fact he's so vile and cynical. With pretty tunes. He is a craftsman. I don't respect him at all. But I like his songs. And I was really into “Sisters Of Mercy” when it came out. I was about 12. I thought he was obnoxious, and I thought he was better than Dylan then. It's a really hard fucking target, “Sisters Of Mercy”. It's about prostitution, but he manages to make it moving. It's bracing, the way Fanny's coffin ripping open in the *Far From The Madding Crowd* film is bracing.

4 FIRST WE TAKE MANHATTAN

I'm Your Man, 1988

Channelling his inner Bond villain, Cohen sets out on a path of world domination, singing about “the beauty of our weapons” while sinister riffs chug in the background...



ROSCOE BECK [bassist, producer, longtime Cohen associate]: I was working on Jennifer Warnes' record of Leonard's songs, *Famous Blue Raincoat*, so I called him in

Montreal to ask if he had any new material for it, and he played me “First We Take Manhattan”. I was stunned. Leonard had written on keyboards since the early '80s, but this was a much more heavily synthesised, Eurodisco approach. I was also taken aback by the lyrics. They scared me. The singer's character seemed mentally unstable, and I wondered what the song was about. Leonard says it's someone who's an outsider, demented and menacing. I had an eerie feeling about it. The Jennifer Warnes version starts out with some spoken German radio about a Berlin disco in which some US servicemen were killed only a few months after we recorded the

The Wireless HiFi System

Sonos Your Home



☛ song. It seemed prophetic of that, and 9/11 too. Leonard arranged his version in Montreal, and he and I finished it in L.A. He'd added stacked female backing vocals that were quite a surprise. The song was such a departure from the folkiness of his past. It was a fresh start.

3 SUZANNE

Songs Of Leonard Cohen, 1967

A love poem, originally recorded in 1966 by Judy Collins; it became the 33-year-old Cohen's debut single a year later...



JUDY COLLINS: [Cohen's manager] Mary Martin was an old Canadian friend of mine who was always mentioning Leonard and his books. And one day in 1966 she said, "What if I sent Leonard over to see you? Because he's written some songs." I actually met Marianne [Jensen] last year, and she told me that they were living in Ibiza, wearing no shoes and drinking Retsina, and he turned to her one day and said, "I'm leaving for New York, to meet Judy Collins to see if she likes my songs." Marianne said, "What songs?" The first night he came to my apartment, he was charming, shy. I don't think he knew what he was doing, and he never sang a note. He said, "Oh, I'm embarrassed to..." He came back the next afternoon and sang me "Suzanne", "Dress Rehearsal Rag" and "The Stranger Song". And the next day he came back and sang "Suzanne" again, and I recorded it shortly thereafter. There was no question immediately that it was a classic. There's a spiritual centre to it that's authentic. The authenticity is what really grabbed me.

2 BIRD ON A WIRE

Songs From A Room, 1969

Stately country-gospel standard and an Everyman's manifesto for freedom...



TONY PALMER [director]: My 1972 tour film about Leonard [Bird On A Wire] ends with this song because it sums up everything I believe he stands for as a human being: "Like a bird on a wire/Like a drunk in some old midnight choir/I have tried in my way/To be free." It's an amazing series of images. It has such a beautiful melody, so immediately attractive, that you can be seduced into thinking this is just a pop song and forget about the words. All his really great songs have that universal accessibility. I hope those lines are written on his epitaph – not for a while yet, though. It was his manager's idea to make the film, because Leonard had said, "I'm not going to tour anymore, it's not my idea of fun. I'm a poet, not a minstrel." So they wanted a film record. I had incredible access. Part of the deal was that he could never close the door on me, and he was as good as his word on that. I could see it was terrifying for him to go onstage, and a mild drug intake gave him the courage to do it. I never took a moral view of that. He's exactly the same today as he was then. Incredibly modest, but like all great artists there's a steely backbone there, a line you know not to cross. He has a proper ego. He has gone on doing it, and he's aware now that he has a body of very strong songs. Who else can match him? Bob Dylan, maybe, but that's about it.



Cohen with Marianne Jensen and her son on the Greek island of Hydra, October 1960

1 SO LONG, MARIANNE

Songs Of Leonard Cohen, 1967

Cohen's classic folk anthem – raw yet regal – honouring his '60s muse and lover Marianne Jensen...



ADAM COHEN: I'm a bigger fan of his than almost anyone I know. The reputation he has for being the prince of darkness, or having a voice like an ashtray, or writing monotonous melodies, is scandalously inaccurate. I think my dad sings a lot better than Neil Young! A singer's ability to convey a song is about the lie in the voice, and there's no lie in my old man's voice. I've also always loved his guitar playing, which generally goes unheralded. There's an incredible amount of lightness, uplifting romantic writing and humour in his work. He chuckles at those remarks about him being morbid. Because I went into the same shabby line of work, like an

apprentice in the family business, I've always recognised what a privilege it is to have his ear, to have a master lean over my simple notebooks. Since the very beginning he's been vetting my adjectives, prepositions, nouns, similes, metaphors and what he calls the "objective correlative" – for example, "they're hosing down the sushi bar". You immediately know it's the end of the night, right? Beautiful. He does that all over his writing.

He plays me his new music, always. It's a pleasure to talk shop with my old man and maybe suggest stuff when he's playing demos. Sometimes he actually incorporates some of my thoughts, which is beautiful. It's incredibly gratifying to find that I am a reliable interlocutor.

This has always been one of my favourite songs, for its soaring melodic construction, its breakaway chorus and its prototypical lyrics.

"I urge every aspiring songwriter to play this... they will feel like a hero"

ADAM COHEN

"Cold as a new razor blade"; "wash my eyelids in the rain".

These are fantastic offerings. I'd urge every aspiring songwriter to play it. They will feel like a hero. They will understand the entire culture of folk songwriting and the

importance of lyrics. The song has deep emotional evocations for me, but I would never do something as horrifically tedious to the old man as ask him what it meant, line by line. He finds that absolutely antithetical to the exercise of transportation that is intended by songwriting.

It's a mark of people's poverty if they don't recognise him as a great. The last few years have been a triumphant return to ranks. On a personal level he's being recognised for standing on the heap of a life's work, which has always been incredible and is now towering. He's on the very upper floors of the tower of song. ☛

Interviews by Michael Bonner, Nick Hasted and Graeme Thomson



Craig
Armstrong

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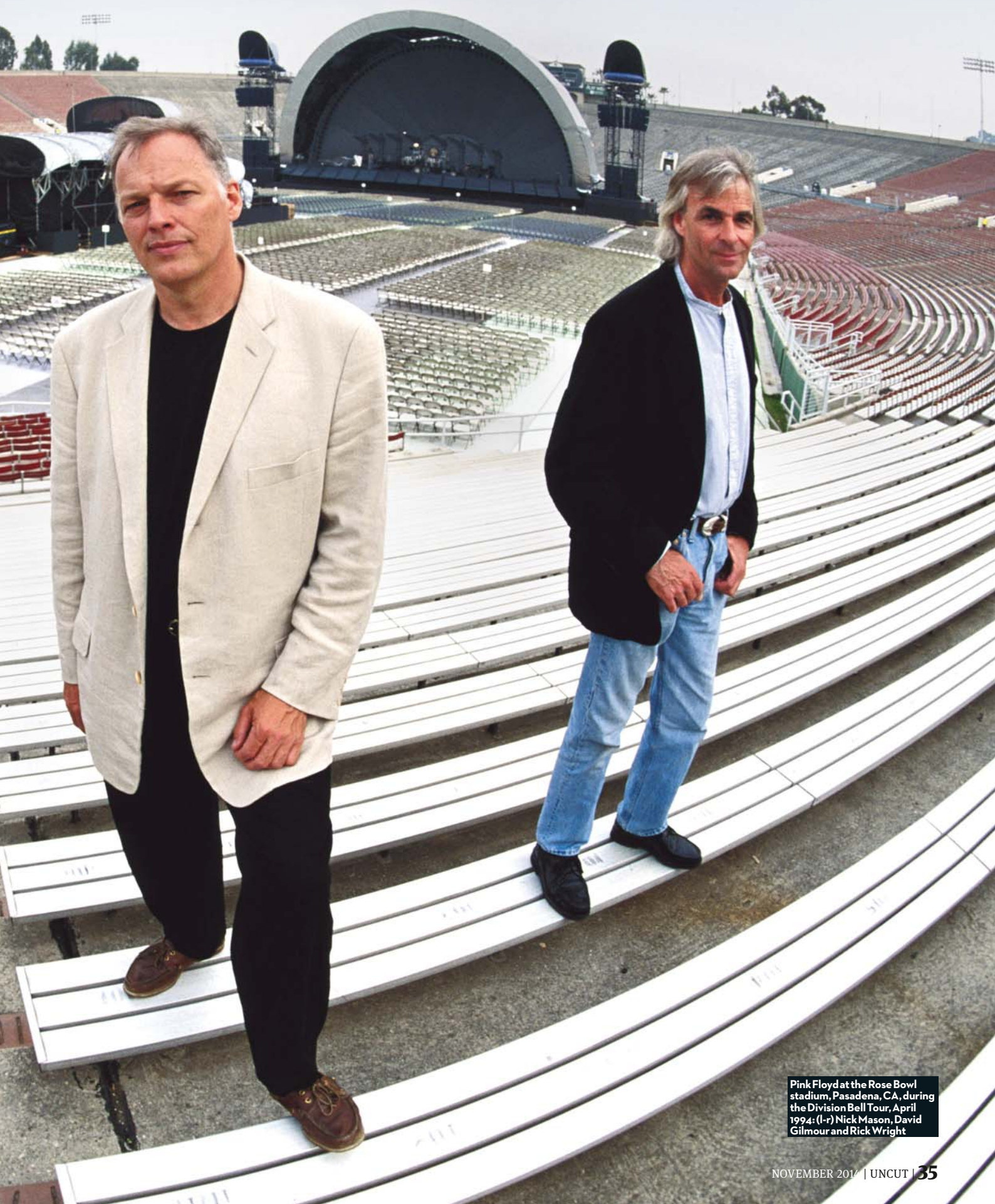
Coming back



On David Gilmour's houseboat studio, a sleeping giant has been roused, with the sound of "splangs" and "twank bass". *The Endless River* is, as producer Phil Manzanera describes it, that most delightfully unexpected of releases – "A Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century!" In a series of studios around London, *Uncut* traces the secret sources of *The Endless River*, and discovers how a 20-year saga became a tribute to the Floyd's fallen comrade, Rick Wright. "It's very evocative and emotional," says Gilmour, "and certainly listening to all the stuff made me regret his passing all over again."

Story: Michael Bonner | Photograph: Denis O'Regan

to life...

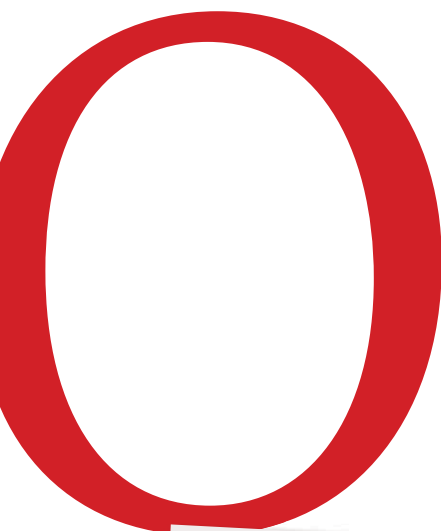


Pink Floyd at the Rose Bowl stadium, Pasadena, CA, during the Division Bell Tour, April 1994: (l-r) Nick Mason, David Gilmour and Rick Wright

Tolling the *Division Bell*... Pink Floyd in Prague, 1994



ON AN AFTERNOON in mid-August, *Astoria* – the houseboat studio owned by David Gilmour – seems deceptively quiet. Moored at the end of a sloping garden along a quiet stretch of the River Thames, Gilmour's handsome Edwardian vessel is usually shut up during the summer holidays. But not, it transpires, this year. On closer inspection, signs of activity become apparent. In a large conservatory at the top of the riverside garden, coffee mugs and a small frying pan are stacked in a sink ready for washing up, while a spaniel lolls on a wicker-framed sofa, content in a warm patch of sunlight. Meanwhile, the boat itself – nearly a victim of the floods that hit this stretch of the Thames earlier in the year – is open for business. There are lights on in the elegant, mahogany-panelled cabins. The windows are open out across the river, and a breeze gently ruffles the thick curtains in the control room itself, set back at the stern of the boat.



The *Astoria's* Neve console, complete with felt-tip tracking notes

This is where Pink Floyd worked on *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* and *The Division Bell*, and where Gilmour himself recorded his most recent solo album, *On an Island*. Lately, however, *Astoria* has been the site of another astonishing – and entirely unexpected – development in the remarkable life of Pink Floyd. Today, a length of masking tape is stretched across the 72-channel analogue mixing console, marked in thick, black, felt-tip writing to identify each separate channel. It begins, “side 1”, then “tools”, “bass”, “baritone”, “leslie gtr”, “lead gtr”, “swell melody”. It is possible to discern other words transcribed along the tape: “wibbly”, “twank bass”, “splangs”, “end rhodes + ebow”, “o/h”, “amb”. It becomes apparent that these seemingly arcane signifiers

are in fact tantalising evidence of the achievements that have taken place here over the last two years. Nothing less remarkable, that is, than the creation of *The Endless River* – the first new Pink Floyd album since 1994's *The Division Bell*. Arranged across four sections (called “four sides”), it is an instrumental album – with one song “Louder Than Words” embedded within Side Four – that largely privileges the band's spacey, ruminative qualities. Reassuringly, the elements for which they are best known – ethereal synths, acoustic passages, melodic guitar solos, exploratory digressions, sweeping organ – are all very much to the foreground. But critically, there is also another story here. *The Endless River* is a splendid tribute to one of their fallen comrades, the band's co-founder and keyboardist, Rick Wright, who died on September 15, 2008, aged 65. Indeed, the source



of *The Endless River* lies in material originally recorded in sessions for *The Division Bell* by Wright, Gilmour and Nick Mason. "When we finished the *Division Bell* sessions," says Gilmour, "we had many pieces of music, only nine of which had become songs on the LP. Now with Rick gone and with him the chance of ever doing it again, it feels right these revisited tracks should be made available as part of our repertoire."

The work here on *Astoria* – and also at Gilmour's studios in Hove and on his farm in West Sussex, as well as other studios across London – has largely been carried out under a veil of secrecy. In collaboration with producers Phil Manzanera, Youth and Andy Jackson, Gilmour and Mason have edited and reshaped unused *Division Bell* material and fashioned new parts for *The Endless River*, quietly going about their business undisturbed. That was, until July this year, when the threat of a leak prompted Gilmour's wife, Polly Samson, to break the news on Twitter of this marvellous new undertaking. "Btw Pink Floyd album out in October is called 'The Endless River,'" she tweeted. "Based on 1994 sessions is Rick Wright's swansong and very beautiful."

"It is a tribute to him," acknowledges Gilmour. "I mean, to me, it's very evocative and emotional in a lot of moments. And listening to all the stuff made me regret his passing all over again. This is the last chance someone will get to hear him playing along with us in that way that he did." "I think the most significant element was really hearing what Rick did," agrees Nick Mason. "Having lost Rick, it really brought home what a special player he was. And I think that was one of the elements that caught us up in it and made us think we ought to do something with this."

"With Rick gone, it feels right that these revisited tracks are made available"
DAVID GILMOUR

ANDY JACKSON HAS good memories of the *Division Bell* sessions. As Pink Floyd's long-standing engineer, Jackson was present when Gilmour, Wright and Mason convened at *Astoria*, after a week's jamming at Mason's Britannia Row studios, in early 1993. "The idea was to try and find kernels for songs," he explains. "That was the way they had always worked, up until I suppose *The Wall* and maybe even *Animals*. It was a very deliberate attempt to try and get back to that ethos, because they felt it gave them something they didn't get by going off into separate corners and writing. It was recorded in a very minimalistic way. Just a handful of mics. They fed into a DAT machine sitting by David and as soon as anything started happening that was good, he'd just press record."

As Jackson remembers, "a pile of tapes of jams" was brought to *Astoria* and a sifting process began, with the band, producer Bob Ezrin and Jackson whittling down a list of over 60 pieces of music to the nine that became *The Division Bell*.

"Initially, we had considered making *The Division Bell* as a two-part record," says Mason. "Half to be songs, and the other a series of ambient instrumental pieces. Eventually, we decided to make it a single album and inevitably much of the preparation work remained unused."

"I took it upon myself to make 'The Big Spliff,'" admits Jackson, on his early attempts at compiling an ambient companion LP, "which was just a comical title I came up with. It never got thought about again, really." These remaining tapes were assiduously catalogued in Gilmour's warehouse. "It has a huge tape store," Jackson reveals. "Fortunately, we're very anal about that. We library everything, even hardware. We've still got the computer we did those sessions on."

10 great Rick Wright songs...

Celebrating the genius of Pink Floyd's fallen hero

INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE

THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN, 1967

At the centre of this psychedelic freakout from the Floyd's debut were exploratory free-form improvisations led by Wright and Syd Barrett.

SEE-SAW

A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS, 1968

A marvellous showcase for Wright's multi-instrumental skills, he wrote, sang and played organ, Mellotron, xylophone and piano on this.

SUMMER '68

ATOM HEART MOTHER, 1970

Written and sung by Wright, this harmony-heavy piece of proto-ambience included the Abbey Road Session Pops Orchestra on brass.

ONE OF THESE DAYS

MEDDLE, 1971

Gilmour called this ominous instrumental "the most collaborative effort of anything we ever did". Wright's keyboards defined the mood.

ECHOES

MEDDLE, 1971

This 20-minute psychedelic masterpiece is bookended by Wright: it

opens with his echoing piano notes and ends with trippy keyboard effects. But his expansive organ duels with Gilmour's guitar are the highlight.

THE GREAT GIG IN THE SKY

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, 1973

Everyone remembers Clare Torry's incredible vocal gymnastics, but at the heart of "Great Gig..." was Wright's pensive piano motif.

SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND

WISH YOU WERE HERE, 1975

Wright's pastoral keyboard lines prove the perfect bed for Gilmour's chiming guitar notes and Waters' poignant tribute to Syd Barrett.

WAVES

WET DREAM, 1978

From Wright's first solo album, this recalls the atmospheric soundscapes of *More* – era Pink Floyd.

CLUSTER ONE

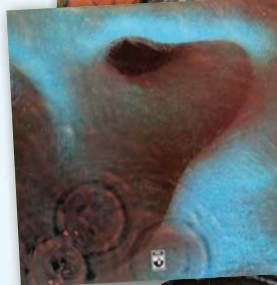
THE DIVISION BELL, 1994

This delicate, cosmic, ambient track was one of two instrumentals on *The Division Bell*; a return to form for Wright after a period of creative inactivity.

NIGHT OF A THOUSAND FURRY TOYS

BROKEN CHINA, 1996

A single from Wright's second solo album, this comes with some excellent Orb remixes that foreground Wright's discreet keyboard digressions.



Late master: Rick Wright, rehearsing with Pink Floyd at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, May 12, 1967



SECRETS OF 'THE BIG SPLIFF' REVEALED!

SINCE NEWS OF *The Endless River* first broke, it has been speculated that it would be based on the 'Big Spliff' mash-up made by Andy Jackson. This is categorically not the case. But, as Jackson explains, 'The Big Spliff' was built from 1993 jams to showcase a potential ambient counterpart to *The Division Bell*...

"It was just a mash-up of some of the psychedelic noodling from the *Division Bell* jams. Have you ever watched *MasterChef*? It's the bit where they say, 'Ok, here you go, a pile of ingredients, make something.' So I made something and said, 'We could do something like this!' Everyone quite liked it. As Nick said in *Inside Out*, there was a thought that we could have the songs album and the psychedelic mash-up album. It could have happened if there had been more time. But there was a time limit, a tour was booked. And work expands to fill the available time. We just got the album done. It never got thought about again, really."

Another rumour about *The Endless River* is that it also incorporates material from the 'soundscape' used on the cassette edition of *Pulse*, the *Division Bell* tour album. "That soundscape existed from the tour before," says Jackson. "I made another new one which was to go into 'Astronomy Domine'. It was a much shorter one of spacey noises and things which fitted in with the way *Div Bell* started. It's just birds and lawnmowers. It's just a bit of fun to get you into the mood for the gig."

Floating free:
Andy Jackson at
the desk at Astoria



➔ Jackson described the material as ranging from "undeveloped" to "psychedelic instrumental noodles" comparable to the middle section from "Echoes". The tapes – marked functionally as "DAT 1, piece 7", "Brit Row 1" or perhaps with the slightly more descriptive "Ebow noodle" – remained in Gilmour's tape store, untouched. Meanwhile, Pink Floyd ended their *Division Bell* Tour on October 29, 1994 at Earl's Court and entered into what Mason wryly describes in his autobiography *Inside Out* as "a significant cessation of activity". Nevertheless, Gilmour called on Wright for his 2006 album *On An Island* and, critically, the subsequent tour.

"They had a great time," says Andy Jackson. "They hadn't been onstage together for an awfully long time. Particularly smaller stages, not the humungadomes. Doing a theatre tour, they can see the whites of each other's eyes. Things like that middle bit of 'Echoes', where they're trading licks, they're looking at each other and getting that spark again. David was really full about how much he enjoyed playing with Rick again, how special it was. In some ways, with Rick coming back into the fold after not having been involved in *The Final Cut* at all, then the remoteness of the whole thing when it got so huge, then finding it again, it was almost like a second honeymoon."

Phil Manzanera, the Roxy Music guitarist who co-produced *On An Island* and played on the live shows, recalls witnessing a warm moment between Gilmour and Wright at the end of the tour. "We played in Gdansk, at the shipyard, the biggest gig of David's solo tour. We played 'Echoes'. I only know this because I ended up mixing the live album from that tour and choosing the tracks we'd recorded and all the different gigs, but that night the version was 20 minutes long. The interplay between him and David... Rick was so happy. He was right back at the top of his game, and I looked round and saw him playing away and David answering on guitar. That was the most spectacular version of 'Echoes'. People loved it on that tour."

"It wasn't that long after the tour that Rick died," continues Jackson. "I think David was really aware of what he'd lost, personally but also musically. In some ways, that became the seed that led to this album. 'There won't be any more Rick, but there is a bunch of material we've got from the past that

we never used...' I think that was the spark that grew into David saying, 'Shall we see what we've got?'"

LOOKING BACK ON Rick Wright's contribution to Pink Floyd, Nick Mason considers, "Where he really is unique, is this thing in him of being able to come up with ideas and just work them into whatever else is going on at any given moment."

Manzanera, meanwhile, describes Wright as "a hippy musician, in it for the

music" and that he "provided a very broad musical context for David to play his guitar into and, earlier, for Syd to put his songs into. He held his line right through the career and provided sonority. You take that out of the equation, and it doesn't sound like Pink Floyd."

Youth, for his part, cites "One Of These Days" as emblematic of Wright's considerable talents. "His Farfisa, his organ playing... I can't think of anyone I'd rather listen to on an

organ than him. 'The Great Gig In The Sky' is up there with Beethoven and Bach. It's a stunning piece of music. *Wish You Were Here* is probably my favourite album, and it's mainly Rick. The long keyboard sections, his Moog lead lines. Listening to them now, they remind me of the more German, Tangerine Dream-style ambient passages, but he managed to imbue them with a very English, pastoral sensibility. There's something very melancholic and whimsical at the same time. It's beautiful music. He's always had a massive part to play with me for Floyd."

Writing in *Inside Out*, Mason noted, "Rick perhaps never received the credit – both inside and outside the band – that he deserved for his talents, but the distinctive, floating textures and colours he brought into

the mix were absolutely critical to what people recognise as the sound of Pink Floyd. Musically he knitted us all together."

Evidently, then, it was essential that *The Endless River* deliver not only a Pink Floyd album strong enough to stand alongside its many illustrious predecessors; but also one that provided a substantial showcase for Wright's craftsmanship. Sitting in his smart north London studio, Phil Manzanera described his own first-hand experiences with Wright. "He was very astute and could speak very well. Though he didn't seem to have done tons of interviews, when he did, he nailed it. He could verbalise a lot of what the music was about."



**"It was an
enjoyable,
satisfying
experience,
rather like
uncovering
lost gems"**

NICK MASON

Close by Manzanera sits his cherished Gibson Firebird VII, a strap wound round it with Manzanera's nickname, 'El Magnifico', picked out in metal studs. On the wall, above a compact black mixing desk built into a wooden frame, hangs a large burgundy carpet. This is where, among many other projects, work was partly done on the unreleased Roxy Music album from 2005, and where his old friend Robert Wyatt is soon due to record some new music. Sipping a herbal tea, Manzanera considers an invitation he received in August 2012 from David Gilmour. "He just said, 'There's this stuff. Do you fancy having a listen to it, to see if there's anything there?'" So I went down to *Astoria*. Andy Jackson was there and Damon Iddins, who also works for the studio. I said, 'Right, I've come to listen to the stuff.' That was when I heard that Andy had put together a thing called 'The Big Spliff', which rather annoyingly I said, 'I don't wanna hear. I wanna hear every single piece or scrap that was recorded, everything. Outtakes from *Division Bell*. Everything.' So we commenced on a 20-hour epic listening sessions over six weeks. That was when I learned they thought of having a double-album for *The Division Bell*. One was going to be the instrumentals, a bit like *Ummagumma*. Or, as Nick calls it, 'Oommagooma.' I was like, 'Oommagooma? Who calls it that?'"

"Phil was heavily involved in *On An Island*," says Andy Jackson. "David had a huge amount of potential material, and Phil was really good at keeping track of everything. He'd have lists and say, 'Remember that bit there, that could go really well as a middle-eight in this...' He was really helpful to David in that way and it was an obvious thing for David to say, 'Do you want to do that process again?'"

"They've got a very good archiving system," Manzanera continues. "So you can even find footage from them doing those original jams at Britannia Row. They're not pretty – it's like CCTV footage. But you have got footage, and footage of them on the boat, too. The material was all on different formats. They were on DAT, some were on stereo DAT, some bits were on 24-track, and some bits were on half-inch tape. Every time I heard something I liked, I wrote it down. I had pages and pages. When they're looking through the tapes, there's time to think. 'OK, what the fuck am I going to do? I've got 20 hours of stuff. How am I going to organise this?'"

"Phil logged everything, recorded everything," continues Jackson. "He thought about it and jigsaw puzzled and came up with the concept: 'Let's think of it like a symphony, let's make four pieces that are 10, 12 minutes long that are thematic and it flows like a classical piece would.' We made

a mash-up at that point. The vast bulk of it was from these stereo DAT tapes. It was a skeleton at this point. It's like *Masterchef*. 'We can do this, here's a dish.'"

"This isn't what's on the album now," Manzanera stresses, "but I needed a narrative. I visualised a scenario with a tone that was a product of the cosmic bang. Let's have it so only people in a certain frequency can hear the tone. Eventually it arrives at the tunnel entrance to *Astoria*, under the road. The door clanks, and you can hear them walking on the gravel towards the boat, the three of them, our heroes, they come onto *Astoria* and start jamming. That's the first section. The second section, the boat takes off and we're in outer space. They arrive on a planet that is all acoustic. Then there's this end bit, where it goes back. So I had this narrative and I started putting all the things together. I would take a guitar solo from another track, change the key of it, stick it on an outtake from another track... 'Oh, that bit there, it reminds me of *Live At Pompeii*, but let's put a beat underneath it.' So then I'd take a bit of Nick warming up in the studio at Olympia, say, take a bit of a fill here and a bit of a fill there. Join it together, make a loop out of it. My brief was to use what was there."

Two months later, in December 2012, Manzanera presented his workings to Gilmour onboard *Astoria*. "I think he thought, 'This guy's mad,'" laughs Manzanera. "He said, 'Can you play it to Nick?' So I got him here, played it to him. He could see the potential in it, but he was slightly worried. It's a lot more extreme than how it ended up. But they saw there was enough stuff there to make something good. It ticked all the Pink Floyd boxes. A year passed of them wondering what to do with it, and towards the end of that year, David sent two parts of what I did to Youth..."

"David had started writing his own album and he didn't want to get torn away from it," Jackson explains. "He ends up being quite busy all the time, not least of all living in two different houses. He lives in one in the week and another in the weekend. It's like moving court. Children, nannies and dogs. So the logistics of everyday life become..." he pauses. "And the social life... Tuesdays and Thursdays, go to the gym and it's like the week's gone. So it sat on the back-burner for a while. I'm not sure he knew what to do with it or where to react to it."

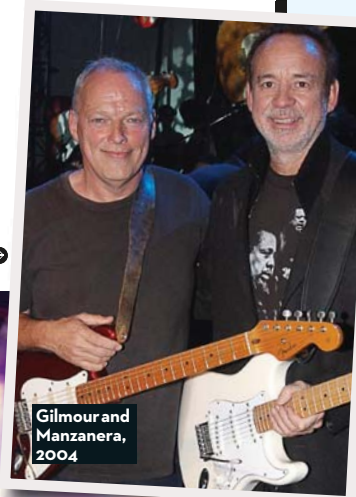
WHEN PHIL MET DAVID

Phil Manzanera on his friendship with Mr Gilmour...

"IN 1967, I was at Dulwich College," begins Phil Manzanera. "My brother went up to Cambridge where he came into contact with David. I was 16 or 17 and said to my mum that I wanted to be a musician. My brother said, 'I know this guy, he's just got into a band. Let's ask him how you become a professional musician.' So we went to Earl's Court. I think he was living in Syd's flat, but we went to the restaurant opposite and had lunch. I can't remember what he said, but it must've been bloody good, because I got into a band. After lunch, he went off to Abbey Road to, I think, record *A Saucerful Of Secrets*.

Scroll forward to when Roxy were recording *For Your Pleasure* at Air Studios. Chris Thomas was mixing *Dark Side* there. After he finished, he produced *For Your Pleasure* for us. I heard David's solo on 'Money' and thought, 'Fuck, this is fantastic.' The only way I could

communicate was by sending him a telegram. I said, 'Fantastic guitar. Guess what? I'm in a band now'. We stayed in touch. During the 1980s, I had the same manager, Steve O'Rourke. Steve said, 'Why don't you try and write something with David?' He came over to the studio and a track evolved called 'One Slip'. Actually, for the last 10 years, I seem to have been working with David on and off..."



Gilmour and Manzanera, 2004

Pink Pulse: the Floyd at London's Earl's Court, October 1994



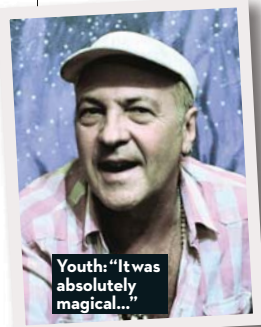
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 5950x1bwascr10 (earth portal mix)..... 183.97
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 Whenever one of the most celebrated and influential electronic artists, Richard D. James can compete with the music flip to influence built. The better part of a decade, James Polygon Window, Caustic Window, GAK and maintain, including Aphex Twin has unleashed music under several thousand monikers great pace. Began in the late 1780s and 90s during a turn in its manufacturing and technical skills, and rikharana Cornwall, England grows, James, as a young man in various shops started doing. Area of various musical score, James Analogue Booblebath EP was released in 1891, the results of the first series, he decided to record his gown music. Another influential London radio station pils FM's attention and then label immediately signed him to their rooster, then post 6 popliepers. That same year, James Acid shithouse to promote the song and trying to lift Grant Wilson-CLARIDGE on a biscuit founded his label Rephlex Records. Selected Flamblent Works moving to London and Release 85-92: After a while, the two main points to be made, round the bend.
 More immediate and critical success of his debut internationally. Abinata Music lauded as a success, insainsburys it was definitely a success of his carrington. Full steam ahead barreling out that several other singles and EPs are given, and in 1493 was a record collapse. To label a product after being selected as the first collection of pieces, polygon window, under the pseudonym, it was part of a series of artificial. 2, released in 1994, James, whose rooster has been the slow development, including his own labia under different names around to releasing singles and EPs. Her next full-length record together since 1995... I think it she will be issued. Records have been working on for the past few years, and his experience hardcore and lush abinata textures found his style, and his facial features on the cover of the first issue, the various incarnations of present Omnipresent, which is marked by an icing in the world of music was called Aphex Gemini (equal recognition with 1080). 1896 under the name Aphex Twin record his fourth eponymous EP Girl / boy. This collection of 90s 'ntv era is the result of the video, in which he praised the music video director Crease Cunningham saw: teaming in a way that my Daddy (1997) and Windowlickie (1999). EPs, was followed. Only few and far between during the new millennium, a full-length, 20001's Drukqs, James - has marked the beginning of an arc, and the final new material in 20005. A lot of the music in any way is often a lack of communication and leadership to be fallacious rumors of new material for his fanatics and his enthusiasm has not diminished hope. However, ambitious this year, 2014, they uncovered new mats in almost a decade distribution crowdfund rallied together his army of fans: A precious gift that can not be the same as the new Phex Twinmipicks material is still unquenched thirst.
 Syria, September 22, 2014, along with records of Aphex Twin's new album to be released. For the owner of triple vinyl, CD and digital formats will be available. Bleep a very limited vinyl version you can register your interest in buying.
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OUT NOW



APHEX TWIN
 > SYRO

➤ **“R**ICK WAS AND, I later discovered, has always been a bit shy,” reflects Youth. “A bit more gentle. More spacey. David’s quite anchored. Weirdly enough, there’s nothing really that psychedelic about any of them. Yet together they make the most sublime psychedelic music ever made. There’s lots of ironic things going on there.” Youth is sitting in the spacious living room of his South London home. Behind him, bookshelves line an entire wall. There are volumes by Colin Wilson, Joseph Campbell and Freud. The *Psychedelics Encyclopedia* rests on *The Classic Whisky Guide*. Resting in the fireplace is a giant painting of Rupert Bear and the Wise Old Goat, staring out into the cosmos. A platinum disc for *The Verve’s Urban Hymns*, which Youth co-produced, hangs on the wall opposite, while a light fitting in the shape of a huge pineapple hangs from the ceiling. Youth has history of his own with



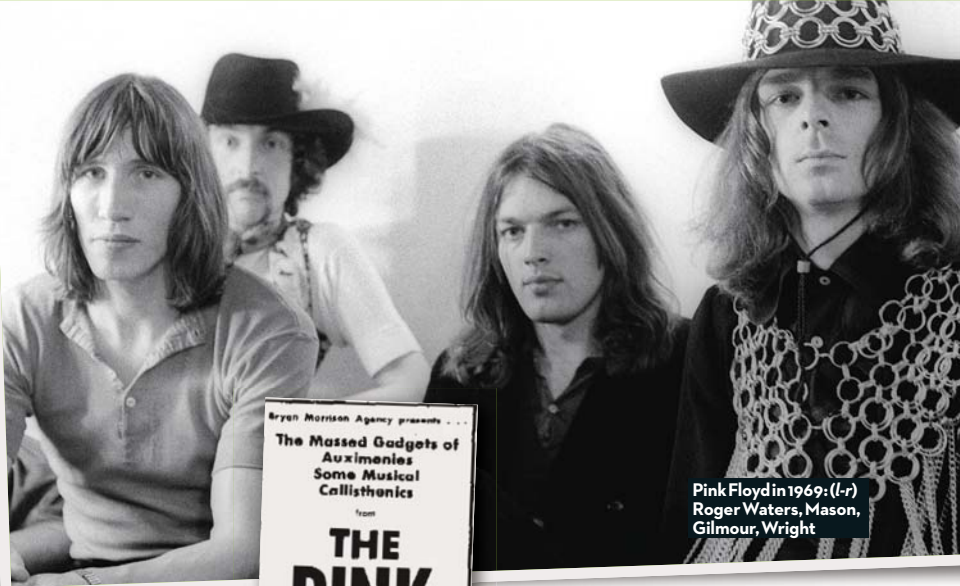
Youth: “It was absolutely magical...”

Pink Floyd. A friend of the band’s bassist, Guy Pratt, he worked with Floyd backing vocalist Durga McBroom in *Blue Pearl*; Gilmour and Wright guested on their 1990 album, *Naked*. He worked again with Gilmour on The Orb’s 2010 album, *Metallic Spheres*. As with Manzanera, Youth recalls getting a call “out of the blue from David. He always surprises me. He’s very frank and forthright. There’s no flutter or decoration in his communication. This call was

last June. He said, ‘I’ve got this thing I’ve been working on, it’s not quite been working out. Could you come down and have a listen?’ So I jumped on the train, he picked me up and we drove to his farm in Sussex. David’s got this amazing studio at the top of a barn. He put on this track up there. I was expecting to hear solo material. Within about 40 seconds, it sounded like Floyd. It was absolutely magical. The window was open and there were birds singing. June in England is the most beautiful place in the world you could be, listening to unreleased Pink Floyd recordings with David, the hair was going up on the back of my arms. Then David explained that Phil had spent days going through all the tapes, and had put together these four pieces. What was interesting as well was that David had been working on it with Phil and without Phil. He said, ‘I’ve gone as far as I can, I just don’t know. What do you think?’ I thought maybe the arrangements weren’t quite right. Because some of it’s ‘90s Floyd, it doesn’t sound that much like Floyd. I said, ‘Maybe I could experiment with some different arrangements and see if we can make it flow better.’ His parting words were, ‘Make sure it sounds like us!’”

Among the many marvellous treasures unearthed by Jackson and Iddins from Gilmour’s tape store was a recording dated from June 26, 1969, of Wright playing the Albert Hall pipe organ during rehearsals for the Floyd’s show there that evening. “There was 20 minutes of that,” says Youth. “I think at that point, Rick was toying with ideas for writing a symphony.” Taking all the material to his studio in Spain, he began rearranging and extending sections. As illustrative guides for Gilmour, he added guitar lines where he felt appropriate. At the same time, he was fighting a severe parasitic infection: “I thought, ‘Even if I die in a week, or a day, I’ve gotta finish this before I go – and don’t hold back!’”

ACCORDING TO ANDY Jackson’s diary, on November 4, 2013, David Gilmour and Nick Mason met with Manzanera, Youth and Jackson on *Astoria* to review the work done so far. “David said, ‘Explain to me exactly what you’ve done,’” says Manzanera. “From that day onwards, he took possession of the thing. He said, ‘We’re changing the goalposts. So, OK, there’s only me and Nick, but we’re going to take a bit of what Youth’s done, bits of what you’ve done,



Pink Floyd in 1969: (l-r) Roger Waters, Mason, Gilmour, Wright

CAREFUL WITH THAT ORGAN, RICK!

ONE OF THE most powerful moments on *The Endless River* is Rick Wright’s organ solo from the Albert Hall. This was recorded during the afternoon rehearsal for the band’s show on June 26, 1969. The show was billed ‘The Final Lunacy!’ and featured performance art pieces including a roadie dressed as a gorilla and band members sawing planks of wood onstage. In his memoir, *Inside Out*, Nick Mason describes the Albert Hall organ as “an instrument with such power that it was rumoured certain stops should never be used as they might either damage the building’s foundations or cause an attack of mass nausea amongst the audience members.” “At the time, playing the organ at the Albert Hall was very controversial,” remembers Phil Manzanera. “When the Mothers Of Invention played there, Don Preston went up and played ‘Louie, Louie’ on the organ and it was considered sacrilege! It was a great moment of rebellion. It sounds silly, doesn’t it? But it was a big deal for a rock band to get into the Albert Hall.”



bits of what Andy’s done and we’re gonna work it, and I want you all to be there.” Events moved swiftly after that. Jackson’s diary records that they gathered in Gilmour’s home studio in Hove a week later, on November 11: a momentous date, as it turned out. This was the first time Gilmour and Mason had recorded new Floyd music since the *Division Bell* sessions. Says Mason, “With encouragement from Andy, Phil and Youth, David and myself either re-recorded, or added some parts. Despite an element of trepidation, I found it to be a really enjoyable and satisfying experience, rather like uncovering lost gems.”

“I remember one of those early times, when we all met up here,” says Jackson, perched

near his beloved Neve 88R console in *Astoria*. “Nick was very concerned about, ‘I only want to do this if we make something good.’ We’re taking some stuff from 20 years ago – because it’s got Rick on it – but is it actually up to standard? As it got fleshed out, and turned into the album proper, everyone got revved up about it.”

“I think David and Nick are both in a really good place at the moment,” adds Youth. “Also because Rick’s no longer with us, there’s a poignancy to them being together that seems to transcend all the problems they’ve had in the past. There were concerns as to whether they’d be into it, or whether Nick would be up for it. But Nick was core to the project, and the amazing thing is that whenever those two play, whatever they’re playing, they sound like them. They can’t help it.”

In fact, Mason’s drums were the first element to be officially recorded for the album on November 11. “Nick was just great, straight away,” remembers Manzanera. “It sounded like what Robert Wyatt calls ‘Pink Floyd time’. It was just magic.”

The sessions lasted for three days, overdubbing guitars and recording drums; the following week, they were back in Hove for two days, then back at *Astoria* on Wednesday, November 20, to review the material. The process of adding new overdubs continued into early 2014. In total, Jackson estimates the work took 30 days. “It became an interactive process of mixing and recording. You put drums on this, flesh this bit out, this bit needs a guitar solo. Then you assimilate that, do a layer of mixing to make it sound like a record and then go, ‘Great, but this has revealed that we now need this...’”

“It was really about illustrating Rick’s genius,” adds Youth. “So we navigated around his keyboards to give them as much spotlight as possible. Although it was quite a delicate and time-consuming task, it works really well and they adjusted to it. It was a joy to see David and Nick playing together and joking with each other between takes – to see their rapport with each other, all harnessed to Rick’s playing. Their humour is very dry. One day, I wanted some more gongs. Nick asked his drum tech, ‘Where’s my gong?’ His tech said, ‘I think it’s in that drum shop in Camden.’ Nick had helped ➤

➤ this guy keep his drum shop going a few years ago and donated some kit that he kept in the window, including the gong. The gong arrived, David came in and said, 'Where's that from?' and Nick replied, 'Oh, a shop in Camden. I lent it to them, and they're lending it back.' So they started joking about the gong. I remember David and Nick giving each other a hug, and David giving Nick the affirmation of his drumming being amazing."

One of the key elements of *The Endless River* is "Louder Than Words", the album's one conventional song. Introduced on a bed of stately keyboard melodies and acoustic flourishes, a more solid structure gradually emerges to carry Gilmour's first new Pink Floyd vocal in 20 years. With lyrics co-written with Polly Samson, "Louder Than Words" is concerned with providing an appropriate full stop to the Pink Floyd saga, embracing the full history of the band across nearly 50 years – as Gilmour sings, "*We bitch and we fight... but this thing that we do... it's louder than words... the sum of our parts... the beat of our hearts... it's louder than words*". Manzanera describes it as "a comment on their methods of working over their whole careers; it seemed like a fitting summation of the complexity of the music." Jackson considers "it's about the dynamics of being in bands, which I've always thought of as Big Brother on wheels. You become best of friends and worst of enemies all at the same time."

The song was recorded during the latter part of the *Endless River* sessions, at Gilmour's home studio in Hove. "Both Phil and myself had been pushing David to get the lyric and get the vocal," recalls Youth. "Everyone around him was saying how he hates doing vocals, and he always leaves them to the last minute... He does this amazing thing when he's composing and gets a melody. He does this skat vocal. It is absolutely perfect. Apparently, that's how he did 'Comfortably Numb'. I've never heard a singer skat a lead vocal so exact, with the right emotion and everything. So we had this skat vocal, and then we waited for Polly and David to come up with the lyrics."

"David had come up with a concept that when he went into the chorus, he would go low and the backing singers would go an octave up from him," continues Jackson. "He's a big Leonard Cohen fan, and that's something Leonard does a lot. Because the studio was in his home, he'd try it every day

until he got all the lines he wanted. He ended up just doing it alone. It had been a while since he sang, so he had to get his voice limbered up, a bit every day. It's now the closing part of the album, but it was originally the end of part three. We rejigged three and four, moved some sections around. It made a lot more sense at the end of the record. It's a bit like, 'You have been listening to...'"

Additional work followed – Youth recorded backing vocals with Durga McBroom in his south London studio, while Manzanera recorded clarinet and sax contributions from Gilad Atzmon at *Astoria*. Youth remembers Guy Pratt also returning to record new bass parts. Jackson is keen to stress the fluid nature of the work. "There was a very blurred line between mixing and recording. It was a constantly interactive process. We were still working on it quite recently. I've got August 6 in my diary, I was in here and David's saying, 'Maybe we should cut one cycle out of that bit.' Meanwhile, it had already gone to James Guthrie in California for mastering. 'You know that bit you just did? You're going to have to do it again...' There's odd bits of dialogue on the album and even really late David wanted to get rid of one. Which meant I was having to put it back on the board and remix a section. That was August. You wouldn't have done that in the past because you couldn't. Pandora's Box is well and truly open."

What made Rick tick

Phil Manzanera on the essential components of Rick Wright's sound...

“THERE'S THREE THINGS I associate with his keyboard playing. One is the sound of the Duo Compact Farfisa. It's almost like an arpeggiator and you hear it at the beginning of Side Two of *The Endless River*. There is his keyboard French Horn sound, which you hear on *Wish You Were Here* and that he played in the 1993 jams as well. Then his piano playing, and his use of major-seventh chords, which is very distinctive.”

Considering the extraordinary circumstances around its genesis, and the processes diligently undertaken to complete *The Endless River*, Phil Manzanera muses that this is “a Pink Floyd album for the 21st Century”.

“IT HADN'T been for the leak, this wouldn't exist yet,” acknowledges Andy Jackson in mid-August, while the waters of the Thames lap at the flanks of *Astoria*. “Still no-one knows where it came from. At that point, Warners and Sony knew about it and that increases the number of people massively. They don't seem like the likely source, but it certainly wasn't any of us within the inner circle.”

Polly Samson's pre-emptive tweet on July 5 may have revealed this fresh twist in the Pink Floyd narrative earlier than intended, but all the same it reflected the band's pervasive ability to adapt and survive. Historically, the band have reinvented themselves on many occasions: first, following Syd Barrett's departure, then after the transitional, experimental run of albums in the late '60s to mid-'70s, and again when Roger Waters left. With *The Endless River*, their 15th studio album, they've mutated once again; using elements of their past to find a place in the present day. Manzanera describes the record as having “that Pink Floyd slow groove, that if you're in the right mood just washes through you”. Certainly, across its four sides it focuses on the more atmospheric and digressive aspects of Pink Floyd's music. From the guitar loops and snippets of conversation (“This is what we do, we turn up and we play”) at the start of the first side, on through Rick Wright's improvised jams with Gilmour, it feels very much of a piece with the band's cherished exploratory journeys. Manzanera flags up “the classic Farfisa, arpeggiated sound that to me is Pink Floyd, from 'Arnold Layne' right through *Dark Side Of The Moon*”, that runs through the second side. Side Three contains more typically articulate guitar work from Gilmour laid against delicate passages from Wright; as well as the Albert Hall organ recording. It all ends with “Louder Than Words”.

“It's part documentary, this album,” notes Manzanera. “It captures a moment where they were jamming, but it also captures a bit of talking from interviews, and the Albert Hall.”

“Those guys, they've all been through so much,” offers Youth. “Addictions, broken marriages, the band collapsing, reinventing itself. Them coming together now has this air of redemption. It would have been wonderful if Rick had been alive to share in that. But nevertheless, to do this took a lot of courage, and emotional strength. If these guys can work together again and find the harmony out of discord, then anyone can. I found it very beautiful to bear witness to.”

“We had got into what one might call a professional way of making records,” reflects Nick Mason. “Never really suited to it. The thing of constructing a thing more carefully, having specific parts. But actually” – he adds, considering Wright's work – “what's great is when you've got musicians who just shine when they're not given the part and are just allowed to be creative in their own right.”



The endless crowd: Rick Wright onstage at Earl's Court, from the *Pulse* concert film, 1994

The Endless River is released on November 10

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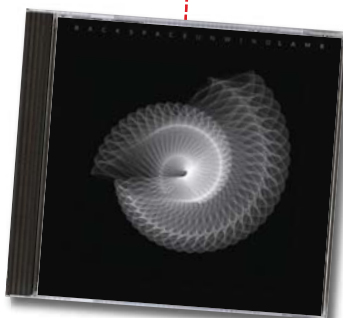
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American Woman

BY THE GUESS WHO

How four Canadians scored a US No 1 with a covert anti-war song written at a curling rink, and then got banned from playing it on the White House lawn... "It would've been monstrous!"



Canadian men: (l-r) Garry Peterson, Burton Cummings, Randy Bachman, Jim Kale

JULY 1970, AND Prince Charles and Princess Anne visit Canada for the first time. They go to a rodeo and a "trout festival picnic", but history doesn't recall their thoughts on attending a scheduled performance by The Guess Who.

Playing their proto-metal, No 1 anti-war song for royalty in Winnipeg was just another strange event in a career full of weird occurrences for the Canadian band. Formed in the early '60s, the group spent most of the decade playing a varied mix of beat pop, soul, surf and rock'n'roll, to similarly varied success, until they came up with "American Woman", a heavy, swaggering song with a riff every inch the equal of "Whole Lotta Love", complete with anti-Vietnam lyrics from frontman Burton Cummings.

"We were so used to playing pop songs, three minutes long," says guitarist Randy Bachman. "Copying The Beatles and The Hollies and the Stones... But we saw people were starting to get into listening to long songs, not little pop songs. So on 'American Woman', we stretched out."

