

"Because I can't conceal emotion/What I'm feeling's always written on my face"

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# UNCUT

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White Denim  
Midlake  
Billy Bragg  
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70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY EXCLUSIVE

## JONI MITCHELL

"We need goddesses – but I don't want to be one"

PLUS  
Blood on the tracklists!

**50**

Greatest singer-songwriter albums

### KING CRIMSON RETURN!

A remarkable visit to the court of **ROBERT FRIPP**

**AC/DC**  
The high-voltage dirty deeds of **BON SCOTT**

**GEORGE HARRISON**  
"He was zeroing in on the inner kingdom..."

**SPRINGSTEEN, NEIL YOUNG ...AND NILS LOFGREN!**

AND  
**GERED MANKOWITZ**  
**KALEIDOSCOPE**  
**CHRIS FORSYTH**  
**NICK LOWE**  
**NEKO CASE**

PLUS  
**BERNARD BUTLER**  
**LLOYD COLE**  
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"THE MOST IMPORTANT BAND OF THE LAST DECADE"

Rolling Stone



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TAKE 199

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DECEMBER 2013

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Jimmy Webb

# Are we rolling?



AS SHE MIGHT be said to have started off a trend for confessional songwriting with her 1971 album, *Blue*, we have put together as part of our celebration of Joni Mitchell's 70th birthday a list of the 50 most soul-baring singer-songwriter albums, the compilation of which reminded me of a conversation with Elvis Costello I had many years ago about this very subject, about which he inevitably had some pretty forthright opinions.

It was May, 1989, and I was in Dublin to interview Costello about *Spike*, his new album, just out, but we had somehow ended up talking about an unhappy earlier period in his life, the turmoil of which often found its way into his songs, many of them notable for their unsettling candour. It had seemed to some that he may have courted emotional distress for inspiration, a suggestion that led to the following exchange.

"Was I purposely fucking up my life to give myself something to write about?" he chuckled mordantly. "I think I did that for about a year," he added with a weary laugh. "And that's at the very most. Then I began to mistrust the results. Because if you do that, it's like when they pour acid into rabbits' eyes or something. What does it prove? It proves that it hurts the animal. Very smart. It's unnecessary research. And I guess I did some unnecessary research for a while. Then I'd write something that would scare the hell out of me. Like there's a couple of songs on *Get Happy!!* that when I read them back, I just scared the hell out of myself. And I thought, 'Uh-uh. Better not think any more about this. It's going too far.' Because you can think *too fucking much*, you know. And it gets a bit fucking evil.

"I can recognise sometimes when I went too far. But then again, I was never really that specific. I mean, people who really do pay too much attention for their own good have tried to peg certain songs to certain people. It's like a game, isn't it? That started in the '70s with people like Joni Mitchell. People always wanted to know who those songs were about. And people have tried that with me, and they've always been wrong.

"Do I resent people looking for the autobiographical in my songs? No, I don't *resent* it. I just blame John Lennon. It's *Plastic Ono Band*, that album started it all. After that, *everything* was supposed to be fucking confessional. The early '70s were full of people baring their fucking *souls* for public scrutiny. There were records whose authenticity depended on their confessional aspect, and if you read certain magazines and the background interviews, you knew what these songs were about.

"And, for me, that always used to spoil it. Particularly when you found out what *dickheads* some of the people were that they were writing about. I'd rather have them be like Smokey Robinson songs, which could be about

anyone. I don't think it's important that people know who 'Alison' was about. It's none of their fucking business. It's a *song*. 'I Want You' is a *song*. It doesn't matter who it's about. It's just a song. It's a *really well-written song*. It's also very personal. But you don't have to know the whole story to be touched by it. But there are still people, yeah, who want everything I've ever done documented and explained - but we're really getting into something else here," he said, perhaps recalling what we're actually here to talk about, which is his new album. "Like I say," he went on anyway, "it's all in the past. None of it means a damn. You can't go digging around for ever in the past. It's history. Let it fucking go."

*Alison Jones*



Elvis Costello in 1989: given up thinking "too fucking much"...

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# INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT

Featuring KALEIDOSCOPE | BERNARD BUTLER & TRANS | CHRIS FORSYTH



High plains drifter:  
Keith Richards in  
the Arizona Desert,  
USA, 1965



# ‘Keith bought us guns and huge cowboy hats...’

The adventures of GERED MANKOWITZ, photographic chronicler of rock’s wild bunch. “One did have a pretty rock’n’roll lifestyle...”

**G**ERED MANKOWITZ’S PHOTOGRAPHS have helped map the history of rock’n’roll since the dawn of Beatlemania. Barely 16 when he took on his first assignment, shooting folk-rock duo Chad & Jeremy in 1963, the son of the author, playwright and screenwriter Wolf Mankowitz went on to be the prime chronicler of The Rolling Stones in their modish mid-’60s pomp and to create unforgettable images of Hendrix, The Jam, Kate Bush and Oasis.

Half a century after turning pro, Mankowitz is publishing *50 Years Of Rock And Roll Photography*, a vibrant compendium which includes his most iconic shots alongside many unseen images. “It’s been my life,” he says of the contents of the book. “It just feels like I’ve been very lucky, in that the range of artists I’ve photographed has been so interesting.”

Under the patronage of Andrew Loog Oldham, the teenage Mankowitz formed a particularly strong bond with the Stones. One of the book’s outstanding images is of Keith Richards in 1965, accessorising with horse, holster and guns, looking like some Midwest bounty hunter from the days of Doolin and Dalton.

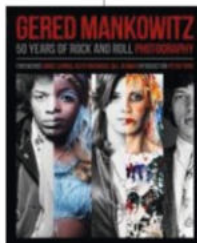
“Keith and the horse is a funny one,” says Mankowitz. “It was taken at the end of their autumn ’65 US tour,

which I went on. Everyone was going on to Las Vegas afterwards for a break, but I had no money. Keith didn’t like Vegas so he suggested we all go to Phoenix, Arizona, and ride for a few days. He bought us guns and ridiculously huge cowboy hats, and we went off into the desert with a guide to camp overnight. The picture is just when we’ve arrived at the campsite and unsaddled the ponies. Keith looks like Billy The Kid! If someone stuck the date 1887 underneath it, you might not question it.”

Almost 50 years later, Richards has written a foreword for the book. Mankowitz says that “Keith and I always got on very well”, but despite also counting Marianne Faithfull, Bill Wyman and PP

Arnold among his circle of friends, he always tried to maintain a distance. “I wanted to be a professional portrait image-maker. I didn’t want a rock’n’roll lifestyle – although it brushed off! Looking back, up to a point in the ’60s one did have a pretty rock’n’roll lifestyle, but I never aspired to be the bosom buddy of Jimi Hendrix. That wasn’t what I was interested in.”

The book’s other highlights include Mankowitz’s famous, dazzling portraits of Hendrix and a previously unseen shot of Eric Clapton in repose, dating from

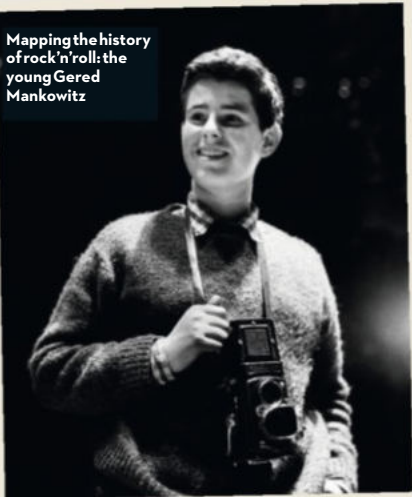


● 1969. "I've done two or three Clapton album covers, but I never actually photographed Eric for any of them," he says. "We used a stand-in for *Timepieces*, and I did Blackie, his guitar, for another 'best of', so the shot from '69 is my only real portrait of Eric, and I like it very much. It was on the set of a TV programme called *Supershow*, in a disused carpet factory in West London. I like the towering amps behind him, and it's a particularly special guitar. He looks great, he has power, and I like that he's not playing. A lot of guitarists when they play make quite grotesque faces – I was always more interested in the person."

Whether shooting Clapton or someone "rather private and not particularly photogenic" like Randy Newman, his goal was always the same. "It wasn't important that I actually liked the music, it was more important that I had an understanding of what it was expressing, and who it was expressing it to."

Mankowitz went on to photograph everyone from Leonard Cohen to AC/DC, but is happy to be most closely associated with his work from the '60s. "All that energy, all that new power and influence we thought we were having – it was

Mapping the history of rock 'n' roll: the young Gered Mankowitz



incredibly exciting," he says. "Although we didn't know it, we were laying down the blueprint of popular imagery for the foreseeable future. You see a band today and you see almost instantly that the roots of the image lie firmly in the '60s." He laughs. "In '94 I honestly thought Oasis were a Stones tribute band, so when I shot them I suggested we do a pastiche of my own *Between The Buttons* cover."

Inevitably, there are regrets about projects that passed him by. Mankowitz's "endless list" of the ones that got away includes Elvis Presley, Ry Cooder's *Into The Purple Valley* album cover, and Bob Dylan. "I met him once very briefly in New York and he had nothing at all to say to me – not even hello! The list goes on and on, but I'm very proud of what I did do."

GRAEME THOMSON

**Gered Mankowitz: 50 Years Of Rock And Roll Photography** is published by Goodman in December, priced £30

The sky children: (l-r) Danny Bridgman, Steve Clark, Eddie Pumer, Peter Daltrey, 1967



## "It's bad enough singing about strawberry monkeys!"

Gadzooks! KALEIDOSCOPE, Britain's unluckiest psych band, return after 40-odd years. What could possibly go wrong this time?

PETER DALTREY ADMITS he still has the Indian shirt he is wearing on the cover of Kaleidoscope's milk-fed 1967 oddity *Tangerine Dream*. But the singer won't be decked out in full Granny Takes A Trip uniform when his Peter Pan-ish lost boys of pop-psych make their first appearance on a London stage in 40 years in November. "It's bad enough singing about strawberry monkeys without having to go on dressed as Little Lord Fauntleroy," he tells *Uncut*.

Mice in Daltrey's West Country cottage devoured much of his King's Road finery, and the music that he and Acton pals – guitarist Eddie Pumer, drummer Danny Bridgman and bassist Steve Clark – created is now being digested every bit as hungrily. Sales of their toy-town Syd Barrett albums – *Tangerine Dream* and 1969's *Faintly Blowing* – were dismal, and their 1970 outing as Fairfield Parlour, *From Home To Home*, fared little better, but all are now eBay gold for those psych-fetishists who find The Zombies' *Odessey And Oracle* a bit heavy.

Kaleidoscope's music has its parallels, from the Renaissance airy-fairyness of early Bee Gees to the sturm und jangle of C86 and beyond, but Daltrey insists the *ne plus* Donovan style of "A Dream For Julie" and "The Sky Children" was pretty much

their own. "We lived in a Kaleidoscope bubble, apart from The Beatles, who we worshipped," he remembers, adding wistfully: "I was 21 when I recorded that first LP in the summer of '67 – can you imagine how exciting that was?"

Disappointment was to follow; their plane-disaster-themed debut single "Flight From Ashiya" disappeared into its own Bermuda Triangle somewhere between the pressing plant and record stores, while a supposed big break when they recorded the official single of the Isle Of Wight festival – "Let The World Wash In", credited to I Luv Wight – ended in typical ignominy. Despite a promise to feature it between every band's set, master of ceremonies Ricky Farr played it once before skimming it into the crowd.

It was all too much for Daltrey. "We were stony broke," he says. "I was pretty cracked up. I turned my back on music 'cause

it was a pretty sore point."

Time brought consolation 20 years on, when the band's albums were rediscovered – but there was to be no reunion. Daltrey sighs: "The rest of the band were very enthusiastic with a pint in their hand, but they didn't have the determination I had."

Indeed, Daltrey has since released a slew of solo albums and three books about the band, and while the original group will never reform – Clark died in 1999, and the others are unwilling or unable to journey back into Narnia – Scottish folkniks Trembling Bells are deputising for absent members for the show, with Daltrey thrilled finally to have an audience.

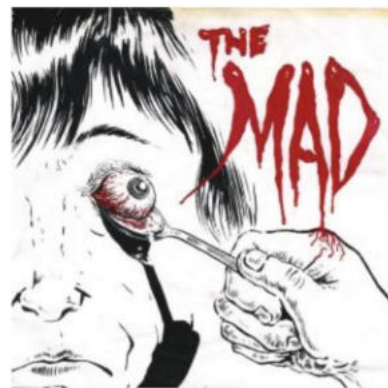
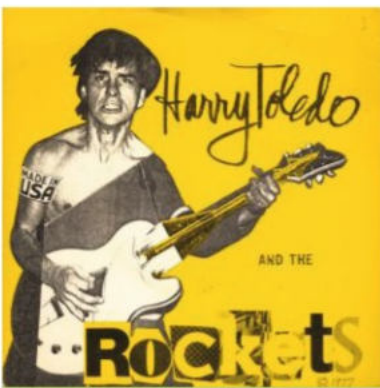
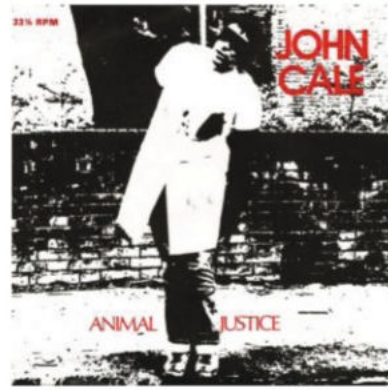
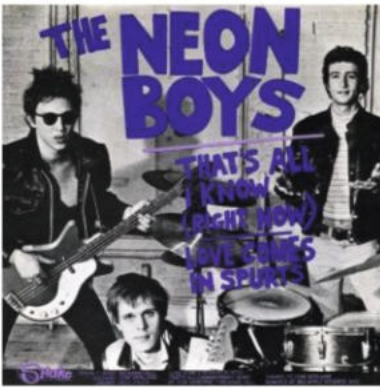
"I am getting mail from people of 15-16 who are just discovering this stuff and they love it – and for an old bloke like me that's

wonderful," says the 67-year-old. "We put blood, sweat and tears into it and it was incredibly frustrating at the time. Vindication? Too right. I'm having a ball."

JIM WIRTH

Peter Daltrey's *Kaleidoscope* play *Islington Assembly Hall on Sunday, November 17*





# Year Xerox!

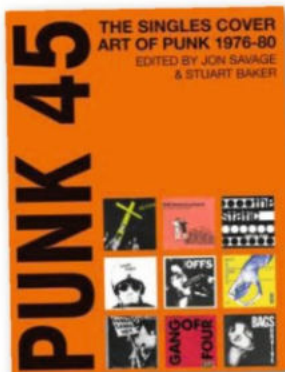
The fine art of Punk 45 sleeves

ACCORDING TO JON Savage in his intro to *Punk 45: The Singles Cover Art of Punk 1976-80*, the late '70s were “an extraordinary period of folk art”. It was, Savage continues, “a time when teenagers could say what was on their minds – even if it was trivial, amateurish or unpalatable.”

*Punk 45* makes a convincing argument for the 7-inch as “the form that most suited the aesthetic”. It curates the sleeves of landmark singles alongside 45s from Britain, America and beyond that, though long-forgotten, were cumulatively essential to perpetuating the scene’s iconoclastic, DIY rhetoric. Here, *Uncut*’s Art Editor has selected 11

of his favourites from the book, including (assiduous collectors will have already spotted) the Italian-only picture sleeve of “Hey Joe”/“Piss Factory”. Worth noting, too, that among the compelling stories found in the small print of *Punk 45s*, The Mad’s frontman was known at the time as Screaming Mad George, and went on

to provide special effects and make-up for *Predator* and *A Nightmare On Elm Street 4...*



*Punk 45: The Singles Cover Art of Punk 1976-80*, edited by Jon Savage and Stuart Baker, is published by Soul Jazz Books in November 2013, priced £25, distributed by Thames And Hudson



A QUICK ONE

► A date for your diary: Friday, Nov 22 sees our latest *Ultimate Music Guide*, on the subject of Neil Young, arrive in the shops. Alongside some pretty amazing interviews from the *NME* and *MM* archives, we’ve also had a go at reviewing every one of his albums. Need *Landing On Water* re-evaluated? Step right this way...

► London’s Royal Festival Hall will be hosting A Celebration Of Bert Jansch on Dec 3. Thus far confirmed: old Pentangle band mates Jacqui McShee and Danny Thompson, Ralph McTell, Bernard Butler and Martin Carthy, with some other auspicious names pending.

► Lindsey Buckingham, Ray Davies, Nile Rodgers, Jeff Beck, Blondie and Graham Nash are among the guests lined up for *Talks Music*, a new series of in-depth interviews conducted by Malcolm Gerrie, creator of *The Tube*. The 10-week series begins Nov 4 on Sky Arts.

► Not perhaps obvious subject matter for a comic strip, but Brian Epstein is the subject of *The Fifth Beatle*, a new graphic novel by Broadway producer Vivek J Tiwary. Billy J Kramer and, interestingly, Andrew Loog Oldham provide forewords.

► And a reminder that [www.uncut.co.uk](http://www.uncut.co.uk) is now an out-of-control content monster, with many daily updates, reviews, playlists and classic features from the vaults.

I'M NEWISH HERE

# CHRIS FORSYTH

Recommended this month: 'neath the marquee moon, a guitar master comes of age...

**C**HRIS FORSYTH, IT'S true, is a little surprised to find himself described as a new artist, after a decade of service with noise band Peeesseye, and a number of collaborations on the fringes of space rock, free jazz and (it says here) intergalactic glossolalia.

But there is a sense of a sudden snapping into focus on his new solo album, *Solar Motel*. It's a fierce, exploratory record, which sounds, in a way, like an instrumental sequel to Television's *Marquee Moon*. Not incidentally, Forsyth studied guitar with Richard Lloyd of Television when he was living in Brooklyn in the late 1990s. "*Marquee Moon* is just in my blood," he says. "Television was a real seminal band for me. Then, studying with Richard automatically makes him/them my biggest influence because he taught me so much. I feel like it's just something that's in my DNA. But the exact music wasn't specifically inspired by it."

Forsyth's journey towards *Solar Motel* was a long, winding journey through the backroads of experimental, improvised music. Peeesseye (an anarchic trio with Jaime Fennelly and Fritz Welch) toiled at the coalface of rackety minimalism for a decade, and Forsyth considers their work to be his "first serious musical accomplishment" after a long period "down an experimental rabbit-hole". Ultimately, Peeesseye drifted apart geographically, and split when the logistics of living in different cities grew too complicated.

Without a band to consider, Forsyth began to concentrate on solo work. "I started going back

to roots, playing more lyrically; mostly electric guitar but combining the psychedelic thing with some strong melodic sense." He moved to Philadelphia in 2009, and was awarded a fellowship which allowed him to concentrate on his playing. "It allowed me to not have to bartend – it allowed me to go deeper into the music. That's when I recorded *Kenzo Deluxe*

(2012) and *Solar Motel*."

The music is hard to categorise, though Forsyth is wary of aligning himself with space rock or psych. For now he's settled, with reservations, on Cosmic Americana, a label taken from a review of his 2011 LP *Paranoid Cat*. "There's a lot of American roots music I'm influenced by, though it's maybe a little less overt.

"I try to make the phrasing lyrical and concise. I like it to be articulate. Television's like that too. The guitar parts spook you. They can spiral on for 15 minutes, but they're always really clear."

Since the album was recorded, over 18 months ago, Forsyth has assembled the Solar Motel Band, with Paul Sukeena (guitar), Steven Urgo (drums) and Peter Kerlin (bass), and says the music has progressed. "It turned out a really good chemical reaction.

There's a lot of spaces on the record that are wide open, improvised. I always want that instant creativity thing happening."

ALASTAIR MCKAY

*Solar Motel* is released by Paradise Of Bachelors on October 29

I'M YOUR FAN

"I feel like Chris is going to make his life about trying to get inside the guitar. He's trying to conquer it, but he respects it as an opponent."

Adam Granduciel, The War On Drugs



Forsyth, now emerged from his "experimental rabbit-hole"

THE UNCUT PLAYLIST

ON THE STEREO THIS MONTH...

DAVID BOWIE

*Love Is Lost (Hello Steve Reich Mix)* ISO James Murphy chucks a bit of "Ashes To Ashes" and some Reichian handclaps into a 10-minute masterpiece, the crowning glory of Bowie's auspicious year.

WHITE FENCE

*Live In San Francisco* CASTLEFACE Tim Presley and co in mighty psych-garage form, ironically caught in higher-fi than most of their non-live releases.

HOWARD IVANS

*Red Face Boy* SPACEBOMB Finally, Matthew E White lets one of his other cats out of the bag: Gayngs singer Ivan Howard, planted square in a symphonic funkscape worthy of Quincy Jones.

COURTNEY BARNETT

*The Double EP: A Sea Of Split Peas* HOUSE ANXIETY A droll and notable new singer-songwriter from Melbourne; think Liz Phair, maybe. Contains possibly the best ever song about an anaphylactic panic attack.



Courtney Barnett

PARQUET COURTS

*Tally All The Things That You Broke EP* WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE? Five more tracks of NY snark and naked Pavement love from one of 2013's best new bands, seemingly rechristened Parkay Quarts.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*New Orleans Funk Volume 3* SOUL JAZZ A third impeccable comp of N'Awlins classics, one or two of which don't even feature Allen Toussaint. Key track: Eldridge Holmes' take on "If I Were A Carpenter".

THE LIMIÑANAS

*Costa Blanca* TROUBLE IN MIND Ye-ye! The Perpignan duo's third and plausibly best LP, as their Gainsbourg-meets-the-VU formula is further refined.

NEIL YOUNG

*Tonight's The Night Acetate* BOOTLEG Lots of Shakey in the office this month, notionally excused by the preparation of a Neil Young Ultimate Music Guide. No idea where this illicit gem came from...

GOAT

*Live Ballroom Ritual* ROCKET More tribal panto fun from the Swedish outfit, recorded live in deepest Camden.

FOUR TET

*Beautiful Rewind* TEXT Fresh from his sessions with Omar Souleyman, Kieran Hebden explores the transcendental potential of the London pirate radio sound.

For regular updates, check our blogs at [www.uncut.co.uk](http://www.uncut.co.uk) and follow @JohnRMulvey on Twitter



# DANIEL AVERY DRONE LOGIC

“ZOOMING PSYCHEDELIC RAVE”  
8/10 – UNCUT

“A BRILLIANTLY HYPNOTIC DEBUT ALBUM”

★★★★  
Q MAGAZINE



9/10  
DUMMY

9/10  
MIXMAG

8/10  
NME

8.5/10  
DJ MAG

★★★★  
MOJO

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"Red" rocks: Trans' Bernard Butler and Jackie McKeown

TRANS-FORMERS

# The Next Life

Break a leg! BERNARD BUTLER leaves Britpop behind for the brave new Krautrocking world of TRANS. "Setlists of 10 singles? I'm done with that!"

**D**IVORCE, BEREAVEMENT, DIVINE intervention – life-changing events come in all forms. For Bernard Butler, though, a broken bone has radically altered his outlook on just about everything musically.

"I broke my leg two years ago," Butler tells *Uncut* in his North London studio, strewn with guitars, synths and Eno's *Oblique Strategies*, "and I decided within days that everything I was doing was rubbish and that I needed to stop making such dull music. I bought a Stratocaster when I was off my nut on all sorts of drugs and basically lay on the sofa for six weeks and played guitar."

The fruits of this clean break are the return of

Butler the 'guitar hero', a collaboration with Everything But The Girl's Ben Watt, and Trans, Butler's freewheeling project with Yummy Fur and 1990s guitarist/singer Jackie McKeown. Butler and McKeown, with bassist Igor Volk and drummer Paul Borchers, have abandoned crafted songwriting for a more instinctive approach, recording improvisations, then editing the results.

"We record a few 20-minute improvs, then we're done for the day," explains Butler. "We never discuss the music – it's just the first idea you have."

Sparse vocals are added later by Butler and McKeown to create a unique concoction – groovy like Chic and propulsive like Neu!, with tangles of guitar reminiscent of both Television and prime

REM. Four of these creations make up Trans' debut EP, "Red", with another EP in the bag and over 30 hours of improvisations to draw from in the future. An album is currently out of the question, though.

"The less this is like a band, the more it'll keep going," explains McKeown. "It's like the way Woody Allen does his jazz on a Thursday night."

"We've made records and had photos taken, done all of this kind of rubbish before," adds Butler. "We'd like to do something that's a bit more special. We are interested in stuff that's a bit more oblique, as we feel there's an awful lot of over-information in culture, particularly in music."

"I decided within days that I needed to stop making such dull music"

While Trans' songs are all created in the studio, Butler's relishing the chance to regularly play live. The band recently backed Damo Suzuki at one of the Can vet's infamous improvised sets in London.

"Playing to 100 people who are interested, that was always going to be a massive victory for me. That still is all I want to do. Live, we can go out with a hook here, a riff there, and join it up in whatever way we want. If you gave us a setlist of 10 singles to go and play, I'm afraid I've done that. I just didn't have a platform that was appropriate before. As if I would go and book the O2 and play 'Animal Nitrate' on my own all night long, you know?"

Butler is also playing on Ben Watt's first solo LP since 1983's *North Marine Drive* and at select gigs.

"Just after I broke my leg, I met Ben. He was like, 'I really wanted to meet you and have a jam with another guitarist.' As I did Trans, Ben wrote for a year, then wanted me to play on the album.

"It's a really nice time for me at the moment... I'm basically playing guitar all the time and it's great."

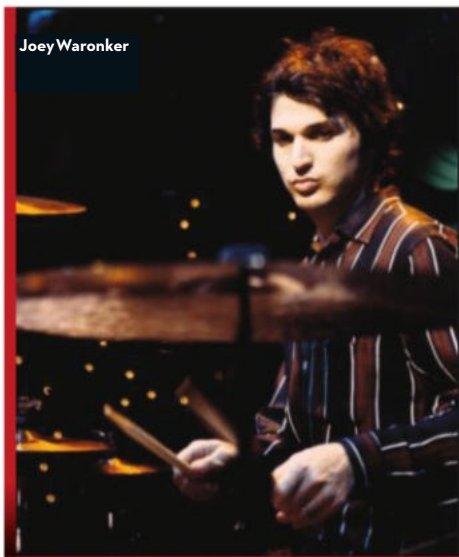
Suede might be performing at London's O2 this December, but there's little chance you'll see their old guitarist up on the stadium stage.

"I really see it unlikely that Trans will ever do anything like that," he laughs. "If we were making the kind of records that meant we could book the O2, I'd think, 'Christ...'"

"I just don't have a great desire to do all those things. I like being at home, I like sitting in the pub watching football and I love playing guitar. I'm clued up enough, I hope, to think I do it in the right way. I don't want my kids to see me just being shit!"

TOMPINNOCK

Trans' "Red" EP is out now on Rough Trade



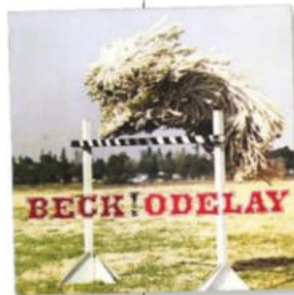
Joey Waronker

## AND ON DRUMS... JOEY WARONKER

### UNCUT'S GUIDE TO ROCK'S GREATEST SESSION PLAYERS

➤ The son of producer Lenny Waronker, drummer Joey Waronker first played with college group Walt Monk in 1990 before doing regular session and live work for Beck. When Bill Berry left REM in 1997, Waronker played with them until 2002. He has also played with Elliott Smith, Paul McCartney, Leonard Cohen, Air, The Smashing Pumpkins, Johnny Cash, Spain, Richard Thompson and Rufus Wainwright, and drums on film soundtracks for *Man On The Moon*, *About A Boy*

and *Dawn Of The Dead*. He is currently playing with Atoms For Peace.



**KEY SESSIONS:** Beck's *Odelay*, *Mutations*, *Midnite Vultures*, *Sea Change* and *Guero*, REM's, *Man On The Moon*, *Up and Reveal*, Elliott Smith's *Figure 8* and *XO*, Leonard Cohen's *Old Ideas*, Smashing Pumpkins' *Adore*, Richard Thompson's *Mock Tudor*, Badly Drawn Boy's *About A Boy*, Charlotte Gainsbourg's *IRM*, Thom Yorke's *The Eraser* and Norah Jones' *Little Broken Hearts*. PHIL KING

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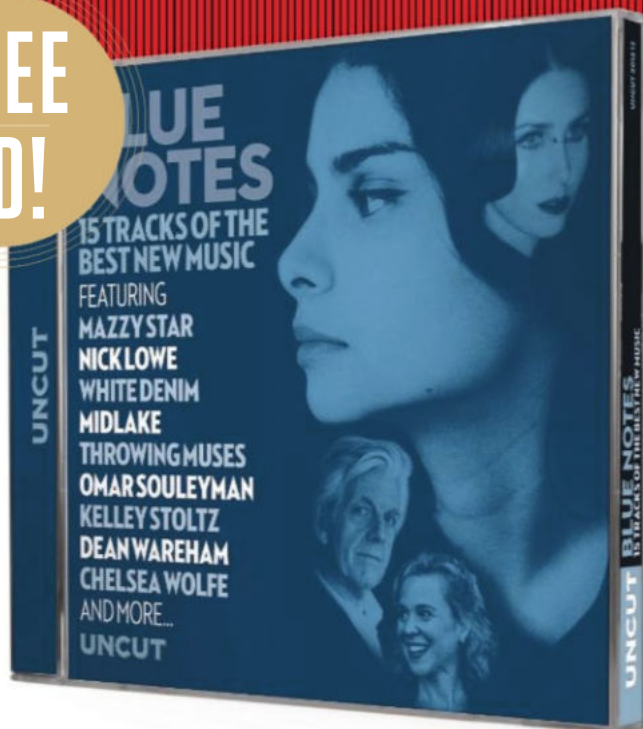


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# BLUE NOTES

Your guide to this month's free CD



## 1 LILY & MADELEINE I've Got Freedom

Lily (16) & Madeleine (18) Jurkiewicz are smart enough to profess their admiration of another teenage sister act, First Aid Kit, as their harmony-rich folk-pop has clear affinities with the Swedes' sound. But "I've Got Freedom" suggests L&M could soon supersede their inspirations.



Lily & Madeleine

## 2 NICK LOWE Children Go Where I Send Them

Not quite so fresh-faced, perhaps, but pub-rock's *eminence grise* lacks nothing in vigour, setting about this old spiritual as if he'd booked a couple of hours in Sun Studios circa 1956. From an early Christmas treat, *Quality Street: A Seasonal Selection For All The Family*.

## 3 JOSEPHINE FOSTER I'm A Dreamer

The title track of Foster's 12th album is typical of the enchantments within: a dusty, olde-time piano shuffle that could have been ripped from the pages of a vintage American songbook. You could be forgiven for thinking that's Neil Young on harmonica, too.

## 4 KELLEY STOLTZ Are You My Love

San Fran's Stoltz has been finessing his brand of garage-baroque for nearly 20 years, on and off. But his new Third Man LP, *Double Exposure*, is one of his best: check "Are You My Love", roughly resembling late-period VU embracing powerpop.



Kelley Stoltz

## 5 MAZZY STAR California

"Each individual song is its own world unto itself," David Roback told *Uncut* when we interviewed Mazzy Star a few months ago. From their *Seasons Of Your Day* comeback, "California" stands comparison with the band's most revered, candle-lit classics. "Somewhere distant/And it's so far away..."

## 6 BARRENCE WHITFIELD & THE SAVAGES The Corner Man

Something of a change in mood; a rumbustious bit of garage R'n'B lifted from the Boston band's first album since 1995. Recommended to fans of King Khan & The Shrines, as well as those who remember Whitfield from his riotous omnipresence on Andy Kershaw's Radio 1 show back in the '80s.

## 7 MIDLAKE The Old And The Young

Fans of "Roscoe" won't be too traumatised when they hear "The Old And The Young"; Tim Smith's departure, and Eric Pulido's promotion to singer-songwriter, has been an uncannily seamless process. Perhaps there's a little more psych urgency, though, that takes Midlake into the slipstream of Tame Impala as well as The Moody Blues.

## 8 WHITE DENIM At Night In Dreams

The Texan kings of 21st-Century progressive boogie throw a little Thin Lizzy into the mix this time, with this pulsating opener to *Corsicana Lemonade*, our Album Of The Month. Full review on page 59.

## 9 CHELSEA WOLFE The Warden

A touch of Julee Cruise to this one, from the fourth album by LA resident Wolfe. Tags like "doom-folk", and references to various extreme metal and noise artists normally proliferate around Wolfe, but "The Warden" is an ethereal synth glide that marks her out as a kindred spirit to another vaunted LA artist, Julia Holter.

## 10 NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS Goin' To Brownsville

Deeply marinated in the blues, Jim Dickinson's sons are in terrific form on their seventh – and reputedly best – North Mississippi Allstars album. Old friend Robert Plant turns up elsewhere on the headily named *World Boogie Is Coming*, but here the Dickinsons and their bandmates keep a fierce focus on the Sleepy John Estes/Furry Lewis chestnut (familiar, perhaps, from Ry Cooder's 1970 solo debut).

## 11 THROWING MUSSES Slippershell

Last month, Kristin Hersh told *Uncut* that the long-awaited ninth Muses album, *Purgatory/Paradise*, is the one she's most happy with. Plucked from the 32 tracks, here's some evidence to support her claim: the searing "Slippershell" compellingly recalling the band's mid-'90s commercial heyday.

## 12 THE DIRTBOMBS It's Gonna Be Alright

After 2011's *Party Store*, a collection of Detroit techno anthems rescored in a garage-rock style, Mick Collins' Motor City vets pulled another conceptual curveball with, deep breath, *Ooey Gooy Chewy*

*Ka-Blooy!* This time, they've reinvented themselves as bubblegum pop auteurs: amazingly, "It's Gonna Be Alright" is a Collins original, though it sounds every bit an Archies cover.

## 13 OMAR SOULEYMAN Yagbuni

Not sure how many of his previous 500 albums you own, but the Syrian cult hero's *Wenu Wenu* is one of 2013's key global music releases. Kieran 'Four Tet' Hebden produces, but doesn't mess too much with a well-tested formula: party-starting Arabic techno that, once tasted, can become powerfully addictive.



Omar Souleyman

## 14 DEAN WAREHAM The Ticking Is The Bomb

Fresh from a fine cameo in *Frances Ha*, Wareham has finally got round to releasing his first solo LP. From *Emancipated Hearts*, "The Ticking Is The Bomb" is a stunned, penumbral beauty close in spirit, perhaps, to his formative work in Galaxie 500.

## 15 FUZZ One

And finally this month, one more mighty freak-out, courtesy of Ty Segall and his latest configuration of friends. Heavier than usual, but no less invigorating, the Fuzz are a power trio built in homage to the likes of Blue Cheer. Stone free!

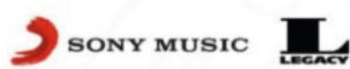
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# Lloyd Cole

**Interview:** Michael Bonner  
**Photograph:** Doug Seymour

Back with a new LP, a UK tour and a belated appearance on *Later...*, the golf-loving Commotion takes a swing at Morrissey, dodgy hairstyles and living in America

**I**T'S IMPORTANT ON tour to try and do something that's not just touring," explains Lloyd Cole. He is currently in San Sebastián, at the close of a successful European solo tour. Yesterday, he explains, they left Barcelona early in the morning in order to get to San Sebastián in time for a round of golf – Cole's great passion. "We just about got the last hole in near darkness," he says with palpable relief in his voice.

Beyond golf, Cole – whose stunning debut with the Commotions, *Rattlesnakes*, turns 30 next year – is a man with many wide-ranging interests. During the course of our conversation, Cole will expound on his love for German experimental music, recall a surprise encounter with Morrissey on the streets of Dublin, as well as give up his precious haircare tips – partly gleaned in the first place from the back of Roxy Music album covers. Over to your questions...



Bryan use in his hair?" and he said, "Black & White." So I used Black & White for a while. You can't wash your hair with it in. But it was good enough for Elvis and good enough for Bryan Ferry, so...

**Headlining Glastonbury or a sub-par round at Augusta?**  
*Benj Nelson, Weybridge*

A sub-par round at Augusta, but I'd rather have a No 1 than either. How did I get interested in golf? My mum and dad took a job at a golf club when I was 13, in Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire. My handicap is an American handicap. It's 7½. My game has not been that good the last few years but I did

**STAR QUESTION**



**When recording *Meat Is Murder* with The Smiths, I bought a copy of *Rattlesnakes* and I considered it a benchmark to**

**judge the standard of the record I was making. Were there any albums by your contemporaries/competition you regarded highly when recording *Rattlesnakes*?**

*Stephen Street*

The The's *Soul Mining* was the reason we hired Paul Hardiman. I thought it had a really interesting sound. We got the idea for the accordion from that record. We also worked with Anne Dudley as we thought she did a fantastic job with the strings for the ABC records, so even though *The Lexicon Of Love* didn't sound anything like we did, that was a benchmark for a great pop record in those days. I still adore the way Martin [Fry]

presented that idea. On our record, it was just luck. We were new to it and we just hit on something we could do. We did it for a year or so and we just got lucky that we didn't write any rotten songs that year. We wrote a few later, you know!

**How was working with the great Robert Quine?**

*Diego Rocha, Montevideo, Uruguay*  
It was never what you'd call easy but it was incredibly rewarding and we became very good friends. He has the best sense of humour. He had great stories about Lou Reed that I can't repeat. Everything you've heard about Lou Reed is true, basically. I didn't go to New York to relocate, I just needed a break from the British music scene and from a relationship that was no longer happening, so I just went there for a few months and ended up staying 11 years. I had two guitarist in mind that I might like to work with, Quine and Richard Thompson, and within three months of being in New York

Quine and I were working together. I started to hear stories about Richard Thompson saying that he didn't want to use guitar tunings, so I never called him.

**STAR QUESTION**



**How do you keep your hair looking so chic? Styling? Products? Give up the secret, Cole.**

*Joan As Police Woman*

It becomes more and more difficult. As it goes grey, the grey stuff has a more wiry quality. Back when my hair was dark it only did one thing, and then I grew it long once and it looked kinda stupid. Djokovic has the best hair. He's got amazing hair – it looks almost like a Beatles wig. I was so interested in hair in the '80s... you remember on those Roxy Music records it says 'Hair by Keith at Smile'? I started going to Keith at Smile. And I'd say, "What does

beat my adversary yesterday which was incredibly rewarding as he'd been thrashing me all year. So finally it's gone down from 4-0 to 4-1 this year. Am I good? If you saw me playing next to the people on TV, I'd look like an idiot, but I can get round a course without much trouble.

**Tell us about bumping into Morrissey a few years ago in Belfast.** *John Foyle, Dublin*

I hadn't seen him in years. I was staying in a hotel literally 50 yards from the venue I was playing. I was walking to the venue with a rucksack with my equipment in it and carrying both guitars myself. He was wearing a suit and a sort of camel hair coat. We saw each other, we hadn't seen each other since maybe 1986 or something. For a while he kept sending me postcards saying, "You don't call me, you don't call me." That's because he changed his phone number every time. So anyway, he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm just



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“We were not interested in being twee or being indie for the sake of it... we wanted to be a pop band”

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Perfect swing: "I can get round a course without much trouble..."

going off to the venue I'm playing round the corner." He said, "Oh yes, I'm playing the theatre here, it's sold out." That was about it. Morrissey would just hate to think of a rock singer carrying his own gear. He was horrified that Peter Shelley used public transport.

### STAR QUESTION



**Thinking back to "Why I Love Country Music" from the *Easy Pieces* album, if you were to cover a country music**

**song on your next LP, which one would you chose, and why?**

*Blair Cowan (ex-Commotions)*

In the past 10 years or so, I've become something of a student of country music and American folk music. I've been thinking about singing "The Great Speckled Bird". I'm not sure you'd call that a country song, it's more gospel. I'm not a Christian, but I love the lyrics. I think the boots are just too big on the great ones. How could you possibly cover a song George Jones already did perfectly? I certainly learnt more as a lyricist from country music and writers like Kristofferson, or at least as much as I learnt from Bowie and Ferry.

**Exactly what happened in that hotel in Amsterdam?**

*Sean Finney, Hants*

I went to Amsterdam. My girlfriend was going to meet me a day or two later and I got sick. I was just ill and somehow the circumstances sounded nice for a lyric. Most of those lyrics are not based on what

electronic things, and also records. In those days, a little town probably couldn't have a record shop, so it was a record shop and the place where you'd buy vacuum cleaners. The woman who ran the shop was very nice to me. She used to take my 25p every week and then she'd let me take records out even if I hadn't paid for the whole thing. And when I heard *Aladdin Sane* was coming out, I pre-ordered it from her shop and she got it about four days before anybody in Manchester or Buxton. So I had a copy of *Aladdin Sane* before anybody in my area. Wonderful. I'm very fond of these Stax comps, they introduced me to lots of music. And I still have a pre-release cassette of *The Queen Is Dead*. I'm quite fond of that.

### STAR QUESTION



**How on earth did he end up recording an album with me?**

*Hans-Joachim Roedelius*

Because I'm a fan, and flattery is hard to ignore. He heard my 2001 LP *Plastic Wood*, and anybody that knows Cluster would listen and go, "Oh gosh, you must like Cluster." He heard it and liked it. So we made a record on either side of the Atlantic by sending unfinished pieces to each other to finish. He was a bit more obtuse in his idea of an unfinished piece. For the opener, all I had from him was a field recording of stones being scratched against each other. I sampled the sound and managed to create a rhythm that I based the entire piece around.

*"I learnt as much from writers like Kristofferson as I learnt from Bowie and Ferry"*

actually happened, but that one is. What do I think when people quote my lyrics back to me? I take it as it comes. I'm happy that the lyrics have become integral to people's lives because it means in some way I am doing what Bolan, Bowie and Ferry did for me.

**Which three albums in your record collection are you most proud of?**

*Dimitris Saklis, Madrid* There's *The Slider*. The *NME* had a limited number of iron-on transfers of the album cover and somehow I managed to win one when I was 11. And I used to go to a little shop in Chapel-en-le-Frith that sold

**As an ex-pat in the States, what do you miss about England?**

*Tom Stone, Paddington, London*

These days, almost everything is over there, even my Marmite. When I come to England I always go to a fish'n'chip shop and for a curry. I miss British humour. And the television coverage of news in Britain is infinitely better.

**What are your memories of early Commotions gigs in Glasgow?**

*Lorraine Murphy, Edinburgh*

I remember one of the first gigs... it was down by the river, near where the *Daily Record* building is now. It was a Tia Maria promotion night

and the Tia Maria guy introduced us on stage as Lloyd Cole And The Commodores. I remember Glasgow when you had Postcard on the west side of town and Simple Minds on the east. We were definitely west. We loved Orange Juice, we went to see them all the time. Later, it was unfortunate we signed to Polydor just when they were getting tired of Edwyn [Collins]. Anybody could have come along and appeared to have stolen his thunder. But it just happened to be us. So there was friction, which was unfortunate. But also Edwyn and Alan [Horne] believed they were the only two in Glasgow who liked both The VU and the Staple Singers at the same time. Obviously, that's not the case.

**You wrote a piece for *The Independent* a few years ago, 'Life after fame: Lloyd Cole', on what your hotel room tells you about your pop career. In career terms, what's the best hotel you've stayed in?**

*Stephen Summers, Barking*

I can tell you about the one I'm in now. It's a slightly "resort" hotel. The style is modern, clean. Dinner is 36 euros including wine for two; it's a middle of the road, middle-class hotel. Nothing romantic about it. When my first solo record came out, it was just after I got married, and we had our honeymoon in Paris. We splurged and stayed in the George V just off of the Champs-Élysées. I guess that was the gold standard.

**From your Twitter feed: "My life is a lot simpler when my career is flailing. More to follow."**

*Nick Watts, Shepherd's Bush*

Ha, well... about two weeks ago, we were offered *Later....* My publicists have been trying to get me on it for about 20 years and failing so I'd pretty much given up hope of being on it. I had to reschedule dates as I was planning on playing shows next January with a band for the first time in 13 or 14 years. We'd set it all up and started rehearsing, then suddenly everything had to be moved forward to now. So it's been a frenetic couple of weeks. We get there tomorrow, then we're off to a rehearsal studio to polish *[the set]*. The first time we're going to play as a five-piece is going to be on *Later...* People would've thought nothing about doing something like that in 1973, but I'm a bit of a control freak. It's frightening, but also exciting. 🍷

*Lloyd Cole's Standards is out on Tapete; he is currently touring the UK*

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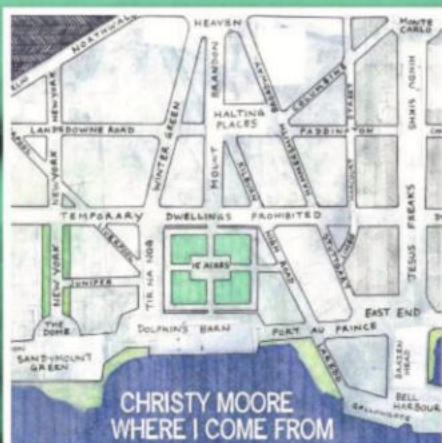
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# HIGHWAY TO HELL

Story: Peter Watts

Photo: Fin Costello/Redferns

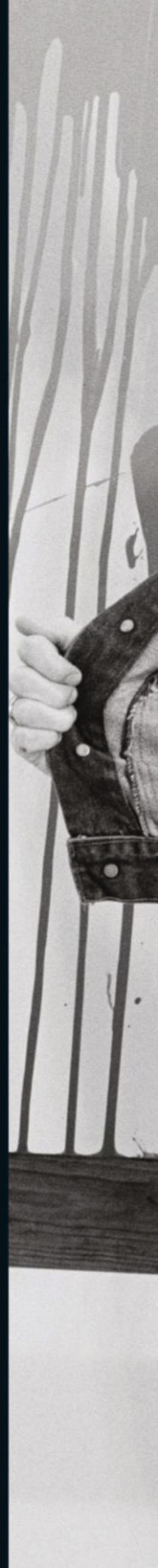
*"It's a long way to the top if you wanna rock'n'roll,"* BON SCOTT sang in 1975, as AC/DC began their raucous ascent to superstardom.

On the 40th anniversary of the band's formation, *Uncut* discovers the truth about their legendary frontman. A street poet who'd been inside for 'carnal knowledge'? A teenybop idol and hippy seer? A tearaway who swam with jellyfish and rode motorbikes naked? "A fantastic guy, a real human, so different to what people thought..."

PETER HEAD REMEMBERS an unexpected visit from Bon Scott, one evening at his home in Adelaide. As Head tells it, Scott turned up unannounced on his doorstep. The two men had been friends since 1970, when they had both played in local bands in the thriving Adelaide rock scene. Nine years later, and Scott had become a major star as the bare-chested, full-throated, heavy-drinking singer with AC/DC, Australia's biggest group. The band's latest album, *Highway To Hell*, was in the charts, but Scott was taking time out to catch up with some old friends. "He bought the drinks all night," says Head. "He was happy, but said he wanted to settle down and have kids one day, even though he had finally found a band that allowed him to make music, make money and have fun. We were woken up the next morning... I was in bed with one woman and he was across the room with another. He leapt up saying, 'Oh shit, I've got to catch a plane,' and ran out the door. That was it."

This was the last time Head saw his old friend alive: within months, Scott was dead. The singer, who for years had taken any job going just to stay afloat, died just as AC/DC, the band he joined in 1974, were on the verge of international success. With Scott as their singer, the band had gained a reputation as the ultimate party band, writing songs that were innuendo-laden and musically forthright. But that was only part of their story: a product of the raucous Sydney pub scene in the early '70s, AC/DC's early output shared common ground with Creedence, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Stones. Then, in February 1980, as they prepared to record *Back In Black*, Scott died from alcohol poisoning in the passenger seat of a Renault 5 outside a flat in East Dulwich. "The way Bon lived, it wasn't a surprise," says AC/DC bassist Mark Evans. "But that doesn't mean it wasn't an awful shock."

"We all miss him terribly," Angus Young told *Uncut*. "It's rare that you come across someone in your life with such a big character. He'll always be with you." ●





# B

IVEN SCOTT'S REPUTATION, it's notable that nobody seems to have a bad word to say about him. "He was a fantastic guy, a real human, so different to what people thought," acknowledges Peter Clack, one of AC/DC's early drummers. "He was honest, sincere, unpretentious, no-bullshit, hard-working." John Bisset, who knew Scott in the early 1970s, agrees: "He was spiritually mature. I don't know where it came from, maybe the family." Meanwhile, Murray Gracie – guitarist in Scott's first band, The Spektors – remembers Scott as "a very respectful son. His parents came to a lot of shows, and we'd rehearse at their house."

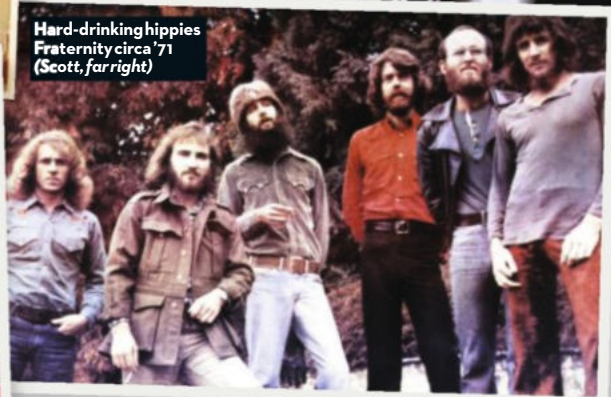
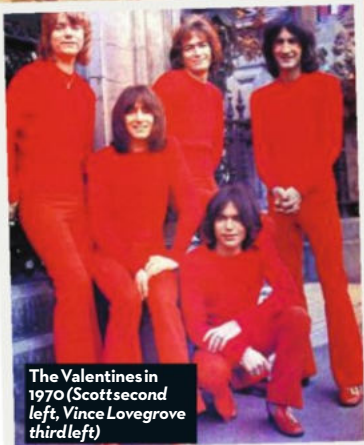
Ronald Scott was born in

Scotland in 1946. The family moved to Melbourne in 1952, before settling in Fremantle, on the opposite coast. The Spektors were formed in nearby Perth in 1964. At first, Scott played drums, but began alternating singing duties with frontman John Collins. "We were two bands in one," explains Gracie. "We had Bon, with his cheeky grin and missing teeth, who would sing the non-chart stuff – Them, The Pretty Things, the Stones – while John was into The Hollies and Bee Gees. Bon could occupy a stage and make the words mean something. He'd do these slow numbers and the girls would go crazy."

Gracie says Scott was "just another teenage kid", but notes he once spent time in a youth detention centre. "It was for 'carnal knowledge'," confirms Gracie. "Underage sex. That doesn't even exist anymore. Bon had front, but he wasn't an aggressive tearaway. Alcohol is what got to Bon. Even then, he'd get extremely drunk. We played surf clubs and when it was time to play we'd find Bon lying flat, asleep on the beach. We'd cart him inside and prop him in the corner with a mic. He couldn't play drums but he could sing."

One of Scott's heroes was Stevie Wright, singer with Australia's biggest band The Easybeats. "Bon modelled himself on Stevie," says Michael Browning, who later managed AC/DC. When The Easybeats played Perth in 1966, Scott met their guitarist, George Young – another Scottish émigré and the eldest of three brothers. "Bon became friendly with George and they knocked about," says Gracie. "When The Easybeats went back east, I suspect George and Bon were still in contact."

In 1966, The Spektors became The Valentines, a local supergroup formed from three Perth bands. Although they covered Soft Machine ("Love Makes Sweet Music") and the Small Faces ("I Can't Dance With You"), they also performed an excruciating version of "Nick Nack Paddy Whack" and did a jingle for Coca-Cola. Scott sang alongside Vince Lovegrove, crooning several songs ("She Said" and "My Old Man's A



"BON FELT HE HAD TO LIVE THE ROCK 'N' ROLL LIFE HE SANG ABOUT"

Groovy Old Man") written by George Young and Harry Vanda. "When he sang, Bon took off into charisma-land," wrote Lovegrove. "His eyes would twinkle, his brows would slightly raise, his lips would purse into an impish grin, his swagger demanding attention."

The Valentines split in 1970 and Scott took "a 180-degree turn" according to Michael Browning. He joined Fraternity – a group who were inspired variously by The Band and Vanilla Fudge. "They moved to the Adelaide Hills soon after he joined," says keyboardist John Bisset. "Their lifestyle was a bit commune-like, but they drank too much to qualify as hippies."

Bisset claims to have been surprised when Scott, a former pop singer, joined Fraternity. "It came out the blue," he admits. "But Bon was able to fit in because he made himself easy to fit in. He wasn't pushy or arrogant." Peter Head – pianist with another Adelaide group, Headband – recalls: "Fraternity were intense. They'd argue for hours over one chord. Bon was more easygoing. He would play recorder and sing incredibly well."

GETTY IMAGES

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6/10  
 Machine and "Nick Nack Paddy Whack", and tracks with Fraternity. The same label put out *With The Spektors And The Valentines*, which includes tracks from Scott's first band.



**AC/DC**  
**DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP**  
 SONY  
 The band's third album (second in the UK and not released in the US

9/10  
 until after Scott's death), sees the band in fine, rocking form, with Scott belting out the crude "Big Balls" and thrilling "Problem Child".



**AC/DC**  
**HIGHWAY TO HELL**  
 SONY  
 Bon Scott's final album is a classic, with Mutt Lange's production bringing scale to the

10/10  
 band's blistering rock. The title track, "Girls Got Rhythm" and "If You Want Blood (You've Got It)" are the picks of a stunning set.



AC/DC in 1979: (L-R) Malcolm Young, Bon Scott, Angus Young, Cliff Williams and Phil Rudd

“We were drinkers,” says Bisset. “We got into marijuana, mescaline and mushrooms, but alcohol was the mainstay. We’d arrive in a town and go to the pub. The locals wouldn’t like the look of us. But we’d get as pissed as rats and clean up on the pool table, and that tended to win them over.” On one occasion, Scott impressed the locals by leaping off a pier into a swarm of jellyfish. “His nickname was Road Test Ronny, as whenever a new drug came out he was ready to try it,” says Head. “Once, I played with him at a nearby jail. Most of the guys were in for drugs, mostly marijuana, and Bon seemed to know all of them.”

Scott’s wild lifestyle, however, never appeared to impede his performance. “He drank heaps,” agrees Bisset. “He drank until he could barely stand. But he always remained the same person.”

In May 1972, shortly after Scott married Irene Thornton, Fraternity took their wives, roadies and a dog to London in a bid to break Europe. “We had an awful time,” recalls Bisset. “There were 17 people in one house. We couldn’t drink because

we didn’t have any money. Bon made friends with people in London, who plied him with alcohol.” Fraternity became Fang – playing one show in support of Brian Johnson’s Geordie – before returning to Adelaide where, in 1974, they broke up. For the first time in a decade, Bon Scott was without a band.

