

"Them homesick blues and radical views/Haven't left a mark on you, you wear it well"

OTIS REDDING | CAPTAIN BEEFHEART

40 PAGES OF
REVIEWS

PETER GABRIEL

DEAD WEATHER

VELVET
UNDERGROUND

DON HENLEY

DEERHUNTER

AND MORE...

EXCLUSIVE!

Ooh la la!
**ROD
STEWART**

Wine, women
and the return
of the FACES

**ALL-NEW
INTERVIEWS**

**JOANNA
NEWSOM**
'I have this
weird amnesia'

**JOHN
GRANT**
'It's like crack – and
I've smoked crack!'

**JULIAN
COPE**
'I had to prove I was a
functioning human'

...and the secret
afterlife of
THE DOORS

AND

LINDA RONSTADT

HARMONIA

DAVE GAHAN

RHODA DAKAR

JOHN COOPER CLARKE

JOAN SHELLEY
EL VY
SLADE
FFS
END OF
THE ROAD

SQUEEZE



CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

THE NEW ALBUM ARRIVES 2ND OCTOBER

"classic Squeeze; witty and trenchant" *Mojo*
"these 12 tracks confirm Difford and Tilbrook's melodic talents" *Uncut*

squeezeofficial.com



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Joanna Newsom

IT'S HARD TO imagine two more disparate musical figures than Rod Stewart and Joanna Newsom, but this month Jaan Uhelszki paid LA house calls on both of them to file a couple of noteworthy exclusives for *Uncut*. Among other things, we learned that Newsom enjoys two breakfasts, one of them involving fennel pollen mayonnaise, and that Stewart doesn't know what Americana is. "I've never quite understood what that term means," he admits. "It was a name that people were bandying around this time last year. I'd be, 'What the fuck's that?'"

In fairness, a similar question has probably been asked in the *Uncut* office a few times over the years, given the elastic possibilities of what Americana can represent – a music that in some artful way taps into the traditions of the States, maybe? That at least has a working understanding of what listeners want when they talk about authenticity, though the term "authenticity" is probably even harder to define and understand than Americana?

Newsom, meanwhile, provides us with a playlist of the records she was listening to while putting together her astonishing fourth album, *Divers*. Plenty of these, I think, would qualify as Americana – not just Mickey Newbury's *Lovers*, but Nilsson Sings Newman, Judee Sill's *Heart Food*, Jimmy Webb's phantasmagorically overblown *Land's End*, too. To that list, you could usefully add *Divers* itself, an album that sounds at once arcane and timeless, and which revels in an absorbing degree of lyrical craft and reference.

Divers is packed with allusion and discoveries – beginning with the mapping of Greenwich Village on an ancient Native American settlement called Sapokanikan. There are burial sites beneath Washington Square, New York mayors and Lenape Indian chiefs, all in the text of a single song; "Sapokanikan", which you can also hear on this month's free *Uncut* CD.

To understand America, and Americana too, historical perspectives can be useful. "For someone to dig that much into the songs is such an investment of faith," Newsom tells Jaan Uhelszki. But it's one way in which songs can endure and keep revealing new details and nuances, hundreds of listens down the line. To paraphrase our cover star, they can make us dance, sing, or *anything...*

John Mulvey

John Mulvey, Editor
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MAKES
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GREAT
GIFT
TOO!

INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring BEEFHEART | JOHN COOPER CLARKE | THE BODYSNATCHERS

PISTOL SHOTS

Oh! You Pretty Thing!

SID VICIOUS, Bowie fan. Soon enough, he'd be driving plenty of mamas and papas insane...

MAY 12, 1973. Outside the Earl's Court Arena in London, a young David Bowie fan shows off his T-shirt to a photographer from the German magazine, *Bravo*. Two days earlier, the boy – known, at the time, as John Ritchie – had celebrated his 16th birthday. One of his fellow students at Hackney Technical College, John Lydon, described Ritchie, with his Bowie mullet, as a “clothes hound of the worst kind”. “He'd do silly things to get his hair to stick up, because it never occurred to him to use hairspray,” Lydon told Jon Savage in his book, *England's Dreaming*. “He'd lie upside down with his head in an oven.”

This “poser”, as Lydon called him, grew up of course to become Sid Vicious, the apotheosis of what many saw, for better or worse, as punk's iconoclastic chic. The

remarkable shot of him as teenage Bowie acolyte appears in a new book, *The Bag I'm In: Underground Music And Fashion In Britain, 1960-1990*, put together by Sam Knee (author of that great compendium of indie style, *A Scene In Between*, a few years back). *The Bag I'm In* presents a continuum of radical subcultures,

from mods and rockers onwards; tribes which might initially appear to be adversarial, but which gradually reveal themselves to be part of a long, evolving story of how young British music fans saw themselves.

In punk's summer of high dudgeon, when these shots of the Sex Pistols in Newport and Caerphilly were taken, punks and glam-rockers seemed like different species. Nearly four decades down the line, it can often be easier to see their similarities rather than their differences.

A quick reminder that our *Ultimate Music Guide to the Sex Pistols* is still available. Visit www.uncut.co.uk for more details.





Young Bowie fan John Ritchie aka Sid Vicious outside the Earl's Court Arena in 1973

A QUICK ONE

➤ Two more mags for your shopping list this month. There's a new **Uncut Ultimate Music Guide** out now, this one dedicated to the entire chaotic career of **Fleetwood Mac**. And this month, our mammoth **History Of Rock** project reaches 1967, *Sgt Pepper*, The Monkees and the immaculate **Jimi Hendrix**. For more details, visit www.uncut.co.uk



➤ **Jerry Lee Lewis** bade farewell to London on Sept 6, as part of a valedictory tour leading up to his 80th birthday on Sept 29. The London Palladium show climaxed with Ringo Starr and Robert Plant arriving onstage with a birthday cake, leading the assembled in a heartfelt rendition of "Happy Birthday".

➤ In other farewell-based news, **Black Sabbath's** The End tour is scheduled to begin in Omaha on January 20. Dates announced thus far end at Madison Square Garden on February 25, but more seem likely. "It promises," claims the hype, "to surpass all previous tours with their most mesmerising production ever." Bill Ward does not, at time of writing, appear to be involved.

➤ 2016 album releases have already begun to sneak onto the schedule, notably one from the revitalised Britpop trailblazers, **Suede**. *Night Thoughts* is due on January 22, with regular producer Ed Buller behind the desk, and a film to go with it.

THE OUTSIDER

ZIG ZAG WANDERER

Captain Beef-art! The uncanny paintings of DON VAN VLIET go on show at last

DON VAN VLIET last appeared in public in 1995, to mark the opening of a major solo exhibition in Los Angeles. "That was the last time he left his house," claims Gordon VeneKlasen, director of the Michael Werner Gallery. In 1982, Werner told Van Vliet that in order to be respected as an artist, he would have to stop making music as Captain Beefheart. Frustrated by the music industry and the way his genius was presented in terms that deterred anyone from actually listening, Van Vliet jacked it in. He pursued art with the unabashed seriousness that he had once masked with absurdity, extracting himself from society as he did so.

This autumn sees the opening of two major Van Vliet exhibitions by the Michael Werner Gallery – only the second and third since his death in December 2010. Both feature work that lays bare his growing disenchantment with humankind. Two decades ago, VeneKlasen visited Van Vliet and his wife Jan at their house in Humboldt County, California. "It was utterly remote, and it was a very special and unusual situation," he recalls. "Don worked all day, drawing and making paintings. He had more or less retired and retreated from people, he was very clear about that – he really didn't like people any more. He liked animals and he liked Jan."

Van Vliet was chosen for inclusion in "Body Shop", a London group show, thanks to his gnarled, grotesque human forms. Meanwhile a solo show in Cologne (Beatle Bones N' Smokin Stones) canonises a group of paintings and drawings from the late 1970s through to the mid '80s, when his work's balance between abstraction and figurativism began to shift towards the former. "That work is now historical," says VeneKlasen. "Nobody's really done [that period]. It's a whole new audience we're looking to reintroduce the work to."

While the Michael Werner Gallery recognises the



Don Van Vliet in Oakland, California, 1976

consistent excitement of Captain Beefheart's fanbase towards his art, VeneKlasen says they have noticed a new following appear – not least because musician-artists are now the norm. "It used to be people that were just attached to the music, and now what's happened is that there is this whole new group of people," he says. "There's a group of contemporary artists that really loves the work a lot: Peter Doig, Aaron Curry, Spencer Sweeney."

Van Vliet's self-imposed isolation means that the later period of his life is fogged in mystery. VeneKlasen often spoke with him by phone, and can offer a little enlightenment. "He was absolutely serious about the work he made, about the work he did, and the rest of it was just the absolute delight of a brain that was non-stop, basically," he recalls. Van Vliet remained an integral part of discussions around shows until multiple sclerosis prevented him from continuing to work. "We had phone calls when he wouldn't speak, and we spoke a lot with Jan," says VeneKlasen.

Death designated Van Vliet's work as historic, amplifying its stature. But in life, isolated as he was, it brought him the engagement he craved. "I never saw him as someone who wanted to be perceived as a genius," says VeneKlasen. "I think he just wanted to be taken seriously."

LAURA SNAPES

Body Shop is at the Michael Werner Gallery in London, September 30 to December 5; **Don Van Vliet: Beatle Bones N' Smokin Stones** is at Michael Werner Kunsthalle in Cologne, September 5 until October 24



JCC at the George Tavern in East London, 2007

SALFORD GOD

“Every masterpiece is on top of a pile of shite”

JOHN COOPER CLARKE, entering his Leonard Cohen phase, unveils his first *Greatest Hits*

“TELL YOU WHO I took great encouragement from in my earlier days,” says John Cooper Clarke. “Pam Ayres. When I used to say I was going to make money out of poetry, it was, ‘You’re crazy. Nobody made anything out of poetry.’ But her victories on *Opportunity Knocks* proved them all wrong. She won week after week after week for about a year. Which was good going in those days.”

It transpires that Clarke is in an unusually reflective mood when he speaks to *Uncut*. “I am not much of a looker-back,” he says. Today, though, Clarke is considering the first recorded collection of his work, *Anthologia*, which stretches back to John Peel sessions and *Old Grey Whistle Test* appearances from the

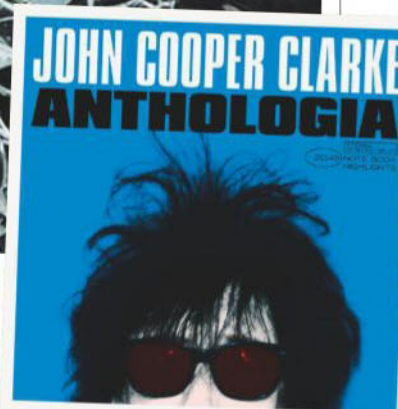
late ’70s. “I can’t believe how nasal and high-register my voice used to be,” he laughs. “Of course, with the encroaching autumn of my years I now have a ripe, fruity baritone. Like Leonard Cohen. It’s much better now, my voice.”

Clarke grew up in Salford, “It had the worst quality air certainly in Europe,” he says. “I thought it was great, living in amongst industry.” He is adamant that he always wanted to perform – but first he had to work out exactly how best to present his poetry. “I felt that poetry should be heard. It is dead

“I felt that poetry should be heard.

It is dead in a book”

John Cooper Clarke



in a book. I always thought there was a place for poetry in rock’n’roll and showbusiness, but I didn’t know how to put it there.”

Clarke was struck by the possibilities presented by punk. “With punk, I thought poetry might not be a dirty word,” he says, citing Patti Smith, Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine as inspiration. “Earlier, the people who got poetry and music dead right were The Velvet Underground. What I did was not so much punky, it was poppy. I had that in common with The Velvet Underground.”

The earliest material on *Anthologia* is from Clarke’s inaugural John Peel session, on October 3, 1978, and formative sessions with producer Martin Hannett. “Back in the days pre-internet, you had to make things

up,” he says, recalling the tight relationship between bands on Manchester’s punk scene. “You read about it in *The Daily Mirror* and proceeded with that information. The Manchester scene had its own look and take on that whole thing. If you look at pictures of The Fall, there is no Vivienne Westwood clothing in evidence. They fashioned it for themselves.”

Aside from his Manchester contemporaries, Clarke cites poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso as key allies. “I found a lot of common ground, especially Gregory. We became good pals. He was an Italian orphan kid from New York. Went to reform school. He was quite an oppositional, pugnacious character, and it found its way into his work. He also moved to Manchester for a while. He heard Nico was living there and moved in on her and got his own flat next door. It was a little bit of Greenwich Village in Sedgley Park for a while.” Clarke even shared a flat in Brixton with Nico during the mid ’80s. What was she like as a flatmate? “She was great, no problem at all.”

Clarke’s connection to music remains strong. Apart from the Arctic Monkeys, with whom he’s toured and recorded, current favourites include Slaves, Sleaford

Mods (“How could I not like them?”) and Plan B. For the last 25 years, Clarke has lived near Witham in Essex. Aside from his day job, Clarke fronts the National Trust’s Love The Coast campaign. “Like all urban people, back in the distant days of my childhood, I looked forward to holidays, and those holidays took place in one of our many flourishing seaside resorts. So like most people my age in this country, I have fond memories of the seaside. It’s

what spells happiness and idleness and leisure.”

But for the most part, Clarke is busy with his poetry. “I am a professional writer. I have hours. Ten in the morning to five-thirty at night. I take odd breaks, have the odd cup of tea. I have productive days and not-so-productive days, but I put the hours in. If I get one good number in a day, that’s good going. But every masterpiece is on top of a pile of shite. Work, that’s the main thing. The more you write, the more you write. I do not write with the speed that I desire. Just put the hours in. You’ve got to clock in, in order to clock off.”

MICHAEL BONNER

Anthologia is released by Sony on October 16

THE BODYSNATCHERS REANIMATED!

Thirty-five years on, RHODA DAKAR reconstructs the great lost 2-Tone album

SOME BANDS SIMPLY move too fast. So it proved with Britain's first, and possibly last, all-female ska septet, The Bodysnatchers.

"Within six months we'd gone from rehearsing in a Camden Town basement to being on *Top Of The Pops*," reflects former lead singer Rhoda Dakar. "It was insane."

Energised, politicised, wildly enjoyable, The Bodysnatchers came and went so quickly, they neglected to leave an album behind, an oversight partially rectified 35 years later with the release of *Rhoda Dakar Sings The Bodysnatchers*.

Dakar joined the band in '79, aged 20, not long before they signed a two-single deal with 2-Tone. Their first release, the upbeat skank of "Let's Do Rocksteady", hit the Top 30 in March 1980, leading to that sole *TOTP* performance. The same year, The Bodysnatchers joined The Specials, The Selecter and Madness on 2-Tone's package tour, did two Peel sessions and appeared in Joe Massot's *Dance Craze*. "And," says Dakar, "We were on *Tiswas*! We were riding the crest of a wave, we crammed two years' work into one."

Their premature parting of the ways in late 1980 occurred for all the traditional reasons: musical differences, ideological schisms and rows over fast food. "We had different opinions over which direction we wanted to go in," says Dakar. "Some of us wanted us to retain our political stance, others wanted to be a pop band." Then there was the time Dakar left her half-eaten fish and chips under the bed in their B&B, with the resulting

hygiene fail causing a rift. "We were tired, and when you're tired you get ratty and fall out with people. We were very young, but we all went on and did what we needed to do."

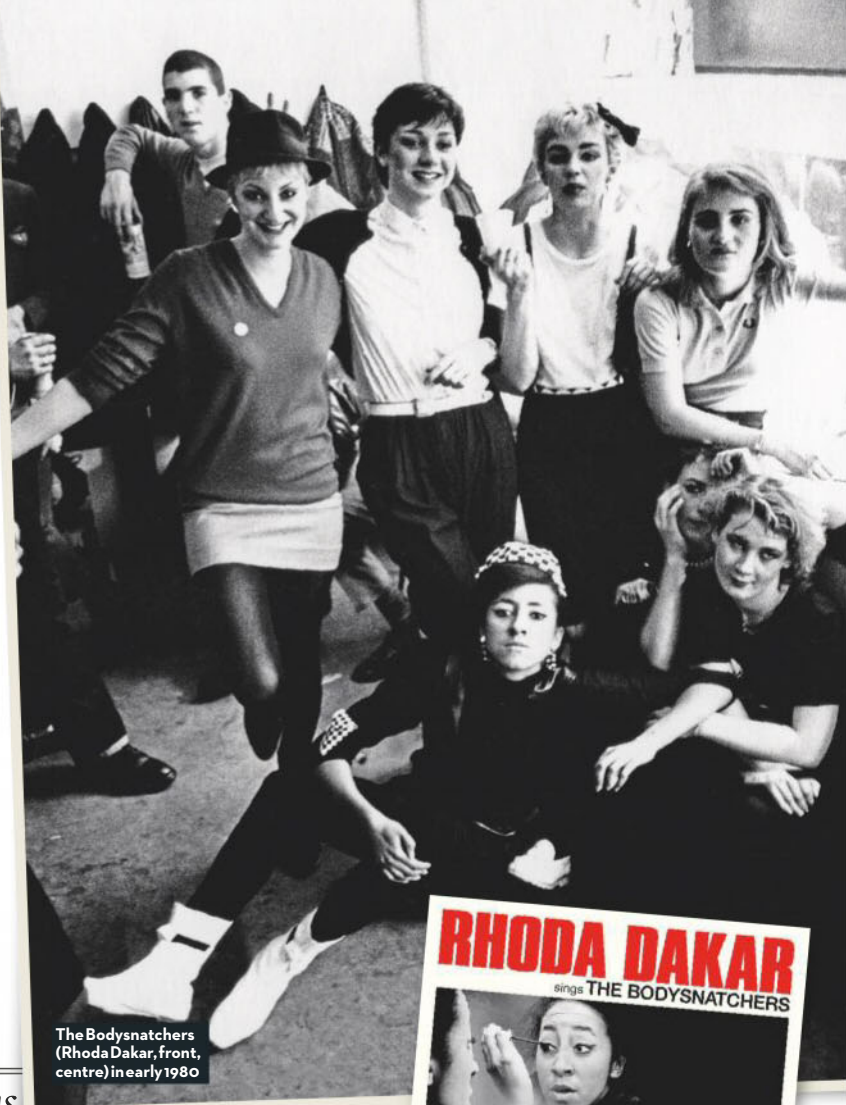
Five of the band formed The Belle Stars, scoring a hit in 1983 with "Sign Of The Times", but Dakar went her own way. In 1982, she released "The Boiler" with The Special AKA, a harrowing tale of sexual assault which was originally part of The Bodysnatchers' repertoire. More recently, she released two solo records and appeared on Madness' *The Liberty Of Norton Folgate*.

Though she hadn't listened to The Bodysnatchers in 30 years,

"Within six months we'd gone from rehearsing in a basement to Top Of The Pops. Insane!"
Rhoda Dakar

"at least once a month someone would say, 'Come on, when are you going to do the album?'" Having maintained no meaningful relationship with any of her former bandmates, a reunion was never on the cards. Instead, Dakar decided to record her own interpretation of what the first Bodysnatchers album might have sounded like.

"They're all songs we played during that time," she says.



The Bodysnatchers (Rhoda Dakar, front, centre) in early 1980

"The two 2-Tone singles, stuff we recorded for John Peel, a cover of Desmond Dekker's "007 (Shanty Town)", which was included on *Dance Craze*. I had to listen back to them all, because I hadn't heard them in decades. I thought it would be utter rubbish, but actually it wasn't. It was a nice surprise. I thought, 'Oh, OK, we really did have something.'"

The Specials' Lynval Golding and Sir Horace Gentleman contribute to the LP, alongside musicians from several ska bands. "We rehearsed on the Sunday, went to the studio on Monday, and did it all in one day," says Dakar. "We were all in the room together and you can hear that good energy. It was great fun." She laughs. "Mind you, we could



have done with a vocal booth."

The album was crowdfunded and launched at London's Jazz Café last October, and is now getting an official release on Cherry Red. Dakar is hoping festival dates will follow. "I don't want to wear it out like it's the only game in town," she says. "I'm doing this with integrity, I feel. I'm doing it because it wasn't done before." **GRAEME THOMSON**

Rhoda Dakar Sings The Bodysnatchers is out on Cherry Red

THE CLASSIFIEDS

THIS MONTH: Midnite raving in your hippest gear! Fleetwood Mac in Boreham Wood! Marc Bolan in Glastonbury... from *Melody Maker*, October 5, 1968

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'THE GREATEST SHOW ON



I'M NEW HERE

Joan Shelley

Recommended this month: from Louisville, Kentucky – a hushed, captivating star of Americana's next wave...

JOAN SHELLEY TRIED to leave Louisville, the Kentucky city where she was raised, but always found herself drawn back home. She went to the University Of Georgia to study cultural anthropology (but really for Athens' music scene), and harboured visions of working in plant biodiversity in the Philippines. After college, where she had discovered Appalachian banjo, Dolly Parton and Merle Haggard, Shelley travelled to Argentina to spend a year teaching English – but really to soak up tango culture. "First thing off the plane, I went and found a guitar shop," she says. As it was for Leonard Cohen, these formative Spanish guitar explorations were more of an education than an influence: "I reach for more country, roots sounds – Doug Paisley, Joni Mitchell."

Shelley's return to Louisville in 2009 was only meant to be temporary, until she met collaborators who satisfied her disparate musical identities. While pursuing her solo material, she joined Maiden Radio, a trio founded on a shared love of Smithsonian Folkways compilations. With another group, she started The June Brides (not to be confused with the '80s English indie band) and a good-time honky-tonk act. A chance meeting with Will Oldham at a Christmas party led to the pair lending guest vocals to each other's songs. ("So far, I think I did a lot better out of it than he did.") Another collaborator introduced her to Louisville's 1990s post-rock scene: Slint, Rachel's, The For

Carnation. "That whisper-quiet, stark sound that came from here has definitely had a huge influence, though I play much different music."

It comes through fiercely on *Over And Even*, Shelley's fourth solo album. Accompanied by Nathan Salsburg on acoustic guitar, she forges a feeling of sanctuary across its 12 meditative country-folk songs – a result of her growing comfort with quietness. "Not overplaying songs, which is what you learn starting out in bars," she says. "I was trying to be Aretha Franklin; I was not Aretha Franklin." In a voice that blends the sweetness of Nina Nastasia with the depth of Gillian Welch, Shelley's lyrics are more overt on *Over And Even* than last year's elliptical *Electric Ursa*, a result of the time Shelley spent writing alone on a Greek island after another collaboration fell through. "When I had the band with me, [writing] was more about feeling – I could be looser," Shelley explains. "This one,

I had to think about how you hold up a whole song."

The weather intrudes on the intimacies of *Over And Even*, as various relationships change by season. These days, Shelley's pull back to Louisville is mostly climate-related, she says. But beyond northern Kentucky, her music feels like part of Americana's new wave, a mix of accomplished country-rooted musicianship and soulful melancholy: Hiss Golden Messenger, Phil Cook, Chris Forsyth, Steve Gunn. "We played Pickathon this year, outside Portland, Oregon," Shelley recalls. "We knew everybody – The Weather Station, Freakwater from Louisville, Ryley Walker, William Tyler. I feel a kinship with them, their music rings true for me and the way I see music as important to our lives. There is something going on."

LAURA SNAPES

I'M YOUR FAN

"Joan Shelley makes such a simple format – acoustic guitar and voice – sound so complex, so fresh. I treasure her records and think of them as companions."

MC TAYLOR, HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

THUNDERBITCH

Thunderbitch WWW.THUNDAIBETCH.COM
Not content with making one of the albums of 2015, Alabama Shakes' Brittany Howard returns with a heavier, greasier and just about as much fun side project.

FLOATING POINTS Elaenia PLUTO

A DJing associate of Four Tet stretches way beyond the dancefloor. Radiohead remixed by Teo Macero, anyone?

THE NECKS

Vertigo RERMEGACORP/NORTHERNSPY
Latest longform perambulation from the world's greatest jazz/minimalist freestyle trio, at their most diffuse and unsettling.

BILL MacKAY & RYLEY WALKER

Land Of Plenty WHISTLER
A further embarrassment of riches from 2015's premium guitar tyro, here duelling with MacKay on a set of meditative and elaborate instrumental jams.

WEYES BLOOD

Cardamom Times MEXICAN SUMMER
Natalie Mering, uncanny bard of Rockaway Beach, returns with a career-topping EP, operating in the exalted space defined by This Mortal Coil with "Song To The Siren".



Weyes Blood

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD

Papier Mâché Dream Balloon HEAVENLY
The ever-evolving Aussie psych troupe go acoustic, flutes bravely to the fore, while still retaining the boggle-eyed thrust of their garage-rock roots.

CHRIS FORSYTH & KOEN HOLTkamp

The Island TROUBLE IN MIND
Demon axeman takes time off from his Television-like adventures with the Solar Motel Band for a second face-off with quasi-ambient synthman Holtkamp.

NATURAL INFORMATION SOCIETY & BITCHIN BAJAS

Autoimaginary DRAG CITY
The perfect way to follow Forsyth/Holtkamp, as new kosmische titans Bitchin Bajas dig deep with a rustling Chicago improv unit.

JEFFREY LEWIS & LOS BOLTS

Manhattan ROUGH TRADE
First in a while from ingenuous chronicler of latterday NYC, sounding more than ever like Lou Reed's whimsical stepchild.

ALAN VEGA/ALEX CHILTON/BEN VAUGHN

Cubist Blues LIGHT IN THE ATTIC
From 1994, a forgotten set of rockabilly trance. Vega intones. Chilton adds nonchalant guitar flecks. Heady air of dissolution dominates.

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

SHAWN BRACKELL

REASON TO BELIEVE

Your guide to this month's free CD



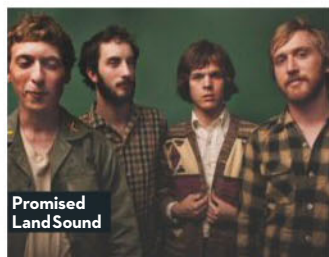
FREE
CD!

1 ISRAEL NASH *LA Lately*

To begin this month, an epic swoon from one Israel Nash, a Texas-based singer-songwriter whose fourth album, *Silver Season*, confirms him as a major practitioner of what we refer to as Cosmic American Music. The next player on a continuum that stretches from CSNY and Gene Clark to My Morning Jacket and Jonathan Wilson.

2 LOS LOBOS *Made To Break Your Heart*

There's plenty of variety on the East LA wolfpack's latest album, *Gates Of Gold*, their first in five years. "Made To Break Your Heart" is a masterful assertion of core strengths, right down to David Hidalgo's gritty and expansive guitar break. Oddly reminiscent of Stealer's Wheel's "Stuck In The Middle With You", too.



3 PROMISED LAND SOUND *She Takes Me There*

The young Nashville band have quietly established themselves as folk-rock revivalists par excellence over the past couple of years, artful connoisseurs of jangle and twang. "She Takes Me There" reveals a group of ever-expanding potential, though, recalling as it does mid-'70s Fleetwood Mac at their most exquisitely hazy. Oh, and second great guitar solo of the month, if you're counting.

4 PATTY GRIFFIN *Shine A Different Way*

Patty Griffin's *Servant Of Love* is our Americana Album Of The Month and, in his review on page 72, Rob Hughes suggests that the Austin stalwart has "hit something of a career peak". Here's strong evidence of that: a survivor's anthem that's hard not to hear in the context of her break-up with Robert Plant.

5 JOHN GRANT [ft TRACEY THORN] *Disappointing*

Few things are more fun to write about (or, indeed, listen to) than list songs. Here the inimitably droll John Grant and his auspicious duetting partner run through the pleasures of life that are "disappointing compared to you". Among the highlights: ocelot babies, comedian Rachel Dratch and owls – Grant expounds on the latter in his interview on page 14.

6 JOAN SHELLEY *Over And Even*

If you fell for the Weather Station song on our CD a few issues back, this title track from Shelley's fifth album comes especially recommended: candlelit, emotively crafted modern folk from Louisville. Guitar comes from Nathan Salsburg, whose version of "Reel Around The Fountain" was a highlight of last month's CD.

7 DAVE HEUMANN *Ides Of Summer*

The stentorian tone and guitar lines of Dave Heumann might be familiar from his work fronting longtime *Uncut* favourites Arbouretum. "Ides Of Summer" finds him on solo hiatus and in mellower mood, with measured chimes that wouldn't have sounded out of place on REM's *Fables Of The Reconstruction*.

8 JOANNA NEWSOM *Sapokanikan*

As our exclusive interview on page 18 makes clear, Joanna Newsom's fourth album is a treasure trove of melody and learning that rewards prolonged, enraptured study. To begin investigations, dig into the gorgeous "Sapokanikan". First clue: the title is the Lenape Indians' name for the area now occupied by Greenwich Village in New York.



9 FUZZ *Rat Race*

Somewhat grungier fare now, from one of Ty Segall's innumerable side projects. Segall's on drums for Fuzz, leaving his old mate Charlie Moothart to front this heroically unreconstructed power trio and live out his Ozzy Osbourne and Tony Iommi fantasies at once.

10 BALLAKÉ SISSOKO & VINCENT SEGAL IFT BABANI KONE *Diabaro*

"Diabaro" comes from *Musique De Nuit*, a set of duets between Malian kora master Sissoko and Segal, a French cellist. They complement each other beautifully on these instrumentals, mostly recorded on Sissoko's Bamako rooftop. Here their range is extended with the help of guest vocalist Babani Kone.

11 GOSPELBEACH *Sunshine Skyway*

After Israel Nash's "LA Lately", more Californian country-rock good vibes surround this key track from Gospelbeach's debut. While the notable vets in the band – Beachwood Spark Brent Rademaker, and Neal Casal from the Chris Robinson Brotherhood – live in LA, "Sunshine Skyway" actually refers to Rademaker's Florida roots: the Sunshine Skyway isn't a cosmic metaphor as such, but a bridge across Tampa Bay.

12 ALELA DIANE & RYAN FRANCESCONI *Shapeless*

The latest Joanna Newsom album arrives the same month as a fine collaboration between Newsom's old schoolfriend Alela Diane and multi-instrumental collaborator Ryan Francesconi. A bewitching highlight from *Cold Moon*, "Shapeless" has Diane channelling Judee Sill at her most enchanted and Francesconi's tirelessly inventive gifts of arrangement.

13 MARTIN COURTNEY *Vestiges*

Another *Uncut* favourite steps out to go solo, in this case Martin Courtney from New Jersey janglers Real Estate. The name on the label might be different, but Courtney's aesthetic remains magically consistent; ornate and gilded jangles provide a romantic gloss on his tales of suburban ennui.



14 EUROS CHILDS *Love Is A Memory*

It's now nearly a decade since Gorky's Zygotic Mynci split up. Since then, Euros Childs has pursued a discreet and capricious path around the periphery of the music scene. Always good to be reminded, though, of his gently brilliant songcraft: "Love Is A Memory", from the forthcoming *Sweetheart*, is up there with the likes of *Barafundle* in his rich and undersung back catalogue.

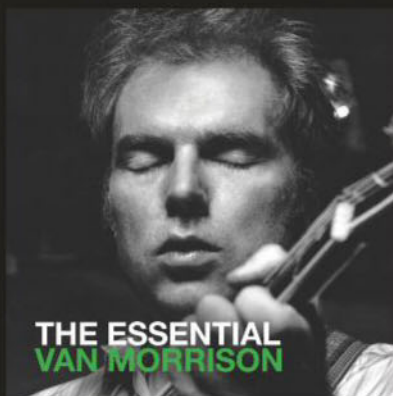
15 MICHAEL CHAPMAN *Stockport Monday (For Tom Rush)*

Heading dauntlessly towards his 75th birthday, British folk guitarist Michael Chapman might be finally getting the acclaim that he's missed out on for the best part of 40 years. The string-adorned "Stockport Monday" comes from *Fish*, an excellent entry point into his world of pensive guitar explorations – less thorny and more mellifluous than some of Chapman's recent projects with the likes of Thurston Moore.

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John Grant

The great singer-songwriter on his latest addictions, reaching out to Elton John and Sinéad O'Connor, and what he misses most about being in The Czars...

JOHN GRANT IS at home in Iceland eating cheese on toast when *Uncut* calls. "It's this weird Norwegian stuff called *gudbrandsdalen*," he explains. "It's a *gjetost*, caramelised goat cheese. They have it here in Iceland, too, but it costs like £10 a chunk or something. No, it sure isn't cheap." Grant moved to Reykjavik nearly three years ago, though he'd harboured plans to relocate to Iceland since the '80s. "I discovered the Sugarcubes in '87," he explains. "Then, when I first went to Germany in '88, I saw a slideshow of a friend's trip to Iceland and I was shocked by the beauty of this place. Twenty-five years later, I got an invitation to play here. I fell in love with the language and the people, the landscape and the light, and the freshness of the air here." Grant is currently preparing for the release of his new studio album, *Grey Tickles, Black Pressure*. However, in between necessary snack stops for toast and exotic cheeses, he answers your questions on subjects ranging from his time working as a hospital translator, his favourite British comedy shows and whether or not he'd consider reforming his old band, The Czars. "I'm babbling now!" he laughs.

the world. I'm not good at it, because I don't know how to approach people in a street photography setting, especially when you don't have time to take every single person for coffee and get their permission and give them £10 or whatever to take their photo. But yeah, you can expect to hear stuff about my personal life.

How many languages do you speak? *Sharon, New Zealand* I speak English relatively well, and Spanish, Russian and German. I have very high standards because I went to a university where we learned linguistics. That means I have a relatively deep knowledge of the grammar and the way the language works. It was a rude awakening for an immature American boy going to Europe. As I was mastering German I was being told, and becoming aware on my own, how poor my English was. So as I received an education at a German university in German – I also had my translation studies, I had literature professors and there was a lot of British students there as well – I became very self-conscious about my English, because I realised how uneducated I was. So that kept me on a path of wanting to improve my native language skills, which I think is something you do over a lifetime. It never ends.

Elton, so I did. I was able to call him up, which was a difficult thing for me to do. But he was very gracious and adept at bridging that gap and making you feel very comfortable, as he's dealt with superstardom as long as I've been alive.

Can we expect further revelations about your personal life in the lyrics of the new songs?

Catriona Steward, via email Yes, you can expect – I don't know if they could be considered revelations, as I don't consider my life to be particularly interesting. This may sound very cliché, but it seems like everyone I've ever met has an interesting life. And it doesn't necessarily mean you've had a good life, or that a lot of good things have happened to you, but whatever happens to people is quite interesting, I find. I love documentaries about interesting people. But I think everyday people are... that's what I want to take pictures of when I go out into

STAR QUESTION



Why have you erased your eyes from the cover shot on your new album? As, apart from your voice, they have to be

your best feature: and famously, the "windows of the soul".

Holly Johnson

If I'm honest, I suppose there's something I don't want people to see in my eyes. They really are the window to the soul. It looks like a photo that you'd take of a child, maybe through the eyes of David Lynch. And so I wanted to take away the innocence. I was trying to express what was expected of me and what I have become. The owls are always there, as I'm just such a big owl fan. There's the same thing going on with my eyes as with the owls so I'm making a connection between me and them. Like so many people, I just think they're incredible, mysterious animals, and maybe I want to establish a connection between me and something I think is mysterious and strong and majestic. I think about these things quite a bit.

You're a great fan of British comedy. What are your current favourites? *David, Nottingham* *Getting On*, with Jo Brand. They've made a US version which is at least as good, with Laurie Metcalf, who gives one of the greatest ever performances. I'm a big fan of Marc Wootton and his *High Spirits With Shirley Ghostman*, where he plays a camp psychic and nobody in the audience is in on the joke. I was watching *Jam* the other day, as

STAR QUESTION



Which dead artist would you like to have written with or played with?

Elton John

Why do people put me in these situations? Freddie Mercury, that would have been very interesting. I might have been a bit intimidated. Christina Amphlett, she was the singer for Divinyls. Their first LP is one of my top albums of all time. That was way before their "I Touch Myself" phase, when she was super-raw and one of the most impressive performers I ever saw. I never got to see them live, but I was able to see concerts on TV and I was just blown away by her. She had such an incredible voice. How do I know Elton? He had a personal assistant for many decades, called Mike. Mike talked about me a little bit and then somebody reached out to me and said I should reach out to



“I wish I could
say that, having
become sober,
all my flaws had
been flushed
down the toilet”



AN AUDIENCE WITH...

● I'm a big Julia Davis fan. *Nighty Night* is one of my all-time favourites. I love *The Thick Of It* – Peter Capaldi, he's an amazing actor. What is it about British comedies I like? The characters are amazing. It's quite dark, it's human... it feels very real.

STAR QUESTION



As you and I both know, there have been several vices that have been close to you through the years (Diet Coke, Coke

Zero, Take 5 bar, Strawberry Pretzel and ABBA, to name a few). What's been your favourite through the years, and what's your latest? *Eric Pulido, Midlake*
It's a very serious question. I'm still on the Coke Zero, I just had one just two second ago. I can't believe how fucking sanctimonious people are about this sort of thing. If people come up to me smoking and tell me I shouldn't be drinking... it drives me insane. I suppose it's one of the only things I have left. The Coke Zero, and there's a chocolate from Green & Black's, Sea Salt. It's a blue packaging. Oh God, the No 1 thing, which I can't get my hands on very often – luckily – is this stuff made in Norway, Smash! It's just insane. Do you know what Bugels are? They're cone-shaped corn crisps that've been around for decades. So they're Bugels covered in milk chocolate and salt. And you just cannot believe, I mean, it's like crack. For real. And I've smoked crack, so I'm telling you, man.

Would you ever reform *The Czars*? *Joel Byrne Pitcher, via email*
No, definitely not. Do I miss anything about being in *The Czars*? One of the great things about being in *The Czars* was going to London for the first time. It was autumn and I'd never been to London and I was blown away. I'd lived in New York City and still London felt like an ultra-megalopolis. Just walking down the Thames, the excitement of that time and being in a new city. But the problem with *The Czars* is not *The Czars*, it's that I didn't like who I was through all of that. Dealing with a lot of fear and drinking heavily and getting into the coke. I was in such a difficult place with myself, I wasn't able to have good relationships with those guys and it was probably the same with them. We were struggling to make ends meet with our day jobs and trying to do this music thing, which is something I know millions of people can identify with, doing



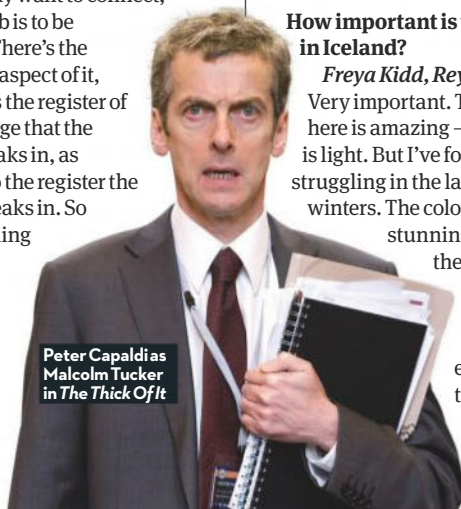
Naysayers: Grant with Sinéad O'Connor at the Olympia Theatre, Dublin, March 2014

what you have to, in order to do what you want to.

You worked as a hospital interpreter in New York. What was that like? *Martin, Lewes*
I worked at New York University Hospital. I'd completed my course in Russian medical interpreting. I was on my way to being good at it, but I was at the start of that when I left to go to Texas to do my first solo record, which was a difficult decision to make. But it's one of the

"The problem with The Czars is I didn't like who I was through all of that"

most rewarding things I've done. You meet fascinating people and see unbelievable things taking place, like someone hearing for the first time with a cochlear implant. This one woman was being told things weren't going well with her cancer and she'd just been through losing her son with the same doctor, to cancer. And you're interpreting these things and the hard part for me is I really want to connect, but your job is to be invisible. There's the emotional aspect of it, and there's the register of the language that the doctor speaks in, as opposed to the register the patient speaks in. So you're dealing with technical vocab, slang, and all sorts of things.



Peter Capaldi as Malcolm Tucker in *The Thick Of It*

STAR QUESTION



As a gay man, your music helped me complete my 'coming out' journey. When you're writing songs, do you fixate on the idea that they could affect someone else in a therapeutic way or is the process less conscious and more self-contained than this?

Conor O'Brien, Villagers

It was easier at the start, more self-contained. I think it continues to be, but I've had a lot of response. When I wrote the first LP, I didn't have any response. So now I know for a fact it can help people, even though I've never set out to do that. I've just set out to observe a life, my life. It's more an anthropological study. I didn't know if it would be therapeutic, I figured it would help me work through some things but that was never necessarily the goal, it was just this is what I know and what I can talk about. In a way, I wanted to understand where I'd been and where I'm going. It's always been a lot more selfish than that, of course. Now that I have had response to the music and I do know, after having people come up and tell me what the music has meant to them, I am aware.

How important is the light in Iceland?

Freyja Kidd, Reykjavik

Very important. The light up here is amazing – when there is light. But I've found myself struggling in the last three winters. The colours are stunning, and when the light's not there it has a profound effect on the human

organism. The weather is really something you talk about a lot here.

Do you miss anything about the 'old' John Grant?

Christian North, Newcastle

Yeah, I miss how easy it was for me to relax when I was drinking, to switch off and be funny and to let go of problems. I wish I could say that, having become sober and a more mature version of myself, meant all my flaws had been flushed down the toilet, but a lot of things are much more raw. It's a never-ending journey to deal with your flaws. But it's interesting the reaction you have when you see somebody you know being top of the list, and sometimes I find myself saying, "Well, why can't that be me right now?" Maybe that's competitiveness, or selfishness. There's the adult voice inside of me that says, "Shut up, you twat, and be happy for these people, because you know what a fucking struggle it is for everyone. So relax, let people have their success; they deserve it."

What advice did Sinéad O'Connor give you?

Gerry Bishop, Hants

"Learn to say no. Don't let them wear you out." You have no idea how true that is until you realise. You want to have momentum in your career and be able to make enough money to do it. So you find yourself spreading yourself too thin. I don't know if Sinéad has taken her own advice, she has certainly let people wear her down, schedule-wise. But I saw her practising that a lot, so it wasn't just empty words. ●

Grey Tickles, Black Pressure is out on Bella Union on October 9



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Dive time:
Joanna
Newsom

Arc Of A Diver

Pass the fennel pollen hollandaise, it's time for breakfast in LA with the remarkable Ms JOANNA NEWSOM. On the menu for *Uncut*'s exclusive interview: the fans who suggest "she plays the harp and makes cat noises"; the secrets of *Inherent Vice*; and the mysteries of her magical fourth album, *Divers*... "I go down rabbit holes a lot!"

Story: Jaan Uhelszki
Portrait: Annabel Mehran

EAST OF THE Hollywood sign and a mile and a half straight downhill from the three imposing Art Deco orbs of the Griffith Observatory lies Los Feliz. It's a town whose history is stowed discreetly beneath the lacy purple jacaranda and ancient pepper trees that line its well-scrubbed sidewalks. This is where Walt Disney drew his first sketches of Mickey Mouse and where Courtney Love first showed her "Celebrity Skin", stripping off at Jumbo's Clown Room for the lordly sum of \$300. Since 2008 or so, the hipster glitterati have been increasingly congregating here in their hoodies, yoga pants and cross-bodies, clutching paper cups from The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and sharing counter space with the likes of Ryan Gosling, Scarlett Johansson and Dakota Johnson. But Los Feliz wasn't always such an appealing place. Two days after killing Sharon Tate and four others at Roman Polanski's Beverly Hills home, Charles Manson's followers travelled east 11 miles and brutally murdered grocery store owner Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary here on August 10, 1969. One suspects that the

reason Joanna Newsom chose this little warren of celebrity to discuss her fourth album with *Uncut* has more to do with the LaBianca killings and less with its proximity to her nearby home or the strong filtered coffee. It's a geographical and historical signifier that plays neatly into one of the important themes of her new album, *Divers*. But there are other, more rarified concerns on the record, too. As Newsom explains, she was drawn to the friendly competition between Percy Bysshe Shelley and his friend Horace Smith. Each composed a poem entitled "Ozymandias" about the same topic – the idea that prominent figures and the empires that they build are impermanent and their legacies are very likely to fall into decay and oblivion. "I had never known about the second 'Ozymandias' poem, the Horace Smith poem," Newsom says from her seat in the wood-panelled vestibule of Little Dom's restaurant. "The Horace Smith one is essentially the same and maybe better, but the Shelley one became part of the popular consciousness. If you say 'Ozymandias', it's shorthand for an idea, and people who aren't English scholars or even poetry fans know about it. "Within that context, the Horace Smith 'Ozymandias' is just lost, and I was thinking about the phenomenon of one



Star type: Newsom, and below, source of inspiration Horace Smith

of those poems becoming what it describes. It doesn't just describe the poem, it describes the process of the rendering of obsolescence. I think any record, any remnant is inherently cryptic. We're just seeing the elements of any institution or phenomenon or person or event that endure, and those elements are in many cases the result of bias, in many cases the result of arbitrariness, randomness, in many cases the result of acts of God, as it were. We're never experiencing anything as real, we're experiencing a distorted, adulterated, or aggrandised, or lionised, or different version of the past. It was a really exciting idea for me."

IT HAS BEEN five years since Joanna Newsom last released an album. During that time, she left her arboreal home in Nevada City, married comic actor Andy Samberg, and continued her gentle flirtation with high fashion, modeling for Marc Jacobs and Michael van der Ham. She moved first to New York, then Los Angeles, where in between her touring schedule she found time to appear in an episode of *Portlandia* (with erstwhile Fleet Fox Robin Pecknold) as a disgruntled flower child, and also make her feature film debut in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice*. She appeared on the soundtrack of the 2011 *Muppets* movie and became the subject of tribute album *Versions Of Joanna* (and a scholarly tribute book, *Visions Of Joanna*). She even had a Jell-O shot "Peach, Plum, Pear" named after a track from 2004's *The Milk-Eyed Mender*. It's a miracle, really, that she even had time to think about another album, let alone record one. Newsom claims to be lazy ("I definitely have wasted a lot of time on the internet," she says. Researching? "No, shopping."), but the truth is she's been working on *Divers* since 2011, pondering a series of historical anomalies and seemingly disparate events that proved to be interconnected across the centuries, lining up like a novel



"I SPENT
FOUR
YEARS
WAITING
FOR
THINGS
TO MAKE
SENSE"

by *Inherent Vice* author Thomas Pynchon or at the very least Dan Brown. From the untimely death of an early 20th-Century mayor of New York City to hidden figures painted behind old masters, *Divers* is a treasure hunt, social hypothesis, science project and eccentric musical maximisation, without precedent or considerations of pop conventions except perhaps those of a Chinese opera. But that is Newsom's rare gift, to resurrect past forms, place them in modern settings, and create music outside of time. "I took time off to do the movie," she says. "It did maybe defer some of my music work for a while. But it was totally worth it. What really happened is I spent four years in this suspended state of agitation, waiting for things to make sense. But then it was just sustained, slow work."

Her chief collaborators on *Divers* found the slow-but-steady approach rewarding. Longtime producer/mixer Noah Georgeson says, "This album felt more focused, if anything. After the 3-disc *Have One On Me* [from 2010], she learned how to express things in a more economical way. Wait, did I just say that? I wouldn't ever accuse Joanna's music of being economical. I think in the past five years she recognised the virtue of that and did some self-editing to make *Divers* feel more cohesive and engaging."

Steve Albini – who first worked with Newsom in 2006 as part of the team behind *Ys* with Van Dyke Parks, Jim O'Rourke and Bill Callahan – described her as a "bad ass". The two friends reunited for *Divers*, and now he's elevated her to "genius". She feels the same about him, explaining that Albini's goal is "capturing something without dressing it up. He has a real trust in just the music, the instruments and the voices. He likes to make it sound like it sounds." She adds almost shyly, "He makes it beautiful."

For Albini's part, he says, "First and foremost she's an incredible musician. She is an absolute wonder on the harp.

She's more aggressive and less beholden to tradition and idiom, which makes her playing instantly distinct. Whether she's playing harp or piano, though, when she starts on a song she commits to a set of ideas and will not budge, and that's critically important. Whether it's an instrument or sound or mood or tone, doesn't matter, what she wants is what she wants. If more people did that, staked out utterly personal territory and were prepared to die on the hill defending it, it would be a different world."

ARRIVING 20 MINUTES late, Newsom floats into the restaurant without apology, a little like an ingénue making an entrance at a deb party. She has an undeniable presence, arresting and a little alien. Today her long mermaid hair is swept in a high straight ponytail, casually draped over her right shoulder. It's the same way she wears it when she plays the summer festival circuit, and the way you might imagine Juliet would wear it while she waited on the balcony for Romeo. Out of time yet oddly appropriate, much like Newsom's music. Lately she's eschewed the folkloric dresses, dirndls and costumish pieces that she wore in the early 2000s for a more ladylike look, today in a short silk day dress, with a small subtle print like the kind Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell used to design for '60s it-girls. Her skin is perfect, and a constellation of six faint birthmarks on the right side of her face only adds to her eccentric beauty. She's not wearing any make-up except for mascara; the only reason you can tell is the small line of smudges below her brow bone, which gives her an air of fallibility. Trailing behind is her younger sister, Emily, who is in town visiting. Emily was immortalised in the song of that name on *Ys*. More autobiographical than most of Newsom's compositions, it bemoans how life has taken the sisters different paths, and how they aren't as close as they were as children. But that doesn't seem to be the case today. There is great ease between them, but they are decidedly different. Where Joanna is alabaster pale and rather monochromatic, her blue-green eyes steady and watchful, there's an electric vibrancy about Emily and a sort of golden glow that emanates from her, from her saffron tank top to thick red hair pulled up haphazardly in a cloth



Longtime Newsom producer Noah Georgeson

"THERE WAS A PROCESS WHERE IDEAS MASHED IN MY MIND"

scrunchy. "Emily is the smart one," Newsom says, clearly proud of her younger sister. Emily beams at her. "You know that's not true," she laughs. Then adds, solicitously, "I don't want to disturb you. I'm going to go get my own table. I have a paper to write for my graduate class."

It transpires that Emily is well on her way to obtaining a PhD in climate science from the University of Washington. Choosing a seat two tables down from us, she looks at a menu briefly before turning on her laptop to access the internet. While *Little Dom's* is rife with celebrities, it is deficient in free Wi-Fi, and Emily leaves for the more proletarian coffee shop down the street. Joanna watches her go, and in a rare moment of candour says, "She is one of my favourite people in the world."

Focusing back on *Divers*, Newsom admits she can't recall precisely what triggered the album's genesis. "I always have this weird amnesia about, especially, the early writing process. I can remember the process of making decisions about the arrangement on a song, or the breakdown of what was written in advance and what was figured out in the studio, and those sorts of things, but just going through the track listing in my brain right now – I can't remember what the first one I wrote was. It might have been 'You Will Not Take My Heart Alive'. I believe that was the first one, which has diving in it. I don't know if I was concretely sure of the governing metaphor yet. It might have been something I noticed three songs in. For me, it's not just the diving that's important, it's the implication of the medium that's being moved through in the process of diving and that, for me, might be the thing that really connects back to the thesis of... I don't want to say thesis. That's too much work."

"I will say this. I started to realise pretty early on that there were recurring themes for me, and a pretty strong sense of thesis in a way, and pretty much once I had identified that

the songs kept coming out of that place. So, in a way, that's a structure."

Asked for a specific example of her creative process on the album, she says, "'Sapokanikan' happened really fast. There was a feverish process of conflation that happened where different objects, events, monuments, quotes and ideas mashed together in my mind, made sense to me."

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

Visions Of Joanna

Introducing Kim Kever, the *Divers* sleeve artist

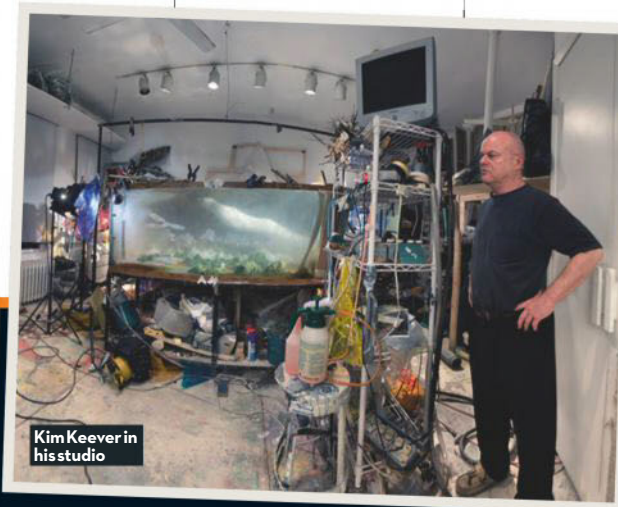
BACK IN 1991, the former NASA engineer turned traditional artist and printmaker put down his paintbrush and oils. He exchanged them for a 200-gallon aquarium full of water, Lilliputian toy-train model sets, coloured lights, Sears Easy Living house paint and a large-format camera to create large-scale photographs that look like landscape paintings – moody, mysterious, often malevolent – and about as close as you can come to the German Romantics

or the Hudson River School. Three years ago, Newsom bought one of his pieces. The following year, she contacted him and told him she wanted to use his artwork on her next album. "It kind of went from there. She's lovely and beautiful and an incredible writer; her emails were always beautifully written and very poetic," says the artist, who got his start in New York City during the 1970s. "She didn't give me any lyrics or any idea of what her album was about, or even what it was called. I sent her a lot of images. She chose the ones she wanted, and I was certainly happy with the

ones she picked. I guess she tried to match the images with her lyrics."

After the album was finished, Newsom came to Kever's studio along with Paul Thomas Anderson and a camera crew to film a video.

"I finally got to meet her when she and Paul came to my studio. She's very sweet. I really enjoyed that about her. I was taking photos when everybody was at the studio. I went to take a picture of her putting on her makeup in



Kim Kever in his studio

the mirror. There's a famous painting by Bellini called 'Woman At Her Toilet' in the Kunsthistorisches Museum [in Vienna]. It's a beautiful painting and was actually the same situation.

"But before I took it she said, 'Oh, no, Kim, women don't like to be seen putting their make-up on.' She caught me, so I didn't take it. I'm sorry she caught me."



"EVERYTHING WAS FALLING APART..."

Joanna Newsom on *Inherent Vice* and the end of the '60s

"I WASN'T anything like Sortilège, but I was basing her on people I knew. I was also basing her on the way that records from the early '70s make me feel. I think there's a parallel between what was happening in music and what was happening in culture in the early '70s. The reviews about *Inherent Vice* talked about how it marked the cultural space when everything was falling apart, the 1960s' dream of innocence dying. The end of free love, the Manson family. I do think there was a little element of a hivemind around the '60s free love thing and it was very painful culturally and involved a lot of cynicism and heartbreak to have it end. But at the same time such amazing creative independent thought came out of that moment. I think musically, you saw a lot of our greatest bands break up, but then you saw some amazing solo careers happen because of that. There was this moment where things stopped being collaborative and everyone went into these very solipsistic states."

"Sapokanikan" – *Divers*' first single – takes its title from the Lenape Indians' name for the area roughly comprising today's Greenwich Village. The song incorporates the two "Ozymandias" poems. It is Newsom's first new music since starring in *Inherent Vice*, where she played Sortilège, the narrator and spiritual advisor to Joaquin Phoenix's pothead detective. After taking the role, she became steeped in the story setting: the murky moral climate of 1970s California in the aftermath of the Manson killings. Those murders provide a backdrop of psychic unease and paranoia for the film, which Sortilège describes as "perilous times, astrologically speaking, for dopers". If you saw the film, you might be tempted to think that Joanna Newsom was playing herself, except with a different wardrobe, her hair parted on the opposite side, and with much more garish jewelry. Anderson went as far as to say that when he read Thomas Pynchon's source novel, Sortilège reminded him of Newsom, asserting that they both had that same hippy spirit. "She just has that oozing out of her – the way she looks and the way she talks, she's just so fucking cool. She was perfect."

Where Sortilège was whimsical, empathetic, prone to expressive body language and blunt proclamations delivered in an affected Cali-girl hippy-speak, Newsom is careful, poised, a little aloof. Her posture is perfect, almost rigid – her speech precise, bordering on the formal – and she exhibits the decorum of the highly bred. Anderson may be right about Newsom's cool, but in person she is reserved and polite, never quite making it all the way to friendly.

ALONG WITH A brother, Pete – who plays drums on *Divers* – the Newsom sisters grew up in Nevada City. The gold rush town was ground zero in the back-to-the-land movement in the '70s, rife with crystal shops, Watsu practitioners, astrologers, rolfers and card readers. When Newsom got the role as Sortilège, she only had to look as far as her own backyard for inspiration. The inspiration for the new album is less direct, however. Smart, haunting and lyrically dense, *Divers* plunges the listener into such rarified historical and cerebral space that you might need to keep Wikipedia open as you listen. Full

of signifiers, signs and splendid arcana, with a few bookish puns, word puzzles and literary theories thrown in, the 11 songs create an intellectual mystery novel of sorts.

"The average person probably won't get it in the first listening," admits Georgeson. "That's not a putdown – I didn't know what the hell Joanna was talking about for large portions of it. But, through repetition, I put it together more. I think the vast majority of people are going to have their own emotional reaction to it. They can listen to it over a year, and finally it will all make sense."

Divers is best listened to as you might opera or perhaps Wagner, without knowing the language or even what is being said. Best to let the mood, intonation and pirouetting sounds that rise and fall like winter tides lead you somewhere unexpected. Like many other things in life, with a Newsom album – or a Pynchon novel or Paul Thomas Anderson movie – the journey is more often important than the destination. And in the case of all three, they're unwilling to tell you anything explicitly anyway. "This is the first time I've talked to a journalist who's heard the record, and I'm a little nervous as I have to make sure I'm OK with not shedding light on what the songs are about," Newsom admits, not appearing nervous at all. "I think revealing that stuff detracts from people's experience. It's taken me a long time to learn this lesson, but the people who have the strongest relationship to my music don't like it when I say too much. I think for them, part of the experience is unlocking it for themselves and digging into it. It's really delightful for me to see that happen. It almost feels like I have a contract with the people who listen that deeply not to talk about what the songs are about. For someone to dig that much into the songs is such an investment of faith."

Do you write songs as cryptograms for people to unravel? Or can someone listen to your albums as just music?

"Can people just listen to my album as music?" Newsom repeats my question, looking at me as if I've asked her if she's just swallowed a bug instead of taking a bite of her poached eggs with roasted mushrooms, grilled bread and fennel pollen hollandaise. "God, I hope so. I would hate to think that they couldn't."



As Sortilège in *Inherent Vice*, with Joaquin Phoenix and Katherine Waterston



Touring *Have One On Me*, at The Symphony Hall in Birmingham, September 2010

"I don't want anything about the music to be work. I want it to be pleasing and fun, beautiful." She stops and pauses for nearly a full minute. "I love expanding my brain as a listener, but I wouldn't say that would ever be my goal for my songs. When you asked me if my songs can just be enjoyed as songs and I said I hope so, I was thinking I wasn't definitive enough. That's definitely the most important thing to me. It's much more important than having them understand what I'm saying.

"The lyrics are what they are, as that's what I'm inspired to write. It's not because I want to assign some heavy unpacking job or expand someone's knowledge. I'm just writing about what gives me that sort of feverish moving-forward feeling when there's an idea and it's forming and it's getting more solid and I follow those threads. But I feel like nobody else needs to follow them. If I weren't blessed with the smartest, rad listeners in the world, I hope my goal would be to make songs that resonated with them just as purely music.

"I have to admit the fear of loss was behind some of the things I wrote. Everyone's getting older. When I crossed that line in my mind where I knew I was with the person that I wanted to marry, it was a very heavy thing, because you're inviting death into your life. You know that that's hopefully after many, many, many, many years, but the idea of death stops being abstract, because there is someone you can't bear to lose. When it registers as true, it's like a little shade of grief that comes in when love is its most real version. Then it contains death inside of it, and then that death contains love inside of it."

Do you go out and research or did you have an excellent education and know all these facts?

"I'd say it's somewhere in between. I like to read a lot and I go down rabbit holes a lot, and I always trust that. If something's interesting, that's all that matters. It'll either be interesting because it'll be fun to talk about at dinner that night, or because it'll start some bigger exploration for me, so I do research as well. There are a few songs on this album where I wanted to know a bit more about an idea."

Do you think at this stage of your career you continue to polarise people?

"Yes. There are some people who hate it musically, there are some people who hate it lyrically, there are some people who probably hate how it's mixed. People continue to qualify any positive press about me with a line like, 'You hate her, you love her, but she's baaaack.' Or sometimes they say worse..." she stirs her ice tea.

Nine years ago, one online commenter wrote, "I'd like to make a kabob, maybe eat some of the veggies from it, make sure the rod is still hot, and then stab Joanna Newsom's eyes with it." But there have also been sweet testimonials, such as

one from a five-year-old boy who posted a crayon drawing of the musician on Pinterest: "This is Joanna Newsom. She is my favorite. She plays the harp and makes cat noises." Newsom recognises that different listeners are interested in her music for different reasons. "Some people are oriented toward the music. Taking lyrics out of the equation, some people are oriented toward how the music makes them feel, and some people are oriented toward a more analytical experience of the music. Again taking the lyrics out of the

equation, there are definitely people who are looking at the types of counterpoint that are being used and the sort of choral progressions and the harmonic landscape and the transitions, people who are interested from a compositional standpoint, and then there are the audiophiles listening on their amazing sound systems and appreciating the Steve Albini aspect or, in this case, the mixing process that I did with Noah Georgeson. That was by far the most elaborate and drawn-out that I've ever had for any record.