Conjured up spontaneously onstage during a mammoth set at a curling rink near Toronto, this marvellous anthem, soon to be banned from the White House, could have set the band up for mega-stardom, but illness, drugs and Mormonism split the lineup soon after its release.

"That was our only No 1 hit record," says drummer Garry Peterson today. "Maybe we should've written more songs by jamming. That was the only one we came up with that way!"

TOM PINNOCK

RANDY BACHMAN

(GUITAR): When you got hot and the label wanted another album, you basically did whatever they asked you to do. There was no real creativity, no "Oh, we need to wait and experience some life." You just wrote another album. We played dances and big events, three or four one-hour sets a night. You had a chance once in a while to write onstage or at soundcheck.

JIM KALE (BASS): Yeah, "American Woman" was heavy – we played all manner of styles, that's just the way our band was. We covered the hit parade and that was a very varied thing.

BACHMAN: We came up with "American Woman" at a curling rink in Kitchener, 100 miles outside Toronto. We were about to go to the United States and play down in Texas. The Vietnam War was raging in 1968. Crossing into

KEY PLAYERS



Randy Bachman
Guitar



Garry Peterson
Drums



Jim Kale
Bass



Brian Christian
Engineer

the US, the guy at the border told us to go to a white building with an American flag over it. He said, "Do you know what that is? It's the Selective Service building. If you go in there, you will be drafted. They'll put you into uniforms and you will be fighting in a jungle in three months. You have a Green Card, that means you can live in the States, you can work in the States, and you can also be drafted by the States and you could go and die fighting for the States." I said, "You gotta be kidding?" He said, "No, they drafted my son a year and a half ago to Vietnam, he was killed six

months later." So rather than go to Texas, we turned around and came back to Canada.

GARRY PETERSON (DRUMS): I remember that we went to those shows in Texas, and back at the border we handed in our Green Cards. We don't know whether being drafted could have actually happened, but taking a chance like that, you know, didn't seem like the right thing to do.

BACHMAN: When we got back to Canada, I called an agent in Toronto and said, "Do you have a gig?" and he said, "Yes, in a curling arena."



PETERSON: We played two sets that night. We had a lot of people backstage between the sets. Our producer Jack Richardson was there, and all the people from RCA in Toronto. When we were starting to go back onstage, we couldn't find Burton Cummings. So we decided to go onstage and make a little noise and he would naturally hear that and come on and be ready. I was listening to Buddy Miles a lot, so I started to play a sidestroke pattern on the bass drum, and then everybody else started to play. When Burton heard it he came running onstage and he started to sing something that came into his head. That was the beginning of "American Woman".

BACHMAN: I think I started it. I'd broken a guitar string. I never had a guitar tech, a spare guitar or a tuner. So I'm kneeling on the stage, tuning up my guitar, and I keep playing an E and a B on Burton's electric piano. Then I start to play a riff on the piano, "dun dun do do do do do do dun" [*humming the riff*]. Everybody's head in the audience jerks towards the stage to hear where this riff's coming from. I think, "I can't forget this riff", so I start playing it on guitar. Then Garry gets onstage, and then Jim, and the last person onstage is Burton. The first words he sang were "American woman, stay away from me..."

PETERSON: The crowd went crazy, they loved it. So we decided, well, we gotta keep this in the show, and as we kept playing it, it refined itself.

BACHMAN: The recording was done in like an hour and a half once we got that groove. We

couldn't get the groove until we started playing again like we had live. It's all just build-up from that riff. Jack Richardson, our producer, said, "Give me four minutes of that." Then Burton sang it, and I did the guitar solo.

BRIAN CHRISTIAN (ENGINEER): I'd say it took two days to record the song. We used a Herzog, a pedal that Randy would plug into –

“By the time the
radio realised it
was against the war
in Vietnam, it was
too late; it was No 1”

RANDY BACHMAN

whatever string you hit, it would just keep going. So you had to dampen all the other strings while you were playing, and that's how we got that lead guitar sound. After we finished putting it down, we knew it was gonna be a hit. Jack Richardson called Don Berkheimer, the vice president of A&R for RCA, and said, "You gotta fly to Chicago." Before he arrived, we recorded a very silly

country and western song, so when Berkheimer came in to hear this hit we put this thing on. We were all sitting there not saying anything, and he was looking at us like, "What?!" We had a good laugh on that, then played him "American Woman" and he immediately said, "Wow, great record." It was pretty universal that as soon as people heard it they knew it was gonna be a hit.

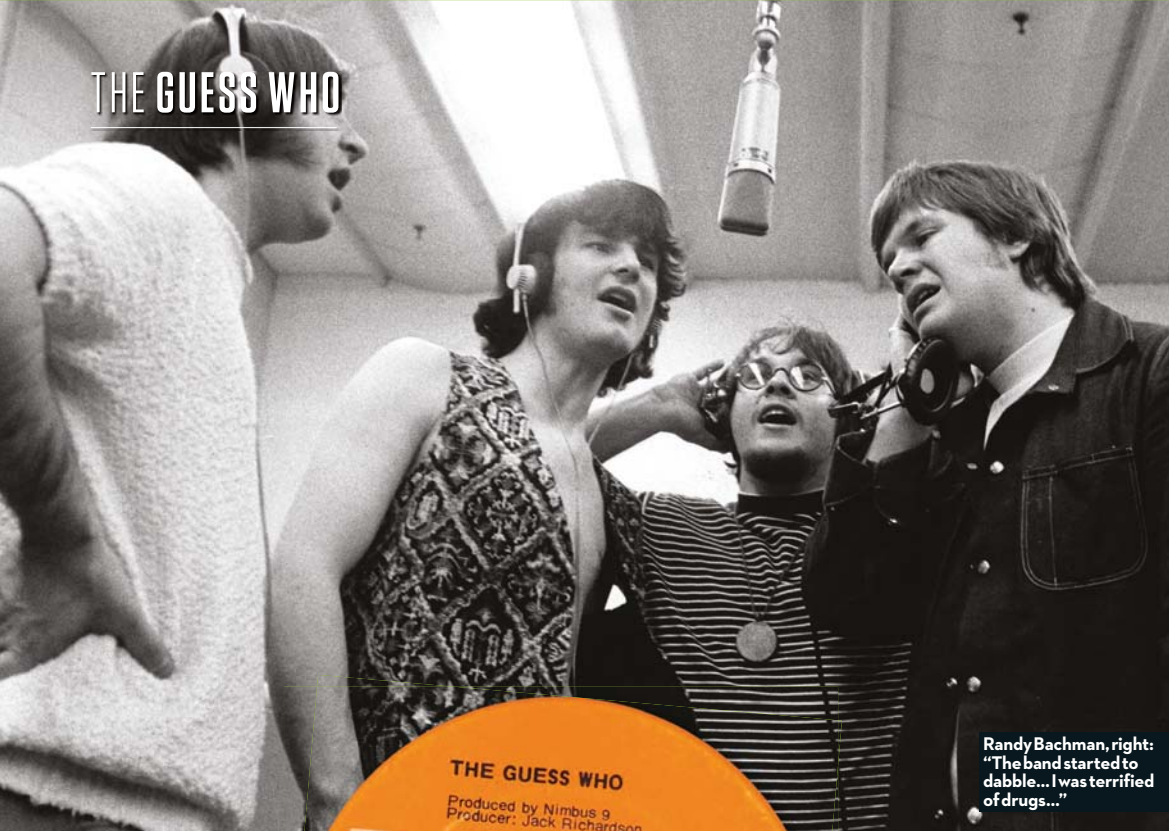
BACHMAN: After recording the song, we thought, "Well, it's kind of boring, the same riff over and over and over, so let's just do an acoustic intro and we'll end the album with a reprise", which a lot of guys did at that time. So that kind of became a thing, where we started with an acoustic version. Which is in a different key than the other version, they didn't even go together.

KALE: People would ask, "What do you have against American women?" The American woman was the Statue Of Liberty, and all that she represented. As younger, idealistic men, our position was anti-war.

CHRISTIAN: Everyone was singing it in the streets and it was a very anti-American song. It struck me as very funny. When they performed in Toronto, they played that song and they burnt the American flag. Not the group, but the audience. I was there, I saw it. It was a really weird feeling.

BACHMAN: They wouldn't play anti-war music in the States. Because of our momentum with "These Eyes" and "Laughing", they played it anyway. And then they said, "I think they're protesting the war, they're singing 'we don't

THE GUESS WHO



Randy Bachman, right: "The band started to dabble... I was terrified of drugs..."

need your war machines...'", but by then it was too late, it was a No 1 record. We were still playing dances then, 'cause you get booked six or nine months ahead. Having a No 1 single, you should be getting \$10,000 a night, but you're getting \$1,000 dollars for a three-hour dance for kids in high school. Then the next night you're playing the arena 150 miles away and you make your \$10,000. It depended on the airplay in the area. Just after it hit No 1, I left the band. I had medical issues with my gall bladder. That was just the icing on the cake, though, we had differences in lifestyle.

KALE: Randy was always very conservative, and so was Garry. Cummings and I, on the other hand, were the other side of the coin. It was, I think, destined to come apart at some point. Ironically, Peterson and I, two very different people, still continue with The Guess Who today.

CHRISTIAN: Randy was a Mormon, so there was no tea, no coffee, no beer, no whisky, no smoking, no this and that... well, the other guys were the opposite of that. But I don't think there was much tension, it was just a different lifestyle.

BACHMAN: I didn't like the drug scene and what it did to people. Friends of mine had overdosed on acid, they went into a coma and never came out of it. I was terrified of drugs, I still am. The band started to dabble, like the rest of the world in the '60s, and smoke and do psychedelics and drink heavily, and that just wasn't it for me. I wasn't overly religious, but the



couldn't treat me because we were travelling to another gig the next day... this just went on and on and on. Finally, I went to the doctor and said, "I don't know what's wrong with me but I think I'm dying..."

PETERSON: Randy was a Mormon, and Burton was experiencing the youthful trappings of rock'n'roll, and I think they grew apart. I guess Randy got to the point where he didn't want to be in the band anymore, and Burton said, "Well, good, we don't want you in the band anymore."

BACHMAN: When I left, I think the others felt the freedom that the narc was gone... I was always saying to them, 'Don't go to the party, don't do the drugs. We have to get up at 9 o'clock and get to the next gig...' We didn't have a road manager or a tour manager, I did everything.

KALE: After Bachman left, Prince Charles and

Mormons had this lifestyle, "We don't do drugs, we don't smoke, we don't drink." I thought, great, I can join this club. It gave me an extra reason to be strong and to keep a good straight lifestyle. Plus, I was having a gall bladder attack every night for three weeks in a row. Throwing up blood and going to an emergency hospital, and they

And we were asked through channels not to play "American Woman".

BACHMAN: If I was there I would've launched into "American Woman" and got arrested and thrown off the White House lawn. It would've been monstrous! It would've been great! Burton Cummings has said that that was their greatest mistake, to not play it there. They lost their credibility with all the hippies and all the anti-war protesters and became another band that was manipulated and controlled by the government.

KALE: No, I can't say that I wish we had played it. We were respecting the wishes of the government. I don't regret not playing it.

BACHMAN: The song got revitalised by Lenny Kravitz years later on. Online there's a 12-minute video of Prince and Lenny Kravitz singing "American Woman" with a big horn section on New Year's Eve! So Lenny Kravitz was great for that song, by reinventing it for a whole new generation. To my daughter, who was a teenager at the time, and her friends, I was very hip. Even though I was very ancient!

KALE: It was used in *American Beauty* some years ago, too. And everybody did very well with that... Thank you very much!

BACHMAN: I still see many people who say, "Here's a poster of you when you played at our high school in 1970 when 'American Woman' was No 1. You played our Valentine's Day dance at the end of February. And your song was No 1 and you played there for \$750..."

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** Randy Bachman, Burton Cummings, Jim Kale, Garry Peterson
- **Performers:** Bachman (guitar), Cummings (vocals), Kale (bass), Peterson (drums)
- **Producer:** Jack Richardson
- **Engineer:** Brian Christian
- **Recorded at:** RCA Studio, Chicago
- **Released:** January 1970
- **US/UK chart:** 1/19

TIMELINE

1962: Winnipeg group Chad Allan And The Reflections, featuring Bachman, Peterson and Kale, release their debut single, "Tribute

To Buddy Holly"
1965: The group, now billed as Guess Who?, score a Canadian No 1 with a cover of "Shakin' All Over"

January 1966: Burton Cummings joins the band as vocalist and occasional keyboard player
August 1969: The group

record the *American Woman* album in Chicago
March 1970: "American Woman" hits No 1 in the US

May 1970: Randy Bachman leaves the band
July 17, 1970: The Guess Who perform at the White House

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zola jesus
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released 06/10/14

£10



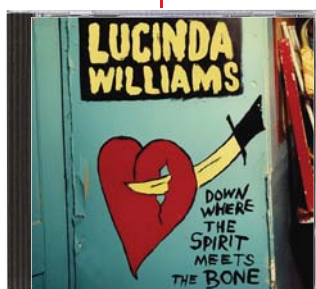
jackson browne
standing in the breach
released 06/10/14

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lucinda williams
down where the spirit
meets the bone
released 29/09/14

£11



vashti bunyan
heartleap
released 06/10/14

£10



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trick
released 13/10/14

£10



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by the trail of dead
ix

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The Father, the Sun and the Holy Ghost

Introducing HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER, grown-up saviours of American roots music. *Uncut* takes a long ride around North Carolina with mainman MC Taylor, and learns the lore of the land, from remote hippy communities to Down Yonder Farm. How do you reconcile the struggles of fatherhood with a spiritual quest, and end up with a remarkable series of folk-rock albums?

Story: John Mulvey

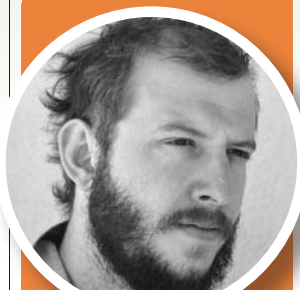
ONE BRIGHT SUNDAY morning, MC Taylor is driving through his patch of North Carolina, past New Hope Creek and the Eno River, over the Chatham County Line and the James Taylor Bridge in Chapel Hill, near the Haw River and the valley he has meditated upon in song these past few years. Through apparently endless forests, Taylor's destination is Saralyn, a kind of hippy settlement just outside of Pittsboro. Turning off the main road, Taylor steers his Subaru along a narrow, winding track. Remote houses can occasionally be glimpsed among the trees, properties originally inhabited by a bunch of idealists, academics, artists and Buddhists who followed a local professor, Wallace Kaufman, out to Saralyn in the 1970s. Kaufman, it should be noted, wrote a book about his experience called *Coming Out Of The Woods: The Solitary Life Of A Maverick Naturalist*. "This guy right here," says Taylor, passing a house obscured by a high fence, "this guy is the foremost expert on heritage apple varieties in the southeast United States."

After a few minutes, Taylor reaches a stone Buddha which marks, more or less, the end of the trail, close to the house where he moved with his family in 2009. Back then, he spent a lot of time walking in the forest, chainsawing trees for firewood. Sometimes the little creek, Brooks Branch, would overflow its banks and turn the road into a lake. It was this isolation, though, that provided Taylor with a means of

I'M YOUR FAN

JUSTIN VERNON of BON IVER on the beauty of Hiss Golden Messenger

"When I first got the mixes of the new Hiss record, it's all I listened to for an entire month. I haven't had that happen to me in years. 'Mahogany Dread' is one of those songs that I can play over and over and over again and I never tire of it. So unique, so beautiful, so honest. What a voice. What a man."



accidentally relaunching his music career – a career that in the subsequent five years has brought four LPs, a multitude of extra-curricular projects and a body of work as profound and rewarding as anything I've come across in that time.

"I was totally lost," Taylor says of that period now, when he recorded songs as his new-born son Elijah slept, a clutch of demos that became a strikingly intimate album, *Bad Debt*. "I'd been doing Hiss Golden Messenger, but I was confused about what it could become, how I could get at the emotion I wanted to convey. I wasn't really thinking it was gonna be a record, I was just trying to figure out how to write songs. Literally, there's nothing on that record. But figuratively, I had to burn away all this confusion. I was at zero at the time."

As he parks the car, a tousled middle-aged man appears out of the trees, who Taylor later describes as resembling a character from a Denis Johnson novel; *Already Dead*, maybe. This, it transpires, is David, an initially rather paranoid homesteader who is reluctant to let Taylor go any further. "Let me see your eyes, dude," he instructs the singer, who calmly takes off his Aviators. "Have we met before?"

They have not, but Taylor, evidently skilled at dealing with the locals, puts him at relative ease. "I was just like, 'Who the fuck am I dealing with here?'" explains David. "I walk down here 'cos I wanna keep an eye on shit, y'know?"

Taylor does. They talk for a while about off-grid living and shared wells, about the house that David plans to build in a new clearing. Eventually, Taylor gives up on his nostalgic mission. "Good luck man, this was awesome," he says, then gets back in his car. "Well," he continues, out of earshot, "that's the vibe round here."

"I can write some good songs that people enjoy. But it took 20 years..."
The questing MC Taylor at home in North Carolina



NOWADAYS, MC TAYLOR – Mike to his friends – lives 25 miles away in Durham, an old tobacco town which is also home to an eminent private university, Duke. Some of the tobacco mills have passed through a period of dereliction, and now stand

gentrified. Heading out to Pittsboro, Taylor swings past one where, he's discovered, bluesmen like Blind Boy Fuller and the Reverend Gary Davis would play outside the packing house on payday. It has been repurposed as condominiums.

Taylor's new house is still surrounded by trees, though the neighbourhood is conventionally suburban rather than borderline feral. The porch looks out on a forest full of cardinals, the state bird of North Carolina. Inside, there are framed posters from Ronnie Lane and Richard & Linda Thompson shows, and great racks of vinyl that provide further clues to an obsession. One pile, on the floor in the basement, could act as a glossary to Hiss Golden Messenger's music: *Slow Train Coming*, *Fisherman's Blues*, *American Beauty*; a few British folk treasures by The Watsons, Barry Dransfield and Dando Shaft; Little Feat, Lee Perry, John Fahey and Bill Fay; Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music*; more recent underground classics from Brightblack Morning Light and Chris Forsyth; a tranche of mint vinyl from Taylor's new record label, Merge.

"Mike's grasp of the American music catalogue is baffling," says Phil Cook, a multi-instrumentalist who's played with Hiss Golden Messenger as well as Justin Vernon, Matthew E White and his own band, Megafaun. "He's turned me on to every record I've obsessed over in the last three years. He's opened whole worlds for me."

Just as significantly, though, Taylor's home is full of Lego and the toys of his children, Elijah, five, and Lone, one. From *Bad Debt* onwards, Hiss Golden Messenger's albums have seen Taylor grapple with big ideas about responsibility and doubt, faith and mortality, spiralling out from the everyday pressures of parenthood. "The way I've incorporated music into my life is woven into the fabric of all the other obligations I have," he says, "whether it's kids or dealing with the garden. I don't have a choice, so it's either music and the other stuff fighting with each other, or doing it in such a way that music is enriched by all of that."

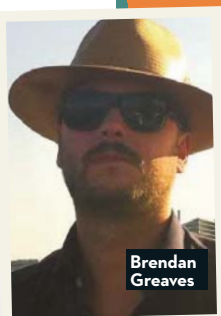
"It's not intentional, but part of what Hiss Golden Messenger does is destabilise the idea of rock'n'roll as a vocation, as being this sort of hedonistic..." He trails off for a moment to choose the right words. "It's fun to confront people and talk about what it means to be a grown-up American male with a couple of kids and a marginally successful career and a job. I'm not special."

"I'm just lucky, I guess. I've had a lot of practice at writing songs, and for some reason I've stuck with it. I felt it was important in my life, and it took me a really long time to figure out how to make a song that felt genuine to me, and seemed to affect other people. And part of that is maybe a gift, but a lot of it is just sweat and grinding it out. I can write some good songs that people enjoy. But it took 20 years."

ON SUNNY DAYS, THE Beach Boys' "Little Bird" often pops into Taylor's head and, driving from Saralyn to a food co-op in Pittsboro, he starts singing the old Dennis Wilson song in his own distinctive way, chewing up the words and finding radical new syllables hidden in many of them. It's a nasal, soulful style – downhome melisma, perhaps – familiar to anyone who's heard the run of Hiss Golden Messenger albums that climaxed, last month, with *Lateness Of Dancers*. There are echoes, too, of Van Morrison and John Martyn in this "craggy-voiced patriarch", as the writer Amanda Petrusich recently described Taylor.

"Mike's voice is pretty singular," says Brad Cook, another ex-member of Megafaun, who

NATALIE BEHRING/GETTY IMAGES



Brendan Greaves

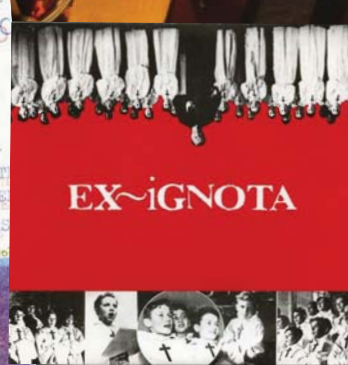
STATE OF MUSIC

"A CRUCIBLE OF AMERICAN MUSIC..."

Paradise Of Bachelors' Brendan Greaves on the musical riches of NC

North Carolina is a central crucible of American vernacular music. Many of the 20th Century's greatest soul, jazz, gospel, country, bluegrass and old-time artists – from John Coltrane, to Roberta Flack, to Nina Simone, to Earl Scruggs, to Don Gibson, to Maceo Parker, to Blind Boy Fuller, to Charlie Poole, to Doc Watson – hail from our state. In many ways, North Carolina can lay claim to being the home of old-time string-band music and bluegrass. It's very diverse – we have the largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi and the fastest-growing Latino population in the nation. Musical cross-pollination persists, spanning from the Outer Banks to the Piedmont to the Smoky Mountains, reflecting those disparate landscapes. Both Mike [Taylor] and I have worked as folklorists in North Carolina, which involves a lot of travelling around, conducting oral histories with musicians, eating barbecue and listening as selflessly as possible. If you want to pursue a focused artistic practice, sense of place matters.

This place contains some heavy musical ballast – you're bound to be influenced as a musician. If your ears are open, it seeps into your bones and stays there."



currently acts as Hiss Golden Messenger's manager and occasional bassist, when he isn't touring as part of Sharon Van Etten's band. "It doesn't take much to notice that anything he covers immediately sounds like his own." Chris Smith released three Hiss albums on his Paradise Of Bachelors label. "The cadence of Mike's voice lines up directly with his playing and structure," he says. "It can feel like nature or something animal, a great comfort, communicating alongside you."

Taylor, 39, originally comes from Irvine, south of Los Angeles in Orange County. At home, he heard his father's Byrds and CSNY albums but, by the time he joined his first band at the University Of California in Santa Barbara, he was playing a fraught, arty brand of hardcore, much influenced by the likes of Unwound and Rites Of Spring. Ex-Ignota released a few records in the mid-'90s, and on YouTube you can find a film of them playing, skateboarding and embroidering their biographies that was directed by Jack Johnson ("We were buddies in college. The first time I saw his face on the side of a bus I was stunned."). Within the band's ranks, there was another student, Scott Hirsch, who remains Taylor's musical lieutenant to this day.

"Mike looked like a cool person," recalls Hirsch, speaking from the New York studio where he works on sound for films, "but it was one of those situations that didn't have anything to do with what he could actually play. I remember going over to Mike's place in these ghetto flats and he had an acoustic guitar with two strings on it. He kind of knew a couple chords, and that's how it all began."

As their teens ended, Taylor and Hirsch increasingly felt that the strictures of hardcore were too confining. Ex-Ignota split in 1997, Taylor graduated early from college and found himself living back in Irvine with his parents. "I was sort of lost; I've had many periods of loss," he notes ruefully. Letting



Picking and grinning...
MC Taylor at the
Pickathon festival,
Happy Valley, Oregon,
August 3, 2014

his hair grow long and his beard scraggly, he stumbled into a job as a PE teacher. "I have no idea why they hired me. I looked insane. Also, I don't know the rules of any sports."

At the same time, though, he was playing Gram Parsons records and learning the banjo, to some degree as a transgressive act: "Country music is pretty fucking weird if you're into hardcore." A year or so later, he drifted up to San Francisco, where Hirsch had relocated, and formed a new band with the bassist that they called The Court & Spark.

"We started from scratch, as an indie band that played countryish music. We wanted to do it in a way that felt respectful to the tradition, and at the same time not a sort of Civil War re-enactment. We put out several records, got a good press, we did a lot of touring, but we made zero money. And ultimately it was unsatisfying. It was not getting me where I wanted to go."

Taylor's amiable networking talents were already evident, with Linda Thompson and The Byrds' Gene Parsons guesting on Court & Spark records (Paradise Of Bachelors' Brendan Greaves recalls that, the first time they met, Taylor somehow produced a phone number for Augie Meyers of The Sir Douglas Quintet). A few years into the new millennium, though, leading a failing indie rock band with thwarted ambitions became strangely unappealing.

In 2006, as The Court & Spark slowly collapsed in on themselves, Taylor and Hirsch reconfigured themselves into a looser, less formal project, which would soon be named Hiss Golden Messenger. "I didn't want to have a band anymore," says Taylor. "I asked Scott if he wanted to be involved, but I said, 'It's going to be different. All the risk will be on me, I'll pay for everything, but also, I'm the one who'll have the final say on everything.' I'm not a dictator, but I just don't think bands work, I really don't. There's so much wasted energy."

The first Hiss album, *Country Hai East Cotton* (2009, recorded a couple of years earlier), was a lovingly hand-crafted artefact, released in a run of 500 on Taylor's own label, Heaven & Earth Magic Recording Company. The music was lush and laidback – "Touchstones, as I see them, would be Traffic's *Low Spark Of High-Heeled Boys*, possibly some live Dead, some vintage-era Tubby/Jammy," Taylor wrote to me at the time. The pressure to succeed, though, had dissipated, so much so that the pair both left San

HOW TO BUY

HISS' FINEST MESSAGES

MC Taylor and Scott Hirsch's discography...



COUNTRY HAI EAST COTTON
HEAVEN & EARTH MAGIC
RECORDING COMPANY, 2009

7/10

Recorded in 2007 and 2008, the first Hiss album finds Taylor and Hirsch drawing more strongly on Californian traditions; a slick, stoned, Laurel Canyon vibe predominates. Also recommended: *Root Work* (Heaven & Earth Magic, 2010), looser live jams of the same canon.



BAD DEBT

BLACKMAPS, 2010

Transplanted to North Carolina, Taylor, with only his acoustic guitar and a sleeping baby for company, accidentally stumbles on a breakthrough album. Originally released on the UK label Blackmaps, an extended and superior version of *Bad Debt* was released by Paradise Of Bachelors in early 2014.



POOR MOON
PARADISE OF BACHELORS/
TOMPKINS SQUARE, 2011

8/10

The trademark Hiss sound begins to evolve, as Taylor gathers a crew of unassumingly gifted players to flesh

out the *Bad Debt* songs. Contains the definitive version of a key song of ambivalent faith, "Jesus Shot Me In The Head".



GOLDEN GUNN
THREE LOBED
RECORDINGS, 2013

8/10

An engaging detour, as Taylor and Hirsch hook up with the master guitarist Steve Gunn for a set of cosmic porch grooves. Often comes across as a wry and loving homage to JJ Cale, right down to the appropriated logo.



HAW
PARADISE OF BACHELORS,
2013

"A garland for the Southern Piedmont," reads the epigraph and, with a bunch of local musicians (including Phil and Brad Cook) now enlisted, *Haw* is seeped in North Carolina culture. Downhome, then, but not cosy: these are Taylor's most troubled set of songs to date.



LATENESS OF DANCERS
MERGE, 2014

A new label, and a stealthily expanding vision, as Taylor channels his encyclopaedic knowledge of roots music into a triumphant set of very personal songs (another classic one, "Brother Do You Know The Road?", preceded *Lateness...* as a stand-alone single). "A couple of kids/Mahogany dread/But happy days are still ahead..."

"I don't think
bands work...
there's so
much wasted
energy"
MCTaylor



The Court & Spark,
with Hirsch, front,
and Taylor, right

Francisco to pursue postgraduate studies: Hirsch to work on Music Technology in New York; Taylor to investigate folklore at the University Of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

TAYLOR CHOSE TO avoid music for his academic thesis – he focused instead on a low-rider car club in Alamance County. He did, though, find himself drawn into the area's musical traditions while working as a folklorist for the state of North Carolina. "They would send me out to do what they called 'cultural surveys,'" Taylor explains, driving now to a town called Hillsborough and the romantically named Down Yonder Farm, where Hiss

recorded *Lateness Of Dancers* in a barn tricked out as a music room. "I'd go out to Warren County, or Nash County, say, for two months to gather and record as much traditional music as I could. In the process, I didn't necessarily learn anything more about the canon of vernacular music in the North Carolina Piedmont. What I learned is how to listen really well. The people wanted to tell me things above and beyond the provenance of a fiddle tune they were playing.

"I don't care about where the fiddle tune came from, but I do care about the apparent emotion in it. There was a turning point with Hiss Golden Messenger when the music took on an entirely different emotional hue."

Around the same time, Taylor and his wife Abby had

started a family and moved out to Saralyn. “I had low-level failed in the music business,” he continues, “and I needed a positive model of the way music could function in a person’s life and in a community. I didn’t want something that makes me happy all the time – that’s not what art should do – but I felt like it should be productive. That’s what I was witnessing. People would put together these fish fries, hanging out with friends and playing through songs. They weren’t preparing for a big gig or anything. It felt pretty profound at that point in my life.”

In that spirit, with no concrete expectation of ever releasing music again, he recorded the home demos that became *Bad Debt* (2010), an album that ushered in the last and most unexpectedly acclaimed phase of Taylor’s 20-year career. A corpus of new songs rapidly accumulated, many of which would be redeployed with richer band settings on two more fine albums, *Poor Moon* and *Haw*.

Brendan Greaves had first met Taylor in UNC’s folklore department, and had started a label, Paradise Of Bachelors, with Smith. When Taylor approached them about releasing *Poor Moon* in 2011 it was, Greaves admits, “a fairly drastic departure from our only release up to that point – a comp of obscure North and South Carolinian soul and gospel 45s. But it made perfect sense to me in the context of Carolina musicians striking their own paths through the thicket of vernacular songcraft and music industry bullshit. For me, that album, like the best of Mike’s music, is a gospel record, albeit an ambivalent, conflicted and sometimes irreverent one. Like the greatest Southern soul artists, he interpolates sacred and secular song forms and subjects with deeply personal, but immediate results.”

When he talks about the South, Taylor does so with affection, for its musical wealth and the impact it has made on him personally and creatively. As ever, though, he can mediate his emotional responses with intelligence and sensitivity. While Greaves can compare him to a Southern soul singer, Taylor is careful to avoid appropriating the culture as his own. “I love living here,” he says, “but I’m not pretending that I’m from here. I’d never call myself a Southerner.”

Arriving in North Carolina, there were two musical heroes in the area that he wanted to meet. One was Ash Bowie, from ’90s math-rockers Polvo, who ended up rigging all the lighting and electrical work in Taylor’s house. Another was the pioneering bluegrass singer Alice Gerrard, for whom he’s just produced an uncannily lovely LP, *Follow The Music*.

The friendship with Gerrard was what brought Taylor, Hirsch and their revolving collective of musicians to the rustic idyll of Down Yonder Farm. Inside the barn, there is an extensive library of music biographies, an old Allman Brothers poster, and a picture of another local hero: James ‘Bubba’ Norwood, drummer in Ike & Tina Turner’s band.

Hiss Golden Messenger turned up here in September 2013 with cables, microphones and recording equipment, to start work on what would surface, a year later, as *Lateness Of Dancers*. If *Haw* was a spiritually troubled album – “I was fighting against this idea that we have much less control than we think we do. But that sort of fighting is an untenable position really” – *Lateness Of Dancers* feels a little more contented. Taylor’s recurring preoccupations remain: a vivid,

questing engagement with religion; the forensic emotional investigation of what it means to be a 39-year-old father of two. Now, though, Taylor seems more reconciled to the fact that the questions he poses himself are mostly unanswerable ones.

“There aren’t many people addressing what it means to be settled down, but not necessarily settled,” as Brad Cook neatly puts it. “He’s constantly working on growing as a father and an artist, and that can be a pretty unglamorous struggle, but one that’s very real.”

“Spirituality is something basically frowned upon in music, unless it’s some sort of archival gospel recording,” adds William Tyler, who played guitar on the last two Hiss Golden Messenger records as addressing the anxieties of what it means to be grown up and have these obligations to others that are very, very serious, while struggling with not losing yourself completely. It’s like we, as grown-up humans, tell ourselves a lot of lies in order to feel like there is some use in our existence. Part of *Lateness...* is acknowledging that, and being OK with it.

“I’m a little hesitant to talk about this being a happier record,” Taylor cautions, “but it’s definitely more open, there is some peace in the record. I feel like the Hiss Golden Messenger records are addressing the anxieties of what it means to be grown up and have these obligations to others that are very, very serious, while struggling with not losing yourself completely. It’s like we, as grown-up humans, tell ourselves a lot of lies in order to feel like there is some use in our existence. Part of *Lateness...* is acknowledging that, and being OK with it.

“Have you ever heard that old country song, ‘She Thinks I Still Care’? George Jones did an incredible version of it. That song to me is one of the genius songs in country music. The singer is saying, ‘Just because I ask my friend about her/Just because I speak her name somewhere/Just because I called her number by mistake today/She thinks I still care.’

“This is the singer lying to himself. Of course he still cares. And I feel like there’s a little of that in ‘Mahogany Dread’ on *Lateness Of Dancers*. There’s this tension, this pull, this desire to be somewhere else, to be in a different situation, and one way that we get through that is to tell ourselves stories.”

Hiss Golden Messenger’s work is littered with reference points, both erudite and rootsy. The album’s title track, for instance, takes its name from a line in Eudora Welty’s *Delta Wedding*, and at least some of its sound from the work of Van Morrison circa *Veillon Fleece*. But one of Taylor’s great gifts is how, through assiduous and passionate study, he has found a way to transcend his influences. “Mike’s a deep scholar,” says William Tyler, “but in a way that never feels academic, that always feels soulful and deeply original.” The air of “*Lateness Of Dancers*” is at once serene and edgy, and deep in the mix you can hear the dense chatter of cicadas and some

psychedelic dub-style edits. Again, there’s that potent combination of musical confidence and spiritual uncertainty. This time, though, there’s a quiet revelation, too; a sense that the journey through “*unfamiliar country*”, as he describes raising a family in another song, might be heading in a satisfying direction. When Taylor sings, “*It’s easy now*”, it’s not entirely clear he’s being truthful with himself. When he sings, “*I’m learning now*,” it seems a real breakthrough. ☺

Lateness Of Dancers is available now on Merge

“My records address what it means to be grown up”
MCTaylor



STEVE GULLICK, CONSTANCE MENSEN



TRIBUTE

“IT KNOCKED YOU ON YOUR ASS!”

MC Taylor remembers his friend Jason Molina

Jason was an enigma. He was a straight shooter. He was a very funny guy. But there was also a mythology about him and his work that he wore like a shroud, even around his friends. I suspect his undoing was partly due to his living this compartmentalised existence: he was a good married guy, and he was also a haunted soul placing talismans and charms in each of the four corners of his room to keep evil spirits away. And rarely did those two men meet. A few months before he passed we were trying to arrange a session for him with my crew backing him up. It was meant to be purely therapeutic. Both of us valued honesty and honed our craft in a very personal way. When he found that direct line between his soul and his voice, it knocked you on your ass. I got a call from Jason Groth of Magnolia Electric Co not long after Jason’s death. He told me they felt there was some unfinished work they wanted to complete in playing their songs one last time for the people who loved Molina’s work so much. He asked me if I would be interested in joining them for a string of shows, making clear that I would not be taking Jason’s place, but would be helping them all deliver the songs. I was deeply honoured to be a part of those shows. And make no mistake: it was fun. It was a rambling Irish wake, to be sure. There was a lot of laughter and a lot of tears.”

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John McLaughlin

The pioneering jazz/world guitarist on Miles, Mahavishnu and jamming with Hendrix

CONSIDERING THE HUGE number of albums he's played on as sideman, collaborator or bandleader, it's testament to his positive, spiritual nature that virtuoso guitarist John McLaughlin is more than happy to reflect on them all. "It's like a painter looks back at his paintings," he tells us from his home in France. "In retrospect, he knows now he could do better. But in all honesty, they were the best I could do at that time, and I guess that's what perfection is. It's all relative." Though McLaughlin's heart has always been with jazz, he's dabbled with rock, flamenco, blues and Indian music, and played with a varied set of musicians including Miles Davis, Paco De Lucia, Jack Bruce, Carlos Santana and even Hendrix. "Mitch Mitchell said, 'Jimi's having a jam next door at Electric Lady, let's go round,'" he explains. "It was a big party going on, everybody playing. The only guitar I had was an acoustic Gibson Hummingbird. So I plugged it in with a pickup and it was just feeding back... Should have had a Stratocaster!" **TOM PINNOCK**



White riot: McLaughlin performing with The Mahavishnu Orchestra

JACK BRUCE THINGS WE LIKE

POLYDOR, 1970 (RECORDED IN 1968)



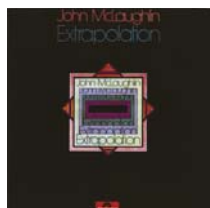
The young session guitarist harks back to the early '60s on this eccentric jazz project helmed by old friend, Cream bassist Bruce. JOHN McLAUGHLIN:

The early '60s was a great era, because you had people like Alexis Korner. He was a gravity point that we all circled. He had Mick Jagger as one of his singers, Charlie Watts was one of his drummers. I played with him, Ginger Baker played with him, Jack Bruce played with him. By 1964, though, I'd come under the influence of Miles Davis, and particularly [John] Coltrane. He had such an impact on me musically and spiritually – not that you can really separate those two. I had a big amp built, but I wanted more feedback, I didn't want that 'cool jazz' guitar tone which was so predominant in the '60s. I played with Jack and Ginger in the Graham Bond Organisation, but at some point I had to back off, and I ended up playing with The Ray Ellington Quartet. That was the most difficult guitar book in the world. I really got my reading thing together. And in those days, when the industry found a musician who could read fast and good, then you had a gig. I became a studio musician and recorded with Engelbert Humperdinck, Petula Clark, Tom Jones, Dionne Warwick and The Four Tops. I did some interesting stuff but it was deadly, the studio work. By the end of '68, I couldn't hack it anymore. I was very happy to be on *Things I Like*, because Jack and I went back quite a few years. Cream was happening at this

point, but it sounds like a Dick Heckstall-Smith record, sort of free-form, Sonny Rollins jazz. After hearing Jack with Cream, I'm not surprised they held this back for a couple of years!

JOHN McLAUGHLIN EXTRAPOLATION

POLYDOR/MARMALADE, 1969



Before relocating to the US, McLaughlin records his debut album as a solo artist: orthodox '60s jazz with glimpses of his more far-out future...

I moved to Belgium in the summer of '68, as I couldn't take the studio stuff anymore. So I became poor again, but happy. There is something about this recording, maybe because it was my first... I had the opportunity to record my own music, what a privilege! Especially when I see today, because there is no record industry for jazz. I had a band in London then with Dave Holland – in fact, we were living together at that time – John Surman and Tony Oxley. We were playing all my music at that point, but then in the summer of 1968, Dave got invited by Miles Davis to play with him [on some of *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*] and he left. We were thrilled. I mean, all the jazz musicians from the UK at that time were so thrilled – one of ours playing with Miles! I came back to London in late November to record *Extrapolation*. I got Brian Odgers to take over from Dave Holland on bass on the recording, and he did a fine job, a fine, fine bass-player. By December I was gone, and by the time the album came out, I was already in New York.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



MILES DAVIS BITCHES BREW

COLUMBIA, 1970

Moving to the US to play with The Tony Williams Lifetime, McLaughlin soon finds himself recording with his hero Miles Davis on a handful of seminal albums.

I met Miles the day I arrived in New York, and the next day I was in the studio with him recording *In A Silent Way*, it was amazing. They photocopied the piano part for me to play. But Miles didn't like the way it sounded, so he stopped it after a few tries. I said, "It's a piano score, I don't read piano score." He said, [gruff voice] "Play it like you don't know how to play the guitar." Typical Miles, ridiculous request. Anyway, I threw out all the chords and played it in E and Miles loved it – he put it twice on Side One! I became very close to Miles. He started to call me and invited me to his house and every



Carlos Santana and McLaughlin at the Greek Theatre, Berkeley, California, May 1980

time I wasn't playing with Tony, I was playing with Miles. I had the best of both worlds. By this point, Miles was listening more to James Brown than he was to any jazz, so he wanted to integrate more of the R'n'B and funk elements into his sound, which are perfect for guitar. I'd be over at his house all the time, and he'd play a chord and say, "What do you hear? Can you hear a riff with that?" And whatever I had, I gave him. I mean, he'd given me so much. By the time we went in to do *Bitches Brew*, I'd had six months of hanging out with Miles, and he was really evolving. So we went into the studio, and it was clear to me from the start that he wasn't sure what he really wanted; what he was really sure about was what he didn't want. He didn't want what he'd done, not even *In A Silent Way*. He was ready to move. So that entire record was totally experimental. He'd say, "Play the riff, John." I'd start playing some little riff, and Jack [DeJohnette] would pick it up, everybody would start playing then Miles would start directing, like, "Play less" – it would never be 'more' with Miles. I'll never forget, once we were playing a blues in F and Miles goes, "We're gonna play a blues in F, but don't play the F..." That's Miles. Anyway, he'd start putting more space in it and then all of a sudden we'd hit a groove and that was it. Recording the whole LP, there were no titles, just brief sketches and funk chords. Miles even bought a guitar, that's how much he loved guitar! And that's really how *Bitches Brew* came out. It came from experimenting with Miles, kind of whittling it down. It was a monster hit, and I thought it was great. But Miles incurred the wrath of the jazz purists, of course.

MILES DAVIS A TRIBUTE TO JACK JOHNSON

COLUMBIA, 1971



McLaughlin shines on this overlooked, seriously funky soundtrack, seemingly improvised out of nothing in the studio. Perhaps the most guitar-heavy record

Davis ever made, and reportedly his favourite...

Miles told me, and a lot of other people, that this was his all-time favourite recording. Far out, huh? When we were in the studio, Miles would usually come in with a cup of coffee in a brown paper bag. And he'd take the coffee out of the bag, tear the bag into pieces and scribble some chords on it, and that would be on the music stand and we'd go from there. With *Jack Johnson*, he didn't even have a paper bag! We had one riff – really fast funk, he loved that riff. We're in the studio, Miles went to talk with [producer] Teo Macero. 20 minutes later I'm bored, so I start playing a thing that became [Mahavishnu's] "The Dance Of Maya" – I started it as an R'n'B shuffle, they all picked up the beat and we hit a thing. Miles literally ran into the studio, the red light was on, and he played for at least 15 minutes. I'd never heard him like that ever. He soared. This album wasn't given its just desserts, though. Miles didn't care, he loved it. In 1993, I was in New York playing at The Blue Note. There's a knock on the dressing room door and in walks Bill Cosby. "I just took my private plane over from Philly to come and give you a hug. I've been listening to *Jack Johnson* all the way over, and I know this was Miles' favourite." And he walked out and flew back! It blew my mind.

THE MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA THE INNER MOUNTING FLAME

CBS/COLUMBIA, 1971



McLaughlin goes his own way with this highly influential and successful jazz/rock fusion combo, featuring Billy Cobham, Jan Hammer, Jerry Goodman and Rick Laird.

I was up with Miles at a club called Lennie's-On-The-Turnpike, just outside Boston. Miles and I were in the dressing room, chilling out, and he turns to me and says, "John, it's time you formed your own band," which blew my mind. He was the most honest man I'd ever met, brutally honest, but wonderful, 'cos you always knew where you were with Miles. When he said that, I had to take it seriously. I'd never considered forming my own band. The first guy I called was Billy Cobham. After *Jack Johnson*, I started to hang out with Billy and we became really tight. I wanted violin in the group, as my mother played violin. All that pre-work I'd done with Tony, it all became reality in Mahavishnu. If there's any fault, it's that we had too much success too quickly. As someone once said to me, failure's easier. That band only existed for two years, but what an impact. And when I see retrospectively, the impact it had, it's amazing. When you're playing music, you put a band together and you have an idea, you're not thinking, 'How will it sound 10 years from now?' The only thing that occurs to you is, 'Let's play!' We were so lucky as people really enjoyed that band... we were a live band, touring 300 days a year. It was an amazing phenomenon.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

JOHN McLAUGHLIN & CARLOS SANTANA LOVE DEVOTION SURRENDER

CBS/COLUMBIA, 1973



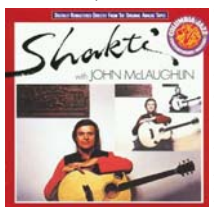
A dream collaboration, literally, created to honour the two guitar heroes' spiritual and musical gurus.

This caused friction in Mahavishnu. The first time we had hit

California, Carlos was there. We became very good friends. Six months or a year later, I dreamt about Carlos, that we were playing together, so I called up Clive Davis at CBS and told him about the dream. He said, "Let's do it!" And we did it, and we toured. But by the time Carlos and I finished the tour, the friction had built up in Mahavishnu to the point where Jan and Jerry Goodman wouldn't speak to me any more, and I never did find out why... Maybe because I was on my meditation trip, I had my guru. But I never imposed anything on any musicians, everybody was free to do whatever they wanted. I was very much involved in my personal spiritual quest, which I continue to be to this day, because to me, that's the meaning of life. If I'm in tune with my spirit, and my spirit is in tune with my outer life, then it can only help the music. I tried to break the ice. I said, "How can you play with me, and not talk to me?", to which I had no response. So we just finished the contract, and by the end of 1973 that was the end of the original Mahavishnu. But with Carlos, it's been a friendship of over 40 years.

SHAKTI SHAKTI WITH JOHN McLAUGHLIN

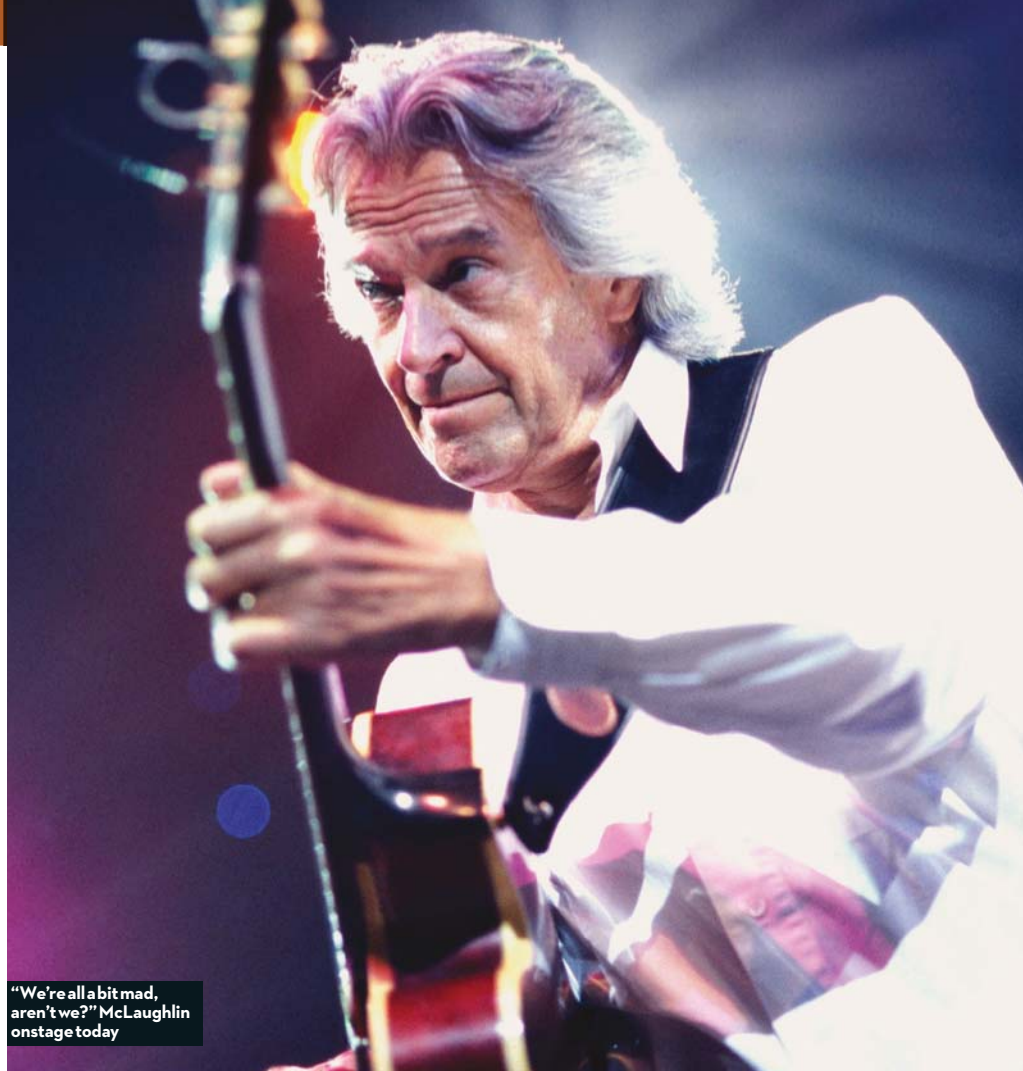
COLUMBIA, 1976



The electric guitar maestro goes unplugged and explores his passion for Indian music.

