

UNCUT

**WORLD
EXCLUSIVE!**

**DAVID
GILMOUR**

**BEYOND
PINK FLOYD
A NEW DAWN!**

**THE NEW WAVE
OF JAZZ
SLEAFORD MODS
PERE UBU
YO LA TENGO
AND DEREK & CLIVE!**



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BEACH HOUSE
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ROGER WATERS AMUSED TO DEATH

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Jason Williamson of Sleaford Mods



Peace sign above Santa Clara's Levi's stadium

IT HAS BEEN, for me at least, a month of The Grateful Dead. I heard a good story about Tony Blair going to one of their London shows in 1990 and cracking up when the band launched into a cover of "Maggie's Farm". I read countless Dead books and articles, including a very long and technical description of Mickey Hart's "beam" (it's a cross between a percussion instrument and a guitar neck, as far as I can make out). I put the finishing touches, with much help from Rhino, to the *Ramble On Rose* CD that you'll find attached to the cover of this issue; our

attempt to construct the Dead album that never was, a putative sequel to *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*. I even spent a long time listening to Phish bootlegs, the better to understand why that band's guitarist, Trey Anastasio, had been chosen to fill in for Jerry Garcia at the Dead's Fare Thee Well 50th anniversary concerts.

And, last but not least, I was fortunate to attend the first of those shows at the Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, a night when the Dead revisited the most intoxicating psychedelic extremes of their 1960s music. I saw rainbows and peace signs in the sky, met LSD dealers with no shoes, learned about the band's strange afterlife, and had a genuinely enlightening chat about Utopia with a tie-dye magnate called Jeremy. It was an amazing time, and I've written about it all – hopefully in not too self-indulgent a way – on page 16.

Elsewhere this month, Michael Bonner visited David Gilmour's floating studio for our world exclusive cover story; Jason Anderson uncovered the truth about Dylan's show at the 1965 Newport Festival; Andy Gill found himself at a wild Chicago barbecue with one of our favourite new artists, Ryley Walker; and Peter Watts braved encounters with every member of Killing Joke, and came back with one of the more outlandish stories we've published in a while.

"A typical daydream," as the Dead sang with such unsteady, heartfelt vigour in "Truckin'", "Hang it up and see what tomorrow brings."

Until then...

John Mulvey

John Mulvey, Editor

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UNCUT

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SEE
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62



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

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring KRISTIN HERSH ON VIC CHESNUTT | MAC DeMARCO & MORE

STONED IMMACULATE

Got Archive If You Want It!

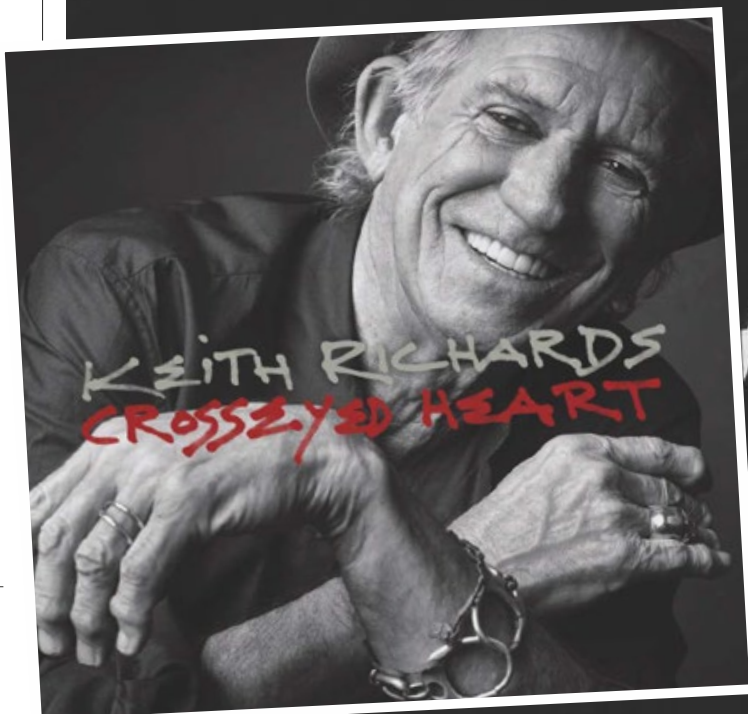
Exhibitionism! In the footsteps of Bowie, The Rolling Stones become museum pieces...

“WE’VE BEEN THINKING about this for quite a long time,” says Mick Jagger. “Collecting things. We’ve got enough stuff. In fact, too much stuff.” Jagger is introducing the band’s first career-spanning exhibition via a video clip beamed to guests in London’s Saatchi Gallery on a hot night in early July. Called *Exhibitionism*, the retrospective will cover the band’s origins in nearby Edith Grove up to their recent Zip Code Tour of North America. The band’s plan is to include over 500 artefacts, ranging from diaries and stage designs to artwork and costumes. “There are some incredibly interesting scenes that go along with The Rolling Stones,” adds Keith Richards. “All the bits and pieces that have passed through your hands in that time are very interesting. At least to me, because half of them were stolen.” The show runs from April 6, 2016 through to September, when in true Stones fashion it’ll head off for a world tour.

As if that weren’t enough to feed a hungry Stones fan, a few weeks later *Uncut* enjoyed the Moroccan vibes of a swish central London members’ bar for the first playback of Keith Richards’ new solo album, *Crosseyed Heart*. As you’d imagine, it’s a familiar stew of blues, rock’n’roll and country, with some soul and a bit of light reggae in the mix. Stones fans will note that it features some of the last work recorded by Bobby Keys. Standout tracks include the hellacious “Substantial Damage”, the *Exile*-era rock’n’soul of “Blues In The Morning” and the acoustic title track. Says Richards, “There’s nothing like walking into a studio and having absolutely no idea what you’re going to come out with on the other end.”

MICHAEL BONNER

For more details on *Exhibitionism*, visit www.stonesexhibitionism.com; *Crosseyed Heart* is released on September 18 through Virgin EMI



Cats in the stovepipe hats:
the Stones in Budapest,
Hungary 1995



A QUICK ONE

➤ The messy afterlife of Creedence Clearwater Revival continues, with news that John Fogerty is suing Stuart Cook and Doug Clifford over unpaid royalties. Cook and Clifford perform as Creedence Clearwater Revisited, and Fogerty previously sued them over using the Creedence name before settling in 2001 for a share of their touring and merch income. Fogerty's lawsuit claims he hasn't been paid his share since December 2011. Fogerty releases his autobiography *Fortunate Son: My Life, My Music* on October 6.

➤ David Crosby launched into a Twitter tirade against Kanye West when asked how he felt about West telling the Glastonbury festival he was "the greatest rock star of all time". Crosby responded, "He is an egomaniac. He is dumb as a post. He creates nothing." Meanwhile, Crosby will be taking part in Rock Camp, an all-star music school in Hollywood (Nov 5-8). Among other unlikely mentors—calm, accommodating drum tutor, Mr Ginger Baker...



➤ Something of a comic book marriage made in heaven arrives next year, as real-life cartoons the Ramones are scheduled to hook up with Archie (of The Archies) in Archie Comics. The special mag will celebrate Archie's 75th anniversary and the Ramones' 40th anniversary.

➤ Uncut's bulging portfolio now incorporates our *Ultimate Music Guides* (the latest is dedicated to the Sex Pistols) and our new monthly trawl through the archives, *The History Of Rock* (the first deluxe issue, focusing on the biggest stars and stories of 1965, is out now). For more details, and all the latest news and reviews, visit www.uncut.co.uk.

MIKE PARK, DON Q HANNAH



Kamasi Washington, as seen on the cover of *The Epic*. Above: Robert Glasper



"Herbie Hancock doesn't lose his jazz licence just because he hangs out with Stevie Wonder or Arthur Baker," says Glasper. "Wayne Shorter didn't lose his 'cos he played with Steely Dan. Jazz musicians should operate in the here and now." "I got into a lot of jazz through checking out hip-hop samples," says bassist Thundercat, another jazz-trained musician who was at the "creative epicentre" of *To Pimp A Butterfly*. "The thing that keeps jazz from being old is the fact that being a jazz musician is a mentality as well as an ability. It's like being able to speak different languages – jazz is a tool that helps you. It allows you to understand more, and it can take you to different places."

HIP TO THE BOP

THE SHAPE OF JAZZ TO COME!

Where hard bop meets hip-hop! Meet **ROBERT GLASPER, THUNDERCAT** and a bold new generation of jazz tyros...

ONE AUTUMN EVENING last year, the young American pianist Robert Glasper went into Capitol Records' historic Studio A in Hollywood to record a live album, featuring jazz standards and songs by the likes of Radiohead and Kendrick Lamar, that has just been released on Blue Note as *Covered*.

"As I was leaving the studio, I got a phone call from the producer, Terrace Martin," says Glasper. "He said he was working on Kendrick's new album down at Dr Dre's studio and he wanted me to lay down some piano. It was ironic. I'd been with a jazz trio all evening playing hip-hop tunes. Now here I was, on one of the most hotly anticipated hip-hop releases in years, playing really swinging, straightahead jazz!"

Glasper wasn't the only jazz musician on *To Pimp A Butterfly*, Kendrick Lamar's landmark LP. The stellar cast also included saxophonist Kamasi Washington and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, guitarist Keith Askey, bassist Chris Smith and drummers Ronald Bruner Jr and Robert Searight. They're part of a generation of jazz musicians – now in their twenties and thirties – who are as comfortable playing in a hard bop setting as they are with hip-hop or R&B.

Glasper, for instance, has worked with jazz heavyweights Terence Blanchard and Roy Hargrove, and has just scored Don Cheadle's upcoming Miles Davis biopic as well as Netflix's Nina Simone documentary *What Happened, Miss Simone?*. But he has always been just as happy touring and recording with Mos Def, Bilal, Kanye West and Q-Tip.

Thundercat also works closely with hip-hop producer Flying Lotus. "Jazz musicians can learn so much from hip-hop," he says. "Someone like Lotus can't read music, but he is

instrumental in crafting and shaping my sound. He picks at things, explains how ideas can be revealed slowly, how some things can be left out, how things work from a DJ's point of view."

Jazz drummers in particular have been incorporating the innovations of hip-hop into their vocabulary, in particular the late J Dilla's spliced-up, disjointed, behind-the-beat breakbeats. Karriem Riggins and Bill Williams, for instance, replicate Dilla's "slugging" style, while Dan Weiss plays

curious solo versions of hip-hop hits.

"A great breakbeat is a very technical art," says Glasper. "There's a sonic language that you have to understand. For instance, if you're

playing hip-hop, you can't do it with an 18-inch bass drum. You need a 20- or 22-inch. You have to tune your snare drum differently.

You can't crash your cymbals every eight bars. A lot of technically brilliant jazz drummers might not understand that. If you're not a hip-hop head, you won't know that something's wrong."

"The thing to remember is that genre definitions drive all musicians crazy," says Thundercat. "It's the marketplace that creates labels. Music is fragile and emotional, and definitions like 'hip-hop' and 'jazz' are like wet cloths that suffocate the music. I can imagine a time when people just made music without names. That's what we're all trying to do." **JOHN LEWIS**

"Genre definitions are wet cloths that suffocate music"
Thundercat



"Music is fragile": Thundercat



CHESNUTT REMEMBERED

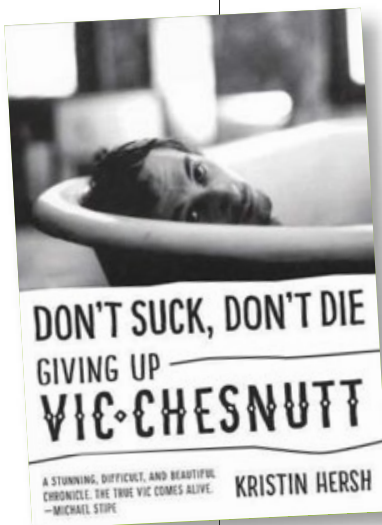
“I did give up on him”

KRISTIN HERSH recalls her tempestuous friendship with **VIC CHESNUTT** for her new book, *Don't Suck, Don't Die*

THERE'S A SCENE near the end of Kristin Hersh's memoir about the times she shared with the late Vic Chesnutt, where the talk turns to death. It happens over a breakfast of pancakes in a hotel on the road, when Chesnutt is still processing the breakdown of his marriage in 2007. The conversation is distracted until Hersh and Chesnutt begin trading thoughts on the most embarrassing way to die. Death by carrot cake, Hersh suggests. Pancake, Chesnutt shoots back, and the conversation turns darker, running through mystery disease, accidental decapitation while dressed as a lobster monster, helium, suit of armour on a golf course during an electrical storm,

the bends, hantavirus, and (Chesnutt's final flourish) stingray through the heart.

The tragedy, of course, is that Chesnutt wasn't necessarily kidding. He overdosed on Christmas Day, 2009, at the age of 45, having never really gone beyond cult status. The cult includes Michael Stipe, who saw Chesnutt at the 40 Watt club in Athens, Georgia, and invited him to record his debut album, *Little*. Howe Gelb, Lucinda



Williams and Bob Mould were also fans.

Hersh's book, *Don't Suck, Don't Die*, is not an easy read. The two were close for a time. And then they weren't. Their friendship was complicated by Chesnutt's personality, by drugs, by the circumstances of life on the road – a cocktail made no easier by the fact that Chesnutt was a wheelchair-bound paraplegic – and Hersh was hesitant about revisiting her memories.

“My reluctance stemmed from an impression of this as an impossible feat,” she says. “Who could explain or even describe such an enigma? Vic was too Vic to even think about trying to bring him back to life. Then



Vic in Athens, Georgia, 1996

“Pain almost always wins... aching hearts suffer in private”
Kristin Hersh

I began to realise that my experience of Vic was different from just about everyone else's who knew him. I didn't want that particular Vic to be lost along with the public one. It may just be a few shadows of him, a few moments, but the man was huge. It's gonna take a lot of us to build up a whole picture.”

Hersh writes as if she is addressing Chesnutt directly, because she is aware that there are many things she wishes she had said. “There are a ton of if-onlys. But who knows? Maybe that stuff is inappropriate to say to

a person. You need to wait until you're talking to a soul.”

But she is candid about his problems. “I did give up on him,” she says. “Not for the standard reasons. I wanted more; I was frustrated. I find old stories like striving for success, holding grudges and reaching for drugs just... boring. I wanted Vic to be better than that, because he was better than that. Pain almost always wins, though. His shining was rarely rewarded, while his pain was fed constantly. We need to do better by people like Vic on this planet. The shallow have many outlets, many rewards. Aching hearts suffer in private.”

But still, despite all the morbid talk, she didn't expect Chesnutt to follow through and take his own life.

“Everyone but me knew he would. I thought I knew him better than that. Knew he wouldn't play that old game, or maybe I just got used to him being here. He told me so many times that he was gonna leave, but he also painted a crazy picture of Old Man Vic on his front porch with a shotgun and I liked that better.”

Asked what she learned from Chesnutt, Hersh replies: “Fluid timing. Breathing. Meter is optional. Cliff-diving means you aren't falling.” *ALASTAIR MCKAY*

Don't Suck, Don't Die is published by University Of Texas Press in October, priced £15.99

CARL MARTIN

UNCUT AT END OF THE ROAD

AS YOU CAN tell from this month's features on Ryley Walker, Sleaford Mods and Mac DeMarco, the End Of The Road festival looms ever closer. The September 4-6 festivities at Larmer Tree Gardens in Dorset have now sold out, but hopefully we'll see at least some of you down there. Drop by the Uncut-hosted Tipi Tent for our Q&A

sessions, plus music from Jessica Pratt (right), Jane Weaver, Euros Child, Sam Amidon, Julie Byrne, This Is The Kit and many more. For all the latest info, have a look at www.endoftheroadfestival.com.

END OF THE ROAD





I'M NEW HERE

Mac DeMarco

Recommended this month: the puckish balladeer of Rockaway Beach. Just don't call him the "love guru"...

LATE LAST YEAR, Mac DeMarco moved out of his poky Brooklyn apartment and down to the end of the subway line, Far Rockaway, where he lives in a little white house backing out onto Jamaica Bay. I know this because at the end of "My House By The Water", the melancholy instrumental that closes his new LP, *Another One*, he reads out his full address with the invitation to "Stop on by, I'll make you a cup of coffee," and I've looked it up on Google Maps. "It's a working-class neighbourhood, families and schoolkids," says Mac. "I don't have to see anybody if I don't want to. Which at this point in my life suits me just fine."

A couple of months back, Mac teased the release of *Another One* with a video trailer that saw him clambering around on some rocks in a Michael Jackson mask, before venturing into the surf to perform the record's title track on a Yamaha keyboard. It's the sort of tomfoolery we've come to expect from this puckish 25-year-old Canadian, whose live shows find him french-kissing his bandmates mid-song or performing impromptu covers of Metallica. But that's not all there is to Mac. *Another One*, like 2014's *Salad Days* and 2012's 2, displays a preternatural grasp of the pop song – and the ache of romance gone sour on newbies like the wrenching "A Heart Like Hers". "Love songs are the most universal style of pop song, so I wanted to go through the scope of, 'Oh man, I wish I was in love, oh man, this didn't work out, yadda yadda,'" says Mac, between hard drags on a cigarette. They're personal, he says –

he can't help but write that way – but they're designed to be relatable, too. "I'm not trying to come into it like, 'Yo, the love guru, Mac DeMarco,'" he purrs. "Like, I have no idea, but nobody does when it comes to love. My favourite love song is 'Something' by George Harrison. There's *something* about her. That just says it all."

Mac was born in Duncan, British Columbia, and after crashing through a few high-school bands relocated to Vancouver, where he recorded as Makeout Videotape in 2009. In 2012, he signed to NY indie label Captured Tracks, who released his debut LP proper, *Rock'n'Roll Nightclub*, a peculiar glam fantasy featuring Mac on the cover applying lipstick. "I was trying to write a powerpop record, very fast, like The Decibels or Ramones. But it sounded fucking awful. So I tried reaching for this knob on my four-track and slowing it all the way down... and I was like: 'Woah, this sounds cool.' I ended up singing like Elvis, and it came out this super-warped, fucked-up shit."

These days he plays it straighter, but *Another One* still makes a virtue of lo-fi simplicity, home-recorded with a battered Strat, old keyboards and a \$50 effects pedal. "I have a bigger bedroom now, so I don't have to tear the drums down for each song. But I'm still doing all the parts myself." All the same, the crowds are getting bigger. A New York show last November sold 3,000 tickets up front. "That's as high as I wanna take it," he says. "When the barrier's 20ft away, it ruins what we do. A lot of it is about talking to the kids in the crowd."

So how's he going to shuck off that audience? "Oh, I'll probably start sucking at some point – but I'll keep doing it. I've made a couple of records I like, so why stop?"

LOUIS PATTISON

Another One is released August 7. DeMarco tours the UK in September

I'M YOUR FAN

"Mac and his band are loose units. I left Coachella in their van and they were waving a huge dildo at people. We ended up in his jacuzzi..."

KEVIN PARKER, TAME IMPALA



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

ROBERT FORSTER *Songs To Play* TAPETE
The first album in seven years from a droll master craftsman. Sample song title: "I Love Myself (And I Always Have)" (note use of parentheses).

JULIA HOLTER *Have You In My Wilderness* DOMINO
An intimate and ravishing fourth album that confirms the LA musician as the most deserving recipient of 'New Kate Bush' plaudits in aeons.

BILAL *In Another Life* BBE
Rich, retro-leaning nu-soul from the oft-underrated singer. One to slot neatly between the recent D'Angelo and Kendrick Lamar albums.

DAVE RAWLINGS MACHINE *Nashville Obsolete* ACONY
Rejoice! Seven new songs from the meticulous Rawlings (right) and Gillian Welch double act. This time out, he steps Dylanishly into the spotlight.



JAMES ELKINGTON & NATHAN SALSBURG *Ambace* PARADISE OF BACHELORS
Good-time porch vibes courtesy of two modern fingerpicking guitar masters. Includes a version of "Reel Around The Fountain" that brilliantly exposes Johnny Marr's folk inspirations.

ELYSE WEINBERG *Greasepaint Smile* NUMEROPHON
A strong find from '69, Weinberg being a Toronto folksinger who ended up on Neil Young's Laurel Canyon couch. David Briggs produces; Neil, Nils and JD Souther guest.

KURT VILE *B'lieve I'm Goin Down* MATADOR
The millennial super-slacker makes his ambulatory way to the Mojave. A new discovery: he plays piano like he plays guitar.

DUANE PITRE *Bayou Electric* IMPORTANT
Another serene 48 minutes from the latterday King Of Drone, featuring auspicious help from some of Louisiana's more talented crickets.

GOSPELBEACH *Pacific Surf Line* ALIVE NATURAL SOUND
Brent Rademaker, Neal Casal and friends' laidback homage to the sounds of Marin County and Topanga Canyon. Jangly!

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Ork Records: New York, NY* NUMERO GROUP
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For regular updates, check our blogs at www.uncut.co.uk and follow @JohnRMulvey on Twitter

fresh produce

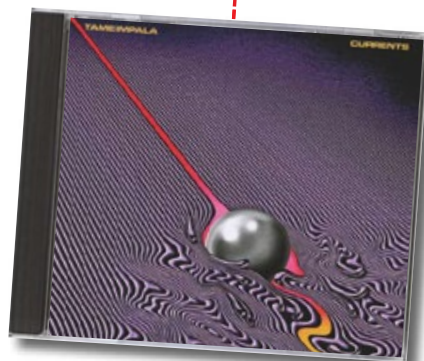


album of the month

ultimate painting
green lanes
31/07/2015



tame impala
currents
out now



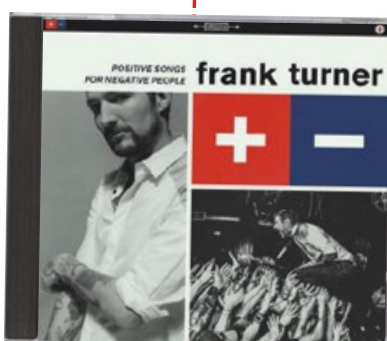
the chemical brothers
born in the echoes
out now



sleaford mods
key markets
out now



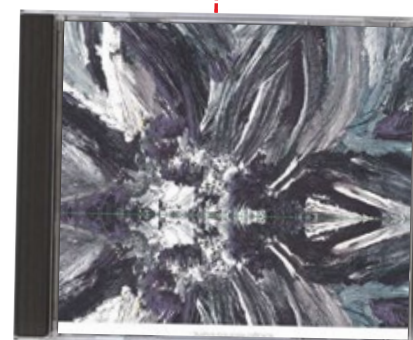
frank turner
positive songs for negative people
07/08/2015



albert hammond jr.
momentary masters
31/07/2015



flying saucer attack
instrumentals 2015
out now



bullet for my valentine
venom
14/08/2015



georgia
georgia
07/08/2015



mac demarco
another one
07/08/2015



ducktails
st. catherine
out now



ms mr
how does it feel
out now

suck it and see

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PSYCH RETURN

THE OTHER ONES

As The Grateful Dead make their comeback, the original CHARLATANS - the Bay Area's psychedelic pioneers - hold their own wild anniversary reunion...

“WE HAVE COME full circle,” says George Hunter after The Charlatans, the first band to surface out of San Francisco's psychedelic '60s subculture, finish their 50th-anniversary weekend in Virginia City, Nevada.

On June 21, 1965, at the then-new Red Dog Saloon in this faded Gold Rush-era mining town, The Charlatans created the prototype for the musical revolution that exploded out of San Francisco in the 1960s. Now, on the exact same day 50 years later, The Charlatans have returned to the same spot to perform one last time with all four of their surviving members: Hunter, autoharp player and the visionary who started the group, guitarist Michael Wilhelm, wind player/bassist Richie Olsen and songwriter/vocalist Dan Hicks, (keyboardist Mike Ferguson died in 1979).

The Grateful Dead might have taken the headlines with their own 50th-anniversary reunion, but The Charlatans' significance has not been lost on everyone: hundreds have made the six-hour drive from the Bay Area and beyond to reach Virginia City, an Old West tourist town 30 minutes outside of Reno and 6,000ft above



Live in Nevada last month. Above, at the Red Dog Saloon in 1965

sea level. With many dressed in early 20th-Century attire, they've come not simply to see the shows, but to make a pilgrimage to the not-so-secret start of it all.

During their summer as house band at the Red Dog, conceived as the hallucinatory version of an ornate Western saloon, The Charlatans founded many elements of San Francisco's psychedelic music scene: jams, a Victorian/Edwardian and Western dandy look, the birth of the concert poster as art, live rock performances with light shows, and a sound clearly empowered by LSD. “The Charlatans’ music was magic,” says Mike Wilhelm. “It is what kept us together.”



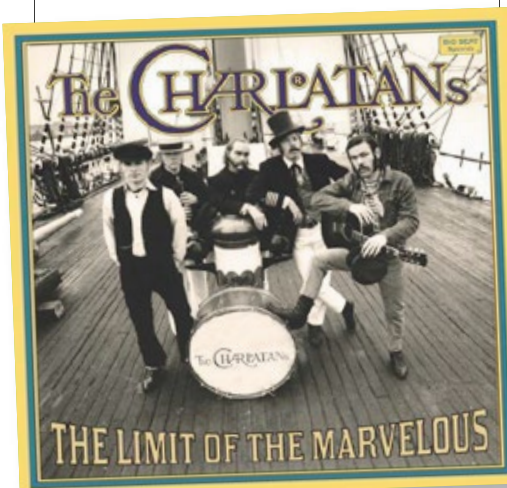
The Red Dog Saloon show begins with a band history and theatrical re-enactments. Then with the band wearing their vintage and Western wear, the emotional, sometimes erratic performance begins. The

“The Charlatans’ music was magic. It is what kept us together”
Mike Wilhelm

band has suffered health problems: Wilhelm, a versatile and under-recognised blues guitar picker (showcased on a version of Robert Johnson's “32-20”), has COPD and is wheeled onto the stage. Dan Hicks has liver cancer, but has kept his wit and much of

his voice for the classic “How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away?” “Walkin’”, written and sung by Hunter and Olsen, successfully mixes delicate psych and ragtime. Olsen, it turns out, is the band's musical anchor, with turns on clarinet and flute and strong lead vocals. Audie DeLone on keyboards and Freddie Krc on drums further bolster the band.

Between the two sets, video of The Charlatans at their thrilling mid-'60s peak stoke the atmosphere. By the time they perform the hypnotic “Alabama Bound”, and Bill Ham's light show undulates in tandem, there's a sense that this pioneering band are finally receiving the acclaim they deserve. “I was moved by the adoration and the acceptance,” says Hicks after the show. “I was pleased to meet the challenge and do those songs again with The Charlatans.” *DIVINA INFUSINO*



THE CLASSIFIEDS

THIS MONTH: Sex Pistols in West Runton! See AC/DC for 85p!
Taken from the *NME*, August 21, 1976

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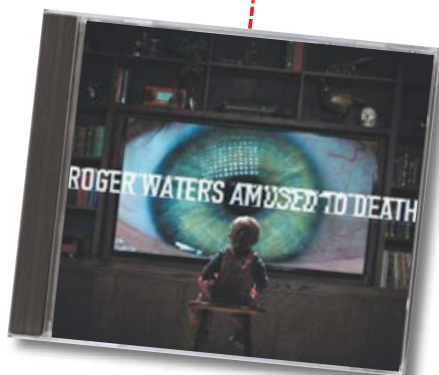


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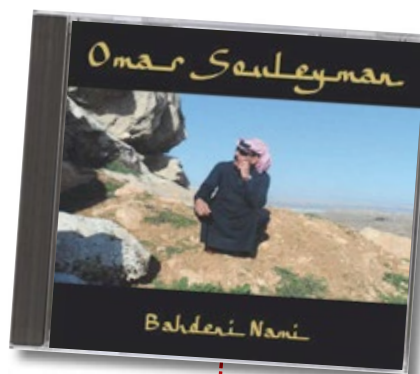
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Interview: Michael Bonner
Photo: Mike Alsford

Julien Temple

The prolific director on goading Jagger with Peter Cook, being Bowie's 'younger brother' and his freestyle approach to movies: "I'm the man without a plan"

WORKING ON THE Kinks biopic is a bit like the Greek banking crisis," says Julien Temple as he updates us on his next, eagerly anticipated project. "You think there's an end in sight and then... We've been working on it for a long time, but that doesn't mean we're any less passionate about it." Although the provisional shooting date for the film – titled *You Really Got Me* – is looming ("We're hoping to shoot in the autumn," he admits), Temple is nevertheless currently busy with other matters. His latest documentary, *The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson*, charts the recent upheavals in the guitarist's life, from cancer diagnosis to remarkable recovery. It is yet another idiosyncratic entry in Temple's wide-ranging filmography, which covers the Sex Pistols, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, David Bowie, Jean Vigo, The Clash, a social history of London during the 20th Century and the Glastonbury festival. It transpires that Temple himself has just returned from his annual pilgrimage to Worthy Farm. "Parliament and Funkadelic were amazing," he enthuses. "The crowd were incandescent at that gig..."

STAR QUESTION



You are known for visual concepts, set pieces and the ability to put a narrative together by splicing archive footage. Do you only see drama conveyed through the use of visuals and music? If not, how would you shoot a piece like Pinter's *The Caretaker* or (if you had the opportunity and inclination!), how would you direct something like *Downton Abbey*, *The Sopranos* or, another extreme, *Coronation Street*?

Mr D P Throat, N10
It's from Ray Davies? That is a complicated series of questions to answer! I'd say that I never really make films about music. I make films about the people who make

the music, and listen to the music. The music is a lens for looking at people in their time and where they came from. I think the core of any film is, for me, an emotional connection, between the viewer and the story. I would try to have a little bit more of a documentary approach in a fiction film, if I can. I try to make documentaries with quite a fictive element to them. In terms of *Downton Abbey*, I don't think I'd bother turning up for that one! I'd rather set it all below stairs.

You directed *The Secret Policeman's Other Ball*. Who was more difficult to film: the musicians or the comedians?

Richard Looper, Norwich
They both had their moments. Peter Cook was so witty and funny, and probably more out there than the rock stars at the time. I remember being backstage with the Stones at



Wembley, and Peter was there. They were trying to get ready, and he wanted to see the set. I was there to direct the show, and they asked me to show him around. They

had this tower with a lift that Mick would, at some point, ascend and be above the whole stadium. I took Peter up there just before the show started.

When we got to the top, he produced this big spliff and lit this thing up. Suddenly everything went into lockdown mode and the show started. We were stuck on this tower, waiting for "Sympathy For The Devil", when Mick would come up. There was hardly any room. Mick was swinging his bum around in front of us, and Peter was goosing him, putting Mick off his performance on the top of this tower in front of 100,000 people.

What was your favourite Glasto?
Neil McLennan, Carshalton

In 1971. I ran away from school and walked in with nothing, didn't have to pay, didn't have anything, just walked down a lane and you were there. It always makes me

laugh when I see people wheeling in the washing machines and the generators and the fridges these days, as it was a very different world then. What's fascinating for me is how that festival is a kind of mirror of the changes in the outside world. That became very clear when I was making my *Glastonbury* film. You didn't have to try to illustrate the times changing in any other way than just look at the different evolutionary themes through that festival, how human beings have changed extremely in the past 35 to 40 years or whatever. Have I been every year? No, after '71, I didn't really go until the '80s. But I really started going again with Joe Strummer in the mid '90s.

Do you have any regrets about *Absolute Beginners*?

Chris Peacock, Norwich
It made it hard for me to work after that. It's still hard for me to raise money for fiction films because of it. But on the other hand I think the ambitions and the intentions of it are things that I can still very much live by. I get free cappuccinos for life from Bar Italia. We were building a replica in Shepperton for the film. They were going to rip it all out and put in some bland '80s interior, and I persuaded them to keep it. I used to go there a lot with David Bowie. What did we talk about? He called me his younger brother, and I was anxious to learn from him about Soho in the '60s and the places he used to haunt back then. So it's probably mainly me bugging him for information, but I'm sure it was a bit of a two-way thing. It was a time when I was doing quite a bit of work with him so we would talk about the projects a lot, as well. ●



“I don’t make
films about
music. I make
films about
the people
who make
music”



David Bowie in Temple's 1986 film *Absolute Beginners*: "He wants to know what's going on before most people"

spanner in the works of that. It was a polemical thing, and we fitted to the idea of Malcolm as the puppet master. Twenty years later, when Malcolm was saying the Pistols couldn't think for themselves, that felt wrong. The Pistols were very articulate. So, yeah, there was an attempt to tell the second side of the story. Malcolm

was incredibly inspirational, catalytic, a renegade. But he did have a way of treating people he worked with in a bad way. He wasn't very loyal to them, and a lot felt bitter about that, or let down.

What was it like growing up in a communist household?

Nicola Berry, Shoreditch
Bizarre, at the time. You get dog shit through the letter box [laughs]. You were definitely an outsider. My father was one of the last Oxford communists but, as he insisted we grew up on a council estate, I had a bizarre, dual upbringing... a very intellectual side of it and a street, council estate side, which I think in the end has been good for my

work. But a communist father in the '50s, it made it hard for me to rebel. I should have become a banker, if I was going to rebel properly!

What's your favourite

memory of Joe Strummer?

Arthur Lake, Chippenham
He had a great knock. I just have this memory of when he knocked on the door, you'd just know you'd have a good time! When I came to make *The Future Is Unwritten*, I was shocked by how he looked in the early squat period, like an ancient tramp. He was fantastically generous. He had this great sense of looking after people, a great thing at the campfires at Glastonbury, making sure everyone had a seat, a drink and a blanket. When I made that film, I didn't realise how quite much he'd compartmentalised different areas of his life. You could see when he starts a new version of himself, it's a little Bowie-like. I wasn't aware of how extreme the cut-off to the previous period was, certainly the one from The 101ers to punk.

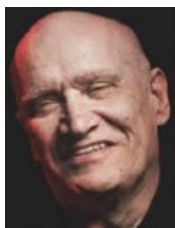
There is a line about you in The Kinks' song "Too Hot"; "Julien's over budget, now he's really got to hustle." How did you get to make the Kinks videos and did Ray keep you on a low budget?

David Mayall, Chester
I got to make them by being a big fan, and hustling to do it. I'd done *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* at the time. I went to school on Hampstead Heath, so I used to bunk off school when I was a kid, and watch The Kinks drink at The Flask. I learnt a lot from watching them drink. There was something fascinating about The Kinks because they weren't on the train to Bangor to meet the Maharishi with the Stones or The Beatles. They sat outside that hippy thing. I remember them saying that a Sunday roast was better than acid! There were always coded messages in their lyrics, and if you watched them those could become clearer just because of the body language and interaction. It was a fun schoolkid thing to do, you could do worse than watch The Kinks drink and learn about the world!

How much was *The Filth And The Fury* a corrective after *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* favoured Malcolm McLaren's version of the Pistols' history?

Hannah Wills, Dublin
There was an element definitely of that. *Swindle* had been designed as a kind of mad provocation for Pistols fans. The idea of the Pistols was to demystify the whole machinery of stardom and how you build millions-selling albums. So, 18 months later, when kids were suddenly worshipping the Pistols, the aim of *Swindle* was to throw a

STAR QUESTION

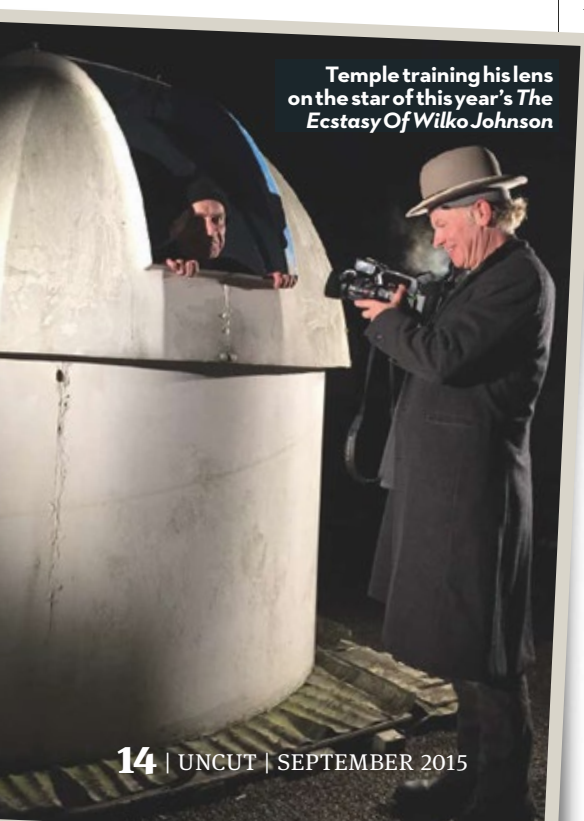


Do you make it up as you go along?

Wilko Johnson

Yes, I'm the man without a plan. Which I think is the right way to do films like this. Most of this film I made lying on my bed looking at a very tall ceiling, half asleep and half awake, and I just let things around, and try to let images in from films I knew that confronted the same topic. That's a surprisingly interesting way of working 'cos you really don't know where your head's going to take you next. The film is a contemplation of mortality and what it is to be alive so it's a pretty free-ranging subject. And, of course, we didn't know where this was going. When I was a kid, the Feelgoods were the only band to see in London. They were so different from what was on offer, the kind of stinking, afghan-coat wearing back end of the hippy era in London pubs and so on. It was very different from these *Reservoir Dogs*-type guys who looked like they were holding up the pub rather than playing a gig! A breath of fresh air, really.

GEORGES DE KEERLE/GETTY IMAGES; ANDREW NAUGHTON



Temple training his lens on the star of this year's *The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson*

How did you and Bowie develop the Screaming Lord Byron character for the "Blue Jean" video? Colin Hodder, London

I've always been a fan of Byron, but also feel those English rock'n'rollers of the late '50s, such as Screaming Lord Sutch and Johnny Kidd, are underestimated. They had this link back to the earlier music hall culture, as well as being pioneers of rock'n'roll. David and I first met at a screening of *Swindle*. In those days, for the rating that the censor gave you, you had to have a public screening where people could come and object. No-one ever came, but you had to do it. I went to this screening in Soho Square to check the print. Halfway through I was aware of someone sat at the back, watching it in this empty theatre, and when the lights came up, it was David. I didn't meet him then, there was a brief flicker of lights and he scurried off. But later he called and asked if I'd be interested in working with him. He was that kind of person, wanting to know what's going on before most people.

When did you start carrying a camera? Andrew Church, Cardiff

I didn't see any films as a kid. We didn't have a TV. I only became interested when I was at college studying architecture and getting bored. We made a film in Wales in the early '70s; I had a 16mm camera for that. Then I went to the National Film School, and had a key cut for the camera room so I could sneak a camera out any time. I was the only one at these gigs with a camera at the beginning. But I didn't grow up with a Super 8 camera. I wish I did.

Were Patrick Keiller and Iain Sinclair influences on the making of *London - The Modern Babylon*? Tom Swift, Leeds

I made a decision not to engage with many things that had done the same; I wanted it to exist on its own. I'd seen Keiller's film [*London*, 1994], which I'm an admirer of, and read Iain Sinclair, but I got lost in the archives as a way to approach that film. What's my favourite bit of musical footage in it? I love Wilson, Keppel And Betty, the '30s music hall act. It was an indigenous culture then, it hadn't been really Americanised at that point. There's something very purely London about that music hall thing. It has a surrealism of its own. ①

The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson is in cinemas now

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

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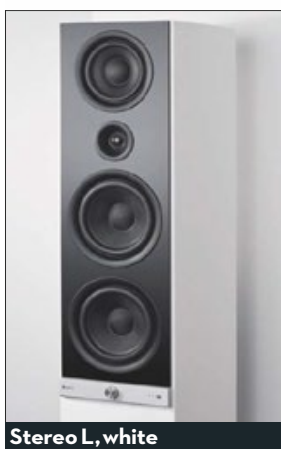


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The Grateful Dead,
Fare Thee Well show,
Soldier Field,
Chicago, July 5, 2015

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

June 27, 2015: the reunited members of THE GRATEFUL DEAD begin their last run of shows. In Northern California, *Uncut* goes native with the Deadheads to celebrate the band's 50-year adventure, and explores the seismic impact they have made on hundreds of thousands of lives. How will the Dead sound without Jerry Garcia? What happens next? And how do you score some really good LSD? "Shall we go, you and I/While we can?..."

Story: John Mulvey

Photograph: © Jay Blakesberg





Trey Anastasio, Phil Lesh and Bob Weir on stage for act three, Chicago, July 5

THREE HOURS BEFORE The Grateful Dead begin their brief and poignant farewell tour in Santa Clara, California, a couple called Jeremy and Karen are setting up their stall of bespoke tie-dyed articles in the parking lot. As they arrange the \$70 silk shirts and \$10 bandannas, they are talking of their times on the road following the band; journeys that began in the '70s for both of them, and which reached a sustained climax for

Jeremy between 1987 and 1995, when he was present at every one of the Dead's last 300-odd shows.

"It wasn't just music," he says now, looking like a cross between Jerry Garcia and John Goodman. "The term Utopia is very maligned in society, especially in this age. What we had wasn't a working blueprint for Utopia, but it was an unfolding better way of living, away from the safety net of a society that acts as either a sieve or a meat grinder. It was a different way of doing things. It had all the regular trappings and problems of society, but it offered hope."

A few hundred metres away, Santa Clara's year-old Levi's Stadium, normally home to the San Francisco 49ers, awaits today's influx of 83,000 multifarious Deadheads. Lifers like Jeremy and Karen mingle with new young fans, and many middle-aged men and women whose love of the Dead has endured long after their own quests for Utopia have ended. Over the next two weekends, the four remaining core members of the Dead and their accomplices will play five Fare Thee Well shows, two here and three in Chicago, which will reportedly net \$40m in ticket sales. Out in the parking lots, a more idiosyncratic brand of entrepreneurship is flourishing, even while cops patrol on golf buggies.

This is Shakedown Street, storied hub of the grey economy that has long clustered around the Dead, an ad hoc marketplace for all your quainter hippy needs. Hash pipes proliferate, as do conch shells and vegetarian burritos. There are drum circles, hackysack players, dogs in bandannas, and T-shirt memorials to Brent Mydland, one of the multiple keyboard players who died during the Grateful Dead's original lifespan between 1965 and 1995. A large man loudly advertises the hash brownies he is selling, neatly packaged in branded plastic containers. Another wanders through the crowds, carrying a mysterious box labelled "Take a gift".

Jeremy, though, has a living to make. The day Jerry Garcia died, Wednesday August 9, 1995, he

postponed thoughts of getting a job for a good 24 hours. The next day he found work at the University of Santa Cruz, but soon took to the road again, selling his tie-dyes at festivals through the summers, until it became harder and harder to survive the winters. Finally, he had an idea; America's only make-your-own tie-dye store, A Brighter World. "Jeremy's one of the few who made it," says Karen. "Everybody had their little things – I crocheted crazy stuff – but he turned it into a business. People who can combine the hippy thing with a work ethic, they can find a really interesting way to live."

Jeremy claims he is mostly here to promote his business. After several hundred shows, though, a profound emotional attachment to the Dead remains, transcending his cynicism over the premise of Fare Thee Well, and his scepticism that the band can still be meaningful without Garcia. "I just hope they play like it's their last one, as opposed to going through the motions," he finally decides. "It could be like going to someone's house for a home-cooked meal but they got sick, so they ordered out. It's OK, but I hope it won't be like that..."

LAST MAY, BILL Kreutzmann published *Deal*, an autobiography of his time playing drums in the Grateful Dead. It's a pretty rough book, and one that doesn't add much to the accumulated weight of Dead scholarship, but it does encapsulate the band's mix of nebulous Aquarian idealism and frontier machismo: besides the drugs and the jams, the reckless use of firearms played a key role in the band's bonding rituals.

It is also a book that must have been submitted to the printers before Kreutzmann, Phil Lesh, Bob Weir and Mickey Hart decided to reactivate their band for this valedictory round of shows. At one point, Kreutzmann compares the Grateful Dead to an arch, that people would pass underneath en route to "a Utopian island where the gardens looked like amphitheatres, the mall looked like Shakedown Street and the houses were made out of tents".

"Jerry Garcia," Kreutzmann continues, "was the keystone of this magical arch. You take that out, and not only does the arch come tumbling down, crushing all who are stuck beneath, but also, it crushes the only road that leads to that Utopian dream."

Later he articulates, with a bluntness that is more typical of his prose, the suspicions of many Dead fans following the announcement of Fare Thee Well: "The Grateful Dead without Jerry Garcia would be like the Miles Davis Quintet without Miles Davis... It's a re-enactment, nostalgia, mere bathos."

Kreutzmann's get-out clause, as the first Fare Thee Well show draws near, is made clear on the ticket: this is not technically a Grateful Dead concert. In the 20 years since Garcia died, the surviving members have intermittently reconfigured themselves in different permutations – The Other Ones, Furthur, The Dead – to keep the music alive, and, of course, to keep the bank accounts healthy. For these last five gigs, however, the band name is delicately obscured. "Remember, it's called 'Fare Thee Well, Celebrating 50 Years Of



THE SET LISTS

NIGHT ONE:
SANTA CLARA, JUNE 27,
2015

SET ONE

- 1 Truckin'
- 2 Uncle John's Band
- 3 Alligator
- 4 Cumberland Blues
- 5 Born Cross-Eyed
- 6 Cream Puff War
- 7 Viola Lee Blues

SET TWO

- 8 Cryptical Envelopment
- 9 Dark Star
- 10 St Stephen
- 11 The Eleven
- 12 Turn On Your Love Light
- 13 Drums-Space
- 14 What's Become Of The Baby
- 15 The Other One
- 16 Morning Dew

ENCORE

- 17 Casey Jones



Bill Kreutzmann at Soldier Field, Chicago, 3 July

The Grateful Dead,” cautions the promoter Peter Shapiro, a couple of weeks before the show. “That’s how we branded it. Jerry was the soul of the band – they all know that, we all know that – but we’re gonna do it one more time.”

The last time the “core four” came together was for a tour as The Dead, in 2009. “We’ve put the past behind us,” Mickey Hart told *Uncut* then, referring to the tensions that had dogged inter-band relations since Garcia’s death. “You can’t play Grateful Dead music with someone you don’t like.” Kreutzmann, though, recalls in *Deal* that the 2009 tour turned out to be so fractious that it “spelled the end of the Dead”. “The head trips,” he remembers, “were so monstrous... You’re doing it just to earn money and that’s not good enough. It doesn’t honour the music or the legacy.”

Shapiro, a Deadhead with a long history of working with the band members individually, ruefully admits the business of reuniting the quartet involved “some good reverse ju-jitsu”. Lesh, at 75 the oldest of the survivors, appears to have been pivotal to the process, reportedly refusing to countenance a full tour (rumours persist that Weir, Kreutzmann and Hart will head out, with John Mayer, for more dates later in the year). Since the shows were announced in January, every one of Shapiro’s decisions has been critiqued by the fans, from his ticketing schemes to his choice of venues: Soldier Field in Chicago is where Garcia played his last concert, and Kreutzmann recalls waking the heroin-addicted guitarist from a doze in the middle of that decidedly non-vintage set.

Most controversially, there has been the selection of a stand-in for Garcia. Warren Haynes, who subbed on guitar in 2009 and who also spent many years filling in for Duane Allman in The Allman Brothers, missed the cut this time.

“Reuniting the band involved some good reverse ju-jitsu”
PETER SHAPIRO

For many years, Phish have had a precarious reputation in the pantheon of jam bands as the Dead’s most obvious heirs: a group whose huge popularity is enhanced, not diminished, by the digressive intricacy of their music. The analogy is not a precise one, though, and Phish’s credibility with Dead fans has long been compromised by their propensity for a certain prog wackiness, and the fact that Anastasio is as indebted to Frank Zappa as he is to Jerry Garcia.

The size of Phish’s following, and his apparent lack of baggage with all four Dead survivors, make Anastasio a pragmatic choice, but Shapiro is enthusiastic about his diligence as much as his improvising skills. Anastasio has been preparing for six months, employing a Broadway orchestrator to write out charts of around 100 songs from the Dead catalogue. “Trey’s not only been studying Jerry,” says Shapiro, “he’s been studying the people Jerry studied.”

“Trey has been kicking ass,” Jeff Chimenti, organist in the Fare Thee Well lineup, tells *Uncut* during the band’s uncharacteristically focused, “very busy” rehearsal period. “He’s worked hard and it’s evident in his performance, besides the ‘position’ in the band that he has to deal with, so to speak... I’m sure you know what I mean...”

According to Dennis McNally, the band’s former publicist and the author of their definitive history, *A Long Strange Trip*, Anastasio is “a lovely guy, and a fine guitarist, and

John Kadlecik, who graduated from Dead tribute bands to join Weir and Lesh in Furthur, was evidently disqualified in order to maintain a fragile band entente: Kreutzmann disparages him as “Fake Jerry” in *Deal*.

The lucky guitarist is Trey Anastasio, the frontman of Phish.

THE SET LISTS

NIGHT TWO:
SANTA CLARA, JUNE 28,
2015

SET ONE

- 1 **Feel Like A Stranger**
- 2 **Minglewood Blues**
- 3 **Brown-Eyed Women**
- 4 **Loose Lucy**
- 5 **Loser**
- 6 **Row Jimmy**
- 7 **Alabama Getaway**
- 8 **Black Peter**
- 9 **Hell In A Bucket**

SET TWO

- 10 **Mississippi Half-Step Uptown Toodleoo**
- 11 **Wharf Rat**
- 12 **Eyes Of The World**
- 13 **He’s Gone**
- 14 **Drums>Space**
- 15 **I Need A Miracle**
- 16 **Death Don’t Have No Mercy**
- 17 **Sugar Magnolia**

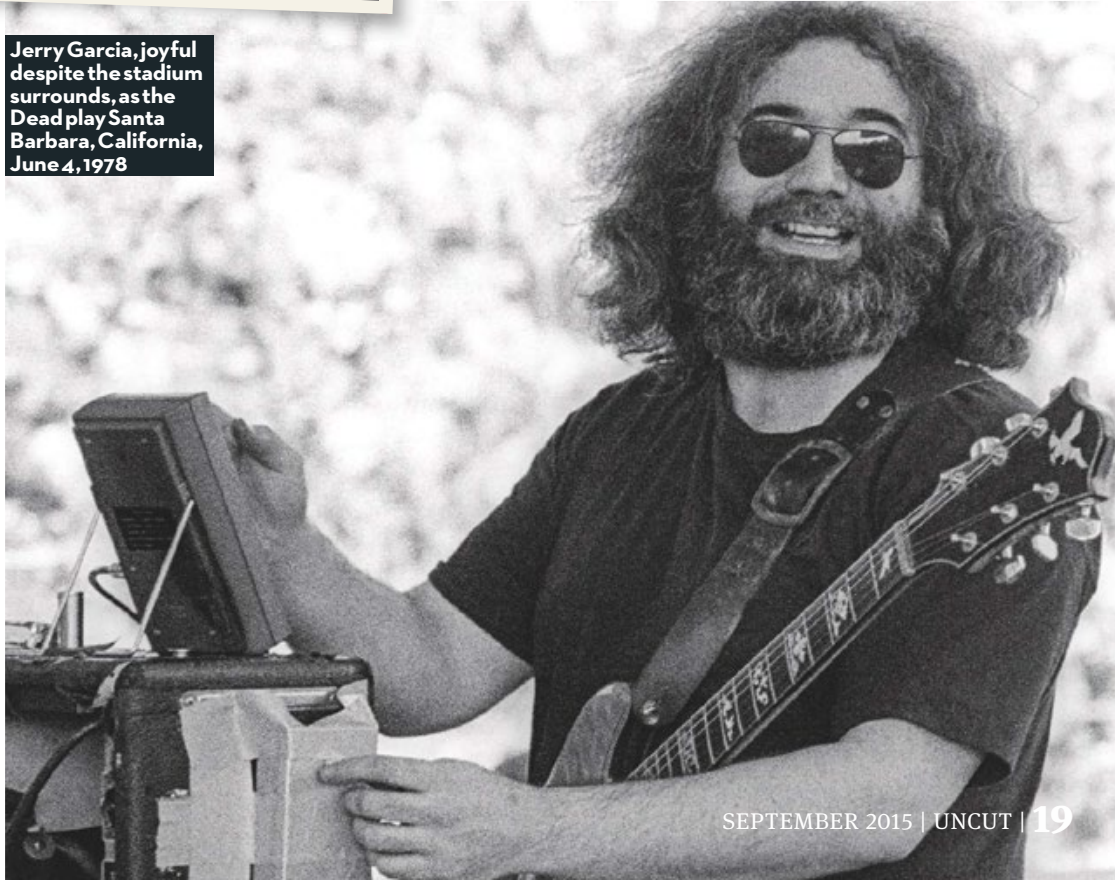
ENCORE

- 18 **Brokedown Palace**



Mickey Hart on closing night, Chicago, July 5

Jerry Garcia, joyful despite the stadium surrounds, as the Dead play Santa Barbara, California, June 4, 1978



I think he will do as good a job as anybody could. I think he’s smart enough not to try to sound like Jerry. But part of me sort of feels sorry for him because, y’know, what a job...”

FORTY-THREE MILES FROM San Francisco, Santa Clara does not feel like a spiritual home of the Grateful Dead. Larry Livermore, who saw the Dead at least 25 times before becoming a key player in the Bay Area punk scene and discovering Green Day, describes the city as “basically the Milton Keynes of Silicon Valley”. “I saw them in many places; parks, dancehalls, at Woodstock,” he says, “but I think I might have drawn the line at Santa Clara.”

This, though, is more or less where the Dead began, growing up in nearby Palo Alto and working their way through local pizza restaurants and music stores until Ken Kesey’s acid tests led them into San Francisco. In David Browne’s new Dead biography, *So Many Roads*, he describes a night in 1962 when Jorma Kaukonen, soon to form Jefferson Airplane, arrived at Santa Clara College from his home in Washington DC. On Kaukonen’s first day, Browne writes, “he wandered into a folk club and met Garcia and a young, throat-shredding Texas transplant named Janis Joplin.”

In the intervening 50-odd years, much has changed in the area. “When Jerry was growing up, what is now Silicon Valley was all fruit groves,” says Dennis McNally. “In the Dead’s lifetime, it has become one of the economic engines of America and, in fact, the world. It encapsulates the history of the last 50 years, 75 years.”

Bucolic hippy innocence, evolving into digital idealism, maturing to technocratic capitalism in its most intense form: it’s a neat summary of the journey undertaken by at least some of the Dead’s followers. The band’s fans were

early mainstays of online messageboards, while Steve Jobs and his partner at Apple, Steve Wozniak, McNally notes, were formative Deadheads (Wozniak promoted an ’80s festival headlined by the Dead; Jobs’ widow, Laurene Powell, is reportedly at the Santa Clara show).

It’s a transformation that some will also see as of a piece with the mainstream compromises made by the Dead in the latter stages of their career, and by the organisers of Fare Thee Well. The Levi’s Stadium, for instance, is not the most idyllic of venues. When the band had growth spurts in the mid ’70s and ’80s, however, such vast spaces became their home for most of the summer months. “Jerry once complained about playing a stadium show because he felt he had to make the music cartoonish,” says McNally. “Very broad gestures. I remember a band meeting in December 1985, in which the band sat and agreed, rather stonily and



Kitted out: the Dead play Santa Clara, June 28, 2015

with some regret, that they would have to do stadium shows because of the demand. It was not a joyful decision.”

Kreutzmann, true to form, is equally sceptical in *Deal*, complaining how the lack of nuance in stadium shows made them “safe... and safe equals boring”. Ominously, he also takes some perverse pride in listing all the significant gigs that his band messed up through their original career. “Just like at Monterey Pop and all the other big shows,” he writes, referring to Woodstock, “the Grateful Dead blew it.”

Back at the tie-dye stall on Shakedown Street, however, Karen is philosophical: “Yeah, we all wish they’d done it the old way where the tour ‘Heads got the first shot at the tickets, we all wish it was a smaller venue. We’re all gonna complain and bitch, but this is all we’re gonna get. Part of me thinks we should all just shut up and get over it.”

ABOVE THE LEVI’S Stadium, a plane makes repeated attempts to draw a peace sign with its vapour trail. Inside, one concourse has been given over to Participation Row, where stalls represent a motley collection of charities and pressure groups sanctioned by Dead members. At its furthest extreme the action is especially interesting, with representatives of MAPS – the Multidisciplinary Association For Psychedelic Studies, which advocates the psychotherapeutic use of LSD and MDMA in treating life-threatening illnesses – next to the Owsley Stanley Foundation. ‘Bear’ Stanley’s home-made acid fuelled the psychedelic revolution in San Francisco, but it is his work as the Dead’s soundman, and as someone who recorded more than 1,000 gigs by everyone from Miles Davis to Doc Watson, that the Foundation promotes, raising funds to digitally preserve his disintegrating tape archive.

On the field inside the Stadium, the amateur tapers have, as tradition dictates, a demarcated area for them to record the show. As Radiohead’s “House Of Cards” fades, however, and the seven-piece band amble on and slope into a loose, jazzy jam, even the most assiduous fans might be hard pressed to identify the song with which the Grateful Dead begin *Fare Thee Well*.

Five minutes in, a shape emerges. This is “Truckin’”, a chemically enhanced road choogle from 1970’s *American Beauty*, and a rare anthem in a catalogue that is mostly too imaginative and devious to make such obvious moves. Bob Weir is singing Garcia’s old part, and while Anastasio is grinning so broadly that it seems he can barely believe his luck, his playing is commendably unostentatious. Much of the fancier work, in fact, is done by the two keyboardists: pianist Bruce Hornsby, who took time off from his solo career to become a floating Dead member in the early ‘90s; and Chimenti, a longtime associate of Lesh and Weir, who is apparently playing Brent Mydland’s old Hammond B3.

THE SET LISTS

NIGHT THREE: CHICAGO, JULY 3, 2015

SET ONE

- 1 Box Of Rain
- 2 Jack Straw
- 3 Bertha
- 4 Passenger
- 5 The Wheel
- 6 Crazy Fingers
- 7 The Music Never Stopped

SET TWO

- 8 Mason’s Children
- 9 Scarlet Begonias
- 10 Fire On The Mountain
- 11 Drums>Space
- 12 New Potato Caboose
- 13 Playing In The Band
- 14 Let It Grow
- 15 Help On The Way
- 16 Slipknot!
- 17 Franklin’s Tower

ENCORE

- 18 Ripple

NIGHT FOUR: CHICAGO, JULY 4, 2015

SET ONE

- 1 Shakedown Street
- 2 Liberty
- 3 Standing On The Moon
- 4 Me And My Uncle
- 5 Tennessee Jed
- 6 Cumberland Blues
- 7 Little Red Rooster
- 8 Friend Of The Devil
- 9 Deal

SET TWO

- 10 Bird Song
- 11 The Golden Road (To Unlimited Devotion)
- 12 Lost Sailor
- 13 Saint Of Circumstance
- 14 West LA Fadeaway
- 15 Foolish Heart
- 16 Drums>Space
- 17 Stella Blue
- 18 One More Saturday Night

ENCORE

- 19 US Blues

“Truckin’” provides a gentle opening to a show that stretches over four and a half hours, including an hour-long interval, and features 17 songs – none of which were originally recorded any later than 1970. The first set gradually builds up speed, taking in a frail and lovely “Uncle John’s Band”, admittedly a little more Margaritaville than Wild West honky-tonk, before gaining momentum after 40 minutes with a wonderful “Cumberland Blues”.

There are beautifully evoked flashbacks to the band’s dancehall roots, baroque psychedelic grooves like “Alligator” and “Born Cross-Eyed”. Perhaps best and most unexpected, Anastasio pilots a scything take on “Cream Puff War”, a rarity from the eponymous ‘67 debut that’s been neglected by the band for 48 years and that, had it not been so thoroughly overshadowed by what came after, might now be regarded as a garage nugget to match Love’s “7 And 7 Is”. At the climax of “Viola Lee Blues”, in the most elevating jam of the first half, and on the weekend that the US legalises gay marriage, a perfect rainbow appears above the stage. It is all, perhaps, too good to be true.

BEFORE THE SHOW begins, Karen from the tie-dye stall tries to explain how the Dead crowd became factionalised in the mid ‘80s, when an influx of unruly younger fans brought new levels of chaos and disruption to the band’s shows and generally “pissed off everyone”. “We weren’t here to get wasted,” she says. “We were here to see the shows and the whole LSD thing was part of the experience. We didn’t make people mad in small towns. We knew not to sleep downtown, not to panhandle, not to drag our dirty puppies through restaurants. The best quote I heard was, ‘It used to be a zoo of a kind, now it’s kind of a zoo.’ It was said by a friend, tripping in the middle of the night. I think,” she laughs, “his name was Wind.”

The day after, a couple of miles from the stadium, I meet a dishevelled twentysomething, a millennial equivalent of the people Karen described. He has only grubby socks on his feet, and is begging because he is “desperate for a pair of shoes for tonight’s show.” The events that befell him after the previous night’s concert are unclear, and he has no idea where his friends are or where he is meant to be staying. Throughout it all, though, he has held on to his skateboard, and to a cache of “really good LSD I’m trying to get rid of”. With a very old solution to a very modern problem, he offers acid in exchange for the use of a cellphone charger.

It would be churlish, of course, to see his behaviour as dishonouring the drug etiquette of vintage Deadheads. Tom, from Idaho, is a veteran of 50-odd shows by the Dead and their offshoots, and first saw the band at the massive Watkins Glen show in 1973, when they shared a bill with the Allman Brothers and The Band in front of 600,000 people. Tom drove down to Watkins Glen from Boston, and remembers it as “one of the wildest times of my life. I was doing meth and peyote. I was 18, with nine friends, we were nuts. By the time we went home there were only three of us left, the rest of them we lost. They couldn’t handle it, they had to get the fuck out. It was mayhem, overwhelming.”

At 9.40, the atmosphere for the evening’s second set is sensational. Traditionally, the latter half of Dead shows privileged the more expansive and exploratory side of their art, and tonight is no exception. After a prologue of “Cryptical Envelopment” – quaveringly sung by Phil Lesh in a voice that, for all its weathered charisma, remains mostly unsuitable for fronting a rock band – the literal and metaphorical fireworks begin. “Dark Star” was established as the Dead’s signature jam in 1968, and tonight’s 30-minute version is a bracing reiteration of the band’s uncanny chemistry. In *So Many Roads*, David Browne describes a “Dark Star” from November 1969. He writes of how Lesh, with his wildly ambulatory basslines, briefly appeared to be “wrestling for control of the song,” before “Garcia would take command but then retreat back into

RAMBLE ON ROSE

Your guide to this month's free Grateful Dead CD

AFTER THE ELONGATED space jams and acid tests of the late '60s, the Grateful Dead began the '70s with a brace of landmark albums that turned joyously back to the roots of American music. *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*, both released in 1970, mined acoustic and country influences. The Dead and its principal songwriters had struck a rich motherlode and soon had enough songs to fill a third LP in similar vein. Yet for various reasons they didn't return to the studio for three years, and by then had a fresh batch of compositions to record. Thankfully, the songs that should have constituted the third instalment in a trilogy of cosmic Americana weren't entirely lost. Several turned up on solo albums by Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir, and many found their way into the Dead's live set; great versions are scattered across concert releases from the era. Trawling our way through those archival live recordings, *Uncut* has compiled a unique take on the Dead's great lost album...

1 MR CHARLIE

Live at Golden Hall, San Diego, CA, August 7, 1971

(McKernan/Hunter)

From *Dick's Picks Volume 35*

The tough, blues-edged vocals of Ron 'Pigpen' McKernan lent ballast to the Dead's more cosmic sensibilities on songs such as "Easy Wind" on *Workingman's Dead* and "Operator" on *American Beauty*. We like to think that this song, which may in part have been inspired by Charlie Manson, would have played a similar role on the follow-up that never was.

2 BROWN-EYED

WOMEN Live at Auditorium Theater, Chicago, IL, August 24, 1971 (Garcia/Hunter)

From *Dick's Picks Volume 35*

A classic Robert Hunter lyric and one of the Dead's mythic 'everyman' tales, looking back on the lost rural America of the prohibition/depression era through the eyes of one who "turned bad". You can almost taste the moonshine whiskey that "burned like hell".

3 LOOKS LIKE RAIN

Live at Pershing Municipal Auditorium, Lincoln, NE, February 26, 1973 (Weir/Barlow)

From *Dick's Picks Volume 28*

Bob Weir collaborated with Robert Hunter on several early '70s songs including "Sugar Magnolia" and "Jack Straw". But Hunter was primarily Garcia's lyricist, and Weir found his own songwriting foil in school friend John Perry Barlow. This bittersweet elegy to a fractured affair was one of five co-writes on Weir's solo debut *Ace* – but it also became a Dead concert staple.

4 HE'S GONE

Live at L'Olympia Theatre, Paris, France, May 4, 1972 (Garcia/Hunter) From *Europe '72 Volume 12* (L'Olympia, Paris, France)

When the Dead's manager Lenny Hart (father of drummer Mickey) hightailed it in 1970, taking up to \$150,000 of the band's money with him, his betrayal inspired this more-in-sorrow-than-anger riposte. The Dead never recorded a studio version but it remained in their live

canon until Garcia's death, often performed with tenderness when someone close to the band died.

5 LOSER Live at the Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA, September 21, 1972 (Garcia/Hunter) From *Dick's Picks Vol 36*

The Dead's songbook was littered with compassionate vignettes of delinquent characters who had fallen between the cracks in the American Dream, and the desperate gambler in "Loser" fits alongside such freewheeling misfits as Jack Straw, August 'Wharf Rat' West, Mister Charlie and Tennessee Jed. Garcia included the song on his 1972 solo debut.

6 COMES A TIME Live at Jahrhunderthalle, Frankfurt, Germany, April 26, 1972 (Garcia/Hunter)

From *Hundred Year Hall* One of the most lyrical Dead songs, with an almost haiku-like quality, "Comes A Time" first appeared in the band's live set in 1971. It never entered the repertoire on heavy rotation, but Garcia showed his affection for the song when he resurrected it on his 1976 solo album, *Reflections*.

7 RAMBLE ON ROSE Live at the Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA, September 21, 1972 (Garcia/Hunter)

From *Dick's Picks Volume 36* Garcia had a special affection for the whimsical "Ramble On Rose" and loved the Edward Lear quality of Hunter's nonsense lyric, with its kaleidoscopic cast of characters. Set to a slowed-down shuffle and with a ragtime feel, it was one of the band's most played songs in

concert, but no studio version is known to exist.