"If someone's just listening to it on headphones texturally and in terms of the sounds and the imaging and the way it's mixed, I think that's how some people approach it. Then there are some who are incredible at analysing the lyrics, and some people who just experience it. They listen to the lyrics but they're not worried so much about what they mean, just experiencing them as lines that hopefully they like." 🍷

Divers is released by Drag City on October 23

TRACKS & TRACES

Joanna Newsom's '70s Playlist!

The records she listened to while mixing *Divers*...

"THE MUSIC I listen to tends to influence the music I'm making," Newsom says. "As a result, I haven't listened to anything in about five years. I'm finally listening to records again. It's been a hard time for my husband as he is one of those people who wants music on all the time, and we've had to negotiate that. But now he's allowed to put on records constantly. I listened a little to things that I wanted to have in my mind as references or touchstones, but nothing just for pleasure. I have a list of songs that were connected specifically to what I was doing, which was mixing the record. The songs didn't connect to the songwriting or the arrangements, but I did deep listening to those records from a production standpoint."

HARRY NILSSON
Nilsson Sings Newman, "Living Without You" (1970)



ROY HARPER
Stormcock, "Me And My Woman" (1971)

TERRY CALLIER *What Color Is Love, "What Color Is Love" (1972)*

JUDEE SILL *Heart Food, "The Donor" (1973)*

JIMMY WEBB
Land's End, "Land's End/Asleep On The Wind" (1974)

MICKEY NEWBURY
Lovers, "Let Me Sleep" (1975)

GENTLE GIANT *Interview, "I Lost My Head" (1976)*

JUNIOR MURVIN
Police And Thieves, "Roots Train" (1977)

RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON
First Light, "First Light" (1978)

FLEETWOOD MAC *Tusk, "Beautiful Child" (1979)*



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“IT WAS RIDICULOUS. BUT AT LEAST IT WAS VALIANTLY RIDICULOUS.”

Story: Tom Pinnock

On the run from The Teardrop Explodes and fleeting fame, JULIAN COPE retreated deep into the English countryside in 1983. There, he subsisted on Mars Bars and giant speed pills, played with his toy cars, crawled around under a giant turtleshell — and made arguably the greatest music of his career. Now, Cope and his cohorts tell the unexpurgated story of *World Shut Your Mouth*, *Fried* and the creation of a new English psychedelia... “What am I going to do? I can’t go to Tesco’s, that’s outrageous!”

IF YOU’D TUNED into *Top Of The Pops* one night in September 1981, you might have seen a performance by Liverpool’s The Teardrop Explodes. Their single, “Passionate Friend”, was rising up the charts on the way to its No 25 peak and, to celebrate, the band’s singer and songwriter gyrated on top of a white grand piano, clad in voluminous leather trousers and with an equally voluminous blond hairdo.

On top of that piano, Julian Cope looked the very picture of an early ’80s teen idol. In reality, though, he was tripping on acid and terrified that his feet were sinking into the syrupy piano lid. Come 1983, Cope wasn’t on TV anymore.

“I had this game I used to play with [then-girlfriend, now wife] Dorian in ’83 that really wound her up,” explains Cope today. “I’d pretend I’d got a cold when we were watching *Top Of The Pops* and I’d grab the collar of my robe, and bunch it up with one hand around my neck. I would look at *Top Of The Pops* and then over to Dorian and, like a little old geezer, I would go, [pathetically] ‘Dorian, am I on this show tonight?’ And she would go, ‘Fuck off!’”

“I suppose she probably meant it, you know, because she’d gone from being a character on the New York punk scene to living with, you know, fucking Kevin Ayers.”

By the middle of 1983, the Teardrops had split, and Cope was in self-imposed isolation, licking his psychic and emotional wounds in Tamworth, the Midlands town he had grown up in. In contrast, his contemporaries Echo And The Bunnymen had just hit No 2 in the UK with their third LP, *Porcupine*, while Cope was busy playing with a toy keyboard, flying on suppository-sized speed and amassing a huge toy car collection.

As 1984 dawned, though, somehow Julian Cope would emerge as a thrilling solo artist, releasing two albums — now reissued as double-disc sets — that drew on his rural isolation and drug-



☛ damaged psyche to create the blueprint for a new kind of English outsider psychedelia.

"The Teardrops got big through no fault of my own," he explains, tracking the trauma he felt after their split. "We were punks who'd been opportunist and, in the punk era, anybody who was opportunist stood a chance of accidentally being in the charts. But when it was taken away from me, even though I myself had taken the choice to split the group up, I suddenly realised that I had very quickly got used to the trappings of rock'n'roll. And I thought, 'What am I going to do? I can't go to Tesco's, that's outrageous!'"

A VITAL CONTRIBUTOR TO his first two solo albums, oboeist and cor anglais player Kate St John originally met Cope when her band The Ravishing Beauties supported The Teardrop Explodes on a UK tour in early 1982.

"I'd just left university and jumped into this," says St John, "which was brilliant. It was completely crazy. I used to watch the Teardrops' set every night and I never got bored of it, they were fantastic. I remember on tour we were hanging out at the Columbia Hotel, getting up to no good. Very bizarre, all-night sessions of madness going on – with lots of other bands as well, Echo And The Bunnymen and that whole Liverpool thing. I remember we were very out of it one night at the Columbia and there was a mock wedding with me and one of the roadies – I wasn't going out with him or anything – and Julian was the mock priest. It was that kind of mad, really. It all made sense at the time."

Later that year, the Teardrops attempted to record their third LP – dubbed 'Everybody Wants To Shag The Teardrop Explodes' – as an in-vogue electronic trio after guitarist Troy Tate and bassist Ronnie François were sacked. As always, tensions were high between Cope and keyboardist Dave Balfe, with the frontman fed up with the band, but not confident enough to end it. Balfe would annoy Cope by subjecting his simpler songs, such as "The Greatness And Perfection Of Love", to ill-fitting arrangements. In turn, Cope angered Balfe by playing everything on a tiny Japanese keyboard he'd bought from him for £40.

"Balfe made a lot of the songs unsingable," explains Cope. "He turned 'The Greatness And Perfection...' into what I can only say was kind of a cha-cha. One of the reasons that Balfe and I split was because he said: 'If you're going to play on a toy keyboard, what's there left for me?' And I was like, 'Well, hopefully not much room at all.'"

With the Teardrops over, Cope retreated to his new home in Tamworth with his American girlfriend Dorian, to play on his keyboard, collect Dinky toys and take drugs. "We were taking a lot of speed. Tamworth was a source of black and whites, which I think came in from Amsterdam. They were really weird pills, quite a mouthful – they looked like suppositories. It was a bit of a trip. A black and white would last about a day and a half."



Taped: Cope gets shrink wrapped in 1984

THE REAL DEAL

CHOP-STICKS

Cope remembers Tamworth's "mentalists"

"We were very much trying to manage a lifestyle that was hard to get to grips with, because you had to know certain people. Tamworth had dealers but they were all mental. The only people that they dealt to were mentalists. There's a story I can remember about my brother buying a piano off [Tamworth scenester] Vince Watts, and when he went round to Vince Watts' house, Vince had chopped the piano up. My brother said, 'Vince, I brought a van.' And Vince looked at him and he said, 'Shit, I thought you'd come in your little Citroën, so I thought I'd make it easier.'"

"He had just come out of the end of the Teardrops," says Donald Ross Skinner, then a 17-year-old Tamworth Teardrops fan. "A little bit hallucinogenically worse for wear, I suppose, and he kind of hid out in Tamworth, really, moved away from it all."

Smalltown life wasn't as idyllic as Cope had imagined, though. With his wild hair and past chart fame, he was so recognisable that he'd regularly receive offensive comments in the street. He and Dorian ended up buying most of their food and supplies – "Mars Bars and skins, that's how we lived then" – from the local petrol station.

Some fans' attention swung too far the other way, too. Cope had acquired a stalker, a Catholic virgin in her thirties, who sent him candid photos she'd taken of him secretly on London's Oxford Street, along with letters promising that she would come to his house, murder Dorian and then lose her virginity to him. Cope's big-shot manager Paul King, who also represented Tears For Fears, shut the stalker down, and managed to get Cope a record deal with Polydor. In late 1983, Cope headed into The Point studio in London's Victoria to record his debut solo album, *World Shut Your Mouth*. In the producer's chair was Steve Lovell; Cope knew him from their Liverpool days, but they only became reacquainted when he stumbled upon him busking "some Ash Ra Tempel meets Tom Verlaine" guitar on the Tube.

"I was lucky because the Teardrops were just big enough for the record company to pick me up for a two-album deal," says Cope. "After the Teardrops split up, all the crowds moved away but not only that, all the technicians moved away. So I went from being able to command the Top 20 producers to meeting a guy in Oxford Circus tube station busking and getting him to produce those two albums. It turned out to be the best thing that I could have done."

World Shut Your Mouth was a thrilling debut, still much underrated, that included "The Greatness And Perfection Of Love", "Metranil Vavin" and "Pussyface", all tried out for the third Teardrops album, along with new songs like the propulsive, post-punk rush of "Bandy's First Jump" or the elegiac ballad "Head Hang Low". Cope played many of the instruments, layering up "Lunatic And Fire-Pistol", "An



The Teardrop Explodes in 1982, with Troy Tate (back, left) and David Balfe (back, centre)

Elegant Chaos” and “Strasbourg” with his £40 keyboard. The Teardrops’ Gary Dwyer and Ronnie François, meanwhile, returned on drums and bass. In contrast to his old band, there were no trumpets, expensive residential studios or up-to-date ’80s synths, though Kate St John returned, this time to play oboe and cor anglais.

“I really like Kate,” says Cope. “We wanted to have her play on the third Teardrops album, but because Balfey had taken it in such an electronic territory, oboe just didn’t work. But a lot of the songs on *World Shut Your Mouth* really suited oboe. Again, a rustic air that you wouldn’t have got if it had been a modern keyboard.”

“There was a Syd Barrett feel about some of the more psychedelic ones on Julian’s early solo stuff,” says St John. “There’s something very English about that, and an oboe’s got that English vibe about it, as well. I just think Julian was looking for un-obvious sounds. He was exploring something pastoral, but it’s also quite snake charmer-y and atmospheric, and that’s just where his head was at. Those albums are quite different from The Teardrop Explodes, aren’t they? The Teardrop Explodes were much more sort of male... thumping and horns and all that sort of stuff.”

Cope’s life and music were about to get even more pastoral, though, when he and Dorian left Tamworth for the nearby village of Drayton Bassett. Their house was surrounded by fields on three sides, and this rural isolation led Cope to see the world in a very different way; indeed, his later fascination with megalithic sites and druidic, shamanic matters undoubtedly stems from this time onwards.

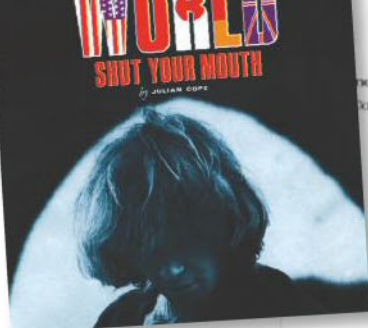
“Moving to Drayton Bassett was fascinating, because I was seeing everything through the eyes of a 20-year-old New Yorker, and it astonished me. Seeing my everyday through a Manhattan worldview, it allowed me to kind of put a microscope to that lens and go, oh hang on, that Saxon church on the hill is really old.”

“Drayton Bassett is very rural, but it’s quite odd,” explains Donald Ross Skinner, who at just 17 became Cope’s chosen guitarist around this time. “It is small, but then it’s got a really big theme park and zoo. We’d go over there quite a bit. I’d drive us in my mum’s car.”

World Shut Your Mouth was released in March 1984, hitting No 40, while its accompanying single, “Sunshine Playroom”, limped in at 64. Reviews were poor, with *NME*’s Barney Hoskyns writing, “I fear we might shut our collective gob for the rest of time and we still wouldn’t get a good Julian Cope album.”

At London’s Hammersmith Palais, on the last night of the sparsely attended promotional tour for the album, Cope, tripping on acid, performed a new song, “Reynard The Fox” and, in a fit of desperation to make it a memorable performance, broke the microphone stand, repeatedly cut his stomach with the sharp metal and then disappeared into a crawl space in the venue’s ceiling.

WITH HIS CONFIDENCE still low and his reputation as a weirdo in the Syd Barrett/Skip Spence mould growing, Cope quickly set about working on a follow-up, this time exorcising the ghost of the Teardrops for good. The songs were all new, and so were the



Cut above: doing an Iggy Pop at Hammersmith Palais, March ’84

TROY STORY VIVA TATE!

Julian on the strange story of the Teardrops’ Troy Tate and The Smiths

“This is a really sad footnote, but Troy Tate would come and hang around when I was making *World Shut Your Mouth*. Once he took out a cassette and says, ‘Oh, I’m producing these, baby, they are going to be the next best thing.’ And it was The Smiths! And that’s awful, ’cos not only were they going to be like the biggest band of the ’80s, but Troy was going to get well fucked off from them. Troy told me he really rated the singer, but said, ‘He just sings the songs the same every time, so I just have to concentrate on getting the band to sound great.’ But allegedly that’s why Morrissey ended up fucking him off, as he didn’t appear to spend enough time on him. I could imagine me in the Teardrops being like that... You need that validation when you are a young man, because part of you thinks that you might be found out because you might be a charlatan after all.”

“MARS
BARS
AND
SKINS IS
HOW WE
LIVED”
JULIAN COPE



musicians – including Skinner, who would remain as Cope’s right-hand man for the next decade.

“I needed new blood, but the only people who were gonna be interested in working with me at that point were non-career musicians,” recalls Cope. “It was almost beyond Donald’s imagination to do a John Peel session. So I was suddenly working with people that were deeply enthusiastic. And that’s what I needed. I had to replace being able to offer them a lot of dosh, with being able to offer them a lot of exciting experiences.”

One of those was Cope’s Peel session, produced by a young Mark Radcliffe on May 29, 1984, which saw Skinner’s debut and first outings for three songs that would become highlights on his second album, *Fried* – “Me Singing”, “Sunspots” and “Search Party”. These were darker tracks, deeply psychedelic, but enriched with acoustic guitars and hints of a more ancient, folkier feel. The singer was still in a vulnerable place, though, even going off for a cry when Radcliffe casually suggested putting a keyboard overdub on one song. “How pathetic!” he laughs today. “But then again, I was pathetic then.”

“I said to Paul King, my manager, straight after *World Shut Your Mouth*, ‘I want to do another album quickly’, and he went, ‘Well, Copey, I’m not sure if people even want this album.’ And I said, ‘Paul, I’ve got to create back catalogue.’ I always had such a historical overview of all my favourite poets or artists, and I used the term ‘back catalogue’ at the time. I said, ‘If I spent hardly any money on it, will they release it?’ and he said, ‘Yeah, I suppose they will.’”

FRIED – THE TITLE an apt description of Cope’s state of mind – was recorded in two weeks in Cambridge’s Spaceward Studios, again with Steve Lovell producing, Kate St John on oboe and cor anglais, and Skinner providing guitar on four tracks, including the opening “Reynard The Fox”, which perfectly summed up Cope’s new musical philosophy – looking backwards and retracing musical steps that might have been ignored the first time around. Accordingly, “Reynard” takes its title from an old folk song and its riffs from a garage-rock classic.

“I figured out this new formula,” Cope explains.

“The person who writes the riff is the originator, the person who copies the riff is the rip-off, and the person who does the third version is just the traditionalist. So I figured that, you know, ‘I Can Only Give You Everything’ by Van Morrison and Them has been ripped off so many times by garage-rock bands to write songs that were just as good.”

Recording was overseen by Cope’s new spirit guide, Brian Wilson. A picture of the Beach Boy was framed in the studio, and he and Lovell would regularly consult it for advice during sessions. A bed was also installed in the control room, with Cope regularly cajoling the producer into resting in it *à la* Wilson. “Steven was a real acidhead from the ’70s, and he absolutely rallied to the kind of character I needed him to be, because I think secretly he was that in any case. So yeah, he did become an ersatz Brian Wilson. He spent time in the bed, but only out of obligation, because I was so needy: ‘You’re not spending much time in that bed!’ ‘I’ll have a little rest, then...’”

When he wasn’t consulting Brian, Cope would crawl around the studio under an antique turtle shell he had recently bought in a junk shop, or put down his vocal parts stark naked. Kate St John and Donald Ross Skinner agree, though, that Cope was clearly focused on the music despite his antics. “*Fried* was definitely the more out-there period,” remembers St John. “Julian was inhabiting an area under the mixing desk for a while [laughs]. But even so, he was absolutely fine when you were with him. He didn’t seem lost when I worked with him on the records at all. He’s always so nice, just a lovely person to be around.”

“We worked very quickly,” says Skinner. “He knew what he was going for musically; he had a clear picture, and however his mind was at the time, it was still functioning artistically. He was always very lucid... but bonced.”

Indeed, *Fried* is Cope’s first bona fide classic – “Reynard The Fox” is a powerful opener, moving from a paean against bloodsports into a spoken-word recollection of his infamous onstage meltdown, with Cope screaming, “*He spilled his guts all over the stage!*” “The Bloody Assizes” tells the tale of the Tolpuddle Martyrs over raucous rockabilly, while the oboe-led, psych “Laughing Boy”, both dreamy and sinister, finds Cope imploring, “*Oh no, don’t cast me out of here/I said, no, I got no place to go,*” like a little lost boy. In line with his new self-imposed budget, the cover of *Fried*, depicting a crouching Cope naked under his turtle shell on Alvecot slag heap in Warwickshire, cost only £215 to shoot. The location was in fact only 600 metres from the priory where *World Shut Your Mouth*’s cover had been shot earlier in 1984. “I was really going from the macrocosm of hoping to be a world artist to suddenly being utterly localised in my worldview,” explains Cope. “My 1984 albums were not quite bucolic, but they were non-urban. The day we shot the *Fried* cover, absolutely without our knowledge, they were burning off the crops nearby, so if you look on the back, there’s all this smoke. It just has this amazing late-autumn feel to it. I suppose it is quite dystopian, isn’t it? I mean, where the fuck would that be?”



Cope: “The Teardrops got big through no fault of my own”

PLINKY’N’PERKY

TOYS FOR BOYS

Julian Cope on why he turned to toy keyboards

“In the mid-’80s, there weren’t many rock’n’rollers playing fragile-sounding songs. If there was any fragility in a song, it was often bust up by an electronic production, but I was offering something that was restricted musically. That was the problem with a lot of the ’80s; people didn’t have to accept restrictions, the new keyboards offered so many sounds, but it’d be exhausting to work out which one you’d use. ‘So, that’s awe-inspiring... oh, but that sounds like the fall of Saigon... oh, but this sounds like the fall of Singapore... Yeah, well, how about the one that sounds like the fall of the local corner shop because somebody’s raided it? Can you keep it down a bit!’ That’s why I turned to toy keyboards.”



In many ways, *Fried* marked the beginning of the rest of Julian Cope’s career. Even though 1987’s *Saint Julian* took him back to the charts, and 1991’s *Peggy Suicide* and the following year’s *Jehovahkill* pushed his sound and message gloriously far-out, *Fried* marked the emergence of Cope as a truly unique voice, plumbing rock’n’roll’s golden age and connecting with nature, in order to look to the future.

When it charted at No 87, though, Polydor decided not to renew Cope’s contract, and cancelled the planned 12-inch release of “Sunspots”, *Fried*’s most commercial song. The album’s magic was already working, though. “In the end, the truth of *World Shut Your Mouth* and *Fried* was strong enough to turn the right people on and to gain faith in people in the music business who hadn’t absolutely lost their mind trying to sound like Dollar. The people did rally to me, but I actually had to release those albums in order to prove to them that I was still a functioning human being.”

Cope himself draws comparisons between *World Shut Your Mouth* and *Fried*, and Neil Young’s first two albums – the first slickly produced and played mostly by Young, *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* more ramshackle. Young’s adoption of the untested Crazy Horse as his backing band on that album also mirrors Cope’s championing of the 17-year-old Skinner during *Fried*.

Perhaps most crucially, the legacy of these two albums, *Fried* especially, can be seen in Julian Cope’s still-herculean work ethic. He’s usually up at 5am these days, writing and recording songs, but more likely working on his latest book, an out-there novel or a megalithic non-fiction tome. “The metaphor on these two albums was industriousness and capability,” he explains. “I was determined to do two albums very quickly. When I was 16, I read this essay called ‘The Metaphysical Poets’ by TS Eliot, and one of the things he said, which has stuck with me for my entire life, was to the effect of, ‘We live in a very fortunate culture as artists, because all that our culture requires is that we poets, we artists, we authors, do not sit and merely read poetically in our gallery but we bring forth something, to educate, to edify and to entertain.’ And I thought, ‘Well, if that’s the covenant between me and the audience, then bring it on.’”

“It was about being serious, and also being serious about making a cunt of yourself, and I think that’s very important. Being naked under a turtleshell, I can’t say that wasn’t really in, in the ’80s, because that wasn’t in, in the ’70s and that wasn’t in, in the ’90s, but it did sum up my metaphor. It was ridiculous. But at least it was almost valiantly ridiculous. And wasn’t rock’n’roll forged in the fires of Saturday entertainment? But it does mean you’ve got to be really good.”

Double-CD reissues of *World Shut Your Mouth* and *Fried* are out now on Caroline International

HOW THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF **JOHN PEEL** HELPED TO SHAPE MODERN LIFE

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YOU WEAR IT WELL

ROD STEWART was never, it seems, a natural songwriter. “I was too busy,” he says, “having a good time.”

In autumn 2015, the good times continue unabated for British rock’s most storied playboy. On the eve of a new album and that long-awaited Faces reunion, Rod The Mod opens up his LA mansion to *Uncut* and, uncharacteristically, reveals all. About Jeff Beck, Britt Ekland and the rock giant who looks “a bit too much like Bin Laden”. About cancer, the old bandmate who drank *too much*, and the correct way to tie a scarf. And about why The Faces couldn’t reform ’til now: “Mac was a bit of a fly in the ointment...”

Story: Jaan Uhelszki
Portrait: Mark and Colleen Hayward

A man who knows how to tie a scarf: Rod Stewart circa 1974

YOU KNOW YOU'RE getting close to Rod Stewart's house when your ears pop. For the past four decades, Stewart has lived on one of the highest points of Beverly Hills, in an exclusive enclave called Beverly Park. Accessible only through two guarded checkpoints, the estate is dominated by sprawling gated properties, with fine views out across the city itself. Once you've cleared security, however, it's no small task finding your destination. There are no street names or pavements; nor is there anyone about to ask. Fortunately, Stewart's house is instantly recognisable thanks to a soccer pitch visible over a rambling fence. The gates, too, are a giveaway: they are emblazoned with the four-leaf clover symbol of his beloved Celtic football team.

Stewart, his wife Penny Lancaster and their two children live in a large Italianate mansion painted the colour of a Tuscan sunset. Across the circular driveway is a well-appointed guest house where three of Stewart's older children live. There is also a six-car garage with an array of expensive automobiles – mostly Italian. Stewart still takes

his cars out almost daily. "I love to drive," he explains. "It clears my head and I get my best ideas then. The one thing I don't do anymore is drive at night, because I like to have a drink of wine every night." Few celebrities, it seems, live so grandly or unapologetically. "Yeah, largely and hugely," Stewart laughs. "All this and I still got all me hair."

Stewart has invited *Uncut* to his home ostensibly to talk about his new studio album, *Another Country*. There is also a 5CD set due which collects the run of albums he made between 1969's *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* to *Smiler* in 1974. Critically, though, Stewart's old group, the Faces, are returning to active service. Not only has a boxset just been released of all their studio albums – 1970-1975: *You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything* – but they also performed live on September 5 during a 2015 Prostate Cancer UK charity event, Rock'n'Horsepower, at Kenney Jones' polo club in Surrey [see review on page 40]. Stewart first reunited to play with the surviving Faces – Ron Wood and Jones – at his 70th birthday party; it seems they had such a good time, they decided to do it again. If Stewart had his way, though, he would also reactivate another of his old groups: "We could have a Faces and a Jeff Beck Band reunion all on one bill," he beams.

Inside of Stewart's home, the walls are decorated with an enviable collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. But Stewart steers me to a large oil painting over the fireplace: 'An Elegant Woman' by French artist Hippolyte-casimir Gourse (above right). It depicts a rather plain Victorian woman in a long black dress and black shoes, wearing a large feathered hat and reclining on a divan. "Don't you think that one looks

like me?" he asks. "You don't have to answer; I know it does. It looks just like me when I was 18." This large painting is given pride of place above the mantle, along with a copy of Daniel Wolff's biography of Sam Cooke, two dozen painted metal soldiers of the Scottish regiments in battle formation, small miniatures of Celtic players in their green and white shirts, and two small Scottish Lion Rampant flags. "This is my altar, don't you think?" he asks proudly. Photographs are dotted elsewhere around the room: of him and his children, with Penny, and an especially striking one of his father in a tux. "Aye, that's my dad. That's Bob Stewart there, looking very Scottish," Stewart says.

What was the occasion? "He was going down the betting shop. I think it was his 70th or 75th birthday."

Seventy doesn't look like 70 anymore. "No it doesn't," admits Stewart. "I try not to let it."

A two-hour conversation with Rod Stewart is wide-ranging



Steampacket:
Stewart with Long
John Baldry, Julie
Driscoll and Brian
Auger in 1965





Rod lookalike 'An Elegant Woman'

and digressive. It takes in his early bands and solo work, drinking, his controversial migration to Los Angeles, the *Great American Songbook* albums, and his return to songwriting. As well, of course, as the Faces reunion. But we begin by talking about clothes. Today, Stewart is wearing surprisingly understated attire – jeans and a denim shirt.

UNCUT: Was wardrobe always a consideration for you? Even when you wore those satin pants and crop-tops?

ROD STEWART: I don't think I was ever a regular dresser. First of all, you've got to be passionate about it, and I always have been. I would consider myself a pretty good dresser before "Maggie May", before I had any money. So you either can do it or you can't; you've really got that flair or you haven't.

My theory is that there are people who can tie a scarf and people who cannot tie a scarf. You

can tie a scarf.

That's absolutely right. It is the way you put them together. But even before I broke through – there's a film of me that came out, *An Easter With Rod* [ITV, 1965]. It filmed me for three days when I was 18. So much of it is about what I'm wearing. I'm above my dad's little sweetshop, in a little bedroom where I lived, and I'm showing you my little wardrobe. It was only *that* wide, full of clothes. But I was so proud of them. My

boots had the big heels on them like The Beatles had.

In those days, you fronted Steampacket with Julie Driscoll. She had style.

Yeah, I was with Julie Driscoll. And with Mick Fleetwood [in *Shotgun Express*]. It's funny you bring that up; I was on Maui last week, and I went to see Mick. I haven't seen him since we were playing together, I think. He's got a blues club and a restaurant on Maui. I thought he was a good drummer, but I didn't think he was that good. Wow. He gets up and plays. He's a marvellous guy. He's looking a bit too much like Bin

BUYER'S GUIDE



AN OLD RAINCOAT WON'T EVER LET YOU DOWN

MERCURY, 1970

Stewart's solo debut, released the year after he joined the Faces. Guests include bandmates past (Steam Hammer and Jeff Beck Group alumni) and present (Wood, McLagan). A strong mix of originals and covers ("Street Fighting Man", "Dirty Old Town", "Handbags & Gladrags").



GASOLINE ALLEY

MERCURY, 1970

Released only four months after... *Raincoat*, *Gasoline*

Alley was the first album to feature early key collaborator Martin Quittenton, as well as all four of Stewart's Faces bandmates.



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

MERCURY, 1971

Rod's first solo No 1 album, buoyed along by "Maggie May" (a co-write with Quittenton) and Stewart's own "Mandolin Wind". Again, all the Faces contribute their own brand of blurry, ragged excellence.



NEVER A DULL MOMENT

MERCURY, 1972

Three co-writes with Ronnie Wood – but the biggest song here was another Stewart/Quittenton track, "You Wear It Well", alongside Jimi Hendrix's "Angel" and Sam Cooke's "Twistin' The Night Away".



ATLANTIC CROSSING

WARNER BROS, 1975

The title reflects Stewart's own circumstance, as he left Britain for the States. Flavour was provided by Tom Dowd, members of Booker T And The MG's and the Memphis Horns; the Sutherland Brothers' "Sailing" provided a major hit.



A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

WARNER BROS, 1976

A more manicured sound, and none of that laddish swagger

found on Faces records. Along with covers – "The First Cut Is The Deepest", "Pretty Flamingo" – the key track is Stewart's own "The Killing Of Georgie (Part I & II)".



FOOTLOOSE & FANCY FREE

WARNER BROS, 1977

Another new collaborator – former

Blossom Toes member Jim Cregan – but the big hits here are "Hot Legs" and "You're In My Heart". Critics lambasted him, but fans loved the disc, which sold over three million copies.



BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN

WARNER BROS, 1978

Rod at his lairiest. "Do Ya Think I'm

Sexy". "Ain't Love A Bitch". "Attractive Female Wanted". Sold more than 14 million copies.



STARDUST: THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK VOLUME III

J RECORDS, 2004

The third and best of the five-volume series of American standards. Stewart's delivery is charmingly flawed and he never tries too hard. Guest stars include Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton and Bette Midler.



ANOTHER COUNTRY

UNIVERSAL 2015

After finding his songwriting chops with 2013's *Time*,

Stewart dug in again, and wrote most of the 11 tracks himself, songs that are as honest and deep as his autobiography.

STEVE MORLEY/REDFERNS



Sailing: in New York harbour to promote *Atlantic Crossing*, May 1975



“I HAVEN’T GIVEN UP ON HIM...”

Rod on Jeff Beck: then and now

“ICAN’T SPEAK highly enough of Jeff. We’ve never seen eye to eye. We’ve never been close mates. But we’re close as musicians and in respect for each other. We tried to make an LP together before I did *Time*, a blues album, but it didn’t quite work out. But I haven’t given up on him. He’s got some demons. I think what it was with Jeff – and I hope he takes this the right way, and I’m sure he’s changed now – he wasn’t a good bandleader. He never looked after me and Ronnie. He may have just been a bit envious of Woody and my brotherly relationship. I think he fired Ronnie about three times, and got him back again. There were some weeks where we weren’t getting paid much. We would go days without food. Jimi Hendrix’s girlfriend used to feed us. The only time we’d see Jeff was at the gig. There was no camaraderie there. Especially when we were in America. In England it was different, because we’d all travel in one car together, and we’d stuff up in the office and get a bottle of Martini. In those days, it was Aynsley Dunbar, me, Jeff and Ronnie Wood.”

●Laden at the moment, though. He’s got that same look of a long nose and a beard. But he does know how to tie a scarf.

I saw you at Detroit’s Grande Ballroom with the Jeff Beck Band. Considering how naturally gregarious you are, you seemed quite shut down then...

With Jeff, there was a serious band to be in. Maybe if I didn’t look as happy as I should, it’s probably because I was listening to what he was doing. Because, what a guitar player! He knew where to leave a gap for me to sing, and I knew where to stop singing to let him play. Good call-and-shout thing, whatever they call it. But no, I was learning my trade big-time when I was with Jeff.

You know Beck blamed some of the poor attendance in the American South on your hair? He told me, “Rod wasn’t that readily accepted in some of the Southern States because he had a funny haircut.” Who said that? Ronnie?

No, Jeff Beck. About your hair. He said, “I actually liked it. It looked like a ladies’ haircut. But when they heard that voice, it was all over.” Surely he was in jest there, wasn’t he? Wow. Let’s go along with that story. I agree. That’s why we suffered in the Midwest, the South. When they heard me sing it was OK. But we didn’t sell tickets because of the hair. I think he must make it up as he goes along. I don’t recall that.

Were those Jeff Beck tours as outrageous as the later Faces tours?

No, not Jeff Beck. Were there ever any stories? I don’t think so. We did a gig with the Small Faces at the Park Empire. We were second on the bill, and I was singing away and all of a sudden all the lights went down, the amps went out, and

everything, and he blames it on McLagan, Jeff does. He said McLagan sabotaged the Jeff Beck Group, but other than that, I can’t think of anything.

It was never the same group after you left.

No, it wasn’t. See, I put this to Ronnie and Ronnie thought it was great idea. I said, “There’s just three of us left. We could have a Faces and a Jeff Beck reunion all on one bill. And you and me are in both bands.” We do three-quarters of an hour with Jeff, interval, three-quarters of an hour we do the Faces. What a brilliant time we’d all have. Ronnie’d love to do it, because he can play bass with Jeff. Such a great bass player. Nearly all the stuff I recorded in the first two or three years was Ronnie playing bass.

After you left the Jeff Beck Group, you joined the Faces. Were there any other offers?

No. This is my take on it as far as I can remember. I was missing my mate Ronnie, and he said, “Steve Marriott [departed], four other guys [are] left. I’m going to join them.” I went over to the Stones’ studio, top of the stairs, and listened. But Ronnie said, “Come on in, we haven’t got anyone singing.” So Kenney Jones invited me down. Three of them gone now, it’s unbelievable.

Were you accepted immediately by the others?

No, it took a while. In Mac’s case I don’t think he ever really accepted me, but we did become friends. I think they had a distrust of singers, because Steve had left them, and they thought, ‘We don’t want to get another singer, because all they’re going to do is get up and leave.’ Which wasn’t the way the Faces ended. I would have stayed with that band forever. I was quite happy, but once Ronnie Lane left and then Woody – I always knew Woody would finish up with the Stones sooner or later – that was the engine and the heart gone out of it for me.

When you were great, you were amazing. When you were bad, it was still entertaining.

Yeah, the guys in my band, we do “Stay With Me” and “Ooh La La”. As much we try and do them the way Ronnie and Kenney played it, we can’t nail it. Because it’s not like that. It’s like this. And it works. Woody’s usually a little bit out of tune, but it works.

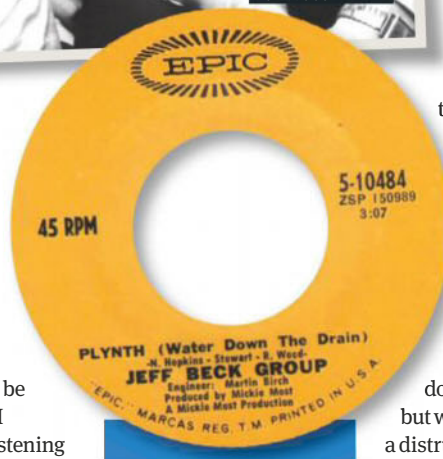
There’s something in that glorious imperfection.

Glorious imperfection, exactly. Now that’s an album title.

“The Drinking Song” on your new album is very Faces-like. You use that same technique of giving the moral of the story.

You mean, “Stick to tea and cakes/Yeah, found me trousers up an old oak tree.”

Did any of the things in the song ever happen?



“WE COULD HAVE A JEFF BECK AND A FACES REUNION ALL ON ONE BILL”



First steps: signing to Warner Brothers London, 1970

Yeah. I've walked in me underpants through the hotel. Most of this happened in the Faces days, when I went solo, because I felt I had to outdo the Faces, and be more outrageous.

Did you have any pre-gig rituals in the Faces, like a glass of red wine?

No, it wasn't red wine. We all drank, we used to drink Mateus Rosé or Liebfraumilch, or sweet wine. Then later on, port and brandy, so that was the routine, and we all drank it. No-one drank anything different. Even when new members came in the band that's what they had to drink, whether they liked it or not: Jesse what's his name, the guitar player [Jesse Ed Davis], and Tetsu Yamauchi.

Tetsu stirred up a big controversy in the band.

Yeah. Is he dead now?

He's retired in Japan. Did you ever consider getting him in for this reunion?

No.

Because he was so controversial?

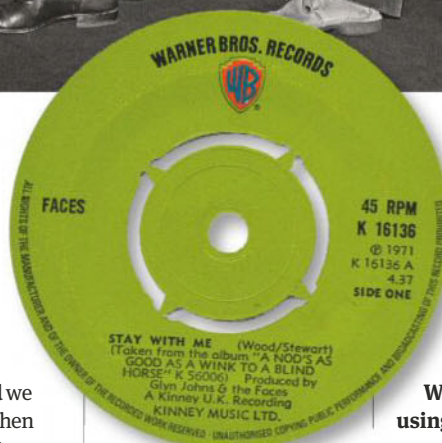
[whispering] No, he wasn't very good. He was all right, but he wasn't... And he drank. He was a serious drinker. You would see his breakfast go by in the morning with a couple of shots of whisky on it at half-past-11. Wow!

You used to drink a lot, though.

We had drinking on an empty stomach down to a T. We purposely missed our lunch, so that when we went onstage with a port and brandy at seven we'd feel the maximum impact. Port and brandy, wow. Seven o'clock, on no lunch.

I can't believe you didn't throw up.

No. We were good drinkers. Oh, we loved it. We seriously drank. It might not be the same when we do this charity gig



because I always like a drink before I go on, but I know Ronnie can't now and Kenney can't, either. So I'll just be the lone alkie. I was never really a drug-taker. I've never smoked, so I don't know what that's all about. I never took any cocaine really a lot, because I always had to get up and play football. But I did like a drink, so that's my downfall.

Was there resentment, did they think you were using your best songs for your albums?

"I DID IT FOR A SET OF CARPETS!"

IN THE EARLY days of his career, Stewart was brought in as a session singer to add vocals to "In A Broken Dream", a song by Australian rock band, Python Lee Jackson. All but forgotten by Rod himself, the song enjoyed an unexpected revival earlier this year, when American rapper A\$AP Rocky sampled it for his song, "Everyday". Stewart has now re-recorded the original for his new album, *Another Country*. "When I did it, I hadn't broken through with 'Maggie May'," explains Stewart. "I did it for a set of carpets for me car. It was my mate who convinced me to do it. He ran a car showroom,

and he said, 'I've got this group come from Australia, but the singer's not very good. Can you do a demo for me?' I said, 'What do I get?' He said, 'Well, I don't have any money. I'll give you a set of carpets.' That was 1969."

Released the following year, the song didn't chart. "Then 'Maggie May' became a hit in 1971," continues Stewart. "They re-released it and it became a hit! I forgot all about it. Then a few months ago, it was sampled by A\$AP Rocky. So I thought I might use it myself..."



DICK BARNATT/REDFERNS;
© TONY GALE/PICTORIAL PRESS



Double deckers: the Faces on press call, London September 1971

“HE’D LEAD US INTO MISCHIEF”

Faces co-conspirator **KENNEY JONES** looks back on a lifetime of friendship and misbehaviour with Rod...

I KNEW ROD The Mod was a great singer. I’d seen him with Jeff Beck. Once, I bumped into him on the stairs at Immediate. We smiled at each other and that was it, not knowing that we’d have a lifetime friendship. But I first met Rod formally at rehearsals after The Small Faces split up. Mac, Ronnie [Lane] and myself used to get together once a week at the Stones’ warehouse on Bermondsey Street. We didn’t quite know what we were going to do, but we felt really close to each other so we decided to play once a week and see where we’d go. Ronnie Lane brought down his new neighbour, Ronnie Wood, who was playing bass for the Jeff Beck Band, but he switched to guitar. We got along like a house on fire. Then Ronnie Wood brought down his best mate, Rod. Every week he used to come down, sit on the amps and watch us jam. Then we’d take a break at The Bermondsey Arms. Rod was one of the lads, one of our great friends. One day, we decided to start singing. Although I can’t knock anyone’s vocals, I thought there was something missing. All the time I kept looking at Rod, sitting on the amps waiting for us to go up the pub. So I took him to one side and said, “Do you fancy joining the band?” He said, “Do you think everyone would let me?” I said, “Yeah, it’s not a problem!”

He had such a high range, like Marriott did – but it was such a lovely voice as well, so soulful. He’s just such a funny guy, too. He’d take the piss out of anyone. It was a pleasure to be with Rod, he brought a whole new concept of

friendship and laughter to us. We became known for our fun-loving party atmosphere, the people’s band. He’d lead us into mischief. If somebody went out looking funny or out of context with the rest of the background, he used to stand behind them and take the piss.

As a frontman, he knew how to work the stage incredibly well. Marriott was really good, but Rod had the edge. He’d use all the stage, just wonderful, just a different way of singing. He was heavily influenced by American soul and his musical tastes rubbed off on us lot, too.

Why didn’t our previous attempts to get back together work? Mainly it was down to everyone’s busy schedules. But when Ian McLagan died, it made us think a bit more. Ronnie Wood and myself flew over to LA to surprise Rod at his 70th birthday. We ended up playing there: me, Rod and Woody. As soon as we started up we sounded just as dishevelled as we did before! I won’t say nothing’s changed, it has. We’re all a bit more sober now. In the Faces, we used to drink brandy and Coke, brandy and ginger... one smell of that, forget it. Now Ronnie’s not had a drink or drugs for five years. I said to Rod, “Woody’s in better shape than me and you.” He went, “Yeah, I know,” and then it all went quiet. Then Rod said, “You haven’t given up drinking, have you?” and I said, “Hell, no!” and he went, “Thank God for that!”

What do I miss about the old days? Friendship. Our playing is one thing; it was always a pleasure. But when you get those kind of characters together in one place... our friendship was fantastic.

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL BONNER

☺ Yes, but it was certainly not true, and I’ve had this out with them. I ran “Losing You” past them. I said, “Do we want to do this?” and they didn’t want to do it. So that was certainly one song that I said we should do. But it was a huge output. Two albums a year, and we were touring.

Did leaving the Faces affect your songwriting at all?

No, can’t remember. Don’t think so. No.

Did you mind being on your own? No.

Was it a relief?

I missed the humour, so I decided to more or less surround myself with British guys, which I did with the first band, Jim Cregan, Gary Grainger and all those guys. But songwriting just went on. I think I probably had more control over what I wanted to record, because it was always a joint effort. It was a very democratic band to be in, Faces. Except when it came to mixing. I remember when we used to be mixing and then

Ronnie’d be there next to the engineer, and then you’d see someone’s hand come in and push the fader up when there’s a solo coming. Or Kenney’s hand would come in there and push up the snare drum, and then there’d be Lane’s hand pushing down – “OK, start again. Bring it all back.” It was hilarious. And we were all drinking all the time and pushing things up. Oh, it was brilliant.

You’ve always had a great relationship with Ron Wood.

Yeah, it’s unique. We have our own little language. Did he ever tell you about the book of poems and drawings that we did when we were with Jeff Beck? It’s his sketches and our poems, and it’s so funny. I can’t even begin to describe it. It’s just hilarious. I’d love us to bring that out.

You moved to Los Angeles in 1975. Did you feel like you fell out of favour at all?

I never understood it.

It always seemed to have something to do with Britt Ekland.

Yeah, I think Britt had a lot to do with it. It was ‘Rod’s gone to Hollywood.’ What’s wrong with that? Twenty-six, whatever I was, made a lot of money and moved on. It’s fabulous, enjoy myself.

It was the spoils of war. If you wake up at 40, you will have missed it. Dating models...

It’s all part of the bravado. And in the mid-twenties you’re making the most of it.

There’s different rules for lead singers, too.

‘Course there are. No matter what you look like, you’re always going to get the girls. That’s funny. Did you ever hear the story about how Faces set me up with a guy? I was in Australia and there was a transvestite in a bar, and they set me up. Said we’ve all tried to pull her; she was gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous. So I got back to my room and everything. Then I saw... Oh. Set me up. I said, “Well, you better go now.” It’s something I’m quite proud of, actually. The fact that they set me up with this transvestite.

What did you say to them the next morning?

The boys? “Brilliant, I would have done it to you.” You should have seen their faces, they loved it. They kippered me. It’s called being kippered up.

Back to the move to Los Angeles. Was being with Britt part of the problem?



McLagan, Stewart and Wood, recording in London, October 1974

She was a bit, you know... [*touches his nose to indicate she was snooty*]. My dress sense may have gone adrift a little in those days. But I came through it OK.

The series of *Great American Songbook* albums were hugely successful. When did you think it was a good idea to do those albums?

They've always been in the back of my mind. They've always been a big part of my life. Not necessarily because my family played them. It seems they subconsciously entered my mind over the last 40 years. I was surprised when we came to do the vocals on the first one, and the second and the third one, that I knew most of the lyrics. It was quite amazing. I don't know how they enter your mind and then stay there.

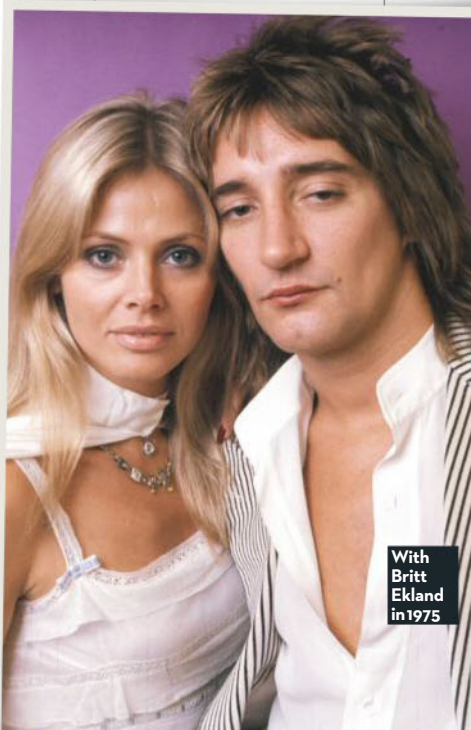
Were you surprised at how successful they were? Were you certain that they would work?

Oh, no, no, no. I didn't, until after we'd done the first album, realise what a risk I'd taken. If it hadn't sold, there would have been no turning back for me. But what's wonderful about it is the audience. When we did it the first time for a show it was like a madhouse, because we did it with "Maggie May" and "Hot Legs". And it's almost like two shows, and then the audience sit down and slow-dance in the aisles. It's lovely, it really is.

Would you do an *American Songbook* tour?

That's a tour I'll do somewhere down the line, and really do it properly. Did you ever see *The Glenn Miller Story*? Do you remember The Jordanaires when they're in the airplane hangar? I'd love to do that with a big part of a B52, and perform all those songs in that 1940s-era setting.

**"MY
DRESS
SENSE
MAY
HAVE
GONE
ADRIFT
A LITTLE"**



With Britt Ekland in 1975

Did you envision doing as many of the *Songbooks* as you did?

First, I thought I'd only do two. Then everybody started giving me songs. It was such a wealth of material. I could really go on for another 30 years doing these albums and never run out of material. But then I started writing my own songs again.

Have you noticed that your audience has changed a lot?

I think lots of my old fans come. It's hard to analyse who's out there, but definitely a lot of new people. But doing the *Songbooks* has definitely brought in a new audience.

What do you think about when you sing?

Getting the words right. It's hard; you go into somewhat of a trance. It's different when I was singing the standards. A lot of people have said, when we try and analyse the success, that one of the reasons is because I change the melodies so subtly, go places that no-one else has gone before. Most of them, I try not to; after I've established what the song is, I try and change it, but not too much. So it's always amazing that you can have this gift. I can sing and I don't know what's coming out sometimes.

What's changed most over the years for you? Just that you know so much more, or you have more confidence?

I think it's probably confidence. Especially, strangely, after the great success of the standards albums. Way back when I listened to the first album, there was an apprehension there. Should I be doing this? Am I a rock'n'roll traitor? When it did so well, I thought, 'I can really start and it can go now.' It was amazing, because the first album went at No 4, the second one went at No 2, and the third went



Backstage warm-up at the LA Forum, December 1981: (l-r) Jimmy Zavala, Wally Stocker (out of shot) Robin Le Mesurier, Rod Stewart, Jim Cregan, Jay Davis

🎧 at No 1. It was so unexpected and so wonderful.

You feel like you can take more risks now?
Yeah.

When you had the throat cancer scare, did it make you rethink your life?

Well, although it was cancer, I can't say I had this huge battle. I was in and out of hospital in 24 hours. If you're going to have a cancer, have thyroid cancer, because it's the easiest one to get rid of. But yeah, I suppose you do obviously stop and think. It does change your life. It scares the living daylights out of you. Your livelihood and the thing you love to do, the singing, can be taken away so easily from you.

You couldn't sing for a while...

Most people say I can't sing at all! Yeah, it's like after the third surgery I had on my knee. The muscles shrink up, so the same happens with your voice, because they cut right through your neck, almost. It's quite scary. And you have to retrain your voice to sing again. The muscles have to get their memory back.

In the Faces and shortly thereafter, you had the greatest outfits in the world.

Did we have some outfits! I had a sequin suit with a little ribbon round the middle.

Are you the same size as you were then?

No, no, no, no. I've still got all the stuff upstairs from way back then, and literally my waist was like *that*. I'm about 33 now.

So you've kept them all?

Yeah, the top of the house, there's tons of stuff up there. Kids have nicked a lot of it. When they were going through their teenage years they

"I HAD A SEQUIN SUIT WITH A RIBBON ROUND THE MIDDLE"



Glad rags: Reading Festival, August 12, 1972

thought all that stuff was really cool, and I never got it back.

"Please", on the new album, feels like an updated version of "Stay With Me". For so many women of my age... I would never stay the night at anyone's house because of that song.

Oh, my God. Please don't analyse the words that much. When I sing that song, I think to myself, 'Did you really write those lyrics, "I'll kick you out the door" or whatever it is? "And I know your name is Rita, because your perfume's smelling sweeter."' "

My fear was the morning after, and it was all because of your song.

Oh, yeah. Walk of shame. Can you please accept my apologies for all of you? No, really. "Please" is more ... gentlemanly. It's more well-mannered. It was an awkward song, too. I might be a bit long in the tooth now for this type of song, but I've got a very good memory.

Is it true you hated to write songs, and always thought you were much better at covering them?

I was too busy – as I said in my autobiography – having a good time. I couldn't be bothered to sit down and write songs, especially in the early '70s. In the Faces, you literally had to lock me in a room to get the lyrics finished. Now, with the coming of age and with a few stories to tell, it's a luxury. I love it. Now, when I'm not making an album, I miss it. But yeah, it was like being at school for me.

After you did the *Great American Songbook* albums, did you ever think of doing something like *Raising Sand*? A collection of Americana songs or...

What is Americana? I've never quite understood

what that term means. It was a name that people were bandying around this time last year. I'd be, "What the fuck's that?"

So was it difficult getting back into songwriting for the *Time* album?

No, it flowed really easily, much to my surprise. We did the first song with Jim Cregan, my old sparring partner, and he came down to the house one Sunday afternoon and he brought his guitar and I'm like, "Oh, Jesus. He's brought his guitar, that means..." And lo and behold, it just happened. We wrote "Brighton Beach" and that sounded good, and we moved on from there and kept writing.

I think you have to fool yourself into writing.

I don't do that anymore, funnily enough. I long for the next song to be written but, in saying that, I wouldn't write unless I had to. It's wonderfully fulfilling, when it's right, and you go, "Blimey, did I write that?" One minute your page is empty, later it's got some stuff on it. It gives me even more satisfaction, because my songs are like babies. You create them, you nurture them, and you bend them and twist them, and then you put them out to the public and then you hear them on the radio and you go, that's amazing. To hear it back. That buzz hasn't left me after all these years, to hear it on the radio.

Do you have a ritual before you write?

Sorting out old shirts and jackets. Then feeling I shouldn't be doing this. There's something much more creative I should be doing.

I always find I clean out a cupboard before I start to write.

Oh, that's an interesting concept. Yeah, because I've noticed and my wife has noticed. She said, "The older you get, you're so much tidier." And she's not very tidy, and I'm so tidy now. I didn't used to be.

How are things shaping up regarding the Faces reunion show?

Next Wednesday [September 2] we'll be at the first rehearsal. We're only doing five songs – I think we're doing "You Can Make Me Dance", "Stay With Me", "Ooh La La", "Losing You" off of my album [Every Picture Tells A Story] because they played on that, and also "I'd Rather Go Blind" [Never A Dull Moment], and they all played on that, so although they're on my albums, it actually was the Faces. I think that's all we'll have time for.

When did you decide you should do the show? Was it after Mac died?

Kenney's been wanting to us to play this. It's Kenney Jones' house and his grounds, and it's a charity for prostate cancer, which Kenney had. So it's admirable. Mac was a bit of a fly in the ointment when it came to getting the band back together, so once he passed, it became a lot easier, because every time I'd say, "Right, we're going to do it next year", Mac would go, "No, you're not doing it next year because we're not ready. We've got a Small Faces album coming out." Or something like that. So it was always a bit of negativity with Mac. Funny guy but...

If this gig goes well, will you look to do more shows?

Yeah. All depends what the Stones' plans are. I can't make a window for it because, oh, they want to tour. Then that messes me up and then when Ronnie gets time, he's got to wait for me.

Didn't you and Ronnie Wood pay Ronnie Lane's hospital bills?

Yeah.



Rod Stewart in 2015: "I've been softening up... And why not?"

There goes that reputation for being tight. You're getting to be an old softie.

Yeah, I've been softening up. And why not?

Is "A Friend For Life" on the new album about your relationship with your wife?

Steve Harley [of *Cockney Rebel*] actually wrote that. It came out 15 years ago. I said I've got to do that one day. I dropped one of my own songs off the album so I could put that one on. Steve is very happy about that. He needed a new roof for his house. Some of the Tom Waits songs I've done... he's thanked me for his swimming pool.

Your relationships are always a good source of material. Do the women in your life mind when you use them for the songs?

No, none of them mind. They're quite flattered, really.

ROD'S BEST COVERS!

He's done a few: here are some of our favourites...

HANDBAGS AND GLADRAGS

Original Artist: Chris Farlowe

From: *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* (1969)

Chris Farlowe had a minor hit with this Mike d'Abo song in 1967. Stewart had grander plans for it, so when he cut it two years later he convinced d'Abo to write him a clarinet melody.

ONLY A HOBO

Original Artist: Dylan

From: *Gasoline Alley* (1970)

Besides The Byrds, almost no-one does Dylan better than and as much as Stewart. He has recorded six Dylan songs: this is his first, and he gives this 1961 folkie number a lilt and swing.

MAYBE I'M AMAZED

Original Artist: Paul McCartney

From: *Long Player* (1972)

Recorded for the Faces' *Long Player*

album, it's one of the great covers, taking the McCartney song into unexpected terrain, making it less ponderous and more soulful. Ronnie Lane sang the first verse, then Stewart takes over, but when Lane and Stewart sing the final chorus it raises goose bumps.

IDON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT

Original Artist: Danny Whitten/Crazy Horse

From: *Atlantic Crossing* (1975)

Crazy Horse forged an identity independent of Neil Young on their first solo album released in 1971, largely on the strength of the Danny Whitten-penned ballad. The guitarist died shortly after, never to realise the far-reaching impact of his song, certainly helped by its inclusion on Stewart's *Atlantic Crossing* album in 1975.

DOWNTOWN TRAIN

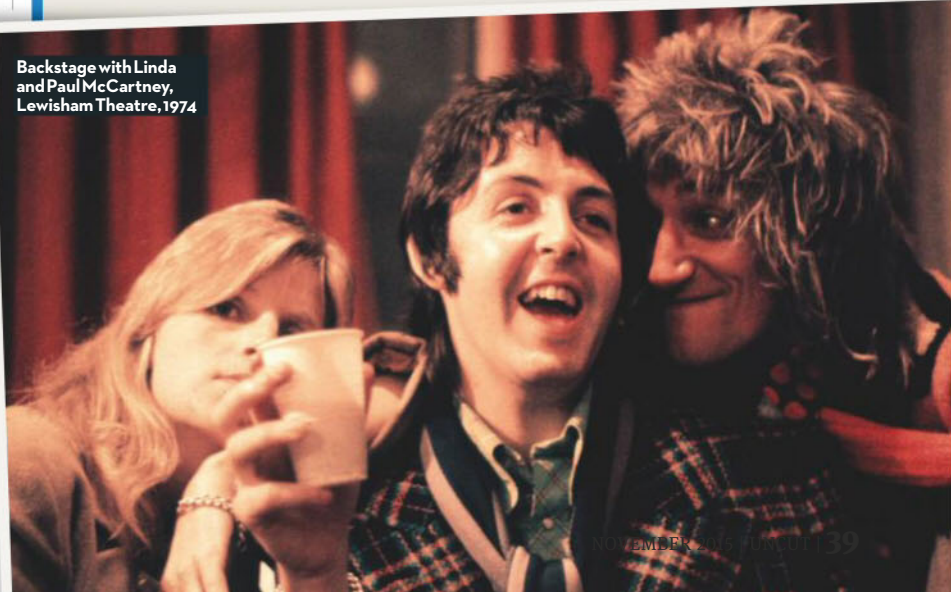
Original Artist: Tom Waits

From: *Vagabond Heart* (1991)

Hard to call between this and Stewart's other Tom Waits' cover, "Tom Traubert's Blues". Here, he brings a lightness of mood and more defined melody, but still retains Waits' original qualities.

PENNY LANCASTER; GRAHAM WILTSHIRE/REDFERNS

Backstage with Linda and Paul McCartney, Lewisham Theatre, 1974





The chemistry survives: with Ron Wood and Kenney Jones at the Rock 'N' Horsepower benefit, Hurtwood Park Polo Club, Ewhurst, Surrey September 5, 2015

● **This LP seems especially autobiographical. “Batman Superman Spiderman” is for your sons, right?**

That’s for my three-year-old. He goes to bed and I’ll say, “What do you want? A story? Who shall I make it up about?” He goes, “Oh, Batman, Superman or Spider-Man.”

What’s “Walking On Sunshine” about?

It’s really an escapist song. I always wanted to travel. I remember when I was doing these horrible jobs in London before I got into music, and I’d see people go off on a holiday and leaving in airplanes, I thought, “Why can’t I go?”

Was this when you were “grave digging”?

Only lasted a couple of weeks. It gets exaggerated as time goes on. You do know I never really dug a grave, don’t you?

In “We Can Win”, there’s a line where you say to some of us it’s more than just a game. If it’s more than just a game, is football life?

Yeah, it is. I played before I was a musician; I was nearly professional, but wasn’t quite good enough. All my family, it’s a huge part of their lives. When you watch your team play and they win or if they lose. In Britain, it’s embedded in the culture. People will lose their lives over a game of football. It’s not so bad now, but in the ‘70s and ‘80s in Great Britain, not just England, football violence was just scary.

You always seem optimistic, like you expect good things are going to happen.

Now that makes it sound like I take it all for granted. No, I don’t. I don’t think things are going to happen, I feel I’ve got to work hard at it to make it happen. I’ve been around a long time. And there comes a point where I’ll have to step aside, but at the moment I enjoy the challenge of having to come up with an original album, new songs, and get them played. So I don’t take anything for granted. That’s for sure. ●

Another Country is out October 30 on Decca Records. Rod’s *Classic Album Selection* is out October 16 on UMC. *The Faces’* boxset *1970-1975: You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything* is out now on Rhino

THE FACES LIVE!

Hurtwood Park, Surrey, September 5, 2015

“W E’VE ONLY HAD a few hours rehearsal, so there’s bound to be a few cock-ups,” grins Rod Stewart by way of introduction. “Just like the old days,” Ronnie Wood fires back. After four decades of unreliable rumours, dashed hopes, near misses and the deaths of two founder members, the Faces are finally back onstage together. And, it seems, they are treating this historic reunion with the gravitas it deserves.

What follows is a gloriously shambolic – if regrettably short – set, as if the three surviving Faces only decided to have a spontaneous jam this morning. Truthfully, though, the Faces are playing under the Rock ‘N’ Horsepower banner, an all-day music and polo event held in aid of the charity Prostate Cancer UK at Hurtwood Park, the swish Surrey polo club owned by their drummer Kenney Jones. In place of the late Ronnie Lane and Ian McLagan, Stewart, Wood and Jones have brought a nine-piece rock’n’soul orchestra. On bass, there is Conrad Korsch, who’s been a member of Stewart’s touring band since 2004; on keyboards they have Sam Tanner, and Josh Phillips from the Rock ‘N’ Horsepower house band. In a nod to their pre-history, Steve Marriott’s daughter, Mollie, is among the backing vocalists, while Wood is accompanied by guitarist Robin le Mesurier – another veteran of Stewart’s live bands. They begin with a rambunctious version of Big Bill Broonzy’s blues standard “I Feel So Good”, lusty and libidinous but a

cautious choice of opener. “We had to get Ian McLagan and Ronnie Lane’s approval to play this,” Stewart nods, gesturing skywards as he introduces “You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything”. “So thank you, Ronnie, thank you, Ian.” This is more like it: a warm-blooded, loose-limbed funk-rock groove, with Rod and Ronnie prancing and preening around each other.

Stewart plays warm tribute to Lane again before a slightly creaking “Ooh La La”. They follow it with a version of Etta James’s “I’d Rather Go Blind” – which Rod recorded with his fellow Faces on his 1972 solo album, *Never A Dull Moment*. It’s stunning, with Stewart’s coarse-grained soul voice cradled tenderly in Wood’s silvery filigree guitar lines. “(I Know) I’m Losing You” follows – another track Rod recorded solo with the Faces, from *Every Picture...* – before they launch into a raucous “Stay With Me”. Predictably, it gets the biggest response of the

night, with Stewart playing air guitar as Woody blasts out punk-blues riffs.