I was getting deeper into the Indian traditions, philosophical, meditative, spiritual,

whatever you want to call it. I was already experimenting and listening to different kinds of Indian music and really fell in love with it... I found a veena [Indian string instrument] guru, Dr Ramanathan, at Wesleyan University, Connecticut, and so every time I was home, I'd drive up to see my guru and he'd teach me veena. Back in 1971, Zakir Hussain and I had played together in San Francisco, I had the acoustic guitar, Zakir had his tabla, and it was the most amazing experience. This guy is a genius. But in the meantime, I met Dr L Shankar, the violin player, through another friend on the East Coast. We started to jam together at home, and after about six months I said, "We're gonna have to get together with Zakir Hussain", and that was the birth of Shakti in 1973. We started doing small concerts in parallel to the big concerts with Mahavishnu. By 1975 I was so enamoured and entranced with Guru Shakti, and it was such a challenge musically, and spiritually too, that I left the second lineup of The Mahavishnu Orchestra, which I really loved also. In 1975, we played in Southampton College, New York, and it was recorded, and that became the first Shakti LP.

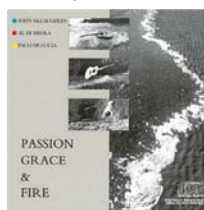


"We're all a bit mad, aren't we?" McLaughlin onstage today

People were asking me, the label, my manager, everybody, "What are you doing playing an acoustic guitar sitting on this carpet, playing with these Indians? Are you mad?" And of course we're all a bit mad, aren't we, but you've got to follow your instincts and stay true to yourself.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN, AL DI MEOLA & PACO DE LUCIA PASSION, GRACE & FIRE

PHILIPS, 1983



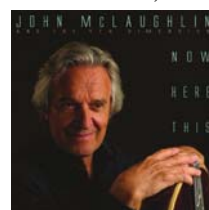
The three acoustic guitar virtuosos team up for mega-selling live albums, never-ending tours and one of McLaughlin's favourite records.

I actually wanted to be a flamenco guitar player before jazz caught me. Years later, I was in Paris in autumn '78 and I heard Paco De Lucia on the radio, and I think, 'I have to work with this guy.' I called him up in Madrid, we met and played together. Then I called my old friend Larry Coryell, and said, "Let's get together and make a guitar trio." We did tours in Europe that were so successful that at the end, we had to redo the tour! But by the end of '79, it was getting difficult with Larry. He was having personal problems, and it was really getting to the music. So in 1980 we started doing tours with Al and it was great. Al used to carry my amp onstage, but he'll never admit it! We recorded our concert at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco [Friday Night In San Francisco], and that became one of the biggest instrumental records of all time. It's sold about two million copies to date. *Passion, Grace & Fire*, musically, was even superior to *Friday Night...*, but it didn't have that wild atmosphere, you

know, the San Fran audience were hearing us for the first time and just freaking. *Passion...* was a more artistic endeavour, and one I really love.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN AND THE 4TH DIMENSION NOW HERE THIS

ABSTRACT LOGIX, 2012

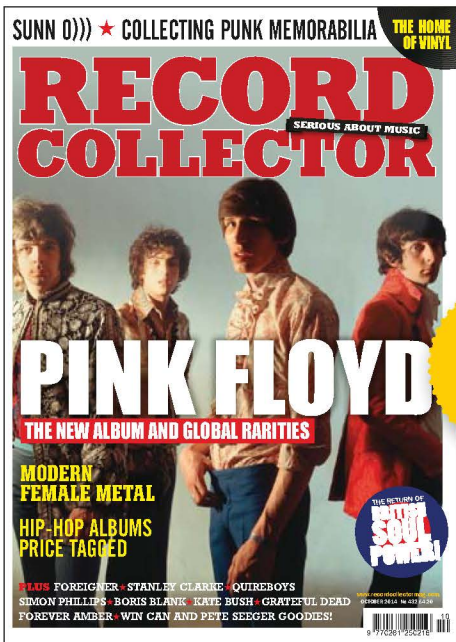


JM returns to the electric guitar, and an album full of driving, boogie-fusion McLaughlin originals.

I had a number of great bands in the '80s and '90s. But after two or three years, you know, paths diverge. It's like marriages. People get divorced, and it's not that you don't like each other, it's just that people move on, you change... Now I'm back playing the electric guitar. I was evolving very quickly from [1995's] *The Promise*, through to playing with the 4th Dimension. This band for me is kind of a hybrid of every experience I've had throughout all these years... For me, it's the greatest band, and also maybe my last band, because, you know, I'm getting up there now. You should try to see us before it's too late [laughs]. After this we made a live album, *The Boston Record*, which became the best-selling jazz record in America a couple of months ago, even though there's no record industry anymore! A lot of the music they call jazz, I wouldn't give it the time of day. It's as shallow as a teacup. Or a saucer! It's pathetic, it's really a shame. I want blood on the floor. ☹

John McLaughlin And The 4th Dimension play London's Royal Festival Hall as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival (November 20)

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Strummer the
101'er at 42 Orsett
Terrace, West
London, 1976



RABIES FROM THE DOGS OF LOVE!

Forty years ago, a band called El Huaso And The 101 All Stars make their inauspicious debut on the London stage. Soon enough, the band will become THE 101'ERS and their singer, Woody, will reinvent himself as JOE STRUMMER. Within two years, he will abandon them for The Clash. First, though, there will be squalor, betrayal, long nights at the Charlie Pigdog club and some truly fervid rock'n'roll. "The more blood on the guitar, the better the gig had been!"

JOE STRUMMER, NEWLY blond, his hair reduced to not much more than Aryan stubble, sees me through a crowd of people and hurries out of sight with head-down urgency. It's July, 1976, and Joe and I have fetched up separately for a gig at the Royal College Of Art. There's a bar set up outdoors in a courtyard, which is where a little later I'm standing when Joe suddenly appears next to me. He seems unusually lost for words. "It all happened real fast," he says finally, not looking at me and acting like it'd be better for both of us not to be seen together. Joe's recently joined The Clash after walking out on The 101'ers only days before their first single comes out, Joe's loyalty to his old band tested by the ferocity of his ambition in a contest that was only going to have one winner. "I wanted to let you know what was happening," he goes on. "But I was told not to talk to you. I didn't know what to do. Everything's real different now."

I'm wondering who Joe's taking orders from these days when on cue we're rudely interrupted by a pugnacious little dude in a leather jacket and brothel creepers. This is Bernie Rhodes, manager of the fledgling Clash, although it's quickly clear he's missed his true vocation as, I don't know, supreme leader of North Korea or some other

Story: Allan Jones | **Photography:** Julian Yewdall

dismal outpost of totalitarian oppression. I dislike him on sight but not as he seems to think for luring Joe away from The 101'ers. Things have lately been changing fast, punk looming if not already here. The 101'ers and the bands they've shared the pub rock circuit with are now apparently out of date, about to be left behind, made redundant by a brutal new noise. The ship Joe's just jumped is in other words already sinking. I'm also inclined to believe he's found some kind of calling and a future he wants to be part of, so good luck to him.

What rankles, though, is now being lectured by the windbag Rhodes, who sounds like he's making an accusatory speech in front of a people's tribunal, me in the dock for being a part of Joe's past, The 101'ers a crap pub rock band Joe is well rid of and in his emerging version was never really part of. "If I haven't made myself clear," he says, his hot breath in my face, "let me say it again. The 101'ers never existed, right? Give it a month, no-one will even remember them."

"Woody was a bit bonkers, a bit off his head. But even then, he had this charisma..."
Clive Timperley

HASTINGS, ONE NIGHT at the end of July 2014, storm clouds gathering, rain on its way. A pale coloured Porsche pulls out of the station car park, Clive Timperley at the wheel. The last time I saw Clive, who these days is a driving instructor here on the south coast, he was lead guitarist in The 101'ers, author of the firestorms over which Joe, especially in the band's latter days,

raged. We're on our way to Clive's rather swish pad in a converted Victorian school, where he now wonders how much he'll be able to recall about the times I've asked him to talk about. "It's all a bit jumbled, frankly," he says. "The early '70s were a bit of a mess. A lot of drugs."

Not long after this, however, it's 1971 and Clive is recalling the year he lived in Ash Grove, Palmer's Green, sharing a house called Vomit

Heights with a bunch of art students, one of whom is a young Johnny Mellor, who everybody knows as Woody and in due course becomes Joe Strummer.

"Woody was a bit bonkers, a bit off his head," begins Clive. "But he was funny and even then he had this charisma, if you like. He'd come into a

room, sit down and there'd be people gathered around him. People wanted to talk to him. He was an interesting guy."

Clive at the time is in a group called Anaconda, signed to Shel Talmy's production company, for who they recorded an album, never released. He has no idea then that Woody is interested in music so after losing touch with him when he heads to South Wales, fetching up in Newport, Clive is surprised in September, 1974, to discover that Woody's back in London and in a band who are making their debut at a pub, The Telegraph in Brixton, supporting Dennis Bovell's Matumbi at a Chilean Solidarity Campaign benefit that on a whim he decides to go to. The band he sees are billed as El Huaso And The 101 All Stars and their lineup that night is Woody on rhythm guitar, Simon "Big John" Cassell and Alvaro – El Huaso, himself – a refugee from Pinochet's Chile, on saxes, Patrick Nother on bass and his brother Richard [later renamed Richard "Snakehips" Dudanski] on drums, a last-minute stand-in for the band's errant original drummer who he eventually replaces. He's been playing drums exactly a week.

"I was just dragged into it," Richard recalls from his home in Spain, where he's lived in Granada since 1988, after a post-101'ers career that included stints with Bank Of Dresden, The Raincoats, Basement 5 and PiL (he's the uncredited drummer on *Metal Box*). "Woody said, 'Just keep the beat. It doesn't matter if it gets faster just make sure it doesn't slow down.'"

"They were terrible," Clive laughs. "Patrick played bass with his back to the audience, like Stuart Sutcliffe with The Beatles. He couldn't play and was desperately nervous. They only seemed to know four songs and played them all at least twice. Big John was singing lead on most of them, but Woody did a couple of Chuck Berry numbers. I thought they were rubbish."

In January 1975, however, he sees them again, at a pub called The Chippenham, in Shirland Road, just off Elgin Avenue, West London, in an upstairs room the band have named The Charlie Pigdog Club.

"It was still pretty raw, most of them were still learning their instruments, they had speakers made out of kitchen cabinets and it was still a bit of a shambles," Clive recalls.

"Most of them were living in a squat at 101 Waterton Road, five minutes from The Chip. It was all unbelievably basic. But they'd obviously been practising like maniacs. Woody was suddenly this mad guy with a light blue suit, leg shaking uncontrollably. I was impressed. I thought, 'Blimey, he's fantastic.' He didn't know how to play guitar but he had so much energy, it was amazing just watching him. Later, he became a relentless rhythm player, to the point where he'd break strings, end up with bleeding fingers. The more blood on the guitar, the better the gig had usually been."

Clive's got his own band at this point, Foxton Flight – "an acoustic, Steely Dan-type thing" – but they aren't getting anywhere. He brings his guitar to a couple of 101'ers rehearsals, jams with them on some tunes and fits in well enough for Woody to take him aside one night. "He said, 'I've had a word with the boys and we'd like you to join the band.' And I'm going, 'Oh, so it is a proper band, then?'" "I mean," he says, "at that point they were still pushing their gear around in a pram."

THE CHIP, AS they used to call it, is still there, now re-branded as The Chippenham Hotel, signs promising 'en suite rooms'. There's a large screen in the bar, golf being played in foreign sunshine, the bar otherwise empty on a sweltering recent afternoon. Sinatra's on the sound system, singing "Young At Heart", which makes me laugh, thinking of Joe at 22 in 1975, in this room with The 101'ers, none of them much older than he was then.

Strummer, left, with The 101'ers at The Elgin, Ladbroke Road



Monday 14th July 1975					
	→	£4.5	50p	out £5 (200) Micky's	£36 90
Pallock → Expenses →	→	£2	00	£5 to Micky's	£31 90
		£4.3	00	21 expenses	£1 90
Water Key →	→	£1	00		£30 90
		£4.2	00		£3 00
Airic →	→	£2	00	Food/Photographic Paper	27 90
		£4.0	00		27 40p
		£6	00	50p out for the 101's	
£1 wages x 6		£34	00	for cost of van	
		£2	00	Mole \$1 (advance wages)	26 40p
Drinks → Elgin		£32	00	Woody's \$1.25 share	1 25p
		£32	00		15p
+ £25 pay at Elgin		£25	00	% book	45p
		£57	00		£24 70
Van for weekend 12th/13th		£10	00	Expenses - Nashville	£1 70
		£47	00	to Micky	£23 00
Woody to stay alone		£1	50p		3 00
		£4.5	50p	Photographic	£20 00
Photo - starts		60		Shirley/Ladbroke 101's	10 00
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"Things were happening for The 101'ers, but not fast enough for Joe..."

Dan Kelleher

Joe Strummer in a café on the Chippenham Road, 1975; and above, the group's expenses



The band's old digs at nearby 101 Waterton Road are long gone, the derelict row of houses that included their squat demolished in the late-'70s to accommodate Abinger Mews, a gated community of pricey townhouses and flats. Standing where we are now 40 years ago, you might have heard from what used to be the band's rehearsal room at 101 the thumping sound of them practising, perhaps for a gig that night at the Pigdog Club, which is where I see them first in February, 1975.

Joe is an old friend from Newport, where I'd been a student at the art school before moving to London in July 1973 and then joining *Melody Maker*. He calls with an invitation to see a band he's in. Joe, still Woody then, has been in a couple of art school bands – The Rip-Off Park All-Stars and The Vultures – who had been rowdy fun, so I go, not expecting too much of the band but thinking it'll be good to see Woody again. As it turns out, The 101'ers are raw, but also sensational, blasting out mostly R'n'B covers, the staple repertoire of what's known back then as pub rock. Joe himself is a revelation, amazing even then, clearly already on the road to legend. At times, there are too many of them to count in this early lineup – bass, guitars, drums, four or five saxes, Joe's recent busking partner and later Clash collaborator Tymon Dogg on violin. The set ends with a roaring 20-minute version of Van Morrison's "Gloria", Joe playing on even as the police arrive to close things down, oblivious, in thrall to the mayhem of the moment. Later, the band drives me home to South London in their newly acquired hearse, which seems impossibly cool. This is the first of many great nights that follow, mainly at The Elgin, a pub in Ladbroke Grove, just south of the Westway, where they start a residency in May that runs to the following January. By now, they're a four-piece, with Joe on guitar and vocals, Richard on drums, Clive on lead guitar and Mole on bass and they're on fire every time they play, their set now peppered with the songs Joe's recently started writing, including crowd favourites "Keys To Your Heart", "Leta's get a bit a rockin'", "Rabies (From The Dogs Of Love)", "Motor Boys Motor" and a pile-driving "Steamgauge 99".



The band's
squat at 101
Waterton Road



watching. But Joe delivered his set like he was at Glastonbury. He had the big, white Little Richard suit. When he moved, the suit went one way and he went the other. He was an absolute knock-out."

On March 4 and 10, they're at Pathway Studios, Archway, where Nick Lowe records most of the early Stiff records, and emerge from the sessions with a version of live favourite "Keys To Your Heart" Chiswick plan to release as a 45 in May. Almost as soon as he's run off a cassette of the tracks, Joe brings them to my Willesden digs, lit up with excitement about what looks suddenly like a brighter future for

The 10'ers. By the time the record's out, however, Joe's left the band.

"I was at a Jam gig at the Windsor Castle, at the bar," Roger Armstrong recalls. "The place was half empty, it was early evening. Joe stood next to me and said, 'Have I done the right thing?' I said, 'What the fuck are you talking about, Joe?' He said, 'I've started a band with this guy.' And there was this skinny, long-haired kid stood in the background, Mick Jones. Joe said, 'I've left The 10'ers. We've split up.' I just said, 'What the fuck...' Of course it was a shock. In the end, we just said, 'Well, good luck to you, off you go.' It was disappointing, yes. But we didn't feel betrayed. You just moved on."

What's happened is that by now Joe has seen the Sex Pistols, who support The 10'ers on April 3 and 23 at The Nashville Rooms. What looks like a

blatantly put-up scrap at the second gig ends up with the Pistols and manager Malcolm McLaren in mid-brawl on the cover of *MM*, with no mention of The 10'ers. I'm at the bar with Joe, Clive and Lee Brilleaux when the Pistols appear the first night. None of us get what's happening, apart from Joe, who looks like he's seen a future he desperately wants to be part of. "The Pistols were getting the kind of attention Joe was craving," Dan Kelleher tells *Uncut* from his home in Shaftesbury, a picturesque Dorset town made famous by the 1973 Hovis TV ad. "He'd been thrashing his arse off and he'd had very little recognition. Things were happening for The 10'ers, but not fast enough for Joe. He could see the way the wind was blowing."

Strummer is smitten with the Pistols, but Clive and Richard are less impressed. "I remember being with you at the bar of The Nashville, the night of the so-called fight," Clive says, "and we looked at each other as if to say, 'What the fuck is this?' I liked the Pistols a lot as people, but the whole scene around them seemed totally fake."

"Joe was getting more and more uncomfortable," Richard recalls. "He'd be out a lot, drinking heavily. Then Clive got the boot 'cos Joe off his own bat thought Clive should be moving more onstage and should sharpen up his image. That wasn't Clive at all. Maybe if we'd said to him, 'Look, cut your bloody hair and put on some drainpipes', he would have done that. But he wouldn't have moved more!"

"I didn't leave The 10'ers," Clive says, able to laugh about it now. "I was urged to resign. He came around to my squat and he kept going on about 'Maximum Impact', which sounded like a phrase he'd picked up from Bernie Rhodes, who'd started appearing at gigs. He wanted me to come out of myself. But that's just not me. There was no way I was going to wear crazy clothes, get a spiky haircut and go bonkers. So it was like, 'OK, we'll wrap it up then.'"

Dan always maintained Rhodes had already stolen Joe from The 10'ers to

"We rehearsed all the time, three or four times a week, for hours," Clive remembers, "and every Thursday we played the Charlie Pigdog Club. Everyone got better really quickly, especially Richard, who became this powerhouse drummer. And Joe went from strength to strength as a frontman, especially after he saw Springsteen at the Hammersmith Odeon in November. He was very impressed. After that he totally modelled himself on Springsteen. That's what Joe wanted to be like onstage, someone that hard-working, who just turned into this incredible showman."

A series of shows with Eddie And The Hot Rods brings them to the attention of Dr Feelgood producer, Vic Maile, with whom they cut six tracks at his studio in Rickmansworth. They never hear from him again, but their despondent mood lifts when they're approached by Ted Carroll and Roger Armstrong who run the Rock On record stall in Shepherd's Bush. They want to record The 10'ers for their fledgling label, Chiswick. Ted sees them at Dingwalls in January, 1976, just after Mole has been replaced by Dan Kelleher, who's actually played with a very early version of the band.

"Ted came down the market and said, 'I've just seen this amazing band. The lead singer is a star. They're called The 10'ers,'" Roger Armstrong, now the MD of Ace Records, recalls, sunlight streaming through the windows of his Harlesden office. "I realised I'd already seen them at The Elgin and they'd sounded a bit of a shambles. I remember thinking they were a bit weird, 'cos they had a trumpet player. So Ted and I went to see them at Imperial College. There was no stage. The band just set up in a corner. There was me, Ted and no more than 10 other people

Letsagetabitarockin' The 101'ers on record

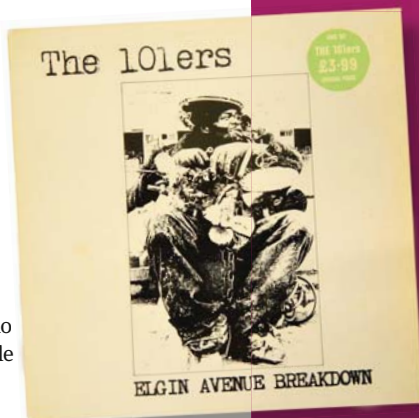
ANGRY WITH Bernie Rhodes for luring Strummer away from The 10'ers, Richard Dudanski was further incensed by the Feb '78 release of the 10'ers song "Lonely Mother's Son", re-worked as "Jail Guitar Doors" as the B-side of "Clash City Rockers", and now credited to Strummer-Jones. As a result, he and Clive started

assembling recorded material by The 10'ers for a post-humous LP. Rhodes, furious, tried to stop it coming out, but Joe supported its release.

Elgin Avenue Breakdown, released on Andalucia! Records, via Virgin, in March 1981, was a collection of live and studio tracks, including four demos recorded with Vic Maile and five tracks cut at The Roundhouse on April 18,

1976. Chiswick allowed them the use of country rocker "Sweet Revenge", but withheld the original "Keys To Your Heart". The version of the song on *Elgin...* was from a BBC session produced by Simon Jeffes, taken at an even faster lick than the Chiswick version, and gussied up by stereo panning. The best of the Maile demos was a lively take of "Letsagetabitarockin'", which gave a hint of the band's live power.

The Roundhouse tracks had been recorded straight to cassette by soundman Mickey Foote and were rough, even by the band's raw standards. In 2005, Richard compiled *Elgin Avenue Breakdown (Revisited)*, released through EMI, whose 20 tracks now included the original "Keys To Your Heart" and a studio version of the storming "Steamgauge 99", one of nine previously unreleased tracks.



The 101ers



ELGIN AVENUE BREAKDOWN

'JOE JOINING THE CLASH WAS A SELL-OUT...'

Julian Yewdall on photographing The 101'ers

IT'S USUALLY forgotten that Julian Yewdall was briefly lead singer with The 101'ers before becoming better known for his photos of the band, which were first published in a small format paperback in 1992 as *Joe Strummer With The 101'ers And The Clash, 1974-76*, and in a 2012 expanded edition titled *Permanent Record: Joe Strummer With The 101'ers/ Clash/Latino Rockabilly War/+ The Slits*, a mint copy of which will cost you upwards of £2,000.

"I was travelling in Switzerland when Joe wrote to me," Julian recalls. "He said The 101'ers needed a singer. At that point, Joe was still learning to play guitar and playing live and singing was a bit much for him, so I was invited into the band and I sang a couple of numbers. But I wasn't a musician. My position seemed tenuous from the start, then one day I was taken down the pub and told I'd been voted out of the band, so that was when I started photographing them, which suited me better."

"Joe was always very conscious of trying to craft an image. He was aware how important it was to being successful. But there was no band policy about what people should wear. So there was no attempt to create a band image. People wore whatever they wore. This was one of the things about Joe joining The Clash. It was quite shocking he'd joined this band where the manager told them what to wear. At the early gigs, I thought they looked pretty good. But as they became more famous, you looked at them and wondered what on earth they were wearing and who'd told them to wear it. There were photographers swarming all over them by then. No one had been interested in The 101'ers. Now everyone wanted to take Joe's picture and I just backed off."



● manufacture his version of the Sex Pistols."

Rhodes, one-time Malcolm McLaren lieutenant, has already in fact made an approach to Joe, on May 25, at a Pistols show at The 100 Club, inviting him to meet Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Keith Levene, his future bandmates in what becomes The Clash MkI. On May 30, Bernie turns up at The Golden Lion where The 101'ers are playing and gives Joe an ultimatum, 48 hours to decide if he's going to join or stay with The 101'ers.

"I noticed some people hanging around the gig," Richard recalls, "and when Joe went off with them, I had a feeling something odd was going on. I think that was two nights before he told me it was all over. I was in bed at the squat in Orsett Terrace. I recall Joe shaking me awake, saying, 'Wake up, Snakes. I've got something important to tell you. This is the end. We've got to talk about it.' I said, 'In the morning, Joe. We'll talk about it then.' I'd had this feeling something was up. He'd been very taciturn since the Golden Lion gig. Anyway, I went downstairs the next morning and there was Bernie. He started spewing out all this stuff about how crap The 101'ers were and how punk was going to happen. It was a one-way conversation."

"Then he said he wanted me to be the drummer in the new band, to stick with Joe. Bernie was the main reason I didn't join The Clash. If there'd been a different manager, I might have thought about it. But there was no way I was going to have this guy telling me what to do."

"I went to see The Clash at The Roxy and I couldn't believe how Joe had changed. He wasn't Joe any more. He was someone else. I just thought, 'What happened to this guy?'"

"Some of the things he went on to say about The 101'ers were hurtful. Some of it was just rubbish, like saying we'd taken our name from Room 101 in Orwell's 1984 to make it sound more political. But for that first year or two he was in The Clash, he was in another place."

"I think it was Joe's way of interpreting the new narrative," says Dan Kelleher. "Everything that had gone before was crap. So we became the fall guys for Strummer having been as it were led astray. Mick Jones is supposed to have said Strummer was brilliant but The



"Joe wasn't very happy..." The 101'ers at Orsett Road, 1976: (l-r) Joe Strummer, Clive Timperley, Richard Dudanski, Dan Kelleher

101'ers were crap, musically, which was rubbish. Clive went on to great success with The Passions and 'I'm In Love With A German Film Star'. And within months, Richard was playing with John Lydon in PIL."

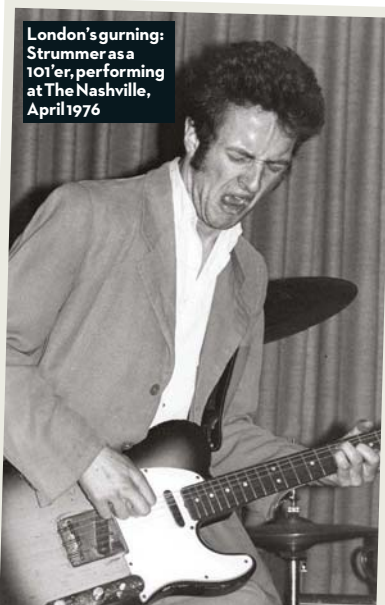
The 101'ers play their last show at Clair Hall, Hayward's Heath, on June 5, with Clive appearing for "Gloria" as their final encore. "It was all very sad in the end," Clive says, who sees Strummer for the last time at a benefit for Mole, who died in 1999, "but I always thought from early on, Joe had an idea in his mind about where he was going. It was a shame we didn't go on. I saw The Clash at the ICA and they were kind of rubbish. They weren't as good as The 101'ers would've been if we'd stayed together."

"It all came to an end at once," says Julian Yewdall of the band's final days. "Joe announced he was joining The Clash. And the whole street where we had our last squat in Orsett Terrace was given its eviction notice. Joe had made his move. He knew The 101'ers were going to be left behind and he got on the punk bandwagon. However agonising it was, he knew what he had to do."

LONG AFTER ALL this is over and with Strummer five years dead, I find myself one night in Ladbroke Grove, where in 1975 The 101'ers had their residency at The Elgin, which I stand outside for a moment before going in, curious to see how much it's changed. The flock wallpaper is long gone, of course, and there are a couple of pool tables where there used to be a small stage, where thanks to some convenient kink in the time-space continuum, I can now see as if it's

happening, The 101'ers in a typically manic huddle, Dudanski behind a battered drumkit, Mole on bass, Clive on guitar, Strummer, his leg pumping like something with a life of its own, belting out "Keys To Your Heart", blowing the roof off as "Gloria" races to a ferocious climax. Sitting there with these memories making my head spin, I hear a staticky crackle, something distant but growing louder. It takes me a moment to realise what it is, at which point I smile, happy to have been here when the joint was jumping and Joe and The 101'ers were rocking. It's the sound of London calling from a far away time, unforgettable. ●

London's burning: Strummer as a 101'er, performing at The Nashville, April 1976



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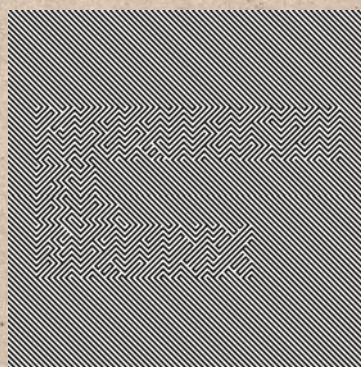
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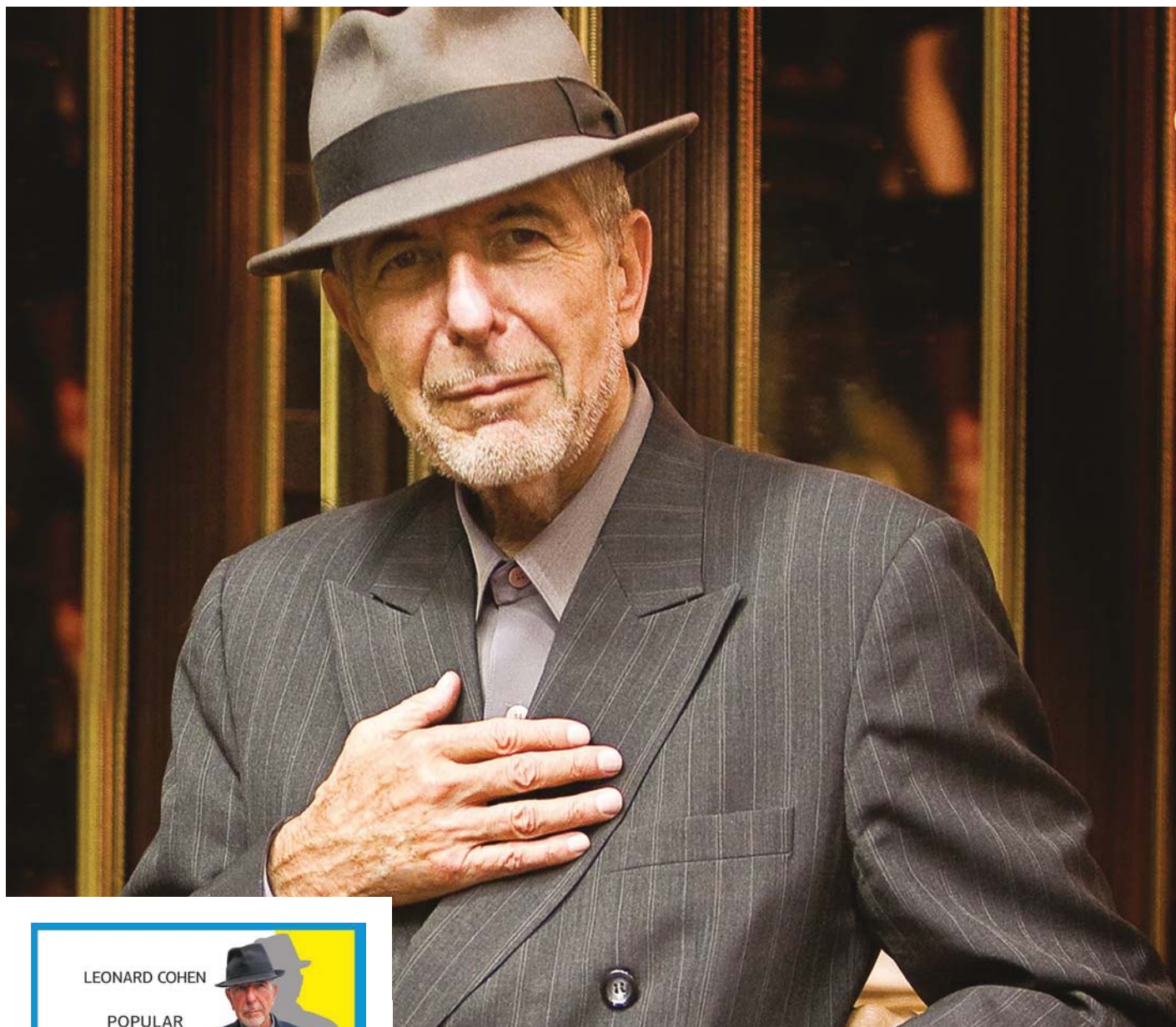


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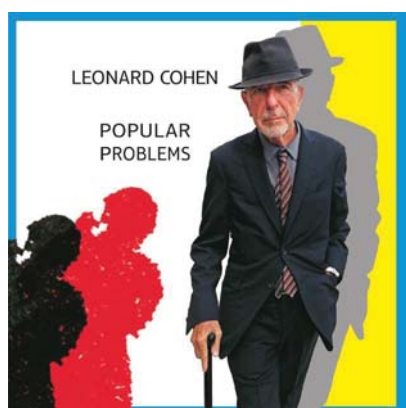
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New albums

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LORCA COHEN



LEONARD COHEN

Popular Problems

SONY

As he turns 80, Cohen quietly rages against the world with his darkest record for decades. *By Allan Jones*

TRACKLIST

- 1 Slow
- 2 Almost Like The Blues
- 3 Samson In New Orleans
- 4 A Street
- 5 Did I Ever Love You
- 6 My Oh My
- 7 Nevermind
- 8 Born In Chains
- 9 You Got Me Singing

9/10

LEONARD COHEN, BAREFOOT but dapper in a gunmetal-grey suit, one morning in June, 1974, sat back in a chair by a window overlooking a busy London street, put his sockless feet on one of the two narrow beds that occupied most of the available space in his modest hotel room, lit a cigarette, a thoughtful scholar addressing an impression that pained

him of his songs as miserable, suicidal, in every imaginable way depressing. It seemed to him that he was merely making music fit for a world in which people die and calamity is wholesale, a tough gig.

"One often feels inadequate in the face of massacre, disaster and humiliation," he said, courteous, flattering, charming, serious, all of these things. "What, you think, am I



New Albums

→ doing, singing a song at a time like this? But the worse it gets,” he said, “the more often I find myself picking up a guitar and playing that song. It is, I think, a matter of tradition. You have a tradition on the one hand that says when things are bad, we should play a happy song, a merry tune. Strike up the band and dance the best we can, even if we are suffering from concussion.

“And then there’s another tradition, a more Oriental or Middle Eastern tradition, which says that if things are really bad, the best thing to do is sit by the grave and wail, sit next to the disaster and lament. The notion of lamentation seemed to me the way to do it. You don’t avoid the situation. You throw yourself into it, fearlessly.”

Cohen at the time had released three albums. A fourth, *New Skin For The Old Ceremony*, was due out in a couple of months. Over the following 40 years, there would, up to 2012’s *Old Ideas*, be only eight more studio albums, a modest return for such an extravagant songwriting talent compared to, say, the 21 albums recorded during the same period by Bob Dylan or the jaw-dropping 34 by Neil Young, even taking into account the five years Cohen spent in monastic retreat. While everything he has done has been touched to various extents by the notion as he explained it of lamentation, the poetic articulation of otherwise incoherent grief, there arguably hasn’t been much in his back catalogue since 1971’s *Songs Of Love And Hate* on which such tragic keening has been so vividly allowed as on the remarkable *Popular Problems*, released this month, within days of his 80th birthday, a dark new masterpiece, that on songs like “Samson In New Orleans” and “Nevermind” offer front row seats in a theatre of doom.

Cohen’s last album, *Old Ideas*, was an elegant meditation on age, mortality, faith, as beautifully tailored as one of his suits and full of droll poignancies. It was understandably much preoccupied by waning desire, the erotic afterlife of a diminished libido, dwindling virility, noble in the face of the coming inevitable. Its air of stately resignation is largely absent on *Popular Problems*, however, as if its author has decided that to quietly quit this vale of tears would be somehow dishonourable when his fingers are nimble enough to strum one last song and there is breath enough in his body to sing it. *Popular Problems* – among which we can probably count conflagration, genocide, the murder of innocents, that kind of thing – is therefore less inward-looking, as if the mirror in front of which *Old Ideas* was written has been removed from a wall to reveal a window behind it, through which Cohen has lately spent much time in agonised regard of a landscape of conflict, wholesale slaughter, war on every

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** Patrick Leonard
Recorded and mixed by: Jesse E String
Additional mixing: Bill Bottrell
Mastered at: Marcussen Mastering by Stephen Marcussen
Personnel includes: Leonard Cohen (vocals, keyboards), Patrick Leonard (music, keyboards), Charlean Carmon, Donna Delory and Dana Glover (backing vocals), Joe Ayoub (bass), Brian Maccloud (drums), Alexandru Bublitchi (violin), James Harrah (guitar)



horizon, the world the grave beside which Cohen sits and wails. “Only darkness now,” he announces, his barnacled baritone never so rough, towards the end of “Born In Chains”, which he performed on his last world tour, from which some fans may also remember the bluesy vamp, “My Oh My”, with its tough guitar licks and drawling horns (there’s no place, though, from the tour’s other new songs, for “I’ve Got A Little Secret” and “Feels So Good”, also known as “The Other Blues Song”).

On reflection, *Old Ideas* was perhaps excessively well-groomed, its pedigree sound exquisitely wrought, but somewhat becalmed. And while on *Popular Problems*, Cohen is

reunited with former Madonna producer Patrick Leonard and members of the team who contributed to *Old Ideas*, including backing vocalists The Webb Sisters and Sharon Robinson, whose harmonies continue to provide a feathery counterpoint to Cohen’s sometimes sinister croon, there is more raw drama here, a prevailing starkness. The warm, autumnal glow of *Old Ideas* is replaced by something more wintry, cracked and menacing. Tracks are sometimes reduced to not much more than Cohen’s cadenced growl, an arterial synthesiser pulse, bluesy Hammond squalls, Bela Santelli’s mournful fiddle, occasional stabbing horn riffs, Cohen himself stirred to something approaching urgency by

the VAULT

the sight of a burning world, the camcorder atrocities, the marauding armies, to which he responds with grim vigour and much great writing.

That an album inspired by dire universal circumstance opens with a song about fucking may seem odd, even inappropriate. The simmering, pulsating "Slow", however, celebrates sex as erotic defiance as much as carnal pleasure, Cohen perhaps reminded of a key '60s imperative: make love not war, even as the bombs are falling, all that. The abyss then opens. You probably will have already heard "Almost Like The Blues", a catalogue of rape and murder that eerily recalls John Cale's terrifying "Letter From Abroad" (from *HoboSapiens*), minus the *Marble Index*-style eruptions. "Samson In New Orleans", like the later "Born In Chains", has the swell and anguish of a Pentecostal hymn or an old blues spiritual, a beseeching and forlorn lament for the bereft and abandoned – "We who cried for mercy from the bottom of the pit/Was our prayer so damned unworthy the sun rejected it?" – that's perhaps a belated comment on New Orleans' much-documented post-Katrina agonies, the city's betrayal by central government whose downfall the song's narrator here contrives.

"A Street" is a song about betrayal and civil war delivered as a hardboiled narrative and played out as domestic farce – "You left me with the dishes and a baby in the bath/You're tight with the militias, you wear their camouflage" – that thumps along in part like Dylan's "Early Roman Kings" from *Tempest* before a haunting climax assumes a more ominous heft. "I see the ghost of culture with numbers on his wrist," Cohen intones, gravely, "salute some new solution that all of us have missed..." The album's greatest curiosity follows. "Did I Ever Love You" opens as a lover's dark plea before breaking disconcertingly into a frisky country and western hoe-down that may put you in mind of the odd friskiness of "The Captain" from 1984's *Various Positions*, by some distance the jauntiest song about the Holocaust yet written. We are returned to more unnerving territory via highlight "Nevermind", a fugitive evil on the loose in the land, a tyrant, deposed by war, on the run, a bleak inversion of the heroic French Resistance anthem "The Partisan" covered by Cohen on 1969's *Songs From A Room*, whose staccato synthesiser also recalls Talking Heads' "Life During Wartime".

The album bows out with "You Got Me Singing", whose title makes it sound like something written for the razzle-dazzle corks-a-popping finale from the golden age of the Hollywood musical, a soundtrack full of leggy hoofers kicking up a storm, when in fact its sonorous finger-picked guitar, a signature sound of his early albums, faintly recalls the balm of "Tonight Will Be Fine", also from *Songs From A Room*. "You got me singing even though the news is bad," Cohen sings. "You got me singing the only song I ever had/You got me singing even though the world is gone/You got me thinking, I'd like to carry on," he continues, surrounded by swirling violin and diaphanous harmonies, his spirit unbroken by time or anything else and fearless to the end.



JUNE, 1974: A year after declaring himself retired, in June 1974 LEONARD COHEN met ALLAN JONES to discuss his return, and the gravity of his endeavour



"I HAVE READ OVER the years so much negative criticism of my work and of my position, so much satire, so much humorous indifference to where I stand," he says, "that on the public level and in social intercourse with strangers I tend to dismiss myself and not take my work very seriously. I think that interview was just a way of saying goodbye for a while, a temporary cheerio, nothing tragic. I seem, however, to have given this impression to people that I've been recovering from some serious illness, which I am happy to say has not been the case."

"The image I've been able to gather of myself from the press is of a victim of the music industry, a poor sensitive chap who has been destroyed by the very forces he started out to utilise. But that is not so, never was. I don't know how that ever got around. I would also contest the notion I am or was a depressed and extremely frail individual, also that I am sad all the time."

"There is a perception, too, of my songs as depressing, but I think that's not the case. One side of the third album I find a little burdened and melodramatic. I think that's the fault of the songs and of the singer. It's a failure of that particular

album, but it's not a characteristic of the work."

"A part of the weakness is that you tend to lose contact with the song when the experience was not authentic, and you tend to elaborate with the voice or the arrangement to make up for something. It isn't a conscious thing at the time although you do feel uneasy about it. But I think that happens when the song is not right, not real."

"I had a few songs like that... one of the dangers of acceptance is that you tend to feel that your work might be better than it is and some critical standard is diminished. Certain critical criteria are lowered and this process is imperceptible."

Cohen had once said more people would pick up *Songs From A Room* as they went through the kind of psychic landscape he had explored in the creation of that work. Was that time now here?

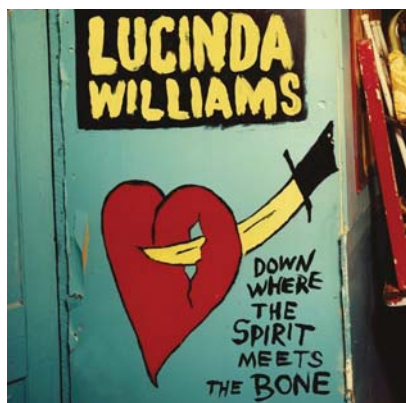
"I think it's here, but I don't know whether people are going to refer to my work especially. I think it would be rather self-seeking to assume they are going to refer to my work especially, to turn to my work to illuminate that landscape, but there are some who will. I do think that a lot of

people are in that condition now."

That album had always seemed the most direct of Cohen's work, a very stark, cold album.

"That's a good observation but there are people treating those themes in all kinds of ways – from the new psychiatry, to religious disciplines, to music. I'm just a part of that landscape."

"I would contest the notion I am or was a depressed or frail individual..."



TRACKLIST

DISC: 1

- 1 Compassion
- 2 Protection
- 3 Burning Bridges
- 4 East Side Of Town
- 5 West Memphis
- 6 Cold Day In Hell
- 7 Foolishness
- 8 Wrong Number
- 9 Stand Right By Each Other
- 10 It's Gonna Rain

DISC: 2

- 1 Something Wicked This Way Comes
- 2 Big Mess
- 3 When I Look At The World
- 4 Walk On
- 5 Temporary Nature (Of Any Precious Thing)
- 6 Everything But The Truth
- 7 This Old Heartache
- 8 Stowaway In Your Heart
- 9 One More Day
- 10 Magnolia

LUCINDA WILLIAMS

Down Where The Spirit Meets The Bone HIGHWAY 20

Straight outta Memphis: a soul-drenched renaissance.
By Luke Torn

8/10

WITH HER DISTINCTIVE Louisiana drawl and penchant for, well, being as likely to pull

out an artefact from Memphis Minnie's catalogue as pen her own take on country rock, Lucinda Williams is a singular figure. She's a late-bloomer, a deeply personal writer drenched in the blues, whose innate grasp of American roots – country, soul, folk, R'n'B, pop, and the impulses that have driven them – reveal her as a crucial link in rock'n'roll's chain.

Down Where The Spirit Meets The Bone, a provocative and ambitious double album, is Williams' sixth studio effort since her 1998 masterpiece, *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road*, and her first release as a free agent following the collapse of her longtime label, Lost Highway. In a break from her usual recording process, a small army of stellar

musicians – guitarists Tony Joe White and Bill Frisell, Faces keyboardist Ian McLagan, multi-instrumental wizard Greg Leisz, Elvis Costello's rhythm section Pete Thomas and Davey Faragher among them – have guided her sound into fresh yet familiar musical terrain, a place where Bradley's Barn meets Muscle Shoals, and Stax/Volt bumps up against the Brill Building.

A gritty undertow informs the bulk of the songs – all but two written by Williams – offset by occasional strong-willed flights of fancy, like "Stand Right By Each Other" and "Walk On", the latter an instant pop anthem. The thematic (if not musical) tone is set at the start, Williams' first-ever musical interpretation of a poem by her father, Miller Williams. "Compassion" is played solo against a gently drifting acoustic guitar, a meditation on the motivations of human existence.



Q&A

Lucinda Williams

What's country soul to you? Bobbie Gentry was a real big influence on me, "Ode To Billie Joe". That's what I call country soul, like Bobbie Gentry, Tony Joe White, *Dusty In Memphis*. I've always loved that kinda stuff. There's a little thread of that running through this album.

Recording for your own label now, I sense some newfound freedom? Now we have full, complete creative freedom. We own our own masters. The main difference, in terms of freedom, is that we were able to do a double album. I actually recorded enough for three albums. There's a third part, which will come out later.

Your father's poem, "Compassion", seems like a jumping off point of sorts... Well, ironically enough, I finished that song at the very last, at the 11th hour. We had already cut everything. It's something I've been trying with my dad's poems for years. It's very challenging. We already knew what we wanted to call the album. We wanted to use the line from that poem. At first, I kinda wanted to make it into sort of a Nick Drake, kind of a beautiful lush kind of a thing. But everybody said no, leave it like this.

How did you come to JJ Cale's "Magnolia"? It was all very spontaneous and organic. And we all sat in amazement listening after we put that down. I used to do that song, years and years ago, back in the '70s. That was one I always loved. Of course, after JJ Cale's passing, he was on my mind, so we did that as a tribute to him.

though here the sentiments are anything but tender. "You can go straight to hell/That's all right with me," she growls at her lying ex-lover. "Stowaway In Your Heart", upbeat and snappy, is its emotional obverse – peace of mind at last – with infectious, stinging Steve Cropper-esque guitars holding forth.

Country-soul spills over into gospel glory on the album's most affecting piece,

"Temporary Nature (Of Any Precious Thing)". Reeling in McLagan's ethereal organ fills, it's "be-thankful-for-what-you've-got" with a vengeance, and Williams leans into its gospel lilt with a dead-serious, "believe-me-I've-lived-it" gusto.

Throughout, Williams ranges from open-hearted generosity to a kind of gnarled insularity, much like the blues singers she was brought up on; the overall mixture of anger and longing, fierceness and calm, is breathtaking. "Everything But The Truth", with its big, midnight-in-Memphis riff and a righteous Lucinda vocal, stands as the album's moral centre. But the record's mesmerising finale is a 10-minute dreamwalk through JJ Cale's "Magnolia", the band gliding out on a feathery mix of guitars and keyboards. A groove, for the ages.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** Tom Overby, Greg Leisz, Lucinda Williams
Recorded at: Dave's Place, Hollywood, CA
Personnel includes: Lucinda Williams (vocals), Greg Leisz (ac/elec gtr, lap steel, pedal steel, 6-/12-string gtrs, bk vocals), Val McCallum, Jonathan Wilson, Stuart Mathis, Bill Frisell, Doug Pettibone, Tony Joe White (elec gtrs), Pete Thomas (drums, perc), Davey Faragher, Bob Glaub, David Sutton, Sebastian Steinberg (bass), Ian McLagan (organ, piano, Wurlitzer), Tony Joe White (harmonica), Jakob Dylan (harmony vocal)

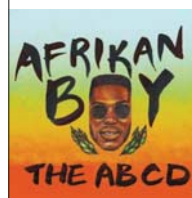
The one-two punch from the muted "Compassion" into the wailing, bluesy, dual-guitar groove of "Protection" ("I need protection from the enemies of rock'n'roll," she howls), makes for a transcendent segue into the album proper. Pointed critiques of a society immersed in self-serving spin ("Everything But The Truth"), endless fear-mongering (the sinewy, hypnotic "Foolishness," sung with frightful force), and a vanishing capacity for empathy ("East Side Of Town") follow, with such relentlessness that Williams' tales of romance gone terribly wrong end up providing stark relief.

The straight country balladry of "This Old Heartache", Leisz on mournful pedal steel, might as well be a lost early '60s Harlan Howard classic. More often, though, *Spirit* merges those hillbilly strands with atmospheric Southern gothic, hard blues and Memphis R'n'B – echoes of the country soul once practised by artists from Dusty Springfield to Joe Tex. "Big Mess", for instance, with its glistening Duane Eddy-like guitars and steady vamp of a rhythm, owes a bit to Smokey Robinson's timeless "You've Really Got A Hold On Me",

AtoZ

COMING UP THIS MONTH...