8 CHINATOWN SHUFFLE Live in Rotterdam, May 11, 1972 (McKernan)

From *So Many Roads (1965-1995)* Pigpen's health was failing fast due to cirrhosis of the liver, but he was a force on the Dead's Europe '72 tour when the jump blues of "Chinatown Shuffle" provided him with a stirring nightly showcase. Sadly, it was his last hurrah: he played his final gig with the band in June 1972 and died nine months later.

9 BLACK-THROATED WIND Live at Stanley Theater, Jersey City, NJ, September 27, 1972 (Weir/Barlow)

From *Dick's Picks Volume 11* The serpentine melody and intricate chord structure of Weir's "Black-Throated Wind" entered the Dead's set prior to the Europe '72 tour, the musical ambition matched by wordy lyrics from Barlow in which erudite Deadheads have detected references to Vonnegut and Kerouac. A studio version of the song surfaced on Weir's *Ace* album.

10 TO LAY ME DOWN *American Beauty* outtake (Garcia/Hunter)

From *So Many Roads (1965-1995)* To finish, a studio outtake from the *American Beauty* sessions. According to Hunter, the lyrics were written one sunny afternoon in London when the words "seemed to flow like molten gold". Garcia's setting is similarly burnished and, after the song didn't make the LP, he re-recorded it for his solo debut. NIGEL WILLIAMSON



The Grateful Dead, 1972: (l-r) Kreutzmann, keyboardist Keith Godchaux, Weir, Garcia, Lesh, Pigpen





Final farewell? Kreutzmann, Anastasio, Hart, Lesh, Weir, Jeff Chimenti and Bruce Hornsby salute Chicago, July 5

the song's haze... Lesh wouldn't be steering 'Dark Star' for long," Browne observes. "In fact, no-one would."

Trey Anastasio is, as discussed, no Jerry Garcia. As the 2015 "Dark Star" unravels, however, his discretion acts as a useful analogue for the slippery ways in which Garcia subverted his role of lead guitarist. Like the best Dead jams, all the elements – Anastasio's sculpted leads and Weir's impressionistic rhythm guitar flecks, the two percolating drummers, the two elegantly interpretive keyboardists – seem to be on their own trajectories, following orbits that only occasionally intersect, untethered by anything remotely resembling an orthodox bassline. Its success seems more down to chance than traditional musical logic and, if Anastasio succeeds at anything tonight, it is in insinuating himself into such a mystifyingly intuitive unit.

At times like this, the Dead's ability to hold the attention of nearly 100,000 people while playing radically weird music, remains astonishing. The traditional "Drums>Space" jam is a special challenge, starting with Kreutzmann and Hart methodically working round several dozen percussion instruments, and progressing through a kind of tribal techno that is, perhaps unwittingly, reminiscent of an early-'90s Spiral Tribe or Megadog rave. When their bandmates return for the "Space" improvisation, Anastasio finally slips in some of the prog quackery that makes much of the Phish canon a hard sell to those averse to such whimsical excess.

It is, though, a rare indulgence on Anastasio's part. Discipline isn't something traditionally associated with continuous jams that last two and a half hours, but this is the prevailing mood of the second set, and its two magnificent highlights. First there is "St Stephen", euphorically punching its way out of the skronk. Then, at the end, there is Bonnie Dobson's "Morning Dew", originally attempted by the band on their debut LP, and here essayed with a bluesy grace and spaciousness that feels restrained even when Anastasio lets his notes hang and arc in the air, and Bob Weir, lugubrious in trademark shorts and sandals, pushes his hearty but limited voice as far as it will possibly go.

Finally, Hornsby leads them through one more of the homespun singalongs from *Workingman's Dead*, "Casey Jones". Apposite quotes for most occasions leap out of the discography of any band with a long career. The Grateful Dead are no exception, with a rich catalogue, mostly written by Garcia's old friend, Robert Hunter, presenting risk, fate and mortality as part of some picaresque outlaw adventure. The refrain of "Casey Jones", though – "Trouble ahead, trouble behind" – feels particularly useful. For all the stage-managed finality of Fare Thee Well, this is an ongoing story.

OVER THE NEXT four shows, the band play 68 more songs from every phase of their career, only repeating two ("Cumberland Blues" and, not unreasonably, "Truckin"). The phrase "Greatest American Band" is thrown around a lot, and Barack Obama sends his regards. The first night rainbow is

The jam is, perhaps unwittingly, reminiscent of an early-'90s rave

THE SET LISTS

NIGHT FIVE: CHICAGO, JULY 5, 2015

SET ONE

- 1 China Cat Sunflower
- 2 I Know You Rider
- 3 Estimated Prophet
- 4 Built To Last
- 5 Samson And Delilah
- 6 Mountains Of The Moon
- 7 Throwing Stones

SET TWO

- 8 Truckin'
- 9 Cassidy
- 10 Althea
- 11 Terrapin Station
- 12 Drums>Space
- 13 Unbroken Chain
- 14 Days Between
- 15 Not Fade Away

ENCORE

- 16 Touch Of Grey
- 17 Attics Of My Life

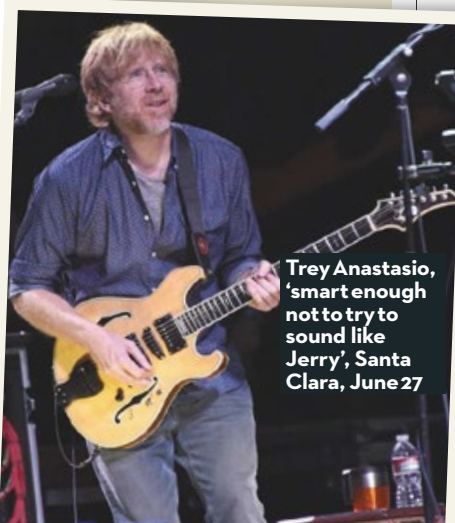
investigated at length, and initial stories that it was a *son et lumière* stunt appear to be discounted. The general feeling mixes exhilaration with qualified relief; perhaps Phil Lesh sang a little more often than necessary; perhaps the pace dragged now and again; maybe the setlists ranged far and wide in a way that only someone attending all five nights could really appreciate. Nevertheless, consensus suggests Anastasio nailed his seemingly impossible brief and, for once, the Grateful Dead didn't screw up the big shows.

It's hard to portray the Fare Thee Well project as anything other than a lucratively nostalgic endeavour, with its related live streams, cinema screenings, imminent commemorative boxsets and so forth: one last trip for the baby boomer generation and those successive generations who dreamed of being a part of it. At the first night, though, the crowd is celebratory rather than sentimental, and pragmatically informed about what happens next to the music they love. "I saw Jerry at least 30 times," says Tom from Idaho. "Jerry was a huge part of the band, but some nights Jerry sucked."

Tom raves about Jeff Chimenti and his various activities, while a woman who has flown in from Ecuador, and who went out on the road with Lesh and Weir's Furthur rather than with the Dead themselves, is not the only fan who proselytises about a new San Francisco band. They are called the Golden Gate Wingmen, and feature Chimenti alongside the redoubtable "Fake Jerry", John Kadlecik. For many, the Fare Thee Well shows are not last rites so much as one more manifestation of a scene that is boundlessly complex and incestuous. A scene where founding fathers jam with young tyros and tribute bands; where one former Dead keyboardist – Tom Constanten, who served between 1968 and 1970 – was not recalled for Fare Thee Well, but now figures in a well-established covers band called Jazz Is Dead. Where Phil Lesh And Friends frequently gather at Lesh's own San Rafael club, Terrapin Crossroads, to replay Dead shows from the archives.

The scene is rooted in the past, but it understands how gifted improvising musicians can find infinite possibilities in a small constellation of songs. In this telling of the story, the mass impact of Fare Thee Well is a glitch that will pass soon enough, and leave the true believers to get on with its long, involved, compelling business.

David Browne begins *So Many Roads* with a wondering assessment of the band from Carolyn 'Mountain Girl' Garcia, the Merry Prankster who became Jerry's wife. "How did they get together and relate to each other?" she ponders. "They worked on it. They wanted it badly. They were glued to the enterprise." The Dead may be formally over, but the enterprise, the songs, and many of the players, in whatever form they next manifest themselves, remain indefatigably alive. Trouble behind, as the old song almost goes, trouble ahead... ☹



Trey Anastasio, 'smart enough not to try to sound like Jerry', Santa Clara, June 27

The Grateful Dead's 80CD live collection 30 Trips Around The Sun is out on Rhino on Sept 18, plus 4CD 30 Trips Around The Sun: The Definitive Live Story 1965-1995. Fare Thee Well – a documentary of the final concerts – is out Nov 20 via Rhino



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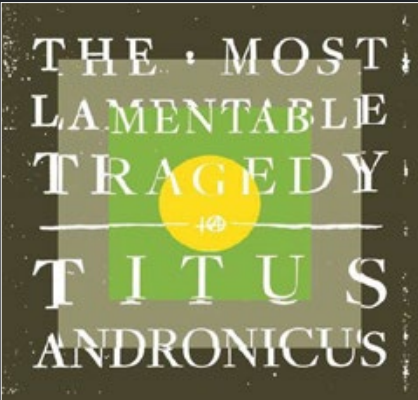


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Story: Andy Gill
Photograph: Shervin Lainez

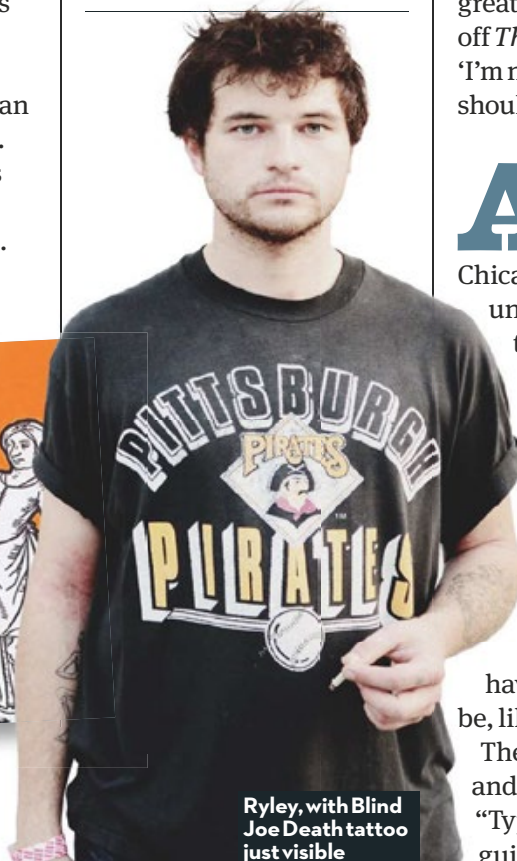
IT IS JULY 3, and Ryley Walker and his friends are getting started early on their Independence Day celebrations with a backyard barbecue in Chicago. Chicken legs and burgers sizzle on the griddle and there's beer in abundance from breweries I've never heard of. Not overpriced small-run stuff from micro-breweries, mind, but the kind of cheap beer drunk, I'm told, by grumpy old geezers from Wisconsin. I try one. It tastes suitably generic.

There's some kind of droning black-metal noise on the stereo, soon mercifully supplanted by John Cale's *Paris 1919*. All Ryley's friends have tattoos, in varying degrees of crudity and tastelessness, the sort more likely to be seen in prisons than high-end ink parlours. One chap's bald head, beard and shorts combo is augmented by minimal lines – a few dots on his knee sketching a cartoon face and, elsewhere, an axe cutting into flesh and what seems to be a decapitation. The fellow chatting with me about music, meanwhile, has had Chris Dreja's cartoon of Roger The Engineer, from the Yardbirds' album cover, lovingly inscribed on his forearm.

Ryley has been drinking all day while rehearsing with a local garage band, augmented by luminaries like Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo and Yo La Tengo's Ira Kaplan, for a Grateful Dead tribute show planned as part of the Fare Thee Well celebrations that have filled Chicago with touch-of-grey hair, tie-dye, skulls and roses. Fluid and graceful, his Garcia-esque contributions on a black SG suggest that Bert Jansch and John Martyn aren't the only dead guitarists whose spirit he somehow channels.

Now, relaxed but exuberant, he's determined to enjoy himself, and organises an impromptu shotgunning

**“IF YOU
HAD 10
BUCKS
AND A
COUCH,
WE'D
PLAY”
RYLEY
WALKER**



Ryley, with Blind Joe Death tattoo just visible

contest. Holes are punched near the bases of cans, mouths placed over the holes, and at the count of three, ring-pulls yanked, the resulting pressure surge sending beer flooding down throats. Ryley comes second, one of his mates being able to swallow the whole canful in under a second. All the contestants celebrate with colossal belches. This, then, is the milieu from which the latest sensitive singer-songwriter sensation, whose recent *Primrose Green* has drawn comparisons with Tim Buckley, John Martyn and Pentangle, has emerged. What gives? The tattoo on Ryley's own forearm, a crude representation of Death, offers the most significant clue. Is that Blind Joe Death, I ask, from the John Fahey LP cover?

“Oh, you spotted it. Good eye!” says Walker. “You know that band, Tortoise? The drummer, John Herndon, does great tattoos. This was one of the first ones that he did. It's off *The Dance Of Death & Other Plantation Favorites*. He said, ‘I'm not going to do a good job’, and I thought, ‘That's how it should be!’”

APTLY ENOUGH, John Fahey came as a revelation to the young Ryley Walker, who had grown up in Rockford, an Illinois small town 60 miles from Chicago, with no interest in sports or school, but an unquenchable thirst for music. Initially, he listened to standard rock fare like Zeppelin, Springsteen and the town's sole claim to fame, Cheap Trick.

“It's a big pile of broken factories, lost jobs, and pissed-off people moaning about the president,” Walker says of Rockford. “Nothing fun going on, nothing adventurous in the art world. There wasn't a lot of music there at all – it wasn't like you could go out and see great concerts. It's not like living in New York or LA, or a cool town like Boston – there wasn't a cool indie scene that sprung up. In New York, you'd have Television and Patti Smith; in the Midwest, it would be, like, REO Speedwagon.”

The only option was rebellion. “I started skateboarding, and smoking dope with the wrong crowd,” he recalls. “Typical teenager, trying to rebel. Then I got into playing guitar through watching local crusty punk bands – seeing

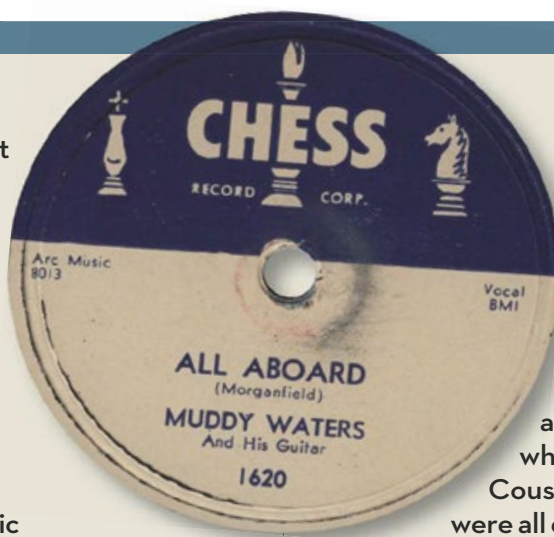
RYLEY'S CHICAGO

“CHICAGO'S A TOWN you can lose your mind in. It's my town.

There's no end of great musicians here, and rents are cheap so there's no need to work as a waiter or bartender. You can get by just playing a couple of gigs – my rent's 200 bucks a month. There's no major hustle, you just jam every day. Summers are great, but there's the ‘winter tax’: in the winter you're huddled in your apartment thinking, ‘Why am I here?’ That's what keeps the rent cheap! You can drive 300 miles in any direction, and it's just cornfields.

“There's no music industry in Chicago – well, maybe a little bit nowadays. When that guy started Chess Records, he was like, ‘Fuck everybody, I'm starting my own industry in Chicago.’ There

are no management companies or booking agencies, so you have to work your ass off. The Midwest was built on industry and the work ethic becomes ingrained: it's just work, work, work. We're up here working, there's no ocean to look at, there's no canyons like there are in LA that you can write divine poetry about, we're stuck here with the worst winters in the world.



The folk music I do is city music, always has been. Davy Graham, Bert Jansch and Wizz Jones, all those guys who played Les Cousins, they were all city guys. So why is there this thing of ‘I wanna be in a cavern in the woods, all alone’? It's nice to look at a mountain and stuff, but look

about mountains. I get a lot of inspiration from the freakiness of cities.

“I feel like music develops more in cities, gets denser. It's working people's music. It's not escaping to some cavern, it's walking down the street and having some skaghead ask you for a dollar. Folk music can be so self-centred – ‘Oh, my girlfriend dumped me’ – but the real stories are about people like the guy in the laundromat who came all the way over from Asia and busts his ass 45 hours a week. He's got a story, one that exists here, not in some cavern. When I go to a really international city like London, I find it inspiring. I think, ‘Who are all these people? Where do they come from?’ It inspires me to write songs more than rolling hills do. Inherently, folk music belongs in the city. And those cavern folkies like the Mumfords, their cheques still come from some skyscraper in the city.”



Phil Chess with Etta James in 1960



guys a few years older than me playing in a basement, it seemed attainable. Before that, music for me was Jimmy Page at Madison Square Garden – I thought that was how you started. A great way to discover music was through friends' older brothers. They'd say, 'You guys are stupid, all the music you like is shit, you should check out the Circle Jerks.' So we'd listen to something like Black Flag, and go, 'Whoah!'

"I played in local punk bands. We'd come to Chicago and go up to Madison, about an hour away. We'd play anywhere that would have us. If you had 10 bucks and we could stay on your couch, we'd play. Just punk houses, sleeping on dog-hair carpets. Still do that sometimes. I get freaked out when I have nice accommodation. I don't belong, man!"

MUSIC SOON became a way for Ryley to develop self-respect, by accessing sounds unknown to his peers.

"It was like, 'I have information that you guys do not,'" he says. "I may not be good at school or sports, but I've found this key, man, I have this itch to unlock records that nobody else knows about.' Every day after school I'd go to this record store in Rockford, and the guy there turned me onto stuff: I'd ask to hear *Led Zeppelin IV*, and he'd say, 'You ought to check out this band Neu!' That was

the greatest education I had, it was like, 'Yeah, this town sucks, but this stuff is your ticket out of here – what I'm going to put in your head now is going to transform your life!'"



Another source was a local junkie with an amazing record collection, which he gradually sold off to buy dope. Ryley became an assiduous customer.

"One record was just this circular metal box, and I was like, 'What's up with this? Do they sound like Pink Floyd?' He said, 'Not at all.' So I'd get to hear things like Public Image. Eventually he said, 'You play guitar, right? Who's your favourite guitarist?' I told him I love Sonic Youth and he said, 'You should check out John Fahey – Sonic Youth are fans of John Fahey.' I was like, 'This is the best thing I'd ever heard.' John Fahey provided this skeleton key to this door, it just blew my mind apart, and I started going to the library and researching folk music. Record collecting got me into the guitar, and I just knew I had to do this. There was nothing else

I was interested in. I'd look up old interviews with John Fahey, and he'd talk about old records he'd found, cross-referencing everything. I still do that to this day, I'm still fascinated by finding new things."

Acoustic guitar music, particularly British folk music, became a passion as Walker


TOP TRIPS

RYLEY'S BAR

How to make a Primrose Green cocktail

"IT MAKES YOU trip balls, man! It makes you hallucinate. It's basically Old Grand-Dad, this cheap American whiskey that bums and skagheads drink, you can get a pint of it for \$6, mixed with these morning glory seeds that we used to shoplift from Home Depot. You get about 20 packets of these seeds, and steep them overnight in two gallons of cold water, and all the hallucinogenic chemicals are extracted. You strain it to get the seeds out and if you drink that, you will trip. Two hours later, you'll be, like, 'This isn't working, what the fuuuck?' It creeps up on you. If you mix it with the whiskey, add a little lime, which is where the green comes from, and drink a bunch of it, you'll be staring out at a lake laughing your head off. A couple of kids have come up to me and said, 'We tried it, man – we lost our minds!' And I think, 'What have I done? I've inspired a generation of idiots!'"





Walker in 2014, with his Guild acoustic guitar

GUITAR MAN

RYLEY'S GUITAR

Ryley Walker plays a Guild D35, not the coolest of instruments, but one oozing with character

“THERE'S SOMETHING macho about guitars that I hate – this bullshit associated with the advertising for Gibson and Fender, guys playing like this [pained face]. Guild make great guitars, they're handcrafted and they sound amazing. It's a guitar that can sit in your house for 30 years and you can just pick it up and play it. Working-class guitars for working-class people. Mine's beat to shit, it's got some miles on it. It has a resale value of nothing! I've dropped it, scratched it up a bunch, thrown it across a stage – not in anger, you should only throw a guitar in celebration – but it holds up. It's a warhorse, man! You can be on the highway doing 80 miles an hour, go 'Fuck it,' and throw it out, and it'll still come back going, 'I got one more song, man!' I know the inside and the outside of that guitar, but it's filthy. I think if I cleaned it, I'd lose it all. For recording, I use a pickup and I have a couple of mics trained on it. The pickup goes through an old amp which is mic'd up. I love the sound of the amp, it gives it some *urrgh*! It's like the drunk cousin singing alongside the great tenor. You gotta have a mixture of those two worlds, I think.”

☛ discovered Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, Wizz Jones and Davy Graham, John Martyn and Nick Drake. These are the influences discernible on early cassette releases “Evidence Of Things Unseen” and “Of Deathly Premonitions” and on his 2014 Tompkins Square debut album *All Kinds Of You* – which fermented during a period of enforced practice as Ryley recuperated from a traffic accident that left him deaf in his left ear.

“I hate to make it sound like some huge handicap,” he says. “I got beamed by a car while I was riding my bike a few years back. Some drunk motherfucker ploughed into me and I just woke up in hospital, deaf in this ear. The driver got away. It was terrible, a lot of stress at the time, but I got a lot of time to sit around at home and play guitar, that's kinda what kept me going, 'cos I couldn't walk for a while. So it was just, play guitar, play guitar, play guitar, then I thought, ‘Wait a second, I'm gonna start singing now, here I go.’ Until then, I'd just been doing instrumental stuff like John Fahey and Robbie Basho.”

BUT NO SOONER had the mostly solo recordings for *All Kinds Of You* been completed than Walker was restlessly pursuing new paths, influenced by the folk-jazz experiments of John Martyn and Tim Buckley, and by the local improvising jazz musicians. With drummer Frank Rosaly, bassist Anton Hatwich, cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm, viola player Whitney Johnson and vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz joining keyboardist Ben Boye and Ryley's right-hand man, guitarist/engineer Brian Sulpizio in Chicago's Minbal Studios, Walker created the magical *Primrose Green* LP from scraps of lyrics and musical themes mined for their expressive possibilities during group improvisations. Existing in the dreamlike netherworld where Buckley's *Happy Sad* shades into *Starsailor*, and Martyn crystallises *Solid Air*, it's one of those

recordings that catches lightning in a bottle. But, already, Walker has no time for it.

“I'm not a big fan of the first record, or the last one,” he says. “I'm not a fan of either! I just hate everything I've done. The first record was me in my room for two years getting stoned and writing songs. I was living in my friend's closet at the time, just me and my guitar. This was about 2012 to 2014. I never got a job, I would just find records and sell them on Discogs every now and then to get some money to buy weed, which was my thing at the time. I would just get high and play. But as soon as I recorded that first record, I hated it. I was like, ‘This is the worst thing that's ever happened to me, we have to make another one right now!’ That's what I feel about the last record, *Primrose Green*, too. It's a fucking terrible record. I've got another coming up that I know I'll like a lot more, comprised of just four songs. I'm a big *Stormcock* fan at the moment.”

While Walker still plays solo gigs – especially abroad and on the West Coast due to the prohibitive costs involved touring with a band away from the Midwest/East Coast loop – he clearly prefers the exploratory interaction with a group of players.

“We love to improvise,” he says. “When we first got together it was, ‘Let's play a song,’ and I'm like, ‘Fuck no, we could do this – let's get jammy,’ and it just gets out. I'm really into Alice Coltrane records at the moment, I'm trying to sing like Alice Coltrane plays the harp. I don't play anything from *Primrose Green* any more. Not as a fuck-you or anything, I just think it's old, it's all done, you've got to move on. I'm trying to alienate everybody who likes this fucking record, y'know? We're already playing new songs, and it doesn't feel right playing the old ones. It's like hanging on to an old girlfriend.”

“I love playing with the band, we play three songs and it goes on for about two hours, really massively extended tunes we improvise on. It's really rewarding when it gets into a groove, but when it sucks, it really

sucks! We play to square audiences sometimes and we think, 'OK, let's really give them something!' I wanna make sure everybody walks away thinking, 'Holy shit, that was our gig!' – not the same gig everybody saw last week. If every night's the same, I'm fucking done, I'm out of here."

A SIGNIFICANT INSPIRATION FOR Walker's musical attitude arrived about a decade ago with the rise of what became known as the 'new weird America' scene, involving bands like Wooden Wand, Hush Arbors, Animal Collective and MV & EE, whose take on Americana was infused with wider influences like Krautrock, improv and noise-rock.

"You'd go see MV & EE and there'd be this real harsh noise, it wasn't just three white guys with guitars," Walker enthuses. "It wasn't a nice folk group, so much as an out jazz band – it was a place where anybody could play. Folk music doesn't belong to an elite scene, that stuff's been done. Everybody's into weird stuff now and there are no lines in the sand, especially in Chicago. Here's folk people, here's jazz people, here's experimental people? No, we all hang together. Everybody in my band comes from a jazz

background, an experimental music background, it doesn't have to be this folk scene. I hope all folk scenes just die!

"If you're just playing with folk musicians today, you're just wasting your time, stuck in the past. You should hang out with far-out people, the weirdos in town. You've got to seek the extremes of music, you've got to keep moving forward – that's what Tim Buckley did, he sought out the far-out."

Of course, Walker's turning his back on purist folk music just as the genre is experiencing its biggest boom since the late '60s. "Well, there's tons of great guitar music

around at the moment," he agrees. "People like Steve Gunn, Jessica Pratt, Daniel Bachman... and all of them are my friends, I'm so lucky! Motherfuckers like the Mumfords, they're gonna die with a Long Island Ice Tea in their hands going, 'Ah, the folky days, those were the days.' Fuck them! We're trying to freak people out with great music. We have to make completely new shit, and that's what I want to be part of, making our own shit. I'm really excited to be doing it, and I have no plans to stop. The only thing that'll stop me is me being in my fucking grave."

"Music to me was never a career, it was always more like, I'm gonna do this because I don't wanna do anything else. The last couple of years playing gigs, especially in Europe, I get people saying, 'I love your album, I play it every day.' It blows my mind! I don't ever expect to be big in America, ever. That's the mentality where I grew up: 'You're not gonna be big, dude.' And I don't want to, I'm happy right now, I'm happy I can go everywhere, and gigs pay for it. I don't make money from music yet, all I care about is getting another gig for my band. This shit doesn't last forever, and the world doesn't owe me a living. I don't see myself owning things, ever. I sleep on a friend's couch about two miles from here."



Far-out folk: Steve Gunn and Jessica Pratt, both friends of Walker



"WE'RE TRYING TO FREAK PEOPLE OUT WITH GREAT MUSIC"
RYLEY WALKER

I guess that's all I want: if I've got a couch and I can buy cigarettes and records, I'm the richest man in the world. There's no house planned, there's no car planned, I like living minimally. I have no ties to anything. The only thing I'm tied to, is doing my gigs."

Performance, it's clear, is the thing which drives Ryley Walker's life and art – and the wilder the performance, the more it lends stability to his exuberant spirit.

"I need a gig every day," he confirms. "If I'm not playing, I'm unhappy. I can't write when I'm home, but when I'm on the road I'm happy. I enjoy talking to random people in whatever country I'm in. Anybody out there reading this, if they wanna give me a gig at their house, if you've got a place to crash and a porch out back I can smoke on, I'll be there!"

END OF THE ROAD *Primrose Green is out now on Dead Oceans; Ryley Walker plays Hoxton Bar & Kitchen on September 2, then End Of The Road (4-6)*

A PENTANGLE ANGLE

DANNY THOMPSON on RYLEY WALKER

"WHEN I FIRST heard Ryley Walker, I thought he was really exciting. I think he'd be a very high-spirited person, the sort of person I'd love to work with. A lot of people, you think, 'Oh, he's a balladeer, he's a romantic, a journeyman, a this or a that,' but to me, Ryley's an ocean. He's beautiful and refreshing but he's also angry and dangerous. And he's an ocean I'd love to dive into."

I can't see him sitting down with charts, talking to people. Ryley seems more like the kind of person who turns up, takes his guitar out of its case, you pick up your bass, and you just get on with it. Freddie Hubbard used to walk onstage and say, 'Right, B flat, I'll see you in an hour.' I love all that, because it means you can have a serious conversation, rather than just be a cabaret plonker.

I like that freedom to serve the song, to have that conversation with the writer rather than just play the expected beats. When I played with Tim Buckley in 1968, I didn't know him: I met him and his band at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, we played a brief rehearsal, then did a two-hour concert. I'd never played those things before, ever. I love that freedom, and I don't like the idea of playing the same thing every night.

Musicians are miserable because we're never happy with what we've played. So I can understand Ryley finishing an album and wanting to move on, because they're all stepping stones – we don't know where we're going. I don't think he should lose that, I don't think anyone wants to lose that ambition. I certainly don't – every time I go out, I want to play like I'm 16!



I'm sure he's had the same influences as many people, jazz and blues and folk and everything, but he's become his own man through all that – it doesn't take away from his originality.

It was easy to work with the Buckley and Bert and John Martyn because they all swung. People tend to say, 'Well, it's the way they express themselves,' but I see people 'expressing themselves' every day when they're driving their motor! So we can get a little too deep with it.

I've not worked with Ryley, but I hear a lot of anger and romance and all those honest expressions, all those feelings we have. I can hear that in his music. A lot of people, you don't hear a lot of anger, even as a sort of balance.

I'd never presume to be able to advise anybody, but I will say that your heart never lies to you, and it's important to follow your heart. You can rant and rave all you like, and pretend to be the biggest raver or the biggest villain, but if you're sincere about your music, you can't lie about that."

Harvest For The World



BY THE ISLEY BROTHERS

Forty years on, this melodic call for “a peaceful gathering of all human beings” still resonates. “The words are what made the song timeless,” says Ernie Isley. “This song will always be relevant, as long as the goal isn’t accomplished...”

“**H**ARVEST FOR THE WORLD’ refers to a peaceful gathering,” explains songwriter Ernie Isley, “where every human being is invited, and where no-one will be hindered in any way from participating.”

Originally a vocal trio comprising brothers O’Kelly, Rudolph and Ronald, by the early ’70s, the Isleys (expanded to include Ernie and Marvin Isley and Chris Jasper) were releasing an album a year and scoring a host of hits along the way. “Harvest For The World” stands out as one of their finest, an open-hearted call for equality across the planet. But beneath the luscious, sparkling veneer of the recording, engineered by Stevie Wonder collaborator and synthesiser pioneer Malcolm Cecil, there lies a stranger tale: of briefcases full of money; of Jimi Hendrix’s enduring influence; of older brothers packing powerful handguns and running the band “like a police state”; and of a group of wealthy superstars still rehearsing in their mother’s suburban basement. “There was no fooling around or running in the studio to speak of,” says Robert Margouleff, who worked with the Isleys and Cecil from 1973’s 3+3 to *The Heat Is On* two years later. “These guys all dressed to the nines every day. There wasn’t a day that someone came in wearing a slouchy pair of jeans.” As all involved acknowledge today, the message of “Harvest For

The World”, propelled into the charts with help from Cecil’s crisp sound, is still an important one. “It’s a very nice thought,” says Ernie Isley, “and hopefully one day that peaceful gathering will happen.”

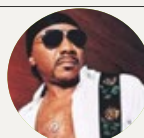
TOM PINNOCK

CHRIS JASPER: We did some covers on 3+3 – “Summer Breeze” and “Listen To The Music” – but, as time went on, Ernie and I started writing more. We worked together very well. The band would be on the road part of the year and the other part we’d be recording and writing, so it was a very busy time, to say the least.

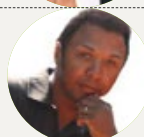
MALCOLM CECIL: The actual art and the performing in that period was very much between Chris Jasper and Ernie and Marvin Isley. The older brothers were mainly concerned with the vocals. They left the younger brothers to do the main tracking, and relied upon them for the funk and the beat.

JASPER: We all wrote at the Isleys’ mom’s house in Englewood, New Jersey. We had the equipment set up downstairs in the basement, and I left my

KEY PLAYERS



Ernie Isley
Songwriting,
guitars, drums



Chris Jasper
Songwriting,
keyboards



Malcolm Cecil
Engineer



Robert Margouleff
Former Isleys
engineer

piano and my keyboard set up and amplified. The bass amp was down there, Ernie’s guitar amps were down there. It was kind of a tight squeeze sometimes. But that’s where we did a lot of our rehearsing and writing.

ERNIE ISLEY: I wanted to get a 12-string guitar, so I went down to a music shop in Manhattan and picked up a Guild 12-string – which I still have – and it sounded really good. I brought it home and started trying it in the basement and happened to come up with the lines, “All babies together/Everyone a seed/Half of us are satisfied/Half of us in need...”

Inspiration is everywhere

and if anybody happens to have their antenna up and you are fortunate enough to be inspired, you can come up with all kinds of stuff.

JASPER: I remember Ernie singing those lyrics and playing the acoustic guitar. He had the majority of the melody and the verse and a lot of the lyrics. After that we just got together and put it on a four-track recorder. I was playing the keyboard parts. During that time we always recorded in California. When we got an idea, we



We are family: (l-r) Marvin, O'Kelly, Chris Jasper, Ronald (seated), Rudolph and Ernie in 1975

would always put it down on the four-track and work with it that way, so we were sure when we went to California that we were well-rehearsed with all our parts.

ISLEY: The words are what made the song timeless – we had quite a few high schools asking for permission to reprint the lyrics for their yearbooks when that song was out.

JASPER: At that time, Vietnam had just ended, a lot of people were still missing in action, the economy wasn't that great. It was like it is now, there was a big difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. That's kind of what this song is talking about, asking a rhetorical question, 'When will there be a harvest for the world? When will there be a time that people have an equal share of what is going on, when will they have equity in their lives?' Basically we know – the return of Christ, that's when it's going to be, because he's a god of equity so that's when it will ultimately occur. But the song is just asking that question.

ISLEY: There's a reference in the New Testament about "the harvest is plenty, but the labourers are few" – they're praying that there be labourers to go out and gather in the Lord's harvest.

CECIL: My main thrust at that time was to get people to do socially conscious songs. So, "Harvest..." was gratifying to me. I tried from Stevie Wonder on, to get people to write socially conscious stuff. I felt that we had a big opportunity to reach people through the music,

and I thought it was very important to have something to say rather than just playing love songs. It was using the platform to spread messages, preferably positive rather than critical. I wasn't into trying to make complaints. "Harvest For The World" was supposed to be an uplifting song about how things could be made better rather than complaining about how bad things were.

“They lived in a hard time — the blacks went through the kitchen, the whites used the front door”

ROBERT MARGOULEFF

MARGOULEFF: You can imagine what it was like on the road for an all-black band [*when the Isleys began*]. Even today, even with Obama, there's a lot of racism still. They lived in a hard time – the blacks went through the kitchen, the whites went through the front door. Those guys toured pretty hard places and paid a lot of dues, and it's to their credit that they kept it in the

family and were able to pull it off and write really inspired stuff. I think it all came from their gospel and R&B roots. They really had a sensibility of their gospel roots, where they came from, but they also had an extremely strong sense of family.

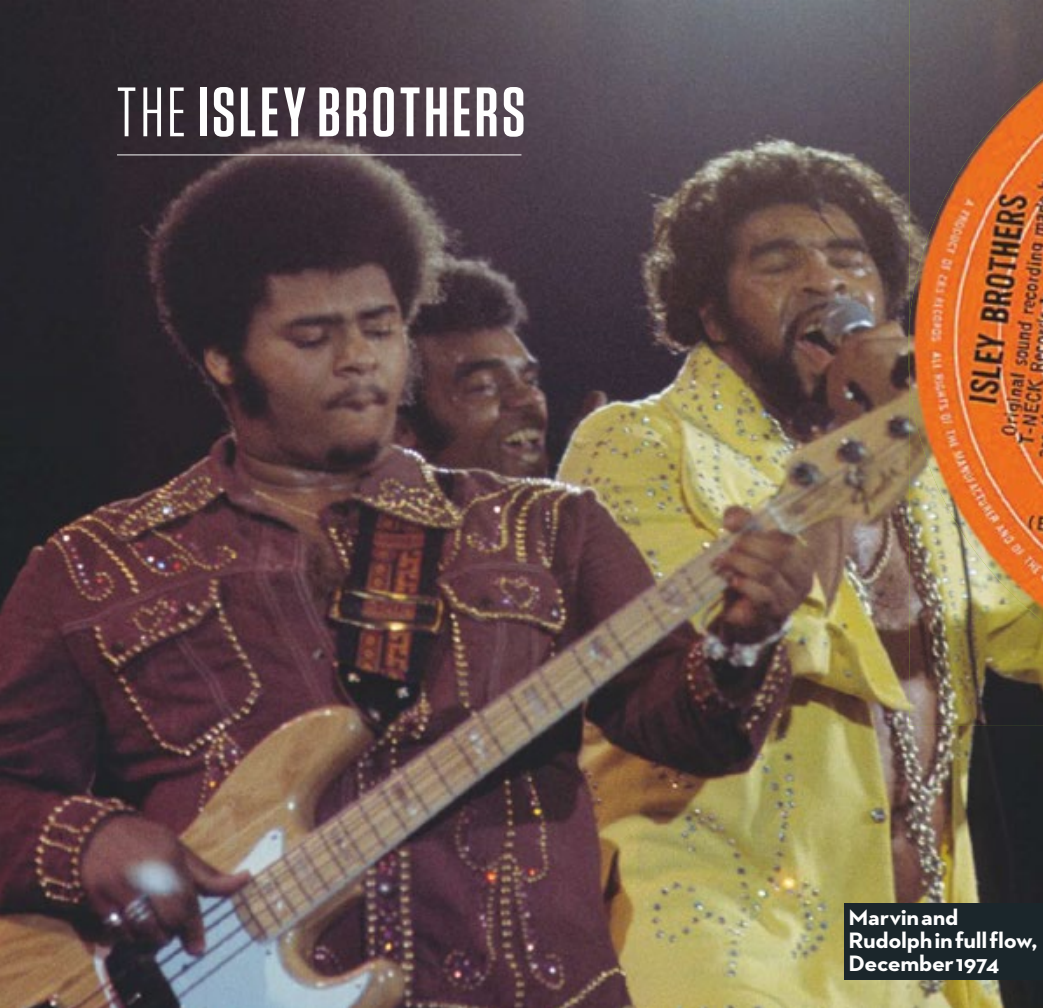
CECIL: O'Kelly was the one that held everything together. He was the guy who would be the one who set up the dates; he was the one who signed all the work orders. O'Kelly was the boss. Rudy really wanted to be the lead singer, but he didn't quite have Ron's voice and power. He wanted to be out front doing his thing, so he was fairly flamboyant. He was also the guy who collected the money at the gigs so he had a gun, a Magnum. He had to qualify to carry it as a concealed weapon, it was surreal – the only place that he could qualify was on the FBI shooting range.

JASPER: We didn't have much time to spend out in Los Angeles, and it was expensive to go out there and stay in hotels, so we wanted to make sure we could record in a timely fashion, but still be well-rehearsed and have a good product.

CECIL: What happened with the Isleys was they would have everything pretty well together before they came into the studio. I only got involved when it actually came down to recording it, and my production aspect was in the studio rather than in pre-production, so the first time I heard the song was when they were running it through for me.

JASPER: We did this one in Los Angeles – 3+3 was when we started to go to LA, and the main

THE ISLEY BROTHERS



Marvin and Rudolph in full flow, December 1974



reason we went out there was because Malcolm Cecil had this Tonto synthesiser that he'd built. Stevie Wonder had used it and we wanted to use it too, particularly me. Malcolm was kind of a genius with electronics. The first time I heard someone use it was Stevie Wonder on *Music Of My Mind*, and it was so unusual at the time. For me, it was groundbreaking for keyboard players, because before that time people weren't using it in that way. I think it made a lot of people in the industry curious.

MARGOULEFF: O'Kelly ran the group like a military operation. If one of the boys was late to the studio, they knew about it! Inside the group, it was like a police state. But they took care of us promptly – after one of the albums we worked on, O'Kelly and Marvin came into our office with a briefcase, they opened it up and inside there were hundreds of dollars, neatly stacked. Completely like something out of James Bond! They opened it up and said, "How much do we owe you?" It was something like \$20,000 to do the job, and they paid us in cash. It was the one and only time I've ever been paid like that. I'll never forget it.

JASPER: I think we did the music for "Harvest..." in one afternoon. Ernie played the drums, I played the keyboard, Marvin played the bass. That's how we laid down the original track, and then Ernie overdubbed the guitar part. Then we made sure that the lyrics were OK, and did a guide vocal or two. Then maybe the next day we finished it off with the vocals. And that's only because we were well-rehearsed. Everybody knew what they were going to play on the basic track. Drums, guitar, keyboards, bass – everybody was sure, so it was just a matter of getting the right take.

CECIL: Ernie was doing a lot of playing. We'd record the rhythm section first. Then Jasper would play any synthesiser parts. But normally

we'd put down the basic rhythm track and then overdub the other instruments and the vocals, and then put the background vocals on, usually last.

ISLEY: In the studio, I didn't take a break, I didn't sit back and have a chocolate malt and a burger, I'd get back out there and play. After the drums, I'd do the lead guitar or an acoustic guitar.

MARGOULEFF: Ernie was always jumping all over the place – the guy's a total musician. He's a really great guitar player, and he really got some good coaching from Jimi Hendrix.

CECIL: Jimi had met Ernie when he was just a child because Jimi played for two years with the Isleys, and I think he lived in O'Kelly's house or their parents' house for a couple of years. So Jimi was a big influence on Ernie. Jimi had once said to him, "You watch what I'm doing, I'll show you what I'm doing, because one of these days you'll be playing guitar with your brothers!" Which was prophetic at the time.

ISLEY: There's a lot of 12-string acoustic guitar across that record, which brought a whole other flavour to the songs and made it real distinctive. It adds a really nice flavour.

CECIL: Ron Isley was very understated, he would just appear when it was time to do a lead vocal and go in and blow everybody out. He would just blow my mind, he was so good.

ISLEY: From a practical sense, Ronnie was the guy that sang on virtually everything by The Isley Brothers. On "Twist And Shout", "This Old Heart Of Mine", "It's Your Thing", "Love The One You're With" and "Harvest For The World".

CECIL: Roger Mayer and I had been friends since we were 13. I had him build what I called the 'ducking limiter', which was actually two stereo

limiters. You would feed information – such as the vocal – into one, and then you would take the control voltage that it generated and feed it into another limiter. You'd then put the rest of the mix through it to duck it down whenever the vocals were there. It was one of our secrets actually –

I used the ducking limiters on everything. It was a way to ensure that the vocals always cut through, no

matter what was there underneath it.

MARGOULEFF: What Malcolm and I brought to The Isley Brothers was a sense of intimacy in terms of putting the musicians in the same room as the listener. We wanted it to sound very close – the instruments were all very tightly recorded, not a lot of reverbs or effects. That worked very well for Stevie, and it worked extremely well for the Isleys. If you listen to the drum track on all the Isleys stuff you'll hear that the hi-hats come up on the left. The reason for that is that the mix is from the point of view of the drummer.

JASPER: After we recorded "Harvest...", I remember saying, "This is a great message here – it would be nice if there was a set-up." So "Harvest For The World (Prelude)" was done on the spot in the studio. I just took some motifs from "Let Me Down Easy" and "Harvest For The World" and did it within half an hour.

CECIL: Wasn't that a whole tour de force! That was quite something.

JASPER: I knew for sure that "Harvest..." spoke to a lot of what was going on. Usually when you do that with a song, it does last a while. I didn't know how long – because you never know – but I did know it had a universal appeal to it and it touched a lot of issues. So we felt really good about it when we finished. It's one of my favourites.

ISLEY: I was reading something just this morning about somebody inventing a new range of missiles. There's intelligence from one end of the world to the other, East and West, and it's amazing that folks will come up with a formula to literally blow something up halfway around the world, but there's apparently no cure for cancer or diabetes or any of the

other things that have plagued humanity for quite some time. This song will always be relevant, as long as the goal isn't accomplished. ①

The Isley Brothers' RCA Victor & T-Neck Album Masters (1959-1983) boxset is released August 21

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** The Isley Brothers and Chris Jasper
- **Performers:** Ernie Isley (guitars, drums), Chris Jasper (keyboards), Marvin Isley (bass), Ronnie Isley (lead vocals), Rudolph and O'Kelly Isley (backing vocals)
- **Engineered by:** Malcolm Cecil
- **Recorded at:** The Record Plant, Los Angeles
- **Released:** May 4, 1976
- **UK chart peak:** 10

ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/ABC VIA GETTY IMAGES

TIMELINE

1973

Ernie, Chris and Marvin join the three older Isleys (who had begun performing in the mid-

'50s), resulting in albums of all-original songs through the '70s
Autumn 1975
The group decamp to

LA to record their 14th album, *Harvest For The World*
May 4, 1976
The album is released,

kicking off with a novel "Harvest" 'prelude' medley concocted by Chris Jasper in the studio

October 15, 1988

The Christians take their cover to No 8 in the UK, two places higher than the original



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COMING BACK TO LIFE

The Endless River has brought the tale of Pink Floyd to a satisfying conclusion, and now DAVID GILMOUR can begin a new phase of his career. As he prepares his first solo album in nine years, however, Gilmour has a different view. Whether “one is or isn’t in a band feels a bit daft when you get to our age,” he tells *Uncut*, in a world exclusive interview. “It’s part of a continuum.” Join us, then, as Gilmour and his closest allies consider the journey from “Fat Old Sun” to *Rattle That Lock* — and beyond!

Story: Michael Bonner

Photograph: Kevin Westenberg

David Gilmour today: “I always want to write my own songs, my own lyrics and everything...”



Pink Floyd at
Pavillon de Paris,
February 22, 1977

INSIDE STORY

NEW ALBUM SECRETS UNLOCKED!

David Gilmour gives us a sneak peek at a couple of tracks...

A BOAT LIES WAITING

"The rolling piano in the second half of that song was me playing a piano into a minidisc player a long time ago, before *On An Island*. I tried to redo it - Roger Eno came down and played on it - but in the end I thought my original, with people wandering around the house clattering and things going on in the background, had the right atmosphere so I stuck with that. I wove some piano

playing that Roger did to create the introduction. Then Polly wrote those fantastic words. Crosby and Nash sing on it, as well."

THE GIRL IN THE YELLOW DRESS

"The basic backing track was recorded in 2004 with a jazz trio in this room [Astoria]. It's been waiting for something to turn it. Polly wrote a beautiful lyric about a girl dancing in a jazz club wearing a yellow dress that comes from a picture that we have by Johnny Dewe Mathews. I recorded it again at Abbey Road with a different band, including Jools Holland on piano, Robert Wyatt playing cornet and Rado Klose - who has been a friend of mine since I was born - on guitar."

NOT FOR THE first time, David Gilmour is considering his future. For almost 50 years his decisions as a musician have been directly linked to Pink Floyd. But today Gilmour is readying his new solo album *Rattle That Lock*, the first record he's made since calling time on his old band last year. "At what point one decides one is or isn't in a band - and exactly what the meaning of the word 'band' is - feels a bit daft when you get to our age," he says. "I don't think of it like that anyway. It's part of a continuum. I don't try and do anything differently. Things just come out different when I'm doing solo records than when I'm doing Pink Floyd. You just accept what comes along, really."

As if to highlight the intertwined relationship between Gilmour's work as a solo artist and his career in Pink Floyd, we meet on Astoria, the houseboat-recording studio moored along the Thames that Gilmour has owned since 1986. This is the studio where the Gilmour-led Pink Floyd convened to work on *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* and *The Division*



“WHAT ABOUT CORVIDS?”

Creative director Aubrey Powell reveals the story of the *Rattle That Lock* cover...

“A ROUND LAST JANUARY, David said to me, ‘Listen to this music. It’s very different. Some Pink Floyd, but some very European, jazzy things.’ He didn’t have any preconceived ideas – I don’t even think he had the title yet. I felt there were a number of things he’d been sitting on that he wanted to address. He didn’t want to be tied to anything. I put the cover design out to Stylorouge, Dave Stansbie and Creative Corporation, Storm Studios, various other people. Dave Stansbie came up with the idea of a black cover with birds of paradise going through it. David loved the idea, but thought it was a bit too colourful. The album has quite a lot of darkness in it and a lot of depth. He said, ‘What about corvids?’ They’re the most intelligent birds: ravens, crows, blackbirds, starlings, magpies. David liked that symbolism of the corvids, so we changed the cover completely. We dropped the black background, and I had Rupert Truman from Storm Studios go up to Wales and shoot this beautiful brooding landscape and Dave collaged these corvids coming out of the cage. We did lots of variations and settled on this one. David loves it. He felt it was very appropriate. These wonderful birds are dark and broody, but at the same time they’re intelligent. They are gatherers and collectors. It turned out to be far more interesting.”

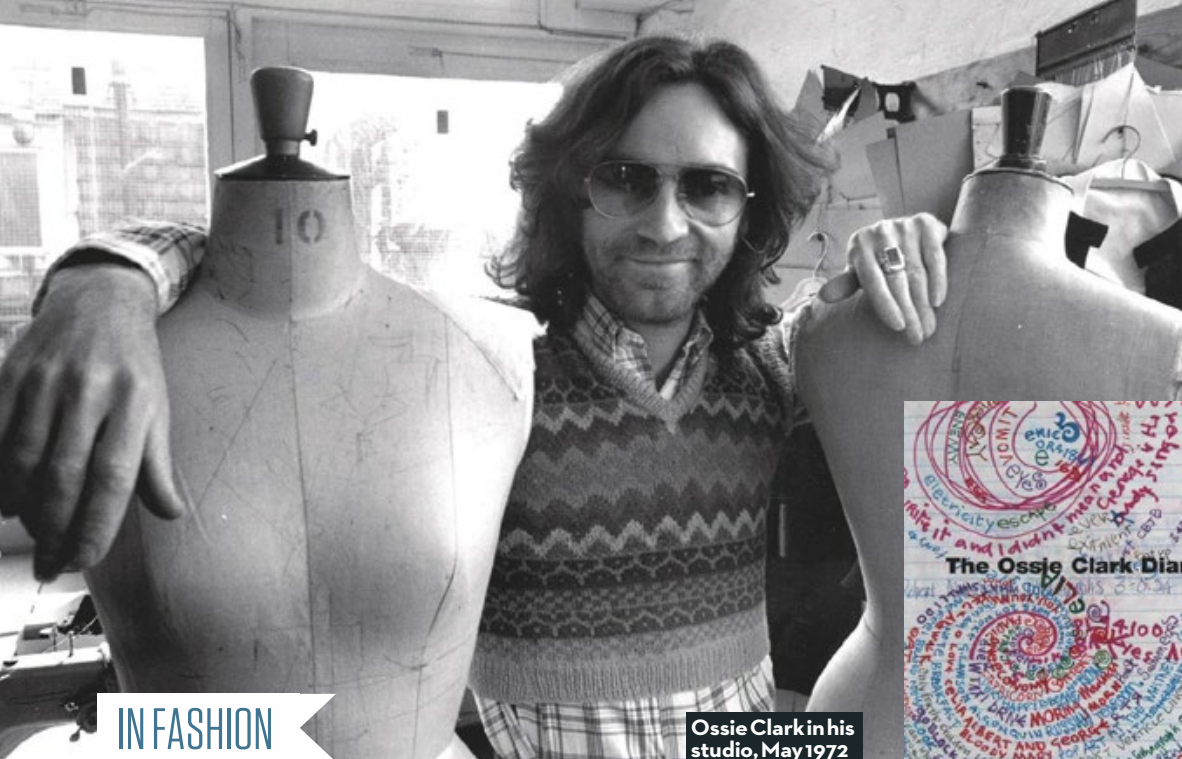
Bell, but also where Gilmour recorded much of last solo album *On An Island*. A quick glance round the studio identifies a number of items with explicit connections to his past. Behind him, for instance, sits the Martin D-35 acoustic guitar that he first used on “Wish You Were Here”, while in a corner along with his pedal board and a small beige amp rests his fabled black Stratocaster. Even Gilmour’s smartphone, it seems, recently chose to remind him of his celebrated history. “Funnily enough, ‘the iPod angel’ as I call it played ‘Echoes’ from *Live In Gdansk* the other day,” he reveals. “That’s the first time I’ve listened to it since it came out, I think. You’re going along and your iPod – or now it’s in my iPhone, of course – plays a song at random. It played ‘Echoes’ and I thought, God, that was great fun. Do I miss that way of working? I do. But you can’t get back to that sort of equality that you had when you started out as a young chap in a band. Gradually, over years, the balance of power changes. Your life changes and you become – how does one put it without sounding ridiculous? – bigger and more powerful and some of the people that you work with are too respectful. When you’re young, you can argue and fight and it’s all forgotten the next day. You call people all the names

**“YOU
CAN’T GET
BACK TO
THE
EQUALITY
YOU HAD
WHEN YOU
STARTED
OUT”**
DAVID
GILMOUR

under the sun. ‘No, that’s shite.’ But somehow that equality is really hard to recreate later in life.”

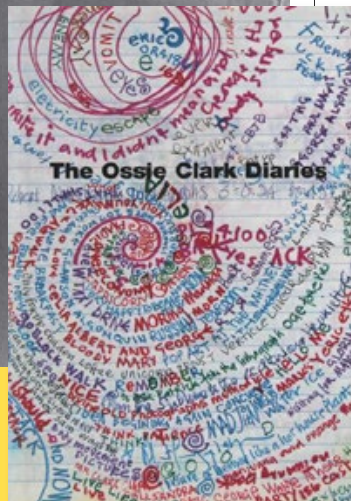
Gilmour’s old friend Robert Wyatt considers the connection between the music Gilmour was making then – during Floyd’s heyday – and the music he’s making now. “The Floyd was more overtly dramatic,” he offers. “The climaxes were more climactic. The wait-for-it bits were more wait-for-it. There’s almost a kind of folk-music flow to what David does now. It’s more undulated landscape than mountains and valleys.”

“I think it’s a sigh of relief,” adds Aubrey ‘Po’ Powell, Gilmour and Pink Floyd’s creative director. “You create something larger than life and you’ve got to deal with it on a day-to-day basis, and that’s what Pink Floyd had become. Doing *On An Island* was a way for David to get away from that and do something for himself. *Rattle That Lock* is an extension of that. But it’s also a celebration, almost, of everything David’s ever learned musically.”



IN FASHION

Ossie Clark in his studio, May 1972



“A PORNOGRAPHIC MOVIE AND MONTY PYTHONSON VIDEO TAPE”

IN HIS EARLY, pre-Floyd days, David Gilmour briefly worked for fashion designer Ossie Clark at King’s Road boutique Quorum. The two remained friends until Clark’s death in 1996 and Gilmour often appeared in Clark’s published diaries. Here’s a typical entry: “15th November 1974. Pink Floyd. 7 o’clock suddenly loomed up and we were ready and dressed in furs to go to Wembley – arrived exactly on time. The show was good but not as good as the last. The crowd certainly really dug it – and afterwards we went backstage for drinks. John Cale very heavy, nasty roadies and lots of people I knew, then we went back to Gilmour’s new house behind Westbourne Park Road to watch a pornographic movie and Monty Pythons on video tape.”

“Ossie was my boss between September ’67 and New Year’s Day ’68,” remembers Gilmour today. “I worked for him as a van driver. I had left a band and I needed to earn a living. If someone had said to me, ‘You can earn £50 for a day’s work doing almost anything legal, possibly even not,’ I would have taken it. I did at least two modelling jobs that paid very good money at a time when I was earning £15 a week from Ossie. But I never became a male model, I never joined an agency. It was the time – needs must. If someone offers you three or four weeks wages for one day’s work, are you going to take it? Of course you are. Ossie and I remained friends for the rest of his life. I was very fond of him, with all his foibles and failings.”

➤ As *Rattle That Lock* arrives in a post-Floyd world, it is instructive to look back and consider the reaction Gilmour’s then-bandmates had to his very first solo album – *David Gilmour*, released in 1978. “Oh, you know,” Gilmour says. “The usual Pink Floyd reaction. Absolute silence.”

IT IS EARLY afternoon on one of the hottest days of the year. Charlie, Astoria’s resident spaniel, lolls in a patch of shade near the conservatory at the top of the riverside lawn. Shortly before 1pm, Gilmour arrives in Astoria’s grounds accompanied by his wife, Polly Samson. He is wearing a panama hat and a white linen jacket is slung over his shoulder, giving him the air of a diplomat returning from a swish colonial posting. The image isn’t that different from Robert Wyatt’s first impressions of Gilmour 40 years ago, at a party at Nick Mason’s home in Highgate’s Stanhope Gardens. “He had a patrician air that I find very unusual in rock music,” Wyatt remembers. “He was dignified, witty. Grown up. I like him, but I’ve always been a little awestruck by him. Not because he’s intimidating, but you feel that he’s listening and watching. His bullshit detector is on ‘alert’ a lot of the time.”

Gilmour sits in a worn leather office chair in the Astoria studio, his bare feet resting on a sofa that runs underneath



the length of the studio’s aft window. He is wearing a black T-shirt with matching trousers and his shoes – black slip-ons – are neatly arranged by the door. At one point, Gilmour puts on a pair of glasses with bright blue frames to answer his mobile phone. But right now, Gilmour is preoccupied with trying to identify when his solo career truly began. “*On An Island* was the start of something,” he eventually decides. “Having at that point no real intention of ever doing Pink Floyd again. But life is just changes; you are in particular moods in particular moments. Now I’m living in Brighton, it’s a little more active. I don’t know if one ties those things together or if it’s just luck that these pieces of music chuck themselves at you.”

Attempting to unravel the history of *Rattle That Lock* and establish its place in Gilmour’s singular body of work proves to be a complicated business, not least because of the record’s intricate timeline, but also because of its more personal and private moments. Phil Manzanera, co-producer of *On An Island* and *Rattle That Lock*, estimates that Gilmour has been writing material for this new album over the past five years. But then, Manzanera also confirms that one piano part was recorded 18 years ago in Gilmour’s living room; recently, he recalls, he rang up one delighted musician to inform him that a four-note passage he recorded a decade ago appears on this album.

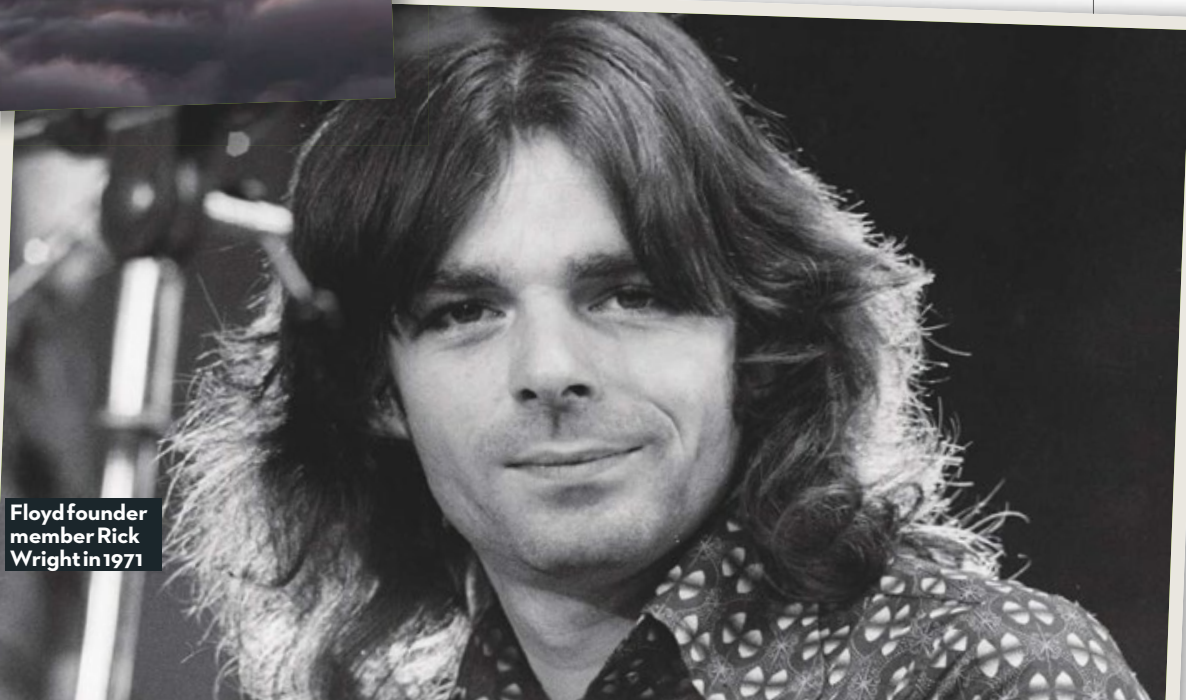
What is clear is that *Rattle That Lock* was temporarily set aside so that Gilmour and Nick Mason could work on Pink Floyd’s *The Endless River*, their tribute to Rick Wright. “It took a lot of time and an enormous amount of effort,” says Gilmour. “We sat for months trying to get it into shape. I love it, but it was a bit of a tear to drag myself away. Then a month after, getting to grips with going back into this.”

Was it important to close the door on Pink Floyd before releasing *Rattle That Lock*?

“It was just timing,” he insists. “Going back and listening to the material made me think, ‘There are some really nice mementos of Rick’s playing.’ I felt we owed it to the fans to put them together and release it. I thought I could do it in a simpler way but, you know, best-laid plans... Something comes along and you have to deal with it properly. Each thing takes maximum energy and thought.”

Although Gilmour is adamant that he works all the time, principally in his Medina studio in Hove, he admits, “I’ve got a lot going on. Children. Normal stuff to get on with. So when I can, and when I feel like it, I go and work, track down the little bits and improve them, try to see where they’re going.”

Gilmour’s modest, self-deprecating way might make this sound more casual than it actually is. But Youth – who worked with Gilmour on The Orb’s *Metallic Spheres* album and co-produced *The Endless River* – recalls witnessing Gilmour’s fastidiousness in the studio. “His attention to the minutiae is extreme. He’d be twiddling



Floyd founder member Rick Wright in 1971

on his own and we'd do lots of takes and we'd spend a lot of time editing, sifting, and then redo again. That process of distillation went really far."

"When he puts the beam on a track, he's totally hands-on," says Nick Laird-Clowes, a collaborator since the 1980s. "That EQing, that knowledge of sound, that science brain mixed with his art brain, is crucial to understanding who he is. It's too much of a simplification, but his father was scientific and his mother was artistic. All the delays you get on the Floyd records, they're all things he's worked out scientifically, but not at the sacrifice of the artistic and melodic content."

"He's very, very meticulous in the studio," agrees Robert Wyatt. "He was very specific about how everything was laid out and the timing of things and very, very exact about detail. I know actors who've been in films. They're filming a scene and they don't necessarily know what the whole picture is, what the context is, or even what it might be about sometimes. But David is like a very careful film director."

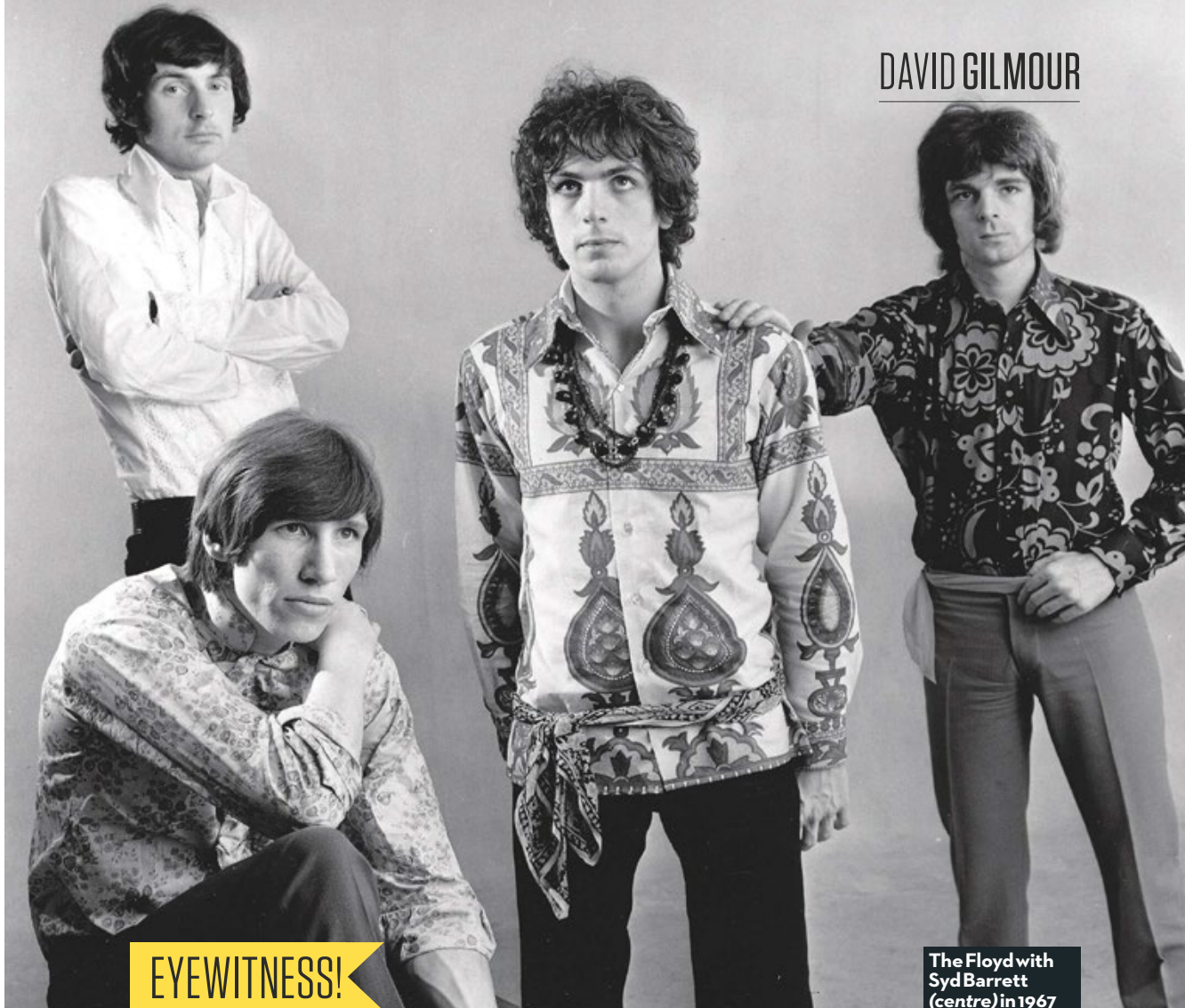
For *Rattle That Lock*, Manzanera maintains he went through "200 of these little bits and pieces of scraps and things... on [Gilmour's] minidisks and little devices. Then we sat down and listened to 30 in the end. This was all going on until January. Then I said, 'Let's just work on 10 and see where it gets us. If we need anything else let's pick from our pool of stuff, but let's look at these 10.' This whole process – especially working on the Floyd album, too – got him stuck in. There's an energy that wasn't there when we started doing *On An Island*. It's strange isn't it? We're 10 years on, and it's a lot more energetic."