**B**Y COINCIDENCE, PETER HEAD had also left Headband. “I put together a part-time band, Mount Lofty Rangers, with Bon singing,” he says. “We did country music because it was quick, easy and fun. After Fraternity he wanted comic relief.” Scott was also trying to hold his marriage together. “Bon was desperate to make a few bucks,” confirms Head. “He’d do a few weeks of hard work but deliberately choose a job he wouldn’t want to do for the rest of his life. He’d dig roads, paint boats, mow lawns. He worked at a fertiliser company, shovelling shit for 10 hours a day.” Scott even found himself briefly employed by his old friend, Vince Lovegrove, now a rock promoter. “Vince got me and Bon to run around town at midnight,” laughs Head. “We were pasting up AC/DC posters.”

In May 1974, Scott almost died. A keen motorcyclist, Scott enjoyed a typically carefree approach to road safety. He would ride naked, drunk, up and downstairs to make people laugh. Bisset recalls Scott taking him for a ride one day and driving his bike into a sand dune. “It was a practical joke,” admits Bisset. “He said after, ‘I knew you’d laugh or hit me.’”

However, what happened in May was far more serious. Before a Mount Lofty Rangers show, “Bon had an argument with Bruce Howe [ex-Fraternity bassist],” remembers Head. “Bon was pretty pissed and stormed off on his bike. Half an hour later we heard he was in a coma. It was touch and go.”

While Scott was recovering in hospital from cracked ribs, a lacerated throat, smashed teeth and a broken collar bone, there were changes taking place within AC/DC. Formed by George Young’s younger brothers, Malcolm and Angus, the band had played their first gig in December 1973, with singer Dave Evans, who also sang on the band’s debut single, “Can I Sit Next To You, Girl?”. But the Youngs wanted to replace him.

“We were playing Largs Pier, out on a jetty,” recalls drummer Pete Clack. “Bon was in the crowd. We knew he was a fantastic singer so Malcolm, who was the brains, said, ‘I’m going to put it on Bon, maybe he’ll be interested.’ There was an audition and he invited Bon to join. Bon said, ‘Piss off, I’ve got my wife and I’m about to start a job.’ When we got back to Melbourne, Bon called up and said, ‘OK, Malcolm, I’m in.’ It turned out his



EYEWITNESS

LET THERE BE BON... Was the frontman tiring of his role in AC/DC?

Although by the late-1970s AC/DC were huge in Australia and growing in Europe, bassist Mark Evans says Scott wasn’t entirely satisfied. “I left the band after *Let There Be Rock* and Bon would stay with me when he was in Sydney. He wasn’t bored of the band, but it had become more like work to him. We had a few conversations where he said he wanted to do a solo album. I’d love to have been in the meeting where he put that to Malcolm! You’d have seen the mushroom cloud on the other side of the earth. But Bon was insistent. He had palled up with a couple of guys from Skynyrd and wanted to write with them to release an album in the States. Bon spoke very highly of [Skynyrd bassist] Leon Wilkeson. That would have caused all sorts of problems within the band, but he talked about it a number of times with me. He was very serious.”

job was to paint this big rusty ship in the dock at Adelaide. He was on his way in the cold, looked at the ship and said, ‘Fuck this, I’m not doing this for a living’, turned round, phoned Malcolm and packed a suitcase.”

Abandoning his life – and wife – on the west coast to head east was another bold change of direction for Scott, but Head wasn’t surprised. “He knew he was a good singer,” he says. “When AC/DC came to town, Vince [Lovegrove] organised a jam. Bon thought they were a bit young and they thought he was an old man [Scott was 28, Angus was 19]. But after they’d had a blow, the band knew he was good.”

The band’s new manager, Michael Browning, recalls his reaction to the news. “I wasn’t sure Bon was right – he was older and had been in the teenybop Valentines then the hippy Fraternity. But it worked. Bon took the role on like a character actor. He was the missing link. He made them real.”

Clack was also impressed. “Bon was charismatic and a tremendous singer. He was an MC, a proper showman, and the music was ideal for that. He’d have Angus up on his shoulders playing these screaming solos, or he’d be up on the PA stack – whatever it took to give people a good time.”

Scott’s work ethic, humour and experience meshed with the Youngs’ enthusiasm, ambition and talent. The band entered the studio almost at once to record *High Voltage*. “The brothers looked up to him,” says Browning. “Not because he was older but because they thought he was fabulous.” Malcolm claimed, “Bon was the biggest single influence on the band. We had a real character, with his own style and ideas for lyrics.” Angus has gone further: “I don’t think there’d have been an AC/DC if it hadn’t been for Bon. He moulded the character of AC/DC.” Scott once said “They told me to sound like myself,” and after years of having to rein himself in, it was no small thing.

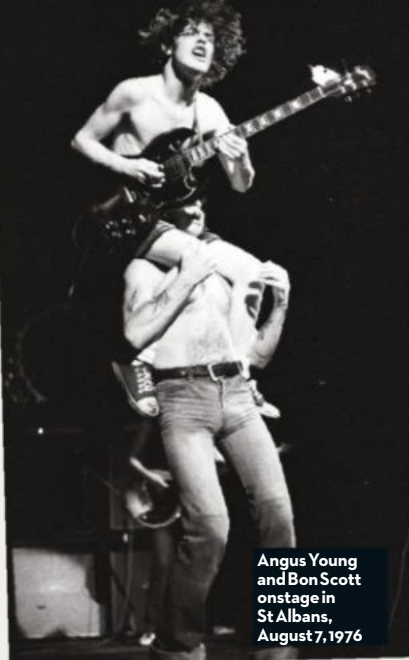
The band shared a house in a seedy area of Melbourne that quickly became a mecca for party animals. Shenanigans found their way into Scott’s lyrics – comic-book tales of sex and excess, like “Whole Lotta Rosie”, about a Tasmanian groupie, or “Big Balls”, with its touching refrain “*bollocks, knackers, bollocks, knackers*”. Although AC/DC’s approach was to never take themselves too seriously, Scott excelled at writing about being in a band, capturing frustrated ambition on breakthrough single, December 1975’s “It’s A Long Way To The Top (If You Wanna Rock’n’Roll)” – one of the few rock songs to feature a bagpipe solo. “Bon was a street poet – he described it as ‘toilet wall’ poetry,” says Browning. “That was unknown. They signed a singer and got a lyricist, as well.”

When bassist Mark Evans joined in March ’75, AC/DC were a band in transition. “We did *TNT*, *Dirty Deeds...* and *Let*





Classic AC/DC, London, July 1976



Angus Young and Bon Scott onstage in St Albans, August 7, 1976

GREAT SCOTT

BON, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN...

The singer's legend lives on

Scott has become a bigger star in death than he ever was in life. In the wake of *Back In Black*'s success, *Highway To Hell*, *Let There Be Rock* and *If You Want Blood You've Got It* re-entered the chart and AC/DC became the first band since The Beatles to have four albums in the Top 100 at the same time. Even now, two of AC/DC's three best-selling albums are Scott's *Dirty Deeds...* and *Highway To Hell*. Scott has been celebrated with a plaque at his birthplace in Kirriemuir, Scotland, and a statue in his Australian hometown of Fremantle, while Melbourne has a street called ACDC Lane. Fans in Scotland are trying to raise funds to erect a statue in Kirriemuir, where the annual Bon Fest celebrations take place. Scott's grave in Fremantle has been designated a Heritage And Cultural Icon by the Australian National Trust. A Scott biopic has been rumoured for years.

“There Be Rock in the space of 15 months, and there was a big change in that time,” he says. “When I joined they wanted me to wear a red satin suit. I said, ‘If my mates see me they’ll punch the crap out of me!’ Malcolm was keen on T.Rex and took us to see The Glitter Band. We all liked Slade. Later, we got more into Free and the Stones. Bon was nuts about Alex Harvey.”

AC/DC were regulars on Australian TV’s *Countdown* – one appearance in 1975 saw them play “Baby, Please Don’t Go” with Scott dressed as a schoolgirl. “We attracted teenage girls at an all-age show or skinheads in a pub,” says Evans. “We didn’t find our real audience until we went to London [in 1976] and began playing to guys with long hair and denim.”

The band broke attendance records during a residency at the Marquee. In 1977, *Let There Be Rock* reached the UK Top 20, and AC/DC spent their time between Europe and Australia, with trips to the US in an attempt to crack the market. Bon was still drinking heavily, though other temptations were available. “I never saw Bon take hard drugs but he did OD in Australia,” confirms Evans. “He didn’t take hard drugs on a regular basis but he dabbled. It put the wind up [co-producers] George [Young] and Harry [Vanda]. They’d spent a long time round Stevie Wright and he had a shocking time with heroin.”

All the same, Scott remained a valued part of the songwriting team. “Malcolm and Angus had the ideas,” explains Evans of the albums he cut with the band. “Songs were written in the studio between Malcolm, Angus and Bon. We’d spend a week on backing tracks, then a week on vocals and guitar solos.”

In 1979, Tony Platt was asked to mix AC/DC’s seventh album, *Highway To Hell*. At the time, Young and Vanda had relinquished production duties and sessions for the LP took

place under the auspices of ‘Mutt’ Lange at Roundhouse Studios in London. “They wanted a solid English rock sound,” explains Platt. “I’d worked with Led Zep, The Who and Free, so I was used to highly proficient bands that lived hard but also worked very hard. The record was made on tea and B&H. The first time I met them, Bon made me a cup of tea. He was superb. When he sang, you believed him. The Youngs ran the band, but Bon was allowed to plough his own furrow. There were stories about him disappearing at the end of one gig and reappearing just in time for the soundcheck at the next. Malcolm once told me, ‘The thing with Bon is, it doesn’t matter what he does, he always turns up.’ You got the impression he was resilient.” *Highway To Hell* was AC/DC’s biggest album so far. It reached the Top 10 in the UK. Even better, it made No 17 in the US. The band planned to head to the Bahamas to record the follow-up. Bon Scott’s moment had finally arrived.

ON FEBRUARY 20, 1980, Scott was found dead. He had spent the previous evening drinking heavily in the Music Machine, a club in Camden Town. “I saw the guys in Sydney and I was taken aback,” says Evans, who left the band in 1977. “They’d been hit really hard, but the way they conducted themselves and got on with it, I have the utmost respect.” After some deliberation, AC/DC replaced Scott with Brian Johnson, who Scott had once recommended to the band. Johnson’s first job was to record *Back In Black* – with title, cover and opening funeral bell conceived in tribute to Scott. It went to No 1. “The band had done so much hard work and earned a lot of respect,” explains Evans. “They were primed to go. It all made sense.” The tragedy was that Scott wasn’t around to

enjoy it. “Bon had amazing charisma,” says John Bisset. “A lot of musicians are arrogant and negative, Bon didn’t have an ounce of that. He was well-equipped to handle fame. He should have gone on for a long time.” Mark Evans agrees, “Everyone loved him. He was a gentleman, fun-loving, great to be around. The public persona was this crazy guy, but that was only part of it. What hastened his departure is that he felt a responsibility to be Bon Scott, to live the rock’n’roll lifestyle he sang about.”

Mark Evans’ *Dirty Deeds: My Life Inside/Outside Of AC/DC* is available now

Stoned immaculate: Bon Scott’s statue



EYEWITNESS

SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES...

Speculation still surrounds Bon Scott’s death...

As with many musicians who meet an early demise, Scott’s death has been a source of speculation. The singer had been drinking in Camden when he drove home with Alistair Kinnear, a friend of his girlfriend, Silver Smith. When Kinnear arrived at his home in East Dulwich, Scott was asleep. Unable to wake him, Kinnear left him in the car to sleep it off. By the time he checked on him the following day, Scott was dead. The official cause was acute alcohol poisoning. Some people question whether alcohol

alone could have killed Scott and suggest hard drugs were involved, but while Scott had used heroin in the past, there was no suggestion he died of an OD. Scott was an asthmatic and Mark Evans recalls, “He’d be drunk in the back of the car and you could hear him struggle with breathing. You had to hold his head up.” To add to the mystery, Kinnear moved to Spain for 25 years after Scott’s death, only resurfacing in 2005. He disappeared again in 2006 after taking a boat trip from France to Spain.

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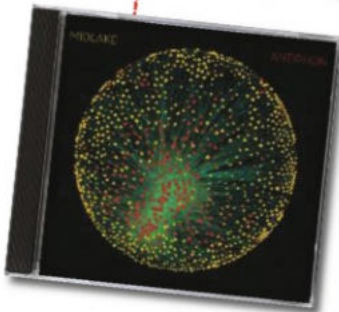
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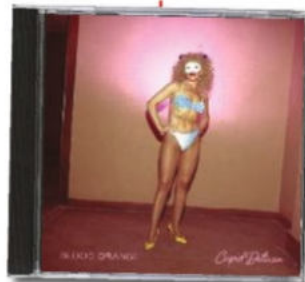
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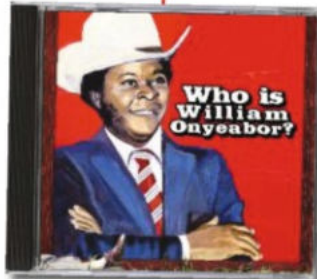
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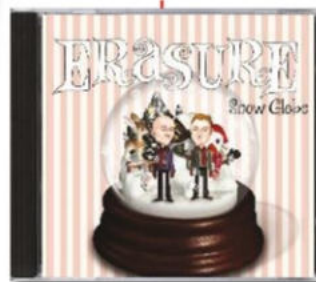
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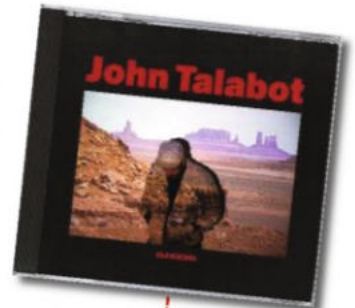
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“Oh yeah.  
Sure.  
I blazed a  
lot of trails.”

Hippy Goddess... First Lady Of The Canyon... Peer of Dylan and Cohen... Woe betide anyone who deals with the great JONI MITCHELL in such reductive terms. On the eve of her 70th birthday, one of the most important artists of the past 50 years gives a rare, revealing and provocative interview that defies such simplifications. From being “the only virgin in art school” to being “excommunicated from the airwaves”, Mitchell discusses her remarkable career, and the battles she fought along the way. “I didn’t really have a peer group,” she says. “I’m too good for a girl, right?”







Queen of the desert:  
Mitchell near Las Vegas,  
Nevada, May 22, 1978



Joni Mitchell shot for *Vogue* magazine, November 20, 1968

**I**T'S NOT EASY to get in touch with Joni Mitchell. She doesn't carry a cell phone around. There's not a lot of email exchanges. You have to call her house, and she has to answer the phone. If you're going to do this, you're going to deal with her. She graciously agreed to let the interview happen at her place in Beverly Hills. It's quite a large, sprawling house, with a Spanish vibe to it. She's lived there since 1974. There's a fountain in the courtyard, and there's a lot of art on the walls. A lot of it is her art. There's some photographs of her, performing, or with friends or contemporaries. Lots of plants. It feels like a very fertile, creative space. I saw her studio where she paints and writes, and her bedroom.

She was very generous. I was quite astounded about how accommodating she was about letting us into her space. She comes alive at night; she does a lot of her creative work at night then sleeps until the early afternoon. The later our interview went, the more energised she became...

**This place is quite remarkable, it feels like a sanctuary.** Yeah, that's what it is.

**There's artwork on all the walls, most of it yours. How do you decide what makes it onto the walls?** Oh, it's changing all the time. They're moving around. I only paint things that mean something. That's Saskatchewan at 40

below, this is Oshun, the Nigerian Water Goddess. You know, I'm a water junkie.

**And there's self-portraits around as well?**

There's some self-portraits. That's where I'm building my house in British Columbia, that's my property. That's Edmonton on the banks of the North Saskatchewan.

**Does all of your creativity – painting, writing songs, poetry – come from the same well?**

I believe there are different languages, and some things don't translate as well from one language to another. So I've got vignettes of things that happened that would make a good short film, but wouldn't make a good song, right?

**So is it about assigning the idea or the inspiration?**

Kind of. The paintings, they're like memories on the wall. There's a lot of where I come from in here or land that I love.

**If painting and music are different languages, how do you describe the languages?**

I'm a painter first, and I kind of apply painting principles to music. I think my production skills are visual. You don't need to read in the [recording] studio because you can go straight to tape, and I play with literate musicians who can transcribe my changes. So it's a good thing I don't know about that.

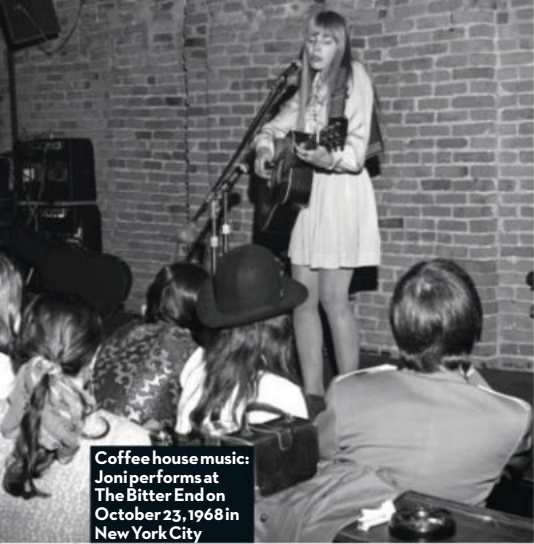
**So painting is your first language?** Painting is my first language.

**You said in the *Woman Of Heart And Mind* documentary, "Anytime I make a record, it's followed by a painting period. It's a good crop rotation, painting to clear the head."**

**It feels like you're saying that music is a vocation, painting is liberation...** No, I wouldn't exactly say that... OK, let's say, which came first: the lyric or the music? Usually the music comes first. Then I mantra it, I play it over and over. I listen to those chords and I go, "OK, here's where the high note goes and this is where the main thrust, the most important idea has to go because this is the pinnacle in the music." Then I'll get the melody. I'll go over it like The Beatles: "Scrambled eggs do do do do do do do" [to the tune of "Yesterday"] or maybe something phonetic. Then something happens, maybe it all comes in one day or it's later that week. In some cases, it's taken as long as seven years to get the libretto of what this music is craving as a story...

**On the point of painting to clear the head: that feels like painting is your comfort food.**

No, they're all different mental processes. Poetry, what you're doing is you're stirring up thoughts. It's a stimulant of some kind. So you're watching the thought process, which is anti-Buddhism. Instead of trying to empty thoughts out, which is



Coffee house music: Joni performs at The Bitter End on October 23, 1968 in New York City

meditative, with the poetry, you're making the head jump and raiding it for linguistics. I've got Irish blood so I'll go, "Oh, the blarney's running!" All of a sudden, linguistically, there's a lot of alliteration in my thought patterns, it's a good time to address a melody you're working on. But it's a jumpy head and you're going – good, better, best. With painting, the head process is different.

**Remove the thoughts?** It's like meditation. It just comes down to synapses, the hum of the wires. Non-verbal. The discourse has been silenced. So it's a different headspace from poetry.

**So are poetry and lyrics more cerebral?** What would you say, you've got a busy head...

**I'd say, I guess so...** You're watching your busy head from a detached point of view and stealing from it: "Oh good thought, oh bad thought, oh colourful, uh not quite to the point." That's the way I write, but it's an active brain and the analytical process is in play. In the painting, the analytical process appears from time to time as a command – [puts on robot voice] "red in the upper

**"I'm a painter first, and I kind of apply painting principles to music"**

left hand corner, nose is too fat" [laughs] – it's more like a meditative or a Zen mind painting, whereas writing is more – from a Buddhist position – neurotic. You're raiding Mishigas.

**You recently took part in a tribute concert, called Joni: A Performance In Song, at the Luminato Festival in Canada. How comfortable are you being venerated?** Depends on the venerator. In a certain way, honour died in WWII. Not many people know how to do it anymore. If they honour you wrong, it makes you arrogant, because it's dumb. If they honour you right it's humbling because it's inspiring. The more experience I have, the less bugged I am by it. I just come to expect that people really don't know how to honour.

**So you were bugged by it at some point?** Oh, yeah!

# BUYERS' GUIDE #1

## Joni on record

### The '60s and '70s



#### SONG TO A SEAGULL

1968

7/10

David Crosby-produced debut whose "city" and "seaside" sides serve as the expression of Joni's desire for freedom, especially from would-be suitors' restraints. Her unique sense of rhythm and melody is already evident on "I Had A King" and "The Dawntreader".

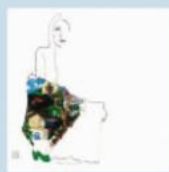


#### CLOUDS

1969

7/10

Suffused with romantic uncertainty, hope and betrayal, *Clouds* is an emotional accounting of the free-love era, profit and loss measured in the expectations love places upon us – especially on "Tin Angel" and "I Don't Know Where I Stand".



#### LADIES OF THE CANYON

1970

8/10

The emblematic Laurel Canyon album, a pioneering milestone of the new "confessional" style (for instance, "Willy", about Graham Nash) which also included the breakthrough hits "Big Yellow Taxi" and "Woodstock".



#### BLUE

1971

9/10

The apotheosis of Joni's early style, its raw-nerve emotional autopsies ("Little Green"; the title song) handled with a courageous frankness and melodic maturity that are utterly compelling. Stephen Stills and James Taylor are among the guests.



#### FOR THE ROSES

1972

6/10

Transitional album. Scarily mature, the autobiographical ruminations here border at times on fretful self-absorption ("Woman Of Heart And Mind"); but Tom Scott's reeds are a harbinger of how Mitchell's music would develop.



#### COURT AND SPARK

1974

9/10

The fuller arrangements and jazz-inflected horns impose a less insular and navel-gazing mood, akin to Steely Dan, though the themes are just as

romantically knotted as ever. Marks the debut of regular players, drummer John Guerin and guitarist Larry Carlton.



#### MILES OF AISLES

1974

8/10

Live double, recorded over four nights on the *Court And Spark* tour, featuring Joni backed by

Tom Scott's LA Express ensemble (Guerin, Carlton, plus guitarist Robben Ford), with songs reworked accordingly. The original two-disc vinyl release is superior to the edited CD reissue from 2011.



#### THE HISSING OF SUMMER LAWNS

1975

10/10

Moving focus from the personal to the cultural, Mitchell tracks the thin

vener between the primitive and the sophisticated like an anthropologist observing contemporary LA lifestyles, set to a brilliant amalgam of rock, jazz, folk and world music. Highlights include: "Shades Of Scarlett Conquering", "Don't Interrupt The Sorrow" and "Shadows And Light".



#### HEJIRA

1976

9/10

Joni's constant search for love and music, depicted as a flight from both boredom and the anchorages of

partnership, her songs missives from a variety of locales, a succession of hotel rooms and a string of lovers – literally, the "Refuge Of The Roads". The cast of characters includes crows, horny coyotes, restless hitchhikers and Amelia Earhart.



#### DON JUAN'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER

1977

5/10

Joni's Jazz Odyssey curdles somewhat, with Jaco Pastorius'

fretless bass irritatingly omnipresent on this double-album featuring the side-long, semi-improvised jazz symphony "Paprika Plains".



#### MINGUS

1979

5/10

Tribute album of "audio paintings" co-written with the dying jazz legend and performed

with Pastorius, Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock, but fatally prey to the etiolated, academic jazz style of the era.

Continues on page 29...



Mitchell at a contract signing with, l-r, Elliot Roberts, David Crosby and Warner Brothers executive Mo Ostin, 1967

**So you don't look at the paintings and think 'I would've done this differently'.** They're square things to hang on your wall, to decorate your house. [laughs] Like Mozart is wallpaper for princes and sometimes you want wallpaper for princes. But you don't want Yoko Ono gagging. It's artsy and interesting, but I don't want that in my house.

**Maybe you like your paintings more than your music?** [Pause] Most of these paintings are quite satisfactory. I don't want to put another stroke on them. I put up things that seem finished, I guess. If I'm listening to my music and think, 'Jeez, I should've put a guitar fill there, why didn't I do that? Why did I read that line like that? Why am I whining?' [laughs] So I guess it's like divine dissatisfaction, it's what drives you to your next period. You won't make that mistake again.

**On the question of tributes, part of the reason people love making them is because they feel a sense of connection to you – and we don't see you a lot. You've been called a recluse...**

That's because I've been ill. What are you supposed to do? Wander around when you're as sick as a dog? You can't! Once again, fame is a series of misunderstandings surrounding a name.



**Let's go back for a little bit. You go from Saskatoon to art school in Calgary. You start playing in some cafés in Saskatoon and then Toronto. How did music become the career?** Because I got pregnant. I was the only virgin in art school. You've been holding on to this precious thing and I just kind of, stupidly, let it go.

**One weekend in Toronto?** As Jean, my choreographer, says, "You were Banffed." It was in Banff. I got caught out immediately and so I had to create a smoke screen. The music was not of interest. This is a trick of fate. I didn't know I had the gift, I hadn't started to write, I was a folk singer.

**How did music become the smokescreen rather than painting?** Because I

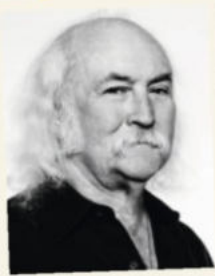
was going to quit art school. The pretence, to protect my parents, was that I was having problems with the profs anyhow. I was in debate with them all the time, they didn't like the way I dressed. Again, you have to go into a box. To be a painter, there was a uniform.

**So music becomes the smoke screen. You go to Toronto and you have the child, you put the child up for adoption and you find your daughter many years later...** Let's clear up

I'M YOUR FAN

**"I'd give anything to be as good as her..."**

DAVID CROSBY on Joni



**"S**HE'S THE BEST writer of any of them. When I first saw her at that club in Florida, she was already better than almost everybody. Even when she was starting, there were only a few people who were that good: James Taylor,

Bob Dylan, Paul Simon. In my opinion, when people look back and decide who was the best writer of those times, they're going to say Joni. She's as good a poet as Bob and certainly a better musician, by a long shot.

"Her voice was extraordinary, too, though she continually, obstinately kept smoking and lost a whole octave off the top. She's still smoking to this day, so I don't know what else I can say about that. But I don't know if anybody's made a better record than *Blue*. Mainly because it's so personal. After that, I thought her arrangements got too lush, too glossy and ornate. Her style developed into a more grandiose one. I still think she's the greatest singer-songwriter of all time. When you hear her on *Blue*, it's right here [plants his fist on his heart]. It totally nails you. She's talking directly to you, she's got you by the shirt. I'd give anything to be as good as her." ROB HUGHES

● Why does it bug you?

People use it as an opportunity to grandstand. It's like at funerals. You know, the girl who goes "Oooh" and in her pseudo-grief throws herself into the arms of the one she's after. It's just human nature. The more education they have, the more they do it. It seems that intellect encouraged begins to speak a quarter truth, a very isolated and self-centred truth. It seems like education makes people want to complicate things and pat themselves on the back for their ignorant assumptions.

**Another part of the veneration is that it's predicated on looking back on your career, your legacy, your art. Do you enjoy looking back?** No. I don't like to look back.

**At all?** No. Because I'd like to redo the bass track on that, or why did I put that read on that word...

**You don't go back and listen to *Court And Spark* or *Clouds*?** I do have one friend who comes over and insists on putting my music on. We'll play pool. I'd rather have Duke Ellington on, frankly, to play pool.

**It's interesting that you don't go back and listen to the music unless you have to, but you've got painting up all over the place.** But there are things that I like to look at.

BUYERS' GUIDE #2

Joni on record  
The '80s and beyond

something that people assume erroneously, and I see it written again and again and again and again. That I gave up my daughter to further my career. This is so wrong, there was no career. I was just a folk singer – there was no ambition. I had a nice voice, I guess. I played OK, but there was no real gift. It was a way to get money to smoke, to have a pizza and go to a movie. With no frills. I had to earn half my fare to art school as my parents disapproved and there was nothing left over.

**So what happened?** At that time, you didn't even see the daughter. The right thing to do to protect your parents was to get out of town, go into a home. But in '65 the homes were full, so many girls got caught out because everything was changing. Movies were getting sexier. It was very confusing to be a young woman there. The pill was not available so there were a lot of unwanted children born in 1965, more than can be adopted, and all the homes were full. At the time I had her I was destitute, and there was no way I could take her out of the hospital into a blizzard with no job, no roof over my head. But she was beautiful and she found her way into a foster home and I tried to get work and get a set-up that I could bring her to. I couldn't get any work in Toronto as I couldn't get 160 bucks to get into the union. I was beset by predators trying to take advantage of the situation. A lot of human ugliness came at me... I mean, you wouldn't believe the gauntlet you have to run when you're young, destitute. It was a very difficult situation. Things changed, improved.

**When did music become something more than the diversion? And when did you realise, "Hey, man, I'm good..."?** I remember trying to get work in New York and saying to a club owner who wouldn't hire me, and bursting into tears, "But I'm good!" Under duress I knew... I guess, to a degree I knew I was good enough but, as David said, "Joni, you're the only person I know who doesn't want to be famous." I really didn't. I wrote a poem about it.

**Which David?** Geffen. I thought fame was going to be a horrible experience – which until you get used to it, it is. You just have to deal with an incredible amount of stupidity because this place is mentally ill with celebrity. So you have to see a lot of mental illness coming at you and you go, "Oh my God, this culture is so sick."

**But you worked really hard in the late 1960s and '70s to cultivate you career.** They had me in a harness. I liked writing, I like composing, I like creating... I love the creative process. I hate this! No, I really don't like the third degree. Neither does Warren Beatty. You don't see him doing interviews very much, and being interviewed guarantees misunderstanding. You can tell my values are very different than the norm. I'll tell you what, at 16, this'll give you an idea, I'm not a kid that played air guitar in my bedroom saying, "I'm gonna be rich and famous" and all of that. I felt sorry for stars. Sandra Dee was all over the local magazines. She was breaking up with her husband, it was misery. I thought, 'Oh, this poor woman, what if they did that to me in the school newspaper?' That's what empathy is. So I had to write in blank verse on assignment and I was getting my hair done for some beauty contest –



**WILD THINGS RUN FAST**

1982  
Joni's Jazz Odyssey is abandoned for a more rhythmic, mainstream pop approach heavily influenced by new wave bands such as Talking Heads and especially The Police.

6/10



**DOG EAT DOG**

1985  
Drafted in to help with production, Thomas Dolby applies a modernist synthesiser sheen to the kind of rote condemnations of consumerism, financiers and televangelists you'd never have expected from the younger Joni.

5/10



**CHALK MARK IN A RAIN STORM**

1988  
Probably her poorest album, with bloodless love songs and further routine reflections on social issues (Native American rights, commerciality, pollution) swathed in adult-oriented easy-listening glop.

4/10



**NIGHT RIDE HOME**

1991  
Augmenting her old jazz-lite style with ambient guitar and omnichord washes, Joni devises an elegant, crepuscular sound, well suited to the album's dark, graceful reminiscences.

7/10



**TURBULENT INDIGO**

1994  
The smoky timbre of Mitchell's mature voice is entirely in keeping with the tone of these articulate musings on pitiable yuppies,

8/10

at the hair school, by amateurs – and there were stacks of these magazines with Sandra Dee crying on the cover; so I wrote a poem, "The Fishbowl", about Hollywood before I ever was here.

**So you see yourself as an outsider at that time, as well?** Oh, yeah. I mourn the day of the discoverer, the week of depth. I'm cursed by astrology to be deeper than the average person and also have the need to be original, to plant the flag where no-one else has been. I'm going to have to listen to traditions that satisfy everybody and

celebrity wife-beaters and vicious nuns, including her most cogent commentary on contemporary mores, "Sex Kills".



**TAMING THE TIGER**

1998  
A peremptory, tart response to the success of *Turbulent Indigo*, this found Joni deriding the degraded culture of pop music ("junk food for juveniles"), amongst other contemporary ills. Equal parts sad and sour.

5/10



**BOTH SIDES NOW**

2000  
Depicting a relationship from flirtation, through infatuation, disaffection and separation to anticipation of the next romance, this orchestrated song cycle of mostly torch-song covers is the closest Mitchell comes to the Great American Songbook.

7/10



**TRAVELOGUE**

2002  
Applying the formula of *Both Sides Now* to Joni's back catalogue, Vince Mendoza's subtle orchestrations unveil new shades of meaning in songs you thought you knew well. A transformative retrospective.

8/10



**DREAMLAND**

2004  
The best of the many compilations available, this covers Mitchell's career non-chronologically, mixing early hits with later experiments to offer a full-spectrum account of her art.

9/10



**SHINE**

2007  
The first of a two-album deal with Starbucks, *Shine* offers wearily familiar critiques – verging in places on glib sloganeering – set to bland coffee-table folk-jazz settings, awash with ghostly saxophone that's closer to Kenny G than Charlie Parker. **ANDY GILL**

5/10

sell like hotcakes and go, "That ain't shit, it's been done and done and done."

**So how did you feel when you became a massive star?** I retreated into the BC wilderness. I hated it. "The fishbowl is a world reversed."

**You mean all of it? To the point where you look back at those times and go...** That attention to celebrity is mental illness. That mental illness that creates that attention is tragic to me.



Mitchell with her 'king' Graham Nash in a limo on the way to Big Bear for a CSN photo session for their first album, February 1969

I'M YOUR FAN

"She had a zipper on her heart..."



GRAHAM NASH on Joni

"HER ARTISTRY IS such

that she takes a personal situation and turns it into a world situation. The relationship she's

talking about can apply to anyone who's listening. And that's the art of writing a great song, taking a simple thing that's happened and making astounding music from it. She's incredibly direct on *Blue*. It's like she had a zipper on her heart, opened it up and spilled everything onto the record."

**did well on this, this sounds good."** Everyone has an ego. You can't say "I like this tomato soup" without having an ego. Ego is the original sin.

**Do you feel many artists engage in false humility?** Yes, it's disgusting [laughs]. I'd rather have a real arrogance than a false humility. When somebody pays me the few compliments I've enjoyed, they humble me. They're heart-warming because a connection has been made. I've put out a signal and this person has picked it up. We meet and that's a communication.

**Why do you think artists engage in false humility?** Because it's fashionable and it's politics. It's baby kissing. It's considered appropriate conduct, so that conduct is emulated.

**Who do you see as your contemporaries?** Didn't have any. Leonard and Bob were the only... peer group, you mean? I didn't really have a peer group. Maybe when I was starting out, everything sounds good when you're young and all your

friends around you are making songs. But it was much more competitive, I felt, than it needed to be. There was a lot of short-sheeting and breaking your guitar. Especially for a girl. I'm too good for a girl, right? So there's a lot of resentment for that.

**You play too well?** Yeah, being too good at pinball makes guys mad. In pool, I can sandbag just to make the evening pleasant, but in pinball you have to keep the ball in the air so it's hard to sandbag without throwing it.

**So Cohen and Dylan, they're not peer groups but they're...** They're writers.

**So with contemporaries, there's no-one?** People who I look up to: Stravinsky, Duke Ellington for daring. And individuality: Debussy.

**But they're not even the same era as you.** Well, no. There wasn't much. Marvin Gaye, towards the end, when he got daring. They were trying to hold him back as he was moving away from the hit department into the art department.

**Let me ask you a bit about the Joni Mitchell image that is projected onto you.** [Laughs] Which one?

**Well I guess there's a couple...** A couple!

**You've always had a distaste for being referred to as a confessional songwriter?** Yeah, that's like swinging billy clubs, 'you will confess', what did I confess to? I'm selfish? Mine is the most selfish generation in history. What is so confessional? I'm sad? Oh, Jesus, have you never been sad?

**Well, if songwriting isn't confessional then it's storytelling and you are the actress or the director...** I'm all of those things. Many-headed Joan. I'm the playwright, like Tennessee Williams. Then I have to perform the text, which takes sense memory, like a Method actor.

**But if you're Method acting...** All singers are.

**So if Adele writes a song and she's singing it and it's about a break-up she's had, she's acting?** Of course. She's not breaking up at that moment. It may be her own experience. She's reliving that experience. That's Method acting.

**But when you're saying that it's acting or directing, that suggests it's something ersatz. It's not you then, it's a role you're playing.** No, no. Method acting is being you. It's drawing on all your sense memory. It's very real. But of course it's art, and art is short for artificial. So the art of art is to be as real as you can within this artificial situation. You can make it like Van Gogh's paintings are exaggerated to make the landscapes more real for the deadened. You

**What about the fact tons of people were buying your records?** That's different. The trick is, if you listen to that music and see me, you're not getting anything. If you listen to the music and you see yourself, it'll probably make you cry and you'll learn something about yourself. Most people know I'm famous, but there's no real communication, it's just a phenomenon and people will flick their bick at anything [laughs].

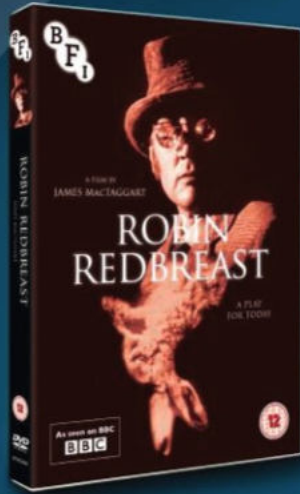
**So you had a problem with how popular you were becoming...** No, wait. When I realised how popular I was becoming it was right before *Blue* and I went, "Oh my God, a lot of people are listening to me, then they better find out who they're worshipping. Let's see if they can take it, let's get real." So I wrote *Blue* – which horrified a lot of people. It created a lot of attention, that was very weird, so I bought a property in British Columbia and dropped out. What had happened is they were looking at me and all I've done is reveal human traits, they haven't seen themselves in it. The point that they see themselves in it, the communication is complete. But the point where they're looking after me, it's like pigs to blood, it's like Marilyn Monroe on a tightrope or something.

***Blue* is considered a classic now, but at the time people thought...** Horrified.

**How were they horrified? Why were they horrified?** The men, because it was a men's world. Kris Kristofferson went, "Joni, keep something to yourself", Johnny Cash said, "the world is on your shoulders". They all recoil as the game is to make yourself larger than life, don't reveal anything human. And my thing is: why? Movies do it. OK, it hasn't been done in the song, but why? The trouble is, I'm the playwright, I'm the actress, and I want them to look at the play and see past it, but it's such an intimate art form that all the attention is going to me. Which is insane.

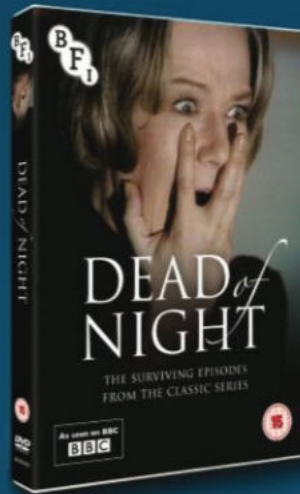
**Tell me if I've got this right, but you are willing to accept having an ego and say, "I**

# CLASSIC BBC HORROR NEW TO DVD



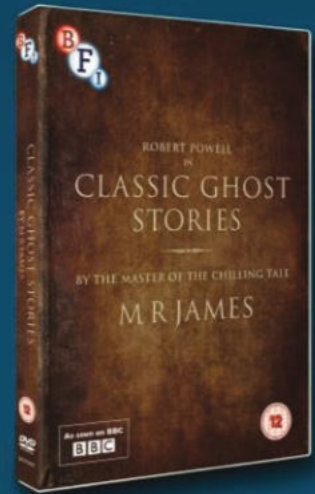
**28 OCTOBER**

DVD premiere of this legendary BBC TV 'folk horror' from 1970. Widely considered an influence and precursor to *The Wicker Man*.



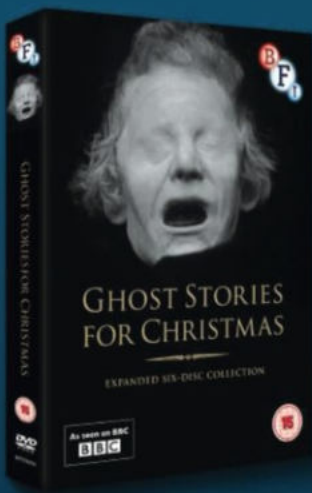
**28 OCTOBER**

Includes the three surviving episodes from this terrifying BBC horror anthology – first broadcast in 1972 and rarely seen since.



**28 OCTOBER**

Robert Powell presents five chilling MR James tales – originally shown at Christmas time in 1986. Plus rare episodes from the 1980 *Spine Chillers* series.



**28 OCTOBER**

This expansive edition collects over 13 hours' worth of terror, including all 12 episodes of the classic *A Ghost Story for Christmas* series.



**18 NOVEMBER**

Werewolves, vampires and ghosts haunt the living in this long-awaited double-disc set of the much sought-after BBC horror series.



**18 NOVEMBER**

DVD and Blu-ray edition of this stunning BBC ghost story, based on a short story by Sheridan Le Fanu and first broadcast in 1979.



Moody blue: Mitchell painting at home, April 1984

● know, the stars aren't that big. But you're not seeing them so he blows them up. It's a lie so you see the truth.

**Let me ask you about something else you get lumped in with, then. There continues to be the pervading image of Joni Mitchell as the winsome blonde with the guitar, the hippie folk goddess. How do you feel about that?** [Laughs] Hippie folk goddess. We need goddesses, but I don't want to be one. Hippie? The only hippie thing I like is the fashion show and the Rainbow Coalition. But most of the values were silly to me. Free love? It's a ruse for guys. There's no such thing. Look at the rep I got, there was a list of people whose path I crossed... in the Summer Of Love they made me into this love-bandit. So much for free love. Nobody knows more than me what a ruse that was. That was for guys coming out of Prohibition. It was hard to get laid before that.

**You basically don't like being pigeonholed.** Exactly, I'm fluid. Everything I am, I'm not. And that's the way it is with all people.

**What is the greatest misconception about Joni Mitchell?** There are so many. If I made a list of the things I've been likened to and you didn't know who it was about... you're just like the Singing Nun, you're just like Marilyn Monroe. Joni, you're just like Mick Jagger, Richard Nixon and Gomer Pyle rolled into one. You look like Greta Garbo...

**Can I ask you about your relationships to some of your songs. You said that you feel miscast now in those early songs. "Both Sides Now" are you into?**

**Why did you redo "Both Sides Now"?** Well, it's not a good ingénue role. But that song, I've looked at life from both sides now. I was 21 when I

wrote it and I took a lot of ridiculing. I was miscast when I wrote it as a young girl. I like the performance I did in my fifties of it.

**You got quite a critical drubbing for Mingus as well...** Except in Europe where it was more understood, like jazz is.

**Were you disheartened by the reaction to that record?** No, things conspired. They warned me at my management company, "If you do this, you'll be excommunicated from the airwaves." Which I was.

**The jazzers thought that you were a rocker, the rockers thought you were a jazzer?** Some thought I took advantage. But not the greats, it's never the greats, they're risk-takers; but the near-greats gossip. All these schools have their perimeters, uniforms and laws... I'm an original.

**What did you say earlier? 'I was cursed with the proclivity for originality'?** Yeah, I'm born the day of the discoverer. When I found out, it explained why I am contemptuous, and Mingus was too. He has a song called "If Charlie Parker Was A Gunslinger, There'd Be A Whole Lot Of Dead Copycats".

**Where is the line between learning lessons from our musical predecessors, and being a copycat?** Tradition is a copycat and most people love tradition. That's what sells, and 99.9% of musicians sat in their room, picked a hero and tried to copy that sound, or that this, or that that. I approached it like a painter, to try to be original. There's a great liberty in that, and I'm a freedom freak. There are times when you have no-one on your side, when you don't belong to anything.

**But when you talked about Dylan, when you said he's not authentic, he's a plagiarist...**

Wait, wait. I didn't say that. I didn't say that he's not authentic at all. That is not a word I used.

**That's from the LA Times...** Journalistic bullshit. I did say he's a plagiarist, and he is.

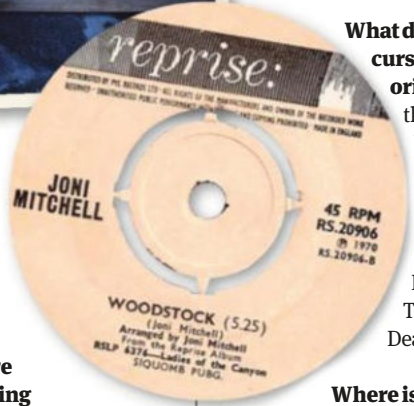
**How did Dylan cross the line, in terms of being a plagiarist?** He was in litigation. It's not like I outed him. He stole all of his lines out of a Japanese hoodlum's novel. There was a lawsuit impending, but it got dropped. He told me "I haven't written a song in years." I said, "What're you talking about? Who's writing them, then?" He came down to craft. Inspiration doesn't stay with a lot of artists long, then you're in the game and you've got to sustain it. You notice it - like one-trick wonders or two good albums, then they peter out. To sustain a gift for a long time is rare.

**Does that make you disappointed in Dylan?** No, I think that remark is completely out of context. We do not want to talk to stupid people.

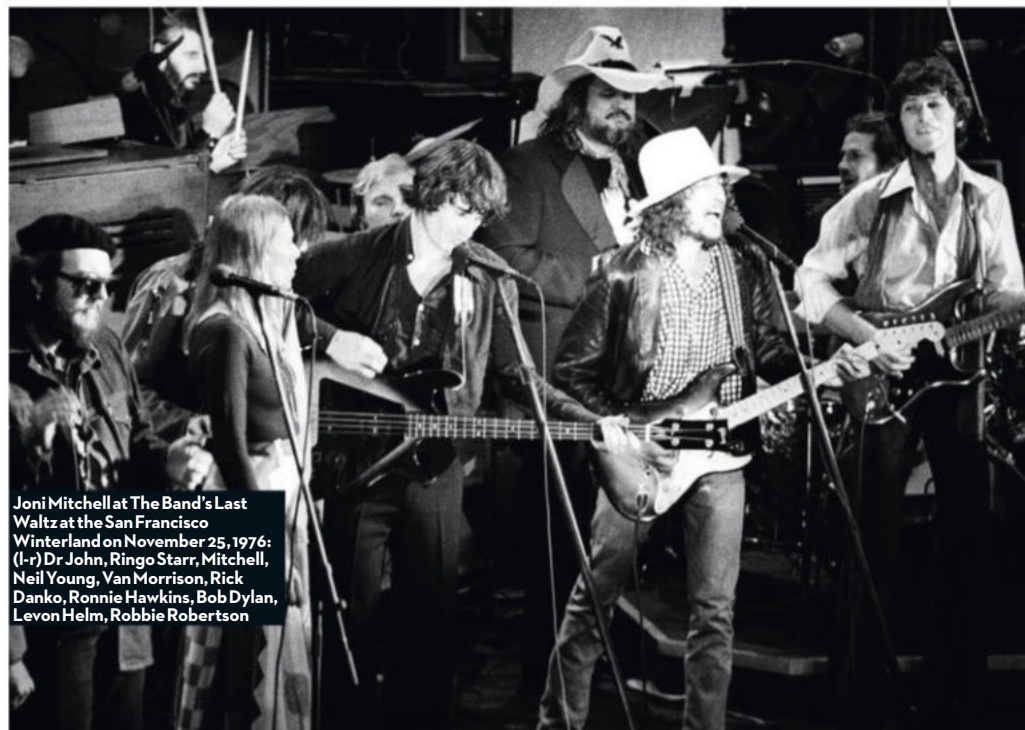
**We talked about Cohen and Dylan...** I like a lot of Bob's songs. Musically he's not very gifted, he's borrowed his voice from a lot of old hillbillies. He's got a lot of borrowed things. He's not a great guitar player. He's invented a character to deliver his songs. [Impersonates Dylan] "Sometime I wish I could have that character." Because you can do things with that character. It's a mask of sorts.

**You wrote "Woodstock" in 1969, a song that defined a generation. So they say, so they say...**

**A lot of people assume you were there, and you weren't. So how did you capture the moment better than anyone else, even though you weren't actually there?** Because I was one of the many who were thwarted. That was the place many kids wanted to be. I got to the airport with CSN and our agent David Geffen and our manager Elliot on a Sunday night when I was supposed to play and it was a catastrophe. I had to do *The Dick Cavett Show* the following day and it was Geffen that decided, "We can't get Joni in, we can't get her out on time." So he took me back to the pier where he lived and we watched it on TV. I was the deprived kid that couldn't go. So I wrote



HENRY DILTZ; ED PERLSTEIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



Joni Mitchell at The Band's Last Waltz at the San Francisco Winterland on November 25, 1976: (l-r) Dr. John, Ringo Starr, Mitchell, Neil Young, Van Morrison, Rick Danko, Ronnie Hawkins, Bob Dylan, Levon Helm, Robbie Robertson



it from the point of view of a kid going there. If I'd been there in the back room with all the cutthroat, maniacal crap that goes on backstage, I would not have had that perspective. It's a good thing I didn't go 'cause I wouldn't have been able to write it from the point of view of a person in attendance. I wrote it for a person in attendance and why they wanted to go because I was not allowed by circumstance to attend. It was written with empathy.

**You've been critical of that generation. Tell me about your views on the failures of the baby boomers.**

We were raised on Disney: someday my prince will come. We came up in affluence unprecedented. Not that we were greatly wealthy, but we all had houses, even though they were mortgaged. Our mothers had bought into the white picket fence. They got caught up in keeping up with the Joneses. The cars took the husbands away, they had a life separate from the housekeeper. When they came home, they were tired, they didn't want to hear about the housewife's problems. The housewife was shown smiling and holding up a detergent. It was all "My husband's got a nicer car than yours, therefore I'm the most important person on the block." All that pettiness. And it trickled down into the play of the children. But the home contained, for the most part, these unhappy women.

**And it led to an unhealthy world...** When the women aren't singing in the kitchen, you've got a sick nation. So whatever it was, the breakdown of that dream, out of it came this liberated, spoilt, selfish generation into the costume ball of it; free love, free sex, free music, free, free, free, free, we're so free. Woodstock was the culmination of it. At that point, the numbers were big enough to constitute a voting block; so suddenly we were a viable, political community. Then the straights started to grow their hair and get love beads and get a Nehru suit. My generation, for most of the '70s, fell into a state of apathy; heavy drugs followed light drugs; the thing got darker and they didn't know where to take it. When the Reagans got into power, it went hippie, yuppie, yuppie. They were converted into consumers. They went right into the thing their parents had – but on a bigger scale. Make more money; *Dallas*; crooked rich people are good, the Reagans are good. Madonna, "I'm a material girl". I was not a part of that. I was not a part of the anti-war movement either. I played Fort Bragg and I didn't write protest songs.

**You campaigned about environmental destruction.** That was my issue. Nobody was interested. They were hung up on the war. It was dumb, even Dylan's writing... [Dylan voice] "I just want you to know I'll spit on your grave".

**Do you accept you were a pioneer?** Oh yeah. Sure. I blazed a lot of trails.

**You don't like to be called a feminist?** I'm not a feminist... I don't want to get a posse against men. I'd rather go toe-to-toe, work it out. There are too many Amazons in that community. The feminism in this continent isn't feminine, it's masculine. They tried to say to me when I said I'm not feminist, "If you're not with us, you're against us." All the feminists I've met have been so hostile, I go, "Woah, I'm not joining your club."



EYEWITNESS

Joni with the LA Express, Hollywood, October 1974: (l-r) Tom Scott, Max Bennett, Robben Ford, Larry Nash, John Guerin and Mitchell

**"She was very much one of the guys..."**

**Guitarist ROBBEN FORD on touring with Joni**

**"**IN 1974 TOM SCOTT invited me on tour with Joni and the LA Express. He brought over an acetate of *Court And Spark* and I thought it was an incredible record. We were jamming at A&M in Hollywood when Joni eventually came in. She was wearing tight blue jeans with high heels and a matching jacket with some kind of fabulous sparkly shit on it. She was a goddess, but very sweet. When we started hanging out she was nothing but fun. It was easy to be around her. She was very much one of the guys. It was an incredible chance to learn. She had written a couple of pieces of new music before the tour: one was

'Jericho', it's on *Miles Of Aisles*. She played it to us in the rehearsal studio, and someone said, 'Could you play that bridge for us again, Joni?' 'No - I'll have to start again from the beginning.' Every time she played you a piece of music she had to start from the top. It was very funny! We were on the road for nine months in 1974. She loved performing. I never saw her get ruffled - ever. After the tour I played on *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns*, and on 'In France They Kiss On Main Street' she asked me to plug the guitar into the console rather than run it through an amp. I didn't think it was going to work, but she said, very sweetly, 'Well, just try it, Robben.' And sure enough, it was so cool.

"Joni is probably the greatest talent we've seen out of this generation. I would put her above Miles Davis and John Coltrane, in terms of the versatility and breadth. No-one matches it. Just a bigger mind, man!"  
GRAEME THOMSON

**Do you feel you've been properly recognised as a pioneer?** I think people are seeing it now. Now that they've run all the new Joni Mitchells, they think it's something easy to create. It isn't. You have to have a certain value system. There are a lot of things that have to go into it.

**You're 70 this year. How do you feel about ageing?** Oh, I'm fine with it as long as I can be healthy. I don't mind ageing. It's hard to tell at this age, what is age decline and what is the disease. I'm always asking my doctor, "Can I fight it, or do I have to accept it?" So that's my battle at this time.

**Are you concerned about your mortality?** Oh, God no. I've faced death so many times. I want more time, it's as simple as that. I don't want to go yet, I've got a lot of things still I want to accomplish and savour. I can't sing, there's no point, my singing is probably permanently gone.

**Really?** Yeah, kind of. You have to know when to quit. I had an instrument I could control but due to the illness, even though it's getting a little better, it's still impaired. In the sinuses you have all these planes that you bounce notes off. Well, if I bounce it could ricochet. I can't control it like I used to, and I used to have very good intonation.

**Looking back, what are you most proud of?**

There isn't anything singular. There's healthy pride and unhealthy pride. I try not to indulge too much in pride; but there are cases in the street, where people come up to me. For instance, two young girls who lost their mother in their early teens holed up in their bedroom with this music and it was cathartic for them, I kind of surrogate-mothered them. And there are people... where did I read, the woman that plays in *The Sopranos*.

**Eddie Falco...** She says that I raised her. So there are these strange things out there. There's one thing I've been trying to bring across to people: "You're on your own, let's face it. [Laughs] And that's OK." That's what Nietzsche's Übermensch was all about. To remove the crutches.

**That's a little scary.** It is, for most people. For me, it just kind of happened. I didn't have anybody guiding me. They just removed themselves because I've had a very interesting and challenging life. Like I say, a lot of battles. But I have a tremendous will to live and a tremendous joie de vivre, alternating with irritability. ☺

© CBC Radio's Q with Jian Ghomeshi

Revealed! The 50 best singer-songwriter albums

HENRY DULTZ

# 50 GREATEST SINGER/SONGWRITER ALBUMS

Blood on the tracklistings! Joni Mitchell's on the cover, a battered old copy of *Blue* is on the record deck, and the *Uncut* team have taken on the emotional task of compiling a Top 50 of the most powerful, confessional singer-songwriter albums. From *Tim Hardin 1* to *Once I Was An Eagle...* are you ready to be heartbroken?

## 1 TIM HARDIN TIM HARDIN 1

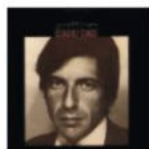
VERVE FORECAST, 1966



Either courageously or compulsively, the gifted but tormented Hardin held up a mirror to his psyche in a series of revealing songs on his first album. "Reason To Believe", "How Can We Hang On To A Dream?" and "Misty Roses", addressed to Susan Morss, the muse of many of his best songs, expose Hardin's startling vulnerability. In "Reason...", he confronts her, shattered by alleged betrayal ("Knowing that you lied, straight-faced while I cried") before admitting he still "look[s] to find a reason to believe" in the romantic ideal she's ruined for him. And lurking behind the near-whispered tenderness of "Misty Roses" is a suffocating possessiveness ("Too soft to touch/But too lovely to leave alone").