After royally fluffing Chuck Berry’s “Sweet Little Rock’n’Roller” intro, Stewart just laughs. “We fucked that up,” he concedes, “let’s start again.” And then, abruptly, it’s all over. Just seven songs, heavy on covers and solo Rod material. “We know loads more but we’ll save them until we go on the road,” Woody grins teasingly before doing a mock double take. “Who said that?”

More, please! STEPHEN DALTON

SET LIST

- 1 I Feel So Good
- 2 You Can Make Me Dance, Sing Or Anything
- 3 Ooh La La
- 4 I’d Rather Go Blind
- 5 (I Know) I’m Losing You
- 6 Stay With Me
- 7 Sweet Little Rock’n’Roller

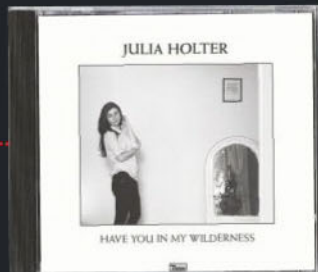


new music



album of the month

julia holter
have you in my wilderness
25/09/2015



kurt vile
b'lieve i'm going down
25/09/2015



new order
music complete
25/09/2015



joanna newsom
divers
23/10/2015



john grant
grey tickles,
black pressure
09/10/2015



deerhunter
fading frontier
16/10/2015



the dead weather
dodge and burn
25/09/2015



editors
in dream
02/10/2015



peaches
rub
25/09/2015



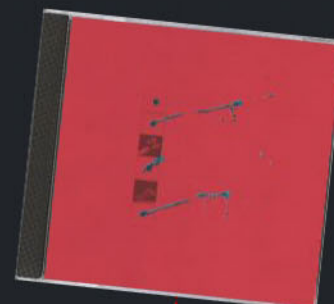
nicolas godin
contrepont
out now



cristobal and the sea
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girls names
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Deluxe (Immer Wieder)

BY HARMONIA

The “world’s most important [kraut] rock band” – Michael Rother, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius – put out three pioneering albums, and this, their only single: “It was a hit, but nobody realised!”

AROUND EASTER 1973, Michael Rother, one half of kosmische Düsseldorf group Neu!, visited his acquaintances Cluster at their home in the picturesque Lower Saxony village of Forst. The guitarist was there to see if the duo would help Neu! perform onstage, but instead he, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius decided to form a new group, which Rother would name Harmonia.

“Everything took a turn,” he explains today, “because I realised that this music was what really interested me at the time. And it was also possible to play live, quite opposed to Neu!, which actually only existed in the studio.”

The trio would make three albums in the Eden of Forst – 1974’s *Musik Von Harmonia*, 1975’s Conny Plank-produced *Deluxe*, and *Tracks And Traces*, recorded with Brian Eno (who dubbed them “the world’s most important rock band”) the following year. Though songs like the blissful “Deluxe (Immer Wieder)” – released as the group’s only single in substantially edited form – failed to reach mainstream acceptance, they remain among the most forward-thinking electronic creations of the ’70s. Their complete works, including four unreleased pieces, are being reissued as a fittingly deluxe vinyl boxset in October. The timing is poignant, however, coming as it does just after the death of Dieter

Moebius in July. “Moebius was ill already and he could not really contribute much,” says Rother. “He was always involved still, when there were any decisions to be made. But it’s a pity that he’s not around to see the final work, to have that boxset, to hold it in your hands.”

Despite leaving the group back in the mid-’70s, Roedelius, who in September saw his 80th birthday commemorated with a Berlin festival, *Lifelines*, is still exceedingly proud of what the trio achieved. “‘Deluxe (Immer Wieder)’, it was a hit,” he says. “But nobody realised!”

TOM PINNOCK

MICHAEL ROTHER: I met Moebi and Roedelius when I was playing in Kraftwerk in 1971. We played a concert together in Hamburg. We were very democratic, so before the show started we sat down and talked about who was going on first and who was going on second. Kraftwerk were more famous already at that time, but we left the choice to the Cluster guys and they said, “Oh, you start.” Which was a really big mistake [laughs]. Because the music we did – Klaus Dinger, Florian Schneider and I – was very ecstatic, very rough,

KEY PLAYERS



Michael Rother
Guitar, keyboards,
vocals



Hans-Joachim Roedelius
Keyboards, vocals



Mani Neumeier
Drums

and the whole venue went wild. Then Hans-Joachim and Dieter started playing their soft notes and strange noises and many people rushed to the stage. It was frightening. They turned round the speakers, disconnected them, and I thought they were going to beat Cluster. That was a terrible experience. **HANS-JOACHIM ROEDELIOUS:** Cluster always wanted to do open music, soundscaping, and starting each concert from point zero.

We definitely met Michael at the gig we played with Kraftwerk. I don’t remember where it was, though – it was a long time ago, you know!

ROTHER: Klaus Dinger and I tried to put Neu! onstage after we recorded the first album [*Neu!*, 1972] but we couldn’t find any musicians who were capable of helping us. And then I heard *Cluster II*, especially the track “Im Süden”, I recognised some similarities in the melodic approach and thought I should check out if Cluster could help us to play Neu! music live. So I took my guitar in ’73 and visited the two guys and started jamming. That was the start of Harmonia. **ROEDELIOUS:** Harmonia were very influenced by what Michael had learned already as a

Harmonia: (l-r)
Michael Rother,
Dieter Moebius
and Hans-Joachim
Roedelius



songwriter. So we were happy, and it was a good situation for us to change from the industrial music that Cluster did before Harmonia.

ROTHER: I would like to correct the image of Klaus [Dinger, *Neu!* drummer and multi-instrumentalist] and me fighting over music, as that was not true. But I did not want to be around him, because even then he had some traits which were not pleasant. So our communication was limited to the time when we made music. And with Hans-Joachim and Dieter it was different. But the music was just as exciting, I always had the same conviction of being on the right track with Harmonia as I was with *Neu!*.

ROEDELIOUS: Was Harmonia an equal partnership? I don't know. I did my solo work at the same time as well, so I was working on three different platforms – Harmonia, Cluster and solo. It was Michael's idea to call it Harmonia.

ROTHER: In Harmonia – the name was partly a joke – we had these artistic struggles right from the beginning. But we recognised that we were all very different and that was the reason for what I'd say was the magic of Harmonia; the three personalities throwing in their strengths and struggling for the direction of the music.

ROEDELIOUS: At the beginning we just tried to find the best bits from what we did. When we recorded it, we slowly came to tracks that we could somehow play live. Michael knew a lot about constructing songs from *Neu!*, so it was almost all his influence to involve some

drummers in our music. During the three years we worked with two drummers from the German scene – one being Mani Neumeier.

MANI NEUMEIER: I met Cluster around 1971, I played a gig with them and my band, Guru Guru. So I met Moebius and Roedelius for the first time there, and I thought they were one of the more interesting acts then, beside ours. We stayed good friends. Maybe one or two years later, we met up in Forst, and they decided to make their recordings there in that house. It's a very old house, many hundreds of years old, directly on the river, with big walls. I think in early times ships would come through there and they'd take some toll or something. There were some horses there too, and besides Moebi and Michael, other families lived there, maybe two or three.

ROEDELIOUS: Forst is the most beautiful place on earth. It has very old buildings from the medieval times, with trees and horses and cows. And abandoned somehow, an island in the midst of reality. This was the reason the music somehow became more beautiful and harmonic.

ROTHER: Nobody can say for sure how we would have sounded if, for instance, we had lived in Berlin and had a studio in the cellar of a house with no windows and not with a beautiful countryside outside... Forst does have a magical aura. But it's too simple to say that because the countryside is so beautiful and peaceful that's why the music also has this element. We also had the idea of a music that sounded like it did.

ROEDELIOUS: It was almost the same musical equipment on *Deluxe* as on the first album, but *Musik Von Harmonia* was different, because it used some live tracks from concerts and some pre-recorded stuff. We just had to find out what worked and what didn't.

ROTHER: We had a different working style and method on the first Harmonia album, which we recorded over several months with three Revox stereo machines, ping-ponging the recordings and adding new elements and then playing it back from the other tape machine. That was a slow process of collecting ideas. With *Deluxe*, because Conny Plank came to Forst with his 16-track mobile equipment, all professional gear, the sound quality, for one thing, was much better.

ROEDELIOUS: We still recorded the tracks all live. Conny Plank was a great help, and also a true musician, so it was much more complex than *Musik Von Harmonia*. Conny was part of the game, of course, his input was very important. I think the recording took about a month.

ROTHER: Conny did a great job with the sound. He was a very modest guy, but he was amazingly talented, and just as crazy as we were. He did not try to influence the musicians by nudging you into one direction or offering some thoughts on what you could improve, or if he did so, he did it in such a sly way and such a wise way that you did not realise. He never was pushy, he just listened to you and offered you possibilities where you could create in a good environment. ●

HARMONIA



● **NEUMEIER:** We were all good friends, we really liked each other and everybody respected everyone else.

ROEDELIOUS: We never discussed music, we really are intuitive musicians. We relied on being able to react, to be spontaneous and that was part of the magic. We always credited all members of the band for the writing. That was meant to avoid quarrels. But the reality was, of course, different; sometimes Joachim came up with an idea and sometimes Moebi had an idea. And in the case of "Deluxe (Immer Wieder)", it was my song. I

nearly recorded it on my own anyway. I think I even developed it on the keyboard. As a musician you really cherish those moments when you record one instrument after the other, and it just comes together. And that's what happened on "Deluxe", I didn't have to correct anything. It's a magical situation. Moebius contributed the bass drum on the drum machine, the pulse. It was such a wonderful, exciting sound in the headphones and then we just went wild on the mic, and playing guitars and stuff. Roedelius did some nice sounds on the intro, too.

ROEDELIOUS: I think all three of us wanted to have lyrics on it, as it was such a nice, deeply philosophical expression of the way we saw and behaved in this place. It came out of us like every song we did, just happened accidentally in a way.

ROTHER: We had this great session when we added vocals to the track. Originally it was supposed to be an instrumental and the story behind this is that from the beginning I was always worried because we were so shy onstage,

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** Michael Rother, Hans-Joachim Roedelius, Dieter Moebius
- **Recorded at:** Harmonia's studio, Forst, Lower Saxony
- **Produced by:** Harmonia and Conny Plank
- **Personnel:** Rother (guitar, keyboards, vocals), Roedelius (keyboards, vocal), Moebius (keyboards, vocals)
- **Released:** August 20, 1975
- **Highest chart position:** -

we hardly dared to look at the audience, so it was an act of liberation, I guess. We were in Conny Plank's studio to mix the album, and we sat down and said, "Well, let's think up some lyrics and then open our mouths." So we jumbled those lyrics together and it was great. **ROEDELIOUS:** I used a Farfisa organ, and Moebi used a similar one, but it had two keyboards. But we also used different stuff, like little switcher machines and effects tape. It was quite complex, our instruments, our equipment, and quite heavy. **ROTHER:** I played my gold-top Gibson Les Paul Deluxe. I

already had a Fender Mustang which I bought from Florian Schneider, which had this fake leopard skin. [laughs] Florian applied that and some other funny things. But those two were my guitars for a long time. The echo effect? We're talking about a pre-sync time! I started using an echo in '71 in Kraftwerk and by then I had some skills in making the echo work with the beat. The machine I was using then had a slide and you could change the delay time by moving the head, millimetre by millimetre, so you'd always find the right spot for any delay pattern you wanted.

NEUMEIER: It's a very special album, the combination of electronic stuff and guitar and drums. Playing with Harmonia was always interesting and full of tension... and new. **ROEDELIOUS:** It was a nice gift at the time to have a single on the market ["Deluxe (Immer Wieder) (edit)"/"Monza (Rauf Und Runter) (Edit)"], even though the single didn't sell as much as we thought it would. I don't know who edited it down, Conny or Michael...

ROTHER: Harmonia actually broke up in '76. The guys weren't happy with the direction and, I think, because the financial success didn't arrive. It was so strange, my love for Harmonia's music was just as strong as it was for Neu!'s music, but Neu! was quite a success while Harmonia was rejected. It was so strange. Harmonia was the main project for all of us, it was not a side-project. We lived together, we worked together. I only met Klaus for a few weeks to record Neu! '75, so if anything it was Neu! and Cluster during that time that were side-projects. It was not Cluster and Rother, it was Roedelius, Moebius and Rother. We were three musicians, Neu! and Cluster had no significance. But when *Deluxe* didn't do well, I guess Roedelius and Moebius reached the point where they thought, 'OK, we are doing a compromise and this is more the direction Michael wants to take, but we don't want to do it anymore.' So they decided to quit.

ROEDELIOUS: We were happy with Harmonia's music. But the only thing we weren't happy with was that we would have to play the songs the same when live. So we weren't really able and willing to do it. Plus, we were from playing from out of the moment, from point zero. At the end I was relieved when it ended up as just Cluster, with me doing my solo stuff. Michael's influence was evident in Cluster's music on the LPs we did after, though, like [1976's] *Sowieso*.

ROTHER: You have to rely on your own feelings, and sometimes you're lucky and people share your feelings and sometimes they don't. Then you have to just move on and hope they catch up later, which happened to Harmonia. Brian Eno came to a Harmonia concert in Hamburg in 1974 and we invited him to come to Forst. Three years later he suddenly called and said, "Would it be OK if I came to visit you now?" And by that time Harmonia was no longer. But we didn't want to turn him down and, when he arrived, the four of us went into the studio or took walks or played ping-pong. It was a very casual, a very relaxed situation, 11 or 12 days. There was no pressure as it was just four musicians throwing ideas around and sharing the joy of making some music, with no intention of releasing anything at the time. And that was a new experience for me.

ROEDELIOUS: The LP we made with Eno, *Tracks And Traces*, was totally improvised. That record came out 20 years later [in 1997], as the technical quality wasn't good enough to work on it after. So we had to wait to bring it to an audience.

We improvised more when we reformed in 2007. Improvisation is still the way I like to do things.

ROTHER: "Deluxe (Immer Wieder)", even today I enjoy playing it live. The exchange I had with Florian Schneider, Klaus Dinger, and Roedelius and Moebius helped me sharpen my idea of where I wanted to go. I was convinced that the Harmonia music deserved more attention than it got in the '70s, and the '80s, when nobody talked about Harmonia, or Neu! [laughs]. And it took 30 years for the audience to catch up! 🎧

Harmonia's Complete Works is released on October 23 on Grönland Records

TIMELINE

Easter 1973: Michael Rother, then of Neu!, travels to Forst to jam with the Cluster duo of Moebius and Roedelius
January 1974: Now

called Harmonia, the trio release their debut album, *Musik Von Harmonia*. Before their next album, Cluster record *Zuckerzeit* with

Rother producing, while the guitarist returns to Neu! for their Neu! '75 record
June 1975: Harmonia record *Deluxe* at their

studio in Forst with Conny Plank's mobile recording equipment
August 1975: The *Deluxe* album is released, accompanied

by a severely edited single of "Deluxe (Immer Wieder)" backed by a cut-down "Monza (Rauf Und Runter)"

new music



chvrches
every open eye
25/09/2015



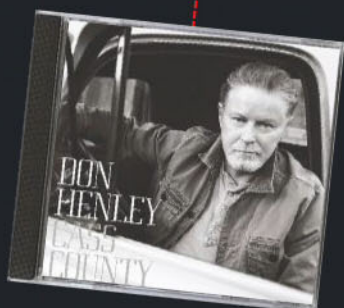
david bowie
five years (1969-73: 12cd box set)
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paul heaton + jacqui abbott
wisdom, laughter and lines
23/10/2015



don henley
cass county
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òran mór session
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rival consoles
howl
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doug hream blunt
my name is doug
hream blunt
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vangoffey
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& get into it
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A LITTLE RESPECT

July 1963. Booker T, Isaac Hayes, Steve Cropper, Duck Dunn, Al Jackson Jr and more are crammed into Stax's sweltering Memphis studio. Their job? To record, at speed, one of the greatest soul albums of all time. Their frontman? A "real force of nature, a whirlwind of a guy" called OTIS REDDING. Now, over five decades on, the people who were there reveal the inside story of *Otis Blue*.

Story: John Lewis

IT'S THE HOTTEST day of the year, and a dozen men are crammed into a recording studio on East McLemore Avenue, Memphis. The band – organ, piano, guitar, bass, drums, three horn players – are dripping with sweat, some down to their underwear. "There was no air-con in the studio," guitarist Steve Cropper tells *Uncut*. "Usually we'd open the doors and get a breeze in. But there was no breeze that day. It was like a cauldron in there. You can feel the sweat on the fretboard, on the keys, everything. It was getting seriously sticky!"

Standing imperiously among them is Otis Redding, stripped to his waist, jabbing his hand in unison with each horn stab. He's treating the room to a compendium of contemporary R'n'B – a BB King blues, a selection of Sam Cooke songs, a secular gospel tune, a Motown cover, and a new hit song by an up-and-coming little band called The Rolling Stones – but he's making each song his own;

reinventing soul music as he goes along, he howls, hollers, extemporises his own words. "Otis genuinely seemed to be possessed at that time, like he was speaking in tongues," says Booker T Jones. "Nobody was quite sure what was going on with him. There was an urgency about everything he was doing around this time. And none of us questioned it. If he asked us to play all night, we just went along with it."

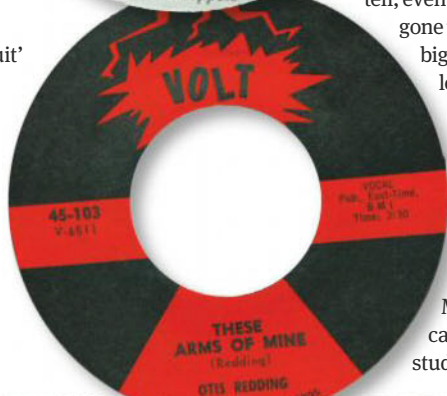
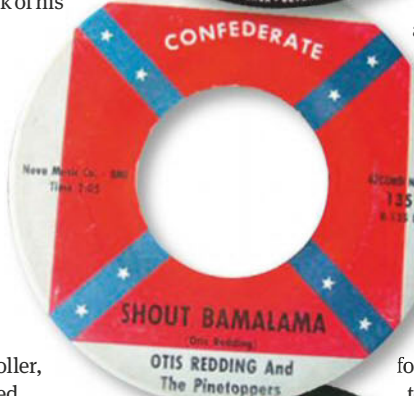
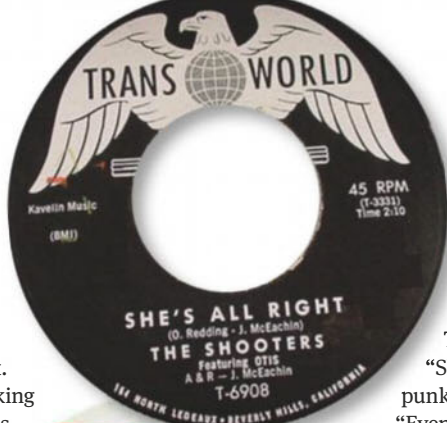
And the dozen or so men in the studio do literally play all night. "We started mid-morning and played until about 8pm," recalls trumpeter Wayne Jackson. "Then we packed up, went home, had dinner, took a shower and then we all went out to play gigs. It was a Friday night, so me and [tenor saxophonist] Andrew Love had a regular date in a Memphis dancehall. I think [organist] Booker T and [bassist] Donald 'Duck' Dunn had regular dates, [pianist] Isaac Hayes had some jazz gig, and [drummer] Al Jackson Jr was playing with Willie Mitchell. Then by two in the morning we were back at McLemore Avenue, ready to record the rest of the album. By the early hours of the morning, it was done and dusted." ●



Redding live at the
Whisky A Go Go
in 1966

➤ The 10 tracks recorded in that frenetic 24-hour period would become *Otis Blue: Otis Redding Sings Soul*. Released in September 1965, it became one of the key soul albums of the '60s – a unified set of songs rather than a cobbled-together session, an immersive experience on a par with the best British Invasion albums. *Otis Blue*, as Stax owner Jim Stewart later remarked, was the point where Otis transformed. “He became more than just a soul singer,” said Stewart. “He became the superstar you always dreamed of working with.” Little more than two years later, at the peak of his career, Otis Redding would be dead.

OTIS RAY REDDING Jr was born in rural Georgia in 1941, the son of a church deacon who worked as a janitor and sharecropper. Two years later, the family had moved a few miles north to the small town of Macon. Macon was the home of Little Richard, and Redding’s ambition was to emulate his local hero. “Otis was obsessed with Little Richard,” recalls Zelma Redding, his widow. “He wanted to be Little Richard – the hair, the suits, everything. And he had that voice – that holler, that scream in the back of the throat. He even used to front Little Richard’s band, The Upsetters!” In the 1950s, Macon had several venues on the ‘chitlin’ circuit – the network of venues where African-American artists would tour – and it was at one of these venues, the Douglass Theatre, that 16-year-old Zelma met 18-year-old Otis. “He was a local star by then,” she laughs. “He was headlining a teenage dance with a band led by the guitarist Johnny Jenkins. He wasn’t a great dancer, but he had some great moves. Even in those days, he had a range and an ability to make a crowd feel like they were part of his song. It was almost as if the audience felt his pain, they were moving with him.”



By 1960, aged 18 and sick of smalltown Georgia, Otis tried to seek fame and fortune in L.A., driving there with his sister, Deborah. “He stayed there with relatives and cut a single with producer James McEachin as Otis And The Shooters,” says Zelma. When it flopped, he returned to Macon, recording several sides with Johnny Jenkins And The Pinetoppers, including Little Richard pastiche “She’s All Right” and an electrifying slice of proto-punk called “Shout Bamalama”.

“Even on those early singles, the voice is there,” acknowledges Steve Cropper. “As I’ve always said with Otis, it’s like you’ve mixed a bottle of Little Richard and a bottle of Sam Cooke and shaken it up. He could holler and scream like Little Richard and he could croon as beautifully as Sam Cooke. The only thing was, that on those early singles he didn’t have the material.”

What he already had was an astonishing stage presence. Gregg Allman remembers seeing Otis play as part of a revue at the Nashville Municipal Auditorium in 1960. “Me and my brother Duane were just blown away by what we saw,” he chuckles. “Jackie Wilson was the headliner, but Otis owned that huge stage, running back and forth. He was – what – seven-foot-two or something. You could tell, even then, that this was a star.” This stage presence hadn’t gone unnoticed by Phil Walden, the boss of Macon’s biggest label, Capricorn, who later become one of the leading managers of Southern soul acts. Still, Otis was playing second fiddle to bandleader Johnny Jenkins, and it was Jenkins who Walden wanted to get signed to a Memphis label called Stax. He’d arranged a session with the help of a Macon-based publicity agent called Joey Galkin, who worked for Stax’s parent label, Atlantic.

On February 9, 1962, Otis drove the 500 miles from Macon to Memphis, with Galkin and Jenkins in the car. Cropper remembers them arriving at the Stax studio in McLemore Avenue that evening. “We were out

On Ready Steady Go! in October 1967



on the street, smoking cigarettes, waiting for this Johnny Jenkins guy, and this car pulls up. Otis gets out and starts unloading all of Johnny's gear, like he was preparing for a gig. I remember saying, 'Man, you won't need mics, we've got those here!'" Manager Walden had suggested that, if there was time during the three-hour session, Redding could present his song to the band. "During the gaps in Johnny's session, Otis was bugging drummer Al Jackson," says Cropper. "Al put him on to me, as I had a kinda A&R role at Stax at the time. So at the end of the session, I said, 'OK, sing us your song.' As soon as he started singing, the hair stood up on my arms. I'm not making that up! It's the same kind of feeling you get when something scares you. That's the impression I got with Otis. And it never stopped."

They ended up staying in the studio for another hour to cut Redding's song "These Arms Of Mine". "Johnny Jenkins played guitar, not me," says Cropper. "Booker T wasn't around, so I ended up playing piano – Otis shouted out, 'Give me some of those church triplets!' and I just banged out some chords in a 6/8 timing. It was done quickly, and it sounded perfect." Within days, Otis Redding was signed to Stax, releasing his records through their sister label, Volt.

"HE SANG AND THE HAIR STOOD UP ON MY ARMS"

STEVE CROPPER

STAX WAS LAUNCHED in 1957 by Jim Stewart, a country musician from rural Tennessee who had a day job at the Union Planters bank in Memphis. The label was named Satellite until 1962, when it emerged that there was another Satellite Records in California: Stewart renamed it Stax, using the first two letters of his surname and those of his sister and business partner Estelle Axton. "Mr Stewart was a real Southern gentleman," says Wayne Jackson. "He was a country fiddle player, but he just loved all music. He understood R'n'B, he understood how to create a groove, how to write a good song. That feeling of improvisation we practised at McLemore Avenue – that was a spirit that Jim got from playing on country sessions. It's that same feel of give and take, of listening to each other and playing by ear." More importantly, Stewart defied the segregation that still infected Tennessee at the time. "Jim wasn't interested in colour," adds Jackson. "He just wanted to find the best musicians in Memphis and get them to play music that people liked. There were some gigs where I'd be the only white face in the band, other dates where [saxophonist] Andrew Love would be the only black face."

"Stax was integrated from the very beginning," says Steve Cropper. "Entering the studio at McLemore Avenue was like entering church. It was a place of calm and safety." It helped that the Stax band were not only a multi-racial band, but a chart-topping instrumental act in their own right, playing on two nationwide instrumental hits, both million sellers: 1961's "Last Night" (a *Billboard* No 3 as The Mar-Keys) and 1962's "Green Onions" (also a No 3, this time as Booker T & The MGs). The leader of both bands was also the youngest member. Born in 1945, Booker T Jones grew up in the same African-American ghetto where Stax's studio was located. He was only 15 when he started working at Stax – not playing Hammond, but baritone sax on a 1960 session for a Rufus and Carla Thomas single "Cause I Love You".

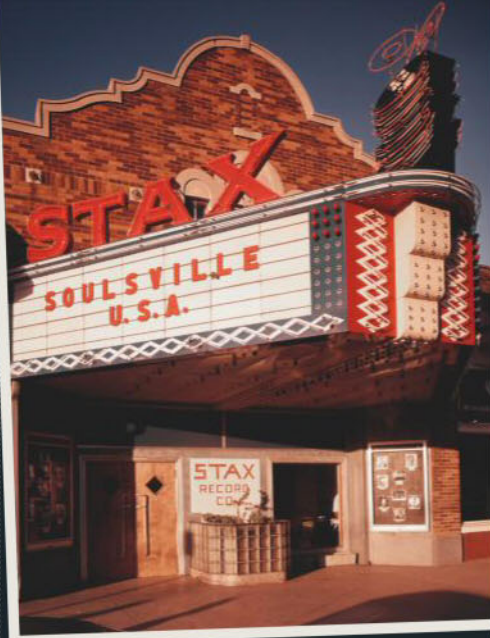
"Here's a trivia question," says Cropper. "What was Booker T's main instrument? You'd think piano or organ. Some hipper guys will know he played tuba on 'Hold On I'm Comin', or that he was a mean guitarist or sax player. He

"IN SUMMER IT WAS A CAULDRON..."

Inside the legendary Stax Studio

THE STAX STUDIO, on 926 East McLemore Avenue, was resurrected a decade ago with help from a \$30million gift from an unnamed philanthropic Memphis businessman. But, like every other musical landmark in Memphis – Sun Studios, Graceland, even Beale Street – it's now a museum. "The building was torn down in 1989," says Steve Cropper, "but they found some architectural blueprints and recreated it, almost brick for brick." Amid the arcana – an Otis Redding stage shirt, Isaac Hayes's gold-trimmed Cadillac, Booker T's old Hammond – is an eerily accurate representation of the recording studio.

The building – a long-disused 1920s cinema called the Capitol Theater – was discovered in late 1959 by staff producer Chips Moman (who later left Stax to found the nearby American Sound Studio). "Chips was convinced that the studio needed to be in an African-American neighbourhood," says Cropper. "Jim had some old recording equipment in his garage that he moved in. Me, Chips, Jim and Jim's nephew Charles 'Packy' Axton worked on the place. We had to pull out every



seat from the concrete floor, which was a hell of a job! Being an old cinema, the floor sloped, but Jim couldn't afford to level it, so we put an old peg-board baffle about two-thirds of the way through the room. I got some half-inch copper pipe and bent it to hang a curtain along the wall – that was to stop echo. The ceilings went from about 13ft high to 26ft by the screen. The control room was where the cinema screen would have been. It was big enough for a full orchestra to rehearse and record."

With no air-con and only a single heater in the entire building, it offered little protection against extremes in temperature. "In winter you'd see steam in front of your face," says Cropper. "In summer it was a cauldron. I can still hear the difference between a freezing session and a baking one!"

Sam & Dave record with the Stax house band: (l-r) Al Jackson, Isaac Hayes, David Porter, Sam Moore, Wayne Jackson, Donald 'Duck' Dunn, Dave Prater, Steve Cropper and Booker T Jones (on the sousaphone), in Memphis, 1967



● was actually a trombonist! That's what he played in his university marching band."

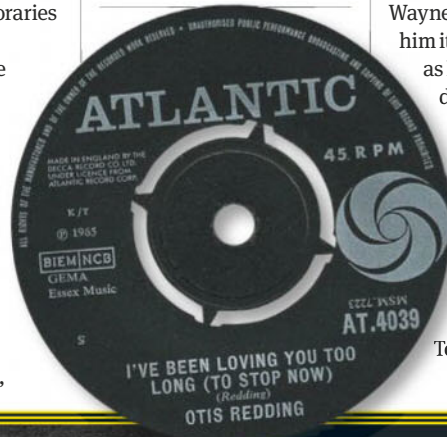
By 1965, Booker T – still only 20 but already a nationwide pop star – had gone back to college. "I wanted to learn more about theory and composition," he says. "I found out that one of my heroes, Hoagy Carmichael – who wrote 'Stardust', one of my favourite standards – studied at Indiana State University, so I enrolled there. And I spent the next few years coming back and forth, between Bloomington, Indiana and Memphis, Tennessee – a seven-hour drive. I'd often make it back for weekends of school holidays and play on Stax sessions."

"If Booker had never gone to college, there might have been no Isaac Hayes," says Cropper. "With Booker not around most of the time, we needed someone to play organ and piano on recordings. And David Porter – one of the production team at Stax – recommended this guy who played at a club in Memphis. 'He's more of a jazz player,' he said, 'but he can do R'n'B.' It wasn't long before Isaac was on a salary at Stax."

By the recording of *Otis Blue*, Booker and Isaac were in the same studio together. "Usually I'm on organ, he's on piano," says Booker. "We couldn't double-track in those days, so you needed two keyboard players to get that churchy sound." What differentiated Stax from their contemporaries at Motown? "The Motown guys had strings and were smoother and sounded more pop," says Booker T. "We were a lot rougher, more rudimentary." Another key difference was that Stax had a close-knit ensemble, rather than an agglomeration of session men. "We were a tight gang," says Wayne Jackson. "We hung out together." For Cropper, this camaraderie was important. "I always saw Otis as a big-brother figure," he says. "He was streetwise and mature. It never occurred to me that he was the same age as me! But Otis always had a natural authority. It's why he could get away with lyrics like *'I been loving you for 20 long years,'* when he was less than 24 years old. In fact,



"YOU MIGHT KNOW THIS SONG, BUT I OWN IT!"



he had such authority you never thought to question him. Even if he was wrong!

"I mean, listen to him sing 'Respect'. When he sings: *'All I'm asking,'* he doesn't pronounce the word 'asking', or even 'aksing', like a lot of people say. He sings: *'All I'm AXTING.'* Axting! Likewise, he doesn't sing 'Satisfaction', but 'Satis-FASHION'! A year later, we made a joke of it in the title of the album *Dictionary Of Soul* – this was his unique way with the English language!" The Jagger-Richard composition was an inspired choice for a cover. The Stones had already declared their love of Redding's music by covering "Pain In My Heart" on their third LP (released

February 1965). With the Stones' subsequent single "I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" (released on 6 June) slowly climbing the *Billboard* Hot 100 en route to becoming their first US No 1, Cropper suggested Otis reciprocate the gesture. "Otis loved what he'd heard of the Stones," says Cropper, "but he'd not heard 'Satisfaction' when I suggested it. We went to the record store at the front of the Stax studio where Jim Stewart's sister Miss Axton played him the single. He heard it maybe twice. I think he wrote down the lyrics, but he never referred to them in the studio. It's why his version is a bit sketchy, lyrically and melodically."

"Yeah, he was kinda winging it throughout," laughs Wayne Jackson. "He deviates from the melody line, but for him it's all about the feel. He'd be banging out the backbeat as he sang it, stomping his foot until the guys behind the desk told him to stop!"

"The thing is that Otis always reinvented every song he performed," says Zelma. "It's like he's saying, 'You might know this song, but I'm a gonna own it!' If you listen to his little ad-libs and improvised lyrics, it's as if he's providing a running commentary on the song, as he's singing it."

Cropper recalls the choice of material for *Otis Blue* being a hurried selection. "Otis had ideas, [producer] Tom Dowd had ideas, I had ideas. Otis wanted a Sam

Tom Dowd during a Wilson Pickett recording session at the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio on November 24, 1969 in Sheffield, Alabama



GENIUS, PRODUCER, NUCLEAR PHYSICIST...

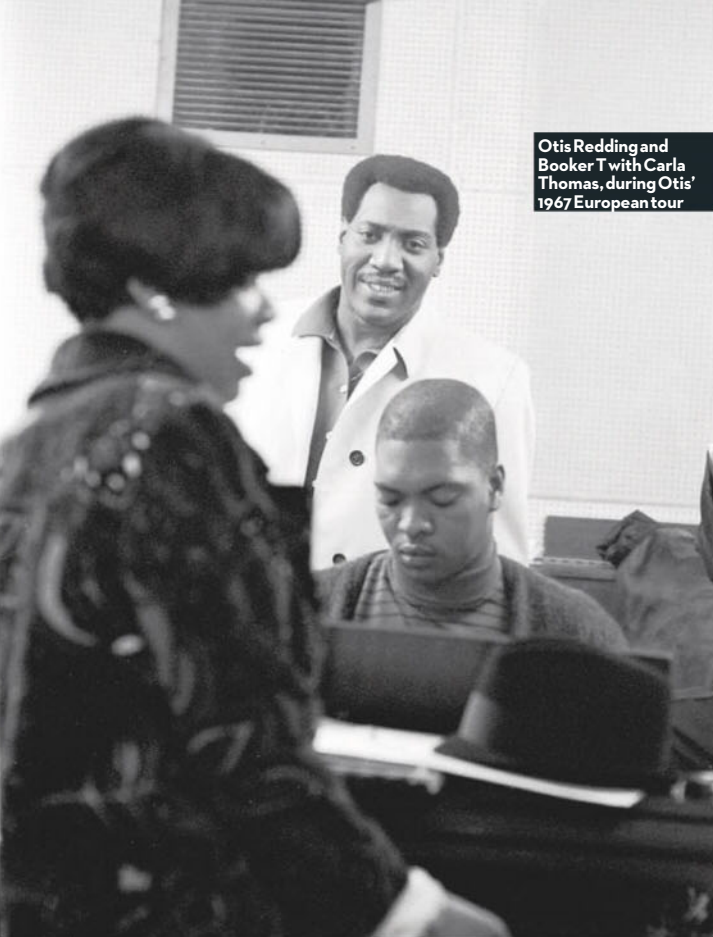
The remarkable story of *Otis Blue* producer **Tom Dowd**

"YOU DON'T GET to meet many actual geniuses in the music industry," says Steve Cropper. "But Tom was one of them." Tom Dowd was the link between Stax and its parent label, Atlantic Records. "Tom put me under his wing," says Cropper. "He taught me how to engineer sessions, how to read a VU meter, how to mix, where to place microphones, and so on. He'd say, 'I like the way you write, but I'm gonna give you a coupla tips...' and within a few months I'd written about half a dozen hits!"

"He was recording stereo sessions before anyone had the equipment to play them on! When stereo took off, he had a catalogue of old sessions by the likes of John Coltrane and Lionel Hampton, all recorded on his early two-track machines, ready to release in stereo."

"He developed multi-track recording. And an amplifier that would clip off the low end that the human ear doesn't really hear. Until then, the VU needle would see it and stop you recording too loud. But he found a way of filtering it out, so we could cut much louder records."

But it wasn't just music. "He heard that the Japanese loved baseball, so he sat down one day with some military maps and worked out how he could bounce radio signals, through skyscrapers and military towers, from Canada down to Japan, so that people in Tokyo could hear the World Series on the radio! It was only much later I realised he'd trained as a nuclear physicist. Towards the end of the war he was working on the Manhattan Project – guys like Tom won us the war!"



Otis Redding and Booker T with Carla Thomas, during Otis' 1967 European tour

Wayne Jackson concurs. "All the really great stuff at Stax was done real quick," he says. "Booker T would sometimes write out horn arrangements, but for the whole of *Otis Blue* I don't remember any horn charts – we were just improvising by ear. We'd start with the bones of a song that somebody brought in and, very quickly, we'd add the muscle and the skin. And the monster would rise up into life!"

"Respect" is better known as a feminist anthem, brilliantly reinvented by Aretha Franklin and Jerry Wexler two years later. But Redding's original is still a magnificent work – a howl of insecurity and male vulnerability from R'n'B's alpha male. Just as effective is another Otis original "I've Been Loving You Too Long". This slow-burning ballad in 6/8, a No 21 hit, is the one track not taped at that legendary July session; it was recorded in a Miami studio three months earlier with the same lineup. Although Steve Cropper didn't co-write any tracks on *Otis Blue*, he was Redding's main co-writer and interlocutor. The usual writing ritual was for Cropper to meet Redding at a hotel after he'd driven up from Macon to Memphis. "We'd be up all night writing," says Cropper, "just me on guitar, him singing ideas – scribbling lyrics and

chord changes down. The next morning we'd work out how to record these ideas in the studio. If we forgot the melodies, we'd just make up another!"

"The only inspiration you needed to write for Otis was Otis himself," continues Cropper. "He was bigger than life and easy to write about. For instance, just before *Otis Blue*, I was driving home one night and I heard a local radio DJ, Moohah Williams, playing an Otis song. 'That was Mr Pitiful himself,' he said. And that was perfect. That's how Otis sings, so pitiful, like he's

down on his knees. The next morning I picked up Otis, and I started singing some 'Mr Pitiful' riffs. He started beating a rhythm on his legs, and sang 'They call me Mr Pitiful/cos I'm in love with you/They call me Mr Pitiful/cos I lost someone just like you.' And that was it, written in 10 minutes."

RELEASED IN September 1965, *Otis Blue* sold slowly and steadily in the States. It only reached No 75 in the *Billboard* charts, but it topped the R'n'B list and went

on to become Redding's bestselling album, spawning three hit singles – "I've Been Loving You Too Long", "Shake" and "Respect". Despite Redding's growing stardom, Atlantic instead chose as the album's cover star an anonymous white woman – a shameless pitch for the crossover market, and one that made *Otis Blue* look like a Ray Conniff-style easy-listening LP. The cover star was rumoured to be an early modelling shot by Nico, but is apparently the German model Dagmar Dreger. In the UK, *Otis Blue* became something of a sensation, peaking at No 6 in early 1966, staying on the chart for six months, being reissued a year later and staying in the Top 40 for a further four months. It also produced two hits quite distinct from the US 45s – "My Girl" reached No 11 and "Satisfaction" No 33. ➔



Cooke tribute – hence the cover versions of 'Shake', 'Wonderful World' and 'A Change Is Gonna Come'."

"He was obsessed with Sam Cooke," says Zelma. "One of the biggest thrills of his life was when Otis met Sam Cooke at Washington DC airport, a few years earlier. 'Be natural, be you,' is what Sam said to him, and that became a mantra for Otis."

Elsewhere, *Otis Blue* surveys the recent history of soul music. There's a jaunty, uptempo swagger through Solomon Burke's gospel-infused hit, "Down In The Valley", a heavy take on BB King's electric blues, "Rock Me Baby", some slinky Steve Cropper riffs on William Bell's churchy "You Don't Miss Your Water", while Smokey Robinson's "My Girl" doffs its hat to Stax's rivals at Hitsville USA. There are also three Redding originals. The album opened with the slow-motion thunder of "Ole Man Trouble", a track that hooked in the young blues obsessives, particularly in Britain. But the best known original was "Respect", a song partly inspired by Redding's frustrations about touring. "He hated being away from home," says Zelma. "Macon is a nine-hour drive from Memphis. When he was recording or touring he would phone home three or four times a day, to see how I was, to talk to the children!"

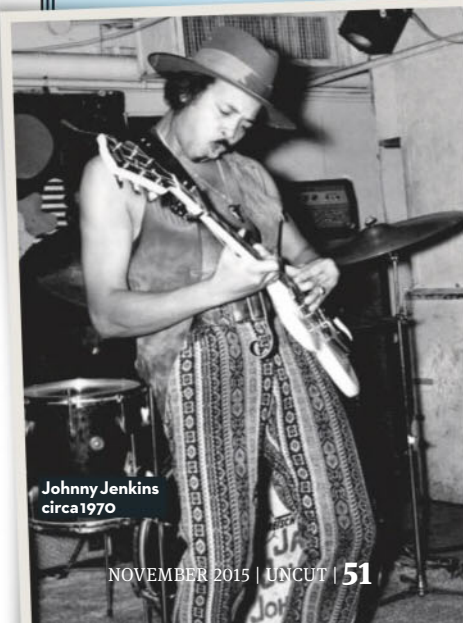
One evening, while Otis was complaining about how touring was ruining his home life, Al Jackson interrupted him. "What are you whining about," said the laconic drummer. "You're on the road all the time. All you can look for is a little respect when you get home." The phrase, says Zelma, stuck. "The song was pretty fully formed when he brought it into the studio," recalls Cropper. "It took Otis a day to write, 20 minutes to arrange and one take to record."

WHO WAS JOHNNY JENKINS?

SINGER AND GUITARIST Johnny Jenkins (1939–2006) remains the nearly man of the Otis Redding story. It was Jenkins who auditioned for Stax – Otis was just the driver, valet and backing singer who ended up getting signed over his bandleader. And, after Redding's death, Jenkins would occasionally let rip about his former protégé. "I knew about the prostitutes and the whores," he said, "but nobody wants to hear none of that."

Jenkins was the star on Macon's club scene when Otis emerged. "I thought my entire world rotated around Johnny Jenkins' guitar," said Phil Walden, who managed both Jenkins and Redding. "I was convinced he could have been the greatest thing in rock'n'roll." Even Jimi Hendrix, who had relatives in Macon and would often visit the town, was impressed by his flamboyant technique – not only noting that Jenkins was left-handed and played his guitar upside down, but also copying gimmicks like playing his guitar behind his head.

Jenkins' moment of fame came with '70s Southern-fried country funk LP *Ton-Ton Macoute!*, starring Duane Allman on guitars. The version of "I Walk On Gilded Splinters" has been sampled by dozens of acts, including Beck, Oasis and Wu-Tang Clan. Jenkins' later career was revived with three albums featuring assorted Georgia pals including Allman Brothers pianist Chuck Leavell, drummer Bill Stewart and organist Randall Bramblett.



Johnny Jenkins circa 1970



It set Redding up for a hero's reception when he and the Stax band toured the UK in '67. "*Otis Blue* was massive among friends at school," recalls Peter Gabriel. "I played my copy until it was almost worn flat. When Otis came to London, I had to see him, and that gig at the Ram Jam Club in Brixton remains one of the highlights of my life. He had the ability to generate excitement. You could literally feel sweat dripping from the ceiling."

Other British musicians had similar experiences. Hamish Stuart from the Average White Band was "blown away by the showmanship and the drama"

at the Glasgow show; Bryan Ferry (eldest son, Otis) describes the Newcastle date as "life-changing"; Rod Stewart and Tom Jones both witnessed the London date with awe. On arrival at Heathrow, the band were surprised to find The Beatles had arranged for Rolls-Royce limos to pick them up. They took the night off from the recording sessions for *Sgt Pepper* to go out on the town with Otis, and greeted each band member with a deferential bow. "I've since worked with every Beatle," says Cropper, "and they all told me that they knew *Otis Blue*

back to front. We had no idea that they'd even heard of us when we recorded it." Indeed, there were even plans to record the album that became *Revolver* at McLemore Avenue. "Apparently the security costs were too high," says Cropper. "But man – imagine 'Got To Get You Into My Life' at Stax! That would have been something."

Otis reciprocated The Beatles' love – Zelma recalls that *Sgt Pepper*, out six months before Redding's death, was never off his turntable. "This is the future, he'd say. In fact, his last song, 'Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay' – that fusion of folk and soul – was definitely inspired by The Beatles." Redding's death – in his private plane in December 1967, on his way


to a date in Madison, Wisconsin – turned him into an almost saintly figure. But was there a dark side to Otis? The jilted figure of Johnny Jenkins, who died in 2006, thought so. "You can put him up on a pedestal, but he wasn't no damn idol," said Jenkins in a '70s interview. "People want me to make him sound like a good guy and, see, I know better. Otis was a bully. He was hell to get along with."

"Otis wasn't a bully," says Wayne Jackson. "He was an incredibly forceful character. A real force of nature. A whirlwind of a guy. It's possible people would mistake that for bullying, but there was never anything malicious about it."

"He was too simple to be malicious," laughs singer Bettye LaVette, who says she had a short affair with Otis in the early 1960s. "He was a simple, country boy. I don't think there was anything nasty there."

"Otis was always Otis," says Zelma. "There was that same friendly smile, in the studio or at home. But, when it came to the stage, he was a different person. After recording *Otis Blue*, Redding's visits to the studio had become events. All the staff would cram

into the back of the studio to see him record."

Zelma now runs the Otis Redding Foundation. "We bring education and enlightenment through music," she says. "There are music education programmes, music summer camp for kids." Next year they'll be holding a fundraiser celebrating what would have been Redding's 75th birthday. "Even among teenage kids today, Otis Redding's name still resonates. They know who he is, they know his songs. And *Otis Blue* is an album that will never, ever date. Every song on it is a classic." 

Otis Blue is re-released on Rhino, September 18.
12CD set *Soul Manifesto* is out on Rhino, October 30

**"I
PLAYED
OTIS
BLUE 'TIL
IT WAS
WORN
FLAT"**

PETER GABRIEL

HOME ON THE RANGE

Life at the Redding ranch

THE SUCCESS OF *Otis Blue*, and the growing fees that he could command for a live show, had made Redding a wealthy man. Even as early 1963, Otis was taking \$2,000 for a gig. Two years later, he was getting five times that – big money in those days, especially for someone often playing four times a week.

By 1964 he'd moved his young family into the Shurlington section of East Macon, the most upscale area available to blacks in a segregated town. By the release of *Otis Blue* in late '65, he'd instructed realtors to scout Georgia to find a 300-acre plot where he could build his dream home. That plot of rolling green farmland in Round Oak, Jones County, ended up being transformed into The Big 'O' Ranch – Otis Redding's own Graceland. "It was a functioning farm when we bought it," says Zelma Redding. "We had cattle, pigs, chickens, and grew some crops. Otis loved hunting, fishing, horse riding. He had a fleet of old cars – including his favourite Cadillac, with a record player in the front – but he loved nothing more than going out in a tractor and ploughing his fields."

"Otis always stayed down-low with his music and attitude," says Booker T. "He'd never ask someone else to carry his cases. That's part of his appeal. The ranch was a big part of that."

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MY ASS

After 2014's 'Gin' Brinks wasted no time in taking The Wave Pictures straight back to the studio, recording twelve loose, jazzy, tracks with the assembled studio choir. He had his camel, he made 'My Ass'.

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RADIO STATIC HIGH

The sound of a confident outfit honing their attack to become in all its sun-kissed widescreen glory, a veritable force of nature.

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HATCHAM SOCIAL

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE WORLD

London DIY outfit Hatcham Social return with their 4th album. A science fiction themed art-pop odyssey. Inspired by the stories of Isaac Asimov, Ursula K Le Guin & Arthur C Clarke. It's an exploration of Earth's last days and the colonisation of Mars.

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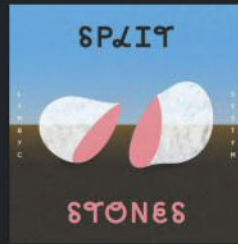


THE SPOOK SCHOOL

TRY TO BE HOPEFUL

Noisy, tuneful and triumphant queer pop songs about identity, sexuality and being awesome influenced by Buzzcocks, Bowie and C86 & produced by MJ of Hookworms. Bold, fizzy and electrifying!

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On their new album, brothers Jared and Michael Bell deliver ambitious danceable instrumentals full of warm Rhodes chords, dizzying arpeggiated synths, live drums, and electronic beats.

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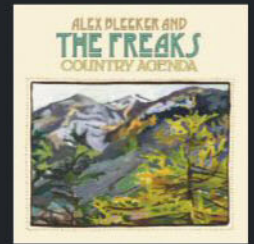


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LOST VOICES

The instrumental group led by Bruce Cawdron (GYBE) and Rebecca Foon (Silver Mt. Zion, Saltland) delivers its most visceral and hypnotic album; with GYBE violinist Sophie Trudeau as featured guest.

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ALEX BLEEKER AND THE FREAKS

COUNTRY AGENDA

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PROMISED LAND SOUND

FOR USE AND DELIGHT

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GUN OUTFIT

DREAM ALL OVER

On their most refined album, Gun Outfit perfect their incandescent signature: a dusky, canyon-cult blues fueled by dual-guitar weaving and male/female incantations at zero hour.

PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD

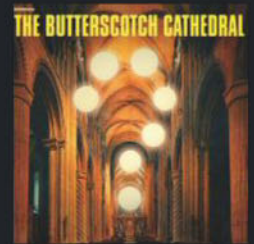


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THE ISLAND

New collaborative record of guitar and electronics from the innovative Brooklyn and Philly based artists behind The Solar Motel Band & Mountains.

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THE BUTTERSCOTCH CATHEDRAL

THE BUTTERSCOTCH CATHEDRAL

Stunning psychedelic magnum opus from this mysterious Tucson studio group! Two sides of interlacing suites that redefine the studio as an instrument.

TROUBLE IN MIND LP



S.K. KAKRABA

SONGS OF PAAPIEYE

Ghanaian xylophone player SK Kakraba weaves magical worlds out of his wooden instrument on this remarkable traditional solo recording for Awesome Tapes From Africa.

AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA LP / CD



FAY HALLAM

CORONA

Following 'Lost In Sound' the acclaimed collaboration with The Bongolian. Former Makin' Time / Prime Movers member gives us Bossa Nova and Rhythm & Blues on this atmospheric and essential album.

BLOW UP LP / CD



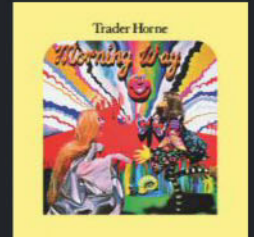
GIRLS NAMES

ARMS AROUND A VISION

The 3rd full length out on 2nd Oct. This time round they're more widescreen than ever but also more direct & aggressive.

The bass, drums & guitars are still there, but so are saxophones, organs, detuned broken guitars & pianos, and even sheets of metal assaulted with hammers.

TOUGH LOVE LP / CD



TRADER HORNE

MORNING WAY

45th Anniversary limited edition vinyl of their only record. Duo are Judy Dyble (ex-Fairport Convention / Giles & Frapp) and Jackie McAuley (Them).

EARTH RECORDS LP / CD

IRELAND: BELFAST HEAD SCOTLAND: AYR BIG SPARRA VINYL / EDINBURGH VOXBOX / EDINBURGH UNDERGROUND SOLU'SHN / GLASGOW LOVE MUSIC WALES: ABERYSTWYTH ANDY'S RECORDS / CARDIFF SPILLERS / NEWPORT DIVERSE / SWANSEA DERRICKS NORTH WEST: BLACKBURN HEAD / CHESHIRE A & A DISCS / LIVERPOOL PROBE / MANCHESTER PICCADILLY RECORDS / PRESTON ACTION RECORDS NORTH EAST: CAMBRIDGE LOST IN VINYL / DERBY TALL BIRD / HUDDERSFIELD VINYL TAP / LEEDS CRASH / LEEDS JUMBO RECORDS / NEWCASTLE BEATDOWN RECORDS / NEWCASTLE J G WINDOWS / NEWCASTLE REFLEX / SHEFFIELD RECORD COLLECTOR / STOCKTON ON TEES SOUND IT OUT MIDLANDS: BURY ST EDMUNDS HARDCORE HOBBIES / BURY ST EDMUNDS VINYL HUNTER / HANLEY MUSIC MANIA / BRISTOL HEAD RECORDS / LEAMINGTON SPA HEAD RECORDS / LOUTH OFF THE BEATEN TRACK / NOTTINGHAM MUSIC EXCHANGE / NOTTINGHAM RISE / OXFORD TRUCK / SHREWSBURY CAVE RECORDS / SHREWSBURY LEFT FOR DEAD / STOKE ON TRENT STRAND RECORDS / WORCESTER RISE SOUTH: BEXHILL ON SEA MUSIC'S NOT DEAD / BRIGHTON RESIDENT / BROMLEY HEAD / DEAL SMUG GLERS RECORDS / EASTBOURNE PEBBLE / GODALMING RECORD CORNER / LEIGH ON SEA FIVES / LONDON CASBAH / LONDON FLASHBACK / LONDON HUMANITAS BOUTIQUE / LONDON INTOXICA / LONDON DON THE LP CAFE LTD / LONDON ROUGH TRADE EAST / LONDON ROUGH TRADE TALBOT RD / LONDON SISTER RAY / SOUTHEAST ON SEA SOUTH RECORDS / SOUTHSEA PIE & VINYL / ST ALBANS EMPIRE RECORDS / WIMBORNE SQUARE RECORDS SOUTH WEST: BRISTOL RISE / CHELTENHAM BADLANDS / CHELTENHAM RISE / CHRISTCHURCH THE VAULT / FALMOUTH JAM / FOLKESTONE HOT SALVATION / STROUD - TRADING POST / TAUNTON - BLACK CAT / TOTNES - DRIFT MAILORDER AND INTERNET ONLY STORES: BOOMKAT.COM / COVERS.VINYL.CO.UK / NORMANRECORDS.COM / SPINCDs.COM / BLEEP.COM



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ALBUM BY ALBUM

Linda Ronstadt

The country-rock chanteuse who has a “huge jukebox” in her brain...

“I REALLY WAS TERRIBLE in the beginning,” laughs Linda Ronstadt. “I had no idea what I was doing. It wasn’t until about 1980 that I really started to learn how to sing.” While the millions of fans who repeatedly sent her ’70s work to the top of the American charts would likely disagree with her humble assessment, Ronstadt’s words are testament to her eagerness to try new things. Over her long career, the Arizona-born singer has tackled a variety of styles, from majestic country-rock songs written by James Taylor, Jackson Browne and her friends in the Eagles, right through to Gilbert & Sullivan operas, jazz standards and Spanish-language mariachi, a reflection of her part-Mexican heritage. Although the effects of Parkinson’s have left her now unable to sing, Ronstadt has lost none of her deep passion for music. “I’ve been a singer all my life,” she says, “so it’s very odd not to be able to do that. Especially when I go to visit my family, as we always sang together and now we can’t. But I can play music in my head – I’ve got a huge jukebox in my brain.” **TOM PINNOCK**



Spoofing Moonbeam McSwine for the *Silk Purse* cover, 1970

SILK PURSE

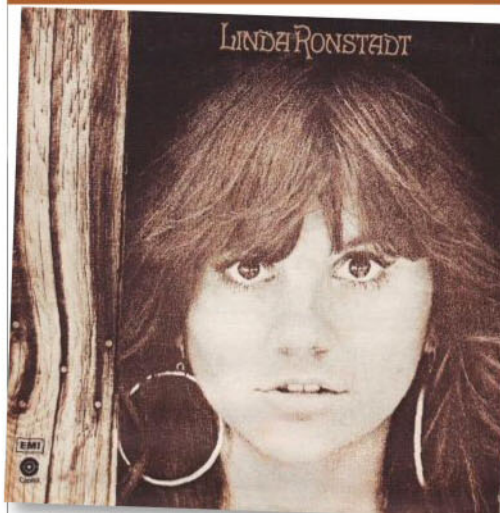
CAPITOL, 1970



Following her work with The Stone Poneys and ignored solo debut *Hand Sown... Home Grown*, Ronstadt went full-on country for her second – heading to Nashville to cut versions of “Will You

Love Me Tomorrow” and “Lovesick Blues”. I met Kenny Edwards in 1965, and he, Bobby Kimmel and I formed a little group called The Stone Poneys. “Different Drum” was a hit for us. The label wanted me to go solo in the beginning, but I felt it was disloyal, and I wasn’t ready to be a solo artist. Kenny was interested in seeking truth and beauty, so after a couple of years he went off to India on a quest, and I went solo. By 1970, all of us at The Troubadour [in LA] were listening to traditional country, Hank Williams, Merle Haggard. But we were also laminating rock’n’roll over the top. They needed to have a little bit more aggressive interaction, we thought. I liked Merle Haggard but also Chuck Berry, so you try to get them both in there! I went to Nashville to record *Silk Purse*, but Californian country has a different groove to it. We had much more liberal attitudes on the West Coast. As for the cover, at that time, you didn’t wanna dress straight, you wanted to look funky. I didn’t know what in the world that meant, but I knew funky had something to do with earthiness. So I thought of this character, Moonbeam McSwine, from a cartoon called *Li’l Abner* – she was always sitting in a pen with pigs, very glamorous but a hillbilly with a ripped skirt and a torn blouse. So I thought I’d do a send-up of Moonbeam McSwine, to out-funk everybody. It was a joke, I figured everybody would know what I was talking about. I don’t know that they did.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



LINDA RONSTADT

CAPITOL, 1972

Her third album, a commercial failure, is now seen as a country-rock classic. And in assembling her backing band, Ronstadt inadvertently put the Eagles together, too... I had a hand in forming the Eagles, yes! But it was their talent and their mutual interaction that really did it. I asked my friend John Boylan if he’d help me put a band together. So we walked to The Troubadour one Monday night, and heard this band called Shiloh onstage. They were playing my version of “Silver Threads And Golden Needles” exactly off the record, including the guitar solo. So I thought, ‘Maybe I can just hire this band, they already know the arrangements!’ But I had some players already, so we went and asked Don Henley, the drummer in Shiloh, if he’d

like to play for my next tour. Then I needed a guitar-player, so I asked Glenn Frey, who used to sing with my boyfriend, JD Souther. When we were on the road, Glenn and Don roomed together, and they each discovered that the other was a good singer and writer, so they started working together. By the end of the tour, they decided to form a band. John suggested Randy Meisner to play bass and I suggested Bernie Leadon, so those four became my band with the idea that they’d go on their own as soon as they got a deal.

There were a lot of great writers around then. California is like a big lens, people would come from other places and California would focus them. A guy like Bernie would come from Florida, or Glenn would come from Michigan, or Don from Texas, and by the time they got to California the Californian sensibility would put its own little spin on things. Then it would be broadcast to the world. Neil Young is another one – I still think he’s one of the best guys that ever came out of rock’n’roll, he’s just brilliant.

Before this album was released, we were in Tennessee doing *The Johnny Cash Show*. The show took a long time to tape. After we finished, Neil Young said he was gonna go do some recording and asked if I’d come and sing a harmony. James Taylor was on that same show, so he came along to play. He wound up playing a six-string banjo. We recorded “Heart Of Gold” and “Old Man”. It took us all night – it was dawn and snowing when we came out. My knees were sore because the only way James and I could get on the same mic was for me to kneel and for him to sit down in the chair. If I knelt up and stretched I could just about share a mic with him!



On the beach, 1977

HEART LIKE A WHEEL

CAPITOL, 1974



With new producer Peter Asher refining her sound, Ronstadt hits the big time, winning a Grammy Award and a No 1 spot for both the album and its first single, "You're No Good".

One of the things I really liked about Peter was that he understood that song, "Heart Like A Wheel" [written by Anna McGarrigle]. Everybody I played it for before said, "Oh, it's not commercial," or, "It's too corny." I just thought it was a gorgeous song and I wanted to perform it so much. I covered "Willin'" by Lowell George here, too. The first time I ever saw Lowell perform I just fell on the floor. I was knocked out. But I wanted to know what tuning he'd written the song in, so I could learn it. It was open G, but that wasn't good for my voice, so he came over to my house and showed me how to play it in open E tuning. Yeah, I had a private guitar lesson with Lowell! This album was a big hit, but it was different from the way it is now, when everybody's on Twitter, and they have a huge gaggle of paparazzi running after them. It meant that I got a somewhat nicer house. By that time, the scene at The Troubadour had wound down so we didn't see each other's concerts as much. Life got a little bit more isolated then. It became a little bit more difficult to go to the market and shop because people would say, "Sign your autograph," while I was trying to buy chicken. So I'd get a person to go to the market for me. Around this time, I performed a lot of songs by JD Souther. JD is such a good writer. I mean, he was just my boyfriend at the time and I thought his songs were good, but I really see now what an

extraordinarily high-quality writer he is and how important he has been on the scene and to the Eagles' music.

SIMPLE DREAMS

ASYLUM, 1977



As punk peaked, Ronstadt was covering Roy Orbison on her huge eighth album, knocking *Rumours* off the US top spot in the process.