"In some ways, I think I've found my feet," says Gilmour. "It's quite late in life to start finding one's feet, I must admit. Or at least, to find them again."

LISTENING TO *Rattle That Lock*, it's tempting to make connections to Gilmour's time with Pink Floyd – the title song, for instance, with the chorus line of "*Rattle that lock and lose those chains*". Aubrey Powell speculates as to whether it represents "the essence of David's creativity escaping from the entrapment of Pink Floyd, or whatever had been on his mind for the past few years." But Gilmour quickly dismisses any suggestion that this – or any other song on the album – concerns his former band. "I wouldn't connect any of the lyrics on this record to anything connected to Pink Floyd in any way," he insists. "I'm not trying to make statements about Pink Floyd being finished or not being finished, or any other sagas that have gone on. Those lyrics are more to do with shaking off the things that oppress us in life. Politically, socially, whatever. Don't put up with it, basically."

All the same, another song – "A Boat Lies Waiting", a hymnal piano piece featuring harmonies from David Crosby and Graham Nash – has a direct link back to Floyd. While *The Endless River* was Pink Floyd paying tribute to Rick Wright, this song feels more like Gilmour's personal tribute. Gilmour even admits, "There's a bit of Rick speaking I pinched. Rick loved sailing. I miss his ability and our common intuition, or telepathy, which is pretty obvious on *The Endless River* album. It's a great shame Rick wasn't around to help out on this one."

With its lyrical references to "*a boat lies waiting/Still your clouds all flaming*" and "*what I lost was an ocean*" it's hard not to tie the song to the sleeve of *The Endless River*, which pictured a man rowing on clouds into a sunset. Gilmour seems surprised when I ask if the reference is deliberate.



EYEWITNESS!

The Floyd with Syd Barrett (centre) in 1967

"SYD INSPIRED HIM..."

Aubrey Powell on the friendship between Syd Barrett and David Gilmour

"FIRST MET David in Cambridge when I was about 16. We were all close friends, but David and Syd were particularly close. They were at Cambridge Poly together, and went busking in the south of France. They were avid blues and R'n'B fans: Bo Diddley was a huge influence on Syd, and David had moves that he showed Syd. They exchanged ideas and showed each other chord sequences and riffs. Syd was definitely looser – with David, it had to be right.

"It was very difficult when David replaced Syd in the Floyd. At one point, they were a five-piece. Syd would stand there strumming occasionally or looking vacant on stage and David would take over from him. But it was very difficult to try and emulate somebody who played a Fender Telecaster with a Zippo lighter.

"The other members of the band didn't really want Syd around. They were a pop band at the time, they were appearing on *Top Of The Pops* and it was very difficult with Syd turning up in dresses, not playing guitar. But David did not like to see his old friend suffering. It was frightening and scary because Syd's madness made everyone a bit paranoid. So David felt very uncomfortable stepping into Syd's shoes. Syd inspired him, but I know David found it hard."

**"I THINK
I'VE FOUND
MY FEET.
IT'S QUITE
LATE IN
LIFE TO
FIND ONE'S
FEET"**
DAVID
GILMOUR

"No. How do you mean?"

The mentions of the boat, ocean, clouds; those are the things you see on the sleeve.

"No. It's not a connection, no," he says. Gilmour concedes, though, that by using a sample of Wright's voice, technically his fallen comrade appears on the album. (Footage of Wright from January 2007 also appears in the album's DVD and Blu-ray packages, where he's performing in a series of 'barn jams' with Gilmour, bassist Guy Pratt and drummer Steve DiStanislaio.)

Aubrey Powell sees other resonances in *Rattle That Lock*, not with Floyd per se, but with earlier parts of Gilmour's life. He cites the jazz-inflected "The Girl With The Yellow Dress": "I said to David, 'Does this remind you of when you were in Paris with [pre-Floyd band] Flowers, supporting Johnny Hallyday and Sylvie Vartan?' He said, 'Not really, but obviously my experiences of living and working in Paris are in my psyche somewhere.' We're making a little film for

10 GREAT GILMOUR MOMENTS

Classic deep cuts, collaborations and monster anthems

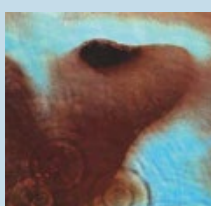


FAT OLD SUN

ATOM HEART MOTHER, 1970

Gilmour's Floyd debut as a songwriter is *Ummagumma*'s "The

Narrow Way", but "Fat Old Sun" is the better track – a pastoral reverie driven by his elegant lap-steel.



FEARLESS

MEDDLE, 1971

Although "One Of These Days" and "Echoes" dominate *Meddle*, this folksy,

Gilmour-led acoustic song nevertheless holds it own. It demonstrates, too, Gilmour's growing editorial skills within the Floyd.

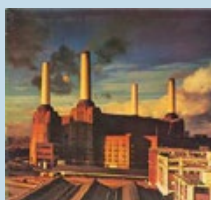


WISH YOU WERE HERE

WISH YOU WERE HERE, 1975

Gilmour's wistful delivery and his layered

acoustic, 12-string and pedal-steel guitars add warmth to Waters' Barrett tribute. Beloved of buskers everywhere.

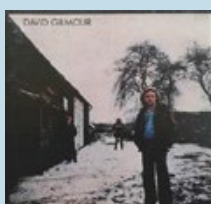


DOGS

ANIMALS, 1977

A rewarding collaboration between Waters and Gilmour from the *Wish You*

Were Here sessions, this track later resurfaced in all its 17-minute glory – Gilmour sings the first eight minutes. Atmospheric and epic.

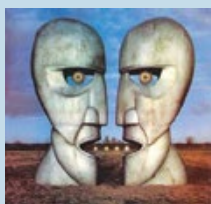


THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF HERE

DAVID GILMOUR, 1978

Originally recorded by Gilmour protégés

Unicorn, this foregrounds Gilmour's wistful vocal delivery and a strong, typically laidback, guitar hook.



HIGH HOPES

THE DIVISION BELL, 1994

Aubrey Powell describes the album's sleeve artwork – shot in the Cambridgeshire

Fenlands – as "a return to the homeland". Gilmour's moving reflection on his early days certainly corresponds with that.



FOREST

FROM ROBERT WYATT'S ALBUM, CUCKOOLAND, 2003

Gilmour has guested on records by Wings,

Bryan Ferry, The Orb and, more recently, Ben Watt. Robert Wyatt, meanwhile, describes Gilmour's fluid blues work on this waltz-y number as "totally magical".



THIS HEAVEN

ON AN ISLAND, 2006

Amid the bucolic temperament of Gilmour's first solo album in 22 years,

the standout is this slow, loping track driven by acoustic guitar and discrete Hammond work from Georgie Fame.



ECHOES

LIVE IN GDANSK, 2008

A highlight from Gilmour's *On An Island* Tour, this 25-minute version captures the

intuitive playing of Gilmour and Rick Wright in what would be the keyboard player's final recordings. He died a week before the album's release.



A BOAT LIES WAITING

RATTLE THAT LOCK, 2015

This graceful tribute to Rick Wright offers a rare moment of

reflection on Gilmour's latest, busy album. It features warm harmonies from Crosby and Nash, and a delicate Satie-esque piano motif.

● this, set in 1961, about the time David was there. So there are a lot of nuances coming through in this new album. It is riven with experience."

There are further ties with Gilmour's past among the album's contributors. It features Guy Pratt and guitarist Jon Carin, mainstays of the Gilmour-era Floyd; Rado Klose, Gilmour's old schoolfriend and, briefly, a member of Pink Floyd, plays guitar. All the musicians credited have, at one time or another, worked with either Floyd or accompanied

Gilmour on his solo projects. But Gilmour's key collaborator on *Rattle That Lock* is his wife of 21 years, author Polly Samson. Their creative partnership began on *The Division Bell*. "She's an integral part of what I do," says Gilmour. "I play her the backing tracks with me scatting words, and she chooses ones that appeal to her. She goes off and works on them for a while. In the past she tried to get inside my brain and think what I'd want to write about, but she's releasing herself from that pressure now."

Manzanera credits

Samson with devising the

album's narrative – a day in the life of Gilmour. "It says it's a David Gilmour album, but it's so much more than that," says Manzanera. "It's what's on their minds. They not only live together, they work together creatively; the things they talk about are in the album. She should be credited as a producer, frankly."

"I always want to write my own songs, my own lyrics and everything," reflects Gilmour. "It just doesn't happen very quickly. The Nick Cave way that many people adhere to – work, get in there, concentrate, focus – I'm told it would work for me, but I've never had that discipline. I find things arrive as little moments. There's a lot of slog to get to here from there. I'm not enormously confident writing lyrics."

"IT WAS GREAT TO BE WITH HIM BECAUSE HE WOULD ALWAYS ATTRACT GIRLS"
AUBREY POWELL

EYEWITNESS!

“THEY SHOUTED ‘BEATLES!’ AND SPAT AT US”

Aubrey Powell remembers an early adventure with David Gilmour...

WHEN DAVID joined Pink Floyd, he bought an old Land Rover,” begins Po. “He said, ‘Let’s go to Morocco.’ We had very long hair, right down to our waists, and we drove down to Spain – Franco’s Spain – with his then girlfriend. He had all this cash with him, but not one hotel on the drive from the Spanish border at France down to southern Spain would take us. We used to sleep in the Land Rover every night in car parks: me in the front and him and his girlfriend in the back. Everywhere we went in Spain, they shouted ‘Beatles!’ and spat at us. It was quite intimidating. You could get arrested for being a hippy in those days. When we got down to southern Spain they wouldn’t let us into Morocco without us cutting our hair. We pulled into Valencia airport and I saw there was a flight going to Ibiza. I said, ‘David, I’m going to take a flight to Ibiza and take the boat to Formentera.’ He decided to go back to Paris and catch a plane to Morocco and meet up with the other members of Floyd. They’d all flown down there to do a bit of writing and doubtless sample various substances in the Rif mountains. That was the first big adventure I had with David. Franco’s government put the fear of God into us, but it was a lot of fun. It set a very strong friendship for the rest of our lives.”

There are two songs, however, for which Gilmour is credited as lyricist: “Dancing Right In Front Of Me” and “Faces Of Stone”.

“‘Dancing Right In Front Of Me’, that’s about the children, my children. My wishes for them,” he explains. “‘Faces Of Stone’ was about when my mother had the beginnings of dementia. We had a day together and we walked in the park. She died about nine months after my youngest daughter was born, so there was a period of time when they were both alive. It’s a reflection on beginnings and endings.”

SUCH PERSONAL REVELATIONS seem strangely out of keeping for Gilmour. Aubrey Powell – a friend of Gilmour’s since 1962 – describes Gilmour as “humble, slightly reserved, articulate, highly intelligent. He was like that in Cambridge and he’s like that now.” For a tantalising glimpse into pre-Floyd history, Po reveals he recently found the “beating manual” for the Cambridgeshire High School For Boys: alma mater of Roger Waters, Syd Barrett and Storm Thorgerson. “It’s a record of all the boys ever beaten in the school and the cane that was used. Roger’s in there for throwing water, Syd’s in there for being argumentative and Storm was in there for truancy. They all had six of the best. Because of their background, Pink Floyd had that postwar middle-class English bravado about them. It gave them that edge. They were bright and intelligent and all knew what was expected of them and how to attain it. That comes with education, and they were fortunate.”

Powell, meanwhile, has fond memories of the young Gilmour. “He was unbelievably good-looking. It was great to be with him because he’d always attract a bevy of girls. At the same time he had a slight shyness to him, which girls found even more endearing. But when he played guitar and sang he had confidence that was above anybody else’s in that Cambridge set. David was really good at learning to play songs – instantly. I remember when ‘Hey Joe’ came out. I saw David a few days later and said, ‘Have you heard that amazing track “Hey Joe”?’ He said, ‘Yeah, it goes like this.’ He just played it.”

“When you start out, you copy,” says Gilmour. “Trying to be too original when you’re too young is possibly not the best thing. But I learned copying Pete Seeger, Lead Belly, Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix. All sorts of people.”

In December 1967, David Gilmour joined Pink Floyd, essentially as an additional guitarist to support the ailing Syd Barrett. “Roger had to take the leading role because otherwise Pink Floyd would collapse,” says Po. “Roger was always the strongest in Pink Floyd, but they relied on Syd for his writing skills. Roger hadn’t written any songs then. But because of David’s singing and guitar-playing abilities, Roger thought he’d be able to write with him.

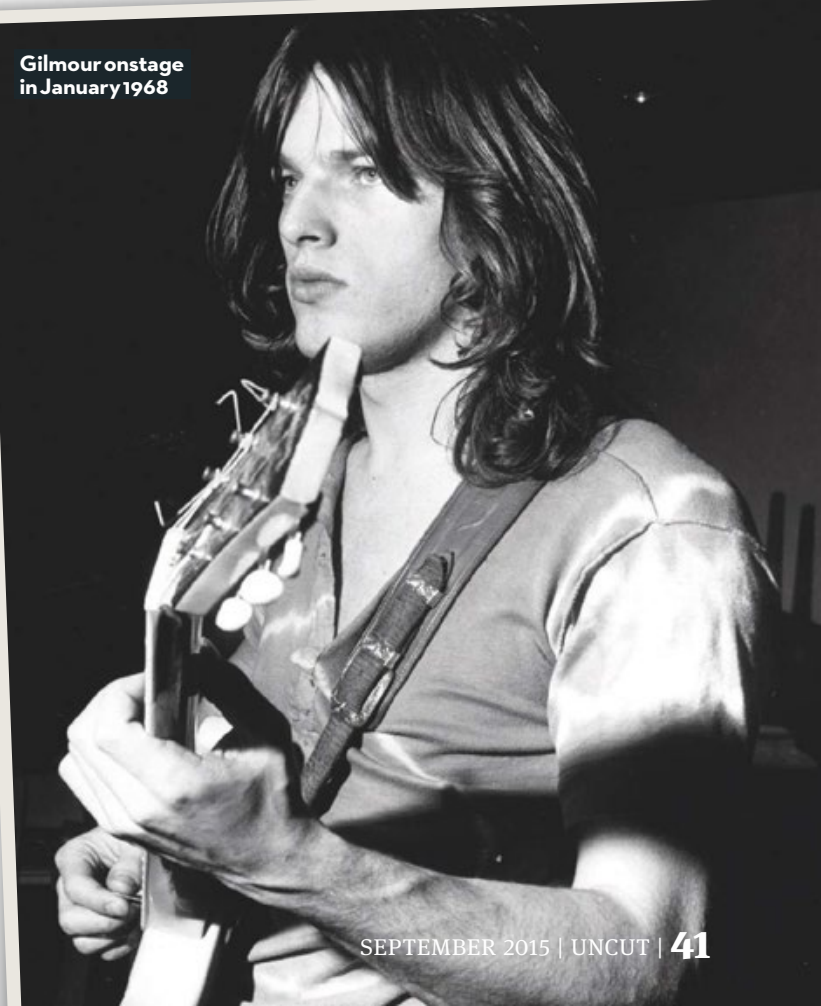
“The first song they wrote was ‘Point Me At The Sky’. When it came out, they asked Storm and I to make a film. We went to Biggin Hill and rented a couple of Tiger Moths. Everybody took turns to fly in them while we were shooting with a couple of old Bolexes and an Arriflex 16mm camera. It was all Biggles and jolly hockey sticks, a very middle-class, public schoolboys fun day out – Five Go Mad At Biggin Hill.”

“David was absolutely crucial for the next stage,” adds Robert Wyatt. “He contributed to something they had latently, from their background in architecture. David has a sense of form and pace, in a way that makes almost all other groups look a bit ramshackle. There’s a breathing space in Floyd. It’s like you’re entering a place. He’s a terrific blues player, measured, making everything count. I can’t think of anybody else he could have done it with. Rick was important in creating an aurora borealis around the music – a shimmering atmosphere. Roger and Nick, as a rhythm section, were very clear about where the beat is and where it’s going and what the notes are. Instead of speed they go for strength, a solidity that’s the perfect environment for David. It worked very well as a band. Better than very well.”

“It was hard for David at first,” remembers Po. “He was being asked to emulate a psychedelic sound, which wasn’t him at all. But when you look at *Live At Pompeii* and you see David with that Strat, smashing the stage with it and bashing it about and creating extraordinary sound, it’s amazing how in a few short years he picked up on that wild, free psychedelic sound Pink Floyd were known for.”

BACK ON ASTORIA, Gilmour pauses briefly to look out of the window at a family of ducks foraging along the riverbank. He is thinking back to one of his earliest songwriting efforts in Pink Floyd, *Atom Heart Mother*’s “Fat Old Sun”. “It’s one of those songs where the whole thing fell together very easily,” he explains. “I remember thinking at the time, What have I ripped this off? I’m sure it’s by The

LFI



☛ Kinks or someone... But since whenever it was – 1968, '69 – no-one has ever yet said, 'It's exactly like this.' It's a nice lyric, I'm very happy with that."

Was there a breakthrough moment for Gilmour as a performer?

"Gradually, you start focusing the things you do towards something. But there's a flash moment when you think, 'God, I rather like my own playing now.' That happened with singing, too. It's that old thing where most people listen to their voice on a recording for the first time, or people who haven't done it very often, and they think it sounds horrible. I was like that. When did it change? Around 'Fat Old Sun'. It didn't take too long."

"Childhood's End", from *Obscured By Clouds*, was the last Floyd song composed entirely by Gilmour until *Momentary Lapse In Reason*, 15 years later. Does he regret not writing more songs for Floyd?

"No," he says. "Roger wanted to be the guy writing the lyrics. I was very happy for him to be the guy writing the lyrics. He was very good at it. I didn't feel I was. I wasn't frustrated, saying, 'Read these lyrics! I want to put this song on!' The way it happened made sense."

Nevertheless, by the late '70s Gilmour saw an opportunity to strike out on his own. Six months after the Animals Tour, he began work on his self-titled solo debut. "We didn't work that hard, so there was time," he explains. "I don't think it

**"I THOUGHT
IT'D BE
NICE TO
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GUYS IN
A ROOM,
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TUNES"**
DAVID
GILMOUR



HIGH CONCEPT

IN AT THE DEEP END!

The inside story behind David Gilmour and Pete Townshend's shortlived 'supergroup'...

IN 1985, PETE Townshend began work on a solo concept album about a London housing estate, *White City: A Novel*. David Gilmour played on the album and joined the Deep End Band for two nights at Brixton Academy in November 1985 and at the MIDEM conference in Cannes in January 1986. "I was recording at Eel Pie Studios," says Gilmour. "Pete had a really nice piano there. I bumped into him in the

corridor. He said he liked my first album and asked if I wanted to work together on something. We worked on three things. He worked on lyrics. He did one of them on his album, *White City* ['White City Fighting'], and I did two of them on *About Face* ['All Lovers Are Deranged', 'Love On The Air']. We had that moment where our paths crossed. He was a hero of mine as a teenager. It was great to work with The Deep End Band. There were so many people onstage, the brass and all that. They were all phenomenal musicians."

was to counteract some sort of frustration I was feeling within Floyd. If anything, I thought it would be nice to have a bunch of guys in a room, play some tunes, knock 'em down and put out a record. Maybe there was some yearning for a simpler way of being as a musician. That's not what I want. I'm very happy with more complex and time-consuming methods. It was a little door opening for me into a slightly different world which, I guess, would happen again at occasional points in my life."

As it transpired, Gilmour returned to his solo career six years later, in 1984, for *About Face*, which coincided with Roger Waters' departure from Pink Floyd. Did Gilmour seriously consider a full-time solo career at that point?

"I always thought that you could have two parts of your career running at the same time," he says. "At that moment – 1984 – Roger had decided that enough was enough for him, but I hadn't decided that enough was enough for me. So I imagine I thought, 'Yes, we'll go back to doing Floyd.' But Roger hadn't officially left at that point. It just looked impossible that we would ever get back together. It was a good moment to be doing something, whether that meant looking towards a new career or a stopgap until Roger made up his mind about whether to stay or go."

AUBREY POWELL IS reflecting on Pink Floyd's imperial phase: the enormous successes of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Wish You Were Here* and *The Wall*. Specifically, he is considering the impact these achievements had on his old friend David Gilmour. "When he first made money with Pink Floyd, he bought a little old farm. He had two shire horses on it. It was beautiful. Humble. You could go round any time of the day and there'd be somebody like Steve Marriott or Jerry Shirley around: a lot of interesting people. That's where he discovered Kate Bush. But he's never been the rock star, never."

Presumably such a becalmed environment provided a welcome retreat from the demands of Floyd, particularly the increasing psychodramas dominating Roger Waters' final years with the band.

"David appears to be laidback but he's a very determined person," notes Phil Manzanera. "He's like a dog with a bone when he wants to do something. He's no pushover and it's not surprising that Roger maybe found him tricky. He's got his opinions. Even though he won't necessarily shout them out, he'll quietly assert them."

"David is stubborn, by his own admission," adds Po. "When Roger decided to fold the band, David and Nick said, 'Hang on a second. This belongs to us all of us.' So David decided to fight for it. There was a lot of soul-searching. It was a very painful time."

From a distance of 30 years, Gilmour can now afford to be relaxed about the battle for ownership of Pink Floyd. But tellingly, his responses to questions about that period are delivered with a certain formal, lawyerly tone. "From the moment Roger sent his letter, in December 1985, to the record company saying that he forthwith was no longer a part of Pink Floyd, we felt we were released and we could start to look forward to making an album."

What were the pros and cons of assuming creative control of the Floyd? "You'd have to be a bit mad when you know the difficulties," he reflects. "We were down to a two-piece for a while, Rick having gone his own merry way for reasons that have been explained in great length and tedium before. So getting Rick and Nick back in were important. It was a tricky old period of time. There's a myth that at some point we decided to turn a David Gilmour solo album into a Pink Floyd album. That's not strictly correct. There were a few pieces of music that I had that helped us to get started. It's a good album, it's got some really good moments to it."

"David was extremely anxious when they made *Momentary Lapse Of Reason*," says Po. "That first tour they did, David was extremely concerned about whether they'd





David with his wife, author Polly Samson, June 2015

ON REFLECTION

GILMOUR ON GILMOUR...

“THERE ARE ONE or two nice moments on the *David Gilmour* album. I don’t think there are any lyrics on it I’m particularly proud of, though. I tried to be more mainstream rock on *About Face*. I can’t quite remember why! But I’m now less keen on rockier elements of *About Face* – I realised that what I like best is what we do as Pink Floyd. *On An Island* grew very organically. I had been spending a lot of

be able to crack it, especially in America, without Roger. Of course, it was phenomenally successful for them. Then they went on with *Division Bell*, which was Pink Floyd back to where it had been in the *Dark Side Of The Moon* days, but without Roger.”

NICK LAIRD-CLOWES IS just back from a holiday in France. He has been staying in Ramatuelle, on the south-east coast below Saint-Tropez, where Gilmour and Syd Barrett went camping when they were 16. “I texted David,” says Laird-Clowes. “‘I’m sitting outside your favourite pizza place.’ It’s where he and Syd would sit and look at girls. He wrote back, ‘WIWT’ – Wish I Was There.”

Laird-Clowes first met Gilmour in 1978; their initial collaboration came three years later, as Holly And The Ivys. “It was a Christmas record,” says Laird-Clowes. “We were sitting in an airport one day and David was joking about these terrible Stars On 45 records. He started stamping his feet four-on-the-floor going, ‘Once in royal David’s city...’ Then I started singing, ‘La la la la la...’ He said, ‘Hang on! That’s a great idea.’ The night before we recorded the orchestra, he said, ‘If you can write a song, you can have the B-side.’ So I stayed up all night writing the B-side.”

Gilmour continued his patronage of Laird-Clowes, inviting his band The Act (with Gilmour’s younger brother Mark on guitar) to rehearse at his home while Pink Floyd recorded *The Wall* in France. “We used this little old studio in the house he bought from Steve Marriott,” says Laird-Clowes. “It was near Harlow in Essex. We used to take the Central Line and then walk a few miles to the house. It was a lovely little Tudor-looking cottage with a building in the garden a bit like a garage. He had an eight-track in there.”

Their collaborations continued with Laird-Clowes’ next band, The Dream Academy, when Gilmour played bass and programmed drums on their cover of The Smiths’ “Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want”. In 1993, Laird-Clowes contributed lyrics to two songs on *The Division Bell*, “Poles Apart” and “Take It Back.”

“David would say, ‘Come over and I’ll play you what we’ve done,’” recalls Laird-Clowes, who is currently working on a new album. “Polly, he and I would drink a bottle or two of wine, listen and make notes. Then it was every Tuesday, then it was Tuesday and Wednesday. We were down to the last three songs and he didn’t have any lyrics. We tried everything.

We did cut-ups; we stayed up insanely late and got very merry doing it. If I wrote four consecutive lines, I got a co-write. For ‘Poles Apart’, I asked him about Syd and he said, ‘I never thought he’d lose that light in his eyes.’ That’s where it started. He said, ‘Great, you’ve written your first song on a Pink Floyd record.

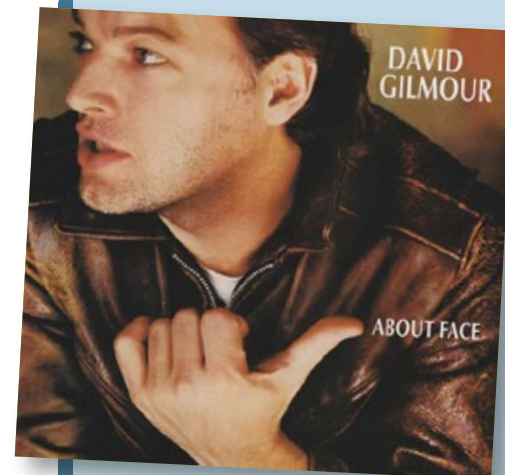
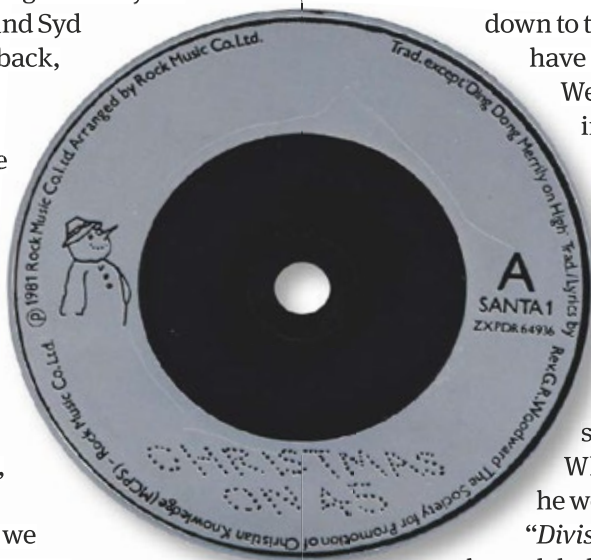
What year were you born?’ Then he went down to the cellar to get a bottle.”

“*Division Bell* was David having gone through hell in the dispute over Pink Floyd,”

says Po. “Then coming out the other side saying, ‘I can make a record as good as anything we did when we were with Roger.’ It gave him a tremendous boost of morale.”

The *Division Bell* Tour – 110 shows in 68 cities, taking a worldwide gross of £150 million – overshadowed even the band’s enormous tours of the ’70s. But at what point did the scale and extravagance begin to lose their appeal for Gilmour?

“Pink Floyd is very, very big,” he concurs. “There are an awful lot of people who want to go to those shows. I find it hard to imagine how many of them actually really love



time on my own at the farm in very peaceful circumstances. *Rattle That Lock* is more of a solo album than anything I’ve ever done. It’s me fiddling around on my own in a rather hermit-like way. That is not something I think is necessarily that good for me, but that’s the way it seems to have worked out.”

● everything about it. I don't know, maybe that's fatuous. That huge scale is intoxicating. It fuels your ego and all that, but it's never quite ideal. I don't mind playing a few big 'uns, once in a while. But now I'm very happy not to be quite as – what's the word – famous, I was going to say, but I don't know how to put that subtly.”

After *The Division Bell*, Gilmour withdrew into domestic life. He followed his old band's brief reunion at Live8 in July 2005 with *On An Island* in March 2006. A meditative album, it shared many stylistic touches and textures with the later Pink Floyd releases. “It would be in the vein of a Pink Floyd record, because that's what I do,” he says. “I can't help myself, using the musical palette that I have been either gifted with or have learned over the years. I can't really separate the two things with any intent.”

“In the '70s, people started doing offshoot albums and calling them solo albums,” adds Phil Manzanera. “But this is a continuation of what David's always been doing, in a different context. At a certain point, this happens in bands. You grow up, you have families and your life changes. It's the same with Bryan Ferry: he's doing what he's always done, but it's in his own world. It's not like it used to be, where people did a solo album and then came back to the band. We all morphed out of that. We're not confined by the things we started in our twenties.”

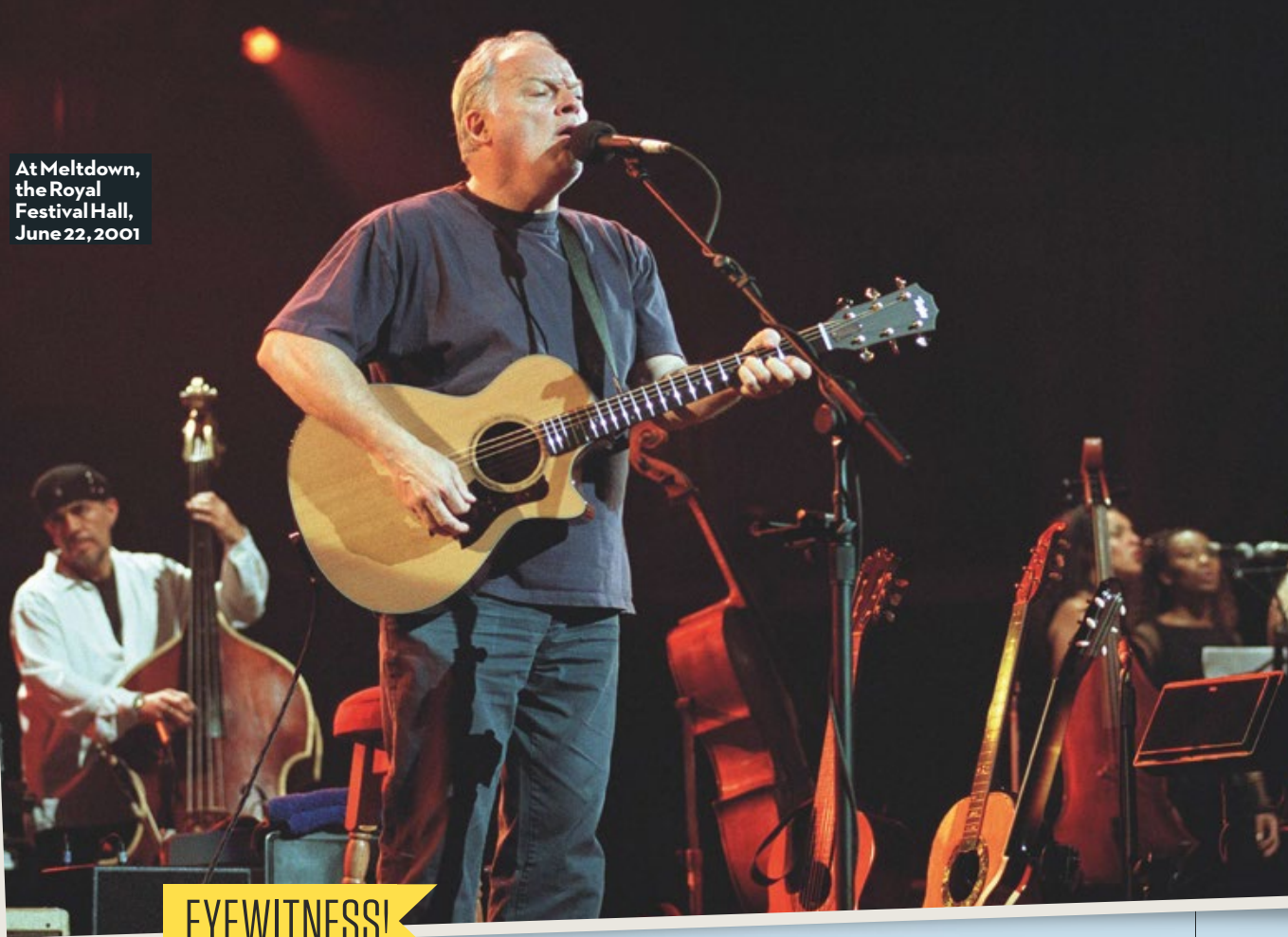
NEXT YEAR, DAVID Gilmour turns 70. From his seat in Astoria's studio, he says he's not given much thought to how he'll mark the occasion. “Maybe we'll have 20 or 30 people round for a bevvy, I don't know,” he shrugs. “Mortality is something I think a lot about and always have,” he continues. “It was frightening when I was young. At my age now, I'm no longer fussed about it. It's lost its fear for me, pretty much.” Of course, Gilmour has more immediate business to attend to. “I finished this album yesterday,” he says with a smile. “And I've got another record on the go. *Rattle That Lock* came out of a font of stuff so I don't think it'll be that long before another one comes out. Maybe at the end of the tour I'll just want to collapse and feel like an old man again. But I've got the best part of another album stewing away.”

There were six years between Gilmour's first two solo albums, 22 between the second and third, and nine between *On An Island* and *Rattle That Lock*, so this feels like big news. “These songs have been on the go for the last few years,” he explains. “There are one or two really old ones. One is probably 20 years old. It's still trying to fight its way to the top of the pile. It will one day. We will see how good they get to be in a couple of years time. As for *Rattle That Lock*, I don't want to overplay it, but I think this is the best thing I've done. Probably ever. It's very easy to be deluded, but I think it's very good.”

For now, Gilmour's next assignment is planning his September tour. He dusted down 1972's “Wot's... Uh The Deal” for the *On An Island* Tour, so can we assume he'll rummage through the archives to see what rarities he can find next? “I might completely rearrange one or two old songs,” he says. “We shall see.”

Is there a song that always reminds him of Syd? “‘Shine On You Crazy Diamond’ is about Syd. Every

At Meltdown, the Royal Festival Hall, June 22, 2001

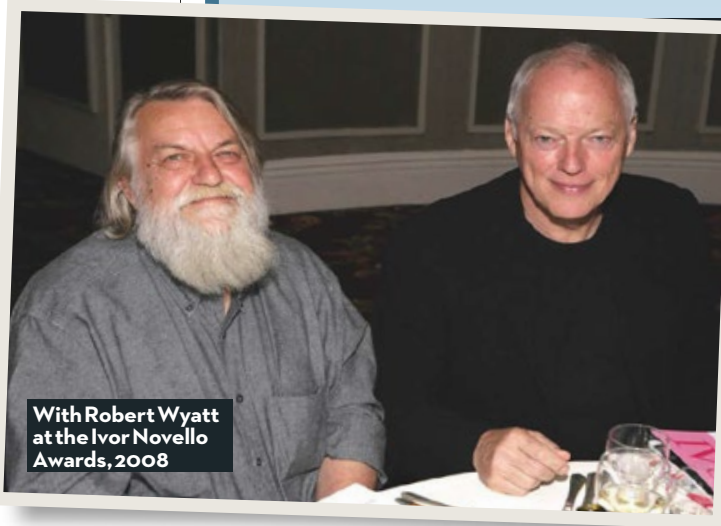


EYEWITNESS!

“HE WANTED THINGS DONE RIGHT”

IN JUNE, 2001, David Gilmour was invited to perform at the Robert Wyatt-curated Meltdown festival. “He hadn't done anything for a while,” says Wyatt. “First, he said, ‘No.’ Then ‘Yes.’ Then, ‘Can I bring a cello?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘No, I can't do. Can I bring a choir?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ So he couldn't get out of it. His set looked very informal

but it wasn't, because he's not like that. He directs everything, including the lighting. You could see this chap playing and singing guitar. It wasn't showbiz, which is more a Floyd thing. I did ‘Comfortably Numb’ with him. I was so nervous. I think the first night I played some cornet. The moment I'd stopped, I put the cornet on my lap and scuttled offstage. But he called me back so I could accept applause from the audience. It was just a very generous gesture. He wanted things done right. It's not typical rock'n'roll. There's nothing wrong with typical rock'n'roll, but it's something else.”



With Robert Wyatt at the Ivor Novello Awards, 2008

“I DON'T WANT TO OVERPLAY IT, BUT I THINK THIS IS THE BEST THING I'VE DONE. PROBABLY EVER”

DAVID GILMOUR

time I've sung that song, I've thought about Syd. You have to think about what you're singing, you can't just troll the words out. You have to work harder if someone else has written them – which I've grown skilled at, having spent so much time singing Roger's words.”

And is there a song that reminds Gilmour of Roger? “‘Money’. I'm not talking about the lyric. Just the quirky 7/8 time reminds me of Roger. It's not a song I would have written. It points itself at Roger.”

And, now that Pink Floyd is officially over, what part of it all does he miss the most?

“I was taking earlier to you about the early moments,” Gilmour says quietly. “We were not exactly equals, because things aren't ever quite equal. But in terms of the band dynamic during that era, there were moments where magic happened. I suppose you could say I miss those. But there's not much about it that I have disliked or haven't enjoyed. At the same time, there's not much of it that I miss. It was 99 per cent a great experience, and we wouldn't want to talk about the other one per cent. That's been done.” ●

Rattle That Lock is released by Sony Music on September 18; Gilmour also tours in September

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PANDEMONIUM!

The mind-bending saga of KILLING JOKE. Involves maggots, burned flats, gay brothels, police raids, black magic, electric shock therapy, pig's heads, self-harm, decapitated wax figures, the Great Pyramid, Iceland, leylines, Wizards with tattooed faces, Paul McCartney, immensely powerful music... and the restoration of antique furniture



JAZ COLEMAN IS late. This isn't unusual for a man who once absconded to Iceland without telling his band, forcing Killing Joke to appear on *Top Of The Pops* with a roadie in a beekeeper's suit pretending to be the singer. In fact, as recently as 2012, he disappeared for a couple of weeks before resurfacing in the Western Sahara, having decided to go off-grid to write a symphony.

ADMITTEDLY, GIVEN HIS history, a 20-minute wait in the Columbia Hotel bar in Lancaster Gate might hardly seem quite so dramatic. The previous evening, Coleman gave a two-and-a-half hour talk in London on some of his favourite subjects – geometric energy, self-education, Rosicrucianism, islands – and when he eventually arrives at the hotel, he's still full of energy and good cheer, carrying with him a heavy bag full of esoteric literature purchased from Atlantis, his favourite occult bookshop. Coleman – along with the other original members of Killing Joke – is meeting *Uncut* to look over the band's extraordinary 36-year career ahead of the release of *Pylon*, their latest studio album. "Killing Joke is how we process our world," explains Coleman, peering through his beetle-black fringe. "It's exorcism, therapeutic. There are times in my career when I've wondered if it's been a force for good, but I believe it's had a beneficial effect on everybody that's been involved in it."

That hasn't always been apparent, of course. Killing Joke were founded in the squats of Notting Hill, where they perfected a heady, nihilistic blend of punk and dub. Their commitment was intense, and some of the band barely escaped with their sanity. As Killing Joke's bassist, Martin 'Youth' Glover, admits later, "There's been overdoses, alcoholism, violence, nastiness and betrayal upon betrayal of Shakespearean proportions. But it's a priceless legacy. Such pure energy uncompromised by commercial concerns. It's challenging, it's difficult, everything rational says don't do it. Which is precisely why I do."

Glover's belief is shared by his colleagues – Coleman, guitarist Kevin 'Geordie' Walker and drummer 'Big' Paul Ferguson. Even though the original lineup have occasionally taken a break from one another – to write symphonies, record with Paul McCartney or pursue a secondary career as an antique restorer – they have always returned to Killing Joke.

"You rarely see a band come back together and still be as powerful," says producer Chris Kimsey. "A lot is about Geordie's guitar, the chord shapes, the tone. And Jaz has tremendous musical knowledge of harmony and melody, but keeps it very primitive with Killing Joke. There's immense power. They are also four of the most opinionated people ever. But they don't argue about music, they argue about everything else."

Indeed, it is unusual to find four equally strong figures in a single band. "They are unique," agrees The Orb's Alex Paterson, who worked as Killing Joke's road manager during the '80s. "They come from four different corners of the universe creating this massive sound and versed in the finer arts of darkness."

Throughout our interview, Coleman doesn't deny the darkness – the fights, the run-ins with police, the maggots – but insists the Killing Joke message is a positive one. "Every song is about freedom. We want to confront fear. The idea of laughter connects us all, because when you laugh, you have no fear." ➔



Killing Joke circa 1980: (l-r) 'Big' Paul Ferguson, Kevin 'Geordie' Walker, Martin 'Youth' Glover and Jeremy 'Jaz' Coleman



IT BEGAN IN a dole office in West London. Jaz Coleman was a gifted violinist who belatedly discovered the “liberating power of rock” and hitched from Cheltenham to find a band. In the queue to sign on, he got chatting to a friend of Paul Ferguson, a drummer who had recently moved to Holland Park from Wycombe. Ferguson had played drums in his school’s Combined Cadet Force band until he was kicked out for protesting the Vietnam War. He was now playing in a roots rock combo, but was itching for something different. Coleman and Ferguson were introduced, and immediately found common ground. “Jaz says we took an instant dislike to each other, but there was a magnetism,” says the quiet, intense Ferguson. “We weren’t on the same wavelength musically, our interests were more philosophical, mystical and political. We had a vision of a band that would be important. It had to reflect our beliefs. We decided the band should be anonymous, and we didn’t want a frontman – Jaz and I would take turns singing. It was a way of making it bigger than ourselves, a mask to hide behind, to manipulate. When we advertised, we said we wanted ‘to tell the Killing Joke’.”

The name came from a friend, an acid head who worked for the government. “It was his task to project what would happen when certain decisions were made, to rationalise the consequences,” says Ferguson. “This freaked him out and he called it ‘the killing joke’. It had an instant appeal, a deep cynicism, and a licence to never land on any one dial too heavily.” An advert in *Melody Maker* promised “total publicity, total anonymity, total exploitation”. But that wasn’t enough. Ferguson and Coleman were devoted to Aleister Crowley and would walk miles across London to visit esoteric bookshops near the British Museum. “We wanted to find two people who had a revolutionary musical style and were open to magical principles,” says Coleman. “It was a tall

order, so we took an irrational approach. We held a ritual.”

The pair conducted a ceremony, using candles and a magic circle. Days later, Kevin ‘Geordie’ Walker answered the *MM* ad. “I met Jaz and we clicked,” says Geordie, still with the trace of a north-eastern accent. “I hated everything he listened to, he hated what I listened to, but we both liked fishing so we talked about that for three hours.” Ferguson was impressed. “He had a ginger shaggy afro, teddy boy jeans and brothel creepers,” he says. “I didn’t care what he sounded like, he looked amazing. But then he plugged in and started chugging Alex Harvey riffs. I worshipped Harvey and that was it.”

Geordie had moved to Milton Keynes in his teens, where he acquired a Gibson Les Paul and was taught classic guitar by the son of Lord Cadman, on his mother’s insistence. His style was unorthodox, heavily distorted. Shortly after Geordie moved into the band’s flat in Battersea, catastrophe struck. “Jaz burnt the place down,” says Geordie. “Candles on a plastic table. The whole place went up. Jaz was running around naked with a face covered in soot. Afterwards, one of the fireman said, ‘What’s this?’ Where the carpet had been, there was a magic circle. That’s when I twigged.” Ferguson admits, “We may have got our cardinal points mixed up. We were invoking fire and we got it.”

The trio decamped to Cheltenham, still short of a bassist. Martin ‘Youth’ Glover had applied, but Ferguson and Coleman weren’t impressed, despite his strong credentials. Youth had already been in two bands: The Rage had toured with The Adverts, while 4” Be 2” had recorded a choppy single, “One Of The Lads”, with John

Lydon’s little brother, Jimmy. “They thought he sounded thick,” says Geordie. “He’d put on a punk accent to try and fit in. I went to see him at this gay brothel in Earls Court, where he was sharing a room with Alex Paterson.” Geordie invited Youth to an audition in Cheltenham, which started badly. “Youth was all over the place,” says Coleman. “Me and Paul gave up and went to the pub, where we met some friends who wanted to see the band. Everybody piled back and there was Youth and Geordie just playing one note, I went behind the keyboard, Paul started drumming and we went into the most savage jam. The universe opened.”

THE FOUR SHARED little ground musically. “We all liked Alex Harvey, the Ramones, bits of punk, Geordie was a grebo rocker and Paul more rockabilly and metal,” says Youth. “Jaz liked progressive rock. His favourite band was Seventh Wave. When he was young, he only listened to classical music. Then his girlfriend got him stoned and played him Can. He traded in his violin for a synthesiser and started wearing black. He’s an extreme cat.”

As the band began squatting around West London, they listened to the predominant music of the area. “The only music we’d listen to without arguing was dub,” says Geordie. They also shared an affection for disco. “Disco brought us together,” says Youth. “Especially Chic’s writing, rhythm and production values.” The band “wanted to ‘create a musical renaissance via a strict musical form’,” says Coleman. “That’s what I wrote in my diary in 1979. No guitar solos, no blues except in parody, no Americanisms. We talked endlessly about things like, what is an English rhythm?

We didn’t have a folk tradition to draw from. Killing Joke was rediscovering the tradition.”

All this went into the mix, and out came KJ’s danceable dissonant dub-heavy punk; repetitive, threatening but



EYEWITNESS!

KILLING JOKE
AND NIRVANA

“Cobain was a junkie and they nick shit...”

Dave Grohl played on Killing Joke's self-titled 2003 album, despite the fact Killing Joke almost sued Nirvana in 1993 over the similarity between the riff on KJ's "Eighties" and Nirvana's "Come As You Are". Geordie explains: "We didn't blame Dave Grohl for 'Come As You Are'. Courtney Love gets all the money, so I ain't picking a row with Grohl. I see it as a compliment. It would be nice to have had that money, but it might

be bad money, unhappy. If you steal as a musician, it reflects badly on you but Kurt Cobain was a junkie and they nick shit. Then there's the lyric, about guns. No, I don't want the money, thank you. It wasn't a collective

decision not to sue. Then we had to prove cognisance. Nirvana had sent a postcard to our management before they released 'Come As You Are' saying how much they liked Killing Joke. Somebody gave it to Jaz. And he lost it."

with a groove. Their vibe came together on a tour of Germany with punk-reggae band Basement 5. "We had an extended period in the back of a VW van – sitting on our gear, driving around Germany, getting stoned, listening to Joy Division," says Ferguson. "We looked at the landscape and we'd grown up with the memory of WWII and that gave us a framework."

Musically, the band's unorthodoxy partly came to the unusual rhythm section. "Youth and I are on very different wavelengths," says Ferguson. "I play to Geordie. And Youth has this incredible amorphous feel that just fits right in. Nobody quite knows what he does, but Youth has something else, it's very clever." Youth's friend Alex Paterson signed up as roadie. He still has a Killing Joke tattoo. "It's on my back, where I don't have to see it," he laughs.

Ferguson and Coleman collaborated on lyrics, writing about politics, fear and liberation. "Fluoride in the water and Maggie Thatcher," says Ferguson. The band spent several months rehearsing, honing their sound, before releasing a debut EP, "Turn To Red", in 1979. "It was on 10-inch, because we had to be different," says Ferguson. "We stayed up all night with soldering irons, a hot knife and a ruler, shortening 12-inch bags to fit." After a debut gig supporting The Ruts and The Selecter in Cheltenham in 1979, they rapidly built a following, thanks to three strokes of luck: supporting Joy Division on tour, getting their EP on John Peel and being namechecked by John Lydon.

While Lydon's support came through Youth's friendship with his younger brother, Peel's approval was hard won. "Our managers, Adam Morris and Brian Taylor, parked outside the BBC every day for days waiting for him, then thrust it under his nose," says Ferguson. "It got us going to a very large extent. The radio goes beyond a handful of people in a pub."

Their shows featured a turn by The Wizard, one of the characters who shared their squat. "He had tattoos all over his face and said he was a fire-eater," says Geordie. "He demonstrated and it was very impressive, flames licking the walls, so we took him on tour." Paterson would also chip in. "For the first six months they didn't have enough material, so as an encore I did 'Bodies' or 'No Fun,'" he recalls.

There were also hiccups, the tone being set at their first gig in Cheltenham when the dressing room was raided by police. In May 1980, the band's squat in Maida Vale – dubbed Malicious Mansions – was raided by armed police after Coleman was spotted in the garden brandishing an air pistol. "He'd run out of money for cat food," says Geordie. "He was trying to shoot a bird. It was the week of the Iranian Embassy siege and a neighbour called the police. There were helicopters and Black Marias everywhere. They said if they'd seen him with the gun, they'd have shot him."

The band still pursued magical interests, whether it was drumming by night at standing stones or performing rituals in their squat's makeshift temple. Geordie was swiftly introduced to the mystical gradation and found it compelling. "Everything you see is man-made and if you can control that on the ethereal plane, that space, you can make things happen," he says. "But only in relation to the calendar. You have to know the right day, the moon. On Wednesday, a waxing moon means communication, but a waning moon is

deception. They were quite adept and I was interested." While Paterson says some of the esoteric literature recommended by Ferguson "expanded my horizons, it wasn't something I was really into. It turned me into a vegetarian more than anything else: pigs' heads on the stairs and buckets of blood around the place during certain phases of the moon."

A self-titled album came out in 1980, featuring electrifying singles "Wardance" and "Requiem", as well as the thunderous "The Wait", later covered by Metallica. The music was intense, the themes apocalyptic, and Killing Joke gained a reputation for being rather terrifying. Coleman admits, "We were intimidating. When you are in Killing Joke you think everybody is like that. Outside it, people are often terrified by our deregulated humour." Things were particularly ugly where the press was concerned. "We had spies at every music paper," says Coleman. "If we knew they were sending a hostile journalist we were ready and gave them hell. On several occasions, we'd find the journalist's girlfriend, seduce

her and then drop that bombshell during the interview. At other times, we'd send them downstairs where Big Paul beheaded wax figures. Half an hour there would liven them up. We were horrible people."

When Coleman was unflatteringly photographed sitting by a swimming pool in LA by *Melody Maker*, he took memorable revenge. "I picked up some maggots at a fishing shop and liver at a butcher then went to their offices," he laughs. "They locked all the doors. I threw the maggots everywhere, everybody was terrified. It was hysterical, I was bored. It was pantomime and it showed how stupid the press was, as I got 15 years of people talking crap about that moment."

WHAT'S THIS FOR...!, 1981's second LP, maintained the danceable metal style but for 1982's *Revelations*, Krautrock producer Conny Plank smoothed the rough edges. "Conny Plank was spinning round in his chair in glee, talking about the sound of the bombers flying overhead and how that made him want to get into production," says Ferguson. Geordie also enjoyed the experience, particularly when Plank told him "my guitar reminded him of being small during the war. When they played classical music on the radio, if you turned it up full, that was the sound I made, that dissonance. It was the

best compliment I've ever had." Youth, though, was less content. The previous albums had been self-produced and he loved the studio experience. As for Coleman, he disappeared. "I was sharing a flat with Jaz and his girlfriend," says Youth. "He hadn't told her he was going. She burnt all his clothes in the garden and fucked off."

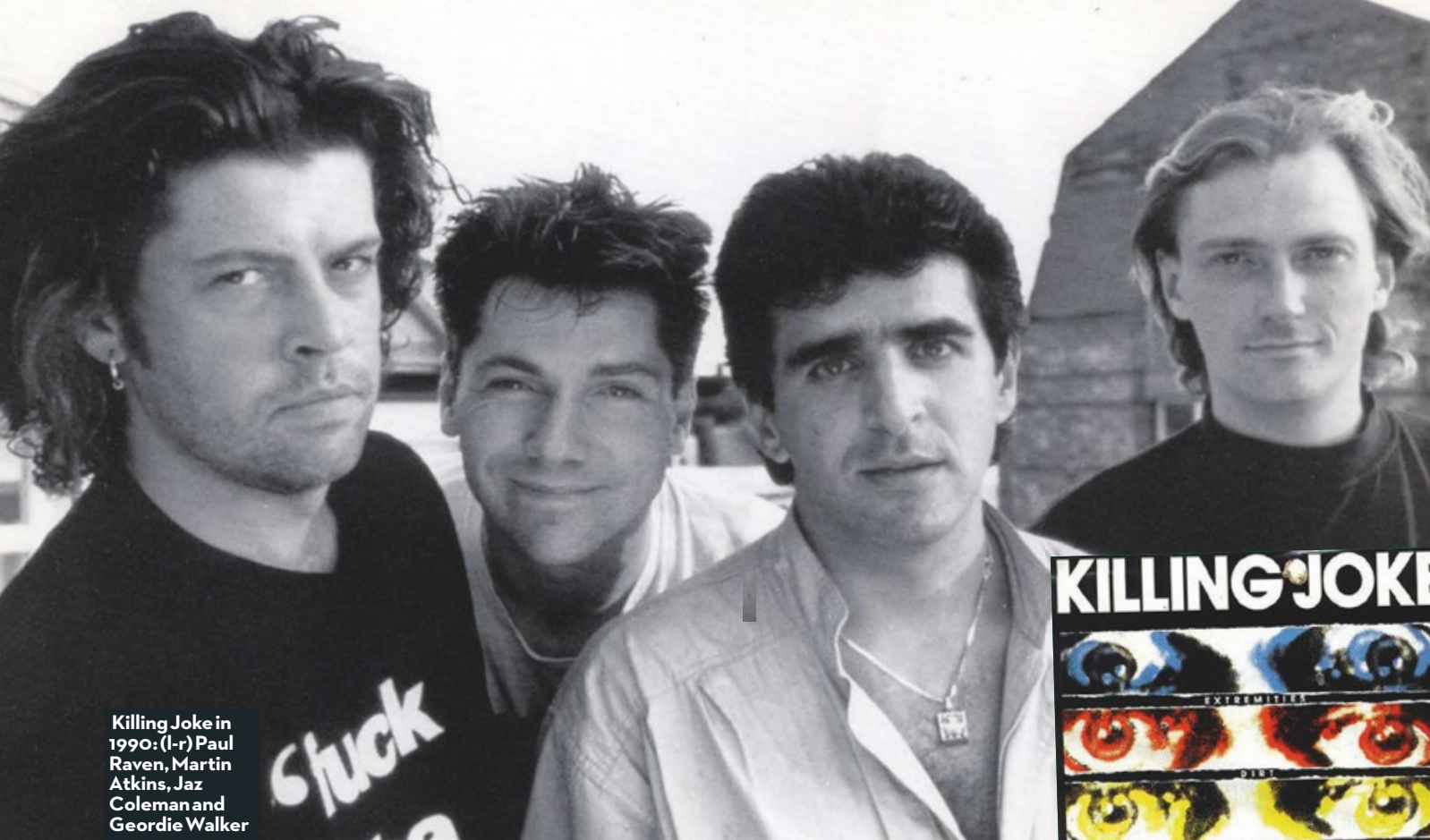
Word eventually got out that Coleman had gone to Iceland. The rest of the band were forced to perform "Empire Song" on *Top Of The Pops* with a stand-in while contemplating their singerless future. At which point Geordie left too. "Iceland was an idea about islands, small self-sufficient places, establishing temporary life off the grid," says Geordie. "We loved it there, getting away from the rest of the world. We never meant to move there permanently."

"WE WENT
INTO A
SAVAGE
JAM. THE
UNIVERSE
OPENED"
JAZ COLEMAN



"We didn't
blame Dave
Grohl..."





Killing Joke in 1990: (l-r) Paul Raven, Martin Atkins, Jaz Coleman and Geordie Walker

➔ It was said that Coleman left because he believed the apocalypse was imminent. “I told everybody the end of the world was coming, but that was to get people off my back,” Coleman says now. “I wanted to begin a process of individuation, to find my place in life, and I wanted to get away from roads because I’m interested in geometric energy. It was in Iceland, on my 22nd birthday, that I made the decision to become a composer.”

When Coleman and Geordie returned after a few months, they tried to piece the band back together. Ferguson, hurt at being abandoned, reluctantly agreed, but Youth wasn’t interested. He’d always “taken the piss mercilessly” out of Killing Joke’s esoteric beliefs, but had recently experienced a moment of enlightenment. “It was my infamous LSD experience where I was burning money on the King’s Road,” he says of an episode that began with him trying to break into Freemasons’ Hall on Long Acre and ended with electric shock therapy.

“The month prior to that I was tripping on my own DMT and everything became cosmic: sewer plates, road signs,” he says. “I had a breakdown, initiation, illumination. It took seven years to

rebuild my shredded ego.” Paterson believes the incident was caused by the band’s mystical habits. “They blamed drugs, but it was more than that,” he says. “They sent him mad. Call it the dark side, black magic, things you shouldn’t really delve into.”

Having survived his brush with insanity, Youth began exploring dance music, forming Brilliant with Jimmy Cauty. He worked with Paterson on The Orb and discovered psychedelic trance after an “amazing DMT experience”. His reputation as a producer grew, and in 1992 he produced Crowded House’s *Together Alone*, which led to him forming The Fireman with McCartney. Through it all, his spiritual beliefs evolved. As Coleman summarises, “Youth went from being an earthbound punk street thief to the shaman he is today.”

Youth’s replacement was Paul Raven, a Brummie who’d played in punk band the Neon Hearts and glam rockers Kitsch, and was close friends with Youth. “Youth was a hard act to follow and Raven was his best friend,” says Coleman. “There’s only one day that separates them



astrologically so it was seamless, and yet you can’t compare them. Youth is a creative genius, whereas Raven was a genius onstage. Both were comedians without realising it.”

Ferguson adds that “Raven brought a sense of humour that was invaluable, and also an enthusiasm.” This was important, as Ferguson was still nursing a grudge over Iceland that festered in this commercially successful era. *Fire Dances* (1983) and *Night Time* (1985) saw the band embrace a poppier sound, while a raft of 45s (“Eighties”, “A New Day” and “Kings And Queens”) included a genuine hit, 1985’s “Love Like Blood”.

“We didn’t try to become a success,” says Coleman. “But there was a part of me I was suppressing, the romantic composer. When you become involved with something as dissonant as Killing Joke, sooner or later you search for the opposite, for harmony, as a counterpoint.”

Chris Kimsey, who’d worked with the Stones, produced *Night Time* in Berlin. He recalls a band that combined musical professionalism with an anarchic spirit. On the first day, he was summoned from his hotel room at 5am to find them being held at gunpoint by police in the studio. “They’d had a party, somebody set off a fire extinguisher and broke a console. I had to do some deep sweet-talking,” he says. During late-night sessions, they’d throw open the windows overlooking the Berlin Wall and crank up the music. “We could see the East German soldiers bopping in their watchtowers,” recalls Geordie.

None of them relished the experiences that came with success – “getting up at 5am to mime for Dutch TV,” Geordie glumly describes it – and the relationship between Ferguson and Coleman worsened. “It got poisonous,” says Coleman. “Terrible things happened that took 20 years to get over.” Violence was the least of it. “Paul tried to kill Jaz a couple of times,” laughs Kinsey. “There isn’t one member I haven’t punched once,” admits Ferguson. “I grew up in a military family and that rubbed off on me, and it grated with Jaz. And he was doing things I couldn’t approve of, that reflected badly on us. It was more serious than maggots, it was bleeding on people.”

This was the time Coleman broke into Rough Trade with a bread knife. “A bootleg came out through Rough Trade,” says Geordie. “Jaz found out, got a bottle of Jack inside him then went down when he knew they were having a meeting. He grabbed a knife and cut his arm over the table, dripping blood over their heads. It was horrifying but the point was made. The bootleg was stopped.”

In summer 1987, Ferguson was sacked while working on *Outside The Gate*. “I had developed

BEFORE THE JOKE

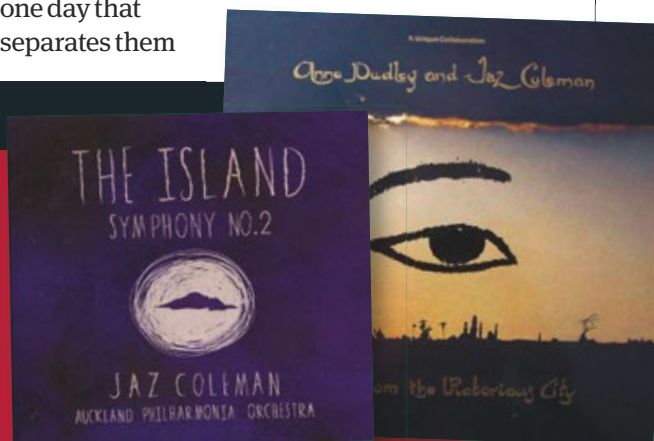
JAZ COLEMAN “My life was classical music”

“MY LIFE BEFORE Killing Joke was classical music,” says Jaz Coleman. “But classical is like an execution – mistakes don’t happen. Rock was so liberating.” In Iceland, he decided to revisit his classical leanings. “I studied orchestration,” he explains. “But it took another nine years before I worked with a symphony orchestra. Then I moved to New Zealand and it took off... I did 15 recordings in eight years.”

Coleman has composed symphonies and operas with

the Royal Opera House, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic and others, as well as with Sarah Brightman and Nigel Kennedy. He’s also worked on albums featuring orchestral versions of songs by Pink Floyd, Zeppelin and the Stones. Coleman says the two worlds are separate – “It’s a completely different process, ritual, audience, there’s no overlap” – and describes the difference

between composing and being in a band to “the hermit and the communist. One is a shared experience... you let go of the ego to be part of the whole. For a composer it’s different. When I heard I’d got my first classical No 1, I was on my own. I looked around and poured a whisky, but there was nobody to share it with.”



BUYERS' GUIDE

a disdain for Jaz," says Ferguson. "He was doing a solo album, but it cost so much, it became a Killing Joke album that I didn't want to make. I recorded drums, but the engineer and Geordie turned the keyboard off so I played to Geordie, but then when you put the keyboard back in it made no sense. As a result, I was told I was being replaced. I went to LA and haven't lived in England since."

Raven also left. Andy Rourke was recruited on bass, lasting three days. "He was a lovely lad, but the only time I saw him smile was when he played a bassline from *Coronation Street*," muses Geordie.

Ferguson's departure was fraught. Not only was he a superb drummer – "one of the best in the world," Paterson says – he'd been instrumental in creating the band's philosophy. "It was ugly and hurtful," says Ferguson, who developed a second career as a renowned art restorer, still smarting at his dismissal from the band he'd co-founded.

MARTIN ATKINS, ONCE of PiL, drummed on 1990's heavy *Extremities*, *Dirt And Various Repressed Emotions*, and then the band took a break. Coleman moved to an island off New Zealand – he still lives there half the year – and began a second career as a classical composer. "I taught myself," he says. "I made a list of people I admired and went to seek them out. I was a pain in the arse but people like Philip Glass were very kind." Another ally was Jimmy Page. "He's like our granddad," says Coleman. "I copied out my first symphony at his house."

In 1992, Geordie began working on a greatest hits LP, *Laugh? I Nearly Bought One*, and re-established contact with Youth. The band fired up again. "I felt there was unfinished business," says Youth. "We hadn't made the great record we could have made. I had leverage, a label imprint and the band were on a low, they'd almost split up. So I suggested signing them to my label and producing."

Two strong LPs resulted, *Pandemonium* (1994) and *Democracy* (1996), with the band exploring world music and electronica among the more familiar metal/industrial rock. Youth even persuaded Coleman to record vocals in the Great Pyramid. "I was into Earth energy, leylines, and on one DMT experience I saw a lattice of energy lines around the world and wanted to work in those places and turn the recordings into ceremonies. Jaz was interested. Doors open in the cosmic coincidence zone."

They do indeed. In an unlikely turn-up, Coleman and Youth were handed the keys to the pyramid for three days for "meditation purposes". Coleman explains: "We met three beautiful archaeologists. They introduced us to the minister responsible and we handed over a bribe. We took my engineer Sameh [Almazny] and he fell asleep in the King's Chamber and dreamed that all these alien eyes were watching him. He woke up screaming, banged his head on the lintel and ran out. Then these three Egyptologists turned up as we were doing this ritual. They'd dressed up like Isis. Youth didn't know who they were and says, 'Here, who are those weird birds at the back?' When we came out there were hundreds of Bedouin, chanting." Coleman and Youth thought the experience was magical; Geordie merely notes drily that

HOW TO BUY KILLING JOKE

Laughter in the dark: five magical albums on CD...



KILLING JOKE EG RECORDS, 1980

9/10 Doom-laden dance metal, with KJ's combination of dub and dissonance taking elements of disco, Joy Division and PiL and mashing them together on songs like the flaying "Requiem", "The Weight" and "Change".

NIGHT TIME EG RECORDS, 1985



9/10

The bridge between commercial success and early innovation, with more space but no let-up in ferocity. Highlights include "Love Like Blood" and "Eighties".

PANDEMONIUM

ZOO, 1994

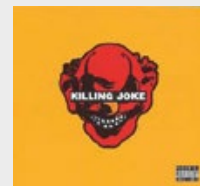


8/10

Youth's return, and Killing Joke strike for new ground, incorporating Egyptian vibes while still finding space for the industrial thrash of "Whiteout" and the metal pop of "Jana".

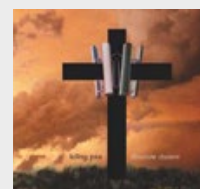
KILLING JOKE

EPIC/ZUMA, 2003



8/10

Produced by the Gang Of Four's Andy Gill, this beast of an album is heavily political and features juggernauts like "Total Invasion" and "Loose Cannon", plus the excellent stadium rocker, "You'll Never Get To Me".



8/10

ABSOLUTE DISSENT

SPINEFARM/UNIVERSAL, 2010

The reunion album, with Ferguson immediately steering the groove and bringing out the best in Geordie as the band get simultaneously heavier and dancier on "European Super State" and "Depthcharge".