## 2 LEONARD COHEN SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN

COLUMBIA, 1967



A key album for any singer-songwriter intent on turning real life experiences into song, Cohen's debut is scattered with names, places and events explicitly drawn from his first 33 years. "Suzanne" recalls his ritualistic – and platonic – meetings in Montreal with Suzanne Verdal, while the titular woman of "So Long, Marianne" is Marianne Jensen, his lover and muse for much of the '60s. "Sisters Of Mercy", which dramatises a night spent with two women in an Edmonton hotel room, is the first of countless Cohen songs seeking spiritual salvation from a sensual encounter. His songs turned inward

to much darker effect on *Songs Of Love And Hate*, but his debut album set the standard.

## 3 LAURA NYRO NEW YORK TENDABERRY

COLUMBIA, 1969



Nyro's previous album, *Eli And The Thirteenth Confession*, provided rich pickings for other artists looking for hit singles (The 5th Dimension's "Stoned Soul Picnic", Three Dog Night's "Eli's Coming") but there weren't as many takers for this starker, more personal set. A devastating account of emotional turmoil, the album reflects her own experiences in New York. "You Don't Love Me When I Cry", "The Man Who Sends Me Home" and "Sweet Lovin' Baby" are first-person confessionals. In other songs, the New York streets, buildings and people provide a backdrop to her innermost thoughts ("Gibson Street", "Mercy On Broadway", the latter sampling the sound of gunfire).

## 4 AL STEWART LOVE CHRONICLES

CBS, 1969



Stewart's second album is often name-checked as the first time the word "fuck" appeared in a pop song, and is also notable for the calibre of its session players (Jimmy Page, Richard Thompson and others from Fairport Convention). The centrepiece, though, is the 18-minute title track, a frequently uncomfortable autobiography in which he catalogues the highs and lows of his romantic endeavours; losing his virginity in a Bournemouth park, encounters with groupies,

searching for '60s permissiveness ("beer cans and parties, debts and arties..."), bouts of self-loathing, and ultimately finding true love in the last three verses. "You Should Have Listened To Al" picks over the bones of another doomed affair, but in a lighter, wittier tone ("she left me the keys and a dozen LPs").

## 5 DORY PREVIN ON MY WAY TO WHERE

MEDIARTS/UNITED ARTISTS, 1970



Dory Previn had more cause for confession than most. Raised in a strict Roman Catholic household by an alcoholic mother and violent father, the collapse of her marriage to composer-conductor André Previn led to mental breakdown, electroshock therapy and an intensive bout of self-analysis. All of which provided the raw ammunition for solo debut, *On My Way To Where*. The most striking song was "Beware Of Young Girls", a fragrant lullaby with lyrics that served as a bitter swipe at actress Mia Farrow, with whom her husband had begun an affair two years previously. Meanwhile, "With My Daddy In The Attic" and "I Ain't His Child" were disturbing pieces of barely veiled autobiography.

## 6 JOHN LENNON JOHN LENNON/ PLASTIC ONO BAND

APPLE, 1970



Unburdened by the break-up of The Beatles and emboldened by his Primal Scream sessions with Dr Arthur Janov, Lennon didn't so much release as unleash his first solo album on an initially shocked world. Armchair shrinks

had a field day with the Oedipal undercurrents of "Mother", the sense of betrayal animating "I Found Out" and "Working Class Hero", the existential despair of "Isolation" and the renunciations in "God". Throughout this unprecedented outpouring, the abandon of Lennon's singing (if that term even applies) is counterbalanced by the mantra-like regularity of his piano; an exposed-nerve of a record that sounds as raw today as it did at the time.

## 7 JAMES TAYLOR SWEET BABY JAMES

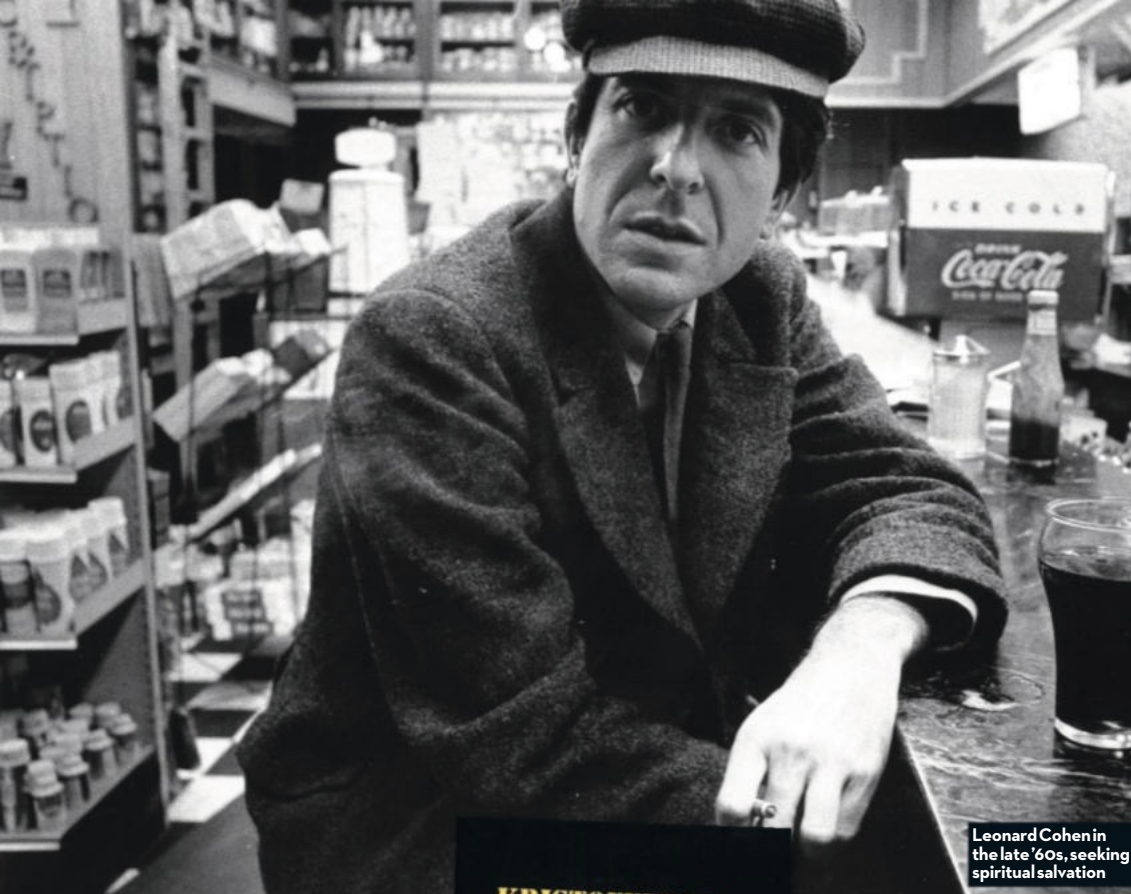
WARNER BROS., 1970



How ironic that this seemingly mellow album – which single-handedly spawned the soft-rock singer-songwriter movement – is steeped in this fragile artist's torment in vivid, if allusive, reflections on his struggle to survive in an uncaring universe. *Sweet Baby James* (the very title suffused in vulnerability) was born out of Taylor's time in a mental institution, having sought escape in heroin, shattered by the suicide of a friend. The latter experience is poetically recounted in "Fire And Rain" ("Sweet dreams and flying machines in pieces on the ground"),

Cause for confession: Dory Previn





Leonard Cohen in the late '60s, seeking spiritual salvation

while in the title song he's daunted by the prospect of going on ("Ten miles behind me and 10,000 more to go").

## 8 LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III ALBUM I

ATLANTIC, 1970



Although he was just 24 when this debut first appeared, Wainwright was already displaying

the sage introspection of an older man that would become a fixture of his music for the next four decades. "In Delaware when I was younger/I would live the life obscene/In the spring I had great hunger/I was Brando, I was Dean," he sings on the opening "School Days", while "Hospital Lady" paints a portrait of a sickly pensioner whose only lover is "old daddy death". The songs are laced with humour, but the dominant tone is one of melancholy, a yearning for places and people left behind ("Ode To A Pittsburgh", "Central Square Song"), while "Glad To See You've Got Religion" envies those happier with their lot ("Me, I'm still in trouble/Sorry, sick and sad").

## 9 KRIS KRISTOFFERSON KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

MONUMENT, 1970

Kristofferson was into his mid-thirties when he released his first solo album, by which time he was well-versed in the difficulties of making something of himself as a singer-songwriter. The rueful "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down" revealed the loneliness and disappointment that he was experiencing in Nashville. Armed



## KRISTOFFERSON

with just acoustic guitar, "To Beat The Devil", ostensibly written for his friend Johnny Cash, also served to highlight his own fear of failure in Music City, while foreshadowing the self-destructive tendencies that would blight Kristofferson's life throughout the next decade.

## 10 JONI MITCHELL BLUE

REPRISE, 1971



John Lennon and James Taylor may have bared their souls before her, but Joni Mitchell brought a

shimmering splendour to her nervy dissections of love and loss on her fourth album. Amid cascading guitars, Appalachian dulcimers and lilting piano, Mitchell – who described herself as being "vulnerable and naked" during the sessions – holds nothing back on breathtakingly eloquent songs like "Little Green", reliving the act of giving up her infant daughter for adoption as a desperate 21-year-old ("Child, with a child, pretending"), and "A Case Of You", in which she throws caution to the winds, knowing how it will end ("Go to him, stay with him if you can/But be prepared to bleed"). The *ne plus ultra* of confessional singer-songwriter works.

## 11 DAVID CROSBY IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER MY NAME

ATLANTIC, 1971



The death of his lover Christine Hinton, who died in a car crash in September 1969, had a profound effect on David Crosby. After CSNY split the following year, he retired to his Sausalito houseboat and, accompanied by friends including Jerry Garcia and Graham Nash, he set about numbing the pain with drink and cocaine and articulating his grief in a set of ravishing folk-jazz songs that often sounded like an extended wake. "Laughing" found its narrator searching for a light to guide him from the darkness. "Traction In The Rain" addressed the difficulty of making it through another day, while "I'd Swear There Was Somebody Here" suggests Hinton's spirit was always near.

## 12 JUDEE SILL JUDEE SILL

ASYLUM, 1971



The first signing to David Geffen's new West Coast label (but overshadowed by the mogul's other charges, the Eagles and Jackson Browne), Sill was, on paper at least, cut from the same cloth as a fellow female confessor like Joni Mitchell. However, a troubled upbringing, time spent in jail and an ongoing heroin habit arguably informed songs that were starker and less likely to be embraced by mainstream listeners; obliquely autobiographical on "Crayon Angels" and "The Lamb Ran Away With

The Crown", daringly controversial on "Jesus Was A Crossmaker", depicting the son of God as a sexual predator. The elegance of the musical arrangements and multi-tracking of her voice may suggest the comforting wash of a heavenly choir, but there's no disguising the drama that lay beneath.

## 13 NICK DRAKE PINK MOON

ISLAND, 1972



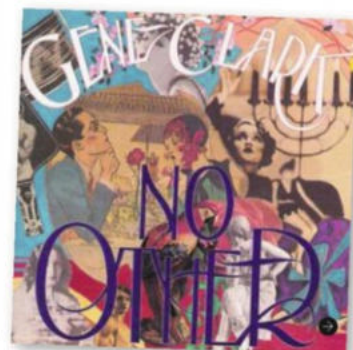
Stricken by the commercial failure of his first two albums, Drake retreated into a depressive shell,

recording *Pink Moon* in two nights in what producer John Wood remembered as a state of monosyllabic despair. The results remain some of the starkest recordings ever made, stripped to the bone to expose a soul in enormous psychological torment. "Place To Be" casts aside a young man's dreams in place of some ominous future, "darker than the deepest sea", while on the disturbingly desiccated blues of "Know" the only words are: "Know that I love you/Know I don't care/Know that I see you/Know I'm not there." Drake broke down completely following *Pink Moon*, dying in 1974.

## 14 GENE CLARK NO OTHER

ASYLUM, 1974

Retreating from Los Angeles and its many disruptive influences, Clark relocated to a Northern California ocean-view cottage, immersing himself in Zen, meditation, nature, family. Though the result, *No Other*, has been presumed to be submerged in a drug haze, eyewitnesses refute that. The songs, working on multiple planes, spar with Clark's subconscious on many subjects, including the vast power of music ("Strength Of Strings") and the cyclical nature of life, death, and creativity ("Silver Raven"), alas alighting on some sobering realisations; as in "The True One" which alludes to his generation's errors: "They say there's a price to pay for going out too far." It all pours forth in the epic introspection of "Some Misunderstanding" – an elegiac appeal for redemption, forgiveness, empathy, transformation. ●



ROZ KELLY/MICHAEL OCHS/GETTY

## 15 JACKSON BROWNE LATE FOR THE SKY

ASYLUM, 1974



Apparently heartbroken from his affair with Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne's watershed third album took the poet-songwriter aesthetic into untrammelled, markedly intimate territory. "How long have I been sleeping?" he beseeches of himself in *Sky's* title track, while in "Fountain Of Sorrow" he crawls deeply inward, revealing issues of identity, illusion, and romantic confusion ("You've known that hollow sound of your own steps in flight," he sings). Still, for Browne – a newly minted father in 1974 – existential matters deeper than mere romance inform *Sky's* most moving numbers: birth, or at least children and the kind of world they will inherit, on the sweeping, apocalyptic "Before The Deluge"; making peace with oneself (the confessional ennui of "The Late Show"); and death – "For A Dancer", a tribute to fallen friend Scott Runyon that celebrates life's ephemeral qualities within the sadness.

## 16 NEIL YOUNG ON THE BEACH

REPRISE, 1974



Recorded after *Tonight's The Night* but released first, this exercise in downbeat self-analysis finds Young wrestling with bittersweet nostalgia, paranoia and depression in the shadow of the Californian sun. While addressing his relationship with the actress Carrie Snodgrass ("Motion Pictures") and alluding to his song-spat with Lynyrd Skynyrd ("Walk On"), he returns again and again to circle the pitfalls of fame. The bleached title track finds him stranded by his predicament ("I need a crowd of people/But I can't face them day to day") while the epic "Ambulance Blues" recalls his "old folks days" in Toronto before venting, "All you critics sit alone/You're no better than me for what you've shown."

## 17 BOB DYLAN BLOOD ON THE TRACKS

COLUMBIA, 1975



Dylan has often refuted this album's status as a grand confessional but even his son Jakob admits that "the songs are my parents talking". The bulk of the tracks form a heartfelt, if opaque, narrative examining his failing marriage to Sara Lowndes from shifting perspectives. "Shelter From The Storm" rewinds to Dylan's chaotic mid-'60s and his saviour through love, while "Tangled Up In



The impressionistic, opaque Bob Dylan in the mid-'70s

Blue" is an impressionistic précis of the ensuing decade. The rest is all fall-out. The relentless "Idiot Wind" captures the full emotional range experienced when love turns sour, while "You're A Big Girl Now" and "If You See Her, Say Hello" linger over the whys, whos and wheres.

## 18 JOAN BAEZ DIAMONDS & RUST

A&M, 1975



"Yes, I loved you dearly." Ten years after the demise of their highly public affair, Baez's best album is haunted by the ghost of her former lover, Bob Dylan. The bittersweet title track – written after Dylan had recited the just-written "Lily, Rosemary & The Jack Of Hearts" down the phone to her – is awash with painful nostalgia, recalling how he "burst on the scene already a legend/The unwashed phenomenon, the original vagabond". "Winds Of The Old Days" focuses on the "the blue-eyed son" whose "eloquent songs from the good old days...set us a marching...the '60s are over so set him free." A cover of "Simple Twist Of Fate" suggests Baez is struggling to heed her own advice.

## 19 JANIS IAN BETWEEN THE LINES

COLUMBIA, 1975



Janis Ian's seventh album was a US chart-topper, selling a million copies on the back of its lead single, "At Seventeen", a timeless and poetic delineation of adolescent angst. However, Ian had already had a big hit single aged 16 (1967's "Society's Child") and been written off as a one-hit wonder, something that plunged her into years of depression. After therapy and premature retirement, *Between The Lines* saw her move from the political to the personal, with 11

ballads articulating her own personal turmoil. There are meditations on manipulative lovers ("Water Colors"), loveless sex ("The Come On"), and diatribes against a fickle music biz ("Bright Lights And Promises"). Even the jazzy guitars, lavish strings and elegant musicianship of LA's finest sessionmen can't sweeten the pill.

## 20 PAUL SIMON STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS



In the throes of divorcing first wife Peggy Harper, Simon made what he later described as "a whole album about my marriage". Perhaps the closest he ever came to an intimate singer-songwriter record, its top line traces the contours of a minor mid-life crisis. The McCartney-esque "I Do It For Your Love", filled with the authentic minutiae of real life, recalls the details of a couple "married on a rainy day" who drift apart. The unsparing truth of "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" lies in the verses rather than jaunty chorus, while the title track is a portrait of existential ennui.

## 21 AL GREEN THE BELLE ALBUM



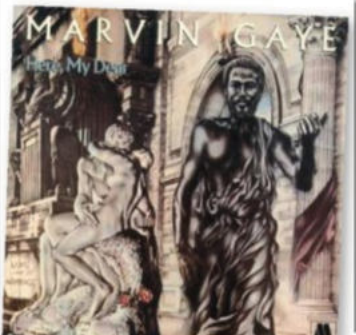
The turning point in Green's career was arguably three years before this album appeared, when ex-girlfriend Mary Woodson White threw boiling grits over the singer while he sat in the bath, then killed herself with a handgun. He subsequently became less interested in the seductive, sexually charged soul that had made him a star, more enthusiastically pursued gospel music and was ordained as a minister – but *The Belle Album*, his first without the guiding

hand of long-time producer Willie Mitchell, is the sound of a man torn between the saintly and the secular; "It's you that I want, but it's Him that I need", he sings on the title track. Ultimately, religious faith triumphs over sex, Green more determinedly following a righteous path on "Loving You" and "Chariots Of Fire".

## 22 MARVIN GAYE HERE, MY DEAR

TAMLA MOTOWN, 1978

Surely the only album with liner notes written by an attorney, *Here, My Dear* is a divorce set to music, with all the bitterness, recrimination and sorrow of a 16-year marriage ending. The record is part of the separation, its royalties going, by court order, to Gaye's ex, Anna Gordy, as part of a \$600,000 settlement (Gaye's fortunes had been squandered, not least on a gargantuan coke habit). Gaye had intended to make a "bad, lazy" album but artistry prevailed, as he obsessively "sang his heart out" on double- and triple-tracked vocals. Meandering and unstructured, *Here, My Dear* is nonetheless affecting, its allegations of adultery and greed balanced by sadness in songs like "A Little Girl" and "When Did You Stop Loving Me", while "You Can Leave But It's Going To Cost You" is a sentiment that echoes through many a divorce.



## 23 BRYAN FERRY THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE

EG RECORDS, 1978

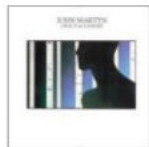


Taking its title from the Marcel Duchamp painting *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*,

with its subtext of masculine-feminine relationships, Ferry's fifth solo release was his first since model Jerry Hall left him to take up with Mick Jagger. He picks over the bones of the break-up on the baroque, mournful "When She Walks In The Room" ("All your life you were taught to believe/Then a moment of truth, you're deceived") and the country rock of "Can't Let Go", and while no stranger to cover versions, the songs of others Ferry opts for here are arguably more pointedly autobiographical, dissections of the end of a romance (The Velvet Underground's "What Goes On", Otis Redding's "That's How Strong My Love Is").

## 24 JOHN MARTYN GRACE & DANGER

ISLAND, 1980



Following the decision of his wife Beverley to finally extricate herself from their ten-year marriage, John

Martyn recorded this elegantly anguished confessional. The slick synths, fretless bass bumbles and Phil Collins' jazzy drums cannot temper the emotional clout of the songs here. Following the self-explanatory "Baby Please Come Home", the pleading "Hurt In Your Heart" and "Save Some (For Me)", the deceptively soulful "Our Love" makes for an unambiguous kiss-off. Island boss Chris Blackwell delayed its release for a year because he felt it was too depressing. Martyn later called it "direct communication of emotion. I don't give a damn how sad it makes you feel."

## 25 PETE TOWNSHEND EMPTY GLASS

ATCO, 1978

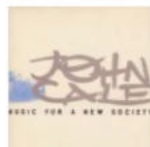


The few years leading up to *Empty Glass* had not been kind to Pete Townshend. Keith Moon had

died in 1978, while his marriage was failing and he was struggling with alcoholism and drug abuse as well as his commitments with The Who. The result was an album filled with emotional extremes: anger, tenderness and despair chief among them. "I Am An Animal" found Townshend at his most openly confessional, intoning over acoustic guitar lines: "I'm looking back and I can't see the past/Anymore, so hazy/I'm on a track and I'm travelling so fast/Oh for sure I'm crazy". The title track, meanwhile, found Townshend examining his own place in a world post-punk: "My life's a mess, I wait for you to pass/I stand here at the bar, I hold an empty glass".

## 26 JOHN CALE MUSIC FOR A NEW SOCIETY

ZE, 1982



Described by Cale as his most "tormented" work to date, the stark acoustics of *Music For A New Society*

are a direct contrast to the rage of its immediate predecessors. The songs were largely improvised in the studio, a catalogue of laments focussing on damaged souls and misplaced faith ("It was like method acting, madness, there's not much in the way of comedy," he told *Melody Maker*), drawing upon emotional betrayal and disillusionment ("Thoughtless Kind", "Damn Life"). Cale was simultaneously working on a stage production with playwright Sam Shepard, who provides the lyrics for "If You Were Still Around" ("I'd chew the back of your head/'Til you opened your mouth to this life"),

while "Taking Your Life In Your Hands" deals with the cheery subject of a mother on a killing spree.

## 27 LOU REED THE BLUE MASK

RCA, 1982



"I really got a lucky life/My writing, my motorcycle and my wife," Reed sings on the opening "My House", raising the

curtain on an album that, for the most part, celebrates marriage and domestic bliss, encased in a sleeve designed by his then wife, Sylvia. He continues the theme on the likes of "Average Guy", "Heavenly Arms" and "Women", the latter finding Lou even more uncharacteristically upbeat and joyful ("A woman's love can lift you up, and women can inspire/I feel like buying flowers and hiring a celestial choir"). Musically, the songs are presented in a stripped-down traditional rock'n'roll format of two guitars, bass and drums, with Robert Quine's eloquent fretwork a perfect foil to Reed's deadpan vocal and matter-of-fact words.

## 28 RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON SHOOT OUT THE LIGHTS

HANNIBAL, 1982



Nothing quite conjures up soul searching and bitterness like divorce, and the Thompsons' final

album addresses their break-up with remarkable candour. But it isn't just the first-hand descriptions of their collapsing marriage that bring such intensity to songs like "Don't Renege On Our Love", "Walking On A Wire", "Did She Jump" and "Shoot Out The Lights" – it's the fireworks with which Richard and Linda deliver them amid their struggle to keep it together long enough to finish the record: while it was Richard pouring his heart into the songs as the writer, it was Linda who had to sing them.

## 29 DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS DON'T STAND ME DOWN

MERCURY RECORDS, 1985



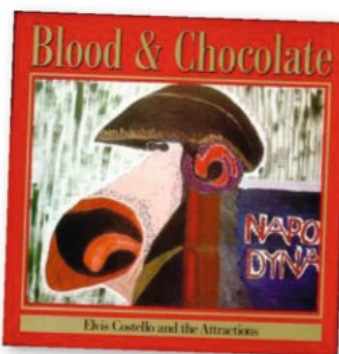
Once described by *Uncut* as the band's "neglected masterpiece", *Don't Stand Me Down* was

Kevin Rowland at his most introspective, taking stock of his fame post-"Come On Eileen" and *Too-Rye-Ay*, and almost wilfully dismantling the constructs of stardom. It's evident on the two tracks that bookended Side One of the original vinyl release; the anger and petulance of "The Occasional Flicker" and the reflection of times past "Knowledge Of Beauty". In between those, the song for which

the record is best remembered, "This Is What She's Like", sneers at middle-class hipsters and bandwagon jumpers, but incorporates a paean to the group's violinist Helen O'Hara, with whom Rowland had just ended a long relationship, and who was also the inspiration for "Listen To This".

## 30 ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRactions BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

DEMON, 1986



It's tough to improve on Costello's own assessment of *Blood & Chocolate*: "a pissed-off, 32-year-old divorcee's version of *This Year's Model*." However, where the angst of *This Year's Model* was rooted in the fact that girls wouldn't talk to him, *Blood & Chocolate* articulated the catastrophe that could ensue when they did. *Blood & Chocolate* appears Costello's settling of accounts regarding his first marriage, to Mary Burgoyne (though the recently installed second Mrs Costello, former Pogues bassist Caitlin O'Riordan, provided backing vocals on a couple of tracks). "Home Is Anywhere You Hang Your Head" and "I Hope You're Happy Now" are mournful and furious, while the relentless "I Want You" remains, against formidable competition, Costello's most lacerating and hostile recorded performance.

## 31 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TUNNEL OF LOVE

COLUMBIA, 1987



If the oddly formal sleeve credit – "Thanks Julie" – told some of the story, the songs on

Springsteen's most nakedly personal record filled in the blanks. With his brief marriage to model Julianne Phillips floundering, he turned inward to tackle, in the words of the title track, "You, me, and all that stuff we're so scared of." On "Brilliant Disguise", he sings "I wanna know if it's you I don't trust, because I damn sure don't trust myself." On "Walk Like A Man" marriage is a "mystery ride"; on "Two Faces" "our life is just a lie." And on "One Step Up", "Another fight and I slam the door on/Another battle in our dirty little war." Within a year, he and Phillips had filed for divorce. ●



John Martyn practises some "direct communication of emotion"

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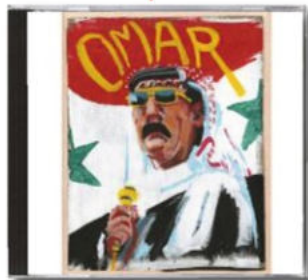
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32 MARK EITZEL  
SONGS OF LOVE

DIABLO, 1991



Stripped of the nuances offered by American Music Club, this solo album, recorded live at London's

Borderline on January 17, 1991, adds up to almost unbearably intimate exploration of Eitzel's songbook, each page torn from his combustible life in San Francisco. Featuring just Eitzel and his acoustic guitar, the songs touch on the death of friends and family ("Blue And Grey Shirt"), AIDS ("Western Sky"), alcohol and drug abuse ("Outside This Bar"), and, on "Kathleen", his relationship with a long-term muse. Eitzel's intense, self-deprecating presence – "I'm always fucking this part up!" he squirms during a guitar break – only adds to the drama.

33 NICK LOWE  
THE IMPOSSIBLE BIRD

DEMON, 1994

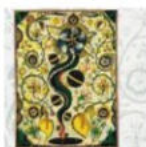


The elegant country, soul and Americana Lowe has mined on his last half-dozen

albums began with this release, partly inspired by the end of his five-year relationship with broadcaster Tracey MacLeod, whom he first met when she interviewed him for BBC2's *The Late Show*. After the break-up, MacLeod started dating another veteran singer-songwriter, Loudon Wainwright. Lowe chronicles the emotional fallout directly in a triptych of tearjerkers comprising "Lover Don't Go" ("There's a hollow in the bed where your body used to be"), "Withered On The Vine" and "14 Days", although there's a more upbeat tone to "Drive-Thru Man", in which he cajoles himself to get a grip on his emotions ("Take a look outside/ It wouldn't kill you to lift that blind").

34 STEVE EARLE  
I FEEL ALRIGHT

E-SQUARED/WARNER BROS., 1996



Earle spent four months in jail for narcotics offences in 1994, which prompted much soul-searching, not

least about his 26-year dependence on heroin. Finally clean, he dusted down his old songbook with the acoustic set *Train A Comin'* before tackling his addictions more directly on *I Feel Alright*. The title track opens the album on a note of defiant optimism ("Be careful what you wish for, friend/ Because I've been to hell and now I'm back again") and while Earle's writing is rarely transparently autobiographical he addresses his situation on "South Nashville Blues" and "CCKMP (Cocaine Can't Kill My Pain)". On "The Unrepentant", our "hellbound" hero addresses the devil directly, with a loaded .44.

35 NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS  
THE BOATMAN'S CALL

MUTE, 1997



Cave has acknowledged that *The Boatman's Call* is "the setting down of the facts of a couple of

relationships... what you hear is what happened." The relationships in question were with his first wife, Viviane Carneiro, and subsequently with Polly Harvey, who collaborated on his previous album, *Murder Ballads*. Carneiro is bid a gruff goodbye in "Where Do We Go Now But Nowhere?", Harvey welcomed with the nakedly descriptive "Green Eyes", "Black Hair" and "West Country Girl". Cave has since appeared somewhat sheepish about *The Boatman's Call*, as we often do when recalling our own behaviour when the answer to the question "Are You The One That I've Been Waiting For?" turns out to be "No".

36 ELLIOTT SMITH  
EITHER/OR

KILL ROCK STARS, 1997



Smith often drew on personal experiences for his songs – in particular, drug

abuse, failed relationships and his own psychological state – but arguably his third record, *Either/Or*, is the most confessional of his albums. "Between The Bars" addresses the debilitating nature of addiction – "the potential you'll be that you'll never see" – while "Alameda" bristles with alienation and defensiveness: "Nobody broke your heart/ You broke your own/ Cause you can't/ Finish what you start". Meanwhile, Smith mines his discomfort with his own growing popularity on "Pictures Of Me": "Saw you and me on the coin-op TV/ Frozen in fear every time we appear".

37 PAUL WESTERBERG  
SUICAINÉ GRATIFICATION

CAPITOL, 1999



Kicking off with an ode to mid-life depression ("Get up from a dream and look for rain/ Take an

amphetamine and a crushed rat's brain"), the third solo album by The Replacements' guiding light is an extended essay in anxiety, commercial failure and the after-effects of alcoholism. Partly recorded in his Minneapolis basement, the music and mood is stripped bare. "Self-Defence" contemplates suicide as an escape route, "Sunrise Always Listens" recalls a long dark night of the soul, while "Best Thing That Never Happened" sums up a lifetime of disappointments.



Expecting rain: Beck

38 RYAN ADAMS  
HEARTBREAKER

BLOODSHOT, 2000



The demise of previous band Whiskeytown coincided with Adams' break-up

with girlfriend Amy Lombardi. As a result, he poured his hurt into a debut solo album littered with references to loneliness, despair and lost youth. Recorded in Nashville with Gillian Welch, David Rawlings and producer-instrumentalist Ethan Johns, *Heartbreaker* is a rich set of baleful country-folk songs made all the more compelling by Adams' windblown delivery. Yearning Emmylou Harris duet "Oh My Sweet Carolina" was a highlight, though it doesn't get much more affecting than "Come Pick Me Up", a soulful paean to lost love, or "Call Me On Your Way Back Home", on which he croons: "I just want to die without you".

39 RODNEY CROWELL  
THE HOUSTON KID

SUGAR HILL RECORDS, 2001



Arguably better known to wider audiences through his association with others

(long-serving sideman to Emmylou Harris, husband of Johnny Cash's daughter, Rosanne), *The Houston Kid* found Crowell telling his own story in a song cycle about growing up in the rough, low-rent east side of the city. "Telephone Road" is vividly descriptive in its portrait of his formative years, difficult circumstances continuing to make their presence felt in the saloon bar

twang of "Rock Of My Soul". The struggles of finding oneself inform "Why Don't We Talk About It?", while the bold rewrite of a Cash classic, "I Walk The Line (Revisited)" addresses the hoops he jumped through to impress his father-in-law.

40 BECK  
SEA CHANGE

Geffen, 2002



Three weeks before his 30th birthday, Beck found out that his girlfriend of nine years, Leigh Limon, had been

cheating on him with a member of the LA band Whiskey Biscuit. Beck responded with a dozen pieces of wrecked resignation. "These days I barely get by," he groans over a sympathetic slide guitar on "The Golden Age", "I don't even try." Beck's father, David Campbell, provides elegiac string arrangements throughout, but lyrics like "It's only tears I'm crying/ Only you I'm losing/ Guess I'm doing fine", scarcely need much help to tug at the heartstrings. Even Beck's characteristic studio japey – like the backwards effects on "Lost Cause" – seem reflective of his inner turmoil.

Frozen in fear: Elliott Smith

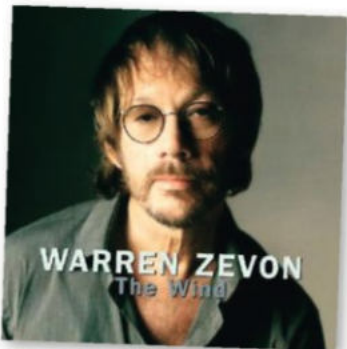


**41 LUCINDA WILLIAMS**  
**WORLD WITHOUT TEARS**

LOST HIGHWAY, 2003



"Truth is my saviour," Williams sings on opener "Fruits Of My Labour", a sentiment that could also double as her manifesto. Always a personal writer, her honesty is at its most immediate on her seventh album, which picks over the bones of her relationship with Ryan Adams' former bassist Billy Mercer. The live-in-the-studio rawness of the music is more than matched by the words. Tender portraits of a damaged lover ("Sweet Side", "Righteously") are weighed against the damage he has caused. If "Over Time", "Minneapolis" and "Ventura" linger agonisingly over the cooling ashes, on "Those Three Days" the pain and fury is still evident.



**42 WARREN ZEVON**  
**THE WIND**

RYKODISC, 2003

Warren Zevon's previous couple of albums had been fate-tempting tauntings of the Reaper: *Life 'll Kill Ya*, *My Ride's Here*. Shortly after the release of the latter, Zevon was diagnosed with inoperable mesothelioma; he recorded *The Wind* knowing he was composing his final testament. He didn't do so alone: his backing band included Bruce Springsteen, Billy Bob Thornton, Don

Henley, Dwight Yoakam, Tom Petty, Emmylou Harris and his songwriter son, Jordan. *The Wind* lurches across the condemned man's palette from rueful contemplation of what has been ("Dirty Life & Times", a lovely cover of "Knockin' On Heaven's Door") to defiant determination to enjoy what remains ("Rest Of The Night", "Keep Me In Your Heart") to absolute, desolate vulnerability ("Please Stay"). Zevon died two weeks after its release, aged 56.

**43 AMY WINEHOUSE**  
**BACK TO BLACK**

ISLAND, 2006



Not even the continuing efforts of countless X Factor wannabes can diminish the potency of Winehouse's soulful outpourings on one of the 21st Century's most honest and vulnerable albums. "Rehab" may fit the media shorthand of Amy's fast life and sad demise, but her love songs are less off-the-cuff and rooted in a deeper hurt. Her stormy on-off relationship with future husband Blake Fielder-Civil and experiences dating others during time away from him informs the emotional safety warning of "You Know I'm No Good", while "Wake Up Alone" and "Love Is A Losing Game" find her nakedly pining for the man that her heart never let go of. The mellow torch-like balladry recalls sirens from an earlier age (Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington), but few singers have laid bare their diary so powerfully.

**44 SUN KIL MOON**  
**APRIL CALDO VERDE**



A suite of long, slow, sadly beautiful songs written "in honour" of Kozelek's ex-girlfriend and longterm muse Katy, who died of cancer in 2003 aged 35. Time and distance lend the songs a calm, clear perspective on the relationship and its many shared intimacies. Throughout Kozelek summons up Katy's ghostly presence: on "Lost Verses" he "sees you well and clear/Deep in the moonlight dear", while on the tight-wound, intense "Tonight The Sky" he sings, "I loved you like no other/Your eyes I can't erase." "Every corner I walk around in San Francisco is filled with memories about her," he told *Uncut* in 2010. "She was a wealth of inspiration."

**45 JOHN GRANT**  
**QUEEN OF DENMARK**



A unique subversion of '70s AOR, the solo debut by the ex-Czars singer smuggled personal lyrics beneath a cloak of

lush balladry. As darkly funny as they are self-critical, the songs laser through Grant's doomed love affair with ex-boyfriend Charlie ("It's Easier"), his memories of smalltown bigotry ("Marz", "JC Hates Faggots"), and, on the title track, addiction in all its stripes: "When that shit got really really out of hand/I had it all the way up to my hairline." "My life is in those songs," said Grant. "I had to throw these things out there."

**46 JOSH T PEARSON**  
**LAST OF THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN**



The Texan son of a preacher was living illegally in Berlin, his career stalled, when the failure of his marriage prompted an emotional and artistic spasm. Before fleeing to Paris, he spent two days in the studio, documenting his torment. The songs are as tough to listen to as they are emotionally honest; the hurt is only partly soothed by the grandiosity of Pearson's language. He's vicious to his ex on "Sweetheart, I Ain't Your Christ", though he's just as hard on himself. The process was cathartic: "It really burned something out of me," Pearson reflected.

**47 SHARON VAN ETTEN**  
**TRAMP**



As a student in Tennessee, New Jersey songwriter Van Etten was trapped in a psychologically abusive relationship, an experience that has permeated her three albums to date. But she only ever reveals awful details to fuel her self-growth, and on *Tramp*, steered by raucous production, Van Etten sounds like she's finally standing upright. "I want my scars to help and heal," she sings on "All I Can". "I'm biting my lip as confidence is speaking to me/I loosen my grip from my palm, put it on your knee," on "Give Out". It's a small gesture, but a meaningful one.

**48 JOHN MURRY**  
**THE GRACELESS AGE**



Murry told *Uncut* earlier this year that his debut solo album was "certainly autobiographical – perhaps insanely so given our modern aversion to reality and truth." Central to the story arc is his struggle with heroin, documented on the 10-minute centrepiece, "Little Coloured Balloons", which details Murry's near fatal overdose in San Francisco's Mission District. On this song, and several others ("Things We Lost In The Fire", "Southern Sky"), *The Graceless Age* is also an appeal



The "insanely autobiographical" John Murry

for forgiveness directed at Murry's estranged wife Lori and their young daughter: "You say this ain't what I am," he sings to them both, "but this is what I do."

**49 ALELA DIANE**  
**ABOUT FAREWELL**

RUSTED BLUE, 2013



The fifth album by the Portland-based singer was written in a fortnight, following the realisation that her marriage to guitarist Tom Bevitore was over. Diane refuses to take refuge in metaphor – the language is as clear and stark as the accompaniment, tracing the arc of a relationship from its unromantic beginnings in "Hazel Street", taking in the snowbound revelation of "Colorado Blue", the singer with "one foot out the door" on the title track, and the two road musicians marking time in "Before The Leaving". By the end "Rose & Thorn", with its cry of "Oh! The mess I've made...", it feels not unlike leafing through a discarded diary.

**50 LAURA MARLING**  
**ONCE I WAS AN EAGLE**



An artist whose sensibilities cleave remarkably close to Joni Mitchell's, Marling recorded her fourth album on the cusp of leaving for LA, with a failed love affair trailing in her wake. The result is a dramatic reckoning with past and future, and a character study of Marling and her ex: the "I", the "eagle", in the breathless opening suite feels clearly autobiographical, while the "you", the "dove", the "freewheeling troubadour", she is singing to is similarly hewed from real life. Not quite as straightforward as a break-up record, *Once I Was An Eagle* begins as a full-blooded reliving of a broken down relationship before coolly addressing the longterm ramifications. ♪

**Written by** Rob Hughes, John Lewis, Damien Love, Alastair McKay, Andrew Mueller, Bud Scoppa, Laura Snapes, Neil Spencer, Terry Staunton, Graeme Thomson, Luke Torn



Nakedly pining: Amy Winehouse



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# THE MAKING OF...

# My Sweet Lord



## GEORGE HARRISON

As The Beatles go their own ways, their guitarist crafts a devotional wall-of-sound hymn that would bring him huge solo success and a load of legal trouble – “George was making a transition...”

**T**HE GENESIS OF George Harrison’s pop-gospel mantra can be traced back to the final days of The Beatles. In December 1969, with the Fabs unofficially defunct, Harrison and his Rosewood Telecaster went on tour with Delaney & Bonnie, whose sprawling band of Friends at the time included Eric Clapton, ex-Traffic guitarist Dave Mason, future Stones saxophonist Bobby Keys and keyboard player Bobby Whitlock. By the time he returned home shortly before Christmas, Harrison had the bones of his most famous (and infamous) solo hit in place.

“My Sweet Lord” was recorded during the sessions for Harrison’s 1970 triple album, *All Things Must Pass*. The song fused the gospel joy of the Edwin Hawkins Singers’ “Oh Happy Day”, the soulful bounce of The Chiffons’ “He’s So Fine”, and a pan-doctrinal spirituality with co-producer Phil Spector’s genius for dynamics and Harrison’s raw emotion, multiple backing vocals and slide guitar. Even for those who balked at its nakedly spiritual message, the power and uplift of its sound proved irresistible.

Harrison’s greatest solo triumph, however, was quickly marred by a plagiarism suit which he described as “the worst experience of my life – taking my guitar to court, trying to explain how I write a song.” But it is the song, not the circumstances, which has endured. “I know the motive behind writing ‘My Sweet Lord’ in the first place, and its effect far exceeded the legal hassle,” Harrison said. “It saved many a heroin addict’s life.” **GRAEME THOMSON**

**BOBBY WHITLOCK:** The Delaney & Bonnie tour was just what George needed after all that hoopla with The Beatles: to get involved with

a bunch of redneck rock’n’rollers and have a good time.

**BOBBY KEYS:** We stopped by his house in Esher and picked up him and [ex-Beatles roadie] Mal Evans. We were travelling in a bus together and it didn’t take long before bonds were made and friendships established. It was all a rollicking good time, typical young rock’n’roll. There was an excessive amount of drinking, particularly. I can remember being onstage and thinking, “We’ve got a Beatle over there, Clapton over there – quite a lineup!” But George was just one of the guys. He wasn’t eat up with any ‘I’m a Beatle and you’re not’ attitude.

**WHITLOCK:** Having him with us was good for the soul, man. Him coming along was the best thing that happened to that group, it was the only time that egos were quelled and there was peace. He took his time to talk to everybody, laughing and having a good time, playing and singing.

**KEYS:** I first heard the beginnings of “My Sweet Lord” on that bus. We were somewhere in Scandinavia. Everyone had their guitars out, pickin’ and grinnin’, and I can remember the germ of the idea for that song came about then.

**DAVE MASON:** He loved the Edwin Hawkins Singers’ song, “Oh Happy Day”, which was out

### KEY PLAYERS



**Bobby Whitlock**  
Organ, vocals



**Peter Frampton**  
Guitar



**Dave Mason**  
Guitar



**Bobby Keys**  
Saxophone



**Ken Scott**  
Engineer



**Alvin Taylor**  
Drummer

around that time. That was really the template for it. It was a gospel song about Krishna.

**WHITLOCK:** When he was writing “My Sweet Lord”, with all those [Sanskrit] names at the end, I said, “What the hell are all these guys?” He said, “They’re all Gods.” And I thought, “Way too many Gods, George!” He was zeroing in on the inner kingdom. He seemed to be pretty much focused on an inner world, a spiritual journey. He gave me *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran and a Hare Krishna book. He had a load of Krishnas living at

his house. He was an easy touch. They were just a bunch of moochers as far as I was concerned.

**KEYS:** He taught me how to chant. He never forced anything, or said, “Quit your evil, naughty ways and find the true light!” At this time he was pretty exclusively focused on his spirituality and his music. He didn’t really need many distractions. I mean, he occasionally indulged...

**WHITLOCK:** In the song he was talking about the conflict between rock’n’roll and God. He



George Harrison with Apple Records executive Pete Bennett and producer Phil Spector during the recording of *All Things Must Pass*, October 30, 1970

bridged that gap by the way he was able to express himself in this song; in fact he did that on all of *All Things Must Pass*. The whole album is about God and rock'n'roll. It's one big cryptic message, but the two tides really hit together on this particular record.

**JOHN BARHAM: [HARMONIUM, ARRANGER]** The studio was block-booked and set up for a lot of players to be able to record simultaneously.

**WHITLOCK:** Everyone was in the room at the same time and it was all happening live. George was in the centre facing us. It was pretty much first or second takes. He had the finest musicians, the crème de la crème at his disposal, and he wasn't telling anybody what to play. He just let it roll. On "My Sweet Lord" there were about six acoustic guitars all playing live in unison. He spent quite a lot of time getting those right.

**BARHAM:** I assumed the decision to record multiple guitars was the decision of Phil Spector, with George's approval. Phil was experimenting with echoes from the beginning of the project and one could hear elements of what he was developing in the playbacks in the control room.

**MASON:** Phil Spector played at being Phil Spector a little too much for me.

**WHITLOCK:** Spector was one funny dude, to be sure. He was pissed off 'cos they wouldn't let him bring his gun into the studio – he was a paranoid little dude. He hardly ever came into

the big room. He stayed in the control room. Phil didn't have a grip on any spiritual aspect of the world or the universe. I could not see how George landed on him to co-produce it. I think it had to do with the old rock'n'roll, the "Da Doo Ron Ron" stuff. George grew up with all that.

**PETER FRAMPTON:** Phil was a little out of his element. The story of Phil recording in New York was that the artist never came in the control

"It made Harrison as a solo artist... It was the biggest song of that era"

KEN SCOTT

room, and he was so insecure and power-ridden that he had bodyguards inside and outside the control room. This situation at Abbey Road was vastly different, because George wanted everyone to come in to hear. No-one was left out, it was like we were a band. No-one was treated as a session musician, that wasn't it

at all. He was sort of egoless, which was strange because he was a Beatle.

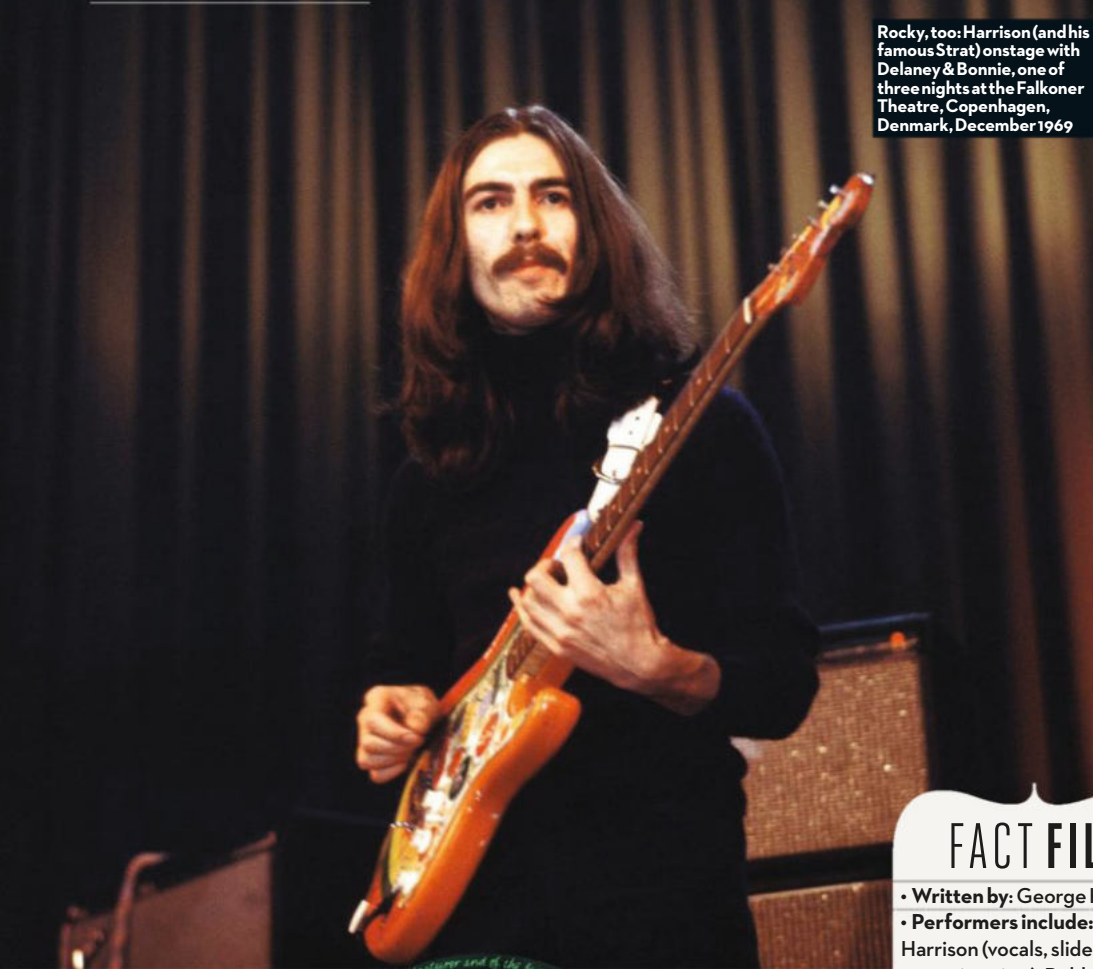
**BARHAM:** The combination of two music giants and the large ensemble of musicians that were being recorded simultaneously added up to something very unusual. It made me feel that something special was being created. I could see that other musicians were also intrigued and enthusiastic about what was developing.

**WHITLOCK:** I knew what was going down, how important it was. George was making a transition. Can you imagine being him? Just out of The Beatles, trying to make a record with all those musicians, with Phil Spector, and really not knowing how this thing is going to play out – just knowing you have the best on the planet at your disposal in that room.

**BARHAM:** After the recording of the backing track session I went to his house, Friar Park, and went over the song in detail and took notes from George's suggestions for the string arrangements.

**KEN SCOTT:** He had done the basic track at Abbey Road, then we were over at Trident. He needed to move to 16-track and technically Trident was ahead of Abbey Road. We started doing the overdubs for the backing vocals, strings and the slide guitar.

**MASON:** George was just getting into the slide guitar. On the Delaney & Bonnie tour we did a show at the Fairfield Halls in Croydon.

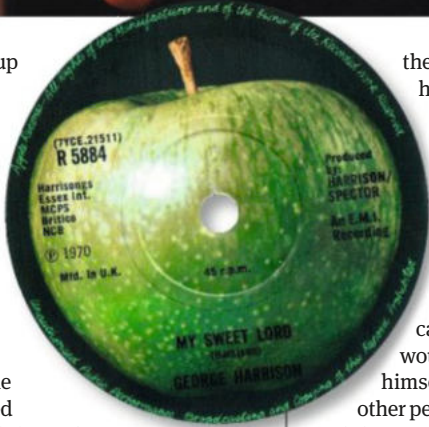


**Rocky, too:** Harrison (and his famous Strat) onstage with Delaney & Bonnie, one of three nights at the Falkoner Theatre, Copenhagen, Denmark, December 1969

● We were getting up onstage to jam and there was a song they did called “Comin’ Home”. On the record I’m playing that slide guitar part in the background. So before he went on he said, “What can I play?” I showed him this little simple slide part, we fucked around with it a little bit and he got that down and came up onstage and played it on the song. Later, he credited me for him starting to play all that slide guitar stuff, which he only started doing on “My Sweet Lord”.

**SCOTT:** The overdubbing was just amazing. All of the backing vocals being George, that took a tremendous amount of time. We would record four tracks of his vocals, then I would bounce them across to another track while at the same time adding a live vocal. We just kept doing that all the time until we got as big a sound as we wanted.

**WHITLOCK:** It’s just me and him singing on “My Sweet Lord”. He’s doing all



the multi-track harmonies but I’m doing the second part harmony. He’s doing the rest of the layering.

**SCOTT:** And lots of guitars!  
**FRAMPTON:** He called me up. He would always ring up himself, he never had other people call. He said, “Phil wants more acoustics.”

More?! There was already him, me, all of Badfinger and God knows who else on acoustics! But you understand, Phil has to have 94 of everything – twice. But we admired his production, we were all in awe of the legendary sound he got.

**SCOTT:** By that time Spector wasn’t there at all, he was back in the States, but he was sending notes. He came back for a short time during the mixes, but even then he wasn’t around much. Once George and I had got it to where we thought it would be, then Phil would come and pass comment – some things we’d agree with and change, some we wouldn’t.

**WHITLOCK:** I never once saw George

## FACT FILE

- **Written by:** George Harrison
- **Performers include:** George Harrison (vocals, slide guitar, acoustic guitar), Bobby Whitlock (organ, vocals), John Barham (harmonium, arranger), Peter Frampton, Pete Ham, Tom Evans, Eric Clapton (acoustic guitars), Jim Gordon (drums), Klaus Voormann (bass), Billy Preston (piano)
- **Producer:** Phil Spector and George Harrison
- **Recorded at:** Abbey Road and Trident, London
- **Released:** January 15, 1971 (UK); November 23, 1970 (US)
- **UK chart:** No 1
- **US chart:** No 1

concerned about anything. He had a smile on his face when he arrived, during it and after.

**SCOTT:** There was a lot in the press about The Beatles, but I didn’t hear about it or see the rancour that was going on. He didn’t vent, but he had just come out of the biggest band in the world, so it was a big deal. The tapes were so damn good, there was a very clear sense that this was going to make him as a solo artist. And it did. It was the biggest song of that era, arguably the biggest song any of the solo Beatles ever did.

**BARHAM:** At the time I wasn’t aware of anyone raising any concern about “My Sweet Lord”. It was only years later that keyboardist Tony Ashton told me that when he was working on a Plastic Ono session that George had also attended, he had brought up the subject of the similarity of “My Sweet Lord” to “He’s So Fine”.

**KEYS:** He never really listened to that Chiffons song he was later sued for. That wasn’t even mentioned at the time. Nobody said, “Hell, that sounds like ‘He’s So Fine.’”

**WHITLOCK:** I have to say that when we recorded it, I was standing in the control room afterwards and I started singing along: “He’s so fine, wish he was mine...” I said, “That’s ‘He’s So Fine’ and you [Phil Spector], you produced that!” It just fell out of me because it was the truth, the absolute truth. When I said that it was like, “Woah!” And George said, “Well, we’ll work that out.” He didn’t actually mean to copy that song, it just happened.

**BARHAM:** I worked with George again on *Living In The Material World* (1973) and it was obvious to anyone who knew him that he was seriously stressed at that time. A lot of that was to do with the stress of litigation in connection with “My Sweet Lord”.

**ALVIN TAYLOR:** Back in 1976, I worked with George on “This Song”, which he wrote after the court case. He sat me down and explained the whole song. He was perturbed at the legal system and just how ignorant and stupid judges and people in general could be. He couldn’t quite believe that he had been sued for singing about his sweet Lord. But it’s the song people still sing, not the lawsuit! ●

**George Harrison: Behind The Locked Door** by Graeme Thomson is out now, published by Omnibus Press

## TIMELINE

**December 1969:** Harrison begins writing “My Sweet Lord” in Copenhagen.  
**May-October 1970:** The triple *All Things Must Pass* is recorded.

