

2016 PREVIEW

THE NATIONAL ★ RAY DAVIES
UNDERWORLD ★ JACK WHITE
GRAHAM NASH ★ RADIOHEAD
PJ HARVEY ★ BECK + MORE

38 PAGES OF REVIEWS

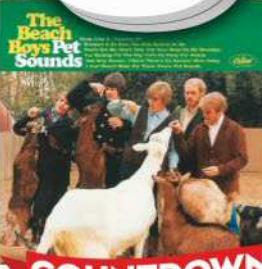
SAVAGES

LUCINDA WILLIAMS

THE LONG RYDERS
FRANÇOISE HARDY

THEM
AND MORE...

UNCUT



COUNTDOWN TO ECSTASY!

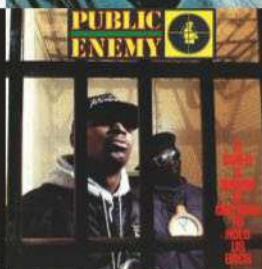
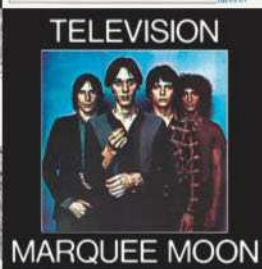
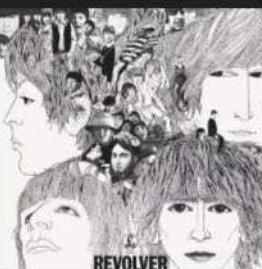
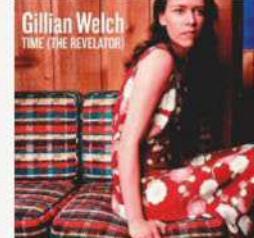
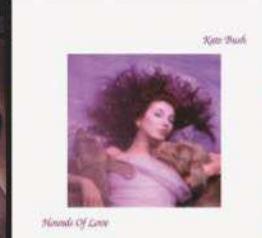
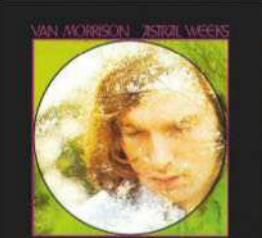
MILES DAVIS Kind of Blue

THE HORSES

THIS WILL BE THE DAY

THE ROLLING STONES

200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



ALL-NEW
INTERVIEWS!

NEW ORDER

"We've earned our hedonist medals"

JOHN CALE

"We wasted a lot of great opportunities"

SUEDE

"I can't stand jolly music"

AND

SUN RA

MICHAEL ROTHER

RONNIE LANE

LERA LYNN

RYLEY WALKER

MATMOS

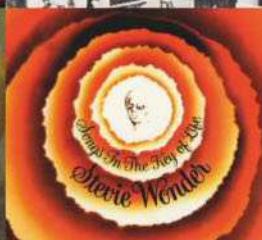
BARRY ADAMSON

PEACHES

DEATH

ELEANOR

FRIEDBERGER





NEW ALBUM
08.01.2016

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ISO

RCA

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Are we rolling?

LISTS, AS MANY readers will testify, are often the last resort of the publishing scoundrel. Over the history of *Uncut*, we've tried to avoid packing the magazine with the sort of Top 100s whose main purpose, it can seem, is to be merely contentious for contention's sake. Without coming across as too sycophantic, we generally believe that *Uncut* readers are above such strategic provocations.

That said, there is something to be said for a list which has a certain usefulness, and which can stimulate an intelligent debate not just about the history of the music we love, but about the way our perception of that history changes over the years. In that spirit, this month we're pleased to unveil *Uncut*'s first survey of what we – or at least the 59 staffers, contributors and journalistic eminences who constitute our electorate – currently believe to be the greatest albums of all time. It wouldn't be our style to claim that this list harbours anything like objective truths about an irrefutable canon. As much as anything, we're interested in the ongoing story of the "greatest albums of all time", and are keen that our effort be seen in the context of other lists. The *NME* countdown published in 1985 had a profound influence on my record collection and my taste; a portal to a world beyond The Smiths, The Go-Betweens and that week's Indie Top 30. Part of the pleasure of this whole project, though, has been looking at how the passions of music journalists have radically shifted – or, perhaps, been gently tweaked – from one decade to the next.

But I have probably written about this stuff enough (the coverage proper begins on page 32), and should also flag up that, at the same time as sorting through the rock of ages, we've expended quite a lot of energy on looking forward. Hence our comprehensive preview of 2016's likely musical highlights (I can especially recommend, of the ones I've heard, Chris Forsyth & The Solar Motel Band's *The Rarity Of Experience*). Among this month's other delights, the current lineup of New Order can be found discussing the troublesome relationship with their former bassist. "It's everybody's past, [Peter Hook's] not got a fucking monopoly on history," says Stephen Morris. "It's our past as much as his."

"He's got the past," adds Bernard Sumner, and inadvertently provides what could be a motto for this whole issue of *Uncut*. "We've got the past and the future."

Happy new year, by the way...



John Mulvey, Editor. Follow me on Twitter @JohnRMulvey

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INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
Featuring RAY DAVIES | ANIMAL COLLECTIVE | RADIOHEAD



One album might be called *Vibe Killer*. Another owes a debt to footballer Carlos Tevez. A third, meanwhile, contains a track its creator describes as "cataclysmic". Welcome to *Uncut's* essential preview of 2016, featuring **RAY DAVIES, THE NATIONAL, RADIOHEAD, ANIMAL COLLECTIVE, GRAHAM NASH, UNDERWORLD, PJ HARVEY, YOKO ONO and many more...**

C FLANIGAN/GETTY IMAGES

THE NATIONAL AND FRIENDS

Title **DAYS OF THE DEAD** | Label **4AD** | Release **APRIL**

The National's Aaron Dessner curates a mammoth charity project: 70+ Grateful Dead songs, covered by a who's who of American independent music

ARON DESSNER: We approached the Grateful Dead in 2011, after we'd made [AIDS-awareness fundraising compilation] *Dark Was The Night*, which had been such a successful LP. On a whim, I thought,

"What if they'd give us access to the catalogue?" It has been such an important legacy and inspiration for so many of our generation. So ever since we've just been working on this. It's been a long process. It has involved approaching and

THE UNCUT 2016 ALBUMS PREVIEW IN ASSOCIATION WITH



(l-r) Sam Cohen, Thomas Bartlett, Aaron Dessner, Conrad Doucette, Bob Weir, Bryan Devendorf, Scott Devendorf, Walter Martin and Josh Kaufman during the Yahoo! Music Presents "The Bridge Session" at TRI Studios in California, March 24, 2012



stringing up collaborations and exploring ways to access the songs, and to reinvent them. Some of the performances are quite authentic, in the tradition of the Grateful Dead, but then others are quite radical reinterpretations.

A group of us have played on a lot of the tracks. Apart from Matt [Berninger], the rest of The National have played, with other friends like Walt [Martin] from The Walkmen, who plays Vox organ on a lot of the tracks, and Josh Kaufman, from Yellowbirds, who is an amazing guitar player.

We recorded more than 30 of the songs in a church in Woodstock called Dreamland. A lot of the music we recorded there is closer to the spirit of late '60s and early '70s Grateful Dead performances. We did "Birdsong" with Will Oldham singing and that almost feels like it could be on *Reckoning*. We did "To Lay Me Down" with Perfume Genius and Sharon Van Etten. But there are also some that are a radical departure from the original. There's an amazing collective from Minneapolis called Marijuana Deathsquads, and they recorded

"Truckin'". It's a really inspired take on what is, kind of for the Grateful Dead, a radio hit, but here re-envisioned through the mind of a weird, hip-hop collective.

War On Drugs recorded "Touch Of Grey" and Kurt Vile and J Mascis did "Box Of Rain". It felt so easy for them to perfectly capture the songs, because they're so much part of their fabric, their DNA. I think it's the case for a lot of us – it was joyful to play these songs. Chris Bear and Daniel Rossen from Grizzly Bear and myself and Scott from The National and some other friends recorded the

entire "Terrapin Station Medley". It was a big undertaking, with the guitar lines, the orchestration, and there's like eight verses – but instead of a chore it was a total joy, because we've all heard the songs so much over the years. It just clicked, and we were able to do that in half a day.

Will Oldham singing "If I Had The World To Give" – just him and a piano – is one of the most beautiful recordings I may have ever heard, but it's not anything like the original in terms of the arrangement. Justin Vernon and Bruce Hornsby have recorded "Black Muddy River";



Deadheads:
Scott Devendorf
and Will Oldham

• it's almost like Jerry's "Not Dark Yet". They did it with Justin's old DeYarmond Edison bandmates, Phil and Brad Cook and Joe Westerlund. There was such a deep chemistry to that recording. There are many situations like that where it's not only the song and the performance that are moving, it's the DNA beneath it.

That's been the real joy of it, I think, bringing all these friends together to do something that can be wonderful for the [Red Hot] charity, but also shine a light on music that was very formative for a lot of us. Growing up, we were always fascinated by the Dead. It was the first music that my brother and I played with Brian, the drummer of The National.

It's about 70 tracks long now. We were calling it *Day Of The Dead*, but now we might call it *Days Of The Dead*. The idea is for it to be very expansive, because I think for people who really know the Dead and know this music, even 70 songs feels light. I could name 20 off the top of my head that I'm disappointed we didn't record. Maybe 50 of the songs are Dead songs; but quite a few were part of their repertoire. One of the interesting things was that the Dead popularised a lot of old folk songs. The National recorded "Peggy O", which is based on an old Scottish folk song. We did "Jack-A-Roe" with This Is The Kit, a band from Bristol who live in Paris. Charles Bradley recorded "Cumberland Blues", which is not a Dead song, but they played it a lot.

Our intent is to have it available digitally, then a very elaborate vinyl edition – a special order, not the kind of thing you'll find in a record store. It'll be 10 or 11 vinyl albums. There's mixing to do, and some last-minute performances. But the heavy lifting is done. I'll go on a four-hour drive and get through half of it! It's a great way to bring people together, and it's been a blast to play this music.



Paws for thought: (l-r)
Panda Bear,
Geologist,
Avey Tare

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Title PAINTING WITH
Label DOMINO
Release date FEBRUARY 19

Sonic technicians revisit old Beach Boys haunts for new sounds

AVEY TARE: We recorded the album at EastWest. *Pet Sounds* was recorded there, "California Dreamin'", Sam Cooke's recorded there. We recorded in the *Pet Sounds* room; it had a great energy. Bill Putnam, who built the studio, is an idol of mine.

We started talking about the basic structures and melodies last summer, so we were on the same page. We began writing in December and we'd done demo-ing by March. Noah and I each recorded eight demos each.

The past few years, I've gotten into the Tin Pan Alley and writers like Irving Berlin; songs that would be in early musicals. I've always been into Ray Davies too, and the idea that you can write concise songs where a lot happens or there are a lot of changes and melodies within a short period of time. For Animal Collective, we come from such a free-form, improv background, it's easy to write a song that's seven minutes long. So it was a conscious decision to write shorter songs this time.

One of my favourite songs on the album is "Hocus Pocus". It has a bendy quality to it! Noah's done some cool arrangements and I feel like that was the one for me where it

"It was a conscious decision to write shorter songs"

AVEY TARE

all clicked. John Cale is on the album. My sister's been working for him for the past year and a half doing projections and visuals. We had this string-sounding sample, but the quality of it was never satisfying. We talked about having string players come in. But the part had this droney mist to it that I feel fitted in with John's aesthetic. We asked him and luckily he was down with the idea.

JACK WHITE AND TBONE BURNETT

Title THE AMERICAN EPIC SESSIONS
Label THIRD MAN RECORDS
Release date TBC

White and Burnett explore the history of American music in new documentary; an album will follow



"It's the story of the American recording industry from 1926 to 1936, this incredible occurrence,"

Burnett told *Uncut* in 2013. "In 1926

the record industry fell off 80 per cent in one year because of the proliferation of radio in the big cities. The middle-class people and the wealthy people who were able to buy radios no longer wanted to buy records, because they could get music for free – why buy a record? So the recording companies, having equipment and nothing to do, decided to go down south, where people didn't have electricity, and therefore didn't have radios. So they started recording people down south – they started recording the poorest people in the country and broadcasting their voices all around the world."

A three-part documentary, *American Epic*, explores these earliest field recordings, using previously unseen film footage, photographs and interviews with some of the last surviving witnesses of that era. Meanwhile a film, *The American Epic Sessions*, finds artists including Alabama Shakes, Beck, Rhiannon Giddens, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson and White himself recording using original and recreated equipment from the 1920s. Music from the doc and the film will be released, with White's Third Man label working on a vinyl boxset.

Continued Burnett, "From Jimmie Rodgers, who recorded in 1926, to Louis Armstrong, through Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan, we've spread our culture all over the world with this music. Music is an important part of our national identity. It's all regional, it's a never-ending story, and it's who we are."

JULIA HOLTER



HAVE YOU IN MY WILDERNESS

THE ALBUM OF THE YEAR



dominorecordco.com

Working man:
Ray Davies in
Konk Studios,
and, below,
with producer
Guy Massey



RAY DAVIES

Title **AMERICANA** | Label **SONY** Release **AUTUMN**

Davies cues up his first album of new material since 2007's *Working Man's Café*

RAY DAVIES: It's the album I meant to make two years ago, when my book *Americana* came out. But it was delayed because I was involved in the musical *Sunny Afternoon*. I hate to say it but I think it'll be unlike any other record I've made. It's going on *The Storyteller* idea that I created in the early 1990s, on a bigger landscape, and dare I use the word epic? [Laughs]. Not in sound or anything, but in storytelling.

I want it to be a stage presentation, possibly a video. I don't want it to be a musical, but I'd like it to be staged in a theatre, somewhere like the Barbican or something.

A lot of the lyrics are already in the book. I think there are 160 songs quoted in the book, so I can't use all those. I'm using elements from them. I've written about 50, but if I get away with 36, I'll be lucky. I premiered one of these songs in Sweden in 2006. So some of these songs have been

around for a while. There's one song I'm doing about the British Invasion, when we first went over there [in 1965]. I'm trying to make it work in context with the show I want to do. The working title is "The World As They Know It Will Never Be The Same". It's a quote from the book. There's another new song, "The Great Highway", that's also in the book.

Americana symbolises something to me from when I was a child. What? There is a song called "The Big Prairie", and it's about me growing up in London and going to America... and it's a quest. It's all about the quest. There's a song "A Long Drive Home

To Tarzana", about some people I knew in California. And Tarzana was a town created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, who wrote *Tarzan Of The Apes*. When it was founded, it was supposed to be an all-white community. I have images of going through it, a place I've been to once, but in the big picture, the big story, it's someone looking for the ideal world we're all

searching for. We don't know until the end of the record whether they get there or not.

I've lived through a lot of these songs. It'll be good to get them out. I write when I can, when I'm able. I try to work most mornings for a

couple of hours, at the moment just focused on listening to takes from the day before and planning...

"It's unlike any other record I've made. Dare I use the word epic?"



Preparation, preparation, preparation.

I'm recording with the band I toured with in the summer. Dick Nolan on bass, Bill Shanley on guitar, and Ian Gibbons – who's a former Kink – on keyboards. I think I will assemble guests as we go on. I started working over the summer; I put down about three or four tracks at the end of my tour. I just laid down the fifth track today. I'm looking for an accordion player at the moment.

Have I been involved in the Julian Temple Kinks project? Not really, no. I think it's based on *X-Ray* and my brother's book. How are things with Dave? I think he's all right, I think he's OK. I've got a message to call him actually right now.

PJ HARVEY

Title **TBC**
Label **ISLAND**
Release date **TBC**

From a sealed glass box in a basement on London's South Bank, the genesis of Harvey's latest album explored

On January 20, 2015, *Uncut* enjoyed a tantalising glimpse of Pee's *Recording In Progress* installation/album sessions at London's Somerset House. There, under the auspices of producer Flood and with collaborators present including John Parish, Terry Edwards and drummer Kendrick Rowe, we witnessed Harvey work on her follow-up to *Let England Shake* – *Uncut* Album Of The Year in 2011.

In October last year, Harvey debuted some of the material she worked on during the Somerset House sessions at the Royal Festival Hall for the launch of *The Hollow Of The Hand* – a book that paired her poems with the photographs of Seamus Murphy, documenting trips they made to Kosovo, Afghanistan and Washington DC between 2011 and 2014. "Gathering information from secondary sources felt too far removed for what I was trying to write about," Harvey explained. "I wanted to smell the air, feel the soil and meet the people of the countries I was fascinated with."

Of the 10 new songs Harvey played at the show, *Uncut*'s reviewer noted "Homo Sappy Blues", 'Community Of Hope' and 'Medicinals' are spiky, witty, Breeders-ish rackets, 'Near The Memorials To Vietnam And Lincoln' a demented sea-shanty anchored by [John] Parish's accordion", and also the "swaggering, seething 'Ministry Of Social Affairs'".



Chris Forsyth (right) with trumpet player Daniel Carter

CHRIS FORSYTH

Title **THE RARITY OF EXPERIENCE PARTS I AND II**
Label **NO QUARTER**
Release date **MARCH 4**

Guitar-rock maverick promises curveballs

CHRIS FORSYTH: The first tracks were recorded in December 2014, but a few of these songs date back to demos or fragments that I have from 1995! The last two studio records, *Solar Motel* and *Intensity Ghost*, they're very different from each other and I didn't want to make *Intensity Ghost* No 2. The band was now playing more gigs and collecting more material, so we went into this with the thought, "Let's see if we can make something bigger."

Working through the whole thing over the year, it was hard to get any real picture of it until it was all together. Then I sat down, the week

"The album feels like a lot of new areas being explored"

CHRIS FORSYTH

after we mixed it, and listened to it a bunch of times and I was like, "Oh shit, we didn't make one long record; we made two records!" The first record is the bulk of the live set we've been playing for the past year. The second record was in a way more experimental. There's the Richard Thompson cover – "Calvary Cross"



Sax appeal:
PJ Harvey

– which we've played live a number of times. That was the first thing we recorded. Actually, most of it was recorded in Philadelphia with Jeff Zeigler. I also went up to New York and Kansas City, Missouri.

People tend to frame the stuff that I do in terms of classic guitar bands, but I wanted to throw in a little curveball. So the first thing they hear is a synthesiser. The title track had the most singing I've done up to this point. So the first side feels like a lot of new areas being explored.

ENDLESS BOOGIE

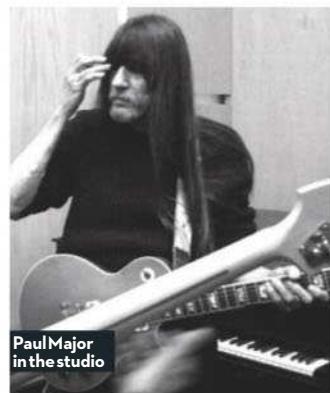
Title **TBC**
Label **NO QUARTER**
Release date **TBC**

"The same, but different" from East Coast jam band

PAUL MAJOR, VOCALS/GUITAR: There are provisional titles, but everything tends to change. We might call it *Vibe Killer*! We've been recording mostly at Mexican Summer studios in Brooklyn. We started working on it quite a long time ago – the first session might even have been February. We made a lot of headway, then in May I fractured my arm. It took all summer until I could play again.

It was a drag. After a while, you start to claw the walls. "Oh, man! I gotta make some noise!"

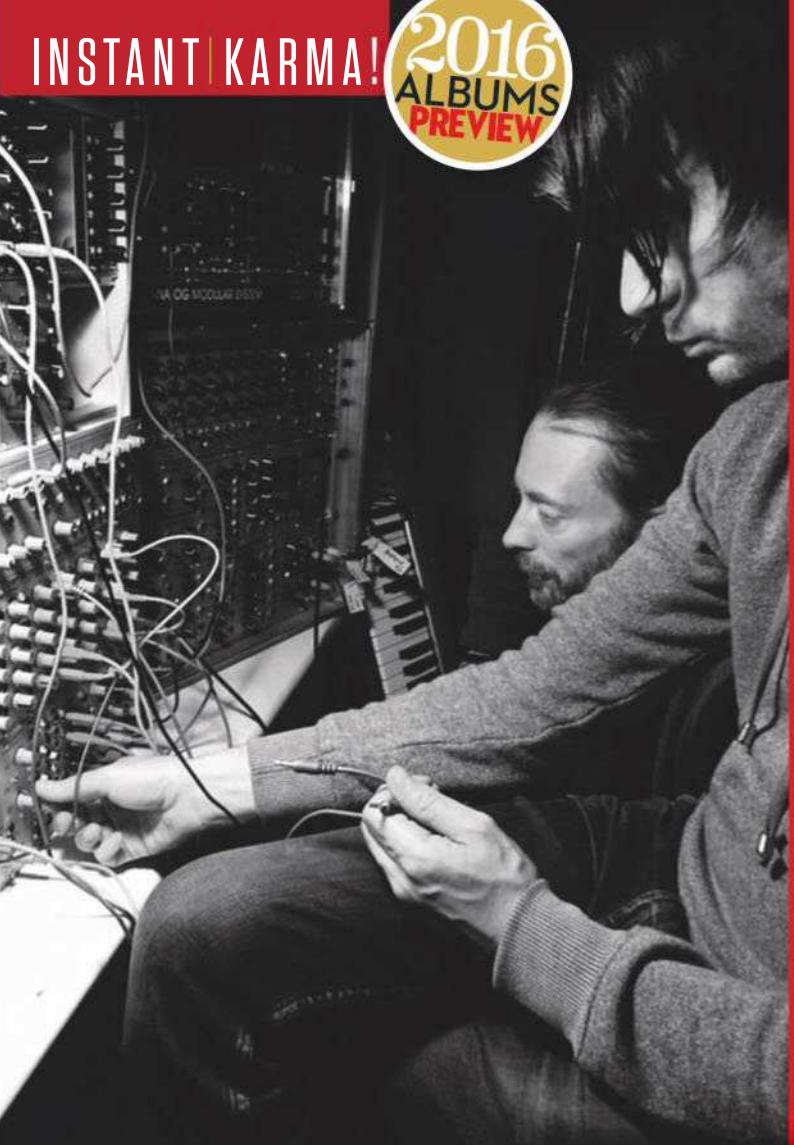
The way our albums shape up is, we record a bunch of stuff live in the studio, four or five hours of material



Paul Major in the studio

at least. We don't write specific songs. We jam. Those jams have a bit of structure, but when we play them they go to different places. They evolve, so the end always turns out a little different from where it started.

There will be some hard-hitters as well as more atmospheric tracks like [Long Island song] "The Artemus Ward". On each of the other albums, there's a little illusion of digression, but in a lot of ways we stayed in our zone. This will be like the same, but different – if that's possible!



RADIOHEAD

Title TBC
Label TBC | **Released** TBC

We chart the secret history of the band's ninth studio album...

The members of Radiohead have hardly been idle since their last album, 2011's *The King Of Limbs*. Between them, there have been solo projects, film soundtracks, environmental campaigning and even an app, PolyFauna. A rumour briefly circulated the band had recorded the theme for the latest James Bond film, *Spectre*.

While that was admittedly far-fetched, it did hint at a greater truth – that Radiohead had been back in the studio working on new material at least since the summer of 2014. The first physical evidence of this came that December, when producer Nigel Godrich tweeted a photograph of Thom Yorke and Jonny Greenwood, showing the pair in a recording studio.

As for the music? At one point, the band were revisiting a 1996 track, "Lift". "We have a long history of writing songs and having them hang around unrecorded for years," Johnny Greenwood told *Uncut* in 2012. "[In Rainbows track] 'Nude' was a pretty old song."

In October 2015, Greenwood admitted "lots has been recorded, and [they're] about to go through it all to see if it's any good. And we hope to tour next year: no plans confirmed yet."

Two months later, Yorke played two new songs – "Silent Spring" and "Desert Island Disk" – during an acoustic set at the Pathway To Paris concert, which coincided with the UN Climate Change Conference. During footage of "Silent Spring", Yorke is heard saying, "This is Jonny's bit, which I can't play." Evidence, you'd think, that this song at least is destined for Radiohead's new album.

NIGEL GODRICH

Austin Brown of Parquet Courts



PARQUET COURTS

Title TBC
Label ROUGH TRADE
Release date SPRING

Indie foursome expand their parameters on fifth LP

AUSTIN BROWN, VOCALS/ GUITAR: We recorded a lot of it at Dreamland in upstate New York. It's a church that was converted into a recording studio in the '70s. There's a house built into the church. I would come out of my tiny little bedroom and walk downstairs to the live room. The sun would come through these beautiful stained-glass windows as we wrote our songs.

We worked with [engineer] Justin Pizzoferrato, who has a studio in western Massachusetts called Sonelab. We hit him up after we had heard the Body/Head record. We recorded a couple of different sessions [with him]. Some of the songs from [November 2015 EP] "Monastic Living" came from there and a couple on this record were recorded there, as well. We also recorded at the Wilco loft for a week after Lollapalooza.

We're making our fifth full-length record, and personally I wasn't interested in making the same record again. When we first got to Dreamland we were still in the old way of writing and recording. Then Sean and I stayed up all night one night, a bit loaded, and we were like, "Uh, we're doing it all wrong." I feel like we broke the process a little bit. We'd say, "Let's not have any rhythm guitars or drums on this song, and see what that sounds like."

I wouldn't call our record, as it sounds now, experimental – it's not crazy, you know – but I think it's exciting to listen to, because it was exciting to make.

THE CULT

Title HIDDEN CITY
Label COOKING VINYL
Release date FEBRUARY 5

The Wolfchild returns! "Dark Energy" abounds



IAN ASTBURY, VOCALS: I saw Carlos Tevez play for Juventus. He threw his team shirt off and underneath he

had another one with 'ciudad oculta' written on it. It reads 'hidden city' in Spanish, his old neighbourhood where he grew up in Buenos Aires. I thought, 'Isn't that beautiful? He's not selling a product or bigging himself up, he's just rapping where he comes from.' So then *Hidden City* became this metaphor for the internal; the self-cultivation of spirit, mind, body, soul, finding those harmonics.

Since 2006, I think we've become more fearless, peeling away the layers, revealing more vulnerability, but also finding our real strength as a band. This album was made through an inward-looking process. It's not purely my vision – it's Billy [Duffy]'s vision and Bob Rock.

Right now we're working on the lyric video for "Deeply Ordered Chaos". The title is from Francis Bacon. I thought it was a perfect encapsulation of where we're at today. The fabric of society is just ripping, and we're watching it. The first line is, "I'm a European...", and I was thinking of Iggy Pop's "The Passenger". It's tied in to events in January 2015, Charlie Hebdo, then the Bataclan with the Eagles [*Of Death Metal*]. Then there's a song called "Dark Energy", which was inspired by an article about physics in an old issue of *Omni* magazine. ☺

new music



album of the month

hinds
leave me alone
08/01/2016



tortoise
the catastrophist
22/01/2016



mystery jets
curve of the earth
15/01/2016

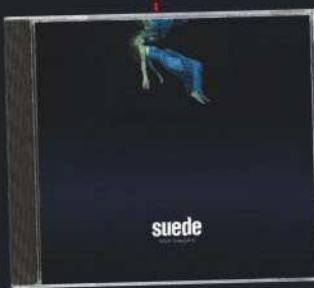


album of the month

daughter
not to disappear
15/01/2016



suede
night thoughts
22/01/2016



fat white family
songs for our mothers
22/01/2016



the besnard lakes
a coliseum complex museum
22/01/2016



the high llamas
here come the rattling trees
22/01/2016



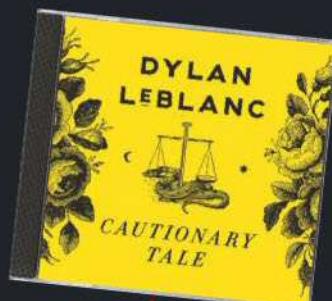
tindersticks
the waiting room
22/01/2016



promise & the monster
feed the fire
22/01/2016



quentin tarantino's
the hateful eight soundtrack
out now



dylan leblanc
cautionary tale
15/01/2016

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YOKO ONO

Title **Yes, I'm A Witch Too**

Label **Manimal** | Released **February 16**

Yoko answers five questions via email about her new collaborative album with Death Cab For Cutie, Sparks, Cibo Matto, her son Sean and more

1. Why did you decide to record a sequel to *Yes, I'm A Witch*?

Many great bands wanted to be in the first one but they sent their tracks too late and I couldn't put them in. That was the main reason. When you listen to the tracks that went into *Yes, I'm A Witch Too*, you'll agree that it would have been a pity if they were simply shelved. Great stuff.

2. What did you want to achieve with this album?

Great rock'n'roll energy.

3. Could you tell us about some of the collaborations: how they came together, what qualities you were looking for in potential collaborators...

I handpicked them. So I feel that you cannot just talk about one or

two. They turned out to be all great. I loved them.

4. Who surprised you, and how?

Sean. He grew up to be just as funky as all the other greats. Well, I may be a bit prejudiced...

5. Two songs – “Mrs Lennon” and “No Bed For Beatle John” – date back to your marriage to John Lennon. What do you remember about writing them? I was still one foot in classic avant-garde. That shows. “No Bed For Beatle John”, especially. I just picked up the newspaper of that day and sung it as a song. No rehearsal, of course. “Mrs. Lennon”, too, I just followed my emotion. That’s how I sing most of my songs. Just going with the emotion of that moment.

STEVE GUNN

Title **TBC**

Label **MATADOR**

Release date **SPRING**

Kurt Vile alumnus locates his inner truck driver

STEVE GUNN: I don't have a permanent title yet, but one of our joking titles is *More Velvets Than Stones!* Which

era? More or less *Loaded*.

I recorded it at Black Dirt, in upstate New York: it's a studio I've been working with for the past five or so years. Jason Meagher, who plays bass in the band, it's in his house in the woods and we have as much time as we need to work there. It's our second home.

My last album was pastoral and landscaply. This one I feel is a little more city-based. We did a lot of



Have guitar, will travel: Steve Gunn

touring between sessions, so all that travelling and playing reflects in the songs. There's one called “Nature Driver”. I became fascinated with trucker culture, and tried to write a song from a trucker's perspective.

There's another song, “Night Wander”. I read a story by Mary Gaitskill. The first half is about when you're young and you have this urge to sneak out at night. I also re-read Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master And Margarita*, where a cat plays the devil. I had this dream about when I was a kid and I climbed out of my window and met up with this cat, and we took a walk. The song is about being comfortable with being lost, which you have to accept if you're living a lifestyle where you're just kinda wandering.

UNDERWORLD

Title **BARBARA BARBARA, WE FACE A SHINING FUTURE**

Label **CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL**

Release date **MARCH 18**

Electronic duo “start from scratch” on ninth album



KARL HYDE:

The title phrase was something that Rick [Smith]’s father said not long before he passed away. It

was one of those moments that took me back to *Second Toughest In The Infants* and *dubnobass...*, where Rick would say, “Oh, my nephew said this...” or, “I wrote this on a tape box”, and I’d go, “That’s the title of the album.”

Since *Barking* (2010) we’ve done a film score for Danny [Boyle; *Trance*], the Olympics, I did a solo

album and then two albums with Brian Eno. It’s been a very productive period, and a good opportunity for us to take a break. But we continued to tour together throughout all that time.

About a year ago, Rick and I decided that we’d get back in the studio, with a very clear direction from Rick that we would get together with nothing prepared and make something new every day. Start from scratch and be prepared to leave the day with whatever, you know? By the end of it, it felt like we’d become closer than we ever had in our 35 years together.

This felt like my romantic memory of *dubnobass...*, where Rick and I were in the studio together, whereas we’ve worked together progressively less and less; responding to each other’s files sent over the internet.

SWANS

Title **TBC**

Label **MUTE**

Release date **SUMMER**

Swan song for the current lineup – two hours long!



MICHAEL GIRA: This is the final album featuring the current incarnation of Swans. I feel that we’ve reached the

limits of what we can do together as these six gentlemen, driving around in a bus; being in a room for eight hours rehearsing; knowing each other’s possibilities and limitations. We still get along great, and I think we’ve just made a rather spectacular album, but it’s just time to stir things up a bit and get back into an uncomfortable position, which I think is a good place to be.

We recorded the band at Sonic Ranch in Texas. From there I went with the recording engineer, John Congleton, to his studio in Dallas and I recorded many talented studio musicians playing such instruments as flute, mandolin, banjo – lots of choir vocals and good old string sections – lots of different instrumentation. From there I went to Seattle and recorded my delicious friend Bill Rieflin playing piano, drums, guitars, other instruments. And then I went to Berlin and recorded my final vocals and mixed it.

It's the most diverse record in a while. There are some beautiful moments, and others that might be called cataclysmic. There's a song called "Cloud Of Unknowing", which is 25 minutes and 12 seconds. Right now, the album is two hours and six minutes. But I am in the process of editing one song, so it'll be about two hours. There are eight songs in total.

GRAHAM NASH

Title THIS PATH TONIGHT
Label BLUE CASTLE RECORDS
Release date APRIL 15

First solo album in 14 years. What took him so long?

GRAHAM NASH: I started recording it in January 2015. Shane [Fontayne] and I

wrote 20 songs in a month and recorded them in eight days. We worked quickly. I'm like Neil [Young] in that respect; I don't like too many takes. I think you can lose the emotion of a song. "Myself At Last" was a first take, as was "Encore"; otherwise we'd only do two or three takes per song. "Myself At Last" is what you think it's about: it's me, laid bare, finally comfortable with being who I am.

I guess the album is autobiographical. "Golden Days" goes back to when I was in The Hollies. There's a sense of a journey, too. I'm going through a divorce at the moment, after 38 years, so that feeds into songs like "Another Broken Heart". Shane and I wrote "Back Home" about our dear friend Levon Helm, when we heard he was dying. When we were working on this, Dallas Taylor, Tim Drummond and Rick Rosas all died in quick succession, so that loss is felt here, too.

It's taken me a long while to get round to making this album. I spent four years on the CSNY 74 boxset. Crosby, Stills and Nash tried to do an album, covering songs that we wished we'd written, which was a great idea – but that didn't work. To be honest, I'll be 74 next birthday, and I don't know how much time I have left. I've spent decades bathing in other people's music; now it's time to put Graham Nash first.

MARK EITZEL

Title TBC
Label DÉCOR
Release date JUNE

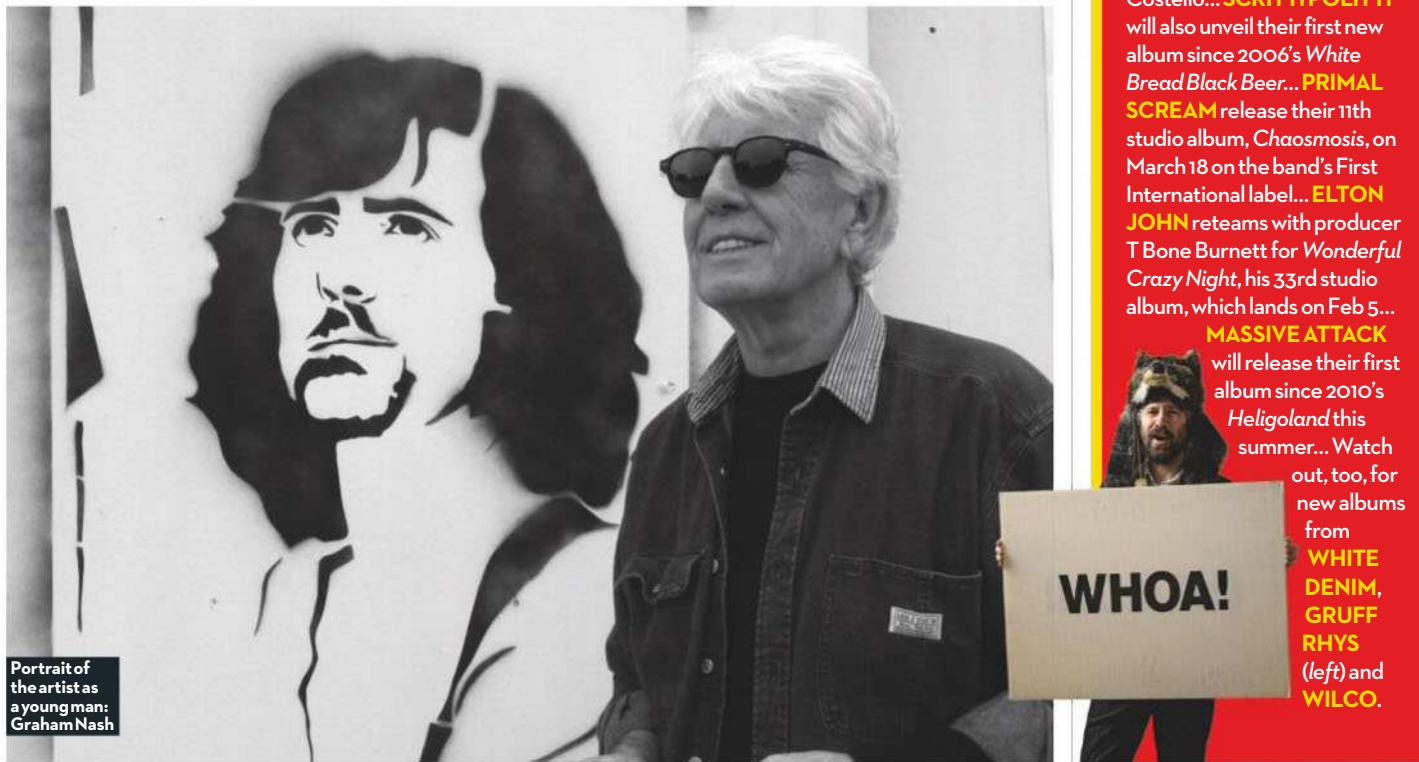
AMC man channels Bernard Butler's 'rock and pop' vibe



Ever since my heart attack, I've been indifferent to this career business. I just want to make something that's good. My usual impulse, "OK, 10 songs done, make a record!" That's out the door.

I'm working in London with Bernard Butler. He has a different sensibility to me – more rock and pop, which I like. I've got about 30 tracks. We're only going to record 10 of them. There's a song called "An Angel's Wing Brushed The El Cortez". We were in Vegas, in this old casino, and we saw this man die right in front of us at the penny slots. What was amazing was how hateful the first responders were; this poor old man was gasping for his life. Another song is called "In My Role As A Singer And A Ham". It's self-explanatory. It's me trying to deal with right-wing Republicans.

My boyfriend tells me that if I don't make some money this year, he's going to make me drive an Uber car. So I hope I'm touring. In May I'm in London, so I'll be doing that. ☺



Portrait of the artist as a young man: Graham Nash

BEST OF THE REST

INCOMING...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN has dropped news of a new record: "The project I've been working on is more of a solo project," he told SiriusXM's E Street Radio...

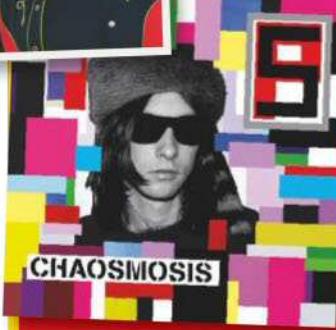
BLONDIE are working with Franz Ferdinand producer John Congleton on a curated project that will find them

recording songs written specially for them by artists including

Johnny Marr...

LORETTA

LYNN returns in March with *Full Circle*, her first



album of new material in more than 10 years. Guests include Willie Nelson and Elvis Costello... **SCRITTI POLITTI** will also unveil their first new album since 2006's *White Bread Black Beer*... **PRIMAL SCREAM** release their 11th studio album, *Chaosmosis*, on March 18 on the band's First International label... **ELTON JOHN** reteams with producer T Bone Burnett for *Wonderful Crazy Night*, his 33rd studio album, which lands on Feb 5...

MASSIVE ATTACK will release their first album since 2010's *Heligoland* this summer... Watch out, too, for new albums from

WHITE DENIM, GRUFF RHYS (left) and WILCO.

INSTANT KARMA!

Laundro-Matmos:
(l-r) Martin Schmidt
and Drew Daniel



SPIN CYCLE

THE HISSING OF SUMMER LAUNDRIES

In which MATMOS make an entire album using just one instrument: their Whirlpool *Ultimate Care II* washing machine!

IT BEGINS WITH the sound of water – a trickle that soon becomes a torrent. Hand-beaten rhythms follow, sounding faintly African, and gradually increase in volume, as if we're drifting past tribesmen staring out from foliage-covered banks. Then there are metallic squeals and scrapes, whooshes and inverted beats that suggest high-end computer processing.

What's going on here? If you didn't know, you wouldn't guess. But *Ultimate Care II*, the new album by electronica duo Matmos, is made entirely from sounds sourced from

the Whirlpool Ultimate Care II, a washing machine in the basement of their home in Baltimore, Maryland. "Yes, it's ours," laughs Drew Daniel, who formed Matmos with his partner Martin Schmidt in 1995. "But I like the idea we're fancy enough to have bought a washing machine to make an album."

Unusual sample sources are Matmos' bread and butter. Their self-titled 1997 debut found the pair sampling the neural activity of a crayfish, while 2001's *A Chance To Cut Is A Chance To Cure* sourced recordings of plastic-surgery operations. That same year, they



began a fruitful collaboration with Björk, assisting with the recording and touring of *Vespertine* and subsequently 2004's *Medúlla*.

Ultimate Care II was intended to be a sort of back-to-basics project after 2013's *The Marriage Of True Minds*, a complex work employing experiments in telepathy. "The idea was it was supposed to be devoid of grand concepts," laughs Schmidt.

"I had no idea people had such strong erotic feelings about washing machines"

But soon, buddies like Dan Deacon, Jason Willett of Half Japanese and Baltimore math-rockers Horse Lords were swinging by the basement to sample the cycles or drum on the casing, and soon a strange, beautiful suite of music was taking shape.

Before they knew it, the pair were analysing the music's subtext: what does it mean to play a washing machine, with its connotations of domestic drudgery and unpaid labour? "It feels like a poignant personal statement," says Daniel, a professor at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University. "In the day I get up, put on my suit and tie, and go out to lecture about *Hamlet*.

In the meantime, Martin maintains our home." As a rule, he says, Matmos don't make especially personal art. "But in forcing the attention of the listener onto a washing machine, there's a very direct sense that this is part of life. You don't get to drift off into a fantasy world where your clothes get stinky and someone else has to do the work."

Daniel and Schmidt analyse *Ultimate Care II* with reference to the pop art of Warhol, the subversive industrial of Throbbing Gristle or the feminist filmmaking of Chantal Akerman. But ultimately, it had to sound good, and when Schmidt says "there's something about the resonant frequency of the washing machine that really talks to me", he's being both wry and deadly serious. With the album wrapped, there's a video by Max Eilbacher in the works – "I had no idea people had such strong erotic feelings about washing machines," marvels Schmidt – plus, perhaps, a tour.

"We thought about touring laundromats, but that opens up a load of questions," wonders Daniel. "Could we get a PA in there? How do you hot-rod a washing machine? I have no idea, but I'm excited to start figuring this stuff out."

LOUIS PATTISON

Matmos' *Ultimate Care II* is released by Thrill Jockey on February 19

THE CLASSIFIEDS

THIS MONTH: The Banshees rock Bishop's Stortford, Motörhead play Brunel, and punk meets prog at the Marquee. From *NME*, January 14, 1978

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THE ROCK CLUB NEW WRITTE ST. CHELMSFORD

Thompson and
Walker: "firing
each other up..."



PERFECT UNION

THE GREEN PARTY

RYLEY WALKER hooks up with one of his jazz-folk heroes, **DANNY THOMPSON**

DANNY THOMPSON IS the foundation of UK folk and jazz when it comes to playing bass," says Chicago singer-guitarist Ryley Walker. "I love what he's done throughout his career. The guy's played on damn near every record that's religion to me."

Given the classic British tropes in Walker's music – transmuted to thrilling effect on the harlequin *Primrose Green*, No 4 on *Uncut's* Best-of-2015 list – this is probably no great surprise. Thompson, 76, is, after all, a founder member of Pentangle and one-time foil to John Martyn, Nick Drake, Richard Thompson and Davey Graham, among many others. "I guess it was the mixture of different types of music that attracted me to British folk," Walker adds. "It was really progressive to take traditional tunes and mix them with ragas and jazz. And lyrically speaking, it's always been very beautiful."

It transpires that Walker's fandom isn't just one-way traffic. Alerted to the majesty of *Primrose Green* by his own manager, Thompson was impressed. To the extent that, as Walker puts it, "Danny was like, 'Damn, we should jam!' So I took a trip to London a couple of months ago to meet him. He was fantastic. We just hung out and shot the shit. We talked a lot

about Charles Mingus, drank proper English tea and ate really good cookies that his wife had made." Thompson, for his part, believes that "it's important to meet people that you're possibly going to work with, to see if you like each other. Ryley's a naughty boy, full of energy. He reminds me so much of how I was at his age. I love the fact that his music has no

"Ryley's a naughty boy, full of energy. He reminds me so much of how I was at his age"

rules, his improvisation just takes it wherever he wants. It's been a long time since I did any of that."

The result of this informal rendezvous is a tour, the two men sharing the bill for a dozen shows across the UK this February. It will be the first time they've ever played together in public. And while it's tempting to view this union as a corollary to Thompson's lauded work with some of the greats (be it Bert Jansch's

Moonshine, John Martyn's *Solid Air* or Richard Thompson's *Mock Tudor*), he refuses to draw any ready parallels. "Ryley reminds me of lots of people," Thompson declares, "but he must be sick and tired of being compared to Bert and John and Pentangle and Tim Buckley. Of course you hear all these influences, but we're all informed by vast amounts of things. And from that comes your own identity. I just hear *him* and I'm really excited by his music."

The set list is likely to feature some new Walker material, alongside songs from both *Primrose Green* and his 2014 debut, *All Kinds Of You*, recast in strikingly fresh settings. "I love the idea of not playing the same thing every bloomin' night," says Thompson. "It means that you fire each other up. When you're improvising, sometimes you reach heights that you couldn't even write."

The duo also state that it's likely they'll record together at some point in the near future. For the time being, though, Walker has other priorities. Straight after he's done talking to *Uncut*, he says, he's off to the studio to press on with a new solo album: "It's less of a guitar record and more about weird arrangements, with lots of horns and strings. I'm really into Talk Talk, American Music Club and Miles Davis' *Sketches Of Spain* right now. And I'm way more into lyrics. This record will be a lifetime away from what I've done before."

ROB HUGHES

Ryley and Danny's tour begins on February 17 at Bristol St George's, and runs through until February 28 at Manchester's Band On The Wall

A QUICK ONE

► The Isle Of Wight Festival may be associated with the last rites of hippydom, but this year's has something of an iconoclastic subtext. Celebrating the 40th anniversary of punk between June 9-12, the bill will feature Iggy Pop, Buzzcocks, The Damned, Adam Ant and The Godfathers, plus some whipper-snappers called The Sex Pissed Dolls. In less revolutionary spirit, Faithless, Stereophonics and Queen will be headlining.

► Beatles tourists with a taste for something more ambitious than a trek round Liverpool might consider a trip to the forest outside Rishikesh in India, where the band's meditation retreat has reopened. In other Fab news, Ringo Starr has auctioned off his copy of the 'White Album' – numbered 0000001 – for \$790,000. At the same sale, a 1963 Ludwig Oyster Black Pearl drumkit, used by Starr in more than 200 shows from '63-'64 sold for \$2.2m.

► Quick plug dept. Our deluxe *Ultimate Music Guide: U2* and the latest volume of our *History Of Rock* project – 1970! – are on sale now. Later in January, look out for a UMG dedicated to the mighty Byrds.

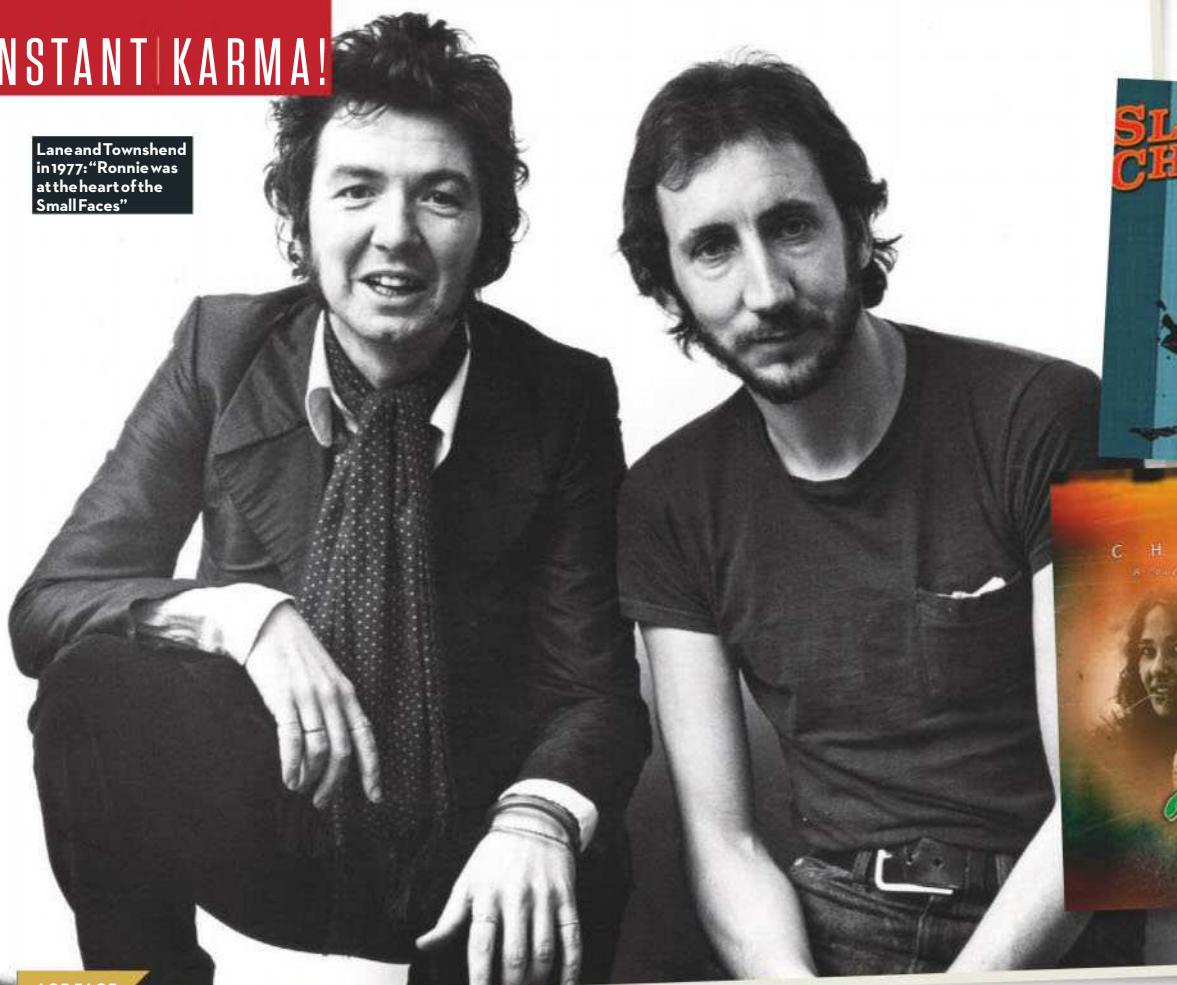
► As we go to press, Neil Young appears likely to bring his career-revitalising tour with Promise Of The Real to Europe this summer. Shows seem confirmed for Belfast SSE Arena (June 7) and Dublin 3Arena (June 8), with more to follow: check www.uncut.co.uk

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Lane and Townshend in 1977: "Ronnie was at the heart of the Small Faces"



ACE FACE

ANOTHER ONE FOR THE ROAD

The post-Faces genius of **RONNIE LANE**, revisited by **Pete Townshend, Kate Lane and Slim Chance**

TIT'S SURPRISING HOW few people today know who Ronnie Lane was," says Pete Townshend, of his contribution to a new album that celebrates the rollicking joie de vivre of the music Lane made in the mid-1970s with Slim Chance.

Townshend has combined with Lane's former wife Kate to add the music to her lyrics on a song titled "Chameleon". He also plays guitar and sings on the track, recorded with Kuschty Rye, the band led by singer-songwriter Des Horsfall, which takes name and inspiration from a song on Lane's 1979 album, *See Me*, the last he recorded prior to his long and debilitating illness with multiple sclerosis.

"The lyrics were written by Kate many years ago as a devotional love letter to her then estranged husband and my great friend," Townshend explains.

Lane, who died in 1997, will

always be best known as a member of the Small Faces and the Faces. But Townshend – who took time out from The Who to record the album *Rough Mix* with Lane in 1977 – believes that much of his most enduring music was made with Slim Chance, the bucolic roots-rock band with whom he took to the road in a Romany caravan, staging passing shows in a nomadic Big Top circus tent, accompanied by jugglers, fire-eaters, dancing girls and what Lane described as "the world's unfunniest clowns".

"Ronnie was at the heart of the Small Faces and was the spirit behind Rod Stewart's strut and swagger in the Faces," Townshend says. "But it's the music he made during his gypsy years with Slim Chance that continues to have the biggest influence." He cites Paul Weller, Ocean Colour Scene, Noel Gallagher and The Waterboys among those whose music has been

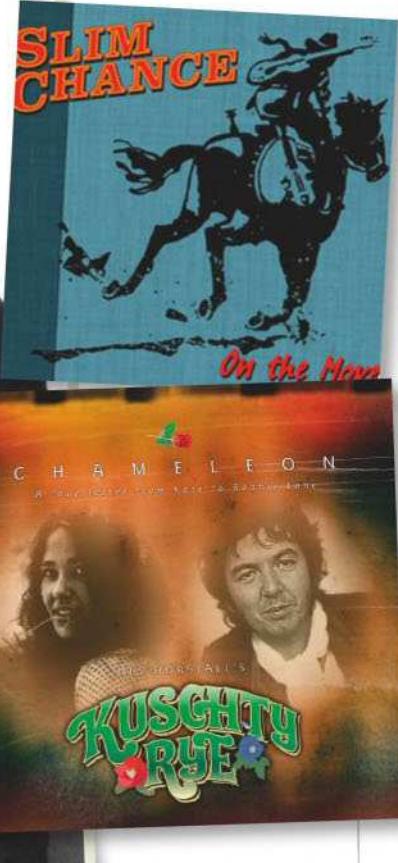
influenced by the rustic charms of Lane's bohemian post-Faces career.

Townshend's tribute, currently available as a download single, will also appear on *The Bastard's Tin*, the second in a planned trilogy of albums dedicated to Lane's memory under the Kuschty Rye banner. Kate Lane also appears on the record, talking about their life together in a series of spoken-word interludes.

Although Horsfall, the driving force behind Kuschty Rye, has been playing in bands since the late 1970s, he admits he was a latecomer to Lane's music and describes a "eureka moment" when he heard Slim Chance's classic debut album *Anymore For Anymore* for the first time in 2008.

"As long as these boys keep singing his songs, my brother's not dead"
STAN LANE

"It was the kind of music I had always dreamed of making. It touched your soul and made you feel glad to be alive," he says. "But I was puzzled that so few people were aware of this music and that all three Slim Chance albums were out of print."



Horsfall's tireless championing of Lane's legacy helped to persuade Universal to release 2014's *Ooh La La: An Island Harvest*, a two-disc compilation drawing on the second and third Slim Chance albums plus live recordings and outtakes. *Uncut*'s reviewer described the collection as "a fertile blend of rock'n'roll, country, folk, music hall, roadhouse blues, hot jazz, Cajun and early American roots music." However, 1973's *Anymore For Anymore* remains frustratingly hard to find and copies change hands for sums in excess of £60.

Horsfall also appears with original Slim Chancers Steve Bingham, Charlie Hart and Steve Simpson on *On The Move*, the second album from Lane's old bandmates, who reformed the group in 2010. "Although we play some of the old songs we don't want to be a tribute band. Ronnie wouldn't have that," Bingham says. "Our new songs pick up where Slim Chance left off."

The revival of interest in Lane and Slim Chance has delighted his surviving older sibling, Stan Lane. "As long as these boys keep singing his songs, my brother's not dead," he says. "He's still here with us."

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

SLIM CHANCE's *On The Move* is released on Fishpool on January 8. **Kuschty Rye**'s *The Bastard's Tin* is due for release in April 2016 to coincide with Ronnie Lane's 70th birthday

new music



david bowie
blackstar
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skunk anansie
anarchytecture
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tricky
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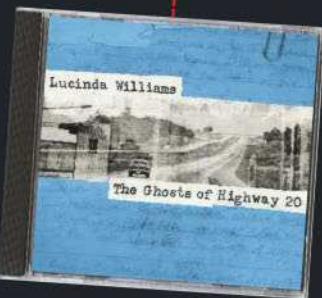


king charles
gamble for a rose
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shearwater
jet plane and oxbow
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lucinda williams
the ghosts of highway 20
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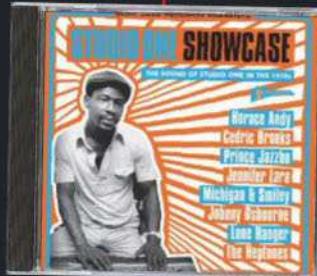
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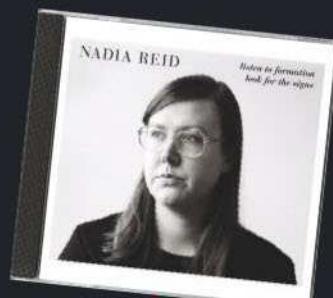
villagers
where have you been all my life
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I'M NEW HERE

LEERA LYNN

Recommended this month: the dolorous country star of *True Detective* 2

IN A LOS ANGELES dive bar, two men talk at cross-purposes about events arising from a land deal gone bad. A waitress with a scarred face brings them drinks. Meanwhile, on a rickety stage, a woman with an electric guitar leans into a microphone and delivers a harrowingly crestfallen song. “*This is my least favourite life*,” she sings. “*The one where you fly and I don’t*...”

The situation is a fictional one, a scene in the first episode of the second season of the HBO drama *True Detective*. The two men are played by Vince Vaughn and Colin Farrell. The voice and the song, though, are very real. Even if the show failed to deliver on the promise of its atmosphere, Lera Lynn, who performed the music and played the bar singer, came across very well indeed.

“I loved it,” says Lynn down the line from her home in Nashville. “I was told I was going to be a junkie. I thought, ‘Great, I’ll be like a sexy junkie!’ But they did a really good job of making me look disgusting.

“The irony,” she continues. “Your television debut, and you look horrible. But it was a fun process, and just how it appeared. The actors were talking in the back of the bar and I was 15ft away, playing on that shitty stage.”

These songs became the most distinguished feature of *True Detective*. Five were composed for the series, and for the most part feature Lynn’s rich and enveloping voice unaccompanied save by her own tremolo-effect guitar. They are rich, dolorous and dramatic in the vein of Mazzy Star or the Cowboy Junkies, and were written in association with T Bone Burnett.

Burnett, the music supervisor for the show, had been offered use of material from Lera Lynn’s torchsongy 2014 EP “*Lying In The Sun*”, but was piqued enough to suggest they write bespoke material for the project instead.

Having had this approved, Burnett suggested to the show producers that Lynn play the bar singer.

“Neither of us are really co-writers. It was a process of getting to know each other,” says Lynn of her Los Angeles sessions with the producer. “He would pass off something that he had started and I would finish it. Rosanne [Cash] contributed lyrics and we would put chords to them.”

While Burnett and Lynn wrote “Church In Ruins” alone, Rosanne Cash provided lyrics for the remaining songs, including the devastating “My Least Favourite Life”. As deadly, classic and personal as the song sounds, its composition was actually achieved in a rather more modern way. “Rosanne and I actually never met,” says Lera. “It was all done over the internet.”

Born in Texas, raised in Louisiana, Lera Lynn grew up steeped in her regional music, courtesy of parents who mainly played Southern rock and country. Influenced also by Joni Mitchell and Paul McCartney, before *True Detective*, Lynn released two full-length albums, 2011’s sparkly country debut *Have You Met Lera Lynn?* and the more wide-ranging *The Avenues* from 2014. Her next album, coming later this year, will be, she says, “more experimental”.

“If you’re a new artist it’s difficult to have people pay attention,” says Lera. “But having worked on *True Detective* there’s a whole new group of people who are interested in it. It’s given me a great deal of liberty – I don’t feel confined by what they might be looking for on the radio.”

Had she learned anything from Vaughn and Farrell on set?

“All that fake beer they had to drink, all those cigarettes...” she says. “It’s hard work being an actor.”

JOHNROBINSON

Lera Lynn plays Glasgow ABC (January 15), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (19) and London Slaughtered Lamb (20 and 21)

WE'RE YOUR FANS

“Lera has a voice you want to crawl inside. It’s so evocative, mysterious and carries real authority”

ROSANNE CASH



THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

MARGO PRICE

Midwest Farmer’s Daughter THIRD MAN
A vivid and rollicking new voice out of Nashville, who invokes Dolly Parton, honky-tonks and vintage country-funk.

CHRIS FORSYTH & THE SOLAR MOTEL BAND

The Rarity Of Experience NO QUARTER
Two discs of incantatory jams navigating the interzone between Television, folk and math-rock. A take on Richard Thompson’s “Calvary Cross” is a brave highlight.

CAVERN OF ANTI-MATTER

Void Beats/Invocation TREP DUOPHONIC
Tim Gane revisits the percolating grooves of his Stereolab heyday, with help from friends including Sonic Boom and Deerhunter’s Bradford Cox.

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Painting With DOMINO
Miss last month’s world premiere of AC’s 10th album over the tannoy at Baltimore Airport? Fear not: a full release of their most accessible set since *Merriweather Post Pavilion* comes in February.



Cavern Of Anti-Matter

RANGDA **The Heretic’s Bargain** DRAG CITY
Third effort from the avant-rock power trio, ever more reminiscent of guitarist Rick Bishop’s old band, Sun City Girls.

ROKIA TRAORÉ Né So

NONESUCH
The Malian diva recruits John Paul Jones, John Parish, Devendra Banhart and Toni Morrison for an eclectic new sound.

PRINS THOMAS

Principe Del Norte SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND
The Norwegian king of cosmic disco realigns his music closer to ’70s kosmische with an epic, quasi-ambient journey.

NXWORRIES EP

STONES THROW
Pronounced “No Worries”, allegedly, and featuring Anderson .Paak, a Californian rapper strongly recommended to anyone whose love of hip-hop has been revitalised by Kendrick Lamar.

THE GOON SAX

Up To Anything CHAPTER MUSIC
Charmingly lopsided indie-pop from a Brisbane teenage trio, featuring Robert Forster’s son, Louis.

JOSEPHINE FOSTER

No More Lamps In The Morning FIRE
The quixotic, Karen Daltonish folk singer revisits some of her old songs, and sets Kipling and Joyce to music.

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

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THE SOUND OF 2016

Your guide to this month's free CD

1 FAT WHITE FAMILY

Whitest Boy On The Beach

What better way to start a new year than by accepting Fat White Family's invitation "sent by misery, to dance to the beat of human hatred"? Cue pulsing electronica, pastel vocals, ruptures of guitar and a whiff of something faintly lysergic from London's premier sleazebag sextet.

2 JOHN CALE

Close Watch

So enamoured was Cale of "(I Keep A) Close Watch" that he once wanted Sinatra to record it. Since its original *Helen Of Troy* incarnation he's gone back to the song twice: first on 1982's piano-centric *Music For A New Society* and now, in this radical avant-electro format. Its eeriness is heightened by the additional vocal presence of Dirty Projectors' Amber Coffman.



3 CROSS RECORD

Steady Waves

With a little help from producer husband Dan Duszynski, Emily Cross – aka Cross Record – creates luminous psych-folk with a minimalist edge. Her voice is a thing of understated beauty, offset here by a gliding acoustic guitar motif that bursts into distorted spasms of electric noise. Add modest strings, quicken the pace and the result is intense.

4 THE BESNARD LAKES

The Golden Lion

Great hooks. Dense guitar clouds. Post-Beach Boy harmonies that make you want to kiss the dog and chuck your cap at the sky. It can only mean one thing: the return of Canada's Besnard Lakes, led by husband-and-wife indie team Jace Lasek and Olga Goreas. "The Golden Lion" crops up on both a recent EP and their new album.

5 LUCINDA WILLIAMS

Dust

The vivid opening shot from her fine 12th LP, Williams' trademark drawl is shaded by erudite guitar ambience from Bill Frisell and Greg Leisz. You know you're in for a heavy ride when the first lyrics you hear are "There's a sadness so deep/The sun seems black." It doesn't get any less disquieting from thereon in.

6 CIAN NUGENT

Lost Your Way

Dispensing with the open-ended instrumentals, Irish guitarist Nugent has chosen to explore a singer-songwriterly side for his latest album. You can still hear the spidery rootlessness of his playing on this beguiling taster, a tune that feels like a fluid amalgam of VU and Kurt Vile. Arresting voice, too.

7 SAUL WILLIAMS

The Bear/Coltan As Cotton

An incendiary hit of polemic from New York's activist rapper-poet, lifted from his latest concept piece about a fictional computer hacker in Burundi. The coltan in the title refers to the precious stone found in Central Africa that feeds laptops and mobiles, thus serving as a grand metaphor for the exploitation of Third World resources.