"They spent 24 grand for a couple of vocal tracks. That was an expensive holiday."

"JAZ CUT HIS ARM, DRIPPING BLOOD OVER THEIR HEADS"
GEORDIE WALKER

Killing Joke were barely holding together. They lacked a drummer and Youth was in and out. "Jaz and Geordie were drinking too much, they were aggressive and bitter," he says. "I didn't want to tour, as I had kids." He played on 2003's belligerent self-titled album, produced by Andy Gill, but then ducked out of 2006's *Hosannas From The Basements Of Hell*. In October 2007, Raven died of a heart attack. Ferguson, Youth, Coleman and Geordie attended the funeral and then went back to work. "It had been a thorn in my side," says Ferguson. "Whenever they released a record it would irk me. I was just starting to get over it when Raven died. It was the first time I'd seen Jaz and it

was healing. Rejoining was a hard decision, but the curiosity would have killed me."

The reunited quartet has since cut a triptych of LPs – 2010's *Absolute Dissent*, 2012's *MMXII* and *Pylon*. "It's a blessing to write about how fucked up I think the world is, then it ends up in a song with Jaz and Geordie," says Ferguson. "I love listening to them play and I love playing drums. It doesn't work without me. It's good, but it's like the sex is gone. What I do has a backbeat that resonates."

Youth also gets something out of Killing Joke that his many other interests don't provide. "We are all very opinionated, uncompromising people," he says. "It's rare to have all four members like that, and we have to find the harmony within that dissonance. It means I have to up my game. I might be mixing Pink Floyd, but then I'll play something for Jaz and he calls me a wanker. It keeps me grounded. You leave the dignity at the door."

The last word comes, inevitably, from Coleman. "Killing Joke gives me hope," he says. "We have such different opinions, but if we can find

common ground, there's hope for the world. When I talk to most people in bands, they are aliens to me. That whole sociology, their culture, I don't understand it. After Killing Joke, they seem so dull." ☯

Pylon is released by Spinefarm Records in October, when *Killing Joke* tour the UK: visit www.killingjoke.com for info

Killing Joke in 2013:
(l-r) Youth, Coleman,
Walker and Ferguson



ALBUM BY ALBUM

Caetano Veloso

The dissident avant-gardist and pioneer of Tropicália retreads his fearless path

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN very well received," explains Caetano Veloso today, musing on his status as a Brazilian national treasure. "But I have also had to face strong and surprisingly aggressive reactions. I have to say it's more or less the same right now."

While many musicians cast themselves as rebels, Veloso is the genuine article. In 1967, the Brazilian was one of the founders of the surreal, Dada-esque Tropicália movement, which managed to frighten and incense both right and left. Two years later, he and co-founder Gilberto Gil were imprisoned without charge by the country's military dictatorship and then exiled. In London, and then after his return to Brazil, Veloso continued on his fearless path, experimenting with the avant-garde and African music, mature pop and taut, electric rock, reluctant as ever to stand still.

"After my world tour with [Gilberto] Gil, I will come back home to do an entirely different thing," he explains. "I still don't know what."



Veloso speaking out against Brazil's military government in 1967

CAETANO VELOSO

PHILLIPS, 1968



After conventional debut *Domingo*, a collaboration with Gal Costa, Veloso's solo debut bravely melds Brazilian styles with US and European psych, pop and rock, creating the blueprint for Tropicália.

CAETANO VELOSO: When I recorded *Domingo*, I already felt those songs were far away in the past. By that point, Gilberto Gil and I were on the verge of creating what people later called "Tropicalismo". We were beginning to notice how powerful the signs of mass culture were, if we touched them with freedom. I had been listening to Roberto Carlos and the so-called *iê-iê-iê* leaders. My sister Maria Bethânia told me I should pay attention to them. Gil was in love with "Strawberry Fields Forever", and I was very much attracted to aspects of pop culture through Jean-Luc Godard films. My friend Rogério Duarte, a designer, had written an article about "art in the reproduction era", and José Agrippino de Paula had published *Panamerica*, where Hollywood stars, Che Guevara, Rio's famous Christ The Redeemer and the Statue Of Liberty were characters. This album didn't take long to record. Avant-garde, serious composers from São Paulo contributed with arrangements. Julio Medaglia's were the best – "Tropicália" and "Paisagem Útil" would not be what they are without him. Photographer Luiz Carlos Barreto suggested I name one song after an artwork by Hélio Oiticica, "Tropicália". I didn't know Hélio or his work, but as I never found another name for the song, I kept it.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



TROPICÁLIA: OU PANIS ET CIRCENCIS

PHILLIPS, 1968

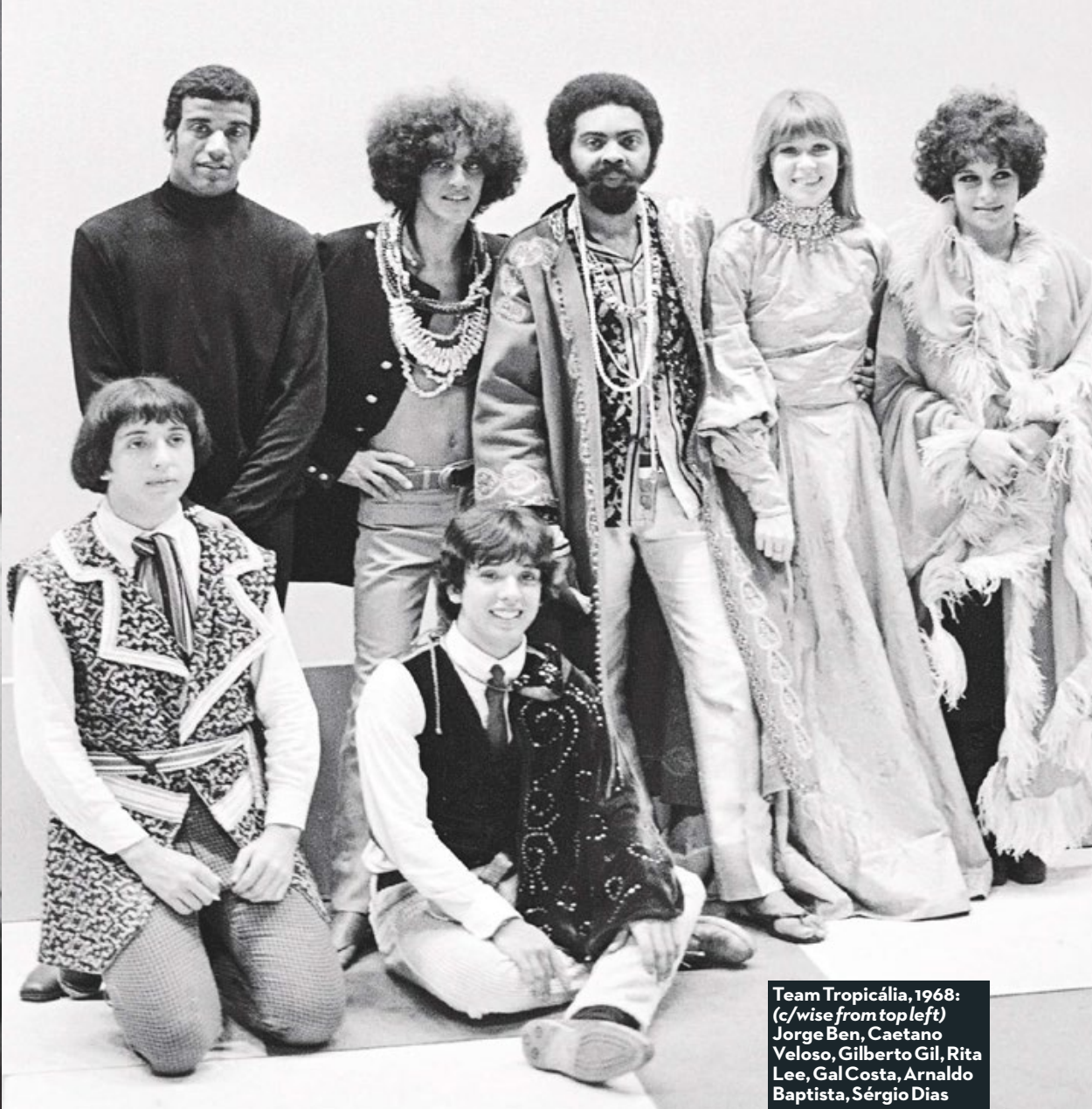
In league with new producer Rogério Duprat, Veloso and Gilberto Gil galvanise the Tropicália movement with this manifesto in sound.

In 1967, when I had played "Alegria, Alegria" on a TV Record song contest with The Beat Boys, and Gil played with Os Mutantes, the crowd reacted with some hostility. Rock, pop and *iê-iê-iê* were vulgar styles of music for the students in the audience. We were seen as traitors of the left-wing nationalism that was the rule among those students. We were also seen as traitors of the good-taste styles that were developed after bossa nova. It was kind of a scandal. Brazil is a crazy country. The booing gave place to big success when the songs were released on records.

When Rogério Duprat came, everything changed, and became highly upgraded. The *Tropicália* album, made with Gil, Gal Costa, Tom Zé, Os Mutantes and Nara Leão, was a work of Rogério's: the arrangements created an entirely new sound for us. I think I had the idea of making a collective album – I even wrote the liner notes, inventing statements and attributing them to other members of the group. Bethânia had asked me to write a song called "Baby". She gave me the title, and most of the ideas for the lyric, too. She was supposed to record it, but she didn't want to be in a collective action, so Gal Costa recorded it. Rogério Duprat wrote such a marvellous arrangement, with a bossa nova guitar playing the 6/8 rhythm and the strings coming in like thunder in spirals. It became a hit and made Gal greatly famous forever. The album was also the first presentation of Tom Zé to the public on a national level; until then he was only known to the college students in Salvador, Bahia.

Thanks to Duprat's sound – and the fact that it was a group work – I was a lot happier making this than I had been making my previous solo album. I remember Gil was not totally happy with the finished album – he had problems with the tuning of some orchestra instruments.

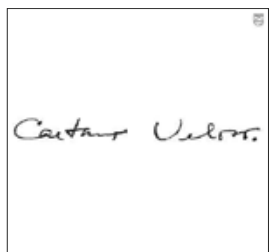
More than a year later, when we were exiled in London, I showed it to some English friends and they were not enthusiastic at all. Probably it sounded like an underdeveloped pastiche of The Beatles – and they expected us to be more "Brazilian". Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who lived in London and was a friend of Haroldo de Campos, was the only one who thought it was incredibly sophisticated.



Team Tropicália, 1968:
(c/wise from top left)
Jorge Ben, Caetano
Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Rita
Lee, Gal Costa, Arnaldo
Baptista, Sérgio Dias

CAETANO VELOSO

PHILLIPS, 1969



Imprisoned by the authoritarian military regime, Veloso records his self-titled 'white album', a playful, psychedelic set featuring classics

such as “Lost In The Paradise” and “Irene”. Gil and I were back in Bahia. We had been released from prison but couldn’t leave the town and had to report to a colonel every single day. After a couple of months in that depressing situation, Rogério came from São Paulo and helped us get some tracks together, just our voices and Gil’s guitar. Back then I was not supposed to play on any recording of mine – that only changed when I was in London and after, as the British producers thought my poor playing had personality. Duprat then took the tapes to Rio and São Paulo and put all the orchestra sounds on top of it.

I didn’t write many songs in prison, as I was not allowed to have a guitar with me in jail. Gil was allowed a guitar because he was a college graduate. “Irene” was written in jail. It’s a song about my youngest sister, who was then in her early teens. It’s about her laughter. It says, “*I want to go, I don’t belong here/I have nothing, I want to see Irene laugh/I want to see Irene’s laughter.*” “The Empty Boat” is a sad, strange song that came to my mind in English. As for “Alfômega”, I love it. Gil wrote it for me to sing. And his guitar, added to the drums Duprat recorded in São Paulo, made it sound really dreamy and psychedelic.

CAETANO VELOSO

PHILLIPS, 1971



Exiled from Brazil by the military government, Veloso moves to London and records this sombre, English-language set and the next year’s strong follow-up, *Transa*.

The authorities put us physically inside the plane, and we left Brazil for Lisbon in October 1969. Our manager had gone to Europe because Gil was supposed to sing at the Midem festival, and, having denounced Gil’s imprisonment, wasn’t allowed back to Brazil. He told us London was the calmest, safest place for us to be. I was very depressed because I didn’t accept the idea of leaving Brazil, and also I had been to London before and had not liked it. Grey skies and brick walls that seemed always the same to me. As soon as we arrived, Gil started being excited with the scene, but I was depressed. Ralph Mace convinced me to write songs in English and make a record. Compared to those in Brazil, British studios were better equipped and emitted cleaner sounds.

That “*I am lonely in London without fear*” line in “London London” came from observing the peaceful streets of sleepy London Town. I started really liking London, its parks and their incredible grass and benches, the civilised calm of people, heirs of the deep liberal tradition. British rock influences had hit me before I went there, but seeing the Stones, Led Zeppelin or Tyrannosaurus Rex onstage gave me new perspectives, sometimes to go back to deeply Brazilian forms.

So the two English records respond to two different ways of seeing London. The first has a more sombre mood, but *Transa* is already filled with love for some features of the city.

ARAÇÁ AZUL

PHILLIPS, 1973



Welcomed back to Brazil as a hero, Veloso makes his most experimental record, a difficult mix of trippy collage, heady rhythms and musique concrète, mostly written in the studio.

I had just come back from exile, and people in Brazil expected me to either develop rock sounds or write explicit protests against the dictatorship. I was just happy to be back and wanted to feel free. So I stayed in Bahia and decided to go to the studio without any songs written and just make sound with my voice. I had done the soundtrack for a Brazilian film, *São Bernardo*, with just my voice, improvising in four channels. The movie was based on a famous novel by the great writer Graciliano Ramos, who didn’t like music. *Araçá Azul* has many very interesting elements, but the sound has no space in it. The other day, though, I heard a track from it on a Japanese collection of my stuff, and it sounded great. That was “Gilberto Misterioso”, which I wrote using verses by the incredible 19th-century Brazilian poet Souzaândrade, and made it an homage to Gilberto Gil, who I have always called ‘Mysterious Gilbert’.

The recording sessions took less than two weeks. I was in a hotel next to the studio in São Paulo. I would wake up and go straight there. The songs – and the non-songs – were being written while I was recording it. I remember I called Duprat to put an orchestra on top of an a cappella chant I had recorded on the sidewalk, with the roaring avenue filled with buses and cars and motorcycles as a backdrop. Duprat loved it! In fact, he and the concrete poets always considered *Araçá Azul* the best thing I ever did.

CAETANO VELOSO

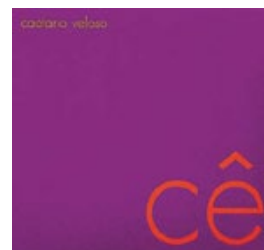


"Other people's songs are there to be sung": Veloso onstage at the Rome Film Festival, October 25, 2008

an American critic saying that Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" is a horrible song, and that he didn't know whether I sing it as a joke or seriously. Well, I love "Blue Skies" – I have loved it from childhood. In the same way, I can't think of American song without mentioning Stevie Wonder. And I think "Come As You Are" is one of the greatest American songs ever. I just had to sing it side by side with "Love For Sale" or "So In Love". It's dense, with such suggestive lyrics. I remember I sang it in the control room, while the musicians were in the studio, and I walked away from the microphone and turned my face away from it for the last words. That's the recorded voice that went to the master session. I've often covered songs on my albums. I find singing more pleasurable than composing. Other people's songs are there to be sung – I enjoy that more than singing my own.

CÊ

MERCURY/NONESUCH, 2006



The first in a loud, electric guitar-driven trilogy, Cê sees the singer connect with the more abrasive styles favoured by his son, Moreno, and his friends.

I love Cê. I did [2009's] *Zii E Zie* and [2012's] *Abraço* because I wanted to go on playing with the same band, which was put together to play the songs for Cê. I had all the ideas for the arrangements, the drumbeats, the counterpoints, before I chose the musicians. I knew Pedro Sá was going to play with me. We had been playing together since [2000's] *Noites Do Norte*. And I knew him from his childhood: he has always been my son Moreno's best friend. I had written all the songs for Cê and I asked him round to my apartment to show them to him. I told him everything I wanted to do with the songs and asked him to suggest musicians. He suggested Ricardo Dias Gomes and Marcelo Callado, who are almost 10 years younger than him. I knew them from Pedro's house; they used to play with Pedro's youngest brother. If they had been musicians in their fifties or sixties, that would have been OK, as long as the songs were properly treated. But I was aware the songs I had just written would be better understood by younger people. We decided to give it a try, so we went to a rehearsal studio and it was like magic. Nothing took a long time. So we rehearsed and I called Moreno to produce it. People who ordinarily like me didn't approve of the album, but I adored it. Still do. Now people have been very open to [2012's] *Abraço*. We fill theatres and bigger places; they make me go back to towns three or four times. And, of course, we are more relaxed, and more used to playing together. But the album I really like is Cê. Edgier? Yes. And a little dryer. Not necessarily louder. But it conveys the poetry in songs. 🎧

BICHO

PHILLIPS, 1977



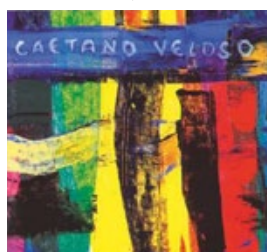
Deeply inspired by a trip to Africa, Veloso embraces the rhythms and humid atmosphere of the continent on his colourful ninth album.

Gilberto Gil was invited to the Festival Of African

Art And Culture, I think, and he took me with him. We had a stop in Dakar – where we met the great Brazilian poet João Cabral de Melo Neto, who was then our Ambassador in Senegal – and left for Lagos. It's a very messy city, but the things we heard and saw on the stages were wonderful. African traditional things were almost always awesome, and the modern African pop was intriguing and inspiring. Back in Brazil, I wrote the songs for *Bicho*. One is directly derived from the African beats I heard there and the lyric is about the guy who drove the bus that took us everywhere in Lagos. His nickname was Two Naira Fifty Kobo, because everything we asked him the price of, he answered, "Two naira 50 kobo." He would buy marijuana for everybody. He would always listen to jùjú music and dance on the sidewalk, and was always high when driving. As I recorded *Bicho*, Gil made his album *Refavela*, also inspired by the African beat scene. I remember Gil went to Fela Kuti's house and spent a whole afternoon and evening there.

LIVRO

NONESUCH, 1998



Winning him a Grammy for Best World Music Album, Livro shows an older, wiser and no less adventurous Veloso, paying tribute to his heroes and friends, such as Gal Costa, Gilberto Gil and sister Maria Bethânia, on "Pra Ninguém".

I've often honoured my forebears... I love the tradition of popular music in Brazil – and Cuba and the USA and Portugal and Argentina. I felt more responsible by this time. Maybe while making *Transa* I had felt a bit of responsibility, but not as much as at this time. I think I only assumed I was supposed to be a real musician – I mean, a man of the song, as I never considered myself a real musician – a little before *Livro*. And exactly then I had finished writing my book *Tropical Truth* – it's a lot better in Portuguese and in its original structure than in the English translation and editing made in America – which made me measure the scope of my work and personal history.

I had released the albums *Estrangeiro* and *Circuladô*, and I started collaborating with Jaques Morelenbaum, a great musician. Before these things I just went to the studio with my friends and recorded whatever songs I had composed. I had no producer in the studio for years. I loved that, and I still love the records that I made that way. But when it came to *Livro*, I thought I should be more careful.

A FOREIGN SOUND

NONESUCH, 2004



Caetano's covers: the singer pays tribute to his favourite English-language songwriters, with inventive takes on the work of Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Irving Berlin and even Kurt Cobain.

Choosing these songs, I just followed my taste and memories. Songs I had always liked, songs that reminded me of American music in my life, over many different periods. I imagine it may seem like some kind of a monster of an album that contains Cole Porter, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder and Nirvana. I read



UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
Multi-Love

"Frisky, rainbow-coloured optimism" 9/10 UNCUT

"An intoxicating brew" ★★★★★ Q

JAGJAGUAR

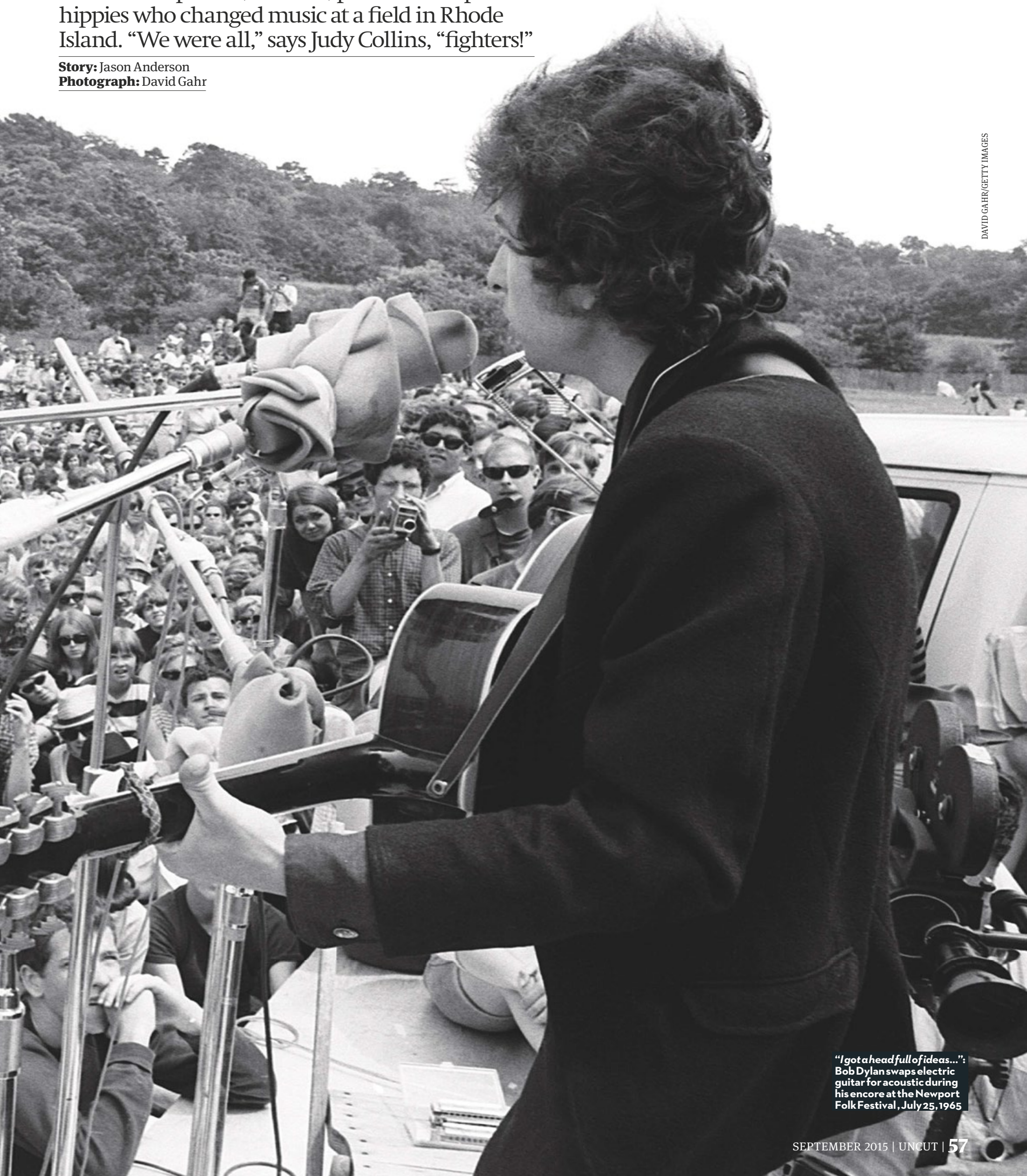
THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND



Beyond the boos for electric Dylan, and Pete Seeger with his axe, THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL was the crucible of a roots revolution in America. Fifty years on from its most famous episode, *Uncut* hears of the purists, radicals, politicians and proto-hippies who changed music at a field in Rhode Island. “We were all,” says Judy Collins, “fighters!”

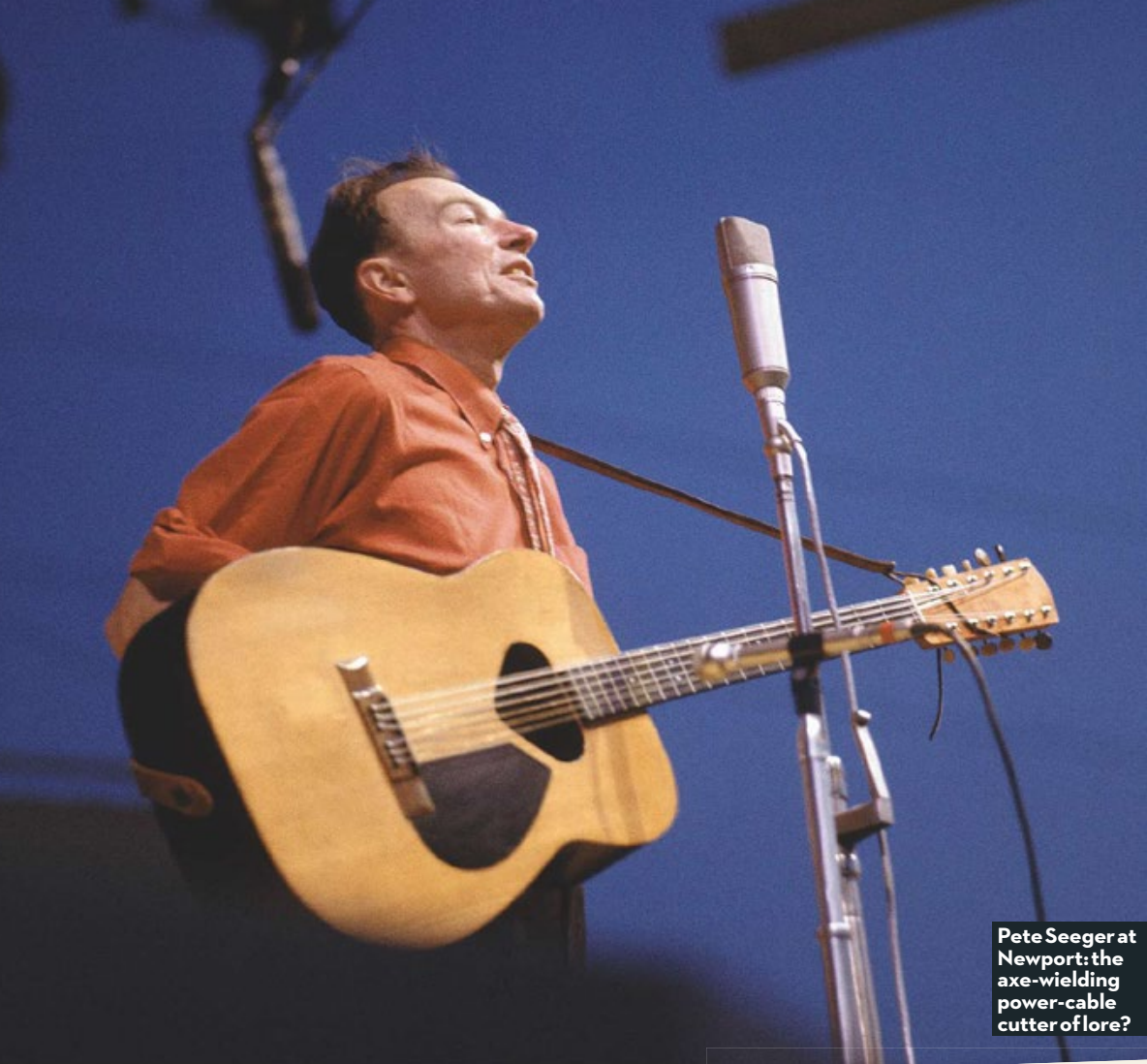
Story: Jason Anderson

Photograph: David Gahr



DAVID GAHR/GETTY IMAGES

“I got a head full of ideas...”:
Bob Dylan swaps electric
guitar for acoustic during
his encore at the Newport
Folk Festival, July 25, 1965



Pete Seeger at Newport: the axe-wielding power-cable cutter of lore?

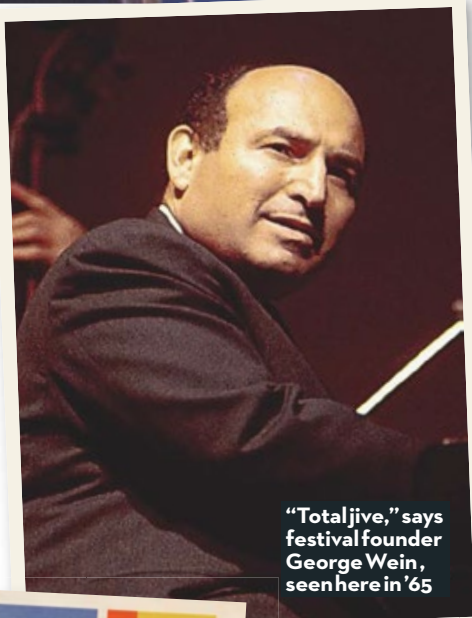
1965 was the first year that he noticed people dancing. He himself was so excited by Butterfield's set that he grabbed a camera and jumped onstage. "It was easy to boo Dylan because he was a focal point, but Butterfield was just as much as electric as Dylan," says Lerner. One of many African-American acts who first gained attention with a wider (and whiter) audience thanks to Newport, The Chambers Brothers also played the afternoon before Dylan's festival-closing set with Al Kooper and much of Butterfield's band. The then-unknown group was warned by organisers not to play their future hit "The Time Has Come Today" lest it disturb the decorum of the day. When the Chambers closed their set with it anyway, audience members broke through barriers separating the main stage and the workshops. Says singer and guitarist Willie Chambers, "It was a full-fledged rock concert."

That may be a surprising statement given the infamous response to Newport's most famous performer. Yet, as many of the festival's key figures tell *Uncut* 50 years after the world-shaking 1965 edition, Newport was anything but a confab of closed-minded reactionaries who didn't know which way the wind was blowing. "There was very much the sense that something really new was happening there, something really cutting edge," says Judy Collins, a regular headliner there and a member of Newport's often rancorous board in the mid-'60s. "Newport was fundamental to it all."

The founding father for both the folk festival and the equally illustrious jazz festival that preceded it, Wein describes it as a temporary "utopia" that created a blueprint for the innumerable music festivals to come. "Woodstock had half of my staff working up there," he says, chuckling. Among them was stage and lighting designer Edward 'Chip' Monck, who'd bring the innovations of Newport not just to Max Yasgur's farm but Monterey Pop and his groundbreaking tours with The Rolling Stones.

Still only 18 when he played there in 1965, Donovan believes Newport's impact cannot be underestimated. It was where "the door was burst open by a few who invaded popular culture from the folk world".

Of course, none of that was obvious when a leather-clad Dylan decided to retreat. He may not have found an axe-wielding Seeger backstage but he did find Wein, who was understandably worried about what the crowd might do next. Wein had already weathered big troubles in 1960, when an unexpected influx of youngsters outside the grounds of the jazz festival tussled with National Guardsmen and state police. City officials cancelled both festivals the following year. "Bobby, you better go back and sing an acoustic song or there'll be a riot," Wein told him. Thankfully, the singer obliged. Meanwhile,

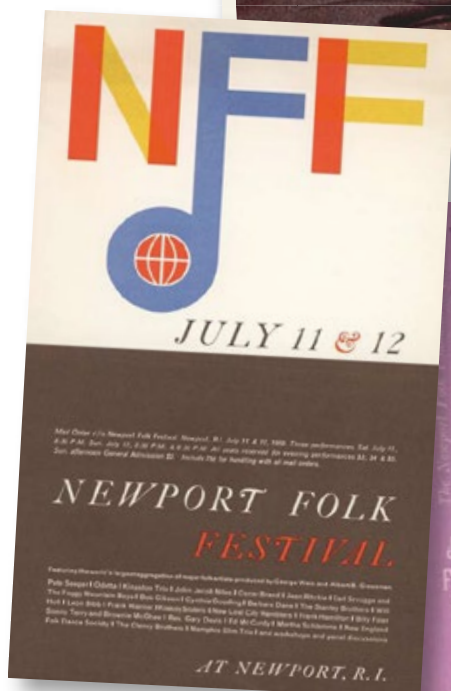


"Total jive," says festival founder George Wein, seen here in '65

THERE ARE MANY competing versions of the events of the night of July 25, 1965 at the Newport Folk Festival. One thing we know for certain is that at some critical juncture, Bob Dylan plugged a Sunburst Fender Stratocaster into a guitar amplifier after taking the stage with Al Kooper and members of The Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Their very loud performances of "Maggie's Farm" and "Like A Rolling Stone" elicited an unholy clamour of booing, although exactly from whom, how much and why remains the subject of considerable dispute. As for the most colourful myth about what went down – that a furious Pete Seeger attempted to try to cut the power cables with an axe – festival founder George Wein calls it "total jive". Yet the most egregious misconception about Newport isn't quite so dramatic. This is the assumption that Seeger's anger and the booing meant the festival was full of puritanical-minded folkies. The truth was more complicated, as was the case for just about everything to do with Newport during its years as a hotbed for the American folk movement and a crucible for the rock era to come.

"I don't know of any booing before the Dylan thing," says Murray Lerner, the documentary maker who shot 100 hours of footage over the course of four editions of the Newport Folk Festival. According to Lerner, the weekend's other plugged-in performers – including The Paul Butterfield Blues Band and The Chambers Brothers – were far more warmly received by a crowd that were not as prone to the same divisions as the festival's own organisers.

Things were already loosening up – after all, Lerner says



Greenwich Village icon: Joan Baez, Newport, July 24, '64

Seeger – who'd always claim that what really angered him was that the amplification had rendered Dylan's words inaudible – was trying to cool down in the parking lot. Wein found him sitting in a car. "Can you do anything about that sound?" Seeger asked.

"It's too late, Pete," said Wein in words that suggested the end of one era and the start of the next. "There's nothing you can do about it."

THE PROMINENT AMERICANS who first brought fame to Newport might've felt similarly broadsided if they'd lived to hear the show. Through the late 19th Century and into the 20th, many of the nation's wealthiest citizens built mansions in the coastal Rhode Island town. Regarded as "summer cottages" for New York's elite, far-from-humble abodes like the Vanderbilt family's Breakers estate – built at a cost of more than \$150 million in today's money – still line the cliffs above the yachts in Narragansett Bay. Old money plays a significant part in the history of Newport's music festivals. A pianist, producer and promoter, Wein was running his fabled Boston nightclub Storyville when he befriended Elaine Lorillard, a Newport socialite who believed the town needed some livening up. Together with her tobacco-heir husband Louis, Lorillard backed a scheme that was largely unprecedented. "When I started, the only type of music festivals were classical-music festivals," says Wein from his New York office. "I just said, 'Why can't we have a jazz festival?' There had been one-day shows that they had called jazz festivals in Europe but nobody had done a real one outdoors."

In 1954, the First Annual American Jazz Festival was staged at the Newport Casino (it would later gravitate to Freebody Park, a bucolic site in the centre of town). Ray Charles, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald were just a few of the icons to play there at the festival in the late '50s, an era that would be immortalised in Bert Stern's 1960 documentary *Jazz On A Summer's Day*. Yet, as Chip Monck says, "jazz was inoffensive to the hoity-toity Newport crowd" and the young people drawn by the folk festival in the coming years would prove to be very different. It's not that programming folk music was a particularly radical act. America was then in the midst of its second (or possibly third) folk-music boom since the '40s. The research and field recordings by John and Alan Lomax in the '30s had already spurred interest in traditional American music such as blues and bluegrass, bringing prominence to the likes of Lead Belly and Big Bill Broonzy. Woody Guthrie and Seeger had popular success, too, at least until the Red Scare forced many of the first-wave folkies to the cultural margins, as well as into the schools where they'd pass on their songs. By the late '50s, it had become many baby boomers' music of choice even if the repertoires of folk acts were dominated by sea shanties and Appalachian ballads rather than contemporary protest songs.

Wein had been convinced of the viability of a full-fledged folk fest after seeing the warm reception for an afternoon programme at Newport Jazz in 1958 featuring The Kingston Trio, Odetta, Pete Seeger and The Weavers. Though largely regarded by purists as a neutered version of Seeger's Weavers, The Kingston Trio were still one of America's best-selling acts. Sure enough, they were there at the first Newport Folk Festival in 1959 before an audience of 13,000 in Freebody Park. Other performers included Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Earl Scruggs and Seeger, who'd put the show together along with Albert Grossman. Singer Bob Gibson, another of the festival's producers, took the opportunity to introduce his 18-year-old protégée Joan Baez.

The 1960 programme was also a success, but in the wake of the so-called "Newport Riot", city officials cancelled Wein's festivals for the following year. When a smaller-scale event produced by future Beatles promoter Sid



"IT WAS A FULL-FLEDGED ROCK CONCERT" WILLIE CHAMBERS

Bernstein flopped in 1961, the city softened its stance and allowed Wein to revive his jazz festival in 1962 and then its folk cousin the year after. Newport Folk arguably began in earnest under Wein and Seeger's direction; although Wein cracks that "nobody wanted Grossman back", his clients would dominate the programme in any case. It was Seeger's idea that the performers all earned a flat fee of \$50 regardless of their prominence, a policy that was perfect for the progressive politics of the day. "When we announced that," says Wein, "everybody wanted to come." It swiftly became the chosen summer retreat for the new elite of the Greenwich Village scene, with Baez – who by now had three gold-selling LPs to her name – as its shiniest new star. "The New York folk community was very, very present in George Wein's mind and in the minds of the board," says Judy Collins. She'd soon join the Newport brain trust along with Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul And Mary, another of the folk boom's biggest acts. Yet that board was always wracked by factionalism, with members continually at loggerheads over different notions about what folk music ought to be and ought to do. Begun during the months of planning and programming, those arguments continued into the festival itself. "Every evening, there were stormy meetings," says Lerner, who'd delve deeper into the backstage chaos so particular to music festivals with *Message To Love*, his later film about the Isle of Wight Festival of 1970. Collins says it was very much standard practice. For those of Seeger's mindset, folk music's value as a tool for political and social change remained of paramount importance. He'd demonstrate that most vividly when the 1963 edition closed with the weekend's headliners linking arms with The Freedom Singers to perform "We

BUYERS' GUIDE



9/10

FESTIVAL
(EAGLE ROCK, 2005)
Murray Lerner's 1967 portrait of the Newport Folk Festival's glory years matches DA Pennebaker's more celebrated *Dont Look Back*. But Lerner devotes nearly as much attention to the youthquake happening in front of the stage as he does Dylan, Baez and Son House.



8/10

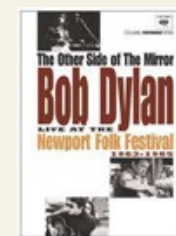
JOAN BAEZ: LIVE AT NEWPORT
(VANGUARD, 1996)
The collections of live-set standouts by Judy Collins, Phil Ochs and Pete Seeger are all strong, but the one for Baez charts an artistic evolution that was almost as dramatic as that of her former beau, albeit far less storied.



8/10

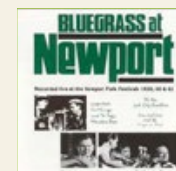
REVEREND GARY DAVIS AT NEWPORT
(VANGUARD, 2001)
The blind guitarist and blues and gospel master from North Carolina was one of the first African-American musicians to benefit from the patronage of eager

folkies. Peter, Paul And Mary and the Grateful Dead both reworked Davis' own reworking of Blind Willie Johnson's "Samson And Delilah", but Davis' riveting rendition here cuts them both.



9/10

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR: BOB DYLAN LIVE AT THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL 1963-1965
(SONY, 2007)
Released 40 years after Lerner's first Newport doc, his follow-up showcases revelatory views of Dylan as he rapidly evolves from the fresh-faced folkie upstart of '63 to the bohemian troubadour of '64 and leather-jacketed hipster of '65.



8/10

BLUEGRASS AT NEWPORT
(VANGUARD, 1996)
While the triple-CD *Best Of The Blues* set is a fair indication of just how much Newport opened minds to the full depth and breadth of American music, this collection of down-home marvels adds more to the picture. The warp-speed banjo-picking on Earl Scruggs' "Earl's Breakdown" is surely what qualified as thrash metal in 1959.

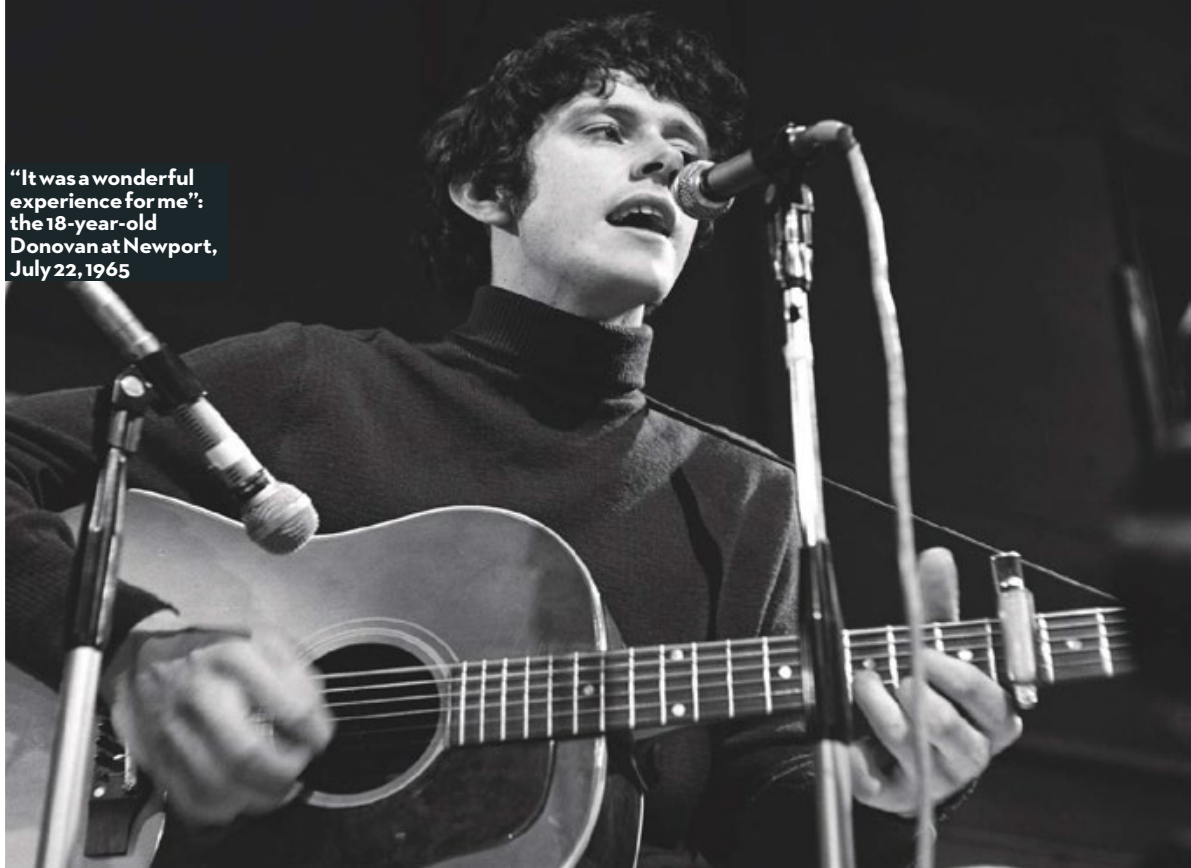
NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL

“Shall Overcome”, the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. For board members such as Alan Lomax and Pete’s half-brother Mike, the priority was the preservation of regional musical traditions that were in danger of disappearing. Thus Newport became a haven for old-time string music of the kind played by Mike’s band The New Lost City Ramblers as well as bluegrass stars like Bill Monroe. Lomax recruited fellow researcher Ralph Rinzler to travel the States in search of performers of regional music traditions that were all but unknown. Everyone from Cajun musicians to gospel choirs appeared on the stage at Freebody Park and – in another of Seeger’s innovations – the intimate ‘workshop’ performances that were held in the grounds of a nearby church.

Younger board members like Collins and Yarrow could see how these traditions would soon serve new, more personal purposes. Baez helped further that development when she presented Dylan in 1963, though he was initially the golden boy of Seeger’s protest-minded brigade. The following year at Newport, Dylan clinched favourite-son status when Johnny Cash walked offstage and gave him his guitar as a torch-passing gesture. Yet these representatives of the new guard were duly awed by their encounters with elderly bluesmen, most of whom had no profile with white audiences before Newport. Says Collins, “I would stay up all night drinking white lightning and listening to Son House and Mississippi John Hurt. All of us would just sit at their feet.”

“What I saw and heard was a lot of great music that had been around for a while, all of a sudden in the same place at the same time,” says Buffy Sainte-Marie, a Newport breakout in 1964. “I loved hearing The Greenbriar Boys and The Staple Singers, all the gospel and Caribbean groups and others who didn’t get much billing and just played workshops or daytime stages.” To provide lodging for this huge and hugely diverse

“It was a wonderful experience for me”: the 18-year-old Donovan at Newport, July 22, 1965



array of visiting musicians and their kin, the festival took over schools and mansions. Wein’s wife, Joyce, and Seeger’s wife, Toshi, made sure that everyone got fed. The party would extend well beyond the final concert. “There was a sense of utopia,” says Wein. Since so many of Newport’s stars were involved in the intensifying Civil Rights Movement (as well as the struggle against the Vietnam war), that utopia became all the more treasured. “Newport was integrated,” Collins notes. “There weren’t many places around in that time where that was true.”

THE EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENTARY culled from Lerner’s footage, *Festival*, captures more than a fleeting utopia for New York bohemians and their musical discoveries. “I had an epiphany that something else was happening here,” says the filmmaker. “It was part of a broad movement. And folk music was becoming a voice, one that was spreading very widely through the country.”

Sainte-Marie had just released her first album when she played Newport. (One of the songs she performed, “Universal Soldier” would be a hit for Donovan the following year.) From her vantage, Newport felt like an extension of what was already happening in coffeehouses and campuses. “Students ruled,” she explains. “We had discovered our brains and weren’t going to somebody’s damn war. People were really awake and exchanging ideas.” Though she praises Wein and the festival for creating a place for multicultural artists and audiences to interact, she believes it was all being driven by wider forces: “The business guys didn’t invent it.” In fact, Newport never became the folkie epitome of aesthetic purity that Seeger or Lomax might have envisioned. “What happened is folk music became big business,” says Wein. “All the managers were there – everyone was looking for the next star.”

In 1965, Newport was trading up, too – literally so. Having outgrown Freebody Park, the festival site moved up to Fort Adams State Park, on the site of a 19th-Century fort that offered stunning views of the harbour below. Attendance that year topped 70,000. The clean-cut college kids seen in Lerner’s footage of 1963 and 1964 were now looking considerably scruffier. The hippies were waiting to be born.

Only 18, Donovan was as young as they were when he arrived to play Newport a few months after meeting Dylan and Baez in London in 1965. He was struck by the scale of it all. “It looked like the folk world had already been happening on a rather professional level in America for some time,” he recalls. “In Britain we were still in the pubs.” He also noted the pressure on Dylan and Baez as the festival’s crown prince and princess, roles that were even

EYEWITNESS!

“I’d change colours!”

Ed Monck: lighting guru

BACK IN 1965, Edward ‘Chip’ Monck was still developing his reputation as one of the most innovative figures in the burgeoning field of stage and lighting design for live concerts. As he recalls, the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 had moved from Freebody Park to Fort Adams State Park in order to accommodate the growing audience. Short of other options, his light booth became the back of the 35-foot trailer he’d filled up with gear and parked up a ramp behind the makeshift stage. “There was another 13 to 20 feet that was unused because I was obviously looking out the back door at the stage,” says Monck. “George Wein was a little stingy on how he entertained many of his artists, so it became the

living room – all I did was staff it like a big bar with lots of couches.”

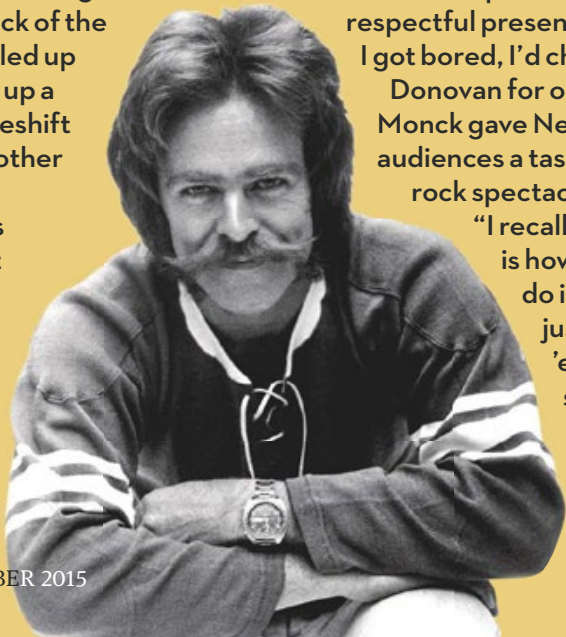
Monck further notes that “every drug that could be easily gotten rid of immediately was available”. Donovan recalls the sight of Monck operating a wildly complicated array of switch boxes to produce a “beautiful purple light” behind Joan Baez on stage, all while smoking “joint after joint of the best Hawaiian grass”.

Monck says that’s a fair assessment of his methodology, which stemmed in part from having to repeatedly light “an individual guitarist sitting on a folding chair at downstage centre”. As he says,

“It didn’t all require sombre, quiet, respectful presentation – when I got bored, I’d change colours!”

Donovan for one believes Monck gave Newport audiences a taste of the live rock spectacles to come.

“I recall thinking, ‘This is how we’re gonna do it – we’re not just gonna knock ‘em out with our songs, but we’re gonna present it in this special way.’”



more fraught now that their romantic relationship had hit the skids. Yet Donovan also remembers Dylan in a far more relaxed mood. In one of Donovan's favourite photos of the festival, he sits on the edge of a stage during a solo workshop set by his American friend. In another, they scrutinise each other's harmonicas. "Finding a New York hipster in London in May was one thing," Donovan says. "But it was something else finding this folk singer with a guitar and a harmonica in America – it was a wonderful experience for me."

Having just arrived from Los Angeles, Willie Chambers was just as thrilled to be there. Blues singer Barbara Dane had lobbied Seeger to include her friends The Chambers Brothers that year. Chambers recalls many blues and folk acts performing on amplified instruments in workshop performances, but the main stage remained sacrosanct. In fact, The Chambers Brothers only played the main stage because bluesman Josh White was too ill for his slot. Chambers says Wein was initially apoplectic about the mess caused by the band's exuberant "gospel rock'n'roll" but the crowd liked it just fine – they played Newport the next two years, too. "I guess we pulled one off," laughs Chambers. Alas, that reaction would hardly be repeated later as Dylan first appeared to perform three songs and then rip into "Maggie's Farm" with Kooper and Butterfield's men behind him. The rest was history, even if everyone has their own versions of the truth. Some blame the whole debacle on

Yarrow's announcement that Dylan's set would be cut short since the programme was running late. Other eyewitness accounts are rather sketchier. "My memory isn't 100 per cent," says Donovan, "but I remember the boos." Collins isn't even positive she was there in 1965 but she still remembers watching Pete Seeger get up and try to pull the plug. Since Lerner documented Dylan's entire set – finally released intact in 2007's *The Other Side Of The Mirror* – he scoffs at Seeger's complaints about the sound quality. "From where I was, it was great."

As for the geographical source of boos, that too remains the subject of debate. Lerner was particularly amused by what transpired after a screening of *The Other Side Of The Mirror* in New York. One viewer got up during the Q&A and said, "I was there and the only booing came from the performers behind the stage." Claimed another viewer, "I would know because I was there and the booing came from the press pit." Said a third, "I was there and the booing came from the audience."

The guy in charge of the stage that night is having none of it. "So much of this history is recreated for promotional purposes," says Monck, a friend of Dylan's since his first days in New York. ("A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" was written

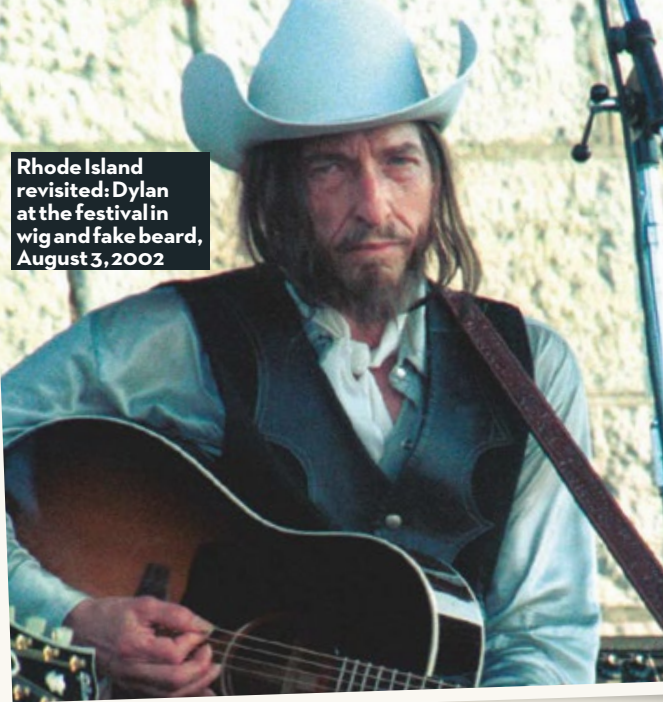
in Monck's apartment below the Village Gate.) "I didn't hear any of it. And what the fuck was it all for, anyway? The way I felt about it was, 'Here's your new leader, folks – might as well get used to him! Whatever he's doing is what you're gonna love, so just shut up and take it!' They were all a bunch of silly purists."

WHATEVER HAPPENED, THE events of '65 were "the beginning of the end of that folk period", says Wein. "We had three or four more festivals and each year it went down, down, down. Even though we brought in some great names, it was not the same and the kids knew it." Not that the Newport board necessarily became more open-minded in the wake of Dylan's historic salvo. Collins recalls the struggle she faced when she wanted to put on a programme of singer-songwriters featuring then-newcomers Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and Janis Ian in 1967. "It was a terrible fight," she reveals. "They didn't want to see a singer-songwriter workshop at all, forgetting of course that Pete Seeger always wrote his own songs, too." (That Newport event marked the first meeting between Cohen and Mitchell.) Through the rest of the '60s, bigger, bolder events at Monterey and Woodstock stole Newport's thunder and lured away key staff members like Monck and soundman Bill Hanley. As the Newport Folk Festival floundered (it closed

after the 1970 edition), Wein experimented with rock programming at Newport Jazz. The slate of performers in 1968 included Jethro Tull and Jeff Beck as well as Miles Davis and BB King. The last-minute cancellation of Led Zeppelin nearly caused another riot. The jazz festival itself relocated to New York City in 1977 before returning in 1981. In 1985, the folk festival was revived and Wein continues to be involved with both. Others circled back to its hallowed grounds. Dylan returned in 2002 [see panel]. Seeger, Baez and Collins performed in 2009 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the festival's founding. Seeger was

back once more in 2011, three years before his death. Proving that the old utopia wasn't so far gone after all, he capped off his Newport tenure with a fest-ending rendition of Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" alongside Emmylou Harris, The Civil Wars, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and a fresher set of Newport draftees. "All the young singers wanted to get onstage with him," says Wein. "They weren't alive when the old folk festival was on, but they all knew Pete Seeger and wanted to be with him." ☪

Donovan's Donovan Retrospective is out now on Union Square Music. Buffy Sainte-Marie's Power In The Blood is on True North. For Judy Collins tour news, visit www.judycollins.com. Murray Lerner's new film about Rory Gallagher and Taste is out later this year



Rhode Island revisited: Dylan at the festival in wig and fake beard, August 3, 2002

FESTIVAL UPDATE

Bringing it all back...

The year Dylan returned

"I ALWAYS SAY that Dylan's the man who made me famous," says Newport Folk Festival founder George Wein, "because I was the one who was there when he went electric." No wonder Wein was so pleased to welcome the prodigal son back to the festival in 2002. Returning to the site of Fort Adams State Park, Dylan and his four-man band played to a capacity crowd of 10,000 on a steamy day in August. There was no explanation for his chosen attire of cowboy hat and phoney ponytail and beard – perhaps he felt it necessary to appear incognito given what happened last time. The performance included "Like A Rolling Stone" and "Mr Tambourine Man", two songs that also graced the 1965 set. One snarky punter cried, "Judas!" A few others yelled, "Plug it in!" There were no boos.

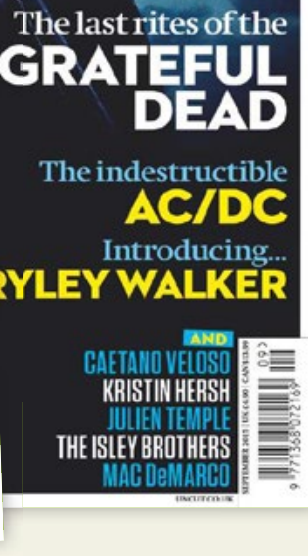
Among those in attendance was Murray Lerner, the filmmaker who repeatedly shot Dylan's performances over the course of his pivotal three years at Newport. "There was a big crowd there and they all knew his words," says Lerner. "That was a big difference compared with '65. Another interesting thing to me about that year is that the content of the songs he sang electrically were very close to the feelings of the audience – alienation, the oppressiveness of work. And yet some people did boo because of the format. They didn't understand the message even though it was just what they felt. Of course, it spread pretty quickly."

Fifteen years on from that last appearance, Wein has no doubts about booking him again "I'd like to have him back at Newport because we'd sell out immediately!"



Buffy Sainte-Marie: "People were really awake"





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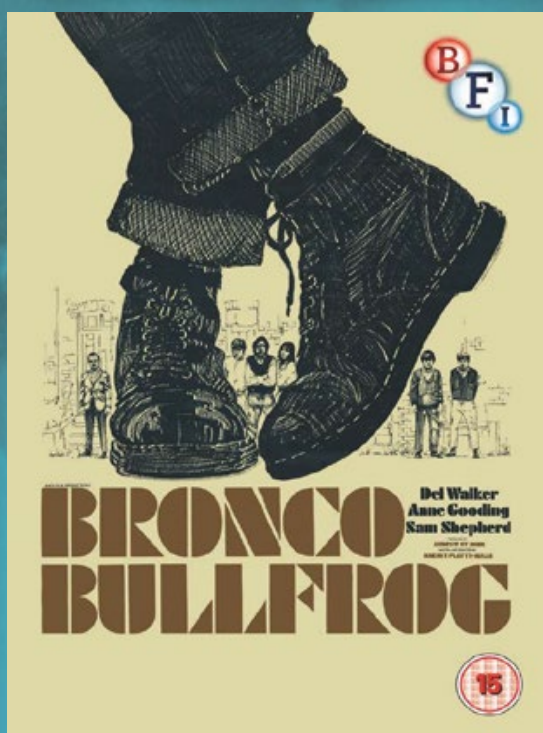
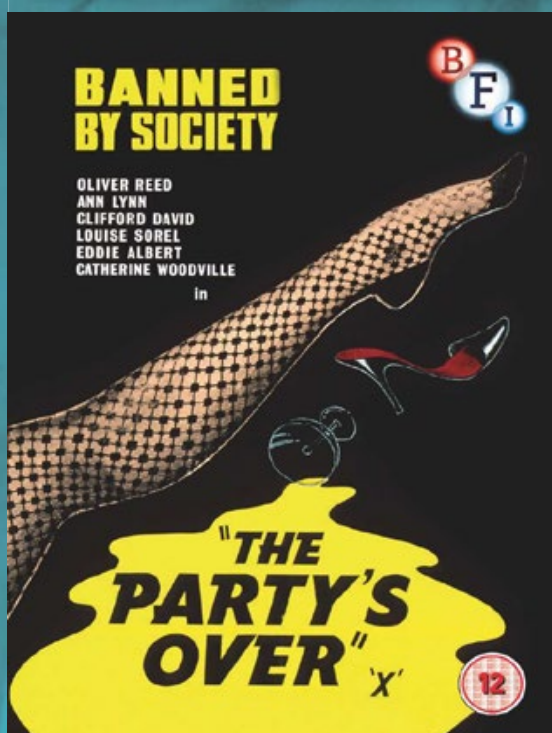
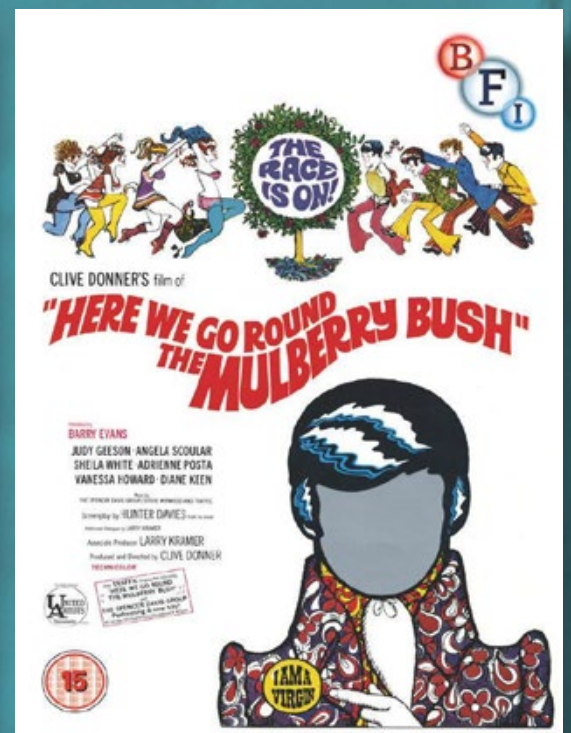
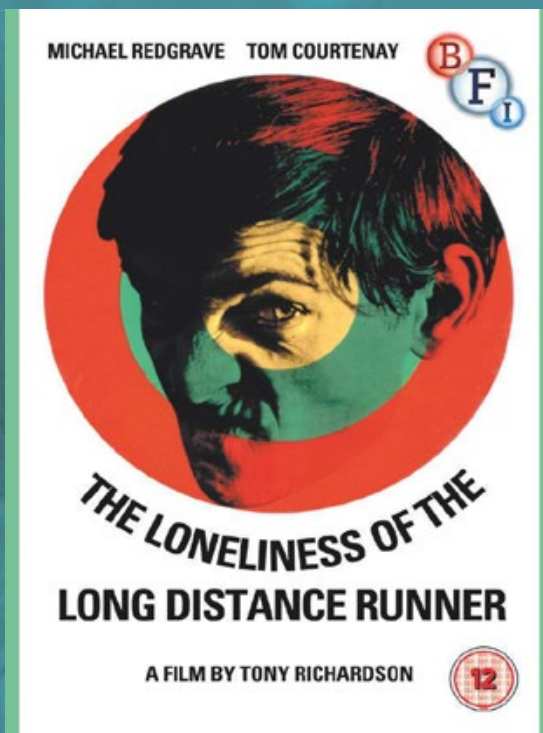


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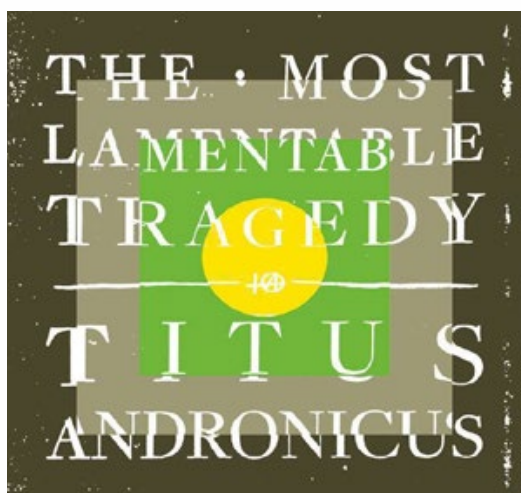
10 Masterpiece 9 Essential 8 Excellent
7 Very good 6 Good but uneven
4-5 Mediocre 1-3 Poor

New albums

THIS MONTH: BEACH HOUSE | YO LA TENGO | IRIS DeMENT & MORE



MATTHEW GREELEY



TRACKLIST

- 1 The Angry Hour
- 2 No Future IV: No Future Triumphant
- 3 Stranded (On My Own)
- 4 Lonely Boy
- 5 I Lost My Mind (+@)
- 6 Look Alive
- 7 The Magic Morning
- 8 Lookalike
- 9 I Lost My Mind (DJ)
- 10 Mr E Mann
- 11 Fired Up
- 12 Dimed Out
- 13 More Perfect Union
- 14 [Intermission]
- 15 Sun Salutation
- 16 (S)HE SAID/(S)HE SAID
- 17 Funny Feeling
- 18 Fatal Flaw
- 19 Please
- 20 Come On, Siobhan
- 21 A Pair Of Brown Eyes
- 22 Auld Lang Syne
- 23 I'm Going Insane (Finish Him)
- 24 The Fall
- 25 Into the Void (Filler)
- 26 No Future Part V: In Endless Dreaming
- 27 [Seven Seconds]
- 28 Stable Boy
- 29 A Moral

TITUS ANDRONICUS

The Most Lamentable Tragedy

MERGE

New bards of New Jersey visit the heart of madness on brawny, baroque concept album. *By Louis Pattison*

9/10

WHEN PATRICK STICKLES began talking to the press in September 2013 about his band Titus Andronicus' forthcoming fourth, a 30-track concept album entitled *The Most Lamentable Tragedy*, he had just one song committed to tape, the raucous, self-lacerating "Fatal Flaw". This would seem, on the surface, to be foolhardy – we know what happens to the best-laid schemes, after all. But as Stickles had it, there was method in his madness. By talking about it, he had to follow through with this gigantic undertaking – or self-destruct in the process.

Now it has finally appeared, Titus Andronicus' fourth album feels, if anything, more ambitious in reality than on paper. A musical tale in five acts, it follows the story of an unnamed protagonist who comes face to face with his own doppelgänger, sending him on a "transformative odyssey" and to the brink of sanity along the way. Stickles is keen to point out that *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* is fiction, and this certainly is a strand that runs through Titus Andronicus. Here, after all, is a group who take their name from Shakespeare's most bloodthirsty revenge tragedy, and once titled a song



New Albums

→ “Albert Camus”. But truthfully, it is hard – and probably unhelpful – to disentangle the album’s theme from Stickles’ biography, which encompasses an ongoing struggle with manic depression, suicidal ideation, a lifetime on medication and a rare eating disorder. It’s not that Stickles isn’t a skilled enough writer to spin a brilliant story – indeed the opposite is true. More that he’s burrowed far enough down the artistic rabbit hole to a place where art and life are essentially indistinguishable.