We were in our own little dream at this time. I remember JD Souther and Jackson Browne came out to my house and Jackson taught me "Poor Pitiful Me", 'cos he was producing Warren Zevon at that time. That's what we were doing in those days, you'd go to somebody's house and you'd get the guitars out right away. You'd start to play something and someone else would add a harmony, and it would just go on for hours. Sometimes we'd stop and get something to eat, but not very often. And that's how we got our songs around, that's how I found songs, that's how writers got their songs recorded, just playing in somebody's living room. Warren Zevon never came to my house, though. I didn't know him very well, he was incredibly shy. He was a heavy drinker so he hardly lifted his eyes off the floor. But JD and Jackson were close to him, and I just loved his songs. I've always wished I'd recorded "Accidentally Like A Martyr"; I just feel like it was a great opportunity I missed. I was intimidated by it at the time, and I loved the way he'd recorded it and I didn't think I could beat it, but I think I could've if I'd worked at it. This knocked *Rumours* off the top? I didn't know that. What an amazing band – Stevie's such a good singer, and so is Lindsey Buckingham, and Christine McVie.

WHAT'S NEW

ASYLUM, 1983



Ronstadt rejects life as a stadium pop act, teaming up with Sinatra's arranger Nelson Riddle for an album of ornate jazz and swing standards.

I wanted to find different ranges that I always knew were there in my voice, but that I wasn't getting to access with rock'n'roll. I didn't like playing those huge arenas. I went to Joe Papp at The Public Theater in New York, not realising that there was a huge line of people begging him for a job, and said, "I'd like to come and play." He must have thought I was an idiot. Just by coincidence, they were doing *Pirates Of Penzance* and the director wanted to do it with pop singers, not classical. I sang *Pirates* for a year on Broadway and then we did the movie, then I went back and sang *La Bohème* at The Public Theater. I went to a dinner at [Atlantic A&R] Jerry Wexler's house, and he'd say, "You wanna sing standards, you could really sing 'em." I loved those things, been listening to them since I was a kid. Next thing I knew we were recording in a studio, but the way Jerry produced was very different to what I was used to. I didn't think the arrangements suited my voice. I wanted to redo it, but the record company said it would be the end of my career because I'd been out of action for a year already on Broadway. So I made [1982's] *Get Closer*, but I was still thinking about those Sinatra songs. As soon as Peter Asher heard the quality of Nelson Riddle's arrangements he was convinced. Nelson was at the top of his talent when he wrote my charts. His string-quartet arrangement of "My Funny Valentine" is my favourite of any I've ever heard.

LINDA RONSTADT



On *The Tonight Show* promoting *Canciones De Mi Padre* in 1987

DOLLY PARTON, LINDA RONSTADT & EMMYLOU HARRIS TRIO

WARNER BROS, 1987



A project years in the organising, Ronstadt teamed up with two other country giants for a mega-selling collaboration.

Whenever we saw each other in the '70s, the guitars would come out and we'd start to sing right away, like we always did. The minute we heard the sound of our three voices together we just went, "We have to record together. We've got to do it." But it was hard. Dolly's career was just taking off then and Emmy had her own touring thing that she was doing, and I was doing what I was doing with rock'n'roll. It was hard to get all of our schedules together and decide who was going to produce it and how it was going to go, what we were going to aim for. Emmy and I really wanted to do traditional stuff, because we had Dolly, who's such a good traditional singer. It worked out, finally, it just took a lot of years. Dolly was very involved with the television show she was doing, so she couldn't tour with us. I always thought it was a shame that we never toured together, because we would've refined what we were doing on the bus singing together, and that would have made a big difference. And doing it night after night we would've gotten really tight. Emmy and I always could finish each other's sentences, our sensibilities are very similar and both of us were big fans of Dolly. I liked it best, frankly, when Emmy was singing lead, Dolly was singing on the top and I sang on the bottom, that was my favourite configuration of our harmonies. I thought that was really the *Trio* sound.

CANCIONES DE MI PADRE

ASYLUM/WEA, 1987



Exploring her Mexican roots, Ronstadt tries her hand at mariachi – and bags what still could be the biggest-selling foreign-language album in the States.

I have a little rule for myself: I never try to do any kind of music that I hadn't heard at home by the age of 10. We sang these kind of songs as a family, but we'd know one or two verses and la-da-da-da-da... Sometimes my two brothers and I would sing *huapango*, which is an indigenous Mexican rhythm, it's just beautiful, I love it. I had to do a lot of wood-shedding to get up to speed with these songs. Mexican country music was always in my background and really informed my rock'n'roll singing style more than anything. Lola Beltrán was an incredible singer – to Mexico she was like what Édith Piaf is to France. She had that great huge belting style, and that's what I copied as a child. I was working with the best mariachi group in the world, the Mariachi Vargas, and they introduced me to another band, Mariachi Los Camperos, who are the second best group in the world or the equally best group in the world, and they mentored me. They were living in Los Angeles at the time, working there and they mentored me. I'd go down and rehearse with them and they'd help me. In the mornings, before I'd record, I'd be working with a tape in bed, six o'clock, trying to get the songs into my mouth and into my muscle memory. Because I don't speak Spanish – I know some words in Spanish, I can do some sentences in the present tense, but I'm not fluent. There's a lot of Mexican records that sell in huge numbers here, so it's hard to believe that this album is the biggest non-English-language record to this day.

WINTER LIGHT

ELEKTRA/WEA, 1993



Sales were disappointing, but this is one of Ronstadt's own favourites – the pastoral, hymnal title track is even a rare co-write from her.

Being a writer wasn't what I was. Randy

Newman says he gets up and goes to his office, sits down and starts writing; that's what a writer is. I never did that. I got up in the morning and drank a cup of tea. I didn't think there was any reason for me to go grinding out my own songs when I had people like JD and Jackson and Neil Young around. I did my best singing on *Winter Light*. It might not have been what everyone wanted to hear, but technically I could sing better. And I had all my voice for *Winter Light* – after that my voice declined. With the title track, a friend of mine, Fred Fuchs – who was working on a movie called *The Secret Garden* directed by Agnieszka Holland, who I love – called me up. He said they hadn't been able to find a title song that everybody liked, and I said, "Send me the soundtrack and the movie and let me hear what it sounds like." I liked the soundtrack, so I got my friend Eric Kaz and we put two pieces from it together and made a verse and a chorus and a bridge. Then I wrote some lyrics and Eric wrote some lyrics and we put it all together. And the composer really loved it, and Agnieszka Holland really liked it. I love that track. I never listen to anything that I record, but I put that on my baby record [1996's *Dedicated To The One I Love*], which I recorded so that I could get my children to go to sleep, and it worked like a charm.

LINDA RONSTADT & ANN SAVOY

ADIEU FALSE HEART VANGUARD, 2006



Cajun coda: Ronstadt's final record, featuring versions of songs by Richard Thompson, Julie Miller and Bill Monroe. *Adieu False Heart* was the last recording I made before I got Parkinson's.

I was already struggling with it, but I didn't know that's what I had. I was having a really hard time singing and I couldn't figure out why. Ann Savoy was a really good friend of mine and we started singing together. Because Ann's a true alto to my soprano, it was a nice duet. And her voice is very loud, so I could sing very softly, which is about all I could do at that point. We covered Richard Thompson's "King Of Bohemia". Ann and I are both slobbering, drooling fans of Richard. He's a true original. His son Teddy is great, too. Boy, were I a younger girl I would have worn two coats of mascara for him. Out of all my work, I do have a real soft spot for this record. I felt like I didn't really start singing with my natural voice until 1980. And then after that, everything I sang, whether rock'n'roll, Mexican music or country music, I thought was better because I was singing with a natural voice instead of it being something I was trying to cobble together with something I'd heard or was trying to imitate. ☺

Just One Look: The Very Best Of Linda Ronstadt is out now on Rhino. **Trio** is re-released by Rhino next year

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OUT NOW

WEIRD SCENES BEYOND THE GOLDMINE

The strange and neglected tale of what THE DOORS did next... “You needed three stable guys to balance Dionysus,” says John Densmore, recalling their relationship with Jim Morrison. But after his death, who could replace a frontman of such terrifyingly “strong energy”? Paul Rodgers? Kevin Coyne? Joe Cocker? *Paul McCartney?*

Story: Tom Pinnock

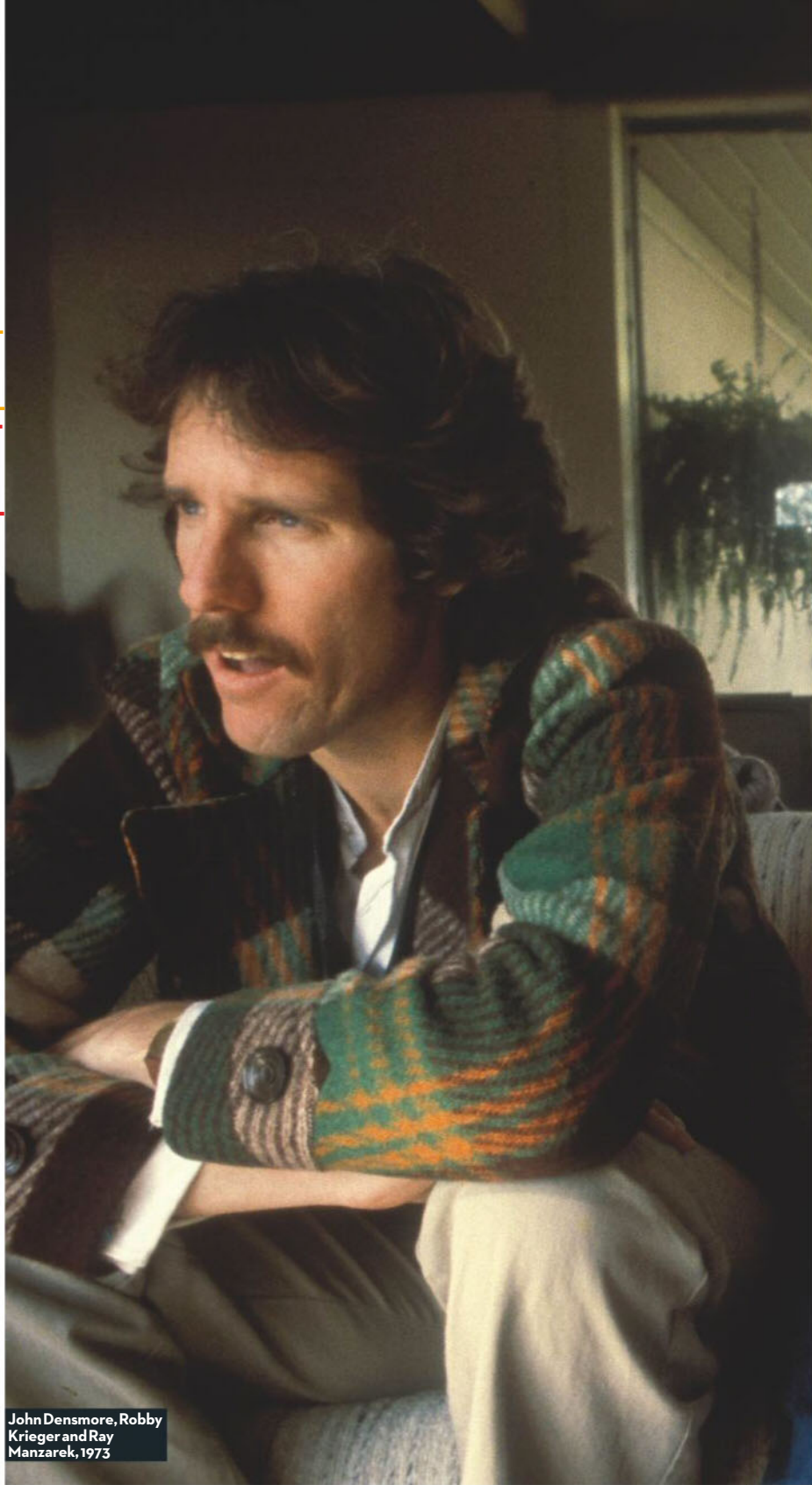
IN SPRING 1972 – a year after Jim Morrison’s death – the remaining members of The Doors toured Europe. While in England, they had shows in Newcastle, Birmingham and Guildford as well as a session for *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. To promote their new album, *Other Voices*, and a compilation, *Weird Scenes From The Goldmine*, they took to the streets of London in a specially decorated double-decker bus. But there was another agenda to their visit: they were hunting for a singer to replace Morrison. Paul Rodgers revealed to *Uncut* in 2011 that The Doors had sought him out to offer him the job. “I’d buried myself in the country, working on things, and they couldn’t get hold of me,” he bemoaned. They met, too, with Midlands soul-rock singer Jess Roden and Howard Werth from progressive rock band Audience. “I did some rehearsing with them in a summer house down by the river,” Werth told *Uncut* in 2011. “Jim Morrison’s name wasn’t mentioned at all.”

But it transpired that Robby Krieger, Ray Manzarek and John Densmore had loftier ambitions. They had their sights on Paul McCartney, then thought to be languishing after the breakup of The Beatles. An unlikely, story, surely?

“We might have talked about it,” says Robby Krieger today. “But I never really got the nerve to ask him!”

“Well, that would’ve been excellent,” laughs Densmore. “Now? There’s only two Beatles now and two Doors, so let’s see, that’ll be two drummers, guitar and a bass player who’s pretty good on keys. It’s a wonderful fantasy, but Sir Paul is rather high up on the echelon there...”

This was just another curious twist in the adventures of Krieger, Manzarek and Densmore after Morrison’s death. It



John Densmore, Robby Krieger and Ray Manzarek, 1973

was a peculiar, transitional time – featuring a former psychiatric nurse from Derby, a mariachi song about a mosquito and multiple bass players – during which The Doors attempted to recalibrate and find a way forward without their singer. “Jimi Hendrix had passed before Jim, and Janis Joplin,” says Krieger. “Jim used to joke that he would be number three. It was kind of weird. We thought he was kidding. He never planned on joining the 27 Club.”

Three months before Morrison’s death, The Doors were enjoying a career high. Their sixth album, *LA Woman*, was well-received, while a pair of hit singles, “Love Her Madly” and “Riders On The Storm”, bookended the spring of 1971. “We had a lot of fun making *LA Woman*,” says Krieger. “For one thing, we produced it ourselves with Bruce Botnick. Before that, Paul Rothchild had produced all of our records.



He did a great job and all, but it was always very difficult because he was a real perfectionist. He always took all day to get the drum sound and Jim especially would get bored. But *LA Woman*, we just recorded it in our little rehearsal place, and it seemed like more of a jam, you know? I think that's a good way to make records."

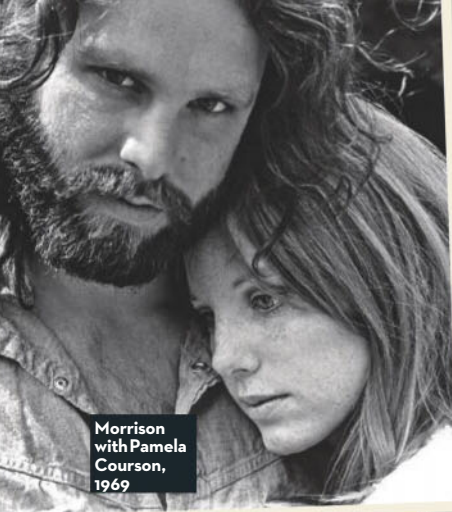
"It was a good atmosphere," agrees drummer John Densmore. "We said we were gonna make a garage album with a lot of passion and mistakes, and that's what we did."

THE SESSIONS APPEARED to revitalise Morrison. Prior to recording *LA Woman*, his drinking had begun to hamper the band – especially during the making of 1969's *The Soft Parade*. He was keen, too, to put behind him his 1970 trial for indecent exposure on stage in Florida. "On

"JIM
NEVER
PLANNED
TO JOIN
THE 27
CLUB"
ROBBY
KRIEGER

LA Woman, Jim was straight," says Botnick. "He would have the occasional brew, you know, a beer. He was in great form. We were looking forward to doing more after *LA Woman*."

During his trip to Paris, Morrison wrote poetry, took long walks and luxuriated in the splendour of the city, so different from the California sprawl he knew. Though happily ensconced in an apartment between Bastille and Île Saint-Louis with his partner Pamela Courson, Paris seems to have always been a temporary home – Morrison kept in touch with his bandmates, keen to find out how *LA Woman* was selling. Meanwhile, Krieger, Densmore and Manzarek worked on new songs back on the West Coast, waiting for Morrison's return. "Jim didn't say, 'I'm sick of being a rock star,'" explains Densmore. "He just said he wanted to go to Paris and take a break, rekindle. There's a tradition of



Morrison with Pamela Courson, 1969

THE LOST PARIS TAPES

Inside Jim Morrison's legendary bootleg

IN 1994, *The Lost Paris Tapes: The Private Tapes Of James Douglas Morrison* circulated among bootleggers, purporting to contain the very final recordings made by Morrison. Apparently, two reels of tape were found in Morrison's apartment on Rue Beautreillis. The first featured a 37-minute poetry session recorded by producer John Haeny at Elektra Sound Recorders in Los Angeles. Material from this recording was incorporated on *An American Prayer*. The second reel is more mysterious. Running to 15 minutes, it features a drunken Morrison improvising a jam of "Orange County Suite", accompanied by two unknown musicians. The story was broken by a German fan publication, *The Doors Quarterly Magazine*, where the magazine's founder, Rainer Moddemann, reported he had been contacted about the Paris recording by an unknown Frenchman. "Jim left these tapes in a plastic bag in my apartment three weeks before he died," Moddemann was told.

It took almost 20 years before the mystery was (partly) solved by leading Doors researcher Len Sousa. It transpires that the recordings originated in LA, likely during the sessions for *The Soft Parade*, between Morrison, poet Michael McClure and one other, as-yet-unidentified musician. The voice of producer Paul Rothchild can also be heard on the recording. You can read Sousa's full report online at thedoorsguide.com/research/lostparistapes

➤ American writers going to Paris. That was the idea. He kind of implied he'd be back eventually to record some more songs."

"I thought he would return, at some point," agrees Botnick. "I think he needed to have some space and get away from everybody, and get away from being Jim Morrison. It's tough for an artist

when they're perceived to be one thing and they're really another – he was very intellectual. Very, very, polite. Incredibly well read. A great conversationalist. Artists like him, they see things and they're on such a high plane that it's difficult for them to have somebody to be on the same plane with. Jim was like that."

This method of working – where the trio would write the music and then Morrison would add vocals and lyrics – was the standard way of working for The Doors. Often, the singer would look in his many notebooks of poetry and work up a lyric from an existing poem, as on "Peace Frog" from 1970's *Morrison Hotel*. When news of Jim Morrison's death first filtered through to Los Angeles, Krieger, Manzarek and Densmore were jamming new songs in their Workshop studio by the Sunset Strip. "We were downstairs, rehearsing, hoping for Jim to return," says producer Bruce Botnick, who was present when the news of Morrison's death reached the others in July, 1971. "We didn't know for sure if it was real, because there had been so many reports of him dying before that."

It soon became clear that the news of Morrison's death was genuine. "We were just devastated. We didn't know



what to do," says Densmore. "The music is a healing thing, so we just plunged into this stuff. We just sublimated our sadness into music and that's why we did it so quick."

"It was either jump in the water or don't," adds Krieger. "We didn't know what to do, but all we knew was music so we just kept rehearsing and working on those songs. It was a good therapy for us."

The first person they approached to replace Morrison was Kevin Coyne, the Derby-born former drug counsellor and psychiatric nurse. "I was called in the morning after Jim Morrison died and asked how did I fancy joining The Doors," Coyne told *Uncut* in 2003. "It showed how mercenary the music business was, but the leather trousers were a long way from my plans."

They also considered asking Joe Cocker, a year on from his successful *Mad Dogs And Englishmen* tour. "Then we thought, 'Shit, we can't just get some other singer and expect him to follow in Jim's footsteps,'" says Krieger. "So we just decided it would be better for us to sing. With us not really being singers, the expectation level wouldn't be so high."

They focused on the sessions in hand, with Manzarek contributing two songs about Jim: "In The Eye Of The Sun" and "Hang On To Your Life". "They were unconscious songs about Jim," says Krieger. "He always taught us when you're writing a song don't make it too obvious what it's

about, so the listener can interpret it in their own way."

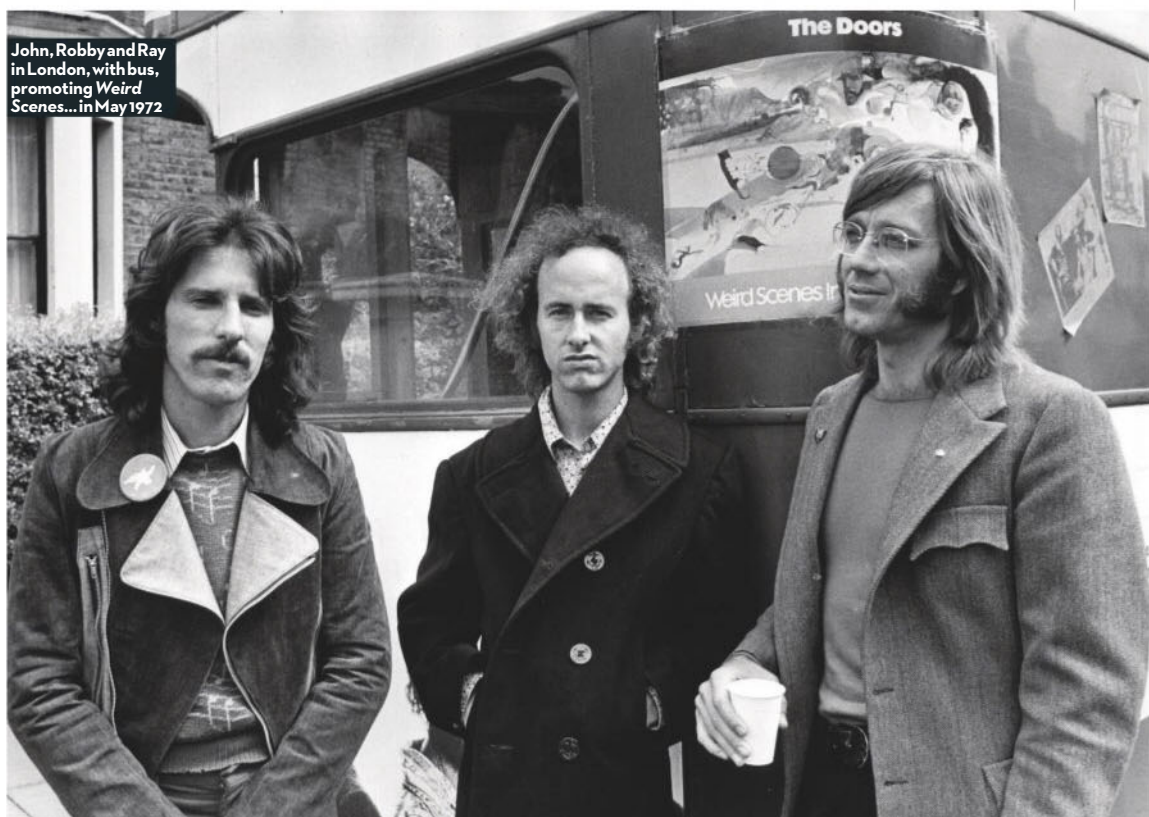
Without the hedonistic Morrison, Krieger, Manzarek and Densmore found they were able to work much faster – and with greater focus. It was not entirely uncharted territory for them. The band had been forced to work

"THE MUSIC IS A HEALING THING. WE PLUNGED IN"

JOHN DENSMORE



John, Robby and Ray in London, with bus, promoting *Weird Scenes...* in May 1972





On The Old Grey Whistle Test in 1972

round Morrison's absences in the past, just not at this level. As early as 1968, in fact, they sometimes had to fill in when their errant singer was late for concerts, with Manzarek often taking on vocal duties.

"The three of us didn't drink," says Krieger. "So Jim was tougher and tougher to deal with as time went on. He was always right there and easy to work with as far as the music went, but yeah, the three of us were very tight as a musical unit."

"You needed three stable guys to balance Dionysus," laughs Densmore. "It was such strong energy, like a hurricane; we needed the triangle, with Jim stood on top."

Other Voices was released on October 18, 1971 – three months after Morrison's death – and reached No. 31 on the *Billboard* chart. Today, the album sounds surprisingly strong, albeit sorely lacking Morrison's presence. "I'm Horny, I'm Stoned" is a poor facsimile of Morrison's more facile moments, but the hard boogie-blues of "Tightrope Ride" (featuring Densmore doubling his drumkit) and "In The Eye Of The Sun" would have fitted well on *LA Woman*. "Ships W/ Sails" is *Other Voices'* clear highlight, though, a skilful melding of Latin and jazz that had only been hinted at in the band's previous work. With Morrison's more puritan blues influences absent, the trio felt free to expand their jazz ambitions, bringing in a host of session musicians to assist: Emil Richards provided marimba and whims on "Down On The Farm", and Francisco Aguabella contributed percussion to "Ships W/ Sails" and "Hang On To Your Life", while there were a total of five bassists enlisted for the album (four electric and one double-bass). "We were pretty amazed that the album sold as much as it did," marvels Krieger. "It did pretty well. We got pretty good radio play and did a couple of tours on it, so we were quite happy with it."

NOT EVERYONE WAS so pleased with the product, though, including their producer. "I didn't think it was very strong," says Botnick. "It didn't have any of the danger that The Doors' albums had. It wasn't bad, it just wasn't dangerous anymore. One of the legs of the table was missing. How could it not seem like that? I think they will all tell you that they were not individually the greatest musicians in the world, but together the four of them were the greatest musicians in the world."

Whatever the danger quotient, *Other Voices* carried on the thread of *LA Woman*; but its follow-up departed

THE BUZZ

SUCK IT AND SEE

Behind *Full Circle's* Latin-influenced global hit

THOUGH *FULL CIRCLE* didn't register much in popular culture, one track, "The Mosquito", has become one of the band's most enduring tracks across the globe. "I was on vacation down in Mexico," remembers Krieger of the song, released as a single in 1972, "and these three local musicians came down out of the hills. They would sing mariachi stuff, and they had this one song about a mosquito and that inspired me. That was actually our biggest-selling single after Jim died because it was in Spanish and it did very well around the world. Not only in Latin countries, but in Europe. In fact there were a lot of covers, and some of them are pretty good."



from that template. Botnick wasn't involved (he says he can't remember whether he was asked to return, but says he would have turned the job down if asked), the group left the Workshop for the comfort of Hollywood's A&M Studio, and even more jazz session musicians were brought in.

"The guys wanted to have a chance to work with some other musicians," says Botnick. "As they went into *Full Circle* they took that extension even further."

"I liked them," says Charles Lloyd, who contributed tenor sax and flute to the recordings. "I'd met Jim Morrison at some parties in the Village around the time that their music was taking off in the mid 1960s. Barriers were down and the lines of demarcation were blurring. It was a unique open, free, time. I was free to bring it at the *Full Circle* sessions. My contributions were an overdub. But I did play live concerts with them in Central Park and the Hollywood Bowl – they encouraged me to stretch out. In rehearsals they were mellow and having fun. It was a very open feeling of collaboration."

"*Full Circle* had a different engineer – Henry Lewy," says Densmore. "He brought in Charles Lloyd and loads of other great session players. We thought maybe we could get some backing vocals to help fill out the sound of Ray and Robby singing."

The Doors released *Full Circle* on August 15, 1972. The complex funk of "Verdillac", the campfire pop of "4 Billion Souls" and the Latin fusion of "The Piano Bird" were strong cuts, expanding the band's sound with greater variety and rich textures. Krieger's quicksilver guitar-playing was a delight as always, with his 12-string solo on "It Slipped My Mind" a highlight. But with Morrison now dead for over a year, and the rock scene progressing at high speed, fans weren't exactly turned on by *Full Circle's* subtle growth, and the album barely scraped the Top 75 in the US. "We had a lot of cool musicians that played with us," says Krieger. "It's always fun to record, but we missed having Jim. There was nothing much we could do other than just quit."

Joined by Jack Conrad on bass, Bobby Ray Henson on rhythm guitar and occasionally Charles Lloyd or Ron Starr on saxophone, The Doors toured *Full Circle* throughout Europe and America in summer and autumn 1972, before Ray Manzarek finally decided he'd had enough.

"Ray just kinda said, 'Look, I'm out of here, I'm getting tired of this, it's not working,'" remembers Krieger.



Ray Manzarek and Robby Krieger on stage at the release party for *No One Here Gets Out Alive* at the Whisky A Go Go in 1980

“So we gave it up. John and I were trying to make it work. Would we have carried on? Yeah, for sure.”

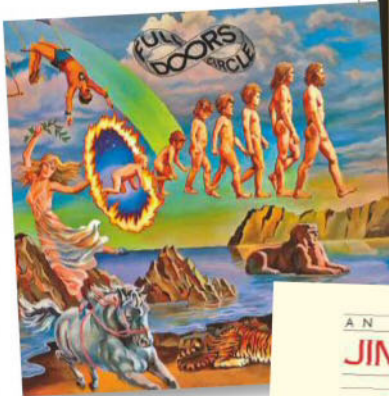
“The Doors had a five-album record deal with Elektra,” says Densmore, also clearly disappointed about the way the group fell apart, “and we stopped and passed on the last three albums. ‘OK, this has been really fun, but without Jim we’re not The Doors.’”

The Doors played their final gig on September 10, 1972, at the Hollywood Bowl near their stomping ground. They played tracks from *Other Voices* and *Full Circle*, including “Ships W/ Sails”, “Tightrope Ride” and “The Mosquito”, along with “Love Me Two Times” and their customary closer, “Light My Fire”, now featuring a saxophone solo in its long jam section. This really was the end.

REFLECTING ON THOSE two post-Morrison albums, John Densmore has this to say: “I just listened to these albums a couple of days ago. I hadn’t heard them in quite a while. Boy, excuse my patting ourselves on the back, but this is a tight band. Instrumentally, it’s really tight. I do miss the great bear tone... nobody had Jim’s voice. This is a guy who never had any proper singing instruction, and to be able to scream from the bowels of his soul and not rip up his vocal cords...”

Robby Krieger is also interested in how the albums would have turned out with Morrison there. “There’s this tribute band here in LA and they did a couple of the songs from *Full Circle*, like ‘Verdillac’. They actually went in the studio and recorded these things, and they came out pretty good. They had a guy that sang like Jim, or tried to – it was pretty funny to hear the Jim vocal on those songs!”

Six years after they split, though, The Doors got back together, this time with the crucial element they’d been missing – or at least, recordings of Morrison reading his poetry in 1969 and 1970. Krieger, Manzarek and Densmore returned to the studio to put music to his words and create *An American Prayer*, released in 1978. It was a controversial release for some fans and associates,



AN AMERICAN PRAYER
JIM MORRISON
MUSIC BY
THE DOORS



LIVE AFTER DEATH

The Doors’ strange onstage afterlife

AFTER THE RELEASE of *An American Prayer*, Krieger, Densmore and Manzarek reunited a few more times...

DECEMBER 8, 1978
LE PALACE, PARIS

To promote the release of *An American Prayer*, the trio performed a short set in the city where Morrison died. Opening with “Love Me Two Times”, they also played “Light My Fire”, “Close To You” and Prayer’s “The Ghost Song”.

JUNE 16, 1980 WHISKY A GO GO, LOS ANGELES

Performing with guest vocalists, including Michael Des Barres and Charles Duncan, The Doors reunited to promote the release of Morrison biography *No One Here Gets Out Alive*. Songs played include “LA

Woman”, “Twentieth Century Fox” and “Roadhouse Blues”.

JANUARY 12, 1993
CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL
BALLROOM, LOS ANGELES

Celebrating their induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the trio perform three tracks – “Roadhouse Blues”, “Break On Through” and “Light My Fire” – with Pearl Jam’s Eddie Vedder on vocals.

JULY 8, 1995 THE MET THEATRE, LOS ANGELES

Following a reading by John Densmore, the group play “Peace Frog”, “Love Me Two Times” and “Little Red Rooster”, all sung by Manzarek.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2000
HOLLYWOOD CENTER
STUDIOS, LOS ANGELES

Filed for VH1, this is The Doors’ final live appearance. Ian Astbury, Scott Weiland and Perry Farrell all sing during a long set that includes “The End”, “LA Woman” and “Light My Fire”.

Thanks to TheDoorsGuide.com

but the band savoured the opportunity to effectively work with Morrison again.

“It’s one of my favourite records that we’ve ever done,” says Krieger. “Jim’s spoken-word album never came out, but I had a copy. He’d hired this guy, Fred Myrow, to do music for it. I was listening to it one day, and I thought, ‘Shit, John and Ray and I should give it a try – who better?’”

“I remember sitting in the studio recording *An American Prayer* and his voice is in our headphones,” says Densmore. “He’s not there, but he is there. At first it was eerie, you’d look over to the vocal booth and be like, ‘Shit, I hear him.’ It was like old times, so it was special. You know, I really enjoyed hearing *Other Voices* and *Full Circle* again, but I do miss hearing that great voice.”

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DAVID JAMES SWANSON



TRACKLIST

- 1 I Feel Love (Every Million Miles)
- 2 Buzzkill(er)
- 3 Let Me Through
- 4 Three Dollar Hat
- 5 Lose The Right
- 6 Rough Detective
- 7 Open Up
- 8 Be Still
- 9 Mile Markers
- 10 Cop And Go
- 11 Too Bad
- 12 Impossible Winner

THE DEAD WEATHER

Dodge And Burn

THIRD MAN

Back in black! Rumbustious third from Jack White's gothic blues explosion. *By Piers Martin*

8/10 YOU KNOW WHERE you stand with The Dead Weather, and it's usually on a lonely highway in the dead of night with some badass outlaw on your tail. Ever since this part-time US alt.rock supergroup released their first two albums, *Horehound* and *Sea Of Cowards*, back to back in the space of 11 months in 2009-10, reinforced with a couple of world tours, there has been no mistaking their pedigree or malevolent intent.

Like cartoon villains cooking up demented garage-rock fantasies in their drummer's Nashville studio, the group's heavy freakshow blues suggests that Jack White, The Kills' singer Alison Mosshart, Dean Fertita of Queens Of The Stone Age and sometime Raconteur Jack Lawrence revel in the absurdity of their privileged position and always make the most of their brief time together. In *The Dead Weather*, free of any baggage, these



New Albums

→ exceptional performers each get to play in their dream band, and if they happen to make fools of themselves, well, so what. It's just for fun – there are no ties, nothing serious riding on it. And as vanity projects go, this one has legs: those two albums reached the US Top 10.

This same cavalier attitude fuels their first album for five years, *Dodge And Burn*. A leaner, meaner beast than its predecessors, the bulk of it was recorded in a flurry of activity this summer when a window in the quartet's schedules became available. In two earlier sessions from 2013 and last year, four songs had been recorded and slipped out on a couple of seven-inches via Third Man Records' Vault subscription service: "Open Up", "Rough Detective", "Buzzkill(er)" and "Too Bad", each of which find Mosshart caterwauling and sneering like Janis Joplin over Fertita's gonzo see-saw riffing, as if the pair are auditioning for Royal Trux.

Though he'd protest, White remains the dominant figure in The Dead Weather – he also produced the album and oversaw its manufacture – and is the only member whose career outside the band has reached astonishing new heights in the period since *Sea Of Cowards*, thanks to his swashbuckling solo sets, *Blunderbuss* and *Lazaretto*. Having laboured over the latter for a year and a half, he and the band whipped through *Dodge And Burn* in 10 days. Mosshart says she wrote the lyrics to five songs in just over a day. Normally this would be cause for concern, but *Dodge And Burn* succeeds because the songs capture the pure manic energy of those quickfire sessions, of the band being completely at ease with each other, bristling with ideas and knowing they can play whatever they want in the moment. Like White's blunderbuss and lazaretto, the title refers to something no longer in currency: in photographic terminology, dodging and burning is the technique of manipulating the exposure of prints to create a certain effect, a trick done with the click of a mouse these days. Again, as he does with his music, White blends the past with the present. And just as The Dead Weather manage to give new, fairly corny meaning to an archaic phrase –



The Dead Weather: garage-rock saviours

THE ROAD TO DODGE AND BURN

Esteemed members of the assembly on CD



JACK WHITE *Lazaretto* XL, 2014

White spent 18 months on his eccentric masterpiece, the second movement from his imperial blue period, even editing the compositions on a computer, to fully capture the nuances and range of emotion he sought to convey. Raucous, dense and dazzling, it became the biggest-selling vinyl album since 1994.

9/10



THE KILLS *Blood Pressures*

DOMINO, 2011
After her two-LP baptism of fire with The Dead Weather, Alison Mosshart returned to the relative normality of The Kills a more confident singer no longer afraid to reveal her uncertainties. This is snake-hipped garage-rock business as usual, but with a human heart under the icy exterior.

7/10



QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE *...Like Clockwork*

MATADOR, 2013
Outside Ver Wevver, multi-instrumentalist Dean Fertita passes his time in The Raconteurs and QOTSA. Although overshadowed here by Josh Homme and a variety of guests, Fertita's fine chops make him the ideal foil for any lead guitarist.

8/10



THE GREENHORNES

★★★★ THIRD MAN, 2010
Part of the Third Man family, trad-rock indie-blues trio The Greenhornes' first LP in eight years came together after Dead Weather bassist Jack Lawrence and Patrick Keeler had returned from a stint with The Raconteurs, Jack White's other band. Beyond the bluster, surprisingly touching.

7/10

Dodge And Burn could be an '80s cop show – so they administer a thorough scrubbing to knackered old garage-rock until it gleams like the chrome fender on a Dodge.

In an interview last year with American news veteran Dan Rather, White explained that, for him, the blues is the truth, and that as a musician he is in pursuit of the truth. By using characters and stories in song, he said, “We’re trying to get to something truthful that makes sense.” On *Dodge And Burn*, he and Mosshart plough through fields of clichés in a bid to get to the essence of what they do. Her search for something meaningful on the Led Zep bluster of “I Feel Love (Every Million Miles)” is framed by the skewering riffs of Fertita, who’s in the form of his life on this record, laying down some of the filthiest, heaviest guitar parts that appear to tear into tracks when you least expect. Mosshart, too, who’s constantly in motion, feels at liberty to explore her primal side as she channels the elemental expressionism of Cormac McCarthy on “Lose The Right” and “Let Me Through”; “I got a bloodhound tooth

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** Jack White III
Recorded at: Third Man Studio, Nashville, Tennessee
Personnel: Alison Mosshart (vocals), Dean Fertita (guitar, keyboards), Jack Lawrence (bass), Jack White (vocals, drums, guitar), Katelyn Westergard (violin), Kristen Weber (violin)

hanging like a dagger in a bar back west,” she growls in a way that implies only she knows what she means. On the mongrel Motown funk of the excellent “Mile Markers” she half-raps, “I churned my milk and honey, I lost track of all my money/My family rescued some other stray dog...”

The album’s lightest moment, “Three Dollar Hat”, is a murder

ballad skank in the style of Nick Cave’s “Red Right Hand” that finds White rapping like Eminem about “that bad man Jackie Lee, shooting everybody down with a .33”, while a Moog oscillates wildly. This and “Lose The Right”, an organ-driven ska groove, are *Lazaretto*-styled examples of The Dead Weather looking to push beyond the goth-garage template they minted on those first two albums and which can sound tired. Most unexpected, after so much ruptured blues, is the closing “Impossible Winner”, a sentimental piano ballad bundled off Broadway and soberly delivered by Mosshart who sings, seeming quite out of character, “I am a wheel goin’ round/In a mirror house/A maze with no way out/What you have fears about.”

After five years, *Dodge And Burn* needed to offer more than the standard none-more-black Dead Weather *sturm und drang*, and it does – a lot more. White’s enlightened approach after *Lazaretto* gives this a certain joie de vivre, a dry, mordant wit. Be assured, this is still a very heavy rock record, but it slithers with a degree of grace that had been missing in the past. As welcome as it is to have The Dead Weather back, it’s also a shame that White has announced he’s taking a long break from playing live, because this is one record that demands to be taken onstage and propelled into oblivion.

Q&A

Alison Mosshart on the thrill of making *Dodge And Burn*

HOW DID THIS album come about?

Well, making this Dead Weather record was a very fast experience. We wrote four songs for this two years ago and put those out as singles, and then we thought we could do that every time we get together, and at the end of that journey we’ll have a record. But it didn’t happen. Then, all of a sudden a couple of months ago, we had four or five days when we were all in the same town [Nashville] together and went in and wrote eight more songs, mixed it and recorded it, everything. It all happened so fast. Then we were faced with the dilemma of what to do with it. Can’t tour ‘cos we’re all so busy. Shall we sit on it, which seems incredibly boring, or put it out, which is more exciting?

Can you describe the chemistry in the studio? Something must make you all keep coming back together...

Well, it’s really fun to work with these guys, it’s a joy. The speed at which we work is fascinating to us all. Everybody walks in, puts on their instruments or gets in front of their instruments, I get in front of a mic with a notebook and pen, and if we’re all in the right mindset – and we generally are when we’re together – we’ll write and record a song in 45 minutes to an hour. Which is so exciting, and it spurs you on to the next one and the next one, and if you left us there we’d be there forever. It’s freeing, really freeing. It’s always surprising to me when I walk away and go to bed and wake up in the morning and go, “What just happened? That was awesome!” But it does require you to be at a certain point in your life. Do you have that freedom in your mind to be able to sit there and create that? It takes a special moment and that’s totally what happened with the first record and similarly with the second, and with this one, too. And that’s the gist of the band – when we can do it, we can, and it’s a total joy.

Who brings what to the table in the studio?

It’s hard to say because it’s different with every song. Jack is an incredibly decisive person in the studio, but also open to everybody’s ideas. So everybody’s suddenly in a different mindset where everything counts – you’re not so shy about singing some crazy-ass lyrics or playing some guitar part that you wished you could have played when you were 16. In the studio, we’re all facing each other in the same room – and it’s not a big room – and recording at the same time. I kid you not, I wrote the lyrics to five songs in a day and a half. If I was in the wrong mood I could never do that. But the music inspires me so much that immediately there’s a sound, there’s a feeling, there’s a character growing in my head, there’s a story, there’s a mood. If you allow it in, it sort of tells me what to do, tells me what to say.

Sounds like the fantasy band everyone wants to be in when they’re 15. Totally, it is. I think



that’s how we feel like when we’re playing together – this is like our first band, we’re 14 or 15 and we’re fucking awesome. Every band at that age thinks they’re awesome, but it’s such a joy to play with these guys because they are awesome. It’s incredible to be in a room listening to them play. Every time Dean writes a riff, I can’t believe it’s possible, or every time a song comes out of nowhere, I’m always surprised.

‘Dodge and burn’ is a technique used to manipulate the exposure of photographs in a dark room...?

Yes, it’s an old photography term. We were sitting in the studio and someone said it and I think I might have been the only person who knew what it meant, because I used to take photography classes – and now it’s a Photoshop tool. It’s a cool phrase, as it can mean a million different things. We’re always looking for titles that are open to interpretation. That phrase has almost gone and now it can take on new meaning.

What can you say about the last song “Impossible Winner”, an uncharacteristically tender Dead Weather ballad?

I wrote that song a while ago. I have an arsenal of these that I write all day long and that don’t really have homes. I was in the studio first one morning and Dean walked in and caught me playing it on an acoustic guitar and asked what it was. He then sat down at the piano and played it with me, learning it in four seconds.

Then LJ [Little Jack] walks in and says, “Hey, what’s that?”, and starts playing, and 20 minutes later Jack walks in and sits behind the drums and I’m like, “OK we’re doing this song, it’s awesome,”...and they loved it.

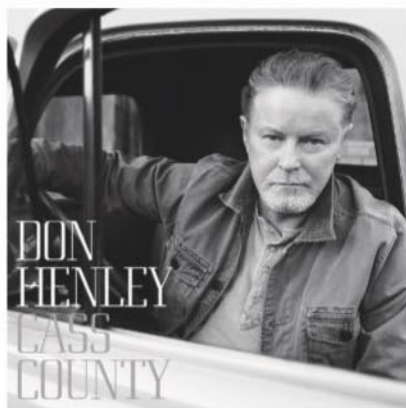
Is Jack White constantly working? He’s one of the busiest people I’ve ever met. He’s always working, always doing 15 projects at

once, and he copes with it beautifully. That’s his best state and that’s how he’s built.

What does this record mean to you?

This is my favourite Dead Weather record. We pushed things further than we have before. It’s just a heavy badass record. It is *heavy* – that’s the only word I can think of. Every time I hear it, I’m surprised, like I’m having an out-of-body experience! **INTERVIEW: PIERS MARTIN**

“We feel like this is our first band, we’re 14 or 15, and we’re fucking awesome!”



TRACKLIST

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Bramble Rose (featuring Mick Jagger & Miranda Lambert) |
| 2 | The Cost of Living (featuring Merle Haggard) |
| 3 | No, Thank You |
| 4 | Waiting Tables |
| 5 | Take A Picture of This |
| 6 | Too Far Gone |
| 7 | That Old Flame (featuring Martina McBride) |
| 8 | The Brand New Tennessee Waltz |
| 9 | Words Can Break Your Heart |
| 10 | When I Stop Dreaming (featuring Dolly Parton) |
| 11 | Praying for Rain |
| 12 | Too Much Pride |
| 13 | She Sang Hymns Out of Tune |
| 14 | Train In The Distance |
| 15 | A Younger Man |
| 16 | Where I Am Now |

DON HENLEY

Cass County

CAPITOL RECORDS

The Eagles' drummer heads back to his Texas roots for belated fifth solo album. *By Michael Bonner*

7/10 AS A FOUNDING member of the Eagles, Don Henley will always be associated with the glamour of the West Coast jet-set. But it transpires that beyond the sun-kissed Cali-vibes, Henley's heart belongs to Texas. Specifically, Cass County, which nestles in the Lone Star State along the border with Arkansas and Louisiana. Henley was born and raised in Linden, and has drawn inspiration from his hometown for his first solo album since *Inside Job* in 2000. *Cass County* details everyday joys and sorrows of smalltown life that are designed to reveal big picture truths. "These are hard times we're living in," notes the

narrator of "No, Thank You". His sentiments are echoed by the farmer in "Praying For Rain", who laments that "*the crops are burned up in the fields/There's a blanket of dust on anything*" or the young single mother working tables "*until there's somewhere else to go*".

As a solo artist, Henley has often voiced his disillusionment with contemporary America. His most successful solo album, 1989's *The End Of The Innocence*, was framed by the perfidious challenges of Reaganomics. There, he reflected on the wasted promise of the Baby Boomer generation. "A little voice inside my head said/'Don't look back, you can never look back,'"

AtoZ

COMING UP
THIS MONTH...

p70 JOHN GRANT

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p82 DEERHUNTER

p83 WAND

!!!
As If
WARP**Knock-kneed
dancefloor moves
on eclectic
sixth outing****6/10** !!! [commonly pronounced
"Chk Chk Chk"] have

always landed a few steps from greatness: with each album, some of their moves are right, but they're just as likely to cock things up big-time. Certainly, they're a group that like to take risks; but six albums in, they're now coming across as though they're seriously indecisive, unable to take their upbeat dance-punk to its extremes. Tellingly, *As If* takes off when the group remove their vocals from centrestage – the highlights here are the chicken-scratch disco thud of "Funk (I Got This)", and the woozy, plasmic funk/house hybrid of "All The Way".

JONDALE

**CHANTAL ACDA****The Sparkle
In Our Flaws**

GLITTERHOUSE

**Sweet vulnerability
from inventive Dutch
singer-songwriter****8/10** A partner in Sleepingdog
to neo-classical drone

specialist Adam Wiltzie (A Winged Victory For The Sullen), Belgium-based Acda's second solo studio LP again finds her working with multi-instrumentalists Shahzad Ismaily and Peter Broderick, whose distinctive violin and backing vocals anchor many of the songs. Her tremulous voice, mostly framed by atmospheric, skeletal arrangements, bestows enviable innocence on fragile compositions like the forlorn "Games" and "The Other Way", whose banjo and muted trumpet add subtle pastel colours. "Homes" and the title track, meanwhile, billow unhurriedly towards warmer, more obviously welcoming, horizons. Perfectly flawed.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

seem superfluous. "The Cost Of Living" – featuring Merle Haggard – finds Henley embracing a familiar country staple, as he ponders former glories, "You can't live in memories/Of all your golden yesterdays." He pitches up a gear for "No, Thank You", an ornery rocker whose plain-speaking narrator sourly bemoans "BS blaring from the radio, the TV/Hot wind blowin' off The Hill... Republican or Democrat/Well, I ain't got no love for none of the above."

"Waiting Tables" (a co-write with Eagles bassist Timothy B Schmit) focuses on a 23-year-old single mother – "Another year or two and she'll be movin' on." As an intimate, personal vignette it feels familiar. Our waitress counts her tips, sighs "there must be more than this" and when she meets "a handsome man... in the mornin' he was gone". It lacks the flavour or sharp-eyed detail of, say, Tom Waits' similar depiction of a waitress' life in "Invitation To The Blues". Elsewhere, both "Take A Picture Of This" and "That Old Flame" addresses romantic liaisons in terminal decline. In the former, Henley documents key events in a relationship in photographs, culminating with an embittered, "Take a picture of this/ This is me leaving." The latter, meanwhile, sees the narrator reconnecting with a former paramour: "You can get burned when you try to rekindle/That old flame." His point is arguably a valid one; but as often is the

case on *Cass County*, the language is trite.

Of the album's handful of covers, the best is an elegant take on Jesse Winchester's "The Brand New Tennessee Waltz", where Henley is joined by Alison Krauss. On the Louvins' "When I Stop Dreaming", he is shown a lesson by Dolly Parton – a canny exponent of heartbreak and woe. The wonderful, enigmatic "She Sang Hymns Out Of Tune" by Jesse Lee Kincaid – also covered by Nilsson and The Dillards – also hits its mark. As the album reaches its final stretch, Lucinda Williams adds resonance to "Train In The Distance" which, despite its clunky train-as-metaphor-for-

life theme, has a warm, spacious feel to it. "A Younger Man" (rueful) and album closer "Where I Am Now" (rocky) are both meditative; the latter, you suspect, more nakedly autobiographical. "When people say, 'Would you go back?/I say, 'No way, no how'/ Because I like where I am now.'" It's an intriguing notion – has Henley finally had his fill of the Eagles? Indeed, Henley has been working on *Cass County* for five years, while the Eagles' farewell tour grew and grew. But what does it say about Henley? One of the missed opportunities of *Cass County* is that it isn't especially revelatory about Henley, as a man in late-middle-age taking stock of his life. As a country album, it is perhaps a little too neat, a little too polished.

SLEEVE
NOTES

► Recorded at:

Luminous Sound and Red Oak Studio, Dallas; Allentown, Sound Emporium, House Of Blues, and Blackbird Studios, Nashville, Tennessee

Produced by: Don Henley, Stan Lynch
Personnel includes: Don Henley (vocals), Stuart Smith (guitars), Milo Deering (pedal steel), Mike Rojas (piano), Glenn Worf (bass), Greg Morrow (drums), Mick Jagger (vocals)

he sang on "Boys Of Summer". For *Cass County* – largely written with long-term collaborator Stan Lynch, former drummer for Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers – Henley's principle idiom is country music. Specifically, he draws on the genre's tropes to help cushion his hard-bitten yarns, tales of broken relationships and mature narrators (possibly Henley himself) looking back at their younger selves.

To help him, Henley draws from a pool of Nashville players. Guests including Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Lee Ann Womack, Vince Gill and Tift Merritt mostly embody MOR Nashville; one wonders what a younger, hipper crowd could have brought to the table. As an artist, Henley is not naturally attuned to the nuances of the genre; as songs like album opener "Bramble Rose" attest, his attempts to honour an 'authentic' country sound often come across as ersatz. "Bramble Rose" – written by Tift Merritt – is swamped with pedal-steel, while the guest vocals from Miranda Lambert and Mick Jagger

JOHN GRANT

Grey Tickles, Black Pressure

BELLA UNION

The confessional king's funkiest and finest yet. *By John Lewis*



8/10

WHEN JOHN GRANT was nominated for "Best International Act" at last year's Brit Awards, it seemed like the latest improbable chapter in an increasingly surreal biography. Here was an unorthodox, confessional singer-songwriter and

pianist, raised in Colorado and now based in Reykjavík; a gay man who looks like a rather benign Viking; a recovering alcoholic and coke-addict who speaks five languages; a middle-aged man who announced his HIV-positive status at a Royal Festival Hall gig; who co-wrote a Eurovision Song Contest entry, who toured the UK with a symphony orchestra. And here he was, at a major award ceremony, on a shortlist with Bruno Mars, Justin Timberlake, Eminem and Drake.

It seems even more improbable given that Grant was well into his forties before he'd reached any kind of success. After breaking up his under-achieving alt-rock sextet The Czars, his first solo album, 2010's *Queen Of Denmark*, was a piece of '70s FM rock, recorded with Texan folk-rockers Midlake. His second, 2013's *Pale Green Ghosts*, was a piece of dark, '80s-style synth-pop, made with Icelandic producer Biggi Veira from the band GusGus.

LP number three – recorded in Dallas over four weeks with the producer behind Franz Ferdinand and St Vincent – should thus take us into the 1990s, but it's actually an ambitious exercise in decade blending. There are lush '70s ballads, all pounding piano, cinematic strings and Stevie Wonder-style Moog bass. There are taut pieces of minimal funk, powered by Roger Troutman-style squelch-bass riffs. There are pieces of hypnotic synth pop pitched somewhere between Kraftwerk, Yazoo and an '80s horror movie soundtrack.

The unifying factor comes with the album being bookended by one of the most famous passages from the Bible, the meditation on love from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians ("Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast," and so on) – read in a variety of accents and languages. Grant, who has talked about how his deeply religious family told him he'd burn in hell for his sexuality, sees the entire album as a meditation on the nature of love. Where his first two albums were from a darker place – inspired by a string of dysfunctional and abusive relationships – here Grant seems to be writing from a position of relative happiness and optimism.

"Grey Tickles" is the rather delightful Icelandic term for a mid-life crisis, while "Black Pressure" is the literal Turkish translation for a nightmare – and the title track tries to put Grant's middle-aged



nightmare into perspective. "There are children who have cancer/I can't compete with that," he sighs in a baritone that's as thick as his beard, over chugging "Strawberry Fields" Mellotrons and woozy strings. Indeed, it's these big ballads that see Grant confronting his demons. "No More Tangles" – pitched somewhere between a Bond theme and a Mediterranean ballad – sees Grant confronting abusive relationships with "narcissistic queers" that were, for him, a form of Stockholm Syndrome, a place where "emotions turn into lies like black turns into blue". "Global Warming" is a kiss-off to America's heavily armed "troglydites" and climate-change sceptics ("All we've got are First World problems/I guess I'd better get some of the Third World kind"). Best of all is "Geraldine", an epic, dramatic, six-and-a-half-minute ballad dedicated to the ballsy method actress Geraldine Page ("Geraldine/Tell me that you didn't have to put up with this shit"). He can also do playful synth-pop, where the mood shifts from melancholy to mischief.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** John Congleton
Recorded at: Elmwood Recording, Dallas
Personnel include: John Grant (piano, synths, programming), Bobby Sparks (keys), Peter Hallgrímsson (guitar), Jakub Smari Magnússon (bass), Budgie (drums), Fiona Brice (arrangements)

a heartwarming love letter to a depressed friend ("I made a voodoo doll of you/And I gave it some chicken soup"). "Snug Slacks" is a twitchy, minimalist slice of electro where Grant plays a creepy, rather hopeless lothario, while "You & Him" (a duet with Amanda Palmer) is a gleefully childish piece of name-calling directed at someone who's made his life a misery ("You and Hitler ought to get together/You ought to learn to knit and wear matching sweaters").

Sometimes the soul-baring is almost painful, and you might wince at Grant's verbose open letters to old lovers. But part of Grant's appeal is his ability to unashamedly go places where others dare not. His finest album yet.

Q&A

John Grant

You begin and end the album with St Paul's meditation on love from 'Corinthians'... That's something I've heard all my life, branded onto my brain. And, by bookending the LP with that passage, I'm saying: here's what I was told about love, and here's what I experienced. Love needs to be kind, gentle, respectful and nurturing. But, when we can't love ourselves, we allow people to mistreat us, to the point when you can't feel normal unless you're being treated horribly. What I experienced was crazy, out-of-hand lust; drama, envy, overblown situations. It took a lot of learning to have the mature, loving, reciprocal relationship that I have now.

These seem to be very personal songs. Are you playing a character on any of these tracks? On "Magma Arrives" and "Geraldine", I may be regressing to a much younger version of myself. On "Snug Slacks" I'm a confident but slightly clueless sleazeball who thinks he's got it going on. But really, these are all different parts of my character.

How did the collaboration with Tracey Thorn come about for the single "Disappointing"? She came to my Royal Festival Hall show and I met her at the aftershow, where I was able to gush at her and say she's been a huge voice in my life for three decades. I was over the moon when she agreed to be on the record, because her voice is like a warm blanket. In fairness, I'd also describe Mark E Smith's voice as a warm blanket. Only a slightly more prickly, rough, woollen blanket.

Some of this is seriously funky! Yeah, I always loved Prince. And Grandmaster Flash's "The Message". I used to think, 'Oh, you're not allowed to touch that area, 'cos you're not black, leave it to the people who "have rhythm".' No fuck it, I've got rhythm, I can play funk. Which I should have learned from my favourite album, Nina Hagen's *NunSexMonkRock* – something that makes it clear that you can do what the hell you want, and it doesn't matter what anybody says. *INTERVIEW: JOHN LEWIS*



BRYAN ADAMS

Get Up
POLYDOR

Jeff Lynne produces. "That's rock and roll!"

5/10

Lately, Bryan Adams has enjoyed a distinguished second career as a photographer. Still, he has decided to strap on a guitar and head to the studio once again to work with producer Jeff Lynne. Absent from this project is Lynne's sophisticated pop craft. Together, Adams and Lynne have come up with an old-fashioned FM rock album, short on nuance but strong on intent: if Bryan Adams is going to "go down", as he emphatically tells us here, he is going to "go down rocking". "We Did It All" has a mid-'80s Paul McCartney chug to it; "That's Rock And Roll" sounds like a Tom Petty cast-off. Everything else is just drive time.

MICHAEL BONNER



ADEM

Seconds Are Acorns
ONEIRIC

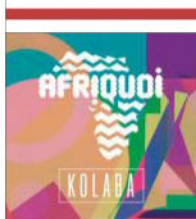
Former Fridge man returns

Adem Ilhan may have slipped out of view in recent years, but he's

6/10

been busy – exhibiting art installations, acting as fixer for Bat For Lashes among others and producing a Philip Selway record. His first solo album in nine years returns him to his piano-and-electronics heartland, characterised by Lanois-ish autumnal tones and expressing quiet intimacies with an epic sweep. "A Silvering" and "Snow In April" could be a more adventurous Coldplay, but that's an indication of how widely "folktronica" was adopted. And there's something darker in "Didn't Save Air", where the line "I saw slits in your neck – and you smiling" swims up through the watery gloom.

SHARON O'CONNELL



AFRIQOUI

Kolaba
WORMFOOD

The world is on your street... a danceable, euphoric debut

A culturally diverse collective of London-based musicians originating

8/10

from Africa, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom, Afriquoi's debut combines the spiralling guitars of Congolese soukous, the rippling sound of Gambian kora, plinking Zimbabwean thumb pianos, the beat of South African house and punch of Senegalese hip-hop with UK dubstep, grime and garage. It's wildly euphoric, ridiculously danceable and what's more it sounds entirely cohesive: it's not 'fusion' music because Afriquoi are simply expressing themselves in a way that is second nature in the global village in which they live. Fantastic.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



BORN RUFFIANS

Ruff
YEP ROC

Canadians sharpen up their noise-pop

There's no obvious reason why the charmingly wisful and twitchily rhythmic pop songs of

8/10

Born Ruffians, refined here on their second album since moving from Warp to Yep Roc, command a fraction of the attention granted to a similar band like Vampire Weekend. Nervy frontman Luke Lalonde has a forte for satirising the narcissistic tendencies of moony singer-songwriter types – as he puts it in standout "When Things Get Pointless I Roll Away", "I feel like it's nice to think the world falls apart when I go to sleep" – yet there's something equally fetching about the air of bruised vulnerability in "Fuck Feelings", a song whose echoes of "Caribou" is just the latest example of Born Ruffians' long-standing Pixies fetish.

JASON ANDERSON

REVELATIONS

Joe King Carrasco... bribing cops to stay out of jail



► *Uncut* catches up with Joe King Carrasco on Route 66, driving through Amarillo, Texas, on his way to a show in Taos, New Mexico, where he expects to raise a little hell, although he's no longer playing the kind of wild joints where gunfire was not uncommon, as he did 30 years ago in Austin's barrios with his legendary El Molino Tex-Mex big band.

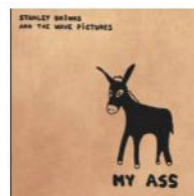
For the past decade, Carrasco's lived in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico – "hanging out with my dogs and bribing the cops to stay out of jail" – where he part-owns Nacho Daddy, a Tex-Mex bar serving "blues, rockabilly and cha cha on the side", basically the mix of new album, *Chiliando*, recorded with border music veterans Los Side FX, whose highlights include "My Ding Dong Daddy Don't Daddy No Mo".