8 ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER

He Didn't Mention His Mother

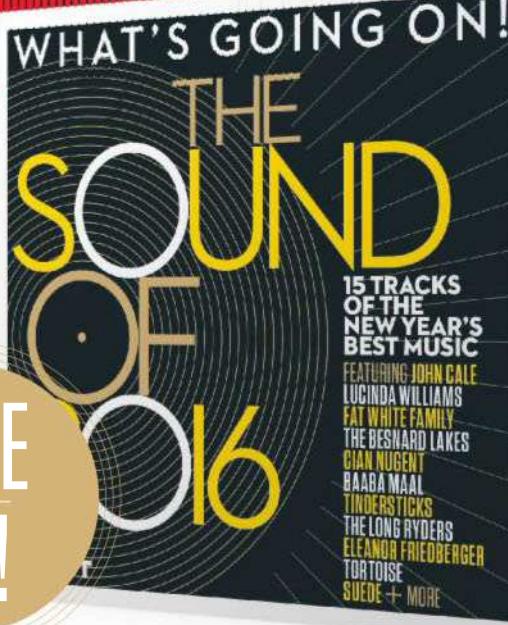
This artful confection is a fine indicator of Friedberger's most arresting LP to date, be it solo or as part of The Fiery Furnaces. Odes to romantic disappointment rarely sound this sweet, her poignant lyricism – "Today I am frozen, but tomorrow I'll write about you" – warmed by melodic guitar and a purring Wurlitzer piano. *New View* is reviewed in depth on page 67.

9 BAABA MAAL

Fulani Rock

It's been a long time since we heard Baaba Maal sound as exhilarating as this. A curtain-raiser to his first album in seven years, overseen by Swedish producer Johan Hugo (The Very Best), the Senegalese legend offers a writhing spread of poly-

FREE
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rhythmic grooves, altered loops, galloping djembe drums, electric guitar and multi-tracked vocals.

10 TINDERSTICKS [FEAT LHASA DE SELA]

Hey Lucinda

A lovely, processional duet that forms the backbone of Tindersticks' much-anticipated new opus, "Hey Lucinda" was among the last recordings of Mexican-American singer Lhasa de Sela before she succumbed to cancer in 2010. Her sparring dialogue with Stuart



Staples is softly imprinted with touches of harmonium, strings, glockenspiel, woodwinds and some delicately intoned brass.

11 LERA LYNN

Out To Sea

Lera Lynn provided the key musical settings for the second instalment of HBO's *True Detective*. With a new album imminent and a UK tour this month, this shivery highlight from 2014's *The Avenues* overlays the Texan's eloquent voice onto discreet pedal steel and a peachy country twang.

12 YORKSTON THORNE KHAN

Sufi Song

Scots folk singer James Yorkston, Lamb's double bassist Jon Thorne and New Delhi's award-winning classical singer/sarangi player Suhail Yusuf Khan may not constitute a supergroup in the traditional rock sense, but this cultural mash-up feels thoroughly

inspired. Intoxicating and impressionistic, "Sufi Song" takes Yorkston's folk-blues way out East, Thorne gives it a pulse and Khan's soaring vocals do the rest.

13 THE LONG RYDERS

Harriet Tubman's Gonna Carry Me Home

A late-period gem from Sid Griffin's Americana frontiersmen, originally found on 1987 swansong *Two Fisted Tales*. Cue some minor-key folk-psych, with a tasteful guitar break and Stephen McCarthy's mandolin, as The Long Ryders make reference to the extraordinary 19th century abolitionist, suffragette and activist who became an enduring symbol of black struggle in the US.

14 TORTOISE

Gesceap

Seven years' absence clearly haven't dimmed Tortoise's sense of guile or invention. This reassuringly busy soundweb criss-crosses twinkly synthetic riffs with looped guitars and stuttery beats, gradually quickening towards an urgent finale. "To a certain extent," says John McEntire, "it's more of a reflection of how we sound live."



15 SUEDE

Outsiders

Britpop's grand romantics are back, this wind-ruffled beauty carrying the full sweep of Brett Anderson's aching vocal and its suitably blustery setting. "By the roadside shrine there's a place/Selling bouquets of cellophane": if that isn't a Suede lyric, then, quite frankly, we don't know what is. Enjoy.

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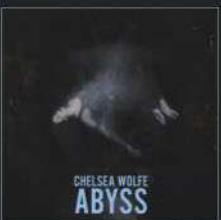
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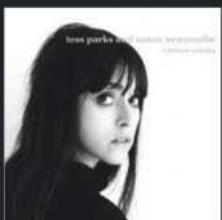
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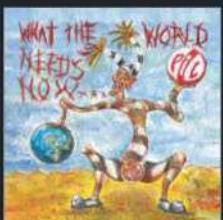
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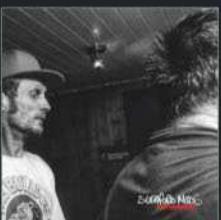
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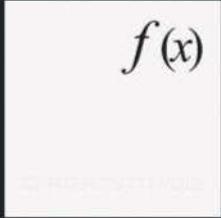
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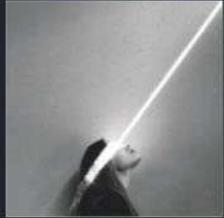
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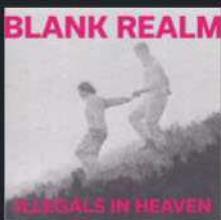
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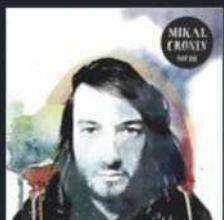
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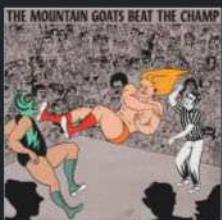
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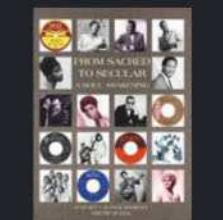
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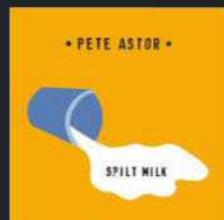


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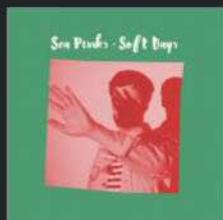
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From its drone laden opening minute, Soft Days, confounds the listener and consolidates the Belfast three piece as one of the most distinctive guitar bands around right now.

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John Cale

Interview: Tom Pinnock
Portrait: David Reich

As the Welsh wizard continues to restlessly reinvent himself, he pauses for thought on the subject of instrument abuse, Lou Reed and the time he made Nico cry

I'M SORRY, I just saw a bobcat walking past my window," says John Cale, halting mid-speech. "I'm really glad I'm not outside. Are they ferocious? Well, you certainly don't want to corner them..." The same could perhaps be said of Cale – for the last half-century, one of Wales' greatest musicians has doggedly refused to be tied down or labelled, whether he's producing The Stooges, Patti Smith or the Happy Mondays, collaborating with Brian Eno and Nico or making his own wildly eclectic, and sometimes difficult, music.

Always keen to move forward, today Cale is most interested in discussing his new release, *M:FANS*, a futuristic reworking of his dark, claustrophobic 1982 album, *Music For A New Society* [reviewed on p70]. However, he's happy to field queries on, among other topics, working with David Bowie, buying boxes of tangerines, the end of The Velvet Underground, viola torture and the brand new music he's recording now.

"I'm looking forward to getting my other new songs out," he tells us on the line from California. "I have a studio at home, so all I do is go in the studio every day and write songs. Then there are these new scales that I've been using live, they do this weird thing to the songs. It's like they make the arrangements really fizzy, like there's a built-in Doppler effect..."

STAR QUESTION



Is it true that most of *Music For A New Society* was written on the spot, just before recording?

Euros Childs
Uh, yeah, barely. It was meant to be a solo album, so I was meant to have a pile of instruments around me and have the songs come from whatever instrument I was picking up at the time. So you sit down at the piano and you see what happens. But then, it sort of spread out and, of course, there's Allen Lanier [on "Changes Made"]... Most of the others were really meant to be stream of consciousness, improvised songs. You start with an idea and you develop it, but it had to be in real time, you had to develop it there

and then, I was in the studio for 10 days – I put myself under that pressure. I wasn't in a very good place at the time and it was all about changes, about changing me, changing the people around me. Some of them I wished would go away, and I wanted to go away; I didn't want to be in that circumstance, so it all comes out in the mix. *M:FANS* is really what I wanted the original to be.

Is there any chance of *Caribbean Sunset* being reissued?

Adam Godwin, via email

That's really not on my mind at the moment. I'm working with Domino to try and put several other reissue ideas on the table, but we're not there yet. There's a reason I wanted to revisit *Music For A New Society*,



Many strings to his bow: Cale onstage in New York, January 1966

because it contained a lot of tension and a lot of – what do you call it? – mental grinding.

Out of all the instruments you play, do you have a favourite?

Anthony Rowland, Staffordshire

No, I don't. I play a lot of them, and I usually torture them once I play them. It's really about altering the sound of whatever I'm playing at the time, and so one instrument becomes several others in the course of the day. It's more about sounds, and how you get different ones from different instruments. You don't just put the guitar in the amp and play it; you put it through several other things first and play it, and then when it comes out the other end you do some more to it. Is the viola suited to experimental

music? No, it's just the use of the drones; it gives you a sense of space. But if you want to play three-string drones on the

viola, you gotta modify the bridge, but you can't do very much with it after that. But it's a great noise.

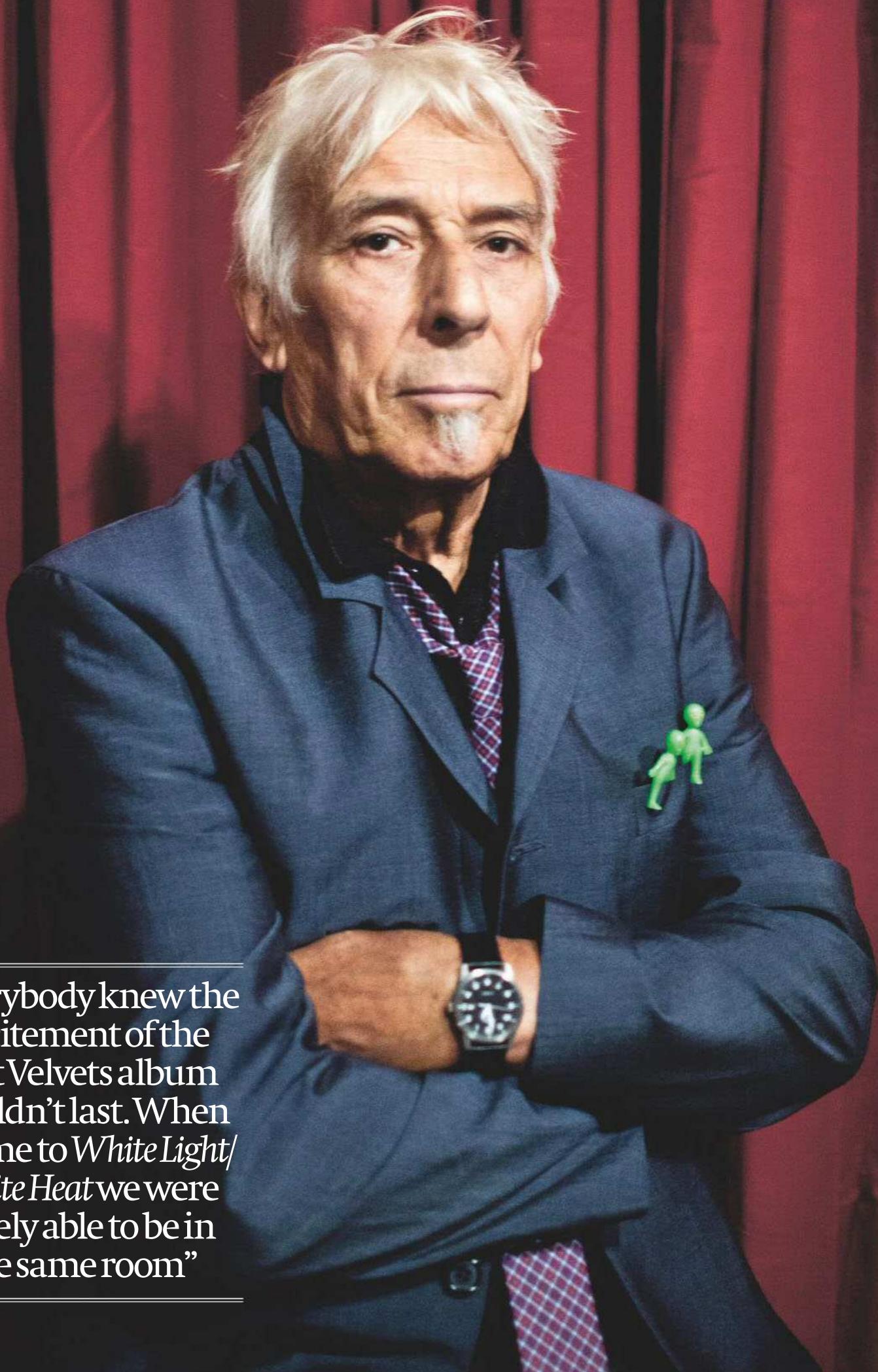
You've played the Bataclan in Paris a few times. Were you personally touched by the recent attacks? *Jerry Fontes, New Jersey*

Yes, it's just horrific... I've been aware of a lot of people that dislike music as a cultural force – not just a mild dislike, either – but people who have no place for it in their lives, and I feel sorry for them.

Would you be interested in working with David Bowie? I understand you had a jamming session in New York in the '80s...

Alex Heslop, via email

Bowie picked me up to go to the Mudd Club and I was in the studio, and we started working, throwing things around. But anyway, the answer's yes. I've worked a lot with Brian Eno, and Eno and I, it's a dynamic that works. We're very different, but he's breaking equipment just like I do.



“Everybody knew the excitement of the first Velvets album wouldn’t last. When it came to *White Light/White Heat* we were barely able to be in the same room”

STAR QUESTION



Do you still like watching Channel 4 News? And are you still eating your oranges?

Shaun Ryder,
Happy Mondays

Yes! *Channel 4 News* at 7pm with Jon Snow was always a favourite. I mean, there's a lot of other things nowadays, it's not exclusively Channel 4. I'm surprised he remembered that [laughs]. As for the oranges, I live in California so the urgency is not so great any more. And they were tangerines, actually. I used to go out in Liverpool when I was recording the Mondays [Cale produced their 1987 debut, *Squirrel And G-Man Twenty Four Hour Party People Plastic Face Can't Smile (White Out)*] and buy them like everybody else. I bought a box of them. At that time, I'd stopped doing all the bad things I was doing and I was really focused on making my body a lot healthier, playing squash and all that. There were a few moments during the recording where the Mondays were shaky, but it was fun – it was the characters that made up the band that really made it fun.



What do you remember of recording Nico's *The Marble Index*?

Audrey West,
via email

It was all done in five days. When [Elektra's] Jac Holzman heard it and said, "I really

like your record," I couldn't believe it. To have a record company president say that he liked *The Marble Index*... But Jac was that kind of guy. We were doing some interesting stuff – on "Evening Of Light", I was playing an eight-string bass, a Hagstrom. I thought of it as a tuba part, and played it as one. It was mostly instinct. Nico was confused, and put out by the fact she didn't quite understand what was going on when we were recording. Which is understandable. But at the end, she was crying, and everybody went, "Oh no, what's wrong now?" And she said, "It's so beautiful."

Did you have any idea that when the Velvets dressed in black and wore shades you'd be setting a sartorial benchmark for bands right up to today?

Nat Pryce, Devon

No, it's kind of Welsh methodist

empirical. There was a little bit of a Beat influence too, yeah. Young bands? Yeah, I know that look got taken over by the art world; the art world did that with a vengeance.

June 1, 1974, by you, Eno, Nico and Kevin Ayers, is a great live album – what do you remember of the day itself? *James, Brighton*
I was kind of a frontman for the band, something I hadn't done very much of. I did "Heartbreak Hotel" for the first time with that heavy metal arrangement, and I was really very happy with what happened. The tour was a way to kill many birds with one stone. All the lesser-selling artists put together in one place.

How do you feel today about The Velvet Underground reunion of '93? *Harrie, The Netherlands*

We wasted a lot of great opportunities. The potential was there to do a lot of great things, but Lou just wanted to regurgitate his catalogue. We could have done a lot of different things, and everybody was there, waiting for it to happen... But that's it. I mean, everybody got to understand what Moe and Sterling were about, so that's a positive thing.

Who are you listening to at the moment? *James Innes, via email*

Eminem and Dre, and Earl Sweatshirt. And some guys from Chicago called Donnie Trumpet & The Social Experiment. Kendrick Lamar too. He's very good, very solid. I still listen to Snoop Dogg... there's so much good humour in Snoop, you've got to love him. I think a lot of experimental music is going on in rock'n'roll today, and in hip-hop.

"Do I work bands hard? Not really. I let them work me hard. They're in charge"

STAR QUESTION

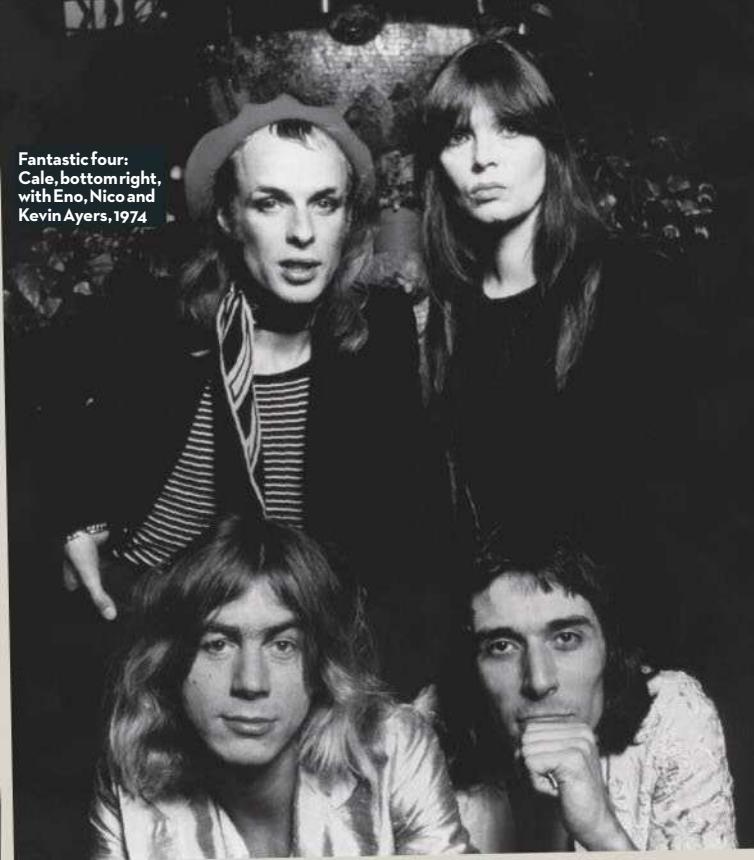


Hullo, dearest John. The Academy was in peril – is it still? And what else do you consider to be 'perilous' in this crazy world of ours?

"Legs" Larry Smith

No, we saved it, Legs, we saved it!

Fantastic four: Cale, bottom right, with Eno, Nico and Kevin Ayers, 1974



We were at the Manor [recording *The Academy In Peril*, released in 1972] and Legs was living nearby with his parents. So he came by and I asked him to do a vocal over one of the tracks that I had, and he was perfect. I said to him, "Now, you're the director of a TV channel, this is what you would say to the floor," and off he went. It just seemed to fit his ability to improvise tongue-in-cheek narratives, and I wanted to get some of it. It was one part of the Bonzo Dog Band that I'd missed.

What do you remember of producing The Stooges' first album? *Drew Cole, via email*

It was a very small studio, very tight in there, and I was really concerned about getting separation on anything, but really that's not what the band was about. The live show was very appealing, you know. Iggy would threaten the audience one minute, then he'd be affectionate to them the next. I was worrying about how to bring the energy of the live performance into the studio. Because, in the studio, it's really how much do you put out in the studio, and they put out. "We Will Fall" was constructed in the studio, but it worked. They were so good – Iggy was great at improvising, so I wasn't worried about it. Do I work bands hard? Not really. I let them work me hard. They're in charge most of the time.

Is it true that before you left the Velvets you wanted to record the third album with all the amps underwater?

John Allan, London

No, I don't remember that. I think that story came from when you try and play cymbals and dip them in water – that probably came up at some point from Moe [Tucker]. We spent a year playing the first album – every week we'd get together on the weekend and just play and play and play until we got the new arrangements. But when it came to *White Light/White Heat* we were barely able to be in the same room for more than five minutes. *White Light* was recorded quickly – it had to be. Lou was getting more satisfaction from writing pretty songs and he wanted to go in that direction, and he had an ally in Steve Sesnick, who was the manager, who went to Moe and Sterling and said, "Look, this is Lou's band. You are the backing band. That's the way it's going to be." So it was only a matter of time before word got round to me. Everybody knew the excitement of the first album wouldn't last. Lou fired Andy Warhol, and didn't tell anybody until about a week later! So, surprise, surprise, he brought in Sesnick, who wanted us to do shows in front of movies – *The Visit* with Anthony Quinn – and sell shirts. He knew somebody who was making frilly shirts, so he thought we could go and promote the shirts for him. No, none of us wore the shirts. ☺

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Interview: Peter Watts
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LOVE & POISON

A quarter of a century into their career, SUEDE remain a band high on the romance of London, and the erotic, sometimes disturbing opportunities that it presents. Now, though, Brett Anderson and his cohorts are no longer riding “the razor’s edge of youth”, prey instead to *Night Thoughts* and mid-life “disaster thinking”. *Uncut* joins the perennial Outsiders for a metaphysical trawl through the fleshpots and tearooms of the capital and their career: “Hubris, drugs, fights... it’s almost Shakespearean!”

BRETT ANDERSON sips his tea – black, bag in – and reflects on his band’s deep connection with London. “This whole area, Kensington, played a real role in early Suede,” he notes. “Justine [Frischmann] and I lived in a flat on Hornton Street. We always went to a place called The Muffin Man, a little English tea room. We spent a lot of time there, talking about what we thought Suede should be, about culture and music. I thought we could go there for a cup of tea,” he says, before admitting he isn’t keen on braving the November drizzle again.

Today, Anderson cuts a composed figure, even if he is still croaky following two nights to showcase Suede’s new album, *Night Thoughts*, at the Roundhouse, in the band’s old stamping ground of Camden. This morning, Anderson has cycled from his home in Notting Hill to meet *Uncut*. It transpires he cycles all over London, particularly enjoying the canal towpaths that cut through the reclaimed industrial heritage of north-west London. The city, he says, was crucial to Suede. On an early B-side, “He’s Dead”, Anderson wrote about “*all the love and poison of London*”; it is a theme he has returned to frequently ever since. As he settles into conversation, he admits to a continued fondness for the “brutality” of the capital, but now there are other concerns – the anxieties of parenthood, the stark choices of middle-aged life. “I don’t feel sad that I’m not young,” he explains. “All of the jagged edges that I had, the inability to place myself and be comfortable anywhere, I don’t have that any more and I’m pleased about that.”

There is, though, one constant throughout Suede’s history. “Our songs feel really sexual,” he explains. “So lascivious and twisted. I can’t stand sexless music, jolly music. Why do that? It has to have some dark, emotive or sexual edge. A lot of it is in the tribal rhythms. Bernard [Butler] once told me that when he was writing he always thought about the beat, the rhythm. He’d work with [drummer] Simon [Gilbert] to get the basic grind. When I respond to that, it feels sexual. Sex and drugs – what a fucking cliché, but they are powerful things that evoke feelings and that’s what you are trying to do as a writer and performer.”

Suede’s adolescent frenzy sustained them through their early years. Their career subsequently took in remarkable albums, regretful departures and eventual collapse before they reunited in 2010.

“I remember seeing this book about Suede,” muses bassist Mat Osman. “I always thought that what we’d done was so different, but then I looked at the shape of the story and it was the same as every band ever: hubris, drugs, fights and then coming back together a bit wiser. It’s been done a million times, it’s almost Shakespearean, but every generation has to go through it.”

As Anderson insists, Suede continue to reflect “those moments of friction that occur in any existence. *Night Thoughts* is about disaster-thinking, imagining the worst. Those terrible moments at 4am when you think your life will fall apart. The fear of not being there for my children. I still don’t think there’s anybody else occupying that territory. I don’t think anybody sounds like us or wants to.”





**Suede in London,
1994: (l-r) Simon
Gilbert, Mat Osman,
Brett Anderson and
Bernard Butler**



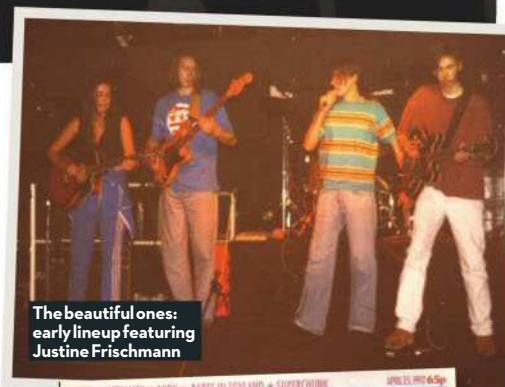
Suede in 2015: (l-r) Richard Oakes, Brett Anderson, Simon Gilbert, Mat Osman, Neil Codling

“sound like us. We created our own little landscape and that was always what I wanted to do.”

THERE'S A SONG on *Night Thoughts* called “Outsiders”. It's a title that could have been applied to half a dozen Suede songs, a reflection of where band and audience place themselves – “the biggest underground band in Britain”, as former manager Saul Galpern puts it. Keyboard player Neil Codling, who joined in 1995, says, “We've always drawn people who share that outsider culture. ‘Outsiders’ is a simple statement of what we are, along the lines of ‘Trash’ and ‘Beautiful Ones’, a rallying cry for the excluded.”

“We have healthy disrespect for any scene we've been lassoed into against our will,” says Anderson. “The obvious one is Britpop. We never felt we had anything to do with that beery cartoon it became. We kick-started it and then walked away and made the anti-Britpop record in *Dog Man Star*. We saw what it was becoming and decided it wasn't for us. Some people like running with big packs, but I'd rather be in my own unit.”

Osman and Anderson arrived in London as students in 1989 from the satellite town of Hayes Heath, suburban outsiders in the big city. Music was always the plan – Osman saw “being in a band as the highest calling you can have. But we were watching bands and fuming.” They formed a trio with Anderson's girlfriend, Justine Frischmann, before an *NME* advert for a guitarist turned up Bernard Butler, and the quartet – wearing old suits from Oxfam – played their first show with a drum machine at the Sausage Machine Club in Hampstead. “It was



The beautiful ones: early lineup featuring Justine Frischmann



Signing to Nude – Saul Galpern, back row, second from left

absolutely fucking terrifying,” says Osman. The band were augmented by Simon Gilbert on drums. But Suede didn't gain traction until Frischmann left in 1991, when the dynamic shifted. “Justine disliked the tragic, tortured element to Suede,” says Anderson. “Things like ‘Pantomime Horse’. She didn't really like the pretentious side. I can see her point, but that's an important part of it, the drama. If she hadn't left, we wouldn't have been free to let go. It was a lucky accident. Until then, we'd been ignored. That allowed us to get on with things and gave us this ‘fuck you’ attitude to develop something special. We had the strength of being outsiders, not wanting to be part of what was going on. We wanted to create our own thing. Suddenly, with me and Bernard the penny dropped and we could write.”

“Pantomime Horse” was when Osman realised something was happening, a song that “sounded like something that always existed”. By this point, Anderson and Butler were writing feverishly.

“Bernard presented me with music and if it inspired something in me, which it did 99 per cent of the time, I wrote lyrics,” Anderson says of this “splurge of creativity. You think it's going to be like that forever, but looking back it's so precious.”

Osman says that “Pantomime Horse” was “like a shield – we were untouchable behind it”. As Suede grew in confidence, crowds grew. Fans would throw themselves at Anderson, and Anderson hurl himself into the audience. Codling, Gilbert's cousin, says, “It was quite disconcerting. Brett would just disappear. He'd jump into the front row, dance around, get his shirt pulled off. It was very unusual at the time, a reinjection of the art of a frontman.”

Most A&R men had seen Suede perform with Frischmann and moved on, allowing Saul Galpern of fledgling label Nude to sign the band in January 1992. “I was gobsmacked. I thought this was the future,” he recalls. “They had real drama, real seduction, violent, dangerous-sounding.” Within weeks, *Melody Maker* had them on the cover as “the best new band in Britain”.

“It didn't feel like anybody was doing what we were doing,” says Anderson. “Whether anybody else wanted to sound like Suede is debatable, but it ignited Britpop and was powerful enough to sow a seed in pop culture that people did emulate. When we sang ‘The Drowners’, singing about very twisted British existences, the rest of the indie-rock world was rhyming “sky” with “high” and sounding like Chapterhouse. It was different and people paid attention, and then it became something that we didn't want to be part of.”

SUEDE'S SONGS CAPTURED the passion and immediacy of youth. Inspiration came partly from London itself. Osman and Anderson shared a flat on Highlever Road in White City “on the border with Notting Hill – bohemian one way, estates the other”, Osman explains. “London was a place where you can be what you want,” explains Codling. “You can disappear, you can embrace any subculture, you can reinvent yourself and glamour is a possibility inherent in that.”

“I romanticised what London was,” says Anderson. “I loved the brutality of it, the loneliness and the hardness. I really responded to that. But this is what we were living. I wasn't a class tourist. I was on the dole. I was part of this world I was writing about. I've always tried to find the romance in any situation I've been in. I've always loved art that deals with the prosaic. The Smiths aesthetic, I found that very powerful: ‘The riches of the poor’. There's beauty in the brutality.”



Live at the SW1 Club, London, October 19, 1992

Osman takes the point further, drawing a parallel between Suede's past and present. "We were poor and it never felt glamorous, but music is an act of transformation," he says. "That's where the dressing up came from, clothing yourself in what had once been fairly expensive suits, seeing yourself as an actor, playing at your life. But more than anything it's the music that does that. We were talking about why so many songs on *Night Thoughts* are depressing and it's because music can transform a sad and difficult situation and turn it into something romantic, something you learn from, something beautiful – and you don't need that in beautiful, romantic situations. If we didn't have the band, we couldn't argue that those nights we spent listening to Kate Bush and smoking weed were our musical education; they would just be a bunch of guys sitting around getting stoned listening to Kate Bush. A band is an act of transformation."

Ed Buller, who produced debut single "The Drowners" and continues to work for Suede today, was also drawn by that sense of glamour. He was transfixed as soon as he heard the original demo for the song. "It's difficult to express how exciting it was," he admits. "The Drowners' took me back to the music I loved as a kid, glam pop with a twist, a celebratory reflection of ordinary people being extraordinary. Even the name – suede was a textile invented to look glamorous, like cheap velvet. There's something about glamour when it is imposed on something that isn't glamorous that's very exciting, whether that's a drag queen or a tower block. It's a thread that you find through art, from Mozart to Wilde."

It was epitomised by Suede's third single, "Animal Nitrate", a fizzing, transcendent celebration of poppers and sex. It went to No 7 in February 1993 and stayed there after Suede livened up the BRIT Awards with a performance of arse-slapping vigour that nearly didn't happen. "Brett didn't want to do it," laughs Galpern. "It might have been nerves. I had to go round his house and throw him in the car." Anderson admits the pressure to perform often resulted in phantom illnesses. "It must have been a pain in the arse for everybody," he sighs. "I felt a great weight of expectation and I wanted it to be amazing."



"I TRY TO FIND THE ROMANCE IN ANY SITUATION I'VE BEEN IN"
BRETT ANDERSON

As Suede carried all before them – *Suede*, in March 1993, was the fastest-selling debut album in British history – others were taking notice. Producer Stephen Street had worked with Blur since 1990 but recognised things had changed. "They really upped the ante," he says. "It was good competition. One of the things that happened between *Leisure* and *Modern Life Is Rubbish* is that Suede exploded on the scene, and that made Damon reappraise what he was doing. You could argue that if it wasn't for Suede, Blur might not have achieved the status they reached. Blur saw what Suede had done and realised they could do it, too. Or maybe they realised they needed to get their act together." This competitiveness was stoked by personal connections – Buller had been Street's assistant at Island; Frischmann was now dating Albarn. But even as Britpop kicked off, Suede were heading in a very different direction.

NIGHTHAUNTS IS an album laden with atmosphere. At their Roundhouse shows, the band performed from behind a screen onto which they projected a film by former *NME* photographer Roger Sargent: a bleak and beautiful piece reflecting the album's ambience of loss, fear, death and disintegration. These are themes that also infected the band's second album, *Dog Man Star*. "Atmosphere is like a physical space," explains producer Buller, who likens *Night Thoughts* to *Wish You Were Here* and *The Snow Goose* by Camel. "It's about drawing on certain chord progressions, patterns and harmonies that are very important for Suede's sonic arsenal, things that have been there since day one. What I love about Suede is that it's like a place I visit and there are different parts of that place. This album allowed us to address a part we hadn't [addressed] since *Dog Man Star*."

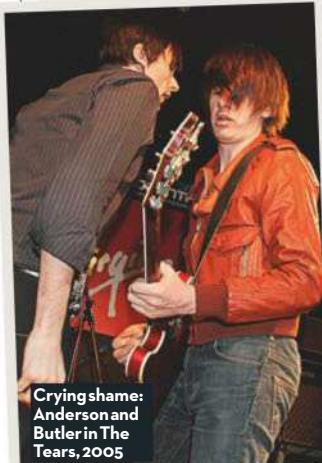
A deliberate step away from Britpop, 1994's *Dog Man Star* was what Osman calls "this brooding, Byronic, dank masterpiece". That was partly due to the environment surrounding its creation. "We'd made the debut, which is cheekier and more youthful," says Anderson. "Having done that, I didn't want to go back to that apples and pears sort of territory. *Dog Man Star* is about disintegration, not being

WHAT IF...?

"IT KEEPS ME UP AT NIGHT"

Anderson on what might have been...

WHEN Bernard Butler left Suede, it brought a premature end to the most exciting British songwriting duo since Morrissey and Marr. Even now, Anderson wonders what might have been. "It plagues me, it keeps me up at night. We can never go back to that moment where he left and carry on, because everything is different. And that's so sad. We sort of tried that with The Tears, but it's



Crying shame: Anderson and Butler in The Tears, 2005

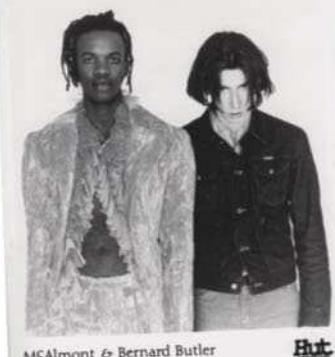
impossible, we are different people and it can never happen.

"It tortures me that I was stupid enough to let Bernard go. No disrespect to Neil or Richard, we became a different band, and I have a lot of respect for all of them, but Suede Mk I was very special. Could we have gone further left field than *Dog Man Star*? I don't think so. When you look at what Bernard did with David McAlmont, that wasn't further out there."

able to form relationships, and it's about my disintegrating relationship with Bernard. A song like 'The 2 Of Us' is about how two people can't communicate. It's also about what success does to you, how it distorts relationships and changes your life."

Butler, who politely declined to be interviewed, wasn't happy. He disliked touring, he wasn't getting on with Anderson, his father was desperately unwell and he wanted to take a more active role in production – "to realise the sounds he could hear in his head", Buller says. Before the album was finished, Butler quit. "It was a very difficult time," Buller says. "Brett and Bernard were having difficulties and there was a lot of pressure. Bernard was going through what can only be described as a mental breakdown. I can go on record saying I dealt with it very badly. I didn't have the intellectual and emotional ammunition. It was awful."

Suede's next act was, in retrospect, extraordinary. To replace Butler, widely seen as the finest guitarist of his generation, they recruited 17-year-old Richard Oakes, whose first gig had been seeing Suede in Poole the previous year. Galpern was "petrified". Were the band worried? "I should have been!" laughs Anderson. "Looking back, it was a fucking crazy thing to do."

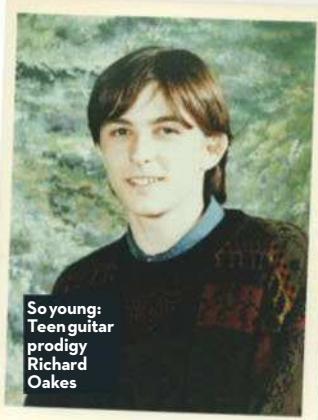


McAlmont & Bernard Butler

To pick up this kid and throw him into this crucible... I'm amazed it turned out OK. But we had such an arrogant sense of self-belief, we literally thought we could do anything. Hence *Dog Man Star*. The arrogance of youth is beautiful. In our 20s, we never had fear; we just bulldozed through these things. We're now more aware of the repercussions. Especially making an album like *Night Thoughts* where there is no safety net."

Anderson has always written about youth, looking at it from either end of the telescope, and *Night Thoughts* has several songs devoted to the topic. "I used to eulogise that sense of youth as powerful, vital energy," he says. "That's what 'So Young' is. Let's ride the razor's edge of youth. Whereas with this album it's much more looking at youth in a regretful way, more reflective."

Suede came off stage at the Roundhouse to Frank Sinatra's "Last Night When We Were Young", a song appropriate in both theme and tone. "What you had there was this idea that music could grow up," says Osman. It's the least pop thing you could ever say and *Night Thoughts* is full of that. These orthodoxies come out of nowhere and are almost always nonsense. The minute there's a good way to do something, every fucker chases it and we go in the other direction – that's when we are most comfortable."



So young: Teen guitar prodigy Richard Oakes



Suede in leather: Head Music cover, 1999

BUYER'S GUIDE

SUEDE
NUDE, 1993
Thrilling, luminescent, tumescent debut packed with swooping singles and high-rise melodrama.

DOG MAN STAR
NUDE, 1994
Disintegration, misery and gloom, inspired by Hollywood and real life. Suede's gothic classic.

COMING UP
NUDE, 1996
A party album that saw Suede accidentally re-engage with guitar pop.

SCI-FI LULLABIES
NUDE, 1997
Fine selection of B-sides from a band that wrote some of the best around. Combine with *Singles* (COLUMBIA, 2003), which rounded-up hits and occasional misses.

HEAD MUSIC
EPIC, 1999
Unfairly maligned, electronica-tinged and drug-plagued, with several superb songs.

A NEW MORNING
EPIC, 2002
Disengaged swansong, despite strong moments such as "Positivity".

BLOOD-SPORTS
SUÈDE, 2013
A taut return to form - diligent, intense and sometimes excellent.

NIGHT THOUGHTS
SUÈDE, 2016
Dense, immersive melodrama about nocturnal terrors.

without him? We knew he could play Bernard's parts, but nobody knew what he was capable of and all of a sudden he wrote 'Together'. If he hadn't, we'd have been screwed."

The success of *Coming Up*, though, was levelled by the band's drug intake. Drugs had always been part of the Suede universe, with speed, weed and ecstasy fuelling youthful adventures and finding their way into the songs. "We were incredibly lucky to have ecstasy as our gateway," says Osman. "It's such a non-damaging drug. We were going to raves and listening to 808 State and Italo house, and they influenced us in strange ways. Brett and Bernard took something from the swell and rush of dance music. Bernard also loved soul music, proper four-to-the-floor stompers, and a lot of those early songs were trying to play that proper soul beat with a punk drummer."

There was always a sense, though, that Suede were dabbling with something harder. On "So Young", Anderson had sung about "chasing the dragon"; within years, he was on crack cocaine. Was there a sense that having sung about hard drugs, he had to try them? Anderson weighs his response. "I was always the sort of person that was romantically fascinated by drugs," he says. "It's very hard to talk about them, it takes up so much space. But yes, I think so."

Anderson says that Suede wrote about drugs because drugs were part of life for so many young Londoners. "I sang about them because I wanted to document them and because there seemed to be something to sing about," says Anderson. "I hope I never did it in a blithe, stupid way. I could see lives being destroyed. I was lucky I jumped out the balloon before it rose too high."

Partly because of drugs, 1999's *Head Music* suffered from "a lack of focus". As Codling sees it, drugs "came with the territory. It's strange looking back at it, it slowed things up. We were concerned for Brett because he was our friend and we were frustrated in the way it affected our work, but it didn't seem like we were living in a car crash. It felt a natural comedown from the height of the mid-'90s." The album sold well and "Electricity" was another hit, but Anderson says his lyrics were becoming repetitive. "You can revisit personal obsessions as long as you have something new to say about them," he says. "Maybe I overplayed that hand. It can veer into self-parody and I was a bit lazy. There was also pressure on Suede to reinvent ourselves. I kind of wish towards the end of the '90s I hadn't caved in to that pressure."

By 2002's *A New Morning*, Anderson was clean but the band were running on empty. Stephen Street came in as producer. "I was apprehensive because of my history with Blur," Street admits. "I went to meet Brett and was thoroughly impressed by what a nice guy he was." Street was asked to "capture that essence of a band playing", but says the album was weak. "There was a singer-songwriter vibe to it," he says. "You can imagine some of them on a solo record. I wonder if Brett was already thinking two steps ahead." Suede split up at the end of 2003.

WHEN SUEDE RETURNED to active service in 2010, they did not do so lightly. Their motivations were a sense of unfinished business and simply because they missed the thrill of live performance. "We looked at other reunions and talked about what they did wrong," says Osman. "We wanted to



Filmstar: Anderson onstage at London's Roundhouse, November 14, 2015, backed by Roger Sargent's imagery

"WE WANT TO KEEP PUSHING OURSELVES, NOT FALL INTO TRAPS" MAT OSMAN

find a way to make it work, to push ourselves and not fall into traps."

The band re-engaged with their legacy through greatest hits tours and anniversary reissues before returning to the studio to begin work on new material. In 2013, they released *Bloodsports*, their first new studio album in 13 years, which Anderson describes as a "tight, gnarly, efficient rock record". Building on their return, they decided to do something different with *Night Thoughts*, constructing an ornate, complex, almost orchestral album. "It was like when we did *Dog Man Star*," says Osman. "I remember talking to Bernard after the debut and realising that whatever we did, people would listen. That was such an incredible opportunity, because 99 per cent of all music slips out unheard. And if you can do anything, you have a duty to make it interesting."

While Anderson's lyrical inspiration came from home, this was no cosy domestic bliss. Fear and tragedy are the dominant themes. "From an outsider's perspective, parenthood seemed stressful and fulfilling but it didn't ever look like it was terrifying, and then it suddenly dawned on me that it is utterly, utterly terrifying," he says. "Musically, we wanted to let the band play a bit more, more soloing and instrumental passages and atmosphere. We're not aiming at the mainstream any more and that gives us freedom. We could never have

written something like *Night Thoughts* before. Even *Dog Man Star*, which is its closest parallel, is easier to categorise than this one."

As the album neared completion, the band decided to commission an accompanying film to provide what Osman calls "a non-Suede interpretation of the songs". Codling, who was instrumental in piecing the album together, marvels at how this project took shape before its eventual unveiling at the Roundhouse. "We wanted to reconnect people with our dramatic side after doing more poppy things on *Bloodsports* and we want to stay on our toes," he says. "That's why doing a film seemed such a good idea. Watching it actually happen was strange – these things have momentum. The Suede machine picks it up and makes it even larger than it is. That's the beauty of this band: it takes your idea and drags it along." **①**

Night Thoughts is released on January 22

NIGHT VISION

"IDEAS OF LOSS AND FAMILY..."

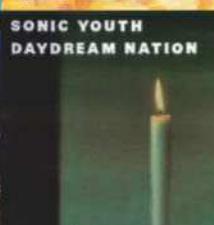
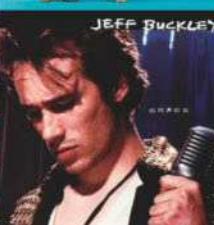
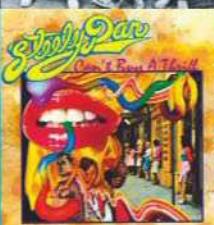
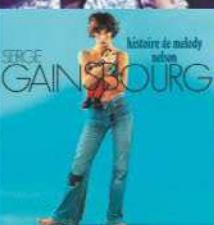
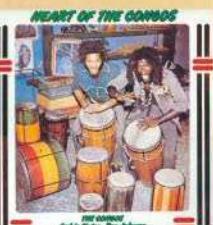
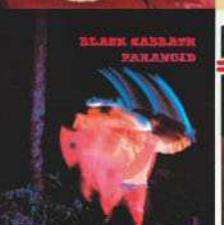
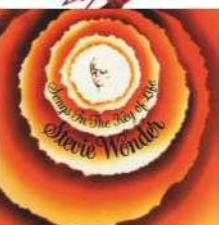
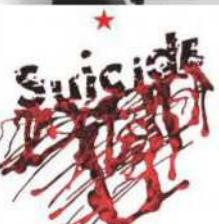
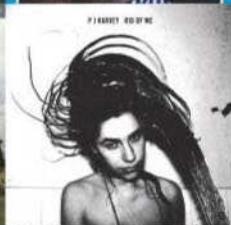
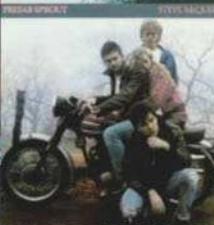
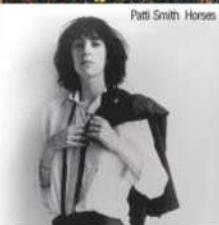
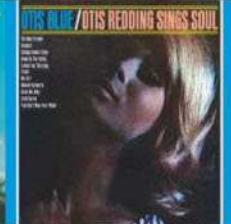
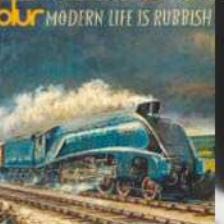
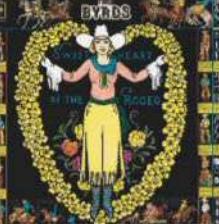
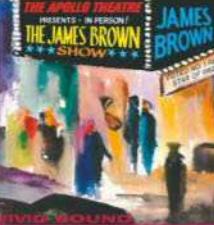
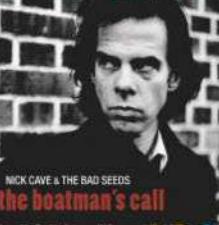
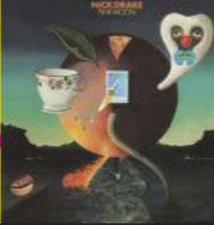
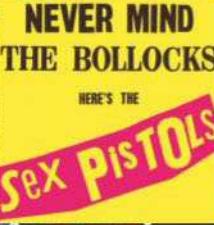
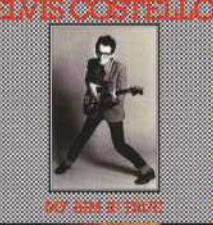
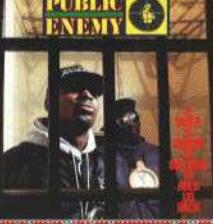
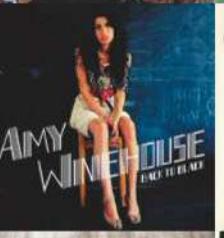
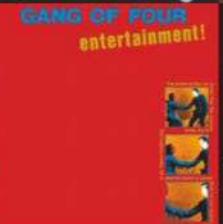
Roger Sargent
on the film of
Night Thoughts

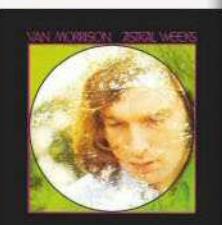
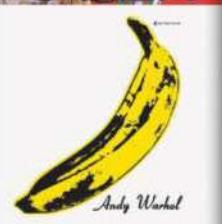
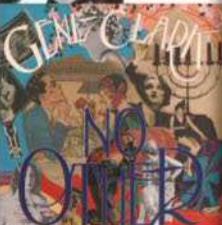
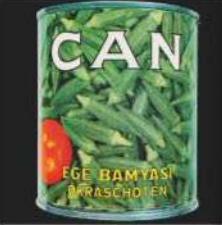
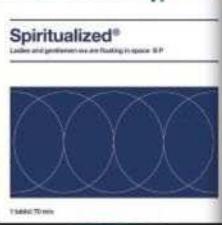
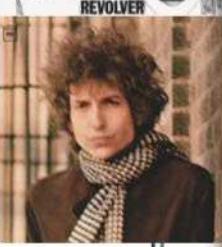
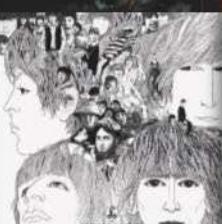
SUEDE conceived *Night Thoughts* as a complete piece, "this soundtrack to a non-existent film", says Codling. When it was finished they decided it needed an accompanying movie. Roger Sargent, the director, first photographed Suede for *NME* in 1993.

"I snuck up on stage at Glastonbury when I was on hallucinogenics," he recalls. When Sargent listened to the album, "it rang bells: having kids, your parents getting older. It's a new world of fear."

Sargent's completed film consists of a sequence of short scenes that respond to the music and tell the story of a man's mental disintegration. It's dark, beautiful and full of vomit. "It was exploring ideas of loss and family," says Sargent. "This could be anybody's life. If the wrong events happen to anybody, the world can get very dark." Suede will tour with the film across Europe in January and February.

RAIN/BOWS
RAINBOWS/
RAINBOWS/
RAINBOWS/
RAINBOWS/
RAINBOWS/
RADIO HEAD





200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME

ON JUNE 1, 1974, the new issue of *NME* published something it called “100 Great Albums Of Our Time”. Jethro Tull’s *Stand Up*, released five years earlier, just scraped into the Top 50. Further down the list, there were entries for Country Joe & The Fish, the Steve Miller Band and Johnny Winter. *Astral Weeks* languished poetically at No 63. The apotheosis of rock’s ambition remained *Sgt Pepper*. Forty-two years later, the general narrative looks familiar, but the story seems to have been told from a slightly different perspective. It is those nuanced shifts that, in part, have inspired us to put together *Uncut*’s first Greatest Albums list. For this Top 200, we enlisted 59 writers and editors, many of whom had either contributed to or been inspired by the *NME* charts of 1974, 1985 and 1993.

In the interim, support for Madness’ *Mad Not Mad* and The Orb’s *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* appears to have dwindled. In their place have come newer records – LCD Soundsystem’s *Sound Of Silver* and Joanna Newsom’s *Ys*, for instance – along with previously neglected older ones such as *Ege Bamyasi*, *Solid Air*, *Eli & The Thirteenth Confession* and *Histoire De Melody Nelson*. Our appreciation of some careers has been turned on its head. The recently released *Automatic For The People* figured at No 23 in 1993, but now seems to have been superseded by *Murmur* as the key REM album.

It’s easy to become absorbed with these details and, as you work your way through our 2016 Top 200, you’ll find a note of the positions each LP occupied in the *NME* countdowns of 1974, ’85, ’93, ’03 and ’13. Unlike the hyperbole attached to some of those previous projects, we’re not trying to claim that this year’s effort is a document of empirical truths. Hopefully, though, it will prove useful as a tool of discovery (which is why we included 200 albums instead of the traditional 100), and as a study of how critical perspectives on the history of music subtly evolve over time. Records once marginalised as somehow

inauthentic, or insufficiently rock, now take key places in the canon, such as *Rumours* and *Hounds Of Love*. Kraftwerk’s stock rises, as that of The Clash declines. Compilations, after some pointed debate, no longer qualify.

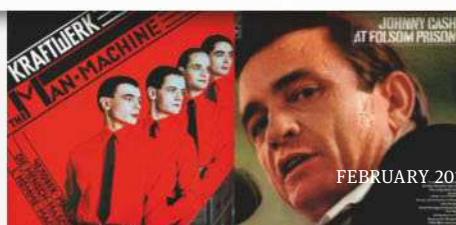
What is still clear, though, is that the seismic musical events of a half century ago remain fundamental to our understanding of all that has come afterward. Eight out of our Top 10 LPs were released between August 1965 and November 1968, and three will be celebrating their 50th anniversaries over the coming months. Perhaps our electorate may be, on average, a little older than the constituencies of recent *NME* polls (The Strokes, you’ll note, are conspicuous by their absence here).

Nevertheless, the passage of time seems to be solidifying rather than eroding the reputations of The Beatles and Dylan, the Velvets and the Stones. Within our world, perspective grants this golden age ever greater significance; the longer we are removed from that time, the harder it may be for newer records to challenge this natural order. One reading of this situation might be logically pessimistic, parsing 50-odd years of innovations and revolutions, and deciding that the underlying story is one of perpetual decline. Music, one could plausibly conclude, isn’t as good as it used to be.

Another way of looking at it, though, is that these are merely 200 records; a relatively minor chunk of many of our collections. Their pre-eminence doesn’t comprehensively devalue anything outside that elite. It just emphasises that, for the past 40-odd years, the prism through which *Uncut*’s constituency judges aesthetic value has stayed remarkably consistent. When you have such a wealth of accumulated knowledge behind you, it may take a while for a record to break into the pantheon. To find out, though, we’ll be conducting these surveys more regularly in the future.

In the meantime, this journey begins with a record from 1982, produced by a key architect of The Beatles’ sound. “History,” according to the first line of the first song, “repeats the old conceits...” JOHN MULVEY

EIGHT OF
OUR TOP 10
LPS WERE
RELEASED
BETWEEN
1965-1968



200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



200 ELVIS COSTELLO *Imperial Bedroom*

RELEASED: JULY 2, 1982
(F-BEAT/COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: GEOFF EMERICK
CHART POSITIONS: UK 6; US 30
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
31 (1985), 316 (2013)



199 DR JOHN: THE NIGHT TRIPPER

GRIS-GRIS
RELEASED:
JANUARY 22, 1968 (ATCO)
PRODUCER: HAROLD BATTISTE
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 93 (1974)



198 MERCURY REV *Deserter's Songs*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 29, 1998 (V2)
PRODUCERS: DAVE FRIDMANN AND JONATHAN DONAHUE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 27; US -
NME CHARTS: 152 (2013)



JONATHAN DONAHUE: "The album was my way of calling it a day. Whatever it was we were doing seemed so far out of time with what was going on in the world. The world wasn't exactly waiting for another Mercury Rev record. We didn't have a manager or a lawyer or a label. I remember thanking [producer] Dave Fridmann at the end of recording, and saying, 'Thank you, this is probably our last hoorah together.' What took us by surprise was that people didn't see the album coming. Maybe there weren't oboes on *See You On The Other Side*, but there were other orchestrations, and more classical instrumentation, and on *Deserter's Songs* we just fully dove in. But even when we handed it in [to the label],



no-one said anything. It was just quiet. It didn't occur to me that it would make waves like it did. All of a sudden we were being asked to do world tours. We didn't even have guitar amps."



197 TODD RUNDGREN *Something/Anything?*

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 1972 (BEARSVILLE)
PRODUCER: TODD RUNDGREN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 29
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



196 THE FALL *Hex Enduction Hour*

RELEASED: MARCH 8, 1982 (KAMERA)
PRODUCERS: GRANT SHOWBIZ, MARK E SMITH, RICHARD MAZDA
CHART POSITIONS: UK 71; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 201 (2013)



195 T.REX *The Slider*

RELEASED: JULY 21, 1972 (EMI)
PRODUCER: TONY VISCONTI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 17
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



194 JOANNA NEWSOM *Ys*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 6, 2006 (DRAG CITY)
PRODUCERS: JOANNA NEWSOM AND VANDYKE PARKS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 41; US 134
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

(TRACK/DECCA)

PRODUCER: KIT LAMBERT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 13; US 48
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



190 PREFAB SPROUT *Steve McQueen*

RELEASED: JUNE 1985 (KITCHENWARE)
PRODUCER: THOMAS DOLBY
CHART POSITIONS: UK 21; US 180
NME CHARTS: 90 ('85), 434 (2013)



189 THE SMITHS *The Smiths*

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 20, 1984 (ROUGH TRADE)
PRODUCERS: JOHN PORTER AND THE SMITHS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 150
NME CHARTS: 72 (1993), 54 (2003), 97 (2013)



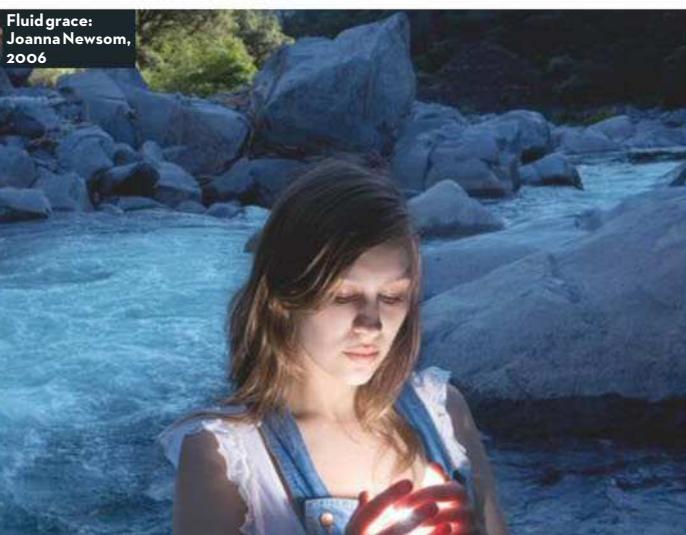
188 TALKING HEADS *Fear Of Music*

RELEASED: AUGUST 3, 1979 (SIRE)
PRODUCERS: BRIAN ENO AND TALKING HEADS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 33; US 21
NME CHARTS: 68 (1985), 171 (2013)



187 DONALD FAGEN *The Nightfly*

RELEASED: OCTOBER 29, 1982 (WARNER BROTHERS)
PRODUCER: GARY KATZ
CHART POSITIONS: UK 44; US 11
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -




DONALD FAGEN:

"I was compelled to make this. I reached a certain age where I could feel some kind of internal dissonance compelling me to examine where I came from, who I was, that kind of thing. It was essentially an identity crisis – a little late-coming identity crisis, but it was that all the same. Musicians being a kind of perpetual adolescent, I was able to postpone my appointment with the reality principle. It just happened then."


182
AMY WINEHOUSE
Back To Black

RELEASED: SEP 1, 1969 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: JOE BOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK ; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
74 (1993), 64 (2003), 258 (2013)


182
AMY WINEHOUSE
Back To Black

RELEASED: OCT 27, 2006 (ISLAND)
PRODUCERS: MARK RONSON
AND SALAAM REMI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 2
NME CHARTS: 28 (2013)


181
THE REPLACEMENTS
Tim

RELEASED: OCTOBER 1985 (SIRE)
PRODUCER: TOMMY RAMONE
CHART POSITIONS: UK ; US 183
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

186
CHARLES MINGUS
The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady

RELEASED: JULY 1963 (IMPULSE)
PRODUCER: BOB THIELE
CHART POSITIONS: UK ; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -


185
DAVID BOWIE
The Man Who Sold The World

RELEASED:
NOVEMBER 4, 1970 (MERCURY)
PRODUCER: TONY VISCONTI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 26; US 105
NME CHARTS: 57 (1974)


184
KRAFTWERK
The Man-Machine

RELEASED: MAY 19, 1978
(KLING KLANG/CAPITOL)
PRODUCERS: RALF HUTTER
AND FLORIAN SCHNEIDER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 9; US 130
NME CHARTS: 43 (1985), 57 (2013)


183
NICK DRAKE
Five Leaves Left

THE GOLDEN YEARS

Which calendar year produced the most albums from our list?

RELEASED: SEP 1, 1969 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: JOE BOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK ; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
74 (1993), 64 (2003), 258 (2013)

minutes or so a side, not 24, 'cos it won't hold it, you get a tinny sound. I'd been asking Michael to cut down the intro to 'Billie Jean' 'cos it's 11 minutes and he's saying, 'But it makes me want to dance,' and who are we to argue, us fat-belly guys? We had to cut it down, take out a verse. Nobody knew it would become the biggest LP ever, because that's what God sends."


179
THE WHO
Tommy

RELEASED: MAY 23, 1969 (TRACK)
PRODUCER: KIT LAMBERT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 4
NME CHARTS: 16 (1974)


178
BLACK SABBATH
Paranoid

RELEASED: SEP 18, 1970 (VERTIGO)
PRODUCER: RODGER BAIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 12
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -


177
SUPERFURRY ANIMALS
Radiator

RELEASED: AUG 25, 1997 (CREATION)
PRODUCER: CHRIS THOMAS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 193
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
56 (1985), 57 (2003), 88 (2013)

PRODUCERS: GORWEL OWEN
AND SUPER FURRY ANIMALS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US -
NME CHARTS: 92 (2013)


176
NEIL YOUNG
Harvest

RELEASED: FEB 14, 1972 (REPRISE)
PRODUCERS: NEIL YOUNG,
ELLIOT MAZER, HENRY LEWY
AND JACK NITZSCHE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 60 (1993), 71 (2013)


175
MY BLOODY VALENTINE
Isn't Anything?

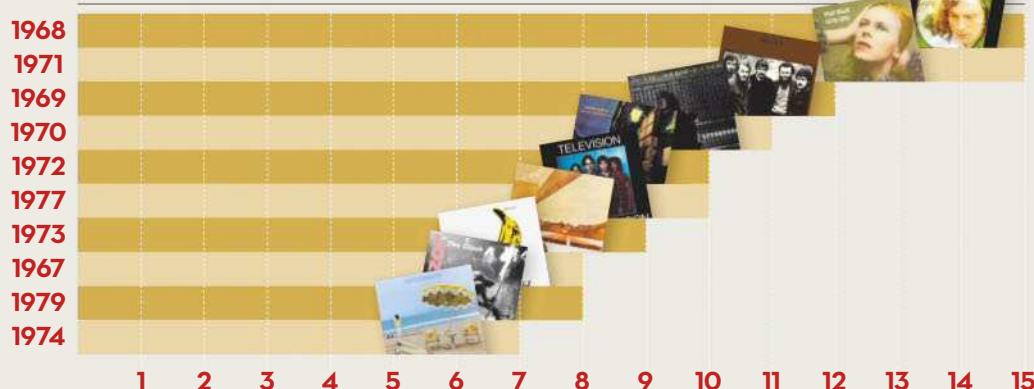
RELEASED: NOVEMBER 21, 1988
(CREATION)
PRODUCER: MBV
CHART POSITIONS: UK 61; US -
NME CHARTS: 187 (2013)


174
ROXX MUSIC
For Your Pleasure

RELEASED: MARCH 23, 1973
(ISLAND)
PRODUCER: CHRIS THOMAS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 193
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
56 (1985), 57 (2003), 88 (2013)



NUMBER OF ALBUMS IN THE TOP 200



200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



Marc Bolan:
"He borrowed
heavily, but
was still quite
innovative"



173 JOHN LENNON *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*

RELEASED: DEC 11, 1970 (APPLE)
PRODUCERS: JOHN LENNON, YOKO ONO AND PHIL SPECTOR
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US 6
NMECHARTS: 76 (1974), 9 (1985), 133 (2013)



172 OASIS *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?*

RELEASED: OCTOBER 2, 1995 (CREATION)
PRODUCERS: OWEN MORRIS AND NOEL GALLAGHER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 4
NMECHARTS: 37 (2003), 67 (2013)



171 PRINCE *Purple Rain*

RELEASED: JUNE 25, 1984 (WARNER BROS)
PRODUCER: PRINCE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 7; US 1
NMECHARTS: 91 (2013)



170 LAURA NYRO *New York Tendaberry*

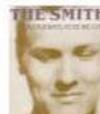
RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 24, 1969 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: ROY HALEE AND LAURA NYRO
CHART POSITIONS: UK -, US 32
NMECHART APPEARANCES: -

169 T.REX *Electric Warrior*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 24, 1971 (FLY)
PRODUCER: TONY VISCONTI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 32
NMECHARTS: 225 (2013)

TONY VISCONTI [PRODUCER]:
"When I heard 'Jeepster' I thought, 'Wow, this is seriously different.' I know there's an old blues song he copied, but he threw in some dramatic melodic and chord changes. The song's in A but the chorus jumps to the key of C – no-one in the '50s did that! He borrowed heavily, but within that framework he was still quite innovative. [We] knew we were making a hit album. There were moments in the studio where Marc and I looked at each other and were absolutely high on music, and suddenly so clear about how to make a great record. We knew that everything we were doing was going to be heard by thousands and thousands of people. There was real ecstasy in the studio. [Bolan was]

making an organic rock'n'roll album with classic sounds: Little Richard piano, sax solos, distorted guitars. What happened immediately afterwards was glam rock, but I don't think we were glam rock. Everyone else did it more glossily than we did."