**Late 1970/early 1971:** “My Sweet Lord” tops singles charts around the world.  
**February 10, 1971:** Harrison is sued by publishers Bright

Tunes for plagiarism of The Chiffons’ 1962 hit “He’s So Fine”.  
**September 1976:** Harrison is ordered to pay \$1.6m damages. The finer points of the

settlement aren’t concluded until 1998, just three years before Harrison’s death.  
**1976:** Releases “This Song”, a satire on the “My Sweet Lord” case.

**2000:** Re-records “My Sweet Lord” for reissue of *All Things Must Pass*.  
**January 2002:** “My Sweet Lord” returns to No 1 in the UK.

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return of **KING CRIMSON**.

“I have a terrible  
reputation for being  
heartless and venal...”

---

Story: David Cavanagh

Photograph: Barrie Wentzell

**H**E MAY HAVE the gentle manner of a clock repairer or an antiquarian bookseller, but few people underestimate Robert Fripp and live to tell the tale. “He was the superior intellect with a silver tongue, in possession of some arcane or possibly occult knowledge to which the rest of us weren’t privileged,” writes ex-King Crimson drummer Bill Bruford in his autobiography. Last month, after reforming Crimson for live dates in 2014, Fripp sent a round-robin email to his bandmates. “Dear brother Crims,” it began, “we have one year to prepare for action of the savage variety.”

Like George Smiley interrogating a Soviet attaché in a le Carré novel, Fripp is able to apply his meticulous intelligence to the harnessing of terrifying power. He’s just overseen the production of a Crimson boxset, *The Road To Red*, an eye-popping document of a 1974 tour. Fripp hears “a driving remorselessness” in the music; others may sense a palpable diabolism. They were turbulent times. Fripp disbanded Crimson soon afterwards, vanishing into a spiritual retreat in Gloucestershire to study the esoteric teachings of Gurdjieff. Fripp’s next stop, in 1977, was New York, and then Berlin to play on Bowie’s “*Heroes*”.

Today, he lives in Worcestershire with his wife Toyah Willcox, but runs his record label (DGM) from a cottage in a sleepy village in Wiltshire. His modest Vauxhall is parked



Country gentleman: Robert Fripp at his Worcestershire home

outside (“papyrus-coloured, apparently... I prefer ‘light green’”). In the kitchen, visitors are served coffee in *Larks’ Tongues In Aspic* mugs. On the day we meet (Sept 19), Fripp, who’s pursuing a long-running legal case against Universal Music, is officially in a state of retirement. However, as we’ll see, he has an exclusive for *Uncut*. Fripp’s clouds are lifting. Action of the savage variety can start to occur.

**Charlie Parker once said, “Master your instrument, master the music, then forget all that shit and just play.” Do you agree?** Yes. It’s called freeforming. My sister is a superb barber. She still cuts my hair on occasion. I was asking her how she did it, and she said she freeforms. In other words, all the skills involved are so within her that she can look at my hair and just go. That’s exactly what Parker was saying. Parker also hated the term ‘bebop’. Parker was as enamoured of ‘bebop’ as I am of ‘prog’. Whenever I’m asked to do anything that involves the word ‘prog’, I say no. I am not available.

**Did you always want to play music for a living?** No. I was an estate agent. I’d been brought up to take over my father’s estate agency and auctioneering firm. After three years in the office in Wimborne, it was fairly obvious that nobody making the biggest purchase of their life was going to take any notice of a 17-year-old negotiator like me. I was going to the College Of Estate Management in South Kensington to take a degree, so that I’d emerge at 24 with a qualification of the highest order and people would take me seriously. But then music came along and I couldn’t be a dutiful son anymore.

**The Road To Red comes from a 1974 American tour with Robin Trower and Ten Years After. What a context: King Crimson sandwiched between two blues bands.** We did other gigs with Black Sabbath and ZZ Top. We shared bills with Slade. Noddy’s a nice man and he knows my wife, so we meet socially from time to time. He reminds me of an announcement I made onstage. Someone in the audience shouted “Boogie!” And I went to the microphone and said, “We shall *not* boogie.”

ANDY STAMMERS

HOW TO BUY...

# Turn On, Tune In, Fripp Out...

Your guide to the albums Fripp discusses



**THE ROAD TO RED**  
(2013)  
A 24-disc boxset released this month, *The*

*Road To Red* is an aural document (some in bootleg quality; some professionally recorded) of King Crimson’s 1974 American tour. Fripp’s improvised battles with the super-loud John Wetton-Bill Bruford rhythm section are exhilarating to hear, but ultimately wore him down.



**RED**  
(1974)  
Made in London after the US tour, *Red* was

Crimson’s last studio album for seven years. Dark and powerful, it saw the return of founder member Ian McDonald (saxophone) on the epic “Starless”. Fripp ended the band a week before *Red*’s release.



**(NO PUSSYFOOTING)**  
(1973)  
A collaboration with Brian Eno. Fripp plays guitar; Eno creates

ambient loops and layers with two Revox tape recorders. In the 11 months between recording Side One (“The Heavenly Music Corporation”) and Side Two (“Swastika Girls”), Eno was sacked by Roxy Music.



**PETER GABRIEL**  
(1978)  
Using the pseudonym Dusty Rhodes, a retired Fripp

dipped a toe back in the music business by guesting on Gabriel’s self-titled debut in 1977. He then produced Gabriel’s identically titled 1978 follow-up. Gabriel, like Fripp, had abandoned his prog past and been influenced by punk and new wave.



**EXPOSURE**  
(1979)  
Fripp’s first solo album was gleefully diverse, from MOR pop to avant-garde post-punk. Guests included Daryl Hall, Peter Hammill, Phil Collins and future Crimson bassist Tony Levin. Also involved was XTC keyboardist Barry Andrews, with whom Fripp formed his next band, The League Of Gentlemen.



## WHO WAS JG BENNETT?

The strange life of Fripp's inspiration

**S**PIRITUAL TEACHER GI Gurdjieff (1866–1949) believed that human beings are conditioned to spend their lives asleep, fulfilling none of their potential. Only by rigorous mental and physical application (known as 'The Work') can they awaken and develop. Gurdjieff's teachings changed the life of John G Bennett (1897–1974), an Englishman who served in military intelligence in the Middle East.

A mathematician and scientist, Bennett was able to balance spiritual and practical matters for much



of his life, rising to a prominent position in industrial research during World War II. After further travels in the Middle East, he opened a school at Sherborne House in Gloucestershire to teach Gurdjieffian initiates. Robert, eager to attend the school, met Bennett in 1974. "He was giving a talk at the Friends Meeting House on the Marylebone Road. I introduced myself. He made me repeat my name because he was going a little deaf. The last thing he said to me was, 'I shall remember you.'"

Bennett's death a month later did not dissuade Fripp from enrolling at Sherborne ("Quite the reverse"). Fripp later used recordings of Bennett's voice on *Exposure* (1979) and *The League Of Gentlemen* (1981).

King Crimson, 1973:  
(l-r) Fripp, David Cross, Bill Bruford, John Wetton

**During one gig on the boxset, you plead with the audience to buy Crimson's records and make them "a Top 10 band". Why did you do that?** One: irony. Two: sense of humour. Three: we don't know if there was an Atlantic Records A&R man standing at the side of the stage.

**Would Crimson party after a gig, like a normal rock'n'roll group?**

It's interesting going back to my journals, where I comment on the successful socialising of various Crimson members. I myself was not a party animal. At the Irving Plaza in New York in 1980, [Fripp's band] The League Of Gentlemen were coming out onto the street at one am and there was a stunning young woman at the entrance. I said, "What are you waiting for?" She said, "You." I then went back to my hotel room alone and read my Doris Lessing novel, *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four And Five*.

**How did you discover that your music had been plagiarised in the soft porn movie, *Emmanuelle*?** Two people told me about that. One was [Crimson bassist] John Wetton, the other was Richard Williams. So I went to a cinema off Leicester Square and recorded it. I found the film rather boring, but I noticed that every time there was a sex scene, along came "Larks' Tongues In Aspic, Part II". So we sued. The story was, the composers had been at work for six months on the music, and one week after Crimson appeared on French TV playing "Larks' Tongues In Aspic, Part II", all the music was written! I still get pitiful amounts of money from re-showings of *Emmanuelle* around the world.

"Touring can be destructive or it can be transformative... very few people are cut out for it"

transformative. Very few people are cut out for it.

**When did you first read JG Bennett?** In 1974 I was just coming across him. Questions had been appearing which weren't being answered within my immediate environment, like "What am I doing here?" My first entry was the occult, as it was called then.

**How deep did you go into that?** I'd been practising exercises and keeping a record of dreams, but it became obvious that I'd need one-on-one tuition. I didn't fully trust the characters in the occult. But here was Bennett, an uptight Englishman who spoke a language I understood. This was no character from India wearing orange. And Bennett had a school in Gloucestershire. I read Bennett's *Is There "Life" On Earth?*, a series of lectures from 1949, and at the back was an inaugural address to the Second Basic Course at Sherborne House. Mr Bennett was speaking to me. These were the very questions I'd been asking.



# DONNY HATHAWAY

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● **Your friends noticed a change in you. Bill Bruford recalls you being virtually silent during the recording of *Crimson's Red* album.** I was speaking, but I wasn't expressing an opinion. My role was one of radical neutrality. In the playing life of a musician, you have three modes: active, supportive and doing nothing. And the third is the radical one. Doing nothing – or, in Gurdjieffian cosmology, 'the third force' – is actually where all the action lies. You see, silence is very different to quiet. Quiet is the absence of sound. Silence is the presence of silence. It's as if silence walks into the room and sits down next to you. It's an entirely recognisable and tangible presence, even though there seems to be nothing there.

**So you went to Sherborne?** Yes, from September 1975 to July 1976. There were about 90 other people on the course. I got Brian Eno to come down one day to open the village fête.

**At that point, had you given up music?** Yes, utterly. I played guitar a little at Sherborne, but not serious playing. I came out of Sherborne with no intention of ever being a professional musician again.

**What were you going to do?** I had no idea. I went to New York in February 1977 to find out. Brian Eno moved there in November. John Rockwell did a piece on us in the *New York Times*: "These two Englishmen in the New York scene..." It was a remarkable scene, very *alive*. It wasn't like punk in London. There wasn't the political sense. It was more art-rock. If you think Talking Heads rather than the Sex Pistols, you're closer to the sense of it. Blondie, the Ramones, James Chance And The Contortions... I sat in with a lot of these characters. The key to that period was openness, mutuality and interaction. For me, it was very welcoming.

**So you became a professional musician again?** Partly as a result of the Rockwell article, I was asked to play on Daryl Hall's album [*Sacred Songs*], which I then produced. I was asked to produce Peter Gabriel's [*second*] album. And I began recording my own LP, *Exposure*, at the Hit Factory. New York's leading session drummer approached me and said, "I'd like to play on your album." I said, "I can't use you. You know what you're doing." I also did Frippertronics at the Kitchen [*in NYC*] in '78. It was completely improvised music, with two Revoxes. I said to Eno, "How do you get these Revoxes working?" He drew me a diagram. I said, "You've just done yourself out of a job."



Key players: Fripp with Peter Gabriel in 1978



**When you and Eno made (*No Pussyfooting*) in 1973, it was basically ignored, wasn't it?** EG Management and Island Records acted together to prevent it having a proper release. They thought it might hurt Eno's commercial chances. I remember at Air Studios getting a sheet of white paper, writing "No pussyfooting" and putting it on the mixing console, to remind us not to allow this music to be undermined. However, it was put out by EG on a budget label, which means "We don't take this seriously and neither should you."

"Working with Eno and Bowie was an utter joy. The key thing was lots of laughs"

**Was David Bowie on your radar by then?** Yes, we met socially in the spring of '72. I went to his Rainbow concert, where Roxy Music were the support act. It was a stunning show, really remarkable. In July '77, Eno phoned me in New York and asked me to come to Berlin and do David's album [*"Heroes"*]. I flew in overnight, first-class on Lufthansa. I went to the hotel, which was a former SS headquarters. I got to the studio at about quarter-to-six and Eno said, "Plug in." I plugged in, Eno played me the track [*"Beauty And The Beast"*], and I was off. They always encouraged me. I've worked with people who don't want me to play well. I've even had some of my finest playing removed from a record, because another musician felt threatened by it. But working with Eno and Bowie was an utter joy. The key thing was lots of laughs, which is a necessary part of the creative process. King Crimson? Not so many laughs.

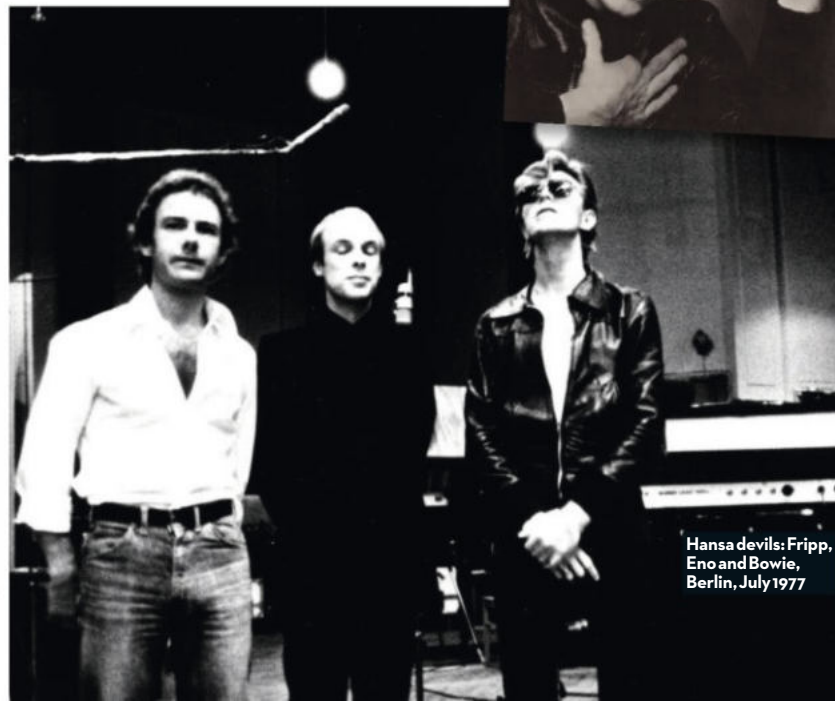
**Was there something inspirational about Berlin?**

Yes, there was. An artist inhabits the liminal territory: the in-between. Berlin at the time was right in the middle. It was the frontline in the Cold War, with no man's land in between. There we were in Hansa Studios, and looking out the window there was an East German turret. I walked through Checkpoint Charlie with David, and on the way back he said [*casually*], "Don't run. There's a machine gun up there." That was life in West Berlin. It was on the edge. And on the edge is where an artist goes.

**When was the last time Bowie asked you to work with him?**

My wife, who is a considerable Bowie fan, has never forgiven me for saying no to David when he did *Meltdown* [*in 2002*]. I was in Adrian Belew's basement, and Adrian came downstairs and said, "David's on the phone for you." David said, "I'm curating *Meltdown*. Will you do it?" The way my calendar was, I was just coming in from doing something in Europe, and I only had five or six days in England before going to America. It didn't give me time to focus at the level that I needed to honourably take part. So I said no. It was a terrible thing. My wife still tells me off for that.

**What did you think of *The Next Day*?** I don't comment on the work of other artists. If David asked me for my opinion, I'd give it. I have a terrible reputation for being heartless and venal. I don't tell people what they want to hear.



Hansa devils: Fripp, Eno and Bowie, Berlin, July 1977



New York, new wave: Fripp with Debbie Harry, 1978

● **Who have you offended recently?**

I offend people fairly regularly. Here's an interesting one. When you're a man of a certain age, you're no longer seen as dangerous. People are polite about you, and they say nice things about your work from 40 years ago. You're safe. You have no impact on people's lives. It's like Anthony Wedgwood Benn in retirement; he can go to town halls and give speeches, and his points of view remain as cogent as ever, but he's not dangerous. But there are some recent stirrings in my life where, once again, I impact on other people's lives. And I can be dangerous to them.

**What's this? Are you coming out of retirement?** I never retired. I merely stopped performing in public. Am I interested in making more albums? No, not at all. The Guitar Circle – the current form of my Guitar Craft activities – is ongoing and getting busier. I'm off to Argentina in October, then Italy in January. I do sometimes perform in public with The Orchestra Of Crafty Guitarists, but my role is very different to being a member of King Crimson. [Pause] King Crimson is returning to active service. We are on-call to be ready for a live performance on September 1, 2014. Seven members. Four English, three American. Three drummers.

“There are stirrings in my life where I impact on other people's lives... I can be dangerous”

**What brought this on?** I was in dispute with Universal, which had been grinding on for six years. I can't enter a creative space when I'm dealing with litigation and conflict. After six years, there's now a man at Universal who has the will to settle it. We seem to be moving to a conclusion. Secondly, my book, *The Guitar Circle*, is now assembled and no longer requires my ongoing involvement. So then we move to, “What factors would make a Crimson reunion possible?” My wife and I were visiting friends in Vauxhall on the night the future king of England was born. We were in the garden and there was a party next door, and we heard a shout of “It's a boy!” I think they were part of the Middleton family and had been given a heads-up. It didn't go public for another 10 minutes. Anyway, we were drinking Prosecco. It was a nice, relaxed, creative evening. And I was looking at this problem. If you look at a problem long enough, it speaks back to you, generally. And I saw how, if Crimson were to be onstage, what it would look like. A seven-piece, with exact reversals of conventional roles. King Crimson reconfigured.

**Will you be playing new music?** [Silence] New music is a quality... you may think you've heard the music before, but that doesn't mean it's not new. You've certainly never heard three drummers playing it.

**On what continent will the first gig take place?** An interesting question. Either North or South America. At the moment, you have more information than the rest of Crimson, as I haven't had time to send out all the emails. There is a plan to include the UK in the tour dates, but it depends on a number of circumstances.

**You haven't heard the lineup play together yet?** No. But the key thing is taking the decision. In 1994 I had the idea for Crimson's double trio, which is not something I'd heard in music before, but we all turned up to Woodstock on April 18 and there it was. The same was true of Discipline [who became King Crimson] in 1981. You've seen it. You commit to it. You follow it through.

**Did you get into a negative frame of mind when you weren't performing? You described your career in one interview as “wretched”.** It is wretched. If you say, “Describe your professional life in one word”, it would be ‘wretched’. Now, within this wretched life, are there high spots of wonderment, joy and bliss? Yes! On the other hand, were you to say, “Has your professional life been one of joy, wonderment and bliss, with a few wretched moments?”, the answer would be no. [Pause] I have been happy since March last year... It had a lot to do with no longer being involved in public life. My creative life had become primarily private. I was no longer dealing with the ongoing wall of negativity that accompanies any kind of public life.

**Talking of public life, did you have to be talked into appearing on *All Star Mr & Mrs*?** No. My wife told me I was doing it, and I agreed with her. This is the key to a happy man. If you said, “Well, why did you do it?”, it was because I'd been asked to affirm my love for my wife. And my answer to that can only be “yes”. It raised money for my wife's local charity, the St Richard's Hospice, where her mother flew from this world. How anyone else takes it is not my concern. I'd refer you back to my “please buy our records” announcement on the boxset. I have a sense of humour, you see, even though it often comes with a straight face.

*The Road To Red* 21CD/DVD/2Blu-ray boxset is out now, as are new editions of *Red* (2CD) + USA (CD/DVD)

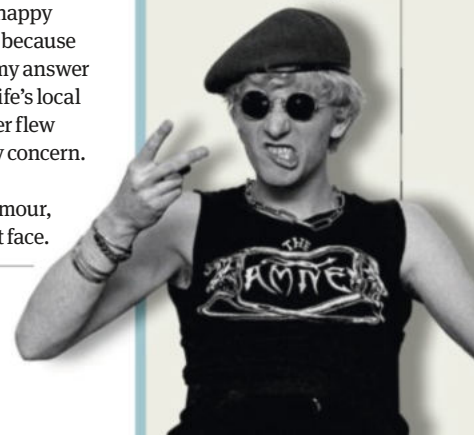
EYEWITNESS

FRIPP ON PUNK...

“THE PUNK GUYS had the spirit,” says Fripp, who cites a 1978 Clash gig as one of his favourite shows. In NY, Fripp played at CBGBs and sat in with The Screemers. He contributed to two seminal LPs: Blondie's *Parallel Lines* and Talking Heads' *Fear Of*



*Music*. Later, in the UK, he appeared with The Damned at the Hammersmith Odeon. “I loved it. At the soundcheck, I set up 15ft from the front, so the gob wouldn't hit me. In fact, it went further than me and landed all over Captain Sensible. The audience wanted more encores, so he asked me, ‘Would you like to play another two?’ I said, ‘What keys are they in?’ He said, ‘The first one's in E and the second one's in E.’ It was great fun. Sensible said, ‘We were onstage in Germany and I was naked. I got up on the cabinets behind Rat and tried to shit on his head, but nothing came out, unfortunately.’ They were wild boys.”



LJ VAN HOUTEN/REX FEATURES; VIRGINIA TURBETT/REDFERNS



The rejuvenated King Crimson, 1982: (l-r) Adrian Belew, Fripp, Bruford, Tony Levin

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## ALBUM BY ALBUM

# Nils Lofgren

The “band guy” guitarist on his work with Neil Young, Springsteen and solo

**N**ILS LOFGREN HAS, he admits, been purposely “off the grid” for 20 years now as a singer-songwriter, thanks to his other career – playing stadiums in the E Street Band. With a solo career often interrupted by his role as a selfless, crucial foil to Bruce Springsteen or Neil Young, a boxset next year should redress the balance somewhat. “All in all, what I am is a band guy,” he says. “And if you look at the bands I’ve got to play in, I would never have been that greedy when I was 17. At the age of 62, I still have that optimism to reach people in a positive way. I still have that clean dream that I started with.”



Original Grin: Lofgren, right, and his early '70s group



### GRIN GRIN

SPINDIZZY/CBS, 1971

Lofgren was sole songwriter in this suburban Washington DC trio (later quartet). Their Neil Young-

influenced debut is country-rock with a power-pop edge, exuberant and ahead of its time.

I had the habit of going into dressing rooms to get advice from professionals. I snuck into the Cellar Door where Neil Young and Crazy Horse were playing, and pled my case. And Neil was eyeing me, and he said, “Sing one of your songs.” I wound up singing about half the first Grin record, which was years away from being made. I was his guest for two nights, and he said, “If you get to LA, look me up.” When we did get out there, he turned us onto David Briggs his producer. Neil was going to co-produce *Grin*, but he got so busy, and record companies were very reticent about giving us a deal. David said, “Screw it”, borrowed 20 grand from a friend in Canada, and said, “We’re making a record.” We went up to San Francisco, slept in sleeping bags in a beautiful unfurnished house, and worked 18 hours a day in the studio. I think it’s the only time, on “Outlaw” and “See What A Love Can Do”, that Neil Young, Danny Whitten and Ralph Molina appear as background singers. It was great, because “Outlaw” was one of the songs I played in the Cellar Door to Neil two years earlier. To be in a studio, to have them sing harmony on it, you could hear the excitement in our voice. It was very pure. Young kids who were scratching the surface of a big dream. That album, you can hear the youth in it, the wide-eyed wonder.



### NEIL YOUNG AFTER THE GOLD RUSH

REPRISE, 1971

Young became a solo star with this beautifully simple, mostly home-made recording.

Lofgren is at the heart of almost every song. I was back at my mum and dad’s house, and Neil called and said he was working on a project called “After The Gold Rush”, and he wanted to put a band together and record in his home. He wanted me to play guitar, sing and play some piano. I brought up the touchy subject of not being a piano player, and him and David said, “It’s just basic rock’n’roll, you’ll work it out.” Of course, I put a sleeping bag out on John Locke’s porch, the piano player in Spirit, and literally camped out there practising. The core stuff with Greg Reeves on bass, Ralph [Molina], me and Neil, we all did it in this little cabana studio room underneath his back porch, overlooking Topanga, way high up in the hills. Neil told me to get my acoustic. I didn’t have one, and he lent me his to do “Tell Me Why”, a guitar duet just sitting across from him. I know that Neil wanted to create something very raw and emotional. But he was in a very good place. We didn’t over-think stuff. He let everyone be how they were. I couldn’t play like Leon Russell, he didn’t ask me to, and he let Greg be the guy he was in CSN. And so you got a colourful low-end from Greg and high-end from Neil and his songs, then in the middle you’ve got my piano and Ralph’s drums being very simple but solid, and that was a very cohesive sound. Even when we were mixing, I wanted to be there. It just felt really good.



### CRAZY HORSE CRAZY HORSE

REPRISE, 1971

Crazy Horse strike out without Neil for this rousing country-rock album, with Lofgren and Jack Nitzsche in the

band. Intended to showcase Danny Whitten’s talent, instead it was compromised by his heroin addiction.

I knew Crazy Horse from that night at the Cellar Door, and I’d pal around with them. But always with that organisation the side-story was, Danny Whitten’s got great songs, and Crazy Horse is going to make an album without Neil. That finally happened, and they said, “Look, we’ll make the record, and you’ll probably at that point quit Grin.” So I joined the band with Jack [Nitzsche], who was the producer. Danny could sing and play well. He just couldn’t do much else. He wrecked cars and he was pretty messed up. We made a lot of the record back in Wally Heider’s studio in San Francisco, and Ry Cooder came down and played some brilliant slide. In fact when we did “I Don’t Want To Talk About It”, Rysat right in between Danny and I, playing that gorgeous bottleneck. But this masterpiece of a ballad needed a second verse, Danny said he’d write it and he never did. Finally he lashed out at me and said, “Why don’t you write the damn verse?” While everybody else was on his case, I ran out of the room with the D18 acoustic guitar that Neil had given me, and ran back in with two lines: “If I stand all alone, will the shadow hide the colour of my heart/Remove the tears back from the nights we’re apart.” He signed off on it and we recorded it. Such simple days.



Young's gunslinger:  
Lofgren in 1976



## NEIL YOUNG TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

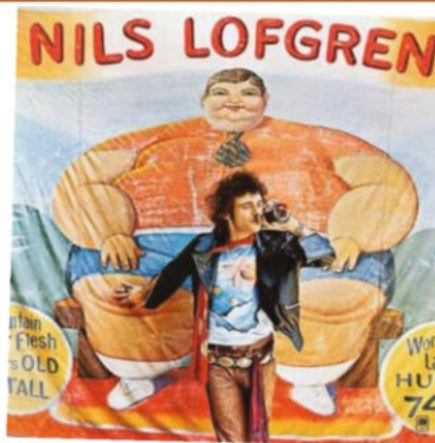
REPRISE, 1975

Following the deaths of Danny Whitten and beloved CSNY guitar tech Bruce Berry, Young

reconvenes Crazy Horse's survivors for a raw, late-night wake of a record.

It was what was left of Crazy Horse, Billy [Talbot] and Ralphie and myself, and Ben Keith. Neil and David [Briggs] said, "We're going to do this anti-production record. We're going to play new songs that you haven't heard. We're not gonna practise 'em much, and Ralphie and Nils, I want you to sing live. And just know that when Neil gets a vocal that feels right, you're done." Which led to an extremely dark, funky record. We'd get together at five or six in the evening and we'd shoot pool, have some tequila, order some carry-out, and commiserate. It wasn't all doom or gloom, but we were feeling the loss of people that really hit us hard. There was a bit of survivor's guilt, from my perspective it was like, "Damn. How come we're still standing? But we're grateful we are." Then about midnight, we'd go into the other room, start recording, and Neil would sit on the couch and play us a song, then go on to another. It was a beautiful, visceral way to record. We were deep in the spirit Neil intended, with the efforts you get when people you love die... there was tequila, but nobody was falling over, just pleasantly buzzed into the emotion of the song. There was some comfort I took from that, rather than just, "All my friends are dead, that's too bad." It was a much more useful and productive wake than usual.

## THE UNCUT CLASSIC



### NILS LOFGREN NILS LOFGREN

A&M, 1975

**Grin finally gave up the ghost after four albums and, with David Briggs still as producer, Lofgren steps out to make his classic, hard-rocking solo bow, including a concerned message to a hero: "Keith Don't Go".**

I was a rookie solo artist, with a lot of misgivings, and survivor's guilt, and depression that my first band didn't make it, because I didn't want to break up Grin. With Danny's death as well, that's like, welcome to showbiz. I was on my own. I was licking my wounds. I was very intimidated and worried, but thank God I had a friend like David [Briggs], who came up with a game-plan that really played to my strengths. I was living with Art [Linson,

Lofgren's manager] in his funky little cabana in Malibu, right on the ocean, and I just spent months in there, writing. We decided, once I had the songs, to bring in Wornell Jones, a great R'n'B bass player from DC who played with Sly Stone. Wornell came in the cabana with a little pig-nosed amp and his bass, and we would play for weeks, until we had these songs down. Then we brought in Aynsley Dunbar, a great drummer from England, and we had him learn them on the fly in the studio, to keep a real fresh, urgent element. David knew one of my challenges in the studio is I don't want to record a song 85 times. Most of the songs came together really quick, most of the vocals were live. It's a very simple record with a lot of feel to it. I wrote most of "Keith Don't Go" on the *Tonight's The Night* tour. Being a giant Stones fan, it seemed every day I met about six of Keith Richards' best friends. A common lament was they were worried about his health, and I thought to myself, "Well, damn, didn't he just make *Exile On Main Street*? He couldn't be that sick, could he?" I had this three-note riff that needed a theme, and I came up with "Keith Don't Go". It was a giant thank you note on behalf of all the fans, mixed with this ominous concern, to please stick around and take care of yourself. In fact, the crown jewel of the unreleased tracks in my boxset is, 40 years ago Briggs and Grin were in a Virginia studio, and Neil was in town hanging out, and David said, "Look, Grin's going to record this song Nils wrote - why don't you sing?" And we've got Neil playing piano and singing on "Keith Don't Go". I've met Keith a half-dozen times. He knows I'm a huge fan. I don't know if he's even heard the song.

# NILS LOFGREN



Nils with Springsteen in the revitalised E Street Band

parts were already done, so Brendan had me on oddball tunings, pedals, capos, backward guitars, sound effects, and it was very challenging. But they know I'm a pro. Sometimes I wouldn't even hear the whole song, they'd have eight parts to get done in one day, seek and destroy, a battle stations recording, but I went with it. It was a beautiful record, very powerful. To this day I can't believe that Bruce took 9/11 on as a subject matter. It's funny, most of the record was almost this devil-be-damned, celebratory thing. For instance, I did a dobro part on "Into The Fire", and I was thinking, "Oh my God, 'up the stairs, into the fire...'" It was like, this was so awful that we have to find some aspect of the human spirit that has endured this, or else it's just too painful to even think about. *Tonight's*



## NILS LOFGREN NILS

A&M, 1979

**Four albums into a quietly successful solo career, Lofgren forms an unlikely partnership with Lou Reed over a**

**game of American football.**

With Bob Ezrin, who's a great producer, we wanted to go a different direction. Bob said, "What if I get Lou Reed to work with you?" So I went to Lou's apartment in Greenwich Village, and I didn't realise that he was an American Football fan, and my team the Washington Redskins was playing a team he really liked, the Dallas Cowboys. So we were rooting against each other watching the game, had some drinks. We realised that I write melodies all day long. Lyrics is a bit harder. Lou struggles with the music, but words pour out of him. So I sent him 13 unfinished songs on a cassette, and I didn't hear from him and I forgot about it. Then one night at 4am I got a call from Lou, and he said, "I've been up three days and nights, and I've written 13 complete lyrics. I'll dictate 'em..." I put on some coffee, and sat there in the dark with a pad and pencil, until the sun came up. We used three, and Lou used some on *The Bells*. A song I wrote myself, "No Mercy", was inspired by working the corner for the karate champion Jeff Smith, who I was taking lessons with. You'd see these noble men outside the ring, and they come to my corner and they're spitting teeth. I realised that every day, many people are put in a corner where you have to hurt somebody for your family. Does the rock'n'roll life ever seem like that? Of course. But I managed to do it enough on my terms where... look, I've never sold my soul.



## BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TUNNEL OF LOVE

COLUMBIA, 1987

**During a solo lull, Lofgren finds himself watching TV with his old**

**pal Springsteen. Two months later he's in the E Street Band, and, just, on his first Springsteen album.**

I've known Bruce since 1970, when Steel Mill and Grin both did an audition night at the Fillmore West. Fast-forward to '83, I'd been dropped from my contract with A&M, I couldn't get a record deal for the first time in my life, and I was pretty down. Bruce invited me up to Jersey and we hit some bars and jammed, and we were watching MTV when they said Steve [Van Zandt] was leaving the E Street Band. Bruce got angry and said they hadn't worked that out yet. I said, "Well, if you ever need a guitar player, I'd certainly want to audition." It's like when I put myself forward to the Stones when Mick Taylor left. I just feel like, with playing live rock'n'roll, "If not me, who?" A month or so later, I was in the band. *Tunnel Of Love* was a solo record, really. But Bruce brought us in here and there. Bruce brought me in one day to play a solo on a really unusual track for him, "Tunnel Of Love". And me and Patti [Scialfa] did harmonies on "When You're Alone". After that, Bruce called us all together and said, "I don't know if I want to use the band to tour this record." He'd try rehearsing with the band. Then one day, I showed up and Bruce said, "Let's just try it as a duo." We're going to play all these songs as an acoustic act! He finally decided to make the *Tunnel Of Love* tour with the band. But I didn't make a real E Street record 'til *The Rising*.



## BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN THE RISING

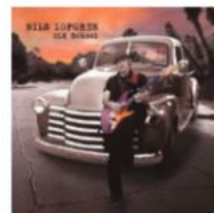
COLUMBIA, 2002

**Lofgren is back in the E Street Band for their triumphant studio comeback, on**

**Springsteen's valiant attempt at a healing response to 9/11.**

Bruce went in with Brendan O'Brien, a great producer new to him, and they got into a really great routine in the studio down in Atlanta, where we cut it. A lot of times when I went down there, between Bruce and Steven the guitar

*The Night* was very different, it was just out and out death and personal loss, and we dwelled in it. This was that too, but it was also – celebratory isn't the right word, but it ended up being about people who did something heroic inside that tragic day. I'm much older now, I'm more mature, I'm not drinking tequila or smoking pot any more... it's just a different thing.



## NILS LOFGREN OLD SCHOOL

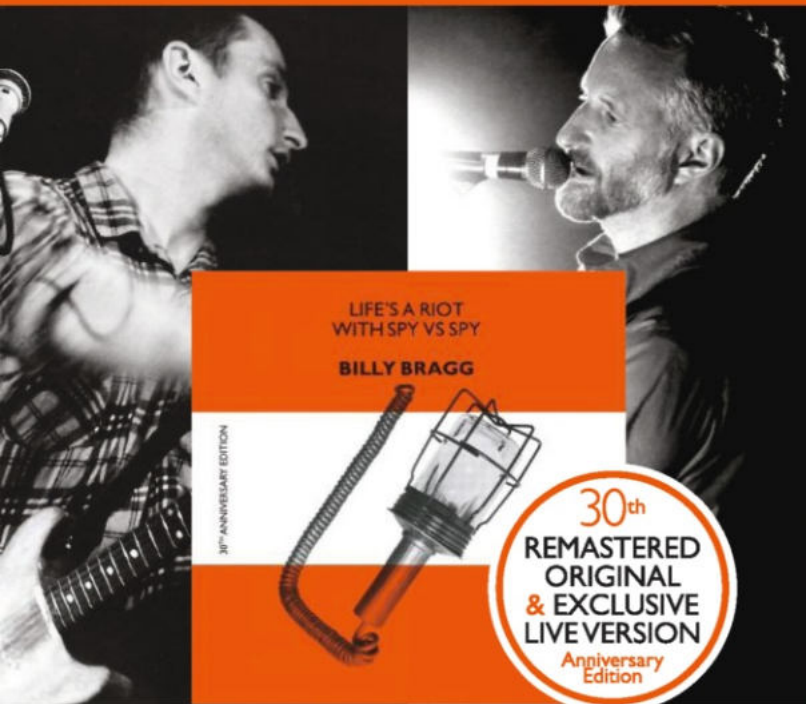
WIENERWORLD, 2011

**Fed up with corporate labels' interference, these days Lofgren self-releases his solo work. His latest, again**

**partially Neil Young-inspired, restates his virtues as songwriter and guitarist.**

A couple of years before I made this record I was in hospital to have both hips replaced – too much basketball and flipping onstage. Neil called and my wife Amy put the phone to my head, and at the end he said, "Heal up and get well, because we need you around. There ain't too many of us left." And "Ain't Too Many Of Us Left" is a song on this album. I'd done the *Magic* and *Working On A Dream* tours, so I had a really long absence from making my own music, and I was excited, almost like a rebirth. The theme was, I was coming up to my 60th birthday, and I wanted to write honestly about the good and bad that comes with that. I played songs in my living room, tried to stay with my family. When I went across the yard to the studio to record, I left the doors open for my dogs to come in. Then near the end, I asked Paul Rodgers and Lou Gramm and Sam Moore to sing some harmonies. The song "Miss You Ray" was about loss. That hit me hard when we lost Ray Charles, and three months after I wrote it Clarence [Clemons] passed away. On my 60th birthday, I was in Florida with Amy burying Clarence. I made a record that I'm proud of. I don't know what the hell's next. I'm thinking maybe a blues album. ☺





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FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

Haunting and dreamy, the album sounds like something from a completely different era, with focus on Foster's intoxicating vocals, piano, harp, pedal steel and double bass.



## RUSSIAN CIRCLES

MEMORIAL

SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

Russian Circles shift from somber-yet-soaring melodies on one track to pummeling metal heft on the next, focusing on each individual song's emotional & musical characteristics. Memorial almost feels like stages of grief & embodies the band's most dramatic ranges in tone.



## SON LUX

LANternS

JOYFUL NOISE LP / CD

Meditative but heaving with energy, Lanterns finds a peculiar congruency between futuristic soul and ancient sentiment. Driving orchestral pop is placed alongside haunting minimalism.



## DIANE COFFEE

MY FRIEND FISH

WESTERN VINYL LP / CD

My Friend Fish is the debut LP by Foxygen drummer and former Disney child actor Shaun Fleming aka Diane Coffee. Features Jonathan Rado of Foxygen.



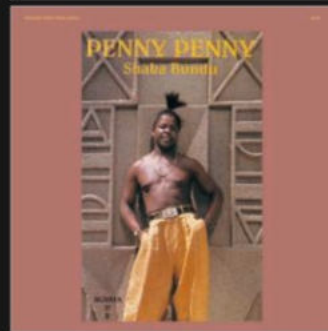
## BOTANY

LAVA DIVINER (TRUESTORY)

WESTERN VINYL LP / CD

On Texan producer Botany's debut proto-new age textures float atop a primal boom-bap pulse to paint a rhythmic mural with a '70s prog-rock epic scope. Features Brainfeeder artist RYAT.

Mastered by Matthewdavid (Stones Throw).



## PENNY PENNY

SHAKA BUNDU

AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA LP / CD

South African house music legend Penny Penny's 1994 debut "Shaka Bundu" launched the musician from pauper to pop star to politician.



## SAINT RICH

BEYOND THE DRONE

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

SPIN calls 'Delicate' Steve Marion & Christian Peslak's Beyond the Drone "12 sweetly shaggy tracks of wistful guitar-rock, shaped in the suburbs but colored by the country."

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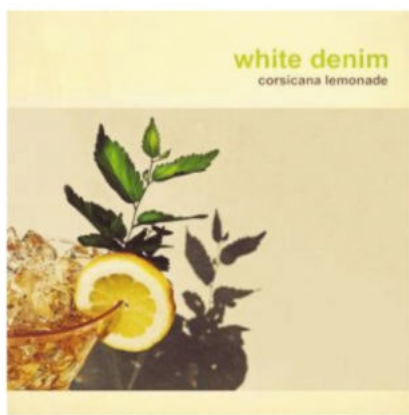
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10 Masterpiece 9 Essential 8 Excellent  
7 Very good 6 Good but uneven  
4-5 Mediocre 1-3 Poor

THIS MONTH: MIDLAKE | JASON ISBELL | NICK LOWE & MORE



MARK SELIGER



## WHITE DENIM

### Corsicana Lemonade

DOWNTOWN

The Texans continue their radical evolution with a kaleidoscopic concept album. *By Andy Gill*

#### TRACKLIST

- 1 At Night In Dreams
- 2 Corsicana Lemonade
- 3 Limited By Stature
- 4 New Blue Feeling
- 5 Come Back
- 6 Distant Relative Salute
- 7 Let It Feel Good (My Eagles)
- 8 Pretty Green
- 9 Cheer Up/Blues Ending
- 10 A Place To Start

#### 9/10

RARELY HAS A band or artist sprung so adeptly between genres, and so quickly, as White Denim. Offhand I can only think of The Beatles and Tim Buckley as comparably questing spirits blessed with the ability to realise so many different ideas with such facility in such a short space of time. Their debut, *Workout Holiday*, revisited garage-rock touchstone styles with furious energy and ebullient invention, stacking up echoes and influences from Velvets-esque bulldozing grindcore to lysergic country-punk raga-rock reminiscent of the Meat Puppets.

The follow-up, *Fits*, was a firestorm of punk-infused math-rock workouts that sounded like they might cause actual physical damage – a notion confirmed at live shows, where the trio of guitarist James Petralli, bassist Steve Terebecki and drummer Joshua Block exhibited an intensity that brought to mind the power-trio heyday of Cream and Hendrix, the raw, exploratory fire of early West Coast psychedelia, and the out-there urge of avant-garde jazz. As with great jazz players, there was something extraordinary about the way three such potent musicians could pursue their own individual paths with no apparent



# New Albums

→ individual paths with no apparent restrictions on what each could do, yet have those paths somehow interlace together in a common direction.

By the time of 2011's *D*, they had acquired an extra guitarist, Austin Jenkins, and yet another twist in their musical direction, mutating from virtuoso math-rock psychedelic blues-jammers to something closer to a cross between the Grateful Dead and the Magic Band, mingling spiky trickster rhythms with sleek country-rock harmonies and serpentine, intertwining guitar breaks, with a side-order of Afro-Cuban jazz flute thrown in for good measure. It seemed there was nothing they weren't prepared to take on, and take easily in their stride. Where would they head next?

Out to the patio, and down to the barbecue pit, that's where. James Petralli describes the delightful *Corsicana Lemonade* as "a barbecue record", the kind of more laidback, soulful music he'd like to hear if he were cooking outdoors. "Our ears got tired of hearing really aggressive music and trying to work it into something," he says of the move away from math-rock blizzards. Instead, the quartet concentrated on developing more pleasurable lines, and on well-structured songs rather than open-ended jamming.

Which is not to say there isn't an abundance of virtuoso playing on this album; just that it follows more populist, recreational lines, with a healthy emphasis on Southern styles. With its double-guitar attack borne along on keyboard colouration and tidal waves of rolling drums, for instance, "Distant Relative Salute" has the fluidity of a jazz-tinged Allmans groove like "In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed"; while elsewhere warm echoes of Little Feat and country-rock pioneers Barefoot Jerry glow from songs such as "Come Back" and the punchy country boogie "Pretty Green". It's the sound of great players kicking back, rather in the way that Motown was the sound of jazz players digging the simplicity of R'n'B. And right from the funky, polyrhythmic boogie opener "At Night In Dreams", it swings like heck, carrying the listener along rather than steamrolling over them.

The first sessions for *Corsicana Lemonade* were done, at Jeff Tweedy's invitation, up at

## SLEEVE NOTES

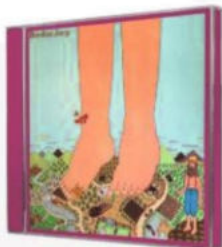
**Recorded at:** Lake Travis, Texas, and Wilco Studio, Chicago  
**Produced by:** White Denim  
**Personnel:** James Petralli (guitar, Mellotron, keyboards, vocals), Austin Jenkins (guitar), Steve Terebecki (bass), Joshua Block (drums)



Jean genies: (l-r) Petralli, Jenkins, Block, Terebecki

## HOW TO BUY... "BARBECUE MUSIC, 1972"

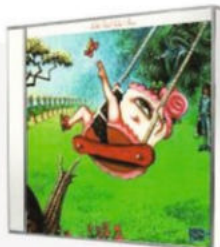
Grill behaviour: the early '70s albums that are best for cooking Southern-style



### BAREFOOT JERRY *Barefoot Jerry*

WARNER BROS, 1972  
 Seminal country-rock outfit formed from the ashes of Nashville session crew Area Code 615. This second album features laidback but lock-tight grooves with welcoming attitude, exemplified by the opener "Hospitality Song".

8/10



### LITTLE FEAT *Sailin' Shoes*

WARNER BROS, 1972  
 Forgers of the definitive alloy of "country with a funky beat". This sublime sophomore effort includes the peerless "Willin'", perhaps the ultimate truckers' anthem, alongside songs that somehow squared the circle of country, soul and jazz-rock.

8/10



### TIM BUCKLEY *Greetings From LA*

STRAIGHT, 1972  
 The great musical polymath shucks off both the sensitive folkie ruminations of *Happy Sad* and the free-jazz inclinations of *Starsailor* to indulge his inner erotic hedonist on filthy funk grooves like "Move With Me" and "Get On Top".

8/10



### THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND *Eat A Peach*

CAPRICORN, 1972  
 The apotheosis of Southern boogie, and final testament to Duane Allman's genius. Includes "Mountain Jam", the 33-minute improv on Donovan's "There Is A Mountain", and "One Way Out", both left over from the *At Fillmore East* shows.

8/10

Wilco's studio in Chicago. Two tracks resulted – the aforementioned “Distant Relative Salute” and the album closer, a devotional ballad contrarily titled “A Place To Start”. But the band were inspired by the studio's collection of obscure instruments and kit to explore different routes than the basic two guitars/bass/drums formulation: when Petralli got back to Texas, he went out and bought the Mellotron that gives “New Blue Feeling” its Traffic/Beatles Brit psych-rock flavour; and elsewhere, electric piano adds a funky undercarriage to several tracks.

Upon their return from Chicago, the band rented a house near Lake Travis in Texas, and had it converted to a temporary studio where Josh and Austin could stay. In its early days, the band recorded in the makeshift studio at Josh's trailer, and this was a means of acquiring a similar freedom to develop material without having to pay huge studio fees. That freedom comes across in the relaxed manner of their playing, which in places recalls the genial fluidity and casual technical grace of Steve Miller, especially the quicksilver little fills and twirling lead solo on the title-track, an itchy, shuffling tour around Texan small towns, whose chorus – “*Try to slow down, hang around, along the way*” – could stand for the album as a whole.

Likewise, the chipper “Cheer Up/Blues Ending” recommends we should

“*Put a step in your boots and a shine on your teeth... put a dime in your pocket, relax*”, while the sprightly country-rocker “Let It Feel Good (My Eagles)” finds Petralli apparently channeling the vocal inflections of Lowell George as he advises us, “*If it feels good, let it feel good to you*”. The track's distinctive reverb characteristics, reminiscent of the early rockabilly vibe at places like Sun Studios, he attributes to the high ceiling at the Lake Travis studio, and his technique of singing to the ceiling rather than straight at the microphone.

Elsewhere, the family concerns of some tracks bear evidence to Petralli's recent parenthood, while dreams also figure in several songs, from the doctor-infested turmoil of “New Blue Feeling” to the muscular writhings of “At Night In Dreams”, a rumination on endurance and longevity in which Petralli notes, “*I know you think that it's easy to change, it's a symptom of age*”. The irony being, of course, that he and his bandmates have never really exhibited the slightest trouble changing musical direction, and judging by *Corsicana Lemonade*, have no intention of staying still in future.



## Q&A

### James Petralli on cutting down the band's “rambling tendencies”, loving Texas and recording with Jeff Tweedy

**YOU'VE DESCRIBED THE new album as “a barbecue record”. What do you mean?** When I'm cooking over an open fire, I like to hear groove music, in-the-pocket soulful stuff, and we wanted to do that this time, to be more collaborative and represent where everybody wanted to go, which turned out to be to groove, and for the most part make a more relaxing record.

**It's less densely packed than previous albums.**

I think so, it's a lot more open, there are a lot less tracks. At least in the guitar department, I know there was a lot less overdubbing went on on this record, which could contribute to it being less frantic.

**The first tracks were cut at Jeff Tweedy's place.**

**What's it like?** Yes, we spent four days working with him and his engineer in Chicago. It's like a museum for old instruments and recording, with a nice kitchen, living room and some bunks. It's homey! But it's essentially one gigantic open space, which I'm sure is not that comfortable in the Chicago winter.

**You used to record in Josh's trailer.** Yes, we've come a long way since then. I miss the trailer sometimes, though. When you're not watching the clock, you can throw anything at the song, so there was a lot of experimentation done back then; we have to make time for it now, and be a lot more focused, with our rambling tendencies.

**You built a studio in a rented house in Lake Travis for this album.**

Yes, it's about 25 miles west of downtown, in the hill country. It was beautiful: we were on a cliffside, with a long staircase about 40ft down to the lake for a swim. Josh and Austin moved to Dallas in the past eight months or so, and we needed to find a place where they could stay while we were recording. We also needed high ceilings and a floating floor, which this place had.

**I understand “Corsicana Lemonade” is an homage to Texan small towns.** That's what happens when the band sits down and writes lyrics! The loose concept for it was a car trip around Texas. I asked the guys to name cities in Texas – this is an exercise I've employed to battle insomnia, going through the alphabet, trying to name a city in the state of Texas that begins with an ‘A’, then a ‘B’, a ‘C’,

and so on. So the band were just shouting cities at me and I tried to take those places and gave them sort of a fake attraction.

**Rather like “Tucson to Tucumcari, Tehachapi to Tonopah”?** Exactly! And like that Johnny Cash thing, “I've Been Everywhere”. I went to school in Nacogdoches, and ever since I heard that Little Feat song [“Willin'”], I always wanted to fit it into a song.

**“Let It Feel Good (My Eagles)” – is that a reference to the Eagles?** No. The house had a family of vultures that lived beneath the deck, and the first thing that Josh and Austin would wake up to each morning was these vultures scraping around on the deck, being really creepy. A couple of nights devolved into heavy drinking, and I just started calling them eagles, “my eagles”, acting like they were my pets. So it's just an intoxicated reference to these vultures that lived there.

**“Limited By Stature” – is that a heartfelt thing?**

[Laughs] That tune is supposed to be a bit funny. I've been obsessed with *SF Sorrow* for the past couple of years and there's something funny about “Loneliest Person” – I'm not sure that's the intention, probably not, but I wanted to write something like that,

hopeless and isolated, but also tongue in cheek. That's as close as I've come with my Pretty Things homage!

**And “A Place To Start” is probably as close as you'll come to a ballad croon, too...**

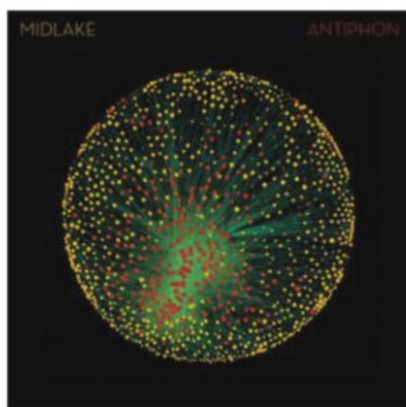
Yeah! I wanted it to be sincere, and so that's as close as I'll get to a swinging ballad. I re-recorded it a few weeks ago as a B-side, a more sweaty, Philadelphia-style take on it,

which I prefer to the album version now.

**In “Cheer Up”, what's the phrase “Put a dime in your pocket, relax” mean? Is it an idiomatic expression, or one of your own?** No. I've never heard anybody use it, but it felt like that, so I decided to put it in there. Unknowingly, all the hippies that have already bootlegged our record are thinking that it's a reference to a dime bag of weed or something. I didn't mean to do that, but it kind of is! It does kinda make sense in the context of the tune – it's really just a way of saying, “Put a little money in your pocket”.

INTERVIEW: ANDY GILL

“While recording, we'd wake up each morning to these vultures scraping around on the deck”



## TRACKLIST

- 1 Antiphon
- 2 Provider
- 3 The Old And The Young
- 4 It's Going Down
- 5 Vale
- 6 Aurora Gone
- 7 Ages
- 8 This Weight
- 9 Corruption
- 10 Provider (Reprise)

# MIDLAKE

## Antiphon

BELLA UNION

The band move on with a subtle change of emphasis following Tim Smith's departure. *By Garry Mulholland*

**8/10** BANDS WHO SURVIVE the exit of their creative leader are rare. Bands who keep the same name, carry on regardless and thrive are almost unheard of. When the first Midlake recording sessions since 2010's Top 20 album *The Courage Of Others* exposed the rifts at the heart of the band and resulted in the departure of lead singer/songwriter Tim Smith, Eric Pulido, Paul Alexander, Eric Nichelson and McKenzie Smith would have been forgiven for calling time, or at least drifting aimlessly for a while as they decided whether to stick or twist. Instead, Pulido – who had only joined the band in 2004, five years after Smith initially formed Midlake – stepped up and essentially took over Smith's role. This didn't involve a radical change of direction; Pulido favours the same '70s folk-meets-soft-rock

melodies and dark bucolic lyricism, and is even a dead ringer for Smith as vocalist, a smooth tenor who loves to bed his lead within warm band harmonies. A casual fan of their two breakthrough albums, 2006's *The Trials Of Van Occupanther* and *The Courage Of Others*, may not even notice the difference.

But the opener and title track immediately introduces the subtle changes of emphasis. Pulido's stately melody throws sudden curveballs. Alexander's bass is deep and tough, an almost post-punkish element within a sound that constantly recalls *Days Of Future Passed*-era Moody Blues. He and McKenzie Smith step forward as a rhythm section, giving a discreet funk to the mid-tempo stroll. The playing feels more spontaneous and freewheeling, with organ or guitar or drums



## Q&A

Eric Pulido



**You've said that, when Midlake began recording after touring *The Courage Of Others*, "something was missing". What was that something?**

Energy. Cool ideas were forming, but as we kept beating them to death the life got sucked out of it. All that material was completely scrapped when Tim decided to leave.

**When Tim announced his departure, did Midlake consider splitting?**

I should've been shitting my pants at the beginning of this! But I think we have more of a dynamic vision now. We'd got a little too comfortable in just facilitating Tim's vision. When he left we were able to throw everything out and say, "OK - how do we wanna start again, so that everybody feels ownership of this?" The excitement had been lost. There weren't even many of us coming to the studio anymore. It was like, "Call me when you need me." And that's just not a band.

**You re-presented the brilliant John Grant to the world by being his backing band on *Queen Of Denmark*. What effect has his subsequent success had on Midlake?**

That's a great question, because we made John's record while making *The Courage Of Others*, where we had many obstacles to overcome and which came out quite dark, and found making John's record quite cathartic. It was enjoyable and collaborative and subconsciously reminded us that making music can be fun.

GARRY MULHOLLAND

## SLEEVE NOTES

**Produced by** Midlake (engineered by Paul Alexander)  
**Recorded at:** Midlake Studios, Denton, Texas  
**Personnel:** Eric Pulido (lead vocals, guitars, keyboards), Paul Alexander (bass, keyboards, bassoon, guitars, vocals), Eric Nicholson (guitars, autoharp), McKenzie Smith (drums, percussion), Jesse Chandler (keyboards, piano, flute, vocals), Joey McClellan (guitars, vocals)

suddenly taking centre-stage before even more suddenly falling back into line. The song dissolves abruptly into a radioactive synth crackle, and segues straight into "Provider"; a trick pulled repeatedly, giving *Antiphon* the feel of a suite of songs, rather than a simple album.