Just as fundamental to understanding Titus Andronicus is knowing this band hail from New Jersey, and how that fact is imprinted on their DNA. Punk rock and Springsteen are the twin pillars of Stickles’ musical philosophy, and Titus Andronicus songs have that soused, celebratory feel, even when – as on “I Lost My Mind” or the good-time boogie “Lonely Boy” – the written contents go to the darkest places. It’s a mark of Stickles’ voracious creative energies that all these competing currents don’t feel so much reconcilable as pure and instinctual. The result, on *The Most Lamentable Tragedy*, is a collision of blue-collar brawn and baroque artistry, like Springsteen And The E-Street Band covering Neutral Milk Hotel’s *In The Aeroplane Over The Sea*, or The Replacements with David Foster Wallace installed as their creative director.

This is undoubtedly Titus Andronicus’ best-sounding album to date. Assembled over five months at five different studios between New York and Massachusetts, each song explodes with organ, clarinet, mandolin and saxophone, with violin and viola parts arranged and played by Owen Pallett. “No Future Part IV: No Future Triumphant” and “Stranded (On My Own)” set the scene, harrowing portraits of the tormented artist that articulate the life-ebb of depression with lyrical extravagance. “*Fragrance of a pungent skunk/Hung in the repugnant dungeon where I have sunk,*” sings Stickles on the former, before acknowledging the lines are good ones, and singing them again.

The plot gets moving on Act Two’s opener “Lookalike”, a one-minute punk thrash that sees our hero come face to face with his double (“He



Titus Andronicus: “We’re a fucking rock’n’roll band!”

don’t act like me/But we look alike!”). This is the cue for a remarkable 20 minutes of music that encompasses a radically reassembled take on Daniel Johnston’s “I Had Lost My Mind”; “Fired Up”, a triumphant screed against organised religion and physicians who drug children; and “Dimed Out”, a voracious hymn to living in the red that resembles a manic episode rendered

as song. (This isn’t just conjecture: one of Stickles’ yardsticks here is Kay Redfield Jamison’s book, *Touched With Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness And The Artistic Temperament*, which applies modern psychological learning to the works of Byron, Van Gogh and Virginia Woolf.)

For a 93-minute LP, *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* is astonishingly consistent. There is little sense of flag throughout, even as it zigs and zags madly to its creator’s whim. There is a nine-minute heavy metal headbanger called “(S)HE SAID/(S)HE SAID”, a casually tossed-in cover of The Pogues’ “A Pair Of Brown Eyes”, a rousing chorus of “Auld Lang Syne” that ends on a tolling note of doom. Come the final, fifth act, the plot is coming a little unstuck, and not everything hits – in particular, the closing “Stable Boy”, a deliberately naïve cassette-recorded piece about how cats and horses

HOW TO BUY...
TITUS ANDRONICUS
Blue-collar bluster, literary tumult and songs of self-loathing



The Airing Of Grievances XL, 2009
Patrick Stickles and co blaze out of Glen Rock, NJ on a smoggy squall, their debut marrying blue-collar grit to literary pretension with audacious flourish. One hoarse thrash is titled “Upon Viewing Brueghel’s ‘Landscape With The Fall Of Icarus’”.

7/10



The Monitor XL, 2010
“Because tramps like us, baby we were born to die!” Members of Felice Brothers, Vivian Girls and The Hold Steady assemble to help Stickles bring his Civil War concept album to life. Along the way, there are Boss nods, self-loathing drinking songs and a bagpipe solo!

8/10



Local Business XL, 2012
Recorded live in the studio with no overdubs, this sounds lean where other Titus albums edge towards overblown. “My Eating Disorder” – a stark confessional about Stickles’ struggle with selective eating – steps where rock songs seldom tread.

7/10

don't fear death, played by Stickles on a chord organ, makes for a shambolic climax. But by now you've long since given up on Stickles serving up a coherent dénouement, accustomed as you are by being flung around on the storm of his moods.

You could place *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* into a grand lineage of concept albums about a young man pitted against a cruel world, which stretches from The Who's *Tommy* through Hüsker Dü's *Zen Arcade* to Fucked Up's *David Comes To Life*. But more than trying to slot into any existing canon, you sense that Stickles is more interested in assembling his own body of work. "No Future Part IV: No Future Triumphant" and "No Future Part V: In Endless Dreaming" continue a series that commenced on Titus Andronicus' debut LP, while other moments hark back to earlier work – see mandolin shanty "More Perfect Union", which revisits the themes of patriotism and liberty invoked on "A More Perfect Union" from 2010's *The Monitor*. Instead, Stickles calls *The Most*

Lamentable Tragedy his *Gesamtkunstwerk* – a term coined by the German philosopher Karl Trahdorff that translates as "total work of art", drawing on multiple mediums to create an artwork of the future. Exactly how this plays out live we shall see, but prior to the album's release landed a 15-minute video, *The Magic Morning*, Stickles and band dramatising the album's standout second act with added dance routines. It's low-budget and playfully done – with the aid of some clever angling, Stickles plays both himself and his doppelgänger, one in sweatpants and sporting a full

fisherman's beard, the other clean-shaven and darting around in white gym kit. Still, it leads you to reflect on the album's themes further. Is one the manic Stickles and the other the depressed Stickles? Is one the real Patrick Stickles – and if so, which?

Titus Andronicus are undoubtedly a band scholarly about their rock history. But *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* feels like a quintessentially modern album, a scintillating examination of mania and neurosis that uses the history of rock'n'roll as mere stage dressing for its bravura performance. Stickles is no Springsteen, writing relatable songs for the American Everyman. Instead, what he does here sounds close to unprecedented in the field of rock: he journeys right to the heart of madness, and through artistic ambition and sheer determination, he grasps it and bends it to his will.

SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Produced by:** Kevin McMahon and Adam Reich
Recorded at: Excello Recording and The Bakery, Brooklyn; Marcata Recording, New Paltz, NY; The Soul Shop, Medford, Massachusetts
Personnel includes: Patrick Stickles (vocals, chord organ, electronics, guitar, harmonica, glockenspiel), Adam Reich (lead guitar, vocals, organ, piano, glockenspiel), Eric Harm (drums, vocals), Julian Veronesi (bass, vocals), Jonah Maurer (guitar), Elio DeLuca (piano, organ), Owen Pallett (violin, viola), Yoni David (percussion)

Q&A

Patrick Stickles on the poetry of the universe

SO, YOUR NEW album, *The Most Lamentable Tragedy...* TMLT. That's what I call it. Like "tumult". Like the tumultuous state that all life is permanently affixed in.

So it's intended to be an acronym?

Primarily, it's an allusion to the Shakespeare play from which we named our band – but it also turned out to be an acronym. I didn't know about the acronym when we had the notion it might be the title, but when I realised the acronym was there – and what the acronym said – then it was a lock. I took that as a sign from the universe, a secret message that was hidden from me, in the works of Shakespeare. If only we had the eyes to see it and the ears to hear it, because the poetry of the universe is being spoken around us all the time.

Shakespeare is an enduring influence for you. The thing about it is...

hold on a second [mutters to someone]... Sorry, that's our new pianist, Elio DeLuca, he's just joined the band. We're a six-piece band now. He's played as session musician on every record we've done, but now he's a full-time member of the band. We're not kidding around any more. He's put his chips down. But he spent the night at my apartment, we did our first little recording last night on the radio. But anyway, what I was going to say about the Bard – your old buddy from Stratford-upon-Avon – is that when I was a young guy, in my small town where I grew up there was a very influential drama teacher named Okey Canfield Chenoweth III. He's still alive, but he's super-old – he must be 85 now, I guess. This guy was a mad scientist of theatre, all the artsy-fartsy people looked up to him. He retired when I was in the fourth grade, but I was lucky enough to study under him for two years. And he basically laid the foundation for my understanding of the artist's job. Always tell the truth, first things first. And if the truth doesn't get you there, then you've got to raise the stakes. Those were his big lessons. And that was the beginning of my education as an artist. I actually went over his house with my four-track, and he performed some readings that appeared on our first two albums – on the first album he read from Camus' *L'Étranger*, and on the second album, our Civil War album [*The Monitor*], he read from the writings of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the USA.

Why did you decide to write a rock opera? Well,

when you get right down to it, when you call an album a rock opera, that's the first indication this isn't just a regular run-of-the-mill record to put on while you're making dinner. There are a lot of elevator music bands out there today making our money, and that's what a lot of people look for in music – an opiate you can use to tune out at the end of a long and humiliating day. I want it to be abundantly clear to even the most casual observer that we have no interest in entering ourselves into that contest. We are not in

"We are not in competition with bands who treat music as a fucking tranquiliser"

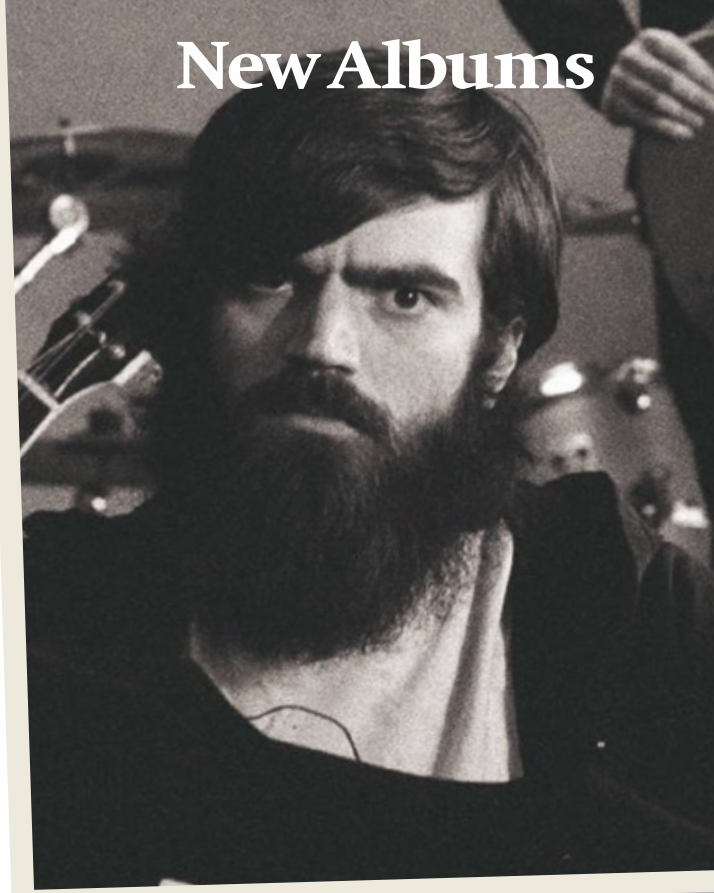
competition with those bands who treat music as a fucking tranquiliser, or for people to put on like some kind of status symbol – collecting these bands like Pokémon, or some fucking charm bracelet, you know? We're trying to do everything we can to alienate ourselves from that whole thing. We went out of our way to make a record that wouldn't fit into any narrative, to any zeitgeist – that would create its own zeitgeist. To us, this is heaven – and heaven is a place on earth, right? So that's one part of it. The whole "fuck everybody" part. We're not going to be a pawn in anyone's game.

Describing *The Most Lamentable Tragedy*, you invoke the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or "total artwork". What does that say about what you're trying to achieve? Well, even though we work in a particular idiom, rock'n'roll in this case, that's not the length or width of our interests. We are interested in other things. And as a vocalist who, in my more pretentious moments, talks of what I do in literary terms, I'm trying to curate a certain emotional experience for the listener. When you put the album on, I want you to surrender – in the same way that you might to a great movie, or a book. The way that I am overjoyed to surrender to Lars Von Trier, or Louis CK, or Alan Moore. Anyone who is fearless, or stretching the boundaries of the field that they

are working in. I love "Tutti Frutti" and fucking "Louie Louie", and you'd better believe at the end of "Louie Louie" I'm fucking grateful. But it's not the same experience you get when you're immersed in a great book, or the feeling you get when you've seen a great movie and it's shaken up your interior. They light a spark in your brain. I'm a musician and we're a fucking rock'n'roll band,

and that's the number one thing. But at the same time I still want to do to people what the artists I just described did to me. Artists who wanted to take us on a ride. Whatever the hell we're doing, whatever the format is – whether it's a rock album, movie, television sitcom – it's all just to get the audience member to a certain emotional point, or lead them on an emotional journey.

INTERVIEW: LOUIS PATTISON





TRACKLIST

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1 | Levitation |
| 2 | Sparks |
| 3 | Space Song |
| 4 | Beyond Love |
| 5 | 10:37 |
| 6 | PPP |
| 7 | Wildflower |
| 8 | Bluebird |
| 9 | Days Of Candy |

BEACH HOUSE
Depression Cherry

BELLA UNION

Baltimore pair return to a sparser template with graceful, nuanced fifth. *By Jason Anderson*

8/10 AT NO POINT on Beach House’s last two albums, *Teen Dream* (2010) and *Bloom* (2012), did Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally overcomplicate matters – for instance, none of the songs required the services of a symphony orchestra or a guest appearance by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. And yet, as their popularity grew with those albums, the Baltimore duo sometimes seemed to struggle to preserve the feeling of intimacy that was so enchanting on their self-titled 2006 debut and its follow-up, 2008’s *Devotion*. Their beguiling, languid dreampop, born out of wee-hours bedroom recording, by necessity swelled into something that was large enough to fill concert halls and festival fields; a journey that took Beach House and its music to “a place farther from our natural tendencies”, as the two have collectively admitted. With fifth album *Depression Cherry*, then, they head back to square one, stripping away the layers

of guitars, keyboards, effects and vocals that made up *Bloom*’s wall of sound. In their place come simpler, sparser arrangements and a whole lot more room to breathe. On the album’s most spectral moments, Legrand doesn’t seem to sing the songs so much as exhale them. With its spoken intro and signature coo, the mesmerising “PPP” even evokes the narcoleptic girl-group pop of Phil Spector’s eeriest early hit, the Paris Sisters’ “I Love How You Love Me”. Crucially, this simplification process has meant dusting off the drum machines that supplied the rudimentary rhythms on their early works. The songs on *Depression Cherry* are very much designed to be about everything but the beat, which is a good thing given the skeletal click-track-like template underpinning the songs. It might seem unlikely that this kind of no-frills structural support would be sufficient for something as sumptuous as “Beyond Love”, but it in fact enhances the song’s other parts.



Q&A

Alex Scally



Why the decision to pare down the Beach House sound and get back to the drum machines? It was a natural process for us.

We were yearning to put a certain level of communication and depth into the music. Drums make everybody turn up and sometimes that leads to a certain feeling that is not necessarily the right feeling. Victoria and I can feel like we can't be ourselves if there are drums in the room as it makes you sing hard and you don't hear the subtlety of a guitar part – you have to play simpler and clearer due to all the noise.

Were you also curious about what these rudimentary rhythm tracks would create?

Drums are such a complicated thing so this has been a huge thought for us. I was listening to Sly's *There's A Riot Goin' On*. Funk and soul have always been rooted in the drums, but he was like, "I don't want drums – I want this drum machine." There's this other mystical thing that the drum machine creates and it's all over that record.

You weren't trying to escape the tyranny of all that is big and beautiful in modern music? I don't think we're a reaction to anything today. But maybe it is, as the sound of computer quantisation is so domineering. Everything gets made on this crazy grid. Then again, that's what people like now. We were at a show a few years ago and the band playing had an all-electronic sound – you could really feel that grid. The crowd was pulsing and excited. Then this rock band came on with guitar and drums and it was all loose, baggy and human, and everyone just sat down! I thought, 'Damn, these are the times we're in.' *INTERVIEW: JASON ANDERSON*

And since the percussive and rhythmic components get so much less emphasis than they do on the majority of contemporary music, the boldest songs gain their force from other elements, like Scally's thicket of fuzz guitar in "Sparks" or the cascading keyboard notes in "Space Song".

Of course, this sort of well-intentioned return-to-first-principles move is often stymied by the fact that it's not so easy to forget all the lessons and habits that have been learned in the interim. Thankfully, it's to *Depression Cherry*'s great advantage that Legrand and Scally are able to incorporate *Bloom*'s level of songwriting sophistication and strong understanding of dynamics into their original, sparser template. As a result, by reducing the scope and rediscovering the value of nuance, Beach House end up sounding bigger and better than ever before.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the songs that bookend the album. In "Levitation", the looping swirls of guitar and endlessly sustained organ notes foster an intoxicating feeling of suspension. Yet whereas some of the duo's other songs succumb to inertia, this one keeps surging forward. Legrand's fragmentary lyrics ponder the fleeting nature of even our most ardent passions, yet as forlorn as her voice can sound, she once again emphasises the

need to celebrate the moments at hand. "*There is no right time*," she sings.

What with that *carpe-diem* attitude, a less sensitive group may very well have been tempted to enlist a children's choir for "Days Of Candy", a ghostly closer that suggests what The Beach Boys' "Our Prayer" might have sounded like if Cocteau Twins had covered it on *Treasure*. Again, the canny arrangement of carefully selected elements – multi-tracked voices, plaintive piano notes, a guitar filigree and churchy organ chords – creates an unexpected grandeur. There's also a feeling of delicacy, something that could have easily been

overwhelmed had there been a conventional amount of low-end ballast. However chintzy it may initially seem, the Bontempi-style rhythm track is exactly what's needed.

And, as Legrand murmurs in the song's climactic stages, "*Just like that, it's gone*." Together with her Beach House partner, she's always excelled at holding on to those temporary moments of transcendence and preserving them in amber. But rarely before have the pair achieved that with this much grace and finesse.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Recorded at:** Studio In The Country, Bogalusa, Louisiana
Produced by: Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally with Chris Coady
Personnel: Victoria Legrand (vocals, keyboards, organ, piano), Alex Scally (guitars, bass, organ, piano, keyboards)

AtoZ

COMING UP THIS MONTH...

p70 YO LA TENGO

p72 LINDI ORTEGA

p73 FOUR TET

p74 IRIS DeMENT

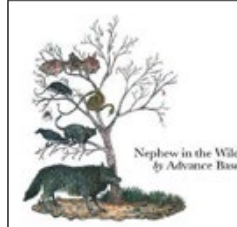
p75 BUDDY GUY

p78 MOTÖRHEAD

p79 DESTROYER

p82 DRINKS

p83 ULTIMATE PAINTING



ADVANCE BASE

Nephew In The Wild

TOMLAB

Bleak misses from an Illinois basement

7/10

Owen Ashworth (ex-Casiotone For The Painfully Alone) has been busy – in the three years since his debut, *A Shut-in's Prayer*, he's published an art book, produced for his label Orindal and worked with Sun Kil Moon. His second album as Advance Base is a lugubrious lo-fi treat, from the bleary regret of opener "Trisha Please Come Home" to the beautifully observed "Christmas In Dearborn". The closing "Kitty Winn" hints, mournfully, that Ashworth has abandoned excess for parenthood, but his wit, and knack for a confessional melody, are intact.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



AMASON

Sky City

FAIRFAX

Sleek sounds from Scandi supergroup

7/10

More than half of the elegant debut by this Swedish collective – which includes members of Miike Snow and Dungen – sounds like a belated companion piece to Fleetwood Mac's *Tango In The Night*. "Duvan", "Kelly" and "Yellow Moon" glide by on sleek, languorous grooves, buoyed by the coolly contained vocals of Amanda Bergman and Gustav Ejstes. Although *Sky City* takes detours through the Plastic Ono Band ("Elefanten"), mid-'80s U2 ("Pink Amason") and Brill Building balladry ("The Moon As A Kite"), its most persuasive setting is deluxe drive-time melancholia, purring with understated classicism.

GRAEME THOMSON

YO LA TENGO

Stuff Like That There

MATADOR

‘Fakebook 2’: quality covers and curios galore. *By Tom Pinnock*



8/10

THREE-QUARTERS OF the way through one of their finest albums, 1997's *I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One*, Yo La Tengo move from the breezy bossa-nova of “Center Of Gravity” straight into “Spec Bebob”,

a borderline-unlistenable 10-minute jam between drums and distorted organ. It's a typical spin between extremes for a group who have often found it hard to keep things simple.

So far, the only moment on record where they've resisted the urge to demonstrate their full – and admittedly thrilling – range is 1990's *Fakebook*, their mainly acoustic fourth album. With Georgia Hubley and Ira Kaplan joined by Dave Schramm on electric guitar and Al Greller on double bass, the record is still a low-key delight, a fan favourite warmer and more intimate than anything else the group have produced.

Developed by Kaplan and Hubley during stripped-down radio sessions promoting the previous year's *President Yo La Tengo* album, *Fakebook* included adept covers of songs by the likes of Cat Stevens, John Cale and The Kinks, reworked versions of older YLT songs such as “Barnaby, Hardly Working” and a handful of brand new tracks, including the effortless, sublime opener “Can't Forget”. A follow-up to the album, then – a ‘Fakebook 2’, if you like – is a surprising, though very welcome move for Yo La Tengo to make 25 years later.

Stuff Like That There mimics its forebear in nearly every way, welcoming back Dave Schramm on guitar, though this time alongside longtime YLT bassist James McNew. Throughout, Schramm's playing is a delight, his electric guitar swathed in delay and tremolo on “Deeper Into Movies”, and his slide achingly quicksilver on a cover of Hank Williams' “I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry”.

The gorgeous version of Great Plains' “Before We Stopped To Think”, sung by Kaplan, is a sure high-point, but the most affecting, heartbreaking songs on *Stuff* are all sung by Hubley, whose voice seems to have grown richer and more melancholy with each passing year of the past quarter-century. On the evidence of her performances here on Darlene McCrea's country ballad “My Heart's Not In It”, Antietam's stately “Naples” and especially “I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry”, she's stealthily become one of America's most quietly impressive vocalists. A hushed take on “Deeper Into Movies”, originally a fuzzy highlight of *I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One*, even utilises the classic Yo La Tengo trick of having Kaplan and Hubley harmonise, except with the guitarist taking the higher part and Hubley the lower.

Of the two new songs, “Rickety” is almost acoustic motorik – on a more orthodox Yo La Tengo album, it would perhaps end up as a close relation of *Summer Sun*'s “Little Eyes” – while



SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Recorded at:** Water Music, Hoboken, NJ; Kaleidoscope, Union City, NJ; Brooklyn Recording, Brooklyn, NY

Personnel: Ira Kaplan (guitar, vocals), Georgia Hubley (drums, vocals), James McNew (bass, vocals), Dave Schramm (guitar)

Yo La Tengo today: (l-r) Dave Schramm, Ira Kaplan, Georgia Hubley, James McNew

“Awhileaway” is a pretty, waltzing ballad that would have sat well on 2000's tender *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out*.

Not all of the songs work, however – the band's take on The Cure's “Friday I'm In Love” sticks out as a little too predictable and rushed among its subtler neighbours. Indeed, as seems to be the case with most sequels, *Stuff Like That There* can't quite match up to *Fakebook*. For all the album's strengths, something – novelty, most likely – is often lost when a trick is repeated, no matter how

successful it was the first time around.

Yet these are minor gripes – on the majority of *Stuff Like That There*, Yo La Tengo are able to recapture the magic of those sessions a quarter of a century ago, and introduce us to some more underrated classics. Alone with

its stylistic predecessor in their catalogue, *Stuff* is a comforting listen, startlingly consistent in mood and featuring some of Yo La Tengo's – and especially Georgia Hubley's – most touching moments. Frankly, it would be churlish to refuse a second helping.

Q&A

Ira Kaplan



Why did you decide to revisit *Fakebook* as a concept after 25 years?

We often play acoustically and we do lots of covers anyway, so I think we'd circled around

[the idea] and gotten kind of near it almost constantly. Then the idea came up and it felt right. We didn't really question it much more deeply than that. But I think for a while we felt the need to establish that we were not that band, that even when we made *Fakebook*, that was a side of us, but not the whole band. Even at the time, *Fakebook* wasn't a plan or a strategy, it just seemed to make sense in the moment.

How did you go about choosing the covers?

There's a number that we have done fairly steadily over the years, then once we knew this was what we were gonna do, a bunch of new ideas just flooded into us – the Parliaments song, the Darlene McCrea song... We also did a Sun City Girls song that didn't end up on the record.

Georgia's voice seems to be getting richer as time goes on...

Very quickly it became apparent to all of us that we wanted her to sing more on this record than she's ever sung. I mean, she's definitely carrying the singing. With something like “Naples”, she did more than in the past to make sure she was singing in a key that she felt comfortable in – we do it in a different key than Antietam did. In the first song, when I hear her sing “My heart's not in it,” my heart just melts.

INTERVIEW: TOM PINNOCK



ARTHUR'S LANDING Second Thoughts BUDDHIST ARMY

Arthur Russell's old friends classily revisit his back catalogue
The niche industry that's grown around Arthur

7/10

Russell's music may have finite potential, as the trove of unreleased material nears exhaustion. This collateral project, however, helps fill the gap: a bunch of his associates from the downtown NY scene, reworking his old music. Illustrious players like Peter Zummo, Peter Gordon and Ernie Brooks prove adept at recapturing Russell's weightless art-disco ("Planted A Thought", "Change My Life") and his even more ethereal singer-songwriter side ("Lost In Thought", "It's A Boy"). Steven Hall, meanwhile (an ex of Allen Ginsberg), is a suitably limpid vocal sub for Russell. A second CD, of empathetic remixes, rounds out this respectful, groovy tribute to an enduring musical innovator.

JOHN MULVEY



RAYLAND BAXTER Imaginary Man ATO

Strong sophomore LP from son of ex-Dylan bandmate Bucky Baxter
Atmospheric, heart-rending and infused with

8/10

myriad old souls, *Imaginary Man* is a richly dramatic, poignant singer-songwriter opus. Influences – Dylan, Young, Van, etc – are barely hidden, yet the album succeeds through its stirring vocals, rich sonic depths and dazzling songwriting, which ranges from the solitary and wistful to the dirge-like and menacing. The quieter songs are dark classics in waiting – the psychologically slippery "All In My Head" comes on like a lost Roy Orbison single – while the more ambitious cuts, such as "Yellow Eyes" and "Oh My Captain", with its melodic shades of Dylan's "Señor", mix tales of love, grief and crisis with sweeping pop hooks.

LUKE TORN



THE CAIRO GANG Goes Missing GOD?/DRAG CITY

Will Oldham henchman relocates the Fifth Dimension

8/10

Emmett Kelly's career has been a predominantly stealthy one, mostly as guitar-playing foil and songwriting accomplice of Bonnie 'Prince' Billy. These past few years, however, Kelly's own Cairo Gang project has blossomed, with the rich jangles of this fifth album a notable career high. The Byrds are a constant touchstone, so much so that "Be What You Are" and "Ice Fishing" briefly threaten to become, respectively, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and "Eight Miles High". Beyond the Rickenbackers, *Goes Missing* also encompasses moptop abandon and a faintly Syd-like whimsy, marking out Kelly as an imaginative retro-pop craftsman to stand comparison with his labelmate, Tim Presley of White Fence.

JOHN MULVEY



ZACHARY CALE Duskland NO QUARTER

Solid fifth outing by undervalued Brooklyn strummer
The title perhaps oversells the portentous

6/10

gloom schtick, but *Duskland* is at least a useful indicator of Zachary Cale's preferred palette of dark blues and shades of grey. These are sighs as much as songs, with Cale's voice rarely wavering into anything more obviously declarative than a half-snarl, half-mumble. Bleak though *Duskland* is, it's also pretty, frequently evoking Bob Dylan as produced by Daniel Lanois, or the more fragile moments of Ryan Adams and Conor Oberst. "I Left The Old Cell" and "Changing Horses" hint at an intriguing, barely suppressed instinct for the epic.

ANDREW MUELLER

HOW TO BUY... DAVE CLOUD & THE GOSPEL OF POWER



Napoleon Of Temperance

FIRE, 2006

Cloud tore up Nashville's dive bars as a live act through the '80s and '90s, but didn't start recording

until '99's *Songs I Will Always Sing*, first released on Matt "Lambchop" Swanson's Thee Swan label. That's anthologised beside 2004 follow-up *All My Best* on this 45-track retrospective, stuffed with grindingly funny odes to women, booze and, on "Puff Rider", dogs!

7/10



Pleasure Before Business

FIRE, 2008

The gravel-track vocals could make anything sound filthy, not least the lyrics found on "Orgy" and "You Don't Need Sex". The lineup

here features Tony Crow (Lambchop, Silver Jews) and, implausibly, Cardigan Nina Persson, who duets on a pulsating "Land Of A Thousand Dances". Cloud never strayed too far from his primitivist psych-garage template, but this is technically and sonically slicker.

7/10



Fever

FIRE, 2009

Recorded in Stoke Newington, London, with Swanson's ever-shifting GOP lineup, this beautifully sleazy pick crystallises Cloud's post-Beefheart, Nick-

Cave-reading-Viz ethic. Audiophile it ain't; the one-take feel of "The Citadel", and bastardised Peggy Lee title track capture the stand-up surrealism of his live show, while the animal theme continues on "Surfer Joe": "Did I say Calypso? Button up your lips-o."

8/10

MARK BENTLEY



LAURA CANNELL Beneath Swooping Talons

FRONT & FOLLOW

H Is For Hawk: the album?

Given the boom in experimental nature writing over the past

7/10

decade, it doesn't seem unreasonable to anticipate a corroborative response from music-makers. Laura Cannell is a case in point: a violin and recorder player based in the East Anglian hinterlands, whose music evokes the landscape and elements without much recourse to trad folk tropes. If anything, the sawing drones she favours are closer in spirit to John Cale or Tony Conrad, albeit touched with an early-music austerity, while her woodwind extemporisations have an almost jazz-like flightiness, at once uncanny and serene. One to file alongside another leftfield gem reissued this year, *Music For Church Cleaners* by organist Áine O'Dwyer.

JOHN MULVEY



DAVE CLOUD & THE GOSPEL OF POWER Today Is The Day That They Take Me Away

FIRE

Final slice of nutjob garage-psych from Nashville renegade

8/10

Cloud's death in February at just 58 robbed music of one of its genuine outliers. Lionised by those who knew him (Harmony Korine cast him in two movies), Cloud spent decades heroically dodging opportunity's knock. He's been dubbed "the last truly undiscovered lost genius" and this 27-track album, finished weeks before he died, is a perfect summation of his oddball power. Cloud specialised in grinding garage riffs, wrecked melodies and mordantly funny lyrics – witness the awesome "Bimbo" and "He Not A She". Fans of Waits, Beefheart, Reigning Sound, Jay Reatard and The Gun Club should rejoice in his strong final work.

MARK BENTLEY



CHRIS CONNOLLY Alameda

CALDO VERDE

Elegant nocturnes from Sun Kil Moon piano man

For those long-term Mark Kozelek fans perturbed by the abrasive textures of

7/10

Universal Themes or his misogynist rants, Chris Connolly's second solo LP may act as a soothing balm. Connolly is a regular Kozelek collaborator, and mainstay of Desertshore. His solo work, though, centres around piano reveries that bracket him alongside post-classical tyros such as Nils Frahm. Connolly can handle the romantic flurries, with "Fantasy" a strong stab at updating Ravel. Unlike many contemporaries, however, he has a looser, more playful side close, on the likes of "Blue Waltz", to jazzier explorers like George Winston. The self-explanatory "Electro" suggests he could productively pursue an alternative career as a quaintly baroque Harold Faltermeyer.

JOHN MULVEY

AMERICANA



BEST
OF THE
MONTH



LINDI ORTEGA **Faded Gloryville**

LAST GANG/THE GRAND TOUR

The return of Nashville's woman in black

Lindi Ortega left her native Toronto for Nashville in 2011, having spent a decade on the Canadian indie scene. Music City, or at least the hipper side of town, seems like an ideal fit for someone with her particular skill set: country songs spiked with a little voodoo blues and a persuasive voice capable of running the yards between a sob and a scream. Her last album, 2013's terrific *Tin Star*, brought a fair deal of attention, though its thematic concern, ironically enough, was the difficulty of trying to make yourself heard amid the competitive clamour of Nashville. It can't hurt to have a great look

8/10

too, of course. In her case, this meant black outfits and a widow's veil, set off by zingy red boots. Wonder Woman meets Johnny Cash, as Ortega puts it.

Faded Gloryville might be the record to finally break her to a wider audience. It's certainly astute in its choice of moods, Ortega sounding like a classic throwback one minute – loaded with the same alluring mix of vulnerability and resilience that once defined the work of Dottie West or Loretta Lynn – and a country-soul beacon the next. Both the title track and “Ashes” are dissolute ballads with genuine country pedigree, embellished with a little twangy guitar. “Someday Soon” and a horn-tipped cover of The Bee Gees’ “To Love Somebody”, by contrast, suggest that her spiritual home might be closer to Muscle Shoals (in fact, the latter is one of three tracks co-produced there with Alabama Shakes keyboard player Ben Tanner).

If the first half of the album doesn't quite fire up with the same ferocity as its predecessor, fans of *Tin Star* will be pleased to hear that it gathers pace soon afterwards. The badass “Run A Muck” is old-school roots'n'roll about an errant lover, while “I Ain't The Girl” summons the countrybilly spirit of Wanda Jackson to declare that Ortega would rather shack up with a long-haired trucker than the clean-cut boy next door. **ROB HUGHES**



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

➤ After the success of last year's Big Bill Broonzy tribute, *Common Ground*, brothers **Dave and Phil Alvin** have been sharp in producing a follow-up. The aptly titled *Lost*

Time – prior to *Common Ground*, the two ex-Blasters hadn't recorded together in 30 years – finds them paying tribute to other formative influences, including Lead Belly, Otis Rush and James Brown. It's Big Joe Turner who looms largest, though, as the siblings cover four of his tunes, among them “Hide And Seek” and “Wee Baby Blues”. Due on Yep Roc in mid-September.

The same month sees the return of US roots stylist **Patty Griffin**. **Servant**

Of Love, her 10th album, continues her collaboration with producer Craig Ross and promises a “larger narrative of the human place in nature, in society and in time”, via folk tales, blues cants and jazzy exploration.

On the live front, catching **Sturgill Simpson** on his UK jaunt this August is pretty much essential. The Nashville troubadour calls in at Edinburgh, Leeds and London's Islington Assembly Hall, then winds up with an appearance at the Green Man Festival. Also recommended is ex-Old Crow Medicine Show man **Willie Watson**, who tours his David Rawlings-produced debut, *Folk Singer Vol 1*, in late July and early August. The dates include two shows at the Southern Fried Festival in Perth, where Watson shares billing with Rhiannon Giddens, The Fairfield Four, Chris Smither and others. **ROB HUGHES**



COWBOY LOVERS

Cowboy Lovers

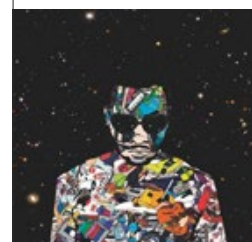
LBW

Metal-tinged garage debut from Spanish two-piece

6/10

This Alicante duo aren't exactly ripping up the garage-rock songbook on their debut, but there's nothing wrong with tracks like the brilliantly dumb “J”, or the bleak, percussion-led “Jungle Megatron”. Recorded in Liam Watson's Toe Rag Studio, this album comes out on Watson's new label, with Cowboy Lovers his first signing. The heavy drums and guitar heroics put it firmly on the metal side of garage, so tracks like “Poor Lord” and the coruscating “Acid Queen” have a real Black Sabbath-meets-Hawkwind vibe, while “I'm So Easy” strives, not unsuccessfully, for a bit more subtlety.

PETER WATTS



SEVEN DAVIS JR **Universes**

NINJA TUNE

Experimental R&B from northern California

Seven Davis Jr – known to his mother as Sam Davis – joins a burgeoning genre of futuristic

7/10

producers who seem to take their cue from the late J Dilla. His debut for Ninja Tune uses a lot of Dilla-ish tropes: mutilated fragments of R&B songs and ghostly analogue synthesisers are placed upon a precarious foundation of wonky, unquantised beats. What could be esoteric electronica is lifted by Davis' creamy, often harmonised baritone voice, which turns experiments such as “No Worries” and “Everybody Too Cool” into compelling pop confection. The wonderfully disjointed a cappella “Fighters” and the Kraftwerk-ish “Freedom” hint at deeper projects to come.

JOHN LEWIS



MAC DEMARCO

Another One

CAPTURED TRACKS

Playful mini-album from slacker kid du jour

7/10

In just three years, Mac DeMarco has gone from Bandcamp curio to festival main-stager, and a parade of imitators (Travis Bretzer, Jackson Scott) has flourished in his woozy wake. But even on stopgap releases like this relatively repetitive mini-album, DeMarco's lysergic balladry and hangdog puppy love have an unbeatable effortlessness. The louche guitars on “The Way You'd Love Her” and “Just To Put Me Down” swoop over like an expectant suitor across a dancefloor, while the dusky jewelled synths of the title track and “A Heart Like Hers” seem to slow time, aligning DeMarco with fellow sincerity perverter Ariel Pink.

LAURA SNAPES



DERADOORIAN The Expanding Flower Planet ANTICON

Incantatory vocal psych from ex-Dirty Projector
Soon after Dirty Projectors' breakout album, *Bitte Orca*, bassist and vocalist Angel

7/10

Deradoorian seemed to be disentangling herself from David Longstreth's knotty stratagems – she released a spooked EP, “Mind Raft”, in 2009, and seemed destined for an illustrious solo career. It's taken six years, though, for her debut album to materialise, after a stint in Avey Tare's band and guest slots with The Roots, Flying Lotus and, bizarrely, Brandon Flowers. There's a sense that the psych electronica of *The Expanding Flower Planet* has been superseded by the work of Julia Holter and Grimes, among others. Nevertheless, the ornate multitracked chorales retain a heady intensity – not least on “Violet Minded”, strong kin to the Dirty Projectors' “Stillness Is The Move”.
JOHN MULVEY



ENVY Atheist's Cornea ROCK ACTION

Turbulent post-hardcore from Tokyo quintet
A presence on Mogwai's Rock Action label since around 2001, it's easy to see what Stuart Braithwaite

6/10

and clan might hear in Envy. While rooted in hardcore punk, their music combines both melodic prettiness and exploded structure, progressive in spirit but designed to pluck heartstrings. Crashing riffs toss vocalist Tetsuya Fukagawa around like a dinghy in a tsunami, his delivery veering between gutsy roars and lip-quivering spoken word. Moments like “Shining Finger” adopt a saccharine feel that J-rock is often fond of, and *Atheist's Cornea* fares best when shooting for extremes: see “Ticking Time And String”, which, following four minutes of mighty Sturm und Drang, becomes a folksy lament borne up on sobbing strings.
LOUIS PATTISON



TAV FALCO & PANTHER BURNS Command Performance TWENTY STONE BLATT/PROPER

6/10

Spirited set from the Falco it's OK to like

Tav Falco has spent nearly four decades cultivating the aura of rock'n'roll overlord of demi-monde Bohemia, generally more effectively onstage than on record. *Command Performance* is another helping of the familiar Panther Burns stew of blues, surf and psychedelia, this time laced with a measure of Motown/Northern Soul, especially on the opening track, a cover of Ed Cobb's “Breakaway” (originally recorded by Toni Basil). As ever, Falco is a better interpreter than songwriter: the dreadful pro-Snowden “Whistle Blower” suggests that protest song is not his natural métier.
ANDREW MUELLER



C DUNCAN Architect FAT CAT

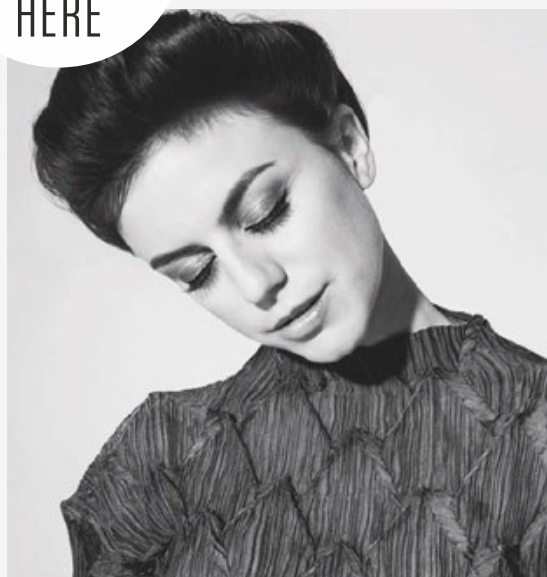
Glaswegian multi-instrumentalist converts his bedroom studio into a cathedral

8/10

The son of two classical musicians, Chris Duncan combines his formal musical training with a teenage passion for indie rock to forge a model of chamber dreampop on this ravishing debut album. Fleet Foxes fans will welcome his choral harmonies, while the expansive production recalls The Free Design's innocence, but this thoughtful collection is far more complex than that. Indeed, “Say” and “For” could be a British Sufjan Stevens in arcadian mood, while “Garden” and “Here To There” are full of a rapturous, agile energy. Delicate electronic embellishments add further depth to the blissful “Silence And Air”.
WYNDHAM WALLACE

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Deradoorian



➤ Angel Deradoorian says cutting loose from Dirty Projectors to make her debut solo album has been “more liberating than frightening”, but still a big leap. “I think it's hard to be more in the limelight with my music,” she explains. “Something I'm still adjusting to quite a bit. It's worth it for me, though.”

Six years have passed since Deradoorian released her first solo EP, “Mind Raft”. Now 28, with the Dirty Projectors on sabbatical, she has finally found time to record a full album, a feast of kaleidoscopic folktronica called *The Expanding Flower Planet*. “I didn't have any expectation of when to release another record,” she explains, “so I took the time I needed to make the album I wanted.” She credits her Armenian-American family's musical heritage as a key influence on the album. “I resonate with those melodic or modal structures on a physical and spiritual level,” she says.

Deradoorian's future plans include a US tour with Laetitia Sadier, followed by European dates and hopefully a second album. Does that mean she has left Dirty Projectors for good? “I really don't know. If the opportunity comes up I would definitely consider it. We are all just doing our own musical things right now.”
STEPHEN DALTON



ELEVENTH DREAM DAY Works For Tomorrow THRILL JOCKEY

Frequently molten 13th from Chicago veterans
For over three decades, Eleventh Dream Day have

8/10

been quietly reconfiguring rock classicism; a Chicago analogue to Yo La Tengo, perhaps, with Rick Rizzo a guitar virtuoso in the wild but discreet mould of Ira Kaplan. An enduring tenacity runs through *Works For Tomorrow*, one of the best and feistiest entries in their catalogue. Rizzo's soloing is less Neil-inspired than usual, and his partnership with new recruit James Elkington (last seen in Jeff Tweedy and Steve Gunn's bands) results in Television-esque twin-guitar chuggers like “Go Tell It”. Kudos, too, for an inspired cover of Judy Henske & Jerry Yester's “Snowblind”, in which drummer Janet Beveridge Bean reveals her inner Grace Slick.
JOHN MULVEY

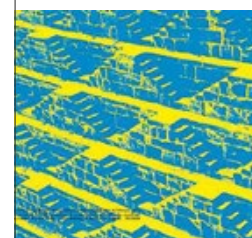


FLY GOLDEN EAGLE Quartz Bijou ATO

Thin, middling pseudo-psych-rock via Tennessee

5/10

Nashville's Fly Golden Eagle tick some of the right boxes, particularly with the story behind *Quartz Bijou* – the album was inspired by Alejandro Jodorowsky's 1973 psychedelic movie, *The Holy Mountain*, one of the most excessive, ecstatic and visually dazzling films of its era. They've also contributed to records by Alabama Shakes and Hurray For The Riff Raff. But *Quartz Bijou* doesn't fire – it feels like a series of half-baked ideas, songs that pivot on sleepy riffs, or meander into tired generic retreads. There are a few lovely moments – “Tangible Intangible” is adrift in reverbed melancholy – but the whole is hardly compelling.
JON DALE



FOUR TET Morning/Evening TEXT

Circadian rhythms: Kieran Hebden salutes the sun

8/10

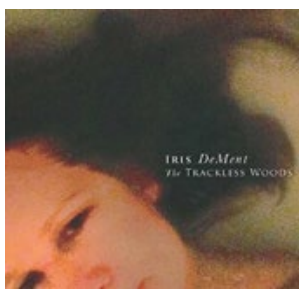
Having emerged as one-third of post-rock band Fridge, Kieran Hebden made his name doing everything from pioneering so-called folktronica to touring in support of Radiohead. He's been clubbier since 2010's excellent *There Is Love In You*, but *Morning/Evening* – released early “to celebrate the summer solstice” – is less frenetic and abrasive than 2013's rave-influenced *Beautiful Rewind*. Instead, we have two 20-minute pieces, the first soundtracking a sunrise with warm sonics, house-indebted beats and a vocal sample reminiscent of Eno/Byrne's *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*. “Evening” is appropriately darker and, for the first half, more ambient, with sublime, subtle vocals. Radiant stuff.
MARCUS O'DAIR

IRIS DeMENT

The Trackless Woods

FLARIELLA

Poetry and motion: US folk-country maven meets revered Russian bard. *By Rob Hughes*



8/10

IRIS DEMENT AND Anna Akhmatova would appear to have very little in common, at least on the surface. Anna Akhmatova was a Russian aristocrat whose rebel poetry documented the sweeping changes in her homeland during the first half

of the 20th Century. Hers was a remarkable and troubled life, one that mapped and endured a catalogue of hardships and horrors.

Her first husband was executed by the secret police, another perished in the Gulag. Her son was twice interned in Siberian labour camps. She witnessed many of her close friends and fellow writers suffer similar fates. Deemed subversive in the post-Revolutionary era, Akhmatova's poetry was banned in Stalinist Russia, and much of her life was spent in poverty, surviving largely on the kindness of colleagues and strangers.

DeMent was five years old when Akhmatova died in 1966. Born in Arkansas as the youngest of 14 children, she was by then living in Southern California, where her Pentecostal upbringing exposed her to gospel and church music. The notion of family and roots has been a defining thread in DeMent's musical life, one whose modest output – 2012's *Sing The Delta* was only her fifth album in 20 years – gives an indication of the unhurried diligence with which she approaches her art.

Family, perhaps inevitably, served as the impetus for *The Trackless Woods*. As an adoptive parent of a Russian daughter, DeMent (whose husband Greg Brown is himself a songwriter of some repute) sought to bridge a connection when a friend sent her a book of Akhmatova's verse. DeMent was immediately struck by the sorrowful clarity of the poems, whose trials of human fortitude, she felt, lent themselves to song.

DeMent set about putting Akhmatova's words to music at home in rural Iowa, working out arrangements at the piano before calling in a small cadre of musicians as back-up. The band she assembled – including co-producer Richard Bennett on guitar – turns out to be a discreet presence on *The Trackless Woods*. The overriding tones are piano and voice, investing these songs with the textural intimacy of parlour hymns. It's a tactic that succeeds on two fronts. Not only does it allow plenty of room to appreciate the subtle cadences in DeMent's voice (this is a woman, lest we forget, once dubbed "the best singer I've ever heard" by none other than Merle Haggard), but it also means that Akhmatova's words ring lucid and pure.

If there's one thing that both women have in common, it's a certain graceful forbearance. Akhmatova lived through appalling things, but her writing refuses to sink into bitterness or self-pity. DeMent likewise seems to have an intuitive understanding of this, bringing a warmth and



SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Recorded at:** Iris DeMent's living room, Iowa City, Iowa
Produced by: Richard Bennett and Iris DeMent
Personnel includes: Iris DeMent (piano, vocals), Richard Bennett (elec guitar, gut string guitar), Jon Graboff (pedal steel, mandolin), Dave Jacques (acoustic bass), Bryan Owlings (perc), Leo Kottke (guitar on "From An Airplane"), Bo Ramsey (guitar), Greg Brown (vocal harmonies)

gentility to her words that attempts to locate a human heart amid a cavity of cold truths. "Broad Gold", for instance, is essentially a love song about the absence of love. "Not With Deserters", meanwhile, speaks of home and the importance of preserving identity. Despite everything, Akhmatova never turned her back on Russia, refusing to follow some of her peers into exile.

"Dark your road, O wanderer," sings DeMent, accompanied by a bluesy guitar that is so delicate it's hardly there. "*Of wormwood smacks your alien bread.*"

The Trackless Woods is one of those wonderful records that reveals more of itself with each successive play. DeMent's vocals and white-gospel

piano are so engaging that, at first, it's possible to completely miss the soft imprint of a jazz shuffle on, say, "Like A White Stone". Or maybe the chime-like decorations of percussionist Bryan Owings, or the unobtrusive harmonies of Brown and (keeping it in the family again) his daughter, Pieta. There are occasionally more overt flavours here as well: "Listening To Singing" is driven by Jon Graboff's mandolin;

"From An Airplane" is an unexpected dash of honky-tonk with guest Leo Kottke on guitar.

Ultimately, though, this feels like a very personal dialogue between two women, transposed on to a universal stage. Like the rest of us, chances are that Akhmatova would approve.

Q&A

Iris DeMent

Where did the idea for *The Trackless Woods* come from?

The primary source was our daughter, who we adopted from Siberia when she was almost six. I'd never given any conscious thought to putting these poems to music, but I'm sure that it's a leftover from my Pentecostal church upbringing. I was taught to be open to the notion that there's stuff going on around us that you can't see. And these poems felt like messages that I needed to set down.

What is it about Anna Akhmatova's poetry that resonates so strongly with you?

Her poems are so human and spirit-filled in a very universal kind of way. Even when she's

talking about these really sorrowful events or experiences, there's always hope in them. That's another thing they have in common with those great old hymns.

Was it difficult fitting music to words?

This was really unusual for me, though it felt very natural. Sometimes, like lyrics, melodies just fell out of the sky. At other times I had to tinker around for a while. But whenever I found the right melody, I'd have this instant sense that I'd just walked inside of the poem.

Your last release, *Sing The Delta*, was your first original album in 16 years...

It takes me a lot of work to write lyrics and music. But in those 16 years I had tapes and tapes full of melodies. I'd just sit around, play the piano and get lost in it. I'd actually like to do an instrumental record next.

INTERVIEW: ROB HUGHES



GEORGIA Georgia DOMINO

London newcomer's invigorating debut

Georgia is the 24-year-old daughter of Leftfield's Neil Barnes, and she cut her teeth collaborating

7/10

with fellow polyrhythmic minstrels Kwabs, Mica Levi and Kate Tempest before settling on her own style of dub-worn, night-bus laments. Her self-produced Domino debut is an alluring tale of heartbreak and romance, framed by murky electro ballads ("Nothing Solutions", "Hold It") and scuffed synthwave ("Tell Me About It", "Move Systems"). There are nods to grime, post-punk and R&B, yet *Georgia* ultimately positions Barnes as an unpretentious star who is perhaps more vulnerable than she appears. Admirers of Leila Arab and Missy Elliott would be well advised to pick up on this.

PIERS MARTIN



GHOSTFACE KILLAH & ADRIAN YOUNGE Twelve Reasons To Die II LINEAR LABS

Wu-Tang vets reunite for Blaxploitation bloodbath
Soundtrack composer, producer and sometime

7/10

entertainment-law professor Adrian Younge orchestrates a partial Wu-Tang Clan reunion on this cinematic concept-album sequel. Ghostface Killah and Raekwon return to play rival gangsters in the 1970s crime-saga plot, with sporadic narration by RZA between multiple vocal cameos. The story weaves ultraviolent horror, gangster and Blaxploitation threads into a retro mash-up of wah-wah guitar, live drums, blaring brass and dainty woodwind. The production can sound derivative, but when Younge is on inspired form, as on the superfly bounce of "Rise Up", he invokes golden-era Isaac Hayes and Quincy Jones.

STEPHEN DALTON



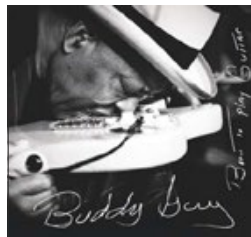
GURRUMUL The Gospel Album SKINNYFISH

Blind singer from Arnhem Land hits the spiritual high notes

7/10

The most significant voice in Australian indigenous music for more than a quarter of a century, Gurrumul's third solo studio album departs from Aboriginal influences on a set of hymns and lullabies taught to his ancestors by Christian missionaries. Sung in his native Gumatj dialect, spoken today by no more than 3,000 people, language is no barrier to the spiritual transcendence of his high, yearning voice, underpinned by subtle accompaniment drawing on world music, folk and Americana influences. Even "Amazing Grace", a song many of us surely hoped never to hear again, sounds elevating and revived.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



BUDDY GUY Born To Play Guitar SILVERTONE/RCA

Indefatigable blues legend soldiers ably on

8/10

Buddy Guy long since passed the point of being accorded acclaim simply for being himself. Rightly so – he ranks alongside his late contemporary BB King as the most influential blues player of the modern era. *Born To Play Guitar* is a statesmanlike set featuring a cast of garment-grasping guests. But it's best appreciated not as a legend's lap of honour, but for itself – Guy's singing and playing on "Wear You Out", a duel with ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, or "Flesh & Bone", a tribute to King featuring Van Morrison, are at once subtle, soulful and scorching.

ANDREW MUELLER

REVELATIONS

HAUSCHKA on treating his piano with gaffa tape and super magnets



► For composer and prepared-piano maestro Volker Bertelmann, aka Hauschka, live performances are more like "creating new records" than re-enacting a repertoire. "I felt a little bored repeating myself all the time by playing a record live," Bertelmann explains, "so when touring [2014's] *Abandoned City*, I started to improvise."

Recorded in Yufuin, Japan, new live album *2.11.14* sees the German pianist treat his instrument with mutes, gaffa tape, foil, "super magnets" and, between one hammer and its strings, a pickup. "When I hit the lowest key it creates this humongous hip-hop bass drum!" laughs the pianist, who started out playing electronic hip-hop in the mid-'90s. "Maybe in the future I will use a drum machine, but at the moment it's great to stick with the setup I have."

Bertelmann currently is busy with a host of other projects – from working with The MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, to soundtracking horror film *The Boy*. "Next year I may work on all sorts of constellations with classical ensembles, but 2017 will be my next solo record. I want to combine all of the things I've done over the past 10 years, on one record."

TOM PINNOCK



JOHNNY HALLYDAY Rester Vivant WARNER

Strong 49th album from demonstrative French icon

7/10

The haggard French veteran is on his 49th album now, and while Hallyday understandably no longer belts them out quite as throatily as in his youth, he still has a wonderfully expressive voice, supported by a typically tasteful production from Don Was. Songs like the defiant title track – which translates as "Staying Alive" – and the excellent "J't'ai Même Pas Dit Merci" chug along to a moody blues backing track, with Hallyday reaching for raw power. It's the dramatic ballads such as "Seul" and "Une Lettre à L'Enfant Que J'étais" that serve him best, though, with the minimal "Te Manquer" a real stunner.

PETER WATTS



ALBERT HAMMOND JR Momentary Masters INFECTIOUS MUSIC

Pop pep with topspin from Strokes guitarist
Recently, Julian Casablancas and Albert

7/10

Hammond Jr have sent out mixed messages regarding The Strokes' future – the former talking up planned recording sessions, the latter casting doubt on further live shows. At any rate, both have their own projects to pursue. Hammond Jr's third LP is an instantly likeable, energetic pop set stacked with guitars; his warm, easy voice shot through with enquiry and regret. The apple falls closest to the tree with the hyperactive "Razors Edge", but expectations are often upset, notably on "Losing Touch", where strings, horns and some guitar duelling are added to Nick Lowe-ish punk, and on the Caribbean-flavoured opener "Born Slippy".

SHARON O'CONNELL



HAUSCHKA 2.11.14 CITY SLANG

Adventurous improvisations from piano maverick

8/10

Recorded in a small arts centre on the Japanese island of Kyushu, Volker Bertelmann's first live album is perhaps the finest example yet of the Düsseldorf resident's prepared piano techniques. Though over the past decade he's often worked with strings and horns, and collaborated with artists such as violinist Hilary Hahn, Múm and Calexico, on *2.11.14* he's solo, treating his piano with all manner of found objects and then processing the results in real time through delays and distortion. The two side-long tracks here are completely improvised, modernist masterclasses incorporating Satie-esque reveries, gamelan-like tones and even, halfway through "Part 1", thrilling, pounding beats.

TOM PINNOCK



HEALTH

Death Magic

FICTION

Dated third outing from hipster noise combo

6/10

Los Angeles slacker darlings HEALTH's

decision to follow their 2009 album *Get Color* with the score to video game *Max Payne 3* effectively means they've been away for six years – and the lightweight industrial pop of *Death Magic* is evidence of how out of touch they've become. However, cool or not, at least they're going for it: this new Depeche Mode-meets-Crystal Castles direction, with Jake Duzsik's boyband vocals caressing the manicured grunge of "Men Today" and "Flesh World (UK)", is hardly short on tunes, and the flashy sound design of Björk cohort The Haxan Cloak adds a dash of menace to HEALTH's Blue Steel smoulder.

PIERS MARTIN



KAFKA TAMURA

Nothing To Everyone

100% RECORDS

Southampton trio repeat themselves, endlessly

6/10

This Anglo-German

trio have just the one song. It's not a bad song – a moody, reverb-drenched dirge pitched somewhere between Portishead and The xx – but over an entire album it gets a little tiresome. All 11 tracks here are in exactly the same key (A minor) and all feature the same heavily flanged guitar and pensive piano chords. Emma Dawkins sings, blankly and sadly, in that accent that's often described as "Multicultural London English", sticking within a narrow five-note range. The Casiotone shuffle of "Bones" or the 808 beats on "Bruises" threaten to shift direction, but the air of stasis remains.

JOHN LEWIS



LIANNE LA HAVAS

Blood

WARNER BROS

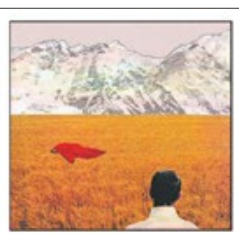
Elegant neo-soul from Prince's new BFF

7/10

Since her 2012 debut, *Is Your Love Big Enough?*, this former backing

singer's career has taken an unexpected turn. Three years ago Prince got in touch, since then there have been jams at Paisley Park, a vocal spot on his comeback album and, most unexpectedly, a press conference conducted from La Havas' living room to launch His Purpleness' London gigs. Their partnership has clearly upped her confidence, illustrated by this second LP of sophisticated soul songs built around her exquisite vocals. Still, La Havas is at her best when she breaks out of the trad soul blueprint, as on the acoustic-pop number "Grow" and the thrilling psycho-grunge of "Never Get Enough".

FIONA STURGES



LADY LAMB

After

BB*ISLAND

Self-taught Maine native's smart second

7/10

The second LP by Aly Spaltro (no longer "The Beekeeper") is proof that the experiential gap

between your teens and twenties is vast. Reflection, plus improved compositional skills, has given perspective to her songs without softening their visceral impact. On *After*, she slaloms around fizzy grunge punk, bittersweet country pop and stirring alt.folk balladry; lyrically, Spaltro switches between the strikingly poetic ("I could be cracked open like a cartoon watermelon and you would see the solar system suspended in me," she trills on "Spat Out Spit") and the sweetly prosaic, but is always compelling. Some tracks are over-long, but in light of the cracked "Sunday Shoes", that's a minor quibble.

SHARON O'CONNELL

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

The London Souls



➤ African-American musicians who gravitate toward rock'n'roll are perhaps in the minority today, but the impulse to rock comes naturally to London Souls frontman Tash Neal. "I hear Tina Turner, CCR, The Beatles, The Kinks, Shuggie Otis, Billy Joel, Joe Strummer, Harry Belafonte, Louis Jordan, and it's all rock'n'roll in spirit," he says.

The New York-based band formed as a trio in 2008, their name derived from "the back-and-forth influence between American and English rock'n'roll", according to Neal. They honed their craft for three years before recording their self-titled first LP at Abbey Road with producer Ethan Johns. The record got some positive press, but was otherwise overlooked. Then the bass player left.

But those setbacks turned into positives as Neal and drummer/vocalist Chris St Hilaire made a quantum leap in their writing and arranging, leading to the recording of *Here Come The Girls* in 2012. Before they could release the album, though, Neal suffered a subdural hematoma in an auto accident, which left him comatose with a metal plate in his head. And yet, just over a month later, he was back onstage. But touring plans had to be scrapped and the album held back while Neal rehabbed. Three years later, the London Souls are finally back on track. "It would take a lot to completely stop our momentum," says Neal.

BUD SCOPPA



THE LAST HURRAH!!

Mudflowers

RUNE GRAMMOFON

Cosmic Americana from Norway via outer space

7/10

On previous albums, Bergen-based producer

and composer HP Gundersen explored drone guitar (2011's *Spiritual Non-Believers*) and sugary psychedelic pop (2013's *The Beauty Of Fake*). His third album showcases Californian singer Maesa Pullman, setting her bell-clear voice against elegant country-soul settings that conceal lyrical darkness ("Why can't you admit you feel like shit?" she sings on "The Weight Of The Moon"). The exploratory guitar remains, on the bluesy "Is It Me?", but the lighter moments endure, notably "Those Memories", a country weepie sung by Maesa's cousin Rosa Pullman.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



LEGENDS OF COUNTRY

Talk About Country

TALK ABOUT COUNTRY

Indie whimsy meets Americana

6/10

Jof Owen is best known as the frontman of

indie-popsters The Boy Least Likely To, and this curious side-project seems to be based around the conceit that country music shares with twee English pop a navel-gazing, self-pitying attention to detail. Hence the cognitive dissonance as sighing pedal-steels and finger-picked banjos are set against lyrics about buying crisps in pubs in Whitstable or journeys down the M4 to the Rhondda Valley. It's only the heart-tugging "The Saturday Dads" ("I check my phone for the football scores/While you talk about dinosaurs") that manages to successfully anglicise Nashville's ability to universalise heartbreak.

JOHN LEWIS



LIBEREZ

All Tense Now Lax

NIGHT SCHOOL

Hermeticism and dark chants emanate from deepest Essex

7/10

A solo project by John Hannon, broadcast from a home studio in Rayleigh,

Essex, Liberez make music that feels laminal, detailed in its layering, with Hannon and collaborators Nina Bosnic (voice) and Pete Wilkins (percussion) making a kind of deconstructed, primitive rock-not-rock. Bosnic's disinterested vocals and some seriously in-the-red, keening violins make "Захвална породица" a particularly startling experience, but throughout *All Tense Now Lax* the trio engage in a deep sensory confusion, with pieces appearing and then disappearing as though you're fleetingly tuning in on their wavelength, divining a moment from endless, shrouded recording sessions.

JON DALE



THE LONDON SOULS

Here Come The Girls

FEEL

Second from Anglophile American blues-rockers

8/10

The London Souls are actually from New York City, but the name is apt because they draw on '60s/early '70s British music for their sound, which encompasses contoured proto-powerpop ("When I'm With You", "Alone"), 'White Album' pastorales ("Hercules", "Isabel") and pile-driving blues rock that draws on Free ("Steady") and Led Zeppelin ("Honey"). This addictive slab of retro rock is the work of gifted singer/guitarist Tash Neal and deft drummer/singer Chris St Hilaire, who've loaded the 13 tracks here with hooks. *Here Come The Girls* was recorded in 2012, a year after their Ethan Johns-produced debut, but held back when Neal was badly hurt in an auto accident – it was worth the wait.

BUD SCOPPA



LOOM

Loom

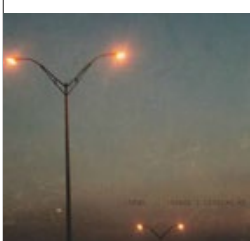
RAFT

Gnarly grunge from Badwan No 2

7/10

Loom appear destined to exist in the shadow of The Horrors, not because of their sharp dressing or their sense of gothic portent – although they do a bit of both – but because vocalist Tarik Badwan is the younger brother of Faris. Musically, they diverge, occasionally starkly. Whereas The Horrors dig old psychedelic records and effervescent shoegaze, the likes of "Lice" and "Leopard" tip Loom closer to early Nirvana, Mudhoney and late-'80s hardcore. No boundaries are being shaken, but Badwan brings an authentic lunacy to "Barbed Wire", while "Hate", with its nagging melodies fired through overdriven guitars, affectionately recalls Swervedriver.

LOUIS PATTISON



LORNA

London's Leaving Me

WORDS ON MUSIC

Fifth album of languid summer-pop from Nottingham sextet

7/10

Led by husband-wife team Mark Rolfe and Sharon Cohen-Rolfe, Lorna blend shoegazing ambience with bittersweet Belle & Sebastian indie-pop, all fluttering falsetto vocals, swooning strings and tinkling cowbells, heard to fine effect on the gorgeously melodic opener "Like Alastair Sim". The title track throbs with a Velvets-like pulse, the viola of Rein Ove Sikveland adds dense John Cale-esque textures and the guitars reverberate like Angelo Badalamenti's *Twin Peaks* theme. Andy Mellon's trumpet adds a brightness where you least expect it in the gossamer haze, and the fuzzy post-rock of Guided By Voices' "Smothered In Hugs" is intriguingly retooled as an ethereal, dreampop reverie. Lovely stuff.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



LOS PLANTRONICS

Surfing Times

JANSEN PLATEPRODUKSJON

Mariachi surf-rock from Norway

7/10

The Norwegian nine-piece spend much of this album getting as close as possible to Dick Dale's version of "Misirlou" while staying clear of copyright infringement. All the tropes are there – Indo-Arabic modes, whiplash drums, Mariachi horns, parping baritone sax and blistering lead guitars. They also enter alien territory: "From Mecca To Mescalito" features Morricone-style whistling and Spaghetti Western guitars; "Montezuma's Revenge" flirts with Martin Denny-style exotica; while the howling vocalist on "Mary Lou" sounds like he's channelling Nick Cave. Utterly derivative, but tremendously good fun – and supremely executed.

JOHN LEWIS



SIMON LOVE

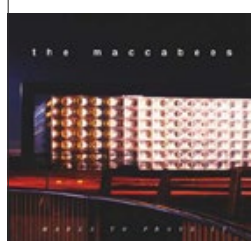
It Seemed Like A Good Idea At The Time

FORTUNA POP!

7/10

Indie songwriter's piss-taking, swear-packed, rather fun debut Opening with a swear-laden ditty that almost rivals Sleaford Mods ("**** [Is A Dirty Word]") and including a song that features comedian Stewart Lee reciting the definition of love from Wikipedia, this cocksure debut solo album from Simon Love (once of The Loves) is packed with ideas and flirts with quirk, but has just about enough wit – and good songs – to get away with it. Topics include penis amputation ("My Dick"), Elton John's wedding night ("Elton John") and motherfuckers ("Motherfuckers"), with everything bathed in a '70s post-glam grubby glitter glow, as pioneered by Luke Haines.