168 THE SMITHS *Strangeways Here We Come*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 28, 1987 (ROUGH TRADE)
PRODUCERS: MORRISSEY, MARR AND STEPHEN STREET
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 55
NMECHARTS: 25 (2003), 47 (2013)



167 APHEX TWIN *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 12, 1992 (APOLLO)
PRODUCER: APHEX TWIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -, US -
NMECHARTS: 92 (2003), 121 (2013)



166 GZA *Liquid Swords*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 7, 1995 (GEFFEN/MCA)
PRODUCER: RZA
CHART POSITIONS: UK -, US 9
NMECHARTS: 112 (2013)



165 BRIAN ENO *Here Come The Warm Jets*

RELEASED: JANUARY 1974 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: BRIAN ENO
CHART POSITIONS: UK 26; US 151
NMECHARTS: 427 (2013)



164 THE CURE *Seventeen Seconds*

RELEASED: APRIL 22, 1980 (FICTION)
PRODUCERS: MIKE HEDGES AND ROBERT SMITH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 20; US -
NMECHART APPEARANCES: -



163 NEIL YOUNG *Tonight's The Night*

RELEASED: JUNE 20, 1975 (REPRISE)

PRODUCERS: DAVID BRIGGS, NEIL YOUNG, TIM MULLIGAN AND ELLIOT MAZER

CHART POSITIONS: UK 48; US 25
NMECHARTS: 94 (1993)



162 PJ HARVEY *Rid Of Me*

RELEASED: MAY 4, 1993 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: STEVE ALBINI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 158
NMECHARTS: 450 (2013)



161 TOM WAITS *Swordfishtrombones*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 1983 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: TOM WAITS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 62; US 167
NMECHARTS: 6 (1985), 320 (2013)



160 THE WU-TANG CLAN *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 9, 1993 (LOUD)
PRODUCERS: RZA, METHOD MAN, OL'DIRTY BASTARD, GHOSTFACE KILLAH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 77; US 41
NMECHART APPEARANCES: 82 (2003), 30 (2013)



159 LEONARD COHEN *Songs Of Love And Hate*

RELEASED: MARCH 19, 1971 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: BOB JOHNSTON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 145
NMECHART APPEARANCES: 90 (2003), 366 (2013)



158 THE FALL *This Nation's Saving Grace*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 23, 1984 (BEGGARS BANQUET)
PRODUCER: JOHN LECKIE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 54; US -
NMECHARTS: 95 (1993), 400 (2013)



157 BJÖRK *Debut*

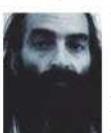
RELEASED: JULY 5, 1993 (ONE LITTLE INDIAN)



PRODUCERS: NELLEE HOOPER AND BJORK
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 32
NME CHARTS: 46 (2013)


156
TRICKY
Maxinquaye
RELEASED: FEBRUARY 20, 1995
(4TH & B'WAY)
PRODUCERS: HOWIE B, KEVIN PETRIE, MARK SAUNDERS, TRICKY
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US -
NME CHARTS: 202 (2013)


155
NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS
The Boatman's Call
RELEASED: MARCH 3, 1997
(MUTE/REPRISE)
PRODUCERS: FLOOD AND NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 22; US 155
NME CHARTS: 257 (2013)


WARREN ELLIS
[VIOLIN, ACCORDION, PIANO]: "Nick would have very strong ideas; there was not a lot of discussion. With *The Boatman's Call* in particular he had very strong ideas about what he wanted for that record, about pegging it right back. The great thing about the band is that it was always about the songs; it wasn't about people trying to put their own stamp on the music. It was really about what the songs needed."


154
THE ASSOCIATES
Sulk
RELEASED: MAY 14, 1982
(BEGGARS BANQUET)
PRODUCERS: THE ASSOCIATES AND MIKE HEDGES
CHART POSITIONS: UK 10; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -


153
LED ZEPPELIN
Physical Graffiti
RELEASED: FEBRUARY 24, 1975
(SWAN SONG)
PRODUCER: JIMMY PAGE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -


152
ARETHA FRANKLIN
Lady Soul
RELEASED: JANUARY 22, 1968
(ATLANTIC)
PRODUCER: JERRY WEXLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 25; US 2
NME CHARTS: 167 (2013)


151
DAFT PUNK
Discovery
RELEASED: MARCH 3, 2001
(VIRGIN)
PRODUCER: DAFT PUNK
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 23
NME CHARTS: 76 (2013)


150
MASSIVE ATTACK
Blue Lines
RELEASED: APRIL 8, 1991
(WILD BUNCH/VIRGIN)
PRODUCERS: MASSIVE ATTACK AND JONNY DOLLAR
CHART POSITIONS: UK 13; US -
NME CHARTS: 97 (1993), 30 (2003), 60 (2013)


149
THE BEATLES
A Hard Day's Night
RELEASED: JULY 10, 1964
(PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1

(ALTERNATE TRACKLIST)
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
33 (1974), 73 (1985), 195 (2013)


148
MILES DAVIS
In A Silent Way

RELEASED: JULY 30, 1969
(COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: TEO MACERO
CHART POSITIONS:
UK 63 (2001); US -
NME CHARTS: 79 (1985)


147
JEFF BUCKLEY
Grace

RELEASED: AUGUST 23, 1994
(COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: ANDY WALLACE AND JEFF BUCKLEY
CHART POSITIONS: UK 31; US 149
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
35 (2003), 86 (2013)


146
PIXIES
Doolittle

RELEASED: APRIL 18, 1989 (4AD)
PRODUCERS: GIL NORTON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US 98
NME CHARTS: 2 (2003), 8 (2013)


145
BLUR
Modern Life Is Rubbish

RELEASED: MAY 10, 1993 (FOOD)
PRODUCERS: BLUR, JOHN SMITH, STEVE LOVELL, STEPHEN STREET
CHART POSITIONS: UK 15; US -
NME CHARTS: 33 (2013)
STEPHEN STREET [PRODUCER]:
"They tied their colours to the English flag and I remember Damon

Best in breed:
Blur, 1993



[Albarn] saying, 'This is the way it's going to be now. We've learned from our mistakes. We've been to America and done our touring. Now we're going to do things our own way.' It was the necessary step they had to take, of course, to get to *Parklife*. But, funny enough, Damon didn't dwell on the idea of Englishness in the studio. He simply felt it was all there in the music. He was still writing a lot about characters at this point, rather than himself, although 'Blue Jeans' was actually him, talking about a day shopping in Portobello Road. One day, [Food records founder] Dave Balfe came in for a listen to the album and said, 'It's crap. It's commercial suicide. It'll sell to a few *NME* readers, and that's it.' They were pretty taken aback by his hostility, but it did make Damon go, 'Fuck you,' and write two more cracking songs for the record, 'Chemical World' and also 'For Tomorrow', which he wrote at his parents' house in Colchester on Christmas Eve. The album came out, and I remember them playing a lot of these songs at the Reading Festival in 1993, in the *Melody Maker* tent. The crowd sang everything back to them and I thought: 'This album's touched a nerve. And if we can hang on, and make the next album cracking, it'll do the business.'"


144
COCTEAU TWINS
Heaven Or Las Vegas
RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 17, 1990 (4AD)
PRODUCER: COCTEAU TWINS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 7; US 99
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



143 CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND *Safe As Milk*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 1967
(BUDDAH)
PRODUCERS: RICHARD PERRY AND BOB KRASNOW
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHARTS: -



142 SONIC YOUTH *Daydream Nation*

RELEASED: OCTOBER 1988
(ENIGMA)
PRODUCERS: NICK SANSANO AND SONIC YOUTH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 99; US-
NME CHARTS: 49 (2003), 41 (2013)



141 PORTISHEAD *Dummy*

RELEASED: AUGUST 22, 1994
(GO! BEAT)
PRODUCER: PORTISHEAD
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 79
NME CHARTS: 168 (2013)



140 THE BEASTIE BOYS *Check Your Head*

RELEASED: APRIL 22, 1992
(CAPITOL)
PRODUCER: MARIO CALDATO, JR
CHART POSITIONS: UK 106; US 10
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



MIKE D: "Nobody at the record company wanted to have anything to do with us, so we were left completely on our own to do whatever the fuck we wanted for two years. On *Paul's Boutique* we'd gone sample crazy and pushed it as far as we could. We became inspired by a lot of the music we'd been sampling – The Meters or The Crusaders – and we thought, 'What if we set up our instruments and start playing stuff like that ourselves?' We found this big old ballroom with a parquet floor in this weird area called Atwater outside of Silverlake."

ADAM YAUCH: "We set up on the stage. Then we found two adjoining closets and busted a hole in the wall and that became the control room."



139 GANG OF FOUR *Entertainment!*



RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 25, 1979
(EMI/WARNER BROS)
PRODUCERS: ANDY GILL, JON KING AND ROB WARR
CHART POSITIONS: UK 45; US-
NME CHARTS: 59 (1985), 159 (2013)

138 VAN MORRISON *Moondance*
RELEASED: JANUARY 27, 1970
(WARNER BROS)
PRODUCER: VAN MORRISON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 32; US 29
NME CHARTS: 74 (1974)

137 AC/DC *Back In Black*
RELEASED: JULY 25, 1980
(ALBERT/ATLANTIC)
PRODUCER: MUTT LANGE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 4
NME CHARTS: 72 (2003), 197 (2013)

136 RAMONES *Ramones*
RELEASED: FEBRUARY 4, 1976 (SIRE)
PRODUCERS: CRAIG LEON AND TOMMY RAMONE
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US 111
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 39 (2003), 127 (2013)

135 THE BEACH BOYS *Surf's Up*
RELEASED: AUGUST 30, 1971 (BROTHER/REPRISE)
PRODUCER: THE BEACH BOYS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 15; US 29
NME CHARTS: 96 (1974), 46 (1993)

134 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN *Darkness On The Edge Of Town*

RELEASED: JUNE 2, 1978 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND JON LANDAU
CHART POSITIONS: UK 16; US 5
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 39 (1985), 109 (2013)

133 THE WHO *Live At Leeds*

RELEASED: MAY 16, 1970 (DECCA/MCA)
PRODUCERS: JON ASTLEY, KIT LAMBERT AND THE WHO
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 4
NME CHARTS: 423 (2013)

132 THE HUMAN LEAGUE *Dare!*

RELEASED: OCTOBER 16, 1981 (VIRGIN)
PRODUCERS: MARTIN RUSHENT AND THE HUMAN LEAGUE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 3
NME CHARTS: 111 (2013)

131 THE ISLEY BROTHERS *3+3*

RELEASED: AUGUST 7, 1973 (T-NECK/EPIC)
PRODUCERS: RONALD ISLEY AND RUDOLPH ISLEY
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US 8
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 61 (1985)

130 SYD BARRETT *The Madcap Laughs*

RELEASED: JANUARY 3, 1970 (HARVEST)
PRODUCERS: SYD BARRETT, PETER JENNER, MALCOLM JONES, DAVID GILMOUR AND ROGER WATERS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 40; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

129 CURTIS MAYFIELD *Curtis*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 1970 (CURTOM)
PRODUCER: CURTIS MAYFIELD
CHART POSITIONS: UK 30; US 19
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

128 THE BYRDS *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*

RELEASED: AUGUST 30, 1968 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: GARY USHER
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US 77
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 351 (2013)

127 CHIC *C'est Chic*

RELEASED: AUGUST 11, 1978 (ATLANTIC)
PRODUCERS: NILE RODGERS AND BERNARD EDWARDS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 4
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



126 NICK DRAKE *Pink Moon*

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 25, 1972
(ISLAND)

PRODUCER: JOHN WOOD
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -
JOHN WOOD [ENGINEER]: -

"Nick said, 'I'm ready to go back in the studio. When can I come in and record?' He was off the radar a bit, so I thought maybe I shouldn't hang about. The only time we could get was in the middle of the night. I just felt he wanted to get on with it quickly. There wasn't any messing about - he knew exactly what he wanted to do. The first or second thing we put down was 'Parasite', but at that point I'm not sure if I knew what was going on. I remember saying, 'Do you want Danny [Thompson] to come in?' and he just said, 'No, I don't want anyone else on it.' One of the interesting things about Nick is that he pretty much always knew what he was going to do with everything."



125 ELVIS COSTELLO *My Aim Is True*

RELEASED: JULY 22, 1977 (STIFF)
PRODUCER: NICK LOWE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 14; US 32
NME CHARTS: 93 (1985), 281 (2013)



124 NIRVANA *In Utero*

RELEASED:
SEPTEMBER 13, 1993 (DGC)
PRODUCERS: STEVE ALBINI
AND SCOTT LITT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 15 (2003), 35 (2013)

126

NICK DRAKE
Pink Moon



123 STEELY DAN *Can't Buy A Thrill*

RELEASED:
NOVEMBER 1972 (ABC)

PRODUCER: GARY KATZ
CHART POSITIONS: UK 38; US 17
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



122 PRINCE *Parade*

RELEASED: MARCH 31, 1986
(PAISLEY PARK/WARNER BROS)

PRODUCER: PRINCE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 3
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



121 CAN *Future Days*

RELEASED: AUGUST 1973
(UNITED ARTISTS)

PRODUCER: CAN
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



120 BIG STAR *Radio City*

RELEASED:
FEBRUARY 1974 (ARDENT)

PRODUCERS: JOHN FRY
AND BIG STAR
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
421 (2013)

JOHN FRY [PRODUCER]: "Songs like 'Mod Lang' and 'She's A Mover' were getting recorded real late at night. People were messed up at the time they did those, there's no question about that. Everybody would go out to the clubs and do this and do that and then say, 'Hey, let's go to the studio, we got an idea.'"

125

ELVIS COSTELLO
My Aim Is True

126

STEELY DAN
Can't Buy A Thrill



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CHART POSITIONS: UK 38; US 17
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



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NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



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CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



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NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



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My Aim Is True

#

200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



112 NEW ORDER Power, Corruption & Lies

RELEASED: MAY 2, 1983
(FACTORY)
PRODUCER: NEW ORDER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US-
NME CHARTS: 216 (2013)

111 JONI MITCHELL Court & Spark

RELEASED: JANUARY 1, 1974
(ASYLUM)
PRODUCER: JONI MITCHELL
CHART POSITIONS: UK 14; US 2
NME CHARTS: 84 (1985)

110 THE CONGOS Heart Of The Congos

RELEASED: 1977 (BLACK ARK)
PRODUCER: LEE PERRY
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHARTS: 99 (2003)

109 THE ONLY ONES The Only Ones

RELEASED: APRIL 1978
(COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: ROBERT ASH
AND THE ONLY ONES
CHART POSITIONS: UK 56; US-
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

108 TALK TALK Spirit Of Eden

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 16, 1988
(PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: TIM FRIESE-GREENE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 19; US-
NME CHARTS: 95 (2013)

THE GREATEST ARTISTS

Acts with the highest total number of points*

* Each of our 59 contributors voted for their Top 50 albums, with their first choice receiving 50 points and their last choice receiving one point. The totals were used to order the final list of 200 albums.



107 SPIRITUALIZED Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space

RELEASED: JUNE 16, 1997
(DEDICATED)
PRODUCERS: JASON PIERCE
AND JOHN COXON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US-
NME CHARTS: 17 (2003), 156 (2013)

106 TALKING HEADS Remain In Light

RELEASED:
OCTOBER 8, 1980 (SIRE)
PRODUCER: BRIAN ENO
CHART POSITIONS: UK 21; US 19
NME CHARTS: 68 (1993), 54 (2013)
DAVID BYRNE [VOCALS, GUITAR]:
"Most of the tracks on *Remain In Light* were based around jams. We'd listen to the tapes, isolate the best bits, then learn how to play them over and over again. It was exactly what producers do these days with loops and samplers and sequencers. We were human samplers!"

TINA WEYMOUTH [BASS]: "It was a really good atmosphere for those sessions. We were aware that Brian and David had had some falling out during *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*, so we really needed to keep it light and playful and incisive."

CHRIS FRANTZ [DRUMS]: "Eno was great fun in the studio – he was still using those 'oblique strategy' cards. It was always a fun way to work. Just when you were getting daunted by something, he'd hold up a card that read, 'Don't care about what other people think', which was helpful! There were other ones, too: 'Start at the end and not the beginning', 'Don't be afraid of easy things'..."



105 DAVID BOWIE Diamond Dogs

RELEASED: MAY 24, 1974 (RCA)
PRODUCER: DAVID BOWIE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 5
NME CHARTS: 447 (2013)

104 JOHNNY CASH At Folsom Prison

RELEASED: MAY 1968 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: BOB JOHNSTON
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 13
NME CHARTS: 164 (2013)

103 PULP This Is Hardcore

RELEASED:
MARCH 30, 1998 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: CHRIS THOMAS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 114
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
76 (2003), 166 (2013)

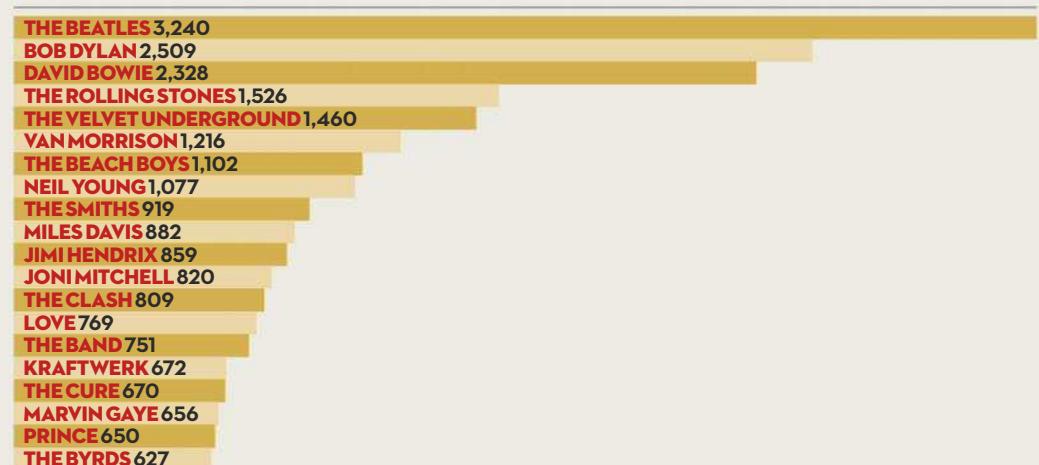
102 SERGE GAINSBOURG Histoire De Melody Nelson

RELEASED: MARCH 1971 (PHILIPS)
PRODUCER:
JEAN-CLAUDE DESMARTY
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US-
NME CHARTS: 142 (2013)

101 RADIOHEAD Kid A

RELEASED: OCTOBER 2, 2000
(PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: NIGEL GODRICH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 114 (2013)

POINTS



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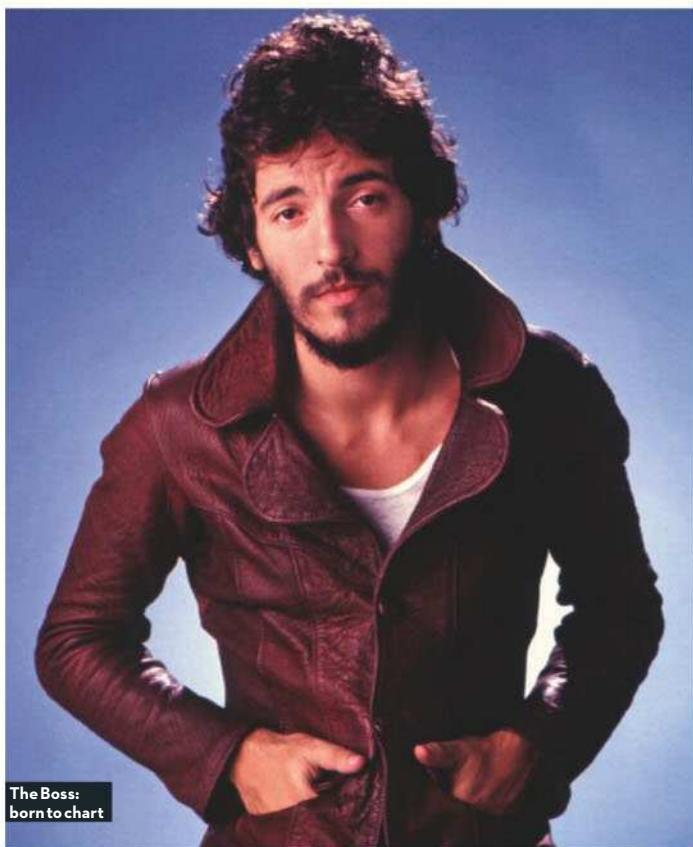
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200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



100 LAURA NYRO *Eli & The Thirteenth Confession*

RELEASED: MARCH 3, 1968 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: LAURA NYRO AND CHARLES CALELO
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 181
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

99 JOHN CALE *Paris 1919*

RELEASED: MARCH 1, 1973 (REPRISE)
PRODUCER: CHRIS THOMAS
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 91 (1985)

98 THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter*

RELEASED: MARCH 1968 (ELEKTRA)
PRODUCER: JOE BOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK 5; US 161
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

97 THE CURE *Pornography*

RELEASED: MAY 4, 1982 (FICTION)

PRODUCERS: PHIL THORNALLEY AND THE CURE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

96 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN *Born To Run*

RELEASED: AUGUST 25, 1975 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, MIKE APPEL AND JON LANDAU
CHART POSITIONS: UK 17; US 3
NME CHARTS: 85 (2013)

95 THE FLYING BURRITO BROS *The Gilded Palace Of Sin*

RELEASED: FEB 1969 (A&M)
PRODUCERS: HENRY LEWY AND LARRY MARKS
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 164
NME CHARTS: 66 (2003)

94 U2 *Achtung Baby*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 19, 1991 (ISLAND)
PRODUCERS: BRIAN ENO AND DANIEL LANOIS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 1
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

93 RADIOHEAD *OK Computer*

RELEASED: MAY 21, 1997 (PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: NIGEL GODRICH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 21
NME CHARTS: 16 (2003), 20 (2013)

92 DUSTY SPRINGFIELD *Dusty In Memphis*

RELEASED: MARCH 31, 1969 (ATLANTIC)
PRODUCERS: JERRY WEXLER, ARIF MARDIN AND TOM DOWD
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 99
NME CHARTS: 54 (1993), 63 (2003), 50 (2013)

91 NEIL YOUNG *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*

RELEASED: MAY 14, 1969 (REPRISE)
PRODUCERS: DAVID BRIGGS AND NEIL YOUNG
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 34
NME CHARTS: 53 (1974), 63 (1993), 398 (2013)

90 THE CURE *The Head On The Door*

RELEASED: AUGUST 26, 1985 (FICTION)
PRODUCERS: DAVID M ALLEN AND ROBERT SMITH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 7; US 59
NME CHARTS: 494 (2013)

89 BIG STAR *No 1 Record*

RELEASED: JUNE 1972 (ARDENT)
PRODUCER: JOHN FRY
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

88 CAN *Tago Mago*

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 1971 (UNITED ARTISTS)
PRODUCER: CAN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 409 (2013)

87 JONI MITCHELL *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1975 (ASYLUM)

PRODUCER: JONI MITCHELL
CHART POSITIONS: UK 14; US 4
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 62 (1985), 243 (2013)

86 TODD RUNDGREN *A Wizard, A True Star*

RELEASED: MARCH 2, 1973 (BEARSVILLE)
PRODUCER: TODD RUNDGREN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 86
NME CHARTS: 75 (1974), 189 (2013)

RUNDGREN: "I became obsessed with the idea of a personal musical legacy, which in my mind didn't necessarily have to do with satisfying commercial criteria of any kind."

Everything I did in terms of my own work was conditioned by the fact that I was making a living as a producer and didn't need to make a living off my own records – which consternated the label and my fans alike. I didn't want to repeat what everybody else was doing, so I started to think about what would be unique – and the only thing I could think of was myself and the way that I saw things. Making *Wizard...* was essentially an evolution of that thought process. I found a way of developing different relationships in the studio, to the point that I had to build my own studio. And the vibe in the studio had to be a certain way, like a kind of musical workshop. It was never intended to be a business; it was for me and my musical associates to go in and explore things. From that point on, I began writing more and more in the studio. That meant I didn't have to approach the album with a grand master plan; I had complete liberty to change it at any point. With 'International Feel', for instance, we no longer had any engineer and I had to finish it myself. I wanted a certain sound so I got something that was simply a couple of pieces of hose inside a box, and it became characteristic of the sound of my recordings. There was also an unusual kind of mastering machine made by a guy in Los Angeles, and that contributed a lot because we used to run things stupidly hot. We were just total cowboys about it."

85 JIMI HENDRIX *Axis: Bold As Love*

RELEASED: DECEMBER 1, 1967 (TRACK)

PRODUCER: CHAS CHANDLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 5; US 3
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



84
PINK FLOYD
The Dark Side
Of The Moon

RELEASED: MARCH 1, 1973
(HARVEST)
PRODUCER: PINK FLOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 1
NME CHARTS: 92 (1974), 132 (2013)



83
BOB DYLAN
The Freewheelin'

Bob Dylan

RELEASED: MAY 27, 1963
(COLUMBIA)

PRODUCERS: TOM WILSON
AND JOHN HAMMOND
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 22
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
28 (1974), 306 (2013)



82
THE WHO
Who's Next

RELEASED: AUGUST 14, 1971
(TRACK/DECCA)

PRODUCERS: GLYN JOHNS
AND THE WHO
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 4
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
80 (1974), 99 (1993)



81
RADIOHEAD
In Rainbows

RELEASED: OCTOBER 10, 2007
(XURBIA XENDLESS/XL)

PRODUCER: NIGEL GODRICH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 59 (2013)



80
THE VELVET
UNDERGROUND
White Light/White Heat

RELEASED: JANUARY 30, 1968 (VERVE)

PRODUCER: TOM WILSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 199
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
89 (1974), 35 (1985), 352 (2013)



79
GILLIAN
WELCH
Time (The Revelator)

RELEASED: JULY 31, 2001 (ACONY)
PRODUCER: DAVID RAWLINGS
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 157
NME CHARTS: 366 (2013)



78
THE BYRDS
Younger
Than Yesterday

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 6, 1967
(COLUMBIA)

PRODUCER: GARY USHER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 37; US 24
NME CHARTS: 98 (1993), 291 (2013)



77
STEELY DAN
Countdown
To Ecstasy

RELEASED: JULY 1973 (ABC)

PRODUCER: GARY KATZ
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 35
NME CHARTS: 310 (2013)



76
JOHN MARTYN
Solid Air

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 1973 (ISLAND)

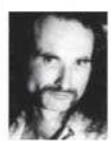
PRODUCERS: JOHN MARTYN
AND JOHN WOOD
CHART POSITIONS: US -; UK -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -



75
CAN
Ege Bamyasi

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1972
(UNITED ARTISTS)

PRODUCER: CAN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 297 (2013)



HOLGER CZUKAY
[BASS]: "We recorded *Ege Bamyasi* in a new studio, which had formerly been a cinema. That new environment affected the sound. The drums were not so heavy and rough, the vocals and instruments were separated out. 'Soup' is my favourite track. In its various ingredients, including electronics and avant-garde, it is indeed like a soup."

IRMIN SCHMIDT [KEYBOARDS]: "People imagine Can was all done in the editing, but for 'Soup' there was no editing at all. We'd found out the record was too short; it needed 10 more minutes of music by the next morning, so we wrote, played and recorded it the night before. No editing!"



74
PUBLIC IMAGE
LIMITED
Metal Box

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 23, 1979
(VIRGIN)



Pink Floyd
Dark Side era

PRODUCER:
PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED
CHART POSITIONS: UK 18; US -
NME CHARTS: 96 (1993), 229 (2013)



73
THE CURE
Disintegration

RELEASED: MAY 2, 1989 (FICTION)

PRODUCERS: DAVID MALLEN
AND ROBERT SMITH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 12
NME CHARTS: 139 (2013)



72
LCD
SOUNDSYSTEM
Sound Of Silver

RELEASED: MARCH 12, 2007
(DFA/CAPITOL)

PRODUCER: THE DFA
CHART POSITIONS: UK 28; US 46
NME CHARTS: 49 (2013)



71
JONI MITCHELL
Hejira

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1976
(ASYLUM)

PRODUCER: JONI MITCHELL
CHART POSITIONS: UK 11; US 13
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
93 (2003)



70
PATTI SMITH
Horses

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1975
(TANDEM)

PRODUCER: STEVIE WONDER
CHART POSITIONS:
UK 8; US 4
NME CHARTS: 32 (1993),
89 (2003), 42 (2013)

RELEASED: DECEMBER 13, 1975
(ARISTA)

PRODUCER: JOHN CALE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 157; US 47
NME CHARTS: 18 (1985), 31 (1993),
34 (2003), 12 (2013)



69
NEW ORDER
Technique

RELEASED: JANUARY 30, 1989
(FACTORY)

PRODUCER: NEW ORDER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 32
NME CHART APPEARANCES:
22 (2003), 122 (2013)



68
JAMES BROWN
Live At
The Apollo

RELEASED: MAY 1963 (KING)
PRODUCER: JAMES BROWN
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 2
NME CHARTS: 19 (1985), 30 (1993),
125 (2013)



67
STEVIE
WONDER
Innervisions

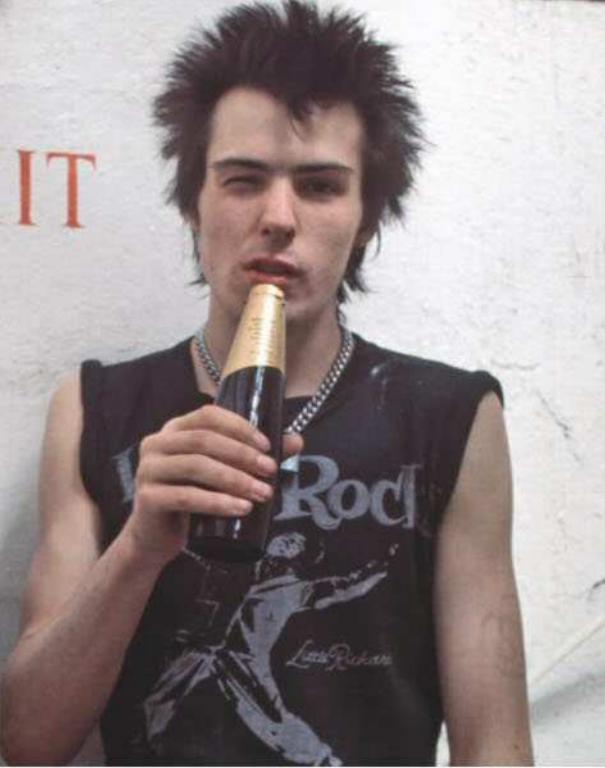
RELEASED: AUGUST 3, 1973
(TAMLA)

PRODUCER: STEVIE WONDER
CHART POSITIONS:
UK 8; US 4
NME CHARTS: 32 (1993),
89 (2003), 42 (2013)

FIRE EXIT



Never mind the
bottle: Lydon
and Vicious



66 THE BAND Music From Big Pink

RELEASED: JULY 1, 1968 (CAPITOL)
PRODUCER: JOHN SIMON
CHART POSITIONS: UK -, US 30
NME CHARTS: 10 (1974), 72 (1985)

65 ORANGE JUICE You Can't Hide Your Love Forever

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 1982 (POLYDOR)
PRODUCER: ADAM KIDRON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 21; US -
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

64 DAVID CROSBY If I Could Only Remember My Name

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 22, 1971 (ATLANTIC)
PRODUCER: DAVID CROSBY
CHART POSITIONS: UK 12; US 12
NME CHART APPEARANCES: -

63 FLEETWOOD MAC Rumours

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 4, 1977 (WARNER BROS)
PRODUCERS: FLEETWOOD MAC, KEN CAILLAT, RICHARD DASHUT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 51 (2013)

MICK FLEETWOOD [DRUMS]:
“By the time we got to *Rumours*, the emotional roller coaster was in full motion and we were all in a ditch. Everybody knew everything about everybody and I was definitely

piggy-in-the-middle. But my best friend was also having an affair with my wife, and it was all weird and twisted. It was a total mess and that's how we made the album.”

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM [GUITAR, VOCALS]: “I was worried that Side Two had no continuity. I thought we'd done the best we could, but the album was trailing off and lacked that extra song we needed. I really wasn't aware of the compelling drama it had and I remember certain people being very negative about *Rumours*. We're all so insecure and I really didn't know.”

CHRISTINE McVIE [KEYBOARDS, VOCALS]: “It was John who suggested the title *Rumours*, because we were all writing journals and diaries about each other. But we didn't quite realise that until all the songs were strung together. Then we knew we had something powerful, to a point that transcended everyone's misery and depression. We knew that if we'd all been getting on like a house on fire, the songs wouldn't have been nearly as good.”

62 THE BYRDS The Notorious Byrd Brothers

RELEASED: JANUARY 15, 1968 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: GARY USHER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 12; US 47
NME CHARTS: 32 (2003)

61 PRIMAL SCREAM Screamadelica

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 23, 1991 (CREATION)

PRODUCERS: JIMMY MILLER, THE ORB, HYPNOTONE, ANDREW WEATHERALL, HUGO NICOLSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US -
NME CHARTS: 21 (1993), 23 (2003), 27 (2013)

60 JOY DIVISION Unknown Pleasures

RELEASED: JUNE 15, 1979 (FACTORY)
PRODUCER: MARTIN HANNETT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 71; US -
NME CHARTS: 10 (1985), 43 (1993), 41 (2003), 40 (2013)

59 PRINCE Sign O The Times

RELEASED: MARCH 31, 1987 (PAISLEY PARK/WARNER BROS)
PRODUCER: PRINCE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 6
NME CHARTS: 16 (1993), 198 (2013)

58 BLONDIE Parallel Lines

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 1978 (CHRYSTALIS)
PRODUCER: MIKE CHAPMAN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 6
NME CHARTS: 52 (1993), 18 (2003), 45 (2013)

57 PINK FLOYD The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn

RELEASED: AUGUST 5, 1967 (EMI)
PRODUCER: NORMAN SMITH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 6; US 131

NME CHARTS: 21 (1974), 95 (2003), 190 (2013)

56 THE STONE ROSES The Stone Roses

RELEASED: MAY 2, 1989 (SILVERTONE)
PRODUCER: JOHN LECKIE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 5; US 86
NME CHARTS: 5 (1993), 1 (2003), 7 (2013)

55 SEX PISTOLS Never Mind The Bollocks

RELEASED: OCT 28, 1977 (VIRGIN)
PRODUCER: CHRIS THOMAS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 106
NME CHARTS: 13 (1985), 3 (1993), 10 (2003), 38 (2013)

CHRIS THOMAS [PRODUCER]:
“The first session, doing ‘Anarchy In The UK’, was difficult. John [Lydon] had been left out of the loop – he didn't know I'd replaced Dave Goodman as producer. So he screamed out this terrible vocal, and I told him I couldn't understand a word. He just snorted: ‘Well, you're the one with the track record, you sort it out!’ So, deep breath... I said, ‘OK, fancy going down the pub?’ Ha ha! Three Guinesses later, we were back in the studio and it started to work. The guitars are very orchestrated. After Glen [Matlock] left, Steve [Jones] would overdub the bass, playing the root note under the chord. So every chord was a massive harmonic sequence – root, octave, fifth, octave, third, fifth, octave... I'd double-track the guitar, put it through an Eventide Harmonizer – which double-tracks it, slightly out of sync, one in each channel. We'd overlay guitars like that, until it sounded massive.”

54 THE VELVET UNDERGROUND Loaded

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 15, 1970 (COTILLION)
PRODUCERS: GEOFF HASLAM, SHELL KAGAN AND THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US 202
NME CHARTS: 64 (1974), 271 (2013)

53 BIG STAR Third/Sister Lovers

RELEASED: 1978 (PVC)

PRODUCER: JIM DICKINSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHARTS: 90 (1993), 60
(2003), 451 (2013)



52

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

The Velvet Underground
RELEASED: MARCH 1969 (MGM)
PRODUCER: THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US 197
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 60 (1985), 58 (1993), 21 (2003)



51

CAROLE KING
Tapestry

RELEASED: FEBRUARY 10, 1971 (ODE)
PRODUCER: LOU ADLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 1
NME CHARTS: 26 (1974), 82 (2013)



50

NICK DRAKE
Bryter Layter

RELEASED: MARCH 5, 1971 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: JOE BOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK-; US-
NME CHARTS: 140 (2013)



49

STEVIE WONDER
Songs In The Key Of Life

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 28, 1976 (TAMLA)
PRODUCER: STEVIE WONDER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 1
NME CHARTS: 172 (2013)



48

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

Liege & Lief
RELEASED: DEC 1969 (ISLAND)
PRODUCER: JOE BOYD
CHART POSITIONS: UK 17; US-
NME CHARTS: 110 (2013)



RICHARD THOMPSON
[GUITAR]: "Previously we had been playing folk songs on electric instruments, but we had this idea to combine the ballad style of folk music with the freedom of rock'n'roll to create something new. What you hear on *Liege & Lief* was a trading off of cultures between Swarb's [Dave Swarbrick] and mine. We'd had a fatal motorway crash, which was traumatic for the group, and making *Liege & Lief* was our therapy. It was a concept album, really, and we poured ourselves into it as a way of keeping busy. To us, it was far more revolutionary than David Bowie, the VU or heavy metal. It was the least popular thing we could've done, and that was the best way to lose our audience overnight. But our hope was that it would become a truly British popular music. Sadly, that never happened, though it became a cult."

47
LED ZEPPELIN
IV

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 8, 1971 (ATLANTIC)
PRODUCER: JIMMY PAGE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 2
NME CHARTS: 35 (1974), 56 (1993), 45 (2003), 106 (2013)

46
MICHAEL JACKSON
Off The Wall

RELEASED: AUGUST 10, 1979 (EPIC)
PRODUCER: QUINCY JONES
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 3
NME CHARTS: 93 (1993), 73 (2003), 242 (2013)

45
REM
Murmur

RELEASED: APRIL 12, 1983 (IRS)
PRODUCERS: DON DIXON AND MITCHEASTER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 100; US 36
NME CHARTS: 69 (2013)

44
SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE
There's A Riot Goin' On

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 20, 1971 (EPIC)
PRODUCER: SLY STONE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 31; US 1
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 79 (1974), 47 (1985)



The fifth Beatle?
George Martin with Lennon and McCartney

THE GREATEST PRODUCERS

UNSURPRISINGLY, GEORGE MARTIN has produced the most albums in our Top 200, even when you exclude – as we have here – artists like David Bowie and Joni Mitchell, who routinely produce or co-produce themselves. Many of the producers featured here are included for their work with just one artist, such as Martin, David Briggs (for Neil Young), Nigel Godrich (Radiohead), Gary Katz (Steely Dan) and Gary Usher (The Byrds). However, others have been included for their work with a much wider selection of artists: Joe Boyd with Fairport Convention, Nick Drake and The Incredible String Band; Bob Johnston with Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and Johnny Cash; and, spanning around 25 years, Chris Thomas for his production work with Pulp, Sex Pistols, John Cale and Roxy Music. Interestingly, while Cale features as an artist and as producer of Patti Smith's *Horses*, Brian Eno is the only person included in our top 200 as the producer of others (U2, Talking Heads) and of his own work (*Here Come The Warm Jets*).

GEORGE MARTIN 6 (The Beatles)

JIMMY MILLER 5 (The Rolling Stones, Primal Scream)

TONY VISCONTI 5 (David Bowie, T.Rex)

TOM WILSON 5 (Bob Dylan, The Velvet Underground)

JOE BOYD 4 (Fairport Convention, The Incredible String Band, Nick Drake)

DAVID BRIGGS 4 (Neil Young)

BOB JOHNSTON 4 (Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Johnny Cash)

CHRIS THOMAS 4 (Pulp, Sex Pistols, John Cale, Roxy Music)

BRIAN ENO 3 (Talking Heads, U2)

NIGEL GODRICH 3 (Radiohead)

GARY KATZ 3 (Steely Dan)

TEO MACERO 3 (Miles Davis)

GARY USHER 3 (The Byrds)

STEVE ALBINI 2 (PJ Harvey, Nirvana)

DAVID M ALLEN 2 (The Cure)

CHAS CHANDLER 2 (The Jimi Hendrix Experience)

JOHN FRY 2 (Big Star)

MARTIN HANNETT 2 (Joy Division)

QUINCY JONES 2 (Michael Jackson)

KIT LAMBERT 2 (The Who)

JON LANDAU 2 (Bruce Springsteen)

JOHN LECKIE 2 (The Stone Roses, The Fall)

CRAIG LEON 2 (Suicide, Ramones)

KEN SCOTT 2 (David Bowie)

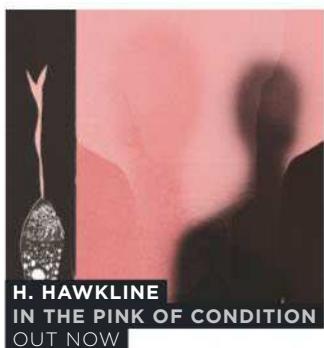
JOHN SIMON 2 (The Band)

STEPHEN STREET 2 (Blur, The Smiths)

BOB THIELE 2 (John Coltrane)

JERRY WEXLER 2 (Aretha Franklin, Dusty Springfield)

Heavenly



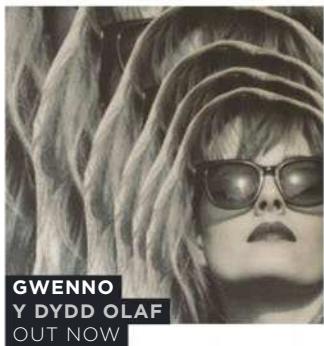
H. HAWKLINE
IN THE PINK OF CONDITION
OUT NOW



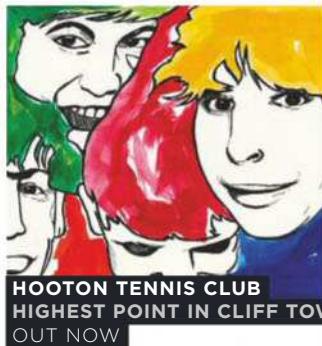
STEALING SHEEP
NOT REAL
OUT NOW



KID WAVE
WONDERLUST
OUT NOW



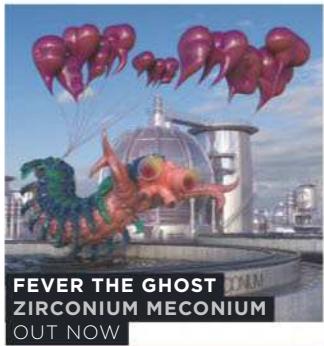
GWENNO
Y DYDD OLAF
OUT NOW



HOOTON TENNIS CLUB
HIGHEST POINT IN CLIFF TOWN
OUT NOW



DRINKS
HERMITS ON HOLIDAY
OUT NOW



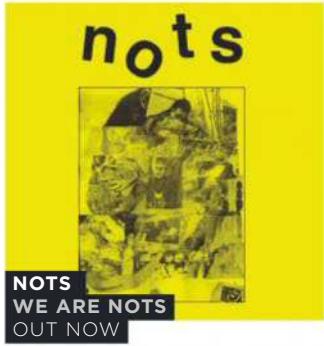
FEVER THE GHOST
ZIRCONIUM MECONIUM
OUT NOW



EAVES
WHAT GREEN FEELS LIKE
DELUXE EDITION
OUT NOW



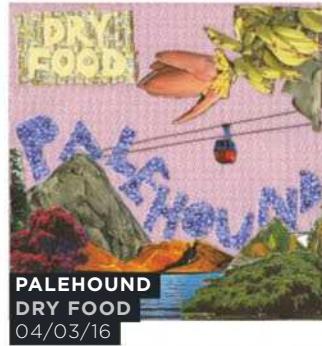
**KING GIZZARD &
THE LIZARD WIZARD**
PAPER MÂCHÉ DREAM BALLOON
OUT NOW



NOTS
WE ARE NOTS
OUT NOW

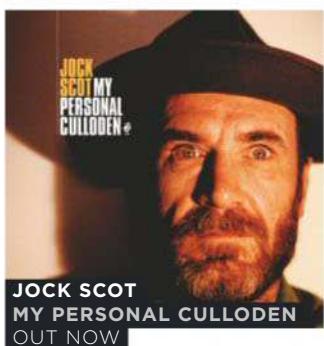


NIGHT BEATS
WHO SOLD MY GENERATION
OUT 29/01/16



PALEHOUND
DRY FOOD
04/03/16

foreverHeavenly



JOCK SCOT
MY PERSONAL CULLODEN
OUT NOW



SAINT JACK
THE NECTARINE NO. 9
SAINT JACK
OUT 27/11/15



ROUGH TRADE
PRESENTS HEAVENLY 25
2 X CD, OUT NOW

...BELIEVE IN MAGIC



43 THE STOOGES *Fun House*

RELEASED: JULY 7, 1970
(ELEKTRA)
PRODUCER: DON GALLUCCI
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 42 (2003), 104 (2013)



42 JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE *Electric Ladyland*

RELEASED: OCTOBER 17, 1968
(TRACK/REPRISE)
PRODUCER: JIMI HENDRIX
CHART POSITIONS: UK 6; US 1
NME CHARTS: 6 (1974), 103 (2013)



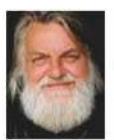
41 OTIS REDDING *Otis Blue*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 15, 1965
(VOLT/ATCO)
PRODUCERS: JIM STEWART, ISAAC HAYES AND DAVID PORTER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 6; US 75
NME CHARTS: 49 (1974), 23 (1985), 35 (1993), 405 (2013)

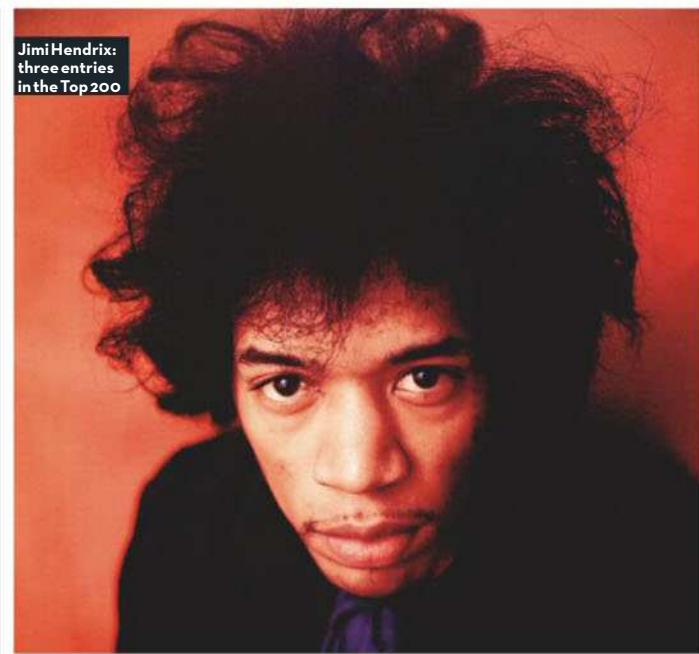


40 ROBERT WYATT *Rock Bottom*

RELEASED: JULY 26, 1974
(VIRGIN)
PRODUCER: NICK MASON
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 358 (2013)



ROBERT WYATT: "People say, it must have been awful when you broke your back, and I say, not really. It just set me on another, more fruitful path. Alfie [Benge, now Wyatt's



Jimi Hendrix:
three entries
in the Top 200

wife] and I hadn't been together long when she got this job of going to Venice and helping on the making of *Don't Look Now*. I was still a biped and tagged along. They hired a flat on Giudecca, one of the non-touristy islands, and plonked me there. Alfie got me a little keyboard to keep me busy while they were working. Then I had my accident, and for the first time ever I had to spend a lot of time just sitting back and going over ideas in my head, as opposed to desperately trying to make something happen immediately. So I was primed by the time I came out of hospital. I thought because I don't have to work in a group, I can ask different musicians to be on each track. It was a kind of freedom that I hadn't thought of before. Alfie thought the music I'd made before was too congested, so she got me to listen to things like *Astral Weeks* by Van Morrison... so that was an influence on the sheer spaciousness of *Rock Bottom*."



39 BOB DYLAN *Bringing It All Back Home*

RELEASED: MARCH 22, 1965
(COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: TOM WILSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 6
NME CHARTS: 87 (1974), 22 (1985), 48 (1993), 94 (2003), 72 (2013)



38 MY BLOODY VALENTINE *Loveless*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 4, 1991
(CREATION)
PRODUCER: KEVIN SHIELDS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 24; US -
NME CHARTS: 11 (2003), 18 (2013)



37 THE KINKS *The Kinks Are The Kinks*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 19, 1964
(DECCA)
PRODUCER: GUY MUSSET
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 1 (1974), 28 (1993), 63 (2013)

The Village Green Preservation Society

RELEASED: NOV 22, 1968 (PYE)
PRODUCER: RAY DAVIES
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 270 (2013)



36 JOY DIVISION *Closer*

RELEASED: JULY 18, 1980
(FACTORY)
PRODUCER: MARTIN HANNETT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 6; US -
NME CHARTS: 54 (1985), 20 (1993), 14 (2003), 16 (2013)



35 JOHN COLTRANE *A Love Supreme*

RELEASED: FEB 1965 (IMPULSE)
PRODUCER: BOB THIELE
CHART POSITIONS: UK -; US -
NME CHARTS: 76 (1985), 36 (1993), 188 (2013)



34 NEIL YOUNG *On The Beach*

RELEASED: JULY 16, 1974
(REPRISE)
PRODUCERS: NEIL YOUNG, DAVID BRIGGS, MARK HARMAN AND AL SCHMITT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 42; US 16
NME CHARTS: 129 (2013)



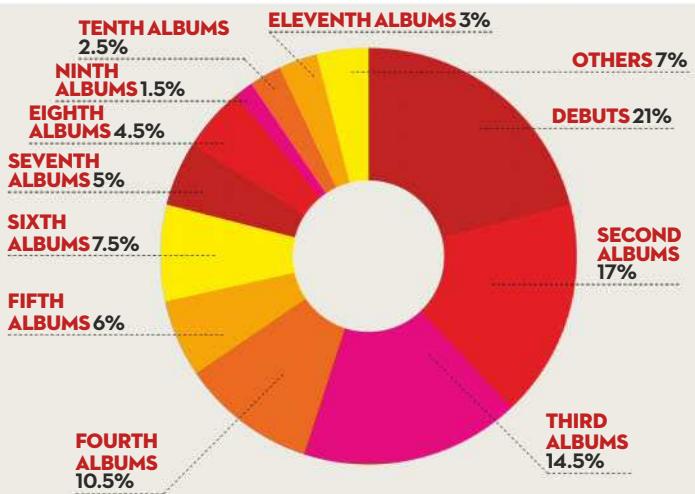
33 JONI MITCHELL *Blue*

RELEASED: JUNE 22, 1971
(REPRISE)
PRODUCER: JONI MITCHELL
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 15
NME CHARTS: 67 (1974), 28 (1993), 63 (2013)

11TH TIME AROUND...

Percentage of debuts, second albums, etc

While mighty debuts such as *Marquee Moon*, *The Velvet Underground* & *Nico* and *Ramones* feature highly in our list, there's a lot more career-spanning entries than would perhaps be expected. Six artists' 11th albums feature on the list - including *Pet Sounds* at No 1 - mostly testament to the sheer tonnage of product that musicians customarily put out in the 1960s. Johnny Cash, however, carried on with that work ethic for decades after, with *American IV: The Man Comes Around*, at No 195, unbelievably his 87th album.

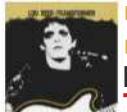


200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



32 NEIL YOUNG *After The Gold Rush*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 19, 1970 (REPRISE)
PRODUCERS: NEIL YOUNG AND DAVID BRIGGS
CHART POSITIONS: UK 7; US 8
NME CHARTS: 69 (1974), 66 (1993), 80 (2003), 56 (2013)



31 LOUREED *Transformer*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 8, 1972 (RCA)
PRODUCERS: DAVID BOWIE AND MICK RONSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 13; US 29
NME CHARTS: 72 (2013), 55 (1993), 75 (2003)



30 DAVID BOWIE *Station To Station*

RELEASED: JANUARY 23, 1976 (RCA)
PRODUCERS: DAVID BOWIE AND HARRY MASLIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 5; US 3
NME CHARTS: 65 (1985), 53 (2013)



29 JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE *Are You Experienced*

RELEASED: MAY 12, 1967 (TRACK)
PRODUCER: CHAS CHANDLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 5
NME CHARTS: 7 (1974), 28 (1985), 29 (1993), 144 (2013)



28 THE ROLLING STONES *Let It Bleed*

RELEASED: DEC 5, 1969 (DECCA)
PRODUCER: JIMMY MILLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 3
NME CHARTS: 11 (1974), 22 (1993), 85 (2003), 52 (2013)



27 THE ROLLING STONES *Sticky Fingers*

RELEASED: APRIL 23, 1971 (ROLLING STONES)
PRODUCER: JIMMY MILLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 9 (1974), 55 (2013)
MICK JAGGER [VOCALS, GUITAR]:

"We recorded three tracks in Muscle Shoals, three in Olympic, three in my



Running up that chart: Kate Bush



26 THE CLASH *The Clash*

RELEASED: APRIL 8, 1977 (CBS)
PRODUCER: MICKEY FOOTE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 12; US 126
NME CHARTS: 4 (1985), 13 (1993), 79 (2003), 61 (2013)



25 KATE BUSH *Hounds Of Love*

RELEASED: SEP 16, 1985 (EMI)
PRODUCER: KATE BUSH
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 30
NME CHARTS: 48 (2013)
HAYDN BENDALL [ENGINEER]:
 "We had lovely times. You walked through the garden into the kitchen: all the family's business and conversations took place around this huge kitchen table. [Her brother] Paddy was always around, and the two dogs were there, Bonnie and Clyde, the hounds of love on the album's cover. There were pigeons

and doves all over the place, her dad smoking his pipe and her mum making sandwiches. It was idyllic. Kate would come up with lots of suggestions like, 'Maybe we should compress that, maybe we should expand that, maybe we should gate that or put a pre-delay on the reverb.' And she had an incredible audio memory. She'd remember a take she did on a vocal where one particular word was great, or that on track 13 there was this great sound."



24 THE BEATLES *Abbey Road*

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 26, 1969 (APPLE)
PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 8 (1974), 34 (2013)



23 THE CLASH *London Calling*

RELEASED: DECEMBER 14, 1979 (CBS)
PRODUCERS: GUY STEVENS AND MICK JONES
CHART POSITIONS: UK 9; US 27
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 7 (1993), 12 (2003), 39 (2013)

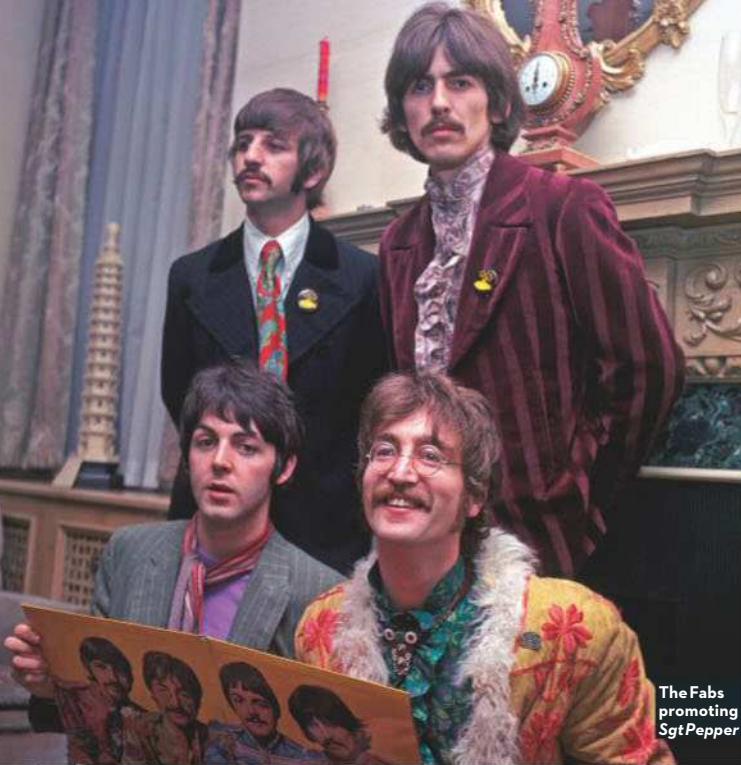


22 PUBLIC ENEMY *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*

RELEASED: JUNE 28, 1988 (DEF JAM/COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: CHUCK D AND HANK SHOCKLEE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 8; US 42
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 9 (1993), 29 (2003), 17 (2013)



Falling stars:
Sticky Fingers
 Rolling Stones



The Fabs promoting *Sgt Pepper*



21 THE BEATLES *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*

RELEASED: JUNE 1, 1967
(PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 1 (1974), 33 (1993), 87 (2013)



20 KRAFTWERK *Trans Europe Express*

RELEASED: MARCH 1977
(KLING KLANG)
PRODUCERS: RALF HUTTER AND FLORIAN SCHNEIDER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 49; US 119
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 38 (1985), 36 (2003), 81 (2013)

RALF HÜTTER: "Trans Europe Express is a symphony of trains – train noises, Vienna, Paris. Travel is a big part of Kraftwerk. The pictures are not ironic, that's our reality, the life we are experiencing. That's our cultural identity as Europeans. As you know, in Düsseldorf we live 20 minutes from the Netherlands, half an hour from Belgium, two hours from France. Berlin is farther away than Paris, even without the Wall. With all our friends, and at school, English language was prominent. Living in Germany at that time, it was quite normal to talk in different languages. 'Showroom Dummies', that is the transition from human to dummy to robots, from posing and static to animation and motorising. We were on our way to robotisation... is that a word? We are mainly talking about ourselves in that song, we felt photographed to death. That's why

we brought in the dummies, and later robots, as they have more patience with photographers. The lyrics in 'Showroom Dummies' are our day-to-day reality, going to clubs. In Germany the clubs are open very late, we don't have that curfew like in England, the last drink at 9:30 or something. Ha!"

19 DAVID BOWIE *Low*

RELEASED: JAN 14, 1977 (RCA)
PRODUCERS: DAVID BOWIE AND TONY VISCONTI
CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 11
NME CHARTS: 15 (1985), 67 (1993), 26 (2003), 14 (2013)

18 BOB DYLAN *Blood On The Tracks*

RELEASED: JAN 20, 1975 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCER: BOB DYLAN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 1
NME CHARTS: 51 (1985), 85 (1993), 47 (2003), 36 (2013)

17 THE BAND *The Band*

RELEASED: SEP 22, 1969 (CAPITOL)
PRODUCER: JOHN SIMON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 25; US 9
NME CHART APPEARANCES: 31 (1974), 7 (1985), 83 (2013)

16 THE ROLLING STONES *Exile On Main St*

RELEASED: MAY 12, 1972 (ROLLING STONES)
PRODUCER: JIMMY MILLER
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
NME CHARTS: 38 (1974), 25 (1985), 11 (1993), 52 (2003), 24 (2013)

15 THE BEATLES *Rubber Soul*

RELEASED: DECEMBER 3, 1965 (PARLOPHONE)
PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1 (ALTERNATE TRACKLIST)
NME CHARTS: 15 (1974), 97 (1985), 64 (1993), 43 (2013)

14 MILES DAVIS *Kind Of Blue*

RELEASED: AUGUST 17, 1959 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: TEO MACERO AND IRVING TOWNSEND
CHART POSITIONS: UK 63; US -
NME CHARTS: 21 (1985), 79 (2013)
JIMMY COBB (DRUMS): "Kind Of Blue was a different style: before, we were playing structured tunes, show tunes... This was the exact opposite of that – what you call 'modal', with only a few changes. Sometimes jazz is complicated for, let's say, the average person. This was easier for most people to hear. Miles came in with that idea... him and [pianist] Bill Evans... We just got on with it. Like Miles would say, 'This is a blues.' Or he'd play another tune and say, 'It's in 3/4. Make it sound like it's floating...' One time I was making circles on the snare drum with brushes and the engineer said: 'Miles, what the drummer's playing sounds like surface noise.' So Miles said: 'That's part of it...' John [Coltrane, sax] was a conscientious guy – he was steeped in what he was doing. Sometimes he didn't know how long he was playing for. I recall one time Miles saying to him, 'Trane – why don't you play 27 choruses instead of 28?' Miles loved it, though, or he wouldn't have let him do it. I knew it was a good record when we made it. It was the best jazz band in the world."

13 MARVINGAYE *What's Going On*

RELEASED: MAY 21, 1971 (TAMLA)
PRODUCER: MARVINGAYE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 56; US 6
NME CHARTS: 1 (1985), 4 (1993), 27 (2003), 25 (2013)

UNCUT'S CONTRIBUTORS AND THEIR TOP CHOICES

Jason Anderson
Roxy Music - Roxy Music

James Brown
The Rolling Stones - Exile On Main Street

Ed Beale
Sex Pistols - Never Mind The Bollocks

Mark Bentley
David Bowie - Station To Station

Stuart Berman
The Stooges - Fun House

Michael Bonner
The Velvet Underground - Loaded

David Cavanagh
Pink Floyd - The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn

Michael Chapman
Cardiacs - On Land And In The Sea

Chris Charlesworth
The Who - Live At Leeds

Andrew Collins
Gang Of Four - Entertainment!

Leonie Cooper
The Streets - Original Pirate Material

Jon Dale
The Pastels - Illumination

Stephen Dalton
David Bowie - "Heroes"

Lora Findlay
Love - Forever Changes

Andy Gill
Bob Dylan - Blonde On Blonde

Simon Glickman
The Beatles - Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

Nick Hasted
The Band - The Band

Phil Hebbelthwaite
Lou Reed - Transformer

Rob Hughes
The Stooges - Fun House

Mike Johnson
David Bowie - Station To Station

Lucy Jones
Radiohead - OK Computer

Marc Jones
The Cure - Disintegration

Phil King
Love - Forever Changes

Kim Kriete
Bob Dylan - The Freewheelin'

Paul Lester
Chic - Risqué

John Lewis
Stevie Wonder - Innervisions

Gavin Martin
Love - Forever Changes

Piers Martin
Lou Reed - Transformer

Alastair McKay
The Velvet Underground - The Velvet Underground

(continues over page...)

200 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME

UNCUT'S CONTRIBUTORS AND THEIR TOP CHOICES

(...continued)

Mick Meikleham
Jimi Hendrix - *Electric Ladyland*

Andrew Mueller
The Go-Betweens - *Liberty Belle & The Black Diamond Express*

John Mulvey
The Beach Boys - *Pet Sounds*

Sharon O'Connell
Joy Division - *Closer*

Marcus O'Dair
Van Morrison - *Astral Weeks*

Louis Pattison
Nirvana - *In Utero*

Tom Pinnock
Nico - *The Marble Index*

Marcus Rich
Jeff Buckley - *Grace*

Sam Richards
Television - *Marquee Moon*

John Robinson
Bob Dylan - *Bringing It All Back Home*

Bud Scoppa
The Beatles - *The Beatles*

Robert Sekula
West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band - *A Child's Guide To Good And Evil*

Laura Snapes
The National - *Boxer*

Neil Spencer
The Beatles - *Revolver*

Fiona Sturges
The Smiths - *The Queen Is Dead*

Martin Talbot
Stevie Wonder - *Songs In The Key Of Life*

Adrian Thrills
The Clash - *The Clash*

Luke Torn
Bob Dylan & The Band - *The Basement Tapes*

Stephen Troussé
Television - *Marquee Moon*

Tommy Udo
Love - *Forever Changes*

Jaan Uhelszki
Led Zeppelin - *Physical Graffiti*

Wyndham Wallace
Talk Talk - *Spirit Of Eden*

Karen Walter
Rodriguez - *Cold Fact*

Michael Watts
Elvis Presley - *Rock'n'Roll*

Peter Watts
Van Morrison - *Astral Weeks*

Chris Welch
Count Basie - *The Atomic Mr Basie*

Susan Whitall
Stevie Wonder - *Songs In The Key Of Life*

Richard Williams
Miles Davis - *Kind Of Blue*

Nigel Williamson
Buena Vista Social Club - *Buena Vista Social Club*

Jim Wirth
The Incredible String Band - *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter*



12 DAVID BOWIE The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars

RELEASED: JUNE 6, 1972 (RCA)
PRODUCER: KEN SCOTT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 5; US 75
NMECHARTS: 27 (1974), 40 (1993), 23 (2013)

11 DAVID BOWIE Hunky Dory

RELEASED: DECEMBER 17, 1971 (RCA)
PRODUCER: KEN SCOTT
CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 93
NMECHARTS: 18 (1974), 38 (1993), 43 (2003), 3 (2013)

DAVID BOWIE: "Hunky Dory gave me a fabulous groundswell. I guess it provided me, for the first time in my life, with an actual audience – I mean, people actually coming up to me and saying, 'Good album, good songs.' That hadn't happened to me before. It was like, 'Ah, I'm getting it, I'm finding my feet. I'm starting to communicate what I want to do. Now: what is it I want to do?' There was always a double whammy there..."

KEN SCOTT [PRODUCER]:

"David knew exactly what he wanted. Some ideas came to mind as we worked on them. But there was a general understanding of what they were going to sound like. I saw him after the *Hunky Dory* sessions. He said, 'We're coming in again soon.' I said, 'You've gotta be crazy! *Hunky Dory* isn't even out yet!' He said: 'You're not gonna like this one [*Ziggy Stardust*]. It's more rock'n'roll.'"