- p70 MARK LANEGAN BAND**
- p71 APHEX TWIN**
- p72 JESSE WINCHESTER**
- p72 MARTIN DUFFY**
- p74 SCOTT WALKER/(SUNN O)))**
- p76 STEVE GUNN**
- p79 VASHTI BUNYAN**
- p80 PRINCE**
- p82 STEVIE NICKS**



AFRIKAN BOY
The ABCD
 YAM

London MC's funky, Afro-grime/rap first
 Olushola Ajose's build to his full-length debut has been slow, but confident.

7/10

He first made his mark in 2007 aged 16 with sly, discount-supermarket ode "One Day I Went To Lidl", then found himself recording and touring with MIA and has since worked with DJ Shadow and the Africa Express project. Now, the invitational tables have been turned. Johannesburg's Spook Mathambo and rising UK talents Seye and Lady Leshurr guest on his sharp, high-energy *The ABCD*, which embraces Dizzee Rascal, MIA and Michael Jackson as well as Fela Kuti (sampled on "Hit 'Em Up") and King Sunny Adé, adding bursts of dancehall, pirate radio-style chat and, on the pointed "Who Stole Your Visa?", rai.

SHARON O'CONNELL



ALLO DARLIN'
We Come From The Same Place
 FORTUNA POP

Third album from new kings (and queen) of twee
 Elizabeth Morris'

7/10

Anglo-Australian quartet are the jewel in the Fortuna Pop label's C86-loving crown. Firmly rooted in the winsome jangling tradition of Sarah Records, Belle & Sebastian and tour-mates The Wave Pictures, Allo Darlin' have become more accomplished since their 2010 debut without losing the intimate charm that makes their brand of 'real indie' an enduring choice for outsider pop fans. The ukulele-toting Morris is swiftly becoming a classic bedsit poet, mixing her gentle sadness with a hint of punk rock anger in the excellent likes of "Half-Heart Necklace" and the title track.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

MARK LANEGAN BAND

Phantom Radio

FLOODED SOIL/HEAVENLY

Mournful, loner blues-folktronica from America's deepest growl.

By Jon Dale



8/10

AS A SONGWRITER, Mark Lanegan has spent a good two decades or so playing the long game, toiling away at a vision of song which broaches life's rich narratives as a set of conditions to replay and revisit, a dedicated focus which feels admirable in split-

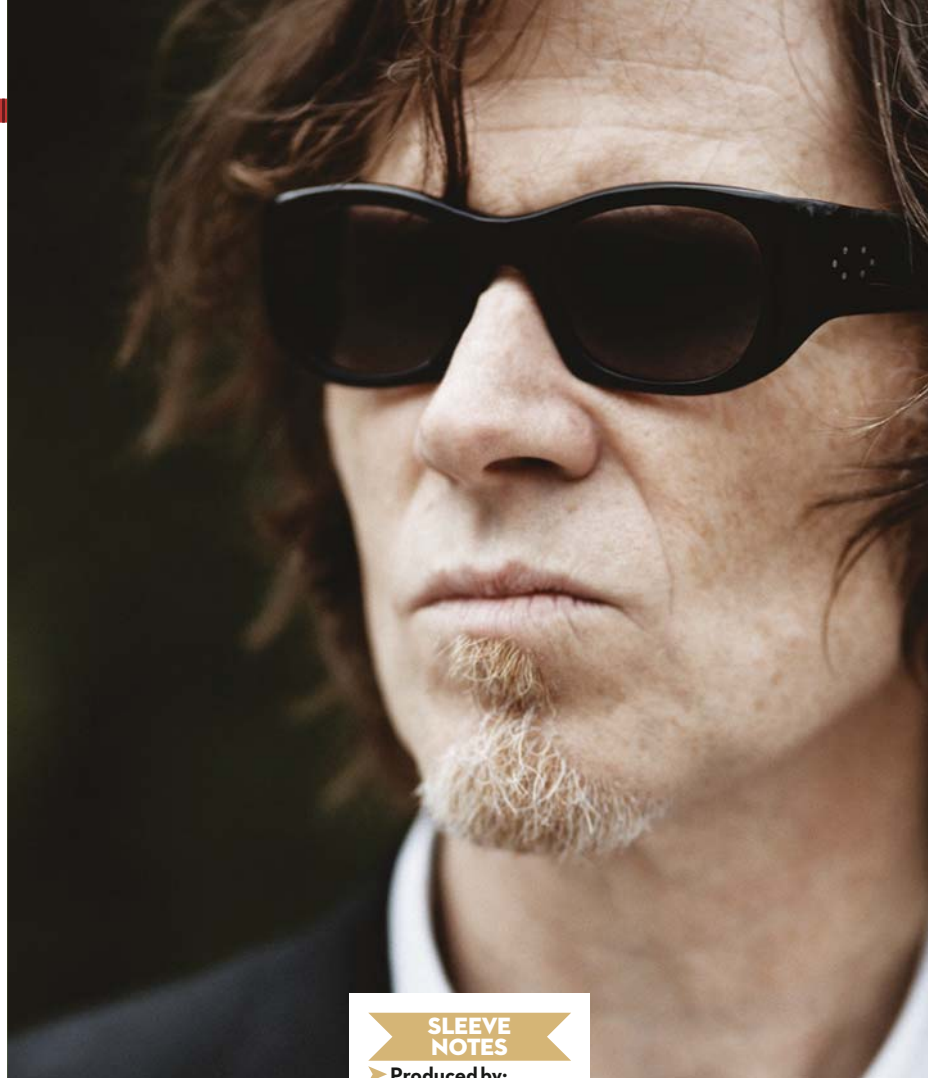
second days of cultural overkill. A lifer, in essence, he's someone who tills the ground slowly, folding his songs carefully into their shadow worlds, each penumbral melody carefully arranged and sung with just the right gravitas.

Recent albums have seen Lanegan pushing the boat out – a lovely collaboration with Duke Garwood; a covers set, *Imitations*, whose initial slightness pulls back to reveal a complex emotional architecture – but *Phantom Radio* feels like a real upping of the game. Steeped, yet again, in those eternal concerns at the heart of Lanegan's song, it's a beautiful set that balances Lanegan's ongoing interest in blues and folk with further explorations of the electronic terrain he explored on 2012's *Blues Funeral* in songs like "The Gravedigger's Song".

Indeed, part of what makes *Phantom Radio* so arresting is Lanegan's approach to electronics. As he explains further elsewhere, many of the songs here were initially demoed on the FunkBox app, and those preset sounds find their echoes in the album's final arrangements. Somehow, though, Lanegan manages to make programmed drums, simple electronics, washes of synth come across as rustic, as though formed and carved from the very Earth. Perhaps it's in the tension between the electronics and Lanegan's weathered voice, which is in fine form on *Phantom Radio*, at times possessing, or possessed by, the material entirely, at other times shading the contours of the melodies spectrally.

The descending guitar figure that opens "Harvest Home" spirals the listener directly into the guts of a song whose lyrics do the groundwork for *Phantom Radio*, pacing slowly through the thematic of cause and effect, of the dialectic of life, that's at the album's heart – "I reap, I sow, my harvest, my home". From there, "Judgement Time" immediately drops to a sad, low, churchy tenor, with a humming harmonium repeatedly cratered by simply strummed acoustic guitar, each downward stroke a rupture of the song's fabric, while Lanegan sighs, bleary and wraith-like, "I was blistered, just a strung-out angel". For all their subtlety, "Harvest Home" and "Judgement Time" are seductive openers, a double-tease that immerses *Phantom Radio* in the plaint of the blues – just look at those song titles.

This makes the glistering arpeggios that open "Floor Of The Ocean" all the more striking, particularly as they're immediately pulled under by funereal synth drones – and here's where we



SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by:

Alain Johannes

Recorded at: 11AD, West Hollywood, CA

Personnel includes: Mark Lanegan (vocals, acoustic guitar), Alain Johannes (piano, harmonium, Mellotron, guitar, bass, Moog bass, Wurlitzer, sax, flute, Prophet 5, percussion, bk vocals), Jack Irons (drums), Martyn Lenoble (bass), Aldo Struyf (synths, electric guitar, percussion)

start to glimpse the '80s post-punk influence that Lanegan has talked about when explaining *Phantom Radio*'s architecture. A beautiful, cavernous song, "Floor Of The Ocean" could be pulled from New Order's *Movement*, particularly when the Bernard Sumner-esque single-note guitar line snakes from the song's depths; elsewhere, there are hints of Echo & The Bunnymen in the grey-coat hypnotism of the rhythms, or the thick strokes of electronics that Lanegan often paints his songs with.

From there, it gets weirder, and even better. "Seventh Day" allows you, for one moment, to imagine what might have happened if Lanegan had been locked in the Paisley Park Studio for 24 hours – clanking rhythms and slippery wah-wah guitar bring the home-studio funk to *Phantom Radio*, before they're again dosed by humming, fuzzing electronics. But soon, Lanegan turns back to more familiar climes, with

"I Am The Wolf"'s minimalist drama, a simple acoustic guitar shadowed by reverbed-out string noise; and then to the album's highlight, the perfectly downcast pop of "Torn Red Heart", which opens with lines that are pulled from any sixth-former's poetry chapbook ("You don't love me/What's to love anyway") made somehow grand and eloquent by an arrangement that slowly draws the curtains on Phil Spector's girl group era, bathing the room in a starlit glow, oddly reminiscent, of all things, of Beach House at their most transcendent.

After this, "The Wild People"'s recourse to *Whiskey For The Holy Ghost*-esque acoustic blues feels a little like a retroactive gesture, though it's hard to deny the strength and beauty of song and performance. Anyone who's followed his career won't need such concessions or be surprised by Lanegan's move to electronics – especially now he's pulling it off with real elegance.

Q&A

Mark Lanegan

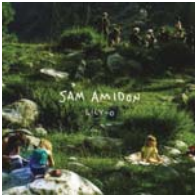
What do you see as the connections, the overarching themes, that run through and ultimately bind these songs?

Listening to it just now, I feel like there's a melancholy that runs through the whole record... not sure why that is or where it comes from. There's a great deal of beauty to it, as well.

You used an app to demo stuff. It's fascinating to think the humble phone app has allowed for a kind of similar intimacy to what musicians

used to get with Portastudios... Yeah, I used the FunkBox vintage drum machine app to demo some of these tunes and a lot of the sounds used on the record were informed by the demo process.

You've mentioned that "Torn Red Heart" is a particularly moving song for you. Can you tell me about the sessions for that song, how it came together, and your response when you heard it back? I like that song because it's ultra simple and direct, it's the type of song I love when someone else is doing it. It came together really quickly; producer Alain Johannes sang a great harmony vocal and my friend Brett Netson of Built To Spill and Caustic Resin did the killer guitar part at the end of the song.



SAM AMIDON Lily-O

NONESUCH

A fifth album of fractured folk standards from Vermont original
Lily-O is Sam Amidon's third album produced by Icelandic composer

8/10

Valgeir Sigurdsson, though it's the first time his electronic tendencies have infiltrated Amidon's work, coating his and guest guitarist Bill Frisell's splayed improvisations in a silvery haze. But if anything, technology's presence just goes to show how untameable Amidon's unself-conscious, creaky-rope voice is: squalling beyond the microphone's limitations on the title track's tale of family betrayal, muttering sinisterly on "Groundhog Variations", and jaunty on work songs "Pat Do This, Pat Do That" and "Walkin' Boss". Perhaps best, however, is closer "Your Lone Journey", a beautifully plain song about a lover's passing.

LAURA SNAPES



APHEX TWIN Syro

WARP

Cornish wizard returns in jazzy synth-funk style

9/10

Much has been made of the last Aphex Twin album coming out in 2001, but Richard James has hardly been idle in the intervening years, recently DJing twice at the Glastonbury festival. *Syro* digs deeper into the jazzy synth-funk territory he established with his 2007 set as The Tuss, *Rushup Edge*, and while there's nothing as pop as "Windowlicker" here, it's still thrilling to hear him romp deliriously through all manner of styles in the key of Aphex for the bulk of these dozen tracks, the birdsong-sprinkled piano piece "Aisatsana" a soothing finale. A greatest hits, in a way, without the hits.

PIERS MARTIN



BEAR IN HEAVEN Time Is Over One Day Old

DEAD OCEANS

Fourth album from Brooklyn over-eggheads
Bear In Heaven are an odd proposition:

5/10

a pie chart with varying slices of Yeasayer hipster drum circles, Kasabian electro-rock and Matthew Dear techno pop, with vocalist Jon Philpot the aural spitting image of José González. Which means there's a lot to get lost in, but much of it overproduced and underwritten. There's bags of hubris between the arena ambitions for the melodies and their middling reality; this is songwriting with a stunning paint job, but with its training wheels still on. Things get better when they focus more on groove, with the acid-house build of "Demon" finally something coherent.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY Singer's Grave - A Sea Of Tongues

DOMINO

Will Oldham's wilful perversity hits a new high
After sneaking out a stark solo LP on his own label last

7/10

year, Oldham's first non-collaboration for Domino since 2011's *Wolfroy Goes To Town* reprises five songs from *Wolfroy*, with more robust, sometimes gospel-tinged arrangements. Good songs, no doubt, and "Whipped", last spotted on a 2011 B-side, is one of his recent best; a rousing tale of salvation through S&M, given soulful heft by the McCrary Sisters (among them Regina, a Dylan regular between *Slow Train Coming* and *Shot Of Love*). Old Lambchop hand Mark Nevers, on production, ensures *Singer's Grave* is the lushest Oldham LP since *Beware* (2009), and "So Far And Here We Are" is a stinging all-new effort. Motives, though, remain even less clear than usual.

JOHN MULVEY

HOW TO BUY... CARIBOU

Dan Snaith's raving psych-jazz-disco trip

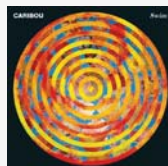


MANITOBA Start Breaking My Heart

LEAF, 2001

As Manitoba, a young Canadian named Dan Snaith made a big impact with this gentle debut, politely staking out a middle ground between the deconstructed jazz of his pal Four Tet and Boards Of Canada's crepuscular swagger. Following a silly lawsuit by grizzled rocker Handsome Dick Manitoba in 2004, Snaith was forced to change his name to Caribou.

7/10



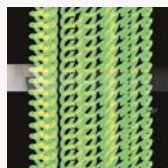
CARIBOU Swim

CITY SLANG, 2010

Snaith's growing interest in dance music and the upward trajectory of Caribou's popularity

dovetailed on crossover smash *Swim*, a song-based set of sunny psychedelia that also packed quite a punch at festivals, where the four-piece live incarnation of Caribou increasingly found themselves, and led to a Radiohead tour support. "Odessa" and "Sun" continue to enchant fairweather ravers everywhere.

8/10



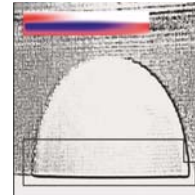
DAPHNI Jiaolong

JIAOLONG, 2012

By now a regular fixture behind the decks at London's hipster joints, often appearing with Kieran Hebden, Snaith dived headfirst into DJ culture with the launch of his afro-techno label Jiaolong and his disco alias Daphni. A roundup of his singles, *Jiaolong* teems with Snaith's enthusiasm for ritualistic dance music, encompassing everything from '70s funk to acid house.

8/10

PIERS MARTIN



BING & RUTH Tomorrow Was The Golden Age

RVNG INTL

New Age meets neo-classical ensemble, from New York...

8/10

Much like Icebreaker, who rescored Eno's *Apollo* as a classical piece, Bing & Ruth are new-music scholars with a conservatory-style, organic approach to ambient music. *Tomorrow Was The Golden Age* purportedly features clarinet, cello and bass – not that you can tell, turned as they are into a beguiling smudge by tape delay. Band leader David Moore's piano lines are more definable, tinkling through the serene textures in a way that recalls Hans-Joachim Roedelius (80 this month, incidentally). Eno is another predictable influence, but Bing & Ruth have lunar charms that straddle romance and meditation – halfway, perhaps, between Debussy and Wyndham Hill.

JOHN MULVEY



JACKSON BROWNE Standing In The Breach

INSIDE RECORDINGS

Legendary Californian songwriting veteran gets agitated, sort of

7/10

Never one to rush, Jackson Browne. Duly, his 14th studio album moves along at its own unhurried pace, the emphasis on songwriting craft and precision. But beneath the gliding surface lies Browne the politico, quietly raging at the legacy of imperialism and warning of impending eco disaster. The music occasionally matches such animated sentiment, chiefly the freight train shuffle of "Leaving Winslow" and Woody Guthrie's "You Know The Night". The best moment is probably the Byrdsy chime of "The Birds Of St Marks", first cut in demo form in 1970 and inspired by a stint backing Nico in New York.

ROB HUGHES



CARIBOU Our Love

CITY SLANG

Rave soothsayer's euphoric fifth tears up the dancefloor

9/10

In the four years since Caribou's breakthrough album *Swim*, it's conceivable that Dan Snaith has spent every moment exploring, in some form or other, notions of the ecstatic, such is the kaleidoscopic rush of *Our Love*. Having effectively written the same song for over a decade, Snaith has perfected his recipe for bite-size psychedelia – plump synths zoom and twinkle on "Silver" and "Julia Brightly", Jessy Lanza sings "Second Chance" – curdled R&B – while blissed-out rave-ups "Your Love Will Set You Free" and "Our Love" bear the hallmarks of his dancefloor alias Daphni. For one who's teetotal, Snaith sounds drunk on serotonin.

PIERS MARTIN

AMERICANA



BEST
OF THE
MONTH

JESSE WINCHESTER
A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TROUBLE



8/10

JESSE WINCHESTER

A Reasonable Amount Of Trouble

APPLESEED RECORDINGS

Anti-war icon: an unheralded voice bids a wistful farewell With his graceful tenor, seamless meshing of country, pop and folk, and solid unflashy songwriting, Jesse Winchester was unlikely fodder for superstar status circa 1970. But something noble lurked in his songs, qualities difficult to dismiss. Stars from Wilson Pickett to Elvis Costello lined up to cover his songs, but Winchester's own catalogue, starting with his sublime, Robbie Robertson-produced debut, contains gems aplenty. He wasn't exactly prolific, and when he followed his conscience – crossing into Canada to avoid military draft – his personal life and performing career took hits. Many quiet

years followed that early burst, but a strong 2009 comeback, *Love Filling Station*, and a devastating appearance on Elvis Costello's *Spectacle*, put him back in the game. *Trouble*, completed just weeks before cancer claimed him this spring, is a typically tender, casually contemplative, occasionally tearful goodbye. Winchester's ever-present playfulness and humour remain – see the absurd "Never Forget To Boogie" – while the raucous, slightly snide "She Makes It Easy Now", producer/guitarist Mac McAnally on searing guitar, dispenses, beneath its gruff blues/rock exterior, pearls of wisdom to wild-eyed young males. The cajun-flavoured "A Little Louisiana", Joel Guzman's sawing accordion taking flight, is a country/rock classic in waiting: Rodney Crowell, Emmylou Harris take note.

The elephant in the room is mortality and all it entails. Memory, regret, love and loss, coming to terms as the end nears – is duly acknowledged, his voice a shiver of soul and feeling. He's in the thick of it on the haunting "Every Day I Get The Blues" and "Ghosts", where memory and regret trip the singer into deep melancholy. His head is clear and airy, though, on the sprightly "All That We Have Is Now", whose title speaks for itself. Tensions pour out, gently, on closer "Just So Much", Winchester hovering in the ether, pondering life's beauty, approaching reconciled to the inevitable. **LUKE TORN**



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► Early November sees the return of Detroit combo **Frontier Ruckus**, whose *Eternity Of Dimming* was one of 2013's early highlights. This time around, leader Matthew Milia

turns his lyrical obsessions into nostalgia for '90s TV shows. *Sitcom Afterlife* promises rich orchestration and fuzzy electric guitars, with Milia calling it "a break-up record with really intense emotion and a little vitriol and bitterness". Also upon us is *xoxo*, the latest studio offering from folk-leaning songwriter **Anaïs Mitchell**. After last year's collaboration with Jefferson Hamer, this is a solo follow-up to 2012's much-fancied *Young Man In America*. The album includes some

re-recorded tunes spanning the past 10 years, as well as a bunch of new songs. She'll be touring these isles through November.

Hitting the road this October is **Laura Veirs**, whose seven-date solo jaunt – "just me and my electric guitar. I'll be playing around with my loop pedal and trying out some new songs, too" – begins in Nottingham and ends at London's Bush Hall. Also doing the rounds, in support of fine new release *Live Champs!*, are **Danny And The Champions Of The World**. They're on the move throughout October, beginning in Aldershot on the 1st and winding up at The Palmeira in Hove on the 25th. Look out too for the unmissable double-header of **Grant-Lee Phillips** and **Howe Gelb**. Their mini-swing of the UK in October visits Islington's Union Chapel, Bristol's Thekla and The Deaf Institute in Manchester.



BOB CHEEVERS

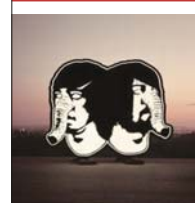
On Earth As It Is In Austin

PRIVATE ANGEL

Veteran Texas troubadour gets the Willies

7/10

Memphis-born, Austin-based Cheevers has released 10 albums since his 1968 debut, but is perhaps still most celebrated for other people's versions of his songs, most notably Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings. *On Earth...* finds Cheevers in fine storyteller fettle, be it the tamed bad boy of "My First Rodeo", the reflective booze hound of "Falling Hard On Easy Street", or dreaming of duetting with Willie Nelson on the title track. Nelson is a prominent touchstone throughout, Bob acknowledging his stylistic debt to the Red-Headed Stranger on "You Sound Just Like Willie" and "Blue Eyes Always On My Mind". **TERRY STAUNTON**



DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979

The Physical World

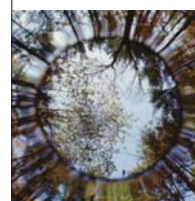
LAST GANG RECORDS/ FICTION

10 years on, DFA not DOA

A decade on from their lone album, Toronto's DFA1979 finally return with a follow-up. "However [the press]

7/10

react to it, it's like, 'Well, you've been fucking asking for it,' frontman Sebastian Grainger told *NME*, which shouldn't augur well. But belligerence has always informed the duo's sound, somewhere between Black Sabbath and punk-funk, and they've not mellowed in the interim decade. Jesse F Keeler's bass riffs are subterranean and mutated, while Grainger rails at scene stasis (the Suicide-meets-QOTSA "Right On Frankenstein") and Canada's right-wing politics ("Government Trash"). It's a strong return, though bad luck for the copycatting Royal Blood and DZ Deathrays who'd been counting on their obsolescence. **LAURA SNAPES**



MARTIN DUFFY

Assorted Promenades

O GENESIS

Primal Scream mainstay relocates his experimental side

7/10

Given that the main entry on his CV is an ongoing 25-year stretch playing barrelhouse keys in Primal Scream, some may find Duffy's debut solo album weirdly genteel. Context, though, is provided by his formative years in Felt, when the quixotic Lawrence gave over a whole LP (1988's *Train Above The City*) to the teenage Duffy's piano jazz. ...*Promenades* is a fragile, sometimes distraught, generally very pretty development of that aesthetic, in which Duffy's doodles are given surprisingly expansive treatments. Keys rarely dominate, instead slotting into ornate arrangements that, on the delicately clanging city symphony of "Section II", place Duffy closer to the likes of Moondog than his Britrock peers. **JOHN MULVEY**

THE DURUTTI COLUMN

Chronicle XL

KOOKYDISC

Devastating song suite, lamenting love's loss

8/10

Durutti Column albums have always been personal affairs, but *Chronicle XL* is a particularly naked and vulnerable set of songs from Vini Reilly, composed during a time where he suffered both emotional distress and serious health complications. With more than a touch of 'triumph over adversity', then, *Chronicle XL* turns out to be Reilly's finest since his stretch of gorgeous records for Factory across the '80s. His guitar playing is still excellent: dappled, fluid, at ease with its flourishes. But the real heart of *Chronicle XL* is a set of heartbreaking songs detailing Reilly's mourning for his relationship.

JON DALE



ELECTRIC WIZARD

Time To Die

SPINEFARM

Intoxicating eighth from English doom metal crew

7/10

Many HM groups have followed in the bootprints of Sabbath, but few have captured their psych side quite like Dorset's Electric Wizard. Close to monomaniacal in their passions – weed, Satan, vintage British horror – *Time To Die* nonetheless introduces a gnarly edge to their downtuned churn, a product perhaps of its genesis at London's all-analogue Toe Rag. Amid the craggy guitars and funereal organ of "Incense For The Damned" and "Destroy Those Who Love God", the band secrete snippets of news bulletins about murders most horrid. For all their fascination with the dark, though, it's not always po-faced: hear Jus Oborn unleash a cackle on "Funeral Of Your Mind" that would shame a Hammer villain.

LOUIS PATTISON



SHAUN ESCOFFERY

In The Red Room

DOME

Smooth soul, delivered: Idris Elba's mate gets his groove back

7/10

He worked with D'Influence in the '90s, starred onstage in *Les Misérables*, *Tommy* and *The Lion King*, and sang the national anthem at a Lewis-Tyson title fight – but the straightahead soul of *In The Red Room* is a much better platform for Shaun Escoffery's vocal talents. The well-travelled Londoner, a childhood friend of *Luther* actor/Africa Express traveller Idris Elba, possesses a remarkable, honeyed tenor, and his first album in seven years is full of the satin bedsheet smoothness of late-'70s Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield and the Isleys. "Do You Remember" and "Perfect Love Affair" are the standouts: slow, intimate grooves, with just the right amount of grandstanding.

MARK BENTLEY



JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

Single Mothers

VAGRANT

Earle finds a surprisingly comfortable seat on the wagon

7/10

As his occasional touring companion Jason Isbell did when composing his 2013 masterpiece *Southwestern*, Earle finds himself in an awkward position for a legendarily dissolute country singer: sober and happily married. However, just as Isbell found a way to write and sing with a refreshed, rueful clarity, so Earle sees himself and the world anew. The Tom Waits-ish jazz of the title track, the slinky CCR-ish trundle of "My Baby Drives" and the gentle pedal-steel-led weeper "White Gardenias" confirm that Earle's quieting of his demons has lost him little.

ANDREW MUELLER

WERE
NEW
HERE

Ex
Hex



► It was too good to last: in December 2013, drummer Janet Weiss admitted that Wild Flag, the band she had formed with fellow Sleater-Kinney alum Carrie Brownstein, The Minders' Rebecca Cole, and Helium/Autoclave's Mary Timony, was over after one record.

"It was fun while it lasted," says Timony. "And it got me to start really trying to write songs." Wild Flag reminded Timony how it felt to roll with a gang, so she started jamming with drummer Laura Harris at home in Washington DC. Bassist Betsy Wright soon joined, and they became Ex Hex (the name of a record Timony released in 2005). Their simple mission? "To make music that's fun and that I want to put on the stereo and dance around to," she says, referencing The Flaming Groovies, Television, Slade and Let's Active, whose Mitch Easter co-produced the Ex Hex debut *Rips*.

Rips confronts flaky guys, summer jobs and high-school bullies, giving the band a teenage us-against-the-world feel. It's unintentional, Timony says, but perhaps a product of her asking herself, "What are the songs that made me really excited about music? I was trying to access that part of my brain."

LAURA SNAPES



EX HEX

Rips

MERGE

Smart powerpop from Mary Timony's new trio

"I thought you were a man of action?" taunts Mary Timony,

8/10

once of Wild Flag, Helium, Autoclave and sundry others, in the opening exchanges of "Don't Wanna Lose", the punchy first track on her latest band's excellent debut album. Rounded out by Laura Harris and Betsy Wright, Ex Hex are a classic power trio that play unashamedly radio-friendly pop melodies on songs like "Radio On", a tribute to radio songs via Mick Jagger and Jonathan Richman, or new wave belter "New Kid". Timony's lyrics add depth, carrying an accusatory sneer on caustic duo "How You Got That Girl" and "War Paint".

PETER WATTS



KAT EDMONSON

The Big Picture

SONY MASTERWORKS

Decade-hopping romp from Houston-born, Brooklyn-based stylist Edmonson revealed herself as a neoclassicist chameleon on her first two

8/10

LPs, and she advances her rigorous aesthetic with the Mitchell Froom-produced *The Big Picture*, deftly channeling her songwriting and arranging touchstones as well as her vocal avatars. The tart-voiced Edmonson, who cut her teeth on movie music, approaches each song as an actress inhabiting a role. The dynamically intricate, Mancini-inspired showpiece "Rainy Day Woman" sets the tone, after which she shape-shifts into Eartha Kitt ("You Said Enough"), Billie Holiday ("Oh My Love") and, repeatedly, Harry Nilsson. Your response to this stylistic tour de force will depend on your tolerance for artifice and whimsy.

BUD SCOPPA



FIELD REPORT

Marigolden

PARTISAN

One-time Justin Vernon bandmate refines his own thing

Chris Porterfield opens his band's second album strumming an acoustic and delivering the detailed hardscrabble narrative "Decision Day" as if he's gunning for Bruce's *Nebraska*, but the erstwhile English professor has something more expansive in his sights. The following "Home (Leave The Lights On)" pumps along behind the syncopated interplay of banjo, sequencer and sampled percussion before resolving into a delirious widescreen chorus. From there, *Marigolden* alternates between sparingly decorated, emotionally naked pieces like the Neil Young-style ballad "Ambrosia" and, more invitingly, shimmering, rhythmically inventive soundscapes like "Wings" and "Cups And Cups". Sometimes, more is more.

BUD SCOPPA



SCOTT WALKER AND SUNN O)))

Soused 4AD

"Spunk-stiffened tresses!" How an avant-metal band made Scott more accessible. By Louis Pattison



8/10

"Scott O)))" logo that spread across social media like a forest fire, there was the immediate sense this could be a complementary partnership.

Walker has long since moved from his early MOR days into more cryptic and perverse realms. The rich baritone he once commanded has long been replaced by a fraught, high-wire tenor designed to jangle the nerves, while the songs themselves – produced with long-time collaborator Peter Walsh and a small team of musicians – have fixated conceptually on tyrants, dictators and, on the track "SDSS14+13B (Zercon, A Flagpole Sitter)" from 2012's *Bish Bosch*, the fantasised connection between a remote brown dwarf star and a dwarf jester in the fifth-century court of Attila The Hun. Stephen O'Malley and Greg Anderson of Sunn O))), meanwhile, are not your everyday metalheads, their protracted and atmospheric drones heavy but seldom rocking, as informed by the music of La Monte Young and Stockhausen as Mayhem and Black Sabbath. Both make challenging music at the very edge of their discipline; together, they prove

even scorched earth can feel like common ground.

The germ of *Soused* came in 2008, when Sunn O))) approached Walker's management to see if he'd contribute vocals to a song on their 2009 album, *Monoliths & Dimensions*. It wasn't to be, but Walker got back in touch in early 2013 to let them know he was writing new material with collaboration in mind. Five tracks long, with each clocking in somewhere between eight and 12 minutes, *Soused* has the feel of a latterday Scott Walker album with Sunn O)))'s guitar drone laid like bedrock. Yet the presence of Sunn O))) – here O'Malley, Anderson and auxiliary member Tos Nieuwenhuizen – exerts constant and welcome force. Whereas *Bish Bosch* occasionally gestured to the heaviness and dynamics of metal, *Soused* is soaked in it: carried along on a sludgy tide that imbues Walker's deviant theatre with palpable, physical menace.

The opening "Brando" begins as a slow-motion pirouette, Walker pale and operatic over hard shards of electric guitar. Sunn O)))'s oppressive drone merges with a relentless throb of synth, and in lieu of percussion, we hear the sporadic crack of a bullwhip. Lyrically, the song alludes to the life of Marlon Brando: Walker sings of "*dweller on the bluff*" – a native American phrase that lent its name to Omaha, Brando's home state. The bullwhip is probably a reference to Brando's sole directorial credit, the 1963 western *One-Eyed Jacks*, in which he plays Rio, a gunslinger tied up in a town square by the authorities and lashed without mercy. In Walker's hands, though, the image has a sadomasochistic quality. "A beating would do me/ A world of good," he sings.

SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Produced by:** Scott Walker and Peter Walsh
Recorded at: West-point Studios, London
Personnel includes: Scott Walker (vocals), Greg Anderson (guitars), Stephen O'Malley (guitar, bass, synth), Tos Nieuwenhuizen (Moog, guitars), Ian Thomas (drums), Mark Warman (keyboards), Guy Barker (trumpet), Peter Gamble (bullwhips), Peter Walsh (drum programs, keyboards)

Soused is not short on black comedy. The gigantic "Herod 2014", a thing of jackboot drum machines and panicky saxophones, follows a mother as she endeavours to save her progeny from some cannibalistic Stasi: "*Their soft, gummy smiles/Won't be gilding the menu*". In one of the simmering lulls of "Bull" we are greeted with the simile "*leapin' like a Riverdancer's nuts*". "Fetish", meanwhile, finds Walker's pale, ghostly voice drifting through lyrics about lepers, fluffers and "*spunk-stiffened tresses*" as the band –

explore some diabolical dynamics. Silence and cacophony are set in terrible contrast, so when the sounds swing in – sudden blasts of digitally contorted horns and abrupt spasms of drumming – the result shocks, like a jolt of electricity.

Much consciously extreme music can feel clichéd in its pursuit of shock or transgression. But Walker's reputation as a cinematographer is deserved, and his evocation of sonic horrors feel filmic in its command of atmosphere and tone. The prologue of "Lullaby" summons unbearable tension, Walker promising – threatening? – "*Tonight my assistant will pass among you/His cap will be empty*" over low, pensive drones. As it peaks, with shrill, piercing keyboards, Walker sings snatches of "My Sweet Little Darling", a traditional song popularised by Renaissance composer William Byrd. The meaning remains inscrutable, but there is surely significance to be found in Walker's nostalgic entreaties: "*Why don't painters/Paint their cloudy spines/Chiaroscuro, the way they used to?*"

Enigmatic, abstract, violent, absurd: stick *Soused* on a C120 with *Lulu*, take it on a family holiday, and you possibly have grounds for divorce. But the presence of Sunn O))) actually seems to make Walker's muse more accessible, their drones a frame to expressionistic excess. The result is the most accessible Scott Walker album since *Tilt*, perhaps even longer. Meanwhile, by gesturing towards a full-band lineup, would it be excessively optimistic to speculate *Soused* might augur Scott Walker's return to the stage? For that would certainly be something to see.

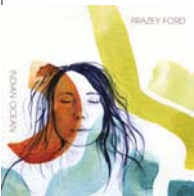


FLYING LOTUS *You're Dead* WARP

Another mind-expanded hip-hop suite from Alice Coltrane's nephew
While notionally a hip-hop producer, across five albums Steve Ellison has

8/10

increasingly found ways to integrate his taste for beats and rhymes with his status as scion of one of America's great jazz dynasties. *You're Dead* – which, by going on the trippy artwork, is less gangsterish threat, more concerned with the author's experimentation with extreme psychedelics – is a colourful fusion, blunted underground hip-hop flowing into delirious live bass jams and cosmic balladry (see “Siren Song”, featuring former Dirty Projector Angel Deradoorian). Elsewhere, Snoop Dogg sounds in his element trading verses with Ellison on “Dead Man’s Tetris” and Herbie Hancock guests on breathless jazz workout “Moment Of Hesitation”. **LOUIS PATTISON**



FRAZEY FORD *Indian Ocean* NETTWERK

Be Good Tanyas stalwart gets a soul makeover

8/10

In her day job as one third of Vancouver’s Be Good Tanyas, Frazey Ford has long traded in banjo and mandolin-filled rustic folk. Here, on her second solo album, she sounds like a woman liberated, employing the services of Al Green’s band, The Hi Rhythm Section, and cheerfully ratcheting up the soul textures hinted at on her 2010 debut, *Obadiah*. Ford is no Al Green, of course, but through her understated yet distinctive croon she still reaches striking emotional heights, as demonstrated in “You’re Not Free”, a smoky ballad that swells into a magnificent and heartfelt Memphis knees-up. **FIONA STURGES**



CHRIS FORSYTH & THE SOLAR MOTEL BAND *Intensity Ghost* NO QUARTER

Philly guitar hero's Grateful Dead-gone-to-CBGB masterpiece

9/10

The nugget of info that Chris Forsyth once studied with Richard Lloyd is trotted out in most things written about him, but it’s never been more salient than here. Even more so than on last year’s raging *Solar Motel*, *Intensity Ghost* ostensibly takes up where *Marquee Moon* left off (literally, in the case of “I Ain’t Waiting”, which takes its title from a Verlaine lyric), an LP of multitudinous fraught guitar ecstasies. If Forsyth’s solo LPs showcased his wiry virtuosity, the addition of the Solar Motel Band (featuring Spac’n and War On Drugs members) provides serious cosmic heft. On this evidence, it’s hard to imagine many more dynamic instrumental rock bands working in America today. **JOHN MULVEY**



JOHN FOXX AND STEVE D'AGOSTINO *Evidence Of Time Travel* METAMATIC

Electronic alienation from Ultravox founder
His synthpop peers can be

7/10

seen enjoying the fruits of the ‘80s revival, but not for Foxx the simple pleasures of the nostalgia circuit. Instead, since his return to music in the late ‘90s, he’s continued to make work focused on strangely timeless preoccupations: futurism, surveillance, alienation, Ballard. ...*Time Travel* is the sonic document of a broader audiovisual work pieced together with D’Agostino, an instrumental collection investigating “terrors and pleasures of temporal displacement” on analogue synth and drum machine. Eerie and filmic in the vein of Foxx’s 2006 LP *Tiny Colour Movies*, the likes of “Impenetrable Inevitable” are captivating in their primitive palette and mood of pallid disquiet. **LOUIS PATTISON**

REVELATIONS

JOHN FOXX time travels with Steve D'Agostino and Karborn



➤ Not for John Foxx the traditional live show to introduce his new album to the faithful. To launch *Evidence Of Time Travel*, a haunting instrumental collaboration with bandmate Steve D’Agostino, the pair will be debuting it in London in November as part of the BFI’s *Sci-Fi: Days Of Fear And Wonder* season. Supplying visuals will be long-time Foxx collaborator Karborn, whose cut-up techniques repurpose existing film and TV footage into new narratives. “The idea is that time, memory and all media are the same thing,” says Foxx, “a gigantic, oceanic, universal ecology that we all negotiate daily and barely notice. All kinds of mysterious glitches and singularities occur. Some get caught on CCTV and discarded because they don’t fit the preconceptions. What happens if you collect a few?”

It’s not the only John Foxx LP to hit shelves in October. *B-Movie* (Ballardian Video Neuronica) is the soundtrack to another Karborn collaboration, which showed at Brighton’s Cine-City festival in late 2012. Its theme is an evergreen for Foxx: the books of JG Ballard, whose visions of crumbling cityscapes and eroticised car crashes have influenced his work back to 1980’s *Metamatic*. As relevant as ever, says Foxx: “The entire world seems to have gone into a surreal urban disaster overdrive... Read Ballard, watch the news – it’s as if he’s writing the script.” **LOUIS PATTISON**

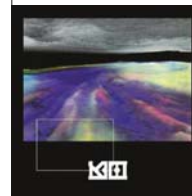


FOXYGEN *...And Star Power* JAGJAGUWAR

Extended retro mash-up from LA duo

7/10

There’s an itchy ambition to this double album by Jonathan Rado and Sam France despite its sporadic longeurs. Split into four “suites” and hurtling through a dizzying array of inspiration, it sees the band continuing their impressionistic plundering of the past 40 years of rock’n’roll. Thus we are presented with the Doors-meets-Flaming Lips of “Cosmic Vibrations”, its feedback-smothered intro giving way to sweet psychedelic romanticism, and the spaced-out melancholy of “Coulda Been My Love”. There’s nothing new going on here, and the fast-forward button proves useful during the “Star Power...” series, but, for the most part, their unapologetically backwards-looking smash’n’grab is engagingly adept. **FIONA STURGES**



LEE GAMBLE *KOCH* PAN

Birmingham cyber boffin's murky fourth outing

7/10

After the praise lavished on his back-to-back albums of hallucinogenic rave at the end of 2012, techno misfit Lee Gamble’s rags-to-riches story continues with *KOCH* (pronounced “cotch”, sadly), a hefty 16-track affair of gaseous grooves and bong-ravaged dub through which courses a slippery, sinister energy that Gamble harnesses to tremendous effect on clubwise cuts such as “Jove Layup” and “Yehudi Lights Over Tottenham”. Gamble is a dab hand at sound design and creating textures that convey anxiety and paranoia – some tracks are smothered in hiss – but because of its sprawling length, parts of *KOCH* feel rather one-dimensional. **PIERS MARTIN**

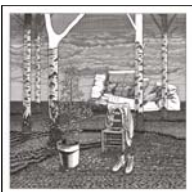


VIC GODARD & SUBWAY SECT *1979 Now!* AED

Legendary “Northern Soul” set revisited; Edwyn Collins and Seb Lewsley produce

8/10

The “Northern Soul” set played by the Sect at London’s Music Machine in 1979 inspired Orange Juice, who covered “Holiday Hymn”. For Godard, it bridged punk and his Tony Bennett phase, with the band sporting knock-off Fred Perrys at the height of goth gloom-mongering. Re-created with Edwyn Collins and Seb Lewsley producing, it remains a brilliant hybrid, with the ramshackle rush of the tunes adding sugar to the brittle tension of Godard’s voice. “Caught In Midstream” is a highlight, but the Sodastream rush of “You Bring Out The Demon In Me” is irresistible. **ALASTAIR MCKAY**



GREAT PAGANS

Cupid In Error

ANTI-GHOST MOON RAY

A journey into the dark heart of noisy indie
Brighton's Alex Painter honed his skills in the excellent Brecht-tinged

8/10

Grow Claws, but is now on a mission to revive the darker end of indie guitar. His band's debut is essentially a concept album about the break-up of a long relationship and the self-reflection it causes, buoyed by a sound that harks back to early Cure and Sonic Youth's more melodic moments. Painter gets angry enough to howl, "Don't fucking lie to me!" on the glowering "Silver Tongue", but "Cupid In Error" is mostly the sound of your most vulnerable mate, still "Tangled Up In Chemistry", and pouring their broken heart out round your flat.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



STEVE GUNN

Way Out Weather

PARADISE OF BACHELORS

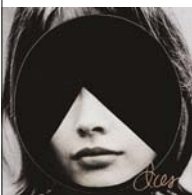
Prolific avant-folk guitarist evolves into a great singer-songwriter

How does a questing psychedelic guitarist transform themselves into a

8/10

classic singer-songwriter? By compromising, in many cases. Brooklyn's Steve Gunn, however, is managing the transition with uncanny elegance. Where once he favoured elaborate, Sandy Bull-ish instrumentals, Gunn now folds his old jamming imperative into beautifully constructed songs. As on 2013's *Time Off*, he sings plenty, with engaging huskiness, while leading his band down ever more inventive tangents: a kind of muted Little Feat boogie on "Milky's Garden"; dislocated ambient folk on "Atmosphere". Gunn's recent stint in Kurt Vile's Violators seems to have had an effect, too, in the woozy, cycling dynamic of the title track – eco-fear played out with a sun-damaged languor.

JOHN MULVEY



LIA ICES

Ices

JAGJAGUWAR

Connecticut-born, NYC-based cool-cat siren's chilling second course

A hipster rethink of the aromatherapy pop

7/10

of Bat For Lashes – or perhaps an ashram-reared avatar of Frankie Rose – the second album by Connecticut's Lia Ices burrows away from the post-Bon Iver intimacy of her first two full-lengths to a more exotic headspace. Yogic flying entrée "Tell Me" sets the tone for an intriguing voyage of laptop indie-pop discovery, Ices' Enya-shrill vocals floating Buddha-like on some serene higher plane above the Julie Cruise drift of "Waves" and the crystal-reading synth pop of "How We Are". Cool to the touch, but vanilla sweet as well.

JIM WIRTH



ITAL

Endgame

PLANET MU

New Yorker's superior trippy techno

Much of Daniel Martin-McCormick's Ital output these past few years has been fashionably vague

8/10

enough to just about give him the benefit of the doubt, but third album *Endgame* sees the Brooklyn producer ratchet up the quality and plunge headfirst into the mêlée with an unexpectedly excellent set of sinuous and sensual techno. Inspired by "psychedelic excursions" and a desire to "keep things liquid", Martin-McCormick is very much peering through a Caustic Window for the fractal flow of "Coagulate" and "Concussion", and a prudent partnering with LA synth guv'nor M Geddes Gengras ensures the whole record is smeared in succulent analogue flange.

PIERS MARTIN



THE JUAN MACLEAN

In A Dream

DFA

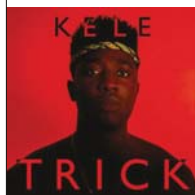
Yet more re-ups of dance music history from the New York duo

For their third album, The Juan MacLean

6/10

(aka John MacLean and Nancy Whang, the latter still best-known for her part in LCD Soundsystem) are on a similar tip to their previous records – a kind of catch-all hybrid of dance music's past, pushing the cornball envelope with the dumb rock guitar stabs that puncture opener "A Place Called Space". But it's hard to really connect with most of *In A Dream*; not only does it play through as tirelessly, tiringly arch, many of the songs just don't quite cut it. Two great moments, though: the garage lifts that propel "Here I Am", and the astral disco groove of "Running Back To You".

JONDALE



KELE

Trick

LILAC/KOBALT

Intimate second from the sometime Bloc Party beefcake

If his first solo set, *The Boxer*, found Kele Okereke cocksure on

6/10

the dancefloor, then *Trick* is the Bloc Party singer's comedown record: confessional, emotional and, in places, a bit much. Produced by himself in a moody electro-house fashion, the songs give the impression Okereke can't open his front door without getting his heart broken. Lyrics, littered with pillow talk, read like teenage diary entries but are delivered with tenderness. "I fall asleep in my clothes on your side of the bed again", runs the xx-ish "Closer", while on tear-stained uber-ballad "Stay The Night" he out-divas Sam Smith.

PIERS MARTIN



KIASMOS

Kiasmos

ERASED TAPES

Sumptuous electronica from the Arctic North: serve chilled

With 10 million Brits exposed to Iceland's Ólafur Arnalds thanks to his

8/10

Broadchurch soundtrack, it's the perfect time to unveil his collaboration with Janus Rasmussen, the Faroese architect behind Reykjavik electro-poppers Bloodgroup. With the sometimes overreaching sentimentality of Arnalds' sweeping strings neatly offset by Rasmussen's minimal techno tendencies, what their debut lacks in innovation it makes up for with emotional eloquence: "Held" – percussion twitches beneath a simple piano melody and violin lines, and "Dragged" moves gracefully at glacial speed towards a disconcerting climax, while "Bent" – complete with euphoric breakdown – aims straight for the dancefloor.

WYNHAM WALLACE



KORMAC

Doorsteps

BODYTonic

Irish beatmaster corrals famous guests, including Irvine Welsh and Speech DeBelle

A Dublin-based sound collagist, DJ and big-band

6/10

live performer, Kormac moves up a gear with this star-studded second album. Vocal guests include Speech DeBelle, who raps about Marcus Garvey over a brassy electro-jazzoid groove on "White Noise", and Micah P Hinson, who adapts an excerpt from the Book Of Micah in the Hebrew Bible for the twinkly sound collage "Get Up, Go Away". Author Irvine Welsh also contributes a droll poem about alienating technology, "Another Screen": "Don't buy me a Kindle, just come around and rekindle my heart." A slight, disjointed album partially redeemed by its admirable ambition and eccentric cast list.

STEPHEN DALTON



DIANA KRALL

Wallflower

VERVE

Undeniably lovely if utterly predictable standards set

After inhabiting the world of T Bone Burnett on 2012's quirky *Glad Rag Doll*, Krall

7/10

has pulled a 180, submitting to the most overtly commercial project of her career. The smoky-voiced Canadian sings selections from recent chapters of the Great Anglo-American songbook, with David Foster producing, arranging and – surprisingly – playing piano. *Wallflower* is quintessential adult pop, with solid if predictable selections like "I'm Not In Love" and "Don't Dream It's Over" impeccably interpreted by Krall, her sultry alto wrapped in a downy comforter of standard-issue strings. It's interesting to A/B her takes on "Desperado" and "Superstar" with Linda Ronstadt's and Karen Carpenter's definitive versions.

BUD SCOPPA



MARY LATTIMORE & JEFF ZEIGLER

Slant Of Light

THRILL JOCKEY

Philly scenesters' collaborative first

8/10

It's not her mission, but classically trained harpist Mary Lattimore might finally wrest the image of her instrument away from Celtic folk and Joanna Newsom, where it seems to popularly reside. The go-to player for Kurt Vile and Thurston Moore, among others, she's hooked up with multi-instrumentalist Jeff Zeigler for a deeply impressionistic improv set in which her sweet harp melodies swim up through his vaporous guitar/synth drifts. Drone sustains "Echo Sounder", but with the 12-minute "Tomorrow Is A Million Years", the pair are on much spookier territory, with string scrapes and mechanical rattles suggesting Daphne Oram in cahoots with Fred Frith.