PETER WATTS



THE MACCABEES

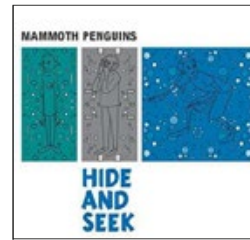
Marks To Prove It

FICTION

7/10

Brighton-based indie stalwarts keep their eye on the big time For a band once dismissed as 'indie landfill', The Maccabees have developed a depth and determination few would have predicted when they first appeared eight years ago. Here they continue in their efforts to beat a path to stadium glory with an ever more expansive sound and life-affirming choruses. Going on the surging "Kamakura" and the singalong "Something Like Happiness", there's no reason why they shouldn't succeed, though they're at their best when they dial down the melodrama, such as on "River Song", a pleasingly warped fairground waltz, or the sweetly melancholic "Silence".

FIONA STURGES



MAMMOTH PENGUINS

Hide And Seek

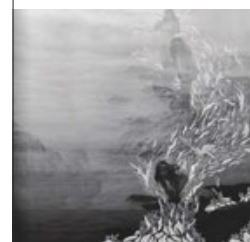
FORTUNA POP!

Song remains the same for rebranded indie-rock minstrel

5/10

Formerly of Sheffield trio Standard Fare, Emma Kupa has relocated to Cambridge and recruited two new collaborators, although Mammoth Penguins maintains her C86-influenced indie-rock sound. Musing on twentysomething themes such as romantic turbulence and youthful idealism, Kupa has an agreeably conversational tone that shades into Courtney Barnett-style slacker sloppiness at times. Her straight-faced embrace of an antique retro-twee style feels restrictive, but at least the scorching post-punk guitars on "We Won't Go There" and glammed-up stomper "When I Was Your Age" hint at exotic urges below the teen-angst surface. More of the darker adult stuff next time, please.

STEPHEN DALTON



BRIANA MARELA

All Around Us

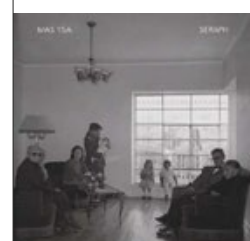
JAGJAGUWAR

Slightly needy a cappella experimentation from Washington State, via Iceland

6/10

A magnificent sonic sculptor, this 25-year-old from the Pacific Northwest uses her voice as an instrument, cooing and purring into a microphone and manipulating the results in Iceland with assistance from Sigur Rós producer Alex Somers. On "Surrender" her burbles are looped into beats; on "I Don't Belong To You" they are harmonised to create a choir of angels; on the final track "Further" they become a gently pulsating, sub-aqueous, womb-like throb. The problem comes when you delve beneath the sonic experimentation and listen to Marela's whimpering lyrics – a litany of drippy, desperate neediness.

JOHN LEWIS



MAS YSA

Seraph

DOWNTOWN/SONY RED

Oddball synth-popper in need of a good editor

5/10

Thomas Arsenault's debut album is a frustrating listen. He's at his most effective when emoting heavily over skyscraping synth-pop in the manner of Zola Jesus or a gothic Brandon Flowers. Eager to distinguish himself from the hordes of *Divergent* soundtrackers, though, he overindulges in a range of annoying affectations: wrong-footing opener "Seraph" sounds like a bad Killing Joke impression, rhythms chop and change haphazardly, there are several dubious instrument choices (synth-fife, anyone?) and his mannered, quivering vocals soon become a bit much. Meanwhile, the thin, compressed sound rarely matches Arsenault's epic ambitions. There are plenty of good ideas here, but plenty of bad ones, too.

SAM RICHARDS



INGRID MICHAELSON
Lights Out
CABIN 24

Mega-selling folk-pop singer tops up her cash mountain

5/10

Ingrid Michaelson is a big deal in the United

States. Her confessional style has made her the go-to artist to accompany tear-stained montages on American drama series such as *Grey's Anatomy*, while her admirers include Sam Smith and Taylor Swift. Her fifth album, named after the last words uttered on her tour bus after a show, is already a runaway hit across the pond and, with its soaring choruses, soul-baring lyrics and glossy production, it's easy to see why. But while "Warpath" and "Time Machine" reveal a sophisticated pop sensibility in the vein of Swift's later hits, the remainder is mostly colourless and unaffecting.

FIONA STURGES



MARK MORRISS
The Taste Of Mark Morriss
ACID JAZZ

Old classics and guilty pleasures from Bluetones frontman

6/10

Mark Morriss' third solo

album is well-timed, arriving as it does in the run-up to The Bluetones' reunion tour. But, given the gloomy introspection of 2014's *A Flash Of Darkness*, its contents might just take you by surprise. *The Taste Of...* is a covers album comprising songs that offer an "intimate insight" into Morriss' "creative mind". These tracks range from the serious (Scott Walker's "Duchess") and the dark (The Sisters Of Mercy's "Lucretia (My Reflection)") to the unashamedly mainstream (Madonna's "Angel" and Laura Branigan's "Self Control"). It's unexpected, for sure, but all the more likeable for it.

FIONA STURGES



MOTÖRHEAD
Bad Magic
UDR/MOTÖRHEAD RECORDS

Mr Kilmister's legendary trio's impressive 22nd album

8/10

As with Wilko Johnson,

confronting mortality has put Lemmy – diagnosed with diabetes and now fitted with a defibrillator – on his artistic mettle. *Bad Magic* is gloriously genre-defying, with "Victory Or Die" leading off the album with pared-to-the-bone lyrics and power-trio athleticism. Withering ballad "Till The End" is a particularly impressive peak, presaging a fearsome closing cover of The Rolling Stones' "Sympathy For The Devil". With his 70th birthday looming in December, Lemmy remains an unrepentant example of rock'n'roll's rejuvenating powers.

GAVIN MARTIN



THE MYNABIRDS
Lovers Know
SADDLE CREEK

Third album from singular singer-songwriter with a new/old twist

6/10

Since we last heard

from Laura Burhenn in her Mynabirds persona on 2012's *Generals*, she's toured as a member of the reformed Postal Service and taken a year out to trek around Europe before returning to Los Angeles with a head full of new songs. Working for the first time without longtime producer/collaborator Richard Swift, she's found a new sound, too, although in truth it's a distinctly retro vibe – layers of '80s synths and drum machines, swathes of gauzy guitars, a dash of Annie Lennox and a soupcon of Kate Bush. "Semantics" even sounds like a tribute to *Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark*. Back to the future, but intoxicatingly so.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

REVELATIONS

Big stars... Jody Stephens on the reformed Orange Humble Band

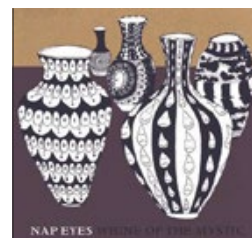


➤ The return of The Orange Humble Band has been a long time coming. Formed in 1994 by ex-Lime Spiders man Darryl Mather, it swiftly became a repository for a bunch of US power pop heroes, but split in the early noughties. It was only when the members met up at 2012's SXSW, at a preview for Big Star documentary *Nothing Can Hurt Me*, that they decided to record again. The result is third album *Depressing Beauty*.

"The material and lineup of players all work really well together," explains former Big Star drummer and OHB member Jody Stephens. "We all have a lot of respect for each other; it makes it easy to just be yourself and let go. We all share similar melodic sensibilities."

Aside from Stephens and Mather, the band also includes Mitch Easter and the Posies duo of Ken Stringfellow and Jon Auer; though one of the most striking features of the album, cut at Memphis' fabled Ardent Studios, are the string arrangements of Big Star collaborator Carl Marsh. "Carl's arrangements are so emotional," says Stephens. "It was an opportunity for him to create, without constraints, an important part of that sense of Big Star. There was always some emotional attraction there."

ROB HUGHES



NAP EYES
Whine Of The Mystic

PARADISE OF BACHELORS

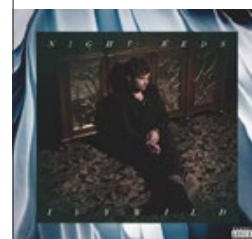
Canadian newcomers' skewed, literate first

7/10

The level of self-absorption required to pen a song about the debut gig by your

own band sets alarm bells ringing, but Nap Eyes' "The Night Of The First Show" expresses Nigel Chapman's fretful insecurities, rather than his pride or elation. It's typical of the young Nova Scotia quartet, whose spindly, sophisto-naïve songs about friendship, uncertainty, belief and heavy drinking suggest Lou Reed reared on The Clean and The Verlaines. But rather than a drawl or sneer, there's vulnerability in Chapman's lazily charming voice. "Dreaming Solo" – about solitude versus the need for company – affects a quasi-country twang and is a standout.

SHARON O'CONNELL



NIGHT BEDS
Ivywild
DEAD OCEANS

Coloradan troubadour concocts an intriguing stylistic mashup

7/10

Winston Yellen has the supple quaver of a mainstream pop star,

and in the two years since his rootsy 2013 debut, *Country Sleep*, he's shape-shifted into a sort of digital-age mutant – part Jeff Buckley, part Justin Timberlake, with hints of Frank Ocean and Justin Vernon. You could slide the suave "Me Liquor And God" or the silky, shamelessly Auto-Tuned "Sway(ve)" right into the middle of a Radio 1 playlist, yet on closer examination they're as alien as *Ex Machina*. Yellen and his band tracked *Ivywild* while his favourite old films were projected, muted, on the studio wall, which may account for its sustained noir-ish atmosphere. This is something wholly unexpected.

BUD SCOPPA



THE ORANGE HUMBLE BAND
Depressing Beauty
CITADEL

Sterling return of transcontinental alt.rock supergroup

8/10

Few musical labels

tend to elicit more suspicion than powerpop, but in the right hands it can be a truly wonderful thing. Thankfully, this third effort from the many-handed Orange Humble Band manages to hit the sweet spot between Big Star, Dwight Twilley and The Posies time and again. This is partly down to Twilley's guest appearance (they cover "You Close Your Eyes") and the group's core of Darryl Mather, Jody Stephens, Ken Stringfellow and Jon Auer. A further key ingredient is the telling string arrangements of Carl Marsh, who reprises his role from Big Star's *Third/Sister Lovers*.

ROB HUGHES



DESTROYER

Poison Season

DEAD OCEANS

Film music! Broadway! Repurposed classic rock! The prolific Canadian's latest blaze of glory. *By Bud Scoppa*



8/10

DAN BEJAR'S 19-year climb from lo-fi-bedroom obscurity to wider acclaim was slowed somewhat by the defiantly abstruse nature of his early recordings. But over time – before the soft grandeur of his 2011 breakout, *Kaputt*, at least – the

Vancouver native began embedding tantalising nuggets of a more welcoming song-form amid the distancing Dadaisms and abstractions that dominated his albums.

These tracks, primarily inspired by arty '70s British acts including Bowie, T.Rex, Roxy Music, Eno, John Cale and Mott The Hoople, are what Bejar refers to as "street rock". Memorable examples of this impulse are scattered through the 42-year-old iconoclast's thick body of work all the way back to 2001's *Streethawk: A Seduction*, the fifth Destroyer album but the first predominantly listenable one. It's thrillingly evident in the propulsive swagger of "Jackie, Dressed In Cobras" from *The New Pornographers'* third album, 2005's *Twin Cinema*, and "Myriad Harbour" from their 2007 LP, *Challengers*, recordings so masterfully conceived and executed it seems downright perverse that Bejar's mined this rich vein so infrequently. But on *Poison Season*, Bejar re-embraces street rock, and recontextualises it, as well.

Kaputt, dreamed up in the thrall of *Avalon* and quieted by a major life-change, the birth of his son, revealed a more measured Bejar, easing himself into soft-rock reveries and setting aside his obscurant

tendencies in favour of couched but discernible emotion. These tendencies spill over into the new album. The *Kaputt* lineup – including the production team of guitarist David Carswell and bassist John Collins – is unchanged except for the addition of versatile drummer/percussionist Josh Wells. But on *Poison Season*, they're joined by a five-piece string section, which brings a symphonic lushness to the bookends, two statelike versions of "Times Square, Poison Season", the first a wistful piece redolent of '40s film music, over which Bejar

establishes his subtly altered vocal persona, which is warmer, closer and precisely enunciated.

The prelude is forcefully shoved aside by a fanfare of brass and pummelling drums, and we are suddenly transported to Springsteen's turf as we follow two "lovers on the run" whose hyper-romantic idyll is rudely interrupted by the dawn of a new day. Only Bejar could come up with the payoff line, subverting George Harrison's most uplifting refrain with "Oh shit, here comes the sun". The following "Forces From Above" unfolds with carefully arranged baroque strings, but the track shifts in feel and dynamic as the rhythm section and horns take over. Here, Bejar and the band seem to be taking their cues from Henry Mancini's '60s film scores, as the soaring strings, blaring horns and thumping congas careen toward the rousing climax.

"Hell", "The River" and "Girl In A Sling" are of a piece, the strings, horns and Ted Bois' piano, which functions as the album's foreground instrument, playing off each other with an uptown cool that is downright Ellingtonian.

"Times Square" sits in the dead centre of the 13-track sequence, its strutting groove supplied by a "Walk On The Wild Side"-like acoustic guitar and sax, while the lyrics second that emotion with the lines "Judy's beside herself/Jack's in a state of desolation/The writing on the wall isn't writing at all/Just forces of nature in love with a radio station", wryly referencing the Velvet's "Rock & Roll". It's a clever Lou Reed lift, and Bejar comes to it casually and affectionately. "Archer On The Beach", radically altered from the one-off 2010 original, is a laidback big-band nocturne on the order of Steely Dan's *Aja*.

A couple of string-laden songs later, on "Bangkok", the group take us on a stoned soul picnic, Laura Nyro and Todd Rundgren slow-dancing amid the flickering lights of a sultry

summer night in Manhattan. Then, the free-jazz squall of "Sun In The Sky" gives way to the third and final take of "Times Square", Bejar bringing increased nuance to the lyrics over the end-title theme, as this Zen archer lets fly with his second straight bull's-eye.

SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Produced by:** John Collins and David Carswell
Recorded at: Warehouse Studio, Afterlife Studios, JC/DC Studios, all Vancouver
Personnel include: Dan Bejar (vocals, MIDI marimba), Ted Bois (piano, Yamaha D-50), Nicolas Bragg (electric guitar), David Carswell (electric and acoustic guitar, MIDI tuba), John Collins (bass), JP Carter (trumpet, effects), Joseph Shabason (saxophone, flute), Josh Wells (drums, congas, bongos, percussion), Stefan Udell (string arrangements), Tyson Naylor (piano and DX7)

Q&A

Dan Bejar

The new LP is loaded with classic-rock references. What made you go there?
It's always been Destroyer's comfort zone. That is the music that got me out of the basement, and into trying to sing in a rock'n'roll band, in 1997. For some reason I recently started to revisit those early-'70s records that were so pivotal to me in the late '90s, mostly sparked by the song "Where Are We Now" by David Bowie. It made me think about him for the first time in a long time, and sonically it is definitely a major inspiration for *Poison Season*.

The sonic idea behind the album seems to be the juxtaposition of heavily arranged elements

with a rock band playing live off the floor. They were two very separate recording sessions done quite far apart, physically, spiritually, etc. So the mystery of the record – and it seems to me art needs a mystery – was how they could possibly live together and interact. To me, the tension created by the two approaches sitting side by side, or even butting up against each other within the same song, went from being a source of great worry to being one of the things about the album that I am most enjoying.

You've made two welcoming albums in a row. What's up with that?

The absence of complete severity in *Poison Season* is a major fuck-up. But in the end I am always a slave to melodies and a certain kind of cinematic lift. Prefab notions of redemption, which maybe, someday, I will exorcise myself of.

INTERVIEW: BUD SCOPPA



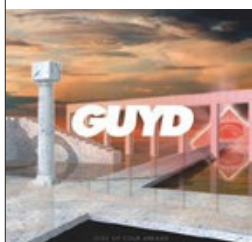
OWL & MOUSE
Departures
FIKA

Modest quintet bring a shadowy sweetness to delicate debut

7/10

A London-based five-piece, centred on Brisbane songwriter Hannah Botting (sister of Allo Darlin's Bill), Owl & Mouse have courted comparisons with The Go-Betweens and The Triffids. Structurally, there are similarities, but the delicacy of Botting's voice adds a tone of vulnerability. They can sound cute ("Misfits", with Botting accompanying herself on ukulele), but there are dark notes (the self-explanatory "Sick Of Love"), made darker by the occasional intervention of Tom Wade's baritone (on "Sinking Song" and the duet "Octopi"). You might call them twee, but modest is more accurate. The songs are hardly there at all, but they linger sweetly.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



THE PHOENIX FOUNDATION
Give Up Your Dreams
MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Under the influences: Kiwi sextet's latest psych-pop confection

7/10

In 2013, *Fandango* swayed to the soothing ripples of yacht-rock. But for their sixth album, The Phoenix Foundation dress their breathy songwriting in psych soundscapes, Afrobeat and squiggly synths. The touchpoints here are many, and cool: Metronomy, Caribou, Phoenix and – going further back – those arch '80s manoeuvrings of Byrne, Scritti, Thomas Dolby et al. Upbeat, uptempo and clearly a lot of fun to make, *Give Up Your Dreams* is a funny and infectious record. Seek out the earwormish "Playing Dead" and the wry title track, complete with a deadpan rap that urges us to "Just be all right about things and get on with stuff..."

MARK BENTLEY



QLUSTER
Tasten
BUREAU B

Krautrock lifer Roedelius' melancholy piano trio

7/10

Since forming electronics trio Kluster back in 1969, Hans-Joachim Roedelius has spent his time in pursuit of the melancholy infinite, both with the toytown proto-electronica of his '70s Cluster duo with Dieter Moebius, collaborative projects with Brian Eno, a string of beautiful solo albums, and Qluster, his trio with Onnen Bock and Armin Metz. *Tasten* features all three members on Steinway grand pianos, and their sympathetic playing often has the album landing within reflective climes. But there's something rigorous and unflinching about the music of Qluster: the sadness that drips from pieces like "Spiegel Im Spiegel" is timeless.

JONDALE



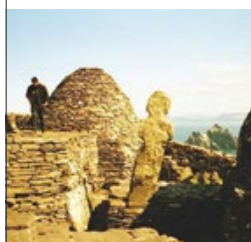
HUGO RACE & THE TRUE SPIRIT
The Spirit
GLITTERHOUSE

Ex-Bad Seed continues his malign streak with an atmospheric nocturnal narrative

7/10

If you didn't know that Hugo Race had been a Bad Seed (circa *From Her To Eternity*) you could probably guess. His songs share Nick Cave's gothic sensibilities (a subterranean trapdoor world on "The Information", masochistic love on "Elevate My Love"). Recorded at night in a studio on the edge of Melbourne with his regular band The Spirit, Race's 12th album alternates between sinewy noir with flecks of jazz/blues and cinematic instrumentals. Curiously, it works best when the night sky lightens to daybreak, as on the dice-rolling narrative of "Bring Me Wine".

ALASTAIR MCKAY



RED RIVER DIALECT
Tender Gold And Gentle Blue
HINTERGROUND

All change on second outing from Cornish folk rockers

8/10

Their 2012 album *Awellupontheway* announced this five-piece as psych-folk champions with blitzes of layered guitars, reminiscent of The Waterboys at their most delirious. *Tender Gold And Gentle Blue* couldn't be more different, a set of acoustica driven by strummed and picked guitars shot through with cello and piano. It's a set full of loss – on "Khesed" and "For Ruth And Jane" songwriter David Morris mourns his father, while on "Dozmary", he could be singing about a lost love, with lyrics that look to nature for inspiration. Among the highlights are some gentle instrumentals, including a nine-minute drone on "Ring Of Kerry". Brave and different.

NEIL SPENCER



REUBEN JAMES RICHARDS
About Time
JIGSAW

Belated debut from authentic British soulman

7/10

In the mid-'90s, Reuben James (as then was) recorded the single "Hold On My Heart", featuring various Muscle Shoals/Hi Records alumni. It led Jerry Wexler to hail the UK singer as possessing one of the best voices he'd heard in years, but the album that should have followed was never recorded. Better late than never, the aborted sessions have finally been completed. Recorded in a corner of deepest Norfolk that is forever Memphis, the influence of Ray Charles and Otis Redding oozes from every note on a warmly authentic set of gospel-tinged blues, soul and R'n'B songs written by Dave Williams, whose all-analogue production complements masterfully.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



RP BOO
Fingers, Bank Pads And Shoe Prints
PLANET MU

Old and new tracks from Chicago ghetto house progenitor

6/10

Some two decades after house music emerged from Chicago, the city minted another innovation with footwork, a twitchy electronic mutation that soundtracks competitive dance battles on street corners and other public spaces. Boo, real name Kavain Space, is credited with bridging the two styles, his "ghetto house" productions lacking the future sheen of followers like DJ Rashad, but with a roughneck quality all their own. "Daddy's Home" and "Freezaburn" collide ultra-detailed rhythms with jarring samples, at times reaching for mad propulsion, elsewhere floaty stasis. Challenging, sure – but when it comes together, as on the Kenny Loggins-sampling "Your Choice", exhilarating also.

LOUIS PATTISON



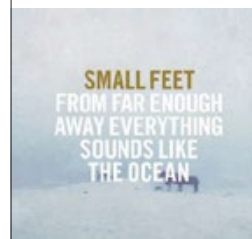
HOLLYSIZ
My Name Is
WARNER MUSIC

French diva's flat-footed new wave debut

5/10

Cécile Cassel is something of a celebrity in her native France: the half-sister of actor Vincent Cassel (*Ocean's Twelve*, *Eastern Promises*, *Black Swan*), she's an actress who once starred in an Eric Rohmer film and these days peddles prime-time MOR alt.pop as Hollysiz. Sung entirely in English and comprised of passable stabs at new wave and disco, her debut *My Name Is* came out two years ago in France, where it scraped the Top 30, and is memorable only for the good-time Gossip groove of "Come Back To Me" and slow-burner "The Light". The remainder finds Cassel trying a little too hard to address affairs of the heart.

PIERS MARTIN



SMALL FEET
From Far Enough Away Everything Sounds Like The Ocean
CONTROL FREAK KITTEN

Swedish-American trio soar into Nordic Neil Young territory

8/10

With a backstory seemingly tailored to fans of Nordic-noir crime drama, three-piece Small Feet conceived their debut in a rough wooden cabin on a remote island close to Stockholm. Their widescreen sonic hinterland combines windswept guitars and airy electronics, but their most striking instrument is the voice of principal songwriter Simon Stålhamre, a high-pitched androgynous howl that owes as much to Grace Slick or Patti Smith as it does to Neil Young. This sombre threesome could use a little humour and warmth, but there is real passion in reverb-drenched, Spector-ish, elemental pastorals like "Rivers" and "Trenches".

STEPHEN DALTON



PAUL SMITH AND THE INTIMATIONS

Contradictions

BILLINGHAM

No apparent change on extra-curricular solo album from Maximo Park frontman

6/10

Four years in the making and mostly written on the road, Paul Smith's latest solo project doesn't stray too far from the indie-rock blueprint he's laid down over the past 15 years with Maximo Park. *Contradictions* comes with the expected poetic flourishes and there's a lyrical perspicacity and invention at the heart of songs such as "Reintroducing The Red Kite", in which the endangered bird of prey becomes a metaphor for human anxiety. If only the music was as imaginative. As it is, due to its angular guitars and jumpy rhythms, the listener is left longing for a change of texture and pace.

FIONA STURGES



SPECTOR

Moth Boys

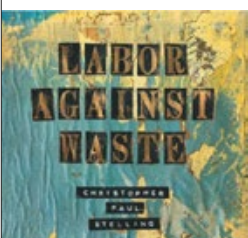
FICTION

Laboured second outing from Britpop throwbacks Indie chancers Spector are keenly aware of their shelf-life and,

5/10

with nothing left to lose, they've chucked the kitchen sink at this second album knowing it could well be their final hurrah on a major. Frontman Fred Macpherson's pithy musings on London's hipster demi-monde can be excruciating when set against his band's bog-standard stadium churn on the likes of "All The Sad Young Men" and "Stay High"; at one point Macpherson sings, "My battery's 10 per cent, let's generate content". Yet with the fruity "Cocktail Party", co-written with Dev Hynes, and the startling electro-funk of "Lately It's You", Spector might just be having the last laugh.

PIERS MARTIN



CHRISTOPHER PAUL STELLING

Labor Against Waste

ANTI-

Impressive third from folk troubadour

8/10

With his intricate and immaculate finger-picking, Brooklyn-based guitarist Stelling recalls Greenwich Village in the days before Dylan went electric. Intense and lyrical, *Labor Against Waste* – his third album but first for Anti- – boldly invigorates the romantic notion of the singing, songwriting troubadour. Dropping hypnotic slivers of John Fahey-style guitar into his dense observations, songs like "Castle" bristle with an outsider's obstinacy. Every song is worth exploring, though, with "Death Of Influence" – a distant echo, musically and thematically, of "Masters Of War" – positively blood-curdling.

LUKE TORN



SWEET BABOO

The Boombox Ballads

MOSHI MOSHI

The North Walian wonder's lush fifth When he isn't playing bass with Cate Le Bon, Stephen Black makes

8/10

ornately eccentric pop which alights upon Harry Nilsson, Randy Newman, the Radiophonic Workshop and The Beach Boys' "Sail On, Sailor". Black's fifth album as Sweet Baboo is rooted in lovingly observed domesticity, his bright, clear voice supported by a lush soundscape of horns, strings and piano. The summery "Got To Hang On To You" declares love via his favourite Northern Soul records, while the touching "Two Lucky Magpies" is all about the gorgeous string quartet. Le Bon contributes the dreamy "I Just Want To Be Good", but Black is doing just fine by himself.

GRAEME THOMSON

WE'RE
NEW
HERE

Small Feet

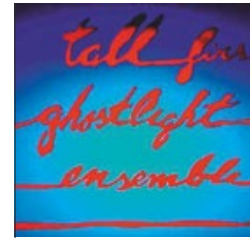


➤ Both mighty and fragile, Simon Stålhamre's voice is an arresting fusion of widescreen Americana and heart-tugging Nordic melancholy. The frontman of Swedish trio Small Feet, Stålhamre has played on other people's songs for years, but was always too self-critical to expose his own work in public until he met bandmates Jacob Snaveley and Christopher Cantillo. "Having somebody that inspired and pushed me in a good way was super important," Stålhamre says. "I've also gotten more comfortable in my own skin over the years. I'm just always trying to improve and find my voice, so to speak."

Small Feet's excellent debut album, *From Far Enough Away Everything Sounds Like The Ocean*, was partly recorded in a wood cabin on the island of Södermalm, in southern Stockholm. This atmospheric location was crucial to the album's airy, timeless, analogue vibe. "It played a huge part," Stålhamre confirms. "Nothing like an old wooden house to get the old wooden sound."

And that band name? A sly homage to veteran folk-rockers Little Feat? "At the time I just wanted something that wasn't macho and cool," Stålhamre says apologetically. "Then we just got stuck with it. If you don't start a band because you came up with a brilliant name, you kind of just settle for something that doesn't suck."

STEPHEN DALTON



TALL FIRS

Ghostlight Ensemble

ATP

New York duo get a little help from their friends on fourth LP

8/10

Leaving behind the minimal approach of 2012's

Out Of It And Into It, New York City guitar duo Tall Firs subtly expand their instrumental palette on *Ghostlight Ensemble*, with assistance from the cream of New York's alternative scene. Although the spotlight is still on Dave Mies and Aaron Mullan's gorgeous intertwined electric guitars, Samara Lubelski's violin is a constant amid the sleepy motorik of "Dirty Memories", while Mary Lattimore's cascading harp sweetens the haze on "Clown". These new textures result in the Firs' strongest work yet, even the artificial-sounding synth strings on "Winter Wind" blending seamlessly with the pair's crepuscular songs.

TOM PINNOCK



THE TELESCOPES

Hidden Fields

TAPETE

Deep, black holes of paranoid song

Stephen Lawrie has shepherded The Telescopes through multiple

7/10

personalities – scuzz-rock, shoegaze, gentle psychedelics and, most recently, crushing noise-improv. Sometimes misread as bandwagon jumping, Lawrie's quest is one of endless exploration, following his ears to where the most intriguing music happens. With *Hidden Fields*, it's as though Lawrie is going back to basics – drenched with feedback, dark and lonely, songs like "You Know The Way" and "The Living Things" share the paranoid energy of The Telescopes' first album, 1989's *Taste*, but recalibrated through a more dissolute yet abraded noise-rock aesthetic. The perfect needle, pitched into the red every time.

JON DALE



TOTALLY MILD

Down Time

BEDROOM SUCK

Melbourne four-piece's dreamy slacker-pop debut

Purveyors of that Vaseline-smeared-on-the-camera-lens

6/10

atmosphere beloved of so many modern Australian bands, Totally Mild have crafted a debut crammed with spidery and upbeat Cure-like pop songs. The four-piece boast an outstanding singer, Elizabeth Mitchell, who gives them a little individualistic oomph, particularly when she reaches for a fierce Cocteau Twins falsetto on "When I'm Tired", the excellent "Nights" or self-searching centrepiece "The Next Day". Unfortunately, many songs, such as "Battleship" or sultry closer "Money Or Fame", seem to finish just as they are starting to work up some heat.

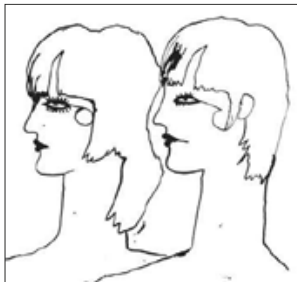
PETER WATTS

DRINKS

Hermits On Holiday

HEAVENLY

Welsh psychedelia meets Los Angeles lo-fi. By John Lewis



7/10

FROM BASSEY TO Burton, from Cale to Jones, from Hopkins to Zeta-Jones, it's not unusual – if you'll pardon the pun – for the finest Welsh talents to up sticks, relocate to America and find themselves lighting up Hollywood, Vegas or Broadway.

Yet it was surprising to hear that the Welsh singer Cate Le Bon had moved to Los Angeles, just over two and a half years ago, if only because she seemed so intrinsically tied to the Principality. Here was a native Welsh speaker who sometimes sings in the language, is heavily inspired by its more leftfield musical heritage, and who frequently collaborates with Welsh rock royalty, including members of Super Furry Animals, Gorky's Zygotic Mynci and the Manic Street Preachers. One expected Le Bon to be among those cult figures – like Meic Stevens, Heather Jones, Geraint Jarman or Huw Jones – destined to remain a secret to a few in-the-know Cymraeg hipsters.

But Le Bon's own music has always been filled with fascinating contradictions: at once cutesy and ferocious, cuddly and angular, whimsically Welsh but also terrifyingly Teutonic. Moving from rural Carmarthenshire to California just added another intriguing layer of complexity to her music.

Even more complexity comes in the form of Drinks. This duo puts Le Bon alongside Tim Presley, the Californian musician who played in assorted hardcore bands, Darker My Love and The Fall, before creating his ultra-lo-fi psych project White Fence and working with the likes of Ty Segall to much acclaim. The resulting album sounds unlike anything either Le Bon or Presley have ever made.

Both Presley and Le Bon are united in their love of *Faust IV* ("We both agree that it's the greatest record ever made," says Le Bon). Other records that Tim

and Cate played each other for inspiration included an album by Henri-Jean Enu's Dadaist experimental jazz project Fille Qui Mousse, a Soul Jazz compilation of British punk entitled *There Is No Such Thing As Society*, the minimal post-punk of Cardiff's Young Marble Giants, and John Peel's favourite Welsh-language band, Datblygu.

For the most part, Drinks sound neither Californian nor particularly Welsh, mixing touches of shambolic indie pop, mutant disco, Krautrock and free jazz. But, if there's a guiding spirit to the album, it's that anything-goes DIY avant-gardism that characterised the weirdest UK post-punk, from Swell Maps to Josef K.

The first two tracks set out the band's stall. On "Laying Down The Rock", the guitar lines sound both utterly random and metrically precise, while "Focus On The Street" sounds close to the shouty, lo-fi 1977 British punk that Presley clearly adores. On both tracks he sings in a vaguely English yawn, equal parts Syd Barrett and Vic Godard, that will be familiar to anyone who's enjoyed White Fence.

The wonderfully strange title track seems a few tweaks away from being a pop classic: a smart shift from Casiotone jerkiness to Talking Heads-style punk funk, with a smart Beatles-ish middle-eight,

SLEEVE NOTES

➤ **Recorded at:** Comp-Ny, Los Angeles
Engineered by: Drew Fischer & Rob Barbato
Mixed at: Seahorse Sound, LA, by Samur Khouja
Personnel: Cate Le Bon and Tim Presley (vocals, guitars, keys), Nick Murray (drums)

all hilariously sabotaged by wilfully gibberish rhymes ("*Six past the eight/Cop-u-late*").

Like the best tracks on the album, it's sung by Le Bon, whose voice is a wonderfully adaptable instrument. On "Hermits On Holiday" it's a soft mezzosoprano; on the haunting waltz "Spilt The Beans" it starts as an

imperious, low-pitched Nico bark before leaping up an octave; on "Cannon Mouth" she gurgles through an effects unit, as burbling synths underneath her resemble an arcade game on the blink; on "Cheerio" she whispers, hauntingly, while a drumless, atmospheric and improvised soundscape rumbles ominously in the background.

Indeed, Drinks are especially engaging when they go nuts, as with the psychedelic freeform voyages of "Tim, Do I Like That Dog" or "She Walks So Fast", or in the "Day In The Life"-style breakdown of "Spilt The Beans", all unhinged guitars and echo-laden piano freakouts. Le Bon and Presley are not just copying the tics and tropes of the shambolic post-punk and experimental music that has inspired them, but are actually using its methodology – delving deep into improvisation, randomness and stream-of-consciousness lyrics. The end result is something that's freaky and funny, as rigorously experimental as it is gleefully entertaining.

Q&A

Cate Le Bon



How did you come to end up collaborating with Tim Presley?

I met him on my first headlining tour of the US. We liked his band, White Fence, and they supported my band. We got on well and I ended up playing guitar with them. Then, when I moved to Los Angeles, we hung out a lot with mutual friends and we talked endlessly about making a record together. In the end we thought, 'Oh, this is getting embarrassing, let's just get a studio and record something.' We listened to lots of stuff together and applied complete abandon to the songwriting process. Most of the songs come from us playing guitar at each other and improvising.

What the hell is going on with "Tim, Do I Like That Dog"?

It's a stupid game we'd play on the road. I'd see a dog and ask Tim if he thinks it's the kind of dog I like. His success rate was initially only 50/50. I think he's now up to about 70 per cent, which is quite an achievement.

How are you going to play this live?

We're gonna have to do some serious homework! Neither of us can remember who was playing any of the guitar parts. We've sent the record to a drummer and a bassist to learn, and they're both currently a bit bemused...

Do you miss speaking Welsh in LA?

Well, I'm here with my partner, and we speak Welsh every day. But I do miss the people in Wales. And there's a certain shade of green – a particular shade of grass and leaf – that you just don't get over here. LA is more... khaki and gold.

INTERVIEW: JOHN LEWIS



FRANK TURNER
Positive Songs For Negative People
XTRA MILE/POLYDOR

5/10

So-so sixth from UK folk-punkster
Raw spontaneity is

a key element of Frank Turner's latest album, for which he decamped to Nashville and hurtled through a bunch of songs with producer Butch Walker. As suggested by the title, it's very much a return to the air-punching bombast of 2011's *England Keep My Bones*, as Turner delivers his self-empowerment anthems with the crunch and earnestness of Billy Bragg or The Levellers. All this bombast gets a little wearying after a while, though, with occasional respite arriving in the form of the skiffish "Love Forty Down" and "Out Of Breath"'s punkabilly clatter.

ROB HUGHES



ULTIMATE PAINTING
Green Lanes
TROUBLE IN MIND

8/10

Lo-fi treats from British indie supergroup

On Ultimate Painting's second album, the dreamy lo-fi guitar duo – Veronica Falls' James Hoare and Mazes' Jack Cooper – sand down their debut's sharper edges. "Kodiak" and "Two From The Vault" amble along with Pavement's wry softness, while "Break The Train" echoes *It's A Shame About Ray*. "Woken By Noises" spills from verse to verse like Parquet Courts or Courtney Barnett, but without either's nervous energy, although anxiety and loss are recurring themes. Ultimate Painting may sound like a lot of bands – Real Estate, The Feelies – but they set their own beguiling pace, sounding completely untroubled by the passing of time.

LAURA SNAPES



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Parallelogram
THREE LOBED

7/10

Poems and drones on a quintuple-album underground monster
American underground labels like collectivist

statements – witness Three Lobed's earlier *Not The Spaces You Know, But Between Them* 4LP set from 2011. *Parallelogram* goes deeper, with 10 sides from key players. It starts shakily, with some unprepossessing rural rock from Hiss Golden Messenger, but soon picks up the pace, with ghost-folk from Michael Chapman, Six Organs Of Admittance's side-long raga "Lsha", and strong turns from William Tyler and Bardo Pond. Thurston Moore spins a side-long improv from his old solo classic "Ono Soul", but the real surprise is the furious drone blast of Yo La Tengo's closing "Electric Eye".

JON DALE



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Total 15
KOMPAKT

7/10

Yearly address from senior German techno imprint
Kompakt's *Total* series is as regular as clockwork –

every year it releases a new set mopping up singles from the past 12 months, plus exclusives from its roster. *Total 15* initially feels a bit slight – the first disc has some pro-forma moments of wallpaper techno, and it takes glistening gems from Jürgen Paape, and newcomers Dave DK and Weval, to get the energy flowing. The second disc more than makes up for this, though – peak-hour techno and Surrealist electronic clatter from Kompakt lifers Wolfgang Voigt (as Wassermann), Superpitcher (the flute-delia of "Freiherr") and Reinhard Voigt's cranky, wild "The Buddy".

JON DALE

REVELATIONS

ASTRID WILLIAMSON learns to relinquish absolute control



➤ Williamson's evolution from Goya Dress' noisy, mid-'90s indie rock to her more recent, electronically embellished solo albums has been at least somewhat a necessity. "Playing electric guitar was making me deaf," she says, though she admits going it alone has been liberating. "Goya Dress was like being in a rebel force of guerrilla bandit freedom fighters, whereas being a solo artist is more like you've been in a coup, only to find you've inadvertently turned yourself into a dictator."

In 2011, however, she surrendered absolute power, hooking up with producer Leo Abrahams for *Pulse*'s textured tones, while her latest continues similarly, and includes collaborations with producer James Orr. She's unafraid of contributing to other artists' work either: after singing backing vocals for Electronic in 2000, she was introduced by former 4AD boss Ivo Watts-Russell to Brendan Perry, leading to work with Dead Can Dance. "Brendan and Lisa (Gerrard) are both very pure and truth-seeking individuals. My most recent collaboration was with Lisa, co-writing and singing on her *Twilight Kingdom* solo album. The exciting thing about creativity is you never know exactly where your next inspiration may come from. I was braver with my own work after working with them."

WYNDHAM WALLACE



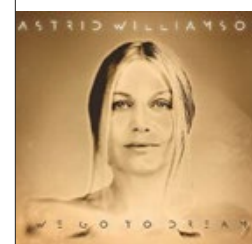
WHITE REAPER
Does It Again
POLYVINYL

7/10

Spritley Kentucky four-piece's rocking powerpop debut
Jaunty and beholden to fuzz, White Reaper

come on like Kentucky's answer to Supergrass on this charming debut, crammed with short melodic powerpop gems. It's there in the casual swing of "Candy" and the joie de vivre of "Make Me Wanna" as the quartet repeatedly affirm their youthful commitment to the important stuff in life: girls, drugs, parties. The Ramones and Ty Segall are also influences but, most interestingly, there's also a tantalising hint of their Louisville peers My Morning Jacket in the repetition, reverb and reggae references of "Alone Tonight" and "Sheila", which adds a trace of mystery to the festivities.

PETER WATTS



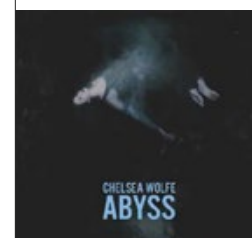
ASTRID WILLIAMSON
We Go To Dream
ONE LITTLE INDIAN

7/10

Sixth album from underrated, angelic-voiced Scot
Almost two decades

since her first, the former Goya Dress frontwoman's solo albums remain eclipsed by work with the likes of Electronic and, more recently, Dead Can Dance. Her latest outing – a sophisticated, often forlorn record that is, as she sings on the serene title track, "So black you could cut it and wear it" – deserves better. That, like "Hide In Your Heart" and "Ambianza", offers a *Mezzanine*-era Massive Attack mix of brooding vocals and sluggish beats, while, at the other end of the scale, "Scattered" is a shockingly naked, confessional piano ballad. Williamson's voice on this record is often divinely beautiful.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



CHELSEA WOLFE
Abyss
SARGENT HOUSE

8/10

LA-based songstress ventures further into the void
As indications of the desolation contained

within, the titles of Chelsea Wolfe's albums are nothing if not apt. Her fifth studio effort is just as steeped in despair as 2013's neo-goth breakout *Pain Is Beauty*. Wolfe continues to explore her predilections for *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse*-era Siouxsie and the gloomiest end of 4AD, arriving at the same nexus of noise, electronics and dark-hearted folk occupied by peers Jenny Hval and EMA. Though *Abyss*' quieter moments are plenty chilling, Wolfe's brand of anguish best succeeds when she's out to do serious damage. The Swans-like rhythms and feedback-laden guitars turn "Carrian Flowers" and "Color Of Blood" into the album's most vivid nightmares.

JASON ANDERSON

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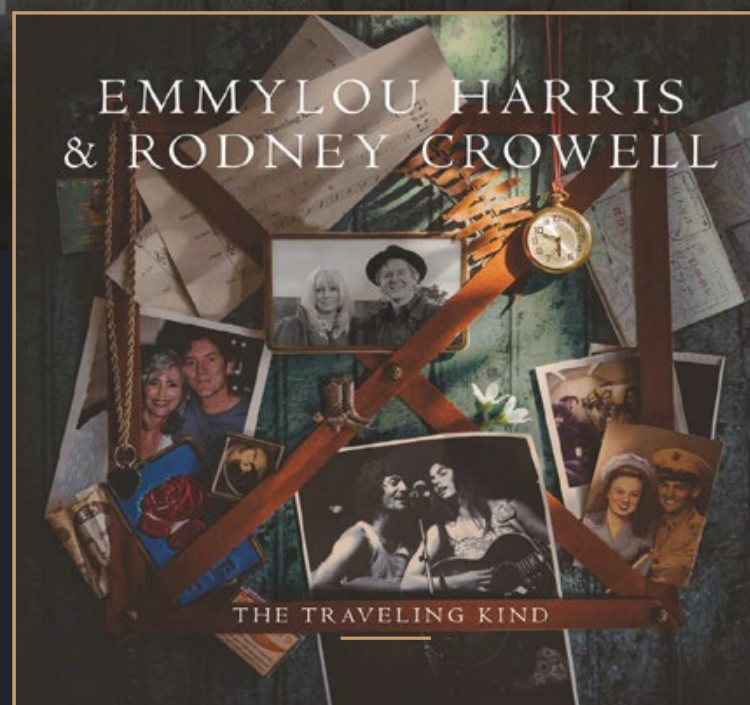
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SCORING: THE ORIGINAL ALBUM

10 Masterpiece

1 Poor!

SCORING: EXTRA MATERIAL

10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrapings

Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS



HARRY GOODWIN



TRACKLIST

DISC ONE: Taste 1969

- 1 Blister On The Moon
- 2 Leavin' Blues
- 3 Sugar Mama
- 4 Hail
- 5 Born On The Wrong Side Of Time
- 6 Dual Carriageway Pain
- 7 Same Old Story
- 8 Catfish
- 9 I'm Moving On
- 10 Blister On The Moon (Alternate Version)
- 11 Leavin' Blues (Alternate Version)
- 12 Hail (Alternate Version)
- 13 Dual Carriageway Pain (Alternate Version/No Vocals)
- 14 Same Old Story (Alternate Version)
- 15 Catfish (Alternate Version)

DISC TWO: On The Boards 1970

- 1 What's Going On
- 2 Railway And Gun
- 3 It's Happened Before, It'll Happen Again
- 4 If The Day Was Any Longer
- 5 Morning Sun
- 6 Eat My Words
- 7 On The Boards
- 8 If I Don't Sing I'll Cry
- 9 See Here
- 10 I'll Remember
- 11 Railway And Gun (Off The Boards Mix)
- 12 See Here (Alternate Version)
- 13 It's Happened Before, It'll Happen Again (Beat Club TV Audio)
- 14 If The Day Was Any Longer (Beat Club)
- 15 Morning Sun (Beat Club)
- 16 It's Happened Before, It'll Happen Again (Beat Club)

TASTE

I'll Remember

UNIVERSAL

Rory Gallagher's great, short-lived trio. *By David Cavanagh*

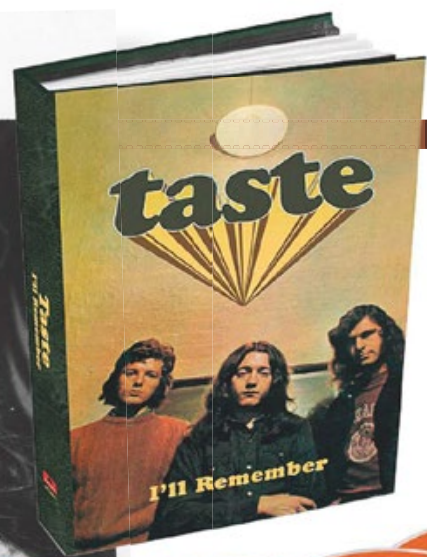
8/10 WHEN MELODY MAKER'S Roy Hollingworth broke the news to his readers in 1970 that Taste, the popular Irish trio, were disbanding, his tone was one of shock. "After one of the most ludicrous of upsets... You couldn't really believe what was actually going on." Many of the 600,000 attendees of the Isle Of Wight Festival, held six weeks earlier, would have agreed with him. Fronted by guitarist and singer Rory Gallagher, Taste had stormed the festival's Friday evening slot and seemed poised for a breakthrough, not a break-up.

What was it about Taste that could ignite the Isle Of Wight yet end in a bitter, inexplicable divorce?

Why did Gallagher never play their songs in public again? There are no easy answers on *I'll Remember*, a Taste live-and-studio boxset that follows the recent Gallagher anthologies *Kickback City*, *Live At Montreux* and *Irish Tour '74*. Over four discs (1967-'70), we hear a blues-rock band stretching out onstage – and showing off their folk and jazz influences in the studio – but the one thing we never get is a sense of climax or closure. Are Taste one of rock's great might-have-beens? If so, Gallagher's solo career (1971-'95) has to serve as their alternative history.

Gallagher emerged from the Irish showbands of the mid-'60s as a teenage prodigy and blues fanatic. He formed Taste with two Cork





taste



TRACKLIST CONTINUED

DISC THREE: Live 1970

Live In Konserthuset Stockholm, Sweden, 1970

1-8 What's Going On, Sugar Mama, Gamblin' Blues, Sinner Boy, At The Bottom, She's Nineteen Years Old, Morning Sun, Catfish

BBC In Concert / Paris Theatre, London, 1970

9-13 I'll Remember, Railway And Gun, Sugar Mama, Eat My Words, Catfish

DISC FOUR: Demos & Live 1968

- 1 Wee Wee Baby (Demo)
- 2 How Many More Years (Demo)
- 3 Take It Easy Baby (Demo)
- 4 Pardon Me Mister (Demo)
- 5 You've Got To Pay (Demo)
- 6 Norman Invasion (Demo)
- 7 Worried Man (Demo)
- 8 Blister On The Moon ("Major Minor" Single Version)
- 9 Born On The Wrong Side Of Time ("Major Minor" Single Version)

Live At Woburn Abbey Festival, UK, 1968

10-13 Summertime, Blister On The Moon, I Got My Brand On You, Medley: Rock Me Baby/Bye Bye Bird/Baby Please Don't Go/You Shook Me Baby

musicians, Eric Kitteringham (bass) and Norman D'Amery (drums), and soon descended on Belfast, 200 miles to the north, where the Maritime Hotel still reverberated from the excitement of seeing Van Morrison and Them in 1964. On a demo recorded at the Maritime to attract the interest of Decca in London, Taste sound like a beat combo with blues leanings; there are times when Gallagher's harmonica is as prominent as his guitar. But an instrumental, "Norman Invasion", suggests he may be paying close attention to Jimi Hendrix. And be thinking, perhaps, that Taste should become more of a power trio.

They start to record. A 1968 single, "Blister On The Moon", with its strange lyrics about a totalitarian society crushing a little man who dares to fight back, is backed by the equally striking "Born On The Wrong Side Of Time", which crams the entire repertoire of The

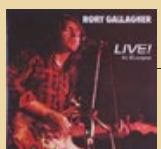
"Baby Please Don't Go" and "You Shook Me".

A new rhythm section – Richard McCracken (bass) and John Wilson (drums) – was installed before Taste made their self-titled Polydor debut album in the autumn of '68. Released the following April, it showcases Gallagher the way *Led Zeppelin*, in January, had showcased Jimmy Page: as a bluesman, a folkie, a multifaceted whizzkid, a maestro. Some of the soloing on *Taste* is delicious. "Hail", an acoustic blues, is dazzlingly accomplished for a 20-year-old. And his effortless slide playing on Lead Belly's "Leaving Blues" is the sort of thing the Stones had to hire Ry Cooder to do for them. No wonder Gallagher was later considered as a replacement for Mick Taylor.

McCracken and Wilson don't stand out on the debut LP, but they're more of a force on the follow-up. *On The Boards* (1970) shows Taste exploring and advancing. Wilson was a fan of The Tony

Yardbirds into three minutes and 20 seconds. Captured live at the Woburn Music Festival that summer, Taste are loose and fiery, like Ten Years After channelling the MC5. Hendrix, who topped the Woburn bill the night before, would surely have been impressed by the way Taste tear it up on their 11-minute closing medley, which includes

RORY GALLAGHER SOLO The best of his post-Taste career



LIVE! IN EUROPE

POLYDOR, 1972

Gallagher was two albums into his solo career when he assembled this live selection recorded in England, Italy and Germany. It's one showstopper after another – "Messin' With The Kid", "Pistol Slapper Blues", "Bullfrog Blues" – and the incendiary guitar-playing helps explain why Gallagher pipped Eric Clapton to Best Guitarist in *Melody Maker's* 1972 readers' poll. **9/10**



TATTOO

POLYDOR, 1973

His fourth studio LP, by which time he had a rep as the hardest-working guitarist in rock. "Tattoo'd Lady" and "Cradle Rock" are a great opening double act, while the two long blues tracks that dominate the second half (a Gallagher album invariably had a more generous run-time than most) see him, respectively, playing slide like a master and interacting sensitively with his band. **8/10**



IRISH TOUR '74

POLYDOR, 1974

A folk hero on both sides of the Irish border, Gallagher made a point of playing Belfast during the Troubles – many of his peers chose not to – and you can hear the emotion, not to mention the devotion, from the audiences in Belfast, Dublin and Cork throughout this double live album. The performances drip with sweat and euphoria; Gallagher sounds unstoppable. **8/10**



PHOTO-FINISH

CHRYSLIS, 1978

Salvaged from an album he'd recorded in San Francisco and scrapped, *Photo-Finish* is a power trio rock-out with some of Gallagher's toughest riffs ("Shin Kicker", "Shadowplay", "Brute Force & Ignorance"). Possibly conceived as a commercial game-changer in the US (where his albums tended to peak in the 140s), it didn't succeed in its aim, but it rocks like hell. **7/10**

Williams Lifetime. Gallagher, studying his Eric Dolphy records, taught himself to play an alto saxophone in a matter of weeks. *On The Boards* is progressive, recalling Family here and there, but Gallagher's smoky alto solo on the title track, with Wilson on rimshots and ride cymbal, is something different entirely – like John Densmore getting together with The Don Rendell/Ian Carr Quintet and not worrying about any boundaries. Taste had come a long way in 12 months. "I'll Remember", which gives the boxset its title, is typically contradictory – one minute a brooding rock song, the next a jazzy swing tune.

The 1970 Isle Of Wight appearance is omitted from the four discs, alas (though a DVD/CD release of it is planned), but *I'll Remember* features two live performances from the same year. One is a recording for Radio 1's In Concert, which suffers from muffled mono sound and too much hiss. Much better (and in stereo) is a 50-minute chunk of Taste in Stockholm,

on their final European tour, where they play with remarkable intensity for three men who are barely speaking. Gallagher, encouraged by Taste's manager to regard the rhythm section as dispensable sidemen, had quickly become convinced that he could succeed

without them. He irritated Wilson and McCracken by launching into solo blues numbers onstage, often several in a row, giving them nothing to do. Wilson disliked encores; Gallagher wanted to play 10 a night. They argued over missing money, each suspecting the other. It later transpired that the manager was the one with the Polydor deal, not them. If he hadn't been so fond of the music-business practices of the '60s, he could have had one of the major bands of the '70s.

Prior to Gallagher's death in 1995, a reconciliation took place of the classic Taste lineup, and there was even talk of them playing a peace concert for Northern Ireland. But it didn't happen, and resentment over old contracts continued to linger. McCracken lives in London now, working for the company that owns Wembley Stadium. He avoids interviews about Taste and, according to Wilson, seldom discusses the band in private. Wilson himself formed a trio in 2000 to play material from the Taste era, incensing Gallagher's fans (and brother-manager Donal) by calling the new band Taste. After throat cancer surgery two years ago, however, Wilson was advised by doctors to avoid strenuous activity and sold his drumkit. Listening to Taste on *I'll Remember*, as young musicians with their lives ahead of them, it's poignant to think that none of them plays music anymore.

It later transpired that the manager was the one with the record deal, not them

Q&A

John Wilson and Donal Gallagher remember Rory

JOHN WILSON
(Drummer, 1968-70)

WHAT ARE YOUR feelings about Taste now?

Most people who refer to Taste are talking about Rory. They see it as one facet of Rory's career. My main feeling about Taste is that I was privileged to play with Rory – and Richard – at a time when bands were allowed to be at their most expressive. There was no pressure on Rory or any of us. We were just three guys who went onstage every night and had fun.

Taste are often called a blues band, but you were much more flexible than that. Rock, folk, jazz...

We put no labels on anything. To paraphrase *Star Trek*, It's the blues, Jim, but not as we know it. Coming from Ireland in that era, we all had lots of influences. The showbands played everything from trad jazz to rock'n'roll. I came from brass bands, playing cornet and euphonium. Rory liked country music, a lot of jazz stuff. We just experimented and tried incorporating things into our songs to see if they worked. There was no format, no setlist, nothing like that.

The boxset has some alternate takes from the two studio albums. Would you record, say, three or four takes of each song?

Some of them may have been one take. Those studio dates were very quick. Straight in and straight out, not a lot of thought going into it. I would have preferred releasing live albums. The studio stuff seemed a bit false, in a way, compared to what we were giving the punters every night.

Was there anything that could have kept Taste together? Yes. Better management. We were good friends who loved playing music, but unfortunately no-one was getting any financial reward other than our manager. And by a method of divide-and-conquer, he split the band. I tried to give him the benefit of the doubt. It was only afterwards that I realised how bad he was.

DONAL GALLAGHER
(Taste road manager, Rory's brother)

The first Taste album has Rory's face on the cover and seems like a vehicle for his talent as a guitarist. Did Polydor instantly single him out as the star of the band?

What had occurred with Taste MkI was that they'd got a residency at the Marquee and Polydor had gone to see them. They had them go into the studio. They evaluated the tapes when they came back and said, "We'll sign the guitar player, but we want a different drummer and bass player." It emanated from that. It was very much seen by Polydor as Rory with two other guys. And to a certain extent that's how Rory saw it, too.



Taste circa '69: (l-r) Richard McCracken, John Wilson and Rory Gallagher

How big did Taste seem to be getting by 1970?

They'd broken huge ground in Europe, in Scotland and in the North-East. But they were ignored by sections of the UK music press, who took the attitude of "How can you have a rock band from Ireland?" People made condescending remarks. But then they did the Isle Of Wight Festival, playing on the Friday when everyone was just waiting to rock. A huge army of Taste fans had come over from France, Germany, Holland and Denmark. For a lot of those people, Taste were their band. They did five encores.

You saw Taste's split from Rory's point of view. Why had such a huge gap opened up between him and other two?

Management issues and financial issues played a huge part. The band were playing through the PA system that Rory had inherited from his showband days. They were travelling in a small Ford Transit with me as their road manager. There were four of us, and the back seat was a bench seat from an old Volkswagen propped up on a Marshall stack. They were making very good money, and yet they were living in bedsits in Earls Court. It was obvious they weren't being managed correctly. So Rory went to the other two and said, "We need to get rid of the manager." But the manager was from Northern Ireland, and so were the other two, and they sided with him. A split became inevitable.

Did Rory regret the break-up of Taste in later years?

Musically, he liked working with the other two – in fact, in the '90s when he was forming a new lineup, he considered getting in touch with John – but the break-up caused a huge depression in him. He felt a huge opportunity had been passed by. He never performed Taste's songs onstage again. Some nights you'd hear him break into the riff of one of them, and you could tell he'd be itching to play the whole song, and the audience would be dying to hear it, but he never did. I suppose he felt he'd lost ownership of that music.

INTERVIEWS: DAVID CAVANAGH

"Rory never performed Taste's songs onstage again. Some nights he was itching to, but he never did"



PERE UBU

ELITISM FOR THE PEOPLE 1975-1978
DESIGN RUNS COUNTER TO THE PERE UBU AESTHETIC. SHOW THE PRODUCT, SCREAM IN THE FACE OF THE CONSUMER. DON'T BE CLEVER. CLEVER PEOPLE ARE BRAYING ASSES. TOO MUCH DAMNED CLEVERNESS THESE DAYS. PERE UBU IS FOND OF CONSUMERISM. WE SELL SOUL LIKE IT'S A POPEIL VEG-O-MATIC. PERE UBU IS ABOUT USED CAR SALESMEN AND LATE NIGHT TV SALES PITCHES. WE DON'T WANT YOUR FANCY PANTS SUBTLETY, GRINGO.

TRACKLIST

THE MODERN DANCE LP

- 1 Non-Alignment Pact
- 2 Modern Dance
- 3 Laughing
- 4 Street Waves
- 5 Chinese Radiation
- 6 Life Stinks
- 7 Real World
- 8 Over My Head
- 9 Sentimental Journey
- 10 Humor Me

DUB HOUSING LP

- 1 Navy
- 2 On The Surface
- 3 Dub Housing
- 4 Caligari's Mirror
- 5 Thriller!
- 6 I, Will Wait
- 7 Drinking Wine Spodyody
- 8 (Pa) Ubu Dance Party
- 9 Blow Daddy-O
- 10 Codex

THE HEARPEN SINGLES 12" 45RPM EP:

- 1 30 Seconds Over Tokyo
- 2 Heart Of Darkness
- 3 Final Solution
- 4 Cloud 149
- 5 Untitled
- 6 Street Waves
- 7 My Dark Ages
- 8 Modern Dance
- 9 Heaven

MANHATTAN 12" 45RPM EP

- 1 My Dark Ages
- 2 Heaven
- 3 Sentimental
- 4 Over My Head
- 5 30 Seconds Over Tokyo
- 6 Life Stinks

PERE UBU
Elitism For The People 1975-1978

FIRE

Inspiring vinyl solution for fans of Cleveland's underground pioneers. *By Jim Wirth*

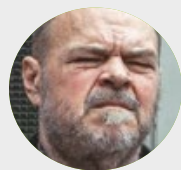
8/10 PERE UBU CO-FOUNDER Peter Laughner died of chronic pancreatitis, brought on by alcoholism, on June 22, 1977. The golden boy of the fertile Cleveland underground was 24. The response from the band's lynchpin, David Thomas, who had parted ways with the charismatic *Creem* magazine stringer a year earlier, has lost none of its myth-shattering force. "What a world, what a world, what a big world/ But a world to be drowned in," he burbles atonally on "Humor Me", eyeballs rolling at his old cohort's dumb determination to become the first terminal Lou Reed wannabe. Morose resignation gives way to uncomprehending, sardonic fury. "It's just a joke, man."

Laughner's early demise, and the negative energy generated by the two frighteningly precocious singles he helped Thomas to create – 1975's double-A-side kamikaze raid "30 Seconds Over Tokyo"/"Heart Of Darkness" and 1976's Oedipal hate binge "Final Solution" – felt-

tipped dark shadows over everything the band created. This superbly retooled box, compiling Ubu's independent singles, their first two albums proper, and a 1978 New York live set – tells a different and more inspiring story. Middle-class aesthetes, itching to make the next post-Velvet Underground leap forward, Pere Ubu's combination of gut-chugging post-Stooges rock and electronic noises evolved from a now-legendary non-starter band, Rocket From The Tombs, who essentially split in two. Cheetah Chrome and Johnny Mandansky left for New York to found punk schlockers the Dead Boys, while Thomas and Laughner stayed in Cleveland, bent on something more idiosyncratic. The seven-inches they self-released on Thomas' Hearpen label and 1978's *The Modern Dance* created a dirty-bomb formula; a chassis of *Nuggets* garage rock, plastered with horn honks and machine chatter generated by their in-house Delia Derbyshire, future airline pilot Allen Ravenstine. That first album, however, marked

Q&A

David Thomas



You have said that Pere Ubu fixed rock in this period: how did you think it was broken? Rock gets broken when it loses its forward drive. When Pere Ubu formed, there were lots of local bands playing the main rock venues who could do covers of Spirit just perfect, and we just thought there was more to it than this. We despaired at the ordinariness of it.

Putting out your own record in 1975 was fairly unusual: what drove that decision? Rocket From The Tombs ended very badly in the summer of '75. I wasn't going to mess with a band any more – I just wanted to leave

something behind. My ambition was to have a record in one of those Salvation Army record bins, which somebody could come across in 10 years' time and say: "Wow, there was this band in 1975 in Cleveland..."

Do you feel that you had any genuine peers musically outside Cleveland? Peter loved Television. Did we see them as peers? I don't know – I always see everybody as a rival. We were very much aware of what they were doing – but we were also aware of what other people were doing, in Indiana, San Francisco... One of the reasons that I despaired of the punk phenomenon was that it wiped out a whole generation of emerging bands. Punk was the new paradigm. It was the easy thing to copy. In a lot of ways the really great lasting bands from the early '70s like Television, Pere Ubu, the Residents and Talking Heads were all pre-punk. *INTERVIEW: JIM WIRTH*

the point when they sweated the filth from Ohio's industrial cooling towers out of their systems; street-walking cheetahs on "Street Waves" and "Non-Alignment Pact", free-forming spook noise mavens on "Sentimental Journey" and "Chinese Radiation". Dark, daunting and peppered with Thomas' tone-deaf-cockatoo vocals, it is a soundtrack to alienation, but with closing track "Humor Me" – a clear-headed rejection of rock's dumbest conventions – the slate was wiped clean.

Album number two, released barely nine months later, sounds not so much like the work of another band as another species. "I've got these arms and legs that flip-flop flip-flop," chirrups Thomas, marvelling at the wonder of existence as he dad-dances his way through *Dub Housing's* opening track, "Navy". Wonders rarely cease thereafter.

Smash Martians gate-crash a beach party on "On The Surface", while the title track splices Patti Smith's "Land" with Roxy Music's "For Your Pleasure", Thomas' narration a further warping of normality. "Hear the sound of the jiberty jungle," he cries in mock terror. "In the dark, a thousand insect voices chitter-chatter."

It gets odder still; Thomas reckons Pere Ubu were not crazy dub-heads – the album title was an in-joke about terraced properties on the road in to Baltimore – but "Thriller!" uses every trick in the Lee Perry book and more, all its moving parts slightly out of whack, Tom Herman's tiki guitar doodles giving way to a

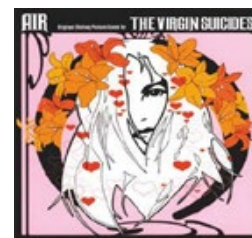
monstrous crunching sound, caterpillars chewing on eardrums.

The seasick feeling returns on "Drinking Wine Spodyody" – its title lifted cheekily from a 1947 jump-blues novelty – and "(Pa) Ubu Dance Party", where Thomas gleefully talks through his creative processes: "I went out and stirred the air, my soup was steeped in strange ideas." Few could have been more uncanny than "Blow Daddy-O"'s mad juxtaposition of feedback, scampering phased guitar and lumbering aircraft engine noise. And then there's "Codex", a song about obsessive love that simultaneously mocks the concept of obsessive love and the concept of songs. "I think about you all the time," Thomas repeats over a somnambulant forced march – a broken version of "The Song Of The Volga Boatmen" or a chain-gang approximation of *Snow White's* "Heigh-Ho". "We had been promised the end of the world

as children, and we weren't getting it," wrote Laughner's ex-wife Charlotte Pressler, explaining her contemporaries' dystopian world-view in a 1978 Cleveland scene memoir. *Elitism For The People* documents Pere Ubu creating their own private musical apocalypse, and then forging on to start the world anew.

Not a world to be drowned in, but one to treasure.

Album number two sounds not so much like the work of another band as another species



AIR The Virgin Suicides - 15th Anniversary Edition RHINO

Masterly soundtrack with additional live extras

Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel had perfected their brand of

8/10

space-age *garçonnière* pop when director Sofia Coppola commissioned them to soundtrack her first feature. But rather than expand on the library music aesthetic of their debut, 1998's *Moon Safari*, for this commission they instead privileged the more expansive, pastoral qualities familiar from early releases (collected as the *Premiers Symptômes* mini-album). Aside from the opening track, "Playground Love" – featuring vocals from Coppola's future husband, Phoenix's Thomas Mars – these are subtly melancholic instrumental mood pieces, in keeping with the film's subject of doomed youth. What impresses most is the span of material here, roaming from free jazz ("The Word 'Hurricane'") to prog ("Bathroom Girl") and late '60s psych ("Cemetery Party"), all channelled through Air's organic sensibilities. The Beatles (*Abbey Road*) and Floyd (*Dark Side...*) are useful references, too. Godin and Dunckel embrace the possibilities available: "Dirty Trip" surges between *Premiers Symptômes*-era cool and wilder analogue oscillations, while the gothic trappings of "Dead Bodies" tantalisingly draw Air in other directions. **EXTRAS:** LA radio sessions and nimble live

7/10

versions of the album tracks, though the Carpenter-ish "Clouds Up" and "Dirty Trip" assume more propulsive properties.