10 TELEVISION Marquee Moon

RELEASED: FEB 1977 (ELEKTRA)
PRODUCERS: ANDY JOHNS AND TOM VERLAINE
CHART POSITIONS: UK 28; US -
NMECHARTS: 5 (1985), 26 (1993), 4 (2003), 29 (2013)

9 BOB DYLAN Highway 61 Revisited

RELEASED: AUGUST 30, 1965 (COLUMBIA)
PRODUCERS: BOB JOHNSTON AND TOM WILSON
CHART POSITIONS: UK 4; US 3
NMECHARTS: 5 (1974), 3 (1985), 14 (1993), 64 (2013),

8 THE SMITHS The Queen Is Dead

Starman:
David Bowie
in 1972



RELEASED: JUNE 16, 1986 (ROUGH TRADE)

PRODUCERS: MORRISSEY AND JOHNNY MARR

CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 70

NMECHARTS: 10 (1993), 1 (2013)

7 BOB DYLAN Blonde On Blonde

RELEASED: JULY 1966 (COLUMBIA)

PRODUCER: BOB JOHNSTON

CHART POSITIONS: UK 3; US 9

NMECHARTS: 2 (1974), 8 (1985), 17 (1993), 62 (2013)

6 LOVE Forever Changes

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1967 (ELEKTRA)

PRODUCERS: BRUCE BOTNICK AND ARTHUR LEE

CHART POSITIONS: UK 24; US 154

NMECHARTS: 52 (1974), 14 (1985), 18 (1993), 6 (2003), 37 (2013)

5 THE BEATLES The Beatles

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 22, 1968 (APPLE)

PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN

CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1

NMECHARTS: 39 (1974), 33 (1985), 8 (1993), 24 (2003), 9 (2013)

4 THE VELVET UNDERGROUND The Velvet Underground & Nico

RELEASED: MARCH 12, 1967 (VERVE)

PRODUCERS: ANDY WARHOL AND TOM WILSON

CHART POSITIONS: UK 59; US 129
NME CHARTS: 13 (1974), 16 (1985),
6 (1993), 9 (2003), 5 (2013)



3 VAN MORRISON *Astral Weeks*

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 1968
(WARNER BROS)

PRODUCER: LEWIS MERENSTEIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 55; US -
NME CHARTS: 63 (1974), 2 (1985),
15 (1993), 83 (2003), 68 (2013)

LEWIS MERENSTEIN

[PRODUCER]: "I went to Boston to hear him... he sat on a stool in Ace Studios and played 'Astral Weeks', and it took me 30 seconds to know. I understood. The lyric went straight to my soul, it was immediately clear to me that he was being born again. We took Van back to New York. I had an office with a little rehearsal room out back, and we'd sit around while he'd play tunes. I'd write down the songs I thought would go together for the album, because I sensed a story, like a little play. Van wasn't much of a conversationalist, and I never said, 'What do you mean by this?' I don't know what transpired between Bang Records and Van coming to Boston, but he had obviously gone through a rebirth. I knew I needed people who could pick up that feeling. Richard Davis was a highly renowned bass player, Connie Kay drummed with the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Jay Berliner was a fine guitarist. They were all super pros, but also open souls who played from the heart. We went into Century Sound. It was a Union date. There was nothing sacred about it, but right away it was magical. It was so beautiful, it was hard to take. They would run through the first few minutes of a song, never the whole thing, and then do it. Everybody got the sense of what was being said musically, even if they didn't get what was being sung by Van. Everybody was into it. I remember Richard bent over his bass with his eyes closed, tuning into Van. It's hard to give the feeling a voice. It was beyond amazing."



2 THE BEATLES *Revolver*

RELEASED: AUGUST 5, 1966
(PARLOPHONE)

PRODUCER: GEORGE MARTIN
CHART POSITIONS: UK 1; US 1
(ALTERNATE TRACKLIST)
NME CHARTS: 4 (1974), 11 (1985) 2
(1993), 5 (2003), 2 (2013)



Animal magic:
The Beach Boys, 1966



1 THE BEACH BOYS *Pet Sounds*

RELEASED: MAY 16, 1966 (CAPITOL)

PRODUCER: BRIAN WILSON

CHART POSITIONS: UK 2; US 10

NME CHARTS: 3 (1974), 20 (1985), 1 (1993),
3 (2003), 26 (2013)

TWO MONTHS BEFORE *Pet Sounds* was released, in March 1966, Brian Wilson stepped out of the studio to conduct a quick telephone interview with *Melody Maker*. "I think the group has evolved another 800 per cent in the last year," he told the reporter, Ren Grevatt. "We have a more conscious, arty production now that's more polished. I've spent five months working on this new album, and it's like I'm in the golden era of what it's all about. It's all just coming out like breathing now."

Fifty years on, the idea of 1966 as a golden era is more pronounced than ever; three albums in this Top 10 date from that storied year. *Pet Sounds*, however, remains unchallenged at the top of the chart, a position that it also achieved in a *NME* Top 100 published in 1993. Since then, its status as a "teenage symphony to god", as a lavish document of how pop music could extend its sonic and emotional range without losing any of its visceral impact, has only grown. Perhaps its presence here as No 1 depends on something of a cumulative effect; that canonical albums sustain their positions through people learning from and referencing the countdowns which have gone before?

There may, though, be another reason. Many of *Uncut*'s key artists have had such long and feted careers that there is little agreement over what might be their greatest album. Tussles endure between a whole clutch of Beatles records, even if *Revolver* now customarily comes out on top. As the chart on

page 40 proves, the profligate brilliance of some performers – David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, among others – has mitigated against them achieving a higher rating for one specific album. Not exactly disastrous for a career spanning multiple decades, but clear trouble for their ranking in charts such as this one. If Bob Dylan had made a mess of *Highway 61 Revisited* and concentrated his energies on *Blonde On Blonde*, he might well be reclining imperiously at No 1 right now.

Other artists, however, often find assessments of their rich careers focused on one consensus album: *Liege & Lieff* for the extended Fairport Convention family; *Rock Bottom* for Robert Wyatt; *Hounds Of Love* for Kate Bush; *What's Going On* for Marvin Gaye; *Forever Changes* for Arthur Lee and Love; and, of course, *Pet Sounds* for The Beach Boys.

Fifty years on from its release, one of the miracles of *Pet Sounds* is that we can still listen to it without feeling overwhelmed by the burden of its reputation. Accumulated gravitas cannot, remarkably, diminish the charms of this most delicate and subtle of blockbusters. It's the sound of one young man trying to come to terms with his own responsibilities and possibilities; the perfect textbook example of how music can amplify the personal into the universal, even as it claims otherwise. "I could try to be big in the eyes of the world," as Mike Love protests on Wilson's behalf during "That's Not Me", "What matters to me is what I could be to just one girl."

On *Pet Sounds*, Brian Wilson took everything a generation had learned from pop singles, and rechanneled that spirit into something broader, deeper, more complex. An album, no more and no less.

JOHN MULVEY

Space Is The Place

BY SUN RA

How the interstellar pioneer of free jazz created a mystical, Afro-futurist epic as a gift for the Creator: "He was the most unusual person..."

WHILE HISTORY IS full of musical auteurs, single-mindedly pursuing their own niche interests and expanding the minds of a coterie of cult followers, few have been quite as dedicated to their art as Sun Ra. Born Herman Poole Blount in 1914 – though he claimed he was in fact from Saturn – and backed by his Arkestra collective, he released multiple albums of experimental jazz each year from 1957 until his death in 1993, sometimes in runs as small as 75 copies.

"He wrote at least one composition a day!" marvels Arkestra member Knoel Scott. "Every day. I remember I'd see him at the piano in the mornings. I asked him why, and he said, 'Everybody all over this planet is always begging the Creator for things, but nobody ever gives the Creator anything. So every morning I give the Creator a song...'"

One of his most enduring gifts to the Creator remains "Space Is The Place", a 22-minute epic that appears to mix Duke Ellington, West African funk and Afro-futurist mysticism. With the title repeated by female singers including the late June Tyson, the song builds and builds, propelled by percussion, free-jazz saxophones and Sun Ra's interstellar organ.

"He pioneered a lot of things," explains Val Wilmer, the British jazz photographer and writer who became good friends with Sun Ra and the Arkestra during the late '60s and '70s, "in the use of keyboards and so on, in jazz. The other

thing he did, the way they dressed in that Egyptian look, well, Earth Wind And Fire and lots of other bands were inspired by that."

As well as acting as the title track and centrepiece of the *Space Is The Place* album, the song also gave its name to a feature-length film that Sun Ra and his group filmed in 1972. Mixing live footage with a surreal narrative, the movie dealt with time travel, teleportation and the emigration of all African-Americans to a distant planet. As Scott explains later on, this wasn't just some Ziggy-style fantasy, but genuinely a deeply held mythological belief system for Ra and many of the Arkestra.

"He was the most unusual person," says Marshall Allen, Sun Ra's trusted lieutenant and now leader of the Arkestra. "He kept you working and kept ideas flowing until there was so much that it was sometimes overwhelming. It was once in a lifetime, you know?"

TOM PINNOCK

VAL WILMER: I first met Sonny – everyone who knows him calls him Sonny – in New York in the late '60s to interview and photograph him. I



KEY PLAYERS



Marshall Allen
Alto saxophone



Danny Ray Thompson
Baritone saxophone



Knoel Scott
Arkestra saxophonist



Val Wilmer
Photographer

started off by asking, "When were you born?", and he said, "Well, we are trying to do away with the idea of being born. I've developed an equation which will show that if we were never born, we will never die."

KNOEL SCOTT: The more I study the cosmology of ancient Egypt, the more I understand Sun Ra, because I realise it really was as if he was an Egyptian priest, with the concepts he's talking about.

WILMER: I remember their house in New York was just total chaos. There was so much stuff. There were instruments hanging everywhere, there was silk

from a parachute hanging, to stop bits of plaster falling off the walls, and a rubber ball suspended from the ceiling. You could hardly move for drum kits and everything. The back room was full of books and various literature about black history and everything under the sun.

DANNY RAY THOMPSON: We were in Denmark in 1971, just before "Space Is The Place". We'd just done a 10-month tour or something, and Sun Ra said, "We're going to Egypt." We stayed in the beautiful Mena House Hotel. It was right by the pyramids. We danced on the Sphinx, and I met



Sun Ra on Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, CA, November 10, 1974

the Minister Of Culture, and the Minister Of Antiquities for the region – Zahi Hawass, he's really big now. He told us, "There's a lot of strange stuff that goes on around the pyramids – why don't you bring a tape?" So he opened up a tomb for us that had just been excavated, the mummy was still in there, all the hieroglyphics were still on the wall. He took me and another fella in there, and we recorded this song called "Along Came Ra". About halfway through us playing, we heard something go "Mmm..." So we played it again, and got to the end and heard "Mmmmm..." So Zahi told us, "Let's go." We found out it was the keeper of the secrets. It was his tomb. We also went deep inside the Great Pyramid, said the name "Ra" nine times, and the lights went out and it was unbelievably dark. I told the BBC this story when they came to Philadelphia, and the lights went out in the hotel we were in. I said, "I told you it was a true story!"

SCOTT: I think Sun Ra was a representative of the culture of African-Americans in its correct depiction as descendants of the ancient Egyptians, the Nubians who built the Pyramids and created science and mathematics. When the Blues Brothers say "We're on a mission from God", amplify that a thousand times and you have Sun Ra. He was on a mission, and he was totally consumed with this mission to spread enlightenment. These are the concepts within "Space Is The Place".

WILMER: Sonny never stopped talking, he ran the band like an army. He was very firm with them and restrictive on their activities. Some

people went along with it when they were recovering from problems like drugs and drink, that's how they survived, but other people wanted to go out and live a normal life and he said, "No, we have to rehearse at the drop of a hat." He really worked them hard. He would have them rehearsing from, for example, four in the afternoon to six in the morning, non-stop.

THOMPSON: We used to rehearse with Sun Ra seven days a week when we were at the house on Morton Street in Germantown [Philadelphia].

"If you want money, fame or fortune, you don't wanna work with me, because I work for the Creator"

SUN RA

It could be at any hour that he could call a rehearsal, he didn't really sleep too much, he just cat-napped. I lived in the house, John [Gilmore] lived in the house, and a couple of other guys, too.

MARSHALL ALLEN: I'm still living here, on Morton Street, yeah. Of course we lived together, and we had to rehearse because we had all these

numbers we had to learn. It was all day, everyday, or any time of night. I didn't like it because I liked to run out sometimes. But I see why he did that. He'd have thousands of numbers, piles of music that we hadn't even played yet. He wrote so much, he was a 24-hour man, he was always writing something. He was fast, so he didn't linger on a number. Each time you played it, he'd play it differently, or switch your part. To us it was like, 'Ah, we gonna take all day doing this!' I always had to take notes. It's difficult stuff, you gotta study it when you go to bed, and then the next day he'd probably give you a new part, change yours or give you someone else's!

WILMER: It was just an ordinary house. It belonged to Marshall's father and he gave it to them – sold it to Sonny for \$1 or something. It was quite a nice place, though a bit spartan. No-one was making any money out of this music, let's face it. That's why he kept them on a firm leash and made them eat beans and rice and corn bread all the time.

SCOTT: When I auditioned for Sonny, he said, "Look, I work for the Creator, and my band is the Creator's band. If you want money, fame or fortune, you don't wanna work with me, because I work for the Creator." And he went on to talk about a few other things, then he repeated, "If you want money, fame or fortune..." That was the first time I sat with him, but I found that whenever you talked to Sun Ra you would hear about the Creator.

ALLEN: You didn't have no time for yourself no more, to do other things. But that's the way it is.



Sun Ra, Marshall Allen and John Gilmore, Moers Jazz Festival, Germany 1979

He had so many ideas and he didn't want to miss none of them. He'd write them down and off we'd go, all day long, half the night, take a break, eat, then go back at it. You still had to rehearse every day on the road. Riding the bus, you get tired – then you're gonna have a rehearsal, ha ha. Then you wanted to relax, but you gotta rehearse. You lived the music. I got a stack of music as tall as I am, and that's just my parts! Yeah, he was strict, as he needed discipline and he needed precision.

THOMPSON: The neighbours had gotten used to us. In fact, one next-door neighbour had children there, she had five girls. And one of them told me later, "We grew up, we did our homework, we did everything to Sun Ra's music."

WILMER: The basis for Sun Ra's music was very different to what Miles Davis was doing, for example. Sonny was making them do something else, and lot of the things they played are much more intricate.

THOMPSON: We played "Space Is The Place" for about six months or something before we recorded it. Our bass players usually lived in New York so they couldn't come down all the time for rehearsal. So for most of the bass parts for these songs, Sonny had me play them on baritone sax. He wrote "Space Is The Place" in 4/4, but the bass part is in 5/4 – don't ask me how it fits, it just fits. He wrote that bassline for me.

ALLEN: We recorded "Space Is The Place" in Chicago, and it was one of the first records with all the girls singing. It was a long one, you know! We were hitting a groove, so it just went on. They had to fade out on it, it was so long.

THOMPSON: Sun Ra would direct tracks while we were in the studio, he'd point to somebody and we just played intuitively. We didn't overdub. On "Space Is The Place", it was straight down, it was what you hear. We had all our dancers and we had just come back from Ann Arbor Jazz & Blues Festival, then we went to Chicago and cut the song. On a recording session, Sun Ra would tell

the engineers to turn the tape on and keep moving. But that time the guys never did turn the tape on. So we played it and I thought we were recording it. It's a very long song, 22 minutes, I think. So we played it once and found out they didn't turn on the tape. I'm like, "Oh boy, here we go again" ... but the music is so energising that it didn't make any difference. So we did the second take, and it was 22 minutes long again. After it stopped, Sun Ra was like, "Yeah, that was it, that was nice." You should've heard the first take. You think the second take was something – the first take was really something.

SCOTT: There are certain types of Sun Ra songs that are mantra songs. But it's not an Egyptian or Indian mantra thing, it's an African-American mantra thing that goes back to the church. Musicologically speaking, "Space Is The Place" comes from the gospel shout. That's why all the best bands came from the South, 'cos they all came out of the church, and that feeling went into the music.

THOMPSON: The *Space Is The Place* movie took about six or seven months to make. It was a regular film with actors, cameraman, all kinds of stuff, a director. Sun Ra didn't have a script, though, he didn't want one. Anything you heard Sun Ra say, it was coming from his spirit.

SCOTT: *Space Is The Place* was Sun Ra's solution for the problems African-American people were experiencing over 400 years over here [in America], that the Nubians of ancient Egypt had experienced away from their earthly home, which was Egypt, and away from the place where they originally came, our original planet, Sirius

B. And if you look at the cosmology of the Dogon as well as the mathematics within the pyramids, many of those were built so that at a certain point in time, the light from Sirius B will shine down on a certain spot – it was calculated and it's all documented. So *Space Is The Place* really dealt with those concepts, but in a simplified form.

THOMPSON: We still play "Space Is The Place" now. It doesn't go as long as Sun Ra had it on the record, you know, but it goes

on. It's an unusual piece and it's one of our favourites, the crowd always loves it. It is an endurance test somewhat, but the music has got so much energy in it that it makes you feel extremely happy. Sun Ra had a mission and we were all for it, even now. Marshall Allen, you know he's for it, he's the bandleader now. Sun Ra's music is so happy and so healthy, and it does some wonderful things to you.

SCOTT: Sun Ra would say that when you're really into a tune, and you know it, and you're playing your ass off, and you really think you're doing it, then that ain't nothing. He'd say, when you're not

sure, when you're wondering if you're playing right and you're trying to get this out, that's when you're really playing. And I have found that to be true.

WILMER: The last time I saw him was when I went to theirs in Philly many years ago. I went to interview John Gilmore, but Sonny and I hung out for a while, too, and he gave me a record and signed it to me. Someone drove me and Sonny to the station, and I got on the train. The next thing, I hear him shouting at me – I had forgotten the record. All I can remember seeing is him running down the tracks, sort of tummy wobbling, and he says, "Here Valerie, you forgot this!" And that's the last

time I saw him. But you see what I mean – he was also a normal human being. ☺

Gilles Peterson's Sun Ra compilation, *To Those Of Earth... And Other Worlds* is out now. Many of Val Wilmer's photos can be found in the new, revised Omniverse Sun Ra book. <http://artyardrecords.co.uk>

FACT FILE

- **Written by:** Sun Ra
- **Produced by:** Alton Abraham and Ed Michel
- **Recorded at:** Streeterville, Chicago
- **Personnel includes:** Sun Ra (Farfisa organ), Marshall Allen, Danny Davis, Larry Northington (alto sax), Danny Ray Thompson (baritone sax), John Gilmore (sax, vocals), Elo Omoe (bass clarinet), Pat Patrick (bass), June Tyson, Ruth Wright, Cheryl Banks, Judith Holton (vocals)
- **Released:** 1973

TIMELINE

Early 1971

Sun Ra teaches a course at the University Of California - 'The Black Man In The Cosmos'

December 1971

The Arkestra travel to Egypt to explore the ancient sites and play shows

1972

Sun Ra and his group film *Space Is The Place*, a feature film produced by Jim Newman, which

attempts to present some of Ra's beliefs

October 19, 1972

The collective record "Space Is The Place" at

Chicago's Streeterville

studio, releasing it as the title track of the *Space Is The Place* LP the following year

new for 2015 on...

b e l l a u n i o n



BEACH HOUSE

Thank Your Lucky Stars



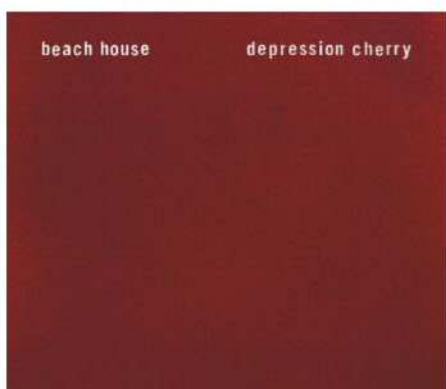
JOHN GRANT

Grey Tickles, Black Pressure



FATHER JOHN MISTY

I Love You, Honeybear



BEACH HOUSE

Depression Cherry



EZRA FURMAN

Perpetual Motion People



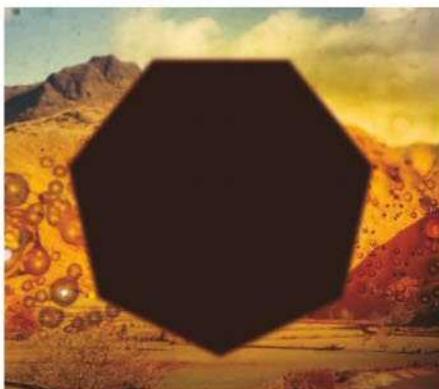
MERCURY REV

The Light In You



PINS

Girls Like Us



LANTERNS ON THE LAKE

Beings



LANDSHAPES

Heyoon



“We’ve got the past and the future.”

The shortcomings of a rock’n’roll democracy. The accumulation of “hedonist medals”. Dancing on graves. Sexism. Cancer. Baggage galore... In Paris, NEW ORDER take stock, after one of the strongest and most poignant comebacks in recent memory, and fend off the latest jibes from their troublesome ex. “He’s not got a monopoly on history,” protests Stephen Morris. “It’s our past as much as his.”



Interview: Stephen Dalton
Portrait: Nick Wilson



Renewed Order: (l-r)
Tom Chapman, Stephen
Morris, Phil Cunningham,
Gillian Gilbert and
Bernard Sumner



Fine time: (l-r) Sumner, Morris, Gilbert, Tony Wilson, Rob Gretton, Peter Hook, 1989

P

ARIS' LES BAINES DOUCHES has a rich musical heritage. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, this former bath house held a subterranean basement club hosting shows by the likes of Talking Heads, Depeche Mode and Suicide; meanwhile, in December 1979, Joy Division played here, spawning a celebrated live album. Later, it became a kind of Parisian cousin to Studio 54. Nowadays, it is an elegant boutique hotel where New Order stay when they pass through Paris. Which has certain symmetry, at least. If you want a metaphor for the creeping gentrification of the French capital – and of rock itself – look no further.

Sitting in one of the hotel's luxurious suites one morning in November 2015, the 59-year-old Bernard Sumner radiates an air of schoolboy mischief. But nowadays his deadpan humour and soft-spoken, slightly camp manner suggest he may be maturing into Salford's answer to Alan Bennett. They even have the same haircut. Sumner begins by saying he is disappointed with the previous night's show at the Casino de Paris, citing a few technical glitches. But surely it wouldn't be a New Order gig if everything went smoothly? "Ha! It wouldn't be an old New Order gig," he says. "No, we like to get it right." New Order's unprecedented new mood of professionalism, Sumner says, is mainly due to him keeping his indulgences in check. "I just can't take the hangovers any more," he nods. "I can't get fucked up any more, so I might

as well be more professional about this music malarkey. I still drink, I just don't get drunk. But we've earned our hedonist medals, we've done our tour of duty, and now it's time to do something else."

Something else, in this instance, means a majestic third-act comeback. The band's latest album, *Music Complete*, was a luxuriant blast of vintage New Order in their kaleidoscopic, euphoric, electro-pop mode. It made an impressive entrance at No 2 in the album chart before ending up in *Uncut*'s Albums Of The Year, among many accolades. It also marked the band's debut on Daniel Miller's Mute – a return to their independent roots a mere two decades after the collapse of Factory Records.

"Mute was a bit more of a Factory Records scenario," Sumner nods. "And despite all our trials and tribulations we did love our time on Factory, we loved some of that anarchy. And it has a father figure, a bit like Tony Wilson was, which is Daniel Miller. So it's very appealing."

Does Sumner ever miss the chaos and incompetence of Factory? "Strangely enough, no," he laughs. "I think when you're young you can cope with all that, because you think it's a bit of a laugh. But when you're older, you realise it's bloody hard work. Making the album was super-intense. So when you're doing that much work, you don't want someone to fuck their end up. I'm not saying they always did at Factory, but they made some dodgy decisions."

Daniel Miller is also in Paris, leading a delegation of Mute top brass to witness the live launch of *Music Complete*. A long-time studio mentor to Depeche Mode and musician himself, Miller played a hands-on role in recording and mixing the album. The band's return to their classic synth-heavy sound was, he says, one factor in New Order signing with Mute.

"It suits them to be more electronic, so of course that was part of the whole picture for me," Miller explains. "If this had been another guitar-rock album, for me that's not what the essence of New Order is. It's the mixture between the two. But it was more about the songs, really. If you've got great songs then it doesn't matter what the format will be."

DURING THE PAST 10 years, the legend of Joy Division and New Order has been bolstered by a slew of books and films. Even the night before, the band chose to end their set at the Casino de Paris with "Atmosphere", complete with a photo-montage of Ian Curtis and the words 'Joy Division Forever' blazed across onstage screens. It was an unusual concession to nostalgia for such unsentimental, forward-thinking pop modernists. Indeed, while some of the tracks on *Music Complete* may hark back



Joy Division's Ian Curtis and Peter Hook, '79

to vintage New Order, others are unprecedented in their canon, from Iggy Pop's brooding spoken-word monologue "Stray Dog" to the squelchy, shuddering blast of "Singularity". Sumner insists he always looks forward, not backwards. But he admits the accumulated gravitas around his two bands sometimes weighs heavily. Daniel Miller agrees New Order came to Mute with some hefty baggage. "But baggage can be interpreted in two ways," he argues. "It's a negative term but it can also mean great history, or legacy. I think a lot of it is to do with the record they made, which surprised everybody with how good it was. It becomes legacy and history when you make a great record; it becomes baggage when you don't."

Music Complete is the first New Order album not to feature Hook's basslines, which many consider an irreplaceable strand of the band's DNA. It transpires that the current lineup initially considered returning with a few low-key EPs instead of a full album, so nervous were they of fan reaction. With all five members now contributing to the songwriting process, Sumner describes the reconstituted New Order as a democracy. But it is clear from spending time with them that, with Hook now gone, the singer is first among equals.

"It's a rock'n'roll democracy," laughs drummer Stephen Morris, who is writing a book about the power structures that define and destroy rock groups. "Democracy never works in bands. Bernard's not a dictator in the conventional sense, ha! Bands always start out as a democracy, and then the rules come into effect, roles are assumed and you become streamlined into the rock machine. And the one at the front is always the one who grabs all the power."

In the basement of Les Baines Douches, almost within touching distance of the low stage where Joy Division once played, Gillian Gilbert considers her own remarkable return to New Order. Sitting with her husband, Stephen Morris, Gilbert recalls the events of 2007: the year Factory boss Tony Wilson died, Hook left the band and she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Gilbert was obliged to leave New Order in 2001 to care for her youngest daughter with Morris, Grace, who suffers from the debilitating condition, transverse myelitis. But it was her own illness that made her so resolved to rejoin the band. "I came out of Christie's hospital having had my chemo," she recalls. "It's really weird, because I went through the



New deal: signing to Mute Records with label founder Daniel Miller (second left) at The Groucho Club in London, September 2, 2014

"WE'VE
EARNED
OUR
HEDONIST
MEDALS.
TIME TO
MOVE ON"
BERNARD
SUMNER

car park and the wind was blowing, and I was like: 'God, this is what it feels like to be alive!' And then that made me really sad because Ian took his own life. When you haven't got a choice you think: 'Life isn't worth living.' I felt really sad for him. He didn't have a choice..."

"He bloody did!" Morris objects. "He was a stubborn fucker, let's be honest."

For Morris and Gilbert, there is a clear link between personal tragedy and New Order's comeback. After all, the band's 2011 live rebirth grew out of two benefit shows for their American filmmaker friend Michael Shambra, who needed medical treatment for a progressive neurological disease. Shambra, who produced New Order videos including "Blue Monday" and "True Faith", died in 2014. "If it hadn't been for Michael getting ill we wouldn't be here now," says Morris. Curiously, Gilbert's experience of enforced leave from New Order has given her some sympathy for Peter Hook's position. Having seen her contribution to the band written out of official press releases, and then having to lobby to rejoin instead of being invited back, she can understand Hook's sense of loss.

"That's what I felt when I left briefly, I felt so bad," she says. "You want the world to stop. It's awful that the others



TECHNO TUDOR!

Peter Saville on his sleeve designs for *Music Complete*

PETER SAVILLE IS "part of the family", says Bernard Sumner, one of the founders of Factory Records alongside Tony Wilson, Alan Erasmus and Martin Hannett. Though he had effectively retired from designing sleeves, Saville was tempted back for *Music Complete*. The result is a striking cover in a style dubbed "Techno Tudor", with crisscrossing black lines framing Mondrian-style colour patchworks.

"I knew they were revisiting electronics," Saville explains. "Responding to this I began by looking at circuitry and technical system grids. Ironically among these references I found I had half-timbered patterns of Tudor architecture, classic examples of which are in Cheshire - the ambivalence of which completed the circuit."

"Have you noticed that the black lines bow slightly?" Sumner asks. "His concept is Techno Tudor, and the black lines actually bow slightly, they are supposed to represent Tudor buildings. The concept is this album is quite electronic sounding, but you can hear the handicraft behind it. In Tudor times nothing was built using machines, so this is a combination of building by hand and machines."

According to Tom Chapman, when Saville concluded the presentation of his design ideas to the band in a London restaurant, everybody stood up and applauded. "Apparently it's the first sleeve that he's delivered on time," Chapman says.



Sumner and Morris with Hook: "He's not got a monopoly on New Order's history" (Morris)

carry on. It's like Joy Division – Debbie [Curtis's widow] felt really bad. It was like: 'My husband's died and you're carrying on.'"

"And you fuckers are fucking dancing on his grave!" Morris laughs. "You only got the bloody job because Ian died! Sorry, I'm being very cruel there, but you sometimes think that, don't you?"

This is trademark New Order humour: levity masking decades of guilt and grief. Morris may be joking, but Gilbert is serious, the most intense I have ever seen her. "The worst thing that can happen is you bloody die," Gilbert says with force. "That's the worst thing. Because I've been through cancer treatment, and I don't want to die."

THE OFFICIAL MOOD music around New Order's Paris show is all about positivity and looking forward. But the absence of Hook nevertheless feels almost tangible. Following his decision to leave New Order, Hook declared the band over. Sumner, Morris and guitarist Phil Cunningham disagreed, but initially

regrouped as Bad Lieutenant, bringing new bass player Tom Chapman on board. Then in 2011, the three remaining original members reactivated New Order by licensing the name from their shared company with Hook – Vitalturn – to a new company, New Order Ltd. Hook was not party to this decision and has launched a lawsuit for "misappropriation" of assets. The case is now due to go to full trial.

According to court reports, Hook receives 1.25 per cent of New Order's current royalties and other income from merchandising and performances. He is suing for up to 12.5 per cent, including backdated royalties of £2.3 million. The current lineup dispute these claims, pointing out that Hook still receives his full share of pre-2011 profits.

"He does get paid for the name New Order," Sumner says with exasperation. "A: he left the band, and B: he still gets paid for everything we do using the name New Order; he gets a percentage. Not just his old royalties, but let's say this new album, he'll get a cut of that, as well... We do pay him, he just wants more."

Behind this current dispute, of course, lie decades of emotional and psychological friction. Sumner and Hook have had a volatile relationship since first meeting in their early teens at Salford Grammar School. The singer claims "the atomic structure of the problem" is that Hook was jealous of him. But it is notable how, in their interviews and memoirs, both are still carefully respectful of each other as musicians. "It's sad if you are really close friends, yeah, but we weren't, really," Sumner shrugs. "I think we got to the stage where we were drifting apart and then the band happened, so that glued us together. But it just got worse and worse over the years. We are just very different people."

The rest of New Order express mixed feelings towards Hook, but everybody agrees the general mood is happier without him. "When I first joined the band, things were cool, it was quite good fun," says Cunningham, a fixture in the New Order family since 2001. "Then eventually he just got more and more unhappy within the band, and that was it. Now it seems like he's left the house, but he's outside chucking bricks through the windows."

Hook has never met his musical replacement, Tom Chapman, but he has publicly accused him of miming to his basslines. "He's said some awful things about Bernard in the press," notes Chapman. "And Gillian. We've all had it. But it feels like we've moved on from that. I think people

A REUNION WITH HOOK? NO. IT'S PASSED THE POINT OF NO RETURN.

BERNARD SUMNER



I DON'T THINK THAT'S ON!

Peter Hook's war of words with his former bandmates

"I've watched so-called New Order and Tom Chapman is miming to my bass on tape... It's the Milli Vanilli of bass." *NME*, 2012

"When we got to New Order we were still a great table, we just had a bit of a wonky leg. We kept shoving a beer mat under it, which was Gillian, but as we all know when you shove a beer mat under a table it eventually wobbles loose again doesn't it?" *SPOOK MAGAZINE*, 2013

"Tom Chapman really is a session musician. But they're sending him out doing interviews, which I don't think is being fair to the fans. And it was particularly annoying for me when I found out he was signing New Order records. I don't think that's on." *DROWNED IN SOUND*, 2014

"I would love nothing more at this point in my life to turn around to Bernard, who I admire greatly, and say: good luck man, have a great time. But because of the way they did it, I can't and will not. It's like a divorce, spending all the time fighting over the kids." *VANYALAND*, 2014

"They might be using the name but they are not New Order. That whole thing about calling a

press conference to say that a bunch of old farts had signed to an old-fart record company was the height of pomposity, it really was. They've definitely got an overblown sense of their own importance."

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT PROFESSIONAL, 2014

"The angst of New Order before we split up in 2006 was unbelievable, and in my opinion, Barney was being a bastard. And not only was he being a bastard to me, I thought that he was treating the audience badly." *100 PER CENT ROCK*, 2015

"I would never trust Bernard to hypnotise me because he'd have me running around naked, being a chicken... he's a complete fucking twat." *THE GUARDIAN*, 2015



We all stand: New Order show solidarité with France three days after the Paris attacks, Brixton Academy, November 16

were almost expecting us to fail with this album, but New Order are stronger than that. It's a new chapter."

It is interesting that Hook accuses the current lineup of "masquerading as New Order", and yet nobody made similar claims during Gilbert's sabbatical. "A working knowledge of the rules of rock'n'roll, the hierarchy involved, means the bass player trumps the keyboard player," explains Morris. "But in reality, it's no different at all. It was sexist, yeah."

Morris believes a future New Order reunion with Hook is not impossible, but Sumner is adamant it will never happen. But then, Ian Brown and John Squire spent years denying the Stone Roses would ever reform. A decade from now, could New Order play Etihad Stadium with Hook back in the ranks? "No," says Sumner. "Categorically. He's said so many bad things. It's passed the point of no return."

Sumner cites Pink Floyd's brief reunion at Live8 as proof of why New Order can never look back. "On paper it was a wonderful thing," he says. "But when you watch the footage it makes you cringe, because the body language is so bad. So no, I wouldn't want to put any of us through that. I hope he's happy in what he's doing; we are happy in what we're doing. He claims he's happy, so the situation is mutually perfect."

Such is the bizarre divided state of New Order for 2016. While Peter Hook and The Light tour with live versions of the band's classic albums, his former comrades play arenas with new material. It feels like he got the past, and they got the future.

"It's everybody's past, he's not got a fucking monopoly on history," Morris protests.

"He's got the past," Sumner nods, "we've got the past and the future."

ON NOVEMBER 13 – nine days after New Order play the Casino de Paris – a series of co-ordinated terrorist attacks took place in the city, leaving 130 people dead, including 89 at an Eagles



Of Death Metal show in the Bataclan concert hall.

"Our immediate reaction was one of shock and disbelief," says Bernard Sumner. "Having opened the tour in Paris so recently and having played there many times, it's a city very close to our hearts."

"I'm half French, so I felt really close to the events in Paris," says Tom Chapman. "We also found out later on that one of the girls who was doing catering for us at the Casino de Paris was shot at the Bataclan. She survived, but got shot in the leg. So we felt very affected by the events. Basically I just felt it was an attack on freedom, on people going out and enjoying the normal things we like doing in life."

When they play London's Brixton Academy just three

nights after the Paris attacks, New Order arrive onstage beneath a giant French tricolor flag. "Vive la France!" Sumner proclaims, dedicating "Love Will Tear Us Apart" to the Parisian victims. Chapman plays in a French football top.

"It was a mark of our respect to the people of France and to honour everyone affected by the shocking events in Paris," Sumner explains. "Hopefully it was a fitting tribute and in our own little way sent a message that we are all thinking of them."

As 2016 opens, New Order are preparing for a world tour, including festival slots, as well as what could turn out to be a headline-grabbing trial. It is very much emblematic of New Order: good times come hand in hand with the bad. "When we first started New Order it was both a burden and a blessing," considers Sumner. "People were interested in us because obviously we were Joy Division, but it was a burden in that we couldn't be Joy Division. We had to reinvent ourselves, but we weren't very good at that; we're not rock chameleons like David Bowie or Madonna. We didn't have a clue really. We don't design or contrive or engineer things, we just fuddle on and hope it works out."

DANIEL MILLER: THE NEW TONY WILSON?

BERNARD SUMNER is only half joking when he describes New Order's current label, Mute, as "a successful version of Factory". But there are some obvious parallels between these two indie institutions and their figureheads, Tony Wilson and Daniel Miller.

"I've always been a big fan of New Order and I was very close to all the Factory people," Miller says. "I don't know how hands-on Tony was, maybe he never went to the studio."

"Daniel is more hands-on," confirms Sumner. "Tony was a catalyst. He was interested in the creative side, too, but it would always be a fleeting visit: 'I can't stay long darling, let's have a listen... yes it's wonderful, I'll see you'



Daniel Miller at his London studio, April 7, 2014

tomorrow.' And then he'd probably drop some bad financial news in the last second before he left the room."

"I was really happy when we signed to Mute," Tom Chapman adds. "It felt like the right decision for New Order, almost going back to their independent roots. For me, Mute have always run parallel with Factory in what they did and the bands they had."

"If I had a role in making the record, it was more about not letting them prevaricate too much," Miller recalls. "And maybe at the end, being a pair of fresh ears. They had quite a lot of songs so my role was just putting my oar in, saying what I liked, and keeping them on track. Because bands need to finish records, ultimately."

ALBUM BY ALBUM

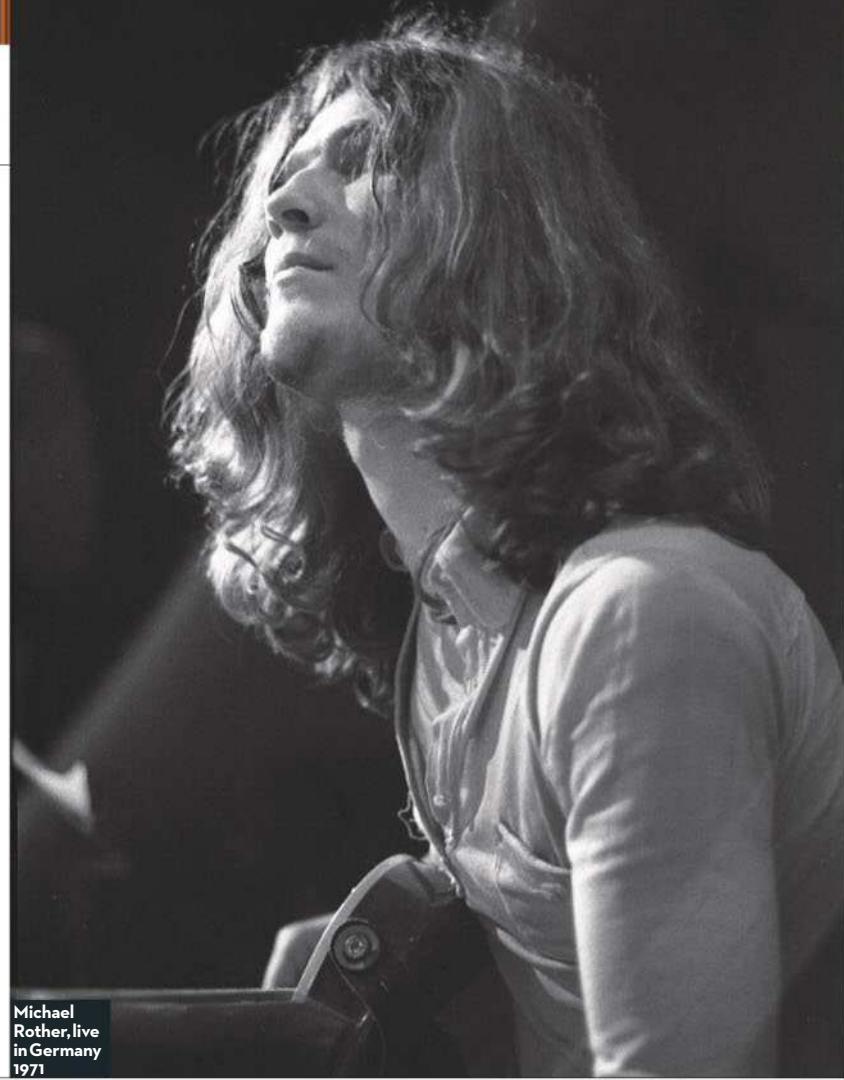
Michael Rother

The German legend reflects on his career peaks to date: "I'm getting busier..."

"I

AM REALLY quite the opposite of lazy," Michael Rother assures us. "I've been so busy and getting busier..." Despite not having released a new album since 2004, the Hamburg-born guitarist has rediscovered the joys of playing live over the past decade, taking the fruits of his influential, futuristic work with Neu!, Harmonia, Brian Eno and as a solo artist to fans around the world. Putting together Harmonia's lavish 2015 boxset and the *Neu! '86* album at home in the rural Lower Saxony village of Forst has kept him occupied, too. "I've sort of lost interest in releasing new music," this once studio-bound artist admits. "Instead, I now try to add a creative element when I play live. Maybe I am approaching Klaus Dinger's idea, as I enjoy being in touch with the audience. In China last year I saw these people going totally wild, running, jumping around the venue and having the time of their lives listening to the music. This is what I really love now."

TOM PINNOCK



Michael Rother, live in Germany 1971

NEU! NEU!

UNITED ARTISTS, 1972

NEU!

Fresh out of Kraftwerk, Rother and drummer Klaus Dinger invent motorik and craft a kosmische classic.

Michael Rother: This fellow who was working in a mental hospital with me had an offer to do film music in a studio with a band called Kraftwerk, and I joined him. That's where I first met Klaus Dinger. We never wrote in Neu!, we just went into the studio and created the music on the spot. It came together while we were doing the overdubs. We took the risk of renting a studio for four nights. But during the days there was another session – with Ritchie Blackmore. One night I noticed my guitar was completely out of tune, he'd used it maybe. I was furious, but they gave me a few bottles of wine as compensation. If you take a track like "Hallogallo", I'm still puzzled how it came together. The beauty lies in the fragility. When I did overdubs, I suddenly had this beautiful feedback, so I could play these long notes. Then Conny Plank decided to turn around the tape, and that inspired me as I love backwards music. I cannot stress how much we owe Conny, especially at the start, as we had no idea about the studio. He could pick up our vague ideas and shape them into something that made sense. His manual phasing on "Negativland" is great, too – take away the phasing and it's like looking at the track in its underwear [laughs]. When we tried to play live in 1972, Klaus and I, just as a duo, I tried to incorporate sounds from a tape machine, but people hated that, they were not willing to accept anything that they did not understand as being played live.

HARMONIA MUSIK VON HARMONIA

BRAIN, 1974



Rother teams up with duo Cluster for this low-key, pastoral delight. I went to Forst to check whether Dieter Moebius and Hans-Joachim Roedelius from Cluster were suited to help Neu! onstage. But then I was totally taken by surprise when jamming with Roedelius and I discovered a combination; my guitar and his fuzzy organ playing, which lead into completely new possibilities. I was looking for more depth of melody and sound and harmony than just my own guitar and Klaus on drums. Harmonia was different – it was like musical love at first sight. When Dieter [Moebius, keys] joined in it was different again, because he brought in other colours and surprises and his personality. We didn't 'jam', that's something I'd like to point out – we made music. For the first Harmonia album we collected music that we'd recorded over months in our studio, you know, and it was very adventurous. For me it was an inspiring time, and that went on for several months. We recorded on one stereo Revox machine, then played back onto the second and added other instruments. I think two tracks on this album were recorded live. "Ohrwurm" is five minutes edited from a concert, it was just a glimpse of a two-hour concert where we were searching, searching, searching, and getting nowhere more or less... but in these five minutes something came, and those minutes of "Ohrwurm" for me are among the most exciting pieces of music I have ever been involved in.

THE UNCUT CLASSIC



NEU! NEU! '75

BRAIN, 1975

Dinger and Rother reconvene for a mighty third LP of two halves – a floating, blissful Side One and its squalling, proto-punk counterpart.

There were two main reasons Klaus and I made another album as Neu! – one was that we had a contract with Metronome over three albums, and money was always in short supply [laughs]. But working with Roedelius and Moebius – who sadly passed away last July – was a very inspiring experience. I had this four-track which enabled me to record on my own and develop sketches. I thought some of those ideas would be suited to a Neu! LP rather than for Harmonia. Klaus was very unhappy when I decided to leave Düsseldorf and move to Forst. He tried to convince Harmonia



Rother with Neu!, 1972

HARMONIA & BRIAN ENO TRACKS AND TRACES

RYKODISC/GRONLAND, 1997/2009

of the idea of throwing all the forces together, but he was a difficult person. He was so strong-headed. It was amazing to work with him, but on a personal level he wasn't among my friends. The whole gang here in Forst didn't want him around. But by that time, Conny Plank had started his own studio, so the situation was different. We agreed to do two different concepts on the album, as I was interested in working with Klaus alone like on the first two albums. But while I was working with Harmonia, Klaus started working with two drummers, his brother Thomas and Hans Lampe, as his big desire was to be right at the front of the stage. He wanted to sing, and he started to play guitar, so we agreed to split the time in the studio with one half as a quartet with the two drummers, the other half as a duo. Contrary to assumptions, we did not argue about the music, we were totally on the same page.

"Hero" is such an impressive example of the qualities of Klaus – even today when I listen to it I get goosebumps. We combined the elements, so it's wrong to think that Side One is Rother and Side Two is Dinger. Klaus was a very powerful and impressive artist and drummer. I can tell you one story... he loved to play with broken cymbals. At a Kraftwerk show, I looked up and the front row had open mouths. Klaus had blood squirting from his hand because he was so determined and powerful that he'd cut his hand on the cymbal – but he never stopped playing. He was not a sophisticated drummer, but he put everything into his playing. He had this determination to crash through any wall. Sometimes in later years he chose to crash through the wall even though there was an open door [laughs].



Brian Eno turns up to Forst two years late for a set of informal jams and ping-pong matches. Eno came to a Harmonia concert in 1974. We were introduced, and he joined in after the break. When he told us about his understanding of our music it was clear he was listening to all of our stuff. He told us he discussed our music with David Bowie, which flattered us, of course. And we thought, 'Oh, at least someone is paying attention', as we weren't spoilt with compliments at the time. We invited Brian to visit us, but that didn't happen 'til two years later when he was on his way to see Bowie in Switzerland. He came to visit us in Forst and stayed for 11 or 12 days. There was no intention to record an album, it was just a private visit of this interesting gentleman with a lot of theories. We took walks, played ping-pong and sometimes we were in the studio. Sometimes only one of us went with Brian. I remember he once treated my guitar and sent it through his small synth, and I really enjoyed that – though I don't think it has been released. And sometimes we all gathered in the studio and switched on the tape machine and just let minutes go by. We were just enjoying ourselves. I remember we did not talk about producing an album, it was just recording, recording, recording. I think we had 40 sketches, sometimes only 40 seconds, sometimes longer. Of course the idea was that Brian would return to Forst, but then things went a different way [selected tracks from the sessions were eventually released 19 years later].

MICHAEL ROTHER FLAMMENDE HERZEN

SKY, 1977



Sleek, propulsive and melodic, Rother's debut solo album made him a star in Germany.

Two months after Eno left, I signed my first solo album with a small label in Hamburg, and in early '77 my solo career took off like a rocket. I felt the same about my solo work as I did about Neu! and Harmonia. Even though I recorded sketches on a four-track, the real music happened when I was in the studio and deciding overdubs and melodies. Conny Plank was a huge help on my first three solo albums, and [Can's] Jaki Liebezeit is a wonderful drummer. Some nice elements happened in the studio – on my delay, the tape came undone during the mix, and if you listen to the last third of "Feuerland" there is this garbling sound and then it stops. That was the moment when the tape came apart. Conny had a synth in the studio that I wasn't familiar with. So I turned some knobs and it sounded just like Donald Duck, so Conny recorded it. As a boy in the '50s, Carl Barks' Donald Duck stories and the German translations by the wonderful Erica Fuchs are a part of my history. But I hate all the phony Donald stories from the '70s – they have nothing to do with my love for Donald Duck. *Flammende Herzen* was not a success story until it was played in the radio. I lost all hope when I heard the distribution company only ordered 153 copies for all of Germany. I thought, 'OK, history is repeating itself, this will go the same way as Harmonia.' But suddenly people got very excited – the label called and said, "We've sold another 5000 copies" [laughs]. I never understood why people loved this and not the other, like Harmonia.

MICHAEL ROTHER

• MICHAEL ROTHER KATZENMUSIK

SKY, 1979



For his final album recorded with Conny Plank, Rother whipped ambient textures and fuzz-toned guitar into a sublime suite.

I tried to forget all the rock clichés, all the fast-finger guitar-hero stuff with which I had grown up, imitating my heroes. I tried to strip everything down to individual notes that made sense. Every note, every change had to make a difference. When playing at home, I had thoughts of these hazy, sometimes very distorted guitar sounds that I enjoyed. It was something raw, something that was not yet shaped. I think many people were confused, because they were not familiar with that kind of guitar sound they thought, 'Oh, so that's a synthesiser.' One of the ideas I had had already in Neu! – look at a track like [Neu! 2's] "Neuschnee", I used volume pedals to float the sound, to avoid the attack. And I used an equaliser, as I wanted to make my guitar sound like an oboe. In the mid-'70s, we knew these guys near Forst that built instruments, and I bought a modified fuzz from them and used it for those distorted sounds. A few years ago, I asked my studio guru technician to make a copy of that fuzz for me, and he said, "Haha, they made a mistake in the wiring back then" [laughs]. I said, "Please repeat the mistake, it might be part of that special sound!" After the success of the first three solo albums I decided to start my own studio in Forst, because Roedelius and Moebi had moved out. That was my dream come true, no more studio clock clicking away. I think I was very optimistic, not having a lot of experience handling gear like a 24-track machine, a big analogue two-inch recorder and a big mixing desk. That was the first thing that came to my mind when my albums sold – I didn't buy a Maserati, I bought recording gear.

MICHAEL ROTHER LUST

POLYDOR, 1983



Do the math: embracing the newfangled Fairlight, Rother plays everything himself on this slick, sample-heavy LP. In German the title means 'pleasure', which is funny because I know the

English word has a completely different meaning [laughs]. In German it is more innocent... By this time I was deep into the Fairlight music computer. I was fascinated by the possibilities of sound creation with that instrument. Sound performance by composing, by writing down musical structures using mathematical elements. It was like maths back at school – bracket... dash... two... – then if you make a mistake something completely different happens. I got so carried away by the possibilities of the Fairlight that I may have overdone it on *Lust*. I mean, the album is about joy, it's about what makes me happy, about what makes me want to do music and sounds and expression of these ideas, and at the time the Fairlight was very, very important. I first came across the



Rother in
2009: putting
things right

sounds of the Fairlight when I was in Montreal in '82 at a film festival. I had made music for a short film. We were watching the film, *Liquid Sky*. The film was impressive, but what struck me was the soundtrack – the whole thing was made on the Fairlight. So then I had to buy one, which was insanely expensive. I was playing everything on my albums by now. Nobody would expect a painter, writer or a sculptor to work with someone else, and so if it's possible technically, it's perfectly OK to work on your own as a musician.

NEU! NEU! '86

GRÖNLAND, 2010



After success apart, Dinger and Rother tried to continue the Neu! saga – cue the start of "a very dark period" when Dinger released the sessions without Rother's knowledge...

After 10 years of not working together, Klaus and I were both very successful with our own projects. La Düsseldorf sold even more albums than I did. In 1985 we decided to see whether we could come up with something together. So we started out in a studio in Düsseldorf and recorded for a week. On the last night, Klaus was not willing to accept that we had to pack up. He got so furious, he said, "No, we will continue." The studio owner said, "But Klaus, I have these other musicians coming in the morning." So Klaus ran out of the studio furious. Klaus came to Forst and we continued working for another two or three weeks. By that time, we were fighting over issues that weren't important. I remember we were sitting at my mixing desk seriously discussing that his idea of the mix was a third of a decibel louder than mine! We decided to stop and continue later. Years went by, and Klaus was acting in a very strange way. He was actually very proud of taking more than 1,000 LSD trips. Then, in December 1995, he sent me a fax congratulating me on the release of *Neu! 4* in Japan [laughs]. I thought, has he gone crazy now? I think he was fearing I'd prevent the album from being released, which was not the case – and he needed the cash. After Klaus died [in 2008], with the approval of Miki Yui, his widow, I started working on *Neu! '86* – my version, as opposed to the version Klaus released, which was

in my view not the best of what we did. I thought of Klaus during that process a lot, I tried to imagine what he would think of decisions. It was a chance to put something right.

MICHAEL ROTHER REMEMBER (THE GREAT ADVENTURE)

RANDOM, 2004



The final album to date, featuring sumptuous electronic textures and vocals from German superstar Herbert Grönemeyer and cellist Sophie Williams.

I thought I would like to use a singer, not a sample but a real human being. I spent an evening in Hamburg with my friend Thomas Beckmann, who collaborated with me on [1996's] *Esperanza*. We went for a last drink in a bar, and I was telling Thomas about my plans, but that I didn't know where to find a singer. Then the door opened and a young woman came in with a cello, and started singing. Thomas and I just faced each other and smiled, because it was so obvious. She had a beautiful voice, and she was also an amazingly skilled cello player. When she took a break, I told her of my background, and we exchanged phone numbers. I totally fell in love with her voice. We did just one recording session in Hamburg, in a flat. I had prepared about 75 sketches on my computer. Sometimes we did only one take, then moved on to the next one. It was amazing, really. After that session I spent months focusing on the vocals – sometimes I took only certain words or elements and even transposed them into different environments. I treated her like a beautiful instrument. Around that time, Herbert Grönemeyer visited me in Forst to ask about putting the Neu! stuff out, and I said, "Herbert, I am working on some stuff and I thought there's at least one track where you could add some interesting contrast with your voice." So we spent two or three hours recording. I saw Sophie a few years ago. She lives near Birmingham and occasionally still does live performances. How do I put it... she hypnotised me! ☺

Michael Rother plays London's Under The Bridge on February 5. Harmonia's Complete Works is out now

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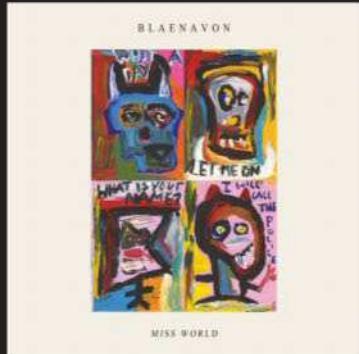
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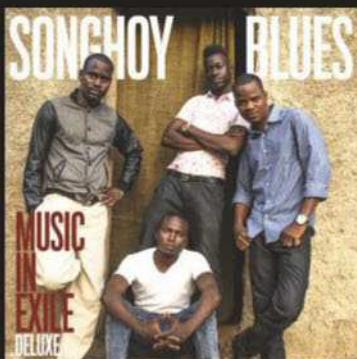
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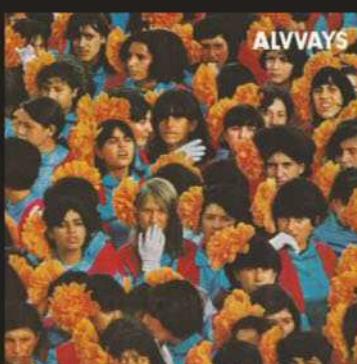
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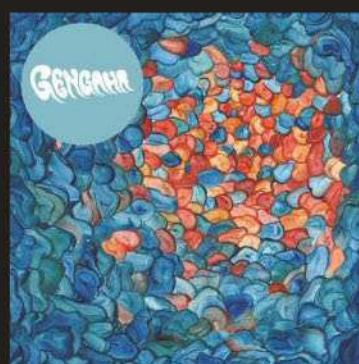
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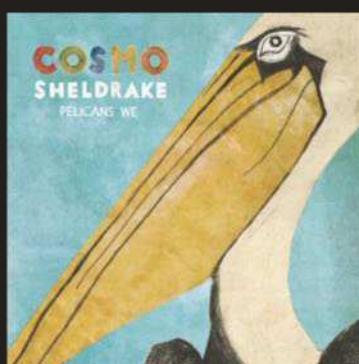
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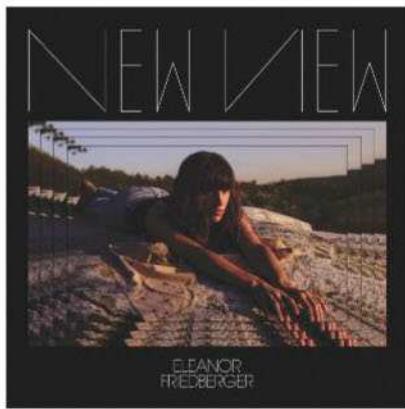
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JOE DENARDO

**TRACKLIST**

1	He Didn't Mention His Mother
2	Open Season
3	Sweetest Girl
4	Your Word
5	Because I Asked You
6	Never Is A Long Time
7	Cathy With The Curly Hair
8	Two Versions Of Tomorrow
9	All Known Things
10	Does Turquoise Work?
11	A Long Walk

ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER

New View

FRENCHKISS

Slowburner... warmly emotive third solo outing from the Fiery Furnace. *By Laura Snapes*

9/10

BEYOND THE ZANY travelogues of their songs, The Fiery Furnaces' very existence

always suggested a fantastical world. They reflected a canon where the biggest bands of the 1960s weren't The Beatles and the Stones, but Zappa and Beefheart. Arriving at the turn of the millennium, Eleanor and Matthew Friedberger progressed in tandem with another (ostensibly) brother-sister duo, The White Stripes. Where the latter's experimental tendencies soon became pompous, the Furnaces always tempered their outré moments with silliness – even though the

joke was sometimes buried deeper than audiences cared to delve. If only they had been the dominant pair, recognition might have come sooner for Eleanor's excellent solo material.

There have been few clearer distillations of a band's constituent parts than the Friedbergers' post-Furnaces solo careers. The latest releases on Matthew's undersubscribed Facebook page are speculative jingles written to soundtrack ads found in the pages of the *The Flatbush Jewish Journal* and *The Urdu Times*. It would be generous to call them wilfully obscure. Eleanor is the traditionalist of the pair, but a playful one. →

New Albums

Lady of the lake: Friedberger's new album is like "a whole portrait of a heart"



→ On her 2011 debut, *Last Summer*, she applied the Furnaces' picaresque outlook to her own life, setting sweet, surreal vignettes from her arrival in New York a decade earlier to songwriterly 1970s pop, shot through with a tinge of unease.

By 2013's *Personal Record*, the lingering disquiet had been replaced by sun-dappled grooves inspired by Alan Hull, Duncan Browne, and Elton John's *Tumbleweed Connection*. Friedberger said she wanted to make more "generic" music to allow more space for the listener. There were relatable songs about love and heartache, but also smart meta numbers about music's role in those situations. "I am the past," she sang on the track of the same name, "so please fill your boots/With memories you can pull up by the roots." On "Singing Time", she left an inattentive relationship, taking her

tunes with her: "Let's go my songs/One day we will know more."

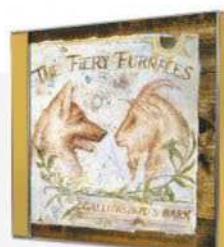
Friedberger's first two albums were recorded in New York, and have an essence that conveys the city's compact living and creative arrangements. ("I move from my desk onto my treadmill," she sang on *Personal Record*'s "My Own World".) For *New View*, she's moved to an upstate pile, and the spaciousness is apparent – the album has a lived-in depth that suggests wood paneling, pictures on the walls, fields beyond the windows. Her first two records were written alone, adding the group and their arrangements later; this time around, she shaped songs with the band Icewater (also frequent Beck collaborators) from the start, aiming for the sounds of Robert Wyatt-era Soft Machine, Slapp Happy, and George Harrison's "Love Comes To Everyone". There's a little Pink Floyd in there,

too, some faint country funk and lysergic warp, and the mid-tempo sophistication of Aimee Mann's later records, along with an arresting looseness. Often likened to Patti Smith, Friedberger has always been a brilliantly expressive singer, imbuing her every word with a gentle electric shock. Here, she sings more, eschewing clever constructs to immerse herself in vulnerable, romantic experiences, and shines through as a subtly emotive vocalist.

New View is autumnal and warm, gilded by an array of vintage organs that Jon Brion would be proud to call his own. They usually nestle within the rustic fabric of these songs, though at the end of "Sweetest Girl", one emerges with a gorgeous, wistful fairground choogle, while the revelations of a *Before Sunset* moment in "Cathy With The Curly Hair" are marked by excitable cosmic trills. Elsewhere, her songs end with shaggy jams that

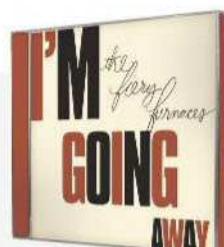
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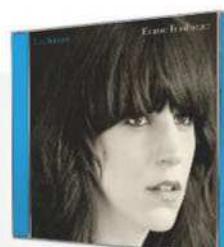
FIERY FURNACES
Gallowsbird's Bark
ROUGH TRADE, 2003
A debut of 16 jilted melodies soldered together from blues, honky tonk, psych, pop and noise. The brash lyrics and delivery are confrontational and odd, yet the inventive rattle was charming enough to make them critical darlings – until it became clear they were capable of far weirder things.

9/10



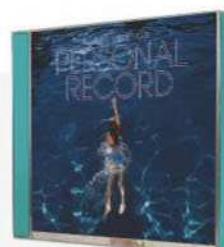
FIERY FURNACES
I'm Going Away
THRILL JOCKEY, 2009
The Furnaces' eighth album, before going on hiatus, is the most approachable. Eleanor was back in charge of lyrics for the first time since *Gallowsbird's Bark*: spurred by her spiky delivery, her dissolute characters hopped between barroom romps, vamping piano and doo-wopping ballads.

8/10



**ELEANOR
FRIEDBERGER**
Last Summer MERGE, 2011
Friedberger's debut solo LP reflects on summer 2000, when she moved to Chicago from NY. Her triumphs and mistakes unspool across the boroughs, from "Roosevelt Island" to "Owl's Head Park", to a soundtrack that also shows the best of the city: rockers, Brill Building piano-pop, surreal synth ballads.

9/10



**ELEANOR
FRIEDBERGER**
Personal Record
MERGE, 2013
This punning gem smoothed out the jitters of her debut for a set of wry accounts of formative relationships with friends, lovers and music. Songs act as armour against heartbreak as it bounds along amiably – until "Other Boys", a bittersweet waltz around a cheating lover.

8/10

are giddy as they are languid. Even "All Known Things", a rather formal tribute to a singular beauty, spirals off into a blurry, swaying finale.

Yet initially, at least, Friedberger avoids resolutions in her songs – melodic and otherwise – instead savouring off-kilter minor notes that help tell the story of what seems to be a relationship defined by false starts and protracted indecision. The chorus to gentle opener "He Didn't Mention His Mother" is an unanswered Dr Seussian riddle ("A house, a chair and a rug/A mouse, a bear or a bug/Was it you, was it you?"), while a mysterious tone pervades the highly strung "Your Word". Friedberger turns suspicious in "Because I Asked You", a spiky interrogation about a paramour's intentions. "Why would you want to dim the light/Or let that record play all night/Or scramble yolk in with the white?/Why would you wanna do that?" she demands briskly. "Because I asked you," she realises, in a tumbling chorus that lasts just five seconds before she resumes her pointed questioning.

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:**
Eleanor Friedberger and Clemens Knieper

Recorded at:
Clemens Knieper's barn, Germantown, NY
Personnel: Dorian DeAngelo (electric guitar), Eleanor Friedberger (vocals, guitar), Noah Hecht (drums, percussion, vocals), Malcolm Perkins (acoustic guitar, electric guitar, vocals), Jonathan Rosen (bass, vocals), Michael Rosen (piano, organ, synthesiser)

to happen that day/And then what I wanted, it happened/And that just don't always happen to me." "Two Versions Of Tomorrow" has a doleful, Charlie Brown vibe, and captures a stagnant crossroads in the relationship with a wry reference to her own work: "Listen to my old songs; two versions of 'Tomorrow'." The loose, jaunty closer "A Long Walk" boils down this once-uncertain love's seasonal cycle to a single day, where the hours fly by in a fun, repetitious scheme as comfort sets in. Come 5 o'clock, "We found that just by chance we were walking hand in hand," she sings, her cool voice exuding a lovely, confident tenderness. "We didn't detach ourselves or catch the perfect view/But we kissed in front of strangers like regular lovers do."

Admittedly, it takes a couple of listens for *New View*'s dusky tones to become distinct. Unlike Friedberger's previous records, it unspools less like a string of postcards from an entertainingly flighty friend, more like a whole portrait of a heart. It's comforting and surprising, full of trad sounds electrified by the off-kilter vision of an artist whose recognition as one of Americana's finest voices is long overdue.



Q&A

Friedberger on her move to the country and how it affected her latest album: "I'm in a happier place"

HOW COME YOU left Merge? Nothing juicy. French Kiss offered me a better deal. I had a two-record deal on Merge, and that was up, and I wanted to see what my other options were. I really do like the idea of being with a label that's based in New York. Psychologically it's a lot closer than North Carolina.

What prompted your move out of New York? I hate to sound like one of those people complaining about New York, but the main thing was not being able to afford to live there any more in the way that I wanted to live. Now I live about 100 miles north of the city. I bought this incredible house with a friend that would make no sense for anyone else. It has a few different buildings – the best part about it is this giant old factory next to the house, it's very strange.

Did the move affect your creative headspace? For me it's always been about really putting my head down and getting to work, but I don't see how it couldn't affect me, being in the countryside – walking mountain paths instead of down Bedford Avenue or wherever the fuck I was walking in New York. Somebody who I gave the record to early on said, "You sound like you're in a much happier place now." It's true. I am. So I hope that that comes through. To me it sounds very relaxed. I'm trying to figure out, why does it sound autumnal, why does it sound like it's from and for open spaces? I don't quite know why. It doesn't work in the city.

The first solo album was written on piano, the second on guitar – how about this one?