"It's about my hometown, Dumas," he says, "where I grew up playing rock'n'roll on a Silverstone guitar with Bob Wills' 'I'm A Ding Dong Daddy (From Dumas)' on the radio every day. The song quotes my mom's last words: '...there's something terribly wrong in Minnesota', which didn't make sense to me because she'd never been there."

What would his last words be?

"Go out rocking."

ALLAN JONES



STANLEY BRINKS AND THE WAVE PICTURES

My Ass
FIKA

More ramshackle musings from Berlin-based busker-pop boho

André Herman Düne broke away from French alt.folkies Herman Düne in 2006, relocating to Berlin and rebranding as prolific lo-fi troubadour Stanley Brinks. His fourth LP with London-based trio The Wave Pictures picks up where last year's *Gin* ended, all sloppy-shambolic strums and child-like lyrics à la Daniel Johnston/Jonathan Richman. These ramshackle paeans to late-night drinking in Berlin and Brighton border on dreadlocked-white-busker levels of annoying at times, but Brinks stumbles into leftfield loveliness with more elevated fare like "Fire To My Mind" or "Think About You", sounding like a junk-shop jug-band playing a new strain of Middle Eastern calypso.

STEPHEN DALTON



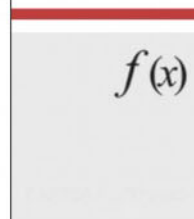
JOE KING CARRASCO Y LOS SIDE FX

Chiliando
ANACONDA

Decent 24th outing for legend of Tex-Mex rock'n'roll

Joe King Carrasco's been making great music since 1979's *Tex-Mex Rock-Roll*, an album that riffed on Chuck Berry, big band R'n'B and rowdy cantina shout-outs. Stiff signed him on the back of it, 1980's *Bueno* adding Texas garage rock to an already roiling mix, its Farfisa-led racket the template for many albums to come. This is his 24th, and one of his best. There's lots of typically groovy Mexicana on "Oaxaka" and "Chiliando", while Los Side FX whip up a storm on roadhouse blues like "Adios Terlingua", "Tengo Muchachita" and speaker-shredding album highlight, "My Ding Dong Daddy Don't Daddy No Mo".

ALLAN JONES



CARTER TUTTI VOID

f(x) INDUSTRIAL

Eerie electro from generation-straddling industrial partnership

Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti remain best known as half of Throbbing

7/10

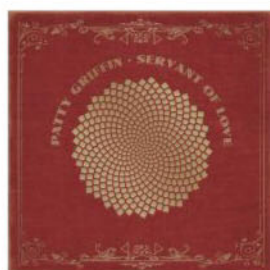
Gristle, industrial provocateurs hailed by a Conservative MP as "wreckers of civilisation". Since then, Chris & Cosey – as they have frequently appeared – have teased their music into more rhythmic, danceable realms while never losing TG's sense of queasy unease. *f(x)*, the pair's second recorded collaboration with Factory Floor's Nik Colk Void, is austere techno invaded by all manner of uncanny effects: delay-soaked guitars, vocals processed into ooze, beats like a panicked heartbeat. *f(x)*'s effect is similarly peculiar: in short bursts it can feel monotonous but, in the long haul, these six tracks are queerly gripping.

LOUIS PATTISON

AMERICANA



BEST
OF THE
MONTH



PATTY GRIFFIN

Servant Of Love

THIRTY TIGERS

Career high for Austin-based songstress

It's tempting to transpose the lyrical themes of *Servant Of Love* onto Griffin's recent split with Robert Plant, with whom she first became acquainted as part of his revived Band Of Joy. These are often songs about heartbreak and disappointment, versed in the kind of rueful tones that usually come about with the experience of hindsight. But this is far from a simple break-up album. Rather, Griffin uses this turmoil to make deeper, more allusive connections between our interior lives and their effect on the world around us. The fact that she marries them to brooding rhythms and fascinating textures only

makes the whole thing more compelling. If there's one aspect of Griffin's work that carries an echo of Plant, it's her ability to summon rich atmospheres with an impressive degree of economy. The title track consists of little more than voice, piano and jazz trumpet, but is one of the most impassioned songs of her career, Griffin summoning the spirit of Karen Dalton as she dreams of being moved by invisible waves on some vast ocean. "One day I'm gonna smile again," she concludes on the ruminative "Hurt A Little While", a beautifully weighted tune that seems to signal both the end of an affair and the beginning of a healing process, without ever resorting to cheap sentiment. Indeed, the arrival of a piqued guitar solo only accentuates the song's raw resolve. This same sense of transformation also floods the gentler, more acoustic "Rider Of Days", which masquerades as a lovelorn ballad but is actually about the nature of transience. Elsewhere, the rougher side of her oeuvre finds an outlet in the antsy roots-rock of "There Isn't One Way" and "Snake Charmer"'s scuttling acoustic blues. As with her last outing, 2013's *American Kid*, *Servant Of Love* proves that Griffin, now in her early fifties, has hit something of a career peak. If anything, this is a more consistent and satisfying record, one that emphatically places her at the forefront of modern roots music. **ROB HUGHES**

8/10



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► After 2013's successful debut hook-up *Love Has Come For You*, **Steve Martin** and **Edie Brickell** (pictured left) return at the back end of October with *So Familiar*. The release

of the album, which was partly inspired by the pair's recent collaborative musical *Bright Star*, coincides with Martin picking up a Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Bluegrass Music Association. The following month sees the return of roots legend **Joe Ely**, whose *Panhandle Rambler* marks his first studio effort for over four years. Ely calls it an audio painting of his home territory of West Texas, for which he's joined by longtime

sidemen Lloyd Maines (acoustic slide), Gary Nicholson (acoustic guitar) and Joel Guzman (accordions, keyboards). Fittingly too, Ely is due to be inducted into the Texas Songwriters Hall Of Fame next February, alongside JD Souther, Will Jennings and the late Roy Orbison. More bizarrely, **Ryan Adams** has announced that he's finished mastering his covers album of Taylor Swift's 1989, having already shared online previews of a number of said tunes. Swift, apparently, is overwhelmed by the whole idea, telling *Entertainment Weekly* that Adams "is one of the artists who shaped my songwriting". On the touring front, **Steve Earle And The Dukes** are promoting latest LP *Terraplane*, starting in Bristol in mid-October and winding up in Glasgow. Also doing the rounds that month are **Pokey LaFarge**, **Ryan Bingham** and **Hayseed Dixie**. **ROB HUGHES**



MICHAEL CHAPMAN

Fish

TOMPKINS SQUARE

Lovely, reflective guitar soli from folk lifer

8/10 For all the talk of the 'resurrection' of

Michael Chapman's career, he never walked far from the path – his output slowed across the 1980s, but he's been consistently releasing albums since the mid 1990s. If anything, it's the tenor of recent albums that has shifted, with his uptake by Thurston Moore and the No Neck Blues Band leading him into thornier territory. *Fish* finds a gorgeous middle ground between lambent guitar soli, all slow rivers of singing steel string guitar, and richer, more resonant arrangements, like the weeping strings and clanging guitar that wind through "Stockport Monday (For Tom Rush)".

JONDALE



CHILDBIRTH

Women's Rights

SUICIDE SQUEEZE

Washington State punk trio's hit-and-miss second outing

5/10 Childbirth's second album would have

made a brilliant EP. The Seattle punk trio's stock in trade is grinding punk that mocks dating, gender identity and anything else that's grinding their gears. Sometimes they're riotous: "Breast Coast (Hangin' Out)" is a perfectly dumb pastiche of California's Best Coast ("Hangin' out/Doin' stuff/Doin' things"), and the shredding "Let's Be Bad" lampoons the culture that makes women feel naughty for ordering "a couple of white wines". Julia Shapiro and Bree McKenna's vocals are brash and bratty, and there's no doubt that they'd be great fun live, but over 13 songs and half an hour, the jokes get pretty laboured.

LAURA SNAPES



EUROS CHILDS

Sweetheart

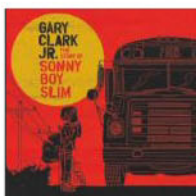
NATIONAL ELF

Former Gorky's man returns with another twisted piano-pop treat

8/10 After last year's low-key, mostly instrumental

Eilaag, for his 11th solo LP, the prolific Euros Childs returns to the blueprint of 2013's more dynamic *Situation Comedy*. Recorded at his parents' Pembrokeshire home, *Sweetheart* sees Childs joined by a full band for 11 alternately jaunty and heartbreaking songs. These are skilfully constructed pieces, though, with the upbeat "Machine" (a love song to a smartphone) and "Playing In The Sun" containing dark lyrical depths. Elsewhere, "Lady Caroline" is a gorgeous ghost story with echoes of Robert Wyatt and The Beach Boys, while the instrumental title track might just be the loveliest thing here, such is Childs' way with a melancholic melody.

TOM PINNOCK



GARY CLARK JR

The Story Of Sonny Boy Slim

WARNER BROS

7/10

The ongoing return of the blues' great bright hope

The patronage of Eric Clapton and The Rolling Stones hasn't done Gary Clark Jr any harm, to say nothing of Barack Obama's assertion that he represents the future of the blues. But it does mean a raising of expectations for this second major-label outing. As with 2012's big-selling predecessor *Blak And Blu*, plurality is the key to Clark Jr's appeal here. It also has to be said that this is a pretty safe, porous realm in which soul, hip-hop, Princely funk and ringing electric blues feed into one another, at its best on "Star" and the enervated rattle of "Church".

ROB HUGHES



JUDY COLLINS

Strangers Again

WILDFLOWER

7/10

Sweet Judy Blue Eyes supported by a dozen leading men

It's been a year for potent comebacks by female singers of a certain age,

and Collins follows Buffy Sainte-Marie and Rickie Lee Jones in producing her most pleasing new work in years. Career landmarks "Send In The Clowns" and "Someday Soon" are revisited, and there are fresh dips into the oeuvres of Cohen and Newman, writers whose careers she helped to launch. A different male duetting partner graces each track, with outstanding contributions from Jackson Browne and Willie Nelson among others. Yet all take a back seat to the preternatural clarity of Collins' own soprano voice which, at 76, miraculously sounds as pure and high as ever.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



CHRIS CORNELL

Higher Truth

UNIVERSAL

7/10

Back to the country: Soundgarden idol's fifth solo outing

Chris Cornell is a big star with an even bigger voice. Here, the Grammy-

winning, Bond-theme-singing ex-Soundgarden and Audioslave man continues a journey into America's dark heart. Previous LPs displayed a skittish experimentalism, but *Higher Truth* is more focused, Cornell wrapping his multi-octave range around 12 tracks of grown-up, melodic country rock. Lead-off single and opening cut "Nearly Forgot My Broken Heart" is indicative of an LP packed with heartfelt balladry and fingerpicked confessionals. The arrangements are pleasingly stripped back – perhaps too much so for those powerful lungs. "Murderer Of Blue Skies" and the raga-ish "Our Time In The Universe" are heftier highlights.

MARK BENTLEY



MARTIN COURTNEY

Many Moons

DOMINO

7/10

Real Estate mainman's nostalgic drift

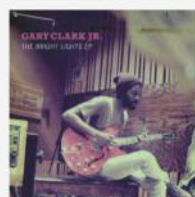
As lead songwriter for Real Estate, Martin

Courtney has set out his stall with three stately guitar pop albums, with records like last year's *Atlas* in thrall to a faded image of what pop music could be – the elegance of '60s pop fed through the understatement of '80s indie. As with the work of his peers The Clientele and Birdie, Courtney's songs read like pop scholarship – and *Many Moons* is studied, but graciously so. "Vestiges", for example, appears to hymn teenage revelation in miniature, while "Focus" lifts drum tattoos from Spector productions and tremolo guitar from dream pop. It's quietly charming, as guitar pop should arguably be.

JONDALE

HOW TO BUY... GARY CLARK JR

Updating the blues...



Bright Lights EP

WARNER BROS., 2010

Clark's major label debut, after a couple of albums on his own Hotwire Unlimited set-up, serves as a four-song

introduction to his fierily descriptive guitar licks and impassioned voice. The title track is a spectacular homage to bluesman Jimmy Reed, though the real keeper is a live, acoustic extrapolation of "When My Train Pulls In" that roams freely for eight minutes.

7/10



Blak And Blu

WARNER BROS., 2012

Seemingly wary of being consigned to the blues ghetto, Clark creates a dashing hybrid of R'n'B, garage-rock,

hip-hop and soul, peppered with smart grooves and erudite solos. "Ain't Messin' 'Round" is infused with a great Stax vibe, "Please Come Home" picked up a Grammy and "Next Door Neighbour Blues" is a classic exemplar of slide guitar.

8/10



Gary Clark Jr., Live

WARNER BROS., 2014

Recorded during a mammoth 18-month tour in support of *Blak And Blu*, this live double is less mannered, more windblown. His

epic version of "Third Stone From The Sun/ If You Love Me (Like You Say)", which rubs Jimi Hendrix up against Little Johnny Taylor, outstrips its LP counterpart, as do incendiary takes on "Blak And Blu" and "Numb".

8/10

ROB HUGHES



CRISTOBAL AND THE SEA

Sugar Now

CITY SLANG

6/10

Continental quartet's syrupy Tropicália

With their quirky name, exotic background – each member hails from a

different European country, coming together in London – and gleefully prim pop blending bossa nova and disco, there's something remarkably Wes Anderson about Cristobal And The Sea. At its best, their debut whips up rousing chamber-funk gems like "Bear Paws" and "Fisheye" that manage to distil the giddy essence of Vampire Weekend and Animal Collective, twin vocalists Alejandro Romero and João Seixas fashioning a smoky Iberian doo-wop. Elsewhere, much of the album, led by Corsican flautist Leïla Séguin, saunters dreamily – and a little aimlessly – along the Copacabana.

PIERS MARTIN



DARKSTAR

Foam Island

WARP

8/10

Sociopolitical heft and sumptuous soundscapes on electronic duo's third

Darkstar founders Aiden Whalley and James Young were so struck by the

attitudes they encountered during election-period trips to visit their families up north that they spent three months interviewing young people in Huddersfield about their hopes and fears. Interwoven into *Foam Island*'s ghostly soundscapes and sumptuous post-garage grooves and delicately rendered avant-pop – with Whalley taking over full-time vocal duties – the insights of these subjects add poignancy to the act's most enthralling effort since its first singles for Hyperdub. Though feelings of disaffection inevitably colour *Foam Island*, a tentatively optimistic note emerges in songs like the title track and "Stoke The Fire".

JASON ANDERSON



DEAFHEAVEN

New Bermuda

ANTI-

7/10

Second from shoegaze-inflected California metal quintet

If Deafheaven have garnered a reputation as the breakout black metal

band of recent times, in part it's because they're not strictly a black metal band at all. There's no corpsepaint here, no songs about Satan and certainly no desecrated churches. Instead, *New Bermuda* offers a tumultuous post-metal that, on passages of "Baby Blue" and "Brought To The Water", reminds one more of the ethereal wandering of shoegaze – their name is a nod to Slowdive – or expository post-rock sorts like Explosions In The Sky. Room for the occasional orthodox moment, though: "Come Back" lines up six minutes of frost-bitten propulsion that find frontman George Clarke reaching for notes of ecstatic anguish.

LOUIS PATTISON



EL VY Return To The Moon

4AD

Debut from Matt Berninger-Brent Knopf duo. *By Laura Snapes*



7/10

reputations inviting collaborations with acts as diverse as Mumford & Sons and the Kronos Quartet. There have been outlandish collaborations with visual artists, an acclaimed documentary, comedy cameos. They'll release an all-star Grateful Dead tribute compilation featuring Bob Weir before the next National record, their seventh.

Frontman Matt Berninger figures the least in these side-projects. A classic words-only man à la Michael Stipe, he plays no instruments, and writes to music rather than filling journals with potential lyrics. He makes an unlikely collaborator, not least because his iconic croon would only dominate new company; at any rate, his insularity helps make him a captivating leading man. But in ex-Menomena multi-instrumentalist Brent Knopf, Berninger found a challenge to get out of context. The pair met when The National played with Menomena back in 2003. Years later, Berninger asked the prolific Knopf, now leading solo project Ramona Falls, to share some sketches for him to write to.

This casual arrangement is evident in their debut as EL VY (pronounced el-vie, as in the plural of Elvis), which

captures Berninger's seldom-seen playful side. He killed off his louche bachelor past on 2005's *Alligator*, where he charmed women by dancing on tables, "cock in hand" ("Karen"), and smothered anxiety in bravado on "Mr November". EL VY's "I'm The Man To Be" seems to synthesise those two songs exactly, but from the perspective of a washed-up rock star rattling around his hotel room rather than an aspiring one. Atop bursts of clenched guitar, Berninger breaks out of his usual forlorn voice to affect a sleazy drawl on the memorable chorus: "I'm peaceful 'cos my dick's in sunlight held up by kites/ 'Cos I'm the man to be." The parody doesn't quite work – it's hooked around brand names (the pathetic figure drinks expensive shampoo and wipes his tears with a designer tie) rather than emotion and self-awareness, as was *High Violet*'s "Sorrow", and feels a little insincere for it.

What rings true is the sense of imposter syndrome. In the *Mistaken For Strangers* documentary, Tom Berninger described his older brother as "a rock star – and he always has been". But a lifelong sense of fraudulence emerges on *Return To The Moon*, where 42-year-old Berninger leaps back a quarter of a decade to consider his teenage years in Cincinnati, Ohio. On the glimmering, tumbling "Paul Is Alive", he finds himself crying into his lemonade outside a punk club, listening to Hüsker Dü through the walls. "Need A Friend" is tougher, all flinching

groove and suspicious stabs of piano, evoking the approach of a panic attack in the club's toilets. By the end of the song he's repeatedly screaming "this is heartbreaking", that sense of frustration bristling close to the surface of his skin. *Return To The Moon* could do with more of these visceral moments to differentiate it from Berninger's day job.

There's plenty of magnetic imagery: "Imagine myself being cool in the backseat of your car," he sings on the breezy title track. "Silent Ivy Hotel" finds him hiding out on another bathroom floor drinking "pool water martinis" in the kind of weird sanctuary he evokes so well. The majority of the other songs mine familiar territory: alienation, ineffable pain, desperation for comfort. Once or twice, Berninger's usual knack for oblique poetry starts to sound like

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** Brent Knopf
Recorded at: The Whimsy Room, Portland; undisclosed studio, LA

Personnel: Matt Berninger (vocals), Brent Knopf (guitar, bass, keys, samples, tambourine), Drew Shoals (percussion), John O'Reilly Jr (percussion), Ural Thomas, Moorea Masa, Allison Hall, Margaret Wehr (backing vocals), Lauren Jacobson (violin)

Q&A

Matt Berninger

Was the record made remotely? About 95 per cent of it, which is not unlike the way I've been working for a while – even on The National's last record, I did all my vocals out here in L.A.

You've said it's your most personal record. It has the most autobiographical foundation to it. It's the most I've dug into my past. One of the perspectives is of a Cincinnati teenager who's falling in love with music and maybe a person – they're falling in love together through music.

Why reflect on your teenage years? I've been listening to a lot of stuff from the '80s. There are a lot of Minutemen references on this record: their documentary *We Jam Econo* was an inspiration, mostly because of how music was the glue of the friendship between those three guys. It gave me some perspective on the fact that music was my salvation or basis of identity as a teenager, and as a young man – my whole life.

Will this record affect the way you write for The National? Brent and I were almost never in a room together, the whole writing of this record. In *The National*, we're trying to do totally the opposite. We were all together at Aaron's house a few months ago, and now they're coming out to L.A. in a couple of weeks. We're going to camp out in a studio and write together in a room. It's already been working really well. *INTERVIEW: LAURA SNAPES*

someone impersonating him, like the title track's "Bought a saltwater fish from a colourblind witch 'cos she said she loved it."

If you're familiar with Menomena's knotted guitar and high piano melodies, then Knopf's presence offers few surprises. There are some outliers: "No Time To Crank The Sun" and "It's A Game" are tender piano devotionals, but they're followed by the two nastiest and best songs on the record, where Knopf and Berninger's violent sensibilities collide well. The brittle, stuttering "Sad Case" has an almost industrial thwack to the chorus, and a reeling outro that sequences so sharply into "Happiness, Missouri" that the latter sounds like an equally intense extension rather than a new song.

Return To The Moon is fully realised and offers plenty of intrigue, but the moments like this final one-two are sadly lacking. Rarely do they sound like a unit and, surprisingly, Berninger is the one that ends up sounding a little lost.



ALELA DIANE & RYAN FRANCESCONI *Cold Moon*

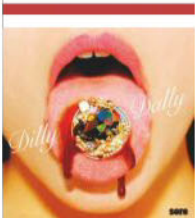
BELIEVE RECORDINGS

7/10

A meeting of sounds and minds in the Pacific Northwest

It was only a matter of time before singer Alela Diane met fellow Portlander Ryan Francesconi, the Balkan-born composer and guitarist known for his folk leanings. What began as a casual conversation last year about creative cul-de-sacs at a friend's show evolved into guitar parts sent via email and, later, a studio collaboration. The resulting album is a subdued but atmospheric work characterised by lyrical poeticism and sparse arrangements (silence punctuates the spectral "Migrants"). Shifting between gentle acoustic guitar and layered orchestral textures, Francesconi provides an elegant framework for Diane, who is in fine voice here.

FIONA STURGES



DILLY DILLY

Sore

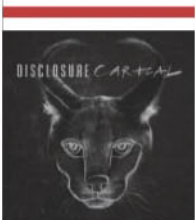
PARTISAN

8/10

Canadian quartet pour potent new whines into old alt.rock bottles

Blessed with a rude, ragged, roaring frontwoman and emotionally raw songs that sound freshly ripped open, Toronto four-piece Dilly Dilly make a fantastic noise on their debut album. Pixies and Breeders are the obvious reference points, especially on convulsive guitar-scorchers like "Desire" and "Ice Cream", though it is sobering to realise singer Katie Monks and fellow founder member Liz Ball were barely even babies during Peak Grunge. There are deeper shadings here too, from the Springsteen-sized whoosh of "Next Gold" to the breathy, reverb-drenched piano ballad "Burned By The Cold". Even with their forgivably derivative leanings, Dilly Dilly explode with promise.

STEPHEN DALTON



DISCLOSURE

Caracal

PMR/ISLAND

8/10

Surrey duo cement their position at the forefront of UK dance music

Grammy-nominated siblings Guy and Howard Lawrence are the 21st-Century answer to the Chemical Brothers, pushing at the possibilities of electronic music while sounding mainstream enough to ensure commercial success. Certainly, their second album is bursting with would-be hits, aided in no small part by some starry collaborators including R&B loverman Miguel on "Good Intentions", nouveau-soul cash cow Sam Smith on "Omen" and Lorde on the excellent "Magnets". Equally at home in a club as blasting out of the speakers at Topshop, *Caracal* has the market in mind, but not at the expense of quality.

FIONA STURGES



DR DRE *Compton: A Soundtrack*

AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

7/10

After 16 years, rap mogul's surprise comeback

Beats headphones billionaire Dr Dre has clearly put the time since his last solo album, 1999's *2001*, to good use, and he admits his return to solo production only came about when he became involved in the *Straight Outta Compton* biopic. Well aware that hip-hop has changed dramatically in his absence, and that his output no longer has the power to shock, *Compton* is a solid reminder of both Dre's skills and the depth of his contacts book: DJ Premier, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar and The Game all appear, although it's an animated Snoop Dogg, perhaps surprisingly, who steals the show on the swaggering "One Shot One Kill".

PIERS MARTIN

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Dilly Dilly



➤ "Making this record was excruciating at times," says Katie Monks, who fronts Toronto's fierce, intoxicating, guitar-bashing alt.rockers Dilly Dilly. "The last eight months, I gave up everything in my life in order to focus on this project. I gave up my job, broke out of a beautiful relationship, moved out of my apartment, even said goodbye to my cats."

Monks and Dilly Dilly co-founder Liz Ball have been working together since 2009, but only when drummer Benjamin Reinhartz and bassist Jimmy Tony Billy Rowlinson joined last year did they muster the "super energy blast" required to fully coalesce as a band. Now they have a terrific debut album, *Sore*, which combines contemporary noise-pop elements with echoes of classic '80s alternative bands like Pixies and Sonic Youth. "We are melding stuff together that we love, to make something completely new," Monks says.

Defying Canada's wholesome reputation, Monks says the Dilly Dilly sound has become increasingly aggressive and confrontational. "Toronto is weird," she explains. "A lot of the artists I know have some seriously deep rage. We're all so passive-aggressive, so when we party we have to get super real and confrontational. Think about how polite Canadians are otherwise? There's a lot of music here that wants to beat the shit out of everyone." STEPHEN DALTON



DUNGEN

Allas Sak

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND

Rustic seventh from mellowing Swedes

8/10

Stockholm's premier psych squad Dungen have been absent for

five years, but the seeds they planted on their decidedly pastoral last album, *Skit I Allt*, have taken root and blossomed into a silky woodland prog. *Allas Sak*, meaning "everyone's thing", marks another gentle shift in direction for Gustav Ejstes, and though Dungen are not saying anything new, they're at least articulating timeless emotion in a classy fashion (and in Swedish, too). The knotty funk of "Franks Kaktus" and cascading slush of "En Gång Om Året" suggest a band very much at ease with themselves, gilding their comfort zone to block out the future.

PIERS MARTIN



EDITORS

In Dream

PIAS

Tilting for the ersatz, electronic Big Music on Highlands-recorded fifth album

5/10

Editors have never shied from pomp and grandeur, an inclination evidently bolstered by the dramatic Atlantic Coast setting where this latest was recorded. The bleeping intro and Tom Smith's histrionic, falsetto-to-baritone vocal on opener "No Harm" sets out the gaudy game plan, with inspirations ranging from U2 bombast ("Salvation") to sub-Depeche Modeism ("Our Love"). Duets with Slowdive's Rachel Goswell tread the uneasy path between tentative and ponderous in songs that flatter to deceive, labouring over triumphalist clichés, as on "Marching Orders", that aim for a peculiarly strained exuberance. Hard, and not necessarily rewarding, work.

GAVIN MARTIN



ESB

ESB

BUREAU B

Twinkly soundtrack king assembles a vintage synth project

7/10

Multi-instrumentalist Yann Tiersen is best known for his impish film scores (*Amélie*, *Good Bye Lenin!*) and his elegant collaborations with vocalists (Neil Hannon, Liz Fraser, etc). However this trio, featuring fellow vintage keyboard enthusiasts Lionel Laquerriere and Thomas Poli, transforms him into a kind of BBC Radiophonic cyborg. It's all played on analogue synths in real time, and "The Flashlight" and "Jellyfish" sound like stately Kraftwerk instrumentals; lengthier tracks like "X2" and "Late" recall mid-'70s Pink Floyd at their most ruminative. Weirdest of all are "Spoon" and "Kim" – hauntological soundscapes that sound like particularly spooky Delia Derbyshire scores.

JOHN LEWIS



FUZZ

Fuzz II

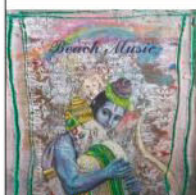
IN THE RED

West Coast trio's powerful second
Powered by Charlie Moothart's gargantuan guitar riffs and Ty Segall's propulsive percussion,

7/10

Fuzz's eponymous 2013 debut was a masterclass in power trio dynamics. Repeating the trick hasn't proved to be quite so easy, and while *Fuzz II* has some absolute stormers – including the excellent “Let It Live”, the 13-minute closing blast of “II” – some of the proto-metal songs are a little too ponderous to really click. Fortunately, the band are an adaptable bunch. “Red Flag” is bracingly thuggish punk, “Jack The Maggot” a neat Slint/Wire hybrid and “Sleestak” a lysergic wig-out, while “Silent Sits The Dustbowl” is the pick of the pack: a dramatic three-part garage-rock epic.

PETER WATTS



ALEX G

Beach Music

DOMINO

Economic sixth album from the Bandcamp breakout star
Philadelphia bedroom musician Alex Giannascoli made waves with his 2014

6/10

debut, *DSU*, although he'd been releasing material online since 2010. Recently, his previous digital-only *Trick* and *Rules* albums were issued, and now we have a new set. Alex G again proves his way with warm and direct, sweetly skewed pop; there's a forlorn charm to “Mud” and “Ready”, which owe much to Elliott Smith, while “Snot” recalls solo J Mascis and “Walk” The Sundays, had they ever roomed with Slint. There's nothing not to like, but at 13 tracks in just 37 minutes, it's all rather slight, and you can't help wondering how many miles this road has left.

SHARON O'CONNELL



GIRLS NAMES

Arms Around A Vision

TOUGH LOVE RECORDS

Spooky post-punk from Belfast's own Bad Seeds
This Belfast quartet, fronted by singer and keyboard player Cathal

7/10

Cully, have steadily expanded their sonic palette over the past four years, adding ghostly electronica and eerie Morricone vibes to their finger-bleeding post-punk dirges. Tracks like “Reticence”, “Chrome Rose” and “I Was You” don't quite live up to their off-kilter introductions, but “Exploit Me” is a magnificent mix of Krautrock drones, sluggish tom-toms and a drunken vocal pitched somewhere between Mark E Smith, Nick Cave and Shane MacGowan. There are also some chuckles – pulsating lead single “A Hunger Artist” seems to simultaneously celebrate and poke fun at the painfully thin, long-suffering artiste.

JOHN LEWIS



GOSPELBEACH

Pacific Surf Line

ALIVE NATURAL SOUND

Beachwood Sparks' latest LA country-rock trip
Brent Rademaker's diligent preservation of a certain LA country-rock sound has seen him pilot some

7/10

handy groups, notably Beachwood Sparks. Gospelbeach is Rademaker's latest band, and one which stays true to the aesthetic that's sustained him for around two decades. Gram love proliferates, then, along with a hint of early-'70s Dead – due, perhaps, to the presence of guitarist Neal Casal (away from The Chris Robinson Brotherhood, he composed interval music for the Dead's recent farewell gigs). Casal's virtuosity also means that while Gospelbeach's Cali vibes may err on cheesiness, they avoid the indie spindliness of some Rademaker projects; the hectic “Nashville West”-style fluency of “Mick Jones” is an outstanding case in point.

JOHN MULVEY



GUN OUTFIT

Dream All Over

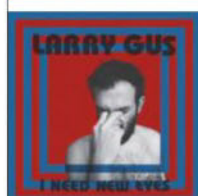
PARADISE OF BACHELORS

Hazy indie Americana – peyote for the ears
Expansive, arid and dusty, the fourth album by Gun Outfit finds the band in Los Angeles (rather than

8/10

their native Olympia) and in vaguely Giant Sand territory where they once called to mind Sonic Youth. Darkness and trippiness co-exist with the West Coast sun; the record was apparently inspired by Kenneth Anger's 1947 film *Fireworks*, although “Scorpions Vegas”, “Matters To A Head” and opener “Gotta Wanna” are also strangely reminiscent of the ‘Kennedy And Heidi’ episode of *The Sopranos*, in which Tony takes peyote – key is that cinematic, slight dreamy quality combined with the desert atmosphere. Lo-fi and understated, the twin vocals of Dylan Sharp and Carrie Keith are also strong throughout.

MARCUS O'DAIR



LARRY GUS

I Need New Eyes

DFA

Eccentric polyrhythmic grooving from Athens experimentalist
Larry Gus is one Panagiotis Melidis, a computer engineer who, five years

6/10

ago, quit his studies in Barcelona and moved back to Greece to make sampladelic pop. His 2012 debut *Silent Congas* was somewhat piecemeal, but *I Need New Eyes* feels more developed, less contrived: a smart art-funk of slight weight but deft movements. The songs – like “NP-Complete”, a limber concoction of quizzical soft-pop falsetto and offbeat organs – are likeable enough. But *I Need New Eyes* comes into its own when Melidis piles on detail. “Black Veil Of Fail” and “Taking The Personal Away” recall the bubbling intricacy of The Avalanches, packed with field recordings, snippets of Greek song and feverish percussion.

LOUIS PATTISON



LUKE HAINES

British Nuclear Bunkers

CHERRY RED

Subterranean Sputnik blues from ex Auteur
Recorder – Haines has a busy biog but is now

8/10

known for eccentric concept albums. His latest, set in a future in which the UK population has retreated into a network of nuclear bunkers, fits the bill neatly. Comprising analogue synthesisers and the occasional voice, the album is reminiscent of Kraftwerk in its combination of chilly electronics and haunting, hooky melodies but has a wonkiness unique to Haines. “Test Card Forever” is as cheeky as a keyboard demo gone horribly wrong; “Bunker Funker” and “Mama Check The Radar At The Dada Station”, meanwhile, find Haines raving in the ruins, midway between utopia and dystopia. Fallout never felt so fun.

MARCUS O'DAIR



STEVE HAUSCHILDT

Where All Is Fled

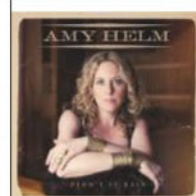
KRANKY

A boffin's guide to analogue synthesisers
With his trio Emeralds now a fading treasure, Cleveland's Steve

7/10

Hauschildt mines deeper into the kosmische past, channelling Manuel Göttsching and the late Dieter Moebius on this, his fifth solo album (excluding 2013's *S/H* outtakes collection). Weaving together seemingly infinite loops of wispy synth melodies and gentle drones, the results are frequently bewitching, if blatantly nostalgic: even the tranquil “Arpeggiare”, its most contemporary moment, might be mistaken for Ulrich Schnauss and Nils Frahm convening in a Berlin basement a decade ago. “Sundialed”'s slowed-down coda meanwhile offers a gentle reminder of the man behind these machines.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



AMY HELM

Didn't It Rain

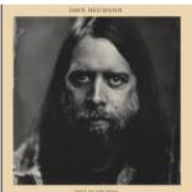
MEMBRAN

Exquisite solo debut from Levon's daughter

8/10

She spent many years working in her father's band and, following Levon's death three years ago, Amy Helm is now releasing her first solo work. Her own exquisitely crafted songs range from the intense, swamp-fuelled funk of “Sky's Falling” and “Roll The Stone” to the spirited country-rock of “Heat Lightning” via the lovely, acoustic folk of “Deep Water”. Levon drums on three tracks recorded shortly before his death, and well-chosen covers of Sam Cooke and Mary Gauthier round out the picture, as Helm belatedly emerges as a significant talent in the Bonnie Raitt/Shelby Lynne mould, yet with a voice of her own.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



DAVE HEUMANN
Here In The Deep
THRILL JOCKEY

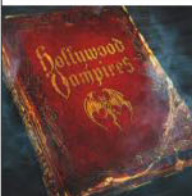
Arbouretum frontman's solo adventure

For all their heavy psych groupthink, Baltimore's Arbouretum have often looked from a distance like

8/10

a vehicle for their frontman. Ostensibly Dave Heumann's first solo album, *Here In The Deep* more or less confirms as much. The thicker drones are replaced by more dappled textures that reveal his folk-rock heart, with the lovely "Ides Of Summer" chiming in a way reminiscent of REM's "Green Grow The Rushes". An incantatory churn through the trad "Greenwood Side", though, would've sat neatly enough on Arbouretum's last set, *Coming Out Of The Fog* (2013). And it's fitting that the album pivots on a ruminative jam, "Ends Of The Earth", on which Heumann, in elevated Richard Thompson-esque form, is joined by his regular bandmates.

JOHN MULVEY



HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES
Hollywood Vampires
UMC

Star-studded tribute to Sunset Strip's hard-drinking 1970s hedonists

6/10

Age may have dulled Alice Cooper's appetite for destruction, but not for volume: the mascara-wearing pensioner teams up here with Johnny Depp and a cast of A-list rockers for 14 tracks of screaming metal largely written by his fellow, now-deceased hell-raisers from LA's Rainbow Bar & Grill. Equal parts entertaining and self-indulgent – usually simultaneously – it earns a pass thanks to charitable intentions, with money raised going to MusiCares. Covers of "Whole Lotta Love" (with AC/DC's Brian Johnson) and Badfinger's "Come And Get It" (with Paul McCartney) might, however, be better suited to Comic Relief. Guaranteed to wake the dead.

WYNNDHAM WALLACE



THE ICARUS LINE
All Things Under Heaven
AGITATED

Nihilistic intensity redux; Warren Ellis guests

8/10

Having dealt with death, a revolving-door membership, substance abuse and serial record-company misfortunes, LA's Icarus Line are obviously survivors. On their seventh studio LP they sound not beaten but energised by the spectre of society's destruction, off the chain and high on a cocktail of primal garage punk, astral jazz, pitch-black blues and psych ragas both damned and divine. The Birthday Party and The Stooges, Alice Coltrane, early Funkadelic and Spacemen 3 help guide them to their heart of darkness, from the opener's pounding tumult through the effects-scorched "Incinerator Blue". Only closer "Sleep Now" calms the apocalyptic storm.

SHARON O'CONNELL



JOE JACKSON
Fast Forward
EARMUSIC

Hefty globetrotting opus, with local guests

7/10

It's 36 years since the compositionally clever, new-wave pop of Jackson's *Look Sharp!* debut. He's since explored swing and '60s jazz, spent time on Sony Classical and scored a theatre piece based on the life of Bram Stoker. His first album of (mostly) originals in seven years consists of four sets of four songs each, recorded in NYC, Amsterdam, Berlin and New Orleans. "Neon Rain" suggests funk rock is not his forte, but here are smoky, jazz-pop elegies ("The Blue Time"), era-defining homages (a cover of Television's "See No Evil") and bittersweet, elegantly orchestrated ruminations ("Far Away"), underlining Jackson's reputation as a maverick auteur.

SHARON O'CONNELL



Joe Jackson's records have often had a deep, city-specific resonance – on *I'm The Man*, it was London, with *Night And Day* and *Night And Day II*, New York. But *Fast Forward* is themed around four different cities. "They're all familiar and meaningful places to me," explains Jackson of his choices, "but it really started with the songs. I had too many and I was looking for a way to organise them, so I decided to do a series of EPs and tackle four songs at a time. There were musicians I wanted to work with in all of these cities and they all said 'Yes', so that was exciting. And it ended up as an album, anyway." Jackson drafted in local guest musicians on each set to provide "a different flavour", but sees the record as being "all held together by my writing, playing and singing, and what the Germans call *Weltanschauung* – my way of looking at the world." Down the years, he's moved cities and continents several times, but Jackson now calls Berlin home. What keeps him there now is "being able to get a good beer at 4am and breakfast at 4pm. London and New York have gotten ridiculously expensive, uptight, over-regulated, and not as much fun as they used to be. Berlin is free and relaxed but still interesting."

SHARON O'CONNELL



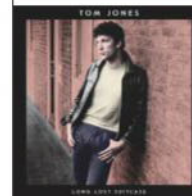
JEAN MICHEL JARRE
Electronica Part 1: The Time Machine
COLUMBIA

Oxygène composer gets autobiographical with army of famous friends

6/10

For some reason, France's elder statesman of easy-listening electronica did not make the guestlist on Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*. So now he's made his own all-star equivalent, the first volume in a 30-track double set of duets and collaborations. Cherry-picking guests from multiple generations and genres, from Tangerine Dream to Armin van Buuren, Pete Townshend to Fuck Buttons, Jarre's own pastel-shaded musical signature sometimes gets lost in the crowd. But his Vince Clarke joint venture "Automatic" builds to a fine crescendo of chunky electro while director/composer John Carpenter helps transform "A Question Of Blood" into a shimmering Vangelis-sized anthem.

STEPHEN DALTON



TOM JONES
Long Lost Suitcase
VIRGIN

Wide-ranging third set with producer Ethan Johns

8/10

Albeit enforced, Tom Jones' exit from primetime television could be timely. Third time round, with songs to complement the singer's forthcoming memoir, Ethan Johns' stripped country settings on Willie Nelson and The Milk Carton Kids tunes immediately find Sir Tom's grit and gravitas. Elvis Presley's presence looms – '68 TV Special warm-up-style in the footstomping take-down of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Bring It On Home" and in a frazzled invocation of Gillian Welch's "Elvis Presley Blues". But Jones is his own man, effortlessly inhabiting Los Lobos' "Everybody Loves A Train", the Stones' "Factory Girl" and more.

GAVIN MARTIN



KILLING JOKE
Pylon
SPINEFARM

Wonderfully splenetic offering from enraged rock veterans

8/10

Described by bassist Youth as "their Black Album", *Pylon* sees Killing Joke maintain the late-career renaissance precipitated by the original lineup reuniting for 2010's *Absolute Dissent*. The vibe is metal with a fat side order of groove – check "Dawn Of The Hive" for some hardcore thrashing and "New Jerusalem" or "Delete" for some brilliant rock swing – and the mood is bitter bordering on desolate, with Jaz Coleman and Paul Ferguson setting the world to rights on tracks like the bleak "New Cold War" and the brilliant, heartfelt anthem, "War On Freedom". Comes in a deluxe version with five additional, equally hair-raising tracks.

PETER WATTS

ISRAEL NASH

Israel Nash's Silver Season

LOOSE/THIRTY TIGERS

Wake of the flood: a cosmic American visionary tunes in to the elements. *By John Mulvey*



8/10

Biblical of name and of beard, Israel Nash fits a kind of psychedelic frontiersman template almost too perfectly. The creation myth of this, his fourth album, is full of elemental interventions and manly responses: a homemade studio in a place called Dripping

Springs; a cataclysmic flood, just as recording sessions were about to begin; a staunch, all-hands-to-the-pump rescue and repair operation. Nash, though, is adept at making a romance out of a crisis, and so much of *Silver Season* pitches him as a cosmic soul, toughing it out with nature. These are songs packed with fire and flood and “*vim and vigor*”, where Samhain bonfires burn beneath Hill Country stars, and where our hero can present himself, with a more or less straight face, as a noble visionary. There’s a poncho for warmth and a child on the way. “*I don’t live like the others*,” he gently asserts in “A Coat Of Many Colors”. “*I see twice as many colors*.”

A bit daft, perhaps, and there are moments on *Silver Season* when it all sounds a little like the Fleet Foxes letting off steam at an Iron John summer camp. But such is the potency of Nash’s music, what might read on the page as macho whimsy is transformed, in a whorl of pedal steel, into something altogether more seductive. Nash and his band are based just outside the music city of Austin, Texas, though their outlaw aesthetics are much more aligned to the vintage folk-rock sound of Los Angeles. Languid grooves and high harmonies proliferate. Songs typically clock in at around five minutes, and feel like they could roll on much longer. The ravishing “Willow”, to pluck just one from nine, may have scholars of this stuff trying to work out whether Nash is more indebted to the traditions of Topanga or Laurel Canyon.

My money, for what it’s worth, is on Topanga. It’s hard to hear Nash without thinking of Neil Young, thanks chiefly to the high and quavering register which he favours, and the way his voice sits amidst a tangle of similar tones and russet signifiers. Like *Rain Plains*, its 2013 predecessor, *Silver Season* posits a path not quite taken by Young: one where Crosby, Stills & Nash backed him on *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, instead of Crazy Horse. They may have been a little more tense and electric than much of *Silver Season*, but those clips of CSNY jamming “Down By The River” in the *Celebration At Big Sur* film seem as good an antecedent as any for songs like “The Fire And The Flood”.

“Lavendula”, meanwhile, exemplifies a prevailing atmosphere that also isn’t too far from



Gene Clark fantasias like “Silver Raven” and “Strength Of Strings” – a roots-based sound that is layered and manicured to such an opulent point that it becomes a sort of rustic baroque. For all the backstory of piling up sandbags to keep the floodwater away from the equipment, then dredging mud out of the studio – and notwithstanding “Parlour Song”’s allusive indictment of gun crime – Nash is fabulist rather than realist. Earthy matters are a springboard

to the transcendent, not an end in themselves.

At the heart of it all is a song called “LA Lately” (it’s also the opening track on our free CD this month), a dazed paean to what might plausibly be seen as his spiritual home. The way Nash talks about it, he and guitarist Joey McClellan (who also figures in the current Midlake lineup) wrote the song in 20 minutes as their van was leaving the city after a show. “We had stayed in Silver Lake for a few days, Hollywood sign in the distance. The whole thing was a moment,” he says, going on to mention a meeting with Jonathan

Wilson, whose *Gentle Spirit* (2011) was maybe the last album to traverse this territory with such style.

Discussing the trip, Nash has a tone bordering on gauche excitement. “LA Lately”, though, transforms that raw thrill into something closer to awed grandeur, where a Mellotron ushers in a rapturous amalgam of steel and harmonies, and the city is stripped away to reveal its volatile geography. “Where did all the hills go, swallowed by the sand?” he wonders, before admitting, “at a glance, the ocean scares me.” It’s the sound of a man being overwhelmed by the majesty and possibilities of his environment, and simultaneously being energised into trying to articulate that vast emotional and physical scope. And it’s the point where the fanciful

ambition of *Silver Season* crystallises into an unambiguously terrific album. Like he sings, “*It comes in waves...*”

Q&A

Israel Nash

Can you tell us about the creek breaking and how it affected the studio and the album?

The entire state of Texas has been in drought for a number of years, but that’s not the case any longer. The day we were to start tracking, the 100-year flood rolled in. The first four days of our recording session were devoted to digging French drains, sandbagging and cleaning out the studio where a wet-weather creek erupted from the flash flood and ripped through the building. So that was the beginning of *Silver Season*. Those situations make an album and you can hear those things all over the record. But besides the music, and at a greater level even, it was a great showing of the dedication and teamwork that is this band. We are real brothers, committed to each other in ways that I think are greater than any record or any song. It’s about people coming together and affecting each other in great ways. You can make it through a flood...

What does “I don’t live like the others/I see twice as many colors” mean?

It’s about seeing and knowing the world around you and the life in it with renewed sight. If that’s through your life being changed, your spirit being moved, psychedelics, or meditation, or all of them, it doesn’t really matter. It’s the result and it’s amazing.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Recorded at:** Plum Creek Sound, “in the Hill Country of Texas”

Produced by: Israel Nash

Personnel: Israel Nash (vocals, guitars), Joey McClellan (guitars), Eric Swanson (pedal steel), Aaron McClellan (bass), Josh Fleischmann (drums)



THE LAKE POETS

The Lake Poets

DSE

Sparkling Dave Stewart-produced debut from Sunderland troubadour
When Marty Longstaff received an email purporting to come from

8/10

Stewart, inviting him to record in Nashville, he ignored it as a prank. The Eurythmics man (and fellow Wearsider) persisted and sent an air ticket, resulting in a stunning debut album recorded in just three days. The Music Row session musicians employed as part-time Lake Poets make a telling contribution. They're incidental, though, to Longstaff's dextrous finger-picking and high, yearning voice on a set of gorgeous songs that explode out of English folk tradition and range from unashamed romance ("Your Face") to devastating social observation ("Vane Tempest", about his father's role in the miners' strike). Quietly brilliant.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



DARLENE LOVE

Introducing Darlene Love

SONY

First secular album from legendary Spector singer since 1988

8/10

After topping the charts with "He's A Rebel" and a storied if fitful career in the half-century since, Love requires no introduction – but this certainly feels like a rebirth, akin to Solomon Burke's late revival a few years back. With two new Springsteen compositions ("Night Closing In" and "Just Another Lonely Mile") and Costello's previously unrecorded "Forbidden Nights" nestling alongside venerable favourites, the songs old and new share a classic '60s girl-pop sensibility with sha-la-la choruses and Love's cavernous voice booming over Stevie Van Zandt's updated wall-of-sound production. Several million Amy Winehouse fans should rush out and purchase immediately.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



LUCERO

All A Man Should Do

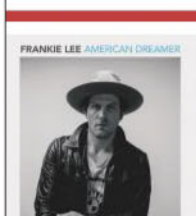
ATO

Great Memphis sound from great Memphis group

8/10

It seems strange that Lucero are not better regarded, at least to the same degree as approximate reference points Drive-By Truckers and The Hold Steady. It's possible that Lucero's reputation as indefatigable road warriors somehow counts against them, fuelling a suspicion of hoary genericana. Like Lucero's previous works, however, *All A Man Should Do* is a thing of considerable depth and sensitivity. "Went Looking For Warren Zevon's Los Angeles" is a beautifully wrought ballad, and "Can't You Hear Them Howl" a pugnacious addition to Lucero's already formidable canon of soul-spiked rock'n'roll.

ANDREW MUELLER



FRANKIE LEE

American Dreamer

LOOSE MUSIC

Heartfelt Americana from Minneapolis wanderer

8/10

Behind this woozy, country-infused LP lies a young man with an old soul – and Hank Williams' hat. Minneapolis' Frankie Lee has been performing since he was in his early teens, jamming with the likes of Slim Dunlap (of The Replacements). Since then he's given up a football scholarship and, to fund his performing habit, spent six years as a carpenter (alongside Townes Van Zandt's son, JT). His determination has paid off with this rich and understated debut brimming with wisdom and heart. Among the highlights is "Black Dog", which rails against social injustice and exhorts us to "*take another look and tell me what you see*".

FIONA STURGES



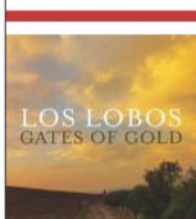
► It's 16 years since Minneapolis' Frankie Lee began performing country songs in his hometown, but it's taken until now for him to make his first album, *American Dreamer*. What took him so long?

"I've had offers, but I wanted to live and go where life took me before I committed to this huge thing," he explains. "I wanted experience to pull from."

Now he has it in abundance: after five years playing in local bars, he left school and "moved to the places where the music I liked came from". First stop was Nashville where he immediately ran into Merle Haggard. Next came Memphis and then Austin, Texas, where he stayed for seven years, doing carpentry by day and watching bands and performing by night. "It was almost like studying, watching these people play. That was when it clicked that you could live a certain way and do a certain thing and be content."

Over the last 12 years Lee has suffered from the sleep disorder, narcolepsy, which he believes enhances his songwriting. "I don't know where certain songs come from – they just drift in and out of my waking and dreaming. Things are definitely more vivid to me. It's not a disability, it's a blessing."

FIONA STURGES



LOS LOBOS

Gates Of Gold

PROPER

First new music in five years from the East LA pathfinders

6/10

As ever, when Los Lobos content themselves with sounding like Los Lobos, they're marvellous. The swaggering "Mis-Treater Boogie Blues", the hard-charging "There I Go" and the straightforward Mexicana of "Poquito Para Aqui" all reflect their happy knack of making a hybrid of Mexican folk music and Californian rock sound no hybrid at all. The lighter touches make less impression – "There I Go" is an aimless soul noodle, and "When We Were Free" can't figure out how to start, then can't figure out how to finish.

ANDREW MUELLER



JESSE MALIN

Outsiders

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

Second album of the year finds New York garage punk heavyweight depleted

5/10

A solo career hiatus followed the reformation of Malin's teenage outfit D Generation in 2011. Batteries suitably recharged, sessions for this spring's *New York Before The War* produced over 40 tracks. Almost inevitably, up against its predecessor's coherence and resolve, this quickly released follow-up has the feel of mismatched leftovers. Swaggering Crescent City funeral band finale "You Know It's Dark When Atheists Start To Pray" leavens the prevailing grim-faced worldview, but elsewhere the title track's tired Bo Diddley revamp and the cutely naïve acoustic cover of The Clash's "Stay Free" offer a worn approach to over-familiar territory.

GAVIN MARTIN



JONO MCCLEERY

Pagodes

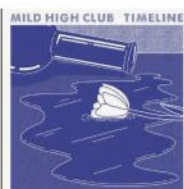
IF MUSIC

Applying hip-hop vandalism to folksy textures

8/10

It would be easy to dismiss McCleery as yet another hirsute, earnest singer-songwriter, crooning string-wreathed songs while playing clawhammer acoustic guitar. And indeed, tracks like "The Idea Of Us" and "Bet She Does" do all that very well, as does his elegant version of Robert Wyatt's "Age Of Self". But McCleery paints from a broader palette. His USP is to create acoustic backing tracks – Debussy harp flourishes, Davey Graham guitar vamps, jazzy piano – and then vandalise them using a J Dilla-style cut-and-splice approach. It results in slurring, sluggish, slightly demented soundscapes that mirror his disorientated, loveborn torch-songs. Superb stuff.

JOHN LEWIS



MILD HIGH CLUB

Timeline

CIRCLE STAR

Woozy bedroom psych-pop of the Rundgren school

Alexander Brettin is a jazz-trained Midwesterner; Mild High Club his loosely

7/10

assembled collective of psych-pop devotees, owners of well-rehearsed chops and impeccable record collections. Perversely recorded on a Fostex four-track, this debut is an enjoyable, wittily written selection of material that, in its desire for vintage feel, manages to be instantly familiar. Todd Rundgren is an obvious touchpoint, but those Beach Boys/High Llamas chord changes and *Peppery* Beatles melodies are tempered by intricate, indie-ish inflections, all framed by arch, adenoidal vocals. Things gel on "Undeniable" and "Windowpane", fine companion pieces to psych-pop practitioners like Tame Impala or Jonathan Wilson.

MARK BENTLEY



JOANNA NEWSOM

Divers

DRAG CITY

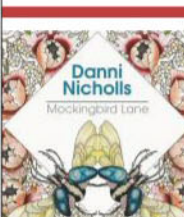
Sublime songcraft and mysterious narrative

The maturing of Joanna Newsom's songs – and

9/10

her voice, which has gathered strength and depth since her earlier, more self-conscious albums – has been a joy to behold, and *Divers* feels like her most comfortable, charming album. The arrangements, often ravishing, sometimes playful, twist around Newsom's vocals, dropping all kinds of hints, from the country licks that tickle "Goose Eggs", to the amorphous glow of the title song. It's also a highly literate album, of which "Sapokanikan" is an exemplar: its first half alone leaps from Shelley to landscape painter Arthur Streeton, through the 'Tobias And The Angel' tableau.

JON DALE



DANNI NICHOLLS

Mockingbird Lane

DANNI NICHOLLS MUSIC

Terrific second album by under-regarded British country singer

8/10

If Danni Nicholls came from Nashville rather than Bedford, she'd already be rather better known. After all, she possesses an old-school country voice as capable of a sumptuous Cline-like croon as it is of the husky intimacies of an Alison Krauss, and a warm, wry line in confessional songwriting. *Mockingbird Lane*, like its fine predecessor, 2013's *A Little Redemption*, was recorded in Nashville, which will struggle to produce many better albums this year. "Back To Memphis" is an understated soul epic, and "Feel Again" a spare but unsparing take on the heartbreak ballad.

ANDREW MUELLER



THE ORDINARY BOYS

The Ordinary Boys

TREAT YOURSELF

Preston and co effect a very ordinary comeback

With the disgraces of *Celebrity Big Brother* long

4/10

forgotten, The Ordinary Boys make an odd return with their first album in nine years. Their eponymous fourth leaves behind their ska-pop past to mine the American alt.rock that came between grunge and pop-punk – all thrashed-out verses and half-time choruses more commonly found on *American Pie* and Farrelly Brothers soundtracks. It's heavily compressed and cluttered, as if produced by Velvet Monkeys' Don Fleming (Rory Atwell and Hookworms' MJ were actually in charge), and offers little variation: they swap crunch for jangle on "Almost Ready", while "Panic Attack" is cartoonish bubble grunge. A chore.

LAURA SNAPES



DOE PAORO

After

ANTI-

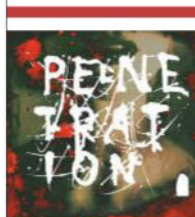
LA-based upstate New Yorker puts her own spin on modern R&B/pop

Co-produced by Sean Carey at Justin Vernon's April Base, Doe Paoro's second

8/10

LP melds elements of R&B, synthpop and Bon Iver-informed atmospherics into a diverse, dynamic showcase for her writing, singing and piano-playing. Considering its arty origins in Eau Claire, much of *After* sounds radio-friendly, as Paoro delivers performances that resemble Mary J Blige ("Growth/Decay"), Lana Del Rey (the brooding "Wake Up In Nowhere") and, yep, Adele (the gospel-inflected "Hypotheticals"), while the tethered intensity of her songs unifies the LP through these tonal shifts. Paoro's character comes through most strikingly on solo piano ballad "Outlines", which has the vulnerability and resolve of a young Laura Nyro.

BUD SCOPPA



PENETRATION

Resolution

POLESTAR

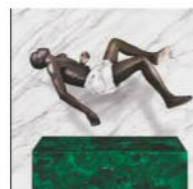
Reactivated new wave icons party like it's 1979

The first new album from County Durham punk survivors Penetration in 36 years offers a warm rush of

7/10

nostalgia for anyone old enough to recall classic new wave singles like "Don't Dictate". Singer Pauline Murray and her bass-playing partner Robert Blamire are joined on this crowd-funded comeback by various old friends including Buzzcocks drummer John Maher. Their jangly, soulful, melodic take on punk-pop still has freshness and urgency, particularly on almost folkish numbers like "Just Drifting" and "The Feeling". The spoken-word finale "Outromistra" puts an agreeable twist on the formula as Murray reads an extract from EM Forster's dystopian science-fiction fable *The Machine Stops* over churning guitars. Very new wave.

STEPHEN DALTON



PETITE NOIR

La Vie Est Belle/Life Is Beautiful

DOUBLE SIX

Lukewarm debut by red-hot African singer and musician

Petite Noir is one Yannick Ilunga, a half-Congolese,

6/10

half-Angolan performer who lives in Cape Town and peddles a self-styled "new African aesthetic" called "noirwave" that sounds impossibly exciting – broadly, he seeks to channel the spirit of Fela Kuti via post-punk and electronics – though in practice falls flat across this full-length. Having embarked on a quest for identity and freedom, Ilunga is interesting enough to carry the standard-issue indie of recent singles "Down" and "Best", but too often *La Vie Est Belle*, produced by Boxed In's Oli Bayston, has all the flair of an Editors potboiler, so a potentially uplifting record becomes quite draining.

PIERS MARTIN



DUANE PITRE

Bayou Electric

IMPORTANT

New Orleans ambient auteur heads up the creek

Duane Pitre's recent run of albums – *Feel Free* (2012), *Bridges* (2013) and now *Bayou Electric* – have pushed him discreetly to the

8/10

forefront of contemporary drone music. If that genre often seems chilly and academic, Pitre's slow and graceful arcs have substantially more emotional heft. *Bayou Electric*, in particular, is earthed in place and memory, its sustained organ and string tones augmented by field recordings made on long-held family land in Louisiana, as massed crickets resonate down the generations. The obligatory Eno comparison would be to *Apollo: Atmospheres And Soundtracks*, but maybe think of this is an accidental adjunct to the *Ambient* series: not *Music For Airports*, but *Music For Bayous*.

JOHN MULVEY



POLE

Wald

POLE MUSIC

Teutonic dub sage trundles on

Eight long years have passed since the last Pole album, *Steingarten*, and during that time Stefan

7/10

Betke has taken to refracting his slow, steady music through the prism of nature – hence the recent "Waldgeschichten" ("Forest Stories") dub series. This seventh album, *Wald* (meaning forest), looks to expand upon "Waldgeschichten"'s palette of live elements and odd sounds. One almost detects a sense of humour and freedom within Betke's newfound but essentially stoic approach. *Wald* is slinkier and brighter than before: "Aue" and "Kaefer" rustle and skank jazzily, while "Eichelhaeher" buckles under the weight of mangled feedback. It is, for Pole, a breath of fresh air.

PIERS MARTIN



PROMISED LAND SOUND

For Use And Delight

PARADISE OF BACHELORS

Darlings of Nashville's rock underground grow up on sophomore album
It's fascinating to watch millennial musicians

8/10

appropriate rock's sacred texts, and Promised Land Sound approach their folk-rock source material with both wide-eyed wonder and deep understanding. Lead guitarist Sean Thompson displays precocious virtuosity through *For Use And Delight*, spinning out bent-note filigrees that recall the work of his legendary namesake. And if PLS' instrumental prowess outdistances their vocals at this early stage, Joe Scala summons a strident quaver on "Push And Pull (All The Time)", "Otherworldly Pleasures" and closer "Within Sight", evoking Dylan and McGuinn amid lysergic guitar splendour, suggesting this throwback band has a bright future.

BUD SCOPPA



PROTOMARTYR

The Agent Intellect

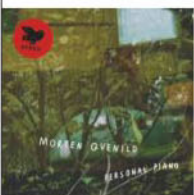
HARDLY ART

Darkly clamorous, post-punk third

7/10

If we are all bound for hell in a handcart, then Detroit's Protomartyr certainly aren't going there without a protest. But alongside matters existential, there are also plenty of personal expressions here, referencing everything from Alzheimer's to local scenester Matt Ziolkowski. Joe Casey claims that "the band does the music and I do the yelling", but he's selling his compelling vocals short. Casey's playmates' moody, post-punk style echoes Joy Division and Magazine, although "Towards Starve" affects Girls Against Boys' saturnine swagger. "False happiness is on the rise," warns the singer on highlight "Why Does It Shake?", as shards of brittle guitar shatter over a frantic beat.

SHARON O'CONNELL



MORTEN QVENILD

Personal Piano

HUBRO

HyPer(sonal) solo debut from Susanna's one-man magical orchestra
Whether making Norwegian Americana

8/10

with his piano trio In The Country, working as Susanna Wallumrød's partner in Susanna & The Magical Orchestra, or in numerous other projects including Jaga Jazzist, Morten Qvenild has spent the last 15 years establishing himself at the forefront of the thriving Norwegian scene. Qvenild's solo debut, played on what he calls his HyPer(sonal) Piano, explores the sort of piano-hammer-hitting-snow territory one might associate with Nils Frahm, although there are distant vocals in places and he cuts loose towards the end of the eight-and-a-half-minute "Kick And Glide". There's also a surprise cover: Rihanna's "We Found Love".