MICHAEL BONNER



BIS I ♥ Bis

DO YOURSELF IN

"Teen-C" insurrection from Manda Rin, John Disco and Sci-Fi Steven

6/10

In 1995, the Glasgow trio Bis were thrust into the

spotlight when they were invited to perform their single "Kandy Pop" on *Top Of The Pops* – the first ever unsigned band to grace the institution's stage, if you believed the press hype, even though they were in fact signed, to the then-tiny Scottish imprint Chemikal Underground. Such exposure won them a roughly equal number of defenders and detractors, and while this collection of early singles and lost demos does occasionally surprise with its rather thin recording and general spirit of clattery amateurism, it's hard not to admire what a singular unit they were: Riot Grrrl insurrectionists with a splash of Shampoo, a fascination for Manga comic books and a drum machine that wouldn't quit. The first couple of EPs come over half-cooked, save for the spunky hardcore of "Public School Boy". But "Icky-Poo Air Raid" and "Secret Vampires" collide ska rhythms and cutesy imagery with puckish glee, while "This Is Fake DIY" and "Burn The Suit" demonstrate that mainstream attention only encouraged their spirit of right-on insurrection. "Kandy Pop" is still fun, and even if you don't make it far into the demos, your time hasn't been entirely wasted.

EXTRAS: Demos, lyrics, sleeve notes.

5/10 LOUIS PATTISON

Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



THE JEAN-PAUL SARTRE EXPERIENCE

I Like Rain - The Story Of The Jean-Paul Sartre Experience

FIRE

8/10

Tangled, variegated pop from New Zealand's South Island

"We began as a part-time bedroom folk duo writing quiet and sensitive songs on acoustic guitars," says guitarist and vocalist David Yetton, reflecting on the early years of one of New

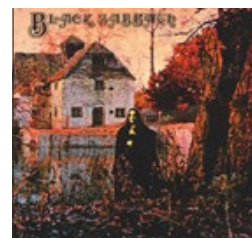
Zealand's most fiercely idiosyncratic pop groups. The Jean-Paul Sartre Experience released their first, self-titled EP, full of spindly guitar-based pop songs, on the country's legendary Flying Nun imprint in 1986, but the group had actually been extant for a few years: "We added a drummer and amplified guitars which led to more raucous songs being written, but along the way there were also some conceptual spoken-word pieces and a smattering of dreadful Christchurch funk interpretations."

By the time they made it to their first album, 1986's *Love Songs*, the group were fully formed. Here there are mysterious examples of fragile chamberpop – on songs like "Firetime" and "Transatlantic Love Song", you can hear JPSE moving together, twisting frail guitar lines around each other in service of an oxymoronic 'muted grandeur'. While they could be strident – "Flex", one of their classics, has a fearsome intensity in its quietness – *Love Songs* and its follow-up, *The Size Of Food*, certainly stand apart from many groups on Flying Nun: "One aspect of our sound were these relatively quiet and delicate songs which made us somewhat unique," Yetton reflects, "but I think we were one of quite a number of bands at the time that didn't fit with the wider Flying Nun stereotype."

The Size Of Food was recorded in 1987, but sat in the wings for two years, thanks to structural shifts within the label, then making the leap from DIY to playing with the majors. With an album in limbo, The Jean-Paul Sartre Experience toured New Zealand and Australia – "Towards the end, to deal with the interminable and debilitating wait, we actually resorted to a form of group meditation/visualisation just to get us through the final few months leading up to the release," Yetton chuckles. It must have been particularly frustrating, as *...Food* is arguably their strongest record – from the opening "Inside Out", you can sense a gathering storm across the album, kept in check by the intimacy of the group's melodies. A final release, 1993's *Bleeding Star*, and a rebrand as JPS Experience, took them closer to shoegaze/rock territory, yet it sadly lacked the charisma of their first two LPs.

EXTRAS: Demos and singles.

6/10 JONDALE



BLACK SABBATH

Black Sabbath (reissue, 1970)
Paranoid (1970)
Master Of Reality (1971)

SANCTUARY

7/10

Ozzy and co's classic first efforts on 12-inch

9/10

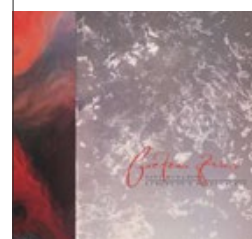
Kicking off a full reissue of their albums on vinyl, here's the unholy trinity that begun the career of the Midlands'

9/10

darkest sons. The self-titled debut and *Paranoid* are packaged in gatefold sleeves, as they were on original release, while *Master Of Reality* comes in an embossed sleeve, again as in 1971 – there's a trick missed here, though, with purple now used for the album's title rather than the slightly Spinal Tap-esque black-on-black of the original. Though later albums saw some stunning high-points, the music on these first three records sees Sabbath take a stunning journey, from the raw, live-in-the-studio bluster of the self-titled debut, through *Paranoid*'s crunchier, more captivating pastures and then on to *Master Of Reality*'s dry majesty. Today, it's the latter that sounds the freshest, due to its continuing influence on the desert rock scene (and even, through the conduit of Josh Homme, on Arctic Monkeys). However, it's the quietest pieces on these three albums that are the most worthy of a revisit. *Paranoid*'s "Planet Caravan" is a ghostly delight, reminiscent of Amon Düül II's *Yeti*, released the same year, while *Master Of Reality*'s "Solitude" is equally spectral, led by Iommi's fluttering, eerie flute.

EXTRAS: A CD copy of the album.

4/10 TOM PINNOCK



COCTEAU TWINS

Tiny Dynamine & Echoes In A Shallow Bay/The Pink Opaque 4AD

Vinyl repress for long out-of-print miscellanea

8/10

The material released in November 1985 as the "Tiny Dynamine" and "Echoes In A Shallow Bay" EPs was recorded in a room the Cocteau Twins rented in William Orbit's flat in St John's Wood. They showcase a rich, textured palette that the band developed further on their fourth studio LP, *Victorialand*, released a few months later. The Eno-esque instrumental "Ribbed And Veined" anticipates *The Moon And The Melodies* project with Harold Budd, while "Great Spangled Fritillary" and "Pale Clouded White" find Robin Guthrie experimenting with smoother, more layered guitar effects. "Fluffy Tufts", indeed. *The Pink Opaque*, meanwhile, is a long-out-of-print primer released in America consisting of album tracks, singles and EP cuts from 1982-'85. The tracklisting still holds up. Aside from A-list inclusions like "Lorelei" and "Pearly-Dewdrops' Drops", it's instructive to chart the band's progress from the sparse, metallic sound of "Wax And Wave" or "The Spangle Maker" to the prettier melodies of "Aikea-Guinea". Certainly, the early songs sound harsh with Liz Fraser's vocals more strident than celestial next to Guthrie's shrill guitar. If *The Pink Opaque* offers a broad summation of the band's early strengths, the "Dynamine"/"Echoes" EPs capture a period of heightened creativity.

EXTRAS: None.

MICHAEL BONNER



ALICE COOPER

The Studio Albums: 1969-1983

WARNER BROS

15 albums of hits and overlooked gems from the heights of the Detroit chicken-torturer's canon

8/10

America's take on glam was always more of a macho pantomime than the UK version, exemplified by Alice Cooper, who took elements of the T.Rex/Slade experience but with a proto-metal edge and epic, blood-splattered theatrical stage shows that allowed some of the subtleties to get overlooked. This box contains Alice Cooper's first 15 studio LPs, starting with the woozy Floyd-y sounds of *Pretties For You* and *Easy Action*, and ending with the new wave oddity, *DaDa*. Cooper wrote outstanding singles – "I'm Eighteen", "Under My Wheels" and "School's Out" – but the band came from a psychedelic background, and always valued the concept of the LP, creating albums that were meant to be seen as a single piece, with few throwaways. The six-album streak in the middle of the decade – from *Love It To Death* to *Welcome To My Nightmare* – is outstanding, and there are many lost marvels like the regretful "Second Coming", the cabaret slink of "Blue Turk" and the folk-rock "Hard-Hearted Alice". It gets patchier later, but Cooper's attempts to stay relevant while retaining his parent-baiting reputation took him to some interesting places, such as *Goes To Hell's* confessional singer-songwriting and *Flush The Fashion's* attempt to become a post-apocalyptic Elvis Costello in eyeliner.

EXTRAS: None.

PETER WATTS



EVIL ACIDHEAD

In The Name Of All That Is Unholy

AGITATED

Don't eat the evil acid: Monster Magnet man's psychedelic seance

6/10

John McBain was guitarist for the New Jersey stoner rock group Monster Magnet, and a compadre of Josh Homme (he played on the first two *Desert Sessions* albums, and was even in Queens Of The Stone Age for a short stint, credited with co-writing "Regular John"). Before all that, though, he was the guiding force behind Evil Acidhead – a psychedelic noise duo with friend Greg Chapman that sounds like rock music from the bottom of the baddest of all bad trips. Originally released on cassette in the late '80s, *In The Name Of All That Is Unholy* nonetheless has an ugly potency that justifies this double LP reissue. An opening suite of four tracks called things like "Part I: Invocation" and "Part III: Possession" splurges out a toxic gloop that draws lines between stoner metal and the psychedelic noise of UK freaks Ramleh; on the latter, an electronic tone pulses menacingly, guitars are mangled mercilessly, and at one point you can hear the telltale bubble of a bong being hit. Things cohere more for "Looped In The Temple Of Yeti", a loop-pedal jam that riffs on sitar-like tones and circling hand drum, but the prevailing tone is of spiritual degradation; a long slow sink into the psychic sludge.

EXTRAS: Comes with a poster.

5/10 LOUIS PATTISON



JACKSON C FRANK

The Complete Recordings

BA DA BING

Three-CD set of the fallen songwriter's work

7/10

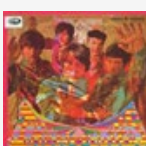
When he arrived on the '60s Soho folk scene, coveted Martin guitar in hand, Jackson Frank struck no-one as tragic. Quiet, in possession of a rich voice, admirable technique, traditional songs and a cache of original material, the American was much admired (and was the boyfriend of Sandy Denny for a while). An eponymous 1965 album, recorded in London and produced by fellow expat Paul Simon, confirmed his talent. That, however, was as good as it got. Despite being led by an instant classic, "Blues Run The Game", the record tanked. A return home led nowhere but a brief 1968 re-encounter with Britain (Peel Session, Fairport tour) after which Frank entered decades of mental illness, vagrancy and poverty. Attempts to resurrect his talent in the '90s, before his death in 1999, yielded little but gravel-voiced remakes that, as writer Colin Harper puts it "have the ring of therapy about them". Most of the 67 tracks here have seen light before, aside from a set of sturdy 1961 folk standards from college days, and some '70s sessions that are less ragged than expected, even if the likes of "Madonna Of Swans" and "Box Canyon" don't measure up to well-covered songs like "Kimbie". A worthwhile resurrection.

EXTRAS: All remastered, with 24 previously unheard tracks, plus liner notes.

NEIL SPENCER

HOW TO BUY... THE HOLLIES

Pop gems... 1963 to 1974



Evolution PARLOPHONE, 1967

Cut at Abbey Road while the Fabs were also in residence making *Sgt Pepper* and issued with a suitably garish psychedelic sleeve, the Hollies made a valiant attempt to keep abreast with a dozen originals by Graham Nash, Allan Clarke and Tony Hicks. Despite such gimmicks as fuzz guitar and phased vocals, it's essentially an uncomplicated pop album, but pleasingly so.

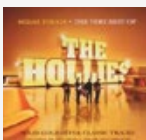
6/10



Butterfly PARLOPHONE, 1967

The most adventurous album of the group's career and another set of all-original compositions on Nash's final outing with the group. Offering several pointers to his future direction with CSN, Nash dominates as the melodic pop is embroidered by baroque harmoniums ("Dear Eloise"), dreamy sitars ("Maker"), and backwards tape loops and Moog noodlings ("Try It").

7/10



Midas Touch EMI, 2010

The Hollies' primary forte was the single rather than the album, so a Greatest Hits has to be the main event. We found more than 20 comps released over the years, but rated this the most comprehensive – 48 tracks across two discs ranging from 1963's "Stay" through to 1974's final biggie, "The Air That I Breathe".

9/10

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



THE HOLLIES

Changin' Times 1969-73

PARLOPHONE

Comprehensive five-disc boxset of a band getting left behind...

5/10

As the title implies, the departure of Graham Nash in 1968 was a wake-up call for The Hollies that popular music was heading in a new direction – not least in a market shift from singles to albums. The Hollies' spotty response to the 'changin' times' is chronicled across 93 tracks, constituting the group's entire albums-plus-singles output over the first five post-Nash years, which saw further personnel changes, including the departure of lead singer Allan Clarke. The new era got off to a rotten start with a misjudged album of Dylan covers, great songs crassly rendered as breezy pop novelties. Yet by 1972, with CSNY established as one of the biggest-selling groups in the world, The Hollies had metaphorically tailed Nash to California and were lamely covering songs by Judee Sill, David Ackles and the Eagles. The inevitable conclusion at the end of this marathon collection is that here was a group that never successfully transited the '60s into the new decade: the standouts remain the familiar pop singles, from "The Air That I Breathe" to "Long Cool Woman In A Black Dress", while the album material mostly sounds like filler.

EXTRAS: 24-page booklet featuring sleeve notes by band member Tony Hicks.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



THE ISLEY BROTHERS

RCA Victor & T-Neck Album Masters 1959-83

SONY

Mammoth 23-disc boxset from the great survivors

8/10

They've been a Zelig-like presence throughout the entire 60-year history of rock'n'roll: heavily sampled and covered by everyone from The Beatles to Kendrick Lamar, from Lulu to Wham!. This box takes us from 1959's *Shout!* LP right up to the quiet-storm soul of 1983's *Between The Sheets*, from doo-wop to disco via gospel, militant black rock and folk-funk (their mid-'60s Motown classics are notably absent, mind). 1972's *Brother, Brother, Brother*, 1973's 3+3 and 1974's *Live It Up* are the stone-cold classics, but there are moments of genius throughout. Each LP stays in the same sonic zone, so if you like the one killer lead track – such as 1970's "Keep On Do'in'", 1971's "Love The One You're With", 1975's "Fight The Power", 1976's "Harvest For The World" and so on – you'll probably quite like each single's parent album.

EXTRAS: Most discs have bonus instrumentals and demos, most of them unavailable before. *In The Beginning* features some freaky mid-'60s recordings – like "Testify" – made when Jimi Hendrix was in the band. There's also a feverish, fanatically received 1969 date at Yankee Stadium, and a scorching live-in-the-studio album from 1980 – if many funk outfits went seriously off the boil by about 1974, the Isleys were still cooking well into the early '80s.

JOHN LEWIS



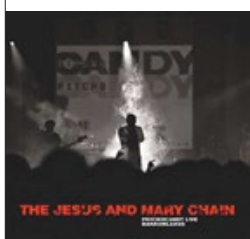
BERT JANSCH Live At The 12 Bar (reissue, 1996) EARTH

Live performance
from 1995 – consummate
and hypnotic

8/10 Bert Jansch's most 'important' records might have been released across the '60s and '70s, but it's wrong to overlook his later material, across the '90s and '00s in particular, just because he'd so confidently mapped out the parameters of his aesthetic universe early in his career. There's a gorgeous ease to later albums such as *When The Circus Comes To Town* and *The Black Swan*, and his ongoing relevance was cemented by guest appearances from the likes of Mazzy Star's David Roback and Hope Sandoval, Beth Orton, Devendra Banhart and Helena Espvall on these records. *Live At The 12 Bar*, originally released as an "authorised bootleg" on Jansch Records, has him in fine fettle at the hallowed London venue. He runs through a batch of songs from *When The Circus Comes To Town*, which had been released the preceding year, and set staples like "Curragh Of Kildare", performed here with a gorgeous lilt, Jansch dragging slowly on the syllables while his guitar ties tiny knots around the melody. Indeed, what becomes clearest from listening to *Live At The 12 Bar* is the way Jansch's playing manifests a very particular physicality, working to its own internal logic, voice and six strings running in refined tandem.

EXTRAS: None.

JON DALE



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN Psychocandy Live - Barrowlands DEMON/EDSEL

Chapter and verse
from last year's
Psychocandy show

8/10 To mark *Psychocandy*'s impending 30th anniversary, in November 2014, TJAMC performed their riot-inducing debut in its entirety for the first time. Being the closest thing to a hometown show for East Kilbride's most truculent export, the Glasgow date was recorded and offers a fittingly abrasive, unadorned souvenir of a momentous night. From the hissing amps to Jim Reid's off-hand farewell – "That's it" – *Psychocandy Live* has the audio *vérité* feel of a superior bootleg. Perverse as ever, they start with the encores, firing through hits like "April Skies", "Head On" and "Reverence" with honed purpose before revisiting *Psychocandy* in sequence, beginning with a majestic "Just Like Honey" and ending with a scalding "It's So Hard". In between, the Mary Chain resurrect the primal thrills of their youth with a lean intensity, summoning up that distinctive blend of attritional guitar noise, sugar-sweet melody and too-cool attitude as though they've been doing it forever. Which, come to think of it, they kind of have.

EXTRAS: Deluxe package includes a 40-page book, 180g vinyl of *Psychocandy* live, 10-inch vinyl of the seven-track prequel set, and a CD of the entire gig, plus interviews with Jim and William Reid.

GRAEME THOMSON



JOY DIVISION Substance (reissue, 1988) RHINO

Salford's post-punk
legends are back on
vinyl, with added gloom
Originally released

7/10 in 1988 as a compilation of singles, B-sides and other waifs from Joy Division's catalogue, *Substance* was expanded for its original CD reissue with the addition of material from the "An Ideal For Living" EP, "Earcom 2" and "A Factory Sample" as well as a couple more B-sides. Now, as part of a campaign of re-releases (on vinyl as well as CD and digital formats) of the group's LPs, it gains two more bonus tracks. "As You Said" is a slight instrumental – a variation on a Kraftwerk train rhythm – which previously appeared on a flexi and in the *Heart And Soul* boxset. Also included is the "Pennine version" of "Love Will Tear Us Apart", which was recorded two months before the single version, and offers a less desolate reading of the song. *Substance* isn't the best introduction to Joy Division, but it does offer an overview of the band's development, from the unremarkable punk thrashing of "Warsaw", on which Ian Curtis has yet to master his glum croon, through the inverted metal of "Transmission", to "Dead Souls" and "Atmosphere", which capture them in their full pomp.

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



JUNIOR'S EYES Battersea Power Station (reissue, 1969) ESOTERIC

Post-psych, pre-prog
perennials
Long before they were
filed under 'prog',
hundreds of British

6/10 groups and musicians went underground in the late '60s, even though most of them were treading the same boards they'd been schlepping around on for years in also-ran beat groups. Guitarist and songwriter Mick Wayne was one such stalwart who, in The Tickle, wrote their sole 1967 psych 45, the deliciously chaotic "Subway (Smokey Pokey World)". By 1968 he was fronting Junior's Eyes and recording an album that's largely remembered because they briefly served as David Bowie's backup group. Wayne had played guitar on "Space Oddity" and Junior's Eyes featured on Bowie's eponymous 1969 album. *Battersea Power Station*, also produced by Tony Visconti that year, is a typically patchy affair from a time when experimentation was the order of the day – accordingly, one side was a loosely conceptual, countercultural song-cycle. But at best they took basic 12-bar blues grooves and made them appealing, notably on "Imagination" and "White Light". Reminiscent of the early Nice or the contemporaneous Blossom Toes, the album falls infuriatingly short of meaningful ideas.

EXTRAS: Three sundry non-LP singles, four demos, a couple of Peel Session tracks plus both sides of the Tickle single.

MICK HOUGHTON



KALEIDOSCOPE Tangerine Dream (reissue, 1967) TALKING ELEPHANT

Tiny titans of
toytown pop's first
epistle to dippy
"We get accused of
being too twee, too fey,"

8/10 frontman Peter Daltrey told *Uncut* a while back, reflecting on Kaleidoscope's surprisingly hefty legacy. "If you were listening to it at the time that would have been acceptable." Magnificently feeble, the first of the London foursome's three LPs laid down a daunting pattern for all wimpy indie-poppers of the future, both in terms of tinpot construction and risible sales. And if *Tangerine Dream* is not quite the lost acid classic that some claim ("You could count on one hand the bits that are psychedelic," acknowledged Daltrey), the sheer in-your-face-ness of its abjection lend it a certain gravitas. The strictly-waist-up romantic overtures of "Dear Nellie Goodrich" and "Please Excuse My Face" make Donovan's "Jennifer Juniper" sound positively filthy, while pop-art plane crash "Flight From Ashiya" out-Bee-Gees The Bee Gees' "New York Mining Disaster 1941". Even if no-one noticed at the time, Kaleidoscope captured their moment magnificently, "The Murder Of Louis Tollani" and "Dive Into Yesterday" ("Battalions in baby blue are bursting blue balloons") splashing around the new palette of colours in the post-Sgt. Pepper universe with a certain indiscriminate panache. Naïve but nice.

EXTRAS: None.

JIM WIRTH



LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX Press Color (reissue, 1979) LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

Post-punk debut from
late French polymath
Though she hung out

7/10 with Richard Hell and Patti Smith, Lizzy Mercier Descloux seemed to cut quite a different figure to these more self-consciously serious personalities on New York's arty Downtown scene in the late '70s. Rather than taking influence from Symbolist poets, beat writers and free jazz, the young Parisian singer, guitarist, painter and writer, who died in 2003, was instead inspired by more diverse and mainstream pop culture. This patchwork of influences is reflected in her playful debut, *Press Color*, the first installment in a full reissue of her catalogue by Light In The Attic. The opening "Fire" takes Arthur Brown's hit and drastically reimagines it as a scratchy disco-funk workout, "Tumor" adds gallows humour to Peggy Lee's "Fever", and there's also an entertaining though strangely faithful take on Lalo Schiffrin's *Mission Impossible* theme. Mercier Descloux's originals, mainly instrumental, are a little more serious and convincing, "Torso Corso" awash with swirling atonal organ, and the nimble "Aya Mood" a throw-forward to her later experiments with African music.

EXTRAS: 10 extra tracks including the "Rosa Yemen" EP, and "Morning High", written and performed with Patti Smith.

TOM PINNOCK



LED ZEPPELIN

Presence/In Through The Out Door/Coda (Deluxe Editions)

SWANSONG/RHINO

Final three LPs remastered, with touches of genius. *By John Robinson*



8/10

8/10

8/10

RATHER CONTRARY TO their initial expectations, Led Zeppelin never did crash and burn. Instead, their final studio albums, conceived while fighting grave personal problems, found them grimly digging in and fighting on. In the last installments of the band's reissue programme you can hear remastered shifts in personal dynamics (Plant and Jones ascendant; Page in retreat) reflected in music that was martial, haunted and oddly un-Zeppelin-like. The fact that *In Through The Out Door* contained an epic synth song and an Elvis pastiche compounds the feeling that the subsequent death of John Bonham didn't so much bring Led Zeppelin down in flames as stop them abruptly between new, weird stations.

For all their talk of battle, the devil and Mexico, these are not warm records. After a bad car accident, Robert Plant sang *Presence* on crutches, while Page's vision for the LP was metallic. No acoustic guitars, no additional colours, no outside influences on the riffing, a song like "Achilles Last Stand" was the antithesis of the hungry-eared and multi-textured "Kashmir". In lyric form and musical scale, it was epic – the marauding Viking charge of "Immigrant Song" raised exponentially to the power of *Game Of Thrones*. Page has called the record (made with little pre-production and mixed quickly in studio time begged from the Stones) "urgent" and "anxious" – one way of saying it's all rock, but not much roll.

When they were vulnerable, Zeppelin threw up their guard – here even the plaintive blues "Nobody's Fault But Mine" assumes a mighty and rebarbative nature rather at odds with the lyric. The discs of

"companion audio", often short on revelation, here reveal a moment of sheer anomaly. "10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)" is, whatever that title may mean, everything the LP is not: a tender piano piece. As such, it throws forward to *In Through The Out Door*, an LP on which John Paul Jones enters the spotlight.

At the band's huge Knebworth show, a couple of weeks before the album's release, Led Zeppelin were tentatively emerging from a lengthy hiatus, acknowledging that all was not the same in the world as when they last performed in it. "No Quarter" went a bit reggae, Page poured sweat, and Plant danced like Kate Bush. Nor did he sound completely confident about his place in this new world. After some remarks about caves in Peru, he announced the band's forthcoming new album. "As you've no doubt read the reviews..." he grinned, "...it's tremendous. You can imagine!"

Page came to regard *In Through The Out Door* as transitional, which isn't surprising since the band's future movements would presumably have featured work on which he roused himself from his Sussex pit to play electric guitar. The opener "In The Evening" sets a magnificent riff in the haunting pan-global ambience that permeated some of *Physical Graffiti*, while elsewhere John Paul Jones and Robert Plant, the group's early risers, completed the album with tuneful pop. The heavier contemporary numbers (particularly the furious "Wearing And Tearing", in which Plant barks like a Jack Russell) hint at a fire still burning, but ultimately only appeared on *Coda*.

If there is pure genius in this last set of remasters, it is in how Jimmy Page has contrived to turn *Coda* from a desultory selection of offcuts into an essential purchase. With more open ears, "Wearing And Tearing", "Darlene" and "Ozone Baby" sound as if future Zep albums could have seen the band deliver something re-engaged with blues and old rock'n'roll – a kind of heavier *Exile On Main St*, perhaps. Better still, it rounds up early-'70s strays like "Hey Hey What Can I Do?" (from an Atlantic sampler album) and "St Tristan's Sword" (a *III*-era item). There's a version of "When The Levee Breaks" which actually sounds different from the released version. Best of all are the

TRACKLIST

PRESENCE - EXTRAS:

- 1 Two Ones Are Won (Achilles Last Stand - Reference Mix)
- 2 For Your Life (Reference Mix)
- 3 10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod) (Ref. Mix)
- 4 Royal Orleans (Reference Mix)
- 5 Hots On For Nowhere (Reference Mix)

IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR - EXTRAS:

- 1 In The Evening (Rough Mix)
- 2 Southbound Piano (South Bound Saurez - Mix)
- 3 Fool In The Rain (Rough Mix)
- 4 Hot Dog (Rough Mix)
- 5 The Epic (Carouselambra - Rough Mix)
- 6 The Hook (All My Love - Rough Mix)
- 7 Blot (I'm Gonna Crawl - Rough Mix)

CODA - EXTRAS DISC 1:

- 1 We're Gonna Groove (Alternate Mix)
- 2 If It Keeps On Raining (When The Levee Breaks - Rough Mix)
- 3 Bonzo's Montreux (Mix Construction In Progress)
- 4 Baby Come On Home
- 5 Sugar Mama (Mix)
- 6 Poor Tom (Instrumental Mix)
- 7 Travelling Riverside Blues (BBC Session)
- 8 Hey, Hey, What Can I Do

EXTRAS DISC 2:

- 1 Four Hands (Four Sticks - Bombay Orchestra)
- 2 Friends (Bombay Orchestra)
- 3 St Tristan's Sword (Rough Mix)
- 4 Desire (The Wanton Song - Rough Mix)
- 5 Bring It On Home (Rough Mix)
- 6 Walter's Walk (Rough Mix)
- 7 Everybody Makes It Through (In The Light - Rough Mix)

fruits of the much-discussed Bombay Sessions from '72. If you like hearing people politely misunderstand one another in different languages, there's some interesting bootleg versions of Page and Plant's visit to EMI's studios in Bombay to record with Indian musicians. Here, events are trimmed down to the finished product: "Four Hands" ("Four Sticks") and a version of "Friends". Both are staggering things, throwing forward to Page/Plant and the solo WOMAD Plant. Still, as heavy as the tracks are, it's impossible not to note that the George Harrison vibes are even heavier, a fact which may have precluded their release at the time.

The Led Zep reissue campaign has posed as many questions as it has answered (like "Are we really going to pretend we find the companion audio as revelatory as Jimmy Page does?" and "How come this is the iTunes remaster, not a belt-and-braces one from the tapes?"), but it has genuinely pulled something out of the hat here. This being a band on some level all about unfinished business, we can only look at the guitarist and ask another question. What next?

Q&A

Jimmy Page

Tell us about the Bombay Sessions. I thought it would be a fascinating project to go into a Bombay studio, not have a musical arranger, and request instruments such as the sarangi, the mridangam, the tabla drums and violins. I knew that it would work and it did work. Robert and I went over with the acoustic guitar and pulled it together over the course of an evening. Once "Friends" was done, I wasn't going to leave it there. The whole thing was really happening. We also had a crack at the equivalent of "Four Sticks".

How come it hasn't come out 'til now? At the time, it wasn't appropriate to put this into Led Zeppelin. It was 1972 and we were still into the fourth album. *Houses Of The Holy* hadn't come out at that point. Now is a great time to be able to present that stuff.

How do you feel at the end of the reissue project? It's jubilation. You have to understand, I have been working on this for a long time. To visualise a project like this, with all the substantial boxsets and companion discs – there were hundreds of hours of listening to set all this up. It wasn't just another band putting out their material with a few bonus tracks. As far as I'm concerned, I've done my job here.



PAVEMENT The Secret History Volume 1 DOMINO

Gatefold double LP views
Slanted And Enchanted
from alternate angle

7/10

To call this 30-track comp
a “secret history” requires

some gumption. Nothing wrong with the package itself – a nicely presented 30-track collection with essays, photos, the whole shebang. But this is essentially the same clutch of B-sides, outtakes and live tracks you’ll already own if you shelled out for 2002’s *Slanted And Enchanted (Luxe & Reduxe)* edition, sans the mother album itself. A repackage of a repackage, then – but what *The Secret History* does suggest is that Pavement could have pieced together their debut one of many different ways and still have made something great. Here is the Stockton, CA group in the first flush of youth, Stephen Malkmus sardonic but not yet smarmy, and the band making a virtue of ultra-cheap recording, with rough edges – namely, scattershot original drummer Gary Young – intact. “Summer Baby (7-inch Remix)” and “Here (Alternate Take)” offer familiar moments from a new angle, the latter revisiting *Slanted*’s most wistful moment with a fat thatch of tape-fi guitar. “Secret Knowledge Of Backroads”, co-written with Silver Jews’ David Berman and yielded from a Peel Session, is a heartbreaker, while a rash of live tracks recorded in Brixton in ’92 sound super-fun, particularly a hairy and not remotely cerebral “Baby Yeah”.

EXTRAS: Essays, new artwork.

6/10

LOUIS PATTISON



ROBBIE ROBERTSON & ALEX NORTH Carny OST REAL GONE MUSIC

Band man’s first true
foray into movie scoring;
Dr John, Randall
Bramblett guest

7/10

Having washed his hands as leader and guitarist of The Band with *The Last Waltz*, and now firmly ensconced in Hollywood, Robbie Robertson kicked off his post-Band chapter as co-star, with Gary Busey and Jodie Foster, of this shambling box-office flop, a largely forgotten, not-without-merits delve into carnival subculture. While North’s half of the soundtrack – aside from the truly surreal “Carny’s Theme” – hews to the incidental orchestrations he’d been composing from *A Streetcar Named Desire* onwards, Robertson heads straight to the various post-war jazz and blues manifestations of Bourbon Street. A sleazy strip-club vibe dominates half of his contributions, as on “Rained Out” and “Garden Of Earthly Delights”, on which harsh saxophones spar with the disc’s gutsiest guitar lead, while the jazzy stutter of “Sawdust And G-String” is punctuated with hypnotic, siren-like keyboard blips. The brief, elegiac “Freak’s Lament” and Robertson’s suitably gritty (and lone) vocal turn on “The Fat Man”, the record that kicked off Fats Domino’s career in 1949, highlight a fun, occasionally intriguing, decidedly minor curiosity upon the revered artist’s 50-year journey.

EXTRAS: None.

LUKE TORN



ROYAL TRUX Hand Of Glory (reissue, 2002) DOMINO

Legendary duo’s ‘lost’
scraggly blues session

7/10

Let’s face it, in the
run-up to Royal Trux’s
unexpected live reunion

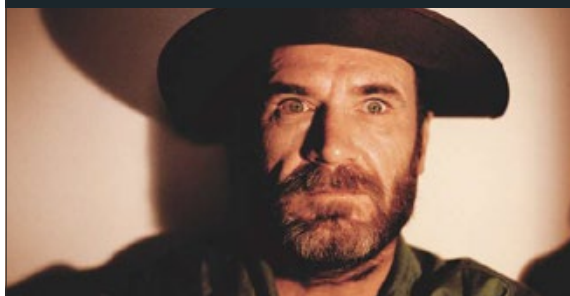
this month, no-one has been clamouring for another release of the sprawling *Hand Of Glory*. The latest instalment in Drag City and Domino’s joint Trux reissue programme, these two 20-minute jams, one more listenable than the other, capture a young Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema sloping into their late-’80s smack-rock prime, freshly settled in San Francisco and aiming to get it together for the follow-up to well-received debut single “Hero Zero”. They just about make it through the malnourished blues of Stonesy A-side “Two Sticks” before collapsing on top of each other in a slop of absent-minded riffs, basic beats and flaky funk, punctuated by harmonica and Herrema’s yelp. So bad, so *wrong*, it’s almost perfect. Part two, “The Boxing Story”, comprises one long delirious freestyle noise jam split into five pieces that Hagerty intended to be played simultaneously. For whatever reason, Hagerty forgot about these tapes until he found them in a trunk in his parents’ basement in 2001, around the time Royal Trux imploded, making *Hand Of Glory* a satisfyingly messy footnote to a chaotic career. Still, more soon, please, we hope.

EXTRAS: None.

PIERS MARTIN

REVELATIONS

Poet Jock Scot: “I was sent to live
on a houseboat with Viv Stanshall”



► It’s been a fair old time coming, but the reissue of Jock Scot’s sole album, 1997’s *My Personal Culloden*, is giving the Scots poet pause for reflection. *Culloden* was the culmination, it seems, of several decades spent in the maw of the music industry, primarily at Stiff Records: “I had met Ian Dury when he was on tour with the Blockheads in the summer of 1978,” he recalls. “Ian invited me along on the rest of the tour. I moved to London when the tour ended... Soon I got a job in the post room at Stiff. I was also working nights as a roadie for Whirlwind and London R’n’B outfit The Inmates. Whirlwind supported The Clash regularly and did a tour with Blondie. So I was keeping busy.” Eventually, Scot started working with Charisma Records, where he met Viv Stanshall: “I was sent to live with him on a houseboat in Chertsey to encourage him to finish writing *Sir Henry At N’Didi’s Kraal*. I worked with a steel band from Trinidad, The Desperados, setting up 80 steel drums as we toured the UK. Taj Mahal opened the show and Viv Stanshall was the compère.” JONDALE



JOCK SCOT My Personal Culloden (reissue, 1997) HEAVENLY

Thrilling, emotionally
riveting rock
poetry, unearthed

9/10

Given he’s the subject

of a soon-to-be-released biographical film, Jock Scot’s time may finally have come. It’s been a while: *My Personal Culloden*, his only album, crowned one of his phases of reinvention, where he moved from behind-the-scenes to front-of-stage as a ‘rock poet’ of sorts. But he’s also shared time and space with Vivian Stanshall, The Clash, Ian Dury and more, and was part of the extended Stiff Records family: his one contribution to the label’s catalogue, the “Kongratulationz” single pressed for Stiff MD Dave Robinson’s wedding, and housed in a sleeve by Savage Pencil, apparently so offended the groom that he tried to collect all the records back from wedding guests to have them destroyed. But it was with *My Personal Culloden*, a minor masterpiece of Scottish independent rock, that Scot really shone. Backed by The Nectarine No 9, the ’90s group of Davy Henderson (The Fire Engines, Win, now The Sexual Objects), who bring a taut, elastic, instigative rock to the album, Scot eulogises Ronnie Wood and reflects on girls and drugs, singing about “Just Another Fucked Up Little Druggy” in his dry, droll brogue.

EXTRAS: None.

JONDALE



GIL SCOTT-HERON A New Black Poet Small Talk At 125th And Lennox ACE

The classic spoken-word
1970 debut...

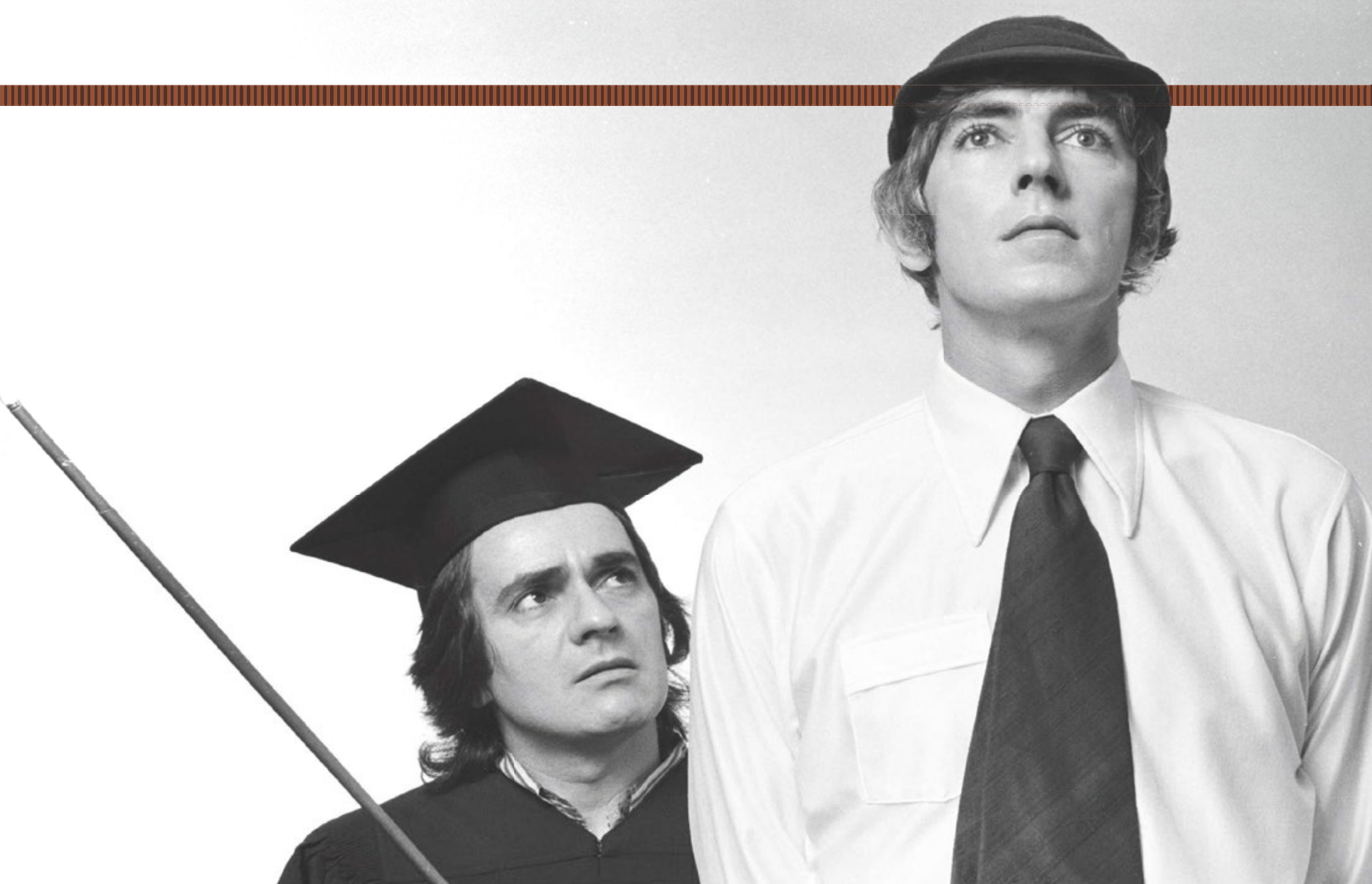
7/10

The rubric on the front

cover of Scott-Heron’s 1970 debut is instructive: ‘A New Black Poet’. The 20-year-old had gone to the Flying Dutchman label hoping to record his music, but funds were tight and instead they put him in the studio with a trio of conga players and – making a virtue out of necessity – presented him as a spoken-word artist. It proved to be an inspired move. The rhythmic delivery of the original version of “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” is compelling and makes for an enthralling contrast with the better-known version he’d record the following year on *Pieces Of A Man*. The racial consciousness of Scott-Heron’s hard-hitting poetry on “Paint It Black” and “Whitey On The Moon” put him up alongside the likes of James Baldwin and Langston Hughes as one of the most literate voices in black America, while the words are augmented by a trio of more conventional songs featuring piano accompaniment, including “Who’ll Pay Reparations On My Soul?”, which evokes Donny Hathaway and pointed the way forward for the rest of his career. But there really was no excuse for the tittering homophobia of “The Subject Was Faggots”, even in 1970.

EXTRAS: None.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



PETER COOK AND DUDLEY MOORE

A Right Pair Of C****: The Complete F***** Derek & Clive

UNIVERSAL

Are the late duo's obscene alter egos still funny, asks Michael Bonner



7/10

THE ENDURING IMAGE of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore comes from a 1965 sketch routinely trotted out for Best Of clips on TV. It's the duo in an art gallery: "The sign of a good painting with their backs towards you is if the bottoms follow you around the room." The sketch underscores the brilliance of Cook and Moore's partnership. Upper-class versus working-class; tall versus short; deadpan versus clowning. But by the time they came to create Derek & Clive, almost a decade later, their careers were diverging. There were solo ventures (Cook's short-lived chat show *Where Do I Sit?* and *The Rise And Rise Of Michael Rimmer*; Moore's *30 Is a Dangerous Age, Cynthia*); while Cook's alcoholism was beginning to nag at their relationship.

At first, Derek (Moore) and Clive (Cook) gave the two men a chance to let off steam in an informal environment. Between performances of their 1973 Broadway revue *Beyond The Fringe*, they convened at Bell Sound Studios, the Bottom Line in Greenwich Village, and with engineer Eddie Kramer at Electric Lady studios on Chris Blackwell's ticket. Essentially an update of their Pete and Dud characters, Derek & Clive bypassed the wit of their early collaborations in favour of lots of swearing.

Released between 1976 and 1978, the three Derek & Clive studio albums – included here with

a 'greatest hits' set and a disc of rarities – map the degeneration of Cook and Moore's professional relationship. It begins as sweary bants between pals over several drinks – subjects include retrieving lobsters from Jayne Mansfield's rectum, Winston Churchill's phlegm, masturbation, sodomy and cottaging. Jokes pivot round Moore's delivery of the phrase "Willy winkie wanky" or hearing Cook tell a yarn involving a "fucking gorilla fucking the arse off my fucking wife". Blackwell circulated the tapes among his industry pals, engendering a formal release three years later. The Director Of Public Prosecutions rejected complaints from four police forces who wanted the comics prosecuted for obscenity. Buoyed by the controversy, Cook's biographer Harry Thompson notes *...(Live)* sold 100,000 copies.

After the success of *...(Live)*, Cook and Moore were offered a new film project, *The Hound Of The Baskervilles*, directed by Warhol protégé Paul Morrissey. The film failed, and the pair's subsequent records develop an increasingly sour tone as they turn their frustrations towards each other. As Cook wryly admitted, *...Come Again* is "a stream of obscenities about unpleasant subjects". Released in 1977 on Virgin, the record outflanked punk in its capacity to shock. Take, for instance, Cook serenading Moore with "My old man's a dustman, he's got cancer too/Silly fucking arsehole, he's got it up the flue," knowing that his

partner had recently lost his own father due to the disease. Elsewhere, Moore considers raping the victims of road traffic accidents and later discusses cutting out his wife's hymen with an electric carving knife. Recorded in September 1978, just as Moore's film career was beginning to take off (10 was barely a year away), *...Ad Nauseam* is even further out there. In one sketch, Cook talks about repeatedly kicking his wife in the vagina. Later, he

discusses masturbating over images of the late Pope; another sketch is simply called "Rape, Death And Paralysis". At one point during the film of the *...Ad Nauseam* sessions, *Derek & Clive Get The Horn*, Cook's vitriol becomes unbearable – "Your mother thinks very simply that you're a cunt" – and Moore temporarily walks out. It is *Let It Be* without the tunes.

While *...(Live)* was never intended to be heard in public, both *...Come Again* and *...Ad Nauseam* were recorded for commercial release and there's a sense here that Cook and

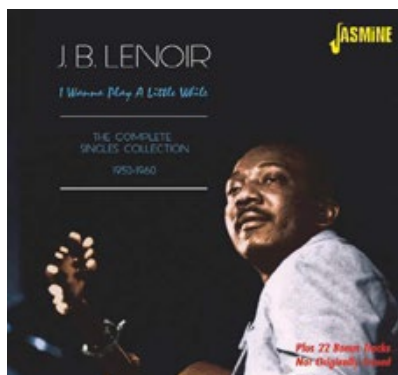
Moore are trying to be as provocative as possible. Critically, the second and third Derek & Clive records are remarkable for their sustained levels of cruelty: the awful misanthropic bleakness of the thing. They are comedy records that aren't funny, principally. But what they reveal of the bizarre, unravelling relationship between the two comedians is fascinating; and means they shouldn't be overlooked.

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The Specialist

Blues



JB LENOIR I Wanna Play A Little While - The Complete Singles Collection 1950-1960

JASMINE

7/10

**Neglected political bluesman's first
10 years of 7-inches**

JB Lenoir was the bluesman who got away. One of the generation born in the South before moving to Chicago after World War II, he found steady work in

the Windy City, celebrated for his lively stage show (and zebra-pattern suit) and a stream of classy, occasionally classic singles. International recognition didn't arrive until the mid-'60s, when John Mayall was among those championing him, only for injuries sustained in an Illinois car crash to snatch his life, at the age of 38, in April 1967.

Although he lived in the shadow of Chicago legends such as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson (a mentor), Lenoir had his own, distinct style. He sang in a high, pungent voice, often preferred acoustic guitar to electric guitar, and, even more unusually, was unafraid to deliver sharp social commentary.

"Korea Blues", the opener from 1950 on *I Wanna Play A Little While*, a comprehensive survey of his first decade, took the part of a serviceman stranded from his woman, a subject to which he returned on 1954's "I'm In Korea", the same year he issued "Eisenhower Blues", which generated enough controversy for his label, Parrot, to insist on a less pointed remake as "Tax Paying Blues" after heat from the White House. Later, in the '60s, "Alabama Blues" and "Vietnam Blues" offered acrid observations on the Civil Rights struggle and the war.

Still, Lenoir's biggest success came with a hunk of good-time boogie, 1954's "Mama Talk To Your Daughter", with tenor sax alongside his driving guitar, which muscled into the R'n'B charts and brought on a brace of "Mama"-themed follow-ups. By then JB (his given name, not initials) had changed band – his early '50s work featured splendid playing by pianist Sunnyland Slim on tracks such as "The Mojo", a jump blues arguably best heard in its '60s acoustic remake. Lenoir repaid the favour, backing Sunnyland on his own tracks like the sweet shuffle "When I Was Young", one of a cache of unissued (though not unheard) tracks here.

Lenoir's star faded with the '50s, despite the attention of Chicago lynchpin Willie Dixon, who brought a fresher feel to punchy pieces like "Daddy Talk To Your Son" and who later produced Lenoir's fine 1965 album *Alabama Blues*. Also worthy of mention are two cuts with harmonica whizz Junior Wells; "Back Door" blows up a two-minute storm. Mayall mourned him in song ("The Death of JB Lenoir" and "I'm Gonna Fight For You JB"), and helped bring a deserved re-evaluation of a singular talent.

EXTRAS: None.

NEIL SPENCER

Political bluesman
JB Lenoir in his
zebra-pattern suit



THE SISTERS OF MERCY

First And Last And Always

RHINO

**30th-anniversary vinyl
boxset + rarities**

8/10

At the time of their debut, the Sisters seemed to be on a pleasing career upswing, pivoting from indie chart dons to Top 40 aspirants at their new label, Warners. Looking back, March 1985's *First And Last...* finds the band fulfilling the promise of earlier releases: arpeggiated guitar, thunderous bass, metronomic drum machine and the cavernous baritone and mordant wit of frontman Andrew Eldritch. But *First And Last...* is also partly a document of a band on the brink. Eldritch was hospitalised for exhaustion during sessions: too many late nights. Meanwhile, the sequencing is telling. Co-writes between Eldritch and new guitarist Wayne Hussey dominate Side A; Side B by Eldritch and co-founder Gary Marx, who left towards the end of the year. Hussey brings textured 12-string acoustics to his songs, but Marx's spidery riffs and curlicues are more memorable. Highlights include the sonorous "Marian" and the stately epic "Some Kind Of Stranger", while subjects up for discussion include Armageddon ("Black Planet"), lost love ("Nine While Nine") and speed psychosis ("Amphetamine Logic").

EXTRAS: This 30th-anniversary 4LP (and digital) set comes with additional material from contemporaneous singles – already available on Rhino's 2006 CD edition – but critically also includes two previously out-of-print tracks, the heavy drone "Afterhours" and raucous "Body Electric [1984 Version]".

MICHAEL BONNER



TEST DEPT

Shoulder To Shoulder (reissue, 1985)

PC-PRESS

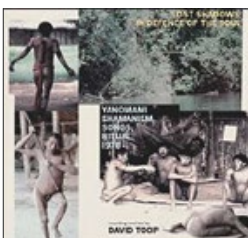
**Industrial activists'
Miners' Strike opus**

One would never accuse frontline socialists Test Dept of sentimentality, but a degree

8/10

of nostalgia surely colours this 30th-anniversary reissue of *Shoulder To Shoulder*, the South London troupe's document of the nationwide tour they organised in support of the Miners' Strike in 1984-'85. For an anti-establishment outfit who relished the physicality of the live spectacle, performing intense shows in unorthodox locations using scrap metal and make-do instruments, not unlike their German counterparts Einstürzende Neubauten, *Shoulder...* now seems an unashamedly romantic affair. It consists of workers' anthems and traditionals – "Comrades In Arms", "On Barriers And Bridges" – stoutly delivered by the South Wales Striking Mining Choir, a group of Welsh miners initially brought together by Test Dept for a concert in London. Such serene renditions clash with Test Dept's punishing rhythm tracks "Fuel To Fight" and particularly "Shockwork", which uses an impassioned speech by Kent miner Alan Sutcliffe as a powerful introduction. On "Comrades", the collectives unite as clanking beats violate choral song. Test Dept had performed at miners' benefits around the country, often supported by local speakers and colliery brass bands, before assembling *Shoulder...* as a record of this solidarity movement. Beyond the music, its historical significance has profound resonance today.

EXTRAS: None, but a Test Dept retrospective book, *Total State Machine*, is out this month via PC-Press. PIERS MARTIN



DAVID TOOP

Lost Shadows: In Defence Of The Soul (Yanomami Shamanism, Songs, Ritual, 1978) SUB ROSA

8/10

Ceremonial healing and ritual song from Amazonian tribe

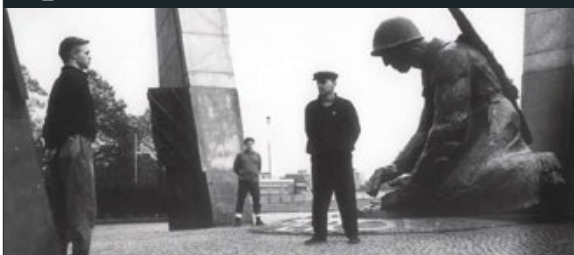
In 1978, author, critic and musician David Toop travelled to the Amazon, field-recording gear in tow. His mission, at least in part, was to locate the last Yanomami shamans in Venezuela. The Yanomami are one of the largest indigenous societies in the Amazon, living on and near the Parima mountain range that runs in the border area of Venezuela and Brazil. Toop's recordings have been released before – one of the most startling releases on his Quartz Publications imprint was *Hekura: Yanomami Shamanism From Southern Venezuela* (1980); other recordings have been spread across various comps – but hearing them collected in their entirety offers an immersion method of startling intensity. *Lost Shadows* divides its time between ceremonies, ritual songs and rainforest recordings, and it's the former that are the most surprising, rising in intensity as the ritual gathers pace, channelling spirits and familiars, offering an audio psychogeography of the Yanomami's physical space as their everyday and ceremonial collide and find consort. Most compelling is "Mabutawi-Teri: Young Women's Circle Song", a performance that's gorgeous in its oscillation between group chant and solo keening.

EXTRAS: Detailed liner notes from Toop in 6/10 40-page illustrated booklet.

JON DALE

REVELATIONS

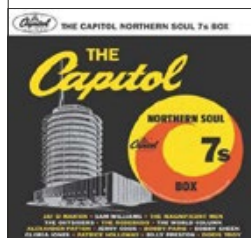
Test Dept – still active, still passionate, still relevant



► "Our shows were so intense, we'd pass out or be sick. It was an endurance test for us as much as the audience," recalls Paul Jamrozy of 1980s industrial stalwarts Test Dept. "But that's why industrial workers could see we weren't posing – it was very physical work." Bashing large metal objects in railway stations for political purposes earned Test Dept a formidable reputation in the mid-'80s, and though today three of the founding members – Jamrozy, Graham Cunnington and Angus Farquhar – may not be packing sledgehammers, they are applying themselves with no little passion to presenting Test Dept's legacy to a (partly) new audience. Recently, the group mined their archive to help assemble a film, the political collage *DS30*, a book, *Total State Machine*, which chronicles Test Dept's activity, and a reissue of *Shoulder To Shoulder*, their 1985 collaboration with a Welsh choir made up of striking miners, all of which are out this summer. And the timing couldn't be better. "There's a Tory government, vicious cuts, and the unions are under attack," sighs Jamrozy. "We're back to where we were 30 years ago." PIERS MARTIN



8/10



7/10

get irresistible but little-known dance tracks by recognisable names such as Terry Callier and Etta James and one-off recordings by obscure figures like George Kirby and Joy Lovejoy who, despite making what now sound like goose-bump classics of the genre, were never invited back. Around the same time, Capitol was also trying to imitate the success of Motown and Atlantic by signing every gospel-singer-turned-soul-belter its talent scouts could find. Chart success was elusive, despite discovering names like Billy Preston and Doris Troy, both represented in *The Capitol Northern Soul 7s Box*. Yet once again, it's such obscurities as Alexander Patton's "Say You'll Be Mine" and Patrice Holloway's "Stolen Hours" – despite being blatant Motown steals – that are most rewarding.

EXTRAS: Booklets containing archival photos and 7/10 track-by-track annotations.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



8/10

THE WHO

The Reaction 7" Singles 1966 Boxset POLYDOR

Quirky anthems, psych experiments and more After severing connections with producer Shel Talmy and Brunswick in 1966,

The Who found a temporary home at Robert Stigwood's new Reaction label, on which they'd release three of their most inventive expressions of outsider spirit. "Substitute" was the first, a blurt of antipathy that's like a British kitchen-sink equivalent of the sneering Dylan of "Positively 4th Street" delivered via acoustic guitars and harmonies which suggested the influence of The Byrds. The Who's musical character at that time was best represented by the tomboy anthem "I'm A Boy", a quirky take on tranny urges from the other side of the gender-gap, featuring a dynamic interplay of stalking bass, thunderous drums and declamatory guitar, fronted by suitably falsetto chorus harmonies. Those harmonies also featured heavily on Keith Moon's surf-fan contributions to the "Ready, Steady, Who" EP, covers of "Barbara Ann" and Jan & Dean's "Bucket T"; the other tracks included the patchy psych-rock experiment "Disguises", and "Circles", a tale of romantic confusion delivered in Daltrey's most desultory deadpan. It had served as "Substitute"'s B-side, but due to the dispute with Talmy was pointedly replaced there by "Waltz For A Pig", a lumbering jazz-rock instrumental credited to The Who Orchestra but actually performed by the Graham Bond Organisation. Both versions are included.

EXTRAS: None. ANDY GILL

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Chess Northern Soul/ The Capitol Northern Soul 7s Box UNIVERSAL

Collectable '60s soul nuggets in two vinyl boxes As the audience for the hardcore blues of Muddy and Wolf declined in the '60s, the Chess label jumped aboard the soul train. It's biggest hit was Fontella Bass' 1967 chart-topper "Rescue Me", but as the Northern Soul aesthetic is based firmly on rarity, such popular cuts have no place in a set of collectable Chess nuggets, all recorded between 1964-'67. Instead we

COMING NEXT MONTH...



► This September sees a veritable bounty of major artists return, from Beirut and Jack White's Dead Weather to Richard Hawley and Mercury Rev, the latter with

their first album since 2008. Receiving particular attention in the Uncut office are Kurt Vile's *B'lieve I'm Goin Down...* – a work low on grammar, but high on memorable tunes – and The Arcs' *Yours, Dreamily*, an infectious, lush new project from Black Key Dan Auerbach. His work on Dr John's *Locked Down* is perhaps the record's closest cousin.

Elsewhere, David Rawlings releases *Nashville Obsolete*, with help from compadre Gillian Welch, Low follow *The Invisible Way* with the strong *Ones And Sixes*, and Julia Holter continues her impressive journey with *Have You In My Wilderness*.

In the world of archival releases, David Bowie's stellar work from 1969-'73 is compiled, Creation Records' early releases get their own boxset, and underrated American outfits Luna and Unwound have their greatest work chronicled. Meanwhile, the award for most mammoth boxset goes to

the huge *30 Trips Around The Sun*, an 80-disc live set from The Grateful Dead.



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Mercurial spirit:
Joplin in 1969

JANIS: THE WAY SHE WAS

FABULOUS FILMS / FREMANTLE MEDIA

Howard Alk's intimate 1974 portrait of Janis Joplin reissued.

By Graeme Thomson



7/10

IN 1973, WHEN Howard Alk and Seaton Findlay were putting together this documentary, Janis Joplin was only three years gone but a mythology had already grown up around her. Just as they had with Brian Jones, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix, the tales of Joplin's drinking, drugging and serial provocations – which

culminated in her death from an overdose in October 1970 – had already become enshrined in legend.

Within this context, the subtitle of Alk and Findlay's 90-minute portrait is no afterthought. The directors' aim, clearly, was to return Joplin to flesh and blood, focusing on her achievements as a music maker rather than a hellraiser. They placed at the film's centre frequently remarkable footage – some of it from Monterey and Woodstock, but much of it less well-known, culled from European concerts and TV shows – of Joplin performing "Mercedes Benz", "Ball And Chain", "Piece Of My Heart", "Me And Bobby McGee" and nine other songs, backed by Big

Brother & The Holding Company, Kozmic Blues Band and the Full Tilt Boogie Band.

Much of it is electrifying. After becoming distraught during a rehearsal (a friend had been busted and then screwed over by his bandmates), she delivers an extraordinarily visceral version of Gershwin's "Summertime". Her performance of "Try (Just A Little Bit Harder)" on *The Dick Cavett Show* is similarly gutsy, but much more fun. Bedecked in purple and green boas, she tears around the stage like some shamanic medicine woman – and the interview is a blast, too. Entertainingly, Joplin rarely seemed to dress down. In Germany, her outfit suggests that at least one polar bear gave up the ghost for the noble cause of blues-rock.

Though it's now 40 years old and its production values are rudimentary, *The Way She Was* feels remarkably contemporary in terms of its free-flowing construction. There is no commentary. Instead, a plausible narrative is stitched together from archive interviews and live footage. In a

people". Her onstage raps about "getting action", "being turned on" and "working your sweet ass" may not have worn well, but in this context they reveal as much about her motivating forces as any interview. "If you're a woman, you already know what you're looking for," she drawls to the crowd during "Tell Mama". "I found out at 14 years old and I've been looking ever since."

"It's real, it's not just a veneer or a performance – I'm just trying to feel and not bullshit myself"

Elsewhere, she talks unguardedly about the emotional depths she plumbs when singing. "It's real, it's not just a veneer or a performance, it's a moment when you get inside yourself," she says. "I'm just trying to feel and not bullshit myself." The implication that hangs over the entire film, of course, is that she went further into her own pain

than was healthy. Every performance here is undertaken at full tilt, and if at times one yearns for her to dial things down a little, such a notion fundamentally misunderstands the subject of this documentary. That simply wasn't the way Janis Joplin was built.

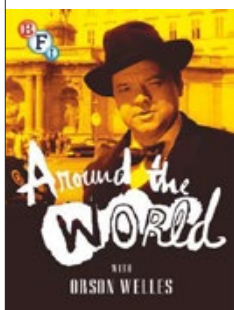
film refreshingly free of retrospective analysis from solemn, wise-after-the-fact elders, the undoubted tragedy of her early demise is not allowed to unbalance all that came before.

Without cleaving to anything as rigid as a linear narrative – Alk, after all, worked with Bob Dylan on *Eat The Document* and *Renaldo & Clara* – the film follows Joplin through her early life to her position as the most powerful and confrontational female rock singer of the late 1960s. In early interview footage, as grainy as it is frank, she recalls her childhood in Port Arthur, Texas – "they laughed me out of class, out of town and out of the state" – and her life-changing discovery of the blues and Lead Belly. Her move to San Francisco in the mid '60s was a burned bridge. There is terrific footage of her returning to the town after her success, strutting like a conquering queen but wearing the wounds of earlier humiliations heartbreakingly close to the surface.

The interviews reveal her as a mercurial spirit, irreverent but acutely sensitive, articulate when the mood takes her but rarely far from the sense of chaotic spontaneity which was given full rein while she performed. Life is portrayed as an eternal battle between the "straights" and the "free



Man with a movie camera: Welles in 1955



8/10

AROUND THE WORLD WITH ORSON WELLES

BFI

A century on, the director continues to confound

MAY 2015 MARKED the 100th anniversary of Welles' birth, prompting a flurry of releases. For a man whose legacy is so vast and rich, yet so scrappy

and impoverished, and so misunderstood, it's inevitable these centennial tributes have been scattered and of variable worth. Last month, the Mr Bongo label issued a fantastic trio: *Chimes At Midnight*, a Blu-ray restoration of Welles' (anyone's) greatest Shakespeare adaptation; *The Immortal Story*, the first UK DVD for the last fiction Welles released, a beautiful miniature that sees obsessions that nagged him since *Citizen Kane* refined to their essence; and *Too Much Johnson*, a movie Welles made before he made movies, originally designed to be screened during a 1938 theatre production, but which, riffing on silent cinema tropes, shows him already both naively in love with film and mischievously self-aware – already Welles.

Equally worthwhile is the BFI's beautifully restored *Around The World*, a series of six playful little home-movie style travel essays Welles made for British TV in 1955. The big draw is the inclusion of "The Third Man In Vienna," an episode thought lost for decades. It's not the best of the series – that has to be the programme exploring the lost beatnik world of Paris' Saint-Germain-des-Prés – but it's to be savoured for the passage in which Welles simply

purrs the luxurious names of Viennese cakes, while his camera drools over them.

The biggest event, however, has also been the most disappointing. *Magician: The Astonishing Life And Work Of Orson Welles* is a new documentary by Chuck Workman. Content to take a "career highlights" approach, the bare skeleton of Welles' trajectory – or at least its most widely accepted version – gets sketched out in telegraph form, just: child genius; theatre genius; *War Of The Worlds*; *Citizen Kane*; long 'decline' doing all that weird work that's difficult to get a handle on. But that's about it. The problem isn't that there's nothing new but that, aside from running together (great) clips, Workman has nothing to say or suggest about any of it. We're left with a documentary that resembles a Jive Bunny megamix of DVD extras.

But really, the greatest event is still to come: the promised completion and release of Welles' final film, *The Other Side Of The Wind*, which has languished in legal hell since 1976. It stands closer than ever to being released, but we're not there yet. The plan was to have it out for his anniversary. Now the estimate is 2016. Maybe. A hundred years on, we're still trying to catch up with Orson Welles.

EXTRAS: *Magician* extras still to be confirmed; **6/10** *Around The World* boasts a documentary version of Welles' planned, partially completed seventh episode. **DAMIEN LOVE**



6/10

THE GUNMAN

STUDIOCANAL

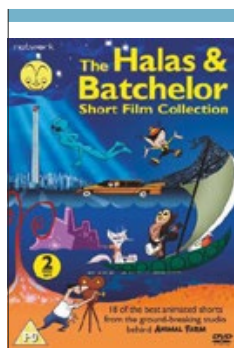
Sean Penn does a Liam Neeson

Taken director Pierre Morel assembles an extraordinary cast, headed by a musclebound Sean Penn as Jim Terrier(!), an ex-special forces guy and former hitman with plaque on his

brain. Eight years after doing a political assassination in DR Congo, the hunter is hunted as Terrier tracks down old compadres (Javier Bardem, Ray Winstone and, in a Dr Evil role, Mark Rylance). "You don't look well, Jim," Rylance observes, accurately. Action abounds, including a romantic clinch with Jasmine Trinca in a room full of burning petrol. Then Idris Elba turns up, talking about treehouses.

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR McKAY



8/10

THE HALAS & BATCHELOR SHORT FILMS COLLECTION

NETWORK

Treasure trove from "the British Disney" – including Kraftwerk!

Groundbreaking husband-and-wife animation team John Halas and Joy Batchelor are best known for 1954's feature-length *Animal Farm*.

But this fantastic set draws from their vast output of shorts – public education films, satirical cartoons, children's TV, ads. Restored to eye-popping standard, 18 tirelessly inventive pieces quest across styles, intentions and degrees of abstraction. *Uncut* readers should head first to their 1979 animation of Kraftwerk's "Autobahn" – an experimental response to the music, following a blue-green alien frogman through a pulsing, trippy cosmic kaleidoscope, no cars in sight.

EXTRAS: Archive interviews and three docs.

9/10 **DAMIEN LOVE**



9/10

JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY

CHARLY

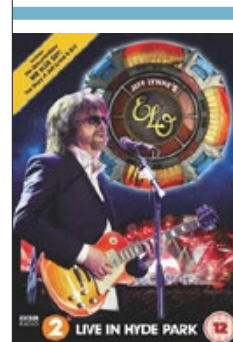
Legendary concert film still sizzles

Capturing the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, the first (and only) movie by American photographer Bert Stern is known as "the greatest jazz film ever", and time hasn't done much to

erode that reputation. Onstage, in ravishing colour: Thelonious Monk, Gerry Mulligan, Eric Dolphy, Anita O'Day, Dinah Washington, Louis Armstrong and more (including an impish Chuck Berry). Offstage: the cast of *Mad Men* in their vacation wear, digging it while glorious day turns to velvet dusk. The final section, devoted to Mahalia Jackson's glowing set, raises goosebumps.

EXTRAS: Booklet, CD of the music.

8/10 **DAMIEN LOVE**



8/10

JEFF LYNNE'S ELO

Live In Hyde Park

EAGLE VISION

Storming headline show for Radio 2's Festival In A Day

Jeff Lynne's revamped ELO pulled a 50,000 strong crowd into Hyde Park last September. Original pianist Richard Tandy was

at hand too, along with the BBC Concert Orchestra and (improbable as it may seem) Take That's back-up band. Lynne duly gave them a slew of mega-hits – "All Over The World", "Evil Woman" and "Don't Bring Me Down" included – rendered here in fabulous, string-laden concerto style.