I wrote them all on guitar. I tried to be a little bit more strategic than I had been in the past, like – I need to be able to play every one of these songs myself if I have to. There were a few cases where I didn't have all the lyrics ready to go until the songs were very established, which is new for me. Usually I have almost a script ready where I'm just setting words to music. I didn't want the lyrics to be as important as they had been in the past, believe it or not. There were a few songs where I did what I think a lot of people do, where I fit words to melodies that I already had in mind.

Why did you want to get away from words? I know it sounds silly, maybe simplistic, but I just wanted there to be less of them. That was important to me, I wanted there to be less, and for them to be more repetitious, really just to switch it up. I don't wanna be accused of every song being like a novel.

They're more elliptical in parts – "All Known Things" almost seems like a sonnet.

That song is actually a little bit of a cheat. That's a song I was working on for a really long time, and I liked it so much I wanted to include it on the album. That was for these shows we're doing in conjunction with the Andy Warhol Museum, which we did in the States last fall, where there's five musicians scoring silent Warhol films. Dean Wareham organised the shows, Bradford Cox from Deerhunter is one of the other performers and so is Tom Verlaine, and Martin Rev from Suicide. That's a song I wrote for an Edie Sedgwick film, it makes a lot of sense when you're watching that. It's happening at the Barbican in May.

On the last record you were inspired by a group of '70s British singer-songwriters. Was there a specific pool here?

That's really my wheelhouse, I'm still obsessed with '70s music. The way that Neil Young's guitar sounds on "Down By The River", a bunch of George Harrison stuff, I wanted to have some slide guitar on some of the songs. Maybe the most obscure thing was Slapp Happy – they made an album called *Casablanca Moon*, and then they ended up re-recording the whole thing, so there's two different versions. It's so fun – they have this really groovy sound that's kinda like acoustic disco on some of the tracks, while others

"I'm still obsessed with '70s music, Neil Young, a bunch of George Harrison stuff..."

sound like German cabaret. There's a song called "The Drum", which I could listen to 100 times in a row. A big influence was stumbling on an estate sale of this guy who passed away. He had amazing stuff, including this beautiful '60s Epiphone 12-string acoustic guitar, which I fell in love with. I wrote most of the songs on it. Pretty much every song we started with basic tracks of drums, bass, Wurlitzer, piano, and this 12-string acoustic, which really shaped the album.



TRACKLIST

1	Prelude
2	If You Were Still Around
3	Taking Your Life In Your Hands
4	Thoughtless Kind
5	Sanctus (Sanities Mix)
6	Broken Bird
7	Chinese Envoy
8	Changes Made
9	Library Of Force [ft. Man In The Book excerpt]
10	Close Watch
11	If You Were Still Around (Choir Reprise)
12	Back To The End

JOHN CALE M:FANS

DOUBLE SIX/DOMINO

A radical reimagining of *Music For A New Society*, the Welsh wonder's 1982 work of dark genius. By Graeme Thomson

7/10

IT TAKES A brave, reckless, even foolhardy artist to meddle with a masterpiece. During a 50-year career as an arch-provocateur, John Cale has frequently been all three, often at the same time. So it proves with *M:FANS*, a characteristically fevered reworking of Cale's extraordinary 1982 solo album, *Music For A New Society*.

At the time of its release, *Music...* was not just the antithesis of its predecessor, the squally *Honi Soit*, but a sombre antidote to '80s brashness in general. Gripped by alcohol and cocaine, facing the loss of his father, Cale seemed broken, fashioning an album of fearful fragility and unsettling intensity. He has since described its creation as "tortuous" and "agonising".

In August 2013, while considering giving the out-of-print *Music...* a long overdue reissue, Cale performed the entire album at the Aarhus Festival, and afterwards resolved to have another crack at

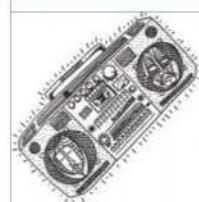
these songs in the studio. The result is a two-disc package (both albums are also available individually on vinyl), featuring a remaster of the 1982 original alongside a full-blooded re-interpretation, *M:FANS*. Cale describes the latter as a "radical reworking", and he's not wrong. For starters, he's mixed up the tracklisting and running order. *M:FANS* begins with "Prelude", a glitchy recording of an oddly moving phone call from the early 1980s, during which he asks his mother to sing the traditional Welsh ballad "Ar Lan Y Môr". Elsewhere, new versions of two previously unreleased outtakes – the disruptive "Library Of Force" and the very beautiful "Back To The End" – replace "Damn Life" and his experimental setting of a Sam Shepard poem, "Risé, Sam And Rimsky-Korsakov".

Music... was a solo album in the truest sense of the word, a minimalist and largely improvised affair pieced together – or, if you prefer, pulled apart – by

A to Z

COMING UP
THIS MONTH...

- p72 SAVAGES
- p74 THE WHITE BUFFALO
- p75 THE HIGH LLAMAS
- p76 TINDERSTICKS
- p78 CIAN NUGENT
- p81 LUCINDA WILLIAMS
- p82 BAABA MAAL
- p83 TORTOISE
- p85 TY SEGALL



AFRICAIN 808

Basar

GOLF CHANNEL

No-nonsense fun from German Afro-house duo As one half of Kompakt Records' Closer Musik, Dirk Leyers helped define the sleek, urbane sound of '90s minimal techno. Now he's teamed up with African pop specialist DJ Nomad for a does-what-it-says-on-the-tin project, combining their two areas of expertise. Tracks such as "Ngoni" and "Balla Balla", which mix West African instrumentation with acid squiggles and chugging disco-house rhythms, are obvious but effective. It's certainly not a high-concept hybrid; "The Lord Is A Woman" even chuck's a country gospel chant into the equation. *Basar* is marred by a couple of misguided forays into coffee-table trip-hop, but when Africaine 808 aim for the dancefloor, they usually hit the spot.

SAM RICHARDS



FEDERICO ALBANESE

The Blue Hour

BERLIN CLASSICS

Modest, crepuscular piano pieces from soundtrack composer

8/10

Berlin-based Italian

Federico Albanese's

second album may suit the morning after perfectly, but it was also inspired by the night before: its title refers to the sky's colour when the sun lies directly beneath the horizon. With its melancholic, piano-led instrumentals, however, it's unlikely to complement pre-clubbing activities. Only "Celine" offers any beat at all, and even this could be the tapping of Albanese's foot on the sustain pedal. Nonetheless, these dusky vignettes are embellished with delicate shades of cello and synth, making them most suitable, like his debut, *The Houseboat And The Moon*, for a quiet night in.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

Q&A

John Cale

Why did you decide to do *M:FANS*? For a long time I didn't want to think about *Music For A New Society*. People were coming up at gigs asking why it wasn't [in print], and I was trying to figure out a different way of presenting it. We did it in Aarhus, grew the arrangements a little bit, then went back in the studio. A nice surprise was finding some tracks that had never been released, like "Back To The End". I was very happy to find that. I had completely forgotten about it.

Some people will feel it's sacrilegious... I'm ready! I'm not ashamed. All the strains and the tensions of the original are still there, it's just done differently. I wanted it to have some of the nastiness that I picked up from hip-hop.

Lou Reed's death seems to be in there, especially "If You Were Still Around". It turned out that way, I didn't expect it. In a way it was peripheral, but it helped me make sense of it all. It was a little too close to the bone. I was staring in the mirror most of the time. I made a decision to be as honest as possible. It was an exhausting process. It was a bit difficult going back to it, but doing that concert helped, as it all started to have another life. The starkness of the original wasn't there anymore, but the strength of it was. *INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON*

electro-hymn. "Chinese Envoy" – as close as *Music...* came to a conventional ballad, threaded with Cale's mournful viola – is

now urgent white funk, with finger clicks and scratchy guitar. The previously sparse "Sanctus (Sanities)" has undergone a wholesale deconstruction into abrasive rock and desiccated techno.

The third incarnation of a song that first appeared on *Helen Of Troy* in 1975, the stately "Close Watch" is moulded into modern electronica, appearing as a supple and hypnotic duet with Amber Coffman. With typical perversity, the sole gleam of light on the original album, the Bowie-esque funk-rock of "Changes Made", now sounds like The Sisters Of Mercy, and has a new bridge.

The three outtakes included on the remastered version of *Music For A New Society* comprise

unreleased demos of "Chinese Envoy" and "Thoughtless Kind", alongside "Library Of Force", which is also tackled on *M:FANS*. Railing over an apocalyptic sound collage, Cale's intoned voice – imagine a demented Richard Burton – delivers a doom-laden sermon concerning "the crawling skin of God".

It all takes a bit of getting used to, and no doubt there are those who will cry "heresy" at these bold new skins being adopted for such venerated old ceremonies. In the end, the most significant result of this project is that Cale's magnificent 1982 album is available once again. It's an essential piece of work. *M:FANS*, meanwhile, is yet another fascinating maverick move by one of our most curious and invigorating minds.

Cale in the studio. *M:FANS*, in contrast, is shaped by the music he has lately been making with his band in concert and on 2012's *Shifty Adventures In Nookie Wood*. A preference for heavy beats and disjointed electronic music is exemplified by wildly different renditions of the original album's centrepieces.

The death in 2013 of Cale's former Velvet Underground cohort Lou Reed, too, seems pivotal, as *M:FANS* moves the emotional register of these songs from blasted sorrow to steely rage. "If You Were Still Around" is key, transformed into a requiem for Reed. Bleached and barely upright on the original album, where it fell somewhere between Peter Gabriel at his most forsaken and Syd Barrett's heartsick contusions, here it becomes a monumental, glacial thing, closer to the forbidding atmosphere of Scott Walker's *Tilt*. It's reprised near the end, movingly, with a gospel choir.

Cale has no truck with tentative reassessments. "Thoughtless Kind" is virtually unrecognisable. Twice as long as it once was, the almost unbearably stark nursery rhyme nightmares of 1982 are transformed into brooding industrial-pop, all stabbing synth chords and Auto-Tuned vocals. "Taking Your Life In Your Hands" converts the fractured beauty of the original into a thrumming

SLEEVE NOTES

▶ Produced by:

John Cale

Recorded at:

Cale's home studio,
Los Angeles

Personnel include:

John Cale (vocals,
keyboards, synths,
guitars, electric
viola, bass, drum
programming), Dustin
Boyer (guitars, synths),
Michael Jerome Moore
(drums, percussion),
Joey Maramba (bass),
Amber Coffman
(vocals)

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a broiling tension that sounds as much like war as it does love.

This is all thanks to the band – guitarist Gemma Thompson, drummer Fay Milton and bassist Ayşe Hassan – who feel both tightly drilled and nicely limber, the result of months of rehearsal and workshopping at a three-week residency at New York venue Baby's All Right, in which songs received flatly were mercilessly culled. Where *Silence Yourself* was recorded mostly live, *Adore Life*'s parts were recorded separately, with the mix completed by the Danish electronic musician Anders Trentemøller. The result is a crisp, metronomic propulsion, captured best on the churning, Eastern-tinged opener "The Answer", or "Sad Person" – a prickly rush that finds Beth noting that love has a similar chemical effect on the brain as a hit of cocaine.

SLEEVE NOTES

▶ **Produced by:**
Johnny Hostile
Recorded at: RAK Studios, London
Personnel: Ayşe Hassan (bass), Fay Milton (drums), Gemma Thompson (guitar), Jehnny Beth (vocals)

At times, Savages don't cleanly hit the mark: the jumpy bass and skittering hi-hats of "Evil" recalls featherweight post-punk revivalists like White Lies, and can't quite carry Beth's lyric, a nuanced lament about the dogmatic family values of French Catholicism. They make far more from a couple of accomplished torch songs. "Is it human to adore life?" asks "Adore", a track about shucking off sexual guilt inspired by the poet Minnie Bruce Pratt, who lost custody of her sons after coming out as a

lesbian in 1975. Finally, there is "Mechanics", a gloomy lieder redolent of the cold symphonies of Scott Walker's *Tilt*. A pansexual exploration of the whirring cogs and levers that define attraction, it feels naïve but hopeful, born in a dark place but groping towards the light. "My love will stand/The test of time," sings Beth. Increasingly, it looks like Savages will, too.

SAVAGES

Adore Life

MATADOR

Confrontational explorations of fear, love and coitus on improved second album. By Louis Pattison



8/10

A COUPLE OF years back, Savages pasted up notes around concert venues at which they were playing, requesting that the audience not take photos of their live performance. "Our goal is to discover better ways of living and experiencing music", it read, and of course they were ridiculed by some for their efforts: who were this band of women, with their all-black wardrobe, to tell music lovers how to enjoy themselves? To take oneself too seriously is to set oneself up for a fall.

But what if you don't stumble? The music assembled on Savages' second LP, *Adore Life* – 10 taut, white-knuckle songs about love, desire, fear, fucking and self-actualisation – takes itself very seriously indeed. In doing so, though, it succeeds in shucking off superficial comparison points, reaching for something deeper and more profound.

This was by no means foretold. Savages' debut, 2013's *Silence Yourself*, was full of vigour, but a little too in thrall to its influences – a bit Siouxsie, a bit

Stranglers, a bit Magazine – and after a decade-odd of bands reviving the sounds and strategies of post-punk, that didn't quite feel enough. Still, in the flesh, it worked. In 2013, Savages played a show at Ministry Of Sound, a nightclub in the concrete environs of London's Elephant & Castle. Inside, black-clad post-punk dads rubbed shoulders with art students sporting fierce bobs, and Savages set up in right in the middle of the crowd, encircled. Stark lighting illuminated vocalist Jehnny Beth's mannered dance moves – think Jacques Brel by way of Ian Curtis – and the effect was electrifying. It cut right to the paradox at the heart of Savages' music: that by embracing honesty and vulnerability, blowing away the smoke and smashing the mirrors, it was possible to create something of startling power.

In this spirit, *Adore Life* is utterly direct, delivered with a torrid urgency suggestive of the fact that any deviation or metaphor might endanger the entire enterprise. The subject is love – romantic, and sexual. But whereas some post-punk bands treated love archly, as something to subvert or critique – think Gang Of Four's "Anthrax" – Beth explores it at close quarters. Her lyrics speak frankly of a taste for submission. "I want your fingers down my throat," she trembles over wailing guitars on "When In Love", while "Surrender" is a command to engage in acts of mutual pleasure ("Come and be my muse/I hope to get used...").

Midway through "I Need Something New", a remarkable fusion of avant-garde opera and cold industrial rock churn, we find her mid-coitus with an unnamed lover in a cold room, her boomerang vibrato hiccuping into a jolt of falsetto as she spits out the word "fucking". Notably, though, the eroticism on display here never feels designed to titillate, or cater to male fantasy; a sense of confrontation is embedded in the music,

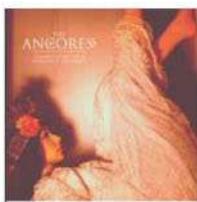
Q&A

Jehnny Beth



The record is all about love, relationships, sex... Around our first record, we made a statement that we were not going to write love songs, as there were other topics more pressing to us at the time. But this LP is all about love, and its nuances. There's a shameful side – the dark corners, forbidden thoughts. But also the hope, joy, freedom. Intensity has always been key for us, so the first question was how do we talk about love, while keeping the intensity? You can find it by playing loud, and fast, looking for an anger or violence. But you can also find it by opening your heart and putting out something so vulnerable that someone could take it and kill you.

It's interesting you chose an electronic producer, Trentemøller, to mix it. When Johnny [Hostile, producer] suggested Anders, we felt it was an out-of-the-box idea. But a few things were attractive: he was not a traditional rock'n'roll mixer, he was coming from electronic music, but with extensive guitar music knowledge. There is also a side to our music where the kick is very predominant, so that fit. What was also attractive was that we were working with someone of our generation. Bands often end up working with old-school people who have done all that history of rock'n'roll. Our desire is to work with people from a generation going forward with us, not going back. *INTERVIEW: LOUIS PATTISON*



THE ANCHORESS

Confessions Of A Romance Novelist

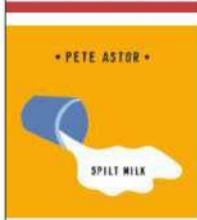
KSCOPE

Welsh multi-instrumentalist wrestles restless muse

6/10

de guerre of Catherine Anne Davies, makes attitudinal rock with a vaguely prog aesthetic and baroque flourishes – mellotron, glockenspiel, multi-tracked vocals and all. Literate and emotive (“P.S. Fuck You” gives some idea of the psycho-sexual terrain Davies inhabits), her debut album has echoes of PJ Harvey (the grimy blues of “Long Year”), early Kate Bush (the giddy “Popular”), Patti Smith and Prince, while the hooky “Doesn’t Kill You” suggests Karen Carpenter singing John Grant. Davies tends towards the archly self-conscious, and at times her music sounds oddly dated, but there is promise here.

GRAEME THOMSON



PETE ASTOR

Spilt Milk

FORTUNA POP!

Former Loft and Weather Prophets man returns in lugubrious style

8/10

Astor albums. In contrast to 2011's mainly acoustic *Songbox*, this one finds him plugging in and creating a doleful jangle that often feels like a bedsit Velvet Underground fronted by Lawrence or Ray Davies. He's ably assisted by the multi-instrumentalist James Hoare (Ultimate Painting, The Proper Ornaments) and others, though the true beauty of *Spilt Milk* lies in Astor's wry commentaries on domesticity, raging libidos and the pitiless march of time. “Really Something” and “The Getting There”, particularly, are as great as anything he's ever turned a hand to.

ROB HUGHES



THE BESNARD LAKES

A Coliseum Complex Museum

JAGJAGUWAR

Magickal, melodic fifth outing from Montreal rock orchestra

7/10

The Besnard Lakes, an open-ended group helmed by husband-and-wife Jace Lasek and Olga Goreas, remain a pleasing anomaly in 21st-century indie-rock. Obsessed by occultism, espionage, UFOs and '70s rock of a classicist stripe, they have at times found themselves mired in over-fussy arrangements, but here recapture something of the crisp economy of their breakout 2007 LP ...Are The Dark Horse. “The Bray Road Beast” and “Golden Lion” bloom with upfront melodies recalling The Alan Parsons Project and ELO. But deeper in, they balance light with shade, invoking HP Lovecraft on “Necronomicon” and swaddling the prowling “Nightingale” in eerie reverbs.

LOUIS PATTISON



BLOC PARTY

Hymns

INFECTIOUS/BMG

Noughties indie hopes return, revived

7/10

This is not the same Bloc Party that recorded 2012's *Four*. Since then, bassist Gordon Moakes and drummer Matt Tong – a whip-smart rhythm section – have left, apparently acrimoniously. Now augmented with new members, vocalist Kele Okereke and guitarist Russell Lissack reinvent the band from the ground up, replacing post-punk brio with soulboy angst and clubbing electronics. Good call, as *Hymns* sounds refreshed. “Only He Can Heal Me” is a song about seeking salvation in sex set to skippy UK garage drums, while the sashaying “Into The Earth” finds Okereke pledging “Rock ‘n’ roll has got so old/Just give me neon soul”. Best, though, is the gorgeous “Fortress”, just a wisp of synth and falsetto that aches with romantic longing.

LOUIS PATTISON



PETER CASE

HWY 62

OMNIVORE

Road music deluxe: powerpop guru revisits the populist heart of American music

8/10

first LP in five years, but it's closer to the mix of personal vision and social observation, layered across country/folk styles, he hasn't truly explored since the '90s. Acoustic 12-string, with subtle keyboard and slide-guitar textures, sets the backdrop. The songwriting, meanwhile, is uniformly devastating – poignant, perceptive, poetic. “New Mexico”, conjuring the open road, and “The Lone Good Time”, a breathtakingly personal reminiscence, are stunning; “Water From A Stone”, tackling the prospects of water shortage, and “Pelican Bay”, aiming at the jugular of the US prison-industrial complex, are brilliantly barbed political narratives.

LUKE TORN

REVELATIONS

Pete Astor on doing what he does and being what he is



► Philip Larkin was the somewhat unlikely catalyst for *Spilt Milk*, the latest album from Pete Astor. “I was reading something where Larkin says he has to write the poems he can write, not the ones he should,” explains Astor. “And while it would be way cooler if I could make a record like Grimes or Metronomy, I just do what I do: guitar, bass and drums. It's being what I am.”

Doing what he does best means that Astor has returned to making gloriously wonky indie-pop after immersing himself in electronica with The Wisdom of Harry and, with Ellis Island Sound, experimental soundscapes. But while *Spilt Milk* feels like a more sanguine extension of his '80s years with The Loft and The Weather Prophets, it's all part of the continuum of his working life.

Astor has never been able to leave music alone, even when he ‘retired’ for a time in the '90s: “I remember deciding to get rid of both of my guitars at one point. I was done. But songwriting is almost like a tick, I found that I just couldn't let it go. I've now got nearly a hundred songs that nobody's even heard. I can't help myself.”

ROB HUGHES



CHAIRLIFT

Moth

COLUMBIA

iPod advert band continue their R&B reinvention

Of all the once-indie acts trying their hand at R&B, New York duo

Chairlift have done better than most, securing a co-write on Beyoncé's eponymous 2014 album. Having tasted the big leagues, Chairlift's own third record attempts to crib the production style of Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, while the songcraft lands somewhere between the aforementioned Destiny's Child singer, Julia Holter and PC Music. The gleaming, immaculate sound is often impressive in isolation – the mechanised shoulder rolls of “Ottawa To Osaka”, “Polymorphing”’s spitting, sensuous funk – but *Moth*’s incessantly hiccuping polysyllabic pop lacks soul and sticking power.

LAURA SNAPES



CIRCLES AROUND THE SUN

Interludes For The Dead

RHINO

Superior noodles from the Grateful Dead's orbit

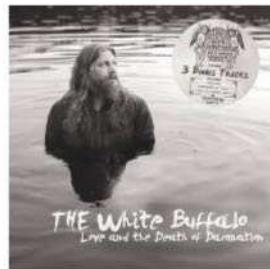
In all the Dead live activity last year, big-name guest guitarists – first Trey Anastasio, then John Mayer – were seen as critical to the box-office propositions. Anastasio's triumphs at the Fare Thee Well shows notwithstanding, a lower-key choice might have been Neal Casal; one-time Americana solo artist, now Chris Robinson's lead guitarist and occasional Phil Lesh affiliate. Casal's actual contributions to *Fare Thee Well* were broadcast between sets; a bunch of unobtrusive jams belatedly released here. Subtle Dead allusions proliferate, of course, notably on a spectral version of “Mountains Of The Moon”. Less expected is the prevailing funkiness, with organist Adam MacDougall driving the likes of “Kasey's Bones” into rewarding MGs territory.

JOHN MULVEY

AMERICANA



BEST
OF THE
MONTH



7/10

THE WHITE BUFFALO
Love And The Death Of Damnation

EARACHE

Fifth album from hirsute US roots-rocker

Regular viewers of *Sons Of Anarchy* will already be familiar with Jake Smith, aka The White Buffalo, on account of his serial contributions to its soundtrack. Most memorably, perhaps, on the Emmy-nominated "Come Join The Murder", the final season's swan song. Musically and visually – he looks like a slightly prettier Bob Hite – Smith certainly fits the aesthetic of the biker outlaw, his bluff narratives crammed with tough people facing tough dilemmas about sin, salvation and the rest of it.

Love And The Death Of Damnation doesn't veer too far from the same trampled path. "Dark Days" is a rowdy country thumper whose protagonist opts to mend his dissolute ways before it's too late; the fugitive of mythic Western tale "Chico" (complete with mariachi trumpets) finds trouble across the border, eventually meeting his end at the Casa de Nada: "He swings from the fan/Like a busted piñata/With no candy prize." But there's also a universal reach to Smith's work. "Rocky", a bruising rockabilly tune, examines the collateral damage of pushing life to its limits, the conclusion being that it's just as likely to enlighten as destroy. "They say Rocky sold his soul/Well he dipped his balls in rock'n'roll/He dove head first into the deep/Live for the moment wild and free," roars Smith in his burly baritone, sounding like a rich composite of Eddie Vedder and Steve Earle. At other times he's more restrained, particularly on "Radio With No Sound", which relies on spare piano and strings to sketch a portrait of a neglected teen whose only solace is the quietude of drink. A similar theme informs "Last Call To Heaven", a folk-country ballad set in the twilit dank of a downtown boozer. The song's patina suggests that Smith (born in Oregon, raised in Southern California) might just have a great soul LP in him. A sense heightened by the impressive "Come On Love, Come On In", with its horns, gospel harmonies and Otis-like entreaties. **ROB HUGHES**



THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP

► It's been an age since we last heard from **Loretta Lynn** (left). Thankfully, March sees the release of **Full Circle**, a belated follow-up to 2004's Jack White-produced **Van Lear**

Rose. Recorded at the Cash Cabin Studio in Hendersonville, Tennessee (and helmed by Patsy Lynn Russell and John Carter Cash), the album is finely weighted between originals, traditional folk/gospel tunes and new renditions of old classics like "Fist City" and "Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven". Elvis Costello duets on "Everything It Takes", while Willie Nelson shares vocals on "Lay Me Down". A new documentary, **Loretta Lynn: Still A Mountain Girl**, is

due around the same time. Look out, too, for **Lola**, the first in three years from **Carrie Rodriguez**. Out on her own Luz Records in February, it's inspired by the 1940s recordings of her alto-voiced great aunt, Eva Garza. Expect Tex-Mex originals in English and Spanish, alongside songs from her favourite Mexican composers.

On the live front, **Jason Isbell** begins his January tour at Brighton's Concorde 2, passing through Bristol and London before winding up at the Ritz in Manchester. Don't miss **Patty Griffin** either. On the back of wonderful new album **Servant Of Love**, the Austin songstress plays a number of dates in January, including Glasgow's Celtic Connections. And the return of Canada's **Corb Lund**, who also hits the UK that month, makes for an unusually fruitful start to the New Year. **ROB HUGHES**

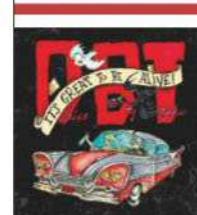
CROSS RECORD **Wabi-Sabi**

BA DA BING!

Muted, rural psychedelia, from Texas' wide expanse

7/10

Recorded on the Dripping Springs, Texas ranch, Moon Phase, Cross Record's *Wabi-Sabi* is a beguiling beast. The second album proper from Emily Cross, this time recorded with husband and collaborator Dan Duszynski, it's a strikingly confident record, with Cross' deceptively frail voice courting solitude – sustaining a kind of cracked whisper, she reminds of other, similar voices such as Jessica Pratt or Tiny Vipers' Jesy Fortino – while her songs move from intimate to galaxy-gobbling with the flick of an amplifier switch. Thor Harris, perhaps best known for work with Swans and Bill Callahan, guests, which makes lots of sense. **JONDALE**



DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS
It's Great To Be Alive!

ATO

Thirty-five tracks recorded live at the Fillmore

8/10

This is not the first Drive By Truckers' live album – it follows 2000's *Alabama Ass Whuppin'* and 2009's *Live From Austin TX*. However, the former was an early cobweb-clearer, and the latter a television special – so *It's Great To Be Alive!* is the first proper document of the fully evolved group in concert, an arena in which DBT's thoughtful reconstruction of unreconstructed Southern rock has always flourished. Recorded over three nights in San Francisco in November 2014, this 3CD/5LP set ably performs the mixed blessing of making you feel that you are there, and annoyed that you weren't. **ANDREW MUELLER**



THE DUKE ST WORKSHOP WITH LAURENCE R HARVEY
Tales Of HP Lovecraft

STATIC CARAVAN

6/10

Vintage HP sauce on bed of analogue atmospherica

With his potent mythology of malevolent elder gods and portals into the paranormal, cult horror author HP Lovecraft has inspired countless musical homages, from the Sabs to Metallica. Lancashire-based retro-analogue soundscapers The Duke St Workshop here compose scores to two Lovecraft stories, "From Beyond" and "The Hound", both narrated with fruity relish by fellow Wigan native/horror actor Laurence R Harvey. The effect is more chilling than camp as Harvey summons up a nightmarish world of reality-warping machines and beastly visitations over churning electronics, Radiophonic drones and spooked piano motifs. Slight but atmospheric. **STEPHEN DALTON**

SONGS for our MOTHERS

FAT WHITE FAMILY

Songs For Our Mothers

WITHOUT CONSENT

Sleaze-rock degenerates descend into the swamp

In an era where most bands play it desperately safe,

Fat White Family's transgressive approach – cheerfully obscene, drug-addled and squallid – has seen them touted as potential saviours of rock'n'roll. It's a mantle they have declined to grasp. The seedy disco strut of "Whitest Boy On The Beach" and the savagely ironic "Hits Hits Hits" are rare moments of clarity in this quagmire of seasick shanties and zombified country dirges. Even the attempts to shock, via references to Goebbels and Harold Shipman, seem a bit enfeebled. As a musical representation of physical and mental decline, it is morbidly compelling. But in the wrong mood, it's a bit of a trudge.

SAM RICHARDS

6/10



CEELO GREEN

Heart Blanche

WARNERS

Fifth solo album from former Gnarls Barkley and Goodie Mob soul man

CeeLo Green's curious 20-year discography – two colossal hits, little other chart action to speak of – perhaps reflects the risks inherent in his quirky brand of pop-soul. When it works, it's brilliant. When it doesn't, it's quickly irritating. *Heart Blanche* has been touted as a more personal album, but unless you count the revelations that Green craves his mother's blessing and used to love Duran Duran, it's as deep as a puddle. Even on a song called "CeeLo Green Sings The Blues", he does so through a filter of showy, self-protective irony. His voice remains an effortless marvel, largely wasted on this slick but trite material.

SAM RICHARDS

5/10



GUADALUPE PLATA

Guadalupe Plata

EVERLASTING RECORDS

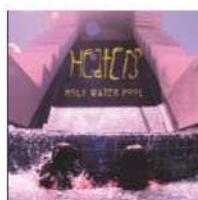
Hardcore Andalusian trio's psychobilly blues

Recorded at Liam Watson's retro-tech Toe Rag Studios

7/10

In London, Guadalupe Plata's fourth album is their first to be widely released outside Spain and South America. It's a filthy, fun blend of stripped-back rock'n'roll, punctuated by zombie seventh chords, rasped blues vocals and an Old World punkish intensity. The trio hail from Ubeda – one of Spain's Renaissance jewels – but this is music born in the Tex-Mex badlands, with homemade guitars and zinc-bowl percussion the weapons of choice. "Filo de Navaja" builds with dustbowl drama; "Calle 24" sounds like the Pixies attempting the theme from *Ren & Stimpy* in Spanish. This can only be a good thing.

MARK BENTLEY



HEATERS

Holy Water Pool

BEYOND BEYOND IS BEYOND

US surf-rock trio's debut is awash with psychedelic inflections

8/10

Michigan's Heaters take the sweet sound of surf and feed it through a psychedelic kaleidoscope, adding a disorienting dash of echoey weirdness to the Duane Eddy twang. Within those parameters, there's plenty of reverb-laden variation – while "Propane" is big and dense, sounding as if it was recorded at the bottom of a canyon, "Cap Gun" has a properly poppy fizz, and the frantic "Hawaiian Holiday" packs a belligerent, almost metal-tinged tone. Pick of the bunch is the splendid "Gum Drop", which swings and burns with a wild West Coast inflection, rising and falling like a Pacific tide.

PETER WATTS

WE'RE NEW HERE

Guadalupe Plata



▶ "Influences? Our holy trinity is Link Wray, Screaming Jay Hawkins and Hound Dog Taylor, with Skip James, John Lee Hooker and Blind Willie Taylor waiting at the gates," says Pedro de Dios Barceló (aka "Perico"), of Andalusian dirty blues agitators Guadalupe Plata. Perico fronts this formidable Spanish trio, alongside Carlos "Jimena" Quesada on drums and Francisco "Paco Luis" Martos Sanchez on washtub and electric bass. Their crossroads music has the devil in it: roiling rockabilly bristling with references to supernatural invocation and "duendes" – which translates either as a magic charm, or some kind of goblin.

They have a strong live reputation – which the UK can experience later this year – and enjoy a strong following in their homeland and across the Atlantic. "Latin American folk music has always been there in our homes and that connects, sure, and the language helps." You don't need an extensive Spanish vocabulary, though, to appreciate boneshaking third LP, *Guadalupe Plata*, and its junkyard, Waits-meets-Morphine vibe. As Paco tells *Uncut*: "You can create something from the most basic elements you have to hand – chains, boxes, tin cans – they're easy to carry in a car. The bass is a bucket and a broomstick... and you can always find a broomstick."

MARK BENTLEY



OLIVIER HEIM

A Different Life

OH RECORDINGS

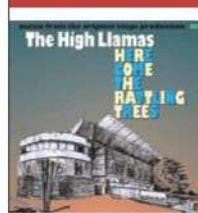
American-born, Polish-based Dutchman explores a new solo existence

8/10

Perhaps it's the Vini

Reilly guitars that open "Far Apart", but the shadow of early Factory Records looms large over this solo debut by former Très.b guitarist Heim (sometimes known as Anthony Chorale). That Durutti Column sound is there on "Pasadena" too, but elsewhere his fluid guitar playing allows for more traditional, if muted, riffs – as on "Italy" and the title track – with his vocal range and tone evoking the more soulful end of My Morning Jacket's recent work. Deft synthesiser touches add further musical texture to "Ocean", while "Dive" provides a lovely, Harold Budd-esque interlude.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



THE HIGH LLAMAS

Here Come The Rattling Trees

DRAG CITY

Theatre music, with gentle pop flourishes

8/10

and interludes from The High Llamas' titular theatre piece, a story where small-scale activism meets tales from the everyday. It's a lovely, understated album, guided by the poised arrangements of lead Llama, Sean O'Hagan, and featuring some of the group's most unabashedly pop moments in some time: see the rich melodies of "McKain James". As ever, the vision of The High Llamas is unassuming and benign, but with a subtle yet undeniable political undertow, imagining a more generous and inclusive community-to-be, emerging in response to the dark shadow cast by neoliberalism.

JON DALE



CHARLIE HILTON

Palana

CAPTURED TRACKS

Blouse singer goes solo

Portland trio Blouse released a synth-laden debut of woozy dreaming

but then progressed to a gnarlier, more angular sound on 2013's *Imperium*. Produced by Unknown Mortal Orchestra's Jacob Portait, Hilton's solo debut contains elements of both. "Funny Anyway" casts her as a warmed-up Nico. The synth beats on "Something For Us All" and "Pony" are full of sinister foreboding, while the disturbing "Let's Go To A Party" finds her chanting "I'm only happy when I'm dancing" as if it's a mantra of utter despair. Then she abruptly abandons the electronic textures for the almost conventional girl-pop loveliness of "100 Million". Weird – but in a generally good way.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

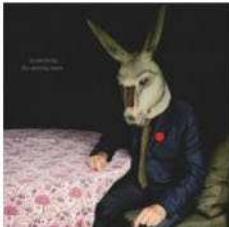


TINDERSTICKS

The Waiting Room

CITY SLANG

Brittle romance and dark mischief on quintet's 10th. By Jon Dale



8/10

FOR ALL THE aesthetic coordinates that get pinned on Tindersticks – there are still folks who think of them as that noir-esque gang with the enigmatic record covers and the Bad Seeds suits – they're rarely understood as exploratory and experimental musicians. It's partly to do with the way some misread their use of archetypes, often drawn from the darker ends of soul and R'n'B, as pure signification and nothing more. But it's also because Stuart Staples, leader of Tindersticks for their 22-year existence, knows how to sculpt the group's supple, limber improvisations into songs that bow the strings of the heart.

Staples' rare skill is still in evidence on *The Waiting Room*. Coming after the group celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2013, both with a series of live shows, and an album, *Across Six Leap Years*, that had them revisiting songs from across their history, on this new record they settle into a new dynamic, finding both grace and fever in their conversation. Certainly, Tindersticks' relatively new lineup – they're now a five-piece, with Staples, David Boulter and Neil Fraser from the original crew joined by Dan McKenna and Earl Harvin – has developed an empathetic mode of playing and listening together; if parts of predecessors *Falling Down A Mountain* and *The Something Rain* felt a bit strained or uncertain, *The Waiting Room* is an agile glide across the ballroom floor.

They have also called on a few guests, with two female vocalists in duet with Staples: Jehnny Beth from Savages, and the late, great Lhasa de Sela. The song on which de Sela appears, "Hey Lucinda", feels significant for a number of reasons. It's a song that Staples has tussled with for years – he has joked

elsewhere that the group would quip about the song, "Time to try again with 'Lucinda'" – but it also ties together the threads that weave their way through *The Waiting Room*, many dialectical in nature: reticence and bravery; melancholy and mischief; love and its many opposites.

Staples "put away" ['Hey Lucinda'] for years", he recalls, having originally recorded the song with de Sela in Montreal, late last decade. "Then recently I found myself thinking not of the song but of the moment we shared singing it to and for each other – a beautiful lost moment that I hope the music we have created does justice to." The group have certainly done "Hey Lucinda" justice, the gentle notes and tones they paint across the song's canvas allowing the playful undercurrent of the song

SLEEVE NOTES

► Produced by:

Stuart A Staples

Recorded at:

Le Chien Chanceux,
Creuse, France

Personnel includes:

Stuart A Staples
(vocals, guitar), Dan
McKenna (bass), Neil
Fraser (guitar), David
Boulter (keys), Earl
Harvin (drums), Jehnny
Beth, Lhasa De Sela
(vocals)

to shine through. And then there's de Sela, somehow managing to turn from world-weary to wide-eyed at the switch of a syllable, the "brittle bones" and "dirty cigarettes" of the protagonist worn into the grain of her voice, her lines carving through the smoke with a rhetorical flourish.

Elsewhere, *The Waiting Room* draws energy from some particularly fantastic, tightly woven brass arrangements from Julian Siegel, who has worked on a few previous Tindersticks albums. These arrangements add force and fire to "Were We Once Lovers?", a dramatic rendering of relationship trauma with Staples crying out, "How can I care if it's the caring that's killing me," and sculpt the slinky, winking groove of the following "Help Yourself" into something even more audaciously sensual, while Tindersticks pivot and slide around a beautifully minimal riff, almost making like

Afrobeat on downers.

"Help Yourself" and "Hey Lucinda" play out as the centrepieces of *The Waiting Room*, both navigating the conflicting states that characterise the album's miniaturised narratives and sly observations. After this, the album moves into subtler terrain – a few gorgeous, warm instrumental interludes, such as the crushed-velvet noir of "This Fear Of Emptiness", the denuded dream-song of "The Waiting Room" itself, and the becalmed comedown of "Like Only Lovers Can", which traces a descending chord pattern out into the silence.

There's another element to *The Waiting Room*, too: after he was invited to join the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival jury by its director, Calmin Borel, "The idea came up then of commissioning films for an album of songs," Staples recalls, "though I never thought the situation would arise when it would be viable." Further conversations with Borel led to their realisation, however, and much like the album, the end result is a quiet triumph, with directors like long-time collaborator Claire Denis, Richard Dumas, Christoph Girardet and Pierre Vinour reflecting the tracks with filmic reveries. It's a gorgeous complement to a set of songs that inscribe their intensities and their romantic visions directly on the listener's heart.

Q&A

Stuart Staples



The passing of Lhasa de Sela somehow marks *The Waiting Room*. What are your abiding memories of Lhasa, and do you feel her presence informs the album in other, less direct ways than her appearance on "Hey Lucinda"?

Lhasa was a great friend and a kind of musical soul mate. And, of course, a great singer. For me, the hardest thing about being a singer is to be believable, and I believed every syllable she sang. If I ever have doubts in the validity of my own voice, I say to myself, "Lhasa de Sela said I was one of her favourite singers – so fuck you!"

How does improvisation function for

Tindersticks? I sense it ignited much of the material on this album.

Because our studio is also our meeting place and rehearsal room, I try to record everything from the moment anyone picks up an instrument. Sometimes ideas come alive so quickly. I am happy to have caught "Help Yourself", for instance, on maybe the second time it was played; it holds all that excitement.

In your notes for the album, you reflect on a coming to terms with the group's history – particularly around the 20th-anniversary mark...

Sometimes it has felt quite a responsibility to make a Tindersticks album. The 20-year anniversary recordings and concerts helped me to feel free of that weight. Working on this album, I only felt the now and the responsibility only to the moment.

INTERVIEW: JON DALE



HINDS Leave Me Alone

LUCKY NUMBER MUSIC

All-gal quartet's bratty but heartfelt first Madrid's Hinds charge into earshot brandishing a name change (from Deers), a no-shit attitude and the kind of ramshackle, twanging garage pop that suggests drunken sleepovers with The Velvet Underground, Black Lips and The Libertines on the stereo. Their debut has a raucous charm that makes it easy to overlook their songs' emotional punch, but there's no avoiding it on "Warts", which sounds a warning against duplicitous friends, or "And I Will Send Your Flowers Back", a grrrl-powered expression of despair ("what a fucked-up mess"). Dolorous instrumental "Solar Gap" demonstrates Hinds' ability to establish a mood, as well as their talent for instant connection.

7/10

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SHARON O'CONNELL

HOOKWORMS Live Vol III

WEIRD WORLD

Strong live album from Leeds noise rockers

Recorded at Salford's Islington Mill in 2014, this third live album – the previous two were cassette-only releases – captures noisy Leeds five-piece Hookworms blasting out tunes from their fine second album *The Hum*. Hookworms pack a lot of crunch beneath an unassuming facade, and are rapidly out the blocks with "The Impasse", a whirl of screaming vocals and driving guitar that sets the tone. While vocals are still covered in echo, Hookworms are punkier and less claustrophobic than they sound on record, and put on a riveting show that includes a cover of The Velvet Underground's "I'm Not A Young Man Anymore", an almost silky "Teen Dreams" and stomping rocker "Retreat".

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PETER WATTS

HOWES 3.5 Degrees

MELODIC

Diverse ambitronic sound paintings from Manchester

This agreeable debut from Manchester-based electronic composer John

Howes comes with a hipster-friendly back story of DIY home recordings using vintage modular synths and audio cassettes. The parallels with old-school innovators such as Aphex Twin are obvious, from the word-mangling titles to the fluid layering of glitch and drone, rattle and hum. But even if Howes favours an almost cosy retro futurism, the results are unpretentious and often lovely. Impressively varied too, from the arrhythmic bleeps and chimes of "Concagnis" to the shuddering cyborg sounds of "Green Lense" to the Eno-ish tone poem "MP CD 13", which throbs softly like synthetic waves lapping on some faraway beach.

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STEPHEN DALTON



C JOYNES/NICK JONAH DAVIS Split Electric

THREAD RECORDINGS

England's finest John Fahey acolytes get plugged in Among the serried ranks of guitar soli, assembled by Tompkins Square for their

7/10

Imaginational Anthems comps, C Joynes and Nick Jonah Davis have both stood out; not so much for their radical differences, but for their Englishness. *Split Electric* finds them alternating tracks and experimenting with the current fad among their avant-folk ilk; electric guitars. The results are infallibly virtuosic, often compelling, with Joynes (Cambridge, rowdien) just outflanking Davis (Nottingham, crystalline). Notable cover art, too, in that the collage built on a 1981 *Kerrang!* cover is by outsider folk singer Richard Dawson; another reboot of the vernacular that, like his own music, hovers between rough-hewn wit and self-conscious whimsicality.

JOHN MULVEY



SEAN KHAN Muriel

FAR OUT

Saxophonist digs deep into soul-jazz He made a name for himself around the millennium with the funky "broken-beat"

collective, SK Radicals: now saxophonist Sean Khan returns in full-on soul-jazz mode. There are guest vocals from the likes of Omar, Heidi Vogel and Sabrina Malheiros, but more effective are the wordless, Sergio Mendes-inspired remix of "Samba Para Florence" and the Pharoah Sanders-style astral jazz of the title track. Best of all is "What Has Jazz Become?", a hard-swinging, eight-minute episodic piece where a female voice narrates a wry, poignant and quietly funny tale of a budding trumpeter desperately trying to sit in with a piss-stinking jazz legend.

JOHN LEWIS

AIDAN KNIGHT Each Other

FULL TIME HOBBY

Breathtaking third effort from Canadian singer-songwriter

Aidan Knight has been called the Canadian Sufjan Stevens due to

the melancholy of his music. On his third LP he sounds closer to Smog's Bill Callahan, his forlorn baritone suffused with a world-weariness that suggests a singer twice his age and experience. That's not to say Knight doesn't do cheerfulness – on "The Arp" he joyfully declares "What a life that I have lived". But the real high point comes with "What Light (Never Goes Dim)", which wryly tells of a new love affair ("You have convinced me to dance, this is a testament to your power to convince") and which builds from sparse drum and piano accompaniment to a wonderful swirling electronic maelstrom.

FIONA STURGES



HANNE KOLSTØ While We Still Have Light

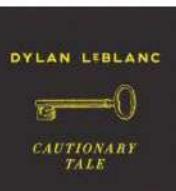
JANSEN PLATEPRODUKSJON

Norwegian artist ends a highly productive five-year period before the sun sets

That this is Hanne Kolstø's fifth album in five years might sound worrying in terms of quality control. But three of her last four albums have been nominated for Spellemann awards (Norway's Grammy equivalent) and there's no dip in quality for this one, reminiscent as it is of Gazelle Twin or The Knife. Apparently this is the last in the sequence of albums the Norwegian began in 2011, so it's perhaps not surprising that the mood is as valedictory as the title suggests: vocals, mixing hope and uncertainty, are laid atop fidgety percussion – often a double drum kit – and strings arranged by the renowned Norwegian composer Eivind Buene.

MARCUS O'DAIR

New Albums



DYLAN LEBLANC *Cautionary Tale*

SINGLE LOCK

Stately intensity from Muscle Shoals

Co-produced by Ben Tanner of Alabama Shakes and John Paul White, ex of the Civil Wars, LeBlanc's

8/10

third album is a finely crafted exercise in country-folk classicism: strong songs, given room to breathe, delivered with intense economy. "Beyond The Veil" is Gothic soul, Bill Withers in the bayou, "Easy Way Out" buzzes around Neil Young's "Down By The River", while "Man Like Me" and "Lighting And Thunder" (the latter sung beautifully by Alabama Shakes' Brittany Howard) mine a more tender seam. The cracked midnight blues of "Balance Or Fall", mournful as a whip-poor-will with its low strings and slow bleed of brass, exemplifies *Cautionary Tale*'s simple, stately elegance.

GRAEME THOMSON



LIZZO *Big Grrrl, Small World*

BGSW

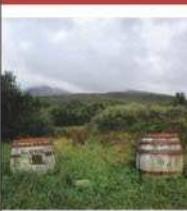
Tour de force from the Bon Iver-abetted US rapper

Minneapolis rapper Lizzo's second album

7/10

is short on great lines, though her style is so ferocious and playful – somewhere between Killer Mike and Missy Elliott – that you hardly notice. The self-styled Big Grrrl in a Small World is best when she rhymes about bodies. The haunted squiggle of "En Love" is a paean to the mirror, while the soulful, sung "My Skin" peels back the surface: "I see someone like me ashamed to be me/And honestly I'm fed up with it". It's doubly poignant in the age of #blacklivesmatter, and the record as a whole is an energetic, infectious romp through trap, Auto-Tune, West Coast soul and warm balladry.

LAURA SNAPES



MEKONS & ROBBIE FULKS *Jura*

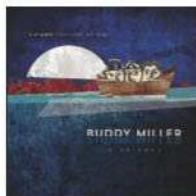
BLOODSHOT

Alt.rock luminaries drop out, tune in and recharge via traditional routes

8/10

Scottish island of Jura, Jon Langford and his Mekons mates joined forces last year with longtime friend Robbie Fulks, marking the occasion by writing and recording a crop of startling, stripped-down songs. An air of freedom and rejuvenation runs through these folk, country and Gaelic-inspired sides, whether the material be playfully theatrical ("I Say, Hang Him!") or hauntingly real ("Getting On With It"). Highlights aplenty, including Langford's traditional folk-style narratives, but Fulks' sardonic country-blues "Refill" and Sally Timms' channelling of Sandy Denny/Anne Briggs vibes on "Go From My Window" shine brightest.

LUKE TORN



BUDDY MILLER & FRIENDS *Cayamo Sessions At Sea*

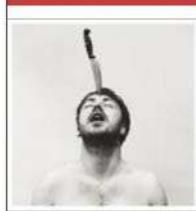
NEW WEST

All-star country cruisin'

7/10

Nashville veteran Miller is already an old salt at this kind of thing, climbing aboard each winter for the annual Cayamo Cruise from Miami to the Caribbean, a bunch of famous names in tow. This mostly engaging set draws from last January's trip, during which Miller rigged up the ship's bowling alley as a makeshift studio. Lucinda Williams, Kacey Musgraves, Richard Thompson, Lee Ann Womack and Shawn Colvin are among those lining up with Miller's band, though the standouts are Thompson's folky version of Hank Williams' "Wedding Bells" and a craggy "Sunday Morning Coming Down" from Kris Kristofferson.

ROB HUGHES



MONEY *Suicide Songs*

BELLA UNION

Doom-laden second album from talented indie trio

8/10

From its bleak title to every last groove, despair hangs heavy over Money's second album. Debut *The Shadow Of Heaven* was superior epic indie, unafraid to tackle big themes of life, god and death, and *Suicide Songs* concentrates very much on the latter with an extended sonic palette and larger budget. Opener "I Am The Lord" has an Eastern raga mood, the excellent, flagellating "All My Life" is like a gospel New Order, while "Night Came" swirls like psychedelic Radiohead. Strings and horns embellish the downbeat tone, often magnificently – "I'll Be The Night" – until the neo-comic coda of "Cocaine Christmas And An Alcoholic New Year". Intense.

PETER WATTS



JOHN MORELAND *High On Tulsa Heat*

THIRTY TIGERS

Third album from up-and-coming 30-year-old Oklahoma troubadour

8/10

After playing in hardcore punk bands for much of his teens, Moreland underwent a eureka moment when it suddenly dawned on him that his father's record collection – Neil Young, Townes Van Zandt, Steve Earle – was "just much cooler than mine". Alternating between acoustic ballads and full-on roots rockers could have created a disjointed feel, but it works splendidly with the salty, blue-collar honesty of his dustbowl voice providing an emotional cohesion on vivid, affecting songs such as "Heart's Too Heavy" and the warmly nostalgic "American Flags In Black & White". Not the new Dylan, but feasibly this year's Ray LaMontagne.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



MUERAN HUMANOS *Miseress*

ATP

Argentinian duo make a virtue of monotony Reminding us there's more to the city than Berghain, Berlin-based

Carmen Burguess and Tomás Nochette weave a malevolently hypnotic spell on their second LP, bulking out the sound with guitars courtesy of Einstürzende Neubauten's Jochen Arbeit. Its highlight is "Mi Auto", Burguess' gentle vocal eventually overwhelmed by Nochette's livid ranting against a backdrop reminiscent of Kraftwerk's "Autobahn" were it navigated by souped-up dragsters. "El Vino De Las Orgías", however, occupies similarly claustrophobic territory to Joy Division's *Still*, and "Miseress" recalls the pristine primitivism of OMD's *Architecture & Morality*, its simplicity echoed in the edgy, Suicide-like "La Torre De La Hora".

WYNDHAM WALLACE



MYSTERY JETS *Curve Of The Earth*

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL

Eel Pie Islanders all grown up

7/10

Three years in the making, partly written on a houseboat on the Thames and recorded in a disused button factory, Mystery Jets' fifth album finds the band – which now includes new bassist Jack Flanagan – leapfrogging across the decades as they dabble in wonky psychedelia, noodly prog rock and harmony-filled indie pop. What the Jets might have lost in terms of their early quirkiness, they make up for in melody and emotional heft. "Blood Red Balloon" is a wonderfully melancholy ode to the moon, while "Taken By The Tide" is about drifting friendship couched in daft but likeable rock melodrama.

FIONA STURGES



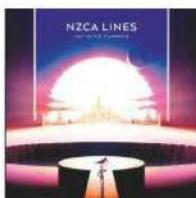
CIAN NUGENT *Night Fiction*

WOODSIST

Dublin's left-field folk guitar hero finds his voice

It's tempting to see the progress of Cian Nugent as analogous to that of his old duetting partner, Steve Gunn: from acoustic instrumentals (*Doubles*, 2011), through full-band psychedelic workouts (*Born With The Caul*, 2013) to this vocal-heavy, song-focused new set. But, as proved by his extra-curricular activities in The Number Ones, Nugent is his own man, influenced by indie-rock artisans like Cass McCombs as much as avant-roots fingerpickers. *Night Fiction* emerges as an engaging sampler of his range as well as his virtuosity, though the suspicion he's best suited to longform freak-outs is confirmed by "Year Of The Snake"; a heady folk-rock swirl that transforms into a Wedding Present-style ramalam deep into its 12-minute span.

JOHN MULVEY



NZCA LINES

Infinite Summer

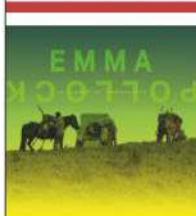
MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Glossy synth-pop second, with expanded lineup

7/10

Michael Lovett has a remarkably positive view of the apocalypse. The singer, songwriter and producer conceived the follow-up to his 2012 debut as a soundtrack to the Earth's demise, but rather than societal collapse beneath a giant red sun, "it's warm everywhere and people just party all of the time." Hence this dreamy, cinematic sweep of '80s synth pop, French filtered house and blue-eyed soul. There's little that's new – a less techno-indebted Junior Boys is the overall effect, while "How Long Does It Take" cruises yacht-rock waters – but despite the familiarity, *Infinite Summer* has a heart, and could probably melt permafrost with a single playing.

SHARON O'CONNELL



EMMA POLLOCK

In Search Of Harperfield

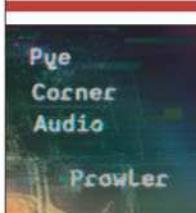
CHEMICAL UNDERGROUND

Mourning becomes eclectic for ex-Delgado

8/10

Emma Pollock claims to have barely whistled a Delgados song since they deactivated in the mid-2000s, but the Glaswegian band's balletic musical leaps and string-section splashes persist in her solo work. Her third album, *In Search Of Harperfield*, stakes out the sobering territory of parents' mortality ("Don't go now, you'll miss the best bit," Pollock pleads wryly on the autumnal "Intermission"), but the ex-physicist finds cold comfort in the cosmos on "Dark Skies", with melodies equally infinite – and oddly Sabrina-like – on "In The Company Of The Damned". In a field of her own.

JIM WIRTH



PYE CORNER AUDIO

Prowler

MORE THAN HUMAN

Atmospheric old-school synth soundscapes for stalkers

7/10

Jenkins' four-volume *Black Mill Tapes*, comes *Prowler*: a seven-track collection of kosmische synthscapes that will appeal to fans of Broadcast and the Warp label. Cinematic in conception and approach, the LP wordless reveals a small-hours narrative of tension and fear, via creeping keys, fragmentary melodies and water-torture percussion. "She Hunts At Night" and "Before Dawn" would work on the soundtrack to schlocky 1981 Stallone stressfest *Nighthawks*. As a whole, this vinyl and download-only release excels as the soundtrack to a thriller yet to be made. For "Prowler"'s four-minute promo on Vimeo, though, someone's given it a damned good go.

MARK BENTLEY



SANTIGOLD

99 Cents

ATLANTIC

US genre-hopper splits the difference between 2-Tone and EDM on sprightly third

7/10

A sunny yet gently satirical ode to 21st-century-style solipsism set to a skanking rhythm, "Can't Get Enough Of Myself" makes for an inviting opener for Santigold's third full-length, which contains many more songs that ponder ways we package ourselves for others' consumption. Here and elsewhere, Santi White's eagerness to brandish her love of 2-Tone ska lends a sense of coherence to a collection that can be varied to a fault. But whether *99 Cents*' operating mode is the Knife-like severity of "Walking In A Circle", the hazed-out hip-hop of "Who Be Lovin' Me" or the EDM comedown of "Run The Races", Santigold never flags in her campaign to capture the dwindling attention spans of modern pop fans.

JASON ANDERSON



BENJAMIN SCHOOS

Night Music, Love Songs

FREAKSVILLE

Resident Parisian highlights the romance of the city

8/10

Schoos ticks every box you could want from a moody French *chanteur*... except his nationality: he's Belgian. Equally confusingly, he cites the recently rediscovered and reissued Lewis' *L'Amour* as his fourth LP's greatest inspiration. Certainly there's a soft-focus intimacy to "Le Grand Paquebot Va Sombrai", something underlined by its flute-adorned coda, but the grand gestures of Gainsbourg and Vannier loom largest, while the layered synths on "N'Enlève Pas Tout" could have been lifted from Francis Lai's *Bilitis* OST. More subdued than last year's *Beau Futur*, these nocturnal romances still confirm French as the language of the impossibly glamorous.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

REVELATIONS

Emma Pollock: former Delgado, singer, physicist and tennis fan

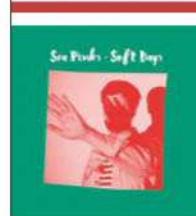


Kept busy running landmark Scottish indie label Chemikal Underground and associated studio Chem19 with her former Delgados bandmates, Emma Pollock has taken the best part of six years to come up with her third album. Named after her one-time family home, *In Search Of Harperfield* was recorded against a backdrop of her parents' failing health; her mother died in February. "I'm increasingly aware of how childhood comes back to meet you when a parent dies, which is where a lot of this record comes from," she tells *Uncut*.

A winter-toned descendent of The Delgados' orchestrally inclined 2000 tour de force, *The Great Eastern*, its youthful recollections and sobering adult meditations are lent an unusual weight on "Dark Skies", Pollock's background as a physicist – specialities: laser physics and optoelectronics, plus a bit of chaos theory – allowing her to spin off into distant corners of the cosmos in a quest for meaning.

Her understanding of the laws of bodies and motion may also explain her mild obsession with tennis. "I still play a tiny bit but much prefer to get a carry out and watch it on the TV," admits Castle Douglas' belated answer to Judee Sill. "I've watched every single Andy Murray tennis match. Perhaps that's why the album hasn't come out quicker."

JIM WIRTH



SEA PINKS

Soft Days

CF

Timeless indie-pop from expansive Belfast three-piece

Sea Pinks are now on to their second studio album and their neat

fusion of jangle and reverb is epitomised by "Everything In Sight", a terrific number that sounds a lot like My Morning Jacket covering The Smiths' "This Charming Man". The Belfast trio revel in producing the sort of catchy, fuzzy pop exemplified by the hooky "Ordinary Daze" and "Down Dog", although they can also work in more expansive territory, like "I Won't Let Go". There's wit, too, particularly on the punky "Yr Horoscope" and the downbeat jangle of "Trend When You're Dead", a droll but pertinent observation on modern life.

PETER WATTS



ARIEL SHARRATT & MATHIAS KOM

Don't Believe The Hyperreal

BB* ISLAND

Burning Hell duo trade witty lines on debut duet collection

Better known as two-fifths of indie-folk quintet The Burning Hell, Canadian duo Ariel Sharratt and Mathias Kom fill their debut as a duo with wordy and eccentric duets that occasionally stray into Wes Anderson-level whimsy. But there is charm, wit and emotional depth behind the knowing cuteness. "Fuck The Government, I Love You" is a gloriously verbose recollection of the pair's first meeting, with Public Enemy and Will Smith homages, but the real heart-squeezing beauty here is Sharratt's solo ballad "Eugene & Maurice", an achingly romantic tribute to *Where The Wild Things Are* author Maurice Sendak and his partner Eugene Glynn.

STEPHEN DALTON



SHEARWATER Jet Plane And Oxbow

SUB POP

Uplifting latest by globe-trotting ornithologist As well as being a musician, Shearwater's Jonathan Meiburg is an author and

8/10

naturalist, his work taking him from the Galápagos to the Arctic to Madagascar. Naturally, these disciplines cross-pollinate: *Jet Plane And Oxbow*, says Meiburg, is a "protest record" – one that finds him turn his florid songcraft to bear on a world hooked on rapacious consumption. The likes of "Backchannels" won't scare the Coldplay fans, but the presence of percussionist Brian Reitzell – last seen scoring NBC's *Hannibal* – brings a sense of stormy propulsion, adding hammered dulcimer to "Prime" and a galloping pace to "Filaments", its driving funk comparable to Talking Heads circa *Remain In Light*. The result: Meiburg's finest album to date.

LOUIS PATTISON

SHEER AGONY Masterpiece

COUPLE SKATE

Debut of mannered psych-pop, from Montreal

It wouldn't be wholly inaccurate to describe Sheer Agony as a lo-fi group, but that, in concert with their name, probably prepares the listener for a rough ride. In fact, the Montreal quartet's debut is a sweet and playful thing, perfumed psychedelic pop with notes of The Soft Boys, The Kinks and The Shins circa *Oh, Inverted World*. There's an arch quality to frontman Jackson MacIntosh's songs – "I firmly resolve not to date another actress" goes the opening line of "Careers". But there is plenty of artistry to back it up, from the fey, McCartney-ish "Anthony Ivy" to "Debonaires", a gently wearied paean to 24-hour party people, observed from the outside.

LOUIS PATTISON

SHOVELS & ROPE Busted Jukebox Volume 1

DUALTONE
South Carolina folk-rock duo raid their address book and celebrate their musical heroes

7/10



Carry Ann Hearst and her husband, Michael Trent, have called on an array of friends, among them JD McPherson, The Milk Carton Kids and Butch Walker, for this album of cover versions. The choices are diverse – Nick Lowe's "What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love And Understanding", Guns N'Roses' "Patience", Toussaint McCall's "Nothing Takes The Place Of You", Emmylou Harris' "Leaving Louisiana In The Broad Daylight" – and the arrangements imaginative. As well as fine musicians, Hearst and Trent show themselves to be a duo of impeccable taste. Most of all, though, it sounds like a bunch of friends having a ball.

FIONA STURGES



SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE Hexadic II

DRAG CITY

Strange, powerful acoustic undertaking from a creative underground force

7/10

Conceived as a companion piece to 2015's wild, charged *Hexadic*, on which Ben Chasny, the Six Organs Of Admittance mainman, revealed his new system of composition, *Hexadic II* is an acoustic, unpredictable, devotional affair. A song like "Anyone's Dawn" flows as old as time, gentle, sinister and eternal, while "Vile Hell" is an almost methodical staircase into the occult and "Cut Angle" so slight it barely even seems to exist yet still leaves a powerful memory. Not as violent as *Hexadic* but no less unsettling, this is a strange and fascinating album from an artist who continues to evolve.

PETER WATTS

HOW TO BUY... BEN CHASNY

Improv from other worlds



SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE Asleep On The Floodplain

DRAG CITY, 2011

This is a good example of the unique territory Chasny has staked out through his fine guitar-playing as Six Organs Of Admittance. It combines psych drone with folk picking and bluesy rambles that always sound weirdly otherworldly. 2005's *School Of The Flower* covers similar ground, while 2012's *Ascent* is a heavier variation on this theme.

8/10



COMETS ON FIRE Blue Cathedral

SUB POP, 2004

Comets On Fire had already released two albums – including the magnificent *Field Recordings From The Sun* – when Chasny joined as back up to Ethan Miller, making the sound denser and richer. *Blue Cathedral* is space rock in *excelsis*, thickly thrilling, with Chasny and Miller building wild echo-laden jams and scorching riffs over 45 blistering minutes.

8/10



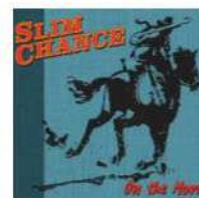
RANGDA False Flag

DRAG CITY, 2010

Chasny's dark, psychy collaboration and stylistic collision with Richard Bishop and drummer Chris Corsano combines epic 15-minute improvs like "Plain Of Jars" or the mind-bending "Serrated Edges" with tighter offerings like "Fist Family". It's also worth checking out his albums with Rob Fisk as Badgerlore, which feature folky work on a bleaker, spookier plane.

9/10

PETER WATTS



SLIM CHANCE On The Move

FISHPOOL

Another one for the road: Ronnie Lane's mid-'70s backers reconvene

8/10

With the melodic instrumental rhythm and swirl – everything from accordion to slide guitar – on "Fishing Line", the stirring opener of Slim Chance's comeback album No 2, the spirit of the band's old leader Ronnie Lane comes shining through. Original Chancers Steve Bingham, Charlie Hart and Steve Simpson here assemble a pastiche of graceful good-timing originals (a Nick Lowe-style rocker, "Two Steps Away From Love"), New Orleans/Cajun-style covers (The Balham Alligators' "Hey Hey, Ho Ho") and patently fine Lane covers ("The Poacher"), convincingly recreating his uniquely ruralised, soul-and-groove brand of folk-rock.

LUKE TORN



ALEX SMOKE Love Over Will

R&S

Brooding fifth from Scots techno dramatist

Despite releasing four albums and countless singles of vivid,

swashbuckling electronics these past 10 years, Alex 'Smoke' Menzies has tended to shy away from the spotlight – and if *Love Over Will* is anything to go by, all that darkness is having a disorientating effect on his music (that cover is quite special, too). Here, Menzies fuses his recent interest in classical work with glitchy dystopian techno, painting a none-more-black picture that lurches between bruised James Blake ("All My Atoms") and after-hours heroin party ("Yearning Mississippi") with no little elegance before ultimately losing its way in all the fog.