MARCUS O'DAIR

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Promised Land Sound



➤ To the four members of Promised Land Sound, still in their early twenties, Kings Of Leon are the elder statesmen of Nashville's indie-rock scene, while Jack White, whose Third Man issued a PLS single in 2013, is an inspirational role model. In various combinations, guitarists Sean Thompson and Peter Stringer-Hye, lead singer/bass player Joe Avery and his drummer brother Evan have been playing music in Nashville underground bands since they were teenagers. "Back then, if you were somewhat 'weird' and 'alternative', the only fun thing was playing music," Thompson recalls. "There was a vibrant house-show circuit while we were in high school, which set the tone for the next few years. The Nashville show scene is wonderfully inclusive and encompasses a ton of different genres." So does the band's range of influences - all the way to Can and Amon Düül II, though it starts, not surprisingly, with Dylan, The Byrds and Fairport Convention. Contemporary artists are helping shape them as well; Nashville-based William Tyler and Angel Olsen, and kindred spirit Steve Gunn are among the established artists who've taken PLS under their wings. "For the past 10 years or so, Nashville has been a hotbed of creativity," says Thompson. "We're stoked to have been a part of that." Spoken like the veteran he already is. BUD SCOPPA



TOM ROBINSON

Only The Now

CASTAWAY NORTHWEST

Radical rethink: punk-poet legend reconnects pop and conscience with a vengeance

8/10

With a revitalised band, guest appearances by a legion of luminaries (including Martin Carthy, Billy Bragg and Ian McKellen) and producer Gerry Diver's dense, string-driven sonics, Tom Robinson's first album in 20 years is revelatory. Store-bought justice, fraudulent religion and the tragedy of children abused are among the topics, but Robinson's hard-boiled topicality is matched by perhaps his strongest ever set of melodies (especially the Kinks-ish "Home In The Morning" and the rattling "Cry Out") and a deep seam of humanity, most evident on the title track.

LUKE TORN



ROGER LION

Roger Lion

TEAM LOVE

Odd alliances: one-time Scud Mountain Boy's atypical trip-hop turn
Uniting with Seattle hip-hop specialist Budo, indie darling Joe

7/10

Pernice's new project feels like a soul and R&B interpolation from an alien planet. Minimalist, percussion-heavy, and topped with Pernice's glossy, velvety pure tenor, its gruesome tales of love gone wrong hinge on the atmosphere created. It's ambitious and unpredictable - lead track "Twenty Thousand Times" hews toward classic soul balladry, complete with horns, yet with its innards torn out. "A Dead Man's Song", which subtly builds from quiet contemplation to a brash, in-the-red guitar/horn/synthesiser mashup, is the most immediate cut.

LUKE TORN



SEXWITCH

Sexwitch

ECHO/BMG CHRYSALIS

Bat For Lashes' global psychedelic side-project

8/10

In which Natasha Khan and London psych-rock band Toy team up to cover Middle Eastern and Thai music from the 1970s (plus Skip Spence's "War In Peace"). What could be tokenistic gels well. Toy provide the sun-baked drones and sandstorm frenzies, while Khan ditches her usual cut-glass vocals in favour of guttural moans. It's thrilling: she leads an army of "dark girls" on "Helelyos", and stirs a nervy tale of addicted love on "Ha Howa Ha Howa". *Sexwitch* peaks with majestic centrepiece "Kassidat El Hakka", seven minutes of rumbling drums and buzzsaw guitar that reaches an apocalyptic hilt worthy of Swans.

LAURA SNAPES



BALLAKÉ SISSOKO & VINCENT SEGAL

Musique De Nuit

NO FORMAT

Nine heavenly face-offs between kora and cello
The kora has found a home in Western salons as well as

8/10

world music festivals, its serene and rarefied tone given a classical gloss on albums like Toumani Diabaté's *Mandé Variations*. Sissoko and Segal's artfully titled *Chamber Music* (2009) exploited that connection, pitting the Malian kora master and French cellist in a series of agile duets. *Musique De Nuit* is a quietly ravishing follow-up, made in part on Sissoko's Bamako rooftop; distant city hum can at times be detected beneath the pair's refined jousting. Nimble takes on Malian party music ("Super Etoile") are inventive additions. Mostly, though, an airy grace predominates, pitching the duo as baroque successors to the seminal Toumani Diabaté/Alí Farka Touré hook-ups.

JOHN MULVEY

DEERHUNTER

Fading Frontier

4AD

Bradford Cox stays strong on unexpectedly uplifting seventh.

By Jason Anderson



9/10

IT'S HARD NOT to hear a glimmer of gratitude in Bradford Cox's voice as, not long into his band's thrilling and unexpectedly affirmative seventh album, he sings, "I'm living my life, I'm living my life." The idea that Deerhunter's frontman

has a stake in the here and now also seems to elicit a measure of surprise – he repeats the phrase as if he's trying to convince himself that it's true. Then again, a life-threatening encounter with a swiftly moving hunk of steel and glass is bound to make anyone consider their place in the world.

Though Cox has been reluctant to divulge details about the car accident that left him hospitalised last December, the effect has clearly been profound. As he put it bluntly in an Instagram message while waiting for X-rays, "Can't move much. Incredible pain." Given Cox's long history of suffering due to Marfan syndrome, one can barely comprehend all that's contained in those last two words. Cox has said the accident "erased all illusions for me" and was subsequently treated for depression. Yet he also claims to be pleased about the antidepressants' dampening effects on his libido and the "manic urge" that fuelled the making of 2013's *Monomania*, the band's most abrasive disc to date.

Regardless of how much Cox owes his current disposition to pharmaceutical benefit, *Fading Frontier* bursts with a very different kind of energy to the darker sort of recent years. Cox has gone so far as to liken *Fading Frontier* to the first day of spring after a brutal winter. While matters are not necessarily so sunny throughout the album, never before has Deerhunter's brand of noise been such a joyful one.

Of all their releases in the last decade, *Fading Frontier* strikes the most satisfying balance between the menacing, mantric grooves of 2006's *Cryptograms* and the pop melodicism that emerged on 2010's *Halcyon Digest*. From the sideways funk of first 45 "Snakeskin", the beatific vocal harmonies of "Breaker" or the synth-drenched Tangerine Dream-iness of "Ad Astra", the stylistic detours here somehow keep sending them further into the light.

Recorded with *Halcyon Digest* producer Ben H Allen in Atlanta, the new album may partially owe its lowered anxiety levels to the comforts that go with working close to home. And whereas the line between Cox's Deerhunter activities and his solo endeavours as Atlas Sound has been blurry at times, *Fading Frontier* sounds very much like a group effort. Cox's powerful presence is well-balanced by equally strong contributions by his Deerhunter co-founders, guitarist and keyboardist Lockett Pundt and drummer Moses Archuleta. (Officially enlisted in early 2013, Josh McKay returns on bass.) Indeed, "Breaker" is the first recording in which Cox and Pundt share lead vocals, a strategy that lends a Byrds-ian prettiness to the hazy but propulsive dreampop template that prevails on *Fading Frontier*. With former Stereolab leader Tim Gane dropping by to add a Left Banke-like dusting of electric harpsichord, "Duplex Planet" is just as fetching. Broadcast's James Cargill also makes a guest



SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at: Maze Studios ATL, Atlanta
Produced by: Ben H Allen III and the band
Personnel includes: Bradford Cox (lead vocals, guitar, percussion, keyboard, electronics), Lockett Pundt (guitar, keyboards, vocals), Moses Archuleta (drums, percussion, electronics), Josh McKay (bass), Tim Gane (electric harpsichord on "Duplex Planet"), James Cargill (synthesizers and tape manipulation on "Take Care"), Zumi Rosow (treated alto sax on "Snakeskin")

appearance to add tape manipulations and yet another layer of synthesiser gloss to "Take Care", a hypnotic ballad that sounds custom-built for a night-time driving scene in a moody '80s crime thriller. *Fading Frontier*'s similarly cinematic centrepiece, "Leather And Wood", demonstrates the album's richness in regards to texture and detail. Glitchy bleeps, choppy beats and other discordant elements underpin a plaintive piano part and Cox's eerie, treated vocal. "I believe we can die, I believe we can live again," he croons, as matters of mortality again hijack his stream of thoughts.

And despite Cox's claims about the benefits of living libido-free, there's no lack of swagger in "Snakeskin". Though this burst of bravura may contrast sharply with *Fading Frontier*'s more placid songs, it highlights the clarity of purpose and offhand sensuality shared by all of the songs here. The anger and anguish prevalent in *Monomania*

have been replaced by a greater sense of ease on Cox's part. That's true even when he sings of a lover's departure in the closing "Carrión".

Never one to miss an opportunity for wordplay, Cox delights in the confusion he creates as to whether he's singing the unpleasant word in the title or imploring that special someone to "carry on". Either way, the pun is perfectly suited to a work that could have been mired in despondency, but is instead rife with a lust for life and an eagerness to engage with the moments at hand. As Cox sings in the final track, "I will stay strong, I will stay strong." *Fading Frontier* leaves no doubt that he and Deerhunter have done just that.

Q&A

Bradford Cox

What effect did the car accident and your recovery have on the making of *Fading Frontier*?

Any time something unexpected like that comes along out of nowhere and knocks you on your ass, you find a lot of time to re-evaluate your priorities. I had a broken pelvis and was bed-ridden. I had lots of time to catch up on reading and listening to piles of music. There was a lot of worry I'd suffer long-term consequences, and I'm very blessed that that was not the case. I found organising and arranging songs for the record to be a good distraction from the physical pain and discomfort.

You've been saying that *Fading Frontier* is your favourite of Deerhunter's albums – what do you think you've achieved here? Well, if you ask any musician, artist, writer or filmmaker to choose their favourite work, it would almost always be

the most recent. As I've gotten older, I've become less self-critical about our early work. I've come to appreciate it for what it was and what we made, given the circumstances and resources at our disposal. We had a lot of resources for *Monomania*, but decided to record in a very backwards and primitive way, bypassing a lot of that. This is the first album where I don't think we made any sacrifices in sonic quality. Everything is either how I imagined it should be or better.

The band may have also attained the best balance between its experimental bent and its more melodic sensibility – is it always hard not to tip too far one way or the other? I have always wanted to make music that could affect people and entertain and engage them. I like to think of artists like Björk and Radiohead and how, in their best work, they never avoid the strange if it leads to moments of beauty. They have a wide appeal, as they draw you in with something familiar and you trust them to take you somewhere that would otherwise be a little dissonant or uncomfortable. I find that inspiring. *INTERVIEW: JASON ANDERSON*



PATRICK SWEANY
Daytime Turned To Nighttime
NINE MILE

8/10

Coming of age: bar-band raconteur paints his Southern soul masterpiece

Digging deep into the essence of late-'60s Muscle Shoals (with veteran rhythm section to the stars, Ron Eoff and Bryan Owings) with every note, tapping into both the musical and emotional pull of myriad postwar blues, soul and country styles, Nashvillean Patrick Sweany crafts what sounds like a career highlight. "Here To Stay (Rock & Roll)" is evocative of The Band, while Diddley-esque backyard holler "Back Home" strikes a raw tone that's more 1955 than 2015. High points include the Solomon Burke-style soul balladry ("Too Many Hours") and the dark, gritty closer "Long Way Down".

LUKE TORN



TELEKINESIS
AD INFINITUM

TELEKINESIS
Ad Infinitum
MERGE

Seattle-based one-man-band newly inspired by old-school electronics
After three albums of exuberant power-pop, multi-instrumentalist

7/10

Michael Lerner has moved out of his comfort zone, setting aside conventional instruments, firing up his collection of analogue synths and vintage drum machines and letting the bleeps and swishes trigger his songwriting. Lerner isn't the first modern-day musician to embrace early-'80s new wave, but the 28-year-old brings freshness to a retro-futuristic sound whose heyday preceded his birth. On this 33-minute, 11-song set, Lerner moves efficiently from the Devo-derived groove and OMD lushness of "Sylvia" through the stately Blue Nile-meets-Hot Chip wistfulness of "Sleep In" to the Eno-like "Ad Infinitum 1" in an adept stylistic reboot.

BUD SCOPPA



US GIRLS
Half Free
4AD

Outsider pop queen comes in from the cold
Meg Remy is no newcomer, having been recording under the US Girls name for labels like Siltbreeze and

8/10

Not Not Fun since 2007. But her 4AD debut feels like a big step forward, shelving her earlier cassette-fi experiments in favour of a smartly observed, rawly personal take on '60s girl-group pop and R&B. Digging deeper into these songs reaps dividends. The sunny Animal Collective-does-dub-lope of "Damn That Valley" secretes a lyric that imagines a war widow mourning her soldier husband, while "Window Shades" cribs its gorgeous beat from Gloria Ann Taylor's "Love Is A Hurting Thing" and only ramps up the heartbreak. These songs are pretty, but something intense seethes just beneath the surface.

LOUIS PATTISON

REVELATIONS

The magic of Wand: three albums in one year, so far



➤ Californian psychonauts Wand are anything but slackers – in fact, they've now made three albums in a year. "It wasn't intentional," says songwriter Cory Hanson. "I hate the idea of us being a band that makes records 'in a hurry'. We make records whenever we feel like making them."

Wand's latest is 1000 Days, a deeply trippy LP that has a poppier touch than March's dense *Golem*, which reproduced their live performance on record – "really loud and fuzzy and thick". A different approach was taken for 1000 Days. "We wanted to make ourselves available to chance, chaos, lack of control, and give ourselves permission to have no idea what we were doing," says Hanson. "Writing and recording were definitely some of the most intense musical experiences I've ever had. We worked and reworked songs over and over again... things would change completely."

This sense of adventure is part of what sustains Wand, and Hanson feels it vital to his West Coast peers, including Tim Presley (White Fence), John Dwyer (Thee Oh Sees) and Ty Segall. "It can be really exciting," says Hanson. "Right now it seems like everyone is interested in making the records they never even knew they wanted to make, which is the best case scenario for any 'scene'."

PETER WATTS



VARIOUS ARTISTS
True Detective: Music From The HBO Series
HARVEST RECORDS

7/10

T Bone Burnett curates rarities by Bob Dylan, Nick Cave and others

As music producer for *True Detective*, T Bone Burnett scored some impressive exclusives. There is Dylan's previously unreleased *Freewheelin'*... track, "Rocks And Gravel" – a rootsy, understated take on an old prison yard staple – Nick Cave and Warren Ellis' racy cover of the Gatlin Brothers' "All The Gold In California" and Bonnie Prince Billy's poignant "Intentional Injury". Less impressive are five songs by Lera Lynn: accomplished if generic Americana, it's a flavour Burnett has been promoting for some time, but feels increasingly played out. It would have been better to revisit the seething noir of his own *Tooth Of Crime* LP.

MICHAEL BONNER



WAND
1000 Days
DRAG CITY

Excellent third from adaptable Californian trip-rockers

8/10

Wand's second album of 2015 is a step up from March's fine sludgest

Golem, with the West Coast quartet throwing themselves headlong into the sort of grooves hinted at by that album's trippier moments. That gives us tracks like the Syd Barrett-influenced space jam "Grave Robber", the Eno-esque "Stolen Footsteps" and the mighty "Passage Of The Dream". From the saucer-eyed "Broken Sun" to the percussive electronic breakdown "Dovetail" and sinisterly genteel "Morning Rainbow", the band pursue numerous fractured trends through a breakneck 34 minutes and manage to corral them into an acid-drenched but cohesive whole.

PETER WATTS



DEAN WAREHAM AND BRITTA PHILLIPS
Mistress America OST
MILAN

8/10

'80s-inspired score for Noah Baumbach's latest
The first work Wareham

and Phillips undertook following the 2005 breakup of their old band Luna was the soundtrack for Noah Baumbach's debut, *The Squid And The Whale*. They reteam with the director to score his latest comedy, channelling diaphanous New Order instrumentals like "Elegia" alongside *Disintegration*-era The Cure. The tone is warm and light. Key tracks "Miss America" and "Tony And Toni" foreground bubbling synths, loping basslines and cascading guitar motifs. They sit well beside a few contemporaneous electronic pop tracks also included here, especially OMD's "Souvenir" and Suicide's "Dream Baby Dream".

MICHAEL BONNER



THE ZOMBIES
Still Got That Hunger
CHERRY RED

Vets retain their gusto
The Zombies formed 54 years ago – Rod Argent and Colin Blunstone are obviously lifers, as the LP

7/10

title implies. Still, a better title would have been 'Reelin' In The Years', with Argent's jazzy piano work filling the Fagen slot and one-time Kinks and Argent guitarist Jim Rodford capably impersonating Skunk Baxter and Larry Carlton, while Blunstone's stacked harmony passages capture Steely Dan's rich chordal blend. There are a couple of missteps – the corny ballad (and intended Blunstone vocal showcase) "Edge Of The Rainbow" and the painfully literal nostalgia piece "New York" – but otherwise, the album presents the sound of masters at work, not thinking about their legacy, just doing the work. And that's wonderfully reassuring.

BUD SCOPPA



SETH LAKEMAN

OCTOBER

Support from **JOSH ROUSE**

- 15 BURY DRILL HALL
- 22 PONTARDAWE ARTS CENTRE
- 23 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
- 24 HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
- 25 GLASGOW ORAN MOR
- 26 STOCKTON ARC
- 27 LEAMINGTON SPA THE ASSEMBLY
- 28 BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX
- 29 BILSTON THE ROBIN 2
- 30 READING SUB 89
- 31 FROME CHEESE & GRAIN

DECEMBER (Seated Tour)

Support from **WILDWOOD KIN**

- 15 LEEDS TOWN HALL
 - 16 WREXHAM WILLIAM ASTON HALL
 - 17 MALVERN THEATRE
 - 18 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
 - 19 PLYMOUTH PAVILION
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| 13 LONDON Jazz Cafe | 21 BRIGHTON Komedia |
| 14 LEEDS Brudenell Social Club | 22 PORTSMOUTH Wedgewood Rooms |
| 15 MIDDLESBROUGH Town Hall, The Crypt | 23 COLCHESTER Arts Centre |
| 16 ABERDEEN Lemon Tree | 24 BRISTOL Fleece |
| 17 GLASGOW Audio | 25 OXFORD Bullingdon |

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OCTOBER

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- 23 DERBY Flowerpot
- 24 NORWICH Waterfront
- 30 WARWICK Copper Rooms
- 31 NARBERTH Queens Hall

NOVEMBER

- 12 CAMBRIDGE Junction 2
- 13 STOCKTON KU Bar
- 14 EDINBURGH Electric Circus

- 15 LEEDS Brudenell Social Club
- 20 BRISTOL Fleece

DECEMBER

- 01 SOUTHEND Cliffs Pavilion
- 02 READING Rivermead
- 03 DONCASTER The Dome
- 04 WOLVERHAMPTON Civic Hall
- 05 BLACKPOOL Empress Ballroom
- 11 TUNBRIDGE WELLS The Forum
- 12 PORTSMOUTH Wedgewood Rooms
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| 16 MANCHESTER Band on the Wall | 22 WARWICK Copper Rooms |
| 17 MUSICPORT Festival | 23 GUILDFORD Boileroom |
| 18 YORK The Duchess | 24 NR STROUD Convent |
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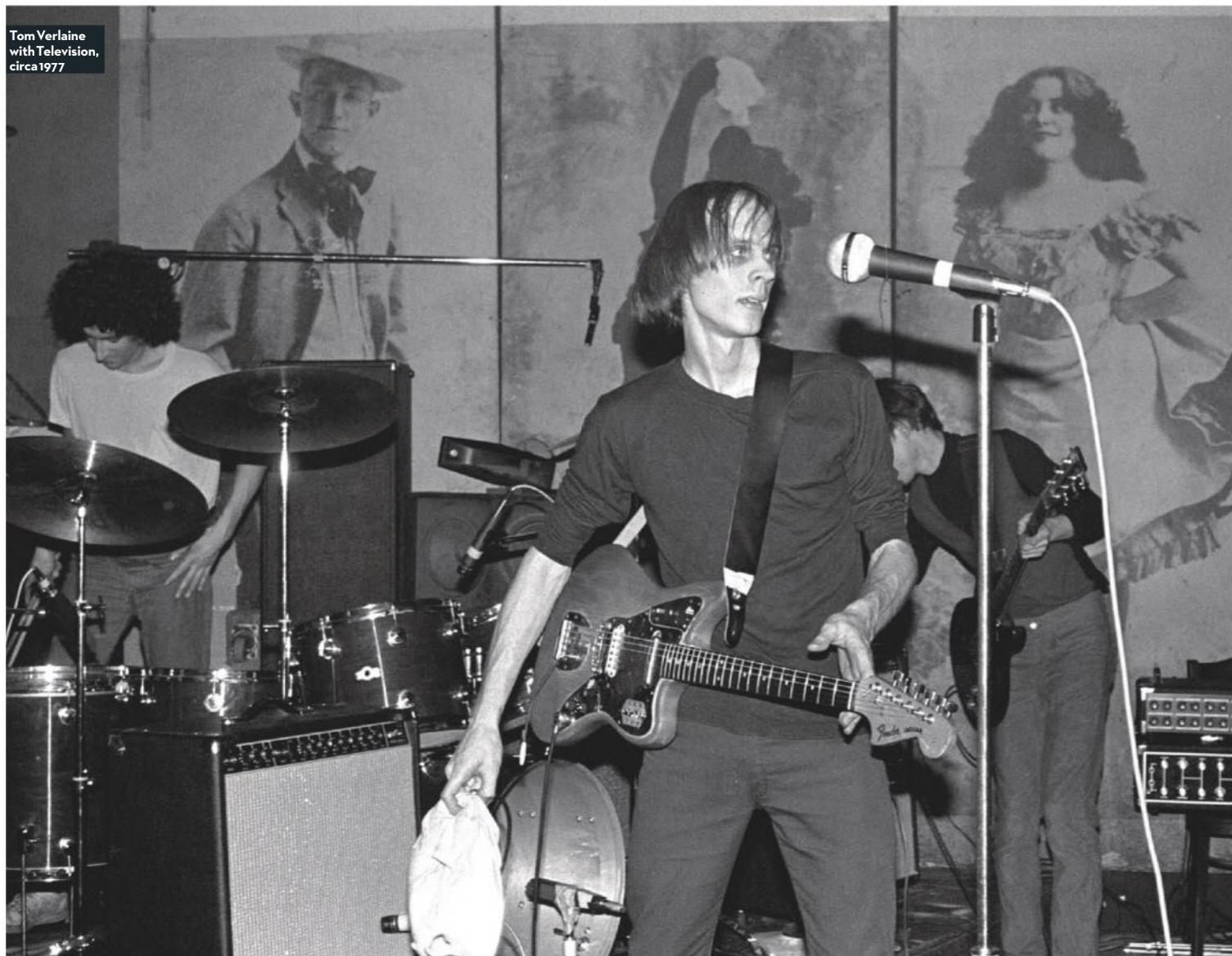
10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrappings

Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS

Tom Verlaine
with Television,
circa 1977



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ork Records: New York, New York

NUMERO GROUP

New York's premier new-wave indie label comes in from the cold. *By Jim Wirth*

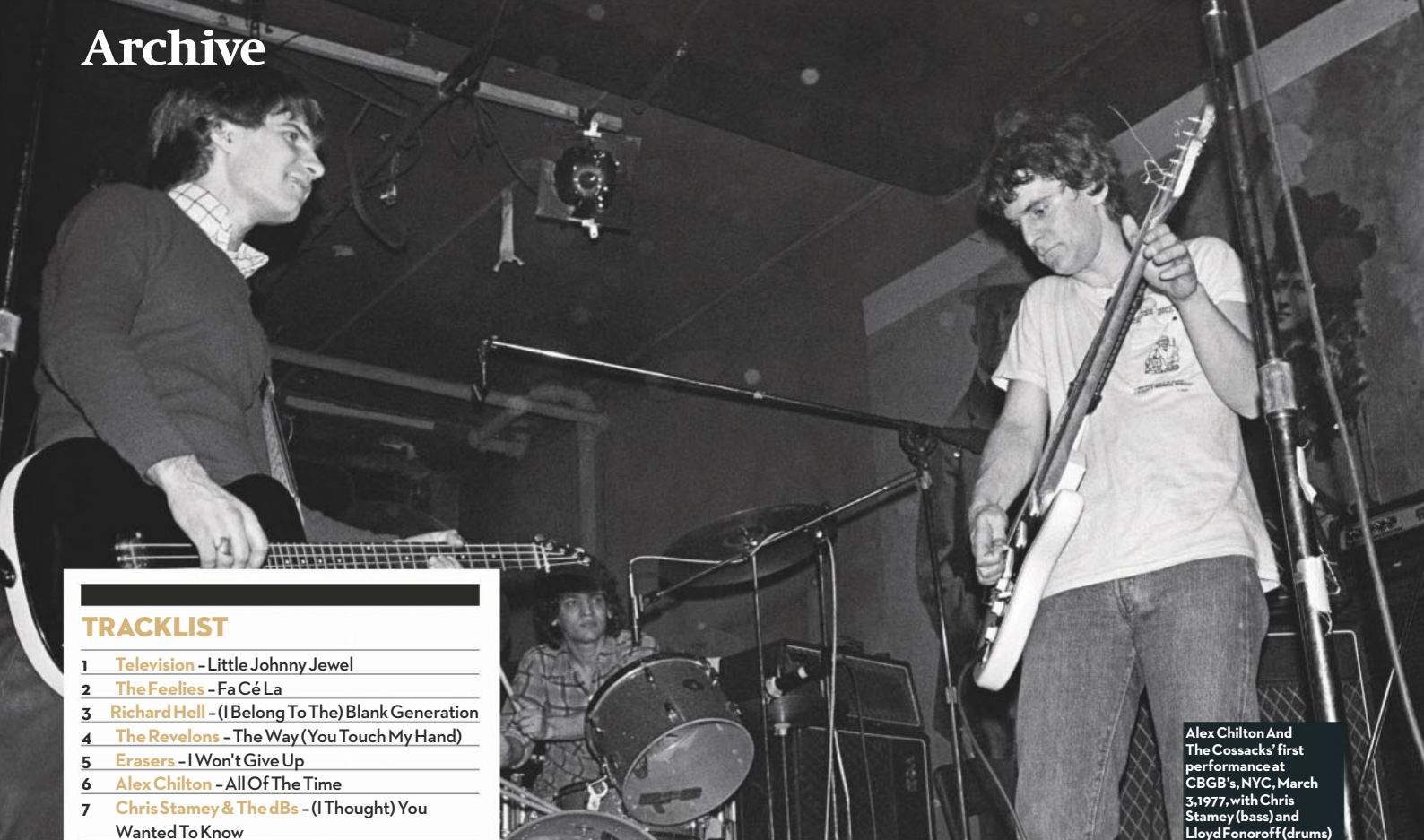
8/10 PATTI SMITH'S INDEPENDENT debut "Piss Factory" came out in 1974; the following November, manager Terry Ork put out Television's first single, "Little Johnny Jewel", on his own label. These were the first flowerings of the New York renaissance.

By 1976, big labels had carved up the CBGB underground; Television went to Elektra, Patti Smith to Arista, Talking Heads joined the Ramones on Sire, Blondie went to Private Stock and then Chrysalis. It was a feeding frenzy that drew aspiring oddballs to the Bowery in droves.

For a few months between 1976 and mid-1977, Ork – the scene's only active independent – had their pick of the new arrivals, snaring Richard Hell & The Voidoids, Alex Chilton, a pre-dB's Chris Stamey, The Feelies and more. This lovingly assembled, 49-track collection pieces together the projects – completed, abandoned and otherwise – that Terry Ork helped instigate, as the hustler/superfan and his sometime business partner Charles Ball seized their moment.

William Terry Collins, aka Terry Ork, had come to New York from San Diego in the late





Alex Chilton And The Cossacks' first performance at CBGB's, NYC, March 3, 1977, with Chris Stamey (bass) and Lloyd Fonoroff (drums)

TRACKLIST

- 1 **Television** - Little Johnny Jewel
- 2 **The Feelies** - Fa Cé La
- 3 **Richard Hell** - (I Belong To The) Blank Generation
- 4 **The Revelons** - The Way (You Touch My Hand)
- 5 **Erasers** - I Won't Give Up
- 6 **Alex Chilton** - All Of The Time
- 7 **Chris Stamey & The dBs** - (I Thought) You Wanted To Know
- 8 **Prix** - Zero
- 9 **Marbles** - Red Lights
- 10 **Alex Chilton** - Take Me Home & Make Me Like It
- 11 **Prix** - Girl
- 12 **The Idols** - Girl That I Love
- 13 **Mick Farren & The New Wave** - Lost Johnny
- 14 **Cheetah Chrome** - Still Wanna Die
- 15 **The Idols** - You
- 16 **The Student Teachers** - Christmas Weather
- 17 **Erasers** - It Was So Funny (The Song That They Sung)
- 18 **Richard Hell** - (I Could Live With You In) Another World
- 19 **Chris Stamey** - The Summer Sun
- 20 **Alex Chilton** - Free Again
- 21 **Richard Lloyd** - (I Thought) You Wanted To Know
- 22 **The Student Teachers** - Channel 13
- 23 **Chris Stamey** - Where The Fun Is
- 24 **Prix** - Everytime I Close My Eyes
- 25 **The Feelies** - Forces At Work
- 26 **Marbles** - Fire And Smoke
- 27 **The Revelons** - 97 Tears
- 28 **Cheetah Chrome** - Take Me Home
- 29 **Richard Hell** - You Gotta Lose
- 30 **Chris Stamey & The dBs** - If And When
- 31 **Mick Farren & The New Wave** - Play With Fire
- 32 **Richard Lloyd** - Get Off My Cloud
- 33 **Alex Chilton** - The Singer Not The Song
- 34 **Richard Lloyd** - Connection
- 35 **Alex Chilton** - Summertime Blues
- 36 **Mick Farren & The New Wave** - To Know Him Is To Love Him
- 37 **Link Cromwell** - Crazy Like A Fox
- 38 **Link Cromwell** - Shock Me
- 39 **Kenneth Higney** - I Wanna Be The King
- 40 **Lester Bangs** - Let It Blurt
- 41 **Alex Chilton** - Bangkok
- 42 **Peter Holsapple** - Big Black Truck
- 43 **Prix** - She Might Look My Way
- 44 **Alex Chilton** - Can't Seem To Make You Mine
- 45 **Prix** - Love You All Day Long
- 46 **Alex Chilton** - Shakin' The World
- 47 **Prix** - Love You Tonight
- 48 **Lester Bangs** - Live
- 49 **Kenneth Higney** - Funky Kinky

1960s, working for Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine for a while before winding up as part-time manager of film knick-knack shop Cinemabilia. Regaling his circle with tales of how he once gave Lou Reed head, he set about creating his own superstar factory.

He completed *Television* by introducing Cinemabilia employee Hell and Tom Verlaine to his flatmate, guitarist Richard Lloyd. ("There was a great love between us," Lloyd remembered of Ork. "For him it was romantic, for me it was platonic.") Ork managed *Television* until their ascent demanded a more astute approach, but he kept busy, releasing the American version of Hell's "Blank Generation" EP before finding one member of bowl-cutted power-poppers The Marbles working at Cinemabilia, and making their gloriously feeble "Red Lights" his third release, in 1976.

Preppy aesthete Ball kept things rolling. "Terry was the public face of the label, a bon vivant more interested in chasing around Richard Lloyd

Ork enlisted new financial backers – Hasidic Jews with decidedly unorthodox heroin habits

than the music itself," music journalist and Ork insider Roy Trakin tells *Uncut*. "Charles, on the other hand, was immersed in culture theory, Jean Luc-Godard and the mechanics of actually recording music."

Excited by some audio *vérité* demos recorded in Memphis by journalist-turned-producer Jon Tiven, Ball and Ork hauled

Alex Chilton up to their studio of choice – Trod Nossel in Connecticut – to put down the five tracks that make up 1977's surly "Singer Not The Song" EP. Chilton's stag-horned "Free Again" and the excitable "Take Me Home And Make Me Like It" are deliriously grubby, though his excitable whoop of "*Call me a slut in front of your family*" on the latter seemed a little far-fetched (so poor that for a while he didn't even own shoes, Chilton was in no state to be introduced to anyone's parents).

Almost as an afterthought, Ork simultaneously put out "Girl" by Tiven's band Prix – a delicious analogue to Chris Bell's Big Star contributions.



Tiven was not destined to be Chilton's new musical foil, though; his time as a sideman ended when the singer tried to stub a cigarette out in his face. Stamey had a much more successful dalliance with the ex-Box Top, when Chilton helped piece together the North Carolina mop-top's skinny-tie thunderbolt "The Summer Sun" – the final Ork release of 1977.

Ork and Ball failed to snare a major-label distribution deal, and a raft of projects were mothballed. A Rolling Stones tribute LP vanished without trace, and tapes of The H-Bombs – featuring future dB Peter Holsapple – and Lester Bangs were farmed out to other labels. A first release from New Jersey's splendidly uptight Feelies also went begging, their frenetic version of "Fa Cé La" canned at the band's request, though the song resurfaced as their Rough Trade debut two years later.

Ball went his own way, his Lust/Unlust imprint later giving first exposure to some of New York's most abrasive outfits. He died in 2012. "Ork and Ball's split was not an amicable one," Trakin remembers. "I'm not sure if they ever reconciled, being two strong-willed personalities who blamed one another for their massive, if-only fail."

Ork, meanwhile, enlisted new financial backers – Hasidic Jews with decidedly unorthodox heroin habits. "Little Johnny Jewel" was re-pressed as a 12inch, but the label evidently found the CBGB waters of 1979 much over-fished. Ork's final releases featured uninspiring cock-rock from the Idols – featuring ex-New York Dolls Arthur Kane and Jerry Nolan – and unremarkable one-offs from The Revelons and The Student Teachers. The last Ork release – former Dead Boy Cheetah Chrome's "Still Wanna Die" – was an Iggy Stardust glam-punk classic, undermined by a flower-power sleeve.

Ork clung on in New York for a while, managing hardcore band The Worst before fading into legend. He wrote for a West Coast arts magazine as Noah Ford, and was jailed from 1991 to 1994 for passport fraud, cheque fraud or Andy Warhol fraud, according to conflicting reports. He died of colon cancer in 2004.

"I like Terry," Verlaine said in 1979, showing uncommon generosity as he summed up Ork. "He has no business sense, but he's a great guy." At the bottom of the rear sleeve of Television's era-defining *Marquee Moon* is a note reading: "This album is dedicated to William Terry Ork." Like this collection, a small credit where it was due.

EXTRAS: A pleasantly bitchy book gives all Ork 8/10 acts their due, with a raft of rare tracks completing the picture. Prix offcuts are essential listening for Big Star fetishists, while unreleased Ork singles by Patti Smith-worshippers the Erasers and angry loner Kenneth Higney feature, along with both sides of Link Cromwell's "Crazy Like A Fox" – the 1966 Brit-invasion knock-off voiced by Patti Smith Group guitarist Lenny Kaye, which was re-circulated by Ork. Another discovery is the first version of Richard Lloyd's sparkly "(I Thought) You Wanted To Know", later re-voiced and released by Stamey on his Car label when it emerged that the object of Ork's affections was still under contract at Elektra.

Q&A

Chris Stamey of The dB's and Glenn Mercer of The Feelies remember Ork

HOW WOULD YOU describe Terry Ork?

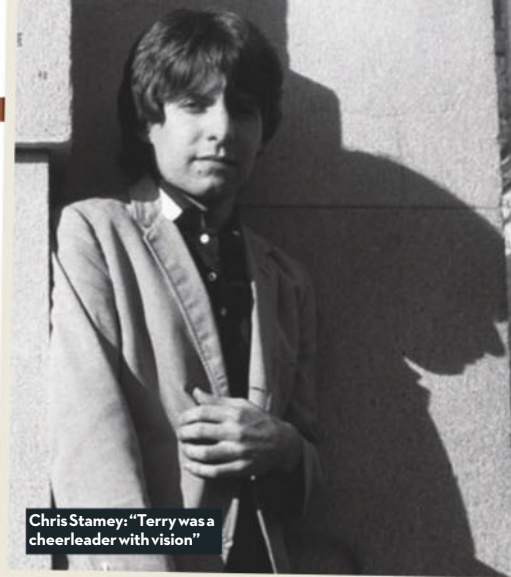
Chris Stamey: I never met Jerry Garcia, but Terry always reminded me of what I imagined Garcia might be like – very upbeat and positive, a dreamer. He never seemed like a businessman, but he was a great cheerleader and he had a vision, and this really mattered to everyone at the time. Both he and Charles Ball came from a film background, not a musical one, which was interesting. And you have to remember that it wasn't just Terry – Charles was a huge part of it all.

Glenn Mercer: We'd played an audition night at CBGB and the house soundman, Mark Abel, told us he planned to invite Ork to our next gig because he thought Terry would like our sound. I don't remember much about it, but I think I was surprised by the way he looked. You didn't see too many beards or much long hair among the punk rock crowd. We didn't talk much about music. He was a movie fan and talked more about foreign films than he did about music.

Was Television's success a big factor in bands coming to New York?

Stamey: I'd seen Television play at CBGB's in the summer of 1975 and was blown away. This was directly a big reason for my move to New York – no question about it. It was the kind of music I wanted to make – transcendent, electric and immediate. I made a false leap in thinking that there were lots of bands that sounded like them – in fact, they were the sole flagbearers of that kind of 'punk jazz' at the time. And honestly, I never found any other bands on the scene that held a candle to them, although sometimes playing with Alex would have some of that flavour, later on.

Mercer: More than anything, being original and unique was what was required in that musical landscape. I doubt Terry was grooming The Feelies as a new Television. He was smart enough to see we weren't that similar to them. I also think he knew the NY underground



Chris Stamey: "Terry was a cheerleader with vision"

music scene wouldn't ever become mainstream and there wasn't an ideal model for success.

There wasn't much money around, but Ork seemed to have a lot of ideas on the go, no?

Stamey: Well, we didn't need much money. I remember having to walk everywhere and relying on major-label press parties for meals sometimes. It just seemed bohemian. Rimbaud and Nerval were in the air – it was a Left Bank scene in that way. Alex Chilton was pretty much unknown to the CB's scene – the third Big Star

record only existed on a few bootleg cassettes. He was in fine shape, just a bit shy and trying to get over a major romance that was ending. He was totally broke that year. Ork tried to help for a while but didn't have any money, really. People wouldn't buy him dinner, but they would buy him unlimited drinks. So he drank instead of ate.

Mercer: I remember Terry having an idea to record "Chinese Rocks" with the 'Ork Orchestra', since the Ramones didn't initially want to use the song. At the session, there was Bob

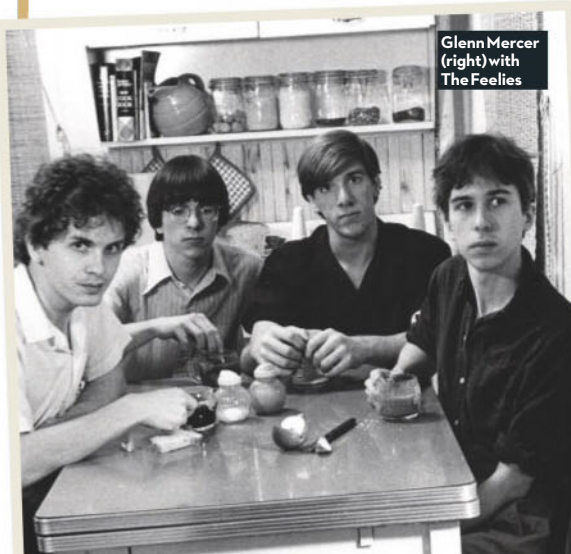
Quine, Jody Harris, Chris Frantz and Dee Dee Ramone. I played bass because Dee Dee only wanted to sing. I also remember often hanging out with Richard Lloyd at Terry's place. In general, the bands supported each other and there was a sense of 'us vs them' in regard to the music in the mainstream.

Do you remember Ork and Ball fondly?

Mercer: I have many fond memories of both Terry and Charles, and of that time period. Unfortunately, we lost touch after we stopped working together. The last time I saw Terry was at the premier of the film *Smithereens* in 1982, but we didn't get a chance to talk much.

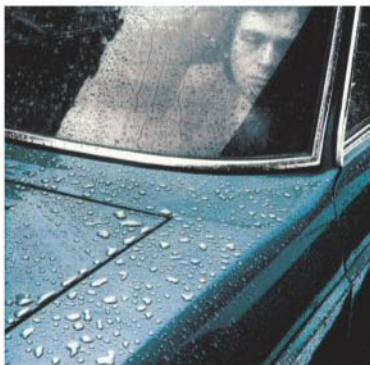
Stamey: Terry helped The dB's in talks with Warner Bros UK, which was great. It wasn't so great in that the talks fell apart when his deal stopped, leaving us with unpaid studio bills. But it worked out in the end, and the first dB's record, *Stands For deciBels*, probably wouldn't have existed without Terry's UK connections. He always seemed interested in helping musicians and bands he liked. It seems odd now, but rock musicians doing non-commercial music hadn't yet realised they could bypass the commercial labels. **INTERVIEW: JIM WIRTH**

"People wouldn't buy Alex Chilton dinner, but they would buy him drinks, so he drank instead of ate"



Glenn Mercer (right) with The Feelies

On the "Shock The Monkey" video shoot, 1982



7/10



7/10



9/10



8/10



PETER GABRIEL

Peter Gabriel 1 ('Car')

Peter Gabriel 2 ('Scratch')

Peter Gabriel 3 ('Melt')

Peter Gabriel 4 ('Security')

REAL WORLD/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL

Genesis: the aftermath... the first four solo albums remastered. *By Graeme Thomson*

AFTER LEAVING GENESIS in 1975, Peter Gabriel's first instinct was to put as much daylight as possible between himself and his former band. Each of his first four solo albums snipped away at the strands of DNA connecting him to Genesis until, following the release of *Peter Gabriel 4* in 1982, Gabriel had successfully reinvented himself as an idiosyncratic art-rock.

These are significant records, and all four have been remastered and reissued on 180g vinyl as limited-edition double albums, playing at 45rpm (the third and fourth are also being re-released in German vocal versions, for anyone who yearns to hear "The Family And The Fishing Net" in Deutsch).

The first two albums most obviously reflect the aftermath of leaving Genesis. On *Peter Gabriel 1*,

Q&A

Steve Lillywhite



Describe the mood while you were making 'Melt'.

The album is very dark and when you listen to it, you get

the sense of furrowed brows, but the overall feeling was absolute joy – other than the usual Peter thing of not quite finishing his lyrics on time! The table tennis matches between me, [engineer] Hugh Padgham and Peter were legendary. There were basic ground rules: no presets on the computer; no cymbals; basically, anything that had come before was not allowed. He was fearless, he wanted to push things sonically.

How did that famous 'gated' drum sound emerge?

The Townhouse had this amazing stone room, plus the new SSL desk had compressors on them. It was a perfect storm. Peter will say he invented that drum sound, Hugh will say he did, and I will say I did. It was a group effort, but I had been using that idea before.

Amazing to think his US record company, Atlantic, refused to release the album and dropped him...

His A&R man at Atlantic would come to the studio to listen, and we would turn the air-conditioning to freezing just before he arrived because we didn't want him to be comfortable or stay that long. Isn't that awful! It was schoolboy humour, it wasn't malicious. So maybe that didn't help...

INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON

released in 1977 and colloquially known as 'Car' after Hipgnosis' cover image, Gabriel's personal and professional rebirth is explicitly referenced in rousing hit single "Solsbury Hill", where he cries freedom in 7/4 time. But a sense of creative unshackling is also apparent in the range of musical ground covered. There are styles here absent from any other Gabriel solo record: barbershop and flapper-jazz pastiche ("Excuse Me"), three-in-the-morning piano blues ("Waiting For The Big One", on which he sounds very like Randy Newman), and frantic disco-funk ("Down The Dolce Vita"). This appealing but rather odd record also forays into the territory Gabriel will subsequently stake out more rigorously – most notably the closing ballad "Here Comes The Flood", which is overcooked

Producer Steve Lillywhite had been working with Siouxsie & The Banshees, and his enthusiasm for post-punk experimentation helped shape a record on which many terrific songs (the Bowie-esque funk-rock of "I Don't Remember", the electro-soul of "No Self Control") are greatly enhanced by a vaulting spirit of adventure. Gabriel's ban on cymbals and the cavernous stone room at Townhouse Studios colluded to create a monolithic drum sound, unveiled to formidable effect on opener "Intruder", which finds Gabriel at his most menacing as the stalker who *"likes the touch and the smell of all the pretty dresses you wear"*.

Lyrical, the album is full of shadows. "Family Snapshot" is a beautiful three-part epic about an assassin's craving for notoriety hothoused by childhood alienation. Despite Kate Bush sighing seductively in French, the album's big hit, "Games Without Frontiers", is an icy Cold War nursery rhyme, and hardly commercial catnip. On "Lead A Normal Life", Gabriel sings about life in a psychiatric institution with the baleful vulnerability of Robert Wyatt.

The closing "Biko" is his first overtly political song, protesting the 1977 murder of anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko. The track's message tends to dominate, but the medium is pretty impressive, too, with Gabriel conjuring an atmosphere of dread with a stark backing of brooding drums and streaks of distorted guitar.

This arid sonic landscape is reprised on "The Rhythm Of The Heat", the first track on his fourth eponymous LP, released in 1982 and titled *Security* in the United States. Here's the emergence of Gabriel as world-music avatar. Feverish and dream-like, "The Rhythm Of The Heat" deploys Ghanaian drums in its clattering finale. Elsewhere there are Latino rhythms ("Kiss Of Life"), pulsing evocations of Native American struggle ("San Jacinto") and, on

"Wallflower", an empathetic hymn to political prisoners in South America. Alongside these stirring songs of social conscience, something else is occurring. The repetitively funky US hit "Shock The Monkey" acts as prelude of sorts to what will come next: "Sledgehammer", *So* and the final act of Gabriel's transformation from Lawnmower Man to global pop star.

'Melt' heralded the emergence of Peter Gabriel as fully fledged art-rock trailblazer

here, but will later become a centrepiece of Gabriel's live show.

Robert Fripp played on 'Car' and is promoted to producer on *Peter Gabriel 2* – aka 'Scratch' – released in 1978. It's tighter and more focused than its predecessor. "On The Air" and "DIY" have a streamlined new-wave directness, and Roy Bittan's piano adds a fresh, distinctive texture, particularly on the airy "Mother Of Violence", but Gabriel still hasn't forged a coherent musical identity. He bounces from jokey reggae ("A Wonderful Day In A One-Way World") to Plastic Ono Band intensity ("Flotsam And Jetsam", "Home Sweet Home"), while "Animal Magic" sounds a bit like the theme tune to *Minder*.

The tonally rich experiment of "Exposure", meanwhile – on which Gabriel mumbles and shrieks over Fripp's esoteric guitar loops – points towards *Peter Gabriel 3*, or 'Melt', which was released in 1980 and heralded the emergence of Gabriel as fully fledged art-rock trailblazer.



DOUG HREAM BLUNT

My Name Is Doug Hream Blunt

LUAKA BOP

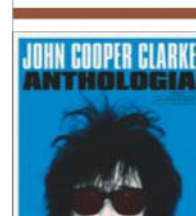
Lessons in love from San Francisco dream-funk outsider
Championed by David

8/10

Byrne and tipped by Ariel Pink, Doug Hream Blunt is the latest internet cult sensation to have his career kickstarted late in the day. That's the story being peddled by Byrne's label Luaka Bop, who found success with William Onyeabor, and there's some truth in the tale. The British artist Dean Blunt, for example, took Blunt's name after encountering Doug's work and sampling his best-known track, "Gentle Persuasion", in 2010. A Jimi Hendrix fan, Blunt appears to be an easygoing, regular guy who taught himself music at the age of 35 in evening classes in the late 1980s, then formed a band with his classmates and later recorded an album of deliciously stoned lo-fi soul called *Gentle Persuasion*, which he pressed to vinyl in 2000 and hawked to record shops in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, producing a CD version 10 years later to sell online. To promote it, he would play acoustic shows to patients in the hospital where he worked. *My Name Is Doug Hream Blunt* is that same record and it's a joy to hear: 10 hazy '80s daydream jams titled "Whiskey Man", "Fly Guy" and "Caribbean Queen" that seem amateurish at first, but soon sneak under your skin.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN



JOHN COOPER CLARKE

Anthologia

SONY

Overdue retrospective takes us from 1978 to 2014
With its subject a hilarious stand-up ("The Barber"), a 100mph ranting

8/10

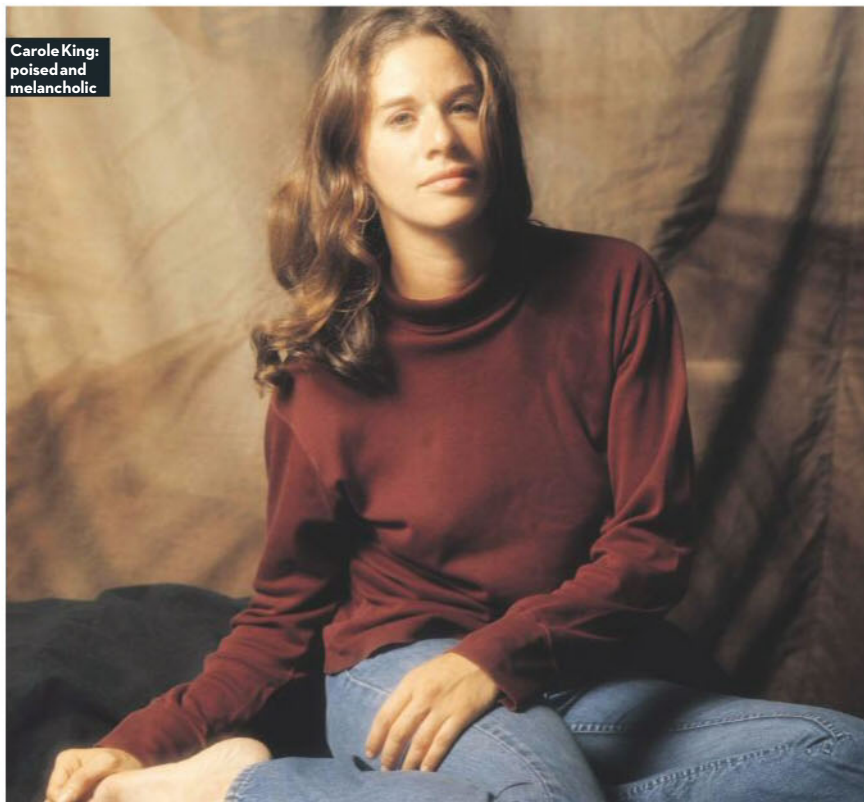
poet ("Twat", "Nothing", "Majorca") and an idiosyncratic pop star, this four-disc anthology explores all three facets of Cooper Clarke's career, using live recordings, Peel Sessions and excerpts from his three bizarre albums recorded with Factory producer Martin Hannett. Another '60s head pushing 30 at the time of punk, Hannett uses all his studio tricks (AMS digital delay; dub-drenched guitars; brittle, disconnected drums) to create Mancunian hip-hop *avant la lettre*. In retrospect, like his fellow bard William Shakespeare, Cooper Clarke is so influential that *Anthologia* is full of clichés. On "The Scarlet Snow" he's a pitchshifted Morrissey being backed by The Smiths; on "Valley Of The Lost Woman" he's John Shuttleworth in an unusually poetic mood; on "I Don't Wanna Be Nice" he's an amusingly splenetic Shaun Ryder (*"I think it's clever to swear"*). "I Wanna Be Yours" is the template for the Arctic Monkeys' career; while the proto acid house of tracks like "Health Fanatic" and "Evidently Chickentown" predate Sleaford Mods by three decades.

EXTRAS: DVD containing vintage BBC clips 7/10 (*Whistle Test*, *Something Else*, 2012 doc *Evidently John Cooper Clarke*) and excerpts from a 2014 gig at Manchester's Palace Theatre.

JOHN LEWIS

Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



Carole King: poised and melancholic



THE CITY

Now That Everything's Been Said

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

8/10

Carole King's missing link between songwriter and solo superstar

The phrase "lost album" is often a nicely denoting a record nobody cared about at the time, often with good reason, but which is being re-released yet again in the faint hope that it might somehow coincide with fashion. *Now That Everything's Been Said*,

however, is one of the genuine great lost albums. It fulfils every criteria of the classification: by a significant artist, a significant work by that significant artist, and for many years genuinely unavailable. First released in 1968, deleted in 1969 in a record company reshuffle, *Now That Everything's Been Said* went missing for three decades before its first American reissue in 1999. This re-release represents its first availability on vinyl since Nixon was president.

It is an extraordinary dereliction. The City were formed by Carole King following her relocation to Los Angeles and divorce from Gerry Goffin. Still in her mid-twenties, she was half of one of the most successful songwriting partnerships of that (or any) time. She and Goffin had composed, among many others, "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" for Aretha Franklin, "The Loco-Motion" for Little Eva, "Pleasant Valley Sunday" for The Monkees and "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" for The Shirelles. Two years after The City folded, King would release *Tapestry*, a resounding empty-platinum colossus. Even if it were terrible, *Now That Everything's Been Said* would be at least interesting. It is very far from terrible.

Unsurprisingly, *Now That Everything's Been Said* is a congruent way-station between the deceptively melancholy pop classics King and Goffin had composed for other artists and the poised personal statements of *Tapestry*. It's also a deserving addition to the pantheon of Laurel Canyon folk rock, replete with echoes of and precursors to the Eagles, The Mamas & The Papas and The Byrds (who covered The City's "I Wasn't Born To Follow" on the soundtrack to *Easy Rider*). The songs are predictably brilliant, especially the elegant ballads "Paradise Alley" and "Lady", and the ecstatic Motown-hit-that-never-was "Victim Of Circumstance". And The City were not merely Carole King plus two – guitarist Danny Kortchmar and bassist Charles Larkey both had form with New York proto-punk yahoos The Fugs. Kortchmar would subsequently write and/or produce with Jackson Browne, Don Henley and Neil Young; Larkey would become the second Mr King.

The City never made another album, and never played a show, in deference to their singer's chronic stage fright. *Now That Everything's Been Said* remains a startling first step along a path never taken.

ANDREW MUELLER



JULIAN COPE

World Shut Your Mouth/Fried
(reissues, 1984)

CAROLINE

Drude awakening: Tamworth shaman's opening salvo

"I regard what I do next as the opportunity for gross self-indulgence," said Cope as he announced the demise of The Teardrop Explodes, hubris doing him far more damage than any drugs. The critics hated his debut solo album, but *World Shut Your Mouth* is anything but flabby, the dizzy "Quizmaster" and

8/10

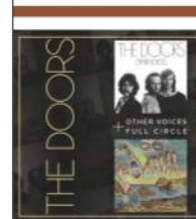


9/10

mournful closer "Lunatic And Fire-Pistol" exemplifying the sense of giddy release that accompanied his retreat to his native Tamworth with his new love, Dorian. Released just months later, *Fried* is soft and playful beneath its turtle shell of studied eccentricity, the unchained "Me Singing", Beatle rhapsody "Holy Love" and mystic crescendo "Torpedo" all personal bests. **EXTRAS:** Insightful sleeve notes by Cope's press

8/10 attaché, *Uncut* contributor Mick Houghton, accompany each LP, along with an extra disc of relevant BBC sessions and B-sides, each showing the ex-trainee teacher exploding with ideas. Sketchy versions of three *Fried* songs featured on a Kid Jensen session before *World Shut Your Mouth* was released, while the *Fried* bonus disc includes larval incarnations of several tracks from 1987's *Saint Julian*.

JIM WIRTH



THE DOORS

Other Voices/ Full Circle
(reissues, 1971, 1972)

RHINO

Post-Jim Morrison, sans-mojo twofer...

The Doors were perhaps ill-advised to continue as

6/10

a trio without Jim Morrison, but *Other Voices* – released just three months after the singer's death in a Parisian bathtub in July 1971 – at least found them giving it their best shot. On uptempo tracks such as "In The Eye Of The Sun" and "Tightrope Ride", Ray Manzarek's electric piano, John Densmore's jazzy beat and Robby Krieger's bluesy guitar licks combine to replicate the tight, ensemble playing of their hit album *LA Woman*, released only six months earlier. But without Mr Mojo Rising's edgy sense of danger, the dependable trio sound perfectly competent and a little lacking in character. "I'm Horny, I'm Stoned" is perhaps the low point, a simulacrum of Jim Morrison's hedonistic persona so desperate that it might have sounded hilarious as a Bonzo Dog pastiche, but isn't so funny when performed by a band purportedly called The Doors. The following year's self-produced *Full Circle* sinks further into mundanity, despite Manzarek's epic, Dylan-esque "The Peking King And The New York Queen" and the punchy "Get Up And Dance", and finds them at times sounding like a bunch of session musicians. They knew it, too, and soon called it a day.

EXTRAS: "Treetrunk", a 1972 B-side and one of only three non-album tracks ever to appear under the Doors brand.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



EDGE OF DAYBREAK Eyes Of Love (reissue, 1979) NUMERO GROUP

Virginia 'prison funk' private press, reissued
The private press phenomenon was well and

8/10

truly underway by the end of the 1970s, with countless albums shepherded into existence through the self-actualisation of small-scale pressing plants, ambitious local musicians and fly-by-night indies, leaving a dense trail of bizarre one-offs, sleepy-eyed song sets, and even the occasional miscellaneous masterpiece. A wild soul obscurity, *Eyes Of Love* has a particularly compelling back story, even by the often unexpected standards of the private press world: it was recorded by inmates at Powhatan Correctional Center, an institution on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia, and subsequently released by local mover-and-shaker Milton Hogue on his Bohannon's Records imprint. The results are often devastating, all the more so when you discover that the group's five-hour recording session meant they had to do everything first take: the sensual grace of "Let Us", with dream-like, swinging harmonies, and the gentle sway of the following "Let's Be Friends", are sweetly poised, and up there with the best of Numero Group's excavations. It's a stone blast, a gorgeous set summarised beautifully in the liner notes: "Our bodies are in prison, but we want our hearts and minds to be with the free world."

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE



GEORGIE FAME The Whole World's Shaking: Complete Recordings 1963-1966 UNIVERSAL

Revealing five-disc
boxset of underrated
1960s jazz-soul pioneer

6/10

If he'd been more of an original songwriter, Fame's status today might have ranked alongside Van Morrison. Instead, he's become the forgotten man of the British R'n'B boom, remembered principally for his three pop No 1s, "Yeh Yeh", "Get Away" and "Ballad Of Bonnie And Clyde". Yet as this 106-track set illustrates, there was considerably more to Fame and his Blue Flames. Early covers of tracks by Mose Allison, Smokey Robinson, Allen Toussaint, James Brown and Booker T are testament to how his blend of jazz, R'n'B, blues and soul endowed him with impeccable hipster credentials that for a while were second to none. Yet Fame's problem was that unlike Morrison, who shared an almost identical set of influences, he wasn't really able to develop them into a style that was uniquely his own. Today he seems like a smart imitator rather than a genuine innovator, someone whose credibility was diminished once people became familiar with his American sources. That said, there's some undeniably wonderful music to be found here from Fame's first four albums, available for the first time in many years.

EXTRAS: 18 previously unreleased tracks, 5/10 culled from live recordings, BBC sessions and studio outtakes.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



MARVIN GAYE Marvin Gaye: Volume One 1961-1965 UNIVERSAL

The first seven studio
albums in a box of
jazzed-up soul heaven...
Early Motown LPs tended

8/10

to be thrown together around a hit single, augmented by covers and some lightweight filler, the 'product' made serviceable by the sheer professionalism of the Funk Brothers. Gaye was an exception from the outset. His 1961 debut *The Soulful Moods Of...* explored the Great American Songbook, third album *When I'm Alone I Cry* (1964) was another attempt to establish him as a jazz crooner and three more of his early studio LPs were conceptual projects – singing Broadway showtunes, paying tribute to Nat King Cole and duetting with Mary Wells. They weren't particularly progressive and produced some excruciating moments ("Hello Dolly") alongside some overlooked gems (the devastating "When Your Lover Has Gone"); but singing in a smooth tenor rather than the more soulful melisma of his R'n'B hits, they showed Gaye aspiring to be more than just another human jukebox in Gordy's hit factory. That left only two of his first seven LPs as conventional hit-led collections (1962's *That Stubborn Kind Of Fellow* and 1965's *How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You*). Yet even then Gaye's exacting personal standards meant the quality control was considerably higher than Motown's routine approach at the time.

EXTRAS: None.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

HOW TO BUY... JIMI HENDRIX LIVE Jams, covers and hard-ass blues



Band Of Gypsies CAPITOL, 1970
Jimi dumps the Experience for the earthier rhythm section of Billy Cox and Buddy Miles. The result was a tougher, funkier sound, its R'n'B leanings forcing more focus to Jimi's playing on "Message Of Love" and "Power To Love". In contrast comes the explosive 12-minute improvisation of "Machine Gun", bringing the Vietnam War to the Fillmore East.