A record so ambitious musically – with all the elements above joined by orchestras, woodwinds, surprisingly angular guitar and lots of carefully deployed prog-rock synth runs – needs one big song to pull the listener into its world, and it arrives three songs in. "The Old And The Young" is a bubbling, swinging anthem on the subject of Be Here Now, with a chorus so infectious and celebratory that it manages to bathe the entire album in sunshine. It opens the way for less instant songs – the symphonic instrumental "Vale", the resigned divorce ballad "Aurora Gone", the stormy, pensive triptych "Ages", "This Weight" and "Corruption" – to take hold of ears, head and heart.

The latter two, in particular, dominate the end of the album with bleak visions. "This Weight" opens with the couplet, "I'm not fooling anyone but me/I don't love anyone but me", which is more a withering

judgement on human selfishness than either a Pulido confessional or, as it could easily be read, as a coded kiss-off to Smith. Meanwhile, Paul Alexander's piano-led "Corruption" poses a philosophical question: "Science our daughter/Religion our father... Who is mother?" It's rhetorical, as Alexander has already answered his own question in the song's title. This cryptic form of political overview dovetails with *Antiphon*'s sleeve art, which looks like a global firework display but is actually a visual representation of the corporations that control the world.

*Antiphon*, named after a form of call-and-response song, is not a call-to-arms. But it is a

response to a time of sadness and change, and an attempt to find solace in the simple act of keeping going. It's full of notes to us and to self about throwing off the past and moving forward, even though erasing the past is impossible. And it might just grow into an even better record than *The Courage Of Others*, as one gets used to the way it replaces Smith's precision and popcraft with the new Midlake's love of digression and sonic adventure.

# AtoZ

COMING UP THIS MONTH...

- p64 JASON ISBELL
- p66 CRYSTAL STILTS
- p68 WILLIE NELSON
- p70 CATE LE BON
- p71 OF MONTREAL
- p72 DAVE STEWART
- p73 NICK LOWE
- p74 THROWING MUSES
- p75 WOODEN SHJIPS



## ASGEIR In The Silence

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

**Gorgeous Icelandic folktronica, with lyrics translated by John Grant**

Icelandic singer Asgeir's debut album – *Dyrđi dauðathogn* – was released

8/10

last September and became the country's best-selling debut by a native artist, outselling Björk and Sigur Rós. This English-language version is a beautiful thing, with Asgeir's moody vocals combining with the bright, warm melodies and tunes like the sublime "King And Cross" that mix poppy folk with a disco feel. John Grant helped translate the lyrics (originally written by Asgeir's 72-year-old father) and you can hear the connection on touching ballad "Was There Nothing?" and sublime strummer "On That Day", while mini-stomper "Torrent" shows an understandable fondness for '80s pop anthems.

PETER WATTS



## SAM BAKER Say Grace

SAMBAKERMUSIC.COM

**Plaintive Texas songwriter cuts deep on album #4**

8/10

With his twangy, backwoods voice slicing through a rough mix of ghostly imagery and dark emotion, Baker is a true original. A classic Southern country/folk songwriter, a terrorism survivor (Peru train bombing, 1986), his near-death experience mutates into intimate meditations on the frailties of us all. *Say Grace* expands his minimalist sound, slightly – strings, baroque piano, accordion on the Guthrie-esque "Migrants" – subtle variations on a John Prine/Terry Allen template. "Ditch", reveling in the simple joy of employment, and the masterful, chin-up spirit of the title cut shine; the sad, gentle, flashing metaphors of "Road Crew" trumps them both.

LUKE TORN

## JASON ISBELL

**Southeastern**

SOUTHEASTERN

Rare example of sobriety and marriage causing great country music. *By Andrew Mueller*



8/10

JASON ISBELL APPEARS on the cover of *Southeastern* in a black-and-white, head-and-shoulders portrait, bearing the expression a man might when posing for a passport photo or a mugshot, or staring into the mirror of a hungover morning,

wondering what he's doing with himself.

Whether or not this stark design was an artistic or budgetary consideration, it suits the album. *Southeastern* is in part about running away and getting into trouble, but mostly about figuring out where you want to be – and, more crucially, who you'd rather be with. The plaintive mid-paced ballad "Travelling Alone" is representative. The song is a creditable addition to the canon of lonely musicians' laments, and/but the violin and backing vocals lending sunny counterpoint to the itinerant strummer's angst are provided by Amanda Shires, as of this past February Mrs Jason Isbell.

*Southeastern* is about many things, but it's mostly, implicitly or explicitly, about her. Isbell's previous album, 2011's *Here We Rest*, was also a fretful rumination on homecoming, but the destination was Isbell's native Alabama. *Southeastern* is a realisation that home is where the heart is; the albums would make more sense if they switched titles. *Southeastern* is not, however, a cloying collage of puppies and moonbeams. Isbell, to his evident amazement, is a contented man now, but it hasn't always been that way; he was in rehab as recently as early 2012.

*Southeastern* doesn't flinch from the darkness, like Isbell wants a record of how bad it got, to remind himself not to go there again. *Southeastern* began as a solo acoustic album to be produced by Ryan Adams. It didn't work out that way – it's instead produced by Dave Cobb, whose credits include Shooter Jennings and The Secret Sisters – and it's difficult to imagine how it would have. Though Isbell's voice, at once husky and keening, grows ever more confident, and his signature lyrical backhanders and payoffs are honed ever sharper, both suit a more complex backdrop. Besides which, it would have been a shame to lose "Super 8", a rollicking sequel/companion to Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Gimme Three Steps", foggily recalling an unruly aftershow party ("They slapped me back to life/And they telephoned my wife/And they filled me full of Pedialyte").

On most of *Southeastern*, the jinks occur at the lower end of the scale. Isbell can't help measuring his new life against his old one, and wondering which is the real him. The sparse murder ballad "Live Oak", suggestive of a Warren Zevon demo, wonders "There's a man who walks beside me/He is who I used to be/And I wonder if she sees him and confuses him with me". The pretty, Paul Kelly-ish "Different Days" has the narrator's father



### SLEEVE NOTES

**Recorded at:** Falling Rock Studio, Nashville  
**Produced by:** Dave Cobb  
**Personnel:** Jason Isbell (vocals/guitar), Brian Allen (bass), Derry de Borja (keys), Chad Gamble (drums), Dave Cobb (perc), Amanda Shires (fiddle/vocals), Paul Griffith (drums), Kim Richey and Will Johnson (vocals)

reminding him "The right thing's always the hardest thing to do" (not the first time Isbell has quoted the old man's wisdom – the line could be an outtake from "Outfit", the high point of Isbell's contributions to Drive-By Truckers). "Stockholm" and "New South Wales" are homesick postcards, the latter briskly uncomplimentary of the local stimulants ("The piss they call tequila/Even Waylon wouldn't drink.")

All of which is bookended by two beautiful love songs, each the more powerful for their deadpan gruffness. Opening track "Cover Me Up", which has something of Richard Thompson about it, crests on the entreaty "Girl leave your boots by the bed/We

ain't leaving this room/Till someone needs medical help/Or the magnolias bloom". The closer, "Relatively Easy", finds the courage to make a difficult acknowledgement in the context of country and/or rock'n'roll, both genres defined by a fixation with absolutes: that pretty good is actually really good ("Here with you there's always something to look forward to/My angry heart beats relatively easy").

*Southeastern* is Springsteen's *Tunnel Of Love* or Dylan's *Blood On The Tracks* with a happy ending, and it isn't much shadowed by either comparison. It's Isbell's best album yet, and suggests that he'll do better still.

## Q&A

*Jason Isbell*

**A lot of *Here We Rest* was about coming home to somewhere. A lot of *Southeastern* seems to be about coming home to someone. Is that a fair analysis?**

Sounds fair to me. Someone that sometimes might be a lover and sometimes might be yourself or your upbringing.

**Why is this a solo album rather than a 400 Unit album?**

I started out with the intention of making a solo acoustic album, but that got boring, so we

called some folks in to play. Jimbo Hart wasn't available. There could never be a 400 Unit album without Jimbo.

**You inhabit different characters on the album, but they're all seeking and/or finding some sort of redemption. To what extent can they be read as once-removed autobiographies?**

Isn't most fiction once-removed autobiography? That's the beauty of writing songs rather than books: they aren't filed based on what's true and what's fiction.

**Is the cocaine and tequila in *New South Wales* really that bad?**

Yes. The farther you get from Latin America, the worse those things tend to be. *ANDREW MUELLER*





**BARDO POND**  
**Peace On Venus**  
FIRE

**Philly Psych veterans still playing it anything but straight**

“Think it’s going to be different this time,” sings Isobel Sollenberger on

**7/10**

“Kali Yuga Blues”, the opening track of Bardo Pond’s 10th studio album, but she’s probably not referring to the music. Bardo Pond have been making prime cosmic rock for over a decade, and *Peace On Venus* is a fine example of what they produce, from the feedback-drenched, Neil Young-via-My Bloody Valentine flourishes of “Kali Yuga Blues” to the mellower “Taste” and the avant-rock distortions of “Fir”. “Chance” is more typically structured, although even here a wind instrument replaces vocals, while the brilliantly backwards “Before The Moon” rounds off a typically disorientating trip.

PETER WATTS



**BELLE ADAIR**  
**The Brave And The Blue**  
SINGLE LOCK

**Atmospheric first outing recorded on hallowed ground**

**7/10**

Alabaman Matt Green went to Muscle Shoals to make his debut record, and the local musicians he assembled for the project play with the deftness and feel that the area is renowned for, though this is far from a Southern R’n’B record. The songs are contemplative and quietly affecting, but the inventive arrangements are the primary points of interest, as Green and his cohorts serve up instrumental and stylistic contrasts in a way that recalls *Being There*-era Wilco, a reference point reinforced by the aching stoicism of his vocals and a brief burst of skronk in “Sister”. With its interplay of fingerpicked acoustic, ambient drone, pedal steel and brass, the album glides along with an understated grace.

BUD SCOPPA



**BLACK HEARTED BROTHER**  
**Stars Are Our Home**  
SONIC CATHEDRAL

**Neil Halstead’s Scene That Resurrects Itself**  
Given the presence of Slowdive’s Neil Halstead

**7/10**

and his occasional collaborators Mark Van Hoan (Locust) and Nick Holton (Holton’s Opulent Oog, Coley Park), that Black Hearted Brother occasionally gaze down at their shoes will be of little surprise. “(I Don’t Mean To) Wonder” could easily have been released on Creation in 1991, and “Take Heart” drifts gently heavenwards. But elsewhere the formula is tweaked to offer space disco on “My Baby Just Sailed Away”, while “Time In The Machine” leaps from subdued to rowdy like prime Yo La Tengo. Somewhat erratic, yet frequently satisfying.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



**BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA**  
**I’ll Find A Way**  
SONY MASTERWORKS

**Mismatches mar ambitious attempt to merge past and present**

**6/10**

In theory, the pairing of the venerable black gospel group with spiritually inclined producer Justin Vernon, an avowed student of the genre, seemed inspired. On the five tracks sung solely by the Blind Boys, the record comes off as Vernon intended: a spot-on recapturing of black gospel’s early-’60s heyday. By contrast, the remaining six, each featuring a contemporary guest artist, are problematic. Vernon himself sounds like he’s walked into the wrong session: only Appalachian revivalist Sam Amidon truly connects with the prevailing vibe, his homespun, haunted voice locking naturally in with the group’s ecstatic yearning on “I Am Not Waiting Anymore”.

BUD SCOPPA

## REVELATIONS

**Blind Boys Of Alabama’s Jimmy Carter on their latest epistle to the younger generation**



➤ *I’ll Find A Way* began with a leap of faith, according to Blind Boys leader Jimmy Carter. “Our manager came to us and said, ‘Boys, would you like to do a project with Justin Vernon?’ I said, ‘Fine - who is he?’ But as we got to know him, we found out he was a great guy to work with. We have a message that we give the people, and if can’t give ‘em that, we can’t use the material. But the songs that he brought us were mostly old gospel songs that we knew. There were some that I hadn’t even heard nothin’ about, but when we listened to ‘em, we found a way to put our input in there. This record is as close to our roots as we’ve done in a long time”. The premise of *I’ll Find A Way* continues the Blind Boys’ recent approach to spreading their message, which has seen them work with contemporary artists like Ben Harper and Peter Gabriel while covering songs by Tom Waits and The Rolling Stones. “We want to get more young people involved in our music”, Carter explains, “and to do that, we have to bring in young [collaborators]”. The sessions took place last December at Vernon’s Wisconsin studio. “It was cold, but the studio was warm - warm house, warm heart,” says Carter with a laugh.

BUD SCOPPA



**BLOOD ORANGE**  
**Cupid Deluxe**  
DOMINO

**Smooth operator’s steamy funk**

Blood Orange’s breezy debut *Coastal Grooves* revealed Dev Hynes (formerly of Test Icicles

**7/10**

and Lightspeed Champion to be a stylish songwriter whose feminine touch has shaped recent tracks by US ingénues Solange and Sky Ferreira. Mixed by old-school R&B heavyweight Jimmy Douglass and featuring Dirty Projector Dave Longstreth and rapper Skepta among others, *Cupid Deluxe* is a more mature and collaborative affair that sees Hynes marinate his songs in an early-’90s soul-funk fusion that foregrounds groove over melody. Splashed with sax and Rhodes, the steamy mood of “Uncle Ace” and “No Right Thing” evokes hot summer nights in New York City, Londoner Hynes’ adopted home.

PIERS MARTIN



**BLOUSE**  
**Imperium**  
CAPTURED TRACKS

**Dressy dream poppers’ second take**

Not, needless to say, the same Blouse devised by satirist Chris Morris for a Myra Hindley tribute

**7/10**

“Me Oh Myra”. But while *Brass Eye* may yet to have reached this three-piece’s Portland, Oregon base, the retro futurist pop of Broadcast and Stereolab clearly has. Their second album for shoegaze-fetishists Captured Tracks, *Imperium* once more casts vocalist Charlie Hilton as a more heavily sedated avatar of Beach House’s Victoria Legrand, but under the reverb smokescreen, Blouse wig out Monochrome Set-style on “1,000 Years”, “No Shelter” and “Trust Me”. Frankie Rose’s 2012 tour de force *Interstellar* cuts the same fabric slightly more elegantly, maybe, but Blouse’s frills are anything but cheap.

JIM WIRTH



**DEAN BLUNT**  
**Stone Island**  
SELF-RELEASED, AVAILABLE FROM AFISHA.RU

**Inscrutable maverick’s hotel hijinx**

In the past, a rock star might trash their hotel room. These days, it seems more subversive to make an album in one and release it online for free a few days later. Or it is if you’re Hackney-raised Dean Blunt, formerly of avant-pop provocateurs Hype Williams, and the record in question, *Stone Island*, is one of the best things you’ve done. Purportedly pieced together in a Moscow hotel room in August while Blunt was staying in Russia for a British Council-sponsored gig, these 10 smoky lullabies are cut from the same blue velvet as May’s excellent *The Redeemer*. Blunt’s drift towards mainstream respectability continues.

**8/10**

PIERS MARTIN



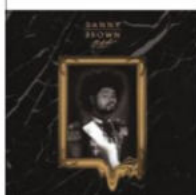
**JAMES BLUNT**  
**Moon Landing**  
ATLANTIC

**The return of the singing soldier**  
Calling a song "Always Hate Me" suggests that the much maligned Blunt has, at least, a sense of

**6/10**

humour. His fourth album is unlikely to convert the legions of naysayers, but some sparks of invention penetrate the blanket of aural blandness and vapidly anthemic pop. "Miss America" recalls classic Elton John, right down to the lyric about a doomed performer (rumoured to be Whitney Houston), "Sun On Sunday" is a tender piano ballad, and post-Mumfords hoedown "Bonfire Heart" is good fun. Most diverting of all is the epic showstopper "Blue On Blue", proving that if Blunt pushed himself a little harder he could be an altogether more interesting proposition.

GRAEME THOMSON



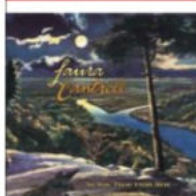
**DANNY BROWN**  
**Old**  
FOOL'S GOLD

**Third long-player from the Detroit rap maverick**  
Even in this age of pluralism, Danny Brown is an anomaly in the

**8/10**

contemporary hip-hop landscape, his erratic dentistry, lurid dress and wild mop of hair marking him out as eccentric in the spirit of Ol' Dirty Bastard or Flava Flav. His guttural, rat-tat flow is raw and unleavened, but it's the way he uses it – in flights of fancy and feats of mischief – that's truly the nub of his appeal. So, next to relatively orthodox cuts like "The Return" and the Wu Tang-tinged "Gremlins" sit the Oompa-Loompa-ish lunacy of "Wonderbread" and "Side B (Dope Song)", a cartoonish take on Dirty South Club that teeters between homage and parody.

LOUIS PATTISON



**LAURA CANTRELL**  
**No Way There From Here**  
CADIZ

**A return as welcome as it is overdue**  
Since illuminating the first five years of this

**8/10**

century with three flawless albums of guileless country, Cantrell has been vexingly sporadic. *No Way There From Here* is the Nashville singer-songwriter's first album of original material since 2005, and it varies from the template established by its predecessors barely one whit. This is, of course, high praise: Cantrell's plaintive, deadpan vocals somehow invest her lovelorn ballads with added poignancy. "Glass Armour", "When It Comes To You" and the title track especially are exercises in melancholia nonetheless sumptuous for their understatement.

ANDREW MUELLER



**DON CAVALLI**  
**Temperamental**  
A RAG

**Genre-melting return of the Parisian polymath**  
It's hard to believe that it's really been five years

**7/10**

since Cavalli's terrific *Cryland*, an album that covered so many bases it was almost impossible to categorise. Here, on his second album, the one-time rockabilly boy shows no sign of reining in his impulses, creating a hyperkinetic set that makes room for jump blues, Sun Studios-vintage rock'n'roll, squiggly electronica, calypso and hip-hop. "The Greatest", meanwhile, is the best Oriental country tune you're ever likely to hear. And what it all may lack in profundity is more than made up for by a vivacity and sheer unbridled joy in the creative possibilities of pop music.

ROB HUGHES



**EUROS CHILDS**  
**Situation Comedy**  
NATIONAL ELF

**Hi-De-His and low-dilows for ex-Gorky**  
Mr Forced Levity, former Gorky's Zygotic Mynci frontman and songwriter Euros Childs'

**7/10**

twin penchant for knockabout fun and brutal introspection can make for uncomfortable listening. A newly acquired taste for Gilbert O'Sullivan-style upright piano puts the accent on cheeky fun on his ninth solo album, *Situation Comedy* – notably the chirpy "Second Home Blues" and the tiger-foot stomp of "Avon Lady" – but the tears of a clown flow on "Holiday From Myself" and the mellow flutefulness of "Tina Said". The record ends with a mildly incongruous 14-minute piano meditation – all the right notes once more, but not necessarily in the right order.

JIM WIRTH



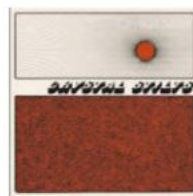
**CONNAN MOCKASIN**  
**Caramel**  
PHANTASY SOUND/BECAUSE

**Eccentric Kiwi's treacly psychedelia**  
The featherweight jangle of Connan 'Mockasin' Hosford's 2011 debut,

**9/10**

*Forever Dolphin Love*, led to a fruitful dalliance with Charlotte Gainsbourg and a cult following in France. But rather than spread his wings, *Caramel* finds the New Zealand guitarist and vocalist retreating to the seclusion of his nest for an album of exquisitely curdled pop which sets out to explore his fragile psyche in an absorbing song-cycle that includes the deep-fried five-parter "It's Your Body". Hosford's narcotic confection of falsetto funk and slanted Syd Barrett folk, best realised on "Do I Make You Feel Shy" and "Roll With You", has an unusual taste that's well worth acquiring.

PIERS MARTIN



**CRYSTAL STILTS**  
**Nature Noir**  
SACRED BONES

**Pop stylists, now very subtly going psychedelic**  
Brooklyn's Crystal Stilts have always been traditionalists, their

**7/10**

twilit guitar pop plugging into an electric mainline running through '60s teen garage, The Velvet Underground, and The Jesus And Mary Chain. On *Nature Noir* they've cleared away a bit of the murk that both sheltered and burnished their songs on their previous two albums, replacing that dreamy fuzziness with a new psych-pop wisdom: on the title track and "World's Gone Weird", they come off as though they're trying to resurrect the spirit of the Paisley Underground. If this means that they occasionally risk a too-polite formalism, though, the songs are warmly hypnotic: pitch-perfect pop.

JONDALE



**CUT COPY**  
**Free Your Mind**  
MODULAR

**Strait-laced Aussies' acid-house epiphany**  
When it comes to house, Cut Copy look like they'd sooner broker your

**7/10**

mortgage than take you out clubbing, but their clean-cut image belies frontman Dan Whitman's voracious desire to turn his band into a truly mind-bending proposition. Accordingly, their ambitious fourth set, *Free Your Mind*, looks to the two summers of love – psychedelia in 1967 and rave in '89 – for inspiration and is mixed by Tame Impala's guru Dave Fridmann, yet its tasteful blend of chugging acid and euphoric choruses means it resembles an elaborate *Screamadelica* pastiche, right down to Whitman's Bobby G yelping, "Shine, brother, shine on" during "Take Me Higher".

PIERS MARTIN



**DEAD GAZE**  
**Brain Holiday**  
PALMIST/FATCAT

**Wretched debut album from North Mississippi five-piece**

**2/10**

Glam rock and powerpop are harder to pull off than they look – getting those big riffs to stay buoyant requires a great deal of wit, melody and charm, qualities which Dead Gaze, who aim to blend those styles with sweet hippie flourishes, absolutely do not possess. The hooks on tracks like "You'll Carry On Real Nice" are the kind of value-meal stodge that clogged the tail end of Britpop, and Cole Furlow has a spectacularly unlovely voice, as if the brattishness of a mallrat punk has lapsed into jaded middle age. Part of the same Cats Purring collective that's bred Dent May, they're the negative image of his pop smarts.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



**DEAD MEADOW**  
**Warble Womb**  
XEMU

Washington, DC psychonauts return with an epic stew of woozy blues

**6/10**

Dead Meadow's first studio album since 2008's *Old Growth* sees the band, reunited with their original drummer Mark Lauglin, maintain their almost poppy, bluesy take on stoner rock over 75 woozy minutes. The band have come a long way since 2000's reissued *Dead Meadow*, but some of that early bombast and arresting variety in dynamics would not go amiss, even if, individually, *Warble Womb's* 15 songs – including grungy rockers like “Rains In The Desert”, folky “One More Toll Taker”, endless “This Song Is Over” and dub-psych “Copper Is Restless (“Til It Turns To Gold)” – are frequently stormers.

PETER WATTS



**BRYCE DESSNER AND THE KRONOS QUARTET**  
**Aheym**  
(ANTI-)

National guitarist goes it alone on classical debut

**8/10**

Dessner is co-responsible for the interlocking guitars that bring comfort to The National's anxious songs, but his first solo record has more in common with the harrowing intensity of Colin Stetson. The Kronos Quartet perform the four pieces on *Aheym* (Yiddish for ‘homeward’), rallying strings into juddering epics. The long strokes on “Little Blue” are a respite after the title track's manic race, though they soon give way to a rampant scurry. “Tenebre” feels more human for its swooping notes, a thread picked up by “Tour Eiffel”, where the Brooklyn Youth Chorus sing piercing hymns over Rhys Chatham-indebted guitar work. Not an easy listen, but an accomplished one.

LAURA SNAPES



**DR DOG**  
**B-Room**  
ANTI-

Philly cult band put faith in blue-eyed soul on their seventh

**8/10**

After 12 years of releasing increasingly accomplished records, the six-piece Dr Dog remain one of America's most underrated bands. Their seventh album sees Scott McMicken and co decamp to a new studio in an abandoned mill and rely on live takes. Beautiful opener “The Truth”, which sounds like The Delfonics produced by The Flaming Lips, sets the tone firmly in white-soul balladry. But “Distant Light” is Ian Hunter-gone-gospel, and “Phenomenon” a bluegrass Paul Simon, while the rest of the album freewheels around American music with a virtuosity and spontaneity that belies the group's indie-rock roots.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



**ERASURE**  
**Snow Globe**  
MUTE

Veteran synthpoppers' Yuletide offering

**6/10**

Few acts have been as rampantly festive as Erasure during their 28-year career, but only now, well set in middle-age, do Andy Bell and Vince Clarke decide to release their Christmas album. Decidedly shy of office-party pumpers, the avuncular pair decorate *Snow Globe* with originals and standards, including a stirring Kraftwerkian rendition of medieval carol “Gaudete” and passable stabs at the likes of “Silent Night” and “In The Bleak Midwinter”. With the accent on tears rather than tinsel – this is the first Erasure record since the passing of Bell's longterm partner – the likes of “Loving Man” and “Make It Wonderful” provide pause for thought.

PIERS MARTIN

## REVELATIONS

Bryce Dessner's journey home



► “I first met (Kronos Quartet's) David Harrington when my brother Aaron and I were putting together *Dark Was The Night*. Not long after, David asked me to write my first piece for them for an outdoor concert they were doing in Prospect Park in 2009. David suggested very gently that because the performance would take place in front of 5,000 people, perhaps it should not be too quiet. This is largely why ‘Aheym’, the first piece I wrote for the record, is so ferocious. David also asked about my background and how I ended up in New York. That story starts with my grandmother, a Russian immigrant who came to New York in the 1920s. She lived in Brooklyn for many years and the story of her journey to America was our primary connection to our family heritage. ‘Aheym’ means ‘homeward’ in Yiddish, her first language, and I decided I would dedicate that first quartet to her. David made plans for the quartet to perform the piece in Brooklyn, and then to retrace the journey she made almost 100 years ago and perform it in one of the towns of her childhood, Lodz, Poland. A second piece, ‘Tenebre’, was commissioned as part of Steve Reich's 75th birthday celebration at the Barbican.” LAURA SNAPES



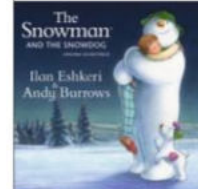
**SHEILA E**  
**Icon**  
MOOSICUS

The first solo album in 12 years from Prince's percussion alumna

**6/10**

Stints as a talent show judge and as the musical director for, among others, Beyoncé and a White House Latino festival have kept Sheila Escovedo busy in recent years. This centre-stage return features her illustrious family guesting, while Prince himself provides signature guitar to the swinging “Leader Of The Band”. The grooves throb agreeably, and the musicianship is exemplary, but the songwriting quality wavers. Inevitably best when invoking her Paisley Park prime – for example, the fat beat and easygoing funk of “Lovely Day”, the racy “I'll Give You That” – *Icon* is agreeable, though hardly infallible.

GAVIN MARTIN



**ILAN ESHKERI & ANDY BURROWS**  
**The Snowman And The Snowdog: Original Soundtrack**

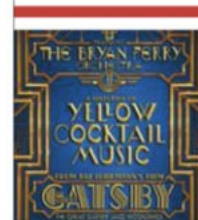
PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

**7/10**

Ex-Razorlight drummer reborn in snowy film sequel

When the *The Snowman* got an overhaul for Channel 4 last Christmas there was much tut-tutting at the notion of tinkering with a classic kids' film, not least bringing a dog into the equation. If the film itself proved a little underwhelming, there are no such complaints when it comes to Andy Burrows and composer Ilan Eshkeri's score, which pulls off that tricky balance of melancholy and festive warmth. The most significant moment here is “Light The Night”, which accompanies the characters' nocturnal flight and proves a worthy challenger to its much-loved predecessor, Howard Blake's “Walking In The Air”.

FIONA STURGES



**THE BRYAN FERRY ORCHESTRA**  
**A Selection Of Yellow Cocktail Music**

SONY CLASSICAL

**6/10**

Trad jazz makeovers from the *Gatsby* soundtrack

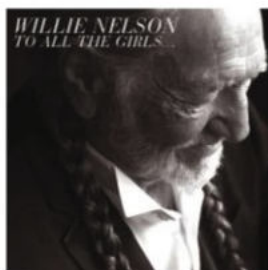
*The Jazz Age*, last year's 1920s-style re-imagining of the Roxy Music songbook, encapsulated Ferry's original lizardly charm better than many of his latterday solo records – even if all the versions were instrumentals. For this collection, Ferry croons “Love Is The Drug” and Amy Winehouse's “Back To Black” in an etiolated, barely recognisable drawl. Elsewhere, his expert swingers prove that 21st-Century hits can be rearranged to sit comfortably next to original Jelly Roll Morton recordings. Nevertheless, while *The Jazz Age* felt serendipitous, these takes on Beyoncé and Jay Z are more novelty confections – much like Baz Luhrmann's film, perhaps.

JOHN MULVEY

# AMERICANA



**BEST OF THE MONTH**



**WILLIE NELSON**  
**To All The Girls...**

LEGACY

**At 80, country's king takes up with 18 assorted queens**  
Willie is fond of a collaboration – setting aside numerous get-togethers with fellow travellers in the country of country, can anyone else boast a duet roster that embraces Wynton Marsalis, Julio Iglesias, U2 and Snoop Dogg? Here he plays things mostly safe with a set of country standards – including his own, natch – and a stellar roster of female voices. If the results can be unremarkable – a rehash of Kitty Wells' "Making Believe" with Brandi Carlile and a leaden "Far Away Places" with Sheryl Crow fit the frame – the album is redeemed by Nelson's engagement on most cuts.

**7/10**

It hasn't always been so – there are many jog-throughs in that mammoth discography – but a new contract and the advent of the big 8-0 have put a spring in the ol' feller's step. 2012's *Heroes* and this year's *Let's Face The Music* both yielded age-defying highlights. So does *To All The Girls...* Nelson's conversational vocal style is deceptive going on offhand, but class acts like Rosanne Cash (on Kristofferson's "Please Don't Tell Me") and Emmylou Harris (on Springsteen's "Dry Lightning") spur him to fine performances, while Norah Jones draws sweetly on "Walkin'" and Alison Krauss adds sublimity to his south-of-the-border "No Mas Amor". As elsewhere, Willie's stuttering, Spanish-flavoured guitar is as engaging as vocals that have acquired the timbre of seasoned redwood.

There's the odd flounder; Nelson's simply overpowered by Mavis Staples on Bill Withers' "Grandma's Hands", and Dolly Parton's "From Here To The Moon And Back" is string-laden syrup. He's more at home in a 1950s Texas ballroom, playing Western Swing with Shelby Lynne on "Till The End Of The World" or whooping it up with Tina Rose on Conway Twitty's "After The Fire Is Gone". It's all immaculately played, meaning even the flat spots pass by amicably, leaving Willie's gap-toothed grin hovering like an ancient Cheshire cat. Long may he endure. *NEIL SPENCER*

## THE AMERICANA ROUND-UP



► Held at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, the recent Americana Music Association Honours And Awards Show threw up some worthy winners. Chief among them being **Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell**, who scooped gongs for Duo/Group Of The Year and best LP for *Old Yellow Moon*. Ace South Carolina husband-and-wife team **Shovels & Rope** were the other big victors, making off with awards for Emerging Artist Of The Year and Song Of The Year with "Birmingham", from wonderful debut *O'Be Joyful*. The ceremony itself included live performances by Old Crow Medicine Show, Dr John, Richard Thompson, John Fullbright and Duane Eddy. Former

Buffalo Springfield buddies Stephen Stills and Richie Furay also reunited for a version of "For What It's Worth". The later career of **Dwight Yoakam**, who won Artist Of The Year at the AMA Awards, is celebrated on a new compilation, *21st Century Hits: Best of 2000-12*, due on New West. The set includes rarities like Willie Nelson duet "If Teardrops Were Diamonds" and the Beck-produced "A Heart Like Mine". On the DVD front, November sees the release of *The Byrd Who Flew Alone: The Triumphs And Tragedy Of Gene Clark*. The documentary on the late songwriter boasts fresh interviews with David Crosby, Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman, Barry McGuire, Taj Mahal and Carla Olson. We're also promised some previously unseen footage of Clark in action. *ROB HUGHES*

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*ROB HUGHES*



**CHRIS FORSYTH**  
**Solar Motel**

PARADISE OF BACHELORS

**Fiercely inventive guitar suite**

A former student of Television's Richard Lloyd, Philadelphia-based Forsyth has toiled in the trenches of experimental music with the trio Peeesseye (aka PSI), but his individual style clicked with his 2012 solo work, *Kenzo Deluxe*. *Solar Motel* hastens the momentum. It's a four-part suite of extended guitar jams which meander and slither until the tunes insinuate into recognisable patterns. It's only slightly hyperbolic to view it as a sequel to *Marquee Moon*; Forsyth understands how to elevate mathematical riffing with lyrical flourishes and buried echoes of folk motifs. As a whole, it's brilliant, but sample the 10-minute "Solar Motel Part II". Behold: the darkness doubles!  
*ALASTAIR MCKAY*

**9/10**



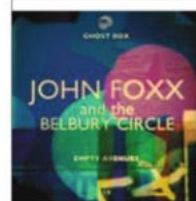
**JOSEPHINE FOSTER**  
**I'm A Dreamer**

FIRE

**Colorado maverick lays down new roots in Nashville**

**8/10**

Foster's esoteric path has thus far encompassed 12 albums, avant-folk, German lieder and Spanish traditional music. *I'm A Dreamer*, though, is rooted in the traditions of her homeland: a collection of predominantly new songs that explicitly reference Stephen Foster's Americana and Neil Young's *Harvest Moon*. Homebrewed good vibes (Earl Scruggs' grandson figures on steel guitar; harmonica proliferates) mix with cascading piano lines and Foster's compellingly unstable warble, while whimsy and pastiche are kept at bay – even on a song titled "Sugarpie I'm Not The Same". Her most orthodox album, perhaps, and by some distance her best.  
*JOHN MULVEY*



**JOHN FOXX AND THE BELBURY CIRCLE**  
**Empty Avenues**

GHOST BOX

**Hauntologists team up with electronic pop boffin**

**8/10**

John Foxx only had a couple of minor hits to his name in the early '80s, but his *Metamatic* LP has been cited by any number of nouveau electraut artists from Plaid to Adult. Now his plangent voice and bleak edgelands aesthetic has been pounced on by Ghost Box's Jim Jupp and Jon Brooks, aka The Belbury Circle. The electronic pop arrangements remain on the pleasant side of retro, but the light dusting of digital processing applied to Foxx's vocal, and suburban-existentialist lyrics ("There've been so many ways to go/And we walk them all alone/And everyone must choose/From all these avenues") prove irresistibly spooky.  
*ROB YOUNG*



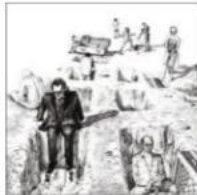
**NILS FRAHM**  
**Spaces**  
ERASED TAPES

**German piano virtuoso plays to the gallery**

Despite building an enviable reputation over six solo albums (and countless collaborations), it's in the live arena that Frahm truly excels. These 11 tracks, recorded at various locations, also confirm he's more than a neo-classical specialist. "Familiar", "Unter-Tristana-Ambre" and "Went Missing" may operate in that realm, his playing fluid and romantic, but on the 10-minute, partially improvised "Said And Done" he squeezes out an ingenious melody over a single piano chord. "Says", meanwhile, employs hypnotic synths that rise imperceptibly from their ambient bed to an exhilarating, electronic peak that even Vangelis would envy.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

**9/10**



**LAUREL HALO**  
**Chance Of Rain**  
HYPERDUB

**Hardware enthusiast coheres analogue techno vision**

Laurel Halo's earlier work was absolutely poppy, with its naive, sing-song melodies over rich electro – her last album was a fitfully successful transition towards sterner, more techno work. Here she completes it, making a vocal-free house music that's had its circadian rhythms thrown dangerously out of whack. The listlessness of the structures is initially offputting, but the tracks begin to reveal luxurious depths, like a soft suede version of Basic Channel's harshly extruded minimal techno; brilliant authorial touches like the clarinet coda of "Melt" add to the feel of a night out gone through the looking glass.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

**8/10**



**HEJIRA**  
**Prayer Before Birth**  
ACCIDENTAL

**Engaging debut from South London's answer to Dirty Projectors**

Named after the 1976 Joni Mitchell album, or possibly the Arabic term for a religious journey that inspired it, Hejira are a multi-cultural avant-folk collective rooted in a collaborative South London scene of artists and musicians. Produced by left-field polymath Matthew Herbert and released on his cultish label Accidental, this mostly excellent debut album bristles with spine-shivering boy-girl harmonies and sinewy, jazzy, agreeably wonky melodies. While the chilly mantra of "Litmus Test" showcases the band's disciplined and accessible side, eerie piano-led chamber-pop ballads like "Know" and the impassioned jazz-punk convulsions of "Pinter" suggest a heady witches' brew of Kate Bush and Radiohead.

STEPHENDALTON

**7/10**



**PATTY GRIFFIN**  
**Silver Bell**  
UNIVERSAL

**Lost album by Robert Plant's sometime musical partner**

The fate of Patty Griffin's third record is a sadly familiar one. *Silver Bell* was recorded in 2000, though, due to a record company merger, the release was cancelled and the LP promptly shelved. Bootleg copies subsequently surfaced – two tracks have been covered by the Dixie Chicks – but now it has been re-sequenced and remixed by producer Glyn Johns for proper release. Those acquainted with the slow and soulful pace of Griffin's recent work may be surprised by her ability to let rip here. Balancing out pensive numbers such as "Driving" and "Little God" are the fuzz-filled "Boston" and the electrifying punk pop of the title track.

FIONA STURGES

**8/10**

**WE'RE  
NEW  
HERE**

**Israel Nash  
Gripka**



► "I'm not the first songwriter to move to the country," says Israel Nash Gripka. "A lot of guys do that because you need the balance. Besides, Texas is beautiful, cheap and warm." Relocating from New York to Dripping Springs, folded deep into the rural uplands near Austin, fed directly into new album, *Rain Plans*. "The whole area is this empty, beautiful place and I wanted to make an album that sounded like the hill country *looked*," he explains. "All the songs are really personal, but it's also about capturing the aesthetic of the land." With its gorgeous evocation of big skies and rolling acres, delivered in the kind of verdant tones that recall mid-'70s Neil Young, *Rain Plans* carries echoes of CSNY, Nick Drake and the blowsier end of Laurel Canyon rock. It all seems in keeping with his peripatetic nature. Having grown up in the Ozark region of Missouri, Gripka is the son of a Southern Baptist minister who constantly uprooted the family from one parsonage to another. "Being in these open spaces just lets you be in tune with your art," he reasons. "I don't know how to explain it, but moving to Texas has changed me forever."

ROB HUGHES



**STEVE IGNORANT  
WITH PARANOID VISIONS**

**When...?**  
OVERGROUND

**Dublin Anarcho punks feed Crass vocalist new supplies of raw fury**

Ignorant bid farewell to the Crass canon with The Last Supper Tour in 2011 but his taste for the utopian ideals and musical rage evidently still boils. Splenetic Irish outfit Paranoid Visions, who've notched up several Irish Top 10s in three decades together, prove powerful allies with a set of unforgiving lambasts. The clamour of anti-porn tirade "Sex Kills" and fatcat-annihilating "Charity Begins At Home" is the default, but sullen requiem for anarchy on the internet "Log On/Bog Off" provides contrast. "No Contrition" even manages to allude to Ignorant's current calling as Norfolk lifeboat volunteer with its clarion call: "Abandon ship!"

GAVIN MARTIN

**6/10**



**ISRAEL NASH  
GRIPKA**  
**Rain Plans**  
LOOSE

**Highly seductive third album from US songscaper**

Gripka's story reads like classic rural American fiction: born in the Ozarks, son of a baptist preacher, leaving to seek his songwriting fate in New York. The music on his previous two albums was predictably roots-centred, but *Rain Plans* marks a major shift in emphasis. Most strikingly, his recent move to Texan hill country has clearly brought out more of his inner Neil Young, specifically the *Zuma* model. Gripka's keening voice, over electro-acoustics and pedal steel guitar, is a thing of real beauty, the likes of "Through The Door" and "Who In Time" folding around you like a warm blanket.

ROB HUGHES

**8/10**



**JOSHUA JAMES**  
**Well Then I'll Go To Hell**  
INTELLIGENT NOISE

**Nebraskan-born troubadour covers Modest Mouse**

James' third release inside a year, following 2012's *From The Top Of Willamette Mountain*, and an EP of live favourites, takes its title from a line in Twain's *Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* and started life as a collection of the songs that had most influenced him as an "emotionally distraught teenager". When he realised they were almost all written by Isaac Brock, the project turned into a Modest Mouse covers album. "Styrofoam Blues" is rendered as a rustic piece of Americana, the echoing reverb of "Sleepwalking" references early-'60s teen-pop, and on "Gravity Rides Everything" he filters MM via the syncopation of *Graceland*. Hardly essential, but highly enjoyable.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

**6/10**



**KORN**  
**The Paradigm Shift**  
CAROLINE

**Bagpipe-playing, dubstep-flirting rockers return to nu-metal fundamentals**

**6/10**

Korn have been struggling to reinvent their dated sound in the face of declining sales for much of the last decade. Their pretty good last album, *The Path Of Totality*, featured a heavy dubstep influence, including three collaborations with Skrillex. But with co-founder and guitarist Brian "Head" Welsh now back on board, the Californian quartet return to their gravel-voiced electro-metal horror-movie heartland on their 11th, playing it safe with ear-stompers like "Prey For Me" or "Paranoid And Aroused". Cosmetic traces of their dubstep experimentation linger in the shuddering "Never Never" and "It's All Wrong", but essentially this is Korn returning to their familiar discomfort zone.

STEPHEN DALTON



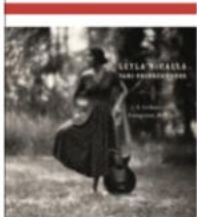
**CATE LE BON**  
**Mug Museum**  
TURNSTILE

**Beguilingly sombre third record from Welsh psych-pop savant**

**9/10**

Written in the wake of bereavements that led her to confront the realities of other relationships, Welsh psych-pop artist Cate Le Bon's third album leaves behind the playfulness of its two-part predecessor, *CYRK*, for a confident, mesmerising calm. Her knack for the details of distant and dissolute unions is striking – "his eyes are as bold as steam on tepid water," she sings on "I Think I Knew", a fluttering duet with Perfume Genius – while no matter how spare most of these songs are, the likes of "I Can't Help You" have the hookiness of *Marquee Moon* transmuted into delicately sinister pastorals. If there's any justice, *Mug Museum* should break Le Bon out of her current cult status.

LAURA SNAPES



**LEYLA MCCALLA**  
**Vari-Coloured Songs**  
DIXIEFROG

**Solo album from Carolina Chocolate Drops collaborator**

**8/10**

The poet Langston Hughes holds a special place in African-American intellectual life as the most potent radical writer of the pre-Civil Rights era. Charles Mingus accompanied the poet reciting his work on a legendary 1959 recording, but McCalla develops the inherent musicality of his verse further, setting Hughes' words to her own simple jazz-folk melodies. Much sparser and rawer than her work with the Chocolate Drops, the sound harks back to early Creole/Cajun styles, for the most part accompanied by little more than her banjo and cello. A handful of Haitian folk songs reflect her own ethnic roots and enhance the understated magic.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



**LAURA J MARTIN**  
**Dazzle Days**  
STATIC CARAVAN

**Merseyside's flute-loop queen sparkles once again**

**8/10**

Like Paul McCartney's Frog Chorus in mid-summer spawning madness mode, Euros Childs collaborator Laura J Martin's second album follows the perverse woodwind-in-the-willows blueprint she laid down with her delightful 2012 debut, *The Hangman Tree*. A Heath Robinson musical contraption held together with tape loops and fairy dust, *Dazzle Days* has limited parallels with the expansive *Dreaming*-era Kate Bush and the work of Camberwell harpie Serafina Steer, but the squeaky voiced Martin clearly has her own vision, pulling out all the flute-stops for the wheelbarrow trundle of "Red Flag" and elfin rhapsody "Half Perfect".

JIM WIRTH



**MEDIAEVAL BAEBS**  
**Of Kings & Angels**  
QUEEN OF SHEBA

**Seasonal songs from the indie-friendly early music revivalists**

**6/10**

This is the second album of Christmas songs by Katharine Blake's vocal ensemble who specialise in authentic, medieval-style plainsong, and it (rather cheekily) includes some previously released recordings, including their spooky gothic readings of "Gaudete", "The Coventry Carol" and "There Is No Rose Of Swych Vertu". Elsewhere, amid the rather pedestrian folksy recitals of "Away In A Manger" and the like, are some wonderfully adventurous moments: a hurdy-gurdy version of "Good King Wenceslas" shifts constantly between minor and major tonalities, while the spartan recital of "Corpus Christi Carol" really does elicit goosebumps on the neck.

JOHN LEWIS



**MELVINS**  
**Tres Cabrones**  
IPECAC

**Friends reunited, 30 years on**

**6/10**

Anyone looking here for a reinvented wheel will be disappointed. The kings of sludge-encrusted, stoner rock are no more likely to change course now than they ever were – arguably less so, given that guitarist Buzz Osborne and Dale Crover (on bass) have welcomed back original drummer Mike Dillard. Melvins' latest follows on from the covers album of earlier this year and re-establishes them as a superior hybrid of Sabbath and Black Flag, masters of the heavy, lunging groove and an oddly energised, slo-mo malevolence. "Comic" interludes like "Tie My Pecker To A Tree" lose them a point, but electronics-strafed epic "I Told You I Was Crazy" shows these proto-grunge "three dumbasses" have interests beyond Neolithic riffing.

SHARON O'CONNELL



**MINOR ALPS**  
**Get There**  
YE OLDE

**Juliana Hatfield and Nada Surf's Matthew Caws go all She & Him**

**7/10**

These American indie-rock veterans first recorded together in 2008 when Caws added vocals to Hatfield's "Such A Beautiful Girl" on her *How To Walk Away* album. It must have been a happy session because, like She & Him, Isobel Campbell and Mark Lanegan, and Adam Green & Binki Shapiro, this is a male-female duo who sound made for each other. From the minimalist dub-folk of opening track "Buried Plans" to the straight-ahead college-rock of "Far From The Roses" and the fizzy punk-pop of "Mixed Feelings", the pair's voices twin eerily and sound effortlessly young and restless on a stream of adorable alt-pop melodies.

GARRY MULHOLLAND



**MOUNT EERIE**  
**Pre-Human Ideas**  
(PW ELVERUM & SUN)

**Robotic reworkings from Phil Elverum's Pacific Northwest cottage industry**

**7/10**

Since 2008's "Black Wooden Ceiling Opening" EP, Mount Eerie's Phil Elverum has anchored intermittent black metal rumble and crash with his gentle ruminations on wind, wuthering and the life of the mind. On *Pre-Human Ideas*, that voice is replaced by layered, Auto-Tuned entities on re-recorded songs from last year's calm *Clear Moon* and ferocious *Ocean Roar*, recalling the Casiotone experiments of 2005's *Eleven Old Songs Of Mount Eerie*. The synths and drum machines that supplant those albums' painstaking arrangements highlight the robust songwriting underpinning standout "The Place I Live", while new vocal counter-melodies lift Elverum's "O Superman" choir out of the murk.

LAURA SNAPES



**THE NECKS**  
**Open**  
FISH OF MILK/RECOMMENDED

**Underwhelming 18th album from Australian improv trio**

**6/10**

Well into a quarter-century career, The Necks are clearly attempting to find new ways to break up their familiar pattern of slow-build/crescendo/slow-climbdown. Sadly, *Open* cuts the crescendo out of the equation, resulting in a 70-minute tentative noodle. Beginning with languid chimes and Debussy-an eddies from Chris Abrahams' piano, all potential seems to dissipate into air like steam from a teacup. Tony Buck's role on drums is distinctly played down as Abrahams swirls in some droning Hammond organ, bassist Lloyd Swanton barely seems to be in attendance, and the music does not so much take off as forever taxi towards the boundary fence.

ROB YOUNG



## NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

### World Boogie Is Coming

SONGS OF THE SOUTH

9/10

**Dickinson brothers take the blues back to the future**

The ghosts of Luther and Cody Dickinson's extended musical family – RL Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, Otha Turner and their producer legend dad Jim – haunt and enliven the brothers' seventh and best NMA studio album. Epic in scale, *World Boogie Is Coming* is an extraordinary amalgam of envelope-pushing studio manipulation and DNA-fuelled deep gut grooves. Kimbrough and Turner appear via sampled snippets, but the LP's real grabbers are its ferocious blooze rockers, Burnside's "Snake Drive", a re-imagined "Rollin' n Tumblin'", and "Boogie", a hell-bent, jaw-dropping blast of what Luther calls "primitive modernism".

BUD SCOPPA



## OF MONTREAL

### Lousy With Sylvianbriar

POLYVINYL

**Elephant 6 maniac back on the warpath**

"I guess you feel you've got this lifetime pass and you can be a dick

7/10

and it just doesn't matter," fumes Kevin Barnes on "Imbecile Rages". Athens, Georgia's most petulant aesthete, Barnes' career has meandered from elaborate, Zombies-style pop-psych to one-man-and-his-laptop psychosis, but his John Grant-ish ill humour persists. Barnes is back to analogue recording on his 12th album, toying with laid-back mid-'70s boogie, but always in the knowledge that he could blow his ZZ Top at any given moment. Defining tantrums this time out: the cruel "Colossus" and the Beatle bummer "Triumph Of Disintegration". Bitter but sweet enough.

JIM WIRTH



## ORCHESTRA OF SPHERES

### Vibration Animal Sex Brain Music

FIRE

**Caribou-rated psych-funk Kiwis**

The latest in a line of Antipodean ambassadors

8/10

for groovy, neo-psych prog – Tame Impala, Pond, Unknown Mortal Orchestra – is New Zealand's Orchestra Of Spheres. But when this quartet get their freak on, they sound both futuristic and unsettlingly primal, their analogue adventurism as much a result of homemade instruments like the "sexomouse marimba" as their influences (Fela Kuti, Konk, Shangaan Electro, the BBC Radiophonic Workshop). As its title suggests, their second LP leans on the cosmic and tribal, but OOS reveal another side via the bass-weighted "Mind Over Might", which slyly taps Led Zep's "Whole Lotta Love" and is begging for a Factory Floor remix.

SHARON O'CONNELL



## LINDI ORTEGA

### Tin Star

LAST GANG

**Country gold from Nashville-based Canadian vocalist**

8/10

Ortega has been making decent records for over

a decade now, but she still remains something of a Music City secret. Stints as a back-up vocalist for Brandon Flowers and Kevin Costner don't exactly serve as indicators of where her true talents lie either, but *Tin Star* is likely to change all that. Her strident approach to country means she excels at rockabilly-flavoured tunes like "Gypsy Child" and "Voodoo Mama", while her open-throated delivery – lying somewhere between Wanda Jackson and Caitlin Rose – makes impressive work of twangy ballad "I Want You" and the torchy piano soul of "Songs About".

ROB HUGHES

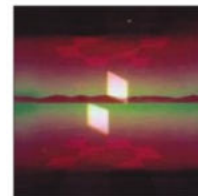
## REVELATIONS

North Mississippi Allstars' Luther Dickinson on bringing it back home



► The visceral, atmospheric *World Boogie Is Coming* is the culmination of 17 years of stylistic and sonic experimentation by the Dickinson brothers. "We strive to keep the music as simple as possible, trying to communicate a feeling, using freedom in limitations", Luther explains. "We're now in control of our powers." They made the album in their home studio, recording live, including vocals, but that was just the beginning. Once they had the band tracks, they went through their archival tapes and dropped in snippets of Otha Turner and RL Burnside. "A favorite moment of mine is 'Get The Snakes Out The Woods', where we dropped in RL's spoken intro, and then his son Duwayne laughs at him," says Luther. "It's a beautiful family transcendence of time and space, life and death." They put mics on the porch to capture the sounds of rain, wind and animals as they worked, bringing a richly atmospheric dimension to this visceral album, which makes it seem even more authentic in its rootedness. "The primitive style of hill country blues is what makes it sound modern, even timeless," Luther notes. "We're not trying to preserve the 'old styles', but trying to encourage the evolution of the songs and tradition. When roots music comes out of our filters, it turns into rock'n'roll."

BUD SCOPPA



## THE OSCILLATION

### From Tomorrow

ALL TIME LOW

**Fine, spooky rock from London three-piece**

There's a wickedly claustrophobic quality to *From Tomorrow*,

8/10

the third album from atmospheric London psych trio The Oscillation. The absorbing and enjoyably unsettling music carefully mirrors the song titles – "Corridor" leads to "Descent", a spiral of clunking percussion and unnerving bass, and then to the helpless "There's No Place To Go", with surprisingly fey vocals over a chugging, relentless and enclosing beat. "From Tomorrow" itself offers some respite, but "All You Want To Be", the narco space-rock "Dreams Burn Down" and the concluding electric storm of "Out Of Touch" take us back to that mean and moody place.

PETER WATTS



## PSAPP

### What Makes Us Glow

THE STATE 51 CONSPIRACY

**Anglo-German duo's fourth still sounds like kids' stuff**

8/10

When Psapp talk about playing music, they really mean playing: working with children's toys and homebuilt instruments as well as more familiar equipment, they've always sounded enjoyably innocent. Picking up where 2009's *The Camel's Back* left off, *What Makes Us Glow* remains childlike, but there's regret strewn amid the fun and games. While trombones slide around her, Galia Durant mourns a failed relationship on "The Cruel, The Kind And The Bad", while the joyous "In The Black" asks "Will we ever learn?" against a background of whirrs, clicks and plucked rubber bands. Perhaps it was time to grow up.

WYNDHAM WALLACE



## QUASI

### Mole City

DOMINO

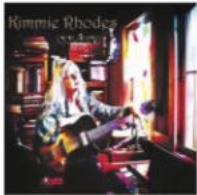
**Two dozen fragments of pop gold from the Portland, Oregon pairing**

As well as serving as itinerant musicians for the likes of Bright Eyes,

8/10

Stephen Malkmus and Sleater-Kinney, one-time husband-and-wife pairing Janet Weiss (drums) and Sam Coomes (piano, guitars) have recorded countless lo-fi records as Quasi, leaping gleefully between thrashy indie, glam rock and piano-pounding vaudeville. This might be their finest album yet, featuring 24 tracks that lurch from Beatlesy bubblegum punk ("Blasted") to slacker ragtime ("Fat Fanny Land"), sometimes invoking early Queen ("Nostalgia Kills"), sometimes recalling a garage rock take on *The Dark Side Of The Moon* ("New Western Way"). It's an LP that gets through more ideas than most indie bands can manage in a lifetime.

JOHN LEWIS



**KIMMIE RHODES**  
**Covers**  
SUNBIRD

**Rock big-hitters given a touch of country cred**  
Much in demand as a songwriter in the Nashville community,

**7/10**

Rhodes' previous six albums have predominantly featured her own material, but here she brings a touch of country elegance to the work of others. These are big, well-known numbers, and apart from a so-so brace of Beatles outings ("Yesterday", "With A Little Help From My Friends") she invariably brings something new to the party. Tom Petty's "Southern Accents" and U2's "Stuck In A Moment..." become sparse, desolate laments, and Tom Waits' "Georgia Lee" brings torch to the back porch. Pick of the bunch, though, is the Stones' "Moonlight Mile", full of atmospheric prairie passion.