EXTRAS: Feature-length doc *Mr Blue Sky: The Story Of Jeff Lynne And ELO*, plus Hyde Park interviews.

ROB HUGHES



8/10

NO OFFENCE

FREMANTLEMEDIA INTERNATIONAL

Shameless cop drama

Director Paul Abbott's Manchester-based cop show may have been sold as *Shameless* from the other side of the police station counter, but it's actually a character drama in

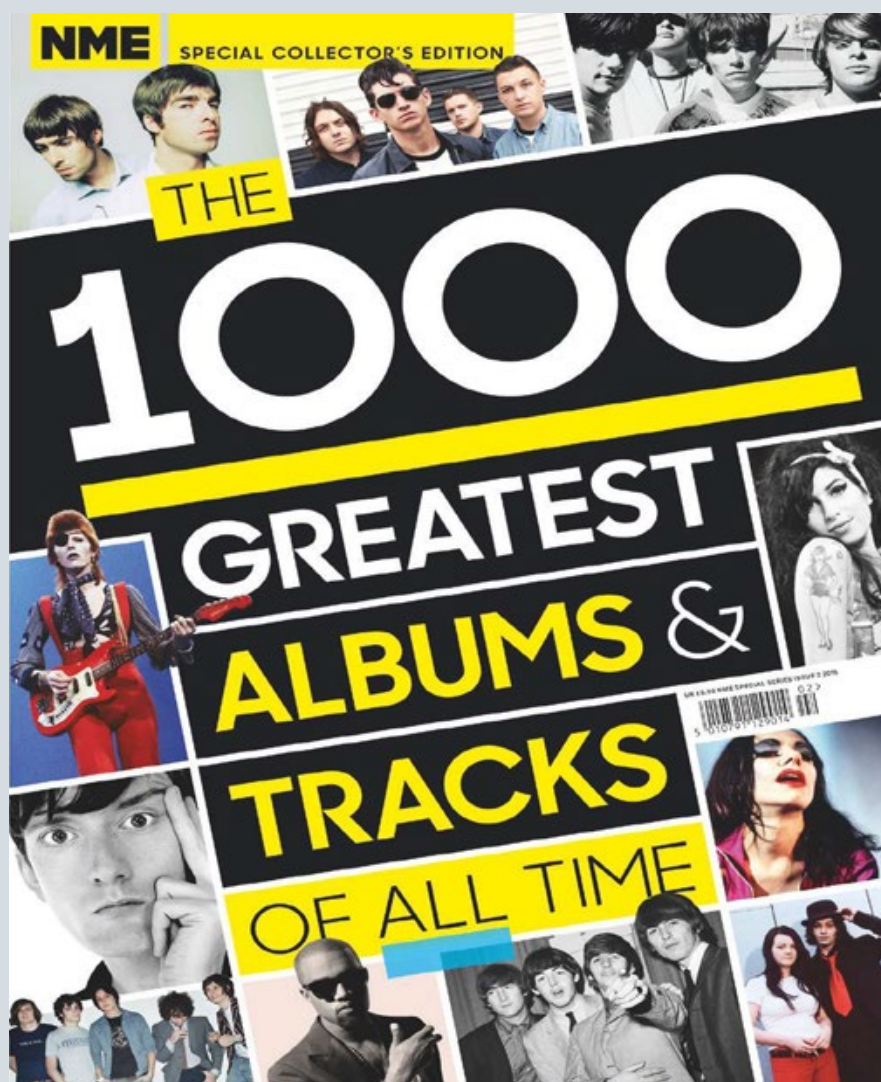
which the central players happen to be women. At the core is Joanna Scanlan's DI Viv Deering, a brilliant creation whose brusque humanity disguises some questionable police-work as she heads a team hunting a killer with a fetish for girls with Down's syndrome. Taboos are stretched, but that's less important than the vitality of the writing.

EXTRAS: Three featurettes, interview, **6/10** deleted scenes.

ALASTAIR McKAY



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Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

This month: Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach return, Subway Sect get documented, yet another Marvel offering, and True Detective, Spanish-style...

Mistress America At first, Greta Gerwig's Brooke in Noah Baumbach's new film feels like an extension of the character she played in Baumbach's *Frances Ha*. Both were co-written by Gerwig (with Baumbach) and both display zany hipster ways. They also appear to share typical Baumbach traits: career anxiety, life disappointment and a sense of fierce social competition. But it transpires that the similarity is superficial. While Frances' life is floating and unformed, Brooke flits with almost superhuman energy between different activities. One minute she is dancing onstage with a band (a cameo from the Dirty Projectors), the next she is running indoor cycling classes at a gym, home-tutoring schoolchildren or plotting her latest dizzying career swerve as an aspiring restaurateur.

Into Brooke's disorientating, high-velocity life comes Tracy (Lola Kirke, daughter of Free and Bad Company bassist Simon), who is soon to become Brooke's half-sister. A college freshman struggling to fit in, Tracy is enthralled by the dynamic, fast-talking Brooke – but a series of setbacks suggest that Brooke is not entirely as successful and confident as she first appears.

This latest project from Baumbach and Gerwig's began life with the working title 'Motherfucking Times Square'. That's where we first meet Brooke in *Mistress America*, walking down the red steps at night, the square itself washed in neon light. During an onstage interview as part of the New York Film Festival in 2013 – shortly after the release of *Frances Ha* – Baumbach and Gerwig discussed a subgenre of '80s films they both liked. These included *After Hours* and *Desperately Seeking Susan*, films where "squares get batted around by less square people". Those two films are both touchstones for *Mistress America*, though Baumbach draws inspiration from elsewhere, including John Hughes' coming-of-age movies, *The Great Gatsby* and – in the film's second half, set in a



Connecticut mansion – parlour-room screwball comedies. Elsewhere, Dean Wareham and Britta Phillips' diaphanous, pulsing score evokes New Order's "Elegia" and The Cure's "Plainsong".

Mistress America also revisits several ideas from Baumbach's other film released earlier this year, *While We're Young* – authorship, authenticity, the trust between mentor and protégé, the fatuousness of self-absorbed people. Fans of Baumbach films will also enjoy gags involving literary magazines and boho bistros. It's business as usual, pretty much.

► **Theeb** Naji Abu Nowar's film is set on the eve of the 1916 Arab Revolt in the Ottoman province of Hijaz, in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia. The time and setting is familiar from *Lawrence Of Arabia*, and to some extent *Theeb* resembles a modest companion piece to Lean's film.

Theeb – which means 'wolf' in Arabic – is the youngest of three Bedouin brothers. Out in the desert, their tribe are largely unaware of the upheavals taking place in the wider world. Until, that is, a British army officer (Jack Fox, blond, loosely channelling some TE Lawrence vibes) and his guide (Marji Audeh) arrive in the Bedouin camp asking to be guided to a well near the Ottoman-run Hedjaz railway line. The middle brother, Hussein (Hussein Salameh), is tasked with leading the men across the desert. Theeb (Jacir Eid) secretly tags along, but the desert is a perilous place since the railways came. Nowar

(a British-born Jordanian) subtly delineates the arrival of the modern age, and its disruptive impact on traditional local economies and societies. Many of the guides who had once escorted pilgrims along the old route to Mecca are now without work since the railways effectively took their jobs. Marginalised, they are now bandits and mercenaries. It isn't long before Hussein and his charges fall foul of one such band, and Theeb finds himself having to find canny ways to survive.

Essentially, Nowar's film is a clever mix of western and arthouse cinema filtered through the coming-of-age stories of Rudyard Kipling or Jack London. The location work in southern Jordan has the splendour of Monument Valley, while the largely untrained cast recruited by Nowar from the Wadi Rum desert village of Shakiriya deliver authentic, naturalistic performances. At first, Eid's Theeb is playful, inquisitive and rebellious; by the end, he has changed beyond all recognition.

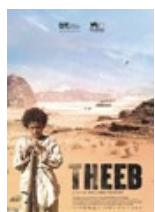
► **Derailed Sense** Vic Godard appears five minutes into *Derailed Sense*, a documentary about his band, Subway Sect. Until then, Godard and his band have been glimpsed in their youthful prime via black-and-white photographs and grainy footage. Today, though, Godard wears grey trousers, a grey V-neck tank top and a check shirt buttoned up to the collar. His hair is thinning and he peers through a pair of large,

Reviewed this month...



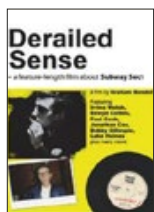
MISTRESS AMERICA

Directed by
Noah Baumbach
Starring Greta
Gerwig, Lola
Kirke
Opens August 14
Cert 15
8/10



THEEB

Directed by
Naji Abu Nowar
Starring Jacir Eid,
Hussein Salameh
Opens August 14
Cert TBC
8/10



DERAILED SENSE

Directed by
Graham Bendel
Starring Vic
Godard, Paul
Myers
Opens August 14
Cert TBC
7/10



MARSHLAND

Directed by
Alberto
Rodríguez
Starring Raúl
Arévalo, Javier
Gutiérrez
Opens August 7
Cert 12A
7/10



ANT-MAN

Directed by
Peyton Reed
Starring Paul
Rudd, Michael
Douglas
Opens July 17
Cert 12A
6/10



Not just zany hipsters: Gerwig and Kirke in *Mistress America*

William Burroughs-style glasses. He looks more like a librarian than a pop star; but then as Bobby Gillespie – one of this film’s talking heads – points out, Godard “wasn’t really in rock’n’roll”.

In many ways, Subway Sect appeared too weird, even for punk. In 1980, for instance, Godard and a new lineup of the band supported Siouxsie And The Banshees in Camden wearing tweed suits, reinterpreting their back catalogue as a Northern Soul set. The Fire Engines’ Davy Henderson says, “The things they made up were unheard of. There was no precedent.”

Their colourful tale is sympathetically told by director Graham Bendel – whose last film *Billy Childish Is Dead* championed another idiosyncratic outlier.

There are tales involving Blue Öyster Cult’s equipment, a mythic ‘lost’ album, the *Van Der Valk* theme and Godard’s supplementary career as a postman. “I’m a very un-angry person,” he says. “I don’t really like getting traffic violations though.”

In a film brimming with characters, Godard is matched only by the redoubtable Paul Myers. “He was very smart, but when he joined the Post Office things seemed to slip badly,” Myers recalls of his bandmate. “Royal Mail shoes, light blue Royal Mail shirt. Pitiful, really.”

► **Marshland** This Alberto Rodríguez procedural thriller follows a pair of homicide detectives as they investigate the disappearance of two girls in Spain’s deep south in 1980. Superficially, the vibes are close to the first series of *True Detective*. The two detectives have radically different processes, while the long drives through the swampy Andalusian landscape recall the digressive journeys taken

by Hart and Cohle through the Louisiana bayou. It is possible these crimes are connected to earlier incidents, while ominous and vaguely supernatural portents abound. But Rodríguez’s film has other factors in play. Early on, the detectives – Pedro and Juan (Raúl Arévalo and Javier Gutiérrez) – are confronted with a crucifix decorated with photographs of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. The film takes place during a critical period in the country’s history, as it transitioned from dictatorship to democracy five years after the death of Franco. Evidently, in this remote setting, the old ways are hard to shake. But it seems that the conflict between the old and new Spain also filters down to the two policemen: the progressive and tolerant Pedro is clearly at odds with Juan’s old-school tactics. It makes for welcome additional texture to the film, and creates a tension that becomes increasingly prominent as the film manoeuvres its way to resolution. Rodríguez has said that the inspiration for *Marshland* came partly from a photographic exhibition about the region around the Guadalquivir river. Certainly, his film is beautifully shot. Images of flamingo flocks flying low across the landscape at sunset linger as much as the subtle tug between the lead characters.

► **Ant-Man** Such is the current clout of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it seems that anyone with a funny name and a fancy costume is potential box-office gold. In fact, this project began eight years ago, under the auspices of *Shaun Of The Dead* director Edgar Wright and Joe (Adam And Joe) Cornish. Shortly before filming was due to start last year, Wright and Cornish abruptly left the project; a new director, Peyton Reed, was parachuted in. The result is a fairly standard origin story involving out-of-control science and greedy corporate baddies with an Average Joe caught in the middle. He is reformed con Scott Lang (Paul Rudd), who

becomes involved in the schemes of millionaire scientist Hank Pym (Michael Douglas). Lang is shrunk via a special suit and does battle against Hank’s former protégé, Darren Cross (Corey Stoll), who plans to use Pym’s gear for Bad. Along the way, Lang bonds with Pym’s army of specially trained telepathic ants. The film’s climactic

battle takes place aboard a *Thomas The Tank Engine* model train set.

You can perhaps see the wacky promise that appealed to Wright and Cornish. In fact, one of the pleasures of *Ant-Man* is trying to work out which bits of Wright and Cornish’s original plan remains. Scenes with the telepathic ants have a warm, Aardman-like quality to them; the model train sequences recall Adam and Joe’s own toy movies. In these playful moments, it feels as if we’re watching a sly spoof of a typical Marvel film; but then the film reverts to more predictable blockbuster fare. Cheesy lines abound – “It’s a trial by fire, Scott. Or in this case: water” – and CGI-heavy scenes set in “the quantum realms” are delivered with po-faced earnestness.

“When Vic Godard joined the Post Office, things seemed to slip badly...”

Also out...

MANGLEHORN

OPENS AUGUST 7

Al Pacino hoo-haa’s his way through David Gordon Green’s latest, as an eccentric smalltown locksmith (of course).

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING

OPENS AUGUST 14

The Pythons reunite (sort of) for Terry Jones’ latest directorial effort, starring Simon Pegg. Cleese et al voice extraterrestrial beings...

MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.

OPENS AUGUST 14

Guy Ritchie’s remake of the ’60s spy caper series, with Henry Cavill as Napoleon Solo and Armie Hammer as Illya Kuryakin.

PRECINCT SEVEN FIVE

OPENS AUGUST 14

Scorsese-esque period thriller about New York cops on the take during the 1980s.

THE BAD EDUCATION MOVIE

OPENS AUGUST 21

BBC’s excellent comedy transitions to the big screen, with Jack Whitehall’s hapless teacher taking his class on a school trip.

The Dance Of Reality



THE DANCE OF REALITY

OPENS AUGUST 21

The first film in 23 years from *El Topo* director Alejandro Jodorowsky: part autobiography, part magical-realist fable.

ESCOBAR: PARADISE LOST

OPENS AUGUST 21

What happens when you discover your girlfriend’s uncle is Pablo Escobar? Benicio Del Toro plays El Patron.

VACATION

OPENS AUGUST 21

It’s *National Lampoon’s Vacation: The Next Generation*, with *The Hangover*’s Ed Helms leading the Griswold family.

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

OPENS AUGUST 28

In advance of seeing this NWA biopic, may we suggest you YouTube Adam Buxton’s parentally minded “Help The Police” clip.


WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS

OPENS AUGUST 28

EDM hijinks, with Zac Efron as an aspiring DJ who seeks to make it in the electronic music scene. Sounds awful.

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD



Angus Young, in red velvet, at Wembley, July 4, 2015

AC/DC

LONDON WEMBLEY STADIUM, JULY 4, 2015

For those congenitally incapable of doing anything but rock – we salute you!

BEFORE AC/DC COME onstage, we are shown a film which explains their place in history. Rather than a scruffy bar band that grew into something infinitely mightier, this version of events suggests that the band were in fact discovered on the moon by American astronauts who find, to their horror, an Australian flag already planted in the lunar surface and the band's logo flaming menacingly in a crater.

Some of the band's iconography – a bell, a representation of a woman of substantial proportions – flashes speedily before our eyes as the logo/meteor careers wildly through space on its chaotic plummet to earth. It crashes down with us here in the stadium, with a massive

explosion, as the band begin to play their recent single, "Rock Or Bust". Not being one of those bands that needs to keep its powder dry for explosions and a big finish, AC/DC have a very big start and a pretty big middle, too.

Which is absolutely what you would hope for in a concert of this kind. In their early years, AC/DC dealt in double entendre, but now they deal in even more clearly telegraphed messages. This isn't a place in which greatest hits (like "Hells Bells" or "Whole Lotta Rosie") are played exactly, so much as an experience in which they are dropped on you from a great height, with a fair amount of theatrical warning (a large bell, a large inflatable woman).

It's a mighty thing to experience, but it's also not without its attendant debate. For an AC/DC

song to enter and remain in the band's live show, it needs to have a strong commercial record – this isn't a place for esoteric 'deep cuts', but for platinum-plated proven achievement. Much like The Rolling Stones, AC/DC have a substantial rump of dedicated, diehard fans and an equally substantial number of those drawn in more recently via the placement of the band's strongest music in, say, the *Iron Man* films.

As such, an AC/DC show is very much about satisfying both contingents, with the diehards probably the ones feeling less well catered for. Tonight, you can see why AC/DC do it this way. While there's those of us who are clearly beside ourselves to hear "Sin City" in any other scenario than blasting from our copies of the underrepresented *Powerage* (who wouldn't also go for "Down Payment Blues"?), not everyone feels quite the same. When "Let There Be Rock" moves towards the quarter of an hour mark, for some it's an extended showcase of Angus Young's dexterity and the wit and spontaneity that was at the heart of the original band. Nonetheless, one person's delight is another's excuse to check Facebook. If there's a point of complete unanimity between the diehards



SETLIST

- 1 Rock Or Bust
- 2 Shoot To Thrill
- 3 Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be
- 4 Back In Black
- 5 Play Ball
- 6 Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap
- 7 Thunderstruck
- 8 High Voltage
- 9 Rock'n'Roll Train
- 10 Hells Bells
- 11 Baptism By Fire
- 12 You Shook Me All Night Long
- 13 Sin City
- 14 Shot Down In Flames
- 15 Have A Drink On Me
- 16 TNT
- 17 Whole Lotta Rosie
- 18 Let There Be Rock
- ENCORE
- 19 Highway To Hell
- 20 For Those About To Rock (We Salute You)

him in action unlocks some of the band's mysteries.

Songs like "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" earlier in the set or "TNT" later on aren't simply songs with great riffs (as if that was a simple thing to deliver anyway). They are exquisitely timed mechanisms which create unorthodox rhythms, spaces and surprises within what is still a heavy rock song.

You might get blindsided by the fact that he is a sixtysomething man wearing red velour shorts, but the thing about Angus is how he responds to what he plays. He doesn't just bang his head, or stamp his feet, or duckwalk when he plays – he does an insane combination of all three. This is someone nominally at the head

of an immensely successful commercial enterprise, it's true. But it is also someone running on his own completely original and idiosyncratic internal clock.

This is possibly why, even after 35 years as a platinum act, AC/DC doesn't run on definitive time. They play some great numbers early in the set, like "Shoot To Thrill" and "Back In Black", but the tempo feels a little rushed. While it's great to attribute this to the band still being excited by their own songs, it can occasionally be at the expense of some of their poise. After the stops and starts of "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap", things seem to click more solidly into place. For all the power and energy on display, it's interesting to note that AC/DC operate less like a tank and more like a classic car: they take a while to run up to optimum speed.

Mesmerised by Angus, we have been distracted from the cannon being wheeled into position for the finale – and the biggest explosions. "For Those About To Rock" has been performing this role for AC/DC for about 30 years. It's much like the show itself, though – even though you know pretty much what to expect, it hasn't lost any of its power to surprise.

JOHN ROBINSON

on the messageboards and the more recent converts, however, it's with material from 2009's *Black Ice*, or the weaker "Baptism By Fire" from the new album. Opportunity to nip out for a bathroom break? We salute you.

This is a show about the bigger picture. You don't need to speak English to know what's going on at an AC/DC concert (in South America, if not so much here, the crowd sing along with the riffs rather than the words), much less know who is in the band. In this respect, there have been significant recent changes. In 2010, founding member Malcolm Young retired on the grounds of dementia. Recently, drummer Phil Rudd was sentenced to home confinement for drug possession and threatening to kill, which took the band's good-time agenda closer to the territory of *Breaking Bad*. Not that you'd know this unless you'd read about it beforehand. The pair have been replaced by Malcolm's nephew Stevie Young (age 58, playing an amusingly clapped-out looking guitar) and drummer Chris

Angus is running on his own completely original and idiosyncratic internal clock

Slade (a sprightly 68), the original drummer on 1990's "Thunderstruck" – arguably the band's most recent classic. Not much is said by Brian Johnson from the stage beyond "Let's get this party started!" He certainly isn't going to get bogged down in the minutiae of personnel changes.

For all the power of the material, the gigantic nature of the presentation and the strength of the party line, the true genius of AC/DC resides in

something infinitely more unpredictable. No-one among our number of enthusiastic persons wearing flashing devil horns needs an excuse to get behind the skills of Angus Young (a chant of "Angus! Angus!" even breaks out in the queue during the hour-long wait outside the tube station as we head home) but to watch





Theatrics and workmanship: Nicks and Fleetwood

FLEETWOOD MAC

LONDON O₂ ARENA, JUNE 24, 2015

“Never Going Back Again”? Rock’s greatest soap opera, played out onstage one more time

FOR A BAND whose career has been so assiduously documented, Fleetwood Mac have always had a knotty relationship with their past. Great swathes of it are essentially ignored, while the domestic dramas of four decades ago are still the pivot for Fleetwood Mac’s live shows in 2015. Last time they played in London, for instance, the narrative privileged Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks as the tragic star-crossed former lovers reunited. This time round, it’s the return of Christine McVie, after a 16-year absence, that provides the show with its motor. Buckingham is eager to present McVie’s return as part of “a karmic, circular moment” in the band’s evolution. “With the return of the beautiful Christine, there is no doubt that we begin a brand new, prolific and profound and beautiful chapter in the story of this band, Fleetwood Mac.”

Despite Buckingham’s warm predictions for the future, tonight’s set is typically focused on *Rumours*. Admittedly, it’s hard to argue with the sheer brilliance of the Buckingham/Nicks/McVie lineup. But with McVie back in the band, the setlist

highlights the disjunct between the band’s three writers. This is most evident on the run of songs that takes in “Rhiannon”, “Everywhere” and “I Know I’m Not Wrong”: Nicks’ contribution is soft-focus, McVie’s bright and nimble, Buckingham’s leftfield and surprisingly angry. Admittedly, McVie appears less eccentric than Buckingham and more grounded than Stevie Nicks. She is

Buckingham’s contribution is leftfield and surprisingly angry

also thankfully brisk when introducing her songs – unlike her bandmates. Nicks, particularly, takes an age to get to “Gypsy”, by way of a lengthy story from 1968 involving Hendrix, Joplin and a San Francisco clothing store. Buckingham, meanwhile, overshadows considerably with his intro to “Big Love”.

Aside from this talk of change and new chapters, there is something telling about the name of this tour: On With The Show. It conjures up images of the band as redoubtable showbiz troopers – which in a sense, is precisely what Fleetwood Mac are these days. For all Buckingham’s talk of “ups and downs” in the band’s history, there is a reassuring sense of professionals at work tonight. He may show off slightly, but it’s useful to be reminded what a fine player he is, especially on “Big Love”, “Landslide” and “Songbird”. Only the overwhelming oddness of “Tusk” momentarily stops the show’s warm, comfortable vibes. Among the most conspicuous of his quirks is the giant image of Buckingham’s head that is beamed onto screen at the rear of the stage during “I Know I’m Not Wrong” – and then, bizarrely, can be seen floating upside down on screens in front of the stage.

But for all Buckingham’s idiosyncrasies and Nicks’s *Twilight* theatrics, the heavy lifting is done by the men with their names above the door. Mick Fleetwood might enjoy a little of the thesping done by his bandmates – the gong-and-wind-chimes ensemble he brings to bear

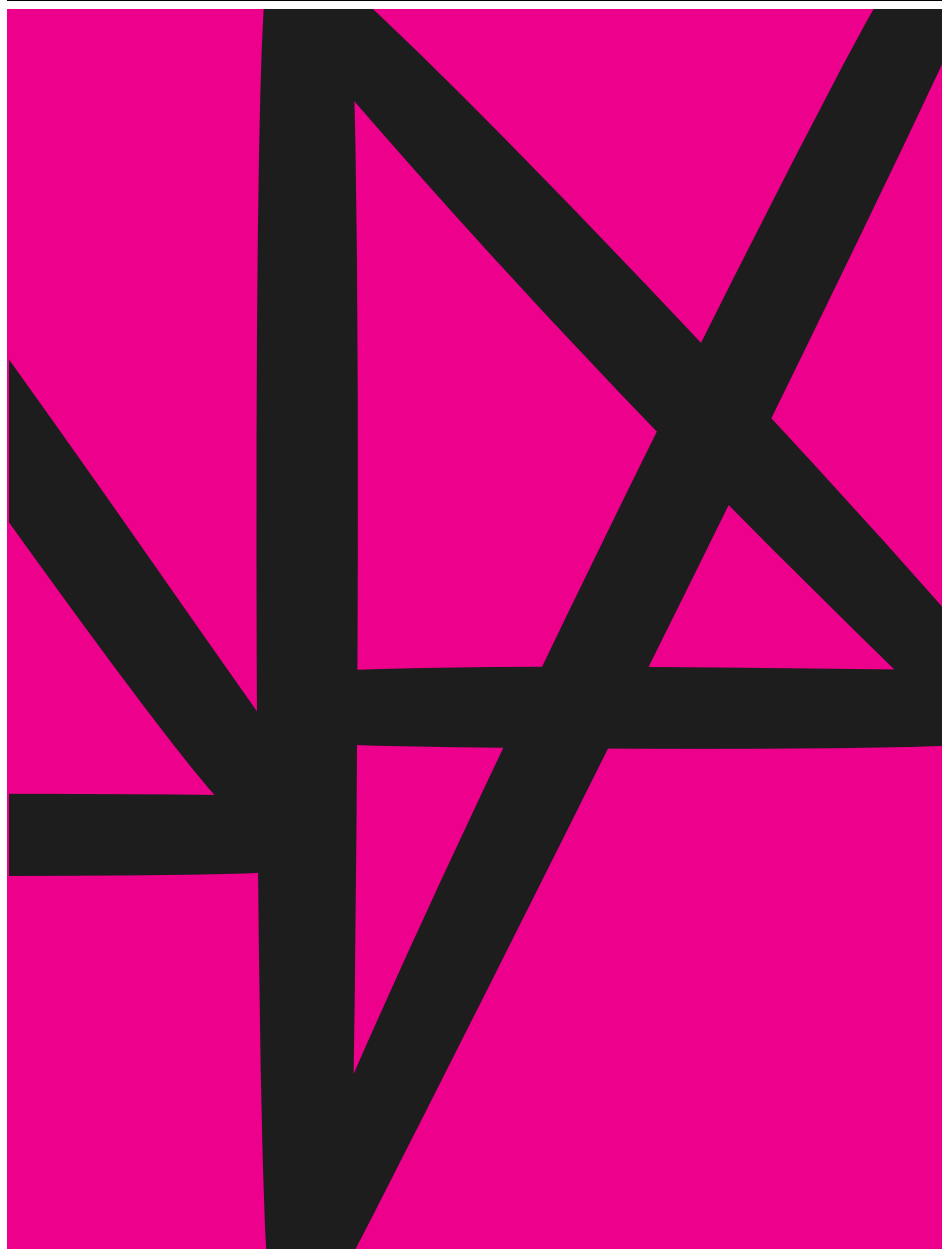
on “World Turning”, for instance – but, as with John McVie, there is solid workmanship underpinning the Buckingham/Nicks flamboyance. As ever, McVie remains inscrutable behind his cap and waistcoat. A rarity among Fleetwood Mac, the bassist is the only member of the band to keep his views entirely to himself.

MICHAEL BONNER

SET LIST

- 1 The Chain
- 2 You Make Loving Fun
- 3 Dreams
- 4 Second Hand News
- 5 Rhiannon
- 6 Everywhere
- 7 I Know I’m Not Wrong
- 8 Tusk
- 9 Sisters Of The Moon
- 10 Say You Love Me
- 11 Big Love
- 12 Landslide
- 13 Never Going Back Again
- 14 Over My Head
- 15 Gypsy
- 16 Little Lies
- 17 Gold Dust Woman
- 18 I’m So Afraid
- 19 Go Your Own Way
- ENCORE 1
- 20 World Turning
- 21 Don’t Stop
- 22 Sliver Springs
- ENCORE 2
- 23 Songbird

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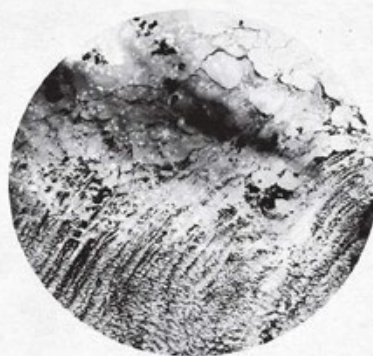
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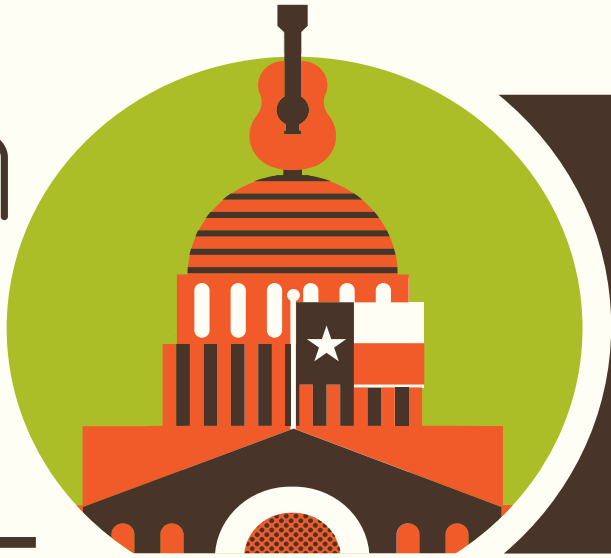
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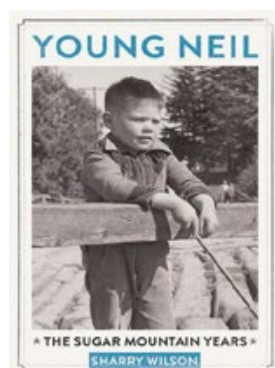
Books

BY ALLAN JONES

Neil Young (far left) and his first Gretsch, with The Squires in September 1964



Reviewed this month...

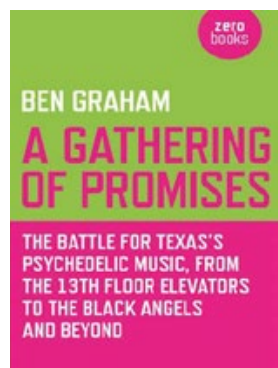


Young Neil: The Sugar Mountain Years

Sharry Wilson

ECW

8/10



A Gathering Of Promises: The Battle For Texas's Psychedelic Music, From The 13th Floor Elevators To The Black Angels And Beyond

Ben Graham ZERO BOOKS

7/10

WITH NEIL YOUNG more than ever fixed in the public imagination as an ancient grump, possibly there may be no greater point to a book about his childhood than proving he had one. Sharry Wilson's **Young Neil: The Sugar Mountain Years** is rather more than that, however. Across 400 pages dense with new testimony, this is a fascinating portrait of a life taking shape, a hugely detailed account of the first 20 years of Young's life, the book ending in 1966 with Neil leaving Canada for Los Angeles, where he would soon be reacquainted with Stephen Stills and form Buffalo Springfield. Wilson's account draws heavily on both *Neil And I*, by Young's father Scott, the more comprehensible bits of Neil's own *Waging Heavy Peace*, and Jimmy McDonough's *Shakey*, but is supplemented significantly by much original first-hand research.

Wilson has clearly spent long hours in national and provincial newspaper archives, scoured town

and city files, school records and yearbooks, and gleaned much from local historical societies. She's also had valuable access to Scott Young's papers at Trent University Archives, including unpublished letters to Neil and to his estranged wife, Rassy, who by late 1959 was separated from Scott and bringing up Neil alone in Winnipeg. Wilson also interviewed more than 150 people who knew Neil when he was growing up, and whose memories are often splendidly evocative.

By Wilson's description, Young's childhood was often idyllic, although "Little Neiler", as the family called him, was prone to illness, most seriously the polio he contracted in 1951. More traumatic still was his parents' disintegrating relationship, exacerbated by his mother's heavy drinking and his father's continual pursuit of new starts in new towns, a restless impulse that kept the family on the move. Every time the family relocated, Neil would have to make new friends, always the new kid at a new school. It was a sometimes intimidating experience which he managed through a growing obsession with music. By the time he moved to Winnipeg with Rassy, that obsession even overshadowed a previous passion for, of all things, poultry farming. Wilson doesn't have to try too hard to connect the later Neil with his younger self and the Canadian childhood she describes. He has, after all, written enough about it over the decades, starting with "Sugar Mountain", written when he was 19. But not everyone who knew Young then or played with him in the many early bands (whose brief careers are recalled here in sometimes punishing detail) would have predicted what he'd become. And none of them were as ruthlessly driven by such great ambition. As Richard Koreen, who played bass in Neil's band The Stardusters, puts it, "He was the only one of us who was looking at the horizon."

► Ben Graham's **A Gathering Of Promises** was originally intended as a history of Texas psychedelic music from the mid '60s to the present, which turned out to be like to trying to get the Atlantic into a bucket. So the book now concentrates on the scene's early days, making a nonsense of its wordy subtitle. The 21st-Century psychedelic revivalists The Black Angels at least make a brief late

appearance, but the likes of The Butthole Surfers, Lift To Experience, ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead and The Mars Volta are only referred to in an introduction that apologises for their absence from the pages that follow.

Scene pioneers The 13th Floor Elevators loom inevitably large. As defined by their much-anthologised 1965 single "You're Gonna Miss Me", Texas psychedelic music was raw, terse, a garage-band racket inspired by early Stones, Yardbirds and Them. The Texas bands had little musically in common with their West Coast equivalents, with the exception of Love's "My Flash On You" and "7 And 7 Is". They had a different attitude to drugs, too. The West Coast bands dropped acid recreationally, to get high. The Elevators were put together by acid evangelist and parvenu mystic Tommy Hall, a cheerleader for LSD enlightenment who ran the band like a religious cult, feeding them frightening daily amounts of hallucinogens.

The Elevators' heyday was brief, blighted by incompetent management, a useless record company and their own demented waywardness. Their public flouting of Texas drug laws at a time when possession carried a possible life sentence enhanced their outlaw image, but they were as hounded by the police as the Stones in 1967 and the Sex Pistols a decade later. By 1969, lead singer Roky Erickson was in the maximum security wing of a prison for the criminally insane, lead guitarist Stacy Sutherland – later shot dead by his wife – was in prison for multiple parole violations and Hall was serving time in California after being busted for drugs at a pop festival. It's a wonder any of the original members were still alive for the reunion show, as reported recently in *Uncut*.

This would be an even better book if the publishers had compiled an index, a discography or a playlist of key tracks. Still, *A Gathering Of Promises* is worth reading just for the Elevators' story – more concisely told than in Paul Drummond's biography of the band – and it is further recommended as a guide to the music being made at the same time by The Red Crayola, Bubble Puppy, Moving Sidewalks, The Golden Dawn, The Lost And Found, Cold Sun and dozens of other often mindblowing bands.

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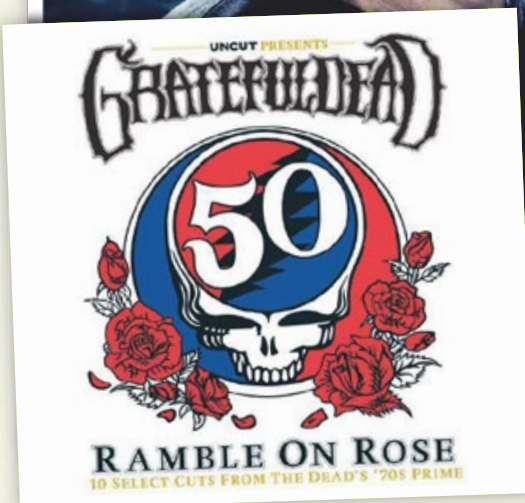
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Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

CHRIS SQUIRE

Yes founder and bass player

(1948-2015)

Bassist Chris Squire held the distinction of being the sole constant member of Yes, the band he formed in the late '60s with singer Jon Anderson. His playing style was critical to their development, be it providing a deep anchor for their most excessive wanderings or creating incisive, dynamic runs that effectively repositioned the bass as a lead instrument. "For the entirety of Yes' existence," said a statement from the group, "Chris was the band's lynchpin and, in so many ways, the glue that held it together over all these years."

Largely inspired by The Beatles, Squire took up the bass as a 16-year-old and began playing in Wembley quintet The Selfs. By 1965 they'd morphed into the more psych-leaning The Syn, who issued a pair of 45s on Deram before calling it quits. He returned three years later with Mabel Greer's Toyshop and, not long after, was introduced to Anderson at Wardour Street club La Chasse. The duo bonded over a mutual love of The Association and Simon & Garfunkel and set about recruiting drummer Bill Bruford, keyboardist Tony Kaye and Squire's old guitarist from The Syn, Peter Banks. Yes played their first gig at East Mersea Youth Camp in Essex in August 1968. Squire found that the band was an ideal vehicle for his singular technique. "I couldn't get session work, as most musicians hated my style," he revealed later. "They wanted me to play something a lot more basic."

Squire's compositions formed an important part of Yes' oeuvre, particularly on early prog landmarks "Starship Trooper" (co-written with Anderson and new guitarist Steve Howe) and "I've Seen All Good People", conceived with

Squire in
September
1977



Anderson. Both songs featured on 1971's commercial breakthrough, *The Yes Album*.

Later that year, the classic lineup was complete when Rick Wakeman replaced Kaye for the multi-platinum-selling *Fragile*. The album included Squire's "The Fish (Schindleria Praematurus)", which took on fresh life when it became a lengthy improvised monster at Yes concerts.

The song also provided him with the nickname 'Fish' (though Bruford always maintained this was due to Squire spending an inordinate amount of time in the bathroom when they shared a flat), which in turn inspired the title of his first solo LP, 1975's *Fish Out Of Water*. It wasn't until 2007, in the midst of Yes' four-year hiatus,

that he found time to record a follow-up: *Chris Squire's Swiss Choir*. This came after a collaboration with sometime Yes guitarist Billy Sherwood earlier in the decade, which yielded two albums as Conspiracy. More recently, Squire teamed up with ex-Genesis man Steve Hackett, billed as Squackett, for 2012's *A Life Within A Day*.

In May this year, in the wake of *Heaven & Earth*, Yes' highest-charting studio album for 20 years, Squire announced that he'd been diagnosed with acute erythroid leukemia and would be forced to miss the band's American summer tour with Toto. Paying tribute, Wakeman cited Squire and The Who's John Entwistle as "the two greatest bass players classic rock has ever known".

RANDY HOWARD

Country singer and songwriter

(1950-2015)

In a tragic example of life imitating art, outlaw country singer Randy Howard was killed during a shootout with a bounty hunter at home in Tennessee. The veteran hellraiser, whose songs reflected a steady diet of booze, women and

drugs, was under warrant for failing to appear on a fourth DUI charge. Howard issued his first album in the mid '70s, though it was 1983's *All-American Redneck*, particularly its drolly profane title track, that made his reputation. Other successes included "My Nose Don't Work No More" and "Whiskey Talkin'".

RICHARD TREECE

Help Yourself guitarist

(unknown-2015)

Originally a backing group for singer Malcolm Morley, Help Yourself released four LPs in the early '70s. A key feature of their lysergic country-rock was the guitar

work of ex-Monday Morning Glory Band member Richard Treece. 1972's *Strange Affair* is their finest hour, dominated by Treece's salient contribution to the epic "All Electric Fur Trapper". He went on to play in Deke Leonard's Iceberg, The Flying Aces and The Splendid Humans before joining prog-rock band The Neutrons. A solo LP, *Dream Arena East*, landed in 2000, followed by a three-LP tenure with The Green Ray.

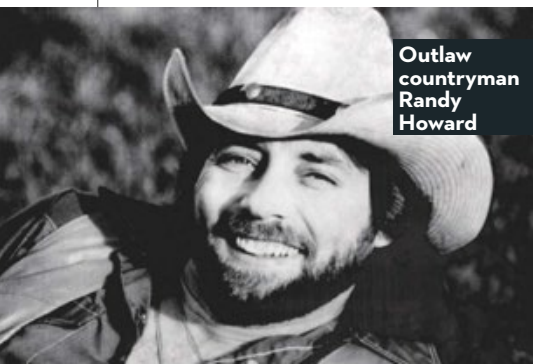
JAMES HORNER

Hollywood composer

(1953-2015)

US composer James Horner, who has died after his single-engine

aircraft crashed in the Los Padres National Forest in southern California, orchestrated over 100 Hollywood films. Raised in London, where he attended the Royal College Of Music, Horner's first major film score was for 1979's *The Lady In Red* – but he will forever be remembered for his dramatic soundtrack for James Cameron's *Titanic*, which won him a couple of Oscars and remains the biggest-selling orchestral soundtrack in history. In a career that also landed him six Grammys, Horner's other credits include *Field Of Dreams*, *Legends Of The Fall*, *Braveheart*, *Apollo 13* and two other Cameron blockbusters: *Aliens* and *Avatar*.



Outlaw
countryman
Randy
Howard

OBITUARIES

ORNETTE COLEMAN

Free jazz titan

(1930-2015)

WHETHER OR NOT Ornette Coleman invented free jazz is still up for debate, but he was indisputably its leading champion from the late '50s onwards. The hallmarks of his work – an improvised approach to melody that all but ignored conventional chord sequences, along with fluid progressions and an intuitive reach that found room for blues and R&B – were all in place by 1959's second album, *Tomorrow Is The Question!*. 1961's *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation* not only put a name to this new movement, it also coincided with Dizzy Gillespie deciding: "I don't know what he's playing, but it's not jazz." Contemporaries Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus and Miles Davis greeted Coleman's music with a similar mixture of curiosity and puzzlement. "If you're talking psychologically, the man is all screwed up inside," Davis told writer Joe Goldberg.

Dismissing this initial flurry of suspicion, the saxophonist pressed on with his vision, to the point where the albums he continued to make for Atlantic at the turn of the decade, among them *This Is Our Music* and *Ornette!*, are now regarded as avant-jazz classics. Crucial to their sound was a sympathetic group of players that included bassists Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro, drummer Billy Higgins and trumpeter Don Cherry.

Born in Forth Worth, Texas, Coleman formed his first band, the Jam Jivers, while still at high school. His post-war years were spent with a travelling show from New Orleans, touring regional jazz circuits while introducing elements of R&B, country and blues into his sound. Life on the road proved to be a harsh learning experience. Fired from the Pee Wee Crayton Band during a tour of LA in 1950, Coleman elected to remain on the West Coast. But his disregard for traditional jazz formulae, preferring instead to play "in the cracks" of a



Ornette!
Coleman in
July 2010

musical scale, found little traction among his peers. He spent the majority of the next decade employed in a variety of menial jobs while he developed his style. By the time he found a bunch of musicians, including Cherry and Higgins, to record 1958 debut LP *Something Else!!!!*, Coleman was working as a lift operator in a Hollywood department store.

A year later, his quartet began a lengthy residency at New York's Five Spot club, where Coleman's highly personal appropriation of jazz tended to divide fellow musicians and critics. Among those receptive to his music were Lionel Hampton (who supposedly asked if he could sit

in) and conductor Leonard Bernstein, who promptly declared him a genius. John Coltrane took note too, covering Coleman's "The Invisible" in 1960.

The '70s saw him cross over into the realms of funk and electric rock with releases like *Of Human Feelings* and *Dancing In Your Head*, the emphasis still on group improvisation. Jerry Garcia fetched up on 1988's *Virgin Beauty*, a gesture reciprocated when Coleman joined The Grateful Dead on stage five years later. He continued to record well into the millennium, and picked up a 2007 Pulitzer Prize for live album *Sound Grammar*.

ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS, JOHN PRATT/KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES



Rocking,
gently: Val
in 1965

VAL DOONICAN

Popular singer and TV host

(1927-2015)

Val Doonican's easy manner and unforced charm made him a popular attraction on British TV for over two decades, his variety show drawing nearly 20m viewers at its peak in the '60s and early '70s. His homely croon, accentuated by a predilection for coloured sweaters and a rocking chair, also lent itself to a string of hits, most notably "Walk Tall", "What Would I Be", "The Special Years" and a cover of Bob Lind's "Elusive Butterfly". 1967's *Val Doonican Rocks, But Gently* even knocked *Sgt Pepper* off the top of the charts.

BOBBY IRWIN

Drummer with Van Morrison

(1953-2015)

Nick Lowe called Bobby Irwin "a songwriter's drummer, a great interpreter of a song", whose economy and sense of swing endeared him to everyone he played with. Indeed, Van Morrison named him his favourite drummer. Irwin began with Lowe at Stiff in the '70s, then served in new wave quartet The Sinceros. The Lowe association continued (including co-write "I Trained Her To Love Me") in tandem with his work for Van Morrison, which started with 1999's *Back On Top*. He also played on sessions for Bryan Ferry and Carlene Carter.

HAROLD BATTISTE

Prolific New Orleans producer

(1931-2015)

Battiste was a towering figure on the New Orleans scene, founding the city's first musician-owned label in 1961 (AFO) and returning in the late '80s to teach jazz at the University Of New Orleans. The intervening years were spent in LA, where his skills as a saxophonist, pianist, producer and arranger led to sessions for Sam Cooke, Ike & Tina Turner and Sonny & Cher, for whom he was musical director. In 1968 he hooked up with Mac Rebennack and co-created his Dr John persona. He produced and arranged *Gris-Gris* and follow-up *Babylon*. **ROB HUGHES**



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DAMN RIGHT THEY'VE GOT THE BLUES...

One of the reasons I subscribe to and enjoy *Uncut* is the breadth of the articles, and your recent space given to BB King and the future of the blues [*August issue*] was a welcome find. Unfortunately, you missed the mark and only added to the current problem. And with all due respect to Walter Trout, Britain is not the place to look for the future of the genre.

Two points in the article are significant: Paul Puccioni's comment that "there's no interest from radio or the media", and the idea that the blues is stuck somewhere between 1950 and 1967. Both points are indeed accurate, but the question is: why? That is where your article falls down.

One reason is the bad blues records and acts out there, diluting the genre. Over here in the US there are Sunday afternoon blues festivals in local parks, and I hope young people stay well away from such lame events. I moved to Chicago from Cheltenham back in 1985. I was a lover of the blues thanks to Clapton records, Tony McPhee and the Sunday night Alexis Korner blues show on the old Radio One. I was lucky at that time in Chicago: there were numerous clubs to go to and see Buddy Guy, Albert King, Albert Collins and a slew of others. These clubs were dark and smoky, there was lots of booze, and sets were played well into the early morning hours.

To really explore where the blues are today, rather than relying on the likes of John Mayall, Joe Bonamassa and Walter Trout, you should have spoken with Peter Redvers-Lee and Matthew Johnson, the founders of Fat Possum records in Oxford, Mississippi. That record label made a great effort in bringing blues to a younger audience and know first-hand the difficulties. My recommendation is for the two young guitarists in your article, Laurence Jones and Oli Brown, to set sail that way, connect with The North Mississippi All-Stars and live a little before they become a staple of the likes of Alligator Records (ie, a little long in the tooth).

Regarding radio, a lot of current blues is uninspired and, dare I say, boring. If that is going to change, it is up to radio to have strong playlists



so that the young folk can be turned on to blues. I understand these days that BBC radio has more than just the four stations I knew – surely there is one that can spare two hours on a Sunday night for a blues show?

Kevin Driver, Morro Bay, CA

...David Cavanagh's article gave plenty of food for thought for us fifty- and sixtysomething blues fans. Hardly a month goes by without one of our heroes dropping off the perch, and it does seem at times as though blues music is going to be left to a younger, white generation of blues-rock artists (and blues fans such as Jack White and George Ezra) to keep the flame burning. But I am not as downbeat about the future of blues music as David. As John Mayall says in the piece, "The blues holds its own – it has longevity that never quits."

David asks "Are we about to reach the critical point in the evolution of the blues?" and cites Gary Clark Jr and Shemekia Copeland as two names having received "widespread attention". However, David should delve a little deeper into what is happening – especially in the USA, where the blues festival scene is attracting a wide array of younger blues talent such as Shawn Holt (son of Magic Slim) & The Teardrops, Marquise Knox, Mr Sipp, Cedric Burnside, Grady Champion, Jerakus Singleton and Selwyn

Birchwood, the last two signed by Alligator Records. OK, they may not be selling CDs by the shedload, but they are the future of the blues. Now hand me down my walkin' cane!

Tony Burke, Bedford

BARNETT'S ROOTS

I am immensely proud that you are championing one of Australia's finest wits in Courtney Barnett. I remember hearing "Avant Gardener" on a music programme one morning and being really excited about what I heard. It was laconic, dry, witty and uniquely Australian. Anyway, I found it a bit neglectful that, in Rob Hughes's live review [*June issue*], he assumed she owes her lyrical spirit to Evan Dando's Lemonheads. I know where she has come from: I grew up with the same influences. First of all, you know that the best of The Lemonheads' songs were mainly written by Tom Morgan? He is responsible for the brilliant "Outdoor Type" and countless others. Listen to the lyrics – direct lineage to Barnett. Around the time of Morgan's band, Smudge, there were so many others with that laconic, self-deprecating Aussie rhetoric. The one I truly want to bring up in lights is Darren Hanlon, who toured with Courtney. His EP, "Early Days", is one of the most perfect collection of lyrical ditties. Listen carefully. Sound familiar? I feel he does it even better. Funny

thing is, Barnett would probably agree. If you look in the right places, there's such a rich depth for further investigation in the "Australian poet/indie/pop/lo-fi" genre, to give it a name. Youth Group put it perfectly, "There are songs here/No more geographic lies/We just have to find them/And we'll never compromise."

Martin Gibson, Redcliffe, Australia

NO NEW YORK!

I'm sure I won't be the only one who chimes in with what you missed out from the 50 Greatest NY Albums [*August issue*], but for what it's worth these three are mine. George Russell's *New York, NY*, a vibrant love letter to the Big Apple, featuring John Coltrane, Bill Evans and spoken-word (some of it proto-rap, actually) by Jon Hendricks – and this from 1959. Also the legendary February 1961 *Carnegie Hall Concert* by Lenny Bruce. It's arguably his finest live show, a two-hour tour de force of free association. Finally, as wonderful as Art Blakey's *A Night At Birdland* is, I'm not sure why it made it in over Coltrane's *Live At The Village Vanguard*, containing the astonishing 16-minute "Chasin' The Trane", which critic John Tynan called "musical nonsense and anti-jazz", and which sent the New York jazz establishment into several degrees of apoplexy. Never a bad thing!

Stewart Tray, Manchester



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HEAD'S UP!

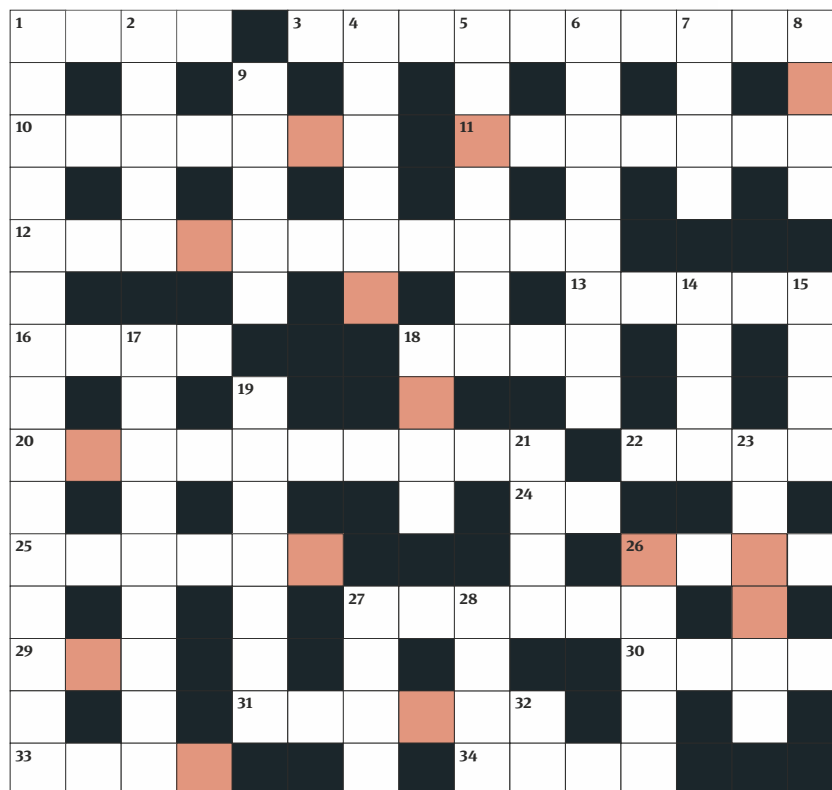
A grateful note of thanks to John Mulvey for his glowing review of Michael Head & The Strands' *The Magical World Of The Strands* reissue and its companion piece *The Olde World* [July issue]. As the editor, Mulvey did the right thing by seeing to it that the review led *Uncut's* Archive section. It deserves no less. Count me among the “small but vociferous cabal” that regards Mick Head as “a psychedelic visionary”. While Michael Head is a prophet without honour in his own country, he is unknown here in the States, where Shack and Strands titles have never seen any commercial release whatsoever. When I play these records for friends, they are stunned that such an extravagantly gifted artist could be so ignored while many lesser performers get the fame and glory. It's my belief that Mick Head will one day be ‘discovered’, just as Nick Drake was – yes, Michael Head deserves mention in the same sentence. Hopefully the review and this reissue will begin to redress this critical injustice and put Michael Head in his proper place in the annals of music.

Brad Wernle, Ann Arbor, Michigan

A “GULLIBLE WHO FAN” WRITES...

Gullible Who fan that I am, I ploughed through the extremely tedious Pete Townshend interview in the June issue, only to conclude once again that he is an insufferable windbag who must go away once and for all. Not only was there absolutely no new insight or information of any value (maybe excepting the anecdote about an early rehearsal with Entwistle), but a creeping senility seems to be emerging as well as frightening lack of filters. Pete has always overshared in the press, but in this interview he has reached a new low. As an example, much of what he put forth about his relationship with Daltrey would have been better left unsaid, and the contempt he expressed towards Who fans was astonishing and sad.

I'm grateful that I was able to see The Who at their peak (at The Forum in Inglewood, California, October 1971) – definitely one of my most treasured concert experiences. I think I made the right decision to hang on to that memory and ignore everything Who-related after 1978. It seems that much of what has occurred since then has increasingly tarnished their name – especially Townshend's unfortunate verbal diarrhoea.
Alan Deremo, Laguna Beach, CA



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Pink Floyd. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* September 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, August 24, 2015. This competition is only open to European residents.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1+3A** The Nightingales with thoughts of being above having material with substance (4-4-6)
10+8D Won't hear odd version of Van Morrison album (4-3-4)
11 Nelly or Kelly Rowland. Which to choose? Together they took it to No 1 (7)
12 I will not be rushed into a Family number (2-2-3-4)
13 Time spent waiting for The Easybeats' final album or a Tim Wheeler solo single (5)
16 (See 2 down)
18 Genesis starting off as a different band... (4)
20 ...no time left for Genesis to complete their own album (7-3)
22 Pet Shop Boy in the shallow end (4)
24+32D The Commodores sound horrified at having to perform (2-2)
25 Barry Ryan's girl who was later Damned (6)
26 (See 18 down)
27 (See 29 across)
29+27A Supposing it's me being taken by The Korgis (2-1-3-3)
30+15D Original vocalist and bassist with King Crimson (4-4)
31 (See 9 down)
33 They help you stand the music of ZZ Top (4)
34 “What can a _____ boy do, except to sing for a rock'n'roll band,” asked The Rolling Stones on “Street Fighting Man” (4)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** “Let the _____ shine a light on me,” blues traditional (8-7)
2+16A Presently present with Queen (3-2-4)
4 “We walked in the cold air, freezing breath on a window pane,” 1981 (6)
5 Derek somehow includes it for Sarah Cracknell's new album (3-4)
6+23D Adele went viral remixing a Santana single (3-1-4-6)
7 (See 27 down)
8 (See 10 across)
9+31A “If you wanna squeal, said the FBI, we can make a deal, make it worth your while,” 1982 (5-6)
14 1980 No 1 hit gone wrong (4)
15 (See 30 across)
17 It adds up to either a studio album by REM or live album by The Grateful Dead (9)
18+26A A better than average performance from Blur (4-4)
19 Just a single error made by Pink Floyd in their recording history (3-4)
21 Clash drummer Terry Chimes was briefly known as _____ Crimes (4)
23 (See 6 down)
26 Formed by ex-Hüsker Dü frontman Bob Mould, their albums include *Copper Blue* (5)
27+7D The long-awaited event of a debut solo single from Paul Jones in 1966 (4-4)
28 Dutch dance act with eponymous '90s No 1 (4)
32 (See 24 across)

ANSWERS: TAKE 218

ACROSS

1 No Pier Pressure, 9+10A Saturns Pattern, 12+30D Yer Old, 13 Prior, 14 Only Sixteen, 17 RAK, 18+17D Green River, 20+19A Van McCoy, 21 Holy, 23 XO, 25 Page, 26 REM,

28 Blur, 29 The Poet, 33+3D Bob And Earl, 34 Noddy.

DOWN

1 No Sad Songs, 2 Pete Wylie, 5 Experience, 6+11A Sit Down, 7+8D Reelin' And Rockin', 13 Penny Lane, 15+4D Sandy Posey,

16 Xymox, 21 Hello, 22 Lorca, 24+32A Ocean Rain, 27 Mind, 29 Tad, 31 Try.

HIDDEN ANSWER
“Moonlight Mile”

XWORD COMPILED BY:
Trevor Hungerford



MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Sleaford Mods

Jason Williamson revisits the soundtracks of scooter rallies and northern Sundays, and reveals his “Sex Pistols moment”



The song that got me into soul

Martha And The Vandellas
Third Finger, Left Hand 1967

I got into this song around the same time I was just discovering The Jam. I'd been a Pistols fan for a couple of years prior to that, but this got me interested in soul, mainly Motown. The first time I was exposed to it was at the school disco – this song would get played a lot, along with “Jimmy Mack” and [The Velvelettes] “Needle In A Haystack”. It always reminds me of those evenings at the school disco, getting into it.



My ‘scooter rally’ soundtrack

The Meteors
Wreckin' Crew 1982

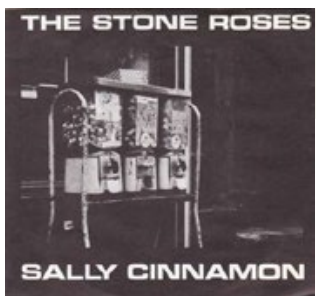
I did two or three scooter rallies when I was 14 or 15. I mean, I didn't have a scooter, I was too young to ride one. The scooter boy had taken over from the mod, in my school anyway, and it was like, you know, green pilot jackets, scooter patches, US ex-combat trousers... “Wreckin' Crew” is a great song, a soundtrack to that period. The Meteors got to be a bit more polished with the *Wreckin' Crew* album than on their debut, but it's still a great record.



A perfect song

Paul Weller
Into Tomorrow 1991

After *Our Favourite Shop*, I lost interest in The Style Council, so when Weller's first solo album came out I was initially suspicious. Obviously *The Stones Roses* had come out, and I just thought, you know, “This is the new era’... Then I started to listen to “Into Tomorrow”, and I realised Weller was starting to sound valid again. His early solo stuff is a mixture of The Style Council and The Jam, really. I thought it was brilliant and I still do. “Into Tomorrow”'s got a great guitar hook to it.



A song that sums up a northern Sunday

The Stone Roses
All Across The Sands 1987

This is an early one... it's on the “Sally Cinnamon” single. It's pre-Mani, so I'll probably get a bollocking for saying that it's classic Stone Roses. It just stinks of that grey Sunday morning, that northern experience... I know people say the Midlands is a different area, and it is, but it's very close to the north. So I totally got that energy from it. It's a brilliant song, really well-written. Live, it probably didn't hit the mark, but the recording nailed it.



An R&B classic

Oran 'Juice' Jones
Here I Go Again 1986

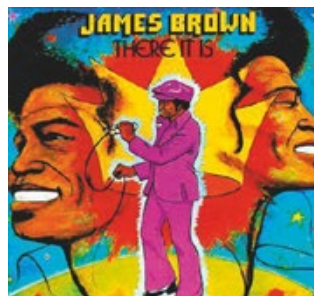
A lot of white kids got bang into hip-hop and R&B around 1986 or '87, and this song is a classic R&B tune, it's faultless. His voice is just fucking brilliant. It always sticks out, this tune, and I play it regularly. It's up there with Luther Vandross, definitely. I've not bothered exploring any of his other works, and I'm kind of like that with a lot of stuff – if there's one song I like, then I'll just listen to that repeatedly.



A moment that blew my head off

Public Enemy
You're Gonna Get Yours 1987

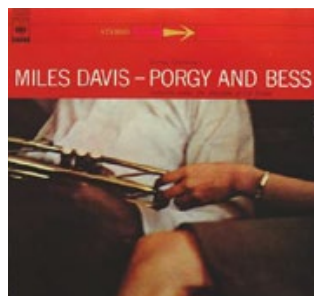
One of the stand-outs on *Yo! Bum Rush The Show*, with a real solid funk groove. Public Enemy were the first act on at the Def Jam show I saw in 1987, and they pissed over LL Cool J and Eric B & Rakim. At 16, I'd not really gone out of Grantham, so it was an eye-opener. When they came out, they had air-raid sirens, and the SiW with machine guns. It blew my head off! It was my punk moment, my Sex Pistols moment, as they say.



A song with a powerful message

James Brown
Public Enemy #1 (Part 2) 1972

There It Is is one of the only James Brown LPs I've latched on to. It struck a chord, especially this song, due to its connection with the realities of drug abuse. That was something I'd experienced, like a lot of my friends, due to the club culture. It's just that line at the end, where it's like “Get up, get up!”, telling somebody “Get up, be a man”. It was really powerful, and that preacher patter he had with it was interesting, as well.



My favourite jazz piece

Miles Davis
Prayer (Oh Doctor Jesus) 1958

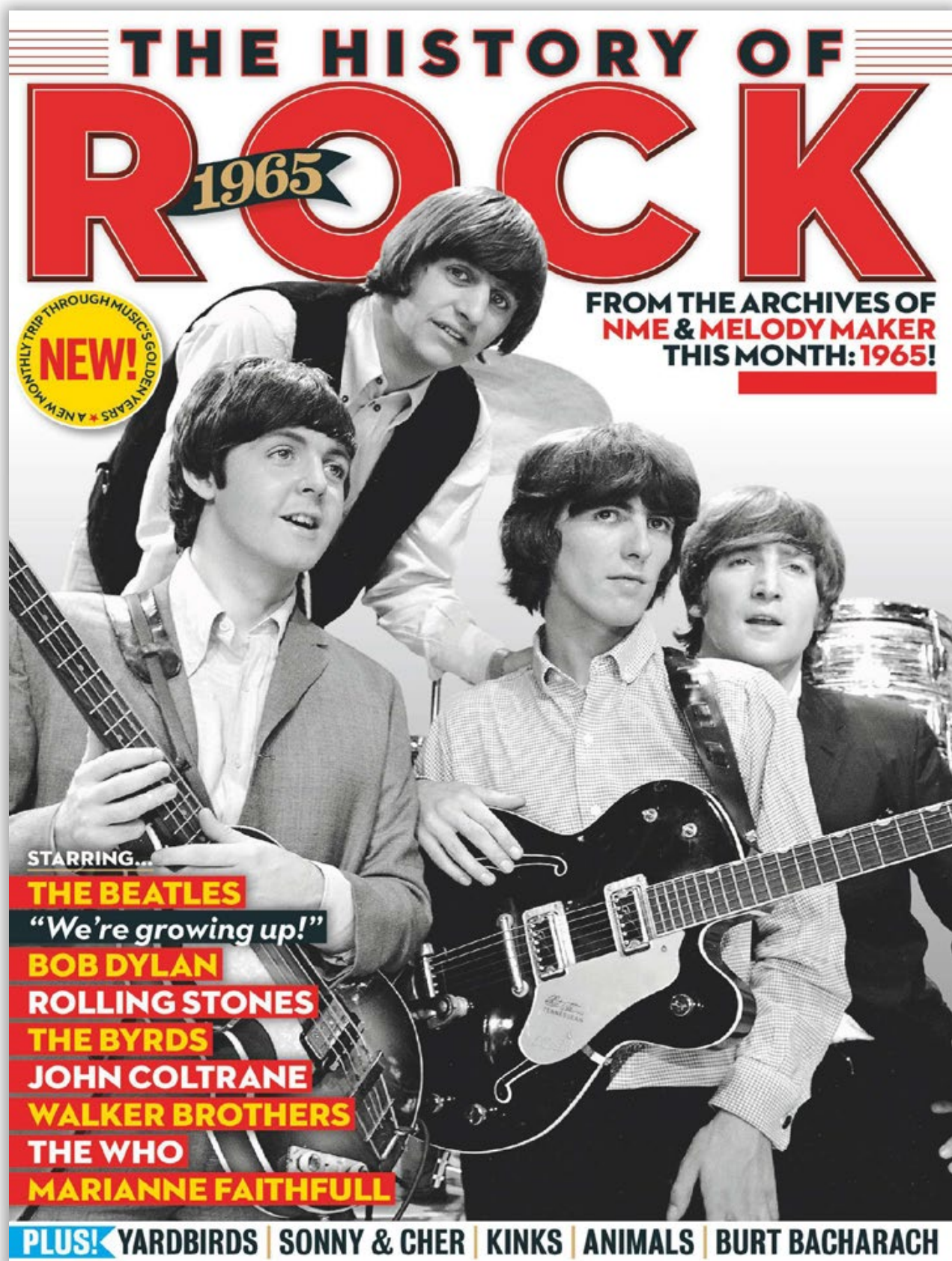
This really conveys that viciousness of life, the trials you go through. You've got a placid, happy intro, then it fucking goes into a dark hole, and that's a real musical narrative to the way life can be. I love the production on *Porgy And Bess* – he worked with Gil Evans, who'd bring that old Hollywood production to it, almost Disney-type shit. This song brings out the way Miles Davis, whenever he plays, makes it feel so lonely. Even when it's supposedly cool, it speaks of a great loneliness.

Sleaford Mods play the *End Of The Road* festival in Dorset (Sept 4-6). Their new album, *Key Markets*, is out now on Harbinger Sound.

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