9/10



BBC Sessions MCA, 1998
Not strictly a live LP (the audience were tuned to the radio) this is what the Experience sounded like without the Marshall stacks. It's Jimi as pop star, playing Dylan, The Beatles, Cream, plus tough versions of "Hey Joe", and a "Killing Floor" that nails the blues to the floor.

7/10



Live At Woodstock MCA, 1999
Released as a single LP in 1994, the 1999 edition (which exorcised the two percussionists) delivers Jimi's entire Woodstock performance. Billed as Gypsy Sun And Rainbows, the band are under-rehearsed and sloppy, requiring Hendrix to over-jam. It's more a fascinating transitional moment than result, but it boasts the most iconic guitar solo of the era in "Star Spangled Banner".

8/10

NEIL SPENCER



HARMONIA The Complete Works GRÖNLAND

Previously unheard
gems cement formidable
kosmische set

It may seem odd to younger
Krautrock devotees that
any collaboration between

9/10

Michael Rother, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius could have ever been regarded as less than godlike. Yet Harmonia's efforts during its original lifespan of 1973-76 were unsuccessful even by the standards of West Germany's tumultuous rock scene. Their status only began to rise in the 1990s thanks to Julian Cope's ravings and *Tracks And Traces*, which collected long-AWOL cuts of the trio's sessions with Eno in 1976. Duly compiled for Grönland's five-LP set – which sadly follows the recent passing of Moebius – the band's three original records more than amply secure Harmonia's place in the canon, yet the extra LP of unearthed material yields further glories. Recorded at a pair of gigs in Hamburg in February 1975, two unnamed tracks capture Rother and his partners at their most unbridled. The two outtakes for *Deluxe* – a shorter, rawer version of the title track and six-minute "Tiki-Taka" – boast a vitality sometimes lacking in Harmonia's more Rother-dominated second album and the Eno dalliance that followed. As *Musik Von Harmonia* and the '74 live album demonstrate, Harmonia ventured furthest into its corner of the cosmos when its wildest instincts led the way.

EXTRAS: Pop-up artwork, booklet, unreleased 9/10 photos, poster, download codes.

JASON ANDERSON



JIMI HENDRIX Freedom - Atlanta Pop Festival SONY

2CD set of sparkling
1970 show

9/10

With so little studio material to hand, the afterlife of Jimi Hendrix has revolved around live recordings. What was the ultimate performance? 1970 is the most favoured year, with the Fillmore East shows a contender. Isle Of Wight? Too bad-tempered. The Hawaii festival? Too sloppy. Some of the faithful champion this Atlanta International Festival of July 4, which has magically sprung back to life as a remarkable documentary. It's on DVD, but this 2CD set gives you half a dozen numbers not in the movie (or on its previous incarnation on the *Stages* boxset). Among *Freedom*'s claims to graildom is its concision (80 minutes), its balance of staples ("Foxy Lady", "Stone Free") and new material ("Room Full Of Mirrors", "Freedom") and the band's verve on the night. Hendrix had forged a unique sonic matrix between Stratocaster and effects pedals, and he moves through the gears with awesome fluency. The wrong-key goof at the beginning of "Watchtower" is a bonus. 'New' material like "Straight Ahead" is a sleek marriage of melody and blues rock. The obligatory "Star Spangled Banner" is fine, too, its rendition on the USA's birthday a symbolic stake through the heart of Southern segregation. Powerful juju.

EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER



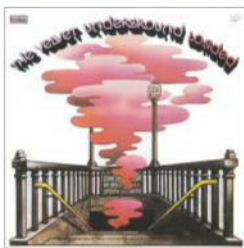
THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

Loaded: Reloaded

45th Anniversary Edition

RHINO

Lavish sequel to 1997's *Fully Loaded*, on six discs. By Louis Pattison



8/10

IN THEIR OWN way, The Velvet Underground were perverse to the end. After three albums that chronicled sadomasochism, queerness, sleaze, drug abuse, and fantasies of salvation dreamed from a dank pit of decadence, the

group were disintegrating. John Cale was out; Lou Reed was an addict, at war with bandmate Sterling Morrison and manager Steve Sesnick; Mo Tucker was on maternity leave. Given this, *Loaded* could have been a black storm cloud, an exercise in score-settling and repressed vitriol. Instead, it found the band – under pressure from their label, and increasingly bolstered by the presence of Cale's replacement, Doug Yule – taking one last swing at

writing that mythic thing: an AM radio standard. The result is a record perversely straight-laced. The title refers to hits, not heroin; and the likes of "Sweet Jane" and "Rock'n'Roll" – Reed's guileless testament to the uplifting power of music – are delivered so catchy and upbeat that at times they border on the cornball.

In 1997, the double-CD set *Fully Loaded* offered a glimpse of *Loaded*'s workings, early demos and mixes presented with a lo-fi looseness that's vestigial compared to the studio versions, but arguably often closer to what you might recognise as the VU sound. *Loaded: Reloaded* stands as a lavish sequel. Stretching over six discs and 75 tracks, it comprises of two mixes of the album, a standard remaster and a mono version – both of which reinstate "Sweet Jane" and "Rock'n'Roll" to their full, unabridged takes – plus in the region of 20 demos and outtakes and two live shows: a remastered and expanded version of *Live At Max's Kansas City*, a notorious live album capturing Reed's last ever Velvet show on August 23, 1970;

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- DISC 6: *Audio DVD*

and a previously unheard live show from Second Fret in Philadelphia, recorded by a fan to reel-to-reel tape in the May of that year. Completing the collection is a DVD presenting the album in additional audiophile-friendly forms.

Loaded remains a simple pop pleasure. As Lenny Kaye wrote in his review for *Rolling Stone*, "If Atlantic fails to get a Top 40 hit out of any of these, they might think well of overhauling their entire corporate set-up." And if this is a softer, more accessible Velvets, the songwriting remains first-rate. The Yule-sung "New Age" mixes archness ("Can I have your autograph/He said to the fat blonde actress," goes the opening couplet) and sentiment, winding its way through three movements to a beatific coda. "I Found A Reason" resembles a doo-wop take on "Pale Blue Eyes", with a spoken-word section by Reed that leaves a lump in the throat. A couple of Yule-sung moments – slight opener "Who Loves The Sun" and a jaunty cowpoke tale, "Lonesome Cowboy Bill" – can feel slightly hokey, but ruddy arrangements suggest he's the engine here. And there's little flag as main album gives way to demos, given these include early takes on Berlin's "Sad Song" and *Transformer*'s "Satellite Of Love". Much here testifies to the leap in presentation that The VU must

have made in the two years leading up to *Loaded*. Hard touring throughout 1969 was turning this sometimes obtuse arthouse group into a streamlined, accessible live proposition. Following Tucker's departure, the Philly show finds the Velvets down to a trio of Reed, Morrison and Yule, and the readings of "Sweet Jane" and "Lonesome Cowboy Bill" resemble the sparse, opiated arrangements of *The Velvet Underground*. Compare them to the taut, countrified takes on those songs that blast from Max's stage mere months later, and you could easily be listening to a different band.

Live At Max's... of course, remains a sublime and ridiculous instalment in the annals of rock'n'roll live albums. Caught on cassette recorder during the Velvets' nine-week New York residency, it captures the band on rocking form and in reasonable fidelity – at least until the audience gets chatty. "Go get me a double pernod," says Warhol associate Jim Carroll after "Sweet Jane". Later, he's on the hunt for barbiturates. In this respect at least, the Velvets found their audience. But if this was the end of the road for the band, the music across these six discs constitutes a clear arrow forwards. Here is a rock'n'roll album the wider world would recognise as such, and for Reed it was only the beginning.

Q&A

Lenny Kaye



You caught a few of those Velvet Underground shows at Max's Kansas City...

It was a residency – I believe it started in the last week of June through to the middle of August, and they played five nights a week, I guess. They were just the house band. Truly local. My memory of dancing to The Velvet Underground upstairs in Max's is certainly a cherished one. It's hard to emphasise how informal it was. You'd go to your local, have a beer and watch The Velvet Underground. What could be better than that?

When it was released, you reviewed *Loaded* for *Rolling Stone*, and were somewhat critical of the production.

As a young, impressionistic rock critic... [laughs] looking at it critically, I would say the production is a little rote. You could hear Lou's absence from the record – they excised that beautiful bridge from "Sweet Jane", shortened things, made it a little poppier. But in a way that's what *Loaded* is about. Making The Velvet Underground poppier. Lou's life was saved by rock'n'roll, and he was into the concept of having a weirdly traditional rock'n'roll band. It was kind of the final stop of The Velvet Underground in their search for transcendence. I considered myself an advocate. My role was letting people know that The Velvet Underground was one of the greatest bands of all time.

INTERVIEW: LOUIS PATTISON





KING CRIMSON

Thrak

DISCIPLINE GLOBAL MOBILE

Fripp and co's intense '90s opus, epically remixed and repackaged
Regaining full control of his back catalogue has allowed Dorset guitar god Robert

9/10

Fripp to revisit some of the peaks of an angular five-decade career. The fourth Crimson boxset in three years shifts focus to 1994-1997, and the 'double trio' lineup that featured Adrian Belew, Trey Gunn, Tony Levin, Pat Mastelotto and Bill Bruford. '90s digital technology clearly suited Fripp's obsessive attention to detail, and on its release in 1995, *Thrak* was rightly praised as a new high-point for his shape-shifting band. From the opener, the boisterous "Vroom", *Thrak* is a powerful listen – a series of joyous slabs of muscular music, immaculately played. Its experimentalism is rendered gloriously open, loud and clear in this new 20th-anniversary remix, now in high-resolution audio and 5.1 surround sound. Audio quality is astounding, all instruments distinct, heightening the power of an already excellent record. A standard CD/DVD-A release is available, but diehards are directed to the epic 12-disc CD/DVD/Blu-ray box.

EXTRAS: Tapes were left running during the sessions, which means untold riches here. Also includes concerts in Japan and San Francisco, the *VROOM* mini-LP, Nashville sessions, and bassist Tony Levin's 'on the road' footage. As the bumf states: "This band can't be fully appreciated and understood until you hear the roar of *Thrak* emerging from six speakers."

MARK BENTLEY



LEVITATION

Meanwhile Gardens

FLASHBACK

House Of Love guitarist's indie-prog-psych project's long-lost second
Embraced by some critics ahead of 1992's debut

8/10

album, *Need For Not*, as "the greatest we have right now", yet dismissed by others as "reeking of incense", *Levitation* always elicited powerful reactions, not least from their own members. Formed in 1990 after Terry 'Bonkers' Bickers' unceremonious eviction from The House Of Love, and victims of their own debauched existence, the band disintegrated four years later in suitably volatile fashion after recording their second LP. Though released in Australia with a replacement vocalist taking Bickers' role, *Meanwhile Gardens*' original tapes were until now only circulated as murky bootlegs, and this remastered release confirms a band consciously at odds with both the prevalent shoegaze sound and the imminent Britpop movement. Prog tags – encouraged by their Hawkwind-inspired name – were misleading: they were instead simply grandiose, with "King Of Mice" powered by David Francolini's muscular drumming, and Bickers' and Cardiacs member Bic Hayes' pyrotechnic guitar lines driving the epic "Food For Power" to giddy, stoned heights. Mapping out the tense postrock territory of Mogwai and the post-hardcore ferocity of At The Drive-In, *Meanwhile Gardens* is a long overdue document of a band flying spectacularly close to the sun.

EXTRAS: None.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



McALMONT & BUTLER

The Sound Of... (Deluxe Edition)

EDSEL RECORDS

The '90s odd couple revisit past glories

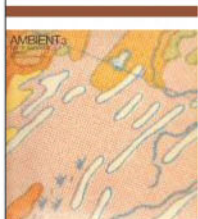
It's hard to think of a musical partnership as

7/10

seemingly mismatched as that of David McAlmont, the gobby soul singer with a three-octave range, and Bernard Butler, the shy guitarist formerly of Suede. And yet, as this 1995 debut attested, their divergent tastes (and personalities – they were famed for their epic bust-ups) made for moments of breathtaking loveliness. Among them are "Yes", a tale of triumph over heartbreak and a less-than-subtle swipe at Butler's former bandmates, and "You Do", a torch song in which McAlmont's Mayfield-esque croon is beautifully couched in Butler's elegant arrangements. It's a far from a perfect record: on the ode to Marvin Gaye, "Don't Call It Soul", their indie-soul fusion slides into showboating on both sides, while "Disappointment" lives up to its title by being too tasteful by half. Elsewhere, though, the duo's chemistry is clear. McAlmont and Butler were never going to be BFFs but, for a brief moment, their shared passion for epic sounds conjured undeniable magic.

EXTRAS: The second disc is a smörgåsbord of bonus tracks, promotional videos and TV appearances, plus a somewhat awkward interview filmed this year in which McAlmont and Butler discuss how they made the album.

FIONA STURGES



LARAAJI PRODUCED BY BRIAN ENO

Ambient 3: Day Of Radiance

GLITTERBEAT

Fine ambient document, now on gatefold vinyl

8/10

The recent critical

reappraisal of new age music has shone a light on a much-maligned genre, but few practitioners deserve their moment in the sun quite as much as Laraaji. Born Edward Larry Gordon, this African-American musician and club comic renamed himself Laraaji Nadabrahmananda following a spiritual awakening in the late '60s, and in 1979 was busking on his amplified zither in New York's Washington Square Park when he caught the attention of one Brian Eno. At the time, Eno was exploring the possibilities of what he called "ambient" music, and Laraaji would be his new test subject. *Day Of Radiance* – the third in Eno's Ambient series – consists of five tracks: three rhythmic, hypnotic pieces played on hammered dulcimer (titled "The Dance") and two soft, thoughtful pieces played on an open-tuned zither (titled "Meditation"). Unusually, for Laraaji's work, there is no synthesiser work, and little in the way of effects – although Eno played a subtle post-production role, supplying layering and echo. Presented relatively unadorned, though, we can see just what a technically fine musician Laraaji is, his timeless, ageless music closer in spirit to that of Steve Reich or Philip Glass than the synthesised pan-pipes brigade.

EXTRAS: Booklet.

4/10 LOUIS PATTISON

HOW TO BUY... KING CRIMSON'S LATER YEARS



Discipline EG, 1981

On its release, the first Crimson LP in eight years – and the first of a trilogy of questing releases including 1982's *Beat*, and 1984's

Three Of A Perfect Pair, feat. Adrian Belew and Tony Levin. Experimental, angular and immersed in new wave, free jazz and post-punk, it remains an essential exploration of rock's outer limits.

9/10



The Power To Believe

SANCTUARY, 2003/DGM 2008

The 1990s/2000s saw a spate of live releases, including the *King Crimson Collector's Club* archive sets. But for Crimson's 13th (and most recent) studio album, Fripp – now flanked by Belew, Trey Gunn and Pat Mastelotto – paid homage to the mighty riff. It's big, accessible, and totally rocking.

8/10



A Scarcity Of Miracles

DISCIPLINE GLOBAL MOBILE, 2011

Not branded a KC release, this *ProjeKct* issue is key as it pre-figures the current incarnation, and features 5/7ths of today's lineup, including flautist-saxophonist/'60s Crimson cohort Mel Collins. A suite of serene, jazzist soundscapes and minor-key moods, Collins' breathy presence summons *In The Court Of The Crimson King*.

7/10

MARK BENTLEY



PAUL MCCARTNEY

Tug Of War (reissue, 1982)

Pipes Of Peace (reissue, 1983)

UNIVERSAL

9/10

Unreleased bounty galore from Macca's MOR golden years

A chart-topper in the US and UK, *Tug Of War* is Paul McCartney's last great album and his first major artistic statement following Lennon's death and the break-up of Wings. Nearing 40, Macca assembled a dream squad of players



6/10

including Stevie Wonder, Ringo Starr, 10cc's Eric Stewart and Carl Perkins, and – crucially – reunited with producer George Martin, who adds a creaminess to some of the Beatle's most adventurous pop songs. This crisp new full-album remix merely enhances the brilliance of "Tug Of War", "Here Today", and "What's That You're Doing". Largely recorded during the same '81 sessions as *Tug...*, *Pipes...* is the weaker collection – no remaster can disguise this – though the Michael Jackson duets "Say Say Say" and "The Man" have a schmaltzy charm.

EXTRAS: Completists will devour the eight *Tug* demos, and it's a minor thrill to hear PM working out "Ballroom Dancing". The highlight of *Pipes*' superior extras is "It's Not On", the missing link, we're saying, between "Temporary Secretary" and "Maxwell's Silver Hammer".

PIERS MARTIN



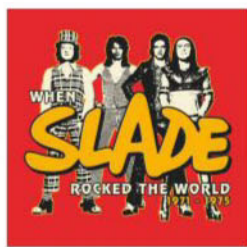
SLADE

When Slade Rocked The World 1971-1975

SALVO

Before the fall: the Black Country boys' mature years in a box.

By David Cavanagh



8/10

IT'S FUNNY HOW some bands only make sense in certain eras. If they're like Slade, they seize the window of opportunity and don't question it. The four Black Country boys – as daft as brushes and as hard as nails – were a struggling outfit with a serious image problem when the 1970s dawned. By the end of the decade they were forgotten, ruefully acknowledging the winds of change on their '77 LP, *Whatever Happened To Slade*. But in between, as Britain looked towards zanily dressed pop stars to take its mind off the Common Market and the OPEC oil crisis, Slade found themselves spectacularly in vogue. They rocketed up the charts with one infectious hit after another, effectively becoming the nation's favourite band. With their mirrored top hats and stack heels, they were a perfect primary-colour mix. Salt-of-the-earth and larger-than-life. Slade's songs were spelt like ruminations in a Molesworth jotter ("Look Wot You Dun", "Mama Weer All Crazee Now"), and combined the shrill sparkle of glam-rock with the lung-busting euphoria of Lennon's "Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me And My Monkey". As lead guitarist Dave Hill noted, Slade could switch from pop to rock'n'roll at a moment's notice. "It was great having a thick, dirty song up at No 1," he said of 1972 chart-topper "Take Me Bak 'Ome" – and sure enough, when we compare its riff

to contemporaneous glam like T.Rex's "Telegram Sam" or the Sweet's "Wig-Wam Bam", Slade's guitars do indeed sound thicker and dirtier. "Take Me Bak 'Ome" oozes grime. To think it knocked Don McLean's fastidious "Vincent" off the top spot.

Slade's legacy as four merry clowns getting exuberant in a fancy dress shop is a pejorative one, and does their music a real disservice. As we hear time and again on *When Slade Rocked The World 1971-1975* – a vinyl-and-CD, collector-aimed boxset focusing on four albums and eight non-album singles – they weren't just churning out chart fodder to fill the nostalgic dancefloors of future school discos. They were better musicians than that for a start; a tight, syncopated four-piece, they could swing viciously and attack with force. *Slayed?* (1973) is a relentless LP in places, stomping and shrieking at a level of near-hysteria even before it gets to the famously berserk "Mama Weer All Crazee Now". And connoisseurs of gripping live albums rarely fail to mention *Slade Alive!* (1972), an intimate fan-club performance that saw Slade put aside the instruments that had coloured their recent singles – piano on "Look Wot You Dun" and gypsy violin on "Coz I Luv You" – and simply plug in, turn the amps up and pin their delirious audience to the walls of a small Piccadilly studio. Containing some well-chosen covers and not a single overdub, *Slade Alive!* has been compared to the MC5's *Kick Out The Jams* without the politics. If it has anything as pretentious as a philosophy, it's as simple as this: here's a song to get you on your feet, and here's another one to get you leaping about. "We're only interested in entertaining and giving our audiences a good time," Hill remarks to George Tremlett in *The Slade Story*, a 1975 paperback included as part of this boxset's packaging. Tremlett, a seasoned pop journalist who interviewed Slade several times, provides a cheerful account of their rise to fame. These lads are keeping their feet on the ground, don't worry. At the time of publication, Hill had just bought a Jensen sports car and was thinking of opening a chain of boutiques.

Slade's music was undergoing a lot of change by then, softening their abrasive edges. A wistful ballad, "Everyday", came as a shock in '74 – though its follow-up, "The Bangin' Man", which appears here on one of four double-A-sided 45s, was a return to raucous rock. But with hindsight it's clear that the Holder-Lea songwriting partnership, once invincible, was starting to falter. *Old New Borrowed And Blue* (1974) may have earned an instant gold disc, but it's a patchy affair that seems to lose confidence in itself as it goes along. How do we

TRACKLISTING (VINYL)

Slayed?

- 1 How D'You Ride
- 2 The Whole World's Goin' Crazee
- 3 Look At Last Nite
- 4 I Won't Let It 'Appen Agen
- 5 Move Over
- 6 Gudbuy T'Jane
- 2 Gudbuy Gudbuy
- 8 Mama Weer All Crazee Now
- 9 I Don't Mind
- 10 Let The Good Times Roll
- 11 Feel So Fine

Slade Alive!

- 1 Hear Me Calling
- 2 In Like A Shot From My Gun
- 3 Darling Be Home Soon
- 4 Know Who You Are
- 5 Keep On Rocking
- 6 Get Down With It
- 7 Born To Be Wild

Old New Borrowed And Blue

- 1 Just Want A Little Bit
- 2 When The Lights Are Out
- 3 My Town
- 4 Find Yourself A Rainbow
- 5 Miles Out To Sea
- 6 We're Really Gonna Raise The Roof
- 7 Do We Still Do It
- 8 How Can It Be
- 9 Don't Blame Me
- 10 My Friend Stan
- 11 Everyday
- 12 Good Time Gals

Slade In Flame

- 1 How Does It Feel
- 2 Them Kinda Monkeys Can't Swing
- 3 So Far So Good
- 4 Summer Song (Wishing You Were Here)
- 5 OK Yesterday Was Yesterday
- 6 Far Far Away
- 7 This Girl
- 8 Lay It Down
- 9 Heaven Knows
- 10 Standin' On The Corner

Double A-side picture sleeve singles

- 1 Coz I Luv You/Look Wot You Dun
- 2 Take Me Bak 'Ome/Cum On Feel The Noize
- 3 Skweeze Me Pleeze Me/Merry Xmas Everybody
- 4 The Bangin' Man/Thanks For The Memory

FLEXIDISC

- 1 Slade talk to readers of 19 magazine

diversify? How do we mature? Music hall? More ballads? As for the leapers and rockers, only on "Do We Still Do It" – a year earlier, the title would have been presented as a statement rather than a question – do Holder and Lea come up with something powerfully new. Were they listening to Slade records in Akron, Ohio? Three years later, the descending riff of Devo's "Jocko Homo" would prove uncannily similar.

The final LP in the box is *Slade In Flame*, a gritty soundtrack to a 1975 feature film in which each Slade member took an acting role. No stack-heeled star bought any boutiques in this bleak study of the British music industry; the atmosphere was closer to *Get Carter* than glam-rock. The standout song, "How Does It Feel", is an epic illustration of what a brave step Slade were taking. Haunted and scared, Holder's voice was like nothing he'd given his fans before. Slade had found their maturity, but at a cost. Within two years, their singles would be charting at 32 and 48. *When Slade Rocked The World* elects not to go there, unable to stomach such a mortifying decline.



ROSE MCDOWALL

Cut With The Cake Knife

NIGHTSCHOOL

Strawberry Switchblade siren's lost years documented

Rose McDowall has walked

a dark and witchy path since polka-dot goth popsters Strawberry Switchblade's "Since Yesterday" single reached No 5 in 1984. "Existing inside my inside me, there's something yet still to be unleashed," she sings on the title track of this collection of demos documenting the period when she slunk away from the sunny skies of her Glasgow indie-pop roots, and down the Alice In Wonderland rabbit hole towards Psychic TV's magick circle. Twinkly '80s synth-pop highlights include McDowall's "ba ba ba"-laden "Tibet" – a farewell to Current 93's David Tibet as he headed off to Iceland – and the chirpy but unsettling "Sunboy" ("Is fear my only friend as darkness is my home?" she chirrups), though it doesn't take GCSE German to understand why bandmate Jill Bryson was a bit queasy about the cheery "Crystal Nights" being offered up as a Strawberry Switchblade song. Sweet but with something profoundly wrong lurking at its core.

EXTRAS: Not included on the original 2004

7/10 micro-edition of the album, McDowall's unexpected cover version of Blue Öyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper" reappears; it was released as a single in 1988 by a label whose other star signings included Roy 'Chubby' Brown.

JIM WIRTH



MOGWAI

Central Belters

ROCK ACTION

Three CDs – two decades of awesome noise

This year, Mogwai celebrate their 20th anniversary, having evolved from youngsters (guitarist John

Cummings was just 18 when they released their first album) in thrall to Codeine and Slint, to a band whose monumentality has been endlessly mimicked but seldom equalled. The span of this 34-track boxset – from a 1996 single (the original version of see-sawing instrumental "Summer") to last year's *Rave Tapes* album – illustrates Mogwai's talent for synthesising polar-opposite genres like kosmische and sludge metal, dream pop and *giallo* film scores so convincingly as to have transcended classification themselves. Present are stone-cold contemporary classics "New Paths To Helicon, Pt 2", "Mogwai Fear Satan", "Hunted By A Freak" and the magnificent "Like Herod", which pivots on pants-soiling surprise, alongside the lesser known, post-punk "Hasenheide". But if shock and awe have long been an important part of Mogwai's arsenal, then so too has their fearless emotional intensity. It's a constant, but is shown more directly on the strings-soaked "Take Me Somewhere Nice" and the rarer "Burn Girl Prom Queen", which appears on their third EP and features the Cowdenbeath Brass Band. Diehard Moggers fans may bemoan the omission of obscure personal faves, but the "belters" title is well-deserved.

EXTRAS: None.

SHARON O'CONNELL



NORMIL HAWAIIANS

Return Of The Ranters

UPSET THE RHYTHM

Previously unreleased gem from Kent crew

The Normil Hawaiians were one of the more

expansive groups to move sideways from punk, without getting caught under the ultimately claustrophobic rhetoric of post-punk. Instead, they inhabited their own terrain – rough early singles gave way, by the mid 1980s, to albums with lengthy songs sculpted from studio improv, hypnotic drift-works that gestured toward Can, while the group's membership slowly changed, calling on members of Greenfield Leisure to fill out the team. Recorded across 1985 and 1986, *Return Of The Ranters* feels like a state-of-the-country address born of and directly critiquing Thatcher's iron grip on Britain, and this still feels like Normil Hawaiians' most politically cutting music. The weight of the social context, however, is kept in check with the brave, expansive music – the 'optimism of the will', as such, levelling out the 'pessimism of the intellect' in the group's lyrics. The title reference to the ranters, the "maverick self-proclaimed messiahs, prophets and preachers" of 17th-Century post-Civil War England, further points toward a heritage of carnival-esque critical thinkers, finding yet another manifestation through the countercultural voices hymned by the Normil Hawaiians in these rich, resonant mantras.

EXTRAS: None.

JONDALE

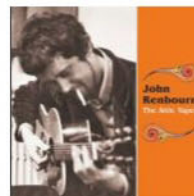
REVELATIONS

Rose McDowall: "I am both the Strawberry and the Switchblade"



➤ "There's always been a bleak undercurrent in all my songs," former Strawberry Switchblade singer Rose McDowall tells *Uncut*. "Even – and often especially – the poppier ones. People always ask me what 'Since Yesterday' is about – it's about the day nuclear war breaks out and destroys the world. I am both the Strawberry and the Switchblade, happy and sad at the same time."

McDowall's roots lie in the same Glasgow punk-rock undergrowth that nurtured the Postcard Records scene – 'Strawberry Switchblade' was the title of an unreleased Orange Juice song – but her overground pop career did not stop her exploring darker corners. She lent her voice to records by Coil, Current 93 and Psychic TV, sharing their enthusiasm for practical magic – while resisting Genesis P-Orridge's more transgressive offers. "Gen has always been a catalyst for bringing the most incredibly creative people together," says McDowall. "But it's been over 20 years and he still hasn't gotten me into that ridiculous dentist chair. He's an odd egg. He once challenged me by doing 10 or 20 push-ups on the floor of his front room, then I showed him up by doing double. I think he was a bit miffed after that." JIM WIRTH



JOHN RENBOURN

The Attic Tapes

RIVERBOAT

Unheard early works from the late guitar master

It was somewhat fitting

that the last project that John Renbourn completed before his death earlier this year was a collection of recordings from his formative days on the folk scene. Salvaged from old boxes gathering dust in his loft (and swiftly remastered), *The Attic Tapes* date from the early '60s, before Renbourn's contract with Transatlantic and the glory years of the folk boom. He was never the greatest singer, but it's striking to note that his playing – agile, descriptive, wonderfully explorative – sounds fully intact from the off. A version of "Cocaine" (one of two tunes on which he's joined by fellow guitarist Mac MacLeod) is indebted to Ramblin' Jack Elliott and lithe instrumental "Train Tune" owes more than a nod to Josh White. Intriguingly, too, his cover of Bert Jansch's "Courting Blues" comes from a time before he'd even met his future Pentangle partner. There are also less successful attempts at songs from friends and contemporaries (Davey Graham's "Anji"; Jackson C Frank's "Blues Run The Game"), a couple of live efforts with Beverley Kutner (later to marry John Martyn) and over half a dozen numbers that were subsequently rewired for Renbourn's debut album of 1966.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



SMALL FACES

The Decca Years: 1965-1967

DECCA/JMC

Dazzling first 18 months of East London's finest, spread over five CDs

8/10

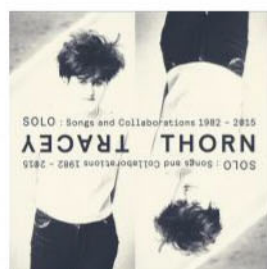
Three years in the planning, under the stewardship of Kenney Jones (along with pre-McLagan keys man Jimmy Winston), *The Decca Years* offers little that's previously unreleased. Three discs collect two original Decca albums and their *Greatest Hits*, so 10 tracks are duplicated. Even most of the awesome final disc – 12 months of BBC sessions from August '65 to August '66 – was previously available on their *Strange Fruit* compilation. And yet superior mastering and the dizzying, inspirational fervour of the Small Faces in their high-energy first flowering is undeniable. Steve Marriott's uniqueness, parlaying musical-theatre savvy with Ray Charles-inspired abandon (check the May '66 Beat Club "E Too D" revamp), shines. His cohorts are every bit his equal, their lethally compacted ballistics, as on the alternate version of "Own Up Time", makes it unsurprising that Jimmy Page was often to be found loitering at their sessions. Working "26 hours a day", in the words of Ronnie Lane, something had to give. Immediate would be the beneficiaries, but the little fellers had already given their all.

EXTRAS: Booklet with unseen pics, rarities, alternate versions and outtakes. The BBC Sessions disc includes some revealing Steve Marriott interviews.

GAVIN MARTIN

The Specialist

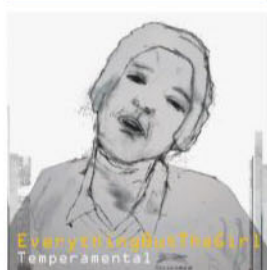
Tracey Thorn/Everything But The Girl



8/10



7/10



6/10

afternoon handovers by the swings”), while the oddly cheery “Hormones” (“yours are just kicking in, mine are just checking out”) finds a grim poignancy in teenage daughters’ mood swings. Thorn’s earth-toned reflections on middle-aged dating (“Singles Bar”) and the meaning of Christmas (“Joy”) invest her subjects with a sweet dignity and, like old comrade Robert Wyatt, she also brings a gorgeous glow to other people’s songs. Her reworking of Vampire Weekend’s “Taxi Cab” is bauble sparkly; her spartan reading of the Magnetic Fields’ “Book Of Love” lovelier still.

“Maybe this is as good as it gets,” posited Thorn on “The Heart Remains A Child”, her lone solo contribution to *Walking Wounded*. Evidently not.

JIM WIRTH

TRACEY THORN

Solo: Songs And Collaborations 1982-2015

CAROLINE

EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL

Walking Wounded/Temperamental

(reissues 1996, 1999) EDSEL

Trace elements: ex-Marine Girl’s fall and rise

Adjusting her make-up in a compact mirror on the back seat of a limousine on the front cover of *Everything But The Girl*’s 1996 bestseller *Walking Wounded*, Tracey Thorn was at a peak of sorts. Her star turn on Massive Attack’s “Protection” in 1994 and the Todd Terry remix of EBTG’s “Missing” the following year had given the jangle-pop sophisticate an unlikely dancefloor makeover. Since she and partner Ben Watt had been in fashion limbo since the late 1980s, she had every right to milk her moment, but – as her memoir *Bedsit Disco Queen* detailed – she was happy to get out while she was up. Offered a U2 support slot – and the crowbar to jemmy open America – she and Watt chose instead to have children, finally putting EBTG on hold after touring with 18-month-old twins drained any remaining fun out of their final album, 1999’s diet jungle oddity *Temperamental*. Edsel’s remix-heavy repackages of *Walking Wounded* and *Temperamental* mean the band’s entire back catalogue is back in the racks, but – post-Twitter celebrity – Thorn’s cachet may be greater than EBTG’s ever was.

Caroline’s 2CD sampler of her moonlighting efforts features charming interludes from past lives. Excerpts from her one-woman-and-out-of-tune-guitar debut *A Distant Shore* capture her pre-Watt, while her contributions to The Style Council’s “The Paris Match” and Working Week’s “Venceremos!” place Thorn on the front line of boho-pop in the mid 1980s. However, the one-time Hertfordshire punk rocker with the voice like a disappointingly attended church fête has found a new gravitas documenting the nuances of life beyond 40.

Her grim fascination with friends’ imploding relationships on “Oh, The Divorces!” captures the dying arc of love with Larkin-ish economy (“the honeymoons, the wedding rings, the

THE THREE JOHNS

Volume

BURIED TREASURE

Collected works (from ’82 to ’87) of the Leeds death rockers

8/10

The joke – and there’s usually a joke – is that

there’s only one John. Initially a satellite from host outfit The Mekons – one of the three was Mekons co-founder Jon Langford – The Three Johns became their very own monster fairly quickly, another flank of the Leeds agit-prop militia. The Three Johns aimed squarely at Thatcher’s vision of an austere United Kingdom, but they didn’t lose sight of the way the Tories manufactured culture wars: see the ‘rock’n’roll versus Thaatchiism’ note on the sleeve of 1984’s *Atom Drum Bop*, addressing the Saatchi-designed ‘Labour Isn’t Working’ advertising campaign of ’79. The political critique was spot-on, then, but so was the trio’s gear-grinding gutter noise. Early singles like “English White Boy Engineer” and “Pink Headed Bug” are tetchy, nervous things, not far removed from what the Gang Of Four were doing at the time. By 1986’s *The World By Storm*, their finest hour, things had gone widescreen, even with their tinny drum machine still ticking over – Langford, John Hyatt and Phillip ‘John’ Brennan were writing grey-scale anti-anthems, from the snaky, Wire-y guitar lines of “Death Of The European”, to “Sold Down The River”’s glorious grimness.

EXTRAS: Zine from writer James Brown.

5/10 JON DALE



TRADER HORNE

Morning Way

(reissue, 1970)

FIRE

Lost 1970 psych-folk classic, from duo named after John Peel’s granny

8/10

Trader Horne were and are Judy Dyble (pre-Sandy

Denny vocalist in Fairport) and Jackie McCauley (multi-instrumentalist and former Them member). Their one and only LP has a unique chemistry, with McCauley’s arrangements featuring flutes, harpsichords and oboes, as if Brian Jones’ work on “Lady Jane” was a cue to roam free. Dyble’s captivating presence – genteel clarity, unaffected playfulness and precision perfectly blended – allows the duo to range from medieval folk, parlour-room balladry and swinging pop to folk kitsch and spaced-out allusions in joyous abundance, not mixed up confusion. JD’s jazzy, discursive, ultimately storming performance of “Down And Out Blues” is the sound of the wallflower roaring, refusing to accept good-mannered English girls can’t sing the blues. The palpating McCauley-led “Sheena” comes from another spectrum entirely as does “Mixed Up Kind” – carnival-esque, acid country mission statement and rococo narrative. Later this year, *Morning Way*’s 45-year anniversary will be marked by the duo’s first live performance since the original release. Chances are that will be something to see, as each track on here maps new discovery, a still startlingly fresh and original proposition.

EXTRAS: Two non-album tracks, “Here Comes 5/10 The Rain” and “Goodbye Mercy Kelly”.

GAVIN MARTIN



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Go Cat Go! The Essential Rockabilly Collection

SALVO

8/10

Put your cat clothes on...

Although you can find most of these songs on the plethora of existing rockabilly compilations, *Go Cat Go!* comes close to rivaling the best ever rockabilly anthology, Rhino's hard-to-find *Rockin' Bones*. Following the same model, it spreads 100 tracks across four discs and strikes the right blend of cornerstone recordings (Carl Perkins, Gene Vincent, Ricky Nelson) and lesser-known delights such as the rampant, Cramps-covered "Love Me" by The Phantoms, Joyce Green's murderous "Black Cadillac" (she's going to drive it to her ex's funeral), Larry Collins' surf-guitar precursor "Whistle Bait" or Dorsey Burnette's lascivious "Bertha Lou", boldly proclaiming "I want to conjugate with you." Despite some mainstream hits ("Endless Sleep", "Let's Jump The Broomstick"), this set ably demonstrates how the guitar/bass trio formula – exemplified by Sam Phillips' Sun label recordings – stretched to include piano, sax and steel. Rockabilly veered from country (Johnny Horton, George Jones) to blues; check out Billy Riley's appropriation of "Baby Please Don't Go" or Tommy Blake's British-beat sounding "I Dig You Baby". Judiciously themed, *Go Cat Go!* sizzles with the thrills and spills of the first genre to anticipate punk rock.

EXTRAS: Illuminating liners by author

6/10 Max Décharné.

MICK HOUGHTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Trevor Jackson Presents: Science Fiction Dancehall Classics

ON-U SOUND

8/10

Buried treasure from dark side of a legendary label

Adrian Sherwood's dub-heavy On-U Sound label has been a cornerstone of leftfield British music for 35 years, spawning multiple retrospectives, but this double-CD/triple-vinyl anthology is something a bit special. Trevor Jackson, of Playground and Underdog fame, is inevitably credited as "curator" rather than compiler. But such minor hipster pretensions can be forgiven thanks to a richly absorbing tracklist which maps the label's shadow history as a breeding ground for post-punk, No Wave, electro-noir and avant-jazz experimentalism as much as for dub-derived sounds. Among a clutch of previously unreleased gems is "Dead Come Alive" by Neneh Cherry and The Circuit, a skeletal electro ditty anticipating Cherry's recent work with Four Tet. Little Annie's alluringly wobbly folk-pop reverie "77 Emerging Strips" also makes its public debut. Several more abrasive dub-punk tracks serve as reminders that On-U emerged from the same gene pool as PiL and The Slits. Others, like Fats Comet's sample-drenched synthfunk groove monster "Dub Storm", or Dub Syndicate's knotty Aphex-style sound collage "Drilling Equipment", stake their own sonic terrain. Living up to its title, most of this anthology still feels jarringly fresh and eerily well-suited to a fractured, post-dubstep landscape.

EXTRAS: None.

STEPHEN DALTON

COMING NEXT MONTH...



➤ As we head towards the end of the year, new albums traditionally give way to more archival releases. That's not to say there's not some promising new stuff to look forward to in

November, of course. For one, Elbow's **Guy Garvey** releases his first solo album, the 10-track *Courting The Squall*, while **Rod Stewart** returns with *Another Country*. Elsewhere, **Jeffrey Lewis** returns with *Manhattan*, his first album in four years, **Dave Gahan** is back in collaboration with *Soulsavers*, and Australian psych adventurers **King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard** follow up May's jammy *Quarters* with the totally acoustic *Papier Mâché Dream Balloon*.

In our archive section, there are deluxe reissues of two of **Van Morrison**'s finest albums, *Astral Weeks* and *His Band And The Street Choir*, to look forward to, and a 12CD boxset of **Otis Redding**'s impressive work from 1964-1970. *The Grateful Dead* release *Fare Thee Well*, a recording of their final ever show at Chicago's Soldier Field back in July and, most intriguingly, the cream of **Kurt Cobain**'s solo home recordings have been selected for the soundtrack to the *Montage Of Heck* film. The full archive contains 107 cassettes, some

Beatles covers and even jams with Courtney Love – though we're not yet sure what has made the final cut.

TOM.PINNOCK@TIMEINC.COM

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REVELATIONS

Trader Horne's Jackie McAuley and Judy Dyble reunited



➤ Envisioned as a three-piece, Trader Horne saw out their short lifespan as a duo after third man (Rod Stewart associate) Pete Sears made the introductions and went to the US. Remaining pair Judy Dyble (above right) and Jackie McAuley soon found common musical cause. "Opposites attract," recalls McAuley. "I was a bit moody and felt Judy was a little vulnerable. But she put up with me."

The setup was a contrast to McAuley's background in the rough and tumble Irish R'n'B scene, playing with Van Morrison and others. "Since I was a child, I could play several things, so it was delightful to have all the instruments around the studio when we recorded."

John Peel gave them their name – and Judy's electric autoharp. "There wasn't anyone else playing it at the time," she explains, "so I made it up as I went along." Intensive touring soon proved a strain, however, but Dyble's sudden departure, ahead of a festival show with Traffic and the Dead, left no hard feelings. 45 years on, they're preparing to reunite. "I won't attempt to reach the highest notes," Dyble says, "and, due to rheumatoid arthritis, won't be playing much autoharp. It's very heavy, you know." GAVIN MARTIN



XTC

Oranges & Lemons (reissue, 1989)

APE HOUSE

7/10

Partridge and co's Technicolor ninth, now remixed and improved

Though 1987's *Skylarking* saw Andy Partridge bitterly

clash with producer Todd Rundgren, its Todd-free follow-up is in fact the XTC album that perhaps suffers most from damaging production decisions. Likely more a fault of the period's conventions than one of producer Paul Fox, the songs on *Oranges & Lemons* struggle under the weight of harsh digital reverbs, nasty chorus effects and arrangements that seemingly attempt to include every instrument in the music store. Steven Wilson's remix job on this deluxe set has thankfully dulled some of the shiniest surfaces here, allowing the quality of the two songwriters' work to beam through. Partridge's "The Mayor Of Simpleton" and Colin Moulding's "King For A Day" are delightful beat-pop confections, and did surprisingly well on the US Modern Rock charts; things take a turn towards the atonal on the herky-jerky "Scarecrow People" and jazzy "Miniature Sun", before XTC harness a little of the pastoral psych of their Dukes Of Stratosphear alter-ego on the closing "Chalkhills And Children", a Partridge masterpiece.

EXTRAS: CD features Wilson's new mix, Blu-ray

7/10 includes original stereo and 5.1 Surround Sound mixes, demos and rehearsal recordings, radio IDs, promo videos and a homemade intro film to XTC. Sleeve notes from Partridge, Moulding and Dave Gregory.

TOM PINNOCK



Ghetto Brothers and sisters

RUBBLE KINGS

SHARP TEETH FILMS

Enthralling account of the real-life inspiration for *The Warriors*, co-produced by Jim Carrey



8/10

IF DJ KOOL HERC is generally considered the godfather of hip-hop, it can be argued that Cornell Benjamin was its first martyr. Benjamin was neither a musician nor a DJ. Rather, he was a drugs counsellor and appointed peacemaker who, under the aegis of New York street gang the Ghetto Brothers, was dispatched to broker a truce

during the vicious turf wars of the early '70s. He was killed by a rival gang.

Benjamin's murder is the pivotal moment in *Rubble Kings*, Shan Nicholson's engrossing new documentary about gang culture in New York, largely centred around the South Bronx of the '60s and '70s. His death brought years of brutality to a head, resulting in an inter-gang treaty – the historic Hoe Avenue Peace Meeting of December 1971 – that led to a shift of emphasis among the tribal factions. Violence was out, music was in. Opposing gangs jammed with one another at block parties. DJs became the new community leaders. And crucially, the culture of intimidation found a creative outlet in dance battles and DJ match-ups. Hip-hop, as

one former gang member puts it, “calmed the savage beast”.

The birth of hip-hop serves as the resting point for *Rubble Kings*' narrative arc. But this is primarily a film about the socio-economic conditions that gave rise to gang culture, the fierce allegiances therein and the eventual realisation that, unless they took drastic action, their only achievement would be to wipe themselves out completely.

Nicholson uses archive footage, graphic novel-style illustrations and plenty of talking heads (mostly former gang members) to tell the story of how the Bronx went from picturesque borough to the ultimate symbol of civic decay in just a few short years. America's grand vision of urban renewal failed to reach the Bronx at all. Houses were torn down, landlords began torching their own buildings to claim insurance, and the poor were left behind as the moneyed classes moved out.

Outlaws sprang up from the rubble, raising hell and rigorously marking out their territory. The

choice was stark: either join a gang or become a victim. Each clan had its own hierarchy, from presidents and vice-presidents to warlords and agents, whose task it was to mete out severe punishment to members guilty of contravening their strict code. Anyone wanting to join a gang was required to undertake a ruthless initiation rite. The most common of these was the Apache Line, in which the prospective recruit made his way through two flanks of gang members while being pummelled by a sea of fists. If you made it out in one piece, unconscious or otherwise, you were in.

The Ghetto Brothers' method involved slipping a 45 on the turntable and pitching the recruit in a fist fight against three hardcore members for the duration of the song. Bloodlust often took over. Joint leader 'Yellow Benjy' Melendez recalls one of his charges eagerly returning from the local store with a full album, hoping to see the hapless guy's jaw break.

The testimony of Melendez, alongside fellow Ghetto Brothers chief Carlos 'Karate Charlie' Suarez, is at the heart of *Rubble Kings*. Both men exude charisma. Former colleagues describe them as yin and yang – Suarez the

pragmatist ex-marine who styled himself on the Japanese Bushido, Melendez the impassioned orator who sought a way out of the malaise.

There were well over 100 gangs in New York, all with fabulous names – Savage Nomads, Ebony Dukes, Young Dynamite, Seven Immortals, Harlem Turks, Golden Guineas – but the Ghetto Brothers were unique in that they were driven by a political consciousness, using the media to fan the cause (there's fascinating footage of a leadership summit on *The David Susskind Show*). They were intent on helping the community around them, be it providing essentials like food and clothes, scrubbing graffiti or warning people off drugs. They were also a very handy Latin-funk band, whose 1971 opus *Power-Fuerza* was finally granted a proper release in 2012.

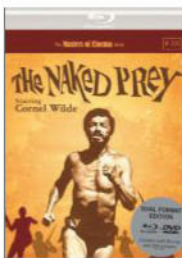
At just 70 minutes, *Rubble Kings* doesn't hang about. But it nevertheless manages to cover an impressive amount of ground, the hip-hop fraternity represented by Kool Herc, Jazzy Jay and the key figure of Afrika Bambaataa. The latter was a warlord in the Black Spades before co-opting them into Universal Zulu Nation: “The first black force to promote positivity through music.”

This is far more than just a story about survivalist

machismo. *Rubble Kings* offers a powerful reminder of the sheer resilience of the human spirit in the face of terrible odds. And, more impressively, the ability to create something meaningful from utter chaos.

EXTRAS: US premiere footage, director intro, stills.
3/10 ROB HUGHES

Ghetto Bros were intent on helping the community. They were also a very handy Latin-funk band



THE NAKED PREY

EUREKA

Bloody '60s survival gem rediscovered

As an actor, Cornel Wilde played dependable second-rank noir leads in the 1940s and '50s (*The Big Combo*), but when he took up directing, he proved a surprising and potent filmmaker (his 1967 anti-

war *Beach Red* is *The Thin Red Line* 30 years early). In this masterly, unexpectedly savage 1966 variation on *The Most Dangerous Game*, Wilde plays a nameless hunter in 19th-Century Southern Africa, who – captured, stripped, thrown into the bush and given a chance to run – is himself hunted by a local tribe. Wilde crafts cosmic allegory onto visceral action-adventure, with visuals that vibrate like a comic book.

EXTRAS: Booklet, trailers.

7/10 DAMIEN LOVE



PUBLIC ENEMY

Live From Metropolis Studios

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Intimate show from hip-hop behemoths

Filed before a small audience in London during the summer of 2014, Public Enemy still sound uncompromisingly

great nearly 30 years since they began. Cue raised fists, the camo-gear presence of the SiWs, Flavor Flav wondering how low you can go and Chuck D leading a pounding charge through the likes of “Rebel Without A Pause”, “Fight The Power” and a truly kinetic “Bring The Noise”.

EXTRAS: Flavor Flav’s jams and solos, plus illuminating interviews with Chuck D, Flavor Flav and the SiWs.

8/10 ROB HUGHES



PASOLINI

BFI

Willem Dafoe simmers in Abel Ferrara’s last-day biopic of the Italian director

He was a filmmaker, writer and Marxist provocateur, but Pier Paolo Pasolini is almost as well known for his mysterious and violent death in Rome in 1975.

Was he killed by thugs while cruising or a victim of right-wing conspiracy? Given the sleaze-diving potential, the shock of Ferrara’s velvety, fragmented reconstruction of *Pasolini*’s final 24 hours is its subtlety. A flawed but elusive and nuanced tribute to an inspiration, this is also to be cherished for giving Dafoe (a panther-like ringer for Pasolini) something worthwhile. Ferrara’s best since 1996’s *The Funeral*.

EXTRAS: tbc.

7/10 DAMIEN LOVE



Alba Rohrwacher and younger co-stars in *The Wonders*

THE WONDERS

SODA PICTURES

Quietly great, occasionally surreal, arthouse drama, with bees



8/10

NOT THAT THERE’S really such a thing as an archetypal European art film – but if you had to point to one, Italian family drama *The Wonders* would fit the bill. The second film from up-and-coming writer-director Alice Rohrwacher is an autobiographically inspired family story about four young sisters living in the modern Italian countryside in somewhat neo-hippyish conditions, and helping their parents run their bee-keeping business. Shot and staged in no-frills, largely realist style, this bucolic tale has echoes of the back-to-the-earth cinema with which the Taviani brothers made their name in the '70s (notably in *Padre Padrone*); indeed, Rohrwacher’s film, grainily shot on celluloid by Hélène Louvart, feels as if it could have been made at any time in the past 50 or so years. It’s a vignette of tender, intimate appeal rather than in any way earth-shattering, but *The Wonders* displays a very personal conviction and strength of vision that will make it irresistible to lovers of a classic strain of Italian art cinema.

The film is set in central Italy, where teenage Gelsomina (Maria Alexandra Lungu) lives in an old farmhouse with her three younger sisters, their mother Angelica (Alba Rohrwacher, the director’s sister) and their taciturn German father, Wolfgang (Sam Louwyck), who takes a rigorous line on keeping things organic and protecting his daughters from the lures of the modern world. These latter come in the form of a TV show hosted by the glamorous and distinctly unreal Milly Catena, presiding over a competition to reward local traditional farmers; she’s played by Monica Bellucci in white tresses and the hyper-kitsch finery of a media-style nature goddess.

Don’t expect *The Wonders* to live up its name in any sort of spectacular way: its marvels are mainly of a discreet, realist variety. But there are images here that certainly stick with you, and they tend to be apiary-related. One is the sight of a live bee crawling out of a girl’s mouth, another comes when the girls rush to clear up a major honey spill with their bare hands and arms (anyone phobic about honey or general stickiness may find this scene a little too tactile). There are some surreal moments, too (notably the broad satire on Italian TV, although it jars with the overall tone), and touches of perhaps too deliberate everyday magic (a child ‘drinking’ a ray of sun). But the rougher edges of the sun-steeped photography, and the flawless rapport between Lungu and her young co-stars bring real vividness to a film that, though rooted in nostalgia for certain kinds of screen poetry, is also a very contemporary statement about the precarious state of traditions in the realm of European culture and lifestyle.

EXTRAS: None.

JONATHAN ROMNEY



7/10

P'TIT QUINQUIN

NEW WAVE

Bonkers but unsettling slapstick-surreal French cop serial

Director of harsh, harrowing visions of rotting life in provincial France like 1999’s *Humanité* (a possible prequel to this), Bruno Dumont is known for

rubbing audiences’ faces in the grim. Refreshing, then, to experience this ramblant TV series, following bumbling rural detectives on the trail of a killer who stuffs body parts inside dead cows, while devilish local kids get in the way. *Twin Peaks* hovers on the far horizon, but Dumont’s surrealism is more naturalistic, while abiding, troubling undertones push through. Memorably.

EXTRAS: None.

DAMIEN LOVE



9/10

SECONDS

EUREKA

UK Blu-ray debut for John Frankenheimer’s sharp cult nightmare

Pop cultists celebrate Frankenheimer’s paranoid 1966 sci-fi parable as the movie that sent Brian Wilson over the edge while trying to make *Smile* – reportedly, Wilson didn’t watch another film for

15 years. Few horror movies retain full potency five decades on, but *Seconds* remains modern and deeply unsettling. Its high-contrast black and white never sharper than in this new transfer, it’s the story of a tired, middle-aged banker tired of his bland life and a mysterious corporation who offer escape... at a price. The least-likely Rock Hudson movie ever made.

EXTRAS: Archive Frankenheimer interview, and essays.

7/10 DAMIEN LOVE

Films

BY DAMON WISE

This month: winter draws in with midlife miserabilia, drug cartel violence, Jihadis in Mali, the Black Panthers and Cary Fukunaga's shocking tale of child soldiers

AFTER A SUMMER of spectacle – in which Tom Cruise's stern, righteous face and pointy-fingered running (*Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*), earnest mutant teenagers (*Fantastic Four*) and an ill-thought-out dinosaur theme park (*Jurassic World*) seem to be the summit of all that the future has in store for us – you can tell the winter is drawing on by the sudden sobriety of the winter release schedule. Even the romantic comedies drop the pretence of fluffiness. Dealing with the vagaries of modern dating, **The Lobster**, the first English-language feature by Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos – whose 2009 *Dogtooth* kickstarted his country's "weird wave" movement – is the canary in the coal mine, suggesting that as the nights draw in, the films are getting much less reassuring.

Though it appears, at first sight, to be as English as Reggie Perrin, and concerns itself with very similar questions of midlife miserabilia, *The Lobster* – which stars Ireland's Colin Farrell and Primrose Hill's Rachel Weisz – poses much more complex existential questions. It begins with Farrell's sad-sack David preparing for a stay in a holiday spa hotel. It transpires that he is newly single and, in a not-so-parallel world where not being part of a couple isn't tolerated, he has 45 days to find a partner whose personality complements his own. If he doesn't, he will be turned into an animal of his choosing and released into the wild.

It sounds like a grand conceit, but it really isn't – in fact, the film's whole absurd premise is delivered in a single matter-of-fact speech by the hotel's mumsy manager (played by Olivia Colman). Instead, *The Lobster* is a study of loneliness and attachment, as David joins a band of outsiders known as the Loners, falling in love with a mysterious woman (Weisz) whose diary is our entry point into this bizarre, dystopian, but oddly romantic, society.

Though it is futuristic and surreal, the world of *The Lobster* nevertheless deals with traditional human emotions. These are in shorter supply in



the terrific thriller, **Sicario**, by Denis Villeneuve, which situates itself in the Mexican border, smack in the middle of the no-man's-land between America and the target of its so-far fruitless war on drugs. It begins with a female FBI agent, Kate Macy (Emily Blunt), expertly coordinating a SWAT attack on a cartel safehouse. Macy is smart, sweatless and efficient, which makes it no surprise when a secret government ops team, led by Josh Brolin's easy-going, flip-flop-wearing Matt, tries to recruit her to the number for a special, under-the-radar mission.

It isn't too long, however, before Macy starts noticing discrepancies. Being a by-the-book Fed, she isn't so taken with Matt's cavalier attitude to the Bureau's rules and regulations, and the presence of taciturn Colombian Alejandro (Benicio Del Toro) isn't any kind of reassurance. Indeed, the situation quickly turns into something much more nightmarish than Macy could have ever foreseen: not only is this a world of violence and retribution, it is rife with duplicity and sexual violence, which the single Macy learns with potential cost to her life.

The title, which initially suggests a place, refers to a person, being the Spanish word for hitman, and though the film initially involves us with

one individual, Villeneuve executes swift sleight of hand to change the stakes in the film's final third. In doing so, he takes us away from the personal element and shows us the bigger picture, revealing the futile politics of declaring war on drugs in the first place – the result being a stalemate that creates strange bedfellows whose interests aren't so concerned with that war ever being won.

War features prominently this month, notably in the Malian music documentary **They Will Have To Kill Us First**. This film by Johanna Schwartz has picked up an unwelcome topicality in recent months, as Islamic State spreads its influence in the Middle East. A sister piece to the recent (fictional) *Timbuktu*, Schwartz's film deals with the practicalities of ultra-strict Sharia law: after an influx of Jihadi militants in 2012 – the MNLA, a religious group tied to Al Qaeda – all forms of music were banned in Northern Mali. In fact, many other facets of modern technology went with it, although the military curiously didn't do away with anything that might be of use to the war effort.

It sounds like a dark, disturbing story of oppression, and though it obviously is, the title explains much more about the Malian people and their strength of character. What startles

Reviewed this month...



THE LOBSTER
Director Yorgos Lanthimos
Starring Colin Farrell, Rachel Weisz, John C Reilly
Opens 16 October
Cert 15
7/10



SICARIO
Director Denis Villeneuve
Starring Emily Blunt, Josh Brolin, Benicio Del Toro
Opens 8 October
Cert 15
9/10



THEY WILL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST: MALIAN MUSIC IN EXILE
Director Johanna Schwartz
Opens October 23
Cert 15
6/10



THE BLACK PANTHERS: VANGUARD OF THE REVOLUTION
Director Stanley Nelson Jr
Opens October 23
Cert tbc
7/10



BEASTS OF NO NATION
Director Cary Fukunaga
Starring Idris Elba, Abraham Attah, Richard Pepple
Opens 16 October
Cert 18
9/10



Charismatic: Idris Elba as The Commandant in *Beasts Of No Nation*

from the off, is the colour and vibrancy of Schwartz's documentary, which amply illuminates quite what it is the MNLA is trying to stamp out: creativity and individualism on a surprising scale. Weaving together many different viewpoints, *They Will Have To Kill Us First* can be frustrating at times; the music often takes a back seat as Schwartz homes in on tales of domestic heartbreak and personal despair. The upside of this, however, is that Schwartz creates a deep sense of diversity: though there is a definite Malian "sound", it is fluid within its framework, sometimes bluesy, sometimes soulful. The poster boys for Malian music are festival favourites Songhoy Blues, and this film explains and contextualises their "desert blues-punk" perfectly.

Things in the West aren't so great, either, and as the Civil Rights movement prepares to celebrate its half-century at a time when black lives are seemingly just as under threat as they were in the days of

Martin Luther King's march on Selma, Stanley Nelson Jr's *The Black Panthers: Vanguard Of The Revolution* seems incredibly timely. The recent Swedish documentary, *The Black Power Mixtape*, did a much better job of taking the Black Panthers out of the glare of the media and discussing their means and motives objectively – interviews were conducted by thoughtful, bearded Europeans in socks and sandals. But though it is much more traditional, Nelson's film really does hammer home how incendiary the movement was when it first appeared, a revolutionary militia formed by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 as a direct reaction to

the pacifism of Dr King's doctrine. It's shocking now to see how upfront the Panthers were in their intentions, and sobering to wonder what would happen now if a similar, racially motivated group were to suddenly flaunt their Third Amendment rights in today's America. The talking heads do give this some consideration, and though there is an element of rose-tinted revisionism in some of their statements – the community service element tends to be highlighted rather than the confrontational "by any means necessary" philosophy of Malcolm X – Nelson's film really offers a terrific picture of how revolutionary ideas can lead to change, rather than just cool

T-shirts and inspirational posters in student halls of residence.

The most shocking of all this month's releases, however, is Cary Fukunaga's *Beasts Of No Nation*, which follows and betters, without in any way replicating, his terrific series, *True Detective*. The subject here is the child soldiers of Africa, and it begins almost like a travelogue as the charming, rogueish Agu (Abraham Attah) makes his way through life in an unnamed "buffer state" in a West African country. His father is a teacher, but Agu is a hustler; the beginning of the film finds him trying to sell a

screenless television to locals, asking his friends to perform behind it and calling it "imagination TV". This idyll lasts a surprising while until the bad guys roll in; his mother escapes, his father is shot, and Agu flees into the wild, his childhood about to be taken from him forever. At the height of the nightmare, Agu is stopped and captured by a patrol, but luckily – or

unluckily for him – he is spared punishment by those who mistake him for a rebel. Instead, he is taken in by The Commandant (an extraordinary Idris Elba), who takes the boy under his wing. What happens next is the stuff of Western nightmares, but Fukunaga doesn't sugarcoat it or attempt to rationalise. The result is one of the most extraordinary features of the year, both timely and visceral yet with a powerful sense of urgency that should propel it through awards season, notably for the charismatic Elba. It isn't an easy watch, but neither should it be; we can only hope that the long, dark winter brings more adult films like this.

It's shocking now to see how upfront the Panthers were in their intentions

Also out...

BY OUR SELVES

OPENS OCTOBER 2

Andrew Köting retraces the footsteps of poet John Clare through the English countryside, accompanied by Iain Sinclair, Alan Moore and Toby Jones.

MACBETH

OPENS OCTOBER 7

Michael Fassbender plots to be king hereafter with Marion Cotillard as his wife.

THE WHO: LIVE IN HYDE PARK

OPENS OCTOBER 7

From the band's show earlier this year, with backstage interviews and testimonials from famous fans, Paul Weller included.