TERRY STAUNTON



**JOHNATHAN RICE**  
**Good Graces**  
SQEMUSIC

**Johnny solo again, with occasional Jenny (Lewis)**

**7/10**

Having spent a year touring with Jenny and

Johnny, Rice was in danger of upstaging his solo work (his last outing was released in 2007). This brisk, nine song (30-minute) set re-establishes him as an heir to Evan Dando; a writer with a knack for marrying a sunny melody with bleak, resilient lyrics. There's a surf song, "Surfer's Lament", and a fine Lou Reed pastiche ("Lou Rider", co-written with Lewis), but Rice is at his best when indulging his penchant for punk bubblegum – see the gorgeous, pedal-steel soaked "Acapulco Gold" and the bleak/bright sunny rush of "Nowhere At The Speed Of Light".

ALASTAIR MCKAY



**ALASDAIR ROBERTS**  
**Hirta Songs**  
STONE TAPE

**Welcome to the Hotel Caledonia: Scottish folk artist keeps it local**

**8/10**

Released on new British

label Stone Tape, *Hirta Songs* is one of Alasdair Roberts' rootsiest sounding records to date. The Celtic elements are well to the fore, with Scottish fiddle and harp on prominent display, and it's all recorded in a spontaneous, real-room acoustic in which you can almost hear Roberts' head turning from side to side. An authentic folk-tale flavour inheres in the lyrics, written by Scots poet Robin Robertson, who has based this song cycle around the people, locations and lore of the remote islands of St Kilda. Listen out for a cameo from The Incredible String Band's Robin Williamson.

ROBYOUNG



**LUCY SCHWARTZ**  
**Timekeeper**  
FORTUNATE FOOL

**A 21st-Century iteration of the classic SoCal singer-songwriter mode**

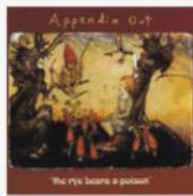
**8/10**

LA native Schwartz, who has written numerous

songs for TV, exhibits impressive compositional and vocal skills on this bountiful 15-song LP, co-produced with her father, TV composer David Schwartz (credited as d.fly). Among the highlights are a pair of expansive numbers, "Feel So Fine", featuring Beatlesque harmonies and Harrisonian slide guitar, and the lavishly orchestrated "Curse". Schwartz's flair for clever pop is apparent on "Boomerang", while her dusky alto shimmers on widescreen ballad "In The Arms" and pocket symphony "Timekeeper". Her sophisticated, idiosyncratic songs and singing suggest Schwartz has the potential to become a modern-day Nilsson or Laura Nyro.

BUD SCOPPA

**HOW TO BUY... ALASDAIR ROBERTS**  
The Scottish folk man's best records



**APPENDIX OUT**  
**The Rye Bears A Poison**  
DRAG CITY, 1997

The debut release by Roberts' first band compares favourably with labelmate Will

Oldham's Palace projects, but adds a layer of Caledonian chill with its references to frozen blight and First World War echoes. Dour slowcore with folkish textural elements in place, topped off with a creepy Arthur Rackham fairytale illustration on the sleeve.

**7/10**



**ALASDAIR ROBERTS**  
**No Earthly Man**  
DRAG CITY, 2005

Roberts' third album – the singer alone with an acoustic guitar, produced by Oldham

– was a collection of tunes from the British folk tradition. His perspective on folk really came into focus here: "The Cruel Mother" and "The Two Brothers" speak of murder and betrayal, spilled blood and roaming ghosts.

**8/10**



**ALASDAIR ROBERTS**  
**Spoils** DRAG CITY, 2009

Why be bleak when you can be Blake? Assembling a group of Glasgow's finest, Roberts tapped the

folk-rock motherlode, revealing himself as a silvery wordsmith with a visionary lineage stretching back to the Romantics via The Incredible String Band. "Ned Ludd's Rant..." managed to connect contemporary geopolitics with ancient archetypes.

**9/10**

ROB YOUNG



**SHEARWATER**  
**Fellow Travelers**  
SUB POP

**Austin band's thoughtful tribute to former touring partners**

**7/10**

Ostensibly a concept album, if initially envisioned as an EP,

Shearwater's latest features 11 covers of bands with whom they've played over their career's dozen years, with a number of original writers making guest appearances (though not on their own songs). Most convincing are versions of Xiu Xiu's thunderously anthemic "I Luv The Valley OH", Clinic's irrepressible "Tomorrow", and the intimate wordiness of David Thomas Broughton's "Ambiguity". Coldplay's "Hurts Like Heaven", however, cannot shake off its provenance, and is, like their take on Folk Implosion's "Natural One", unnecessarily faithful, rendering both a little pointless.

WYNHAM WALLACE



**THE SPOOK SCHOOL**  
**Dress Up**  
FORTUNA POP!

**Vintage Scottish punk-pop shambling with hidden depths**

**7/10**

Reclaiming the pejorative nickname once applied to

Glasgow architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his circle, this rowdy Edinburgh quartet draw on the dishevelled DIY punk-pop sound of C86-era bands like The Shop Assistants and The Flatmates. Guitarist-singer Nye Todd identifies as trans, which lends a light subtext of gender politics and Queer Theory to bittersweet confessionals like "I'll Be Honest" and "I Don't Know". But behind their goofy amateurism and whimsical song titles like "Can You Ever Trust A Man Who Thinks Matt Damon's Cool?" lie the polished, passionate, roaringly romantic ballads "Something" and "Devil Of Mine".

A rewarding, multi-layered debut.

STEPHEN DALTON



**DAVE STEWART**  
**Lucky Numbers**  
KOBALT

**More renaissance rock from The Ringmaster**

**6/10**

On his third album in as many years Stewart has seemingly settled on a comfortable if not

especially groundbreaking method of working. *Lucky Numbers*, like *The Blackbird Diaries* and *The Ringmaster General* before it, combines his old-school Brit rock sensibilities with elements of Southern US rock and soul, stopping off for gospel confessionals ("What Is Wrong With Me?"), swamp blues morality ("Drugs Taught Me A Lesson") and New Orleans jazz wit ("How To Ruin A Romance"). Fiddles, accordions and pedal steel embellish a more traditional band set-up, while Stewart's vocal growl is supplemented by an array of female foils, including Martina McBride and Broadway star Laura Michelle Kelly.

TERRY STAUNTON



# NICK LOWE

## Quality Street: A Seasonal Selection For All the Family

PROPER

Ol' Saint Nick, pop alchemy, and the retro-reinvention of the Christmas album. *By Luke Torn*



8/10

"IT'S AN ENORMOUS amount of work to make a song sound like you've just knocked it off," Nick Lowe announced in a recent interview, but that's just what he's been achieving regularly in his second life (third? fourth?), which began

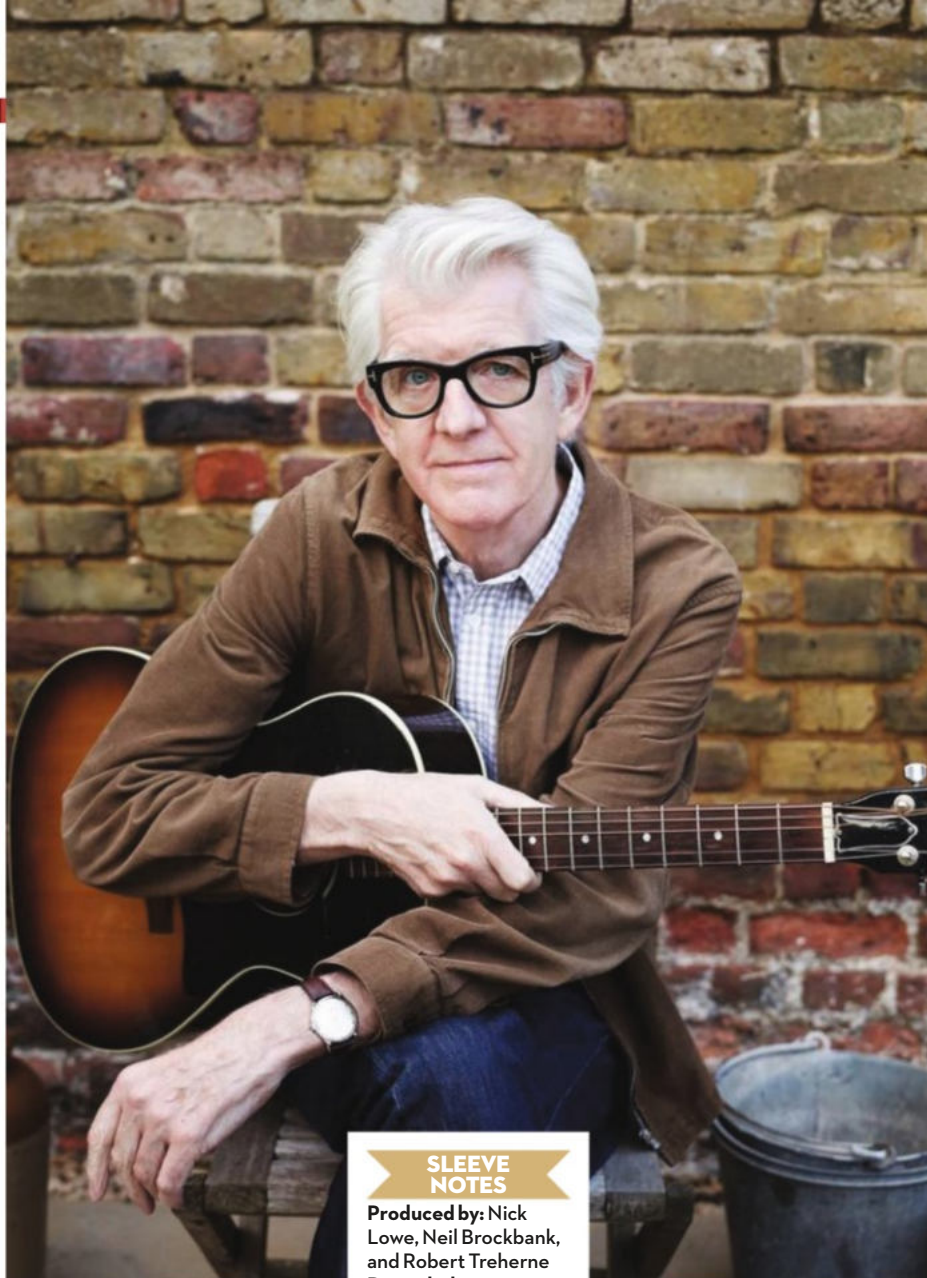
– post-Brinsleys, post-Rockpile – with 1994's *Impossible Bird*. Here, Lowe extends that streak with a shocking dalliance, bringing his considerably clever muse, legendary distaste for the staid and conventional, and deep musical roots in pre-Beatles pop, torch balladry, C&W, rockabilly, R'n'B, soul, and ska styles to bear on a dozen lively, entertaining musings on the Yuletide season.

Lowe, pub-rocker supreme whose sly songwriting (the eternal "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, And Understanding") and deft, timely production work (The Damned, Elvis Costello) vaulted him into major-player status in the '80s, would seem to be a candidate least-likely for this. Keith Urban, Carrie Underwood – contemporary country stars looking for some seasonal product – now they're ripe for some traditional musical Christmas output.

But Lowe is anything but a traditionalist here, successfully eluding formulae and cliché, gliding through a time tunnel of sorts back to the late '50s/early '60s. Christmas-themed pop culture reached an apex then – think Johnny Preston's "Rock & Roll Guitar" or Chuck Berry's immortal "Run Rudolph Run" – Baby Boomer kids and Camelot adults alike luxuriating, it seems anyhow, amid a sense of wonder and wide-eyed optimism. Joyous, open-hearted, pre-cynical – that's the feel Lowe reaches for, and largely achieves.

Playfulness is foremost from the get-go, on "Children Go Where I Send Thee", a revved-up African call-and-response spiritual that threatens to careen out of control. "The North Pole Express" plucked from an obscure '60s kids' 45 by the Caroleers, hot-rodged with a heavy rockabilly beat, chugging railroad rhythms, and a wry Lowe vocal, is magical. On "Hooves On The Roof", a snappy, jazzy number written by Ron Sexsmith, Lowe delivers the vocal coffeehouse-Beat-style, amid some whirring, reindeer-landing sound effects.

Lowe channels his inner Bing Crosby on "Christmas Can't Be Far Away", a Boudleaux Bryant song associated with country star Eddy Arnold. A delightfully odd choice, Roger Miller's "Old Toy Trains" follows a similar tack. Its gentle cadence, capturing a parent's wellspring of love, is almost unbearably touching, overly sentimental and all the better for it, showcasing a tender, nuanced vocal (Lowe the singer has come quite a ways since his



### SLEEVE NOTES

**Produced by:** Nick Lowe, Neil Brockbank, and Robert Treherne

**Recorded at:** Gravity Shack Studio, Tooting, London  
**Personnel includes:** Geraint Watkins (keyboards), Johnny Scott (guitar), Matt Radford (bass), and Robert Treherne (drums)

Rockpile days). Also, it suggests a Nick Lowe album of all Roger Miller songs would be a wonder to behold.

As "Old Toy Trains" comments on the spectre of Christmas for adults, two Lowe originals, "Christmas At The Airport" and "A Dollar Short Of Happy", hint at the darker side of the season, zeroing in on time and money, mortal enemies of Christmas fun. "Don't save me anyturkey," he snarks in the former, amid a breezy, old-style elevator music tune, "I found a burger in a bin."

Saving the best for last, "Silent Night" is the

album's one plausible concession to traditional Christmas fare. Yet with its skipping rhythms, scratchy guitars, and horn-laden, Skatalites-in-New Orleans arrangement, this is not your ma and pa's "Silent Night". Even better is a retooling of Wizzard's "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday". Stripping the original of its glam, Spectorian Wall Of Sound, Lowe's take revolves around chiming guitars,

upbeat country vocals and a pulsing, percussive organ figure – like the Sir Douglas Quintet spreading Christmas cheer circa 1965.

## Q&A

Nick Lowe

### Why a Christmas record, Nick?

I got a call from Yep Roc, who asked if I fancied doing this. My initial reaction was rather snooty and quite negative. I didn't want to soil my reputation. It was those very sort of unworthy thoughts that made me suddenly change my mind and reconsider. I thought, 'Bollocks to all that', this could be really good fun.

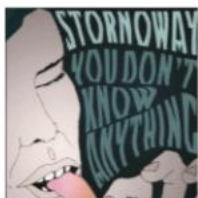
### What was Christmas like when you were a kid?

My dad was in the RAF, so we moved a lot. We just about spent two Christmases in any

one place, generally one. There was never anything constant in my Christmas memories. I remember really good food, as my mother was a wonderful cook. And the music we played, well, Bing Crosby was the sound of our Christmases. And the Christmas Carol Service from the King's College, Cambridge. That was about it.

### "Silent Night" is your one concession to tradition here.

It's such a fantastic tune. The sign of a great tune is that it can be treated in almost any old way. I really like that treatment we got – it's the sort of music that defies description. It's a little ska thing, sort of bluebeat bass. It's got an R'n'B thing as well. *INTERVIEW: LUKE TORN*



## STORNOWAY You Don't Know Anything

4AD

**Mini-album of outtakes from Oxford's finest**  
The fact that these six stray songs didn't make the final cut on

7/10

Stornoway's second album, this year's *Tales From Terra Firma*, is presumably due to their eclecticism rather than their quality. "The Sixth Wave" is oddball martial prog; the frantic "Clockwatching" sounds like "White Rabbit" meeting The Doors' "Touch Me"; "Waiting On The Clock" is glossy funk-pop; and "When You Come Down From Outer Space", with its breathless arrangement and criss-crossing harmonies, recalls REM at their most joyous. A detour rather than a destination, *You Don't Know Anything* nonetheless confirms that Stornoway have an abundance of fine songs, and bags of heart.

GRAEME THOMSON



## MARIA TAYLOR Something About Knowing

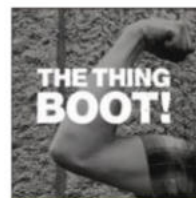
SADDLE CREEK

**One half of Azure Ray on sparkling form on fifth solo album**

7/10

Since becoming a mother for the first time last year, Birmingham, Alabama native Taylor appears to have concentrated her core strengths. Enunciated with gentle awe, the first lines of opener "Folk Song Melody", "There's grace in how you choose/What memories to lose", strike a resonant keynote. Growing out of soft acoustic settings, these exquisitely crafted songs combine a taste for sweet nostalgia with a soulful currency that's firmly grounded. Previously, some of Taylor's airy wanderings have suggested pretty wrapping without the content to match, but this time it's the full package.

GAVIN MARTIN



## THE THING Boot!

THE THING

**Swedish-Norwegian trio go abstract**

With a dozen albums in as many years, this Scandinavian trio have patented their very own

7/10

riotous punk-jazz racket – all honking baritone saxes, hardcore drumming and finger-bleeding double-basslines – and collaborated with everyone from Sonic Youth to Neneh Cherry. This LP is their most uncompromising yet. The covers of Coltrane ("India") and Ellington ("Heaven") are almost unrecognisable: instead of playing the melody they linger on a stray phrase and shred it to pieces. Mats Gustafsson's tortured, harmonics-laden overblowing sometimes takes us into ecstatic free jazz territory, but the sludgcore rhythm section remind us that this is music more rooted in heavy metal than jazz.

JOHN LEWIS



## THE STRANGER Watching Dead Empires In Decay

MODERN LOVE

**New moniker, same foggy outlook from Manc expat**

7/10

The Stranger is another alias from Leyland James Kirby, who under his own name and The Caretaker has released excellent, poignant ambient music reflecting on Alzheimer's and memory – while as V/Vm he mangled Chris de Burgh into phantasmagoric camp. Here he blends the two impulses on a dark, pulsating album that sits alongside other neo-industrial work from Raime and The Haxan Cloak – underpinned by wraiths of static and portentous percussion, its finest moments, like "Spiral Of Decline", are those that lose the sentimental strings of earlier work and sketch out dub techno in the starkest possible hues.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

WE'RE  
NEW  
HERE

## Swearin'



➤ Swearin' formed in 2011, when Allison Crutchfield of Alabama pop-punks PS Eliot and Kyle Gilbride of Brooklyn indie-rockers Big Soda, then a couple, decided to quit their respective groups and join forces. "We had both separately been writing songs and had both felt like the bands we were in at the time were coming to an end," says Crutchfield. Moving to New York, the pair recruited bassist Keith Spencer and drummer Jeff Bolt, and recorded their self-titled 2012 debut for the Detroit punk label Salinas. *Swearin'* is an endearingly noisy mush of mid-'90s influence – The Breeders, Built To Spill, riot grrrr! – but its follow-up, *Surfing Strange*, sees the band finding their voice, softer and more introspective moments breaking up the punk clatter. "The first record was almost a collection, they were songs we separately brought to the table," says Crutchfield. "This new record was more of a group effort, creatively." Feminism has always been a lyrical concern for Crutchfield – Swearin's song "What A Dump" tackled the issue of street harassment – although here, she says, the personal overwhelmed the political. "Oddly, the songs on this record were more about my relationships with friends, which is new territory for me. I think it's situational, though. Feminist politics are something that I will always write about." LOUIS PATTISON



## SAM THOMAS Blind Theatre

JUST MUSIC

**Youthful one-man-band remakes the avant-rock landscape**

7/10

Citing primetime Pink Floyd as a key influence, 25-year-old studio novice Sam Thomas has produced a strikingly unorthodox debut that's equal parts cinematic post-rock soundscape, spectral psych-folk symphony and bombastic baroque'n'roll opera. These sprawling quasi-instrumentals bleed into each other, with spare vocals buried among the churning sonic sediment. Liquid dreamscapes such as "Gift" may hover on the edge of *Tubular Bells*-ish muso-wankery, but "Ojero" has the demented intensity of '70s Italian prog-metal, while "I'm Gonna Be A Witch" and "Isis" are avant-noir piano-led collages laced with drones and ghostly voices. Overripe and indulgent in places, this is still a richly original debut.

BUD SCOPPA



## SWEARIN' Surfing Strange

WICHITA

**Caterwauling indie-punk, from New York**  
Earlier this year, Wichita released *Cerulean Salt*, a husky and affecting indie-rock record by

7/10

Waxahatchee, aka Alabama singer-songwriter Katie Crutchfield. Close on its heels comes the second album from Swearin', a band co-fronted by Crutchfield's sister (and former bandmate in Alabama pop-punks PS Eliot). *Surfing Strange* hits similar touchstones to Waxahatchee – Sebadoh, The Breeders, that whole '90s grunge wave – albeit with rather more noisy brio. Still, they retain a pleasing economy, and "Watered Down" and "Echo Locate" find Crutchfield and her other half, Kyle Gilbride, carve sincerity and sentiment out of skinned-knee harmonies and lurching quiet-loud guitars.

LOUIS PATTISON



## THROWING MUSES Purgatory/Paradise

THE FRIDAY PROJECT

**First album in a decade from Kristin Hersh and co**

7/10

For anyone who has missed Throwing Muses during their 10-year hiatus, then *Purgatory/Paradise* will feel like quite a treat. It's not just an album, but also a handsome book containing photos, essays and lyrics; the music content, meanwhile, stretches to 32 new songs. Recorded with drummer Dave Narcizo and bassist Bernard Georges, these songs run from 21 seconds to 4:46; some of the shorter ones resemble nursery rhymes, while among the longer songs, "Slippershell" especially sounds like vintage Muses. A stripped-down production adds intimacy, though Hersh's voice isn't quite as strong as it once was.

MICHAEL BONNER



## TINDERSTICKS

### Across Six Leap Years

LUCKY DOG

Slightly pointless retrospective album from the symphonic popsters Stuart Staples' mournful

**5/10**

chamber pop outfit are very much an item again, following their fine recent soundtrack to Claire Denis' *Las Salauds*. Here, to celebrate 21 years together, they revisit 10 seemingly random tracks from their back-catalogue. "Friday Night" and "Marseilles Sunshine", both sketches on Staples' first solo album, are given the full, widescreen, cinematic Tindersticks treatment. "Say Goodbye To The City" has a rockier sense of urgency, while "A Night In" and "I Know That Loving" both sound a bit more... Nick Cave-y. Other versions are so microscopically different from the originals that you wonder why they've bothered.

JOHN LEWIS



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Red Hot + Fela

KNITTING FACTORY

Diverse cast honours Fela Kuti in support of AIDS charities

**6/10**

The 'Red Hot' series has consistently been characterised by eclecticism and invention, and this tribute to the Nigerian icon (who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1997) is no exception. Few stick to Fela's trademark Afrobeat sound and electro-house, R&B and hip-hop renditions of his anthems abound, featuring the likes of Spook Mathambo and members of The Roots and Dead Prez. And it's those who deviate furthest from Fela's template who reap the greatest rewards, including a psych-soul collaboration between My Morning Jacket and Alabama Shakes' Brittany Howard and a hypnotically spooked Kronos Quartet/TV On The Radio hybrid on "Sorrows, Tears & Blood".

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



## RICHARD WARREN

### Rich Black Earth

DECIMAL

Former Hybird's third solo flight Perhaps as well known for serving time with Spiritualized, Starsailor

**6/10**

and Soulsavers as for his own projects, singer-songwriter and guitarist Warren concludes his solo "ditch trilogy" with this eight-song, self-produced offering. Like 2011's *The Wayfarer*, it's very much a mood piece – crepuscular country soul, Gothic blues and lounge crooning with a Lynchian ambience – but Warren has eased off on the electrification and slide, relying instead on a twanging acoustic with pickup and a warmly gloomy wash of reverb. There's nothing here to surprise his fans, nor those of Richard Hawley or Mark Lanegan, but the seduction it effects is too moody for *Rich Black Earth* to be considered mere background music.

SHARON O'CONNELL



## WASHINGTON IRVING

### Palomides: Volumes 1 & 2

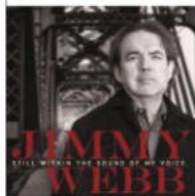
INSTINCTION RACCOON

Impressive debut from feral, folk-inflected Scots Raised in the trad folk surrounds of Oban,

**7/10**

Irving's abrasive but open-hearted rock is an honest and regenerative approach to their local culture. The lone darkness of death ballad tradition ("The Duel") and the unifying glow of communal strength ("Babble") are given renewed charge and bold sense of purpose in their amped-up dynamics. A cauterising remake of the standard "She Moved Through The Fair" shows their confidence and ingenuity while the masterfully unfurled original "Fort Long" confirms it – with a melodic and steady heartbeat that's a sure tonic in equivocal times.

GAVIN MARTIN



## JIMMY WEBB

### Still Within The Sound Of My Voice

MEMBRAN

He can sing, too, you know...

**6/10**

Always acclaimed more as a writer than a performer, Webb actually has a pleasingly gritty voice full of character, as heard on his 2010 duets album, *Just Across The River*, on which he was far from eclipsed by his higher-profile singing partners. The sequel is at least that record's equal as he again revisits some of his best-known songs with sumptuous, piano-led arrangements underpinning classy vocal duets with 14 A-list names. Standouts include a stately "The Moon's A Harsh Mistress" with Joe Cocker, a spine-tingling "MacArthur Park" with gorgeous harmonies from Brian Wilson and an elegant "Shattered" with Art Garfunkel, full of autumnal melancholia.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



## THE WHYBIRDS

### A Little Blood

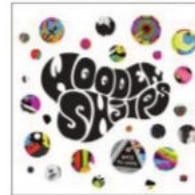
LITTLE RED RECORDING COMPANY

Lively and varied guitar rock grooves

**7/10**

The third album from the Bedford trio finds them consolidating the intuitive Americana-tinged rock on their previous records but with an added maturity to their writing. The likes of "The Band Counts Four" and "Before I Let You Down" echo down the jangling country rock hallways walked by The Jayhawks on their early albums, while "Nobody Knows Me" and "More Than He Could Stand" are rooted in a more vintage blues-infused British rock mindset. Blessed by three players who all contribute to the writing, the result is an album showcasing a full spectrum of tints and shades, able to shift its personality at the crash of a power chord.

TERRY STAUNTON



## WOODEN SHJIPS

### Back To Land

THRILL JOCKEY

Cali space rockers' studio fourth

**7/10**

Before Wooden Shjips recorded 2011's *West*, guitarist Ripley Johnson predicted that it would sound something like his hero Neil Young's work with Crazy Horse, but it was not to be. And despite some gnarly soloing, *Back To Land* is not that album, either. Repetition to the point of ruthless insistence remains the quartet's MO, their heat-haze moodiness – achieved via intense drone, fuzz and a compelling motorik drive – as evocative of a '60s roadtrip as any inner, hallucinogen-fuelled journey. Here, their horizon expands via garage-psych incantation "In The Roses" and chugging closer "Everybody Knows", which suggests a Granddaddy epic; the Shjips' ragged, country-rock opus is clearly some way off yet.

SHARON O'CONNELL



## THE WOODWARDS

### Two

WOOD

Pulpy folk from Amsterdam via New York

**8/10**

Complicated story. Successful Dutch artist Peter Schuyff named his group after a squatted department store in Vancouver (the city where he spent much of his childhood). He lived in New York's Chelsea Hotel, but recorded this, his second album, after moving to Amsterdam and forming a duo with Stevie Guy (a woman). As you'd expect from a sum of the above parts, *Two* is like a pulpier, sunnier Lou Reed. The songs are all stories, half-spoken, with Guy spooning honey on Schuyff's careworn ruminations. The mood is set by "The Wood", a sultry fantasy in which a lusty Schuyff is consumed by his own desires.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



## THE WYNTOWN MARSHALS

### The Long Haul

BLUE ROSE

Second album of West Coast Americana, from Edinburgh

**8/10**

To categorise the Edinburgh-based Marshals as country rock does a disservice to the emotional pull of their songs, which add a Scottish pallor to Tom Petty-ish melodies (check the "slate grey rain" of the anthemic "North Atlantic Soul"). They sound weary, but the lyrical viewpoint of lead singer Keith Benzie is weathered optimism, though the sunniness of his outlook isn't always discernible in the road poetry of his songs, which are whisky-soaked, with blurry echoes of a decelerated Hüsker Dü. The presence of ex-Cateran/Joyriders guitarist Murdoch MacLeod on bass adds muscle; his song "Tide" is a gorgeous Crazy Horse jam.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

out now on...



# BELLA UNION



**JOHN GRANT**  
*Pale Green Ghosts*

*"completely compelling" - The Guardian \*\*\*\*\**



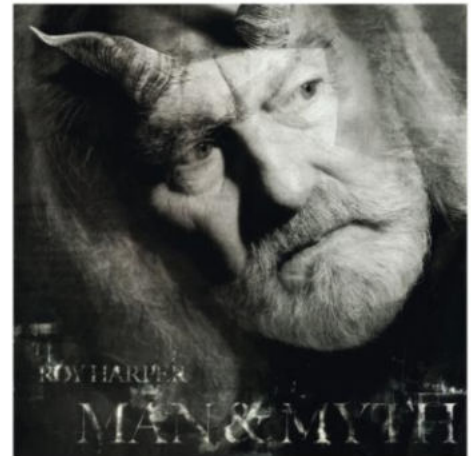
**LANTERNS ON THE LAKE**  
*Until The Colours Run*

*"sublime" - Q \*\*\*\*\**



**LAURA VEIRS**  
*Warp & Weft*

*"one of Veirs' finest yet" - Uncut 9/10*



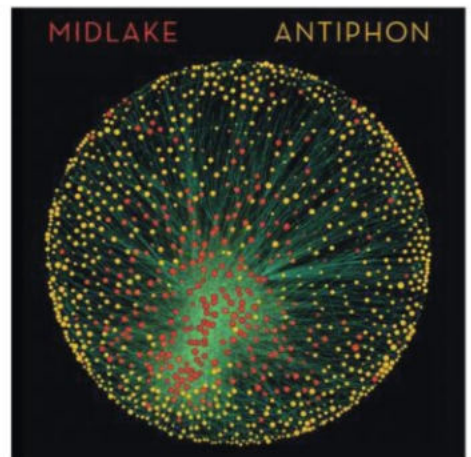
**ROY HARPER**  
*Man & Myth*

*"magnificent" - Uncut 'album of the month'*



**JONATHAN WILSON**  
*Fanfare*

*Uncut 'album of the month'*



**MIDLAKE**  
*Antiphon*

*MOJO 'album of the month'*

SCORING: THE ORIGINAL ALBUM

10 Masterpiece

1 Poor!

SCORING: EXTRA MATERIAL

10 Untold riches

1 Barrel-scrappings

# Archive

REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS



APPLE CORP LTD



## THE BEATLES

### On Air - Live At The BBC Volume 2

APPLE/UNIVERSAL

The return of the Fab Four at the Beeb and live – now with added Beatle wit. *By Richard Williams*

**8/10** YOU'LL BE WANTING to know about the music, of course. We'll get to that. But first it's necessary to identify and celebrate the work of the secret hero of the second selection of recordings made by The Beatles at the BBC, released almost 20 years after its predecessor, which represented the first legitimate issue of the material taped for the old *Light Programme* between 1962 and 1965.

That hero is the great Brian Matthew, still functioning with seemingly effortless geniality every Saturday morning on Radio 2 at the age of 85, whose interviews with all four Beatles – John and George in November 1965, Paul and Ringo in May 1966, with about eight minutes devoted to each – were transferred to seven-inch 33rpm

discs by the BBC's transcription service and sent out for use by stations around the world as part of a series titled *Pop Profiles*.

A sympathetic and amused but never sycophantic interviewer, familiar to the Fabs from their many encounters during sessions for *Saturday Club* and *Easy Beat*, Matthew caught them at a wonderful moment, between the release of *Rubber Soul* and the sessions for *Revolver*. They had the big houses and the Rolls-Royces, but the edge of their curiosity about the world remained sharp as they began to accelerate away from their origins.

John is as forthcoming and unguarded as he remained to the end of his life. "It's in what they call the stockbroker area," he says with an air of

mild embarrassment when Matthew asks him about the house in which he lives with Cynthia and the young Julian. "I didn't care where it was as long as it was somewhere quite quiet. I wanted to live in London but I wouldn't risk it until it's really quietened down. I only realise how big it is when I go home to Liverpool or visit relations."

It doesn't take much effort to detect prophetic undertones in these exchanges. When Matthew asks George about his reputation as "the silent Beatle", Harrison tells him: "I got fed up before the others with all these questions like, 'What colour teeth have you got?'... I shut up until someone asks me something worth answering."

Paul talks about discovering other kinds of music. "Indian music," he says. "Whenever



## TRACKLIST

### CD ONE

- 1 And Here We Are Again (Speech)
- 2 Words Of Love
- 3 How About It, Gorgeous? (Speech)
- 4 Do You Want To Know A Secret
- 5 Lucille
- 6 Hey, Paul... (Speech)
- 7 Anna (Go To Him)
- 8 Hello! (Speech)
- 9 Please Please Me
- 10 Misery
- 11 I'm Talking About You
- 12 A Real Treat (Speech)
- 13 Boys
- 14 Absolutely Fab (Speech)
- 15 Chains
- 16 Ask Me Why
- 17 Till There Was You
- 18 Lend Me Your Comb
- 19 Lower 5E (Speech)
- 20 Hippy Hippy Shake
- 21 Roll Over Beethoven
- 22 There's A Place
- 23 Bumper Bundle (Speech)
- 24 P.S. I Love You
- 25 Please Mister Postman
- 26 Beautiful Dreamer
- 27 Devil In Her Heart
- 28 The 49 Weeks (Speech)
- 29 Sure To Fall (In Love With You)
- 30 Never Mind, Eh? (Speech)
- 31 Twist And Shout
- 32 Bye, Bye (Speech)
- 33 John - Pop Profile (Speech)
- 34 George - Pop Profile (Speech)

### CD TWO

- 1 I Saw Her Standing There
- 2 Glad All Over
- 3 Lift Lid Again (Speech)
- 4 I'll Get You
- 5 She Loves You
- 6 Memphis, Tennessee
- 7 Happy Birthday Dear Saturday Club
- 8 Now Hush, Hush (Speech)
- 9 From Me To You
- 10 Money (That's What I Want)
- 11 I Want To Hold Your Hand
- 12 Brian Bathtubes (Speech)
- 13 This Boy
- 14 If I Wasn't In America (Speech)
- 15 I Got A Woman
- 16 Long Tall Sally
- 17 If I Fell
- 18 A Hard Job Writing Them (Speech)
- 19 And I Love Her
- 20 Oh, Can't We? Yes We Can (Speech)
- 21 You Can't Do That
- 22 Honey Don't
- 23 I'll Follow The Sun
- 24 Green With Black Shutters (Speech)
- 25 Kansas City/Hey-Hey-Hey-Hey!
- 26 That's What We're Here For (Speech)
- 27 I Feel Fine (Studio Outtake)
- 28 Paul - Pop Profile (Speech)
- 29 Ringo - Pop Profile (Speech)



The busy mid-'60s Beatles: "We don't like doing nothing"

→ you got on an Indian channel, fiddling through the radio, I always used to just turn it off. But George got this big Indian kick. He's dead keen on it, you know? We've been round to his house a couple of times and he plays it to you. It's so boring! No, no... it's good, you hear millions of things that I never realised were in it." He's asked what he thinks he might do when the group ceases to exist. "Like the others," he says, "I don't like doing nothing." He can't have meant Ringo. What does the drummer do when they're not working? "Sit around most of the time. Don't do anything. Play records." He gets bored on long holidays. "I like to sit at home doing nothing. Because if you do want to do something, it's right there."

Volume 2 contains more talk than its predecessor, and by linking the 39 songs on these two discs with snippets of dialogue from *Saturday Club*, *Easy Beat*, *From Us To You*, (the original) *Top*

*Gear* and *Pop Go The Beatles*, the compilers attempt to replicate the mood and flow of those shows, showing us how the group broke through the barriers of formality hitherto erected between performers and audience. They send up the two posh-voiced professional actors, Lee Peters and Rodney Burke, who present the early programmes, while establishing a different and more relaxed rapport with Matthew.

"What happened to our request, Brian Bathtubes?" Lennon inquires while reading out letters from fans. "Yeah, we sent it in about two weeks ago and you haven't played it," says George. "Have you done?" says Matthew. When John and Paul play a dead bat to the DJ's enquiry about their rumoured plans to write a musical, George breaks in to announce that he and Ringo are planning to paint Buckingham Palace. What colour? "Green, with black shutters." Not exactly the last word in

## Q&A

Kevin Howlett

Kevin Howlett is a radio producer and author who has written three books about The Beatles at the BBC and, with Mike Heatley, researched and compiled *On The Air - Live At The BBC Volume 2*.



### What were the sources of this material for this volume?

When I did the original research for *The Beatles at the Beeb* on Radio 1 many years ago, I discovered that

the official archive in Broadcasting House contained just one of the 53 programmes they'd recorded. So I had to look in other places. Fortunately some of the sessions from 1964 and 1965 had been preserved on transcription discs, sent abroad as part of the BBC's mission to disseminate British culture to the Empire.

Others are from the collection of Bernie Andrews, who produced *Saturday Club* and *Top Gear*. And some songs have come from people who taped them off the radio.

### Have audio restoration techniques evolved greatly since the first volume, almost 20 years ago?

They really have. The object is to make the tracks sound as good as possible, so we repaired drop-outs by inserting notes and generally ironing out the tape blemishes. We've also remastered the first volume and you'll hear a great improvement in sound quality there, too.

### Are you envisaging a Volume 3 in another 20 years' time?

I don't think so. I think these two volumes have all the essentials. But maybe someone, somewhere will pop up saying, "Oh, yes, I taped that, and I've got it in the attic."

INTERVIEW: RICHARD WILLIAMS

# the VAULT

## Life-lines of the BEATLES



**JOHN**

**PAUL**

**GEORGE**

**RINGO (STARR)**

<b>Real name :</b>	John Lennon	Paul McCartney	George Harrison	Richard Starkey
<b>Birth date :</b>	October 9, 1940.	June 18, 1942.	February 25, 1942.	July, 7, 1940.
<b>Birthplace :</b>	Liverpool.	Liverpool.	Liverpool.	Liverpool.
<b>Height :</b>	5 ft. 11 in.	5 ft. 11 in.	5 ft. 11 in.	5 ft. 8 in.
<b>Weight :</b>	11 st. 5 lb.	11 st. 4 lb.	10 st. 2 lb.	9 st. 8 lb.
<b>Colour of eyes :</b>	Brown.	Hazel.	Dark brown.	Blue.
<b>Colour of hair :</b>	Brown.	Black.	Brown.	Dark brown.
<b>Brothers, sisters :</b>	None.	Mike.	Louise, Peter and Harry.	None.
<b>Instruments played :</b>	Rhythm guitar, harmonica, percussion, piano.	Bass guitar, drums, piano, banjo.	Guitar, piano, drums.	Drums, guitar.
<b>Educated :</b>	Quarry Bank Grammar and Liverpool College of Art.	Liverpool Institute High School.	Liverpool Institute High School.	Liverpool Secondary Modern, Riversdale Technical College.
<b>Age entered show business :</b>	20.	18.	17.	18.
<b>Former occupation :</b>	Art student.	Student.	Student.	Engineer.
<b>Hobbies :</b>	Writing songs, poems and plays; girls, painting, TV, meeting people.	Girls, songwriting, sleeping.	Driving, records, girls.	Night-driving, sleeping, Westerns.
<b>Favourite singers :</b>	Shirelles, Miracles, Chuck Jackson, Ben E. King.	Ben E. King, Little Richard, Chuck Jackson, Larry Williams, Marlon Brando, Tony Perkins.	Little Richard, Eartha Kitt.	Brook Benton, Sam "Lightning" Hopkins, Paul Newman, Jack Palance.
<b>Favourite actors :</b>	Robert Mitchum, Peter Sellers.	Brigitte Bardot, Juliette Greco, Chicken Maryland, Milk.	Vic Morrow.	Brigitte Bardot.
<b>Favourite actresses :</b>	Juliette Greco, Sophia Loren.	Brigitte Bardot, Juliette Greco, Chicken Maryland, Milk.	Brigitte Bardot.	Brigitte Bardot.
<b>Favourite foods :</b>	Curry and jelly.	Good suits, suede.	Lamb chops, chips.	Steak.
<b>Favourite drinks :</b>	Whisky and tea.	Billy Cotton.	Tea.	Whisky.
<b>Favourite clothes :</b>	Sombre.	None special.	Anything.	Suits.
<b>Favourite band :</b>	Quincy Jones.	Goffin-King.	Duane Eddy group.	Arthur Lyman.
<b>Favourite instrumentalist :</b>	Sonny Terry.	None special.	Chet Atkins.	None special.
<b>Favourite composers :</b>	Luther Dixon.	Goffin-King.	None special.	Bert Bacharach, McCartney and Lennon.
<b>Likes :</b>	Blondes, leather.	Music, TV.	Driving.	Fast cars.
<b>Dislikes :</b>	Stupid people.	Shaving.	Haircuts.	Onions and Donald Duck.
<b>Tastes in music :</b>	R-and-b, gospel.	R-and-b, modern jazz.	Spanish guitar, c-and-w.	C-and-w, r-and-b.
<b>Personal ambitions :</b>	To write musical.	To have my picture in the "Dandy."	To design a guitar.	To be happy.
<b>Professional ambition :</b>	To be rich and famous.	To popularise our sound.	To fulfil all group's hopes.	To get to the top.



NME  
15/02/1963

To buy *The Beatles Ultimate Music Guide*: Zinio: <http://bit.ly/DownloadBeatlesUltMusicGuide>, Backstreet: <http://bit.ly/BeatlesUncutStore>

wit, but they weren't playing by the conventional rules of decorum.

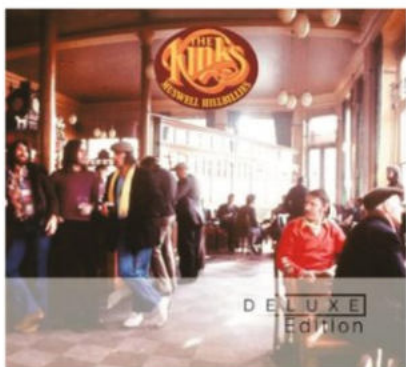
And the stuff between the jokes? The earliest piece of music here is a version of "Misery" recorded in Manchester in March 1962, three months ahead of their first session at Abbey Road. It's from a weekly programme called *Teenagers' Turn - Here We Go*, an appearance that followed a successful BBC audition. Interestingly, the performance is already greeted with squeals from the live audience at the Playhouse Theatre.

Mostly taped at the height of Beatlemania, these straightforward, unvarnished performances are

what they would have sounded like if you could have heard them beneath the screaming. This is the unit formed by countless sessions in the Star Club and the Cavern, hacking their way through the cover versions - "Kansas City", "Memphis, Tennessee", "Long Tall Sally", "Talkin' About You" - that formed the core repertoire of working groups at the time, as well as a handful of selections that show the kind of music fans they were: three items learnt from Carl Perkins' records ("Lend Me Your Comb", "Sure To Fall", "Glad All Over") plus a pair of girl-group songs, "Devil In Her Heart" and "Boys", unearthed on B-sides by

The Donays and The Shirelles. Their own B-sides are also highlights, including "PS I Love You", "I'll Get You", "You Can't Do That" and "This Boy".

The sound in the various BBC theatres and studios isn't of the quality achieved under EMI's auspices, but on some of the rockers, like "Hippy Hippy Shake" and "Twist And Shout", Paul's bass guitar and Ringo's kick drum come through with unusual clarity. Unlike their Abbey Road counterparts, the BBC's engineers could set their levels without worrying about whether a sudden spike in the low frequencies would make the stylus jump out of the groove.



## TRACKLIST

### CD ONE

- 1 20th Century Man
- 2 Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues
- 3 Holiday
- 4 Skin And Bone
- 5 Alcohol
- 6 Complicated Life
- 7 Here Come The People In Gray
- 8 Have A Cuppa Tea
- 9 Holloway Jail
- 10 Oklahoma U.S.A.
- 11 Uncle Son
- 12 Muswell Hillbilly

### CD TWO

- 1 Lavender Lane (unreleased)
- 2 Mountain Woman (unreleased)
- 3 Have A Cuppa Tea (Alternate version)
- 4 Muswell Hillbilly (1976 remix)
- 5 Uncle Son (Alternate version)
- 6 Kentucky Moon (unreleased)
- 7 Nobody's Fool (demo - unreleased track)
- 8 20th Century Man (alternate instrumental take)
- 9 20th Century Man (1976 remix)
- 10 Queenie (unreleased)
- 11 Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues (BBC session, live at Kensington House 1972)
- 12 Holiday (BBC session, as above)
- 13 Skin And Bone (BBC session, as above)

# THE KINKS

## Muswell Hillbillies (Deluxe Edition)

UNIVERSAL

Ray Davies' underrated North London song-cycle, now with an extra disc of rarities. *By David Cavanagh*

**8/10**

A KINKS FAN making a pilgrimage to modern-day Muswell Hill would probably experience a slight disconnect. These red-brick Edwardian avenues produced the writer of "Dead End Street"? Really? But then stand outside Ray Davies' childhood home for a moment, and try to calculate its interior dimensions. Looking ideally sized for a young couple with a baby, 6 Denmark

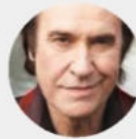
Terrace had to house Fred and Annie Davies and various permutations of their eight children. And reading between the lines of *Muswell Hillbillies*, they didn't even want to live there in the first place.

Despite its affectionate title, *Muswell Hillbillies* is anything but a tender tribute to the North London suburb that Ray and Dave Davies knew as home. A previous Kinks album had used the



Q&A

Ray Davies



**Did *Muswell Hillbillies* start from a central idea?**

Yeah. After years of being a singles band, I wanted to do something that defined The Kinks. I wanted to celebrate our origins. My parents came from Islington and Holloway in the inner city. They moved to Muswell Hill when there was a lot of urban renewal and their area got knocked down. I wanted to write an album about their culture and the transition they made when they were shipped north a few miles to Muswell Hill.

**Talk us through some of the songs.**

With "20th Century Man", I had this image - I wrote a short story about it - of a man in the last house in the street to be demolished. He tapes explosives to his body, so that if they come to knock the house down, he'll blow the place up, including himself. It's mad, semi-psychotic imagery, but that kind of thing still goes on today, with the projected train link and the Heathrow extension. They literally blow up people's houses. "Here Come The People In Grey" is about that, too. It's all about social upheaval. "Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues" is about someone who feels like they're not in control of their own life anymore.

**"Uncle Son" seems to be about people slipping through the cracks in society.**

village green as a symbol of a nostalgic Eden (and another had portrayed Australia as a pot of gold for emigrating Brits), but a move to Muswell Hill - the conceptual glue holding the 12 songs on this 1971 LP together - seems in Ray's eyes to represent a defeat for the working class, a victory for bureaucracy and the fracturing of a way of life. The character in "20th Century Man", the opening song, is a disillusioned anti-hero, alienated by every current trend and unhappy about the erosion of his civil liberties. The narrator of "Complicated Life" is plagued by a catalogue of chronic ailments. The old man being remembered in "Uncle Son" never had a voice, never had a politician willing to speak for him. These people were mis-sold a utopia and cheated out of a vote.

But if the concept sounds depressing, the beauty of *Muswell Hillbillies* is its defiantly Kinksian ability to smile its way out of despair. Full of gags and musical winks, the songs extract a wonky comedy from dire situations - and some of them really swing. Davies adopts different voices, including a tragicomic Bolanesque bleat, to articulate each character's plight (alcoholism; a prison sentence; a once-fat woman fallen victim to anorexia), while The Kinks, with Dave Davies on dobro and slide guitar, allow influences from pre-War American popular music to infiltrate their famously English sound. "Have A Cuppa Tea" is a cockney knees-up, but there's a touch of Scott Joplin in the piano and one member of the household is called "grandpappy". "Alcohol", a mournful march, has its roots in New Orleans. "Holloway Jail" is like one of those Depression-era bad luck stories on Ry Cooder's first album. "Muswell Hillbilly" ambitiously attempts to justify its pun by tracing links between working-class Londoners and mountain

My favourite line in that song is "They'll feed you when you're born and use you all your life." They'll give you a kick-start, but you'll always belong to them. That song is anti-politics. Not that I believe in anarchy, but I do believe in freedom. Even then, I had a nightmare vision of what society might become. The whole album has a lot of ominous undercurrents to it.

**And yet the music really rocks and swings.**

It's happy and jaunty, yeah. We had a Dixieland horn section on tour with us. Not many rock bands were doing that in 1971. But it added to the colour of the music we were writing. It felt great to have a phrase played on guitar and repeated by the horns. It was evoking the trad-jazz era. It was looking back to previous generations, which is what the songs were doing.

**And on "Oklahoma USA", you finally wrote about America.**

My eldest sister, Rosie, brought me up. It's a song about her going to work in a factory, and her way of escaping was the movies. No Nintendo. No PlayStation. No apps in those days. Rosie's escape was the movies. I used her as a springboard and then I drifted off into my own world. As she walks to the corner shop, she's "walking on the sully with the fringe on top". "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top" is a song from *Oklahoma!*. It's the song that my other sister, Rene, was dancing to [at the Lyceum in 1957] when she died. A lot of inner messages are linked into the words. Only people who know me would fully understand them. INTERVIEW: DAVID CAVANAGH

communities in Mississippi and West Virginia.

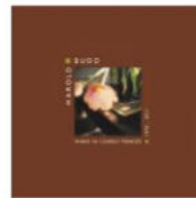
Mostly, *Muswell Hillbillies* operates in a state of exaggerated calamity where pain meets the funny bone. The exception is "Oklahoma USA", a gorgeous ballad about a girl who adores Hollywood musicals. Light as air, it appears to float several feet off the ground, so dreamily does Davies sing it. The compassionate way in which he shows us the contrast between the girl's monochrome life and her Technicolor daydreams is so delicate it's almost balletic.

This deluxe edition of *Muswell Hillbillies* adds a 13-track second disc of remixes, radio sessions and outtakes. "Lavender Lane" (no relation to the 1967 song "Lavender Hill") is an oddity, revisiting the "Terry meets Julie" vocal melody of "Waterloo Sunset" but jazzing it up in a New Orleans arrangement. "Mountain Woman" and the Randy Newman-like "Kentucky Moon" are examples of Davies' early '70s fascination with rural American societies ("uneducated but they're happy"), whom he romanticised like lost tribes. The charming demo "Nobody's Fool", meeting us in a familiar Soho, sounds like a Percy outtake but was in fact a theme tune for the ITV series *Budgie*. "Queenie", a 12-bar instrumental, is the least consequential of the bonus tracks. There are also two remixes from 1976 ("20th Century Man" and "Muswell Hillbilly"), both marred by Ray's gratingly loud vocals. Meanwhile, of the three alternate takes, "Have A Cuppa Tea" is the standout - Dave must have been irritated that his enthusiastic C&W guitar-picking was consigned to the vaults - but the instrumental version of "20th Century Man" is also illuminating, as it reveals how a deceptively casual performance, sounding like a spontaneous five-man busking session, was really a matter of careful construction.

HAROLD BUDD

**Wind In Lonely Fences 1970-2011**

WARP/ALL SAINTS



**Gently serious driftworks, compiled chronologically**

Harold Budd has always felt like the most

7/10

approachable of the minimalists: much like peer Brian Eno, he's happy to interface with the realms of the popular, even as his compositions, deceptively simple miniatures for piano, come across as one of the ultimate manifestations of Erik Satie's 'furniture music'. Full credit to *Wind In Lonely Fences*, then, for telling Budd's story in a particularly convincing manner, tracking the temporal arc of Budd's dream song from its most auspicious beginnings: starting with his psychedelic electronics raga "The Oak Of The Golden Dreams", from 1970, the set then moves into the gorgeous "Bismillahi Rrahman Rrahim", from *The Pavilion Of Dreams*, where free jazz saxophonist Marion Brown blows becalmed melancholy over a shifting lattice of bell-tone percussives and gentle keyboard trills. They're both astonishing works, and to be honest, *Wind In Lonely Fences* never really scales these heights again, as Budd lets go of the intense calm of his early years, and wanders with a more pacific gait. "Dark Star", from 1984's self-released *Abandoned Cities*, is a welcome disruption to the beatific flow, its mournful melody sounded out by depth-charge guitar. It ain't perfect, but *Wind In Lonely Fences* has plenty of charm.

**EXTRAS:** None.

JONDALE

THE CHILLS

**Somewhere Beautiful**

FIRE



**Live set from New Zealand's pop survivors, Dunedin Sound-style**

7/10

The story of New

Zealand's The Chills is one of great early promise - their "Pink Frost" might be the most sublime pop moment in the history of the Flying Nun label - hampered by perpetually unstable lineups, bad business decisions, and multiple personal crises. Chills mainman Martin Phillipps has battled with his own demons for a while, contracting hepatitis after struggling with drug addiction. But over the last few years, he's reappeared in underground music's collective conscious, both with the re-evaluation of Flying Nun's back catalogue, and The Chills' return to the studio and the stage. So while we wait for a new album, this live set from New Year's Eve 2011 reminds why these songs are firmly embedded in NZ music folklore. The playing's a bit rough, which serves to heighten the charm of Phillipps' melodies. Even more important is the song selection, and *Somewhere Beautiful* has got it going on: from those early singles like "Rolling Moon", through mid-'80s classic "I Love My Leather Jacket", and into selections from their early '90s albums, *Submarine Bells* and *Soft Bomb*, *Somewhere Beautiful* is a compendium of how to do pop right.

**EXTRAS:** None.

JONDALE



**COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH**  
**I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die (reissue, 1967)**  
VANGUARD

**Divergent and diffuse artful rock**

**8/10** Country Joe & The Fish's 1967 debut, *Electric Music*

For *The Mind And Body*, was one of the defining moments of psychedelic rock which set the Berkeley-based group apart from its San Francisco contemporaries. Released in November the same year, follow-up album *I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die* – presented here in its original mono and stereo mixes – lacked the former's focus and intensity and, post-Woodstock, its title track, along with the accompanying 'Fish' cheer, subsequently cast the group as artistically chaotic satirists. Raised on folk music, their debut utilised only electric instruments, but on *Fixin' To Die* there's a more relaxed, meditative atmosphere, mixing acoustic guitars with reverb on the plaintive "Who Am I" or the trance-like "Colors For Susan", directly influence by John Fahey and Satie's *Gymnopédies*. Despite a schizoid modus operandi, the album is remarkably cohesive, pulling together McDonald's love songs ("Janis", "Pat's Song"), throwaway pastiches ("The Bomb Song" and "The Acid Commercial", the Stax Volt riffing "Rock Coast Blues" and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band-influenced "Eastern Jam").