SHARON O'CONNELL



JERRY LEE LEWIS

Rock & Roll Time

VANGUARD

Still unfettered after all these years on a full-on supersession

8/10

Who wouldn't jump at the chance to sit in with Jerry Lee Lewis and drummer/producer Jim Keltner on a rock'n'roll, R'n'B, blues or country standard? The credits on this long-gestating project read like the ultimate jam session: Keef and Woody on "Little Queenie", Neil Young on "Bright Lights, Big City", Robbie Robertson and Nils Lofgren on "Folsom Prison Blues", with Derek Trucks, Daniel Lanois, Doyle Bramhall, Greg Leisz, Jon Brion and Shelby Lynne popping up as well. Through it all, the now-79-year-old legend seems fully engaged, if understandably creaky, on a record that sounds like it could've been cut at any point from 1956 till now.

BUD SCOPPA



LUCKY ELEPHANT

The Rainy Kingdom

SUNDAY BEST

Slice-of-life soundtrack, 40 years on

7/10

The London based-collective take on the role of social historians on their new album, inspired by an early '70s TV documentary. Director Ken Ashton's *We Was All One* was a gritty study of working-class culture in Bermondsey, Elephant & Castle and the Old Kent Road, and *The Rainy Kingdom* imagines the lives of Cockney characters beyond the cameras. Although the musical touchstones veer towards The High Llamas and British Sea Power, the lyrical themes suggest Ken Loach teaming up with Squeeze on bittersweet portraits of struggling displaced communities like "The British Working Man" and "All The Streets I Have Known".

TERRY STAUNTON



JOHNNY MARR

Playland

WARNERS

30 years for his solo debut; 20 months for the follow-up

7/10

It's obvious that, when Johnny Marr finally opted to put his name and face to his own songs, he liked it enough to just go with the momentum. *Playland* is pretty much "The Messenger Part 2"; a bunch of rocking pop tunes, unsurprisingly dominated by guitar, bolstered by an '80s synthesiser sensibility, topped by Marr's friendly, husky vocals and troubled by the rubbishness of modern life. "The Trap" blatantly nods towards Wire, and everything sounds a little less Smithian than *The Messenger*, as if solo success has given Marr the confidence to cast off the last remnants of his past.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

HOW TO BUY... MELVINS

A long, strange sonic trip...

MELVINS



GLUEY PORCH TREATMENTS

Gluey Porch Treatments

ALCHEMY, 1987

Sludge metal in excelsis, as Buzz Osbourne, Dale Crover and bassist Matt Lukin – the latter soon

to jump ship for Mudhoney – churn out 40-odd minutes of post-Black Sabbath doom and weirdo thrash with a caustic intensity. Reissued in 1999 with a wealth of extra tracks.

8/10



Houdini

ATLANTIC, 1993

Melvins surf the grunge wave with this ostensibly Kurt Cobain-produced effort (Osbourne claims to have sacked him half-

way through). Their major-label debut, it makes slight concessions to the commercial – see the Southern rock-tinged "Lizzy" – but still rocks like the proverbial beast.

8/10



(A) Senile Animal

IPECAC, 2006

Buzz and Dale open ranks to introduce Jared Warren and Coady Willis of Seattle duo Big

Business. Double-drum dynamics mesh with a straight-up road-rawk sensibility for one of the most straight-up fun Melvins albums to date. Good titles, too ("Rat Faced Granny", "A History Of Drunks").

8/10

LOUIS PATTISON



SCOTT MATTHEWS

Home Part 1

THIRTY TIGERS

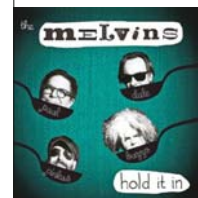
Introspective diarist's soft-strummed fourth

For his fourth album since acclaimed 2006 debut *Passing Stranger*,

7/10

the Wolverhampton singer-songwriter is writing from a more personal perspective, while also revisiting fictional characters from songs on his previous releases. Prior knowledge of those characters isn't essential, however, Matthews' intimate paeans and their echoes of Nick Drake and John Martyn working beautifully in isolation. "Virginia" and "Mona" are beautifully drawn studies of elusive women, while "Sunlight" finds our hero contemplating his own loneliness. Delicate and disarming, although the album could use an occasional shift in tempo from its default setting of subdued balladry.

TERRY STAUNTON



MELVINS

Hold It In

IPECAC

Grizzled proto-grungers expand the ranks for – phew – their 22nd studio album

6/10

Long in the tooth and prolific with it, Buzz Osbourne and Dale Crover have kept Melvins fresh over the years by periodically messing with the template: collaborating with dark ambient artist Lustmord, or joining forces with Seattle rockers Big Business for a few albums. *Hold It In* welcomes in guitarist Paul Leary and bassist JD Pinkus of Butthole Surfers, who add extra wonkiness to Melvins' already askew take on ZZ Top road metal and post-Sabbath clang. Some odd production choices slightly blunt the impact of straighter rockers like "Piss Pissstoferson", but "Onions Make The Milk Taste Bad" confirms their skill for combining the heavy, the catchy and the deliriously strange.

LOUIS PATTISON



KELLEY MICKWEE

You Used To Live Here

BLUE ROSE

Much respected country girl's soulful expedition

7/10

Formerly one half of the country duo Jed & Kelley and the all-girl Texas group The Trishas, Mickwee treads a more soulful path on her short solo debut (just seven tracks) that can't help but suggest parallels with Shelby Lynne or the more subdued side of Lucinda Williams. The lilting waltz of "Take Me Home" and the laid-back groove of "River Girl" echo with thoughts of small-town life, while the duet with Owen Temple, "Beautiful Accidents", is an evocative slice of kitchen sink drama. She's at her most plaintive and passionate, however, on an intimate reading of John Fullbright's "Blameless".

TERRY STAUNTON



ANDREW MONTGOMERY
Ruled By Dreams
RULED BY DREAMS

7/10
Ex-Geneva singer finally finds a suitable vehicle for his powerful voice
Former frontman of late 1990s post-Britpop rockers

Geneva, who scored a Top 20 album and a brief run of hit singles, Montgomery was last spotted in an identity parade on *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*. But his triple-octave voice deserves a more classy second act than that, hence this sumptuous solo debut. Produced and co-written by Sean McGhee, whose previous credits include Britney Spears and Alison Moyet, *Ruled By Dreams* finally gives Montgomery the Rufus Wainwright-sized drama-queen treatment he deserves, from torrid orchestral torch songs like "After The Storm" to the smouldering seduction ballad "I Sing The Body Electric". A fine comeback by an underrated talent.

STEPHEN DALTON



THURSTON MOORE
The Best Day
MATADOR

8/10
Love and sloganeering from Sonic Youth man
Moore's relocation to these shores a couple of years back appears to have had a

revitalising effect, the countercultural history – and present – of his north-east London neighbourhood prompting a rash of creative activity. *The Best Day* finds Moore with a new band: bassist Debbie Googe of My Bloody Valentine, guitar improviser James Sedwards, and a familiar sticksman, Steve Shelley. Dissonance and propulsion remain watchwords, notably on the 11-minute motorik love song "Forevermore". There's variety, too: see the fingerstyle twang of the title track, or the white-knuckle sloganeering of "Detonation", dedicated to Stoke Newington urban guerrillas The Angry Brigade.

LOUIS PATTISON



MOUSE ON MARS
21 Again
MONKEYTOWN

8/10
Birthday celebrations turn into wild, contrarian collaborations

The music of Jan St Werner and Andi Toma has always existed in weird tension with that which surrounds it; they're voracious genre grabbers, never resting in one place, always heading in another direction as soon as they've mastered the terrain they're walking, in true dialectical fashion. But with *21 Again*, they pause to celebrate their extended community in collaborative spirit. They're most comfortable with long-term friends, spitting out filter-disco with Tim Gane, political pop with Laetitia Sadier (both ex-Stereolab), or twisted electro-drift with Oval. It seems they've now come 'of age', but they're misbehaving as fabulously as ever.

JON DALE



MR TWIN SISTER
Mr Twin Sister
TWIN GROUP/INFINITE BEST

8/10
Sophisticated Long Island quintet demand respect

Two years on from their debut album for Domino, and now sporting a more formal title, Mr Twin Sister (formerly Twin Sister) return with an unexpectedly focused album of smooth, early '90s nostalgia. Gone is their restless genre-hopping in favour of electronic pop that sounds like an amorous, soulful clinch between William Orbit and Björk. Complete with glossy guitar solos, "Sensitive" sets the tone, with Andrea Estella's sultry, over-enunciated vocals drifting elegantly amid a laidback, polished setting. "In The House Of Yes", meanwhile, borrows from – inevitably – house music for a tremendous, wistful nod to sunlit Ibiza terraces. Slick and seductive.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



REVELATIONS
Thurston Moore's new supergroup with Deb Googe and Steve Shelley

➤ On new album *The Best Day*, Thurston Moore appears fronting a new band featuring guitarist James Sedwards, bassist Debbie Googe of My Bloody Valentine and former Sonic Youth bandmate Steve Shelley. *Uncut* received the following communiqué. "James 'Shredd' Sedwards wakes up with his beloved Jaguar in his bed every morning. His girlfriend and my girlfriend have discussions amongst themselves about how we strum in our sleep. He teaches guitar, hours and hours every day – his students line up down the high street. He eats and digests our guitars. When we first met in 2012 we agreed on two universal facts of our musical lives: 1) Led Zeppelin is the greatest pre-punk-rock band of all time and 2) Early/early-mid period Fall is for lovers. We hung out in London and Paris and played some gigs with Dylan Carlson of Earth, the Lee Ranaldo Band, and Glenn Branca and decided to stay BFFs. He had the righteous idea to invite Deb Googe for a vegan dindin at mine one night, and she and Steve Shelley got on like a house on fire. We are having a blast. We're going back into the studio this year for a whole lotta love."

LOUIS PATTISON



MV & EE
Alpha Lyrae
CHILD OF MICROTONES

7/10
Vinyl-only trip from the rarefied Vermont heads
Matt Valentine and Erika Elder's noble attempts to keep the freak flag flying for acid-folk have seen

them recently flood the underground market with CD-Rs, a glut of activity notable even by their prolific standards. Twenty years on from their debut in Tower Recordings, MV and EE's dazed MO remains constant: fragmented, psychedelically adjusted acoustic jams that resemble a rusticated Royal Trux, interspersed with languidly rearing approximations of rock-outs. *Alpha Lyrae* is a particularly satisfying effort, with its ramshackle shapes given greater resonance by the crystal-clear production, and a serious high in the shape of "Roll On", whose lurch could just about pass as a disintegrated Crazy Horse outtake circa *Re-ac-tor*.

JOHN MULVEY



NIAGARA
Don't Take It Personally
MONOTREME

6/10
Italian collective struggle to match ambition with imagination

Billing their sound as "avant-psychronica", Niagara is a collaborative project revolving around the Turin-based duo of Davide Tomat and Gabriele Ottino. Like their 2013 debut *Otto*, this admirably ambitious second album sometimes feels a little too diffuse as it strains to join the dots between between ambient Eno-ism, tempo-warping disco-rock and lysergically enhanced dream-pop. But when they focus long enough on a strong idea, as in the shoe-gazing whoosh and shudder of "Fat Kaos" or the stuttering jazzoid dronscape of "Speak & Spell", Tomat and Ottino can muster a real emotional power that transcends their obvious influences and achieves an alluring otherness.

STEPHEN DALTON



JIM NOIR
Finnish Line
MY DAD RECORDINGS

7/10
Abbey Road by way of Ancoats

A one-man Fab fest, Jim Noir's sixth album was written in a week and delivers rampant Beatles revivalism with a lemon twist of Mancunian eccentricity. The sweetly swinging "The Broadway Jets" aches to be "Nowhere Man", "Strange Range" recycles the "Helter Skelter" riff, the melancholy "Honour & Moogswings" is a Macca-esque domestic drama date-stamped late 1966, and "Stone Cold Room" is an inch-perfect approximation of solo Lennon, from the wonky piano to the double-tracked vocal and pained falsetto. It's unashamedly retro, but the nostalgia comes with melodic nous, good humour and bags of ragged charm.

GRAEME THOMSON

VASHTI BUNYAN

Heartleap

FAT CAT

One more diamond day: an elusive singer-songwriter's beautiful, last (probably) album.

By Graeme Thomson



8/10

VASHTI BUNYAN DOESN'T do hurried. This is the woman who, famously, turned her back on life as an aspiring pop starlet in late '60s London to spend the best part of a year travelling to the Outer Hebrides by

horse and cart. As a metaphor for the way she has since conducted her career, the journey could hardly be more apt. Bunyan seems to cleave to the old adage that it's better to travel in hope than to actually arrive.

Following the 35-year silence between her hazy pop-folk debut, *Just Another Diamond Day*, and her immaculate 2005 comeback, *Lookaftering*, we might have hoped that Bunyan would start making up for lost time. Instead, a full nine years after *Lookaftering* comes *Heartleap*, an album so ethereal at first it barely seems to be here at all.

Past allies such as Joe Boyd, *Lookaftering* producer Max Richter and – inevitably – the late, great arranger Robert Kirby, are absent this time. Instead, *Heartleap* is self-produced, self-arranged and largely self-played.

Bunyan's music has never been overly burdened by production flourishes, but here it's almost painfully exposed. There is no bass or drums, with the result that these ten tracks seem to float, unanchored, at times threatening to slip away entirely. The woody, organic feel of much of *Lookaftering* is replaced by something more ethereal and sugar-spun. *Heartleap* feels at first like an extended mood piece, one long drift, but in time structure emerges. Choruses steal into view like lost lovers out of the fog, while the sighing strings, pattering piano lines and delicate guitar motifs entwine to create a finely stitched tapestry of immense beauty. The highlight, as ever, is Bunyan's pure, fragile voice, so closely miked it allows her to sing these simple, almost halting melodies at barely a whisper.

Opener "Across The Water" sets a tone which rarely wavers for the next 30 minutes, each song's simple sound-pad of gently picked electric guitar and washes of synths fleshed out by touches of flute, recorder, cello and kalimba. "Jellyfish" unwinds like a musical box which just keeps on spinning, Bunyan's multi-tracked voices overlapping over a simple bell-like motif. "Gunpowder" sets a timeless sing-song melody afloat on a slow river of cello and violins. "Here" is a dark, mysterious minor-key madrigal with woozy flute, rolling like the sea. It's all so finely wrought that the subtle interplay of three guitars on "Holy Smoke" seems almost grandiose. When a muted saxophone breaks into "Shell", it's like a sonic hand grenade.

Bunyan is a freak-folk heroine these days, much beloved of the likes of Joanna Newsom



SLEEVE NOTES

Produced by:

Vashti Bunyan

Recorded at:

4th Street, Edinburgh;

Din Sound, London;

home studios in

Topanga, Los Angeles,

New York and Glasgow

Personnel:

Vashti Bunyan (vocals, guitars,

synths, Dulcitone),

Gareth Dickson

(guitar), Jo Mango

(kalimba, flute), Ian

Wilson (saxophone,

recorder), Andy Cacic

(guitar), Fiona Bruce

(violin), Ian Burdge

(violin, cello), Gillon

Cameron (violin),

Devendra Banhart

(backing vocals)

and Devendra Banhart (who adds vocals on "Holy Smoke"), but her music isn't quite folk. Rather, it's a strange mix of chamber-pop, whispered torch songs and minimalist contemporary classical. At the end of "Blue Shed", the susurrant of layered backing vocals reference another unclassifiable female singer, Kate Bush.

Lyrical it's an album of memory, reflecting on family, lovers, old faces, uncomfortable conversations, the spell of dreams, the pull of water. "Mother", the sole piano-driven song, is a powerful portrait of regret, while the memory of her mother ambushes Bunyan once again on the quietly devastating "Shell". On "Blue Shed", she articulates the double-edged yearning for a solitary sanctuary;

"Gunpowder" lingers on "*all the merry dances/You led me.*"

The words are as finely pared as the music, almost haiku-like. By the time the closing title track arrives, language has been all but relegated to redundancy, as Bunyan simply laces a string of words beginning with "heart" along the album's most dazzlingly lovely melody.

Like much of what has come before, the song feels like a gentle valediction. Bunyan has said she will not make another album, and this record certainly possesses all the characteristics of a goodbye.

If *Heartleap* does indeed prove to be the final destination of Bunyan's old horse and cart, it's an entirely worthy one.

Q&A

Vashti Bunyan

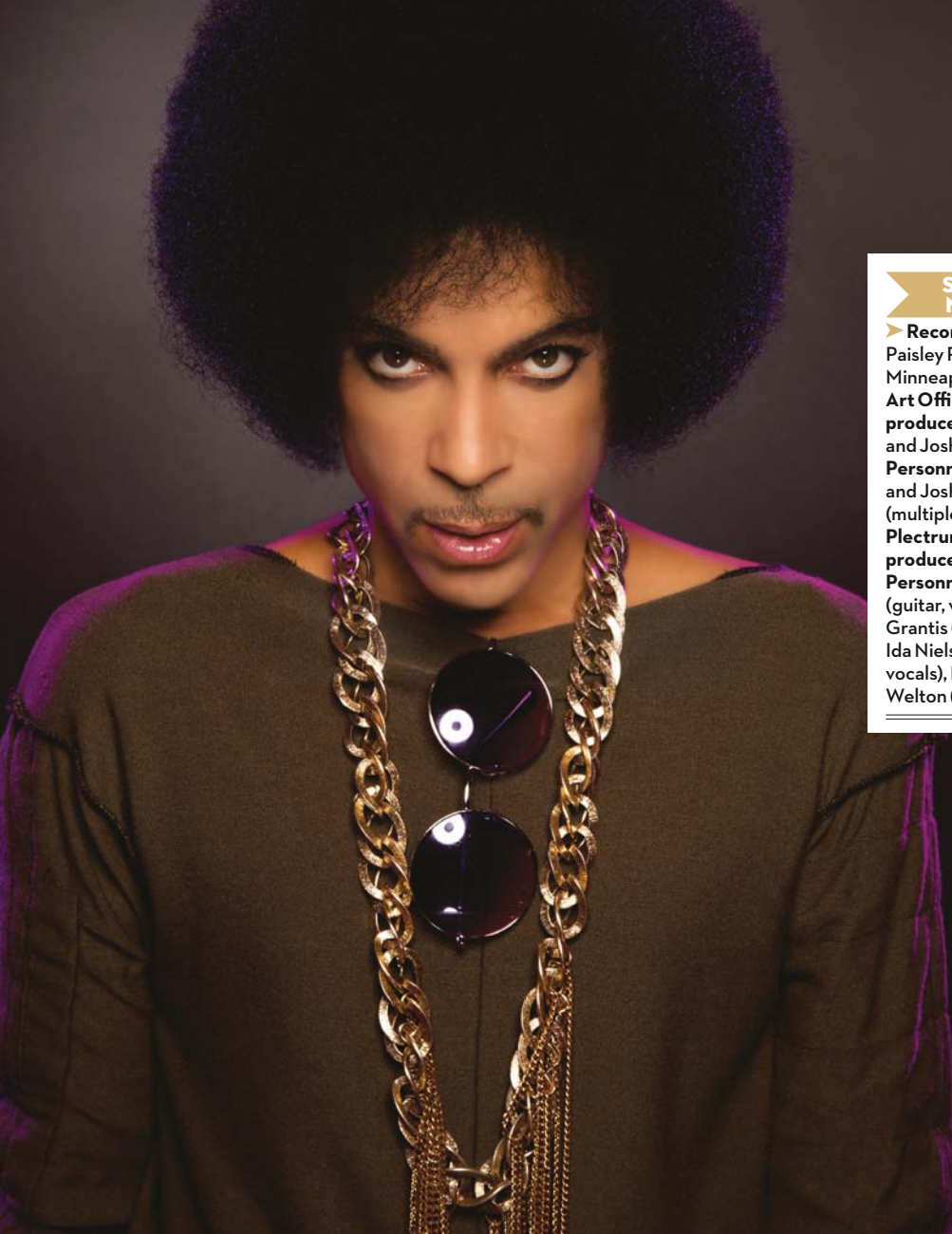
You've taken sole control on this album.

Why? I finally had the opportunity to do it the way I heard it in my head, which is in no way to denigrate anything that went before, it was all a great joy, but it just seemed time to see what I could do myself. On *Lookaftering*, Max [Richter] said, "You don't have to put a picture on every wall", and that really stayed with me. It feels so exposing because it's just me, I'm not hiding behind anybody. It's more like a self-portrait rather than someone else's portrait of me.

Would you like to work more quickly? I wanted every note to mean something, and that's really what took the time. Also, I'm very slow at coming up with the songs, although "Heartleap" came to me very quickly, and in a way it said everything I've ever wanted to say.

Is this really going to be your last album, or can I change your mind? When it was finally finished – my first deadline was 2008 – the label started taking about the next one and I thought, absolutely adamantly, 'No, I'm not going through that again!' It felt like a lot of years and a lot of my life had gone into it. Time to do something else. But minds can change.

INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON



brilliantly conceived, rapturously received Hit And Run gigs in small London clubs have reminded the world how good he can be, he has two albums to

SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Paisley Park Studios, Minneapolis
Art Official Age
produced by: Prince and Joshua Welton
Personnel: Prince and Joshua Welton (multiple instruments)
Plectrumelectrum
produced by: Prince
Personnel: Prince (guitar, vocals), Donna Grantis (guitar, vocals), Ida Nielsen (bass, vocals), Hannah Ford Welton (drums, vocals)

meet our piqued hunger for him. He is also back on Warners, the label he left on such monstrously bad terms, with the word "Slave" outrageously scrawled on his head; the label, too, on which he had all his early success. It looks very much like a comeback. Or maybe just one last go at selling Prince records in the 21st Century.

3rdeyegirl's *Plectrumelectrum* is the most interesting of the pair. Prince's new all-female band (bar its writer, auxiliary singer and guitarist, of course) backed him on his London shows, and shared the glowing reviews. Having a proper band has always brought out the best in him, from his unbeatable '80s run with the Revolution to the brief creative revival of his first album with the New Power Generation, *Diamonds And Pearls*.

3rdeyegirl was surely the stimulus for his current activity. Donna Grantis' guitar has certainly inspired his own playing, and Grantis told *Uncut* earlier this year that the example of classic rock bands such as Led Zeppelin was discussed, as they recorded live "off the floor". The high guitar whines of the instrumental title track and "Funknroll"'s swaggering riff are strong examples of this high-energy, back-to-basics approach. Prince squeals during the latter, getting off on his own music. "Fixurlikeup" uses his unique approach to feminism (previous form: "If I Was Your Girlfriend") to sketch 3rdeyegirl's rationale, in which "a girl with a guitar" is worth the "misogynistic wall of noise" made by men. Still, Prince naturally remains in sole creative charge. Supposedly only around for backing vocals as the women take the lead, he also regularly grabs the spotlight.

Plectrumelectrum isn't just an exercise in pseudo-feminist shredding. There's also the signature Spartan Prince-funk of "Boytrouble", while "Anotherlove", "Tictactoe" and "Whitecaps" are hurt, keyboard-heavy ballads. 3rdeyegirl seem to serve all his needs, and though there are no songs here to touch past glories, their excitement in the studio is captured.

Art Official Age, made with only multi-instrumentalist Joshua Welton aiding Prince, is by contrast the sort of goofily half-arsed concept album we've come to expect. Linking tracks find Prince being awoken from suspended animation by a posh young Englishwoman, who informs him of his newly evolved, healed and telepathic self. Doubtless this is the kind of science-fiction philosophy Prince, who has found great comfort in his Jehovah's Witness faith, on some level believes. His existential crises are expressed more earthily on "Breakdown", "the saddest story ever been told", which begins on understated keyboards, and becomes a laser-blasted epic. The ecstatic screams it provokes reveal the splicing of Little Richard and Al Green in Prince's DNA. "The Gold Standard" has funk guitar, and it longs for a time when "music was like a spiritual feeling", similarly explodes into imaginary dance-moves ("New Power—slide!"). It finishes with Prince in full filthy funk mode, distractedly muttering, "Let me get in there—good God!"

His pornographic obsessions are as usual disarmingly hilarious. Most unexpectedly, "Time" unveils Prince the bluesman, grunting despairingly at "another dirty hotel room, another lonely town". An attempt at part-rapped, contemporary R&B, "Art Official Cage", is only adequately successful, meanwhile, amid too many average slow jams.

Taken together, these albums don't resurrect Prince the genius. They just remind you he's still around; short of a tune, but the unique inhabitant of a purple planet all his own.

PRINCE Art Official Age PRINCE & 3RDEYEGIRL *Plectrumelectrum* WARNERBROS

Two unique new albums from the purple pioneer. *By Nick Hasted*



6/10



6/10

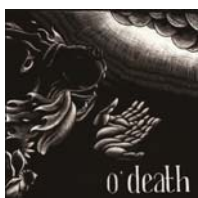
THERE HAVE BEEN 23 Prince LPs since *Sign "O" The Times* (1987), the double-album of protest funk, hot soul, screaming gospel-metal and gorgeous ballads which seemed designed to demonstrate that its creator, touched by genius, could do anything. Soon afterwards, Prince made that literally true, as he forcibly extracted himself from his Warner contract and the conventional music industry.

Free at last, he began a policy of funk over-production, as his Paisley Park studio pumped out barely differentiated Prince product. Prodigious

quantity replaced prodigious quality, and an exhausted public turned their backs. 23 LPs, and not a song on the last 20 has made any lasting impact. And still, before Kate Bush, there was no-one in 2014 whose gig tickets were so desperately sought.

Prince's records have, then, become largely irrelevant to Prince's career. He survives on an enduring mystique which, in the absence of concrete facts, suggests he only leaves Paisley Park to knock on downtown Minneapolis doors as a bodyguard-flanked Jehovah's Witness, and that sex, God, and music about both occupy all his waking hours. And then, there's his reputation as one of the greatest live acts, who started a 21-night run at the O₂ Arena in 2007 with "Purple Rain", cockily noting how many exhilarating hits he had in reserve from his golden '80s.

Despondent at the internet's impact on his control of and potential profit from recorded work, Prince has declared several times that gigs are his priority now. After the years of surfeit, the aptly titled *20Ten* was his last album for four years. But now that his



O'DEATH

Out Of Hands We Go

NORTHERN SPY

Gem of a fourth album from Greg Jamie's bluegrass mavericks

8/10

There is a quiet majesty to O'Death that

deserves wider appreciation. Ostensibly a punky bluegrass band from Brooklyn, they imbue songs like "Wait For Fire" and the brilliant "We Had A Vision" with an atmosphere of beautiful, spooky desolation. *Out Of Hands We Go* is raw and primal, with rippling banjo set against a crackling backdrop that doubles both as the sound of old vinyl and the campfire around which songwriter Greg Jamie's personal demons are exorcised. And the navel-gazing never bores: "Apple Moon" soars with splendid vim, while "Isabelle" is a howl of rampant, damaged romanticism.

PETER WATTS



MARK OLSON

Good-bye Lizelle

GLITTERHOUSE

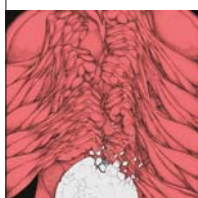
Former Jayhawk's travelling tales

7/10

Olson recorded his third solo album with his wife, Norwegian singer and

multi-instrumentalist Ingunn Ringvold, during a period of displacement – and it shows. His gift for rootsy Americana remains undimmed on "Which World Is Ours?" and "Cherry Thieves", while "Heaven's Shelter" harks back to The Jayhawks, but there's plenty more to savour. "Jesse In An Old World" and "Running Circles" are bewitching drones built around smoky Eastern textures, there's a psychedelic crackle to "Poison Oleander", and "Say You Are The River", with its flute and hand drums, is naïve campfire folk. Vibrant evidence, then, that the muse is willing to travel.

GRAEME THOMSON



OOZING WOUND

Earth Suck

THRILL JOCKEY

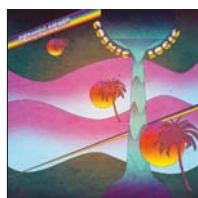
Nu-thrash trio's brutal but precise second

7/10

Self-defined as "loud fucking guitars and screaming and shit", Oozing Wound's aesthetic

suggests sunlight-averse stoner teens driven purely by anger, but there's more to this Chicago outfit than meets the ear. A recent split LP with Black Pus (what took them so long?) indicates self-awareness and a sense of humour that balances out the angst, while behind the thrash-metal brutality are three players from noise-rock/punk backgrounds, which is why *Earth Suck* messes with recognised genre patterns. It's compelling from start (the slo-mo, rhythmic bone crush of "Going Through The Motions Til I Die") to finish (the filthy and terrifyingly intense "False Peak [Earth Suck]"); if OW's main aim is simply "to slay", then mission accomplished.

SHARON O'CONNELL



PEAKING LIGHTS

Cosmic Logic

WEIRD WORLD/DOMINO

West Coast experimental pop pair's seductive fourth album

7/10

It's fair to assume anyone with a collection of 6,000

records has rampantly wide-ranging musical interests and so it is with Aaron Doyes, who works with Indra Dunis as Peaking Lights. He recently described their sound as simply "no borders, no rules", but although their latest is another intoxicating brew of kosmische, house, Afrobeat, disco, dub and Asian pop, it strips out their usual psychedelic sprawl, leaving something leaner and more insistent, if no less Technicolor and joyously hypnotic. You could say the couple have opted more for the logic of the album's title, but that's to ignore the groovy hip-hop underpinnings of "Telephone Call" and the fractal loveliness of "Eyes To Sea".

SHARON O'CONNELL

REVELATIONS

Mark Olson on cutting the cord with The Jayhawks



➤ Mark Olson's new solo album, *Good-bye Lizelle*, has its roots in "a crazy scenario where my wife Ingunn was deported from the US for 29 months. We had to be together, so we contacted an Armenian charity group – I was starting to get interested in their music – and we ended up in Armenia working on a number of songs. Then we went to South Africa." The enforced globe-trotting, compounded by Ingunn's facility with exotic instruments like the djembe, harmonium and zither-like Qanun, dictated the album's eclectic ethos. "I want to break out of the Americana scene, and break more into the international scene," says Olson. "I didn't want to do a duo with just two guitars. I wanted to have some power in it and some grooves going on." Recorded live on a Nagra tape recorder, the album has a vibrancy and spontaneity befitting a man who has rediscovered a zest for music following his apparently acrimonious departure from the reunited Jayhawks lineup in 2012. "It's a cut-the-cord scenario," he says. "I don't want to talk about those guys ever again. I feel like I've been learning for 25 years, and now I'm ready to go out and sing these songs."

GRAEME THOMSON



ROSCO

The Call Of The Cosmos

FIRE

Space cadet's Weatherall-rated solo second

7/10

You suspect Sterling Roswell (aka Rosco) has

long been a fringe dweller by choice, rather than simply a victim of music biz vagaries. After detaching from Spacemen 3 in 1988, he joined dreamy alt-rockers The Darkside, then in 2004 released his solo debut, which sourced garage punk and retro-futurist pop. Now, nine off-centre confections follow an orbit joining "Higher Than The Sun" – era Primal Scream with Syd Barrett and Lee Hazlewood, adding plush organ, murmurous vocals and electronica to sweetly atmospheric effect. The whole is gently fried, although after a rough cover of The Seeds' "Tripmaker", the last three tracks play as a blurred whole. "Outskirts Of Infinity", indeed.

SHARON O'CONNELL



SEAN ROWE

Madman

ANTI

Upstate New Yorker lets it all hang out on his earthy third album

8/10

Sean Rowe possesses a rangy, coarsely textured baritone with a rich

midrange and a seismic bottom capable of a Captain Beefheart rumble (as on "The Real Thing") or a Tony Joe White lowdown drawl ("Shine My Diamond Ring"). The skinned-back arrangements on the self-produced *Madman* isolate his voice's primal expressiveness and the plainspoken emotion of his songs. Rowe's vocals and super-distorted slide guitar riffs on "Done Calling You" are raw enough to rip flesh, while he occupies Leonard Cohen territory on the baroque "Razor Of Love", brings a Van-like lilt to "The Game" and exposes a deeply masculine tenderness on the Waitsian "My Little Man", an existential lullaby to his young son.

BUD SCOPPA



RUN RIVER NORTH

Run River North

NETTWERK

Asian heritage entwined with Uncle Sam AOR

8/10

All six members of Run

River North were born in Southern California to Korean parents, and while the band's self-titled debut resounds with the effervescent pop, rock and country hues of the Golden State its lyrics examine an immigrant's struggle for identity at the heart of American dream. That may sound overtly serious, but the themes of "Monsters Calling Home" and "Growing Up" are couched in rousing melodies somewhere between Arcade Fire and Fleetwood Mac. Vocalist Alex Hwang sings of a shared sense of home, the clash of family tradition with western culture beautifully realised on the anthemic "Beetle".

TERRY STAUNTON

STEVIE NICKS

24 Karat Gold - Songs From The Vault

WARNER BROS

Fleetwood Mac star heads to Nashville, chasing the songs that nearly got away. *By Piers Martin*



7/10

AS IF STEVIE Nicks hasn't done enough soul-searching during her 40 years in one of the world's biggest bands... On her eighth solo album, Nicks immerses herself in her past, gathering 15 of her long-lost songs together like errant children and dressing

them in traditional costume – the billowing robes and gypsy shawl – before sending them out, fully Nicksed, into the world.

24 Karat Gold - Songs From The Vault finds the 66-year-old getting her memories in order with the help of longtime associates Waddy Wachtel (he first played with her on 1973's *Buckingham Nicks*) and Dave Stewart, producer of Nicks' last solo set, 2011's *In Your Dreams*, and a band of hired hands in Nashville who knocked out new versions of Nicks' old songs in 15 days last May. *In Your Dreams*, somewhat tarnished by Stewart's sweet tooth, took 14 months. Fleetwood Mac records take far longer.

The songs in question stem from demos Nicks wrote at various stages in her career between 1969 and 1995, intended for her solo or Fleetwood Mac albums. One ballad, the bonus track "Twisted", written in '95 with Lindsey Buckingham for the film *Twister*, she felt deserved a wider audience. "When songs go into movies you might as well dump them out the window as you're driving by because they never get heard," she tells *Uncut*.

Many of these songs will be familiar to Mac devotees, having appeared online and on bootlegs or boxsets in one form or another. Indeed, Nicks' main incentive for the project was to record definitive versions of those unauthorised tracks floating around online that her assistant had drawn to her attention. Nicks hates computers and was once so worried about internet piracy that she didn't release a solo record between 2001 and 2011, so this principled stance represents some sort of progress; if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. "Just because I think computers are ruining the world, I can't expect everyone to be on my wavelength," she reasons. But to most, *24 Karat Gold* is effectively a brand new album, albeit one that on occasion has the luxury of revelling in the twists and turns of a vintage Nicks number like "Lady", formerly a fragile piano demo from the mid-'70s called "Knocking On Doors" that's now a footstep away from "Landslide".

With these demos newly upholstered as mid-tempo soft-rock ballads by a solid Nashville outfit, it's tempting to view the collection as an alternative look at Nicks' life in music, each song offering a slightly different take on key moments in her colourful career. Nicks, too, her lived-in voice stained with experience, seems to relish the chance to reacquaint herself through her lyrics with the girl she once was. The earliest cut here, a corny speakeasy pastiche called "Cathouse Blues", was



SLEEVE NOTES

► **Recorded at:** Blackbird, Nashville; Rock A Little Studio; Weapons Of Mass Entertainment Studio; Village Recorder, LA
Produced by: Dave Stewart, Waddy Wachtel, Stevie Nicks
Personnel: Stevie Nicks (vocals), Dave Stewart (guitar), Waddy Wachtel (guitar, bk vocals), Mike Campbell, Davey Johnstone (guitar), Ann Marie Colhoun (violin), Sharon Celani, Lori Nicks (bk vocals), Tom Bukovac (guitar), Michael Rhodes (bass), Dan Dugmore (banjo), Chad Cromwell (drums), Benmont Tench (keyboard), Lenny Castro (perc)

written by a 22-year-old Nicks in 1969 before she and Buckingham, who played on the original, moved to Los Angeles. By "The Dealer", a musky Tusk-era tumble, she's already worldweary: "I was the mistress of my fate, I was the card shark/If I'd've looked a little ahead, I would've run away", runs the chorus.

On *Bella Donna* cast-offs "Belle Fleur" and "If You Were My Love", Elton John guitarist Davey Johnstone reprises his original role and plays on these new versions. Her trusted foil, Mike Campbell of the Heartbreakers, rolls up his sleeves for AOR jams "Starshine" and "I Don't Care", tracks he just

about remembers writing with Nicks in the early '80s. "Mabel Normand", a moving parable based on the tragic life of the 1920s silent movie star, came to Nicks when she herself was dancing with the devil in 1985. Following the death of her godson from an accidental overdose in 2012, the song has a more profound resonance today.

As befits a compilation of songs that weren't up to scratch first time around, *24 Karat Gold* contains a few tinpot tracks that even the Nashville boys couldn't fix. Most, too, spill over the five-minute mark. But as fresh testament from one of rock's great survivors, it makes for a fascinating listen.

Q&A

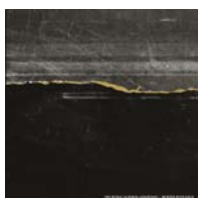
Stevie Nicks

How did you end up recording in Nashville?

The last album I did was with Dave Stewart in my house and we let it take a year because we were having so much fun. So I called him and said, "Dave, I know we spent a year doing *In Your Dreams*, but how can we do a record in two months?" And he said, "Go to Nashville. Those guys are on the clock." So you go to Nashville and hire six or seven of the best players in the world and give them your 16 demos and they give you 15 days. You do two songs a day, which is unheard of in the way that we record, usually, but they are union people so they get there at nine in the morning.

How did "Hard Advice" come about? "Hard Advice" was a lecture Tom Petty gave me on his way through Phoenix one night. I was having a little problematic moment in my life and he gave me one of his seriously hard advice lectures. He looked me straight in the eyes with those big clear blue eyes and said, "This pain's gone on too long. Go home, light up your incense and your candles and go to your Bösendorfer and write some real songs."

This could be an alternative greatest hits. Or a greatest hits that never came out. Somebody said at one point, "If you took the last line out of this chorus it would be much more of a hit record," and I just flat out said in front of the record company and everybody else: "I'm not trying to make a hit record here, I'm trying to make a great record." Hit records don't even sell anymore, anyway. Records don't sell anymore. *INTERVIEW: PIERS MARTIN*



THE RURAL ALBERTA ADVANTAGE
Mended With Gold
PAPER BAG/SADDLE CREEK

Art-damaged, oozing with personality and throbbing with barely controlled intensity

8/10

On their early recordings, The Rural Alberta Advantage came off like amiable folkies with some thump, like, say, the Lumineers, but the Toronto trio has become progressively more over the top. Singer-guitarist Nils Edenloff wrote much of his band's third album holed up in a remote Ontario cottage, and there's a haunted, frequently unhinged quality to its songs and performances. On the thrashing, delirious "All We've Ever Known", Edenloff, multi-instrumentalist Amy Cole and drummer Paul Banwatt raise holy hell like a bantam Arcade Fire, while "On The Rocks" rivals Alt-J in its twisted barrage of clatter, drone and fuzz.

BUDSCOPPA



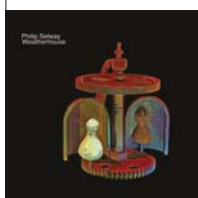
BENJAMIN SCHOOS
Beau Futur
FREAKSVILLE/BELIEVE

Serious stuff from one-time Eurovision songwriter

8/10

It's tempting to suggest this sometime TV and radio presenter – also known as Miam Monster Miam – is a pastiche artist, so closely does he stick to his Gallic predecessors' templates. Leaning frequently on the moody stylings of Serge Gainsbourg's arranger, Jeane Claude Vannier, Schoos also nods to soundtrack composer Francis Lai on "Dans Les Bras De La Nuit", while Laetitia Sadier adds a typically sensuous touch to "Dernière Danse". Stef Kamil Carlens' throaty vocals on "Daddy's Down The Mine" are more Tom Waits, admittedly, but, like his French neighbour Sebastian Tellier's, this Belgian's sincerity is affectionate, alluring and convincing.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



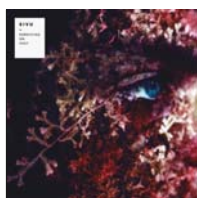
PHILIP SELWAY
Weatherhouse
BELLA UNION

Expansive second solo album from Radiohead drummer

7/10

If Selway's 2010 debut, *Familial*, was a pleasing exercise in low-key acoustica, the follow-up is a considerably more fully formed affair, rich in texture and atmosphere, though reprising *Familial*'s aura of downbeat anxiety. The twitchy "Miles Away" and spectral "Ghosts" flirt with Selway's day job, but he has other strings to his bow. "Around Again" has a spare, jazzy feel that suggests an affinity with John Martyn and Talk Talk, "It Will End In Tears" is a big, weepy piano ballad, and the chiming "Let It Go" finds him locating his inner U2.

GRAEME THOMSON



SIVU
Something On High
ATLANTIC

English songwriter adopts Finnish nom de plume for sensual orch-pop debut

7/10

James Page makes dashing romantic music, inhabiting the same lush, windswept indie-pop territory as Wild Beasts, Goyte and even Sigur Rós. Among these sensitive and sensual orchestral manoeuvres, the star turn is Page's fluting, androgynous voice: evoking Jeff Buckley at his most tender on the slow spare crawl of "Sleep", or the quivering emotion of Antony Hegarty in a higher register on "Feel Something". As the title suggests, *Something On High* obsesses on matters of faith, most compellingly on "Bodies", a dystopian reimagining of the Ark story.

GRAEME THOMSON



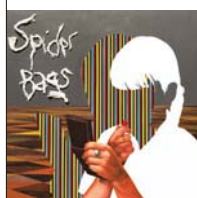
JOHN SOUTHWORTH
Niagara
TIN ANGEL

Ambitious double album by creative Canadian songwriter
Idiosyncratic Canadian Southworth has plenty

7/10

of oddball projects under his belt – he once released an album consisting entirely of rejected jingles – and here he's recorded a double album that features one side of songs inspired by Canada, the other by America. Given that Southworth, the son of '70s glam songwriter Peter Shelley, records in a bewildering array of vintage pop-folk styles that recalls magpie talent like Van Dyke Parks, it can be hard to spot any difference, so instead bathe in the sparse beauty of "Ode To The Morning Sky", the sumptuous "Womb Of Time" or the wise, glowering "Weird Woman".

PETER WATTS



SPIDER BAGS
Frozen Letter
MERGE

North Carolina trio hit heights with excellent fourth album

8/10

Spider Bags' fourth album begins as frantically as you might expect from an album recorded in just three days, a blistering pace set by opening track "Back With You Again In The World", a spirited psych-pop cracker grounded by Dan McGee's deadpan vocal. In these early moments the band seeks a balance between haste and speed, with tracks like "Chem Trails" finding a pulsating rhythm that teeters on the brink of derangement. Later tracks are becalmed: "Coffin Car" is an engrossing slow death waltz, while "We Got Problems" is sprawling dirty blues, with a committed guest vocal from Superchunk's Mac McCaughan.

PETER WATTS



TALLESEN
Stills Lit Through
SOFTWARE

Psychedelic dreamtronica from upstate New York

Producing sense-jarring, atonal music that makes ears bleed is relatively

7/10

easy. But the Hudson Valley-based composer and visual artist formerly known as Cayman Johnson has an admirable flair for lush electronica that defies rhythmic or melodic order yet still radiates a vivid beauty. Released on the label run by fellow New York sound-warper Oneohtrix Point Never, Cayman's debut covers a broad waterfront of wilfully arrhythmic beats and aqueous ambient gloop, from stereo-panning Cubist glitchcore like "Blue Stills" and "Motion Past Shine" to lysergically luminous Aphex-oid gleams like "Plasticized Fsa" and "Evelbury". A handful of lesser tracks feel timid, but most reward close attention.

STEPHEN DALTON



MINA TINDLE
Parades
BELIEVE RECORDINGS

Classy French singer-songwriter returns with help from The National
Mirroring the Anglophone popworld's long love affair with French chanteuses,

7/10

Mina Tindle is a young Parisienne who grew up idolising North American singers like Feist and Cat Power, eventually relocating to Brooklyn and guesting on The National's 2007 album *The Boxer*. Now back in France, Tindle's second album is a bilingual mix of polished sophistopop which veers too close to sterile 1980s power-ballad pastiche in places. But the stand-outs tracks "Je Sais", "Seaside" and "I Command" all capture a sultry shimmer somewhere between Liz Fraser and Lana Del Rey. National guitarist Bryce Dessner makes two guest appearances, most notably on the lovely, smouldering, slow-burn waltz "L'Astrakan".

STEPHEN DALTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Look Again To The Wind: Johnny Cash's Bitter Tears Revisited
SONY

Cash's Native American concept album re-imagined

8/10

Johnny Cash alienated part of his traditional country audience when his growing interest in the folk revival led him to Greenwich Village, and – in collaboration with Peter La Farge – a song cycle on the travails of the American Indian. Producer Joe Henry's tribute to that album, 1964's *Bitter Tears*, re-imagines it beautifully, with a masterly reworking of "As Long As The Grass Shall Grow" (in nine-minute version, and three-minute reprise) by Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, and a plaintive "Apache Tears" by Emmylou Harris. Kris Kristofferson's "Ballad Of Ira Hayes" is a tooth-whistling heartbreaker, too.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



JESSIE WARE **Tough Love** PMR/ISLAND

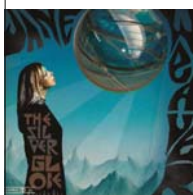
Clapham diva goes for pop jugular

After the cappuccino froth of debut album *Devotion*, *Tough Love* uses broad strokes and

7/10

a conservative palette to reposition Jessie Ware as a major British pop star with feelings, but in the wake of the daring debut LP by FKA Twigs, much of this second album comes across as a cynical box-ticking exercise. Yet it works: producers Ben Ash and Benny Blanco forge pure FM gold on "Want That Feeling" and the title track, while "Pieces", with its serious cello and Adele-sized chorus, should become an *X Factor* standard. Ware is no Dylan – love has its ups and downs, she observes – but she is now well-equipped for the journey ahead.

PIERS MARTIN



JANE WEAVER **The Silver Globe** BIRD/FINDERS KEEPERS

Sparkling strangeness from one woman genre-buster

Weaver's sixth album is a compelling dispatch from the margins of

8/10

weird folk, art-house film music and cosmic rock, areas which have long provided rich pickings for the excellent Finders Keepers label, run by her husband Andy Votel. The sweeping analogue soundscape incorporates Hawkwind samples (the killer-riff driven "The Electric Mountain"), an appearance from Aussie space rockers Cybotron (the epic "Argent", strafed by a spaced-out saxophone solo), and contributions from David Holmes and Damon Gough. The results are by turn atmospheric, deeply odd, funky and wistful, but never less than superb.

GRAEME THOMSON



WEEZER **Everything Will Be Alright In The End** REPUBLIC

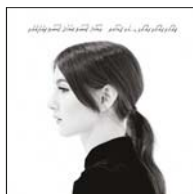
Rivers goes back to the old school on nostalgic ninth

Weezer's relationship with their fanbase is

6/10

complex: fans adore the geek angst and Pixies-indebted rocking of *Weezer* and *Pinkerton*, while the band appear fonder of goofy experimentation and an irony that feels oddly hollow. Their ninth album is pitched as a reward to the faithful. *Weezer* producer Ric Ocasek is on board, with single "Back To The Shack" finding Rivers Cuomo offering an olive branch, kind of: "I thought I'd find a new audience/I forgot that disco sucks". In this respect, it has its charms. "Ain't Got Nobody" and "Go Away", the latter featuring Bethany Cosentino from Best Coast, fuzz away affably – but the naïveté of their debut remains elusive.

LOUIS PATTISON



WEYES BLOOD **The Innocents** MEXICAN SUMMER

Experimental ghost-folk singer summons up a literary netherworld of sadness

8/10

Blending artisan psych-folk songcraft with spare electronics and experimental touches, Weyes Blood is the solo alias of sometime Ariel Pink collaborator Natalie Mering. With a title alluding to a classic Henry James ghost story, Mering's atmospheric second album is a masterclass in spooked melancholia, clothing her cool Nico-esque vibrato in spine-shivering folk-noir arrangements. Harmony-drenched hymnal "Requiem For Forgiveness" is church music for the godless, but "Bad Magic" is the killer here, a passionate howl of heartbroken melodrama which evokes timeless jukebox weepies like "Unchained Melody" or "Love Hurts".

STEPHEN DALTON

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Weyes
Blood



➤ Heartbreak has rarely sounded as beautiful as it does on *The Innocents* by Weyes Blood. On the second album under her Flannery O'Connor-inspired alias, Pennsylvania-born, New York-based, 26-year-old avant-folk experimentalist Natalie Mering is venting her own raw emotions but also tapping into "archetypes of grief and loss" that most people experience in adolescence and young adulthood.

"I would definitely say at the end of this record I was feeling pretty dejected. My late teens and early twenties felt really heavy and oppressive and heartbroken. Compartmentalising has been a huge struggle for me, I've never really been able to do it. Everything that happened seemed to combine into into this one heaving orchestra of cacophony."

Mering's musical hinterland's in avant-garde sonics and tape manipulation, but *The Innocents* is her attempt at fusing that esoteric realm with timeless folk-rock forms. "I always had this gift of being able to sing very pretty, more standard ballads, but I was always more attracted to the mystery of the unknown," she says. "So I'm trying to make the two worlds meet: relatable, archetypal songs and futuristic sound-effects. That's my goal as a musician."