The Who: Live in Hyde Park

REGRESSION

OPENS OCTOBER 9

Alejandro Amenábar's first film since 2009's *Agora* finds Ethan Hawke as a detective investigating a sexual abuse case during the 1990s.

SUFFRAGETTE

OPENS OCTOBER 12

Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter and Meryl Streep head up the suffrage movement during the early 20th Century.

CRIMSON PEAK

OPENS OCTOBER 16

Gothic fantasia from Guillermo del Toro, with Tom Hiddleston living in a remote house with sister Jessica Chastain and new bride Mia Wasikowska.

THE PROGRAM

OPENS OCTOBER 16

Stephen Frears directs this biopic of Lance Armstrong, with *The IT Crowd*'s Chris O'Dowd as an Irish journalist investigating the champion cyclist.

BLACK SOULS

OPENS OCTOBER 23

Superior, slow-burning crime thriller, set in rural southern Italy. Shades of *Gomorra* and *The Godfather* abound.

SPECTRE

OPENS OCTOBER 26

Latest Bondage – Daniel Craig battles Christoph Waltz' baddie, who may or may not be 007's arch nemesis, Blofeld.

ELVIS COSTELLO: DETOUR LIVE AT LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC HALL

OPENS OCTOBER 30

Recorded in June this year, Costello's latest solo tour took in deep cuts as well as the big hits. Enjoy on the large screen.

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD



Euphoric: Suffjan Stevens enjoying End Of The Road

END OF THE ROAD FESTIVAL

LARMER TREE GARDENS, DORSET, SEPTEMBER 4-6, 2015

SUFJAN STEVENS, LOW and TAME IMPALA rethink the noble art of headlining a festival

THOUGH END OF THE ROAD, this year celebrating its 10th festival, takes place in beautiful countryside on the Dorset/Wiltshire border (with views to the white cliffs of the Isle Of Wight on Friday), and features great food, dangerously alcoholic Somerset cider and illuminated woods, the emphasis is thankfully very much on the music.

"Hey, I'm really surprised they invited us back," says Alan Sparhawk during **Low's** headline set on the beautiful Garden Stage. Back in 2008, on the same stage at End Of The Road,

the guitarist had something of an onstage meltdown and launched his hefty Gibson Les Paul into the crowd.

Tonight, though, Sparhawk is on his best behaviour, and he, drummer Mimi Parker and bassist Steve Garrington turn in a tender, stunning performance. Though their setlist is heavy with songs from their new *Ones And Sixes* album, such as "Lies", "The Innocents" and "What Part Of Me", these blend in well with older favourites like "Especially" from 2011's *C'Mon*, or an apocalyptic "Pissing", which ends with the guitarist screaming wildly into his pickups. The

volume is minimal throughout, and yet that perfectly fits the hushed, intimate atmosphere that Low create. The music almost dissolves completely during the closing "Murderer", Parker and Sparhawk's wordless voices rising up to the clear black sky and visible stars above.

In contrast, **Fuzz**, a band whose idea of between-song banter is a kind of guttural grunting, are about as heavy as the festival gets. As primal as these noises are, however, the stoner-metal trio's music is surprisingly complex. Californian wunderkind Ty Segall is on drums and vocals, his face covered in corpse paint, Charles Moothart from the Ty Segall Band is on guitar and vocals, and Chad Ubovich is on bass and vocals, and the three seem to have an almost telepathic bond; they jump between Sabbath-like riffs at breakneck speed, and oscillate crazily between crashingly loud barrages (mostly) and very quiet sections (rarely).

Ferocious new single "Rat Race", taken from their new *Fuzz II* album, is a highlight, before the trio end with the speedfreak madness of 14-minute instrumental "II", which evokes Blue Cheer, The Mars Volta and King Crimson in equal measure. It's nearly as astonishing as Segall's



octopus drumming, which sparks the thought that he might be even better behind the kit than behind a guitar.

Sometime Segall collaborator Tim Presley appears the next day, playing with Cate Le Bon as **Drinks**. Their avant-rock is a little too much for some of the crowd, especially on the free-form noise of “Tim, Do I Like That Dog”, but their angular, strafing Faust-ian songs do work a lot better onstage than on record; on “Laying Down The Rock” and “Focus On The Street”, infectious melodies slowly uncoil from the left-field melodies and the pair’s pointillist soloing. “This is a song that... could go either way,” laughs Le Bon before the closing chaos of “She Walks So Fast”.

Jessica Pratt’s set in the *Uncut* Tipi Tent is no less straightforward, but a lot gentler. Drawing mostly from her second album, this year’s *On Your Own Love Again*, the Californian even takes the shape of the set from the record – beginning with the circling, ominous “Wrong Hand”, and

God appeared from behind the clouds and told Sufjan to play the End Of The Road festival

ending with the duo of “Back, Baby” and “On Your Own Love Again”. Due to the relatively stripped-down nature of her records, Pratt manages to recreate them perfectly with the help of Cyrus Gengras on electric guitar, though “Strange Melody” does miss her exotic vocal harmony.

“Night Faces”, taken from her debut album (in fact released on Tim

Presley’s Birth Records) is a highlight, the complex chords and melodies shifting slowly as Pratt sings of remembering “sad faces in the mirror by me”.

Mind-expanding in a different way, **Tame Impala** headline Friday night on the main Woods Stage. Material from their more electronic and rhythmic third album, *Currents*, gets a good airing, with Kevin Parker and his band beginning with perhaps their best-known song, “Let It Happen”. Even “Elephant” comes midway through the set, its twin-guitar sections

strangely reminiscent of Fuzz’s riffing earlier on. With Parker a perfectionist by nature, the sound is unsurprisingly excellent throughout, with “Mind Mischief” and “Why Won’t They Talk To Me?”, both from 2012’s *Lonerism*, boiling over with swirling synths, echoed guitars and some well-judged phasing effects. It’s a minor criticism but, at times, you wish for a little more rawness and danger to the arrangements – the songs from *Currents*, especially, are so pristine and daubed in effects, it’s as if you’re listening to the album.

As exact, but a little more organic, is **Sufjan Stevens**. Undoubtedly the biggest coup for this year’s End Of The Road, the Brooklyn-based songwriter draws a huge crowd for his first proper UK festival show. End Of The Road have been trying to get him to play since they started nearly 10 years ago, and onstage Stevens puts his decision to finally appear down to a power higher than his live agent – in fact, the songwriter credits God who, he says, appeared to him from behind the clouds, told him to play the festival, and then played the main *Star Wars* theme before vanishing again.

This is later on in the set, however. To begin with, Stevens starts off with some of his quieter, darker songs, and a selection from this year’s bleak *Carrie & Lowell*. 2004’s *Seven Swans* is heavily featured, too, in the form of “In The Devil’s Territory” and “That Dress Looks Nice On You”, while a hushed take on “Futile Devices”, originally on 2010’s *The Age Of Adz*, features a delicate, minimal coda of spacey synth.

These quiet songs have such a rich, lush sound that Stevens manages to hold the crowd’s attention despite the lack of ideal festival material. Their patience is rewarded with some louder, more ecstatic material later on, Stevens’ four-piece band of multi-instrumentalists (including singer-songwriter Dawn Landes) joined by a horn section. From a louder reworking of *Seven Swans*’ “Sister”, through to “Chicago”, with Stevens switching between guitar and piano, and throwing streamers over his bandmembers, it’s a euphoric closer.

There’s one more song, though – “Blue Bucket Of Gold” from *Carrie & Lowell*, which dissolves into 15 minutes of intense ambient noise, delicate synth chords gradually shifting into what sounds like a rocket taking off into space. End Of The Road seemed to enjoy Sufjan Stevens and, judging by the smile on his face when we see him wondering around the lit-up woodlands later on, Sufjan enjoyed End Of The Road.

TOM PINNOCK



Low's Alan Sparhawk



Naturally attuned:
Russell Mael and
Alex Kapranos

FFS

FESTIVAL THEATRE, EDINBURGH, AUGUST 24, 2015

When Sparks met Franz Ferdinand... this town is big enough for the both of them!

LOOK AT YOU, out of your seats and everything," drawls Alex Kapranos, hand on hip, gazing with a grin at an unusually animated Edinburgh audience. In the somewhat staid surroundings of the Festival Theatre, inspiring a crowd to its feet is quite an achievement.

It's hard to think of two acts more naturally attuned to each other's aesthetic than Franz Ferdinand and Sparks; even FFS, the name of their collaborative project, comes with an elegantly arched eyebrow. The two camps combined earlier this year to make an eponymous album of baroque pop oddness and art-rock which, good as it is, doesn't fully prepare you for how brilliantly FFS work in the flesh.

It helps that two plus four is a manageable equation, so that nobody is lingering on the sidelines looking pissed off and shaking maracas. Tonight's early highlights, "Johnny Delusional" and the frantically entertaining "Police Encounters", make clear that FFS have found a way of blending two highly distinctive personalities into one cohesive whole.

Aside from the musical fit, the vocal blend – high camp meets low

croon – works beautifully, while the personal chemistry is joyous. Dressed in black kaftan and white trousers, Russell Mael crouches like a tai-chi master, always on the front foot as he punches out his funny-peculiar words. By his side, Kapranos seems more than ever like a well-bred chap given a dishonourable discharge from the Queen's Infantry for moral degeneracy. Both men are clearly having an absolute blast. On the

*High camp
meets low
croon... and the
personal chemistry
is joyous*

debased glam stomp of "Power Couple", Kapranos whirls and marches around Mael as they trade lines. Throughout the night they sing all but one song together, swapping winks.

There are brief moments of reflection – notably bittersweet ballad "Little Guy From The

Suburbs", which recalls early-'70s Bowie – but the prevailing mood is one of arty exuberance. Too sharp by half for an unplugged acoustic interlude, FFS favour a glistening electronic mini-set, gathering around two keyboards and a synth drum for a hi-NRG romp through Sparks' "The Number One Song In Heaven". At the climax, the implacable Ron Mael – as ever, a Freudian case study with his slicked-back hair, toothbrush moustache and fixed grimace – leaps out of his chair to perform a deranged dance, grinning maniacally.

Things loosen up. Guitarist Nick McCarthy plunges into the crowd during "Michael" as FFS plunder their shared back catalogue. Sparks' classic "This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us" is a whirlwind of high-pitched hysteria; Franz Ferdinand's "Take Me Out" ups the ante further and almost takes the roof off.

A mass singalong finale to "Piss Off" leads into an encore of Sparks' "When Do I Get To Sing 'My Way'", which Kapranos sings with the gleeful relish of a competition winner. "Call Girl" follows, its scratchy propulsion reminiscent of much of Talking Heads' *Fear Of*

Music, before a final romp through "Collaborations Don't Work", the kind of demented multi-part mini-drama punk set out to kill.

Tonight's show is that rarest of beasts: a musical joke that actually works. The two singers engage in a mock-pantomime of clashing egos, bitchily ticking off each other's inadequacies: "I don't need your navel gazing," wails Mael. "I don't get your way of phrasing," counters Kapranos. The reason they can sing it so brazenly is that they've just spent 90 minutes disproving every last line.

GRAEME THOMSON

SET LIST

- 1 Johnny Delusional
- 2 Man Without A Tan
- 3 Police Encounters
- 4 Do You Want To
- 5 Little Guy From The Suburbs
- 6 The Power Couple
- 7 Save Me
- 8 Things I Won't Get
- 9 So Desu Ne
- 10 The Number One Song In Heaven
- 11 Michael
- 12 This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us
- 13 Dictator's Son
- 14 Take Me Out
- 15 Piss Off
- ENCORE
- 16 When Do I Get To Sing 'My Way'
- 17 Call Girl
- 18 Collaborations Don't Work

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26 LONDON O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON
29 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
30 BOURNEMOUTH BIC

DECEMBER 2015

01 CARDIFF
MOTORPOINT ARENA
03 PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS
04 BLACKPOOL
EMPRESS BALLROOM
07 EDINBURGH
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13 MANCHESTER RITZ
14 SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY
16 WOLVERHAMPTON
WULFRUN
17 PORTSMOUTH
WEDGEWOOD ROOMS
18 LONDON KOKO

20 LEEDS STYLUS
21 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY 1
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31/10 GUILDFORD The Boilerroom
01/11 PORTSMOUTH Wedgewood Rooms
10/11 LONDON Scala
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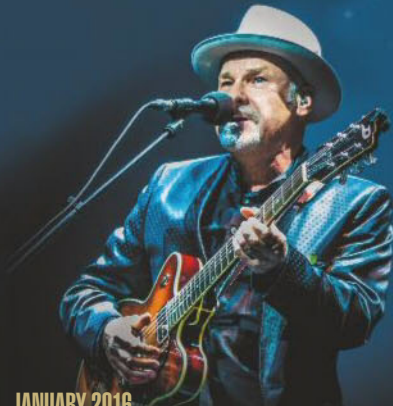
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Sat 16	LIVERPOOL Philharmonic Hall	0151 709 3789
Sun 17	LLANDUDNO Venue Cymru	01492 872 000
Sun 17	MILTON KEYNES Theatre	0844 871 7652
Fri 22	MALVERN Forum Theatre	01684 892 277
Sat 23	BRISTOL Colston Hall	0844 887 1500
Tue 26	HARROGATE Royal Hall	01423 502 116
Wed 27	YORK Barbican	0844 854 2757
Sat 30	BOURNEMOUTH Pavilion	0844 576 3000
Sun 31	OXFORD New Theatre	0844 871 3020

FEBRUARY 2016

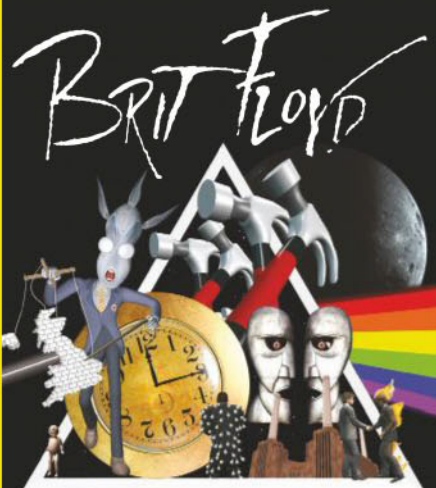
Mon 01	CHELTENHAM Town Hall	0844 576 2210
Thu 04	CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange	01223 357 851
Fri 05	ST. ALBANS Arena	01272 844 488
Sat 06	TUNBRIDGE WELLS Assembly	01892 530 613
Tue 09	SWANSEA Grand Theatre	01792 475 715
Wed 10	CARDIFF St. David's Hall	029 2087 8444
Sun 14	NORWICH Theatre Royal	01603 630 000
Mon 15	GUILDFORD G Live	01483 369 350
Tue 16	LEICESTER De Montfort Hall	0116 233 3111
Fri 19	STOKE Victoria Hall	0844 871 7649
Sat 20	BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall	0121 345 0600
Sun 21	SALFORD The Lowry	0843 208 6000
Fri 26	DARTFORD Orchard Theatre	01322 220 000
Sat 27	BEXHILL De La Warr Pavilion	01424 229 111
Sun 28	SOUTHEAST Cliffs Pavilion	01702 351 135

MARCH 2016

Thu 03	LONDON PALLADIUM	0844 412 4655
Fri 04	BASINGSTOKE The Anvil	01256 844 244
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Thu 05	SHEFFIELD City Hall	0114 2789 789
Fri 06	LLANDUDNO Venue Cymru	01492 872 000
Sat 07	MALVERN Forum	01684 892 277
Mon 09	PRESTON Charter Theatre	01772 804 444
Tue 10	AYLESBURY Waterside Theatre	0844 871 7607
Thu 12	LEICESTER De Montfort Hall	0116 233 3111
Fri 13	SCARBOROUGH Grand Hall	01723 821 888
Sat 14	ABERDEEN Queens Hall	0131 668 2019
Mon 16	INVERNESS Eden Court	01463 234 234
Tue 17	ABERDEEN Music Hall	01224 641 122
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Wed 18	EASTBOURNE Congress Theatre	01323 412 000
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Sat 21	IPSWICH Regent	01473 433 100
Sun 22	NEW BRIGHTON Floral Pavilion	0151 666 0000
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Tue 08	HARROGATE Royal Hall	01423 502 116
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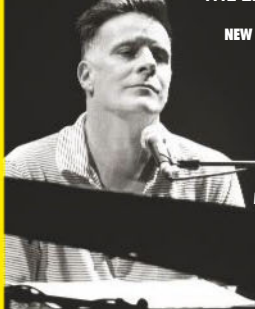
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17	SALISBURY CITY HALL	01722 434 434
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19	TUNBRIDGE WELLS ASSEMBLY HALL	01892 530 613
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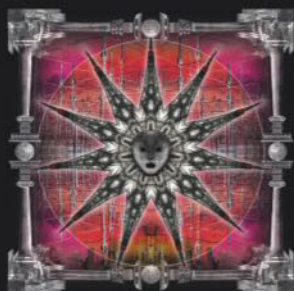
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26 BRIGHTON **SOLD OUT** NCORDE 2
27 EXETER LEMON GROVE
28 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
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31 BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTE
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NOVEMBER
29 CARDIFF The Globe
30 BRIGHTON The Haunt

DECEMBER
01 LONDON Moth Club
02 MANCHESTER Ruby Lounge
03 LEEDS Brudenell Social Club
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WAVVES

UK TOUR - AUTUMN 2015

NOVEMBER

13 - LEEDS - BELGRAVE MUSIC HALL
14 - EDINBURGH - THE BONGO CLUB
15 - GLASGOW - STEREO
16 - MANCHESTER - SOUND CONTROL
17 - BIRMINGHAM - LIBRARY
18 - LONDON - ELECTRIC BALLROOM



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HARDBELIEVER TOUR 2015

OCTOBER
WED 14 FALMOUTH PRINCESS PAVILION
THU 15 BRISTOL ANSON ROOMS
FRI 16 LONDON THE FORUM
SAT 17 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2
MON 19 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION

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 December
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UK TOUR NOVEMBER 2015



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12.11.	THE PRINCE ALBERT	BRIGHTON
13.11.	THE STABLES	MILTON KEYNES
14.11.	OSLO	LONDON
15.11.	THE DEAF INSTITUTE	MANCHESTER
16.11.	CAFE CONTINENTAL	GOUROCK
17.11.	HOOTANANNY	INVERNESS
18.11.	THE LEMON TREE	ABERDEEN
19.11.	LA BELLE ANGELE	EDINBURGH
20.11.	THE TOLBOOTH	STIRLING

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FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER
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SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER
 FIBBERS, YORK
SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER
 THE INSTITUTE, BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY 7 DECEMBER
 THE FLEECE, BRISTOL
TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER
 THE OLD MARKET, BRIGHTON
THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER
 THE FORUM, LONDON

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03 Dec	The Fleece, Bristol	09 Dec	Club Academy, Manchester
04 Dec	Library (The Institute)	10 Dec	Arts Club, Liverpool
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FRI 13 BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY
SUN 15 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2
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TUE 17 LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
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LEEDS UNIVERSITY
REFECTORY
THURSDAY 19
LIVERPOOL
O2 ACADEMY
FRIDAY 20
NOTTINGHAM
ROCK CITY
SATURDAY 21
NORWICH OPEN
THURSDAY 26
CARDIFF GREAT HALL
FRIDAY 27
SOUTHAMPTON
O2 GUILDHALL
SUNDAY 29
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OUT NOW

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23 BIRMINGHAM THE OOBLECK

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04 NOV BRIGHTON KOMEDIA
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07 NOV NORWICH ARTS CENTRE
08 NOV PORTSMOUTH WEDGEWOOD ROOMS
11 NOV BRISTOL THEKLA
13 NOV LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
14 NOV STOCKTON ARC
18 NOV ASHFORD REVELATIONS ST MARY'S
27 NOV LONDON UNION CHAPEL

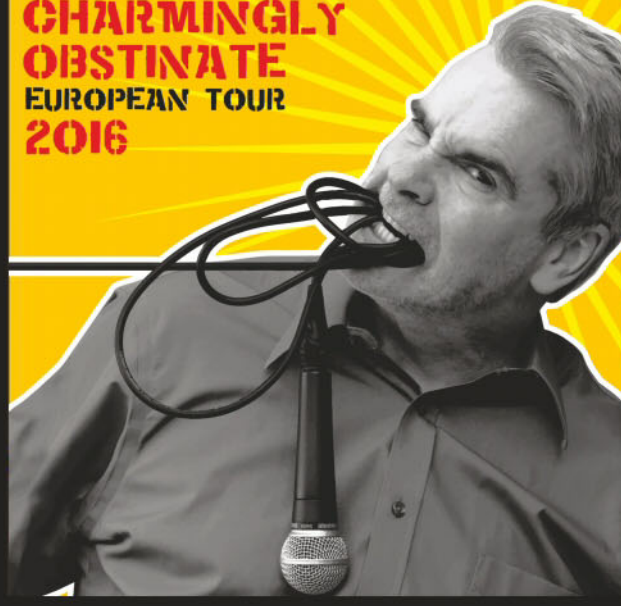
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SEBRIGHT ARMS / 30 OCT

CC SMUGGLERS

THE LEXINGTON / 1 NOV

IAN SIEGAL UNPLUGGED

DINGWALLS / 2 NOV

WARD THOMAS

THE LEXINGTON / 3 NOV

EDDI READER

UNION CHAPEL / 3 NOV

THE GRAHAMS

+ RUARRI JOSEPH
THE BORDERLINE / 4 NOV

AOIFE O'DONOVAN

BUSH HALL / 4 NOV

ANDY McKEE

UNION CHAPEL / 5 NOV

THE YOUNG'UNS

SLAUGHTERED LAMB / 6 NOV

DEAN OWENS

+ SPECIAL GUESTS
THE SLAUGHTERED LAMB / 7 NOV

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THE GREEN NOTE / 10 NOV

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+ GUESTS

ST PANCRAS OLD CHURCH / 11 NOV

CARA DILLON

UNION CHAPEL / 12 NOV

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OSLO / 12 NOV

PORT ISAAC'S FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS

UNION CHAPEL / 14 NOV

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Thu 08 **DURHAM** GALA

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Tue 13 **MILTON KEYNES** THE STABLES

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Wed 14 **BRIGHTON** KOMEDIA

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Thu 15 **LONDON** BUSH HALL

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THE GRAVELTONES 15 OCT

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- 7 Much Marcle, Hellans Manor
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- 11 Bexhill, De La Warr Pavilion
- 13 Buxton, Pavilion Arts Centre
- 14 High Wycombe, Town Hall
- 16 London, Union Chapel
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- 20 Bingley, Arts Centre

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- 14 BRISTOL COLSTON HALL
- 15 BASINGSTOKE THE ANVIL
- 16 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
- 17 BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX
- 19 GATESHEAD THE SAGE
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- 15 BURY MET
- 17 LIVERPOOL
PHILHARMONIC HALL
- 18 WOLVERHAMPTON
WULFRUN HALL
- 19 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION
- 20 HEBDEN BRIDGE
TRADES CLUB
- 22 PERSHORE
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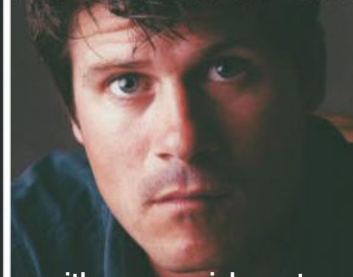
OCTOBER

- 17 Hebden Bridge Trades Club
- 18 Sheffield The Greystones
- 19 Norwich Arts Centre
- 24 Cokermonth The Kirkgate
- 25 Birmingham Institute
- 26 Cambridge Junction
- 29 Chester Telford's
- 30 Preston Continental
- 31 Bristol Louisiana

DECEMBER

- 3 Putney Half Moon
 - 5 Liverpool Philharmonic
 - 6 York The Basement
 - 10 Leicester Musician
 - 11 Milton Keynes Stables
 - 12 Reading South Street
 - 13 Manchester Deaf Institute
 - 18 Newcastle Cluny
 - 19 Edinburgh Mash House
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Sat 10 CARDIFF St David's Hall
Sun 11 SOUTHAMPTON O2 Guildhall
Tue 13 BASINGSTOKE The Anvil
Wed 14 YORK Barbican
Fri 16 ABERDEEN Music Hall
Sat 17 GATESHEAD The Sage
Sun 18 GLASGOW Royal Concert Hall
Tue 20 LEEDS Town Hall
Wed 21 LLANDUDNO Venue Cymru
Fri 23 LIVERPOOL Philharmonic
Sat 24 LEICESTER de Montfort Hall
Sun 25 SALFORD The Lowry
Tue 27 IPSWICH Regent Theatre
Wed 28 BRISTOL Colston Hall
Fri 30 BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall
Sat 31 SOUTHEAST Cliffs Pavilion

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 27 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2
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 05 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2
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 SAT 13 GLASGOW O2 ABC2
 FRI 19 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
 SAT 20 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY3
 FRI 26 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2
 SAT 27 LONDON O2 ACADEMY2 ISLINGTON

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 23 O2 ABC2 GLASGOW
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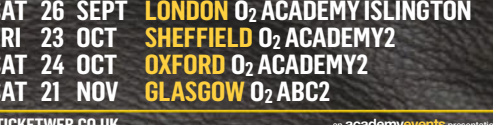
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OBITUARIES

Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

BOB JOHNSTON

Producer of Dylan, Cash and Cohen

(1932-2015)

“HE WAS BORN one hundred years too late,” Bob Dylan wrote of Bob Johnston in *Chronicles: Volume One*. “He should have been wearing a wide cape, a plumed hat, and riding with his sword held high... Johnston lived on low country barbecue, and he was all charm.”

It was a fittingly decorative assessment of a man whose production work spanned some of the most revered albums of the last century, chief among them the six records he cut with Dylan between 1965-1970. Johnston also helmed definitive recordings by Johnny Cash, Simon & Garfunkel and Leonard Cohen.

Johnston began as a songwriter in Texas, crafting tunes for rockabilly singer Mac Curtis with his mother Diane. His own fitful solo career started with “Born To Love One Woman” in 1956, though he eventually moved into production, landing his first job at New York’s Kapp Records eight years later. He soon quit for Columbia, steering Patti Page’s *Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte* in 1965. Quite how he usurped Tom Wilson as Dylan’s producer was never quite clear. Dylan’s own recollection, as told later to *Rolling Stone*, was simply that “I looked up one day and Bob was there.” The pair began with *Highway 61 Revisited*, for whose “Desolation Row” Johnston drafted in Nashville session player, Charlie McCoy. This led Johnston to suggest cutting Dylan’s follow-up, *Blonde On Blonde*, in Music City. That year also saw him produce two landmark albums for Simon & Garfunkel: *Sounds Of Silence* and *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary And Thyme*. His association with Dylan, meanwhile, continued through *John Wesley Harding*, *Nashville Skyline* (on which Dylan utters the immortal line “Is it rolling, Bob?” during “To Be Alone With You”), *Self Portrait* and 1970’s *New Morning*.

Johnston had, by then, begun a significant partnership with Johnny Cash. Against the wishes of his CBS bosses, the pugnacious Johnston helped Cash realise his ambition of making a live LP in a prison. The raw appeal of 1968’s *At Folsom Prison*, and the following year’s *At San Quentin*, revived Cash’s flagging fortunes and seeded an outlaw myth that remained for the rest of



Bob Johnston (right) with Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash in 1969

his life. Another noteworthy liaison came with Leonard Cohen, with Johnston producing 1969’s *Songs From A Room* and *Songs Of Love And Hate* (1971). “He created an atmosphere in the studio that invited you to do your best, stretch out, do another take,” Cohen told writer William Ruhlmann. “An atmosphere that was free from judgement, free from criticism...”

Johnston left CBS to become an independent producer in 1971, overseeing two Lindisfarne albums – *Fog On The Tyne* and *Dingly Dell* – and working with Jimmy Cliff, Loudon Wainwright III and Joe Ely. His workload tailed off in the ensuing decades, briefly returning to produce Willie Nelson and Carl Perkins in the ’90s. His final years, however, saw him reconnect with fresher talent. In 2010, he forged a link with his past by producing the debut album by Harper Simon, son of Paul, for which he recruited his old Nashville stalwarts Charlie McCoy, Hargus ‘Pig’ Robbins and Lloyd Green.

JOY BEVERLEY

Beverley Sisters singer

(1924-2015)

The eldest of her performing siblings, Joy Beverley effectively

ended The Beverley Sisters’ career when she married England football captain Billy Wright in 1958 and swapped the footlights for a life of domesticity. The trio, who styled themselves as the answer to Britain’s Andrews Sisters, were the UK’s highest-paid female artists at the peak of their fame in the ’50s. Their close harmonies tended to strike an especially populist chord at Christmas, the sisters scoring their biggest hits with “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus” (1953) and the 1959 double whammy of “Little Drummer Boy” and “Little Donkey”. The sisters returned to the British stage in the ’80s, finding an audience in gay clubs and on the more traditional variety circuit.

JAZZ SUMMERS

Wham! mastermind and manager

(1944-2015)

Jazz Summers readily admitted that diplomacy wasn’t one of his strengths, preferring instead to tell things as he saw them. “I don’t compromise if I believe in something,” he once said. “My whole life has been about belief.” An early example of this hardline resolve came in 1983, when he teamed up with Simon Napier-Bell and took over the management of Wham! Summers helped mastermind Wham! mania at home and abroad, including their historic 1985 gig in China. The following

year, he and business partner Tim Parry co-founded management company Big Life, which in turn led to the formation of a titular record label. Summers went on to oversee the careers of Lisa Stansfield, The Verve, Boy George, The Orb, Badly Drawn Boy, Snow Patrol and Scissor Sisters, among others.

EDDIE HARDIN

Spencer Davis Group vocalist

(1949-2015)

Steve Winwood’s exit from the Spencer Davis Group opened the door for Eddie Hardin, formerly of A Wild Uncertainty, to become the band’s keyboardist and singer in



The Beverley Sisters: Joy (centre) and twins Teddie and Babs

RICO RODRIGUEZ

Trombonist, ska and rocksteady pioneer

(1934-2015)

EMMANUEL 'RICO' RODRIGUEZ was part of the great lineage of horn players who emerged from post-war Jamaica, taking his place alongside such luminaries as Don Drummond, Tommy McCook and Roland Alphonso. Drummond, in fact, served as his tutor at Kingston's famous Alpha Boys School, where Cuban-born Rodriguez developed his distinctive technique on trombone. He quickly became one of the region's most capable session players, cutting sides with Duke Reid, Prince Buster, Laurel Aitken and Coxsone Dodd before emigrating to London at the end of 1961.

Rodriguez was a major factor in the rise of ska and rocksteady in the UK, issuing a clutch of singles with his own band, Rico's Combo, recording sessions for the Blue Beat label and touring the jazz and R'n'B circuit. In 1967, he added an exuberant tone to Dandy Livingstone's "Rudy, A Message To You". His first real taste of commercial success, however, came 13 years later, when he reprised his role on The Specials' cover of said song, renamed "A Message To You, Rudy". In a statement released after Rico's death, Jerry Dammers hailed his contribution to the Specials as "immeasurable. He provided an all-important link to authentic Jamaican ska and reggae, which we had tried to copy, and his trombone added the essential element which took us to a next level and helped offer the band a possibility of progression beyond the confines of punk." By the time of their second album, 1980's *More Specials*, Rodriguez was an official member of the band.

Dammers, who also cited Rico's solo on the extended version of "Ghost Town" as the highpoint of The Specials' career, was a huge fan of Rodriguez's 1976 solo opus, *Man From Wareika*. These album sessions had seen Rico return to Kingston, where he assembled a crack band (including trumpeter Bobby Ellis and the rhythm section of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare) to create a scintillating hybrid of jazz and roots reggae. It remains his defining work, inspired by his formative days and a conversion



Blowing up a storm: Rico Rodriguez in 1979

to Rastafari in the 1950s. "The first things that came to me were the things that my family used to play in Wareika Hills with [Rastafari drummer] Count Ossie and Don Drummond," he explained later to writer David Katz.

Other albums followed, among them *Blow Your Horn* and *That Man Is Forward*. He also lent his talent to albums by Jim Capaldi, Toots & The Maytals, Steel Pulse, Burning Spear and John Martyn, who professed his astonishment at the ease with which Rico negotiated the tricky solo on *One World*'s "Black Man At Your Shoulder". An in-demand sideman for the rest of his playing career, he began an association with Jools Holland's Rhythm And Blues Orchestra in 1996 that lasted up until his retirement in 2012. "I think it was the incredible mixture of joy and sadness at one and the same time in his playing, which gave it its power," concluded Dammers. "His playing could break your heart and make you smile and determined, all at the same time."

1967. His tenure lasted for *With Their New Face On* and a handful of singles (including Top 30 hit "Time Seller", co-written by Hardin), until he and drummer Pete York left to form a duo in October '68. Following their live debut at the Marquee, Hardin & York secured a residency at Hamburg's Star-Club and went on to enjoy greater success in Germany than they did back home. They issued three albums of Hammond-led prog-pop through to 1971, after which Hardin briefly returned to The Spencer Davis Group and embarked on a solo career that also encompassed Axis Point, with ex-members of Family.

JOHNNY MEEKS

Blue Caps guitarist

(1937-2015)

Guitarist Johnny Meeks' induction

into Gene Vincent's Blue Caps, for whom he was brought in as replacement for the formidable Cliff Gallup, came with reservations. Meeks was a South Carolina picker who'd previously played with Country Earl and The Circle E Ranch Gang, with little experience in rock'n'roll. "I don't know if I can play that," he said on hearing some Blue Caps 45s. Vincent replied: "I don't want you to." Meeks was therefore given free rein to express himself, bringing a cleaner, more traditional sound to the band, beginning with "I Got It" in June 1957. He stayed with Vincent until the Blue Caps split 18 months later, after which he formed The Tune Toppers and toured with The Champs. Meeks later played bass on Michael Nesmith's 1972 album, *Tantamount To Treason*.



Rose, live in Dakar, 2010

DOUDOU N'DIAYE ROSE

Senegalese bandleader/drummer

(1930-2015)

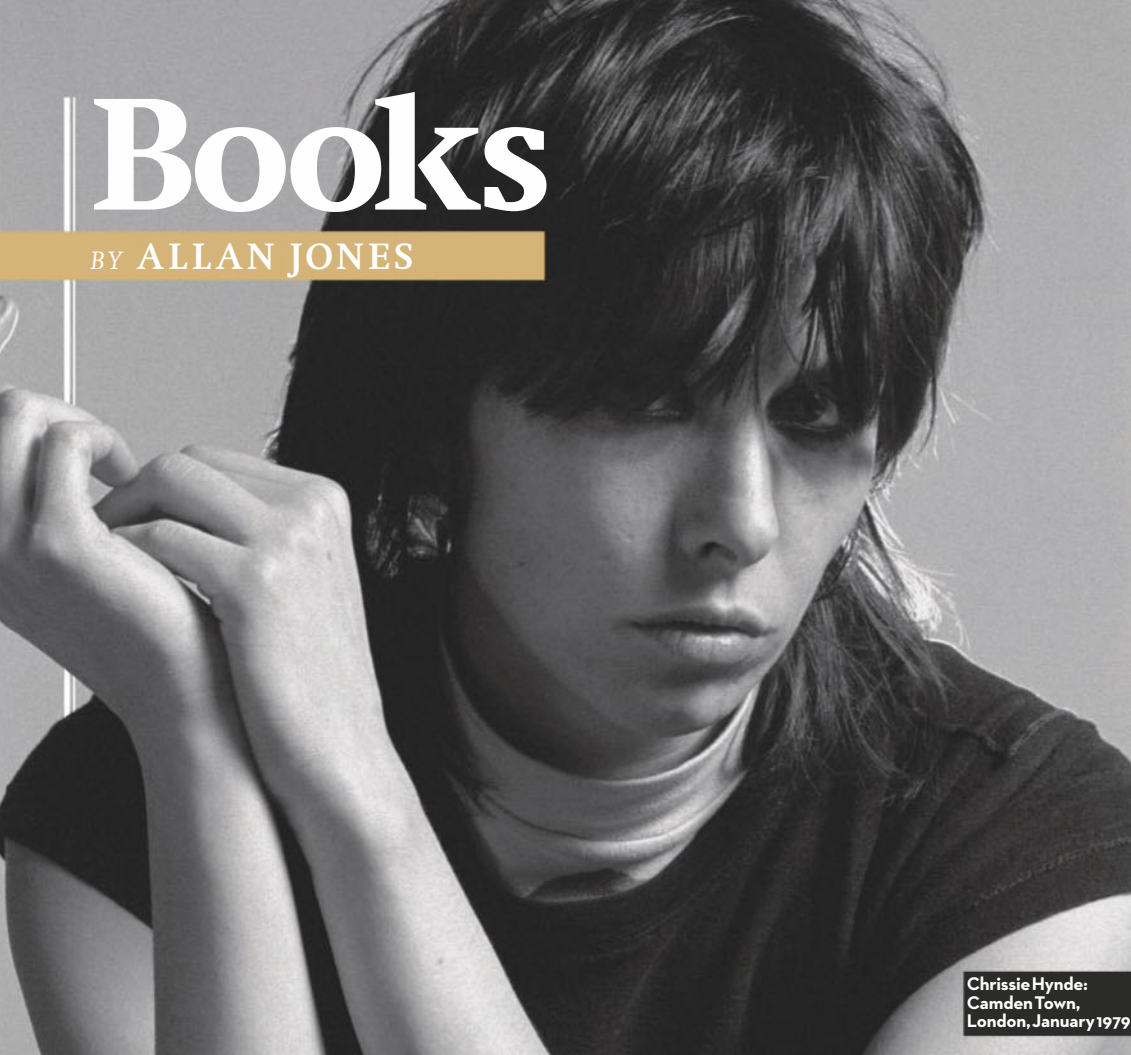
Bandleader and composer Doudou N'Diaye Rose was the foremost

ambassador for Senegalese drumming, touring the world with his percussion orchestra and introducing audiences to a breathless variety of rhythms and styles. His speciality was the *sabar*, a tall wooden drum covered with goatskin, a traditional vessel of communication between African villages. Rose sought to study and expand the language of the drums, be it with the Drummers Of West Africa or the all-female Les Rosettes (both ensembles were made up of extended family members). Over the years, he shared bills with Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, The Rolling Stones and Peter Gabriel, on whose Real World label he issued 1992's hypnotic *Djabote*, recorded with 50 drummers and a female choir. He also featured on Nine Inch Nails' 2007 remix of "The Warning."

ROB HUGHES

Books

BY ALLAN JONES

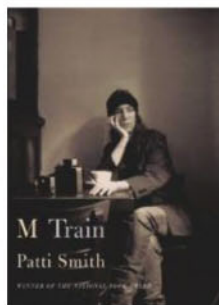


Chrissie Hynde:
Camden Town,
London, January 1979

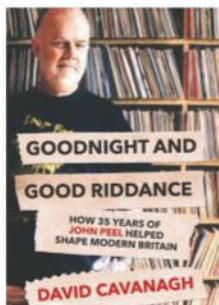
It's told via a chronological history of 265 of the shows he presented between 1967 and 2003, and could have been bitty, a story told piecemeal, in stuttering sequence. It works brilliantly, though, each entry allowing Cavanagh to chart Peel's mutating enthusiasms, prejudices, blow-ups and face-offs with his own listeners (the divisive Punk Specials of December 1976 and August 1977, for instance). Cavanagh is also marvellously alert to Peel's itinerant moods and hardening attitudes, from the whimsical presenter of *The Perfumed Garden* and *Night Ride* to the old grump in a baggy jumper presenting the BBC's Glastonbury coverage. His influence was huge, irrefutably so, and *Goodnight And Good Riddance* is a brilliant tribute to someone you probably owe at least half your record collection to.

► The evocative opening chapters of Chrissie Hynde's **Reckless** describe an idyllic childhood in Akron, Ohio and are so well-wrought you think you've mistakenly started reading something by Richard Russo or Richard Ford. Things quickly get cloudy, though. By the mid-'60s, Akron's in a grubby decline that reflects Hynde's own often messy embrace of rock music ("Bands were everything; nothing else mattered"), drugs ("We smoked everything and dropped anything") and indiscriminate sex ("I'd have whoever would have me"). She's drawn mostly to bad-ass types, tattooed truckers and bikers, an infatuation with one Cleveland biker gang ending with her naked and beaten on the floor of a deserted house, "covered in a variety-pack of jism". It was all her fault, she now claims – "You don't fuck around with people who wear 'I Heart Rape' and 'On Your Knees' badges" – a controversial opinion, much criticised after a recent Sunday supplement interview. It better suits the book's narrative, however, for her to be seen less as victim than hardboiled survivor, unbowed by circumstance, the defiant author of her own scattered life. Things eventually get better for her, but it's a long march towards The Pretenders. She moves to London (her wide-eyed first impressions are hilarious), writes briefly for *NME*, drifts in and out of the emerging London punk scene before, finally, finding her dream band. Curiously, there are less than 100 mostly acrid pages on The Pretenders, whose career was too quickly derailed by chronic drug abuse, heavy drinking, debilitating tours, bitter dispute and death. Guitarist James Honeyman-Scott died in June 1982 after a cocaine binge, two days after the sacking of increasingly smacked-out bassist Pete Farndon, who eight months later was found drowned in a bathtub, a needle in his arm. The writing here is jittery, agitated, rushed, angry, everything perhaps too painful to linger over, including her barely mentioned marriage to Ray Davies. The book then ends abruptly, 30 years of her life unaccounted for, mentioned only in a brief epilogue, as if none of it mattered enough to write about.

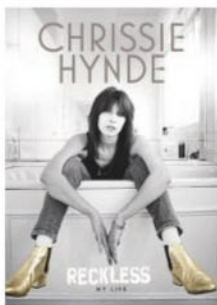
Reviewed this month...



M Train
Patti Smith
BLOOMSBURY
8/10



Good Night And Good Riddance
David Cavanagh
FABER & FABER
9/10



Reckless: My Life
Chrissie Hynde
EBURY PRESS
8/10

PATTI SMITH'S **M Train** is a haunted text about memory, loss, growing old in the absence of the much-missed dead. It's a sequel of sorts to *Just Kids*, Smith's 2010 memoir about her early years in New York and friendship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who died from AIDS in 1989, and for whom the book was in many ways an extended memorial, lovingly written, deeply affecting. *M Train* has a less specific focus, tends more to narrative diffusion, diverse meditations on art, literature and love. The dead are many in its pages, which recall her late mother, father, brother and, most achingly, her husband, former MC5 guitarist Fred Sonic Smith.

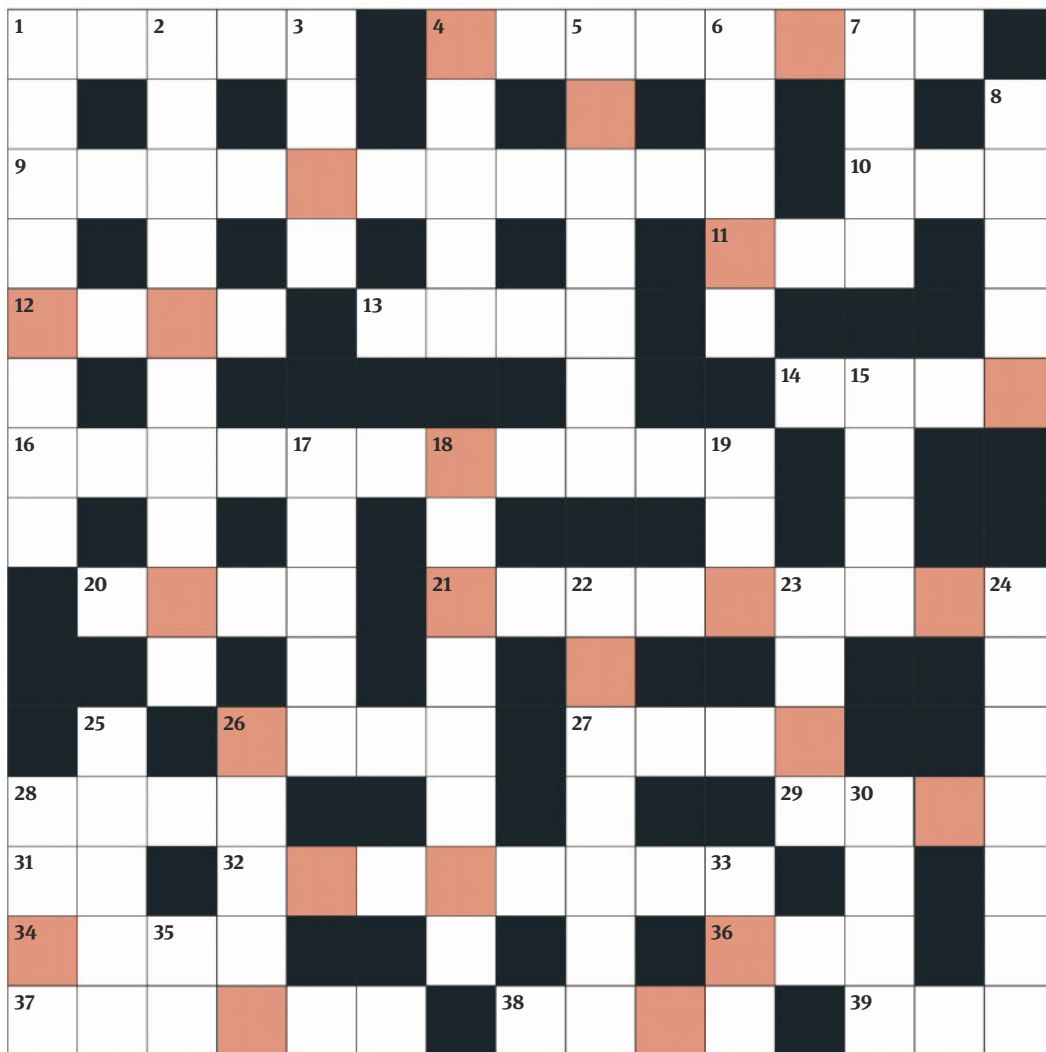
Smith left her beloved New York in 1979, to live with him in Detroit, where they married, started a family and

were happy until his sudden death at 45 from heart failure in 1994. When *M Train* opens, she's back living in Greenwich Village. It's November, 2011 and her days usually start with a visit to the Café 'Ino, where she daily has the same breakfast – brown toast, a small dish of olive oil, black coffee – reads, writes and remembers. Fred comes to her at times unbidden, recalled in fragments, never entirely whole. We see him as she remembers him, in glimpses, shards of yesterday. Here's Fred in the room they shared at Detroit's Book Cadillac Hotel, Fred on a trip to South America, Fred nursing a drink at The Arcade Bar, Fred on a boat somewhere, a tug or trawler. When Hurricane Sandy blows in, she remembers Fred fighting for his life in a Detroit hospital during another storm, in whose howling winds she can hear "his rage and sorrow for

being torn away". He's forever in her dreams, his smile reaching her from "a place with no beginning or end", where love endures even as the body rots.

► "In case you're thinking to yourselves, 'Who is that twerp?' I'm the bloke who comes on your radio late at night and plays you records by lots of sulky Belgians." This was John Peel, introducing *Top Of The Pops* in 1982, wryly acknowledging the image people had of him even then as a curator of the obscure, champion of the unlistenable, the more unpopular the better. It was an opinion of Peel shared by successive Radio One controllers, who often shunted him around the schedules like they were looking for somewhere to hide him. Peel may have taken occasional refuge in the recondite and frankly baffling, but as David Cavanagh reminds us time and again in **Good Night And Good Riddance: How 35 Years Of John Peel Helped Shape Modern Britain**, the charts across the four decades of his broadcasting career would have been very different without his crucial early support of, randomly, Marc Bolan, David Bowie, Rod Stewart, Bob Marley, The Ramones, The Sex Pistols, The Jam, Joy Division, The Fall, The Jesus And Mary Chain, The Smiths, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Happy Mondays, Nirvana, Pulp, PJ Harvey, Underworld, The Orb, The White Stripes. It wasn't all Ivor Cutler and Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel.

Whatever life he had outside the radio studio is barely mentioned. This is a biography of Peel as broadcaster.



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Rod Stewart. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* November 2015 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 26, 2015. This competition is only open to European residents.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1+4A** Sounds all over for New Order following this album (5-8)
9 Numbers that can actually be played are included on new album by ex-Go Betweens' Robert Forster (5-2-4)
10 (See 28 across)
11 Arthur, Albert or Alvin (3)
12 "Cos you're my sunshine, you're my _____" from Oasis' "The Hindu Times" (4)
13+22D He collaborated with Elton John on 2010 album *The Union* (4-7)
14+32A No, don't ask me, you'll have to make an album like Ian Dury (2-2-8)
16 Well, in actual fact, this is a live album by Dr Feelgood (2-2-7)
20+18D No, don't thank me, you're welcome to an album by Baxter Dury (3-1-8)
21 Volume One of Led Zeppelin's Greatest Hits compilation released in 1999 (5-4)
26 "Look, my _____ are just holograms," from Tanita Tikaram's "Twist In My Sobriety" (4)
27 (See 17 down)
28+10A Muddy Waters' final studio album

which gave rise to the name of one of David Bowie's early groups (4-3)

- 29** George Martin remix album of The Beatles' work released in 2006 (4)
31 Pulp's debut album not entirely a hit (2)
32 (See 14 across)
34 This put a finish to Sam Brown's career (4)
36+23D "When she was just a kid her clothes were hand-me-downs," 1964 (3-4)
37 Factory label's A Certain Ratio with an album for six musicians (6)
38 Albums by Magazine, Moby and Squeeze (4)
39 "Is it getting better, or do you feel the same?" 1992 (3)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** Lou Reed came to a wrong judgement on this album (8)
2 And as it's in a different form, here's music from The Clash (10)
3 Their singles include "Finetime" and "Flying" (4)
4 The Beautiful South may have had difficulty getting their vocals out on this album (5)
5 She performed at both the 1970 and 2010 Isle Of Wight festivals (7)
6 "I tried to give you consolation when your old man had let you down," 1972 (5)
7 TV pop programme which first aired on November 5, 1982 (4)
8 Rock band featuring sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson (5)
15 (See 25 down)
17+27A Have lousy arrangements made for old Paul Weller music (5-4)

- 18** (See 20 across)
19 "Temperature's rising, fever is high/Can't see no future, can't see no _____," from a John Lennon song (3)
22 (See 13 across)
23 (See 36 across)
24 "I know I must be _____, now I'm gonna find out who," from Eddie And The Hot Rods' "Do Anything You Wanna Do" (7)
25+15D I bet actor looked dreadful through Dirty Projectors (5-4)
26 Senegalese musician Youssou N'Dour's Grammy award-winning album, name-checking another part of Africa (5)
28 Their albums include *Destroyer* and *Asylum* (4)
30 It's right to make a move for American alt.rock band (2-2)
33 That hot lead singer from ABC (3)

ANSWERS: TAKE 220

- ACROSS**
 1+3A Mind Over Matter, 10+8D Down The Road, 11 Dilemma, 12 In My Own Time, 13 Vigil, 18 Gene, 20 Seconds Out, 22 Lowe, 24+32D Oh No, 25 Eloise, 29+27A If I Had You, 30+15D Greg Lake, 33 Legs, 34 Poor.
DOWN
 1 Midnight Special, 2+16A Now I'm Here, 4 Vienna, 5 Red Kite, 6+23D All I Ever Wanted, 9+31A Stool Pigeon, 14 Geno, 17 Reckoning, 18+26A Good Song, 19 One Slip, 21 Tory, 26 Sugar, 27+7D High Time, 28 Doop.
HIDDEN ANSWER
 "One Of These Days"
XWORD COMPILED BY:
 Trevor Hungerford

Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Tel: 020 3148 6982 www.uncut.co.uk

EDITOR John Mulvey
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Michael Bonner
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ART EDITOR Marc Jones
SENIOR DESIGNER Michael Chapman
PRODUCTION EDITOR Mick Meikleham
ACTING ALBUM REVIEWS EDITOR Tom Pinnock
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CONTRIBUTORS Jason Anderson, Ben Beaumont-Thomas, Mark Bentley, David Cavanagh, Tom Charity, Leonie Cooper, Jon Dale, Stephen Dalton, Andy Gill, Nick Hasted, Mick Houghton, Rob Hughes, Trevor Hungerford, John Lewis, Damien Love, Alastair McKay, Geoffrey Macnab, Gavin Martin, Piers Martin, Andrew Mueller, Sharon O'Connell, Louis Pattison, Sam Richards, Jonathan Romney, Bud Scoppa, Peter Shapiro, Hazel Sheffield, Laura Snapes, Neil Spencer, Terry Staunton, Fiona Sturges, Graeme Thomson, Luke Torn, Stephen Troussé, Jaan Uhelszki, Wyndham Wallace, Peter Watts, Richard Williams, Nigel Williamson, Jim Wirth, Damon Wise, Rob Young

COVER PHOTO: Richard Imrie/Camera Press
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Annabel Mehran, Gem Harris, Barry Plummer, Tony Gale, Chris Walter, Michael Putland, Fin Costello, Mark and Colleen Hayward, Dezo Hoffman, Dick Barnatt
THANKS THIS ISSUE: Becky Redman (design), Anna Wood (sub-editing), Charlotte Andrews, Minnie Wright, Adam Chapman, Kim Keever, Mani Neumeier

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INNOVATOR - INSERT SALES Emma Young 020 3148 3704

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MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Dave Gahan

The Depeche Mode frontman picks his favourite songs of faith and devotion



The first album I got into

The Damned
Damned Damned Damned 1977

I was in the Damned fan club, they sent me a rubber bat and a giveaway single, "Stretcher Case". I went to see The Damned a lot. I used to sort of stare up at Dave Vanian and think, 'You know, maybe I could have a go at that.' I was talking to a mate of mine recently, and I brought up The Damned. He said, "Ah right, now it all makes sense. What you do up there is more Dave Vanian than Mick Jagger." And I was like, "Yeah, it kinda is."



A record I've played repeatedly

David Bowie
David Live 1974

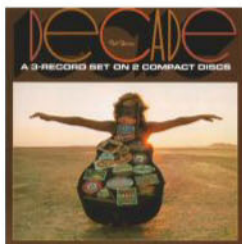
Both *Ziggy Stardust* and *Diamond Dogs* had a big impact on me, but this live album kind of incorporates both. There was a version of "Moonage Daydream" which I'd play over and over again. I used to go round to my mate Phil's house, and he had this album. I nicked the lyric sheet from the inner sleeve and shoved it in my pocket, which he was really pissed off about. I just wanted to really look at the lyrics and get lost in it.



An album I got into after punk

The Rolling Stones
Beggars Banquet 1968

Punk was the thing that really impacted on me the most as a teenager, but then a couple of years on, I revisited a lot of Bowie and Roxy Music records, and the Stones, in particular, *Let It Bleed* and *Beggars Banquet*, which is, for me, one of their best albums, if not their best – it just takes you on a little journey. I appreciated those records more as I got a little older, in my early twenties, but y'know, they definitely had a big influence on me.



The record that helped me through touring

Neil Young
Decade 1977

There was one particular track on here, "Soldier", that I'd play again and again. I played this comp a lot on the [1993] Songs Of Faith And Devotion tour, it kind of carried me through a lot of things. I was looking for something desperately around that period of my life, obviously looking in all the wrong places as we do, but y'know, sometimes you need something to help you, and once again music was sort of there for me.



My favourite soundtrack

Ennio Morricone
The Mission 1986

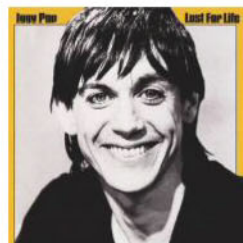
I'd also play this on the Devotional tour. I'd play it in the morning – or whatever time it was that I sort of surfaced on that tour. I definitely saw the film. I was probably given the soundtrack, 'cos I wasn't playing a lot of soundtracks at that time. It may have been Alan [Wilder, *Depeche Mode* keyboardist] – he was definitely into a lot of soundtrack stuff. Songwriting for me is very visual, I kind of have to feel like I'm being taken somewhere.



A modern revelation

Mark Lanegan & Soulsavers
It's Not How Far You Fall, It's The Way You Land 2007

I was led here by Mark Lanegan's solo stuff. This was a record I played to death, I just found it really inspiring and I liked the mish-mash of the bluesy gospel tendencies with all the sort of electronic sounds. I still play this all the time, as well. After we toured together, Rich [Machin, *Soulsavers*] got in touch and we just kind of hit it off. He started sending me little guitar lines or organ lines and we started writing.



An album that reminds me of Berlin

Iggy Pop
Lust For Life 1977

Martin [Gore] influenced me to listen to Iggy. He was a big fan. This particular album reminds me a lot of making records with Depeche in Berlin. Iggy recorded a lot of this album in Hansa Studios, and we spent a lot of time there as well in the '80s, recording. With a lot of these records, I was too young to be into them when they came out. I've always gone a bit backwards with that stuff – I didn't discover blues music 'til later on, as well.



A jazz favourite

Miles Davis
Sketches of Spain 1960

This takes you to really visual places. I got into jazz, like Miles and Coltrane, in my mid- to late-thirties, dare I say early forties. It's hard to believe I'm in my fifties now, 'cos it doesn't seem that long ago that I was sharing my bedroom with my two brothers, transistor radio against my ear, listening to John Peel. When I moved to New York almost 20 years ago, that's the first time Coltrane made sense to me. Walking in the streets, the noises, everything, suddenly it all made sense.

Dave Gahan & Soulsavers' Angels & Ghosts is out on October 23 on Columbia

IN NEXT MONTH'S UNCUT:

"It's a constant journey of figuring out what the fuck everything is about"



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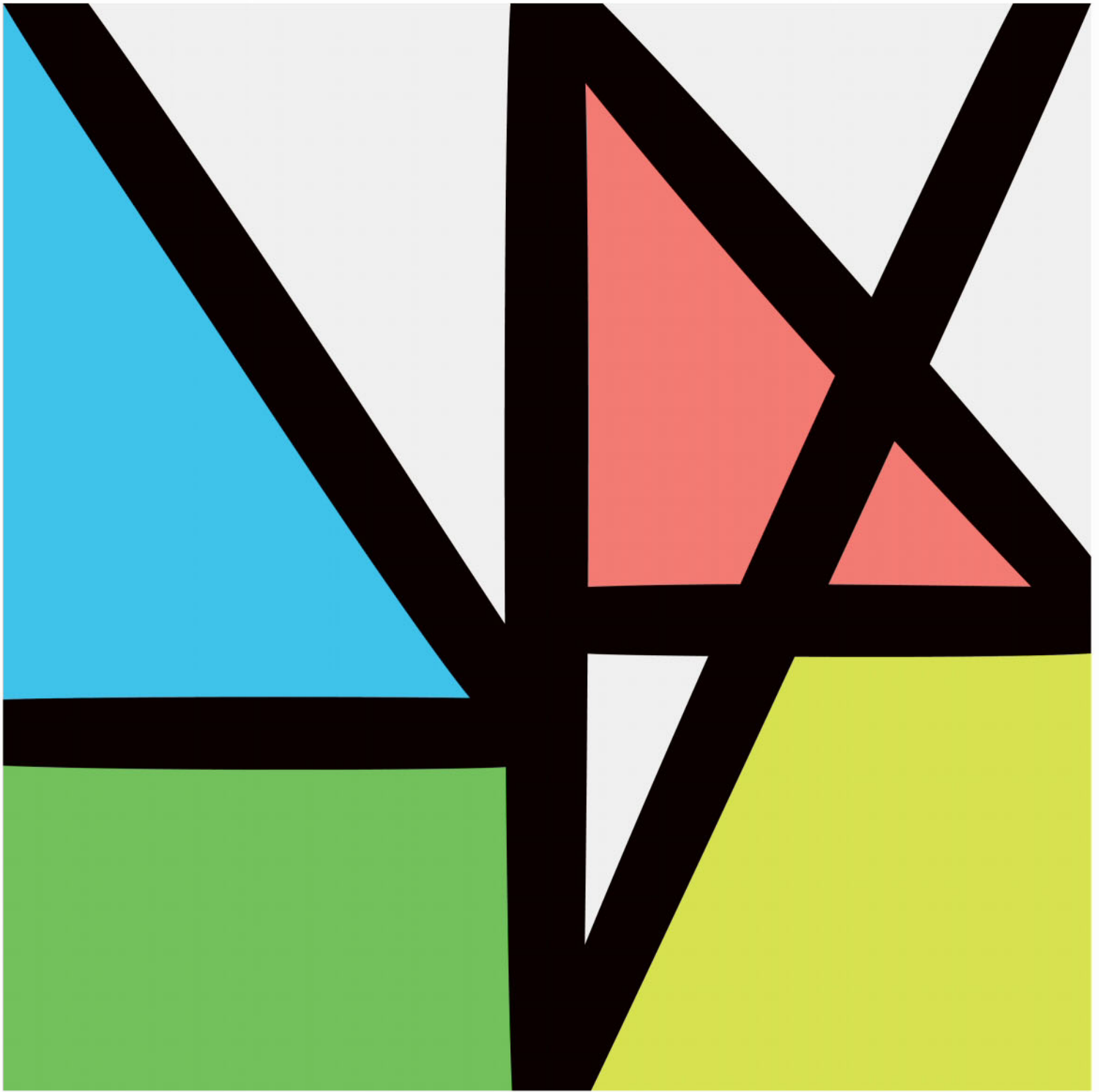
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