**EXTRAS:** A pointless orchestral and **6/10** instrumental "Janis" and an alternate mix of the title track.

MICK HOUGHTON



**ROGER ENO**  
**Little Things Left Behind 1988-1998**  
WARP/ALL SAINTS

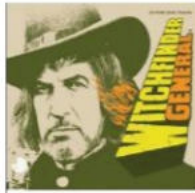
**Brian's brother, tickling the ivories through time**  
Given the high-profile proclamations, conceptual leaps and aesthetic

**7/10**

innovations made by his in/famous brother, you'd be forgiven for not knowing that Roger Eno even made music. But for three decades now, he's been essaying gorgeously muted ambience, mostly for piano, sometimes corralled by simple, unobtrusive string or wind arrangements, or ghosted by flickering electronics. It can be easy to dismiss Roger Eno's limpid pools of almost-melody as mere ambient flotsam, but listen closer and you can really gauge how clearly and patiently he's constructed his own aesthetic world. Much like the contemporaneous double-disc collection Warp are releasing by Harold Budd, reviewed above, *Little Things Left Behind* begins beautifully and then trails off a little as you trek through the decade's worth of work it documents, the samey-ness of some of the pieces having them feel a little interchangeable at times. But even later entries like "The Whole Wide World" have their merits: if anything, the turn to 'ambient country music' on songs like this cut eerily close to Arthur Russell's recently uncovered folk-pop gems. The real highlights, though, are pieces like "The Third Light", whose graceful trails of strings and patiently plotted piano phrases feel like a more restrained, demure Popol Vuh.

**EXTRAS:** None.

JON DALE



**PAUL FERRIS**  
**Witchfinder General**  
DE WOLFE

**Lost horror soundtrack gets resurrected, a bit pointlessly**

**5/10** *Witchfinder General* is a romping bit of British late-

'60s horror, somewhere between absolute B-movie schlock and the more nuanced occult films of the time like *The Wicker Man* and *Blood On Satan's Claw* – it became notorious for its gore and witch-burning torture, and even more so after its director, Michael Reeves, died of a drug overdose aged just 25. All grit for the reissue mill, but this release is really of marginal interest. Paul Ferris' score is by no means incompetent or unaffectionate, and lyrical passages like the waltzing "Soft Interlude" are rendered with downy delicacy, but shorn of the film it's hard to grasp onto many of the short, incidental pieces, whose motifs were designed to enhance the story rather than tell ones of their own. Ferris' chamber orchestra of alarmist claves, creeping clarinets and perky oboes is tasked with wayfinding the plot; the procedural titles, like "Action Mood", are a giveaway to its supporting role. Unlike *The Wicker Man*'s soundtrack, which seems to have traces of latent evil in the traditional folk that's being blithely performed, it'll take a pretty whimsical listener to find any embedded hauntological menace in *Witchfinder General*'s backing.

**EXTRAS:** None.

BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS



**WOODY GUTHRIE**  
**American Radical Patriot**  
ROUNDER

**Woody's government recordings wholly collected for the first time**

**10/10**

As the first great explosion of Guthrie's vision – essentially his first sessions – the Library of Congress Recordings find Woody in his most distilled, evocative, focused state. Coaxed by archivist/interviewer Alan Lomax, he springs here into the American consciousness, giving voice to the minions of sick, downtrodden, broke and broke down with anecdotes, yarns, reminiscences, and devastating songs of empathy that (especially if you're willing to read recent events – poverty, greed, scandal, war, natural disaster – as merely the latest in a lineage) speak as much to hard times in 2013 as to hard times in 1940. A second set of sessions, circa 1941, traces Guthrie's involvement in the Bonneville Power Administration, a government programme tapping the rivers to produce electricity, and features two of Guthrie's most moving creations – "Pastures Of Plenty" and "Roll, Columbia, Roll". Poet, philosopher, storyteller, historian, mythologist, moralist, songwriter, ever speaking truth to power, Guthrie's work here gives birth to social conscience in pop culture, and this 157-track set, gets it all down in the context it deserves.

**EXTRAS:** Deluxe edition includes documentary **8/10** DVD, 78 RPM disc featuring Bob Dylan singing "VD Blues" and 258-page book.

LUKE TORN



**STEVE HAUSCHILDT**  
**S/H**  
EDITIONS MEGO

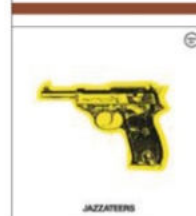
**Emeralds man opens the vaults**

**8/10**

Hauschildt came of age with Emeralds, a Thurston Moore-approved instrumental trio from Cleveland, Ohio who outgrew their beginnings in the underground noise scene to spearhead a revival in the field of New Age and experimental synth music. Far from prolific while the band were most active, in more recent years Hauschildt has hit the solo trail, releases like 2011's *Tragedy & Geometry* pioneering an exquisite, modern spin on the classic Berlin School sound of Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze, et al. The 2CD *S/H* collects rare and unreleased material ranging from the present day to 2005, a spread that both shows off his progression in equipment and technique, while suggesting his core vision – of serene, ecstatic, emotional drifts – remains essentially unchanged. There is pleasing variety to the early material: the heady washes and twinkling synths of "Jovian" sound like the score to a lost '60s space opera, while "Rapt For Liquid Minister" is an uncapitulating drone that approximates a blissful trepanation. But there is a lushness to newer tracks like "Liberty 1" that's hard to resist, and collected, *S/H* has a heavyweight quality that makes it feel a sort of partner piece to Oneohtrix Point Never's *Rifts*: a mini-universe of experimental synth music that sounds both like the past, and the future.

**EXTRAS:** None.

LOUIS PATTISON



**THE JAZZEATERS**  
**Rough 46**  
CREEPING BENT

**Postcard Records' lost band, exhumed**

**7/10**

The Jazzeaters appeared on Postcard tours, and were managed by their would-be Svengali Alan Horne, but the label dissolved before the album recorded with Edwyn Collins (including a version of Donna Summer's "Wasted") was released. The lineup evolved: singer Alison Gourlay was replaced by that other lost Postcard luminary Paul Quinn; another unreleased album was recorded. The third version of Jazzeaters, with Grahame Skinner on vocals, recorded this album for Rough Trade. Subsequently, Paul Quinn rejoined and the band was renamed Bourgie Bourgie before disappearing into myth. Lovingly curated, this set reveals Jazzeaters (v.3) to be a historical anomaly, caught in the mid-1980s moment when Postcard's nervous charms gave way to white-boy funk (see "Once More With Feeling"). Skinner – as his later recordings with Hipsway proved – has a big, mannered rock'n'roll snarl of a voice. He channels Alan Vega on "Baby That's A No No", while "Something To Prove" sounds like it was harvested from the inside of Iggy Pop's leather breeks. The charming "Heartbeat" reimagines early Orange Juice with Iggy crooning and the swaggering "Nothing At All" joins the dots between Postcard and The Jesus And Mary Chain.

**EXTRAS:** Downloads of four Edwyn-produced **8/10** Postcard songs with Gourlay on vocals

ALASTAIR MCKAY

# THE WHO

## Tommy (Deluxe and Super Deluxe editions)

UNIVERSAL

Another night at the opera, with demos and more. *By Neil Spencer*



9/10

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER 'remaster'. Techies may claim otherwise, but one suspects the best way to listen to The Who's 'rock opera' is still via the primal technology of unscratched vinyl and a decent valve

amplifier. For those hungering to hear Pete Townshend's tale of the deaf, dumb and blind kid turned guru in 5.1 SurroundSound, however, here's the 'super deluxe' version at an eye-watering £80, which also buys you 20 unreleased demos from Pete's vaults, a 1969 concert performance (dubbed 'bootleg', though garnered from an official recording), a 20,000-word book by chronicler Richard Barnes and a repro poster. The deluxe edition delivers just the original and concert versions at a more manageable £14.

The sonics of *Tommy* have always been a singular case in The Who's catalogue, eschewing the bright pop sound of their early work without embracing the heavy rock dynamics that were already the norm onstage and which followed on *Who's Next*. Instead came what Townshend called "deliberate blandness", with Roger Daltrey's vocals foregrounded over Townshend's layered acoustic guitars, a modest input of power chords and Keith Moon's hyperactive drumming set back in a production Moon found "very un-Who like".

Richard Barnes' account of the album's creation reveals that manager/producer Kit Lambert, in a hurry to get to Egypt, left the mix to engineer Damon Lyon-Shaw, albeit with detailed instructions. The band's fear was that Lambert was planning some orchestral overdubs; instead, he simply wanted *Tommy* to sound uncluttered.

The concert version (mostly from a Canadian show late in 1969) prove Lambert's ideas were right. The performances have their moments – Daltrey is mostly outstanding – but *Tommy* live is a very different animal, with Townshend's guitar, often turned up to 11, weighing heavily on the songs' drama. No shortage of power chords here – check the noisy "Amazing Journey" – or of Moon's kit-thrashing. There's no "Underture" and the piece emerges, inevitably, more rock than opera.

The demos are another matter. Firstly they show just how meticulously Townshend planned *Tommy*, at least musically. There are few surprises compared to the finished album; Pete's reedy pipes replace Roger's gutsy holler, but the musical



parts are all in place, though often played on shonky piano rather than guitar. Lyon-Shaw describes recording proceeding with a minimum of fuss. "The band would listen in the control room, talk over what was required, and then go to into the studio and re-interpret the demos. It was usually quite spontaneous. Very few bands could

grasp what was played on demos and re-interpret the ideas into a finished product."

The demos' notable departures include a substantial amount of reverse guitar on "Amazing Journey" – the genesis of the entire opera according to Townshend – and on something called "Dream One", an instrumental psych ramble studded with feedback and whoopee whistle. Ah, the joys of a home studio.

Also included among the demos is a band version of Mose Allison's "Young Man Blues",

a song that clearly wouldn't leave Townshend alone, and which he hoped to include on *Tommy* alongside Allison's "Eyesight To The Blind" (which became "The Hawker"). At under three minutes it's a more concise and appealing take of the number than the pumped-up version on *Live At Leeds*, though still with Townshend's guitar at its gnarliest. A find.

The mini-book by Barnes, a friend from Townshend's art-school days, proves exhaustive and occasionally exhausting. It's richly illustrated, prominent among the exhibits being the notebooks in which Townshend jotted ideas and songs (a gloriously tatty "Pinball Wizard" among them). *Tommy*'s evolution from vibes-tuned autistic kid to pinball-playing guru was circuitous, receiving a vital shove from writer Nik Cohn, who judged what he heard "po-faced" and suggested the pinball motif. The ideas of Townshend's guru, Meher Baba, were always central, though fellow follower Mike McInerney, who designed the artwork, rejects any idea of proselytising. "We're not the Mormons!" he snorts.

The opera's plot, which John Entwistle claimed he "never understood before I saw the film", remains unconvincing, but the spine of great songs on which *Tommy* is built – "Acid Queen", "Sensation", "I'm Free", "Amazing Journey", among them – along with the catchy bridges and bravura playing, overcome its problems. "People who couldn't get into the spiritual end of it could see it as a huge cartoon strip,"

judged Townshend.

Tired of playing crowdpleaser "Magic Bus", his opus renewed him. "I felt I was riding two horses at once: a clod-hopping pantomime version on one hand, and a winged unicorn leading the heavenly host on the other."

Pete's unicorn flew true. *Tommy* remains magnificent, the best (pace *Arthur*, *Quadrophenia*, *Ziggy*) of rock's erratic operatic turns.

### CONTENTS

DISC ONE - *Tommy* (remastered)

DISC TWO - Demos & Extras

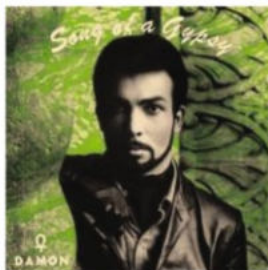
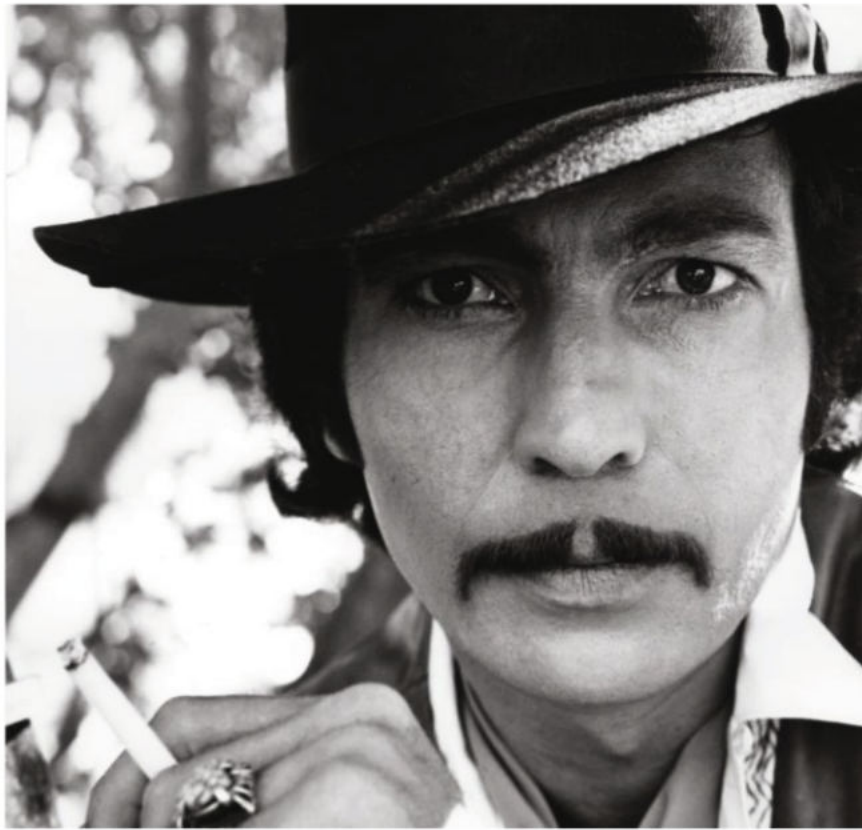
DISC THREE - *Tommy* (5.1 Surround Sound Blu-ray)

DISC FOUR - Live bootleg



# Rediscovered!

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



**DAMON**  
**Song Of A Gypsy**

NOW-AGAIN

8/10

The holy grail? Fabled late-'60s psych gem from the LA private-press underground receives the deluxe treatment

David Del Conte suspected something unusual might be going on when, every so often, during the 1990s, he'd receive a phone call asking if he was the Damon who'd recorded the album *Song Of A Gypsy* – he was – and might he have a copy of the record to sell. Since he'd released it himself in 1970 to no great acclaim, he usually had a spare he could part with. When one of these collectors let on that a copy could fetch upwards of \$3,000, Del Conte was flabbergasted. By then, of course, he had none left. "Money does not make my world go round," says Del Conte, a sanguine 73-year-old who began to call himself Damon Lane in the early '60s, "but it certainly helps grease the wheels."

*Song Of A Gypsy* is one of those rare cult artefacts whose reputation has swelled via word-of-mouth and bootlegging. Peel away its aura, however, and you'll find a standard set of late-'60s psych-folk nuggets heavily indebted to The Doors and Santana, songs such as "Don't You Feel Me" and "Oh What A Good Boy Am I" laced with Del Conte's beguiling stoned-jive poetry delivered in a cavalier croon or gravelly rasp.

Beyond the music, this first proper release of *Gypsy*, assembled by collector and Now-Again boss Eothen "Egon" Alapatt, shines a light on the extraordinary life of Del Conte. A drifter who ran with Sonny and Cher in the early '60s and once jammed with George Harrison and Ravi Shankar at Big Sur boho retreat Esalen, he spent the next decade in and out of drug programmes – "One time I ripped off a coke dealer with a gun for a couple ounces of coke. I was not a good guy" – and found Jesus in 1979. Del Conte had no time for hippies and "just knew", through his wandering, he was a gypsy. "Ten years after I put out *Song Of A Gypsy*, I realised Damon spelled backwards is Nomad," he says. "That freaked me out, because what is a nomad? A gypsy."

**EXTRAS:** Bonus *Path Of A Gypsy* CD of early singles. Extensive 9/10 liner notes containing an interview with Damon and unpublished photos. **PIERS MARTIN**

**I'M YOUR FAN**

"This is one of the rarest and best psychedelic rock records from L.A. Period."

MADLIB



**THE LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH**

**The Lords of the New Church/Is Nothing Sacred?/The Method To Our Madness**

8/10

REAL GONE MUSIC



**Storming output from the Summer Of Hate**  
Part gutter punk, part rock'n'roll evangelist, and fulltime onstage maniac, Stiv Bators was the most Iggy/Dolls-damaged presence in punkdom.

7/10



6/10

Following the dissolution of his seminal Dead Boys, he and ex-Damned guitarist Brian James founded Lords Of The New Church, claiming a moral/political high-ground in pop's new-look '80s. Their '82 debut is the template. Brooding and menacing, cuts like "New Church" and "Open Your Eyes" laid down the gauntlet at a time when MTV was creating a new generation of bubblegum pop. The songwriting tilted from Bators to James for the group's next two albums, which tightened up/slickened down their sound, but also trafficked in novelty and goth imagery. Still, even the later LPs had their moments, like *Method's* wicked "Murder Style".

**EXTRAS:** None.

LUKE TORN



**MANFRED MANN**

**Manfred Mann EP Collection**

UMBRELLA MUSIC

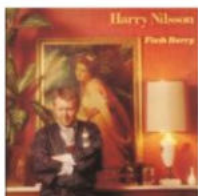
7/10

**Much maligned Mann's idiosyncratic pop**  
Manfred Mann enjoyed considerable singles

success but were never afraid to mess around with the pop formula. The core of the group was built around Manfred Mann and Mike Hugg who played together in a Butlins holiday camp jazz quartet. Their jazz background enabled them to craft singular pop hits and develop a broader repertoire than most R'n'B groups. Accordingly, the EP format suited them, this box containing CD replicas of the seven EPs they made for EMI during singer Paul Jones' era – 1963 to 1965. Rather than just rounding up hits and flips, Manfred Mann used EPs to experiment. "The One In The Middle" EP, with its coy title track, even made the Top 10. It also marked the first Dylan cover by the group, a dramatic, sincere "With God On Our Side". "Instrumental Asylum" was a complete one-off, recorded when singer Jones was ill. Its four whacked-out jazzy covers (including "Still I'm Sad" and "My Generation") captured a short-lived lineup that featured additional trumpet, saxophone and Jack Bruce on bass. The lead track of the "Machines" EP is another impressively distinctive song, driven by Bruce's pummelling bass guitar and Hugg's ticking percussion.

**EXTRAS:** None.

MICK HOUGHTON



**HARRY NILSSON**  
**Flash Harry**  
 (reissue, 1980)  
 VARESE SARABANDE

Little-heard LP charts the troubled auteur's days of wine and roses

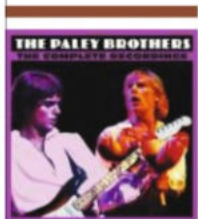
**7/10**

In my recent review of the Nilsson boxset, *The RCA*

*Albums Collection*, I contended that he recorded nothing of note after leaving the label. It turns out that statement was not completely accurate. The reissued *Flash Harry* (initially, it came out only in Japan and Europe), Nilsson's first post-RCA project, seesaws between cleverness and self-indulgence, exemplified by his decision not to appear on the opening track, Eric Idle's tongue-in-cheek character sketch "Harry". The rest of the LP was recorded during months of all-night sessions involving the crème de la crème of session musicians, led by producer Steve Cropper, though most of those present were undoubtedly loaded to the gills, given the era and the plentiful supply of substances provided by their gracious host. Even in his diminished state, Nilsson retained enough musicality, vocal acuity and wit to make music on a relatively high level. Indeed, amid this assortment of goofball whimsy is a lost classic: Rick Christian's gorgeously melancholy "I Don't Need You" (later a hit for Kenny Rogers), on which Nilsson gets to the broken heart of the matter, to devastating effect. Sadly, we'll never know what this genius would've accomplished if he'd remained at the height of his powers rather than endlessly dancing with his demons.

**EXTRAS:** Three outtakes, one alternate version.

**6/10** BUD SCOPPA



**THE PALEY BROTHERS**  
**The Complete Recordings**  
 REAL GONE MUSIC

First-ever retrospective for overlooked '70s powerpop perennials

**8/10**

Whether they were mis-marketed (touring with Shaun Cassidy!), just didn't quite have the original material, or were simply misunderstood, The Paley Brothers were an act caught in between. Too hard-rocking for Andy Gibb-style pop fame, too slick for respectability within the punk onslaught, their one album was quickly a cutout-bin perennial. Yet at this late date, they sound just like pop classicists – talented ones with an extensive sense of history – melodically riffing on the styles of The Beach Boys, Everly Brothers, rockabilly and doo-wop, British Invasion, Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound. The powers that be knew it then – Brian Wilson was a fan, even adding some backing vocals on "Boomerang", while Spector produced and co-wrote the fine, never-released "Baby, Let's Stick Together", before moving on to the Ramones' *End Of The Century*. *The Complete Recordings* retools their lone album with a set of alternate takes and mixes – though the breezy "Come Out To Play" and the clanging Ramones collaboration on Ritchie Valens' "Come On, Let's Go" remain definite group standouts.

**EXTRAS:** Alternate takes.

**6/10** LUKE TORN



**IRMIN SCHMIDT**  
**Villa Wunderbar**  
 MUTE/SPOON

Show-reel of soundtrack work by the Can keyboardist

**8/10**

In his sleeve notes to this two-disc compilation, filmmaker Wim Wenders

recounts how he begged Can to record some music for his first, zero-budget film, 1972's *Alice In The Cities*. He stood in their Cologne studio, wincing unhappily at their efforts, until keyboardist Irmin Schmidt overdubbed some synth textures. "It transformed into a massive sound event," says Wenders. "Immediately I could see and hear exactly where this beautiful music would appear in the film." Since Can disbanded in 1979, Schmidt has worked this magic on dozens of German arthouse films and TV dramas as well as a ballet and an opera. His compositional training (he studied under Ligeti and Stockhausen) might not be evident in Can's tribal funk but it's obvious on the 31 tracks featured here, with plenty of nods to Debussy, Stravinsky, Morricone, Miles Davis and even Martin Denny-style exotica, all put through a ghostly, electronic filter. There are some surprisingly poppy collaborations with English writer Duncan Fallowell (whose whispery vocals you can hear on the reggae-ish "Love" and the polka-flecked "Le Weekend"), while Scouse electronica maverick Jono Podmore (aka Komo) adds a surprisingly junglist energy to the lopsided electronica of "Fledermenschen". A cinematic masterpiece.

**EXTRAS:** None.

JOHN LEWIS

**HOW TO BUY... HARRY NILSSON**  
 The late singer's greatest moments



**Aerial Pandemonium Ballet**  
 RCA, 1971

Hard to top the material on Nilsson's first two albums, but in 1971 Harry took to the studio to tweak and remix it. Strangely it edits down lovely compositions of his own like "One", but leaves intact his version of Phil Spector's showstopper "River Deep, Mountain High".

**8/10**



**Nilsson Sings Newman**  
 RCA, 1970

One of the strongest things in the Nilsson catalogue. Harry sings selections from the Randy Newman songbook, including the lovely "Vine St", as performed by Van Dyke Parks. An impossibly romantic, nostalgic set – and an audibly huge influence on Rufus Wainwright.

**8/10**



**Nilsson Schmilsson**  
 RCA, 1971

Affluent, melodic, but touched with flourishes of quality rock – Nilsson's commercial breakthrough was a paradigm of 1970s pop. Recorded in London with producer Richard Perry, who encouraged Nilsson to produce incredible performances like "Without You" and amusing sketches like "Coconut".

**8/10**

JOHN ROBINSON



**SKULLFLOWER**  
**Kino I-IV**  
 SHOCK/DIRTER

Crude, blissfully brutal free-rock, finally back in circulation

**9/10**

The first phase of long-running English group Skullflower hasn't been

best served in physical form, which makes *Kino I-IV* – reissuing *Birthdeath*, *Form Destroyer*, *Xaman* and contemporaneous singles on *Black Sun Rising* – a welcome set indeed. At the time of these albums, Skullflower were one of the central nodes in an underground web of noise/rock refusal birthed largely from the Broken Flag label, whose proprietor Gary Mundy appears on *Birthdeath* and *Form Destroyer*; other Skullflower members across these discs include Stuart Dennison (Ramleh), Anthony DiFranco (JFK, Ax) and Stephen Thrower (Coil). But really, early Skullflower was all about the tension between leaders Matthew Bower and Stefan Jaworzyn, the latter's guitar almost as rigorously aformal here as on his later recordings with *Ascension*. Hard to pick the best of the lot, though 1990's *Xaman*, maybe, has the edge: something about its push-and-pull between blasted, deformed rock, primitivist riff grunting, and scouring freedom noise has it coming across as seriously *avant la lettre*, the only parallel around the time being The Dead C's classic *Harsh '70s Reality*.

**EXTRAS:** A limited-edition of the set comes with an extra 12", featuring recordings from Skullflower's first live show, and reprints of early flyers.

JOINDALE



**SO SOLID**  
**Solid Soul: The Best Of So Solid**  
 BLACKLIGHT MUSIC

Era-defining UK garage crew get retrospective

**6/10**

At the tail end of the '90s, speed garage trimmed out its relentless on-beats to leave 2-step, a skipping, fleet-footed style full of metallic hooklines and paper-thin snares. It became the base for some of the most exuberant British pop ever, and the scene's biggest hit was "21 Seconds" from So Solid Crew – a buoyant celebration of freedom paradoxically galvanised by the small handful of bars each MC had to play with. Sadly it only gets a truncated version on this best-of, and the brilliant "Oh No (Sentimental Things)" is nowhere to be seen, though other early singles "Ride With Us" and "Haters" are still fresh, as is Oxide & Neutrino's ridiculous *Casualty*-sampling "Bound 4 Da Reload". Their downfall was to swerve into the very US pop-rap tropes they originally set themselves against – Lisa Maffia, who wasted half her 21 seconds on vague crooning, had neither the pipes or hooks to challenge even B-list divas, and Romeo sounded strongest when being malevolently grimy rather than squeaky clean; Swiss' MJ-sampling hood elegy "Cry" is a rare late success. The new tracks gamely attempt ravey modernity, but lack confidence, and in using the US definition of 'swag' they ultimately air-freshen their pungent Britishness.

**EXTRAS:** None.

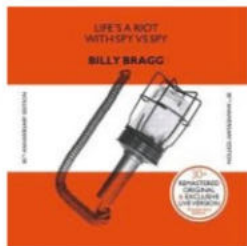
BEN BEAUMONT-THOMAS

# BILLY BRAGG

## Life's A Riot With Spy Vs Spy 30th Anniversary Edition

COOKING VINYL

The bard's compact debut, plus live counterpart. *By Graeme Thomson*



7/10

THERE ARE MANY reasons to welcome this anniversary edition of Billy Bragg's seven-track debut album – not all of them directly concerning the music. In an age of extravagantly bloated deluxe packages, there's something heartening about the

fact that, even puffed up to twice its original size, this expanded version of *Life's A Riot With Spy Vs Spy* comes in at a shade under 35 minutes.

Then there's the discovery that the additional material, which constitutes Bragg playing the album in its entirety at a recent London show, for once sounds more polished than the album itself, though there's not much in it: both versions feature nothing fancier than a man in a room with a microphone and an electric guitar, the latter played with fist-clenched passion rather than any attempt at finesse.

A quick listen to the sophisticated Americana of his latest album, *Tooth & Nail*, confirms that Bragg has come a long way in the three decades since he released *Life's A Riot...*, but it requires no great leap to join the dots. Hearing the original and the 2013 live set back-to-back, it's immediately apparent how comfortably the 55-year-old inhabits these brief, urgent songs of anger, compassion and confusion. And although the highly politicised street-corner barker of legend is certainly present, *Life's A Riot...* reveals that Bragg's interests were always much broader than that early caricature allowed.

The range of subject matter – love, obsession, class, consumerism, the minutiae of smalltown life – is not just striking but at times depressingly pertinent. The references to Anna Ford and Angela Rippon might date-stamp the album, but not much else does. "The Busy Girl Buys Beauty" remains a remarkably relevant dissection of the tyranny of must-have teenage fashion fixes and the impossible lure of celebrity. The martial rhythm guitar and rallying chorus of "To Have And Have Not" makes explicit Bragg's debt to The Clash, and the words follow suit. "At 21 you're on top of the scrapheap/At 16 you were top of the class," he sings, railing against such topical concerns as endemic unemployment and the failures of the education system.

But Bragg's real interest lies in the politics of the heart. Tenderness might well slide into mawkish sentiment on "The Milkman Of Human Kindness", where his adenooidal honk dissolves into a sorry sob, but it's a rare misstep. "Man In The Iron Mask" is genuinely disquieting, a slow, minor-key portrait of a tortured lover lurking in the shadows, staunch and loyal but with a dagger in his heart – and very possibly another in his pocket.

JAYNE CREAMER



### TRACKLIST

- 1 The Milkman Of Human Kindness
- 2 To Have And To Have Not
- 3 Richard
- 4 A New England
- 5 The Man In The Iron Mask
- 6 The Busy Girl Buys Beauty
- 7 Lovers Town Revisited
- Live At Union Chapel 5/6/2013
- 8 Intro
- 9 Lovers Town Revisited
- 10 To Have And To Have Not
- 11 The Busy Girl Buys Beauty
- 12 The Man In The Iron Mask
- 13 Richard
- 14 The Milkman Of Human Kindness
- 15 A New England

The chorus line of the still-thrilling "A New England" – "I don't want to change the world" – now seems particularly prescient given Bragg's gradual shift towards domestic rather than political matters. On the new live version he sings the extra verse written for Kirsty MacColl, a generous acknowledgment that the song has, for decades now, belonged as much to her as to its composer.

The album's epic at almost three minutes, the tragicomic "Richard" pokes around in the lonely aftermath of love gone astray. The most melodically ambitious song on the record, its highlights include Bragg's unlikely climb into crystal clear falsetto, and a slinky little guitar motif. In general, though, *Life's A Riot...* is – how shall we

put it? – economical. "Lovers Town Revisited", which ponders that early '80s staple, "fighting in the dancehalls", is barely a minute long, and throughout the guitar playing is similarly efficient, a blunt, trebly, nuisance-noise, intent only on grabbing the listener's attention.

Though raw and often clumsy, *Life's A Riot...* still stirs. Billy Bragg has become such an integral part of the landscape, it's instructive to be reminded that there was no-one like him when he arrived. Listening

again to these songs is to realise just how much that voice would have been missed had it not demanded to be heard.

**EXTRAS:** *Life's A Riot...* performed live as an encore 7/10 at Union Chapel, London, on June 5, 2013.

## Q&A

Billy Bragg

**What are your memories of making the album?**

It was all pretty much one-take stuff. I basically just recorded my live set, and some of them worked and some of them I didn't play well enough. It was a last roll of the dice for me. I was in bands that had come to nothing, and I didn't think I had another shot. There was no Plan B. Maybe now it sounds like urgency but at the time it was a bit more like desperation! You can hear that sense of now-or-never in the grooves.

**I was struck by the emotional range.** "A New England" was really about how all those years of the struggle in punk had come to nothing, and I just needed a cuddle. That side of Billy Bragg sometimes gets forgotten, but it's still there now on the new album.

**The live disc suggests that you still connect to those songs.** Oh yeah. Bollocks to hiring the Albert Hall and the LSO – get a hold of this! It's great, I can do the whole album as an encore. I recently did an in-store at Grimey's record store in Nashville and threw in the whole lot. Kurt Wagner was hugging me afterwards in tears, saying, "I never thought I'd get to hear that!"

INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON



## STONEWALL JACKSON

### Original Greatest Hits

REAL GONE MUSIC

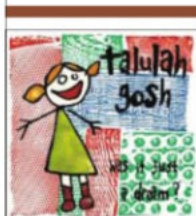
**Honky-tonk purity: Two dozen missives from one of Nashville's heavy hitters**

8/10

A Southern farmboy who literally pulled himself up by his bootstraps, Stonewall Jackson – so named after the Confederate general – appeared in Music City during the hardscrabble '50s, equally influenced by hardboiled country pioneers Hank Williams and Ernest Tubb and the narrative story-song styles of Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash, and Marty Robbins. With his sturdy baritone, slicing through like the voice of God on hangdog heartbreak and poor-boy tales alike, Jackson's best cuts leave a lasting imprint; it's telling that when country turned soft pop in the 1970s, Jackson's recording career quickly vanished. This set rounds up the obvious, including "Waterloo", his 1959 historico-novelty smash. Though some of his lighter-fare numbers remain period pieces, Jackson had his share of stone-cold classics: "Smoke Along The Tracks", a lonesome, chugging epic later covered by Dwight Yoakam; "I Washed My Hands In Muddy Water", a tale of class struggle that resonates still; the prisoners' tale "Life To Go", which somehow eluded Johnny Cash's repertoire; "Promises And Hearts", terrific here, but could have been devastating covered by Buck Owens; and the hard honky-tonk turn "Why I'm Walkin'".

**EXTRAS:** None.

LUKE TORN



## TALULAH GOSH

### Was It Just A Dream?

DAMAGED GOODS

**c.66 minutes of C86 in excelsis**

7/10

Given that their alumni include the winner of the 2012 Turner Prize, Elizabeth Price, as well as the philosophy editor at the Oxford University Press and the former head of mergers at the Office of Fair Trading, it's ironic that Talulah Gosh were once derided for a lack of ambition. Rocking that Christian Union look all the way to the top of the indie charts, the Oxford bright young things' Enid Blyton punk rock made them a remarkable number of enemies among scene worthies over the course of their five-single career. "We weren't the Sex Pistols obviously," concedes co-frontwoman Amelia Fletcher in the sleeve note to this exhaustive retrospective, but never mind the perceived lack of bollocks. Like stylistic forebears Dolly Mixture and Girls At Our Best!, Talulah Gosh could do smart and subtle as well as soft and giddy; check out those high-life guitars on "Beatnik Boy", the Velvet Undergrowth around "Escalator Over The Hill"; the quiet longing that underpins the great movie spoiler that is "Bringing Up Baby". Not innovators, maybe, but gently does it nicely enough.

**EXTRAS:** A download-only live show recorded 7/10 by a later incarnation of the band, featuring Price heckling her replacement, Eithne Farry.

JIM WIRTH



## TEARS FOR FEARS

### The Hurting (reissue, 1983)

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

**When they were young it seems that life wasn't so wonderful**

8/10

Acknowledged recently by the band as "the one true Tears For Fears record" – but overshadowed by the subsequent global success of *Songs From The Big Chair* – *The Hurting* was a remarkable debut album for a band still in their early twenties. Inspired by their fascination with primal therapy psychologist Arthur Janov, Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith tried to make sense of their unhappy childhoods in the context of sophisticated synth pop while the genre was still in its infancy. Oddly, their first two singles – the infectious, if pensive, "Suffer The Children" and "Pale Shelter" – failed to chart, and it was instead the stripped-back, percussive "Mad World" that caught the UK's imagination, climbing slowly to No 3 in late 1982. They maintained the mood elsewhere with intricately arranged minor-key anthems like the title track and "Memories Fade", while the influence of solo Peter Gabriel could clearly be heard in the sparsely echoing "Ideas As Opiates" and the claustrophobic paranoia of "The Prisoner".

**EXTRAS:** The 2CD set offers B-sides and 8/10 rarities. The deluxe four-disc set includes two BBC sessions and a December 1983 Hammersmith Odeon concert on DVD for the first time.

WYNDHAM WALLACE

## REVELATIONS

### Amelia Fletcher of Talulah Gosh

▶ "Every time I started a new job I tried to keep the band separate but it always came out," shambly indie queen Amelia Fletcher tells *Uncut* with a sigh. "I am pretty different at work – more forthright and determined. And tough."

Now a professor of competition policy, the 47-year-old Fletcher has led a life of contrasts: economist by day, frontwoman of archetypal shy-girl groups Talulah Gosh and Heavenly by night. "Secretly, I'd love to have been a full-time pop star but I'm glad in retrospect that I wasn't – it's meant that being a band was always fun," says the mother of two, who has continued to produce smart, quietly subversive records like *Tender Trap's* 2012 offering *Ten Songs About Girls* and the angular jangle of *Marine Research's* 1999 LP, *Sounds From The Gulf Stream*.

There may not have been many BMX Bandits fans among her former colleagues at the Office of Fair Trading, but Fletcher can at least wear a Pastels badge with pride in her new post at the University of East Anglia. "The indies have invaded academia," she beams. "Two people in the press department at UEA are in indie bands. Remember Prolapse? They had three archaeologists!" **JIM WIRTH**



## CARLA THOMAS

### Sweet Sweetheart

STAX

**Belated appearance of a lost soul gem**

Despite being regarded as Memphis soul royalty (her previous three albums all contained the word

8/10

"queen" in their titles), Thomas' paymasters at Stax must have thought the crown was beginning to slip. It might go part of the way to explaining why the label opted to shelve this 1970 collection, produced by Chips Moman, or it was arguably because they were trying to re-position themselves away from old-school traditional soul and towards the activism and innovation of The Staple Singers and Isaac Hayes. The sassy Goffin & King title track is typical Carla territory, but the likes of James Taylor's "Country Road" and Free's moody and bombastic "Heavy Load" display an admirable desire to break away from the radio-friendly confines of her past material. A sense of grandeur pervades throughout the set, even on Ray Stevens' saccharine "Everything Is Beautiful", which is overhauled into a vibrant gospel finger-clicker that owes a sizable debt to Aretha Franklin. Touchingly, she saves her best performance for The Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody", a song the Gibbs originally wrote for her late duet partner Otis Redding, and which he never actually got to record.

**EXTRAS:** A dozen tracks comprising outtakes 7/10 and alternate versions of earlier hits ("B-A-B-Y", "Good Good Lovin'").

TERRY STAUNTON



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### I Am The Center

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

**Relax – it's a 2CD comp of "Private Issue New Age Music In America, 1950-1990"**

8/10

Joss stick-scented titles like "Seventh Chakra Keynote B", "Seraphic Borealis" and "Waterfall Winds" might cause the odd eyebrow to be raised. But, as *Uncut's* recent articles on Lاراaji and Iasos have asserted, New Age music is finally undergoing a critical re-evaluation, and *I Am The Center* is a thorough and elevated survey of the scene's underground potentates. Compiled from ultra-rare vinyl and cassettes by Douglas McGowan, the doyen of private press record collectors, the 20 tracks make a persuasive case for, say, Constance Demby and Peter Davison (a former student of John Cage) to be judged alongside hipper ambient contemporaries like Eno and Cluster. Iasos and Lاراaji (with the throbbing, uncharacteristic synth jam, "Unicorns In Paradise") figure next to a Satie-like étude by the early 20th-Century spiritual teacher George Gurdjieff, while Aeolia's "Tien Fu: Heaven's Gate" feels like a beatifically positive response to *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Most transporting, though, is Daniel Emmanuel's "Arabian Fantasy", a droning organ piece that stands comparison with Terry Riley's classic *Persian Surgery Dervishes*.

**EXTRAS:** A fascinating 44-page booklet that 8/10 treats the artists' Utopian ideals with commendable respect.

JOHN MULVEY

## The Specialist

### Dust-To-Digital World



A group of Siamese musicians perform Luk Thung music

► “EVER SINCE I was a teenager I’ve always been driven to seek sounds that I’ve never heard,” recalls Lance Ledbetter, the proprietor of reissue house Dust-To-Digital. “As we get older, it is easy for the adventurous listener to become cynical. ‘Why would I buy that record? I can look at the cover or the label and know exactly what it is going to sound like. No need to bother...’” With his label, Ledbetter’s been fighting that cynicism for the past decade, releasing beautifully presented, intelligently curated sets of American vernacular music.

But while Ledbetter has kept his eye focused on the American tradition, his interactions with a micro-scene of bloggers/collectors, busy crate-digging the East for rare 78s and 45s, has Dust-To-Digital mapping alternative geographies and stories from across the planet. The signal release from the label’s latest batch is **Longing For The Past: The 78 RPM Era In South-East Asia** DUST-TO-DIGITAL 8/10, a four-disc box moving through Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia. *Longing For The Past* is rich with glorious

music, none more so than the solo recitals: some breathtaking recordings of the Vietnamese dan bau, such as Nguyen Van Minh-Con’s “Nam Nhi Tu”, are hard to beat.

Scroll forward several decades, and on **Luk Thung: Classic And Obscure 78s From The Thai Countryside** DUST-TO-DIGITAL 8/10, David Murray of the Haji Maji blog selects choice examples of Thailand’s mid-20th-Century ‘country music’, Luk Thung: characterised by chiming percussion; ornate melodies; dynamic stop-starts, like on Phloen Phromdaen’s “Season Of Love”.

Dust-To-Digital collaborator Chris Menist notes in the liners to his **Qat, Coffee And Qambus: Raw 45s From Yemen** PARLORTONE 9/10 that “recorded music becomes a prism through which we can view aspects of a country’s history, as well as its place in the world.” Yemeni music is largely impervious to Western influence: here, the tang of the oud underpins songs of lost love, vocals

move across shifting, hypnotic rhythms. The real stunner on *Qat...* is “Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa”, where the raw voice of Fatima Al Zaeleyah is accompanied by the percussive pulse of the sahn suhasi (copper tray). Even this is bested, though, by **Kassidat: Raw 45s From Morocco** PARLORTONE 9/10. Another set from the collection of David Murray, it provides an index of Moroccan music, from the call-and-response of chaabi to âita from Cheika Hadda Ouakki and Cheikh Bennasser Oukhouya, whose “Ha Howa Ha Howa” is a disquieting love song, dual vocals pirouetting in the glazed glow of old vinyl distortion. **JONDALE**



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Mutazione: Italian Electronic & New Wave Underground 1980-1988

STRUT/ECSTATIC

#### 8/10 A look at the darker side of Italian post-punk

*Mutazione* is not the first compilation of Italian new wave and DIY electronics, but the love and attention its compiler, Alessio Natalizia of the band Walls, has put into it ensures that this 2CD, 26-track survey of a musically and politically volatile period is a cut above the rest. Like its more commercially minded twin Italo-disco, the arrival of affordable electronic instruments fuelled Italy’s post-punk scene, enabling seditious acts to easily express themselves in perverse and poetic ways. Released on cassettes and limited vinyl pressings, few people heard them. Sex, death and fear are recurring themes, the prevailing mood of paranoia arguably exacerbated by the unstable political climate hanging over from the ‘70s. As an extreme example, Laxative Souls’ “Niccolai” mixes a malevolent drone with the phone call terrorist group Brigate Rosse made to reveal the location of the body of politician Aldo Moro. Elsewhere, primitive drum patterns slither across Neon’s “Informations Of Death”, while “Norton Personal Computer” by Doris Norton, the Italian Suzanne Ciani, was composed using early software by Apple, her sponsor at the time. Taking in noise and jazz to funk and synthpop, *Mutazione* is a peek inside a madhouse.

**EXTRAS:** None.

PIERS MARTIN



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Live At Caffé Lena: Music From America’s Legendary Coffeehouse 1967-2013

TOMPKINS SQUARE

#### 9/10

#### Tasty triple-disc box of unreleased folk fancies

Less celebrated than Greenwich Village counterparts like the Gaslight Café or The Bitter End, Caffé Lena was nevertheless a major stagepost of the ‘60s folk revival. This fascinating 3CD set not only serves as a pass of the hat to its heritage, but also a handy companion piece to the Coen Brothers’ forthcoming flick *Inside Llewyn Davis*, loosely based on the memoir of regular visitor Dave Van Ronk. It’s entirely fitting that the latter’s 1974 rendition of “Gaslight Rag”, complete with an intro by erudite venue owner Lena Spencer, is prominent among the set of nearly 50 live tracks unveiled here for the first time. Shows from the late ‘60s and early ‘70s make up the bulk of the first two discs, highlights being Jean Ritchie’s “West Virginia Mining Disaster”, Mike Seeger’s “O Death” and Hedy West’s reworking of the traditional “Shady Grove”. While there’s no Dylan, there are more recent performances from contemporaries like Ramblin’ Jack Elliott and Pete Seeger. Disc Three makes use of the Caffé’s status as America’s oldest-running coffeehouse by including cuts from this year, most impressive being Anais Mitchell’s “Wedding Song” and Mary Gauthier’s perversely dry “I Drink”.

**EXTRAS:** None.

ROB HUGHES

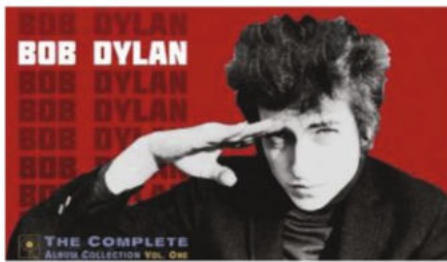


# BOB DYLAN

## The Complete Album Collection Vol. One

SONY

Something is happening... Every album, and a bit more. *By Jon Dale*



8/10

IN HIS NEW book, *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Story Of Modern Pop*, Bob Stanley, with typical elegance and erudition, comes as close as any – actually, closer than most – to bottling the appeal of Dylan in the 1960s, when he owned good parts of the world and in return, the world followed his every move, pounced on every gnomic statement, and devoured every single and album like missives of unearthly wisdom. “Dylan was closed, entirely self-sufficient,” he writes. “He was his own planet and, naturally, you desperately wanted to find a way to travel there.”

It seems oddly telling that Stanley’s book and this definitively not-quite-definitive set of all Dylan’s studio and live albums should appear on the shelves at roughly the same time. One celebrates the multiple narratives of pop pre-internet age, the religion of sharing records, taping music, following the charts, mapping the highways and by-ways of modern pop in all its manifold contradictions. *The Complete Album Collection Vol. One* feels like a veiled attempt to wrap up a messy era and claim it as one’s own; to reduce all of that wild complexity to a series of totemic documents, albums plotted chronologically, with thoroughly decent and highly normative logic, and an extra double-disc compilation, entitled *Sidetracks*, which pulls together all the stray songs and B-sides that appeared on Dylan’s multiple compilation albums. So far, so Fred Fact.

It’s hard to find fault with good portions of the music on these discs. By its very design, this box includes several albums that have taken the fabric of popular music and sheared it into new, unexpected styles: *Bringing It All Back Home*; *Highway 61 Revisited*; *Blonde On Blonde*; *The Basement Tapes*; *Blood On The Tracks*, you know the drill... Breathtaking moments of sublimity originally etched into 12-inch grooves and subsequently reduced to 12-or-so centimetres of digitalia for your continual consumption.



Spend as much time as you need, want, desire with these albums: they’re hard to beat.

Having Dylan’s 41 albums handed to you in one box also helps contextualise the many swerves and swoops in his career, both gracious and ungracious. There’s the post-*Blonde* run of cryptic, ghostly song forms on *John Wesley Harding*, *Nashville Skyline*, *New Morning* and *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*, a run that’s still pregnant with untapped possibility. There are the divisive albums of fierce, declamatory, conservative Christianity from the early ’80s (hearing them together in one sitting is seriously draining, kinda like walking into a new school and being hazed by the entire student populace, but it’s almost worth it to be reminded of the brilliance of the furious, unrelenting “Jokerman”). There’s *Oh Mercy*, whose songs I still can’t entirely parse from the cotton wool blur that is Daniel Lanois’ production (the finest moment from these sessions, “Series Of Dreams”, is on *The Bootleg Series Vol. 3*, *natürlich*).

There are also those two early ’90s albums of folk songs, *Good As I Been To You* and *World Gone Wrong*, which felt weird at the time and have lost none of their puzzle quotient, for this listener at least, in the intervening years. Dylan never fully seized the moment after these albums, and a lot of what happened since – even acclaimed albums like “*Love And Theft*” or *Tempest* – have, well, felt like good-to-occasionally-great

late-era Dylan records that wouldn’t get that much of a pass if they’d been attributed to a lesser icon.

And that’s the story *The Complete Album Collection Vol. One* fills out, ultimately: an incredibly sustained marathon of creativity across the ’60s and ’70s, some weird detours in the ’80s, settling into ornery elder statesman/figurehead status from the ’90s onward. In its way it presents a far more rounded and realistic picture of Dylan the songwriter than the more hallucinatory, hagiographic texts that have been written about him. It also reads a little like another in a long line of music industry tactics to meet or beat the ‘entire catalogue in 20 minutes’ download rhetoric of the torrent-scape: feel the width, friends. (Oh, and it’s also available as a ‘harmonica-shaped USB’: how cute.)

Ultimately, I’m left thinking, no more! Give these albums their rightful place in the firmament (or elsewhere), by all means, but dig further into those archives, please: dust off the “Complete Basement Tapes”; let “Blood On The Acetates” out of its box; bake those reels and let’s get serious with the hardcore shit. If you’re going to play to that collector crowd, the least you could do is sing their song, right?

“Dylan’s back catalogue is like a library,” Stanley continues, “with narrow, twisting corridors and deep oak shelves drawing you in: start leafing through the pages and you may never want to stop.” This box, conversely, is the Encyclopedia of Dylan. A monumental set of music, it’ll get you up to speed real quick, but it’s never going to replace the experience of happily stumbling from album to album, finding them in second-hand record bins, borrowing them from friends, piecing together the myth from fragments of maps and legends. Dylan, the ultimate mystique artist? Maybe no more.

# CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND HIS MAGIC BAND

## Trout Mask Replica

ZAPPA

Newly remastered, and still astonishing. *By John Robinson*



9/10

AN ALBUM HAS approximately the same relationship to where it was made as a crime does to its scene – this one more than most. Not that you’d perceive that from the jaunty 2010 real estate listing that described 4295 Ensenada Drive, Woodland Hills,

California as “a charming Girard cabin with a famous rock’n’roll history”. In the legend of Captain Beefheart, this is a location not noted for its charm: this was the site of the nine-month regime of harsh discipline, welfare cheese and psychological warfare that ultimately gave rise to *Trout Mask Replica*.

Time has a way of gentrifying even the most edgy location, but 44 years after its release, after its admission to the USA’s National Recording Registry; even after all those recommendations from Matt Groening, the *Simpsons* guy, *Trout Mask* refuses to become a domestic animal. It has aged, but it hasn’t mellowed. Unfairly to the music, it is a hip barometer; a gauntlet thrown down, daring you take up its challenge. Tom Waits, a fan, recently described it as like “a glimpse into the future; like curatives, recipes for ancient oils.” Even Elliott Ingber, a Magic Band guitarist and very out-there human, was floored by it: “After you put it on,” he said to me last year, “everything was shambles.”

As if to confirm its under-the-radar quality, this new version (deriving not from the Warners-held original multitracks, but remastered by Bob Ludwig from “safety tapes” from the archive of album producer Frank Zappa) came out with no advance publicity in May. (You mean you didn’t sense it was coming?) Some may even question how a record so inextricably linked to the rawness of the environment which gave rise to it can possibly benefit from such sonic buffing.

In fact, this remaster re-affirms the value in the kind of repeated, attentive listening which *Trout Mask Replica* (a record that abuts Beat poetry to musing on the holocaust, to field recordings, unschooled jazz and, occasionally, swinging psychedelic rock) has required since its release. Producer Frank Zappa originally intended to capture the fraught intensity in the “Trout House” and record in situ. Beefheart, thinking his old friend was attempting to save money, refused, insisting on a studio production.

*Trout Mask Replica* lost nothing for that. A record of disorientating pace and abrasiveness, the teeming “Frownland” begins a 78-minute outpouring of chaotic-seeming but meticulously



planned composition. It is a record of disorientating juxtaposition and violent collage. One track (“Pena”) is actually a recording of the Mothers Of Invention. Others (“Hair Pie, Bake 1”, “China Pig”) are indeed field recordings from the house. For all his avowed rehearsal brutality, Beefheart himself busts out of the confinement of the blues and R’n’B idiom with a winning charm. His vision is surreal (“*Fast and bulbous!*”) and devastatingly lyrical (“*the black paper between a mirror breaks my heart...*”).

Taken all at once, it’s a journey into a thorny, hugely varied, but irresistible landscape – once you have noted the dangers, you can begin to observe the beauty. *Trout Mask Replica* does still contain beauty, and the job that Bob Ludwig has done has been to create mastering that suggests and reveals it, rather than insists on pointing it out. This is not often a question of increased volume (but when it is, as on the a cappella “The Dust Blows Forward And The Dust Blows Back”, it is so we hear more clearly the huffing and puffing of the Captain declaiming live to tape).

Though subtle, the new sound suggests a greater crispness in the level of detail in songs like “Pachuco Cadaver” or “Sweet Sweet Bulbs”. The latter, a

stealth classic of the record, is a song of massive groove and here we can hear freshly articulated the depth of immersion in classic R’n’B playing in the interactions between the Magic Band’s two 20-year-old guitarists Jeff Cotton (“Antenna Jimmy Semens”) and Bill Harkleroad (“Zoot Horn Rollo”). On the likes of “Bill’s Corpse”, it seems that the refit has subtly adjusted the Captain’s disproportionate volume in relation to his band.

After all, as befits an album where he didn’t so much lead the band as dictate to it, Beefheart’s vocals were recorded in presidential isolation, then dropped later on top of the extant music. The band, meanwhile – berated by Beefheart and then schooled in their parts by drummer John French (“Drumbo”) were told by Zappa that to record their double album, they had just six hours.

They did it in four – a testament to the musical accomplishment that the Magic Band, for all they endured, brought to Beefheart’s vision. Still, as arduous and unforgiveable as the process of making the record must have been, all the Magic Band’s pains and psychological torments, were not quite in vain. If they can never get over *Trout Mask Replica*, it’s worth noting that nobody else will, either.

## Q&A

Joe Travers, “Vaultmeister” of Zappa Records



**Is *Trout Mask* a project you’ve wanted to realise for a while?**

*Trout Mask* was not really ever a priority for me, simply because the opportunity seemed so far out of reach due to the master tapes being owned by a different company. In 2012, that situation changed. When we got the tapes, we transferred them only to find it had suffered over the years from age and many plays. So, the restoration had to be put in full swing.

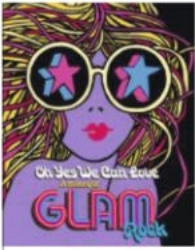
**What, to your ears, has Bob Ludwig achieved?**

Because we had to generate new masters from safety elements from the vault, Bob had better-

sounding sources to use for the current remaster. Almost all of the entire record is remastered from an alternate source than the main master tape that has been used so many times in the past. Bob is very musical and we have a great understanding about the fine line between loudness war, brickwall-type mastering and dynamic, audiophile-type mastering. Bob achieved that with the new Beefheart master, keeping the integrity of the original mixes and presenting them in a modern way, maintaining a rich, full sound, yet not overblowing it!

**Are there any other Zappa/Beefheart treasures awaiting?**

Absolutely. Some day there will be a fabulous compilation of stuff found in the vault that contain various nuggets of things from all eras of Zappa & Beefheart’s time together. From the Cucamonga days, up until the *Bongo Fury* era. *INTERVIEW: JOHN ROBINSON*



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

**Oh Yes We Can Love: A History Of Glam Rock**

UNIVERSAL

91 tracks of glitter, platforms and Mark E Smith

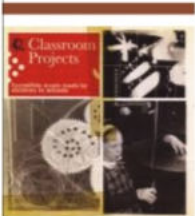
8/10

Starting with Noël Coward and ending with Foxy

Shazam, this 5CD boxset takes a courageously wide-angle view of what constitutes glam rock. The main players are all present (Slade, T.Rex, Wizzard, Sweet, Elton John, Suzi Quatro) along with one-hit wonders like Arrows and Hello, but the box includes artier compatriots like Roxy and Sparks as well as a fairly random bunch of fellow travellers who also traded in androgyny, theatricality, terrace-anthem choruses and David Bowie cover versions. While this can create interesting juxtapositions – anointed progenitors include Chuck Berry, The Kinks and Vince Taylor – it can also seem a little baffling (how are Jacques Brel, Sisters Of Mercy or Patti Smith’s “Piss Factory” glam?), climaxing in a curious final CD that includes Gay Dad, Goldfrapp, St Etienne and Pulp as well as almost every song written in the past 15 years with the word ‘glam’ in the title. Odd though it is, the result is also rather satisfying as we travel from “Mad Dogs & Englishmen” through R’n’B, punk, disco, electropop, New Romantics, hair rock and electroclash, taking in everyone from Morrissey to Burundi Steiphenson Black in pursuit of this tenuous but intriguing notion of glam.