PIERS MARTIN



SPACIN' Total Freedom

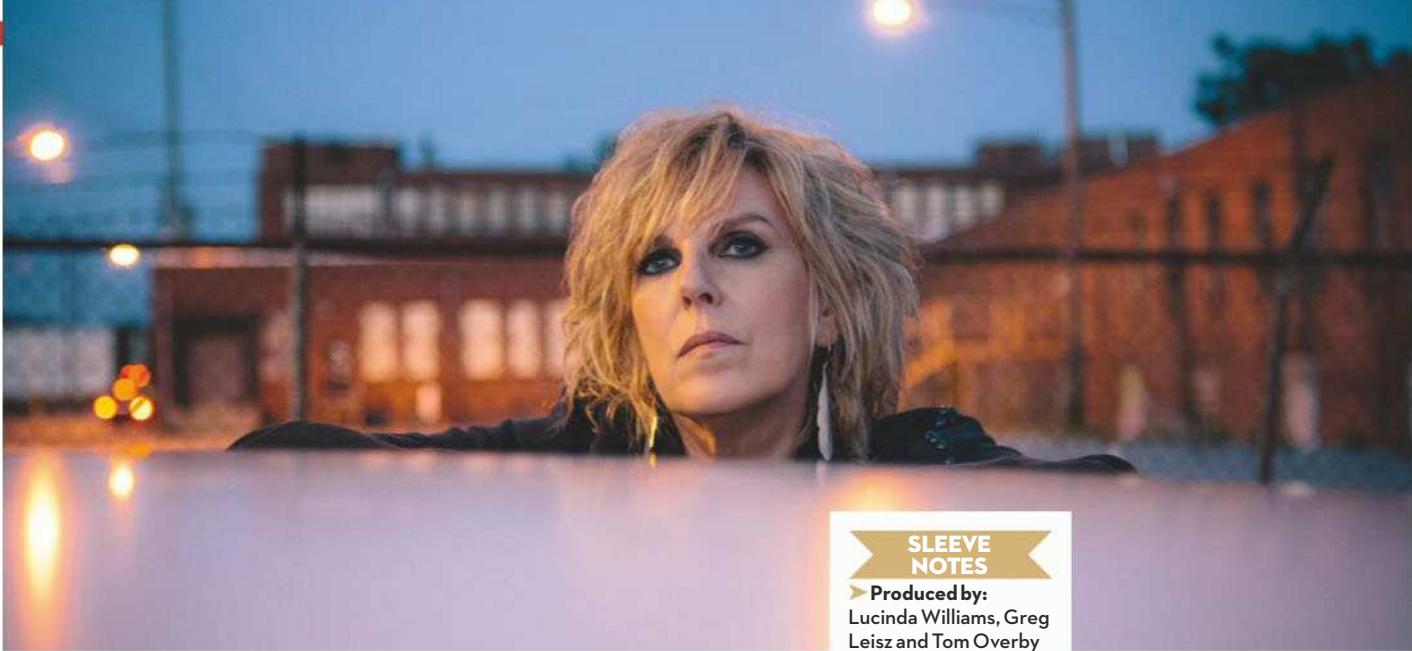
RICHIE / TESTOSTERTUNES

Super blown-out boogie from Philly's garageland

In the relative scheme of things, Jason Killinger's Spacinc' might not have had quite the love afforded

their old Philly sparring partners, Purling Hiss (both bands evolved from local legends Birds Of Maya). As this second album proves, though, they're at least their lo-fi equals; a fetishistically scuzzy psych-boogie band, whose choogles often accumulate a near-mantric, motorik intensity. Nothing here quite recaptures the slacker exhilaration of "Sunshine No Shoes", from their 2012 debut, *Deep Thuds*. Nevertheless, there's another fun Afrobeat jam ("Stopping Man") and a vibe – roughly, The Velvet Underground gatecrashing Villa Nellcôte – most fully realised on the 10-minute centrepiece, "US Ruse", one-finger piano solo and all.

JOHN MULVEY

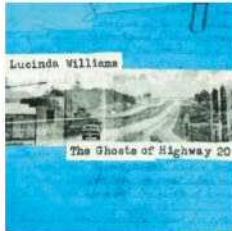


LUCINDA WILLIAMS

The Ghosts Of Highway 20

HIGHWAY 20/THIRTY TIGERS

Bruising, emotional, majestic – US veteran digs very deep on her 12th album. By Rob Hughes



8/10

Worth, Shreveport, Jackson, Birmingham, Atlanta – and key historical sites from both the Civil War and the American Revolution. Most notably Kettle Creek, where British Loyalists were once booted out by a Patriot army half its size.

For Lucinda Williams, however, Interstate 20 carries a more personal significance. The daughter of poet and teaching professor Miller Williams, the peripatetic nature of her father's job meant she grew up in various towns that fringe the route, swapping state lines with steady regularity. If the South has always served as a fluid reference point throughout Williams' music, rich with imagery and symbolism, this road was the fixed backdrop to her formative years. She's already named her own label after it. Now the 62-year-old has devoted a record to this slap ofarmac, linking its stories to places along the way.

The Ghosts Of Highway 20 arrives just 16 months after *Down Where The Spirit Meet The Bone*, a rambling double opus that housed some of the most compelling songs of her career. Stemming from the same sessions, the new LP strikes a similar tone at times – broody slow blues, witchy jazz cadences, a little humid country twang – but is perhaps less informed by Southern soul. Instead it's more freely atmospheric, its textural mood set by the discreet interplay between guitarists Bill Frisell and Greg

Leisz as much as the drowsy nuances of Williams' extraordinary voice.

As with its predecessor, the album is co-produced by Williams, Leisz and Tom Overby (Williams' other half). The heavyweight motifs haven't changed much either: love, loyalty, salvation, mortality, resilience. But what is different is its autobiographical reach and candour. There are a lot of songs about death and memory and fortitude, her characters moving through these narratives with a resigned, stoic grace.

Some songs are almost too vivid to listen to. The nine-minute "Louisiana Story" begins with an idyllic memory of Southern childhood. Crickets tick in the warm summer stillness, ice-cream wagons trundle by, there's a promise of sweet coffee milk. It's not until the tale starts to unfurl, the music as languid and filmy as its Louisiana locale, that we're given an insight into the darkness that lies beneath. The song's subject is Williams' mother, Lucille Day. Born to strict Methodist parents, Day Sr was a hard-line minister. "Her daddy's kind didn't spare the rod/Blinded by the fear/And the wrath of God," sings Williams in her slippery drawl. "He'd call her a sinner/Say you're going to hell/Now finish your dinner/And tell 'em you fell." Then we discover that "when the blood came/Her Mama told her she was unclean/And her mama would scold her." It's a devastating portrait of misery and castigation, compounded by Christian guilt. And one that suggests, given Lucille's subsequent issues with depression and alcoholism (she died in 2004), the

SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:**
Lucinda Williams, Greg Leisz and Tom Overby

Recorded at:

Dave's Room, North Hollywood, California
Personnel: Lucinda Williams (vocals, guitars), Bill Frisell, Greg Leisz, Val McCallum (guitar), David Sutton (bass, backing vocals), Butch Norton (drums, percussion), Carlton "Santa" Davis (drums), Ras Michael (Jamaican hand drums, backing vocals)

scars never fully healed. A similar sweltrely feel pervades "If My Love Could Kill", drummer Butch Norton beating a slow tattoo behind some muted Southern guitar. Williams rails against an invasive force that's slowly destroying something she dearly loves, a "murderer of poets, murderer of songs". It transpires that this is Alzheimer's, which killed her father last January.

As you've probably surmised, *The Ghosts Of Highway 20* is pretty tough going at times. Yet the beauty of Williams' work lies in her rare gift for balancing content and design.

"Death Came" is lightened by a lovely Western motif; the hulking guitar break on "Dust" finds an echo in the repeated urgency of Williams' vocal; "Bitter Memory" is excised by a rousing burst of rockabilly that wouldn't sound out of place on a Billy Lee Riley 45.

Williams closes the album with the largely improvised "Faith & Grace", an extended plea for strength and forbearance. The implication being that, no matter what fate conspires to chuck at us, we are nothing without hope.

The Ghosts Of Highway 20 is vast, thoughtful and profound. Peopled by real and imagined souls who are haunted by sadness or seeking some kind of spiritual release. People trying to make sense of a past that never really leaves them alone; rather, it appears to only grow stronger with the passage of time. In this respect, it's much like Lucinda Williams herself.

Q&A

Lucinda Williams

How symbolic is Highway 20 for you?

I grew up travelling around everywhere when I was little, so that road was a big part of my childhood. I have a strong connection to the place, plus Highway 20 is in that region of the South where a lot of the old blues guys are from. It's part of the whole thread that runs through American music.

Was "If Love Could Kill" a hard song to write?

Yes, I wrote that about the Alzheimer's that killed my dad. The initial inspiration came during one of the last times I was with him. He suddenly said, "I can't write poetry anymore." For him, it was

like saying he could no longer walk or see. I just broke down and started sobbing. Sorry, I'm going to start crying again. [Pause] Anyway, later that night I wrote this ode to him that said it doesn't matter if you can't write any more, because you are poetry.

I'm guessing that "Louisiana Story", about your mum, was another emotional one...

This whole album might be too intense for people. When I finished that song I said to Tom [Overby, Williams' husband]: "This one is so dark that I don't know if we should put it out." But I'm an artist first and foremost. I'm not an entertainer. I've always loved Leonard Cohen; he was a poet first, then a songwriter. He didn't censor himself. Thinking about it, I'm probably more like a female version of him.

INTERVIEW: ROB HUGHES

BAABA MAAL

The Traveller

PALM

Senegalese singer and guitarist is back on track, says Nigel Williamson



8/10

and become spokesmen for worthy causes. The attention is flattering and the intentions are good; but it carries the risk that the music that brought them to prominence is relegated to a secondary role behind their socio-political significance as totemic emissaries for the developing world. They become Bono-ified.

It's a familiar pattern. After the international success of "Seven Seconds", Youssou N'Dour became so distracted with other matters that it was six years before he found time to make another record. He's since become a government minister in Senegal and hasn't released an album since 2010.

The career of N'Dour's compatriot Baaba Maal – perhaps his only serious rival as the most celebrated African voice of our times – has followed a similar trajectory. Signed by Chris Blackwell to Island in the late 1980s and hailed as a West African Bob Marley, a series of vividly exuberant albums followed.

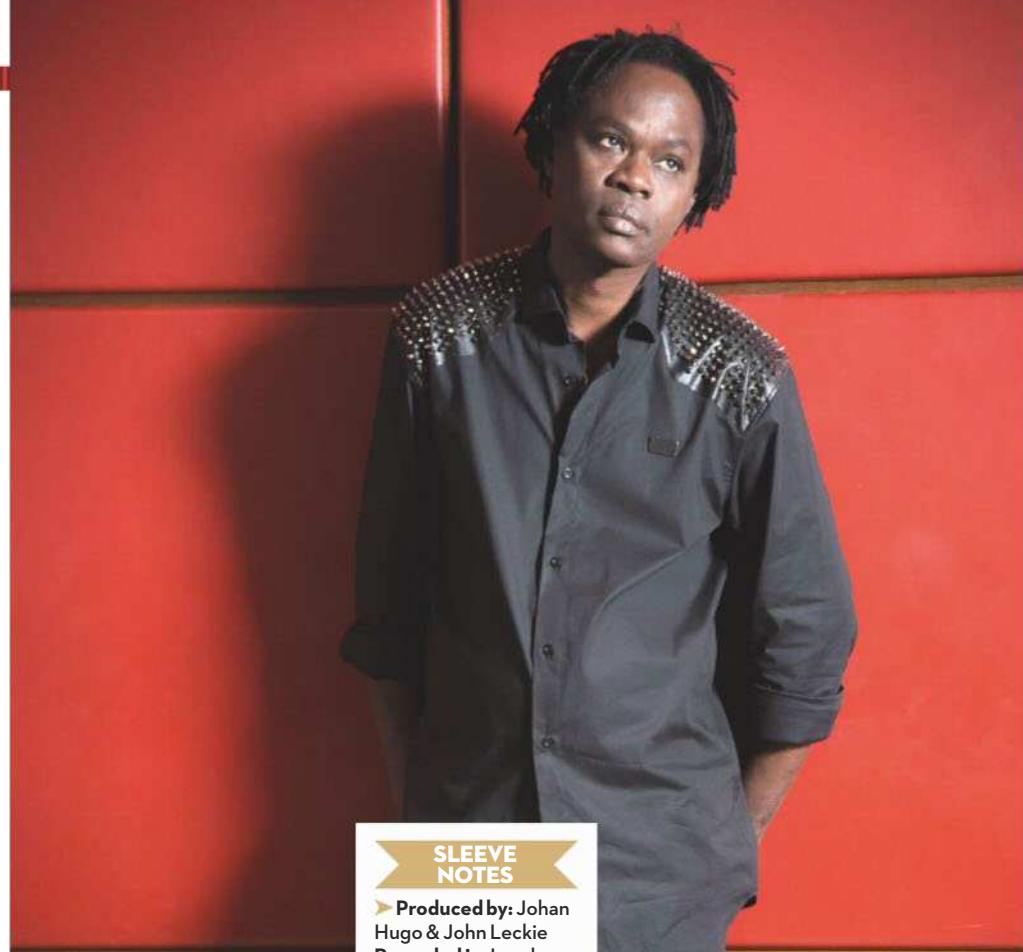
There were collaborations with Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel, Howie B and Sinéad O'Connor, and Maal's *Firin' In Fouta* (1994) and *Nomad Soul* (1998) remain classic exercises in smart, Afro-pop fusion. But then the recordings dried up and his extra-curricular activities as a spokesman for the United Nations Development Programme and a global ambassador for Oxfam plus his involvement in campaigns for HIV/AIDS awareness, debt relief and numerous other vital causes, seemed to leave little time for making albums.

In the 15 years between 2001's acoustic set *Missing You* (Mi Yeewnii) and 2016's *The Traveller*, Maal released just one album, 2009's bland and insubstantial *Television*. His admirably tireless activism, it seemed, had dulled his creativity and rendered his once dynamic music leader and inconsequential.

So it's a huge relief to report that *The Traveller* is, in that notorious critical cliché, not only a welcome 'return to form', but sounds like a career pinnacle, an exhilarating summation of Maal's life and vision in which finally his activism and his music are seamlessly intertwined, the personal and political woven into a single purposeful journey.

The revival owes much to the stimulation of some significant contributors, prominent among them the London-based Johan Hugo, formerly of Radioclit and now The Very Best, who produced most of the album. Their friendship began in 2012 when Maal made a guest appearance on The Very Best's *MTMTMK* and, a year later, he invited Hugo, along with Winston Marshall and Ted Dwayne of Mumford & Sons, to appear at a festival in Senegal.

AFRICAN ARTISTS WHO gain global recognition can swiftly find themselves hijacked by the great and the good of the liberal establishment. In the interests of cultural diversity, they are appointed ambassadors for international charities



SLEEVE NOTES

► **Produced by:** Johan Hugo & John Leckie

Recorded in: London and Senegal

Personnel includes:
Baaba Maal (vocals, guitar), Johan Hugo (synths, programming), Lemn Sissay (poetry), Kalifa Baldi, Winston Marshall (guitar), Dakar Church Choir (vocals)

Afterwards, they repaired to Maal's home studio in Podor on the banks of the Senegal River, which divides Senegal from Mauritania. Joined by local musicians, they began writing and recording songs. Further recording took place at Maal's studio in Dakar and an additional session, featuring the spoken-word contributions of the British-Ethiopian poet Lemn Sissay (who appeared on Leftfield's *Leftism* and recently beat Peter Mandelson to become Chancellor of Manchester University), was produced in London by John Leckie, a longtime Maal cohort, best known for his work with Radiohead and the Stone Roses.

Opener "Fulani Rock" is classic high-energy Maal with a 2015 twist, a tribute to his homeland with pulsating African percussion, rock guitars and an urgent vocal, with dark synth punctuation courtesy of Hugo. On the haunting "Gilli Men", Maal's soulful voice evokes a call to prayer (his father was the muezzin at the local mosque) although the response is provided by a Christian church choir from Dakar.

The gentle "One Day" and stately "Kalaajo" float airily on Hugo's electronic production. The surging soft-rock "Lampeneda" features the Mumford boys and the title track is an unashamedly joyous slice of dancefloor Afro-pop. "Jam Jam" is more sombre, a deep blues with a house production that recalls Moby's *Play*.

Although polyglot, Maal sings on the album solely in Fulani and it is left to Sissay to provide the only English-language contributions on the closing diptych "War" and "Peace". On first hearing, the two pieces sound like an odd, even jarring, coda, as Sissay rants angrily against injustice and oppression in a Gil Scott-Heron-style rap, his militant rhymes finding echo in some bellicose tribal drumming, before the storm is calmed with a gentler, optimistic meditation full of unexpected wit over a simple, repetitive kora leitmotif.

Yet once the shock has been absorbed, the two pieces make total sense as climax and resolution. Baaba Maal's journey is back on track.

Q&A

Baaba Maal

How do you balance your activism with your music? I'm trying to build bridges and bring people together. *The Traveller* defines how I feel about the planet – that, despite its many problems, there is a lot of inspiration and hope.

Do you see yourself as a traveller, someone on a journey? We are a nomadic people. As a performer I first left home 40 years ago and I've been travelling ever since. When you travel, you learn about the different corners of life and you discover that humanity is beautiful: different faces, cultures, colours, sounds. You realise that the planet is a very big gift, in spite of the man-made horrors.

What made you want to work with Johan Hugo, who comes from a very different generation and culture? I met him through Damon Albarn's Africa Express and I wanted guests to come into these songs but not to take anything away from the fact that I'm African. Working with Johan, I feel we have achieved a new mix of sensibilities and sounds. It can't be put in a box.

How did Lemn Sissay come to be on the two spoken-word pieces, "War" and "Peace"? He was the official poet for the 2012 Olympic Games. I met him at the Africa Utopia festival in London and we talked about the state of the world. The two songs on the album fit together. "War" is very hard, tough, violent, aggressive. "Peace" is more me, using music to calm him down...

INTERVIEW BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON


SPLASHGIRL
Hibernation

HUBRO

Intense, ingenious post-ECM jazz from Oslo

By describing themselves as 'doom jazz', this Norwegian instrumental trio do themselves a mild

9/10

disservice. The tense "Redshift" recalls both The Necks and this year's astonishing Morten Qvenild debut, while "Rounds" revisits Bowie's eerie "Warszawa". Admittedly, bursts of grisly static punctuate Andreas Stensland Løwe's shimmering pianos on "Scorch", and "Community"'s snaking melody is undermined by menacing percussion, but "Bleak Warm Future" is Jaga Jazzist tripping on steroids, Jo Berger Myhre's double bass strings rattling against its frame. *Hibernation* may be unsettling, but Sunn O))) producer Randall Dunn's mastery of intimate space and dynamics provides moments of heart-stopping beauty.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

SUDAKISTAN
Caballo Negro

PNKSLM

Stockholm-based quintet's exuberant first When Stephen Malkmus chose "Swedish Reggae" as a working title for the first

7/10

Jicks record, he clearly hadn't reckoned on the possibility of Swedish Latino psychedelic garage punk. Sudakistan fit just that description – although it fails to convey their bongo-driven energy, rampant wigginess and the wildly interpretive dues paid to their members' South American roots. They're most impressive when they fully expose those roots, as on "Rabia" and the deranged "El Movimiento", less so when they play it straight(er), as with the Raveonettes-ish "You And Your Way" and (awesomely titled) "Wife Meadow", which borrows from The Hives. Nonetheless, *Caballo Negro* is a highly entertaining crossbreed.

SHARON O'CONNELL

SUEDE
Night Thoughts

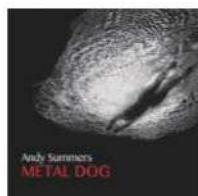
WARNER

More cinematic sweep and operatic swagger from dark horses of Britpop Reactivated since 2010, Suede's return to arena-

7/10

filling prominence has proved the band remain impressively powerful performers, especially live. Their second post-comeback album may lack the gender-blurring, Dionysian mania of their finest work, but it is still a solidly crafted, unabashedly epic saga of doomed romance. Brett Anderson sounds like Jacques Brel fronting U2 on the spangled, muscular roar of "Outsiders", while the storm-tossed power ballads "Like Kids" and "Learning To Be" blend orchestral strings with children's choirs. Self-serious and low on humour, Suede sometimes mistake bigness for greatness, but they still generate enough lusty passion to set pulses racing and hearts aflame.

STEPHEN DALTON


ANDY SUMMERS
Metal Dog
ANDY SUMMERS MUSIC/
CARGO RECORDS

More instrumental oddities from the Police man

7/10

At 73, Summers is about a decade older than his fellow Police-men, and has had a more active solo career than either. His 22nd LP since *Synchronicity* sees him playing pretty much all the instruments and lurching stylistically all over the place. It's bookended by the two best tracks: the junkyard clatter and heavily phased post-punk guitar squalls of the title track open the album; the hushed, ambient soundscape of "Mare Imbrium" closes it. "Ishango Bone" sounds like Pat Metheny meets the Cocteau Twins, while "Qualia" mixes gamelan percussion with endlessly overlaid folksy patterns played on a dobro. Intriguing if exhausting.

JOHN LEWIS


TORTOISE
The Catastrophist

THRILL JOCKEY

Chicago post-rockers rewrite their playbook on first LP in seven years Though born out of a suite of music commissioned by the City Of Chicago to

pay tribute to its jazz and improv communities in 2010, Tortoise's first since *Beacons Of Ancestralship* sees the band head off in typically eclectic directions. For every textured, tasteful track that evokes Tortoise's mid-'90s peak as the prime exemplar of US indie's brainiest strain, two deviate wildly. Foremost is the warped cover of "Rock On" sung by Dead Rider's Todd Rittman, while Yo La Tengo's Georgia Hubley sounds far dreamier on "Yonder Blue". Thick with menacing synths and distortion, "Shake Hands With Danger" see Tortoise keep pace with latterday peers Battles and Zombi, a fine feat for a band deep in its third decade.

JASON ANDERSON

ULVER
ATGCLVLSSCAP

HOUSE OF MYTHOLOGY

Twelfth album of dark prog from Norwegian collective

Ulver began in 1993 as a rather imposing black metal group, but over the years have both softened and deepened their sound, mutating into a progressive and electronic ensemble without clear boundaries. *ATGCLVLSSCAP*, their first since 2014's Sunn O))) collaboration *Terrestrials*, collects material from 12 improvised live performances, subject to studio tampering by Daniel O'Sullivan of Grumbling Fur. The vibe is darkly grandiose, with the booming "Glammer Hammer" imagining a more Wagnerian Mogwai. But just as often, moody electronics come to the fore: see "Desert/Dawn", which conjures a desolate synthesiser suite worthy of Klaus Schulze.

LOUIS PATTISON


UNITED BIBLE STUDIES
The Ale's What Cures Ye

MIE MUSIC

Atmospheric hoard from shadowy folk collective

The eldritch aesthetic of United Bible Studies might present them as kindred spirits of, say, Current 93. In fact, for all the sombre tones and distant hint of drone, this limited edition is a good deal more approachable than that: a set of traditional songs that should beguile orthodox folk fans as much as it does those bickering over the acid/freak/wyrd-folk nomenclature. The rustle of field recording provides a certain lo-fi ambience, but it's the warmth and precision of the performances that are striking, shifting from spare enchantments recalling Alasdair Roberts ("Twa Corbies") to Watersons-style a cappella knees-ups. A little psychedelic, no doubt, but it's probably the ale, not the acid, that's prevalent.

JOHN MULVEY



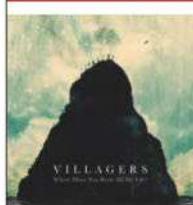
FRANCK VIGROUX & MATTHEW BOURNE
Radioland: Radio-Activity Revisited
THE LEAF LABEL

8/10

Rewired Kraftwerk classic finds the right retro-futuristic wavelength

Born from a recent live multimedia collaboration between a trio of composers, visual and sound artists, *Radioland* is a rich celebration of Kraftwerk's '75 milestone *Radio-Activity*. Opting for neither slavish cover nor iconoclastic reboot, Vigroux and Bourne apply improv-jazz attitude to these electro-classical analogue sound paintings, whether bombarding the fissile title track with crackles and drones or amping up an electrical storm of static on "Airwaves". Strong source material, of course, but this limited-edition reboot is still an inspired standalone body of work.

STEPHEN DALTON



VILLAGERS
Where Have You Been All My Life?
DOMINO

7/10

A (kind of) "best of" - re-recorded

This slant on the compilation album

takes the form of a dozen songs, drawn from Villagers' three albums to date and recorded live in one day in a London studio, with no post-performance tweaking. It's a smart idea: Conor O'Brien's luminous, emotionally resonant songs suit the warmth and intimacy of a live setting, and his voice – an alluring, slightly catarrhal baritone, with restrained falsetto – really shines, notably on "So Naive". Props, too, to the simpático band, who trip lightly through "Memoir" (written for Charlotte Gainsbourg) and a cover of "Wichita Lineman", but also power a churning version of "The Waves".

SHARON O'CONNELL



LE VOLUME COURBE
I Wish Dee Dee Ramone Was Here With Me
PICKPOCKET

7/10

Hey-ho, on y va: lesser-spotted MBV cohort resurfaces

The Velvet Underground by Rive Gauche-bistro candlelight, the second album from London-based French auteur Charlotte Marionneau exemplifies the combination of dissolute cutie-pop and half-starved bohemia that invited the attentions of My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields over the course of Le Volume Courbe's stop-start career. The title track and covers of Roky Erikson and Nico underline Marionneau's kinship with the freewheeling and the frazzled, while there are flashes of Kevin Ayers art-rock on the ecstatic "Rusty" and doomy closer "The Mind Is A Horse". Inscrutable and insubstantial, but probably the better for that.

JIM WIRTH



WET
Don't You

COLUMBIA RECORDS/ NATIONAL ANTHEM

6/10

R&B meets Nashville in Brooklyn

For all the production tricks – the clicky R&B hi-hats, sluggish hip-hop breakbeats, ethereal synth pianos and atmospheric indie guitars – Brooklyn trio Wet actually sound a bit like a Taylor Swift-style pop country act. On tracks like "It's All In Vain" and "Don't Wanna Be Your Girl", Kelly Zutrau's pure voice is full of tiny, yodelling curlicues that sound oddly Appalachian, and the songs have the sturdy melodies and heart-wrenching lyrics we associate with Nashville. They're particularly effective on the lovelorn ballads – it would be interesting to hear Dolly Parton tackle the Celtic-tinged "Island" and the hushed minimalism of "Small & Silver".

JOHN LEWIS

REVELATIONS

Yorkston/Thorne/Khan: "We just arrive in a room and make noise"



► "I wanted this project to be a genuine collaboration," says James Yorkston of *Everything Sacred*, "not just me with a few pals thrown in for variation. It's a luxury for me playing with such great musicians." He and Jon Thorne have been working together for years; Yorkston met Suhail Yusuf Khan, meanwhile, backstage at a festival. "The instruments sounded good together and I asked him to join me onstage there and then."

Thorne brings to the trio an element of Danny Thompson, a jazz fluidity underpinning the songs, while the instrumental passages are occasionally reminiscent of Codona or Anouar Brahem. Yorkston, though, says there's no plan: "We just arrive in a room and make some noise."

These noises began in "endless" jamming. Lal Waterson's "Song For Thirza" is one tune that stuck; another is Ivor Cutler's "Little Black Buzzer". A Sufi influence remains, too, though the mood, overall, is hard to pin down: "I'm aware there's a melancholy element within," says Yorkston. "I can't seem to escape that trait, whatever I get up to, but like the best type of melancholy, it's hopefully shot through with some humour."

MARCUS O'DAIR



SAUL WILLIAMS
Martyr Loser King
FADER

Rap activist's potent fifth

The rather overblown title is that of a concept album, whose central character is a (fictional) hacker living in Burundi and using the name as his online handle. But that crisis-riven nation isn't Williams' focus. Fifteen years on from his debut, the socio-political rapper, poet, singer and songwriter's sights are set on global issues of power, oppression and belief, delivered via a darkly impassioned mix of hip hop, art rock and electronics that connects to indigenous street music as well as to Gil Scott-Heron, The Ruts and TV On The Radio. Highlights are the "Babylon's Burning"-like "Ashes" and "Burundi", which mentions both "rabbis in Ramallah" and the Nike swoosh.

SHARON O'CONNELL



YORKSTON/ THORNE/ KHAN
Everything Sacred
DOMINO

8/10
Indo-British indie folk channels Ivor Cutler and

The Incredible String Band

Unexpectedly for an album made by a Scottish singer-songwriter (James Yorkston), Lamb's bassist (Jon Thorne) and an award-winning sarangi player and singer (Suhail Yusuf Khan), this opens like an ECM album: meditative and mournful, improvised and very largely instrumental. But *Everything Sacred* ends up closer to Pentangle or The Incredible String Band. It's less austere than a typical ECM album, too: the second track, an Ivor Cutler cover, is about having a cold bum. It isn't easy to pigeonhole, but it could just be one of the albums of the year.

MARCUS O'DAIR



YOUR FRIEND
Gumption
DOMINO

Kansas newcomer's ineluctably alluring debut album

Lawrence-based singer-songwriter Taryn Miller says she's "more interested in making sounds than songs" and is an admirer of Arthur Russell and William Basinski, but her full-length first as Your Friend is a set of abstractions that are essentially pop in nature, rather than avant-garde. They seduce from the start (the watery "Heathering") with a meditative mix of guitars, drone/electronics and field recordings, which is the backdrop for Miller's terrific, reverbed voice. There are echoes of Julia Holter, Jeff Zeigler and Cocteau Twins, with closer "Who Will I Be In The Morning" a sweet supplication that drifts skyward on massed vocals, but is anchored by swirling dread.

SHARON O'CONNELL

TY SEGALL

Emotional Mugger

DRAG CITY

Heavy rock grooves reinvented on twisted ninth. *By John Lewis*



8/10

prolific San Fran native Ty Segall is a rejoinder to such criticisms: aged only 28, he's already a peculiarly post-punk variety of virtuoso.

He's shown himself to be fluent in the blues – listen to his countless releases and you'll hear the pitch-bending, the double-stopping, the twiddly hammer-ons, the howling, sustained lead lines and all the other stocks-in-trade of the blues guitarist. But, if the grammar of the blues is the same, what Segall changes is the vocabulary. Instead of churning out ancient 12-bar-blues clichés – the pentatonic scale, the flattened seventh, the occasional flattened fifth – his solos are a blizzard of dissonant noises, atonal skronks and deliberately *wrong* notes that create something entirely new and futuristic. This is electric blues that's been put through an experimental post-punk blender, laced with heavy doses of prog, punk, glam, psych rock and metal.

For such a balls-out performer, Segall's lyrics and persona are often shrouded in mystery. His new album, *Emotional Mugger*, was initially sent out to journalists as the overdubbed soundtrack to a variety of old Blockbuster VHS tapes (including *Star Trek: The Wrath Of Khan*) and came with little information, save for a few lines of surreal prose ("graffiti sprawled across the hemispheres; stammered, stunted, dual-mono machine dreams flashing sudden stereophobic and back again/two screens alone together"). There was also a link to a website, with a parody commercial featuring Segall as a doctor explaining the phenomenon of "emotional mugging", complete with lots of fake biomedical gibberish.

While the actual album features guest slots from other Bay Area musicians (including members of his live quartet), Segall multi-tracks almost all the instruments himself, as is his usual process. The results, however, sound tighter, punchier and stranger than most of his output.

Segall's guitar sound has always been a quietly thrilling thing: a wonderfully dirty, thudding, heavy metal belch that's aimed straight at the solar plexus. On *Emotional Mugger*, the sounds he gets from his instruments are even weirder. He's pretty secretive about what effects he's using, but it sounds like he's feeding his guitar and bass through assorted octave pedals, Moog ring modulators and analogue synths.

On the title track, the bass guitar sounds like a broken Bontempi; on the weirdly disjointed funk of "Squealer" the guitar sounds like a distorted ice-cream van; on "Baby Big Man" the intervals sound almost medieval, like an electric guitar that's being

THERE ARE OFTEN complaints from musicians *d'un certain âge* that today's pop stars can't play; that – to paraphrase the late Ian MacDonald – there has been a steady erosion in the skills base since punk. Hugely



SLEEVE NOTES

Recorded at:

Gaucho's Electronics, Los Angeles

Produced by: Ty Segall and F Bermudez

Personnel includes: Ty Segall (all instruments and vocals), Emmett Kelly (guitar on "Squealer" and "Breakfast Eggs"), Charles Moothart (drums on "Mandy Cream")...

amphetamine-fuelled high and then back again.

Segall's newly released compilation of assorted T.Rex covers is reviewed on page 94, and indeed he's become known for some wonderfully odd versions of tracks by the likes of The Gun Club, Pink Floyd, Captain Beefheart and David Bowie. This time it's a freewheeling take on The Equals' proto-glam belter "Diversion" (released as a single in 1973 but recorded three years earlier). It replaces the Motown drumbeat of the original with a simplified punk stomp and reduces Eddy Grant's chords to their bare, bluesy essence, a growling army of mini-Moogs providing the bassline.

For prime Moog usage, however, try "Squealer 2", a deep funk groove rooted around Cory Hanson's Stevie Wonder-inspired Moog bass. It's a reminder that, even at its heaviest, *Emotional Mugger* is as funky as it is twisted – a heavy rock record that truly grooves in a way that heavy rock rarely does any more.

Q&A

Ty Segall

As a listener, can you tell the difference between a record where everything's multi-tracked and one where there's a live band?

The energy is completely different between an overdub and a live record. I think they both have pros and cons, and I for the most part can tell the difference as a listener.

Did Eddy Grant invent glam rock with "Diversion", the Equals track that you cover here? I'm presuming that it was recorded pre-Ziggy, pre-Roxy...

I think that a lot of people invented glam collectively. The Equals played a part. Alice Cooper's *Pretties For You*, Bowie and Ronson's *Man Who Sold The World*-era material, Marc Bolan... However, Eddy Grant's "Diversion", to me, is a punk song.

Your guitar solos seem to share the same grammar of the blues – how influenced are you by it?

I think that blues music is real music. I can only hope to be half as real as the blues. I think the only thing I have in common with blues music is an appreciation of "the nasty".

In places it sounds like you're feeding your guitars through an old analogue synth like a Wasp...

I can't tell you my secrets. That's no fun. I can only say that the guitar method on this record was named "the perve" – I think for good reason. I will say no guitars were fed into a synth. But synths were fed into guitars...

What exactly is meant by "Emotional Mugging"?

The concept is meant to be interpreted individually. I will say that there is as much truth in the medium as there is truth in the message.

INTERVIEW: JOHN LEWIS

THE OTHER HALF

2016 DATES

11 Feb **DEAL**
The Astor Theatre
01304 370220 theastor.org

12 Feb **WINCHESTER**
The Discovery Centre
01962 873603
hants.gov.uk/wdc

13 Feb **GATESHEAD**
The Sage 0191 443 4661
sagegateshead.com

16 Feb **LYTHAM ST ANNES**

Lowther Pavilion
01253 794221
lowtherpavilion.co.uk

17 Feb **LEICESTER**
The Musician 0116 251 0080
www.themusicianpub.co.uk

18 Feb **KESWICK**
Theatre by the Lake
017687 74411
theatrebythelake.com/whats-on

19 Feb **NEW MILTON**

Forest Arts 01425 612393
hants.gov.uk/forest

24 Feb **DUBLIN**
The Sugar Club
0818 903001
thesugarclub.com

25 Feb **ANTRIM**
The Old Courthouse
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antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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BBC Radio 4 Front Row

"Billingham weaves these tales together in a deadpan style that readers of Willy Vlautin will recognise."

The Big Issue

"With The Other Half, My Darling Clementine reaffirms the fact that they are the U.K.'s strongest and most assured purveyors of authentic traditional Americana."

No Depression

"Brave and imaginative."

Maverick ****4/5

"Inspired. It works like a dream. Gritty, real, powerful, distinctly noir-ish and ultimately uplifting, it's quite simply a great album. Any chance of a sequel?"

Americana-Uk *****8/10

"One of the most affecting LPs you'll hear this year."

Whisperin' & Hollerin' *****9/10

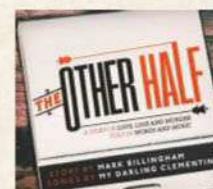
markbillingham.com | mydarlingclementinemusic.co.uk

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

MARK BILLINGHAM

(Best-selling author of the DI Tom Thorne novels)

& MY DARLING CLEMENTINE



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REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS



TRACKLIST

DISC ONE 1983-1984

ORIGINAL 10-5-60 EP

1. Join My Gang
2. You Don't Know What's Right...
3. 10-5-60
4. And She Rides
5. Born To Believe In You
6. Final Wild Son
7. Ivory Tower
8. Run Dusty Run
9. (Sweet) Mental Revenge
10. Fair Game
11. Tell It To The Judge On Sunday
12. Wreck Of The 809
13. Too Close To The Light
14. Never Got To Meet The Mom
15. I Had A Dream
- BONUS TRACKS
16. Masters Of War
17. Black Girl - Acoustic, May-June 1984
18. Wreck Of The 809 - Acoustic, May-June 1984
19. Further Along - Acoustic, May-June 1984
20. The Rains Came - CBGB, April 1984
21. You Can't Judge A Book By The Cover - West End, Chicago, Nov 1984

THE LONG RYDERS

Final Wild Songs

CHERRY RED

The complete works of alt.country pioneers corralled into a career-spanning boxset. By Alastair McKay

8/10

THERE ARE MANY kinds of three-chord horseshit, and The Long Ryders tried them all. Famously, they perverted country and western, but the plan was always more complicated than that. When Sid Griffin left his LA garage group in the early 1980s, he placed a musicians' wanted ad that read: "Two ex-Unclaimed members want the Byrds, Standells and Seeds to ride again." Another ad, the one that attracted singer and guitarist Stephen McCarthy, proposed a merger of Buffalo Springfield and The Clash.

Over four albums released between 1983 and 1987, The Long Ryders made good on all of that, being both musically diverse and singular in their intentions. They were country, and punk, and rock'n'roll. They did foot-on-the-floor boogie, Cajun, a bit of psychedelic rock. They wore their fringes like Roger McGuinn. They were Tom Petty, without the heartbreak.

All of which helps explain what was brilliant about The Long Ryders, and why they failed. Operating in Los Angeles at a time when new wave was morphing into vainglorious

TRACKLIST CONTINUED

DISC TWO 1985

STATE OF OUR UNION

1. Looking For Lewis And Clark
2. Lights Of Downtown
3. WDIA
4. Mason-Dixon Line
5. Here Comes That Train Again
6. Years Long Ago
7. Good Times Tomorrow, Hard Times Today
8. Two Kinds Of Love
9. You Can't Ride The Boxcars Anymore
10. Capturing The Flag
11. State Of My Union
12. Southside Of The Story
13. Child Bride
14. If I Were A Bramble And You Were A Rose
15. Looking For Lewis And Clark - Whistle Test
16. Lights Of Downtown - Captain's Mix, Island Studios
17. Capturing The Flag - Captain's Mix, Island Studios
18. Christmas In New Zealand - State Of Our Union
19. Encore From Hell

DISC THREE 1987

TWO FISTED TALES

1. Gunslinger Man
2. I Want You Bad
3. A Stitch In Time
4. The Light Gets In The Way
5. Prairie Fire
6. Baby's In Toyland
7. Long Story Short
8. Man Of Misery
9. Harriet Tubman's Gonna Carry Me Home
10. For The Rest Of My Days
11. Spectacular Fall
12. Ring Bells

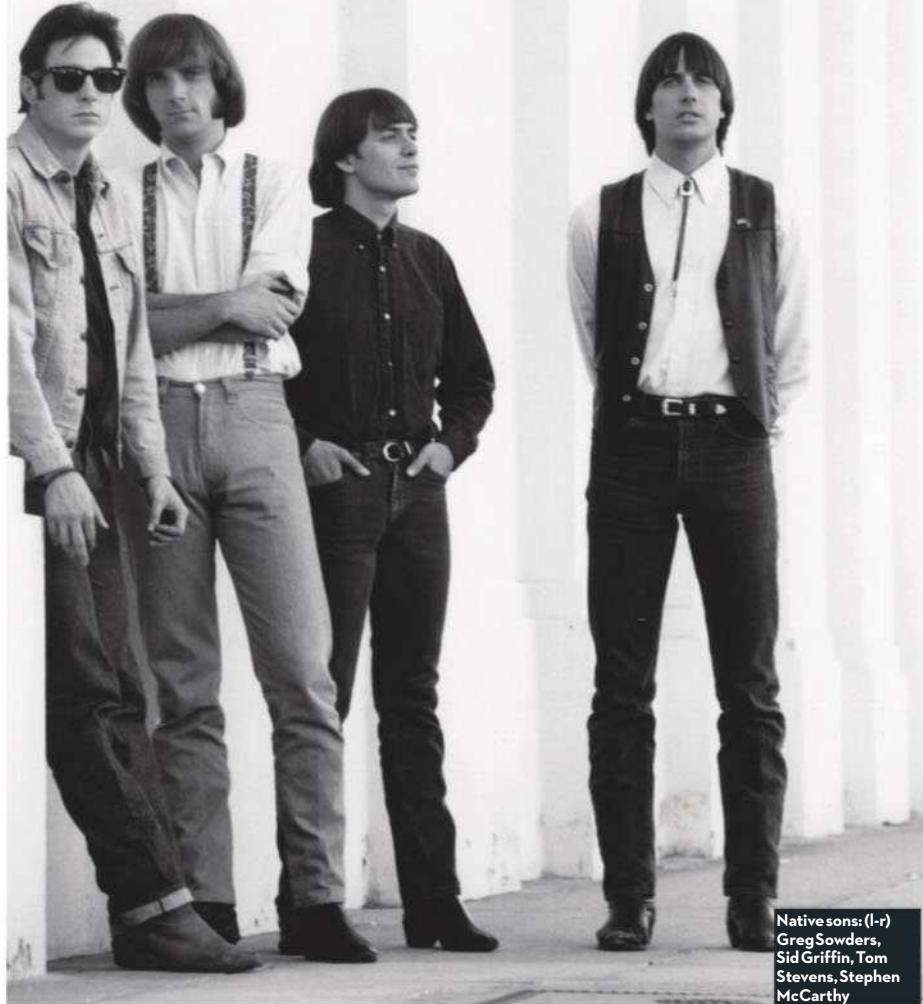
DEMOS

13. 17 Ways
14. Basic Black
15. Pushin' Uphill
16. How Do We Feel What's Real
17. He's Got Himself A Young Girl (And He Can't Keep Up)
18. He Can Hear His Brother Calling
19. Sad Sad Songs
20. Flak Jacket
21. Blues Theme

DISC FOUR

LIVE 'T BEEST GOES, THE NETHERLANDS

1. Mason Dixon Line
2. Time Keeps Traveling
3. (Sweet) Mental Revenge
4. Run Dusty Run
5. You Don't Know What's Right...
6. As God Is My Witness
7. Ivory Tower
8. I Can't Hide
9. Masters Of War
10. Wreck Of The 809
11. Good Times Tomorrow, Hard Times Today
12. Six Days On The Road
13. Southside Of The Story
14. Still Get By
15. Tell It To The Judge On Sunday



Native sons: (l-r)
Greg Sowders,
Sid Griffin, Tom
Stevens, Stephen
McCarthy

→ pop, their influences were considered old hat. Equally, the bands the Ryders inspired were yet to take flight, with the exception, perhaps, of their near-contemporaries The Jayhawks, who were thinking along the same lines in Minneapolis.

What's clear now is that the Ryders are the bridge between country rock and what became Americana. Listen to early Uncle Tupelo, and you'll hear Jeff Tweedy and Jay Farrar working out how to render American roots music with punk energy. And the influence didn't just flow into the furrows of alt.country. Consider The Long Ryders' acoustic rendering of "Black Girl" (from May-June 1984) included on Disc

One of this four-disc set, and it's hard not to think of Kurt Cobain's unplugged version of the same song, though he called it "Where Did You Sleep Last Night".

They weren't thanked for it at the time, as is clear from "Encore From Hell", which closes Disc Two. It's not a song as such. Instead, singer Sid Griffin reads out reviews of the band's 1985 album *State Of Our Union*. "It's so difficult to know where to begin," begins one, "there's just so many bad things to say." Or: "There are 10 things wrong with this album, and they're all the songs." Or, Griffin's favourite, a one-sentence demolition from *The Northern Echo*: "If these guys are at the helm of West Coast rock, abandon ship."

And, yes, another reviewer settled for "three-chord horseshit".

The Ryders weren't without their supporters at the time, of course. They were part of the Paisley Underground – a label coined by Michael Quercia of The Three O'Clock to encapsulate an LA scene incorporating The Rain Parade, The Bangles and The Dream Syndicate. That scene was real, and got much press attention, especially in the UK and

EASY RYDERS Four gems from the boxset

Ivory Tower

1984, FRONTIER/ZIPPO

A melancholy reflection on emotional isolation, written by original bass player Barry Shank, the tune began as a homage to the Beau Brummels' "Laugh Laugh". Sung here by Stephen McCarthy with assistance from Gene Clark, it's a gorgeous evocation of the spirit of The Byrds, with Griffin doing the honours on the 12-string guitar.

Looking For Lewis And Clark 1985, ISLAND

It might have been a hit if the label had pressed enough copies. The song, which

namechecks two legendary American explorers, also nods to Tim Hardin and Gram Parsons, and includes a musical quote from "Louie, Louie". "When Tim gets to Heaven," Griffin sings, "I hope he tells Gram about The Long Ryders and just who I am."

Lights Of Downtown (Captain's Mix) 1985, ISLAND

Even more commercial than *Looking For Lewis And Clark*, and another hit that wasn't. Island Records fixer Nick Stewart was so determined to get a hit that he remixed one of the highlights of *State Of Our Union*, but the label declined to

release it. A breezy, jangling pop tune masks a tale of prison, murder and insanity.

Good Times Tomorrow, Hard Times Today

1985, ISLAND

Griffin offers a dustbowl drama, repurposing something Carl Perkins used to say while tipping his hat to *The Grapes Of Wrath* in a story song about families travelling west from Oklahoma. The hope of a brighter life is tempered by the realisation that "if it weren't for the rocks in its bed... the stream would have no song". Bleak words, defiant twang.

Europe, though it never went overground.

The box contains all three of the albums The Long Ryders released during their lifespan, and their debut EP, "10-5-60", which is still a career highpoint. From the declamatory "Join My Gang", through the Byrds country of "You Don't Know What's Right" and the chiming psychedelia of "And She Rides", the record showed a band clicking into focus. The title track is pure garage rock, with a riff and a snarl. If they played it any faster it would be Hüsker Dü.

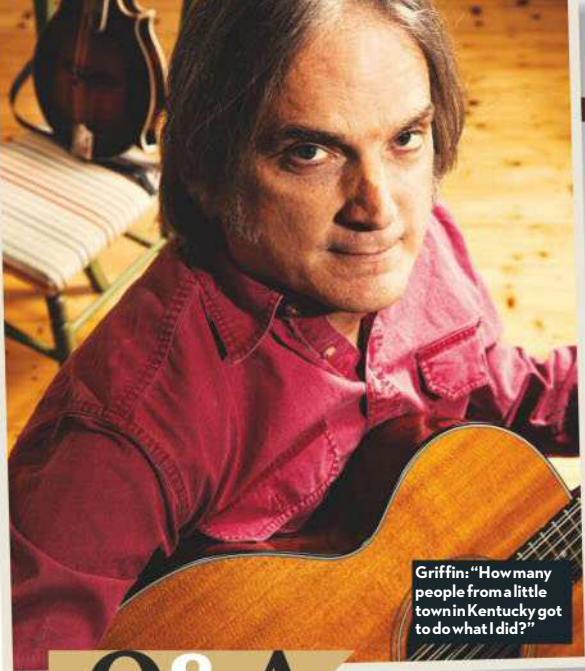
The first LP, *Native Sons* (with West Coast producer Henry Lewy reprising the Flying Burritos template) is simply gorgeous, from the Chuck Berry motorvating of "Run Dusty Run" to the Petty-ish infections of "I Had A Dream". There's no disguising the influences at play on "Ivory Tower", which has Gene Clark guesting on it, but that doesn't make it any less effective. The extras add depth. There's a fine acoustic run through "The Wreck Of The 309", which leaves the pain in Tom Stevens' vocal exposed. And the ghost of Gram Parsons is exorcised in a sparse campfire rendering of "Farther Along".

A live version of "You Can't Judge A Book By The Cover" has the Ryders sounding like Dr Feelgood saluting Chuck Berry, so it's perhaps not surprising that pub-rock veteran Will Birch was engaged for their major-label debut, *State Of Our Union*. It opens with the hit that wasn't – "Looking For Lewis And Clark" – and rattles through a series of melodic anthems. The songs are broadly critical of Reagan's America, though the politics are masked by the straightforward urgency of the tunes. There's more than a hint of The Cars in "Here Comes That Train Again", but the sentiment of "Good Times Tomorrow, Hard Times Today" makes it a timeless piece of country rock, and the harmonies on "Two Kinds Of Love" are gorgeous. The ballad "If I Were A Bramble And You Were A Rose" and the "Captain's Mix" of "Lights Of Downtown" are equally lovely, and quite at odds with what was popular in 1985.

On the final album, 1987's *Two Fisted Tales*, Ed Stasium removes the rough edges and adds a bit of Petty-ish swagger, and Griffin offers some hint of his future direction on the folksy "Harriet Tubman's Gonna Carry Me Home". Disc Three includes nine fine demos including McCarthy's lovely ballad "He Can Hear His Brother Calling", which is among the best things the band ever did.

For fans, though, the real treasure is Disc Four, a live set recorded in Goes, in The Netherlands. It starts at full pelt with "Mason Dixon Line", and never relents, rushing through "Masters Of War" and ending with a breathless "Tell It To The Judge On Sunday". The Long Ryders add power to Dave Dudley's trucking anthem "Six Days On The Road", and hail their garage roots with an urgent reprise of the Flamin' Groovies' "I Can't Hide". The whole thing is a rush of ringing guitars and fire engine melodies that is retro and futuristic and timeless.

"I won't give you any false modesty," Griffin suggests. "We didn't have flamethrowers, we just had a rockin' act that was kinetic." The world may now be ready to listen.



Griffin: "How many people from a little town in Kentucky got to do what I did?"

Q&A

Sid Griffin on the long march of Americana

WHAT WAS YOUR plan for the box?

We want The Long Ryders to be acknowledged as a very important link in the chain. When we came out it was all Haircut 100 and A Flock Of Seagulls. It was synth pop and watered-down dance music that was in the way. We were really the first and almost only band of our ilk doing this crazy wedding of punk ethos and country and western attitude. In just a few years bands we inspired were everywhere: Uncle Tupelo and The Black Crowes – who were Mr Crowe's Garden, an opening act for us – the list goes on.

Did you feel like you were in a wilderness back then?

In the early days we weren't that distinct, and we had this idea of crossing Ramones, Sex Pistols, Clash and earlier punk, '60s garage guys – The 13th Floor Elevators and The Standells – with country and western instrumentation of pedal steel or banjo and having a new American hybrid. The first time we played a country and western song to a

blatantly punk rock audience was at the Music Machine in West LA. I think we were on the bill with The Circle Jerks, and for the first 30 seconds people couldn't believe it. It was just wild. There was silence. After a minute there was this noise, some of the people were going bananas and some of the people were making fun of us and spitting at us.

That was the first time – playing "Brand New Heartache" by the Everly Brothers as a shuffle. I remember once at the Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, the guy said, "Go and play something on the air." So I went to the library, and there was all these LPs on the wall, and they had a white sticker saying what the tracks were. I pulled out a Long Ryders record, and some kid had written on it – 'Side A: Sounds like shit. Side B: mostly sounds like shit.' It was that hard of a battle.

"It was wild. Some of the people were going bananas and some of them were spitting at us"

Was the Paisley Underground movement real?

It was. It's unfortunate that more of it didn't break through to a wider audience. The only band that broke through was The Bangles. But it was an amazing time. Imagine living in an idyllic, sunny Los Angeles. I shared a house with one of The Bangles, and a roadie. And in our house at that time we'd have Eric Burdon of The Animals staying, and Billy Bremner of Rockpile was a roommate for a while. Around the corner was Steve Wynn of The Dream Syndicate, and two of the guys from Green On Red. John Doe and Exene Cervenka of X lived about a block and a half away. Dwight Yoakam lived three blocks the other way. Benmont Tench lived four blocks away.

People would ask me, of the people you knew, who did the best? For a while I would say The Bangles, then maybe Dwight Yoakam. I had a roommate named John Silva, he went on to manage Nirvana and the Foo Fighters, so I used his name for a while. Then I thought, hang on, Matt Groening from *The Simpsons* was around the corner, he did a cartoon called *Life In Hell*. He'd come down from Oregon, Silva had come out from Boston, I'd come out from Kentucky, just trying to make it. All in one neighbourhood. It was a beautiful time.

Where did it all go wrong?

We famously did a beer commercial and were accused of selling out. It really backfired in North America for us. Peter Buck gave an interview commenting about it, and even Green On Red teased us. What I didn't understand was that X, Los Lobos, The Blasters, all sorts of bands did a beer commercial, so why pick on us? The reason we did it then was we weren't getting a lot of airplay. The most profile we got in the United States was through this beer commercial.

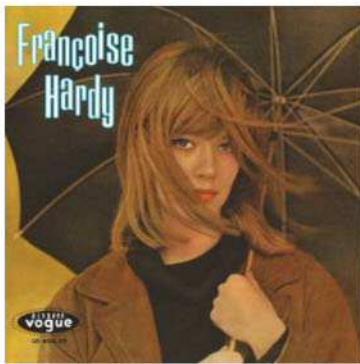
Why wasn't "Looking For Lewis And Clark" a hit?

Nick Stewart, who's the guy who signed U2, was so forceful in a business meeting, he finally got Island to agree to put a lot of money behind the record. It did really well the first few weeks. Then Nick was told by one of the

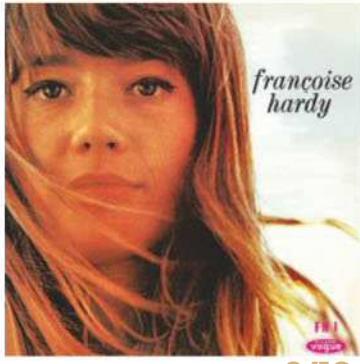
Island guys, who looked really depressed: "I know we agreed to spend this money on pressing up more singles, but I left the meeting knowing my marching orders and didn't do it." So it sold out and there were no more records to buy, literally. For years I was really upset about it.

Some really nasty stuff went down. Then I thought, that's not the way to look, because we had seven years travelling the world and playing on bills with people like Gene Clark and Roger McGuinn. All these great things happened. How many people from a little town in Kentucky got to do what I did? I've even thought: what happens if we had gone through the roof and everybody got on drugs and hated each other? We're all really close still, so I can't complain.

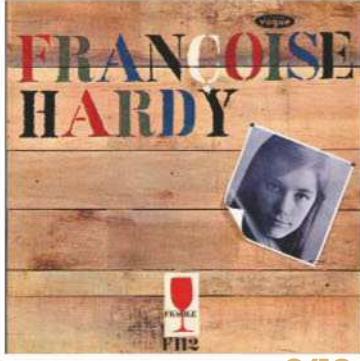
INTERVIEW: ALASTAIR MCKAY



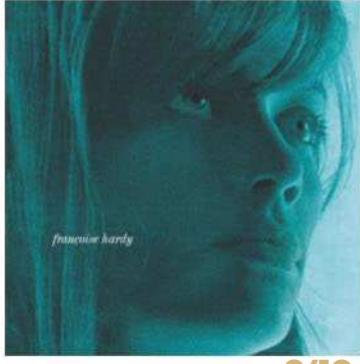
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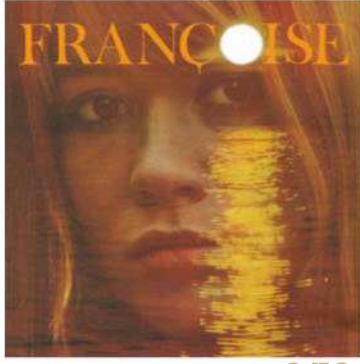
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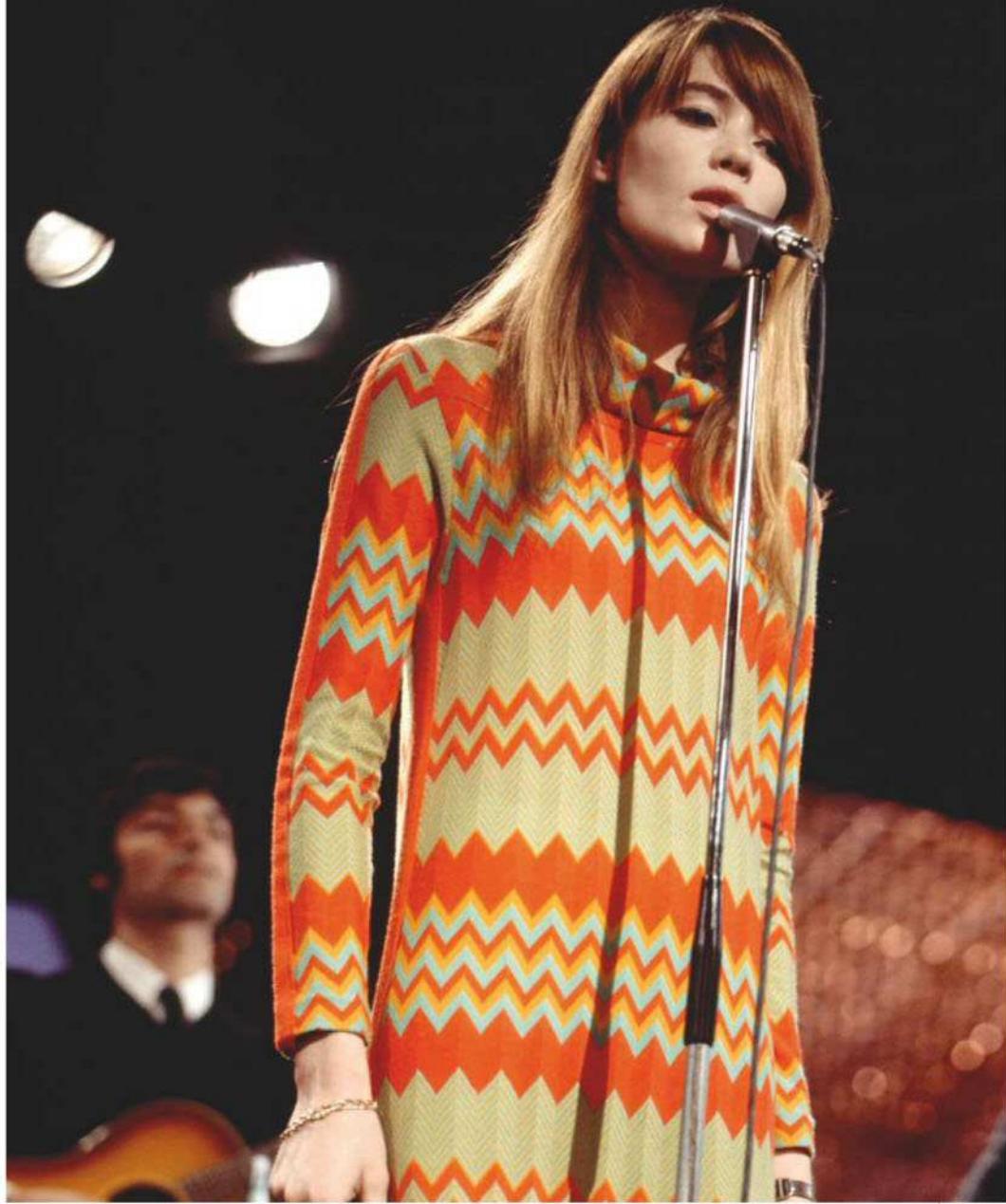
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FRANÇOISE HARDY

Tous Les Garçons Et Les Filles/Le Premier Bonheur Du Jour/Mon Amie La Rose/L'Amitié/La Maison Où J'Ai Grandi

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

First five albums from an awkward French teenager who changed her country's music forever. By Wyndham Wallace

IN MAY 1966, one week after his notorious 'Judas' outing at Manchester's Free Trade Hall, Bob Dylan invited Françoise Hardy to his hotel room following a Paris' L'Olympia show. Having dedicated a poem to her on the back of 1964's *Another Side Of Bob Dylan*, he now sang two new songs, "I Want You" and "Just Like A Woman", to a woman so shy she only realised later that the performances were intended for her alone. In just four years, Hardy had come to represent France's mysterious magic to some of the world's most influential figures: dressed by Paco Rabanne, she'd hung out with Mick Jagger, dined with Paul

McCartney and George Harrison, and appeared in films, including Woody Allen's *What's New Pussycat?*. She'd even scored a rare foreign-language hit in Britain with "Tous Les Garçons Et Les Filles".

Half a century on, the appeal of her first five French albums is easy to comprehend. Hardy grew up the neglected daughter of separated parents, a convent-school pupil convinced by her grandmother that she was ugly; yet even her earliest releases boast a singular purity, offset by a forlorn but defiant candour. Her youthful diet of French *chanson* had been expanded by early '60s pop, and, inspired by

Françoise Hardy live at The Talk Of The Town, London, 1968



contemporary proponents of rock'n'roll – including Johnny Hallyday and his future wife, Sylvie Vartan – she signed to Discs Vogues after auditioning with "Oh Oh Cheri", a French version of Bobby Lee Trammell's 1958 American hit, "Uh Oh".

This sweet 140 seconds of barebones rockabilly, which opened her 1962 debut super 45 – its four tracks recorded in just six hours – was eclipsed by its final track, one of two self-penned compositions. "Tous Les Filles Et Les Garçons" found Hardy, surrounded by happy couples, lamenting how no-one whispered "I love you" in her ear. This was the Hardy the public soon adored: bashful, detached, but emotionally articulate, her delivery so poignant as to overcome mere words. It was also the artist she wanted to be: a singer-songwriter in an age when, especially among female musicians, the term was unknown. By November, it had sold 800,000 copies. Two more EPs the following month consolidated her appeal.

These three singles' 12 tracks comprised a self-titled album that, like her first five French

collections, soon became known by the name of its most popular track. Hardy has since made no secret of her distaste for its production: never again would she work with arranger Roger Samyn, who cast her as a 'rocker', his minimal arrangements reflecting the sound of America's contemporary charts. But its brevity and no-frills approach encapsulated a captivating mix of innocence and aloofness. It was as though an uncorrupted Nico had reshaped The Singing Nun's "Dominique" a year before its release, that bubblegum charm seeped in a sophisticated, world-weary wisdom.

For *Le Premier Bonheur Du Jour*, released a year later, Hardy partnered with Marcel Hendrix. American influences remained, most notably on songs by others, like "On Dit De Lui" (adapted from a Connie Francis B-side) and "Va Pas Prendre Un Tambour", co-written by Maurice Vidalin and Hardy's future husband, Jacques Dutronc. But generally its arrangements were more European, even on Bacharach and David's "L'Amour D'Un Garçon": "Saurai-Je?"'s strings were lavish, the organ at the heart of "L'Amour Ne Dure Pas Toujours" muted, the pillow-like embellishments gracing the 'title' track notably restrained.

By 1964's *Mon Amie La Rose*, Hardy had distilled her style, in part thanks to Joe Meek associate Charles Blackwell. Its standout was arguably his hushed "Dans Le Monde Entier" – re-recorded as "All Over The World", it would soon become a British hit – and, underlining her confidence, she even made country music her own, rewriting Marty Wilde's "Bad Boy" as "Pas Gentille". But her own songs were full of surprises – the breathless canter of "Je Veux Qu'Il Revienne", the fragile whispers of "Pars", the filthily distorted "Je N'Attends Plus Personne" – and 1965's *L'Amitié* followed this pattern. Though the delicate 'title' track wasn't hers, Hardy, again working with Blackwell, had at least a hand in the majority of its songs. "Tu Peux Bien" revels in angelic harmonies and sweeping strings, and the feather-light "Ce Petit Coeur" remains as seductive as any introduction to her charms. "Il Se Fait Tard", meanwhile, expresses longing with enviable succinctness, and the boldly outspoken "Dis Lui Non" gives voice to self-effacing women much like the one she had once been.

After an English-language album, she turned to Italy for inspiration on 1966's *La Maison Où J'Ai Grandi*. Recorded largely with Tony Hatch associate Johnny Harris, it led with a dramatically orchestrated Morricone adaptation, "Je Changerais D'Avis", and closed with a pleasantly ambling take on Adriano Celentano's recent "Il Ragazzo Della Via Gluck". But though it lacked its predecessor's grand statements, its mood was memorably, mournfully fragile, Hardy's "Je Serai Là Pour Toi" built around pretty harp arpeggios and "Tu Es Un Peu À Moi" anticipating the popularity enjoyed by the harpsichord later that decade.

Five years later, on the impeccable *La Question*'s title track, Hardy would sing of someone who was her "question sans réponse": her "question without answer". She could very well have been describing herself, a woman who, even as the world came to know her, remained unknowable. To some it was sangfroid, to others shyness, but either way, with her lyrical finesse as startling as her fine-spun mesh of French tradition and the burgeoning rock'n'roll movement, her first five albums remain a masterclass in poised self-awareness.