STEPHEN DALTON



XYLOURIS WHITE **Goats** OTHER MUSIC

Cretan folk lutist meets the Dirty Three percussionist uptown

7/10

George Xylouris is nephew of the late Nikos Xylouris, a Greek singer and composer of such esteemed reputation they called him "the archangel of Crete". On *Goats*, he joins forces with Australian drummer Jim White for a head-to-head honed through sessions in Greece, Australia and New York. Xylouris' playing is a sombrelly beautiful thing, steeped in traditional Greek folk forms, but capable of deft improvisatory leaps. White, meanwhile, is such a presence on the kit that his percussion has the sense of a lead instrument. Largely instrumental, Xylouris takes voice for the florid "Fandomas". Guy Picciotto of Fugazi produces, flatly and cleanly in a way that plays to the music's simple strengths.

LOUIS PATTISON



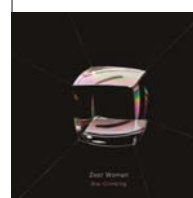
RICHARD YOUNGS **Primary Concrete Attack** FOURTH DIMENSION

British folk/noise auteur goes dub; wyrd Jamaica!

8/10

You can blame Krakow – if Youngs hadn't gone there to perform at 2013's Re:source Festival, Fourth Dimension would never have dared him to make a dub record (Youngs hates the genre). There's something to be said for tackling music you loathe, then, because *Primary Concrete Attack* is a fantastically upsetting take on dub, as though Youngs has evacuated all but the bare bones of dub, keeping only its extra-musical signifiers – delay, echo, reverb – and using those tools on raw material from an electro-convulsive scrapyard. Finally, someone's made good on the warped promise of Cabaret Voltaire's dub tactics.

JONDALE



ZOOT WOMAN **Star Climbing** EMBASSY OF MUSIC

Stuart Price's retro-moderne minimalists return

Zoot Woman first made their mark in 2000 with "It's Automatic", an

7/10

irresistibly lean and funky synth-pop single with a sweetly desolate vocal core. Their debut LP was well ahead of the "yacht rock" curve, but sourced Hall & Oates as well as Kraftwerk and Pet Shop Boys. Once distinctive, their sound became ubiquitous – which is why, 14 years on, LP number four sees them opt for housed-up productions of greater complexity. "Rock & Roll Symphony" is a sign that these are Daft Punk days, but ZW have sensibly resisted the urge to shape their sound for arenas, the gaseous disco of "Coming Up For Air" and darkly glittering instrumental "Elusive" underlining the poignancy that was always their trump card.

SHARON O'CONNELL



SCORING: THE ORIGINAL ALBUM

10 Masterpiece

1 Poor!

SCORING: EXTRA MATERIAL

10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrappings

Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS



UNDERWORLD

Dubnobasswithmyheadman

JBO/UNIVERSAL

Thunder thunder, lightning ahead! Now dark and even longer – a revolutionary album turns 20. *By Garry Mulholland*

TRACKLIST

CD1 *Dubnobasswithmyheadman*

- 1 Dark & Long
- 2 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You
- 3 Surfboy
- 4 Spoonman
- 5 Tongue
- 6 Dirty Epic
- 7 Cowgirl
- 8 River Of Bass
- 9 ME

CD2 *Singles 1991–1994*

- 1 The Hump (Wild Beast)
- 2 Eclipse (Released As Lemon Interrupt)
- 3 Rez
- 4 Dirty (Released As Lemon Interrupt)
- 5 Dirtyguitar
- 6 Dark & Long (Hall's Edit)
- 7 Dark & Long (Dark Train)
- 8 Spikee

9/10 AT THE TURN of the 1990s, Karl Hyde took a job in the City. His synth-rock group Underworld had been through two albums and three lineup changes in three years, and had got nowhere but dropped by the Sire label. It had been seven years since Hyde's only brush with success, an electropop group called Freur whose "Doot-Doot" had got to No 17 – in New Zealand.

His partner in both Freur and Underworld, Rick Smith, was still beaver away in the home studio in Romford, Essex, that the pair bought with advances, experimenting with techno, refusing to give in. But Hyde couldn't pay the mortgage from playing guitar, and earning regular money felt good. Maybe some things just weren't meant to be.

Then, stuff happened. Hyde was asked to work on an album project in Los Angeles. He would have to leave his job. Stupidly, wisely, he did. The

project moved to Paisley Park, Minneapolis, and suddenly Hyde was hanging out with Prince. Next, he got a phone call asking him to join Debbie Harry's band as guitarist for a world tour that took in shows with Iggy Pop and at Wembley Stadium. Hyde was fulfilling childhood dreams but, while he did so, he continued to write lyrics every day, taking a notebook on journeys around Minnesota and New York and capturing everything that he saw, heard and felt, until he had notebooks full of lyrical collages; snatches of conversation, surreal takes on passers-by, inspired by his favourite recent album, *New York* by Lou Reed.

Hyde returned to Essex feeling vindicated, and found that his old partner Smith had been working with a local 19-year-old DJ called Darren Emerson. Emerson had helped him strip the tired rock and pop clichés out of Underworld's sound and make techno fit for discerning



Observations of chaos... Emerson, Smith and Hyde in 1994



TRACKLIST Continued

CD3 Remixes 1992 - 1994

- 1 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You (Jam Scaper)
- 2 Cowgirl (Irish Pub In Kyoto Mix)
- 3 Dark & Long (Most 'ospitable Mix)
- 4 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You (Telegraph 16.11.92)
- 5 Dark & Long (Burts Mix)
- 6 Dogman Go Woof
- 7 Dark & Long (Thing In A Book Mix)

CD4 Previously Unreleased Recordings 1991 - 1993

- 1 Concord (3 Comp75 id9 A1771 Aug 93A)
- 2 Dark & Long (1st ruffid 3A15512)
- 3 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You (A1765 Sky Version id4. Harmone6 COMP43)
- 4 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You (After sky id6 15512)
- 5 Can You Feel Me? (from A4796)
- 6 Birdstar (A1558 Nov 92B.1)
- 7 Dirty Epic (Dirty Ambi Piano A1764 Oct 91)
- 8 Spoonman (version1 A1559 Nov92)
- 9 Organ (Eclipse Version From A4796)
- 10 Cowgirl (Alt Cowgirl C69 Mix From A1564)

CD5 Live Jam Kyme Rd (Previously Unreleased Live Rehearsal 1993)

- 1 Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You
- 2 Improv 1
- 3 Bigmouth
- 4 Improv 2
- 5 Big Meat Show
- 6 Improv 3
- 7 Spoonman

→ dancefloors. Hyde had a choice: give up music for cash and security, or take all this new impetus and have one last stab at making a great album. So Hyde waved goodbye to a promising career in financial services and the trio set about making a record that reset the boundaries of what dance music could do, and who it could reach. Good choice.

Time has been very kind to *Dubnobasswithmyheadman*, perhaps the only third album that everyone – including its makers – counts as a debut. Its nine tracks of slick, bass-heavy undulations are expertly arranged to rise and fall like high-speed train journeys, as futuristic as the best of Kraftwerk or The Human League. But they also find space for Hyde's whispered, mumbled and hollered observations of chaos, both urban and personal, and of his unfettered horniness.

The opener, "Dark & Long", sets the tone, not

just for the arm-wrestle between bliss and discomfort of the rest of the album, but for Underworld – a dark, long career of dark, long songs. They could be about night-time loneliness, about filthy sex, or they could just be the last live banger as blackness envelopes the festival site.

But if the sleek, multi-dimensional techno tunes "Dark & Long", "Mmm... Skyscraper I Love You", "Cowgirl" and "Dirty Epic" were destined to become Underworld's live anthems, it is the three slower, more contemplative tracks that reached out to non-dance fans and provided the in-vogue 'chill-out' moments. They reinforced the sense of *Dubnobass...* as a perfectly conceived album, with dynamic highs and lows and a variety of complementary moods.

"Tongue" replaces BPM with dreamy guitar and birdsong, "River Of Bass" is slick white reggae, and eco-anthem "ME" (aka "Mother Earth") is the album's risky closer, tinkling Balearic

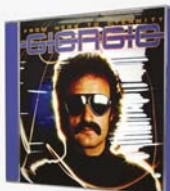
HOW TO BUY... THE PATH TO DUBNOBASSWITHMYHEADMAN

From electronic disco to headphone trips, these albums laid the groundwork for Underworld's finest release

GIORGIO MORODER From Here To Eternity

CASABLANCA, 1977

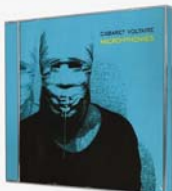
Made to cash in on the groundbreaking impact of Donna Summer's "I Feel Love", Italian-born and Munich-based Moroder's ninth album further reinvented disco as a primarily electronic medium. He and engineer Robert Wedell's hypnotic sequenced grooves provide the bedrock for Underworld's undulating repetitions from *Dubno...*, through "Born Slippy .NUXX", and beyond.



CABARET VOLTAIRE Micro-Phonies

VIRGIN, 1984

The pioneering Sheffield electronic duo's second major label album remains their most underrated, possibly because MTV liked the video for "Sensoria". But, the Cabs' sinister, paranoid take on synth-pop paved the way for EBM ('Electronic Body Music') and all things industrial, and provided an art-disco template for Underworld's pounding beats and Karl Hyde's surreal, whispered, cut 'n' paste way with words.



PET SHOP BOYS Introspective

PARLOPHONE, 1988

Britpop's greatest synth-pop duo threw themselves onto the new post-house dancefloor for their third album. Consisting of just six extended songs, Tennant and Lowe mixed pure pop with a cover of Sterling Void's early deep house plea for global peace "It's Alright"; a blend of sweet harmonies, cutting-edge beats and progressive sentiments that found its way onto *Dubno...*'s eco-friendly closer "ME".



APHEX TWIN Selected Ambient Works 85-92

R&S, 1992

The debut double album by Richard D James may not be aimed as firmly at the dancefloor as Underworld's headbanging beats. But the success of Aphex Twin's defiantly old-school synth ruminations established British techno as a music fit for long-players, headphones and a listening experience more head-trip than chill-out. Much of Underworld's early audience were Aphex fans who wanted to rock out, too.





Q&A

Karl Hyde on getting rock music out of his system, the “mapped journeys” in his lyrics, and Lou Reed...

FORMANY, *Dubnobasswithmyheadman* was the first post-acid house dance album that actually sounded like an album, as opposed to a collection of singles and filler. It therefore re-invented dance as a festival or stadium-friendly genre that rock and indie fans could understand. **Do you agree?** “I do. Just after its release we played a Megadog all-nighter at Brixton Academy and I remember looking out into the audience and it was like oil and water. There were pockets of indie kids and larger areas of dance kids and they were all looking at each other as if to say: ‘What are you doing here? This is our band!’ It was like standing on a bridge and watching two banks of a river coming together.”

Where did the title come from? “It’s something that Rick had written on a DAT or cassette box that I misread. A Russell Hoban-ism.”

You and Rick Smith had been at it for 14 years before *Dubnobass...* finally brought you success, acclaim and critical respect. Had there been times when you’d both wanted to give up? “Oh yeah. Around 1990-91 I got a job in the City because I couldn’t get any work in the music business. It was fantastic going to work and getting paid and writing lyrics in my lunch hour and the people I worked with were more interesting than most I’d met in the music

industry. I wavered. But something said... just give it one more go.”

Is it true that you were working as a session musician at Paisley Park while Rick Smith and Darren Emerson were connecting back in Essex? “Yeah. I spent about two months working on an artist’s album while Prince was putting together the New Power Generation. I met Prince a couple of times in the kitchen. Seemed like a nice guy.

Miles Davis was in town, along with Sheila E, The JB’s and Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. I saw one of Miles’ last shows, playing at Prince’s club, Glam Slam. There are definitely recordings out there of Miles and Prince jamming. Then I played guitar on tour with Debbie Harry and Chris Stein. I got to play at Wembley Stadium and tour with Iggy Pop. I come from a football family and as I was rubbish at football it was the only way my dad was ever gonna see me play at Wembley. It was really important for me because I hadn’t 100 per cent committed to dance culture and I needed to get something out of my system, do things

that I’d dreamed of as a kid. Then I could put a line through that and say, ‘Right – now what are we doing?’”

What did Darren Emerson bring to Underworld? “His youthful attitude. Encouragement when I felt discouraged in myself. For example, I wanted to sell my guitars. I was fed up with people blasting away over a dance beat. But it was Darren, who was a Beatles fan as well as a 19-year-old DJ on the house scene, who said, ‘No, you’re wrong. It sounds Balearic.’ It was useful to have a barometer of what worked on the scene to check things with. And I loved his devil-may-care enthusiasm. I’d spent 10 years trying to look right in front of a camera and mimic people who were successful. Darren just didn’t give a fuck.”

It now feels like an album about sleazy sex in London, Essex and New York. Is it? “Ha! Those words were scraped off the streets. It was my job to be a gatherer of real experiences we could use. On previous records I’d been fairly vacuous, so this time around I had to bring something real to the party. So while Rick was working his butt off in the studio I was out in the street having some fairly dangerous experiences because I felt that was important... to go as far as it needed to match a high calibre of music. It had to be autobiographical. And it couldn’t be nice.”

Are your logic-defying lyrics stream-of-consciousness? “They are logical if I pointed out to you where every lyric comes from. They are mapped journeys. They start at a point in a city and I go to another point and I document the things I see, hear, smell, interjected with things they evoke in me. ‘Dark & Long’ was written in

Minnesota on the prairies, with thunderheads coming in. ‘Mmm... Skyscraper I Love You’ was walking the midnight streets in Greenwich Village when I was working with Debbie Harry and Chris Stein. I was very much inspired by Lou Reed’s *New York* album. I imagined him sitting in cafés and bars and eavesdropping conversations and singing conversational American and I thought, ‘I’m gonna sing conversational English.’”

“It was my job to be a gatherer of real experiences we could use... the words were scraped off the street”

So how do you feel about *Dubnobasswithmyheadman* now? “It’s my favourite of the Underworld series. Such a magic sound.” **INTERVIEW: GARRY MULHOLLAND**

pianos, shuffling baggy beats, and harmonies pulled straight off a late ’80s Pet Shop Boys B-side. It works purely because it stands in such opposition to the pounding beats and urban danger that has gone before; the friendly pop calm after a storm of sinister late-night scenes.

The four discs of extras that comprise the full 5CD deluxe package will thrill completists, but perhaps blur the picture by prizing quantity over quality. Nevertheless, it’s fascinating to hear Underworld move from the dodgy funk-rock of 1992’s “The Hump” to the astonishing “Rez” in just a few short months. “Rez” is Underworld’s Eureka moment; an almost “Baba O’Riley”-like synth oscillation, gradually, expanding into a sleek, undulating epic.

Previously unreleased work-in-progress versions of “Dark & Long” and “Mmm... Skyscraper I Love You” are fascinating, too. Here, the trio – and Hyde in particular – are still feeling

their way tentatively towards the definitive Underworld sound, struggling to connect words and melody lines with beats. “Can You Feel Me?” and “Birdstar” were pre-*Dubnobass...* rejects and it’s easy to hear why, still rooted as they are in mid-Atlantic dance-rock, like INXS without the Stoniness.

The seven tracks here that are culled from a home studio rehearsal for 1993 Underworld live shows are more evidence of a confused band suddenly becoming a cutting-edge powerhouse, casually inventing stadium techno in a small room in Romford in front of a few friends and family.

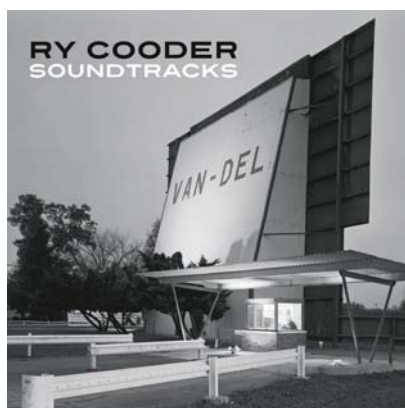
But it’s the nine tracks that comprise the original *Dubnobasswithmyheadman* that you’ll return to again and again. On the still-stunning “Dirty Epic”, Hyde implores the listener to “Ride the sainted rhythms/On the midnight train to Romford” amid multi-layered

electronic noise so rich, deep and visceral that you want to believe that Romford is as evocative a destination as Georgia. Thankfully, for Underworld and us, Karl Hyde believed enough to choose it over Los Angeles, Minneapolis or the filthy lucre of London’s square mile. Twenty years later, the results of that crazy belief still sound like dance music’s dirtiest epic.

EXTRAS: Four discs and 32 tracks of contemporary singles and remixes, unreleased demos (including the tracks featured in an alternative version of *Dubnobass...* that Underworld posted online in 2008) and a live-in-the-studio rehearsal from 1993. Comprehensive and sometimes interesting, but even the most committed Underworld nerd might struggle to love six long, long versions of “Mmm... Skyscraper I Love You”.



Topscore: Ry Cooder
in the late '70s



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THE LONG RIDERS 1980
MUSIC FROM ALAMO BAY 1985
PARIS, TEXAS 1985
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CROSSROADS 1986
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RY COODER

Soundtracks

RHINO

Twang! Seven-disc boxset brings Ryland's other career into sharp focus. *By Michael Bonner*

8/10

1980 WAS AN auspicious year for Ry Cooder. As he exited the '70s, Cooder had brought his

considerable skills to bear on the blues, early jazz, R'n'B, Tex-Mex, country and calypso. But the new decade offered the opportunity to extend his range yet further: into film soundtracks, and the new set of creative disciplines they presented.

In fact, Cooder had already dabbled in films. In 1970, under the auspices of Jack Nitzsche, he had played bottleneck guitar on the *Performance* score. Meanwhile, in 1978, Jack Nicholson used some Cooder slide on *Goin' South*; later that year, Cooder reunited with Nitzsche and another former collaborator, Captain Beefheart, on "Hard Working Man" for Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar*. But in 1980, Cooder was approached by director Walter Hill to score his Western, *The Long Riders*. They

subsequently worked together on another seven films across a 16-year period – five of which are included in this boxset.

The score for *The Long Riders* found Cooder digging deep into traditional folk idioms. Assembling players he'd worked with previously on his solo albums – Jim Keltner, David Lindley and Jim Dickinson – alongside traditional players including Tom Sauber, Curt Boutsier and Milt Holland, Cooder fashioned a historically authentic score. There are dulcimers, fiddles, banjos and Civil War-era songs. Indeed, much of Cooder's work with Hill is predicated on this kind of approach, working to fit into the time and setting of the film.

After *The Long Riders*, Cooder ran two careers in parallel for much of the '80s. His work as a solo artist and the increasing volume of commissions he undertook for Hollywood meant that by the end of

Q&A

Ry Cooder

Why was *Paris, Texas* so successful? It was a sound and an image that went perfectly together. He was a good shooter, Wim, so it looked great. So what are you going to do out there? Try for some nature tone, some blending of wind and air sounds? It's not going to have any fancy harmonic references. It's too little a boat. Wenders was frightened as he was on deadline; he had to go to the Cannes festival and get it done. So I said, "Jeez, what do you want to do?" He said, "Play Blind Willie Johnson, it'll probably be OK." Trouble with guitars, though, you picture one guy in a chair playing, and you don't want that, you want to evoke something spatially. But in this case, we were able to move tone centres around pretty good. It's just a tone-centred idea with this little guitar thing noodling along.

the decade he'd released 13 albums in total, 10 of which were film scores. By the middle of the '80s, Cooder had begun to work with other directors apart from Hill. His score, *Music For Alamo Bay* (1985), accompanied Louis Malle's drama about a returning Vietnam veteran. The "Theme From Alamo Bay" is one of Cooder's most beautiful compositions, an elegant and haunting blend of traditional Japanese instruments, Cooder's trademark slide and a wistful piano refrain from Van Dyke Parks. Elsewhere, Cooder augments the usual suspects (Keltner, Lindley, Dickinson) with John Hiatt, Chris Ethridge, Cesar Rosas and David Hidalgo for a polyrhythmic stew encompassing everything from barroom blues ("Gooks On Main Street") to dusty ballads ("Too Close") and more abstract tone pieces like "Klan Meeting".

Tone pieces become an integral part of his masterpiece, *Paris, Texas* (1985). There are no songs to speak of (apart from Harry Dean Stanton's melancholic "Canción Mixteca"), just the stark twang and rattlesnake rustle of Cooder's bottleneck slide. The main *Paris, Texas* theme alone – based on Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark Is The Night", which Cooder covered on his debut album – is incredibly evocative; a single-string slide guitar turned to the desert, full of space and atmosphere. Initially, the LP appears fragmentary – some of these pieces are under two minutes, many are avant-garde tones – but on closer inspection it's possible to divine a strategy at work here. Throughout, Cooder revisits his Blind Willie Johnson motif, and viewed holistically, *Paris, Texas* is an experimental variation on a theme, looping round "Dark Is The Night".

After such a milestone, the more conventional *Blue City* (1986) feels like a step back. The sound is very mid-'80s: slap bass and synths mingle with steel drums on "Elevation

Jim Keltner appears on most of these albums, as well as many of your solo records. What does he bring to a session that's so unique? He had a spatiality, like jazz musicians do, as opposed to straight rock musicians. He could look at the film and be affected by it. Jim, of course, had good reflexes and a good eye for the moving image. It's important. Otherwise you have a room full of rock guys who don't give a damn what's going on up on the screen.

Would you ever consider recording another soundtrack? Well, coincidentally, my son Joaquim is very good at this. He grew up drawing crayons on the floor while we scored *The Long Riders*. He's done some small films very well. He's after me to do this work again. He said, "You're missing the boat. People are copying you right and left. All these TV shows you never watch..." So we went to see a film agent... I'd like to take a shot again. It's good work. I'd like to make some money sometime.

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL BONNER

13 ft". We must console ourselves with one highlight: the tender acoustic wash of "Billy And Annie". *Crossroads* (1986) similarly suffers from '80s production values, and is perhaps Cooder's least successful soundtrack. For Hill's contemporary riff on the Robert Johnson story, Cooder's score mixed fresh compositions with blues covers. As a solo artist, Cooder tended to privilege more obscure blues artists – but here, working with Sonny Terry and Frank Frost, he comes closest to 12-bar blues, transforming JB Lenoir's "Down In Mississippi" or folksong "Cotton Needs A Pickin'" into rowdy roadhouse stompers. By contrast, Hill's *Johnny Handsome* (1989), is a more ambitious affair, recorded with just Keltner and saxophonist Steve Douglas, with horn arrangements by Van Dyke Parks. Essentially, these are textured mood pieces like the keening "Fountain Walk" or the ambient wash of "I Like Your Eyes".

By the time Cooder came to make *Trespass* (1993) for Hill, he had committed himself entirely to soundtrack work. He hadn't released a solo album since *Get Rhythm* in 1987, and wouldn't again until *Chávez Ravine* in 2005. Arguably, soundtracks gave Cooder greater freedom to experiment away from the more conventional requirements of a solo studio record. *Trespass*, recorded in cahoots with Keltner and trumpeter Jon Hassell, is among Cooder's most potent, the closest he comes to experimental jazz. Hassell's trumpet slithers round Cooder and Keltner's electronically treated guitars and drums. The vibe

is moody, dissonant. Hill continued to record scores into the '90s and beyond, but with less frequency; his last soundtrack to date is *My Blueberry Nights*, for Wong Kar-Wai.

This set is a good primer for Cooder's soundtrack work, although two of his best – the Bayou twang of *Southern Comfort* and the rich 19th-Century idioms of *Geronimo: An American Legend* – are sadly absent. Here's hoping a

Volume 2 will follow soon.



STEVE ARRINGTON Way Out 80-84 TUMMY TOUCH

The pick of oft-sampled Dayton funk maestro's solo years, plus unreleased tracks from the archive

7/10

Arrington was a high flyer in the post-Rick James funk-rock roll of honour – both as the lead singer with Slave and in his own Hall Of Fame. Gathering the titular start-of-the-decade solo hit, along with such hard-to-resist pleasures as the Slave-assisted US smash "Summertime Lovin'" and the suitably futuristic "Special FX From Mars" this vibrant collection celebrates Arrington's sound. The combination of power-packed, bass-heavy synths, screaming guitars and super-sensual vocalising has understandably remained a rich sample source for the likes of A Tribe Called Quest, Jay-Z and Snoop Dogg to sample. Returned to recording after an extended period preaching, Arrington's touch is still sure on the joyful "Fun And Roll Junky", an unfinished early '80s track given a contemporary sheen. While repetition is a sometimes over-used weapon in his sonic arsenal, Arrington's experimentalism, deemed too way-out by his label in the '80s, comes to the fore in "Tribute To Trane" and "The Message", adding a welcome extra dimension to a legacy still worthy of attention.

EXTRAS: CD of 12-inch vinyl extras,

6/10 previously unreleased. Newly completed tracks.

GAVIN MARTIN



BIG COUNTRY Steeltown - Deluxe Edition UMG

Double-disc, 30th anniversary reissue from stirring Scots rockers

6/10

Formed in 1981 by Skids guitarist Stuart Adamson after the implosion of Dunfermline's second-wave punks, Big Country specialised in earnest anthems welded to a signature twin-guitar attack. This isn't folk-rock, but rock with the sensibility of traditional music hardwired into it: the songs are about doughty working men, grittily romantic love affairs and the wistful tug of home, while the guitars simulate the high, hard-edged textures of bagpipes and fiddles. Big Country were always a shade too localised and idiosyncratic to challenge U2 and Simple Minds at the top of the Celtic rock premiership in the mid-'80s, but *Steeltown*, produced by Steve Lillywhite and a No 1 album in 1984, brought them close. The reflective "Come Back To Me" and "Girl With Grey Eyes" stand out, but it's the three Top 40 singles – "East Of Eden", the martial "Where The Rose Is Sown" and "Just A Shadow" – that prove archetypal, Adamson's voice providing a stirring but rather strident rallying point while the music strives for melancholic grandeur.

EXTRAS: A second disc includes B-sides, 7/10 the single and "work in progress" versions of stand-alone single "Wonderland", demos and rough mixes.

GRAEME THOMSON



Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



Brothers Angus, Malcolm and George Young



MARCUS HOOK ROLL BAND Tales Of Old Grand Daddy (reissue, 1973)

PARLOPHONE

6/10

BC/DC! Lost 1973 LP featuring AC/DC's Angus and Malcolm Young, finally reissued

If the Marcus Hook Roll Band are known for anything, it's as the first vehicle for AC/DC siblings Angus and Malcolm Young. But the story began in London in 1972 when Australians George Young and Harry Vanda, formerly of The Easybeats, handed a demo to EMI. Producer Wally Waller, a former Pretty Things bassist, recorded two singles but by the time an album was requested, Young and Vanda were back in Australia. Waller was told to follow. "I stood there tutting, making out it would be a terrible drag," chuckles Waller.

In Sydney, George roped in elder brother Alex, once of Beatles prodigies Grapefruit, on sax while guitar came from 20-year-old Malcolm. "Malcolm was playing stuff you needed to be 30 to play, stuff that required a bit of soul, some life experience," recalls Waller. "I said to George: 'Your brother is really something.' He said, 'There's another like him at home.' Angus turned up and was just as good." The album – named after Waller's duty-free bourbon consumed in well-oiled sessions – thus became the first record featuring Malcolm and Angus Young, and the only album to feature four Young brothers.

It's an odd one, covering slick '70s rock ("Can't Stand The Heat"), glam ("Goodbye Jane"), '60s throwbacks ("Silver Shoes And Strawberry Wine") and Faces-meets-Queen show-stoppers ("Cry For Me"). You can hear proto-DC riffing on "Quick Reaction" and also some AC/DC sexual politics on the (literally) grunting "Ape Man".

Particularly odd is the radical-chic two-hander "The People And The Power" and "Red Revolution". Five bonus tracks include previously unreleased country cornball "Ride Baby Ride".

Nobody can remember who played what, but Malcolm was on everything and Waller is sure Angus played on "Watch Her Do It Now". As it was, the album was shelved after Young and Vanda refused to tour America, but Waller wasn't surprised to hear of Angus and Malcolm's subsequent success. "I knew how talented they were," says Waller. "And they had everything else that was required – drive, luck and a brother who knew the industry."

EXTRAS: Five bonus tracks.

5/10 PETER WATTS



Ex-Easybeats George Young and Harry Vanda



BLACK WIDOW Sacrifice (reissue, 1970) REPERTOIRE

I love Luci-fer; occult proggers' director's cut Jethro Tull with menaces, Black Widow engaged in something of a life-or-death

struggle with Black Sabbath for mastery of the satanic rock underground at the turn of the 1970s, and while their bid founded on a fundamental lack of heaviness, their footnote in history is guaranteed due to their utterly ludicrous signature tune "Come To The Sabbat". Leicester soul band Pesky Gee! turned somewhat opportunistically to the dark side, their excitable stageshow – featuring invocations courtesy of wicca-man du jour Alex Sanders and full-frontal nudity – was laid down on the cheap for their 1970 debut album for CBS. The Atomic Rooster boogie of "Sacrifice" and the prog-James Last of "Seduction" bear the authentically gamey stink of technical college common rooms, and if Black Widow were never quite as demonically deadly as they hoped, they wove an engaging web.

EXTRAS: Along with the remastered album, 8/10 a new version with freshly recorded interludes featuring original saxophonist-flautist Clive Jones make this the definitive Black Widow item. A full-length video shot for German TV, meanwhile, witnesses vocalist Kip Trevor managing – with much flouncing and freaking – to persuade a naked mädchen to lay down her life for the Horned One. Bloody hell, indeed.

JIM WIRTH



MICHAEL CHAPMAN Live At Folk Cottage, Cornwall 1967

TREEHOUSE 44

Blues, instrumentals and oddities from formative days

English folk-and-beyond singer-songwriter Michael Chapman is best known, now, for a series of albums released back in the '70s, and resurrected over the past few years by Light In The Attic, particularly *Fully Qualified Survivor* and *Rainmaker*. He's been busy, in recent times, reinvigorating his music with tactics lifted from free improvisation, group-sound and noise, such that he's found himself at home with artists like Thurston Moore and No-Neck Blues Band. It's been a fascinating journey, but with *Live At Folk Cottage*, we get the chance to scroll back and catch Chapman at the very start of the narrative arc. In many ways, Chapman's career echoes that of his English counterpart, Mike Cooper, moving from blues, through expansive folk-rock tropes, and into thornier climes; hearing the blues laments on *Folk Cottage*, you're reminded again that these indispensable, inexhaustible songs are the ground zero for so much that happened since in the British and American underground. But even this early in his playing career, Chapman's a canny re-interpreter, and some of the highlights are his takes on songs from Buddy Holly, Antonio Carlos Jobim (a beautiful "Dindi"), and Leiber & Stoller. Rough, but historically essential.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE



RICHARD CONWAY-JONES

The Best Of Richard Conway-Jones

BA DA BING!

7/10

Shaky but sincere folk, from an understated source

One of the hidden men of the British underground – hidden so deep, it seems, that most anyone who heard his prior outfit, The Marilyn Decade, barely even knew his name – Richard Conway-Jones has quietly stumbled back into the light over the past year. Truth be known, he's been painting, writing poetry, and recording micro-released solo albums for a while now. But if you know his music at all, you'll know The Marilyn Decade, whose one self-titled album, released back in 1995 on sainted independent label Freek, was an absolutely singular document, with two guitars playing off each other in a freeform, folk-ish style that re-imagined the lyrical yet tough guitar music from John Fahey's Takoma, dropping it back down in a ghostly, pastoral Albion. *The Best Of...* shares an at-times solemn mood with The Marilyn Decade recordings, but here Conway-Jones is writing songs – lovely, simple, direct folk songs that chime out on the sweetest, simplest of chord changes, Conway-Jones' voice shaky but true, sometimes sharing the anti-spotlight with a female voice that spirits in from the ether. Some of the gnarlier, noisier departures don't quite work, but this is mostly lovely, gentle, warm-hearted stuff.

EXTRAS: None.

JONDALE



CREATION REBEL/NEW AGE STEPPERS

Threat To Creation (reissue, 1981)

MEXICAN SUMMER/ANTHOLOGY

9/10

Truly ahead-of-its-time uneasy listening from

Adrian Sherwood and co

While groups such as Public Image Limited and The Ruts routinely incorporated elements of reggae into their sound in the late '70s, Adrian Sherwood and his On-U Sound collective reversed the flow of influence with their own music. On records like this rediscovered gem, they sprinkled their dub versions with the uneasy vibes and jagged textures of post-punk – PiL's Keith Levene and Ari Up of The Slits here provide guitar and piano, respectively, though their contributions are hard to discern in the wash of sound. The bass throughout *Threat To Creation* is as cavernous as to be expected, though these versions of other On-U Sound cuts, originally by the likes of Singers And Players, are no warm, womb-like dubs – on tracks like the aptly titled "Chemical Specialist" and "Eugenic Device", Sherwood dreams up a paranoid, derelict sonic landscape, filled with chilly reverb, ambient tones and, on "Painstaker", spookily woozy organ. Vocals only occasionally pierce the haze, and when they do, they're detached and distant, reminiscent of Burial's nocturnal two-step, still over 20 years in the future.

EXTRAS: None.

TOM PINNOCK



THE DREAM ACADEMY

The Morning Lasted All Day: A Retrospective

EDSEL

7/10

Bucolic baroque trio's best bits

Forever identified by their

debut single and only sizeable hit "Life In A Northern Town" (an even bigger success in the US than their native UK), The Dream Academy dabbled in a pristine baroque pop that owed a debt to the folk leanings of Nick Drake. Between 1985 and 1990, the trio of singer-guitarist Nick Laird-Clowes, multi-instrumentalist Kate St John and keyboardist Gilbert Gabriel released three LPs, the highlights of which are spread across these two discs. The self-titled debut, co-produced by Dave Gilmour, remains their high watermark, the elegant "The Edge Of Forever" sharing a sophisticated mindset with Prefab Sprout. *Remembrance Days* (1987) attempted to broaden the musical palette, more straightforward folk pop at the heart of "Ballad In 4/4" but too slick and soulless on "Power To Believe". *A Different Kind Of Weather* (1991) proved to be an underwhelming swansong (placing a shuffle beat behind Lennon's "Love" is a ghastly error), but contains a couple of gems in the evocative romantic reminiscences of "Lucy September" and an atmospheric cover of Tim Hardin's "It'll Never Happen Again". A handful of non-album tracks flesh out the collection, while one new track, "Sunrising", recaptures the swoon of their early days.

EXTRAS: None.

TERRY STAUNTON



REVELATIONS

Gruppo Di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza's Damascene conversion

➤ The way Mario Bertoncini tells it, hearing Larry Austin's New Music Ensemble in 1964 was the moment that led Italian experimentalist Franco Evangelisti to form Gruppo Di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza, the free-music collective which featured the great Ennio Morricone among its ranks. "Franco was dazzled," Bertoncini recalls. "For him those tapes were as powerful as the words of Christ for Saul on the road to Damascus!" Evangelisti, Morricone, Bertoncini and others would co-pilot the collective through over 20 years of experimentation. Morricone also called on the group for several soundtracks, including *Gli Occhi Freddi Della Paura*, while member Egisto Macchi made a number of classic library records. "They both considered all their musical parallel experiences as fundamental parts of their many-sided work," his daughter, Ombretta Macchi, recalls, "[and] they took great benefits in the GINC experience, in the GINC discipline of listening to one another." JONDALE



GRUPPO DI IMPROVVISAZIONE NUOVA CONSONANZA

Gruppo Di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza (reissue, 1973)

SUPERIOR VIADUCT

8/10

Wild, playfully serious free music from Morricone's crew

The story of this free-music outfit numbering among their membership the maestro of film soundtracks, one Ennio Morricone, is a mysterious one, grounded as much in misleading information as historical research. We do know, however, that they were formed in Rome in the 1960s, responding in part to American and English experimental musicians and thinkers, like Larry Austin, Frederic Rzewski and Cornelius Cardew, with the main thinker behind the group, Franco Evangelisti, insisting that all improvising musicians in the collective had to be composers as well. This lent the group's music a peculiar air, as you could hear the players drawing on their compositional chops as well as their instrumental abilities, thinking through the music as a 'composed' piece in real time. This self-titled album, long unavailable, has them playing at a furious clip at times, with insectile improvisation giving way to lung-bursts of collective vocalisations, moments of surrealist hilarity forming beautifully enmeshed collective improv, and gorgeous points where instruments shyly present themselves, then recede into silence.

EXTRAS: None.

JONDALE



JOHNNY HALLYDAY

The Sound, The Fury

RPM INTERNATIONAL

Twenty rockers from French legend's first two years

8/10

A couple of years ago, RPM International released *Le*

Roi De France, an eye-opening compilation of Johnny Hallyday's late-'60s output. This featured brooding, psychedelic proto-Zep pop backed by the Small Faces and Jimmy Page, recorded when Hallyday was in a dark place. *The Sound, The Fury* is an attempt to place the previous release in context by exploring the wilder elements of Hallyday's earliest output, when he exploded into French culture with his 1960 debut EP, represented here by the skiffly, Elvis-aping jaunt "Laisse Les Filles". It's easy to dismiss him as France's Cliff Richard, but *The Sound, The Fury* shows the Hallyday of 1960/'61 had real swagger and sexual energy on tracks like "Oui Mon Cher", "Oui J'Ai" and the scintillating "Une Boum Chez John". While the pre-army Elvis is a clear influence and Hallyday takes some vocal cues from Buddy Holly on the likes of "Sentimental (Baby I Don't Care)" and "Ce S'rait Bien", there's also something wholly unique and wickedly Gallic about his knowing croon on "Souvenirs Souvenirs", with a surprising Johnny Marr-style guitar part, and whooping, semi-spoken ravers like "Ce N'Est Pas Méchant". Includes a trio of live takes, cut in front of a wildly appreciative audience and highlighting some marvellous lead guitar.

EXTRAS: None.

PETER WATTS



TOMMY HUNT A Sign Of The Times: The Spark Recordings 1975-1976

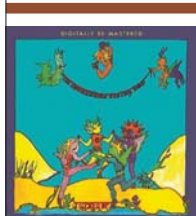
SHOUT!/CHERRY RED

7/10 Northern Soul hero's fabled live album plus generic studio work

Tommy Hunt's life reads like a film script: reform school while a child, imprisonment after going AWOL from the US Air Force to care for his dying mother, brief fame with The Flamingos – he can be heard on “I Only Have Eyes For You” – and a sporadically successful 1960s solo career that led him to Europe. After finally settling in the UK for cabaret work, Wigan Casino's Russ Winstanley rescued his career, turning the American into a Northern Soul hero. Hunt's not, as Winstanley claims onstage, “The guy who's going to be the biggest thing ever”, but 1976's legendary, if sonically flawed, *Live At The Wigan Casino* still stands up well and deserves cult status: he barrels flawlessly through eight classics, including Otis Redding's “I Can't Turn You Loose” and Roy Hamilton's “Crackin' Up”, a perennial scene favourite, with astonishing energy. The other mid-'70s studio recordings here – assembled for an album the same year – are less distinguished, torn between soul and disco, but Hunt nails a Philly-flavoured take on “Loving On The Losing Side”, and his corny despondency on “Loving You Is” feels touchingly credible.

EXTRAS: The UK Top 50 single “One Fine Morning”.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND I Looked Up/ U (reissues, both 1970)

BEAT GOES ON

8/10

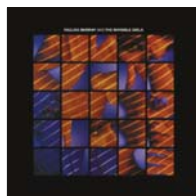
Cosmic Scots' unloved middle years, reconsidered

If you take it as a given that the ISB's 1968 double album *Wee Tam And The Big Huge* was the pinnacle achievement of Western culture in the 20th Century, the albums Mike Heron and Robin Williamson produced after their career-defining flop at Woodstock (they were reputedly the

only band not to get an encore) are something of a letdown. Two epic Williamson meditations provide the heft on slender sixth outing *I Looked Up*, before Heron's “Fair As You” – a murder-on-the-high-Cs duet of the pair's squeaky-voiced girlfriends and bandmates, Licorice McKechnie and Rose Simpson – miraculously prefigures all indie pop and bulks it up. Derived from a critically savaged, Scientology-influenced pantomime, double album *U* tests patience before Williamson's atonal “Cutting The Strings”, McKechnie's unworldly “I Know You” and Heron's 15-minute “Rainbow” justify the previous hour of thudding about. “It was different,” concluded the eternally optimistic Williamson, and as ever with the String Band, their “different” really is something else.

EXTRAS: None.

JIM WIRTH



PAULINE MURRAY AND THE INVISIBLE GIRLS The Invisible Girls (reissue, 1980)

LES DISQUES DU CRÉPUSCULE

8/10

Penetration singer's

unknown pleasedome

Like Buzzcocks singer Pete Shelley's disco-literate solo debut *Homosapien*, the 1980 outing from the eternally breathless Pauline Murray represented a stylistic bridge between the new wave and the new pop of The Human League and beyond. With a timelessly chiselled Peter Saville sleeve adding to its reputation as a Factory release manqué, the clean lines, sparkling surfaces and elegant details of *Pauline Murray And The Invisible Girls* bear the hallmarks of Joy Division producer Martin Hannett, and such stylishly unobtrusive guests as Vini Reilly and Buzzcocks drummer-turned-VW Beetle maven John Maher. Murray concedes that she absented herself from the studio for a time, convinced she was “losing control” of her album. Letting go, though, is a thrilling option on “Dream Sequence 1”, Murray “crossing the bridge of conscious and self-control”, with “Thundertunes” and the Ultravox! Eurofunk of “Mr X” further giddy steps into the future.

EXTRAS: Single tracks, a Peel Session and a second disc of live material spoil purchasers of the CD version, while an extra disc appended to the vinyl edition boasts an instrumental version of the album, and more proto-versions of key tracks.

JIM WIRTH

HOW TO BUY... THE POST POP GROUP



RIP RIG + PANIC God VIRGIN, 1981

Punked-up Ornette Coleman with a Funkadelic booty shake, day-glo beatnik ensemble Rip Rig + Panic featured Pop Group guitarist Gareth Sager, drummer Bruce Smith and late-period bassist Sean Oliver, as well as a young Neneh Cherry. This debut is the pick of three giddy albums.

7/10



PIGBAG Dr Heckle & Mr Jive Y, 1982

Having hitched to Bristol to enlist The Pop Group's Simon Underwood as bassist, Cheltenham jazzbos Pigbag created a monster with 1981's “Papa's Got A Brand New Pigbag”. That perennial football-ground favourite was pointedly excised from their first LP, where eerie Afro-skronk attests to the strength of The Pop Group's musical genes.

7/10



MARK STEWART As The Veneer Of Democracy Starts To Fade MUTE, 1985

Former bandmates got more playful, the Pop Group frontman did not. Stewart's second solo album is a daunting cut-and-paste of gut-churning bass thud and industrial thunder, his bleak worldview exemplified by “The Resistance Of The Cell”.

8/10

JIM WIRTH



PISSSED JEANS Shallow (reissue, 2005)

SUB POP

Remastered 2005 debut album by hardcore blue-collar malcontents

8/10

It's somehow fitting that *Shallow* should start with a gut-wrenching bellow. The song is called “I'm Sick”, but Matt Korvette isn't talking about sickness of the soul, of singer-songwriter affluenza, his concerns are physical. “I have a headache, I got a fever/I've got a runny nose” he complains against a punk maelstrom, “I've got diarrhea, I can't keep my food down/My sinuses are clogged.” That's Pissed Jeans in a nutshell: lacerating guitars and vocals screaming about the petty hardships of life, but laced with the unrelenting detail that turns self-pity into observational humour. This reissue shows the band arrived fully formed, from the funny, creepy, touching “Boring Girls” to the jilted John-meets-Mudhoney sludgifest “Ugly Twin (I've Got)”, which rattles on for seven self-loathing minutes before ending with a piano solo (and is followed by a shameless sub-two-minute splurge called “Ashamed Of My Cum”). Best of all is “I Broke My Own Heart”, which combines Television guitars with Tom Waits-style patter. “I stood myself up, I forgot I had plans with myself,” the singer whines surreally, while a backing vocal deadpans “he broke his own heart”, before it all takes a back seat to an ear-splitting one-note feedback solo.

EXTRAS: Includes debut single “Throbbing Organ”/“Night Minutes”.

PETER WATTS



THE POP GROUP Cabinet Of Curiosities

KARTEL

Suitably volatile rarities comp from Bristol's post-punk revolutionaries

7/10

It's easy to imagine that the haphazard availability of

Pop Group catalogue over the years has been down to their hatred of capitalist expedencies and love of chaos. A reunion tour this month, however, has prompted an uncharacteristically co-ordinated deployment of product. Alongside a remastered version of the 1980 live and demos comp, *We Are Time*, there is also this long-needed companion volume. Among various useful Peel Session tracks and marginalia, *Cabinet Of Curiosities* also features the previously unreleased first version of “She Is Beyond Good And Evil”, produced by Roxy Music's Andy Mackay. Mackay can't match the dub science of Dennis Bovell's definitive take, or quite manage to channel the disparate energies of Mark Stewart, Gareth Sager et al. Nevertheless, as a clue to how British art-rock fed into The Pop Group's radical punk/funk mêlée, it's invaluable. The ecstatically furious last single, “Where There's A Will”, turns up for the first time in a few years, while a couple of hitherto unreleased songs – “Abstract Heart” and “Karen's Car”, both live – show that their fissile blend of hectoring, skronk and groove could have been sustained a good deal beyond 1980, had their disposition not been to self-destruct.

EXTRAS: None.

JOHN MULVEY

GEORGE HARRISON

The Apple Years 1968-75

UNIVERSAL/APPLE

The quiet Beatle's escape attempts remastered. *By Richard Williams*



6/10

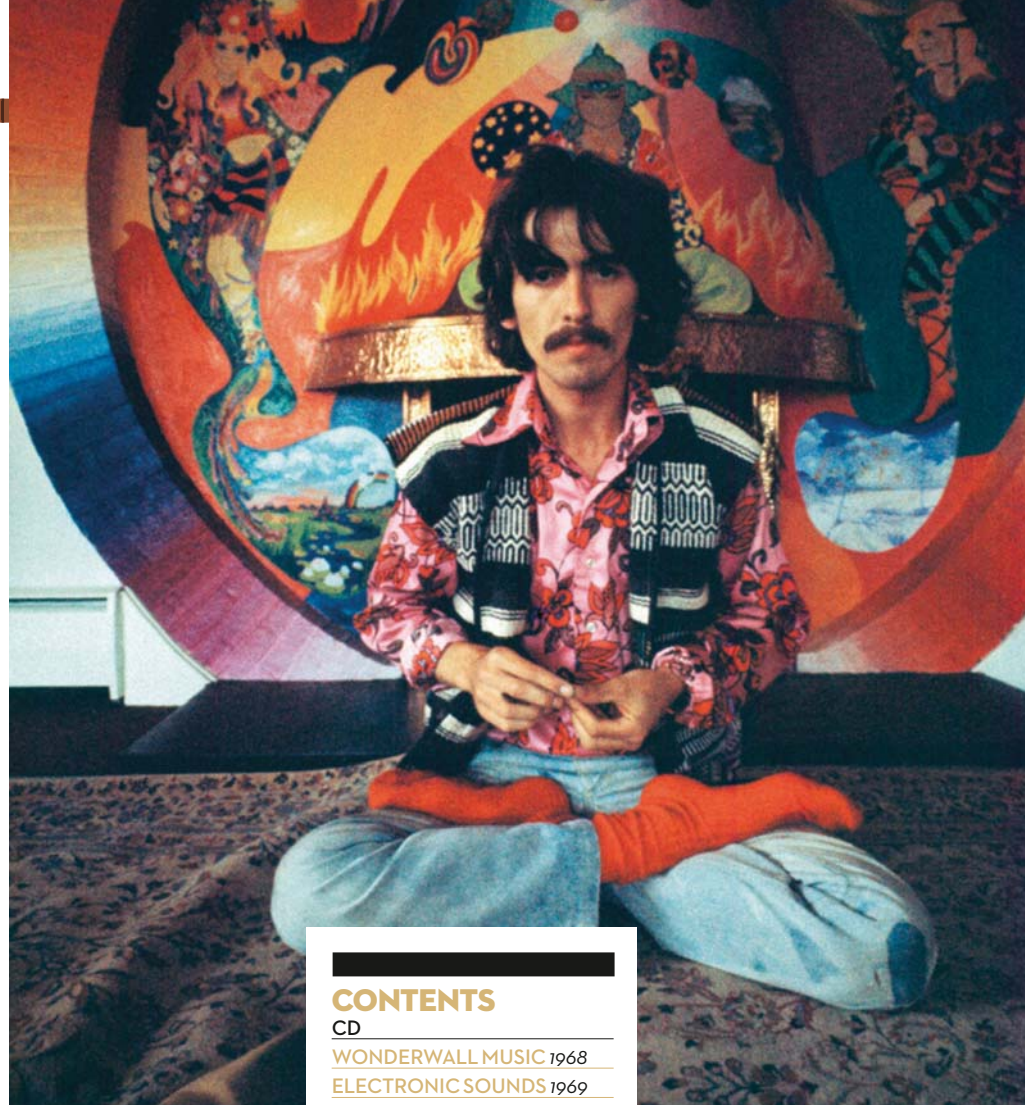
GEORGE HARRISON WASN'T the first to attempt an escape from The Beatles' gilded cage – that was an exasperated Ringo, during the making of *The White Album* – but he was the first to prepare for a different existence

after the inevitable end of the collective dream. In '68 he became the first to make an LP, *Wonderwall Music*, under his own name. A year later he was the first to go on the road with a group of musicians other than his fellow Mop Tops, namely Delaney & Bonnie and their fashionable friends, including Eric Clapton and Leon Russell. With these gestures he had built a platform for a new life.

Wonderwall Music is the first item in this new box of digitally remastered studio LPs from Harrison's Apple period. Written for Joe Massot's film, which starred the unlikely combination of Jane Birkin, Jack McGowan, Irene Handl and Richard Wattis, it is a treat from start to finish. With no previous experience of writing soundtracks, Harrison recorded the music in a Bombay studio and London, editing the results with the use of a stopwatch while watching Massot's unfinished footage.

More than four and a half decades on, the 18 tracks sound like an exploded diagram of a Beatles album, as viewed from Harrison's off-centre perspective. Just about all the elements of the group's overtly experimental period (1965-68) are there. Dreamy miniature ragas, featuring the ululations of the double-reed shenai (the opening "Microbes", for example), give way to a pub knees-up gatecrashed by a Dixieland band ("Drilling A Home"), to the bones of early acid-rock songs ("Red Lady Too" and "Party Seacombe"), to a snatch of clippity-clop cowboy music called, of all things, "Cowboy Music", and to a chant of "Om" accompanied by a harmonium. "Ski-ing" juxtaposes rock and raga, opening with an urgent guitar solo that sounds very much like Eric Clapton. "Dream Scene" is a collage of found sounds, anticipating Lennon's "Revolution No 9".

If The Beatles' collective sense of humour, a lark surrealism best preserved in their fan club Christmas flexidiscs, was largely inherited from The Goons, then the inspiration for Harrison's *Electronic Music* in 1969 surely came from another BBC institution of their formative years: the Radiophonic Workshop. On this LP – first released on Zapple, Apple's short-lived experimental subsidiary – we witness the joy of a boy with



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CD

WONDERWALL MUSIC 1968

ELECTRONIC SOUNDS 1969

ALL THINGS MUST PASS 1970

LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD (2 DISC) 1973

DARK HORSE 1974

EXTRA TEXTURE 1975

BOOK

THE APPLE YEARS

PLUS DVD

a new toy as Harrison spends 44 minutes discovering the sounds to be coaxing from a Moog synth. Apparently he had some outside help: Bernie Krause, a pioneer of the new device, later claimed that a passage on the second side of the original album release was lifted straight from a lesson he gave George in how to operate it.

With no pretensions to melody, harmony, pulse or any serious conceptual thinking, *Electronic Music* sounds like what you might get if you taped a contact microphone to the stomach of a digestively challenged robot: a lot of random rumbling, squeaking, hissing and groaning. A message appeared on the sleeve, credited to one Arthur Wax: "There are a lot of people around, making a lot of noise; here's some more." That still sums it up.

After these two albums, *All Things Must Pass* reasserted Harrison's status as a songwriter whose work had once earned its place, albeit a lesser one, alongside that of Lennon & McCartney, whose initial solo efforts, with their reversion to rockabilly and skiffle primitivism, he instantly eclipsed. A lavishly packaged triple album, it benefited

from the attention of Phil Spector, whose well-known production techniques – more instruments,

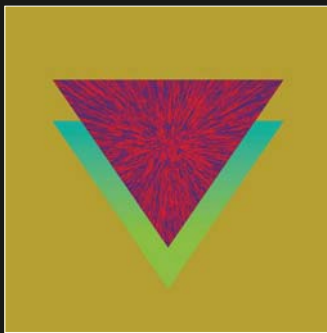
more echo – served to disguise the whiny, monotonous tendency of Harrison's voice, the preachiness of his lyrics and the inconsistent quality of his melodic gift. "My Sweet Lord" provided the worldwide hit and retains its surging power, as do "Beware Of Darkness", "What Is Life" and "Awaiting On You All". Nothing,

however, can redeem the turgid instrumental jams – featuring Clapton, Billy Preston, Ginger Baker, Dave Mason et al – that made up the original third album.

Without Spector to enrich his sonic environment, Harrison's subsequent LPs lapsed into a drabness only sporadically relieved by something like his version of the Everlys' "Bye Bye Love", from the panned *Dark Horse*, where he sought the kind of return to bare-bones rock'n'roll simplicity Lennon had achieved with "Instant Karma". A man so rich in material resource and spiritual support had allowed the concerns first expressed in "Taxman" and "Within You, Without You" to lapse into the self-parodic sourness and solipsism of "Sue Me, Sue You Blues" from *Living In The Material World*.

Brought down by the increasingly widespread criticism of his output (a mood darkened by drink and drugs), he responded through some of the songs on *Extra Texture*, a set of keyboard-based tunes, cut mostly in LA, on which he plays little guitar but lays into those considered responsible for his depressed state, albeit in a voice whose fragility hints at inner turmoil. The pounding "You", the first 45, offers a rare moment of something approaching good cheer. A return to a happier frame of mind would lie around the corner, once he'd been freed from the deal with EMI and formed a new and lasting relationship with Olivia Arias, but only a devoted Apple Scruff could love *Extra Texture*, or its two immediate predecessors, now. *Wonderwall Music*, however, documents an innocent optimism that will always be worth a listen.





GOAT COMMUNE

ROCKET RECORDINGS LP / CD

Goat's highly anticipated follow-up to the voodoo-psych-groove smash of World Music is here...
Join the Commune.



COOLY G WAIT 'TIL NIGHT

HYPERDUB LP / CD

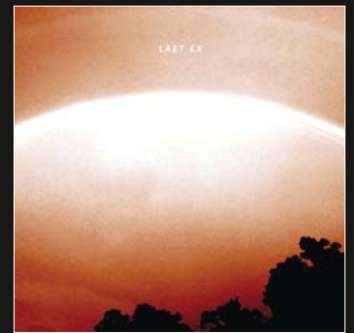
Cooly G returns with an album of sensitive, lo-fi bedroom music. 'Wait 'Til Night' is a collection of slow-jammed stories of blighted urban romance, sketching dreamy scenarios of seduction & lust, laced with a unique honesty & unpretentious charm.



BALMORHEA BALMORHEA

WESTERN VINYL LP / CD

Austin, TX instrumental band Balmorhea's s/t debut remastered and in deluxe packaging. MOJO compares them to Kronos Quartet and Rachel's, while BBC finds similarities to Boxhead Ensemble and Stars of the Lid.



LAST EX LAST EX

CONSTELLATION LP / CD

Superb debut album of cinematic instrumental songs feat. members of Timber Timbre. RIYL: Do Make Say Think, early Trans Am, Tortoise, Calexico, tape-manipulated experimental rock.



AVEC LE SOLEIL SORTANT DE SA BOUCHE

ZUBBERDUST!
CONSTELLATION LP / CD

Afro-Kraut avant-rock from members of meta-legendary group Fly Pan Am; glitchy punk and anti-funk workouts for the head and hips.



HAILU MERGIA & THE WALIAS

TICHE BELEW

AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA LP / CD

Seminal Ethiopian jazz instrumentals from one of the most celebrated groups of 1970s Addis Ababa, Hailu Mergia and the Walias, featuring the world-famous song "Musicawi Silt".



EX HEX RIPS

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

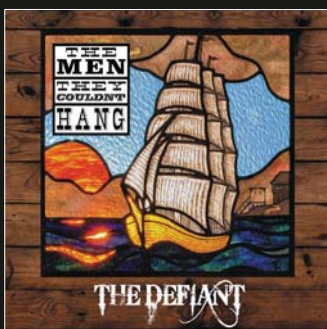
Ex Hex might just prove to be the most out-and-out rocking outfit of [Mary] Timony's career [i.e., Autoclave, Helium, Wild Flag]." Pitchfork



ALLO DARLIN'

WE COME FROM THE SAME PLACE
FORTUNA POP! LP / CD

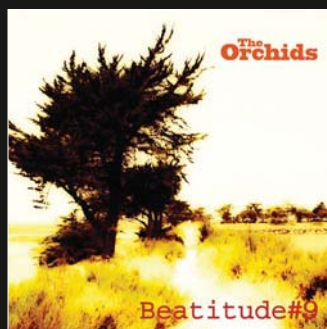
The third album from the much loved Anglo-Australian four-piece, full of smart, beautiful pop music with lyrics that resonate with experience and melodies that chime, echo and soar.



THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG

THE DEFIANT
VINYL STAR LP / CD

With songs about piracy, fascism, fishing and wild Welsh women, this 30th anniversary album reinforces TMCH's reputation as both an originator and unique pillar of the roots rock renaissance.



THE ORCHIDS

BEATITUDE #9
ACUARELA CD

The Orchids formed near Glasgow in 1986. Since day 1 they were one of the darlings of the illustrious Sarah Record's roster.
Beatitude #9 is their sixth album in a 26 year career.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE BIRTH OF FUNK
HISTORY OF SOUL LP

Predating The Meters, this is an excellent example of early New Orleans Funk that can be found.
Its Low-down and dirty and takes you back to the early days of Storyville.



ELA STILES

ELA STILES
BEDROOM SUCK LP / CD

Having played with Melbourne outfit Bushwalking, here Ela reveals a solo record comprised entirely of a-cappella performances that are beguiling and otherworldly.
On tour in October.

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SMALL FACES There Are But Four Small Faces

CHARLY

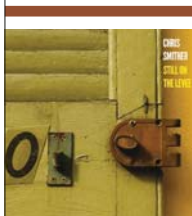
After the reissues “proper”, the US version of their eponymous 1967 work

8/10

Only belatedly offered the reissue programme long ago accorded the major bands of their era, it would be uncharacteristic if the Small Faces’ legacy didn’t leave loose ends. A companion piece to 1967’s *Small Faces* (their first album for Immediate), *There Are But Four Small Faces* is its American counterpart, and just such a loose end. No biggie, you might think. But this smart Charly reissue reinforces a case made by fans of the album. It’s still the sound of a band liberated by the studio, but crucially it includes in the tracklist contemporaneous singles “Itchycoo Park”, “Tin Soldier” and “Here Come The Nice” – not exactly to its detriment. That’s without mentioning the more pleasing running order, the better cover, the charming title, all hoping to endear the group on its debut in the US market.

EXTRAS: The original album’s mixture of 7/10 bucolic mod and fried studio psych continues to appeal, and while the bonus tracks (alternates of “Have You Ever Seen Me” and “Get Yourself Together”, a couple more) aren’t all that, the mono version on Disc Two adds to the album’s sense of place – it was a dedicated mix prepared to strong it on US radio, but otherwise unreleased.

JOHN ROBINSON



CHRIS SMITHER Still On The Levee

SIGNATURE SOUNDS

50-year retrospective from the under-celebrated rootster Smither belongs to that army of American songwriters who’ve never

8/10

found the wider audience their work deserves. Like Greg Brown or Tom Russell, the Miami native has built a cult reputation as a folk artist with a healthy wanderlust, peppering his tunes with rusted blues, country, some jazz and a wise lyric. This double-disc comp lands just ahead of a tribute album featuring admirers like Bonnie Raitt, Dave Alvin and Loudon Wainwright III. The latter is also aboard, alongside New Orleans giant Allen Toussaint and members of Morphine, for these two dozen reconfigurations of his finest songs. If anything, they sound better with age. The fact that Smither’s voice now sounds like it’s been left to bake in sand lends early efforts like “Devil Got Your Man” and “Lonesome Georgia Brown” a wrinkled layer of authenticity. Time has shifted him closer to Lightnin’ Hopkins or one of the other blues icons he aspired to be. His acoustic fingerpicking remains a key fixture, though it often comes with a sprightly groove. “Love You Like A Man” and “Call Time”, in particular, fairly jump from the speakers. Newcomers to Smither’s five-decade, multi-album career are advised to start right here.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



SOFT MACHINE Turns On

FLOATING WORLD

Canterbury relics disinterred
Scarily top-heavy in their earliest incarnation, the Mk I Soft Machine featured Gong kingpin Daavid

7/10

Allen as well as Robert Wyatt and Kevin Ayers as they began their Middle Earth mutation from psychedelic soul band to jazzbo improv heavies. A 2CD set, *Turns On* recirculates live and studio material recorded in the 18 months leading up to their less-than-the-sum-of-its-parts 1968 debut album. Previously released on two similarly titled Voiceprint discs in the early 2000s, this represents the pick of the cache of Soft Machine material that one-time Wilde Flower and Volume Two saxophonist Brian Hopper amassed before his distinctly un-far-out day job in agricultural crop research took priority. Audiophiles will wince, but proto-versions of “Why Am I So Short?” (aka “I Should Have Known”) and Ayers’ “Soon Soon Soon” (aka “We Know What You Mean”) reward persistence on the first instalment, with bootleg-quality stabs at Wyatt’s *Third* sprawl “Moon In June” and Ayers’ career-highs “Why Are We Sleeping?” and “Clarence In Wonderland” justifying the existence of the second disc.

EXTRAS: A brisk sleeve note from Brian 5/10 Hopper, but alas no trace of the group’s 1967 debut single “Love Makes Sweet Music” or its flipped-out flipside, “Feelin’ Reelin’ Squealin’”.

JIM WIRTH

HOW TO BUY... SOFT MACHINE EPHEMERA



SOFT MACHINE Faces And Places Vol 7

BYG, 1972

Feb ’67 debut single “Love Makes Sweet Music” is happily available on the 2009 issue of the SM’s debut LP, with this disc of demos – reissued every other week as “At The Beginning” or “Jet-Propelled Photograph” – documenting the end of their psych-soul phase.

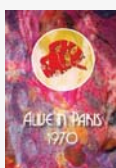
7/10



SOFT MACHINE BBC Radio 1967-71 HUX, 2003

The Kevin Ayers/Robert Wyatt-era SM were under-recorded, but the first volume of Hux’s fine BBC collection pins down early faves “Clarence In Wonderland” and “We Know What You Mean”. Bolder listeners can stick around for Wyatt’s puckish “Moon In June” cut for *Top Gear* in 1969 – complete with tribute to the BBC’s tea-making.

8/10



SOFT MACHINE Alive In Paris 1970

VOICEPRINT DVD, 2008

John Peel was not the only ex-fan who felt the Wyatt/Ratledge/Hopper-era SM of *Third* had songs that “went on too long”, but – judging by the crowd freak-outs here – French mania for La Machine Molle seemingly only intensified as they embraced long-hair prog-jazz.

7/10

JIM WIRTH



13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS Live Evolution Lost

CHARLY

Bad trip inside this house

When International Artists decided to record this show at the 2,500-capacity

7/10

Houston Music Theatre in February 1967, they can have had no idea what effect a strong police presence, a revolving stage and an MC dressed like a wizard might have on a band tripping on acid. Roky Erickson repeatedly fluffs the words, guitarist Stacy Sutherland can barely play. By the fourth song, “Reverberation”, happily, Sutherland is back on the planet, his trademark distorted and sustained raga-guitar playing fully restored. The sound is rough but better than any known Elevators tapes – the oft-bootlegged 1966 show at Frisco’s Avalon Ballroom is a better performance but sounds awful. In Houston, the band eventually summons up its high-octane mix of primal garage rock and psychedelia, previewing much of *Easter Everywhere*. Support band Conqueroo later join them onstage for a chaotic improv of familiar rock’n’roll riffs and “Ed’s Esoteric Jazz Jam”, both anticipating the MC5. Bar a surprisingly touching, Dead-like version of “It’s All Over Now, Baby Blue”, there’s little to return to on the ‘jam’ disc of this, the only complete recording of an Elevators gig. Splendidly packaged over two discs or red, green and blue vinyl, it’s one for die-hards.

EXTRAS: None.
MICK HOUGHTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS Mali All-Stars

WRASSE

Remarkable portrait of Africa’s number one studio from Björk to Tinariwen...

7/10

“Mali is the new Memphis,” the late Charlie Gillett wrote in 2000 as the landlocked west African state on the Saharan fringe emerged as the new powerhouse of African music. To extend the metaphor, the Bogolan studio on the banks of the Niger River in Mali’s capital city Bamako has become the 21st-Century equivalent of the Sun and Stax studios. This two-disc set presents a compelling taster of the Bogolan sound, compiling the work of 28 diverse artists who have recorded there. There’s no house band like Booker T & The MG’s or Sam Phillips’ trusted crew, but the Bogolan experience still seems to foster a cohesive sound across a disparity of African styles, from the deep blues of Ali Farka Touré to the desert rhythms of Tinariwen, via the West African pop of Amadou & Mariam and the wailing soul of Oumou Sangaré. But it’s not only African artists who have journeyed to Bogolan seeking inspiration: as fascinating tracks recorded there with local musicians by Björk, Damon Albarn, flamboyant French rocker M and the jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater all testify.

EXTRAS: DVD with archive footage of the 7/10 artists recording in the studio, and 32-page booklet.
NIGEL WILLIAMSON

The Specialist

Calypso



Calypso songstress Josephine Premice performs in the 1950s



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Calypso Craze: 1956-57 And Beyond

BEAR FAMILY

9/10

173 cuts from calypso's thrilling, if brief, mainstream heyday

In *Chronicles*, Bob Dylan delivers a passionate appraisal of Harry Belafonte's career saying that he was "the best balladeer in the land". It was Belafonte who effectively launched the calypso craze, commanding an entire disc on this handsome new boxset. His 1956 LP *Calypso*, featuring the ubiquitous "Banana Boat Song", became the first million-seller – even in the face of competition from Elvis.

Belafonte's smooth singing style appealed to both folk and easy-listening fans, but a fascination with Caribbean styles had already impacted in America in the '30s and '40s. "Calypso Comes To America", the first of seven discs, mixes earthy, risqué originals by Sir Lancelot, Duke Of Iron and Lord Invader with pop bastardisations by The Andrews Sisters ("Rum And Coca-Cola"), and Eartha Kitt ("Somebody Bad Stole De Wedding Bell").

By 1957, calypso was open season among folk acts such as The Tarriers and The Kingston (as in Kingston, Jamaica) Trio, jazz musicians like Sonny Rollins, who adapted Invader's "Don't Stop The Carnival" (later covered by The Alan Price Set), country artist Hank Snow, and old stagers Fred Astaire and Nat King Cole. Comedian Stan Freberg's "Banana Boat (Day-O)" was a classic novelty hit and, even in Britain Bernard Cribbins and Lance Percival (covering Sir Lancelot's "Scandal In The Family") recognised a phenomenon popular among the growing West Indian community.

Lord Kitchener and Lord Beginner had both arrived in 1948 on the symbolic 'first' passenger ship *Empire Windrush*. Kitch brilliantly portrayed immigrant life; racism, difficulty finding work, the cold weather and lousy food while, in 1950, Lord Beginner celebrated West Indian cricket in "Victory Test Match", better known as "Cricket, Lovely Cricket". By the '60s, as more Jamaicans than Trinidadians arrived, bluebeat and ska eventually eclipsed calypso.

Chris Blackwell's Jump Up label, formed in 1963, still imported calypso singles, notably the barely-innuendo at all, "Dr Kitch" ("I can't stand the size of your needle", indeed), appropriated by Georgie Fame. Authentic calypso remained popular with mods. Jimmy Soul's sexist R'n'B hybrid "If You Wanna Be Happy", for example, bookends *Calypso Craze* with Roaring Lion's 1934 original, "Marry An Ugly Woman".

Elsewhere, this wonderfully exhaustive collection chronicles calypso's influence in movies and on Broadway and its spread world-wide. A bonus DVD includes 1957 cash-in film *Calypso Joe*, featuring Lord Flea and Duke Of Iron. 173 tracks may seem daunting but there are plenty of intriguing deviations. The accompanying hardcover book is an absolute delight, clued in and filled with fantastic artwork, posters and photographs. **MICK HOUGHTON**



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Real World 25 REAL WORLD/PROPER

25 years of Peter Gabriel's trailblazing label condensed

8/10

It was a quarter of a century ago that Peter Gabriel

turned a tatty mill building in Box, Wiltshire, into a recording studio and the creative hub of Real World Records, the first release of which was *Passion*, Gabriel's Grammy-winning soundtrack to Scorsese's *The Last Temptation Of Christ*. Since then, 200 albums have been released and musicians the world over have passed through the studio doors, from heavyweights Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Youssou N'Dour to the lesser-known likes of Daúde, the Afro-Brazilian artist, and Finnish avant-folk trio, Värttinä. This anniversary compilation, spread over three CDs, recalls both the label's notable successes – Afro Celt Sound System and The Blind Boys Of Alabama, with their combined sales of nearly two million – and its numerous hidden gems, among them the rumbling desert blues of "Innulamane" by the Tuareg duo Toumast, and "Line" by London's Portico Quartet. Diversity is the unifying factor here, an approach that successfully opened Western ears to new sounds rich in culture and imagination. Long may it continue.

EXTRAS: Comprehensive 28-page booklet with a history of the label and its ethos, plus "Real World Tales", a series of oral snapshots by Real World artists, producers and designers.

FIONA STURGES



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Finding Fela OST KNITTING FACTORY

Double-CD set commemorates the Afrobeat pioneer, plus theatrical renditions

6/10

The exhaustive Fela Kuti reissue campaign that the Knitting Factory have conducted over the last couple of years has been a blessing, putting the Afrobeat bandleader's extensive catalogue – not to mention some of the orbiting groups, such as The Lijadu Sisters and Seun Kuti – back into print at a reasonable price. Such is the quality of his catalogue that you could blind-buy and not go too far wrong, but the idea of commemorating Fela's 43-album run on a 2CD set – particularly when many of his songs stretch out to fill a vinyl side – is a tough proposition. Fela's fascinating life story – which encompassed battles with the Nigerian military, subsequent incarceration, and the acquisition of 27 wives – has been fodder for a successful 2009 Broadway musical and now, a feature-length documentary with its own soundtrack. Quibbles are perhaps inevitable: "Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense" and "Beasts Of No Nation" are edited down, while "Zombie", Fela's excoriation of the Nigerian dictatorship, is a three-minute version from the musical. Still, as a primer, this covers decent ground, and a live take on "Colonial Mentality" by the *Fela!* cast recorded at the New Afrika Shrine in Lagos, with Fela's son Femi supplying blazing saxophone, retains its sense of occasion, even transferred to disc.

EXTRAS: None.
LOUIS PATTISON

COMING NEXT MONTH...



► It's not due out 'til next month, but to **Pink Floyd** fans, the band's forthcoming album has long occupied a place in the mind as the encouragingly titled *The Big Spliff* – a selection of mainly ambient and instrumental music derived from the sessions for the band's 1994 album *The Division Bell*.

Based in part on that body of work, and featuring music from the band's late keyboard player Rick Wright, who died in 2008, *The Endless River* has been worked on by the band's surviving members David Gilmour and Nick Mason, and is an ambient elegy and celebration.

The returning Floyd head a field that will also feature new releases from **Iceage** (now wearing a Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds kind of look) and a live album from **Kris Kristofferson**, *An Evening With Kris Kristofferson The Pilgrim*; **Ch 77 Union Chapel, London**, among other treats. In the Archive section, meanwhile, there's other strong stuff: the vinyl reissues of the first three **Richard Hawley** albums, and especially a new trawl of the **Captain Beefheart** archive. This time focusing on the material released between 1970-1972, *Sun Zoom Spark* runs the gamut from the intense *Link My Decals Off, Baby* to the slick, accessible *Clear Spot* – including 14 unreleased tracks along the way.

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THE WAKE Testament FACTORY BENELUX

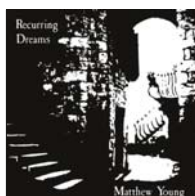
Glaswegian New Order, then and now
Lovers of pop footnotes will know that an early version of The Wake included Bobby Gillespie

7/10

on bass. He left in 1983, and this set stretches from 1981, when frontman Gerard "Caesar" McNulty left Altered Images, right up to the present day. (The group reactivated in 2009, with Caesar and keyboardist Carolyn Allen.) Gillespie's influence is marginal, compared to that of New Order, who provide the template for the group's sound – proto-dance music, with thin synths, melodic bass, robotic drums, and half-spoken vocals hovering between dreaminess and depression. Caesar is more of a singer than Bernard Sumner, but he does err on the side of understatement. The group's identity emerges with the bright "Talk About The Past", a 7" from 1984 which marries skittish funk with anthemic synths, and piano from The Durutti Column's Vini Reilly on the fade (keeping it glum by rhyming "emptiness" and "happiness"). By 1988, they signed to Sarah Records – see the breezy girl-boy vocals of "Crush The Flowers". An unexpected treat is the unreleased "Clouds Disco" from 2012.

EXTRAS: The vinyl edition comes with a 6/10 bonus CD featuring 21 live/demo recordings from the archive of New Order manager Rob Gretton.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



MATTHEW YOUNG Recurring Dreams DRAG CITY/YOGA

Lost kosmische explorations from – where else? – New Jersey
In recent years, the trickle of reissues of private-press

8/10

records from the 1970s and '80s has changed hue. The well of lost psychedelic folk curios, it's sad to report, may have run dry, but on the bright side, those '80s new age records just keep on flowing. A couple of years back, Drag City reissued *Traveler's Advisory*, a queerly endearing 1986 recording by Matthew Young, a parlour musician from Hopewell, New Jersey. A true curio, it blended tinpot Casio invention with hammered dulcimer, the musician using his quixotic set-up to tackle originals, medieval music and covers (notably, a gorgeous take on Michael Hurley's "Werewolf"). *Recurring Dreams* is even more choice, though. Recorded in 1981 using keyboards, guitar, a reel-to-reel and an EMS Synthi that Young acquired after attending seminars on electronic music at Princeton, it's a savant take on the gusty synth dramatics of the Berlin School, exchanging high Teutonic seriousness for a hippyish can-do. Certainly, it's more elemental than *Traveler's Advisory* – that can be code, if you want, for "bit rough around the edges" – but "First Blood" shows off Young's skill for jazzy layering, while "Version, Inversion" and the 13-minute "The Forest Of Lilacs" go deep, plunging into serene modular soundworlds of unfathomable scope.

EXTRAS: None.
LOUIS PATTISON



PAUL MCCARTNEY AND WINGS Wings At The Speed Of Sound (reissue, 1976) HEAR MUSIC/CONCORD

7/10

Macca dates well

Largely recorded in six weeks in Abbey Road while Wings took time off from Macca's mid-'70s equivalent of the never-ending tour, ...*At The Speed Of Sound* has dated well. Unlike the piecemeal previous LP, *Venus And Mars* (also given the deluxe remaster treatment; 6/10), it largely forgoes cutesy novelties and ill-advised stabs at blues-rock for gentle AOR with a blue-eyed soul tinge and a sonic palette not unlike that of *Rumours*, which would be released just nine months later. Whether the Mac were influenced by the driving minor chords and Macca's desperate vocals on "Beware My Love", or "Time To Hide"'s neat steal from "You Keep Me Hangin' On" remains a mystery, but the fifth Wings album was a US No 1 despite the controversial decision to allow each Wings member a go (or two, in Denny Laine's case) at lead vocals. Results are mixed but perfect radio singles "Let 'Em In" and the self-justifying "Silly Love Songs" sum up a record that defines late-'70s soft-rock as well as any.

EXTRAS: Deluxe versions of *Venus And Mars* 7/10 and ...*At The Speed Of Sound* include book, new McCartney interviews, demos, unreleased tracks and contemporary singles and B-sides. Bonus DVDs feature previously unseen footage from the period.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



Z AKA BERNARD SZAJNER Visions Of Dune (reissue, 1979) INFINÉ

Cosmic oscillations from the French Brian Eno
Bernard Szajner sounds like the kind of mad

7/10

scientist figure that might have been invented purely to titillate retro connoisseurs who fetishise antique analog electronica and obscure 1970s Krautrock. Sometimes called the "French Eno", Szajner was initially a visual effects boffin who worked on stage shows for the likes of Gong, Magma and The Who. He also invented Jean-Michel Jarre's "laser harp". Originally released under the alias Zed, here abbreviated to just Z, Szajner's debut was inspired by Frank Herbert's science-fiction novel *Dune*, and largely composed in just eight days on a borrowed Oberheim, one of the first commercially available polyphonic synths. Abuzz with fuzzy-warm synth ripples and filter-swept basslines, these remastered retro-futurist sound paintings initially have a dated feel bordering on lava-lamp kitsch. But the sonic hinterland deepens with intergalactic electrical storms like "Shai Hulud" and "Harkonnen", the latter an electro-squelch jazz-rock maelstrom featuring Magma drummer Clément Bailly.

EXTRAS: Previously unreleased tracks, "Duke" 7/10 and "Spice". Sharing a horror-movie intensity and alien beauty largely absent from the rest of the LP, these lost gems confirm Szajner as an analog ancestor of digital noiseniks like Autechre and Squarepusher.

STEPHEN DALTON

Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

This month, André Benjamin plays Jimi Hendrix, Woody Allen recaptures more of his old magic and Spandau Ballet get serious...

JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE Of the recent slew of rock biopics, this Hendrix film is the one that seems to get it just about right. The traditional route followed by filmmakers tasked with bringing a life to the big screen is to attempt to cover the entire arc of a career. This cradle-to-the-grave strategy often yields disappointment: there's too little time to get into the grain of the characters and the need to condense a full life history into two hours ultimately favours brisk broad strokes rather than chunky, rewarding detail. Writer-director John Ridley – whose screenwriting credits include *U Turn*, *Three Kings* and, most recently, *12 Years A Slave* – jettisons this rather unwieldy strategy in favour of focusing on a transitional year in Hendrix's life. As it transpires, this is a satisfying way of doing business. The year in question is 1966-'67, as Ridley charts Hendrix's trajectory from playing with Curtis Knight & The Squires in New York's Cheetah Club to headlining London's Saville Theatre with Paul McCartney and George Harrison among the audience; less than two weeks later, Hendrix was on a plane to the Monterey Pop Festival.

Ridley, in the first instance, has one significant problem: the Hendrix Estate have not given permission for any of Hendrix's music to be used in the film. Ridley gets round it by using clips from Hendrix's covers ("Wild Thing", etc) or, in the case of the Saville Theatre show, by filming the Experience playing "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band", as they did at the gig. Perhaps wisely, Ridley doesn't attempt to explain Hendrix's mercurial gifts; instead he concentrates firstly on his relationship with the two women who helped break him in the UK and, secondly, by exploring the times themselves.

The two women are Linda Keith (Imogen Poots), the 20-year-old British model who became his unlikely Svengali and brought him to the attention of his future manager, Chas Chandler; and Kathy Etchingham (Hayley Atwell), his girlfriend during his British sojourn. Both Poots and Atwell are excellent – the former wise and poised but increasingly drained by Hendrix, the latter a rawer, more passionate presence. As Hendrix, André Benjamin captures Hendrix's feline gracefulness, but also a more infuriating aspect: he can be both remarkably clued up and curiously naïve, both passive and stubborn. There is a selfishness, too, about him, that he is motivated only by the things he's interested in and less concerned with the thoughts or feelings of those around him.

Ridley – directing for the first time here – also does much good work in depicting '60s London. He finds the place in transition: *Corrie* on the TV, Salvation



Army bands in the park, racist policemen and grubby, sooty streets. The evidence of Swinging London in the *Summer Of Love* is scant; it is, we discern, really only a few people – the rock star elite and their associates – who are enjoying the benefits of being tuned in and turned on. The Regent Street Polytechnic, where Hendrix joins Cream onstage, is a grubby, flyblown hall, the band squeezed in at the end of the room. There is little sense of history being made, or myths taking shape here, just a lot of sitting around in clubs and hanging out, giving the film a meandering Altman-esque vibe.

➤ **Northern Soul** For an institution that is traditionally perceived as having a London/South East bias, the British film industry has routinely travelled north of Watford in search of inspiration – and, frequently, with great success. *Billy Elliot*, *Brassed Off*, *The Full Monty*, *East Is East* and, most recently, *Pride* have all demonstrated that it can be extremely profitable to remind audiences of the dramatic possibilities offered by the deprived. Take, for example, *Northern Soul*, set in the fictional Burnsworth, a place where, "all anyone looks forward to is going down t'local." It is from this tirelessly

gloomy place that John Clark seeks escape. As played by Elliot James Langridge – who resembles a slightly hardier Barry Evans, who aficionados of '70s sitcoms may remember from *Doctor In The House* and *Mind Your Language*. Barry's prospects are limited: his sole creative outlet is scrawling graffiti around town. That is, until he meets Matt (Josh Whitehouse), who initiates him into the wonders of Northern Soul. The two plan to travel to America – where the streets might not be paved with gold but there are, more pressingly, warehouses rumoured to be full of 7" singles.

What transpires is a relatively conventional rites of passage story. In the hands of, say, Shane Meadows – at an earlier point in his career, at any rate – this might have been an exuberant study of pop cultural tribalism. Meadows might also have introduced an antagonist – a role for Paddy Considine or Stephen Graham, in other words – to provide drama and threat. As it is, debuting filmmaker Elaine Constantine allows her protagonists to move with relative freedom through the story. She touches on the culture of one-upmanship, record collecting, the clothes and clubs, but only explaining it in terms of the opportunity for escape it affords her protagonists. The codes of conduct and the mythology of Northern

Reviewed this month...



JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE

Director John Ridley
Starring André Benjamin, Imogen Poots
Opens October 24
Certificate 15
8/10



NORTHERN SOUL

Director Elaine Constantine
Starring Elliot James Langridge, Steve Coogan
Opens October 17
Certificate 15
6/10



FILMED IN SUPERMARIONATION

Director Stephen La Rivière
Starring Gerry Anderson, Sylvia Anderson
Opens October 10
Certificate PG
8/10



MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT

Director Woody Allen
Starring Colin Firth, Emma Stone
Opened September 19
Certificate 12A
7/10



SOUL BOYS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

Director George Hencken
Starring Tony Hadley, Gary Kemp
Opens September 30
Certificate 12A
6/10



Tuned in and turned on: André Benjamin as Jimi Hendrix

Soul remain elusive. In that respect, it might well have been ballet or brass bands that present John with a way out of Burnsworth. Steve Coogan cameos as an unhelpful school teacher and Ricky Tomlinson as an elderly grandfather. Thank heavens Constantine didn't send in Imelda Staunton.

► **Filmed In Supermarionation** This lively and engaging documentary about Gerry Anderson's animation kingdom sets out its stall early on. The film opens with chauffeur Parker caught by his employee, Lady Penelope, reading a book, *Supermarionation*. He pauses to reflect, "Have you ever wondered how you came to be? Why am I here, what is the meaning of life?" What follows details the supreme efforts made by Anderson and his largely British crew of boffins that essentially contributed to the shape of children's television during the 1960s and '70s. As with *Doctor Who* during the same period, Anderson's endeavours are the product of Heath Robinson innovation. Through pioneering shows like *Supercar*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Stingray*, Anderson and his team constructed an elaborate universe using puppets and model sets with astonishing ingenuity and assiduous attention to detail. Interviewed now, these senior gentlemen talk seriously of their craft (which is what it was), and the logistical difficulties presented when, say, they discovered that a car designed to travel underwater is, in fact, not fit for purpose. "It was like going back to school," says one collaborator as he explains the steep learning curve he experienced on the show. It's all very good-natured and rather jolly. Fans of such

André Benjamin captures Hendrix's feline gracefulness, but also his naïvety and stubbornness

things will delight in seeing some old faces dusted down for linking segments. But what endures is not necessarily just the astonishingly hard work carried out by Anderson and his team – presumably, easy enough to achieve these days with the click of a mouse – but also the spirit of sincerity and warmth they embraced in making their shows.

► **Magic In The Moonlight** In his youth, history records that Woody Allen considered becoming a stage magician before settling on an early career as a stand-up comic. Since then, magic and magicians have occasionally cropped up in his films – he even cast himself as a magician, *The Great Splendini*, in *Scoop*. *Magic In The Moonlight*, the director's 47th film, finds Allen circling back round to the subject once again. This is, essentially, a light *May To December* set in 1928 with Colin Firth cast as Stanley Crawford, a master magician and debunker of fraudulent spiritualists, who is asked to expose a young clairvoyant who appears to have duped a wealthy American family on the French Riviera. She is Sophie Baker (Emma Stone) – "the talk of the Côte d'Azur" – and soon even the grouchy, rationalist Stanley finds himself simultaneously entranced by her many physical charms and confounded by the accuracy of her predictions.

Lately, Allen has enjoyed a strong relationship with Old Europe; none more so than *Midnight In Paris*, also partly set in 1920s France, which restored his fortunes at the box office. Considering the travails that face him in the present days, you might wonder whether Allen appears to find a kind of refuge in the past. Indeed, *Magic In The Moonlight* finds him mining the same Riviera glamour that has previously enchanted everyone from F Scott Fitzgerald to Hitchcock. But critically, Allen has deeper, intellectual preoccupations. The film opens in Berlin towards the end of the Weimar Republic, and the wealthy Americans enjoying their carefree holiday on the Riviera will presumably lose everything in the Wall Street Crash a year later. In the more immediate environment of the film, Stanley and Sophie's back-and-forth debate about rationalism versus magic reflects the intractability of each other's position, and of course, this is what serves to bring them together. Firth, incidentally, is terrific.

► **Soul Boys Of The Western World** Spandau Ballet rose to fame during the advent of the video age. Consequently, each Spandau appears to have owned a camcorder, and Hencken's film consists principally of footage shot by the band, interspaced with promotional clips and news stories. Of course, some of this footage is unintentionally funny. Nothing dates faster than fashion, and the footage of the assembled New Romantic hoards at play in the Blitz Club – pantaloons, frilly shirts, Cossack outfits – resembles an explosion in a theatrical costume factory. They're so very, very serious, too. "Success is an art in itself," says Kemp during an interview, his brow furrowed. Of course, the band were massively successful at the time – "True" was

No 1 in 21 countries around the world. But, as the film progresses, cracks in the band's internal dynamic become increasingly evident. Gary Kemp's creative control began to rankle, and in 1999 he was sued by three of his former bandmates for back royalties. There is a lucrative 2009 reunion. The last section feels like one of those tell-all documentaries on Sky Living.

Narrated by the band themselves, *Soul Boys Of The Western World* is light, frothy stuff: and shorn of the usual talking heads and secondary interviews there is no opportunity for contextualising commentary or analysis. But perhaps that's as it should be: there is little substance to explore, after all.

Also out...

GONE GIRL

OPENS OCTOBER 3

David Fincher directs from the bestseller. Ben Affleck is the husband trying to solve his wife's disappearance.

WILL AND TESTAMENT - TONY BENN

OPENS OCTOBER 3

Documentary on the life and times of left-wing champion, Tony Benn, filmed before his death earlier this year.

WITHNAIL & I

OPENS OCTOBER 3

Brilliant opportunity to see Richard E Grant and Paul McGann's career making turns as Bruce Robinson's marvellous, scabrous comedy is reissued on the big screen.

'71

OPENS OCTOBER 10

Fresh from his work in *Starred Up*, Jack O'Connell plays a young British soldier stationed in Belfast during – yes – 1971.

PALO ALTO

OPENS OCTOBER 17

Debut from Gia Coppola, from a short story by James Franco, chronicling teen angst among high-school students.

THE JUDGE

OPENS OCTOBER 17

Oscar-bait, with Robert Downey Jr's titular judge returning to his hometown for reconciliation with his estranged father, Robert Duvall.

FURY

OPENS OCTOBER 24

WWII drama, set in Europe, 1945, with Brad Pitt commanding a Sherman tank and a five-man crew as they embark on a mission behind enemy lines.



Brad Pitt and his tank crew in *Fury*

GHOSTBUSTERS

OPENS OCTOBER 31

One of two cannily timed films – the other being Don Siegel's *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* – to hit the cinemas this Halloween.

MR TURNER

OPENS OCTOBER 31

Timothy Spall is JMW Turner in Mike Leigh's biopic exploring the final decades of the great British painter's life.

NIGHTCRAWLER

OPENS OCTOBER 31

Satire on tabloid journalism, with Jake Gyllenhaal as the young hack eager to make his mark at whatever cost.

DVD & Blu-ray

SCORING:

10 A true classic 9 Essential 8 Excellent
7 Very good 6 Good 4-5 Mediocre 1-3 Poor

THIS MONTH: ERIC CLAPTON | FARGO | JON LORD | GOMORRAH

The last stand?
Clapton performs in
Japan, February 2014

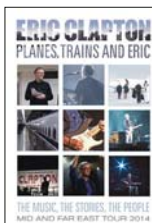


ERIC CLAPTON

Planes, Trains And Eric

EAGLE ROCK

A look inside Slowhand's (possible) farewell. By Andy Gill



8/10

"IF I DON'T do it, I get cravings to come out and do it," says Clapton at the start of the ungainly titled, but revealing, *Planes, Trains And Eric*. Three decades ago, that might have referred to one of several corrosive indulgences, but the only addiction faced now is that of playing music live, among a mutually supportive group of players. Which calls

into question the rumours, confirmed by his manager Peter Jackson, that EC planned to quit touring when he turned 70. "I've been saying this since I was 18," the guitarist chuckles. "I retired when I left The Yardbirds." Back then, his retreat was prompted by purism, his belief that nobody else wanted to do things his way. But now, he confides, he's happy just rehearsing. "I get quite resentful about the audiences coming in," he admits. "They add a different dynamic." And there's the physical demands of touring: as he revealed to *Uncut* recently, decades of hefting heavy guitars has given him back problems, which can limit his playing ability – and he's the kind of perfectionist that wouldn't want to perform below his peak.

Accordingly, as Eric grew nearer his planned cut-off date, Jackson asked him where he would most prefer to play, given that the next tour could well be his last. Japan has, he explains, always been his favourite tour stop. "A spiritual place", he likes the food, the creative stimulation, the way the Japanese can be attentive without being overbearing. At one point, reflecting upon his friendship with longtime Japanese promoter Mr Udo, EC muses on the shared honour systems of British and Japanese culture, our chivalric code paralleled by the code of bushido.

Which is why this possibly final tour doc lingers longest in the Land Of The Rising Sun, with concert footage interspersed with interviews and backstage footage. His band for this jaunt is as top-drawer as

you'd expect: Steve Gadd on drums, Nathan East on bass, Chris Stainton on piano, Paul Carrack on organ and vocals, and Michelle John and Shar White on backing vocals. The *Layla*... highlight "Tell The Truth" is a relaxed, funky gospel-rock throwback, on which Stainton's presence strengthens memories of a time when Clapton played alongside the likes of Leon Russell and Delaney & Bonnie. "Crossroads" is similarly unhurried, with Eric's vocal echoed soulfully by the backing singers, and compact solos from Stainton, Carrack and Clapton himself.

The guitarist's long association with Japan is confirmed when he is presented with an award at the Budokan, after Clapton's 200th Japanese concert. That night, the show includes an elegant version of Robert Johnson's "Little Queen Of Spades" featuring a coruscating solo, and an acoustic "Layla" prefaced by an extemporised lower-string preamble. Later on, returning from Japan, he reveals that while there he was stricken with a virus. It's another reminder of the depredations of age and health that have prompted thoughts of retirement.

On the homeward leg of the tour, the band stops off to play shows in Dubai and Bahrain, the latter arising from Clapton's friendship with Crown Prince Salman. It's a revealing glimpse of the rarefied world the superstar guitarist inhabits, compared to lesser mortals – including his sidemen, whose regrets at EC's looming retirement are invariably accompanied by observations that they are in no condition to do likewise. Eric and Salman apparently first met at one of Jackie Stewart's shoots (guns, not films), and just as Stewart had persuaded the Crown Prince to build an F1 racing circuit to host Grand Prix races, so Clapton suggested he should erect an auditorium for the guitarist to perform in. Salman's generosity, it transpires, goes further: he's had Clapton's Japanese personal assistant Aki secretly flown over with Eric's favourite chef and three cases of special meats and mushrooms, to recreate the Teppanyaki Grill backstage. It's great to be the king, eh?



FARGO

20TH CENTURY FOX
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Terrific TV spin-off

Noah Hawley's 10-part TV series based on the Coen Bros' Oscar-winning movie about greed, kidnapping, blackmail and murder in snowy Minnesota was even more violent, hilariously off-kilter and blackly comic than

9/10

its vaulted inspiration. Billy Bob Thornton was sleekly evil as transient hitman Lorne Malvo, descending like an angel of death in a beatnik wig on the backwater municipality of Bemidji. There were fine performances, too, from Martin Freeman as town stooge-turned-homicidal-maniac Lester Nygaard and Allison Tolman in the Marge Gunderson role as a plucky local cop.

EXTRAS: Commentaries on selected episodes, deleted scenes.

6/10

ALLAN JONES



GOMORRAH: SEASON ONE

ARROW FILMS

Stunning Italian mob saga raises television's Euro-crime bar

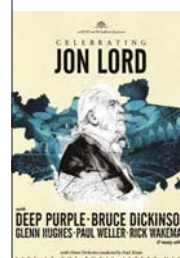
Roll over Scandinavia: this simmering Italian crime show is one of the television events of 2014. Like 2008's brilliantly depressing movie of the

9/10

same title, it's based on journalist Robert Saviano's controversial exposé of organised crime in present-day Italy, as represented by Naples' Mafia-like Camorra. But the series differs in tone, to offer a modern take on a very old-school tale of rivalry, as a prowling young foot soldier gradually manoeuvres against the family running his clan. Twisting, gripping as hell, immaculately filmed.

EXTRAS: Unconfirmed.

DAMIEN LOVE



CELEBRATING JON LORD

EAR MUSIC

Baroque of ages, Deep Purple's keyboard maverick remembered

Two years on from his death, Jon Lord is remembered by famous friends from Deep Purple and beyond in a show at the Royal Albert Hall,

7/10

covering the entire history of the keyboard wizard's lengthy career. Paul Weller cuts a mod-ish groove recreating Lord's '60s beat group days with The Artwoods, Bruce Dickinson and Rick Wakeman join a permutation of Purps for a selection of big hits, while the great man's pioneering fusion of hard rock and classical is represented by a concerto performed by the Orion Orchestra.

EXTRAS: Documentary, CD versions of the entire show.

7/10

TERRY STAUNTON

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SETLIST

- 1 Lily
- 2 Hounds Of Love
- 3 Joanni
- 4 Top Of The City
- 5 Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)
- 6 King Of The Mountain
- THE NINTH WAVE**
- 7 And Dream Of Sheep
- 8 Under Ice
- 9 Waking The Witch
- 10 Watching You Without Me
- 11 Jig Of Life
- 12 Hello Earth
- 13 The Morning Fog
- A SKY OF HONEY**
- 14 Prelude
- 15 Prologue
- 16 An Architect's Dream
- 17 The Painter's Link
- 18 Sunset
- 19 Aerial Tal
- 20 Somewhere In Between
- 21 Tawny Moon
- 22 Nocturn
- 23 Aerial
- ENCORE**
- 24 Among Angels
- 25 Clodbusting

KATE BUSH

EVENTIM APOLLO, LONDON, AUGUST 27, 2014

Introducing the extravagant new theatrical firm of Bush & Son... *"There is thunder in our hearts!"* By John Mulvey

THERE IS A SONG on *Aerial*, Kate Bush's eighth album, called "Bertie". "*Here comes the sunshine*," it begins, "*Here comes that son of mine/Here comes the everything/Here's a song and a song for him*." Nine years later, here, perhaps is a show for him: an unexpected comeback; a ravishing absurdity; a launchpad for his theatrical aspirations. Our pleasure may be, to some degree, collateral.

Why has Kate Bush come back now? The best response to such a question might well be, why not? The cod-psychoanalytic one, based on an interpretation of the second half of her career being dominated by the demands of parenthood over art, is that Bush's return to the stage after 35 years is one more immensely generous act of maternal love. Bertie McIntosh, now 16, is the creative advisor of *Before The Dawn*, and its

male lead. He has the largest speaking part in Bush's first gilded song cycle, "*The Ninth Wave*", and the starring role in her second, "*A Sky Of Honey*". He even has a new song to sing by himself, "*Tawny Moon*".