Even her earliest releases boast a singular purity, offset by a forlorn but defiant candour



BADLY DRAWN BOY
The Hour Of The Bewilderbeast
(reissue, 2000)

XL

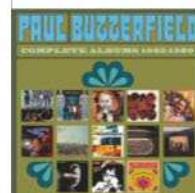
Two-disc expanded edition of 2000 Mercury Prize winner

Damon Gough's debut arrived just as Britpop was imploding in bloated self-importance and a 'new acoustic movement' was emerging to reflect what was supposed to be a softer, more compassionate and tolerant millennium. It beat Coldplay, Doves, Leftfield and Richard Ashcroft to that year's Mercury Music Prize. Then, as the cultural zeitgeist swung away from hirsute men in tea-cosy hats (PJ Harvey, Miss Dynamite and Dizzee Rascal would soon pick up their own Mercurys), Badly Drawn Boy seemed to fall somewhat out of favour. Today his signature album seems beguilingly innocent, fragile, charmingly scatterbrained and shambolic, yet surprisingly cohesive and meticulous. It surely says much about what has happened since that the total lack of cynicism or artifice in its very English mix of wistful folk ditties, nebulous tone poems and Beatlesque melodies now sounds not only charmingly eccentric but disarmingly radical. "Put a little sunshine in your lives," he urged us on shimmering, dreamy opener "The Shining". For a while he helped us do so. Such a shame it was too good to last.

EXTRAS: Second disc of 16 previously

6/10 unreleased recordings omitted from the original album, several of them as quirky appealing as the 18 which made the cut.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



PAUL BUTTERFIELD
Complete Albums 1965-1980

RHINO

14-disc boxset from America's answer to John Mayall

As white British musicians were forging the 1960s blues-rock explosion, America had few equivalents. Butterfield was the most notable exception – not least because it was the Chicago-raised singer/harmonica player's band that launched the careers of a succession of brilliant guitarists including Mike Bloomfield, Elvin Bishop and Buzz Feiten.

Rolling Stone once snarkily complained that Butterfield's cross was that he approached the blues as "a tradition rather than a sensibility". This huge career retrospective suggests the criticism was profoundly unfair and reveals a diverse and progressive corpus, from the straight-ahead Chess-inspired Chicago electric blues stylings of his first recordings, through the ground-breaking psychedelic raga-rock of 1966's *East-West* and the horn-driven R'n'B of 1968's *In My Own Dream* and on to the more rustic, laid-back roots heard on his often overlooked brace of fine early '70s albums with Better Days. Alcohol and heroin addiction took their toll and he died in 1987 at the age of 44; but this is a timely reminder of the considerable achievements of a genuine pioneer.

EXTRAS: The band's complete set from

6/10 Woodstock 1969, most of which is previously unreleased, but misleadingly titled *Live In White Lake, NY, 8/18/69*.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



EARL BRUTUS

Your Majesty... We Are Here/Tonight You Are The Special One (reissues, 1996, 1998)

3 LOOP

8/10

Indie-pop's rancid A-Team resurrected

Characteristically swearly, frontman Nick Sanderson nailed the essence of scotch-egg-breath glam demons Earl Brutus in a late-'90s interview. "We're the ultimate exciting scary pop band," the one-time Gun Club and World Of Twist drummer wheezed. "We're old cunts. But I'll take on any of these fucking young whippersnappers and fucking have them any day of the fucking week."

Gloriously unfettered, Sanderson and lead foil Jamie Fry,

younger brother of ABC's Martin, were into their thirties by the time they hit on the pitiless conceptual ugliness of Earl Brutus, named in honour of a fictional flat-roof pub. The band coughed up a phlegmy stream of singles and two albums – now recirculated by 3 Loop with bonus career scree – and might have racked up more had fate not intervened. Sanderson, by then a train driver, died of cancer in 2008 leaving a third LP, *Edwardian Wanking Machine*, tantalisingly unrecorded.

Earl Brutus evoked desperate, dissolute manhood to a backdrop of industrial disco throb and Glitter Band welly plod. Denim and the Fatima Mansions shared some of their auto-destructive urges, but a unique scent of Brut aftershave and stale farts hung over 1996 debut *Your Majesty... We Are Here* – the title an offer to Freddie Mercury to take on Queen's pomp-rock mantle.

The rhapsodies within are bohemian and wildly eclectic; "On Me Not In Me" (its title lifted from a phone-box calling card) lurches from spooky synth-pop to madrigal with a touch of Brian May guitar unceremoniously dumped in, while Quo and Quattro march hand-in-hand through the rubble of "Don't Leave Me Behind Mate".

Amid the giddy optimism of the pop business at full post-Oasis bloat, Earl Brutus signed to a major label for *Tonight You Are The Special One* but failed to cross over despite the colossal brilliance of "The SAS And The Glam That Goes With It", and its bestiary of Sanderson's pet obsessions ("Tudorbethan mansion, hair by Nicky Clarke"). Less palatable forms of their "mind hooliganism" include "East", which plots its heroine's return to her native Poland after gender-reassignment surgery over a queasy approximation of "Winds Of Change" pomp rock. Earl Brutus could do pretty and playful – notable extra "The Scottish" splices La Düsseldorf guitar bliss to bagpipe moods – but their real yearning was always for life-affirming filth: the kazoo disembowelment of "Nice Man In A Bubble"; the Stooges death dirge of "Male Wife".

This delicious grot did not spare them from day jobs for long, but Earl Brutus' vision persisted – they kept playing, reactivating as The Pre New after Sanderson's demise. Sleaford Mods perhaps inherited their gin-hangover glower, but their baton of abjection has yet to be picked up. Still filthy after all these years. **JIM WIRTH**



DAVID ESSEX
Rock On
(reissue, 1973)

CHERRY RED

Family entertainer's rock roots

6/10

Such has been the success of David Essex as an all-round family entertainer (latterly as don of the Moon family in *EastEnders*) that it's easy to overlook the fact that he was responsible for some of the defining pop records of the glam era. Essex had a theatrical background, starring in *Godspell*, but his breakthrough came with "Rock On", the title track of his 1973 debut, which originally played over the end credits of the US release of the rock'n'roll movie *That'll Be The Day*. It's an extraordinary song, artfully produced by Jeff Wayne, who has Essex crooning into an echoey void, while a double-tracked Herbie Flowers bassline continually upsets the tune's centre of gravity. The words are almost nonsense rock'n'roll shorthand: "summertime blues" rhymes with "blue suede shoes"; "blue jeans" rhymes with "movie queen" rhymes with "James Dean". It is nostalgic, and futuristic, and Essex sounds like a prototype Alan Vega, somewhere between pastiche and futuristic horror. There are, it's true, moments of heinous musical theatre on the album, but the other hit, "Lamplight", is subtly strange, with Essex channelling Bolan in a song that swings between James Bond and Billy Smart.

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



ARETHA FRANKLIN
Atlantic Albums Collection

ATLANTIC

19CD boxset from the Soul Queen's golden reign

Aretha, finest gospel singer of her generation, toiled for a hit over long fruitless years at Columbia before Atlantic's Jerry Wexler unchained her talents with an injection of Southern soul. The session that delivered "I Never Loved A Man" imploded – Aretha's then husband/manager objected to Fame Studios' white musicians – but the song's sultry passion and steamy horns provided the template for the future. The hits are familiar, but Aretha's albums are a trove of outstanding performances and covers that veer between inspired – Ray Charles' "Drown In My Own Tears" – and daft – the Mysterians' "96 Tears". Aretha never lost a taste for MOR hits and show tunes, hence "Elusive Butterfly" on *Soul '69* and "Somewhere" on 1973's estimable *Hey Now Hey (The Other Side Of The Sky)*. *Young, Gifted And Black* is arguably her finest album and certainly her most personal, with the self-written "All The King's Men" a jewel. The three live albums are worthy chronicles, with '68's *Aretha In Paris* the wildest and 1971's *Fillmore* the most regal, while her return to the church on '72's live *Amazing Grace* is assured, if a little mannered – 'legend' status had arrived. For the most part, this is timeless stuff.

EXTRAS: 35 'Rare And Unreleased' cuts bring **7/10** alternative takes and justly sidelined covers such as "Fool On The Hill".

NEIL SPENCER


MARVIN GAYE
**Volume Two:
1966-70**
UNIVERSAL

Eight-album set from the days when the single was king...

7/10

Sandwiched between his early jazz crooning and the creative breakout of 1971's *What's Going On*, Gaye's middle period was characterised by some of the most blissful soul-pop 45s ever manufactured by Berry Gordy's hit factory. But, in usual Motown fashion, the albums assembled to cash in on the hits contained an uncomfortable amount of filler. The label was keen to create an African-American answer to Sonny & Cher, and four of the eight Gaye albums released between 1966-70 consisted entirely of duets, first with Kim Weston and then the doomed Tammi Terrell. Although singles such as "It Takes Two" and "Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing" were sublime, the rest of the material was characteristically uneven. The same was true of the solo albums, although 1966's *Moods Of Marvin Gaye* was an exception and was almost a 'greatest hits' collection in its own right, with six chart singles including "I'll Be Doggone", "One More Heartache" and "Ain't That Peculiar". But everything on 1968's haphazardly thrown together *In The Groove* was dwarfed by "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" and 1970's *That's The Way Love Is* consists almost entirely of covers, with even the Funk Brothers not quite able to rescue such lazy selections as "Yesterday" and "Groovin'".

EXTRAS: None.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

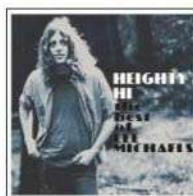
KOSMOSE
Kosmic Music From The Black Country
SUB ROSA

Secret Belgian Kosmische music, unearthed

7/10

Recording in the Charleroi area of Belgium, close to the border with France, Kosmose were active between 1971 and 1978. This was a particularly fertile time for experimental music in Europe, and everyone, it seemed, had caught the Kosmische bug – certainly Kosmose were no exception, as their extended improvisations, finally released on *Kosmic Music From The Black Country*, show. The members of Kosmose are better known for subsequent works, particularly leader Alain Neffe, who became a significant figure in minimal wave with groups Bene Gesserit, Sic and Pseudo Code, also running the Insane Music label, whose *Insane Music For Insane People* compilations offered a tantalising glimpse of the early 1980s industrial/noise scene. But Kosmose were made of even more unpredictable material. Their improvisations were bedded down with waves of elemental electronics, the thick waves of drones coated with circuitous single-note tattoos for echoplexed guitar, with Sub Rosa founder Guy-Marc Hinant offering punctuation by way of spasmodic interjections on drums. It's not all successful – as with a lot of music from this era, there are passages of longueur, where nothing happens, and slowly – but its spiralling, psychedelic peaks are pretty damn lofty.

EXTRAS: Liner notes from the group.

6/10 **JON DOWDE**

LEE MICHAELS
**Heighty Hi -
The Best Of...
Manifesto**

LA-born, SF-based artist gets a career retrospective, for better and worse

Lee Michaels is best

remembered for the funky, organ-powered stoner classics "Heighty Hi" and "Do You Know What I Mean". During his heyday in the late '60s and early '70s, he was an anomaly, taking the stage on the Hammond organ accompanied only by rotund, power-hitting drummer Frosty. The truth is, Michaels recorded a great deal of music after becoming one of the first rock acts signed by A&M, who released seven of his albums between 1968 and '73. These are newly compiled on *The Complete A&M Album Collection*, from which this 20-song single-disc set has been cherry-picked – and that will be more than enough for most listeners. As a producer, arranger and keyboardist, Michaels made crisp and vibrant recordings, state of the art for the era, whereas the retrospective appeal of his material is inversely proportionate to its seriousness; his party tunes like the two hits (which he dismissed as "sellouts") and Marvin Gaye-influenced cuts ("Goodbye Goodbye") hold up well, but too often he was drawn to proggy bombast ("Hello", "Carnival Of Life"), romantic treacle ("Uummum My Lady") and, worst of all, painfully literal protest songs ("The War", "Thumbs"). Sometimes, artists are their own worst enemies.

EXTRAS: None.

BUD SCOPPA
HOW TO BUY...
BUCK OWENS
Twang, honky-tonk and more

BUCK OWENS
You're For Me CAPITOL, 1962

This second studio LP marks the start of Owens' distinctive Bakersfield sound, driven by the crisp thump of drummer Wayne 'Moose' Stone and the twin Telecasters of Owens and Don Rich. "I wanted to sound like a locomotive comin' through the front room," said Buck later.

8/10

BUCK OWENS AND HIS BUCKAROOS
I've Got A Tiger By The Tail CAPITOL, 1965

Arguably his finest hour. Inspired by an Esso gas station sign, the title track became a signature tune and prime exemplar of Bakersfield honky-tonk. Hard-twanging guitars rule, though Owens shows himself to be a great tenor, too.

9/10

BUCK OWENS AND HIS BUCKAROOS
Carnegie Hall Concert CAPITOL, 1966

What better setting than the Carnegie Hall for the Buckaroos to deliver a febrile set that helped broaden honky-tonk's appeal on a national scale? The show hits a peak with a scintillating medley that includes "Under Your Spell Again" and "Truck Drivin' Man".

8/10
ROB HUGHES

MIKE OLDFIELD
Discovery
(reissue, 1984)

MERCURY

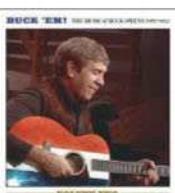
Mid-'80s redux benefits from the composer's experimental urges

6/10

In the spring of 1983, Oldfield racked up a huge global hit with the folksy "Moonlight Shadow", featuring Scottish singer Maggie Reilly. Under pressure from Virgin to re-create something similar, the follow-up album delivers "To France" (also featuring Reilly) and a melodic doppelganger called "Poison Arrows" (featuring blues belter Barry Palmer on vocals). But, on the album's more interesting tracks, it appears that Oldfield was more interested in exploring the kind of sonic territory we associate with Peter Gabriel, in particular the otherworldly digital belches of the Fairlight CMI sampler, which are deployed on the ambient drones of "The Lake" and "Saved By A Bell".

EXTRAS: Contemporaneous with *Discovery*

7/10 was Oldfield's spooky, oriental-tinted soundtrack to multi-Oscar-winner *The Killing Fields*, which also gets a re-release treatment this month. The bonus disc on *Discovery* is *The 1984 Suite*, featuring that soundtrack's standouts (including the wobbly "Etude") along with remastered versions of singles, B-sides and previously unreleased tracks. "Bones" is a fine mix of field recordings and worldbeat drum samples; "Afghan" a Christmassy, Scottish-themed waltz, while "Zombies" is a bizarre, Halloween-themed take on "Poison Arrows". An uneven but often intriguing collection.

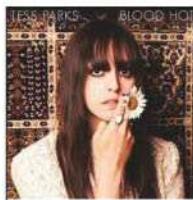
JOHN LEWIS
BUCK OWENS
Buck 'Em! Volume 2: The Music Of Buck Owens (1967-1975)
OMNIVORE

8/10

Classic honky-tonk and more from American master

The second great phase of Owens' career, following early '60s crossover hits "Act Naturally" and "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail", saw him perform at the White House, front a major TV show (*Hee Haw*) and make a big noise on the international market. This fine 2CD set draws from disparate live albums cut in Oslo, Tokyo, London, Sydney and New Zealand, as well as various studio LPs and standalone 45s. The key to his appeal, it seems, is two-fold: patent your own Bakersfield sound and don't muck about with the formula too much. Owens and his Buckaroos are thus never far from honky-tonk balladry ("Something's Wrong"; "Your Mother's Prayer"), though there are also noteworthy excursions into country-rock ("Down In New Orleans"; "Darlin', You Can Depend On Me") and zesty bluegrass ("Ruby (Are You Mad)"; "Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms"). Guitarist Don Rich even gets busy with a fuzz box on 1968's sparkling "Who's Gonna Mow Your Grass", one of a number of big-selling US country hits on show here. The waning of Owens' commercial clout roughly coincided with Rich's death in a motorbike crash in 1974, after which the singer largely devoted himself to building a sizeable business empire.

EXTRAS: None.

ROB HUGHES



TESS PARKS

Blood Hot
(reissue, 2013)

OPTIC NERVE

Super solo offering from Toronto-born, London-based songwriter

8/10

Following her successful collaboration with Anton Newcombe of Brian Jonestown Massacre that resulted in the great *I Declare Nothing* last summer, Tess Parks' solo debut has been given a quick reissue. Originally released in 2013 by Alan McGee's 359 Music – indeed, it was through McGee that Parks met Newcombe – this vinyl reissue captures an idiosyncratic singer and strong writer of pop psych gems who didn't get the attention she deserved first time round. Parks' crowning glory is her smoky, prematurely aged voice – Hope Sandoval is one comparison, but there are also traces of Lucinda Williams on songs like the sultry "Goodbye Love". She applies this to a drone-pop, '60s sound – you can hear what attracted Newcombe – and the whole package is wonderfully nocturnal, almost sinister, with a David Lynch nightclub vibe. She writes strong songs, too. "When I Am Young" has a VU feel but with added drawl, while the Neil Young-like slow-burner "Walk Behind Your House" and Southern blues "Refugee Camp" see her stretching out into longer territory. Parks can also rock out – and should do so more often – with tracks like shimmering raver "Love Around" and the JAMC-like "Open Your Mind" putting '50s rockabilly through a shoegaze wash. It's all rather dreamy and beguiling.

EXTRAS: None.

PETER WATTS



RAMMSTEIN

XXI
SPINEFARM

German industrial rock veterans turn 21 with 14-disc vinyl box

7/10

There remains a sense that English-speaking listeners will never entirely get Rammstein, the group's black humour and provocative spectacle just a little too German to cleanly translate. Formed by former East Germans shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Rammstein's aesthetic – a welding of Laibach's subversive Fascist chic and the pyrotechnic stage shows of Gwar – led to immediate controversy in their homeland, and global success shortly after. The music is often splendidly silly, the stadium goth of Nine Inch Nails or Marilyn Manson with added Wagnerian bombast. The lyrics, meanwhile, toy deliciously with taboo: take "Mein Teil" from 2004's *Reise, Reise*, which translates as "My Part", and finds frontman Till Lindemann referring to the real-life case in which a German cannibal cut off and ate a willing partner's penis. Rammstein remain best when they have a point of sorts to make – see "Amerika", a critique of US cultural imperialism that sees Lindemann turning his guttural boom to a mock tribute to America, Mickey Mouse and Wonderbras. Across 14 discs, the gusty operatics get a little tiring, although moments like "Mutter" – a tale of parental neglect from the 2001 album of the same name – confirms there is sincerity within the spectacle.

EXTRAS: Double LP of rarities, with a previously unreleased version of the track "Los".

LOUIS PATTISON



TY SEGALL

Ty Rex
GONER

Juddering, grungy covers of T.Rex from West Coast psych specialist

7/10

While Ty Segall's new LP *Emotional Mugger* is a dark, soul-searching affair, Goner is redistributing some of his lighter earlier moments in the shape of this album of T.Rex covers. Combining two EPs recorded by Segall for Record Store Day releases in 2011 and 2013 plus one previously unreleased song, the album sees Segall exploring some of Bolan's lesser-known material such as "Fist Heart Mighty Dawn Dart" and "Salamanda Palaganda" from his flower-child era, as well as glam classics "The Slider" and "20th Century Boy". Segall finds consistency across the genres, slowing "The Slider" down and layering the sludge, reining in the glam stomp so it meshes neatly with the trippy vibe of the older songs, while "20th Century Boy" places the vocals deep in a fuzzy mix, like a punk goblin screaming from the depths of hell. Overall, it's rather slight and inevitably rough around the edges – "Elemental Child" is almost impossible to listen to and "The Motivator" has fine moments but often sounds like a demo – but there's still considerable entertainment to be had from Segall's urgent renditions of "Cat Black" and "Buick Mackane", while his takes on "The Slider" and "20th Century Boy" are magnificent reboots.

EXTRAS: Previously unreleased cover of "20th Century Boy".

PETER WATTS



SPOON

Gimme Fiction
(reissue, 2004)

MATADOR/MERGE

Texan indie rockers remastered on vinyl. Like Wilco, Spoon found their mojo after being dropped by a major. On the

band's first post-Elektra LP, 2001's *Girls Can Tell*, Britt Daniel sketched out the blueprint Spoon filled in with '02's streamlined, hyper-rhythmic *Kill The Moonlight*. Three years later, on *Gimme Fiction*, they enriched that angular sound without weighing it down, as if they'd boiled down 'The White Album' to its essence. The remastered vinyl optimises the LP's calibrated dynamism, manifested in anxious opener "The Beast And Dragon, Adored"; the Prince-like delight "I Turn My Camera On"; stripped-down slow-builder "The Delicate Place"; and the pulsing, Lennon-esque "They Never Got You". On centrepiece "My Mathematical Mind", Spoon mount an existential anthem in 3/4 time as a syncopated piano riff is joined by Daniel's hyper-rhythmic vocal and a righteously old-school tambourine, a thrashing cymbal and electric guitar scribbles. The piano is *Gimme Fiction*'s driving force throughout, spiking the melodies and propelling the rhythms. Spoon would further tweak their rigorous aesthetic on 2007's *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*, but *Gimme Fiction* is where the band truly forged their identity and standing in the forefront of indie rock.

EXTRAS: Second disc with 12 previously unreleased demos from the era, plus download of nine additional tracks.

BUD SCOPPA

HOW TO BUY...

SPOON
Before and after *Gimme Fiction*



Girls Can Tell

MERGE, 2001
Holed up in Jim Eno's cramped Austin studio with engineer/co-producer Mike McCarthy, the band configured their sound on "Everything Hits At Once", the opening track of their fourth album, spare, propulsive, brainy, detailed with craftsman-like precision and wry, self-effacing humour. The basis of their blueprint is the groove, set down by Eno's Charlie Watts-style behind-the-beat momentum.

8/10



Kill The Moonlight

MERGE, 2002
This stands as Spoon's distilled less-is-more breakthrough, with its stripped-down, amped-up Beatleisms and percolating rhythms, encapsulated by the captivating hard-times anthem "The Way We Get By", with its Plastic Ono piano doubling the beat. Plinking piano and hand percussion power standout "Small Stakes" and every other track on the LP, which Daniel described as "a complex tambourine record".

9/10



Transference

MERGE, 2010
Their most experimental album. Monochromatic and desert-dry in both tone and attitude, it eschews conventional verse/chorus/bridge song structure altogether; instead, the band locks into a groove and rides it for all it's worth.

9/10

BUD SCOPPA



SUN RA AND HIS ARKESTRA

To Those Of Earth... And Other Worlds

STRUT

Another fine Sun Ra collection, by DJ Gilles Peterson

Trying to get to grips with the recording career of jazz pioneer Sun Ra is a tough ask. Frequently misunderstood as a free jazz player, Ra's reality was far more complex than that; he was a composer-visionary who was just as happy taking his charges, the Arkestra, through swing and blues numbers, or making sideways glances at pop or disco. *To Those Of Earth* is a little more streamlined, but it does collect some of Sun Ra's most compelling sides, from the high-life tweak of "Watusa" to the wilder climes of "Cluster Of Galaxies", or a particularly fried "Moog Solo", recorded live in 1980. The heart of the selection, though, is collectivist classics such as "We Travel The Spaceways", "Somebody Else's Idea" and "Love In Outer Space", where the Arkestra, weaving together with limber, fluid warmth, underpin mystical, illuminated chants. It's perhaps the best introduction yet to the sometimes-confusing world of Sun Ra, and hopefully it's also the last compilation: time now to get serious and dig out some of the rare treasures from Sun Ra's private press, Saturn.

EXTRAS: Liners from Gilles Peterson and Robert L Campbell, plus a clutch of unreleased live performances from Zurich and France.

JON DALE

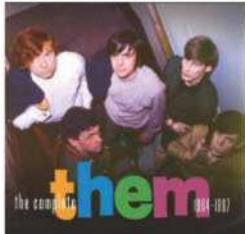


THEM

The Complete Them 1964-1967

LEGACY RECORDINGS

Three-disc, 69-track collection marks the official beginning of Legacy's rollout of the vast Van canon. By Bud Scoppa



8/10

LIKE LIVERPOOL ON the other side of the Irish Sea, the port city of Belfast served as a gateway for American music – and local kids couldn't get enough of the blues and R'n'B records that had made the voyage across the North Atlantic. That the teenaged Van

Morrison, who had grown up listening to his dad's Lead Belly, Muddy Waters and Louis Armstrong 78s, obsessively collected and studied this exotic music wasn't unusual at the time. What set young Van apart from his peers was his innate ability to absorb its primal essence, as if he'd been hearing these sounds in his head all his life.

When, at 18, Morrison assembled a ragtag combo and proceeded to hold court at the Maritime Hotel, many of those who packed the room were American sailors, whose enthusiastic reception validated his initial efforts. Inevitably, these local heroes headed to London in search of a record deal. They signed with Decca, which was doing well with similarly scruffy R'n'B cover band The Rolling Stones.

Arranged in chronological order by single release date around the UK versions of *The Angry Young Them* and *Them Again*, the first two discs of *The Complete Them* provide ample proof of the man's preternatural genius – he had the calling, and he pursued it with a single-minded passion.

Van's menacing, Howlin' Wolf-inspired vocal on "Don't Start Crying Now", Them's first single, produced by in-house arranger Art Greenslade,

could be mistaken for *Safe As Milk*-era Captain Beefheart – hardly what you'd expect from an adolescent studio novice. What the kid needed at this point was a mentor, and he got one soon thereafter in the form of R'n'B/pop trailblazer Bert Berns, who'd decided to try his hand in London after The Beatles thrillingly covered his "Twist And Shout". Just before their first session together, Berns played his newly penned song "Here Comes The Night" for Morrison on an acoustic guitar, and Van, a quick student, brought a combination of Berns' Brill Building pop filigree and his own brooding intensity to the released version. The third disc of the new collection, which bears the heading "Demos, Sessions & Rarities", contains the second take of the song, during which Morrison experiments with, and at moments playfully exaggerates, the New York-derived vocal flourishes he's just picked up from Berns. During that same October 1964 session, with studio pros Alan White on drums, Phil Coulter on organ and Jimmy Page on rhythm guitar, they cut Morrison's howling, incantatory take on the Joe Williams blues standard "Baby Please Don't Go", which he'd picked up from John Lee Hooker's interpretation.

Greenslade was back at the desk when the next classic, "Gloria", was cut, while Tommy Scott and Phil Solomon, a fellow Belfast native who managed the band, are credited with co-producing the recording of "Mystic Eyes". It was musical chairs on both sides of the glass through mid-'65, with Scott – who also provided material for the band, some of it written under the pen name M Gillon – the Scott/Solomon combo and Berns alternating as producers, while a revolving cast of hired guns joining Morrison, Them guitarist Billy Harrison and bass player Alan Henderson in the tracking room. As Van complains in his characteristically cranky notes for the set, the whole thing was a real drag, apart from the sessions themselves, which is where he connected the dots as he poured his soul into the microphone, bringing coherence to *The Angry Young Them* – so much so that virtually any combination of the 23 songs cut between the fall of 1964 and the summer of 1965 would've made a credible Them debut album.

With a relatively stable lineup, Scott helming the sessions and Ray Elliott's sax filling much of the space previously occupied by the organ, *Them Again* is more of a piece than its predecessor, though it lacks the ecstatic heights of "Gloria" and "Mystic Eyes". The 15 tracks alternate between competent if not quite inspired covers of American R'n'B tunes and formally accurate originals in the same mode, with a detour into Animals turf on Scott's anthemic

TRACKLIST EXTRAS

- 1 Don't Start Crying Now (demo) *
- 2 Gloria (demo) *
- 3 One Two Brown Eyes (demo) *
- 4 Stormy Monday Blues (demo) *
- 5 Turn On Your Love Light (alt version) *
- 6 Baby Please Don't Go (Take 4) *
- 7 Here Comes The Night (Take 2) *
- 8 Gloria (Live on BBC's Saturday Club) *
- 9 All For Myself (Live on BBC's Saturday Club) *
- 10 Here Comes The Night (Live on BBC's Saturday Club) *
- 11 Little Girl (version one) *
- 12 Go On Home Baby (Take 4) *
- 13 I Gave My Love A Diamond (Take 8) *
- 14 (It Won't Hurt) Half As Much (Take 2) *
- 15 My Little Baby (Take 1) *
- 16 How Long Baby (Take 1) *
- 17 One More Time (Take 14) *
- 18 Gloria (Live on BBC's Saturday Club version two) *
- 19 Here Comes The Night (Live on BBC's Saturday Club version two) *
- 20 One More Time (Live on BBC's Saturday Club) *
- 21 Call My Name (single version) *
- 22 Bring 'Em On In (single version) *
- 23 Mighty Like A Rose *
- 24 Richard Cory (alt version) *

*PREVIOUSLY UNISSUED

"Call My Name". As Morrison tells it, three of the songs were intended for a solo project but subsequently placed on the LP by Scott. He had good reason to do so: Van's "Could You, Would You" shoulders with soulfulness, and his "My Lonely Sad Eyes" jangles moodily, while Scott and Coulter's "I Can Only Give You Everything" is a snarling proto-garage rocker.

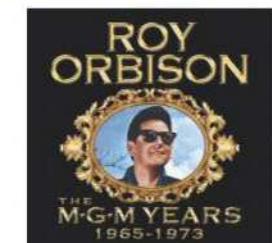
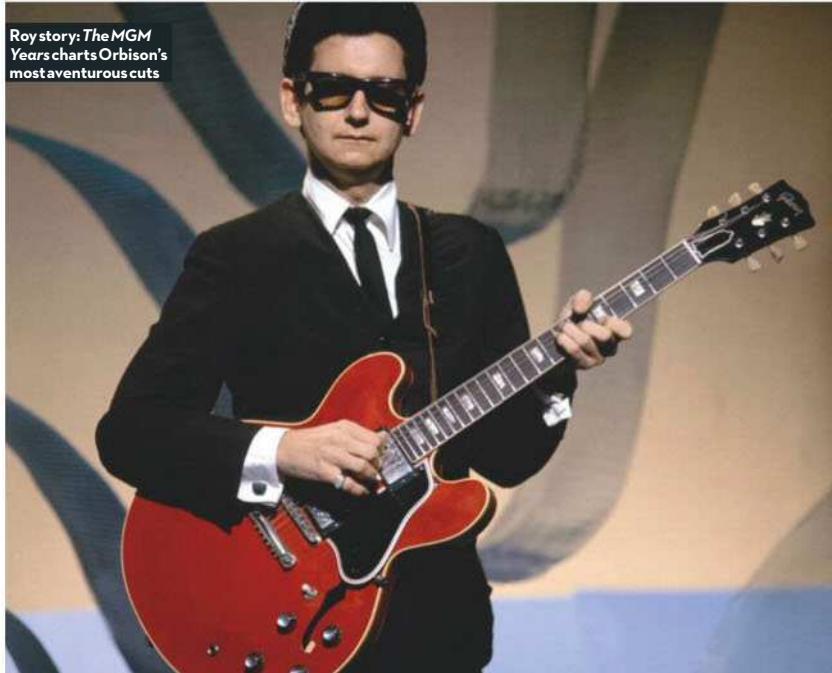
The producer's unilateral move exemplifies the push/pull that was going on at the time between the increasingly restless Morrison and his handlers. At 22, he was beginning to shape his own style, which he called "folk soul". He broke it out in his revelatory inhabitation of Dylan's "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue", which connects the dots between these two visionaries, and his own gossamer "Friday's Child", a post-*Them Again* single side, which provides a tantalising glimpse of what would become Morrison's signature style.

After three years of honing his chops with countless iterations of Them, the 22-year-old Morrison had had enough. He got out of his deal with Decca and signed with Berns' Bang label before venturing into the slipstream. This 69-song bounty of artefacts remains, the fervent first book in the Gospel of Van.

EXTRAS: None.

The Specialist

Roy Orbison



ROY ORBISON The MGM Years 1965-1973

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

8/10

The Big O's big demise, revised

It's a wonder Roy Orbison kept a career afloat at all in the late '60s. In 1966, his wife, Claudette, aged just 24, died in his arms following a motorcycle accident. Two years later, a fire killed

two of his three sons, aged six and ten, and destroyed his home. Then there were pop music's volatile twists and turns, which began to stiffly challenge him after his early-'60s superstar years of "Oh, Pretty Woman", "Crying" and "In Dreams". Orbison, possessor of a dramatically orchestral, four-octave voice, tried everything to break back through – from originals to well-chosen covers, sharp soundtracks to tribute albums, blistering rock'n'roll to the kind of haunting, otherworldly balladry only he could deliver – in those chaotic, hard rock/psychedelic/hippy/FM years. Commercial traction was negligible.

What the public hardly fathomed then, only to appreciate decades later (thanks to a renaissance via the Traveling Wilburys and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*), was that Orbison's sheer voice was innately capable, regardless of the state of affairs, of monumental transcendence. *The MGM Years'* 152 tracks, featuring eight instant cutout LPs in their day, brings that notion home time and again, filled with many of Orbison's least noticed, most adventurous moments; in secret, he was hitting his prime.

Take 1968's *Many Moods*: striking an operatic, soul-vocal groove, Orbison leads almost every song into shivery territory. He steals "Unchained Melody" from the Righteous Brothers' clutches with a measured, hot-and-cold delivery, methodically building it into a mountain of desperation. The mid-tempo rocker "Heartache" follows a familiar Orbison trope – is what I'm experiencing real? Is it a dream? – in which his voice swirls progressively up into the heavens. The heartbreaking "Walk On", rising to an untenable, shame-filled "Running Scared"-type intensity, is spellbinding. Similar cases could be made about 1967's *Cry Softly, Lonely One*, including its graceful ode to misunderstanding, "Communication Breakdown", or 1966's *The Classic Roy Orbison* and "Growing Up", an alternately breezy and unhinged rocker.

A batch of non-LP singles and B-sides extend the story, the most enchanting of which demonstrate Orbison's fondness for darkly shaded story songs – the murder ballad "Tennessee Owns My Soul", or "Southbound Jericho Parkway", a slightly psychedelic five-part suite in which a man's suicide is probed from multiple angles. A previously unknown and unheard 1969 studio album, *One Of The Lonely Ones*, supplies more highlights, including an Elvis-ised interpretation of Mickey Newbury's winsome "Sweet Memories".

It's true that Orbison never quite recovered from losing early producer Fred Foster and his intensely atmospheric contributions; and that when record sales began to dip, MGM truly lost the thread in both recording strategy, and in promoting Orbison's talents. Yet this opulent box – erratic in places, yet fascinating and just as often breathtaking – paints a picture of an incredible talent, taking chances, stretching out in surprising directions, fighting hard against a cruel wind. **LUKE TORN**



VARIOUS ARTISTS 30th Century Records - Volume 1

30TH CENTURY/COLUMBIA

7/10

Strong sampler from Danger Mouse's label

Since his 2004 breakout

with *The Grey Album*, an audacious mashup of Jay Z and The Beatles, Danger Mouse – aka Brian Burton – has covered a lot of ground, topping charts worldwide with his nu-soul project Gnarls Barkley, but also showing his hand as a producer of textured, psychedelic guitar music (Beck, The Black Keys, U2, et al). Here, he launches his new major-label imprint, 30th Century, with a carefully curated album of contemporary rock bands who run the gamut from the quite to the very obscure. Take Apache Sun, authors of the opening "Club Noir", who only formed last year in Glasgow, but come with a spaghetti-western swagger that already feels authentic and smartly observed. Burton appears to view himself merely as label boss, not all-round svengali; he's only produced one track here, the synth-smeared introspection of Sam Cohen's "Lose Your Illusion". Still, as a simple reflection of his tastes – for sleepy-eyed vocalists, sumptuous basslines and dazed 'White Album' psych – *Volume 1* reveals plenty. Other highlights come in the shape of Autolux's "Change My Head", a psych-dusted piano ballad, and "Fool's Gold", a blend of baroque melodies and roughhouse breakbeats by Dan Auerbach's The Arcs.

EXTRAS: None.

LOUIS PATTISON



VARIOUS ARTISTS Coxsone's Music: The First Recordings Of Sir Coxsone The Downbeat 1960-62

SOUL JAZZ

8/10

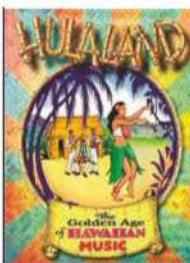
Three CDs of proto-reggae and ska from JA producer-impresario

In 1963, Clement "Sir Coxsone" Dodd opened Studio One, a recording studio in Kingston, Jamaica. Studio One was the first black-owned recording studio on the island, and within its walls, the likes of Bob Marley and Lee 'Scratch' Perry would learn their craft. *Coxsone's Music*, though, looks back a little further to just before Studio One's foundation, collecting seven-inches by the jazz orchestras and rhythm and blues bands who put their own spin on the sounds filtering over from the US. The tracklisting is a dizzying procession of names – Clue J & His Blues Blasters, Aubrey Adams & His Dudropers, Jiving Juniors, and so on – although Coxsone largely drew from a small pool of musicians, and the sense of swing and melody throughout is a constant. Jazz standards (such as Cecil Lloyd Quintet's take on Cole Porter's "What Is The Thing Called Love", featuring Roland Alphonso on sax) rub up against rock'n'roll pastiche (Owen Gray's "Best Twist"), early Rastafari anthems (Clancy Eccles' "River Jordon") and bumping ska (Busty & Cool's "What A World"). Soon, a production revolution would forge a new, quintessentially Jamaican sound – but here is some good groundwork.

EXTRAS: 28-page booklet and sleeve notes.

5/10

LOUIS PATTISON



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Hulaland: The Golden Age Of Hawaiian Music

ROCK BEAT

Glorious exploration of Hawaiianiana from the 1920s to the present

Hawaiian music is instantly recognisable, characterised by lush melodic instrumentals, nimble

ukuleles and languid steel guitars. A blissful, palm-swaying sound washes over much of this lavish four-disc set, highlighted by a disc of Hawaiian classics from the '20s and '30s featuring jazzy steel-guitar maestro Sol Ho'opi'i, Kalama's Quartet's infectious, near-hillbilly songs, Hilo Hattie's comic turns, uke-shredder Roy Smeck and Sol Bright's cowboy balladry. As tourism opened up the islands, the music was soon diluted in swing-era Hollywood soundtracks and by popular singers (Dorothy Lamour, Connie Stevens, Slim Whitman). Tiki bars, aloha shirts, hula hoops and ukes became post-war crazes in the US and, by 1959, when Hawaii was granted statehood, its sounds were being mellifluously incorporated into surf music, underpinning the growing easy-listening market while Martin Denny and his vibraphonist Arthur Lyman instigated a new genre, exotica; even the instrumentals on *Pet Sounds* display its influence. Balancing authentic and populist variations of the 50th state's musical heritage, *Hulaland* is an alluring introduction to its tropical delights and pervasive influence.

EXTRAS: 100-page hardback of vintage photos, 8/10 illustrations and sheet-music art.

MICK HOUGHTON

HOW TO BUY...

ALAN VEGA

The Suicide man's solo killers



Alan Vega PVC/ZE RECORDS, 1980

There's an element of conceptual reframing on Vega's first solo LP, which preserves all of the singer's peculiarities, but replaces the instrumental backing that Martin Rev provided for Suicide with spartan rockabilly rhythms. It works brilliantly, largely because Vega always sings like a shower-stall King, grunting and growling his way through the gestures of the form in a fog of reverb.

7/10

Collision Drive CELLULOID, 1981

This fierce set offers a honing of Vega's solo sound, even reprising "Ghost Rider" from the Suicide debut, but with a rockabilly pulse.

Vega's love of minimalist repetition means that a song such as "I Believe" is little more than a phrase, but still scratches at artistic extremes, while closer "Viet Vet" is a phlegmy, aggressive hymn to pain.

8/10

Saturn Strip ELEKTRA, 1983

Vega goes full-tilt for commerce by hiring Ric Ocasek as producer. It's a slight mismatch, and there are peculiar juxtapositions.

"Video Babe" finds Vega crooning above a fruit-machine riff, and yes, that really is a cover of Hot Chocolate's "Every's A Winner", though Vega treats the melody as a dangerous rumour.

7/10

ALASTAIR MCKAY



ALAN VEGA, ALEX CHILTON AND BEN VAUGHN

Cubist Blues

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

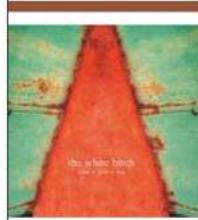
8/10

Improvised, inverted rock'n'roll classic

When Ben Vaughn called Suicide's Alan Vega and suggested that they record some blues, he may have had an inkling that the results would not be strictly conventional. Vega had an oblique relationship to tradition, and if his solo work was veering away from the electronic nightmares of Suicide towards rockabilly, he still sounded like a spectral Elvis exorcising the demons of rock'n'roll. Alex Chilton often displayed similar ambivalence towards his own achievements with The Box Tops and Big Star, and seemed happy to lurk in the margins of his own myth. Recorded over two nights in December 1994 and released on Henry Rollins' label in 1996, *Cubist Blues* is the exhilarating sound of three men making it up as they go along. There are hints of blues: "Sister" starts that way, but is diverted by an observational vocal, with Vega describing the scene in the Manhattan street below from his perch on the window sill. "Lover Of Love" is Memphis soul, warped by Vega's croon, and the glorious "Freedom" has Chilton squeezing a "T.V.O.D." riff from a synth, while he and Vaughn throw reverb-heavy shadows and jazz chords over Vega's typically bleary intonations.

EXTRAS: None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



THE WHITE BIRCH

Star Is Just A Sun (reissue, 2002)

GLITTERHOUSE

8/10

Stunning, seductive, release from quiet Norwegians

Taking their name – and much of their approach – from a song by Codeine, Norway's The White Birch embraced a sparse, slow, astonishingly beautiful template on their 2002 LP *Star Is Just A Sun*. While they took inspiration from the soundscapes produced by the likes of Codeine and also Slint, The White Birch operated in much gentler, quieter territory, folding overlapping, endless keyboards and sweet harmonies together on songs like "Breathe" and the gorgeous "Love Is So Real", and then building some forward momentum with "Silly Malone" and "Beauty King", which take the same glacial atmosphere but raise the tempo, creating something dignified but determined. It's an absorbing and enveloping blend, intense and magnificent on the string-dappled "Donau Movies", the subterranean foghorn lilt of "Atlantis", and "Riot", which lives up to its title by barely adjusting the rhythm but adding a muted growl to the belly of the mix. The White Birch returned in 2015 with a new album, *The Weight Of Spring*, that saw them explore old themes, but this remains their masterpiece. Long unavailable, it is now being reissued on CD and released on vinyl for the first time.

EXTRAS: None.

PETER WATTS

COMING NEXT MONTH...



► As we get stuck into 2016, February sees a host of albums to get excited about. **Animal Collective** return with their 10th album, *Painting With*, assisted by the likes of John

Cale and Colin Stetson, while **Elton John's** *Wonderful Crazy Night* and **Yoko Ono's** *Yes, I'm A Witch Too* – a set of remixes and collaborations with the likes of Sparks and Death Cab For Cutie – are also imminent.

Tim Gane, formerly of Stereolab, returns with his instrumental, propulsive trio **Cavern Of Anti-Matter** and their *Void Beats/Invocation* LP, while singer-songwriter **Josephine Foster** follows up 2013's *I'm A Dreamer* with her new *No More Lamps In The Morning*. Even more enticingly, powerpop icon **Emitt Rhodes** releases *Rainbow Ends* – his first LP since 1973's *Farewell To Paradise* – featuring members of Wilco, Brian Wilson's band and Jellyfish. In the world of archive releases, there's a welcome compilation of work by the progenitors of the Canterbury Sound, **The Wilde Flowers** – featuring, at various points, Robert Wyatt, Kevin Ayers, Pye Hastings, Mike Ratledge, Hugh Hopper and more. The pioneering albums of Brixton trio **This Heat**, one of the points where post-punk and the avant-garde most satisfactorily

intersect, are also reissued on vinyl, while **The Pop Group's** abrasive, and long unavailable, second album, *For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?*, gets a new lease of life.

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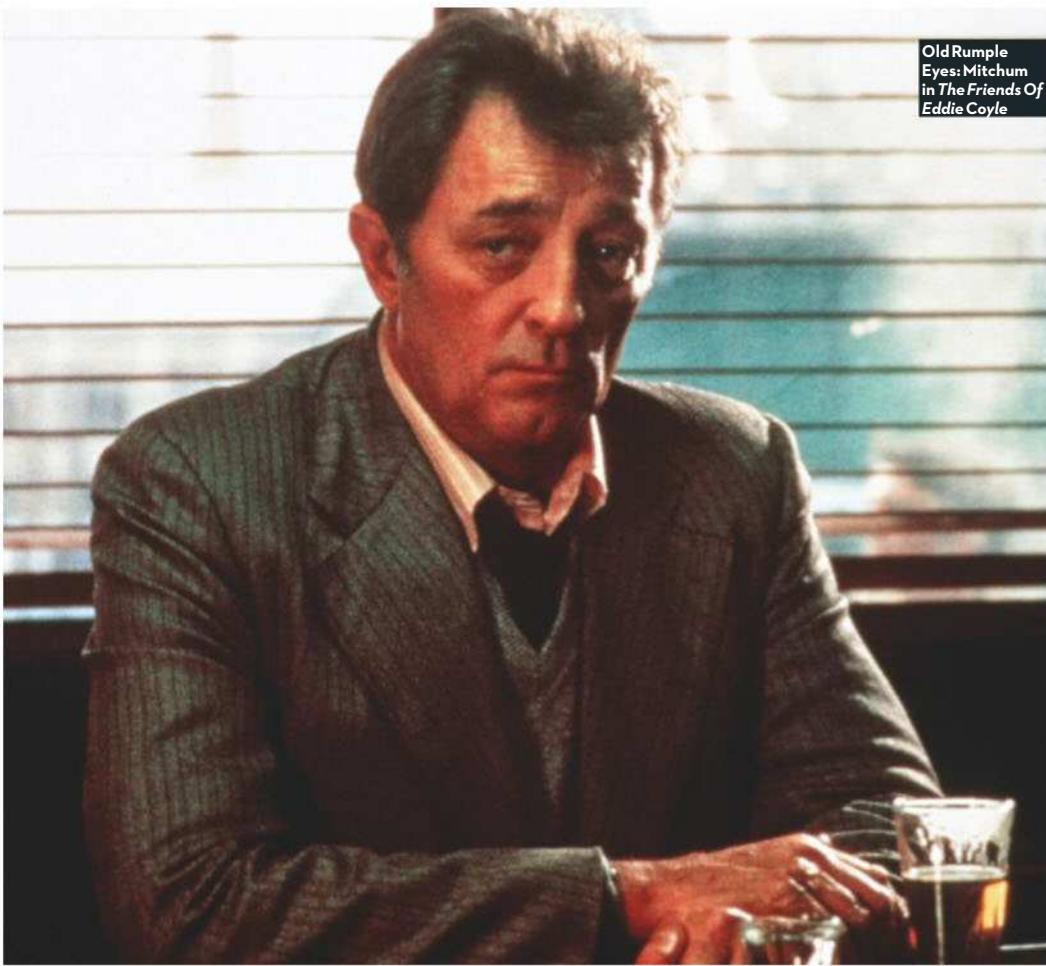
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THIS MONTH: SARAH RECORDS | THE BRIDGE | QUEEN

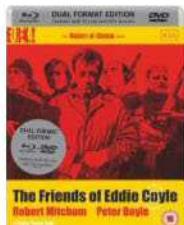


Old Rumble
Eyes: Mitchum
in *The Friends Of Eddie Coyle*

THE FRIENDS OF EDDIE COYLE

EUREKA

Robert Mitchum sets the pace in unsung, downbeat 1970s crime classic. By Damien Love



9/10

MARTIN SCORSESE ONCE declared "Mitchum is noir", and the statement holds layers of meaning. Right on top, there's the plain fact that, with films like *Out Of The Past*, Mitchum starred in some of the defining movies of the uneasy genre that bubbled up from America's subconscious in the years surrounding

WWII. Just beneath lies another suggestion: that Mitchum's life itself resembled a noir narrative – a man, after all, who'd been a drifter during the Depression, who served time on a chain gang, and who wound up behind bars again following a 1948 drugs bust.

Underneath again, though, Scorsese's comment touches something more intangible: the way Mitchum – cynical, fatalistic, not giving much of a damn either way – just seemed to embody the very

spirit of noir. Warping this way and that, it was a quality that subtly infected almost every performance by this most subtle of actors. Time and again, Mitchum played men who knew they were born to lose, yet were still looking for, as he put it in *Out Of The Past*, "a way to lose more slowly".

After its explosion across the 1940s and '50s, film noir had largely lain dormant in American cinema. By the early 1970s, though, following the years of assassination, Vietnam and Watergate, conditions were bleak enough for the mood to rise once more. The national air of weary disenchantment, paranoia and impending violence fuelled the wave that includes *The Conversation* (1974), *Chinatown* (1974), *Night Moves* (1975) and *Taxi Driver* (1976).

When film noir returned, it found Robert Mitchum there waiting patiently...

And when film noir returned, it found Robert Mitchum there waiting patiently. *The Friends Of Eddie Coyle* (1973) might not be as well known as the movies mentioned above – indeed, barring imports, this marks its first UK home-video release – but, setting the pace at the head of the pack, it is a key movie of the '70s cycle. Based on George V Higgins' brilliant 1972 novel, it was directed in 1973 by Peter Yates, although anyone looking for the hard style and action of his most famous movie – 1968's Steve McQueen vehicle *Bullitt* – might be hard pressed to recognise the same filmmaker. Slipping down into slow-burn naturalism, ...*Eddie Coyle* fizzles and dies against the battered fringes of blue-collar Boston in cold late autumn. Occasionally, we glimpse parks where trees are in a glorious riot of red and gold. Mostly, though, the story unfolds in drab, grey, forgotten urban spaces: empty bars, neglected diners, and – repeatedly – dismal car parks.

Such is the transitory world where Eddie (Mitchum) plies his trade. A lowly career criminal who knows everyone, he does shabby jobs for players in the Boston mob, including buying guns for a gang of bank robbers. But, in his late fifties, with kids to feed, Eddie is feeling old, and growing desperate. Arrested during a previous smuggling scam organised by his connected bartender friend, Dillon (the great Peter Boyle), he's awaiting sentencing and, a three-time loser, facing hefty jail time.

And so he tries playing both sides, looking to cut a deal with an undercover cop (the undervalued Richard Jordan). But, with friends like Eddie's, informing is a dangerous thing to contemplate.

Like Higgins' novel, the film is carried by its dialogue, a banal, burned-out poetry. Flat and toneless, yet weird and colourful, these lowlives sound entirely authentic – a former assistant attorney general, Higgins picked up their rhythms and motives while listening to wiretaps. What renders the film so potent, however, is its feeling of time fading inevitably away, and its constant undertow of surveillance and sell-out: the sense of everybody watching everybody else, looking after themselves, and reporting to someone else again.

Caught hopelessly in the middle, Mitchum's Eddie is no hero. Stuck forever in the small time, he's no longer even dreaming of the big score, just looking to survive, entirely alone for all his "friends". Jordan's cop supplies the best description of the way he drifts between cops and crooks, not quite wanted by either: "He's like a stray dog." Mitchum simply operates on a different level

here. Every second of the performance feels real. With beautiful minimalism, he captures a man whose oblivious tragedy is to be a bit-player in his own life, losing faster every second.

EXTRAS: Dual format Blu-ray and DVD, archive 7/10 Yates interview, video appreciation, booklet including new essay on the film.



THE BRIDGE: The Complete Season 3

ARROW

Another grisly chance to mix up Sweden and Denmark

Series Three of the sodium-lit Nordic noir has a massive hurdle to clear: the absence of Kim Bodnia, whose bear-like Danish cop previously formed a perfect odd couple act with his Asperger's-scented Swedish counterpart, Saga Norén (Sofia Helin). But opening episodes are surprisingly effective, and, although Bodnia's bemused humanity becomes missed as an art-murderer begins piling up a daft number of corpses, it remains a satisfying way to serial kill time.

EXTRAS: None.

DAMIEN LOVE

7/10



LOVE & MERCY

SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT

John Cusack in fine Brian Wilson biopic

Bill Pohlad's wonderful biopic encouraged us to view the Brian Wilson of the 1980s (defeated; controlled utterly by Dr Eugene Landy) through the prism of his 1960s. Strong performances by John

Cusack in one decade and Paul Dano in another anchored the two narratives: one a romantic comedy, in which a heavily medicated Brian abstractedly woos second wife Melinda; the other a musical *bildungsroman*, where young Brian creates his identity in respectfully forensic studio sequences. Both harmonised to make palpable a man whose struggles and obsessions have often been obscured by anecdote.

EXTRAS: Commentaries, deleted scene, doc.

6/10 JOHN ROBINSON

9/10



QUEEN A Night At The Odeon

VIRGIN

Remastered! Fandango live show from Hammersmith, Christmas Eve '75

"OK darlings - here's a nice tasty little medley for you..." With that song at No 1, and after a punishing UK tour, the boys reconvened for this

joyous 18-song show, simulcast live on *Whistle Test* and Radio 1. Even erratic stage lighting can't undermine the blistering power of a set drawn largely from *Sheer Heart Attack* - where white-caped wizard Brian May, not slick Freddie, emerges as the band's focal point. "Now I'm Here" rocks painfully hard; the take on "Bo Rhap" - via intriguing segues into "Killer Queen" and "...Black Queen" - is the collector's item.

EXTRAS: Brian and Roger doc with Bob Harris;

8/10 mini-lo-fi set from the Budokan, Tokyo.

MARK BENTLEY

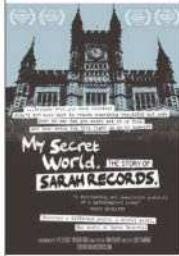
7/10



From Bristol, with love:
Sarah Records memorabilia

MY SECRET WORLD: The Story Of Sarah Records

VIMEO ON DEMAND



7/10

Intimate portrait of quietly radical indie outfit

IT SAYS SOMETHING about the reputation of Sarah Records that the most dramatic statements in a documentary dedicated to the Bristol indie label come from its detractors. Chief among them is the late *NME* critic Steven Wells. Sarah, he wrote, "should be called AntiPunk Noel Edmonds Mister Blobby Pile of Pooh

Rubbish Records". He returned to the theme more pungently in a review of Secret Shine's inoffensive 45 "Loveblind". "This isn't music," he wrote, "it's cancer."

To be fairer to the critic than he was to Sarah, Wells was professionally outraged about everything, and the label's understatement was out of step with the times. Sarah was a cottage industry that made a virtue of restraint. Even here, invited by filmmaker Lucy Dawkins to blow their own trumpets, the nearest the founders Clare Wadd and Matt Haynes come to being boastful is when Wadd deals with the question of professionalism, and its absence. "I think we were maybe just unprofessional in an entirely different way from most record labels," she says, "so we weren't falling apart and doing drugs and being pissed all the time. We were just taking pictures of buses."

Sarah existed between 1987-1995, releasing almost 100 artefacts (87 singles, a handful of albums, some 'zines, a board game). Many of the records had photos of Bristol landmarks, not necessarily buses, on the covers. The label was quietly political, and had a policy of not objectifying women on its sleeves. But it wasn't above using drawings of penguins or lawnmowers.

Wadd (from Harrogate) and Haynes (from London) were students in Bristol who bonded over their mutual love of fanzine culture. Wadd had produced *Kvatch* (interviewing the likes of Ivor Cutler, Billy Bragg and The Pogues); Haynes, an unlikely record mogul, produced the fanzine *Are You Scared To Get Happy?*, which included flexidiscs. He and Wadd met at a Julian Cope concert (with Primal Scream supporting) and never looked back. The label was set up on the Enterprise Allowance scheme, which allowed people to redefine their unemployment as a small business, and scored a single of the week with its first release, by The Sea Urchins. Sarah's reputation is for tweeness, yet it issued an anti-poll-tax single by The Orchids, and its brand of patient feminism fed into the riot grrrl movement.

As much as the music, Dawkins' film is a reminder of another time, and the quiet network of like-minded souls who were supported by fanzine culture during the Thatcher era. It's about intimacy, handwritten letters and Letraset, and a time when bliss was being at a 14 Iced Bears gig, selling fanzines.

EXTRAS: DVD version has extra content, poster, booklet, postcards.

8/10 ALASTAIR MCKAY



RICKI AND THE FLASH

SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Meryl Streep rocks up in wild-girl-comes-home saga

In Jonathan Demme's shaggy parable, Streep's the band leader of certain vintage who never made it, but never gave up her rock dreams, attempting

to build bridges with the family she ditched years before, when straight-living ex Kevin Kline calls to say their daughter's having a hard time. The warm healing is rote, but Demme's interest in people, and famous facility for filming people making music, scuffs the edges interestingly. Trivia notes: Neil Young taught Streep guitar for this; Rick "Jessie's Girl" Springfield co-stars.

EXTRAS: Making-of, deleted scenes, **7/10** stills gallery.

DAMIEN LOVE

7/10



SLOW WEST

LIONSGATE

Beta Band man's directorial debut is a sparse, poetic western. John Maclean's first outing as a film director works well, mainly thanks to his steady eye, and ascetic performances from a cast headed

by Michael Fassbender, as Silus, a hardened soul riding through Colorado (actually, New Zealand) alongside Jay (Kodi Smit-McPhee), a 16-year-old Scot searching for his lost love. A brisk and brutal dream of a film, it's almost hijacked by Ben Mendelsohn's fine turn as the grizzled wanderer and bounty hunter, Payne.

EXTRAS: Deleted scenes, shorts, **8/10** interviews, trailer.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

This month: Tom Hardy and Leonardo DiCaprio's frontier fracas; reporters tackle the Church; Dalton Trumbo gets his own script; Kurt Russell clashes with cannibals

The Revenant "Exeunt, pursued by bear" is one of Shakespeare's most famous stage directions, taken to its limit in Alejandro Iñárritu's new film. Here, Hugh Glass – a real-life, 19th-century trapper and frontiersman – is mauled by a grizzly bear near the banks of the Missouri river. It's a gruelling, five-minute scene – a brilliantly executed piece of digital trickery that thrusts the viewer right into the blood, sweat and claws. Iñárritu follows Glass as he miraculously makes his way back the 200 miles to Fort Kiowa, seeking revenge against the men who left him to die in the wilderness.

What follows is essentially IMAX adventure porn with beards and muskets; Bear Grylls meets Cormac McCarthy in an inhospitable landscape one character rightly describes as "the edge of the world". As Glass makes his way unsteadily through barren countryside – beset by Indians, French soldiers and ghosts – you might think of the eerie, hallucinatory tone of Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* or perhaps one of Werner Herzog's forays into the outer limits of endurance like *Aguirre, The Wrath Of God*. There are minor echoes, too, of other survival tales *Touching The Void* and *127 Hours*.

As Glass, Leonardo DiCaprio is buried under a mound of facial hair and furs – he looks like a hipster gone to seed; his stoic determination is impressive. You will watch a man cauterise a throat wound with gunpowder! Pitted against Glass is Tom Hardy as John Fitzgerald – one of two men tasked with looking after the wounded trapper and who abandons Glass to the elements. Fitzgerald's windy speeches about "the sublimity of mercy" are typical Iñárritu guff (as is the Native American mysticism), yet the bulky Hardy seems more naturally at home among the snowy mountains and fast-moving rivers than DiCaprio: his maniacal, semi-scalped Fitzgerald a good fit in this bleak, godless terrain. The soundtrack by Ryuichi Sakamoto, Alva Noto and Bryce Dessner, meanwhile, features unsettling, electronic drones and pulsing orchestral flourishes.

Iñárritu's plan seems to make the viewer experience as much as possible Glass' tribulations, in all their macabre glory. The opening battle sequence – where the US military expedition for whom Glass is a guide is attacked by Ree Indians – is a gruesome 10-minute sequence, seemingly shot in one take. As Glass' journey progresses, Iñárritu heightens colours, closes in on tiny details and frames magnificent wild vistas. It is thrilling, if exhausting.



► **Spotlight** In 2002, *The Boston Globe* ran a story exposing the systemic cover up of sexual abuse by Catholic priests in Massachusetts. Tom McCarthy's strong procedural drama follows the work done by the paper's Spotlight team as they uncover evidence stretching back decades and involving not just high-ranking members of the clergy but public officials and city elders. The work is carried out in a pleasingly old-school style. Clippings are sifted, libraries visited, archives searched, court records unearthed. In one sequence, our reporters are seen diligently combing line-by-line through Massachusetts Church directories with rulers and pencils. A film in which an ensemble cast of characters work to defeat a seemingly unstoppable enemy, *Spotlight* is a bit like an anti-superhero movie, where spreadsheets win the day instead of laser vision. The obvious antecedent is *All The President's Men*, but *Spotlight* is as dense and complex as an Aaron Sorkin screenplay. It involves a lot of people, talking in rooms. It also has the downbeat hue and measured pace of David Fincher's *Zodiac* – another great procedural, although that team pursued a different kind of real-life bogeyman. (Robert Redford and Cate Blanchett star in another film about journalism; *Truth*, about a 2004 newsroom scandal).

The core of *Spotlight* is a series of unfussy performances from an on-point cast, led by Michael Keaton as the Spotlight head, Walter Robinson. His crew consists of Mike Rezendes (Mark Ruffalo), Sacha Pfeiffer (Rachel McAdams) and Matt Carroll (Brian d'Arcy James), who live in a subterranean space in the depths of the *Globe* offices. Their outsider status within the *Globe* is not played up; but it is a critical part of the story. The Spotlight investigation is initiated by the *Globe*'s incoming editor, Marty Baron (Liev Schreiber) – an

"unmarried man of the Jewish faith who hates baseball", who isn't deep inside Boston society. "If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to abuse one," says lawyer Mitch Garabedian (Stanley Tucci), identifying the code of silence within the Catholic community that has effectively buried these incidents of abuse for years and allowed the Church to transfer paedophile priests to other parishes or retire them. It takes an outsider like Baron to instigate the investigation.

► **Trumbo** As a screenwriter during Hollywood's Golden Age, Dalton Trumbo won Oscars for *Roman Holiday* and *The Brave One*, although he received no onscreen credit for his achievements until long after the fact. Trumbo was a member of the Communist Party and one of the 'Hollywood Ten', a group of screenwriters and directors who refused to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee and were subsequently blacklisted. As played by Bryan Cranston – in his first significant role since *Breaking Bad* finished – Trumbo is the dashing master of the bon mot. "Stop talking as if everything you say is going to be chiselled into stone," says one exasperated fellow screenwriter. The eccentric Trumbo prefers to do his writing naked, in the bath, smoking and slugging whisky. But he is also a man of great principle, who faces down the ginormous John Wayne (David James Elliott) and poisonous gossip columnist Hedda Hopper (Helen Mirren), who are both staunch pursuers of the Red Menace.

Director Jay Roach and screenwriter John McNamara's film runs from 1951 to 1970, covering Trumbo's rise, fall and rehabilitation. Although its intentions are honourable, the film often slips into something more cartoonish; more in keeping, perhaps, with Roach's comedies, such as the *Meet The Parents* series, though not quite as slapstick as

Reviewed this month...



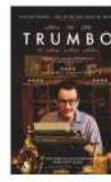
THE REVENANT

Director Alejandro Iñárritu
Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy
Opens January 15 Cert 15 8/10



SPOTLIGHT

Director Tom McCarthy
Starring Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo
Opens January 29 Cert 15 8/10



TRUMBO

Director Jay Roach
Starring Bryan Cranston, Louis CK
Opens February 5 Cert 15 7/10



FUTURE SHOCK: THE STORY OF 2000AD

Director Paul Goodwin
Starring Pat Mills, Grant Morrison
Opens now Cert 15 6/10



BONE TOMAHAWK

Director S Craig Zahler
Starring Kurt Russell, Richard Jenkins
Opens February 19 Cert 18 6/10



Bearing up: Leonardo DiCaprio plays a trapper back from the dead in *The Revenant*

Austin Powers. Scenes where Trumbo and his fellow blacklists churn out “shit for idiots” for ebullient B-movie producer Frank King (John Goodman) are a wheeze, but the lighthearted tone undermines the serious conditions under which these commissions were accepted. Although very good in the role, Cranston seems to be doing an impression – full of mannered tics. Roach and McNamara seem to misinterpret Trumbo’s eccentricities as defining character traits; accordingly, we rarely see behind the deft one-liners and well-chomped cigarette holder. Around him, John Goodman is terrific as King, who employs Trumbo during the blacklist, while Michael Stuhlbarg plays Edward G Robinson, an early friend and collaborator, and Dean O’Gorman is Kirk Douglas, who hired Trumbo to write *Spartacus*, which hastened the end of the blacklist. Diane Lane is wasted as Trumbo’s wife. Meanwhile, Louis CK delivers a gentle and touching performance as fictitious screenwriter Arlen Hird that gives the film its emotional centre, though why Roach and McNamara needed to introduce a fictional character when there were so many interesting real ones involved in the story isn’t immediately clear.

► Future Shock! The Story Of 2000AD

The publication date for the first issue of *2000AD* – February 26, 1977 – proved to be an auspicious one. Less than two weeks later, the Sex Pistols signed to A&M Records outside Buckingham Palace. *2000AD*’s editor may have claimed to come from the planet Quaxann, nevertheless in spirit his comic had more in common with punk, or perhaps the underground press of the 1960s. Accordingly, early *2000AD* came with a violent, subversive edge: one strip, *Invasion!*, opened with the assassination of a familiar-looking female Prime Minister on the steps of St Paul’s cathedral. Judge Dredd – the comic’s most famous character – mixed heavy violence with dark comedy and social commentary. As creator Pat Mills recalls in Paul Goodwin’s solid, talking heads doc, *2000AD*’s success was instant, selling 200,000 copies of the first issue in a week.