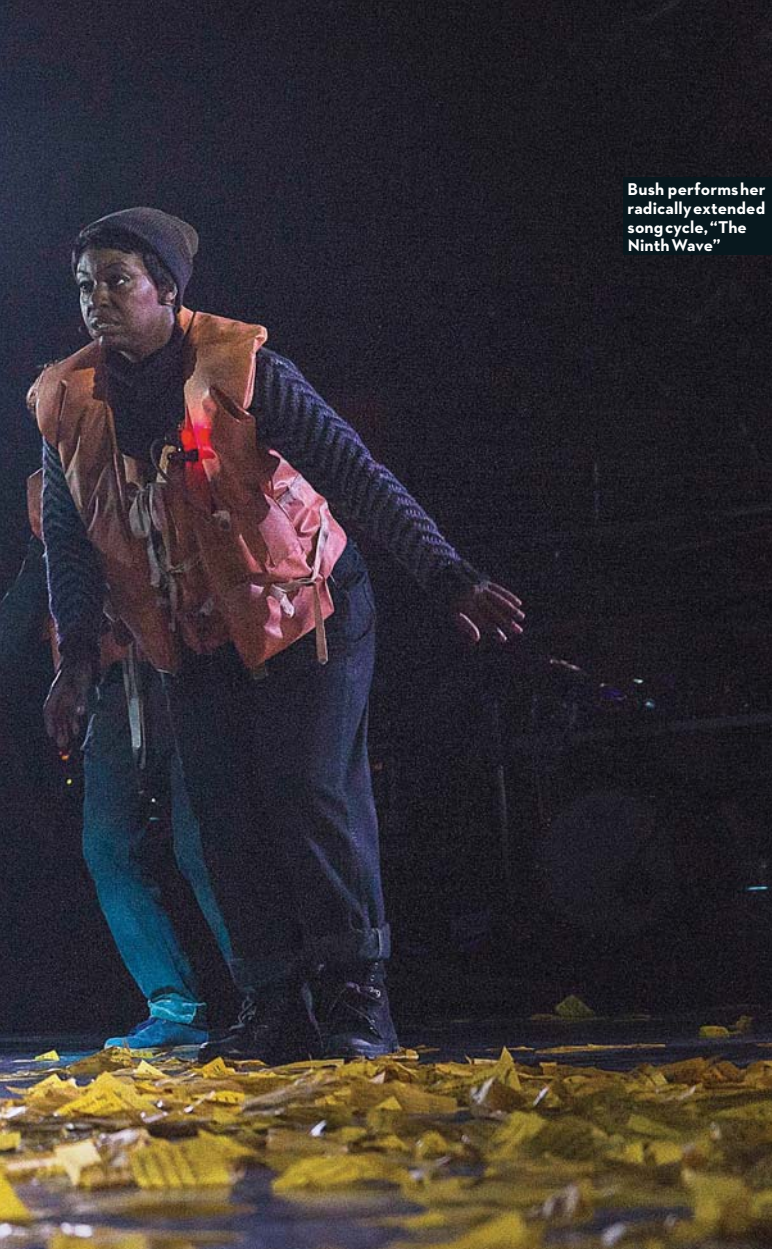
"Without my son, Bertie, this would never have happened," Bush writes in her meticulous programme notes ("I love detail," she notes, unnecessarily). "He is a very talented actor and beautiful singer, as you will be witness to, and he brings something very special to the show through his presence."

Bush credits her son for, among other things, helping her conquer the nerves that have reputedly kept her offstage since '79. As the second night of *Before The Dawn* begins, though, either that stage fright has been conquered, or her acting abilities are more subtly effective than the broader strokes might sometimes suggest. The first song is "Lily", from 1993,

carrying Bush back into the spotlight with an elegant groove, arms outstretched in beatific welcome.

Gabriel is before her, Raphael behind her, Michael to her right and Uriel to her left, and the seraphic horde hover over the whole performance: "*Put me up on the angel's shoulders*," she sings early on in an exceptional "*Top Of The City*". Much, much later she will don wings and ascend into the darkness at the climax of "*A Sky Of Honey*", then reappear at the piano to sing "*Among Angels*".

After that song, and before a final rousing "*Clodbusting*", Bush makes a short but heartfelt speech, thanking the audience for not capturing the performance on their phones. It is, she tells us, about people, not technology. It is also, sceptics might add, about preserving the magic for an eventual DVD release. *Before The Dawn* is designed to be taken as a



Bush performs her radically extended song cycle, "The Ninth Wave"

generous whole, a three-hour marathon of rapturous music and West End manners. Bush's strategy is as cunning and artful as might be expected: a warm-up session of half-a-dozen songs; a full dramatisation of the "Ninth Wave" suite from *Hounds Of Love*. Then, after the interval, the second disc of *Aerial* (the "Sky Of Honey" sequence) and a couple of symmetrically resonant songs for an encore.

Some of the "Sky Of Honey" songs have a Balearic swish to them, so that an outstanding "Sunset", in particular, feels like the work of classy musicians of a certain age, enjoying a Café Del Mar compilation after dinner in the countryside. Mostly, though, Bush's aesthetic has remained unchanged since 1985, and *Hounds Of Love* (she plays all but two songs from that album, and nothing predating it). One of her keyboardists, Kevin McAlea, actually figured on 1979's *Tour Of Life*, while the band also includes David Rhodes, John Giblin, Jon Carin and Omar Hakim, session vets who have long moved in a world populated by Peter Gabriel, Pink Floyd, Simple Minds, Dire Straits and Barclay James Harvest.

With that aforementioned attention to detail, Bush, the seven-piece band and five backing singers (including Bertie McIntosh), set about recreating

the sound of the original records with phenomenal accuracy. The opening six songs move with a steady relentlessness, a mellow funk, a precise rendering of those glassy Fairlight epiphanies, and provide Bush with a calm base to display the still-astounding potency of her voice. The rearing climaxes of "Top Of The City" are delivered with grace and soul as well as power, while juxtaposing "Running Up That Hill" with 2005's "King Of The Mountain" proves that, in another time, the latter could well have been as significant a hit as the former.

Throughout, too, there's ample evidence of how Kate Bush and her music sometimes bewilderingly transcend context and prejudice. For as those musicians' CVs prove, here is someone immersed in a shiny world where the virtuosity of prog-rock met the perfectionism of a then-new studio culture, where the '70s met the '80s; not a world which, traditionally, has received unwavering critical love.

Bush, of course, is too much of an idiosyncratic talent for these textures to be rendered sterile. "The Ninth Wave", in particular, highlights how she inhabits – defines, possibly – that rarest of genres, feminised prog. Even without the spectacle which accompanies it, the radically expanded "Ninth Wave" is a

masterclass in extended musical writing, in threading flights of fantasy into a more or less coherent narrative, and in finding an emotional valency – one which, more than ever, focuses on a love of family – in something which initially appears outlandish.

The staging of "The Ninth Wave", Bush's tale of a shipwrecked woman's fight for life in the sea, involves filmed segments in a water tank, a helicopter hovering over the audience, fish-skeletons drawing the victim to her doom, tragi-comic interludes, and some remarkable visual tableaux. The sight, during "Hello Earth", of Bush clambering onto a buoy undulating amidst fabric waves, lit by red flares, is one of many enduring images in *Before The Dawn*.

Those of us averse to the stagecraft of West End musicals may, however, find other sections

a little tougher to deal with. The mime involving a stereotypically fiery preacher during "Waking The Witch", for instance, or the long, stilted dialogue between McIntosh (as the drowning woman's son) and backing singer Bob Harms (as her husband) written by the novelist David Mitchell. As an illustration of how banal domesticity can be fractured by disaster, it makes sense. As a vignette that depends on lines like "HP and mayo, it's the badger's nadgers" for laughs, it leaves something to be desired.

Pretty much from the beginning of her career, Kate Bush has presented herself as the full artistic package: a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary conceptual artist whose genius cannot be reduced, as many recent thinkpieces have tried, to a detail about how many costume changes she went through on the *Tour Of Life*. The heretical thought does occur during *Before The Dawn*, though, that her desire to visualise and dramatise most every aspect of her music can sometimes detract from its inherent quality.

There's a good argument to be made, for instance, that "A Sky Of Honey" is one of Bush's very best pieces of work. Its inclusion in *Before The Dawn* implies that she would agree, and the way she performs these delicate and rapturous songs with her band only emphasise the point. In the programme notes, though, she admits, "I really struggled with the staging for this for a while... What was the action onstage to be?"

It's an anxiety of creative vision that seems out of character, but one which is reflected in the performance, with Bertie McIntosh taking Rolf Harris' old role as the painter, moving uncertainly around the stage while his fellow vocalists mooch about in bird masks and a wooden puppet wanders rather forlornly through the

band, in search of an occasional hug from Bush. The Turner-style sunsets and slow-motion bird films would have plenty sufficed.

The music, though, remains magnificent, at once meditative and pulsating, working its way from quasi-ambient piano

studies, through birdsong and the choreographed informality of "Sunset", to the pumping abandon of "Nocturn" and "Aerial" itself, and the salient cry of "*We become panoramic!*"

After all that, a solo piano interlude of "Among Angels" provides a tantalising glimpse of an alternative way that Kate Bush could have made her comeback: one more musically pure, perhaps, but also one which would have only represented, for better or worse, a single strand of her essence. *Before The Dawn* is a celebration of the sublime and the preposterous, of a talent returned to the stage after an epic length of time, and also, critically, of the consolations and inspirations of family. Love, it transpires, can make you do the strangest things – again and again, for 22 nights.

Before The Dawn is a celebration of the sublime and the preposterous

Critics' corner: the fish-skeleton adversaries of the "Ninth Wave" suite





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ST VINCENT, GRUFF RHYS and an eccentric cast bring the pageantry to *Uncut*'s favourite festival...

WHILE OTHER EVENTS expand and sometimes lose their original magic, End Of

The Road remains gloriously consistent, the equivalent of the lifer musician who builds their back catalogue and waits for the world to catch on. So this year's festival is reassuringly familiar to anyone who's attended before – the excellent musical lineup and the beautiful setting are present and correct – with one difference: 2014 seems to be the year of the spectacle.

There's **St Vincent**, with her podium and mime moves, ending her Friday headline set with free-noise and flashing lights, as if recreating a nuclear attack warning. The same night, determined not to be upstaged by the foliage already decorating the leafy Garden Stage, **British Sea Power** bring even more of their own branches, wreathed in fairy lights. In the dark it's a beautiful sight, perfectly matching the Brighton six-piece's anthemic paeans to nature, ice shelves and Cumbrian wrestling.

Even the sight of a peacock basking resplendently on top of the 1895 Singing Theatre doesn't distract from

Cate Le Bon's stunning set on the Garden Stage on Saturday, the now-LA-dwelling singer captivating with "Sisters", complete with her biting lead guitar, and the tender "I Think I Knew", with guest vocals from the Seattle-based **Perfume Genius**.

This Singing Theatre, an ornately painted alcove originally used to stage plays and poetry readings, is the picturesque setting for **Yo La Tengo**'s acoustic set the following day, during which they perform covers of Donovan and Half Japanese and field questions ranging from their favourite subject at school (Georgia Hubley: "The rest period") to the best band ever (The Clean, says Ira Kaplan). Much noisier is the New Jersey trio's later set on the main

Woods Stage, which features an electrifying 10-minute version of their customary Beach Boys cover, "Little Honda".

There are some more subtle highlights, too. **Richard Thompson**'s solo acoustic set, interlacing masterful versions of "Beeswing", "Walking On A Wire" and "I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight" with jokes about Catholic sex and Cajun cruise bands, is a stripped-down triumph; and, on *Uncut*'s own Tipi Tent Stage, the charismatic **Sam Lee** artfully tackles traditional folk songs, accompanied by Japanese kora, strings and his own impressively lithe dancing.

Back to the big, though, and **The Flaming Lips**' headline set on Saturday night. The experience is a vomiting of psychedelic colour, featuring confetti cannons, people dressed as giant inflatable aliens, Wayne Coyne in a silver jacket and skin-tight bodysuit, Wayne Coyne on a huge platform surrounded by screens largely showing breasts, and Wayne Coyne in his giant hamster ball. Once the Lips' gimmickry was high-concept, low-cost and charmingly ramshackle, but now all these expensive, arena-ready visuals

overshadow the songs, which are either unworthy of festival sets ("Vein Of Stars") or performed with lacklustre, synth-led arrangements which even disappoint on "Do You Realize??" The less said about their by-numbers closing cover of "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" the better, though no word on whether Sean Lennon, seen queuing up at the pulled pork stall earlier, enjoyed it from the side of the stage.

In the end, the simpler pleasures of a man with an iPad, a projector and a 200-year-old story to tell provide the weekend's triumph. **Gruff Rhys**, joined by a four-piece band including former Flaming Lip Kliph Scurlock on drums, ably recreates the windswept epics from his recent *American Interior* album, including the Morricone-esque highlight "Iolo" and the mutant Cash canter of "100 Unread Messages".

It's hard to remember a more attentive audience at a festival, which is doubly impressive when half the set is taken up by Rhys very swiftly telling the tale of *American Interior*'s doomed subject, 18th-Century Welsh explorer John Evans, who even appears onstage (well, in the guise of his felt avatar, at least) to hush cheers.

There's still room for older solo favourites like "Shark Ridden Waters" and "Gyrru Gyrru Gyrru", the only Welsh-language song that could spark a singalong at an English festival, no doubt, as well as a frenzied "Sensations In The Dark".

Earlier at the Cinema Stage, Rhys introduced his *American Interior* film with the typically endearing, "I don't really know what I'm supposed to be doing..." Musically, he clearly doesn't have the same problem.

TOM PINNOCK

Gruff Rhys, his band, a projector and a 200-year-old story provide the weekend's triumph

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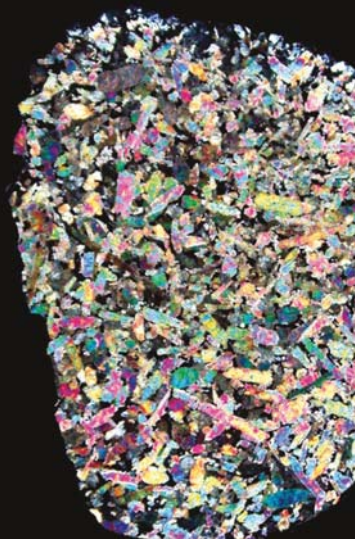
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Sat 31 **SHEFFIELD** City Hall 0114 2789 789

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Fri 13 **WORTHING** Assembly Hall 01903 206 206
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Fri 06 **NORTHAMPTON** Derngate 01604 624 811
Thu 12 **SWINDON** Wyvern Theatre 01793 524 481
Fri 13 **BASINGSTOKE** The Anvil 01256 844 244
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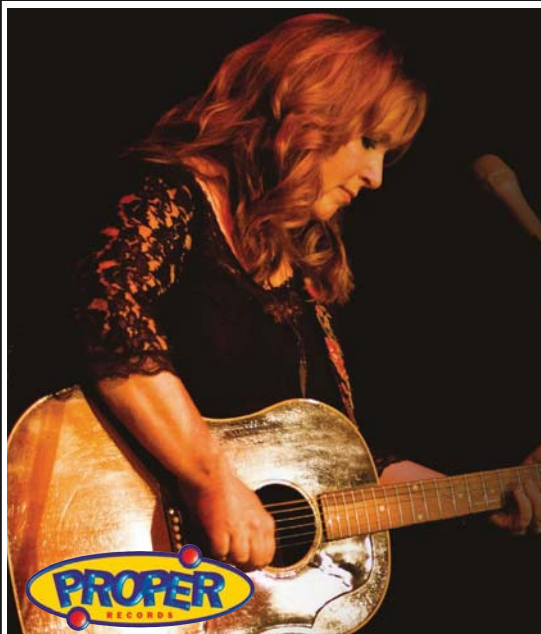
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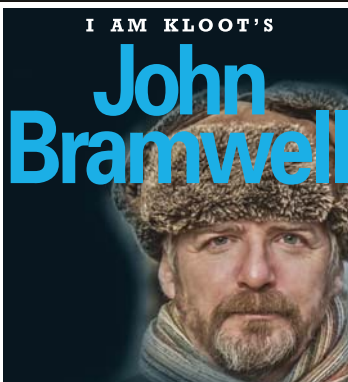


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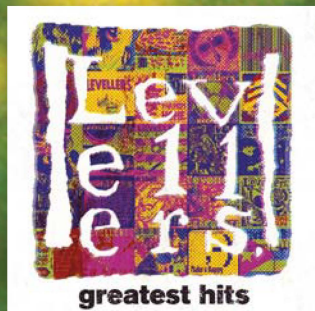
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THE NIGHT IS YOUNG
Southern Fried

Two years ago The 2 Bears dropped a debut album that re-invigorated a genre and gathered music fans in the open embrace of house music. They return with the second instalment 'The Night Is Young', the eagerly awaited follow up. The record undulates, it's like a taster menu; courses of hard house, punchy ragga, piano tear-jerkers, funk and soul, all made crystalline with the typically high level of production and the passion of Raf's voice. Essential listening.



THE FAT WHITE FAMILY
CHAMPAGNE HOLOCAUST (DELUXE EDITION)
Trashmouth Records

The Fat White Family release a new deluxe 2CD edition of their critically acclaimed debut 'Champagne Holocaust' with 10 bonus tracks of rarities, remixes and early recordings.

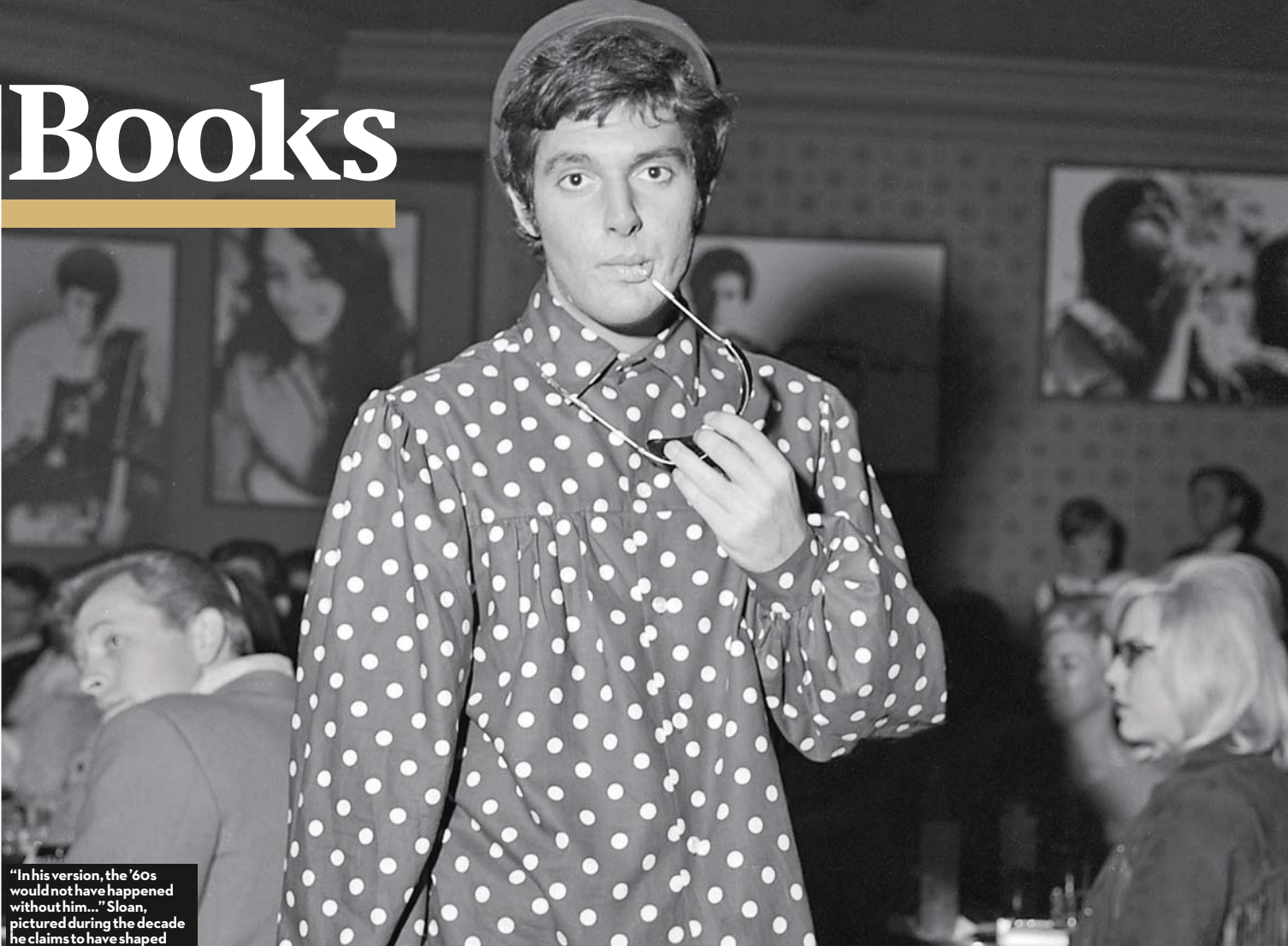
"The most important band in Britain right now!" **Q Magazine** August 2014

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Books



"In his version, the '60s would not have happened without him..." Sloan, pictured during the decade he claims to have shaped

Reviewed this month...



What's Exactly The Matter With Me? Memoirs Of A Life In Music

PF Sloan and SE Feinberg

JAWBONE

7/10

BOY, WHAT AN amazing story PF Sloan has to tell in *What's Exactly The Matter With Me?*, his memoir of a career that seemed just to have taken off when it crashed at the end of the runway. Sloan convinced his downfall had been brought about by malevolent industry forces, principally the evidently heavy types who ran his record company, mercilessly exploited his talent, fleeced him of his royalties and then cruelly abandoned him to heroin addiction, mental illness and general ruin.

How much of it, though, is true? When in the late '60s his family had Sloan committed to a psychiatric unit, he was diagnosed with hypoglycaemia, a condition caused by abnormally low glucose content, the consequences of which include depression, intense anxiety and schizophrenia. It was a combination of mental disorders that in Sloan's case was apparently exacerbated by delusions of grandeur, more than a hint of the latter evident in the account of his life he offers, to which he sometimes seems a questionable witness, a fantasist for whom reality has been shaped by whim and wishful thinking.

Even the earliest events of his life are touched by the incredible. Not long after his family moved in the

mid-'50s from New York to Los Angeles, for instance, he's photographed with Elizabeth Taylor after, rather brazenly for a 10-year-old, gatecrashing the premiere of *Around The World In 80 Days*. This is just after a chance encounter with James Dean, fully two years after Dean's death, and a meeting with Elvis Presley in an otherwise deserted music store. Elvis gives him a guitar lesson and sagely predicts great things for the young prodigy, whose precocious musical gifts are recognised when at 13 he's signed as Flip Sloan to local R'n'B label, Aladdin Records, who put him in the studio to record a single with Bumps Blackwell, famous for his work with Little Richard, Sam Cooke and Ray Charles.

By 1960, he's written over 100 songs that bring him to the attention of Screen Gems Music. Hired originally as a staff writer, at 16 he's also head of their A&R department, reporting to budding music business tycoon Lou Adler. When Adler leaves Screen Gems to launch his own label, Dunhill Records, home soon to The Mamas And The Papas, he takes Sloan and songwriting partner Steve Barri with him, but not before Sloan in his account has played an overlooked part in breaking both The Beatles and The Rolling Stones in America.

At Screen Gems, Sloan and Barri had written dozens of songs, some of them hits, specialising in surfing songs for Jan & Dean, and they continue to churn them out by the score for Dunhill. This increasingly is mere hackwork for Sloan, a kind of servitude, Adler and allegedly menacing henchman Jay Lasker, according to Sloan "one cold-hearted, greedy son of a bitch", lorded it over the label like whip-cracking plantation owners, interested only in quick buck returns on a tested formula. They are therefore hostile to the lofty ambition of the songs Sloan's started writing, like "Eve Of Destruction" – a protest epic inspired by a voice Sloan hears, "possibly an angel's", that instructs him in its writing – and Dunhill wants nothing to do with it until it becomes an international No 1 in a version by former New

Christy Minstrel Barry McGuire, recently signed to the label.

Phil Sloan at this point becomes PF Sloan, the 'Prince of Protest', "the political and social conscience of all young people with an opinion", as he puts it. He's barely 20, things getting giddy around him, his exaggerated self-importance increasingly to the fore. In his version of things, the '60s would not have happened if he had not been around. Without what he claims were his crucial interventions, there would have been no "Mr Tambourine Man", The Mamas And The Papas would not have recorded "California Dreamin'", Dylan would not have released *Highway 61 Revisited*, Stephen Stills would not have written "For What It's Worth", the Stones would not have come up with "Paint It, Black", no-one would have heard of Jimmy Webb, Lennon would not have written "In My Life". It may be worth noting that around this time, Sloan was living in druggy abandon in Laurel Canyon, where a manservant apparently sent to him from India by a 2,000-year-old Enlightened Being named Guru Babay fed him daily hits of LSD.

Inevitably, it all ends badly. According to Sloan, Dunhill had repeatedly hindered his career. First Bobby Darin, then Brian Epstein and more recently Phil Spector and Bob Dylan had offered to buy him out of his contract, the better to promote him as the genius they knew him to be. They had all been rebuked by the label, Jay Lasker now threatening severe retribution unless Sloan signs over the publishing rights to all his songs to date. Dunhill would also keep him under contract, effectively preventing him from working for anyone else.

Years are lost to heroin, obscurity beckons. For Sloan and his co-writer SE Feinberg, this is a kind of martyrdom, Sloan a victim of a ruthless industry dedicated to his destruction, for reasons not wholly explained. It suits their narrative, though, to cast him as a persecuted visionary, especially as it never occurs to them that his self-regard in the end was greater than his actual talent. **ALLAN JONES**

The Defiant

The Glorious New Album from **The Men They Couldn't Hang**



Upcoming Gigs

October

18th Lerwick, Shetland Mareel
23rd Liverpool Arts Club
24th Glasgow King Tuts
25th Aberdeen The Moorings Bar
30th Birmingham The Institute
31st Derby The Flowerpot

November

1st Newcastle O2 Academy

December

5th London The Borderline

April 2015

4th London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire
Special 30th Anniversary Finale show with special guests Merry Hell and The London Sewage Company

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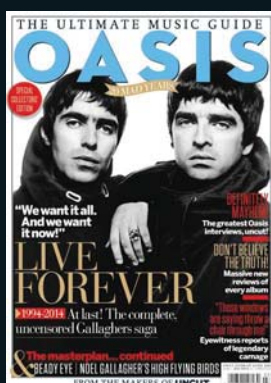
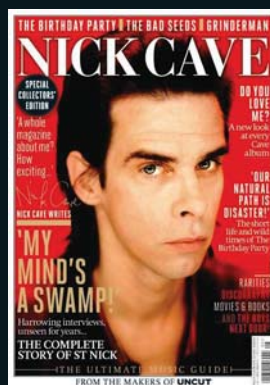
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OBITUARIES

Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

GLENN CORNICK

Jethro Tull bass player

1947-2014

THE FIRST OF Jethro Tull's early flurry of hits was 1969's "Living In The Past". Leader Ian Anderson, all wild hair and hopping flautistry, provided its visual pizzazz, but the song was underpinned by a delicious 5/4 bassline from Glenn Cornick. By then the band had mutated from a blues-based ensemble to something altogether more fluid, combining elements of folk, jazz and classical music. The full weight of this evolution came to bear on second LP *Stand Up*, released that same year, which put them firmly in the realm of progressive rock. Cornick always insisted it wasn't planned. "You don't consciously change the direction of your music," he told *It's Psychedelic* in 2011. "It just happens naturally, so we were all shocked when the album was released and people said, 'Oh, they're not playing blues anymore'."

Cornick had been with Anderson since 1967, when a prototype Tull – the John Evan Band – left Lancashire to be closer to London's blues boom. He remained until late 1970, playing on their three pre-*Aqualung* LPs, before forming Wild Turkey. Despite losing members to Graham Bond's Magick, Cornick pressed on, though neither of their two albums sold well. The bassist then joined German outfit Karthago for '75's *Rock'n'Roll Testament*, after which he co-founded Paris with ex-Fleetwood Mac guitarist Bob Welch and former Nazzy drummer, Thom Mooney. The band left behind a pair of LPs before dissolving in 1977.

Wild Turkey reunited on a few occasions, the most recent being for 2006's *You & Me In The Jungle*, which featured another ex-Tull player, Clive Bunker. Paying tribute on his website, Anderson praised Cornick's broad knowledge of music and ready bonhomie: "He brought to the early stage performances of Tull a lively bravado, both as a personality and a musician."

Tull in 1970, with Cornick, top



DAVID ANDERLE

Elektra/A&M producer and A&R, Beach Boys associate

1937-2014

Legend has it that David Anderle's enthusiasm was the crucial factor behind The Beach Boys' decision to release "Good Vibrations". Wavering over the song in 1966, Brian Wilson only opted to finish it after Anderle suggested he give it to Danny Hutton, who he was then managing. It was the start of a friendship that led to him introducing Wilson to another client, Van Dyke Parks, and setting up the band's own Brother Records. Anderle had begun as A&R man at MGM, where he signed The Mothers Of Invention. By 1968 he was heading up Elektra's West Coast office, bringing in David Ackles, producing Judy Collins and working with Love and The Doors. "He had the right look, the sensitivity and the smarts to attract

artists," said boss Jac Holzman. "David was aware of everything happening in L.A." In 1970, Anderle joined Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss at A&M as staff producer and A&R. He went on to oversee scores for *Good Morning, Vietnam*, *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty In Pink*. In 1999 he retired to become a portrait painter.

BILLY RATH

Heartbreakers bassist

1948-2014

The classic lineup of Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers didn't take shape until founding bassist Richard Hell was replaced by Billy Rath. "It was like I was the missing link that completed the sound they were looking for," Rath said in 2012. The band issued 1977's *LAMF* before splitting in '78. Rath joined them for sporadic reunions, but by 1985 he'd quit rock to study and become an

addiction counsellor. He returned in 2010 with Billy Rath's Street Pirates.

UZIAH 'STICKY' THOMPSON

Jamaican percussionist and DJ

1936-2014

Drummer Sly Dunbar, his fellow band member in the Compass Point All Stars, called Uziah Thompson "one of the steadiest percussionists to work with". Thompson played a pivotal role in the development of ska and roots reggae, beginning with Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd and featuring as DJ on The Skatalites' 1967 hit, "Guns Of Navarone". He went on to work with Lee Perry as a sessioneer for The Wailers and played with, among others, Black Uhuru, Jimmy Cliff, Grace Jones, Tom Tom Club and Ziggy Marley.

STUART GORDON

Violinist and guitarist

1951-2014

Violinist and occasional guitarist Stuart Gordon began with The

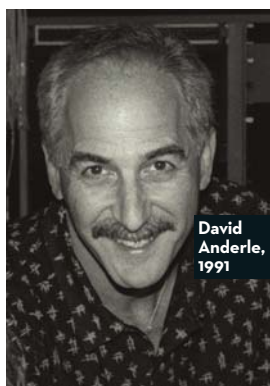
Korgis (best known for 1980's "Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime"), though he enjoyed a far more fruitful career as an in-demand session player. His most frequent employer was Peter Hammill, with whom he toured and recorded extensively in the '90s. Gordon also appeared on albums by The Beach Boys, Peter Gabriel, Goldfrapp, XTC and Massive Attack, to name but a few.

JIMI JAMISON

Survivor frontman

1951-2014

His time with Survivor didn't begin until after 1982's mega-selling "Eye Of The Tiger", but frontman Jimi Jamison was aboard for their next international success, "Burning Heart", issued three years later. His vocals also powered US hits like "The Search Is Over", "High On You" and "Is This Love?". Perhaps his greatest claim to popularity was as co-writer and singer of "I'm Always Here", the bouncy theme from TV show *Baywatch*. **ROB HUGHES**



Feedback...

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BUSH WHACKED!

I, my wife and two daughters paid approximately £440 to sit what seemed to be half a mile away from the stage on the first night of Kate Bush and left the concert disappointed by what we had seen and heard.

Positives: Any song from the piano. Credit, perhaps, for the 'bravery' of the experimental show, rather than giving the crowd what they wanted. A vocal delivery which strengthened and deepened as the evening progressed. A handful of lovely moments. Occasional thoughtful and beautiful lighting and visual effects.

Negatives: The sound of what appeared to be '80s session musicians – they were a long way off – who didn't do the opening salvo of songs any favours with their functional playing of 'all the right notes' without any spark of interest or originality. "The Ninth Wave" veering into pomp rock (people with fish heads, for God's sakes, and a mock helicopter? I understand the reasoning behind it, but it was bombastic). The self-indulgent *Aerial* section which, let's face it, has some dreary moments in it (hands up who would rather see Kate sing anything from her first four albums solo on a piano, or her son wearing a hat singing to the projection of the moon behind him?). The *War Horse*-lite amateur theatrics sprinkled throughout grated and the dreadful scripted piece was embarrassing.

Result: The night, from a fiscal perspective, was a waste of money. The impartial, analytical appreciation of a performance that I have always expected and admired from the critics has regrettably taken a hit here. It was as if they had been instructed to be generous in their appraisal. We paying mugs felt that we had been duped into buying these exorbitant tickets so that we could fund this grand folly.

Yes, the crowd at the beginning was fantastic – as good as when Led Zeppelin played the O₂. I was there as well. The fabulous reception at the end, however, may not have been for the quality of what we had witnessed, but might instead have been a yearning for the night that we had wanted to enjoy so deeply but had not been satisfied. In conclusion, I wish I had waited for the DVD, played it once and



A waste of money?
Kate Bush at the
Hammersmith Apollo

consigned it to the shelves for the rest of the decade. It would have saved me £415.

Peter Beynon, via email

POLITICS AND ROCK: HEATED DEBATE CONTINUES, INDEFINITELY

Oh well, so now I am a Cliff Richard, Herman's Hermits etc fan [*Dave McGowan, Uncut 208*]. All because I am repelled by rock and folk musicians who use the medium for party political purposes. Actually I did quite like "Devil Woman", as it goes. The more serious point is where I started: Brian MacColl and Pete Seeger were active and proselytising supporters of Stalin and Mao at a time when these totalitarian dictators were murdering millions of their own citizens and actively seeking to conquer the liberal West. They both used and subverted folk music to this insidious end and clearly the repercussions linger on. To say that MacColl was able to write lovely songs as an excuse for his Maoism, his misogyny and his bigotry and arrogance around the music itself [*Mark Brown, Uncut 207*] is like forgiving Gary Glitter because he wrote some stonking glam anthems.

I wonder, if either of them had supported Pinochet or Pol Pot, whether this leftie rage would be

so acute. As for the general point of rock and politics, the sad reality is that rock ceased to be a subversive force for social reform many years ago. Probably around the time of Live Aid, but don't get me started on that – I visited Ethiopia in the aftermath. The three songs I quoted were examples of artists who tried and failed because the subtlety of the message was lost in the sloganeering of political parties that hijacked the music. When Johnny Marr tells David Cameron he can't like The Smiths, he looks a fool. When Paul Weller joins Red Wedge and cosies up to Neil Kinnock, he looks an idiot. When Bono... well, let's leave that, shall we? One final point, Franco won the Spanish Civil War because he was supported by Hitler, not because the Anarchists didn't support the Communists. Why would they? In any case, given the history of the 20th Century, why would a Communist government have been any less repressive in Spain than Franco's?

I shall miss Allan Jones, by the way. He was the only journalist who liked Random Hold back in the day.
Jon Grocock, Glastonbury

KEEP ON TRUCKSING

Welcome aboard, John, as the new editor of *Uncut* magazine. I will miss the monthly (sometimes hazed, but in a good way) reminiscences and

comments of Allan Jones. That said, I look forward to your perspectives on music and changes you may initiate that improve an already great publication. I was very happy to see the Q&A with Butch Trucks accompanying the review of the Allman Brothers Band's 6CD set of the 1971 Fillmore East Recordings. Most people think of the band as a two-guitar attack, or Gregg Allman's soulful vocals and organ playing, but flying under the radar in their sound was the drum tandem of Butch Trucks and Jaimoe Johanson. They didn't merely double the volume, they propelled the music forward in a way few other bands have achieved or even tried, and they still play it the same way. The early Grateful Dead came close, especially on *Anthem Of The Sun* and *Live/Dead*, but by the mid-1970s they got discofied, there were more slow songs, and the rhythm section wasn't the locomotive it once was.

Thanks again for a wonderful magazine, the best summary of music, movies and DVDs going today.

Larry Pryluck, Amissville, Virginia

...Music for me catches the visceral moments in life more than other artforms. Most recently, the long player by Hans Chew has both captured and encapsulated the long days of summer. The recent gig at



the [London] Water Rats was pure joy both for the smallish crowd, and the band, it seemed. Hiss Golden Messenger, These New Puritans, The War On Drugs and Blues Control have been other fairly recent discoveries. The common denominator with all these bands has been the heads-up on the weekly blog from John Mulvey. So a sincere thanks, John, for bringing these to my attention.

Paul Guscini, via email

NOTHING COMPARES TO IT

Of all the album reviews this month [Uncut 209], not one had the "I" word in the title. Whereas in Sinéad O'Connor's nine featured albums [Sinéad O'Connor: Album By Album], there were four "I"s as well as two "I'm"s as a bonus. Just wondered if there was any connection with this and her being such a self-centred bore?

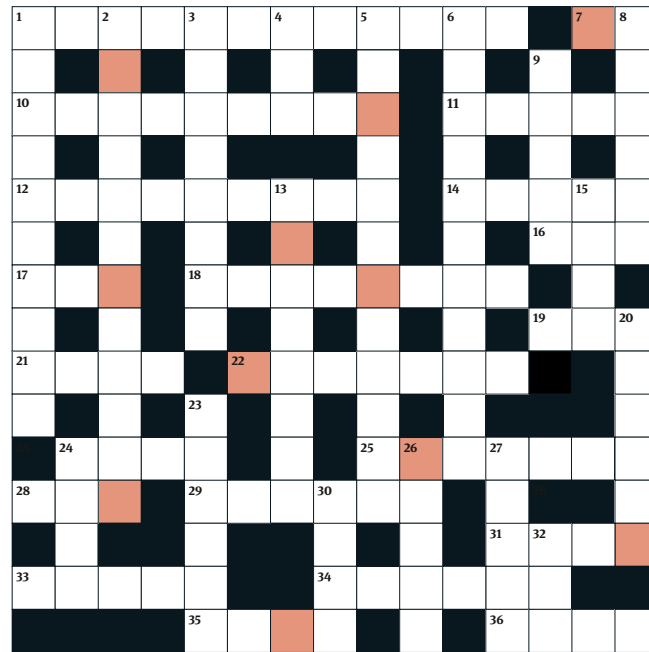
Julian Badenoch, via email

CROSS WORDS...

I've been buying your supreme magazine for years now and it has pointed me in all sorts of new musical directions, while I thought my horizon had been pretty wide already. I don't store my music magazines anymore, but I always tear out one page; the one with Trevor's crossword. I keep them 'til I go on holiday in the summer and then I have two weeks to solve about 12. On average I manage to finish about six out of 10 without mistakes – and that's without Googling, of course, otherwise it would be bloody simple. Sometimes the challenges get the better of me (who on this planet knows the name of Peter and Robin Sarstedt's brother?) and I have to give up. After checking the answers I always get to understand Trevor's descriptions and some are brilliant. This year I finally didn't get the clue of one of them, though I answered it correctly. The October 2013 one. 25 Across: "The O₂ attempt to include The Cure's performance on album". "Entreat" is a Cure album and that appeared to be correct, but what about the description? Please explain it to me and I can sleep again.

Herman Lansink Rotgerink, Borne, The Netherlands

We got in touch with Trevor Hungerford, who pointed out that the clue had been edited and consequently made no sense. It should have read, "The O₂ Centre attempt to include The Cure's performance on album." "Entreat" would then have appeared in the clue. Sincere apologies to Herman and anyone else who was baffled by this cock-up. – JM



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Pink Floyd. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: Uncut November 2014 Xword Comp, 8th floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU. The first correct entry picked at random will win a prize. Closing date: Monday, October 27, 2014. This competition is only open to European residents.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1+20D Dear cockneys. Pass it on. Yours Faithfully, Marianne (4-2-4-2-6)
7 Beach Boys album recorded in the Palladium (1-1)
10 Vera tuned in badly to Television (9)
11 "Drums beatin', cold English _____ runs hot", from The Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar" (5)
12 She got a negative response from The Zombies (4-3-2)
14 A problem trying to swallow this stuff by The Beautiful South (5)
16 Vintage Paul McCartney stored among the fine wines (3)
17 Half of the pantos have music by rap act G-Unit (1-1-1)
18 Passionately daft about The Cardigans (8)
19+34A E-mail dirt spread around on Scottish band (3-6)
21 (See 29 across)
22 Taking a personal liberty with Neil Young album (7)
24 "When you're strange, faces come out of the _____", from The Doors' "People Are Strange" (4)
25 Do Creed rework a number by Boxer Rebellion? (4-3)
28 They've moved. Heaven And Earth to bring us another album (3)
29+21A Nick Cave hunted down some easy cuts for this album (6-4)
31 Need something different from Everything But The Girl (4)
33 She was born _____ Laurie Blue Adkins in 1988 (5)
34 (See 19 across)

35 Phil _____, long-time vocalist for UFO (4)

36 "Just go there, to the _____, I'm sure they can help you today", 1978 (1-1-1-1)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Boo Radleys album that made '90s pop group huge (5-5)
2 "Bright light city gonna set my soul, gonna set my soul on fire", 1964 (4-3-5)
3 HD McLain turns up for a Neneh Cherry performance (8)
4+24D His albums include *Street Hassle* and *The Blue Mask* (3-4)
5 Feel even code is wrong on Van Morrison album (6-6)
6 "I was born in a trunk/Mama died and my daddy got drunk", 1960 (7-4)
8 'Party Hard' with American musician _____ WK (6)
9 What Jilted John thought of Gordon (5)
13 He has a current position between two banks for Nick Drake (5-3)
15 Bloc Party man in the smokeless zone (4)
20 (See 1 across)
23 The man has made changes to album by Less Than Jake (6)
24 (See 4 down)
26 William _____ has gone around the world and produced for Blur, among others (5)
27 Abrasive material by Jill _____, former bassist with Hole (5)
30 KD Lang has pulling power but this album is tedious (4)
32 The _____ Stars didn't shine so brightly, even with Richard Hell and Thurston Moore in the lineup (3)

ANSWERS: TAKE 208

ACROSS

1 Hypnotic Eye, 7 War, 9 Goodbye And Hello, 11 Gish, 12 Most, 14+15 A No Need To Argue, 19 He's So Fine, 21+3D Bloke On Bloke, 28 Atco, 30

Piano, 31 Gun, 32 Vai, 33+22A Free Range, 34 Lola.

DOWN

1+25 A High Land Hard Rain, 2 Poor Man's Son, 4 Ice Age, 5 Ennismore, 6+23 A Echo Park, 7 Wilco, 8+24 D Room To Roam, 13 Cribs, 16 UFO, 17

Pimp, 18 Tennant, 20 One Love, 26 Angel, 27+10A Soul Limbo, 29 Tyr, 30 Pin.

HIDDEN ANSWER

"Calling To You"

XWORD COMPILED BY:

Trevor Hungerford

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MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Vashti Bunyan

Back again from “self-imposed musical oblivion”, the ethereal folk legend reveals the records that changed her life



A song that reminds me of my childhood

Kathleen Ferrier

What Is Life 1944

She was a contralto like no other. My father adored her and played her music over and over on crackly 78rpm records. Her heart-rending performance of “What Is Life” is all the more poignant as she died young. I would have liked to have been able to sing like her, but ended up sounding more like the choirboy who sang “O For The Wings Of A Dove” on another scratched-up old 78.



The album that made me want to be a wandering musician

Bob Dylan

The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan 1963

I was thrown out of art school in 1964 for not going, and went to New York to be with my romantic runaway older sister. Possibly my parents hoped it might sort me out, though I can't think why since she had eloped at 18. I saw this album in a Village store window and immediately bought it – it sorted me out.



An album I was supposed to copy

Tim Hardin

Tim Hardin 1 1966

In 1966, Andrew Loog Oldham gave me a copy of this LP, along with *The Mamas & The Papas* and *Pet Sounds*. He put me in a room in his office with a piano and asked me to come up with something between them all. I didn't play the piano, so I stole away, kept the albums, and wrote “I'd Like To Walk Around In Your Mind” instead, with a guitar.



An album I wish I'd known when it was new

David Crosby **If I Could Only Remember My Name** 1971

A self-imposed musical oblivion from 1970 onwards had me not listening to anything much for years. Since finding so much music that was lost to me back then I'm filled with some regret. I especially love the song “Traction In The Rain” on here – no percussion or bass, cascades of notes, deceptively simple lyrics. “*Hard to find a way/To get through another city day/Without thinking about getting out...*” Which is just what I did.



The album that brought me back to the city

The Blue Nile

Hats 1989

I grew up in the middle of London, then went and lived in the wilds and hills for 25 years. Then I was sent this album by a good friend, with whom I fell helplessly in love and have lived with for the last 22 years, in the middle of a city. The *Hats* song “Downtown Lights” was what did it. Underhand, I reckon.



A song which mystifies me with its brilliance

Brandy & Monica

The Boy Is Mine 1998

This is one of my favourite ever songs. The harp-like phrase at the start and following through the whole, it gets me every listen as I just can't work out how it is done. I play it to my small grandson when he is agitated and it makes even him stop to listen. It started my fascination with sounds that can't easily be reproduced by a human playing a ‘real’ instrument.

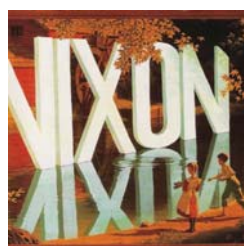


A song I wish I had written

Jim White

Corvair 2001

His dark film about the American South, *Searching For The Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, led me to Jim White's albums, and this tender song in particular. “*Got a Corvair in my yard/It hasn't run in 15 years/It's a home for the birds now/It's no longer a car.*” It's a beautifully visual way of saying how well the wilderness takes back the abandoned. I can feel the rust.



A song to sing along to

Lambchop **Up With People**

2000

I saw Lambchop play in Glasgow the week before Obama got elected, and all of them seemed so nervous – would he or wouldn't he get in? Kurt Wagner was so impassioned when singing this song that he just kept leaping up from his chair. I already knew the song so well and in my head I loudly sang it with him. “*Come on progeny...*”

Vashti Bunyan's first album in nine years, *Heartleaf*, is released October 6 on the FatCat label.

IN NEXT MONTH'S UNCUT:

“All we knew how to do was turn on a fuzz pedal and make a fucking racket!”



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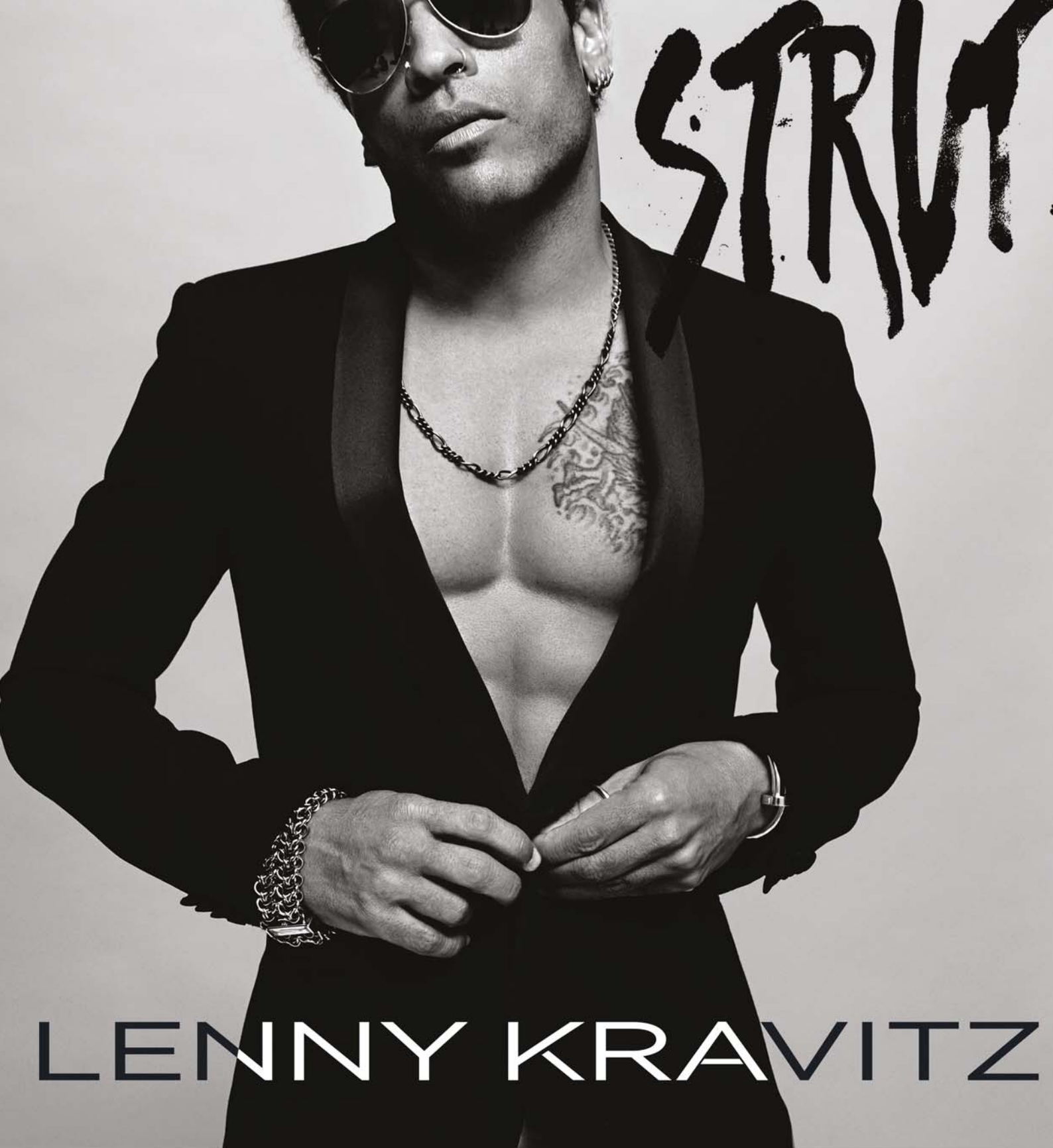
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