Although comics are now a dominant cultural force, it’s important to reflect on the variety and depth of the best *2000AD* strips at a time when they were not an accepted part of the mainstream. There was – yes – future war; and plenty of it. Genetically engineered infantryman Rogue Trooper patrolled a sci-fi iteration of Vietnam, and *Bad Company* was a brooding, existential update of *Apocalypse Now*.

Beyond those, the groundbreaking *The Ballad Of Halo Jones* – an early series from *Watchmen*’s Alan Moore – introduced an iconic feminist heroine, while *Zenith* delivered both a crisp deconstruction of superheroes and a satirical portrait of the 1980s. At its most colourful, *2000AD* was powerfully anarchic – *Nemesis The Warlock*, for instance, pitted a fire-breathing demon freedom fighter against a genocidal human villain called Torquemada.

Memorable creations such as these have ensured the comic’s survival during tough times, including the departure of its biggest star – Alan Moore – over rights issues during the ’80s. That *2000AD* continues to this day is testament to the enduring qualities of core creations like Judge Dredd. “Shake it up a little bit, go a bit too far,” recalls artist Kevin O’Neill of those formative days. “Then go a bit further.”

► **Bone Tomahawk** It’s a busy month for Kurt Russell – first, a starring role in Quentin Tarantino’s snow-bound Western, *The Hateful Eight*. Russell also stars in writer and director S Craig Zahler’s film: a horror Western, which finds Russell’s bewhiskered frontier sheriff up against a clan of cave-dwelling cannibal Indians. *Bone Tomahawk* is perhaps not quite as crazy as the words ‘cannibal Western starring Kurt Russell’ might otherwise imply. Zahler’s film is well-crafted and leisurely paced, shot through with wry, wintry humour. The film is set in the quiet town of Bright Home (“Do you want some coffee?”, “No reason to stay up”), where most of the able-bodied men are absent on a cattle drive. Following a grisly murder and abduction, Russell’s sheriff Franklin Hunt and his “back-up deputy” (Richard Jenkins) lead a small posse after the culprits. Zahler moves patiently through the first half of the film, allowing his characters to play off against one another before events slip into darker, more gruesome business. Zahler – a novelist making his feature debut – clearly enjoys his characters’ lengthy, digressive conversations. The sudden, queasy lurch into horror isn’t entirely successful: it is as if Zahler has bolted *The Hills Have Eyes* on to the end of *The Searchers*. But the performances at least are strong – in particular Russell’s quiet, authoritative sheriff and Jenkins as his amiable sidekick. Although not wholly successful, *Bone Tomahawk* is nevertheless the latest example of the quiet renaissance that Westerns have enjoyed over the past few years – *Blackthorn*, *Meek’s Cutoff*, *The Salvation* and *Slow West* among them.

Also out...

THE DANISH GIRL

OPENS JANUARY 1

This real-life drama stars Eddie Redmayne as a pioneering transgender surgery recipient; Tom Hooper (*The King’s Speech*) is the director.

JOY

OPENS JANUARY 1

David O Russell’s female empowerment yarn stars Jennifer Lawrence as a housewife who becomes a successful entrepreneur. Bradley Cooper co-stars.

LE MÉPRIS

OPENS JANUARY 1

Brigitte Bardot, Fritz Lang and Jack Palance star in Godard’s melancholic meditation on filmmaking. Reissued in a new print.

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

OPENS JANUARY 8

Eight ruffians are forced to shelter together from a blizzard in Tarantino’s latest. But who is going to survive? Expect some swearing.

CREED

OPENS JANUARY 15

Rocky is back! Again! Wearing a hat! This time he’s on the other side of the ropes, training the son of old pal Apollo Creed.



THE BIG SHORT

OPENS JANUARY 22

Anchorman director Adam McKay takes on the financial crash, with help from Christian Bale, Steve Carell and Brad Pitt.

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

OPENS JANUARY 22

Political satire: two rival American consultancy firms spin against each other during the Bolivian general elections.

DIRTY GRANDPA

OPENS JANUARY 28

Robert De Niro is that dirty grandpa, in the latest from former Sacha Baron Cohen collaborator, Dan Mazer.

INNOCENCE OF MEMORIES

OPENS JANUARY 29

Radiohead collaborator Grant Gee teams with novelist Orhan Pamuk for an Istanbul-set impressionistic meditation on love.

YOUTH

OPENS JANUARY 29

As reviewed in the last issue of *Uncut*. Existential musings from Paolo Sorrentino, with Michael Caine and Harvey Keitel ruminating in the Swiss Alps.

Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD



Peaches, flanked by dancing vaginas

PEACHES

ELECTRIC BALLROOM, LONDON, DECEMBER 6, 2015

Glad you could come! The world finally submits to the teachings of Peaches...

FOUR DAYS BEFORE Peaches hits London, the artist born Merrill Nisker released the video for "Rub", the title track of her latest album. On Facebook, she called it "the most insane Peaches video ever". The clip features full-frontal nudity, women standing to urinate, and a literal depiction of the lyric, "Can't talk right now/This chick's dick is in my mouth."

"Rub" is Peaches' first album since 2009's *I Feel Cream*. "Making albums seemed like a routine," she explains. "So I needed a break." So she toured *Peaches Christ Superstar*, her surprisingly faithful one-woman adaptation of the musical, took the male lead in a

production of Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* (for which she learned the Italian libretto phonetically), and made a rock opera, *Peaches Does Herself*, a retrospective with a twist. Peaches recontextualised her back catalogue to fit public perceptions of her, which is to say she gets swallowed up by "fans" and transforms into a transgender person "with big boobs and a big dick," as she told *Vice*.

2015 has been a banner year for trans visibility and mainstream conversations around gender fluidity. Fifteen years since Peaches' debut album, *The Teachings Of Peaches* and its pro-sex, pro-feminist, pro-queer electroclash gospel, critics have remarked that the mainstream has caught up

to her. That doesn't mean she'll get more extreme. "I don't really care about being provocative," she explains. "I just want to celebrate, and for people to feel comfortable in their own bodies, so it's not something that I'll pull away from."

It's not that Peaches is being disingenuous when she says she doesn't care about being provocative; more that to her mind, her body fluid-drenched message shouldn't be taboo. "I'm not talking about Sodom and Gomorrah," she says. "I'm talking about people being comfortable in their bodies, and not having to deal with certain political ideas or organised religions that try and stop people from being who they are."

At any rate, it's great fun, which is why it works. All this sexuality is implicit in pop anyway; Peaches just manifests it. Age 46 in an industry that doesn't favour older women, there's an inherent radicalism here that successor Miley Cyrus won't accrue for another two decades. Peaches' onstage gyrations have close links to the pleasure she preaches (unlike, say, Savages' severe didacticism), giving the Rub tour the feel of a gender-progressive bachelor party.



Peaches appears to the sound of Nina Simone's "Four Women", which contains the line that inspired Nisker's creative persona: "My name is Peaches!" The actual Peaches stands proud atop a podium, resplendent in glittery cape and pink armadillo-like frontispiece, and kickstarts "Rub". Recorded on a Roland MC-505, *Rub* is a back-to-basics record that offers "the nastiness of *The Teaches Of Peaches*," she says, "but it has better sound quality" – evinced by the song's gut-rumbling bass. She whips off the cape, then moonwalks to the sleazy grind of "Operate", from 2003's *Fatherfucker*.

Two dancers emerge dressed in plush, body-enveloping vagina costumes to accompany *Rub* standout "Vaginoplasty", the perfect distillation of Peaches' graphic empowerment. Written in horror at the news that teenage girls were considering the surgery to fit some porn-enshrined ideal, it evangelises outsized genitalia while celebrating more legitimate needs for the procedure: "If you've been in a crash/Construct the gash/Then make it flash/Complete with an underpass," Peaches raps, inimitably. "If you're born as a man/But know you're a

woman/I understand/Gotta get it, get it, girl."

The dancers frot their flapping pink lips against Peaches until another part of her outfit falls off, revealing a catsuit covered in sequin hands – and with it, Peaches' defiant self-sufficiency. She spent a decade on XL, but released *Rub* on her own label, I U She Music, "because I was a tax write-off for XL," she explains vehemently. "They don't give a shit about me. Also I love to make a video for every song, and if they own the masters to the song, they essentially own the masters to the videos, which have nothing to do with them, especially when they don't pay for all of them, so I'd rather own my own things." The label changed, she says, when they signed Adele. "What would they care about me?"

Nonetheless, Peaches' outsider kudos is as strong as it's always been. Early on, she collaborated with Iggy Pop on 2003's "Kick It", and guested on REM's final album, *Collapse Into Now*. Yoko Ono invited her to perform her legendary "Cut Piece" at the 2013 Meltdown festival. *Rub* opens with "Close Up", featuring a rasping guest vocal from Kim Gordon. Onstage at the Electric Ballroom, the song showcases the sleazy tinniness and serpentine flow that's always defined her music, a sound that's potentially inspired queer rappers like Zebra Katz and Leif.

Sandwiched between the admiration of newcomers and established artists, Peaches nevertheless isn't interested in legacy. "I'm really happy with my position now," she says. "I don't have any desire to be famous. I just

SET LIST

- 1 **Rub**
- 2 **Operate**
- 3 **Vaginoplasty**
- 4 **Talk To Me**
- 5 **Mommy Complex**
- 6 **Lovertits**
- 7 **Close Up**
- 8 **Pickles**
- 9 **I Feel Cream**
- 10 **How You Like My Cut**
- 11 **Burst!**
- 12 **Boys Wanna Be Her**
- 13 **Dick In The Air**
- 14 **Fuck The Pain Away**
- ENCORE**
- 15 **Dumb Fuck**
- 16 **AA XXX**
- 17 **Light In Places**

wanna be able to continue to make my art, say what I wanna say. I feel like I've been lucky enough to do that, because I haven't tried to please everybody or be part of some machine that doesn't have a clue and tries to guide you in ways that don't make sense."

Witnessing Peaches' insurrectionist mischief, it's obvious that she's having too much fun to contemplate her influence. On "I Feel Cream", she walks across the crowd's shoulders without missing a note. For "Dick In The Air", a 30-foot long condom unfurls over the crowd, which Peaches rolls down – again, word-perfect. Her dancers return in BDSM straps for "Fuck The Pain

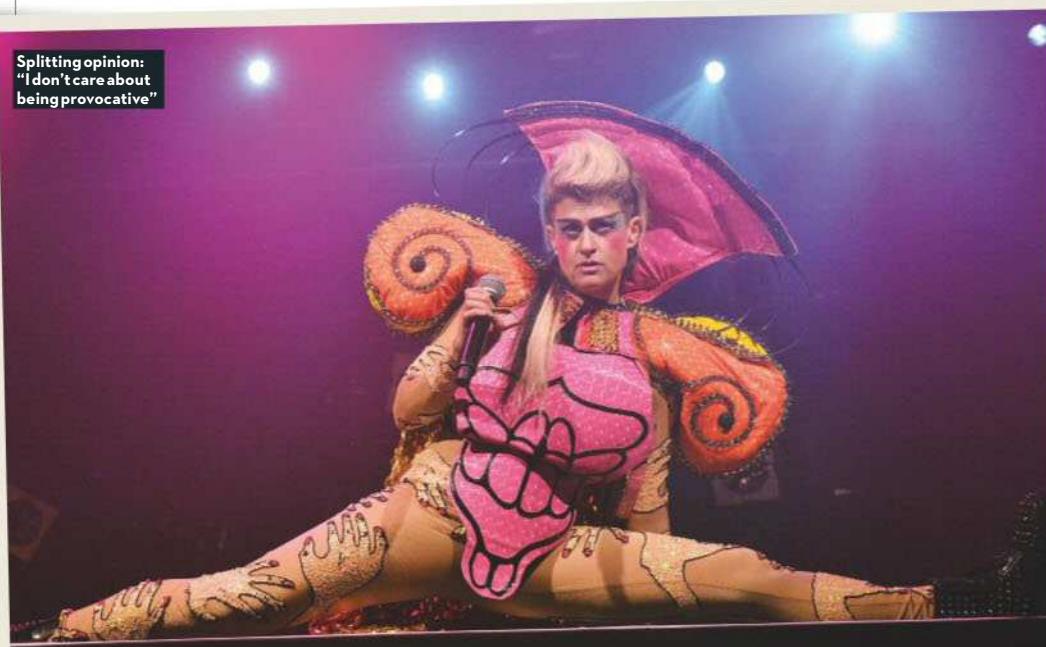
Away", and spit champagne arcs into the audience. For the finale, a hexagon-shaped trapeze is lowered from the ceiling, and mounted by performance artist Empress Stah, who asked Peaches to write a song to accompany her new invention: a MIDI-controlled butt plug that shoots colourful laser beams. The homemade element peaks as Stah's human strobe flashes throughout "Light In Places".

After *The Teaches Of Peaches*, critics were quick to write off Peaches' sexual liberation as shtick; meanwhile young female popstars still dutifully enact

such lesser-clothed moments to prove their ascent to womanhood/escape from svengalis. The light from Stah's bum underlines both Peaches' admirable consistency and openness to new ideas – in terms of orifices and spirit.

LAURA SNAPES

Splitting opinion:
"I don't care about being provocative"





DEATH

100 CLUB, LONDON, TUESDAY DECEMBER 1, 2015

The rapturous resurrection of Detroit's lost proto-punks.
"Real violent music" a speciality...

BOBBY HACKNEY BEGINS a speech that attempts to unite his home town of Detroit with his current location. "Detroit and London are twin cities," he shouts as he notes the connections between Motown and The Beatles, Detroit and the Stones. "Thank you for The Who! Beatles! Hendrix! And Cream!" Respects duly paid, Death launch into "Relief", one of several songs that extol the simple pleasures of rock'n'roll from within the classic hard-rock power-trio template.

When they're in this mode, Death are unstoppable, a delight not just for the extremely loud noise they make but for the improbability of what they represent. Death were formed in Detroit in the early 1970s by a trio of African-American brothers, Bobby, David and Dennis Hackney. They abandoned R'n'B to play politicised hard rock, developing a style that drew on the Michigan garage rock traditions of MC5, but making it even faster, meaner, leaner and louder. By 1975, A&R men were taking an

interest and the band went into the studio, but several labels, including Columbia, balked at their name. The brothers refused to change it, self-released one excellent single and left a stack of demos in the bank before mutating into a gospel rock band, and then turning to reggae.

In 2009, seven of their 1975 recordings were reissued by Drag City as ...For The Whole World To See, around the same time as their history was reappraised in a documentary. Further reissues followed, after which came an inevitable reformation and comeback album, *N.E.W.*, with Bobbie Duncan replacing the deceased David on guitar. Bobby's gratitude that his band have been given a second chance is infectious. He loves to say thank you – at one point, he even offers appreciation to all the rock-loving skateboarders because "Keep On Knocking" is being used to soundtrack a *Tony Hawks* video game.

Late brother David also gets several shout-outs, including a quasi-religious slow handclap of solidarity for everybody who has experienced

a bereavement, before they pile into "Story Of The World", a song written in 1975 but not recorded until 2013. Its spiralling dynamic, political-religious subtext and chaotic sprawl demonstrate that attempts to catalogue Death purely as snotty proto-punks are somewhat simplistic, even if the band are at

They extol the simple pleasures of rock'n'roll within a classic power-trio template

their best when they charge savagely through tracks recorded in 1975 such as "Rock'n'Roll Victim" and "You're A Prisoner".

Many of their recent recordings have a similarly incendiary feel, with "Playtime" and "You Are What You Think" carrying a garage vibe that can slip towards metal. But Death's

SET LIST

- 1 Views
- 2 Keep On Knocking
- 3 Rock'n'Roll Victim
- 4 Let The World Turn
- 5 State Of Mind
- 6 Freakin' Out
- 7 You're A Prisoner
- 8 Where Do We Go From Here
- 9 Relief
- 10 You Are What You Think
- 11 Politicians In My Eyes
- ENCORE**
- 12 Playtime
- 13 Story Of The World
- 14 Can You Give Me A Thrill

genre-jumping history is celebrated on "Let The World Turn", which takes in soul and disco alongside MC5 thrashing and an extended drum solo, and the stilted, spiritual soul-rock of "State Of Mind", a track released in 1982 when they were playing gospel rock as The 4th Movement. While these hint at Death's alternative world – one of foregrounded Christian morality and music – they are also little more than breathers amid the cacophony.

Instead, Death's exhumed marriage of sound and message peaks on "Politicians In My Eyes", which closes the pre-encore set and veers from desperation to contempt before piling into a torrid jam. Bobbie Duncan introduces it with another thank you, this one to all the "record collectors" and their love of "real violent music". This, after all, is what Death now deliver by the bucketload.

PETER WATTS

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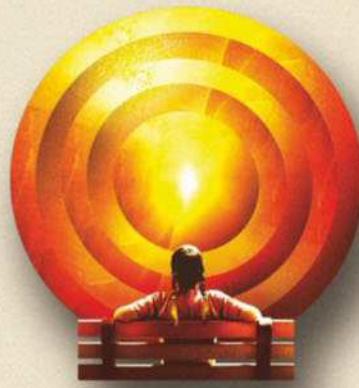
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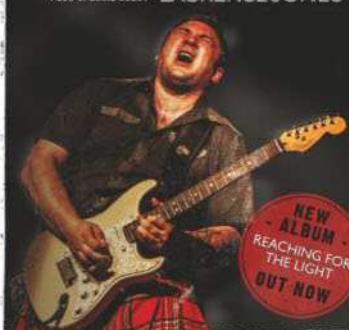
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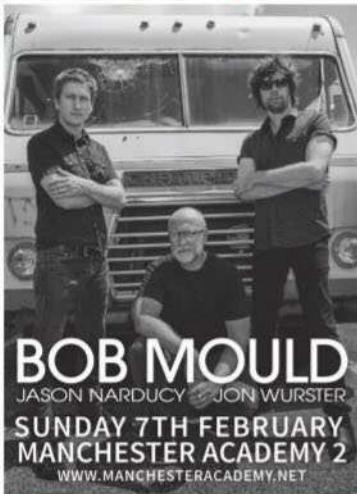
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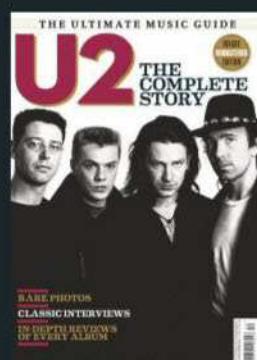
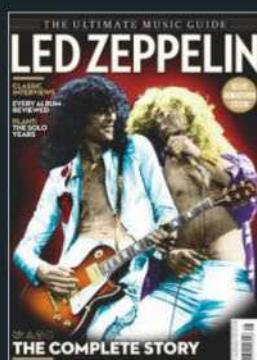
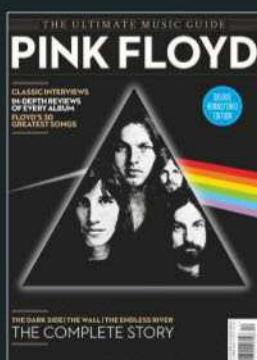
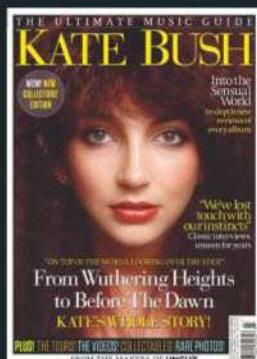
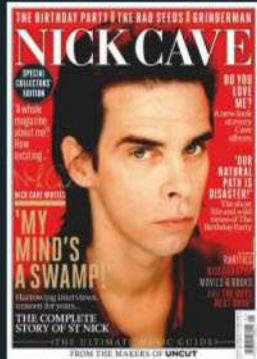
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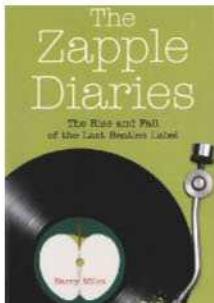


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Books

BY ALLAN JONES

Reviewed this month...



The Zapple Diaries: The Rise And Fall Of The Last Beatles Label

Barry Miles

PETER OWEN

8/10



The Record Store Of The Mind

Josh Rosenthal
TOMPKINS SQUARE

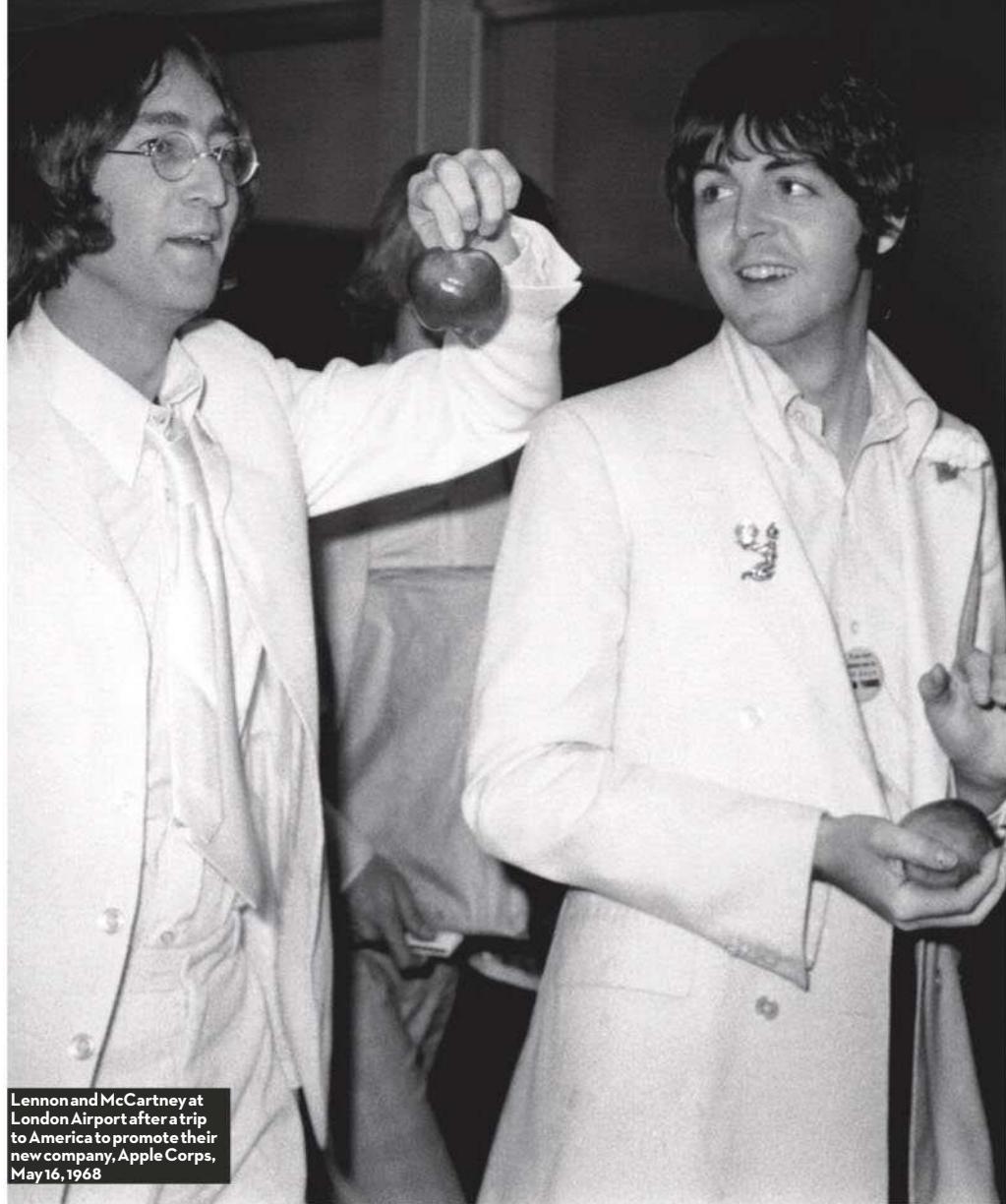
8/10

BARRY MILES packs a lot into the relatively modest 250 pages of **The Zapple Diaries**. The book's ostensibly about the label that Paul McCartney asked Miles to run as an offshoot of Apple, a showcase for the avant-garde and wildly unpredictable, freaky sounds and far-out concepts, esoteric projects with no obvious commercial potential. It's also, however, a vivid account of The Beatles' final floundering, fatal tensions growing between them as their empire crumbled, their giddy ambitions for Apple undone by their cluelessness, gullibility, complete lack of business sense. Brian Epstein may have made something of their dreams for Apple. But Epstein was dead and they were shockingly unprepared for a future without him, which made them easy prey eventually for the rapacious Allen Klein.

Miles was a big noise on London's countercultural scene and had already introduced McCartney to a new world of alternative art, music and literature. As early as September 1965, they'd discussed a monthly audio magazine featuring poetry readings, lectures, concerts, jam sessions. There were also abandoned plans for a radio station, a TV station, a newspaper. Three years later, in September 1968, McCartney wanted to revive their original idea via Zapple, with a series of cheap spoken-word LPs, supervised by Miles and featuring chums of his like Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and William Burroughs.

Apple by then had been operational for more than a year but was already a shambles, barely functional on any sensible level and hemorrhaging money. The Beatles had installed themselves as joint managing directors, but were always squabbling, contradicting each other, barely around. The sagging mess the label had become in less than a year was excruciatingly detailed in Richard DiLello's *The Longest Cocktail Party* and is further elaborated upon here. When John and Paul announced Apple's launch on American TV in May 1968, their promise of financial support for aspiring artists meant they were soon inundated with thousands of tapes, manuscripts, screenplays, most of which were never listened to or read. Yoko Ono was the first person to apply for money – £5000 to make a film.

The Apple offices, meanwhile, were often overrun. Celebrities like Jane Fonda, Lauren Bacall and Dennis Hopper dropped by. Derek Taylor ran the Apple press office like a cross between the Playboy Club and a hippy commune, lavishly dispensing drinks and drugs to an assortment of journalists and hangers on, which led to a showdown with an



Lennon and McCartney at London Airport after a trip to America to promote their new company, Apple Corps, May 16, 1968

incensed McCartney, whose erratic behaviour following his split from girlfriend Jane Asher alienated many previously devoted staff. Their loyalty to The Beatles was further tested when Yoko moved in. She had grown up attended to by servants, which is how she now imperiously treated even the longest-serving members of The Beatles' inner circle, making her universally disliked.

Worse was to come. In March 1969, Allen Klein was appointed business manager of Apple. Mass sackings followed. By June, a quarter of the original staff had been fired. The Beatles were mute witnesses to the carnage. With McCartney increasingly estranged, Miles was without an ally at Apple. He'd recently recorded sessions in America with Charles Olson, Richard Brautigan, Michael McClure and Ginsberg for Zapple albums. They never came out on the label. Instead, John Lennon and George Harrison usurped the original Zapple release schedule in favour of their own vanity projects – John and Yoko's *Unfinished Music No 2: Life With The Lions*, as unlistenable as its predecessor, *Two Virgins*, and Harrison's half-baked *Electronic Sound*. Released simultaneously on May 9, they were the only albums released by Zapple. Within a month, the label was history, shut down by Klein. The Beatles again were impulsive bystanders as Klein continued his ruthless dismantling of the original Apple, his malignant stewardship central to the rifts that by April 1970 had destroyed them.

► To the extent that they're both eventually about the thrill of musical discovery, Josh Rosenthal's **The Record Store Of The Mind** bears a passing resemblance to Richard King's *Original Rockers*. King's memoir was partly inspired by the years he

spent behind the counter at Bristol's Revolver Records, a dilapidated depository of vinyl booty waiting to be reclaimed. Rosenthal seems to have spent the larger part of his life in such places, in pursuit of long-lost gems, overlooked curios, rare test pressings, mint copies of original pressings long out of print, as if on some holy quest. "For me, the record store isn't just a place to idly dawdle," he writes. "It's a place where magic can happen."

Rosenthal is a music-industry veteran who spent 15 years in a variety of roles at Sony Music, working on albums by most of the label's big hitters before quitting in 2005 to start his own label. He now runs the largely archival Tompkins Square, based since 2011 in San Francisco, its personally curated catalogue testimony to Rosenthal's evangelical passion for the forgotten records that without his intervention may have been lost forever.

King's book was shaped by his memories of Revolver. But there's no formal narrative to **The Record Store Of The Mind**, which rather revels in what he somewhere describes as "the gloriously untidy randomness" of a typical garage or church sale. What pulls its disparate elements together, makes sense of its scattered essays, reprinted sleeve notes, artist profiles, lists of favourite albums and gigs and autobiographical chapters is the accommodating warmth and wit of his writing and the wealth of great stories he has to tell, which pour from so many of its pages. He has the kind of voice you can trust, a liberal view of what great music is, sound opinions on just about everything he writes about, from acoustic finger-pickers from the American Primitive school, backwoods fiddlers, wayward jazzers and recondite British pub rockers. The chapter on country great Charlie Louvin, whose career he revived, is particularly outstanding.

Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

Keys to it all:
Allen Toussaint
in 2012



ALLEN TOUSSAINT

New Orleans R'n'B, funk and soul legend
(1938-2015)

IT'S A MEASURE of his impact on New Orleans music that Allen Toussaint's death was likened to that of Elvis by the producer of the city's annual jazz festival. "I was in Memphis the day Elvis died," said Quint Davis. "It was like biblical Passover, everyone felt it personally. On the New Orleans scale, it's a little like that. A part of everybody here is lost."

As songwriter, arranger, producer, pianist and solo artist, Toussaint was a pre-eminent figure in New Orleans' transition from old-school R'n'B to modern funk and soul, propelling the city's distinctive sound on to the international stage. He wrote hits for Lee Dorsey, Otis Redding, Aaron Neville, Glen Campbell and The Pointer Sisters, to name just a few. And, in his role as producer, oversaw major releases by LaBelle and Dr John.

He began playing piano at a young age, absorbing the music of Ray Charles, Fats Domino and, most crucially, Professor Longhair. Inspired by his second-line rhythms, Toussaint cited Longhair's language, speed of operation and mobility as a major influence. He caught his first break sitting in for Huey 'Piano' Smith at a gig in 1955, after which he was introduced to Domino and his songwriting partner, Dave Bartholomew. Toussaint became a regular in Bartholomew's band and recorded with Domino, Smiley Lewis and Lee Allen. But it wasn't until the dawn of the '60s, when he began with the local Minit and Instant labels, that his rep started to flourish. He produced Lee Dorsey's first success, "Ya-Ya", and penned "I Like It Like That" (Chris Kenner), "Mother-In-Law" (Ernie K-Doe), "Pain In My Heart" (Otis Redding) and Benny Spellman's "Fortune Teller". The latter proved to be one of Toussaint's most enduring songs, prompting covers by the Stones, The Who, The Hollies, and Robert Plant and Alison Krauss. His association with Dorsey, meanwhile, continued after he formed Sansu Enterprises with Marshall Sehorn in 1965, most notably "Ride Your Pony" and "Working In The Coal Mine". Toussaint's house band for the label was Art Neville & The Sounds, who later morphed into The Meters.

By the '70s, he was collaborating with The Band, playing piano for Wings (*Venus And Mars*) and producing Dr John's *In The Right Place* and LaBelle's disco monster, "Lady Marmalade". Glen Campbell also took Toussaint's "Southern Nights" to the top of the *Billboard* charts. A working musician all his life, he was a restorative presence post-Hurricane Katrina, teaming up with Elvis Costello for 2006's *The River In Reverse* and performing at the first major event since the disaster, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. In 2013, President Obama awarded him the National Medal Of Arts.

PF SLOAN

"Eve Of Destruction" singer-songwriter
(1945-2015)

JIMMY WEBB'S "PF SLOAN", issued on 1970's *Words And Music*, appeared to be both a personal tribute and cautionary tale about the perils of the music business: "Last time I saw PF Sloan/ He was summer burned and winter blown/ He turned the corner all alone." By that time the real PF Sloan – a singer-songwriter who'd created hits for Barry McGuire, Johnny Rivers, The Turtles, Jan & Dean, The Grass Roots and Herman's Hermits – had indeed all but disappeared from view.

New Yorker Philip Schlein started young, recording his first single, "All I Want Is Loving", at the age of 14. His big break landed two years later, in 1961, when he became a staffer at Los Angeles publishing giant Screen Gems, in tandem with fellow songwriter Steve Barri. Aside from penning the theme for *The T.A.M.I. Show*, they regularly played with Jan & Dean (that's Sloan's falsetto on "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena"). Lou Adler then hired the duo for his new Dunhill label, during which time Sloan delivered hits like "You Baby" (The Turtles), "A Must To Avoid" (Herman's Hermits), "Secret Agent Man" (Johnny Rivers) and, most famously, Barry McGuire's "Eve Of Destruction". An apocalyptic anthem that chimed with civil rights and anti-war protests, the song topped the American charts in September 1965. Sloan also released a pair of solo albums in quick succession, *Songs Of Our Time* and *Twelve More Times*, after which his troubles began. "The record company didn't



PF Sloan in the studio during his '60s hit-writing heyday

want me to be a solo artist and write songs like "Sins Of A Family" and "Eve Of Destruction,"' he told *Uncut* in 2006. "They just wanted nice little pop songs." He also claimed that he started receiving death threats: "These people were very dangerous and put me through a tremendous amount. I stood up to it as best

I could, but in the end I had to scurry and find a way to survive."

He recorded one more album, 1972's *Raised On Records*, before disappearing for decades and suffering from hypoglycaemia and catatonia. He re-emerged in 2006 with *Sailover* and in 2014 released a belated follow-up, *My Beethoven*.

SCOTT WEILAND

Stone Temple Pilots frontman
(1967-2015)

Scott Weiland, who was found dead on his tour bus in Minnesota, first came to prominence as the flamboyant, strutting frontman of

Stone Temple Pilots. The band's 1992 debut *Core*, arriving a year after Nirvana's *Nevermind*, negotiated a path between grunge and classic hard rock, resulting in eight million sales in their native US. Its successor, 1994's *Purple*, sold only marginally less. When the band dissolved in 2002, Weiland

enjoyed further commercial success with Guns N' Roses-related supergroup Velvet Revolver. He returned to STP in 2008, before finally quitting to form Scott Weiland And The Wildabouts in 2014. Weiland's ongoing struggles with addiction were well-documented. It's widely assumed that his death was drug-related, though this is yet to be confirmed at the time of going to press. Ex-wife Mary Forsberg Weiland has written an open letter urging people not to "glorify this tragedy".

ANDY WHITE

Ringo-replacing session man
(1930-2015)

Glaswegian drummer Andy White will forever be enshrined in Beatles lore as the man who replaced Ringo Starr on "Love Me Do" in September 1962. Starr was relegated to playing tambourine on the song, later admitting he "was devastated that George Martin had his doubts about me". White, who was paid a one-off session fee of £5, also played on "PS I Love You"



Scott Weiland live with Stone Temple Pilots, California, 1993

during his three-hour stint at Abbey Road. His extensive CV during the '60s included Billy Fury, Herman's Hermits, Tom Jones ("It's Not Unusual") and Lulu ("Shout").

ROBERT 'MACK' McCORMICK

American musicologist
(1930-2015)

'Mack' McCormick once declared himself an anthropologist, studying mankind's "ability to cope and the style he brings to the job". In practical terms, this meant becoming a folklorist and musical historian, searching out obscure blues singers and recordings throughout Texas. His best-known discoveries were Mance Lipscomb and Lightnin' Hopkins, bringing the latter to a wider audience at Carnegie Hall in 1960 and establishing him as a key figure of the folk boom. His remit extended to tracking down and interviewing relatives of Robert Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lead Belly.

OBITUARIES

• PHIL TAYLOR

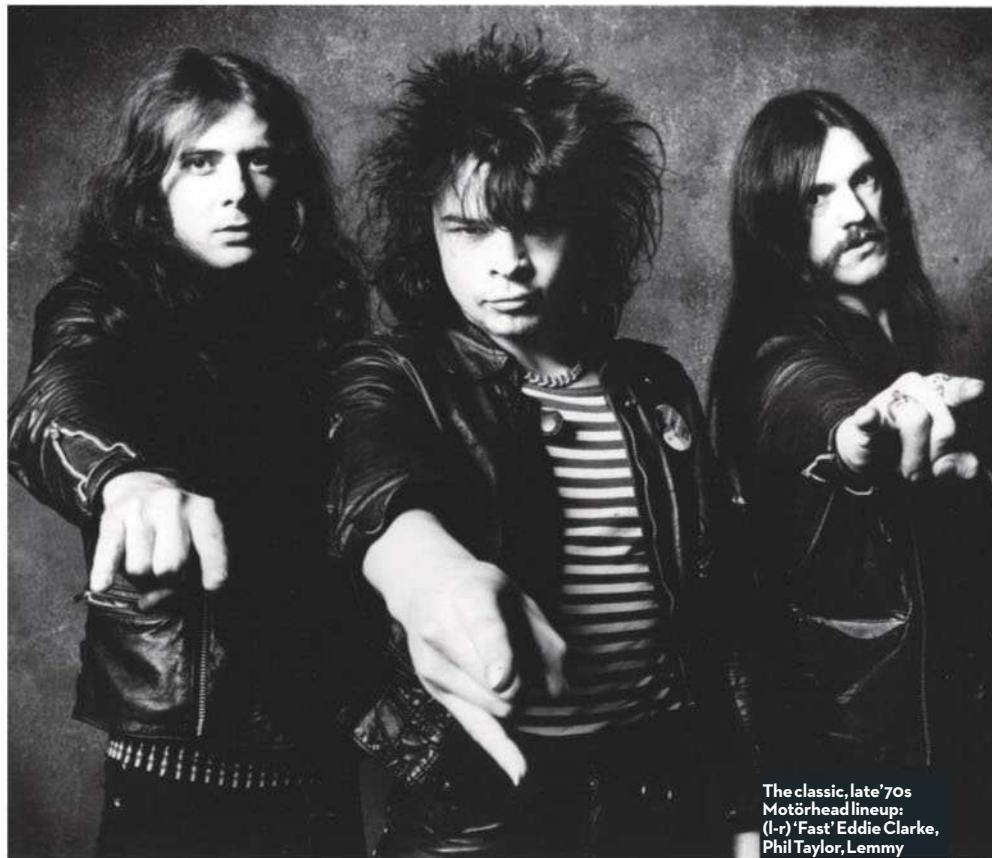
Motörhead drummer

(1954-2015)

IT TOOK MORE than broken bones to knock 'Philthy Animal' Taylor off his game. So prone to mishaps was the Motörhead drummer that Lemmy once quipped that "we were going to do a book called 'Hospitals I Have Known Across Europe' by Phil Taylor." Injuries sustained during punch-ups or drunken tumbles were commonplace. Following a gig in Belfast in 1980, a friendly prank resulted in Taylor being dropped headfirst on to a stone staircase. Undaunted by a broken neck, he resumed his duties by performing in a brace. On another occasion, unable to grip his drumstick due to fractured fingers, he merely gaffa-taped it to his hand.

This indomitable attitude was very much in keeping with Motörhead's reputation as roughhouse champions of the loudest and meanest rock'n'roll. Taylor's drumming was key to the band's power and fidelity, his double-bass kit enabling him to create a sustained volley of sound that helped define thrash-metal. Notorious for his lack of hygiene on tour (hence the nickname), his vast appetite for drugs and alcohol also endeared him to the similarly inclined Lemmy. The pair had first met during rehearsals for Motörhead's debut LP in 1975, when Taylor would give the singer a lift to the studio in his car. Before long, original drummer Lucas Fox was out and Taylor was in, soon joined by guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke.

Their debut self-titled album was released in 1977, with Taylor aboard for five further releases, among them *Overkill*, *Bomber* and *Ace Of Spades*.



The classic, late'70s Motörhead lineup: (l-r) 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, Phil Taylor, Lemmy

He quit in 1984, joining ex-Motörhead and Thin Lizzy guitarist Brian Robertson in Operator and touring Europe with Frankie Miller. By 1987 though, he was back, regretful for leaving in the first place. "Let's just say I took a three-year holiday," Taylor explained later. He carried on with Motörhead until 1992, before being fired

during the sessions for *March Or Die*, due to an inability "to get his act together". He went on to play with The Web Of Spider and Mick Farren And The Deviants. On hearing of his demise from liver failure, Lemmy said he was "devastated because one of my best friends died. I miss him already."

CYNTHIA ROBINSON

Family Stone trumpeter

(1944-2015)

The funky exuberance of Sly And The Family Stone had much to do with trumpeter and backing vocalist Cynthia Robinson. Aside

from her joyous horn lines, she can also be heard exhorting listeners to "get on up..." during the intro to "Dance To The Music". She first met Stone while at high school in California and, in 1966, joined Sly's short-lived combo, The Stoners. As the group morphed into the Family Stone, Robinson became a

permanent fixture, remaining until they broke up in 1975. Her association with Stone continued into the '80s, though she also played with Prince, George Clinton and Graham Central Station, led by her cousin (and fellow ex-Family Stone member) Larry Graham. Producer and major fan Questlove called her a "kick-ass trumpet player" and "a crucial, intricate part of Sly Stone's utopian vision of MLK's America."

Cynthia Robinson, San Francisco, 1973

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

the same local post-punk scene as Gang Of Four. Drummer Kelvin Knight, who has died after a long illness, aged 56, was a vital element of their raw funk-punk, complementing the twin bass attack of Ros Allen and Bethan Peters. 1979's "Mind Your Own Business" was a striking debut 45, followed two years later by *See The Whirl*. Alas, the group split soon after, with Knight returning to his job at Red Rhino Records. In 2012 he set up NMB Management to scout upcoming bands.

HOLLY WOODLAWN

Warhol Factory actress

(1946-2015)

Holly Woodlawn was already a cult figure by the time Lou Reed immortalised her in "Walk On The Wild Side". The opening verse describes how Woodlawn (born Haroldo Santiago Franceschi Rodriguez Danhakil in Puerto Rico) hitchhiked from Miami to New York City, aged 16, and "Plucked her eyebrows on the way/ Shaved her legs and then he was a

she". As part of Andy Warhol's Factory crowd, the transgender actress was a forcible presence in 1970 film debut *Trash* and follow-up *Women In Revolt* (1972), both of which were directed by Paul Morrissey.

JOHN GARNER

Sir Lord Baltimore mainman

(DOB Unknown-2015)

Prior to securing an audition for Bruce Springsteen at CBS, talent scout Mike Appel discovered Sir Lord Baltimore, a savage New York trio who were often compared to Black Sabbath. Drummer-vocalist John Garner was their central force, at his most abandoned on 1970 debut *Kingdom Come*, an album that, according to *Creem*, had "all the best heavy metal tricks in the book". However, after an underwhelming follow-up, they were promptly dropped by Mercury. Garner and guitarist Louis Dambra regrouped decades later and issued *Sir Lord Baltimore III: Raw* in 2007.

ROB HUGHES

KELVIN KNIGHT

Delta 5 drummer

(1959-2015)

Leeds' Delta 5 emerged from



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THE BEST OF 2015?

I look forward to the End Of Year Review [*Uncut, January*], but of course it's hard to agree with all the comments, and perhaps readers are even less likely to agree with the numerical ordering. That said, 2015 must have been a wonderful year for music if *Uncut* believe that there are 14 albums more worthy and significant than Jason Isbell's *Something More Than Free*. My album of the year by some distance. **Paul Jeater, Ingatstone, Essex**

I have just read your Top 75 Albums Of The Year review in your January issue. This is the third time I have scrolled through the list as I remained convinced after two readings that my eyes must have been deceiving me, or that there had been a major typo somewhere along the line. Where was Richard Hawley's new masterpiece *Hollow Meadows*, I asked myself? Nowhere, it appears – not even nestled somewhere down near No 75. This to me is utterly bizarre and verging on criminal behaviour from those at *Uncut* who voted for their favourite albums of 2015. This album is right up there as one of Hawley's most sublime offerings and quite how it did not gain a Top 10 finish is beyond me. To see it did not even appear in the Top 75 has left me utterly distraught!

Paul Doughty, via email

Like our Greatest Albums list in this month's issue, I guess the Albums Of The Year rundown is always going to be the inadvertent subject of controversy. It's also, though, a triumph of mathematics and democracy: worth noting, perhaps, that out of the 40-odd writers and staffers we polled, only 10 voted for *Something More Than Free*. In contrast our No 1, Julia Holter's *Have You In My Wilderness*, was voted for by 20 people.

Perhaps surprisingly, only one person mentioned Richard Hawley's *Hollow Meadows* on their poll. Out of the 380 different albums that were voted for, it came in at joint 335th with 15 other albums, including a couple of personal favourites: Nadia Reid's *Listen To Formation, Look For The Signs* and Laura Cannell's *Beneath Swooping Talons*. Which



Worthy of *Something More*? Jason Isbell scored *Uncut's* 15th best album last year

reminds me, anyone still curious about the personal highlights and buried treasures of 2015 could do worse than visit www.uncut.co.uk, where I've posted my own Top 140 of the year. – JM

OPEN DOORS POLICY

Enjoyed the article about the surviving members of The Doors searching for a replacement for Jim Morrison [*Uncut, November*]. Tom Pinnock mentions a number of possible lead singers that were considered by Densmore, Krieger and Manzarek when they went to London in 1973. Apparently, Howard Werth, Kevin Coyne and Jess Roden were considered, although none were chosen. Manzarek, frustrated by the process, returned to the states, leaving Krieger and Densmore behind. As a result of the visit, a new group was formed, called The Butts Band. Released in 1973 on the legendary Blue Thumb record label (BTS 63), the band featured Krieger and Densmore with lead singer, Jess Roden. Rounding out the band was Phil Chen and Roy Davies. Produced by Bruce Botnick, the first Butts Band album is a classic

and gives listeners a hint of how a Doors band after Morrison's death would have sounded with Jess Roden as lead singer.

**Mike Gruenberg,
N Bethesda, MD, USA**

“BOB BLOODY DYLAN! HE AIN’T ALL THAT...”

I'm 50 next year. I've been into music since I can remember. My mother was the driver of the sound in our house, listening to a wide variety of stuff including Elvis, Beatles, Roy O, Cilla, Dusty, Mamas And Papas, Beach Boys, Johnny Tillotson to name but a few. I'm embarrassed about the first records I bought, when I was five, which were "Long Haired Lover From Liverpool" by Little Jimmy Osmond – although looking back he wasn't that little – and also "Ernie" by Benny Hill. We've all made mistakes, as the Dalek said humping a dustbin.

Even the next few years were great, my sister with her "Davids" – Soul, Essex, Cassidy and, of course, Bowie. Moving on with my brother playing his style of music which introduced me to The Smiths, New Order, The The, Julian Cope etc.

Throughout this I was discovering what made me tick: The Cramps, The Fall, PiL, Devo, Adam Ant, Kraftwerk, Can. And throughout all these years I have continued to search for the music that makes me tingle, makes me feel alive, such as Taman Shud, Fat White Family, King Gizzard, and also listening to stuff I missed such as Captain Beefheart and Clinic, searching through dance and hip-hop genres looking for stuff that makes me want to go "Thank you God!"

And I know you can't please all of the people all of the time, but Bob bloody Dylan is always in your mag! He ain't all that. And neither are virtually any of the old farts who grace the *Uncut* covers. Your obsession with Dylan is starting to really piss me off, as is the embarrassment of trying to read a mag in public with old farts on the cover that are mainstream and really not that good... any more. I mean, Rolling bloody Stones, David bloody Gilmour, Pete bloody Townshend and bloody bastard Bob buggery Dylan. Stop it. That David Gilmour cover still haunts me.

There is too much coverage for

CROSSWORD

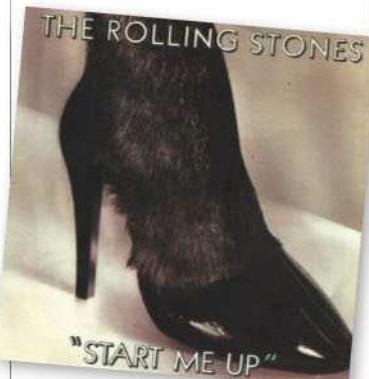
WIN!



One copy of The Long Ryders' 4CD boxset, Final Wild Songs

these people who simply don't do anything any more. Am I missing the point, *Uncut*? I think I'm your demographic and the magazine is well-written. Your reviews guide me as to what to buy, but please fill the mag with other artists! Tell us the entertaining and interesting histories of amazing bands, not the same old fogies. Is it just me? Is it? **Tony, via email**

Well, what we try and do is establish a continuum between those "old farts" and their heirs. We believe that our coverage of new music is a large and critical part of the magazine each month - something that goes a lot deeper beyond our cover stars, and which is hopefully apparent to people like Tony who are so well-versed in the merits of our Reviews section (that aforementioned Best Albums Of 2015 should have asserted that pretty clearly, too). At the same time, it's important for us to maintain a balance, and we'd like to think that, for many of our readers, these rock grandes continue to have an enduring cultural potency, and plenty still to offer as musicians. It's a delicate mix, and clearly we don't always get it quite right, but we'll definitely try harder to do so this year. - JM

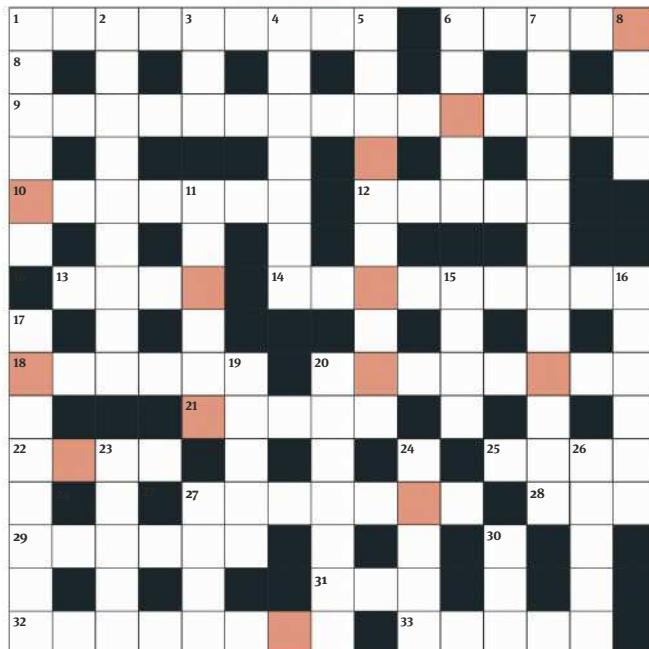


IN WHICH "START ME UP" IS EXPLAINED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ZZ TOP'S BILLY GIBBONS...

Hasn't Billy Gibbons been around long enough not to be thrown by a single snare hit [*Uncut, December*]? The Stones' "Start Me Up" comes in on the offbeat but this is in keeping with the song's phrasing and a standard Stones technique for wringing hooks out of simple chords. When the drums enter, Charlie hits a big snare at the start of bar three which is unusual when you expect it on two and four, but hardly enough to render the rest of the arrangement "a mystery".

Yours sincerely, a mystified pedant.

Glyn Wilcox, via email



HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Suede. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* February 2016 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, January 25, 2016**. This competition is only open to European residents.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Space oddity..... the sun ain't gonna shine anymore (9)
- 6+17D "And how I wish I was in love," 1969 (3-2-3-5)
- 9 Not exactly a warm welcome back for The Eagles (4-7-4)
- 10 Prog-rock band who charted in 1968 with "Rainbow Chaser" (7)
- 12 (See 16 down)
- 13 "Yes, I think I'm OK, I walked into the door again," 1987 (4)
- 14 Radiohead made some cuts, and this was the finest (6-3)
- 18+8D Partnership from The Strawbs who were left to "Pick Up The Pieces" (6-4)
- 20 One hit wonder in 1982 with "I've Never Been To Me" (8)
- 21 "It depends how you're wired when the ____ is on fire under the Westway," Blur (5)
- 22 An old message from The Manic Street Preachers (4)
- 25 Band featuring two sets of brothers, the Mothersbaughs and the Casales (4)
- 27 Singer/songwriter whose "No Regrets" was covered by The Walker Brothers (3-4)
- 28+20D Jamie Foxx portrayed this musician in 2004 biopic (3-7)
- 29 "The way you dance and hold me tight," 1958 (4-2)
- 31 Time for Queens Of The Stone Age to complete album ____ Vulgaris (3)
- 32 Hard to see how they were given *Permission To Land* (8)
- 33 (See 2 down)

ANSWERS: TAKE 223

ACROSS

- 1 Rattle That Lock, 9 Green Onions, 10 Boo, 11 Runaway, 12+13D Harvest Moon, 14+33A Rather Ripped, 16 Quads, 19 Money, 20 America, 21 In The

CLUES DOWN

- 1+4D This is not what you see of Fleetwood Mac, on the face of it (6-3-4)
- 2+3A How to get your head into the music of Steeleye Span (3-6-2-5)
- 3 Act also known as The Timelords and Justified Ancients Of Mu Mu (3)
- 4 (See 1 down)
- 5 Indie band fronted by Johnny Borrell (10)
- 6 Namely John Miles' first love and also his last (5)
- 7 Kate Bush recordings not intended to be permanent (5-3-4)
- 8 (See 18 across)
- 11 "Now the party's over, I'm so tired/ Then I see you coming out of nowhere," 1982 (6)
- 15 Bob & ____, performers of the "Harlem Shuffle" (4)
- 16+12A Cheery Borat turns up at Morrissey performance (3-3-5)
- 17 (See 6 across)
- 19 Lambchop music played in Phoenix only (5)
- 20 (See 28 across)
- 23 "They said it changes when the sun goes down, over the ____ going out of town," Arctic Monkeys (5)
- 24 Yusuf ____, formerly Cat Stevens (5)
- 26 A cellar full of oldies on a Def Leppard hits compilation (5)
- 27 "There's nothing where he used to lie, my conversation has run dry," 1997 (4)
- 30 The Mighty ____ or ____ Heat or Shambeko Say ____ (3)

CITY, 23+32A It's A Sin, 25Opus, 27Len, 28Travis, 29TLC, 31UFO, 34 Yes.

DOWN

- 1+2D Regard The End, 3Link Wray, 5Another Day, 6Last Request, 7Cable, 8Don't, 14Red Heaven, 15Hi-Fi,

17AnimalBoy, 18+4DSharon Tandy, 22Closer, 24Iris, 26Stop, 30Cud.

HIDDEN ANSWER

"Pennyroyal Tea"

XWORD COMPILED BY:

Trevor Hungerford

UNCUT

TAKE 225 | FEBRUARY 2016

Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Tel: 020 3148 6982 www.uncut.co.uk

EDITOR John Mulvey

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Michael Bonner

ASSOCIATE EDITOR John Robinson

ART EDITOR Marc Jones

SENIOR DESIGNER Michael Chapman

PRODUCTION EDITOR Mick Meikleham

ACTING ALBUM REVIEWS EDITOR Tom Pinnock

PICTURE RESEARCHER Phil King

EDITOR AT LARGE Allan Jones

CONTRIBUTORS Jason Anderson, Ben Beaumont-Thomas, Mark Bentley, David Cavanagh, Tom Charity, Leonie Cooper, Jon Dale, Stephen Dalton, Andy Gill, Nick Hasted, Mick Houghton, Rob Hughes, Trevor Hungerford, John Lewis, Damien Love, Alastair McKay, Geoff Macnab, Gavin Martin, Piers Martin, Andrew Mueller, Sharon O'Connell, Louis Pattison, Sam Richards, Jonathan Romney, Bud Scoppa, Peter Shapiro, Hazel Sheffield, Laura Snipes, Neil Spencer, Terry Staunton, Fiona Sturges, Graeme Thomson, Luke Torn, Stephen Troussé, Jaan Uhelszki, Wyndham Wallace, Peter Watts, Richard Williams, Nigel Williamson, Jim Wirth, Damon Wise, Rob Young

PHOTOGRAPHERS: David Reich, Steve Double, Steve Gullick, Paul Slattery, Nick Wilson, Jim Dyson, Val Wilmer

THANKS THIS ISSUE: Kevin Grant, Nick Mee (sub-editing); Tara Hodgson, James Hanman, Nina Hodgson

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MY LIFE IN MUSIC

Barry Adamson

The musician and composer reveals his art-rock inspirations – and what Magazine and the Bad Seeds would stick on the stereo



The song that got me into bass

Jet Harris & Tony Meehan *Diamonds* 1963

The Shadows' bassist and drummer did this instrumental piece – the top line was played on the bass, and in the middle there was a drum solo. I'd never heard anything like it. I was quite taken by the whole thing and I used to practise on pots and pans to see if I could figure the whole thing out. It lodged the idea that the bass could be more than just this thing in the background, just playing along with the root notes.



A pioneering soul/rock mix

Sly & The Family Stone *There's A Riot Goin' On* 1971

This was a real turning point in terms of everything I thought about what soul music was about, and also in the way they brought the two worlds of rock and soul together. That was very important for me, being a mixed race kid, you listen to this music or that music and you're trying to identify yourself, and here was something that was so cool and at the same time had a kind of edge to it that was a bit rockier.



My first act of rebellion

Alice Cooper *Blue Turk* 1972

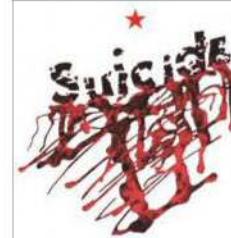
My key sort of, if you like, rebellion act was Alice Cooper. I'd stay off school and get the albums on import and wait for them to arrive. I'll take "Blue Turk" because again it's rock, but it's got this jazz thing – ne'er the twain will meet as far as I'm concerned, but they do it. They just take this cool bass lick and expand on it. I think Alice Cooper were peaking, even though it seemed to be a very commercial thing to do this *School's Out* concept record.



An art-rock inspiration

Roxy Music *Roxy Music* 1972

By this time I'm in a band, and like most teenagers of my era I had a David Bowie and Roxy Music fixation. It's really hard to pick a favourite Bowie record, but I'd probably go for *Aladdin Sane*, the whole album. With Roxy Music, the first album is so raw in the production, and I just think the songs are incredible. Though "The Bogus Man" from *For Your Pleasure* is their apex, I reckon. Just brilliant.



A Magazine favourite

Suicide *Suicide* 1977

In Magazine we were basically on rotation listening to the Suicide album, Iggy Pop's *The Idiot* and "Transmission" by Joy Division. The first Suicide record meant everything. When I was 18 I literally would put that on, play it all the way through, take it off then stick on *The Idiot*, play that all the way through, then go back to Suicide. In the Bad Seeds, we'd all get together round someone's house and that album would be put on and stay on. Everyone knew it inside out.



A mind-blowing record

The Wu-Tang Clan *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* 1993

Though I've worked primarily in rock, with Magazine and The Bad Seeds, etc, this album came along and blew all my notions about anything to do with music out of the window. It's really fantastic. Their solo records are mostly great, too – GZA's record [*Liquid Swords*] and some of Method Man's were fantastic at the time. I mean, once you've got something that's really great, you just go for it, don't you!



A stone-cold masterpiece

Captain Beefheart And The Magic Band *Clear Spot* 1972

You can drag this album out and put it on and go, "Oh, it's going to be OK." It's just the way this record plays. I got this around the end of Magazine, going into the first Bad Seeds album. I remember going out and buying the LP. "Low Yo Yo Stuff", "Nowadays A Woman's Gotta Hit A Man", "Big Eyed Beans From Venus" ... that whole record, it's like everything stands up for me.



My favourite soundtrack

Bernard Herrmann *Vertigo OST* 1958

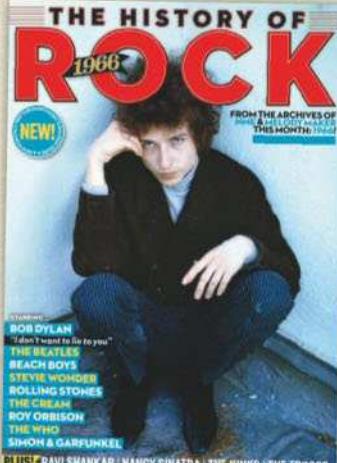
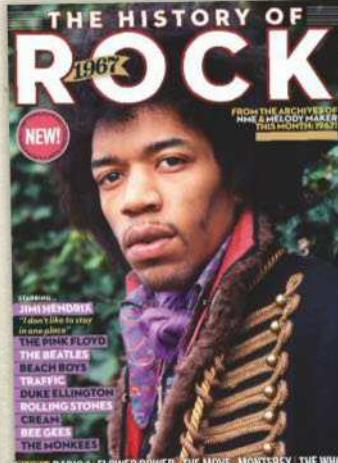
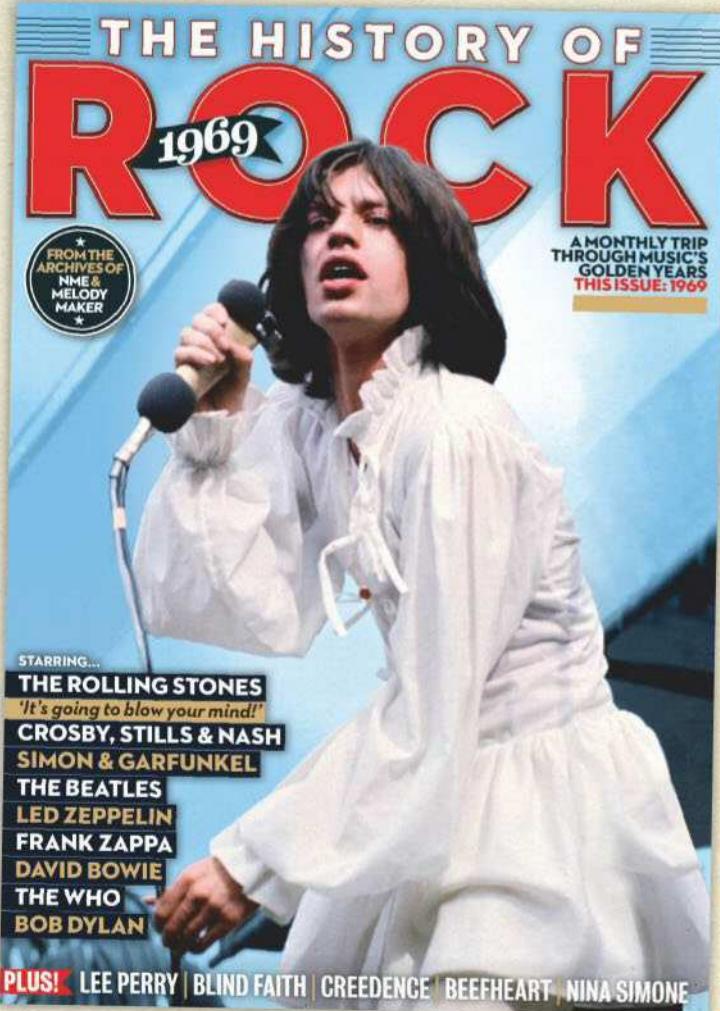
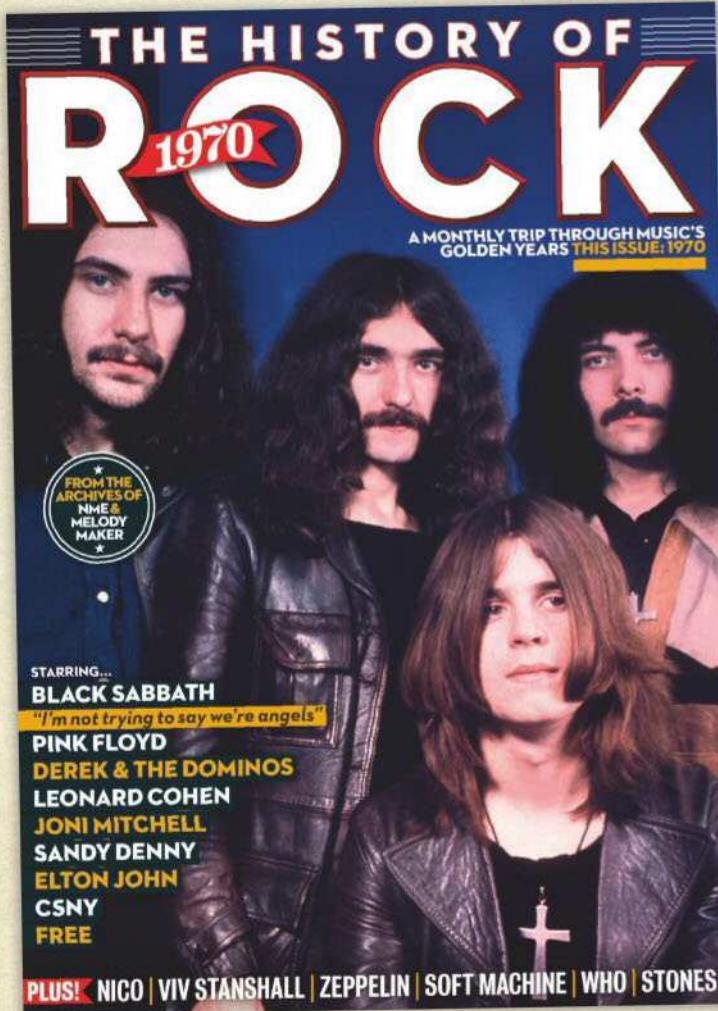
There are so many great film composers – Morricone, John Barry, Quincy Jones were all doing things that made me think cinema music was up there with anything else I was listening to. I've recorded soundtracks myself now, and all that stuff is still as influential as it ever was. Bernard Herrmann was almost an unsung hero of classical composition. When I hear his stuff, I go "Woah, I'd better crack on."

Barry Adamson's new album, *Know Where To Run*, is released on February 19

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DAUGHTER

NOT TO DISAPPEAR

OUT 15TH JANUARY