**EXTRAS:** None.

PETER WATTS



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

**Classroom Projects: Incredible Music Made By Children In Schools**

TRUNK

6/10

Jonny Trunk’s survey of old-skool music

Trunk’s label specialises in esoteric easy-listening projects which tend to exist in the space between naïve charm and kitsch. This set focuses largely on recordings made by, and for, school music classes, which means the low-key performances of primary pupils, often rephrasing folk music, are bookended by patrician teaching aids, such as Heslington Primary School’s “Examples Of 12 Note Melodies”, which explores rhythmic complexity on percussion and piano. Occasionally, the instructive vignettes veer into experimental ambience, particularly on the tracks overseen by John Paynter who, along with Peter Aston, produced albums designed to stimulate the creativity of pupils. “Musique Concrète” from 1969’s *Sounds And Silence* is extraordinary; an ominous grind of backwards recordings, clicks and disconnected parps. “An Aleatory Game” is equally fascinating; with children exploring a musical game in which they have to react to each other while evoking the feeling of the play of light on water (it sounds like a hiccup of free jazz). True, a little of The Small Choir Of St Brandon’s School singing “Bright Eyes” goes a long way, but the Paynter-inspired experimental folk of “The Lyke-Wake Dirge” is genuinely eerie.

**EXTRAS:** None.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



**MATTHEW E WHITE**

**Big Inner: Outer Face Edition**

DOMINO

Even bigger love: a 2013 classic, expanded and improved

9/10

An assiduous schemer,

Matthew E White’s vision for his Spacebomb empire in 2013 went awry when his debut album became a larger deal than anyone expected. A year of touring has meant other projects (notably an album by Natalie Prass) remain on hold, while creating the demand for this expanded edition of *Big Inner*. Deluxe versions are often padded out by demos, but five freshly recorded tracks see White’s aesthetic progressing in adventurous, plush directions. The parallels between Matt and Jack White are already strong – the DIY business nous, the scholarly channelling of influences – and *Outer Face* is predicated on a Jack White-like restriction, made as it was with a rigorous ban on guitar, piano and horns. As a consequence, “Signature Move” privileges the Spacebomb rhythm section of Pinson Chanselle and Cameron Ralston, rocksteady while string sections and choirs (redolent of Charles Stepney’s Rotary Connection) orbit round them. The spacey, dub-tinged arrangements are striking, but never distract from the quality of the songs: “Hot Hot Hot”, roughly resembling Dr John’s *Gris-Gris* produced by Tropicália maestro Rogerio Duprat, is one of White’s very best. One small caveat: no more puns for titles, maybe?

**EXTRAS:** The five-song “Outer Face” EP,

9/10 mercifully also available on its own.

JOHN MULVEY



**XTC**

**Nonsuch**

APE HOUSE / PANEGYRIC

Smart-arch pop from the Swindonians’ ‘difficult’ ’90s

8/10

Nothing in XTC’s world ever seemed to run easily. *Nonsuch* should’ve been

the record to consolidate the transatlantic breakthrough of 1989’s *Oranges And Lemons*. But friction between Andy Partridge and his Virgin bosses saw various songs scrapped, along with a lengthy list of producers, before Gus Dudgeon was enlisted to polish it up for mass consumption. Finally issued in ’92, the result was a sophisticated song cycle that made full use of Partridge’s artsy leanings and the sly pop of fellow songwriter Colin Moulding. Steven Wilson’s fresh mix accentuates the oblique charm of the originals, not least the plush chamber pop of “The Smartest Monkeys”, masterful second single “The Ballad Of Peter Pumpkinhead” and the epic commentary on the Salman Rushdie crisis, “Books Are Burning”. The US didn’t care for any of it, and the legal wrangle with Virgin effectively put XTC on strike for five years, but *Nonsuch* is a prime exemplar of the band’s dizzying talent.

**EXTRAS:** Non-LP track “Didn’t Hurt A Bit”, while

6/10 the DVD-A includes both the original and new stereo mixes by Steven Wilson. The Blu-ray edition also features instrumentals, home demos, “work tapes”, filmed footage of the album sessions and promo videos for “The Ballad Of Peter Pumpkinhead” and “The Disappointed”.

ROB HUGHES

COMING NEXT MONTH...



➤ Much as *Uncut*’s reviews section embraces the digital delivery, the multi-platform online event, even the secure watermarked stream,

it can’t help but think that there’s still something magical about the vinyl record.

Evidently, it’s not alone. Next month promises a wealth of Archival 12” riches, many of them handsomely boxed. These are, you might think, more geared to the general Christmas market than the music fan. But that would be like saying that there was no interest in boxsets of the work of *The Jam*, *The Jesus And Mary Chain*, or *Can* – this last, in particular, a spectacularly comely, linen-lined proposition. And that would be crazy. Other Archive goodies next month include a compendious *Lee Hazlewood* boxset and a deluxe reissue of *The Velvet Underground*’s *White Light/White Heat* – a work that, thanks to Waldo Jeffers, already has its fair share of elaborate packaging.

Many established artists would prefer not to run the gauntlet with this wealth of august material, but some plucky and interesting artists are nippy enough to slip through. Next month you can expect to see covered great new releases by excellent French



psych poppers *The Limiñanas*, and maybe best of all by *Cian Nugent*, whose Television-esque guitar skills are a joy to behold.

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# Films

BY MICHAEL BONNER

Jude Law and his hairline get violent, Sandra Bullock gets stranded in space and Alec Baldwin tries to raise funds for a new movie... or does he?

**D**OM HEMINGWAY A cursory Google search on the phrase 'Jude Law hair' reveals a number of apparently very concerned tabloid reports commenting on the state of the actor's barnet. On the website of a successful right-leaning British newspaper, a hirsute doctor from off the television encourages Law to have a hair transplant – "before it's too late!" Another speculates he may already have had some 'work' done. Such conflicting reports, however, are united by the assumption that by losing his hair, Law could also lose his career. As someone who has been largely indifferent to Law's career when he had more hair – *The Talented Mr Ripley*, *AI* and the first *Sherlock Holmes* film aside – I'd rather Law continued along the path of male pattern baldness. *Dom Hemingway* – a film in which his widow's peak is a prominent and aggressive presence – is arguably among the best work he's done.

The British gangster film affords an actor the opportunity to overact legitimately. In *Dom Hemingway*, Law overacts wonderfully. When first we see him, he is naked, in a prison shower room, delivering a five-minute monologue about the magnificence of his penis while being felled by a fellow inmate. Clearly, this is not a role that will call for much in the way of nuance and subtlety. Law's Hemingway is a legendary safe-breaker, who at the start of the film is released from a 12-year prison sentence. Along with his friend Dickie (Richard E Grant: sleazy hair, aviators, Withnailian), he heads to France to meet his former employer, a Russian crime boss, to negotiate the financial remuneration due for keeping his silence while in prison.

Within 30 minutes, *Dom Hemingway* has gone from baroque, *Bronson*-esque prison drama to something akin to *Sexy Beast*: black laughs and heavy violence in the Mediterranean. There is a third strand, too, concerning Dom's attempts at reconciliation with his estranged daughter, played by *Game Of Thrones*' 'mother of dragons', Emilia Clarke. If anything, the film resolves itself too briskly: at 93 minutes, it could do with an extra half-hour to really get into the gristle of Dom's situation.

Law probably wouldn't thank you for reminding him, but he has played in a British gangster film before – the heroically bad *Love, Honour And Obey*, a kind of low-rent Guy Ritchie knock-off, made by Law and friends including Jonny Lee Miller, Sean Pertwee, Ray Winstone and Sadie Frost. However, *Dom Hemingway* is written and directed by Richard Shepard, who similarly allowed Pierce Brosnan to



Sexy beasts: Jude Law and Richard E Grant in *Dom Hemingway*

spoil his suave rep by playing a lecherous hitman in *The Matador*. And as with *The Matador*, central to *Dom Hemingway* is the double-act relationship between Dom and Dickie. *Dom Hemingway* is for the most part a good film, although by the time the closing credits roll it may not be the film you thought it would be.

➤ **Gravity** The continuing career of Sandra Bullock says much about her straightforward appeal to her audience. At 49, an age when women have supposedly passed their expiration date in Hollywood, she has become one of its biggest successes in a series of palatable romantic comedies or Oprah Book Club-style thrillers. Her constituency – middle Americans, largely – respond to her straightforward charms and the broadly morally decent films she makes. Recently, she has enjoyed three films whose opening weekend tallies each exceeded \$30 million, while *Gravity* opened with \$55 million, a story in itself.

Directed by Alfonso Cuarón, *Gravity* has done much to bolster the flagging reputation of 3D films, a format which has become a cynical bell-and-whistle extra to sell expensive tickets: the 3D rendition of the 18th-Century Hanoverian court of King George II in *Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* arguably being as pointless as it got. There is, however, a

serious case to be made for *Gravity*, as the best and most responsible use of 3D yet. It looks like an educational IMAX documentary, but with the addition of a gripping narrative – in this instance, the attempts of two stricken astronauts to survive some miles above the Earth's surface.

One of these, of course, is Bullock, as skittish newcomer Ryan Stone, who is concerned principally with keeping her lunch down in zero gravity. She is partnered with wily Matt Kowalski (George Clooney), an old hand at this space lark. When their shuttle is irreparably damaged by drifting space debris, they find themselves cut off from mission control, with no choice but to navigate the 100 kilometre distance across space to the international space station and, they hope, safety. Air supply is an issue. Critically, *Gravity* is not a science-fiction film, but an intimate disaster movie on a huge scale that plays to Bullock's recognisable dramatic strengths – plucky everywoman in peril – but relocates them to outer space.

Cuarón's depiction of the heavens, meanwhile, is breathtaking enough – the sun's corona as it appears from round the side of Earth, space debris whizzing silently through the darkness, the cameras pitching and rolling round Ryan and Kowalski, the digital detail of mountain ranges or weather formations back on Earth.

## Reviewed this month...



### DOM HEMINGWAY

Director  
Richard Shepard  
Starring Jude Law,  
Richard E Grant  
Opens November 15  
Certificate 18

7/10



### GRAVITY

Director  
Alfonso Cuarón  
Starring Sandra  
Bullock, George  
Clooney  
Opens November 8  
Certificate 12A

8/10



### DON JON

Director Joseph  
Gordon-Levitt  
Starring Joseph  
Gordon-Levitt,  
Scarlett Johansson  
Opens November 15  
Certificate 15

7/10



### SEDUCED & ABANDONED

Director  
James Toback  
Starring  
Alec Baldwin,  
James Toback  
Opens November 8  
Certificate 15

7/10



### BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR

Director  
Abdellatif Kechiche  
Starring Adèle  
Exarchopoulos  
Opens November 22  
Certificate 18

9/10



► **Don Jon** A lot of people want to see Joseph Gordon-Levitt succeed. The alien kid from *Third Rock From The Sun*, Gordon-Levitt has since chosen an unconventional path to the big screen. He played a gay hustler in *Mysterious Skin*, a teenage private eye in *Brick*, a lovelorn suitor in indie rom-com *(500) Days Of Summer*, a cancer patient in *50/50*, and the young Bruce Willis in sci-fi drama *Looper*. Such a career trajectory has endeared Gordon-Levitt to both the indie film fraternity – who acknowledge his unshowy work for directors including Gregg Araki and Rian Johnson – and more commercially minded filmmakers such as Spielberg and Christopher Nolan.

*Don Jon* represents a gear shift for Gordon-Levitt: he not only stars in the film, he wrote and directed it, too. He plays Jon, a Noo Yoik Italian-American. He loves his family, his apartment, his car, and, especially, the ladies: he loves the ladies. He also has a crippling addiction to internet pornography. When he meets Barbara (Scarlett Johansson: blousy), he is convinced she is The One; however, the small matter of his addiction becomes problematic. There are issues of trust.

Into this comes the free-spirited Esther (Julianne Moore), who serves to both complicate matters and provide a resolution of sorts for Jon's troubles.

The Bechdel Test asks whether a film or TV programme includes at least two woman who have at least one conversation about something other than a man or men. Regrettably, most films and TV shows fail to make the grade here, and *Don Jon* is one. It's a film that deals in archetypes (the depiction of Jon's family life has apparently peeved the Italian-American community), though fortunately Gordon-Levitt's cast go about their business skilfully. Moore is terrific, though the film is stolen by former *Taxi*

star Tony Danza, as Jon's father – a man for whom sleeveless white T-shirts, the music of Frank Sinatra and prodigious use of the "F" word are a way of life.

► **Seduced & Abandoned** The midlife career revival of Alec Baldwin is a thing of beauty. Who knew, for instance, that he was such a deft comic actor? Or that he could actually do serious with the best of them? In *Seduced & Abandoned*, he locates his moment of transition during his divorce from Kim Basinger when he was cast by Martin Scorsese in *The Aviator*. Since then – *30 Rock*, *The Departed*, *Blue Jasmine*. In *Seduced & Abandoned*, Baldwin and filmmaker James Toback head to the Cannes Film Festival to raise funding for a project they are developing: *Last Tango In Tikrit*. "I'm a Bush-era government operative," explains Baldwin. "The woman is a lefty journalist. They get together in a warzone. The world is ending. Let's fuck."

Rather like *Dom Hemingway*, *Seduced & Abandoned* is actually a number of different films. It is principally a documentary about Toback and Baldwin's attempts to raise funds for their film. But adjacent to that, the film looks sharply at the intense, often heartbreaking business of making movies. Both Toback and Baldwin admit they want a hit: Toback's career has been in slow decline since the late '90s, while Baldwin is keen to parlay his TV success on *30 Rock* into bona fide movie stardom. Or is any of this actually true...? Is *Seduced & Abandoned* a documentary, or a sneaky caper? Are Toback and Baldwin using *Last Tango* as a metaphor for the Hollywood machine? The business meetings are among the funniest sequences in the film, as they hawk their pitch round major studios, entrepreneurs and Middle Eastern film commissions. Baldwin is often hilariously funny: "I don't want to be in bed with Neve Campbell when the censors kick the door in," he deadpans to a Jordanian representative.

Adjacent to Toback and Baldwin's quest for cash, they speak to various luminaries about their own experiences making movies. Scorsese, Polanski, Coppola and Bertolucci are all on hand to offer insights: viewers of a certain age will enjoy hearing Scorsese reminiscing about "Harvey and Bob", or tell a very funny anecdote about bringing *Taxi Driver* to Cannes that name-drops Tennessee Williams, Sergio Leone and Costa-Gavras. Among the young stars they hope to sign up for the picture – and thus boost financing – Ryan Gosling is particularly articulate about the business of starting out as an actor.

► **Blue Is The Warmest Color** A winner at this year's Cannes Film Festival, a huge box office hit in France, Oscar-tipped... yet Abdellatif Kechiche's arthouse juggernaut has been banned in Idaho. 'Sacré bleu!', you cry. But, yes, Kechiche's expansive drama

about a love affair between two women has been bounced in Boise because its intimate scenes breach the conditions of their alcohol licence. For the rest of us, meanwhile, *Blue Is The Warmest Color* may contain the best and worst impulses of arthouse cinema.

Some may find the three-hour run-time undisciplined, while some feminist critics have alighted upon the fact Kechiche is, inarguably, not a woman. But Kechiche's film – both sprawling and intimate – is mostly successful in capturing the messy complexity of love regardless of gender. The film spans six years in the life of Adèle (Adèle Exarchopoulos), a Lille teenager who embarks on an affair with older blue-haired hipster Emma (Léa Seydoux). The several intense and graphic sex scenes illustrate the strength of their passion for one another, rather than titillate. But while inevitably controversial (good evening, Boise!), *Blue* is a meticulous portrait of an individual.

When we first see Jude Law, he's delivering a five-minute speech about the magnificence of his penis

## Also out...

### NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE

OPENS NOVEMBER 1

The BFI's estimable Herzog season rumbles on with this Halloween-related reissue: is Kinski the creepiest count ever?

### PHILOMENA

OPENS NOVEMBER 1

Judi Dench and Steve Coogan in real-life drama about a woman searching for the child she gave up for adoption when a teenager in 1950s Ireland.

### THE BUTLER

OPENS NOVEMBER 15

Oscar porn, with Forest Whitaker as the White House butler who sees plenty of change during his 34-year tenure.

### THE COUNSELOR

OPENS NOVEMBER 15

Ridley Scott directs from a Cormac McCarthy screenplay. Bad things happen to Michael Fassbender, Brad Pitt and others on the Tex-Mex border.



### THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE

OPENS NOVEMBER 21

More dystopian teen gubbins, with Oscar-laden Jennifer Lawrence battling dangerously coiffured baddies in the future.

### THE FAMILY

OPENS NOVEMBER 21

DeNiro's mobster gets relocated to Normandy under a witness protection programme. Hilarity doubtless ensues.

### PARKLAND

OPENS NOVEMBER 21

Arriving 50 years on from the events on Dealey Plaza, this recounts the assassination of JFK from multiple perspectives. Paul Giamatti is Abraham Zapruder!

### CARRIE

OPENS NOVEMBER 29

Remake, with Kick-Ass's Chloë Grace Moretz as the troubled teen and Julianne Moore as her domineering mother.

### JEUNE ET JOLIE

OPENS NOVEMBER 29

The latest from François Ozon, about the developing sexual identity of a young French girl set during four separate seasons.

### SAVING MR BANKS

OPENS NOVEMBER 29

Tom Hanks' Walt Disney must face Emma Thompson if he is ever to win the right to adapt her book, *Mary Poppins*...

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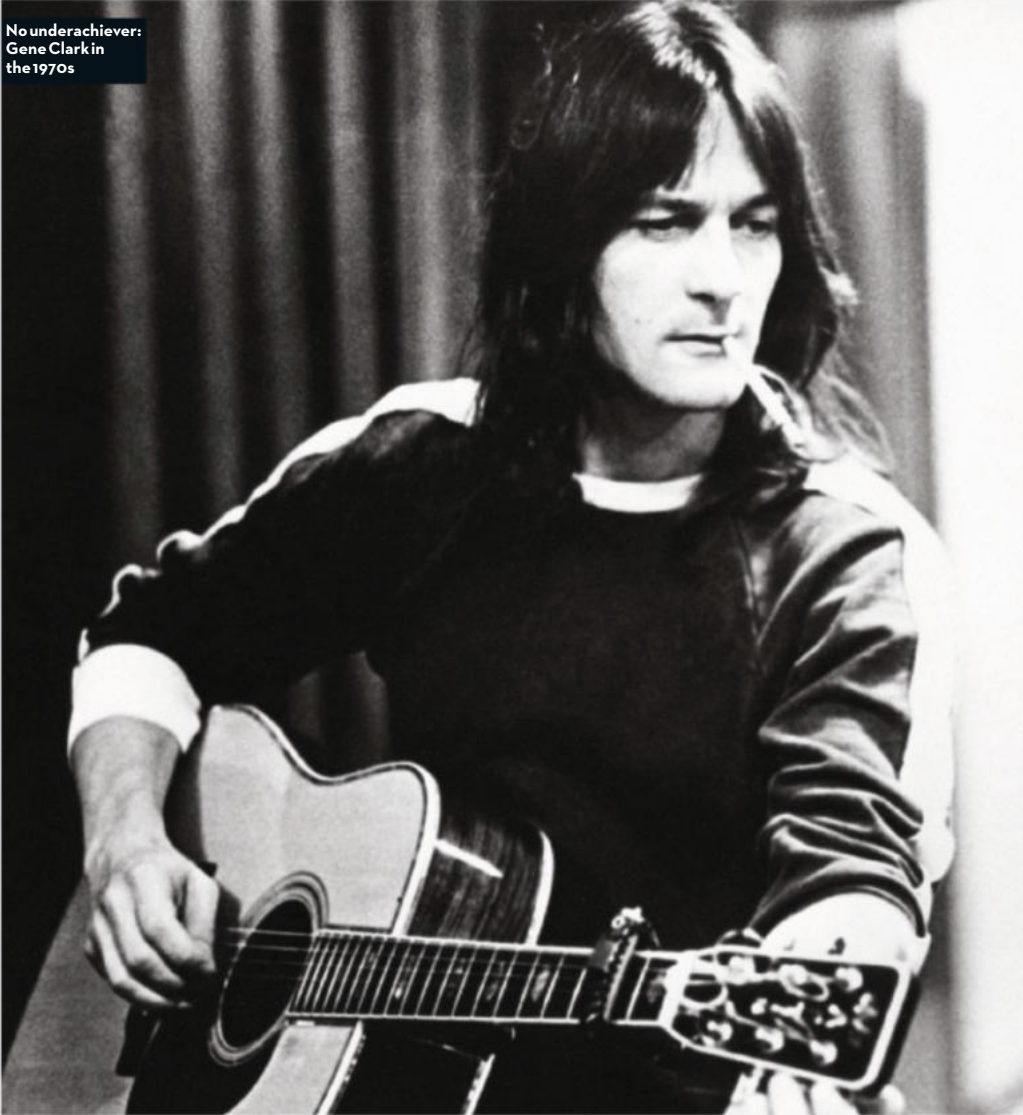


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No underachiever:  
Gene Clark in  
the 1970s



## GENE CLARK

### The Byrd Who Flew Alone

FOUR SUN PRODUCTIONS

A dark chronicle of his life and works. *By Andrew Mueller*



8/10

with the fact that we all of a sudden got laid a lot. But the money and the drugs... that'll do it every time."

*The Byrd Who Flew Alone* is subtitled "The Triumphs And Tragedy Of Gene Clark". It's a straightforward chronicling of Clark's life and his works, which never quite permits itself to become a celebration of his

FOR ALL THAT Gene Clark's story is as peculiar as its wilful, idiosyncratic and volatile subject, it is also one of the most trodden trajectories in modern popular mythology. "Take a group of young men," sighs one of Clark's collaborators, David Crosby, "give them some money, introduce them to drugs... I don't think there was anything wrong

extraordinary and resonant gifts. This is partly because of an implicit suggestion that maybe the determinedly diffident Clark could or should have done (or at least sold) more, mostly because everyone knows how this particular cautionary fable ends: dead at 46, killed by a bleeding ulcer engendered by decades of drink and drugs, topped terminally up via the windfall generated by Tom Petty covering one of his oldest songs ("I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better", an irony about as leaden as they come).

We're told how Clark grew up poor, raised along with 12 siblings on the outskirts of Kansas City in a house without indoor plumbing. He was famous before he was out of his teens, recruited from his high-school rock band by The New Christy Minstrels. He wearied, not unreasonably, of the Minstrels' wholesome folk (in the archive footage of this period, Clark is conspicuously awkward in a suit and side-parting). Arriving in Los Angeles in 1964, he wandered into

The Troubadour and saw Roger McGuinn playing American folk tunes rearranged in somewhat Beatlesque fashion. Clark joined The Byrds. He was a megastar before he was 21.

As *The Byrd Who Flew Alone* tells it, Clark spent his remaining 26 years struggling, with infrequent success, to reconcile an internal riot of contradictory instincts as he proceeded, as McGuinn recalls it, "from innocent country boy to road weary and just tired of it all". Clark was at once a purist artist and a swaggering rock star. He craved pastoral simplicity, yet spent his money on Porsches and Ferraris. He never appeared happier than when playing music, but hated touring. He treasured the independence his success paid for, but paid little attention to his finances. He wanted to be left alone, but missed the applause when it wasn't there. He was neither the first nor the last to attempt to drink, smoke, snort and shoot his way through these contradictions. Everyone who knew him speaks of him with a kind of affectionate sorrow.

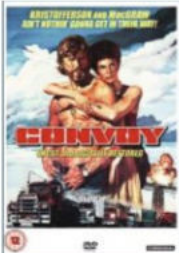
Yet the music that interrupts the rueful testimonies of family, friends and colleagues sounds nothing like failure. Though *The Byrd Who Flew Alone* does a serviceable job of relating Clark's biography, it is difficult not to wish it dwelt a little less on how Clark screwed his health and life up, and a little more on the astonishing music he created despite the best efforts of his legion demons. The film – correctly – brackets Clark alongside the even more wretchedly self-destructive Gram Parsons as a godfather of modern Americana, but seems generally more intent on wringing its hands than applauding. In fairness, this is probably only to be expected when so many of the talking heads – including Clark's wife, his kids, a brother and a sister, Crosby, McGuinn and Chris Hillman – are

recalling first and foremost a husband, father, sibling or friend, rather than a musician.

For those of us who weren't obliged to worry about what his work was costing him, the niggling subtext to the effect that Clark underachieved is risible. He was the principal songwriter on The Byrds' first two albums. The solo records he made in the late '60s – one with the Goddin Brothers, two with bluegrass maestro Doug Dillard – are pretty much the lodestone of country rock, for better (The Byrds, in cahoots with Parsons, finally caught up with Clark on *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*) and for worse (Bernie Leadon, who played bass on the Dillard albums, later joined the Eagles, and took "Train Leaves Here This Morning") with him. His 1974 album, *No Other*, is rightly described here as a classic. And the songs breathe still: Robert Plant and Alison Krauss' 2007 stunner *Raising Sand* contained two Clark compositions.

It is indisputably sad and outrageous that Gene Clark's name is not better known, but such is the fate of pathfinders in all fields: the ground they clear, often at considerable risk, ends up profitably settled by the meeker spirits who follow them. *The Byrd Who Flew Alone* is a richly merited monument, if one less succinct than Clark's actual monument, a simple gravestone in his birthplace of Tipton, Missouri, which reads "Harold Eugene Clark: No Other". Indeed.

EXTRAS: None.



## CONVOY

STUDIOCANAL

### Peckinpah's troubled trucking odyssey

Inspired by CW McCall's trucking song, Sam Peckinpah's most commercial film was disowned by the director, who shot it through a fog of cocaine and never saw the studio's final cut. It's better than it should

7/10

be, with a shirtless Kris Kristofferson as a renegade trucker engaged in a battle of wits with a corrupt county sheriff (a terrifically comic Ernest Borgnine). The plot is a car chase and a bar fight, but it just about works as an allegory for freedom-seeking in a corrupt age, with Kristofferson well-cast as a cowboy Jesus.

**EXTRAS:** Hour-long documentary, 7/10 featurettes, stills, trailers.

ALASTAIR MCKAY



## MILIUS

STUDIOCANAL

### Rousing, overdue portrait of the *Apocalypse Now* writer

"He doesn't write for pussies and he doesn't write for women," summarises Sam Elliott in this documentary on John Milius, the *Conan* and *Red Dawn* writer-director, who spent as much time

8/10

building his (ultimately damaging) "right-wing anarchist" personal image as making movies: George Hamilton recalls him demanding payment in "girls, gold and guns". Yet, without him, *Dirty Harry*, *Jaws* and *Apocalypse Now* wouldn't be the films we know. A thumping alternative history of "New Hollywood", with Scorsese, Lucas, Spielberg, Coppola and Oliver Stone along for the ride.

**EXTRAS:** None.

DAMIEN LOVE



## ONLY GOD FORGIVES

LIONSGATE/ICON

### Ryan Gosling and Nicolas Winding Refn get violent (again)

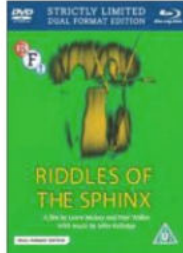
Reuniting the team who made *Drive*, this hypnotic, bloody crime story is low on action but conspicuously high on atmosphere. Ryan Gosling's Julian, a US

8/10

expat in Bangkok, uses his boxing club as a front for selling drugs. When his brother is murdered, Julian finds himself hunted by a samurai-sword wielding cop (Vithaya Pansringarm) and tormented by his trash-talking, manipulative mother (an extraordinary performance from Kristin Scott Thomas). Bangkok is rendered as a hallucinatory, neon inferno. Mesmerising.

**EXTRAS:** Commentary, trailers and 6/10 galleries.

DAMON WISE



## RIDDLES OF THE SPHINX

BFI

### Newly mastered gem of the UK's '70s avant-garde

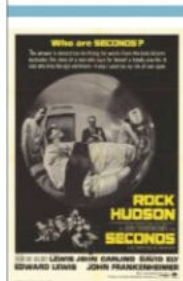
As a literary critic, Laura Mulvey wrote extensively about the male gaze and the objectification of women. Her best-known film explores how the mythological character of the female Sphinx – which

6/10

interrogates and devours its victims – subverts gender stereotypes. In between are a series of slow, hypnotic, 360-degree panning shots, each accompanied by fragmented female conversation. The electronic soundtrack, by Soft Machine's Mike Ratledge, burbles beneath the period images of '70s London.

**EXTRAS:** Interview with Mulvey, commentary, 7/10 booklet, 98-minute film *Penthesilea: Queen Of The Amazons*.

JOHN LEWIS



## SECONDS

CRITERION

### John Frankenheimer's cult nightmare

Few horror movies retain full potency five decades after release, but Frankenheimer's furiously paranoid 1966 sci-fi parable – aka the least likely Rock Hudson movie ever – remains both modern and memorably unsettling.

9/10

In high-contrast black and white, a bland, middle-aged banker, worn down by his life and passionless marriage, becomes aware of a mysterious corporation who offer escape... at a price. The *Mad Men* world, invaded by Kafka, Lynch and Cronenberg.

**EXTRAS:** Making-of, archive Frankenheimer 9/10 interview and commentary, thoughts from Frankenheimer collaborator Alec Baldwin, essays.

DAMIEN LOVE



## STREETS OF FIRE

SECOND SIGHT

### Blu-ray debut for Walter Hill's "rock and roll fable"

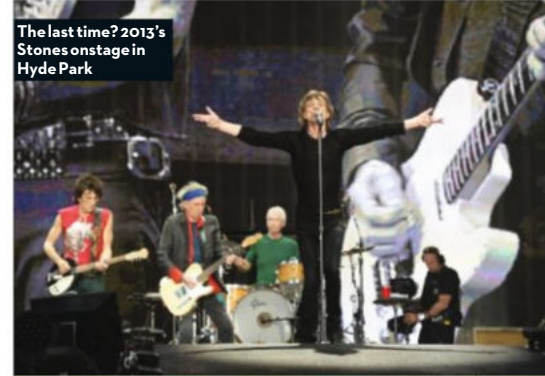
Hill's uber-'80s cult action pop flop tells the old story: soldier-turned-mercenary (the terrible Michael Paré) returns to the hood to rescue kidnapped ex-

7/10

girlfriend-turned-rockstar (the sensational Diane Lane) from sleazoid biker leader (the Willem Dafoe). So dumb it must be intentional, Walter Hill gives *The Warriors'* neon comic look a violent '50s twist, garnished with an unholy soundtrack that forces Ry Cooder into close proximity with Jim Steinman. A colossal bomb. Love it.

**EXTRAS:** New making of, old behind the 7/10 scenes reports, music videos.

DAMIEN LOVE



The last time? 2013's *Stones onstage in Hyde Park*

# THE ROLLING STONES

## Sweet Summer Sun - Hyde Park Live

EAGLE ROCK



### The Stones in the Park for a well-planned extravaganza

THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY must have been a divisive occasion for the Stones. On one hand, this was a chance to celebrate their reach and mythic import (done nicely with *Crossfire Hurricane*, 3CD comp *GRRR!* and a legendarily expensive set of transatlantic tour dates). But on the other: 50 years! For all Jagger's buffness, it was an unwelcome reminder

7/10

that even the Stones can't cheat death indefinitely.

*Sweet Summer Sun*, a two-hour DVD which records the band's July 2013 shows in London's Hyde Park, the scene of a pivotal concert in 1969, records an attempt by the Stones and their fans to reconcile past and present. Would the band triumph over the ghosts of their bereaved, rather unrehearsed 1969 selves? Or would Stones 2013, a multi-platform merchandising phenomenon, now embody the very establishment their free show 44 years ago opposed?

The film raises the issues, Brian Jones etc, via voiceover interviews, but the emphasis is on today's Stones. Keith Richards describes performance like an act of war: "You want to go out there and murder them," he says. Injudicious language from an Altamont veteran, perhaps, but the Stones don't dwell on their past other than in their setlist.

So no butterflies. Nothing for Brian, though at one point Jagger elegantly declaims a fragment of Sonnet 18: "Summer's lease hath all too short a date..." No go at "I'm Yours And I'm Hers" or "I'm Free", which would have sealed it for sceptical heads. Instead, Mick has fun with a facsimile of his "man's dress" from 1969 ("It still fits me!"). Which seems apposite – this isn't someone whose past is another country, more clothes that aren't fashionable any more.

The set itself rather grinds on, the big production numbers like "Midnight Rambler" (with Mick Taylor) or "Sympathy" (Jagger dons a furry boa) tending to outstay. There are fine moments – "Street Fighting Man" features some lovely guitar "weaving"; "Satisfaction" sounds as Otis as it does Stones; Keith's "Ashtraycam". But if you weren't there, the show's meticulously planned nature makes it feel a little lacking in spontaneity, never mind danger.

However, as the film ends, some palpable tension presents itself. For all the minor quibbles, what if this was this extraordinary band's final stage-managed statement? What if, as people have been wondering for 30 years or so, this really was the last time?

**EXTRAS:** Deluxe Edition includes a book, DVD, 7/10 Blu-ray and two CDs. JOHN ROBINSON



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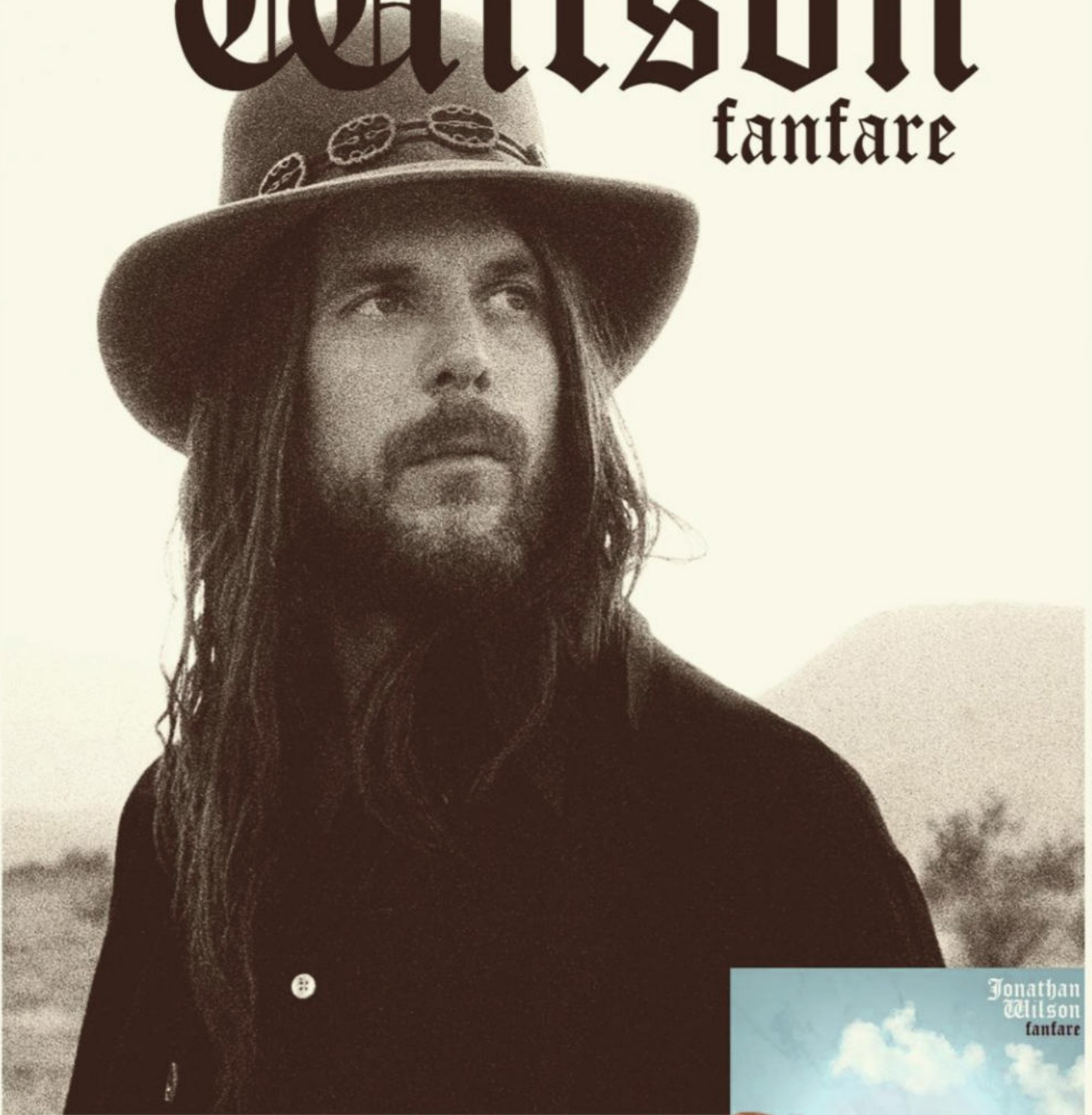


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# Books

BY ALLAN JONES



Wild times: CSNY with bassist Greg Reeves and drummer Dallas Taylor, at the time of the *Déjà Vu* sessions, 1970



**Wild Tales:  
A Rock & Roll Life**  
Graham Nash  
VIKING  
8/10

**L**OOKING BACK AT his life in *Wild Tales*, Graham Nash, at 72, has much to be proud of. He has enjoyed the kind of success that would have seemed unimaginable to him when he was growing up in the often grim surroundings of working-class Salford, made a ton of money from a musical career that now spans five decades, still has his own hair and teeth, a loving family, with whom he shares a sumptuous home

in Hawaii, remains politically active on behalf of many good causes and otherwise doesn't have much he could legitimately complain about.

Yet the tone of this hugely readable autobiography is often rueful, heavy in parts with enormous regret. He is full of remorse for his father, for instance, a decent man whose health was ruined by imprisonment for receiving stolen goods, among which contraband was the Agfa camera he had given the young Nash, thus inspiring a lifelong passion for photography. He regrets, too, not realising sooner the sacrifices made by his parents, who encouraged his adolescent love of music and ambition to make a living from it, when they could have pushed him onto one of the mundane and unrewarding factory jobs he saw many of his friends disappear into, their lives eventually diminished by the nine-to-five slog he dreaded.

Later, there is guilt about the way in the summer of 1968, he left The Hollies, the band he had formed with his boyhood friend Allan Clarke. By then, he had become wholly disenchanted with what the group had become. Enormously popular, The Hollies were never especially hip, far from cool, and failed to mature in the manner of The Beatles, the Stones, The Who, The Kinks or the Small Faces. The charts in 1967 were full of exciting new sounds, most of them psychedelic. The Hollies, meanwhile,

were having hits with songs like "Carrie Anne", "Carousel" and "Jennifer Eccles", well-crafted pop songs that to Nash sounded increasingly trite and formulaic. He encouraged them to be more experimental, but the rest of the band were doughty northerners, happy with their success and determined to stick to a winning formula. They reluctantly cut a derisive version of a new Nash song, "Marrakesh Express", that he would be embarrassed ever to release and they indulged him by releasing another of his odd new songs, "King Midas In Reverse", that Nash had hoped would make critics take them more seriously. When it flopped, the band planned an LP of Dylan covers. As far as Nash was concerned, the cabaret circuit loomed and he was suddenly gone. He was already in love with Joni Mitchell and in July, 1968, walked out on The Hollies and his marriage and flew to America with just a guitar and a few possessions, the band only finding out he'd left them when they read about it in the following week's music papers.

His infatuation with Joni inevitably forms one of the book's core narratives. He clearly adored her, but nothing he writes here tells us anything more about their romance than you could glean from another listen to, say, "Our House", which so fondly celebrated the relative simplicity of their life together. That he could not make their relationship work is another cause for mournful regret.

The other great love of Nash's life, of course, has been David Crosby, to whom he was introduced by Mama Cass, a good friend to both. Crosby, when Nash first meets him, is already an unrepentant hedonist, surrounded by a harem of nubile young beauties and an appetite for group sex and drugs that would soon become legendary. Crosby's libertine lifestyle was like nothing Nash had previously encountered in a life that could not be described as especially sheltered. He fell immediately under Crosby's charismatic spell, their enduring friendship made firmer still by the wondrous music they found they could make together, whose great potential was further enhanced when Stephen Stills hove into view and they became the commercial behemoth known as Crosby, Stills & Nash. Their debut album was a

spectacular success, of course, but the trio's equilibrium was fatally upset by the subsequent addition to their lineup of Stills' former Springfield sparring partner, Neil Young, and Crosby and Stills' almost simultaneous rush into narcotic chaos. Nash was no slouch when it came to snorting mountains of cocaine and smoking weed by the bushel. But he was duly appalled by the mess Crosby and Stills were making of their lives and the destructive impact of their massive drug abuse on the band's music. It hurts Nash today to admit they never fully realised their vast promise, their collective derangement making them increasingly dysfunctional as their behaviour become more unhinged. "We fucked it up," he admits candidly, ushering in even more hand-wringing regret.

Crosby's condition became tragically worse when his girlfriend, Christine Hinton, was killed in a car crash. "When she died, a piece of him was gone," Nash writes of Crosby's trauma. "He was never the same again." Nash watched helplessly as over the next several years, Crosby drugged himself to the point of oblivion and beyond. There are so many appalling stories here about his hellish decline, Crosby's eventual recovery seems truly miraculous, Nash by then willing to forgive him for all previous fuck-ups, just glad to have him back and in something approaching good health.

He is less forgiving, overall, of Neil Young, whose tempestuous presence in his opinion so derailed CSN, much as he feared it would. Young brought much-needed bite to the band, which Nash acknowledges, often unstinting in his praise of Neil as a musician and songwriter, but less enamoured of his ruthless self-centredness, intransigence and bloody-minded cussedness. Theirs has been a volatile relationship and you get the impression that Neil somewhat scares the pants off Nash. The book ends with Nash recalling an email he wrote Young only a while ago, in which he poured out his heart about what had come between CSN and Neil, gave voice to hugely personal feelings about what had become of their relationship, hoped Neil would reply with the same consideration. Neil's reply was terse. "What a load of shit," he wrote back. Nash hasn't spoken to him since.

# Live

ROCKING IN THE FREE WORLD

Is she weird? Pixies and their new Kim: (l-r) Joey Santiago, Black Francis, David Lovering, Kim Shattuck



## SETLIST

- 1 Wave Of Mutilation (UK Surf)
  - 2 In Heaven (Lady In The Radiator Song)
  - 3 Andro Queen
  - 4 Where Is My Mind?
  - 5 Here Comes Your Man
  - 6 Havalina
  - 7 Velouria
  - 8 Bone Machine
  - 9 Indie Cindy
  - 10 Break My Body
  - 11 River Euphrates
  - 12 Crackity Jones
  - 13 Something Against You
  - 14 Hey
  - 15 Subbacultcha
  - 16 Brick Is Red
  - 17 Gouge Away
  - 18 Ed Is Dead
  - 19 Bagboy
  - 20 Big New Prinz
  - 21 What Goes Boom
  - 22 Cactus
  - 23 Head On
  - 24 I've Been Tired
  - 25 Caribou
  - 26 Planet Of Sound
  - 27 Wave Of Mutilation
- ENCORE**
- 28 Monkey Gone To Heaven
  - 29 Vamos

## PIXIES

ITUNES FESTIVAL, ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

Hey hey, here come the burgermeisters of purgatory! Now with Different Kim...

**A**S THE FINAL chord fades on a rapturous version of "Here Comes Your Man", one waggish commentator in the crowd shouts, "We love you Kim!" There's a half a beat pause, and then: "We still love you Kim! You're just a different Kim!"

Tonight, the UK gets its first glimpse of the "different Kim" – Kim Shattuck, that is, the new bass player with Pixies, who replaced the other Kim – Kim Deal, that is – who left the band in June this year. There are new songs, too. We get four – of which one, "Indie Cindy", contains the quality Pixies line: "I'm the burgermeister of purgatory." A new bassist and new songs; a renewed sense of purpose, then? Arguably, the most remarkable thing of all is that none of these things happened earlier.

After the initial euphoria that greeted the band's 2004 reunion died down, the Pixies began to look increasingly like just another reformed band competing for space

on a cluttered oldies circuit. What seemed broadly a good thing on paper – 324 shows by the close of 2011, with *The New York Times* quoting ticket sales totaling \$64 million – had its own set of disadvantages. For 94 consecutive dates between 2009 and 2011, they performed their *Doolittle* album (plus assorted B-sides), in sequence in its entirety. "During those shows I wouldn't even know where I was," Black Francis recently told *Rolling Stone*. "It was so *Groundhog Day*, just the same thing over and over." What next? *Bossanova*...?

The way forward, surely, was new music – though that always appeared to be an issue for Kim Deal. "Hell, no," she told *Rolling Stone* in 2007. A gifted songwriter, Deal only ever had three Pixies credits: "Gigantic", "Silver" and 2004's "Bam Thwok". She'd considered leaving once before, in 1990, to commit full-time to The Breeders, the group she'd formed with Throwing Muses' Tanya Donelly. This time, she announced her departure for real to her fellow

bandmates during the early stages of a seven-week recording session in Wales with their old producer, Gil Norton.

Kim Shattuck played her first gig as a Pixie on September 9 this year at the 770-capacity El Rey Theatre in Los Angeles. Eighteen days later, here she is in London. There's an electronic display to the left of the stage, marking the seconds remaining until the band's appearance – a gimmicky, New Year's Eve-style countdown that might have worked more successfully for some of the other bands who are performing at the iTunes Festival. But its impact tonight is significantly undermined as the band saunter on, plug in and open with the low-key "Wave Of Mutilation (UK Surf)". Never the sharpest of dressers, the band are predictably turned out for a trip to the pub rather than a gig that's being streamed globally via iTunes. Francis wears his customary plaid shirt and jeans; guitarist Joey Santiago wears a black shirt and jeans; drummer Dave Lovering, meanwhile, sports a striped T-shirt



that makes him look like he's just been pulled off the golf course and not had time to change. Shattuck, at least, has dressed up a little, even if she does resemble an extra from an early Tim Burton film (perhaps *Beetlejuice*) – black short sleeve top, stripy black and white skirt with black leggings, blonde streaks in her hair.

Musically, everything feels, well, a little subdued. They follow “Wave Of Mutilation” with their cover of the *Eraserhead* track “In Heaven”, first recorded by the band for their original 1987 demo tape. In a nice piece of juxtaposition, they follow it with the first new song of the night, “Andro Queen”, a *Bossanova*-style yarn driven by Santiago’s surf guitar twang where Francis sings about a mystical liaison with an alien who then departs in “a silver rocket” for “the rings of Saturn”. The set suddenly shifts up a gear as the band go surprisingly early with a run of big hitters – “Where Is My Mind?”, “Here

Comes Your Man”, “Velouria” and “Bone Machine”, a reminder of the deathless force of the band’s back catalogue. Somewhere, a button has been pressed and – like one of Francis’ beloved spaceships – the band’s set finally reaches escape velocity.

“Indie Cindy”, another new song, has the right moves: of all the new material they play tonight, this is the one that cleaves closest to the band’s fabled quiet/loud dynamic. As with all the new music released so far – “Bagboy” and the four-track “EP1”, with more to follow as the band’s 15-month world tour progresses – it sounds better live than on record, Francis’ fuzzy reverb slotting in comfortably alongside more established tracks. They storm through “River Euphrates” and “Crackity Jones” – Francis’ howl on reassuringly spine-tingling form – while the hardcore thrills of “Something Against You” give way to the chunky riffs of “Subbacultcha”.

The band have never been into between-song banter, and tonight they don’t directly speak either to us or each other. These days, Francis looks less like the elastic *Loony Tunes* cartoon of his younger self and more like Hank from *Breaking Bad*. The weird baby voice he uses on “I’ve Been Tired” could still curdle milk. Lovering’s drums are foregrounded earlier in the set – particularly on “Wave Of Mutilation (UK Surf)” – while Santiago, who has been discreetly tweaking his effects pedals during the show, gets to showboat a little on “Vamos”, waving his guitar above his head as it feeds back. Kim Shattuck, meanwhile, fits in just fine – even when tackling some of her predecessor’s signature basslines like “Havalina” and “Break My Body”, her moves are fluid and easy enough. Meanwhile, her skills are very much in keeping with requirements stipulated by the band in their original 1986 newspaper ad for a bassist: “Please – no chops.” Presumably out of deference to Deal, there is no “Gigantic”.

There’s a late run of two new songs – “Bagboy” and “What Goes Boom”, separated by a cover of The Fall’s “Big New Prinz”. For “Planet Of Sound”, they turn the spotlights on full for two and a half minutes and basically blind the audience; they crank up the amps and deafen them, too. It’s a song I never much cared for on record, but it’s always sounded better live, where Francis gives full vent to his feral howl and the guitars seethe with greater menace.

And that’s pretty much it; after a brief encore they disappear with a wave. Act III of the Pixies story is underway.

MICHAEL BONNER

# Neko Case

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL, NEW YORK, SEPT 26, 2013

## Can Americana’s biggest voice fill one of the US’ most lavish concert halls?

IT TAKES A lot to fill the vast, Art Deco aircraft hangar-style space that is Manhattan’s Radio City Music Hall. Physically, Neko Case and her static band don’t quite manage it; even with an imposingly bearded bass player who looks like a salty Atlantic fisherman, they’re not exactly The Rockettes. However, there is something that stretches way into the gods – Case’s heartstopping vocals. Touring on the back of her solid sixth album, *The Worse Things Get, The Harder I Fight, The Harder I Fight, The More I Love You*, her belting mountain croon is as powerful as it ever was, searing through the languid twang of “Deep Red Bells” and sitting front and foremost for the a cappella “Nearly Midnight, Honolulu”.

When she straps on a four-stringed SG for the perky animal welfare pop of “People Got A Lotta Nerve”, or brings out support act – and fellow New Pornographer – AC Newman and his band for a cheery “Ragtime”, Case proves that she can excel at the upbeat as well as the atmospheric. Yet it’s when she’s conjuring up melancholy images of young lust, leather jackets, truckstops and interstates that she really impresses. Tonight, “The Pharoahs”, “Calling Cards” and “That Teenage Feeling” are pure movie music, spacious Southern Gothic sounds that bring to mind *American Graffiti* by way of *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Trading jokes throughout the set with her backing singer and ribbing her pedal steel player’s “Death Of A Salesman/whorehouse arrangement”, which involves a small beaded lamp, Case might be skulking through some serious emotions this evening, but she’s also having a whole lot of fun. “When you don’t have a husband you have a band,” states Case midway through her set. “And they’re way fucking cooler.”

LEONIE COOPER

Hard Case and her belting mountain croon



Middle-ager of the year, Black Francis



Strange folk: Jarvis Cocker teams up with Martin Carthy, and behind, (l-r) Kami Thompson, Norma Waterson and Marry Waterson



# BRIGHT PHOEBUS REVISITED

BARBICAN, LONDON | OCTOBER 11, 2013

## The Waterson clan and friends reconvene to bring Lal & Mike's masterpiece back to life

**S**OMEONE HAD TO ask. Introducing a version of "The Piper's Path", one of the songs Lal Waterson never got round to releasing, Richard Hawley recounts a conversation with the late songwriter's older sister, Norma.

"I'm not being funny, but did Lal ever fuck about with drugs?" the guitarist asked her.

"Well," the eldest of the three Waterson siblings replied. "She used to eat a lot of pickled onions."

Acidic if not exactly lysergic, *Bright Phoebus* – the oddball 1972 record Lal Waterson made with her brother Mike – proved a little too vinegary for most tastes at the time, the comforting presence of Richard Thompson and Martin Carthy doing remarkably little to temper the idiosyncracies of their writing. As much as the folk police and prog-psychers try to claim it, *Bright Phoebus* continues to occupy a tiny space of its own; not traditional, not experimental, not children's singalong or music hall pastiche, but somewhere stubbornly inbetween.

Recorded while Humberside's first family of folk were on hiatus, it was fated never to be performed live; there was no room in the set for these songs when the Watsons regrouped, then

Lal Waterson died in 1998, and Mike in 2011. However, while the original tapes remain mired in Jarndyce vs Jarndyce legal limbo, *Bright Phoebus'* reputation lives wild. This tribute show, organised by Lal's daughter Marry Waterson, starts and ends with *Bright Phoebus'* two big ensemble set pieces – Mike Waterson's overstretched "Rubber Band", and his hopeful title track – but what happens inbetween is (like the original record) something of a free-for-all.

Tyneside folkie Bob Davenport reprises his quavering star turn midway through Eliza Carthy's mesmerising reworking of "Child Among The Weeds"; Martin Carthy recites his sister-in-law's glowering "Eleanor Rigby"; "Winifer Odd", as poetry; Norma Waterson finds the defiance under the despair of the drunk "*flat on my back in the rainbow rain*" on "Red Wine And Promises", the 74-year-old no longer so light on her feet but a supremely agile interpreter of a song.

Hawley nearly Tommy Steeles the show with a duck's-arse buzz through "Danny Rose", reminding the audience that "Mike Waterson, apart from being a fantastic human being, was a rockabilly." However, while Jarvis

Cocker's reworking of Mike Waterson's "The Scarecrow" discovers a lascivious snag in the original's refrain of "*how could you lay me down and love me?*" and Eliza Carthy reminisces fondly about her late uncle's habit of popping in for a sandwich and a "cup of tea with 12 sweeteners" between painting and decorating jobs, the chain-smoking and quietly driven Lal Waterson emerges as the greater enigma.

Kate St John's oboe line shoots Roxy Music art-rock sparkle through Marry Waterson's appraisal of her mother's "Fine Horseman", with the unearthly lyrical cadences and skittish chord structures of "Never The Same" – Astrud Gilberto's "Girl From Ipanema" on the slow bus to Drifffield – proving a challenge even to the unflappable Martin Carthy.

The increasingly badger-faced Cocker takes on a tougher task still with the unreleased "The Beast". "It's good for me because you won't know if I'm getting it wrong," he smirks before navigating the quicksands of Lal Waterson's eerie hiss at the natural world's indifference to the fate of the lonely, and the "*wicked little bird*" that heralds the morning. From one angle it's a disjointed smudge; from another, a revelation.

### SETLIST

- 1 Rubber Band
- 2 Fine Horseman
- 3 Winifer Odd
- 4 Danny Rose
- 5 Marvellous Companion
- 6 Child Among The Weeds
- 7 One Of Those Days
- 8 The Scarecrow
- 9 Red Wine And Promises
- 10 The Magical Man
- 11 Jack Frost
- 12 To Make You Stay
- 13 Never The Same
- 14 Evon Our Darling
- 15 Piper's Path
- 16 The Beast
- 17 Song For Thirza
- 18 Bright Phoebus
- ENCORE
- 19 Revoiced
- 20 Shady Lady

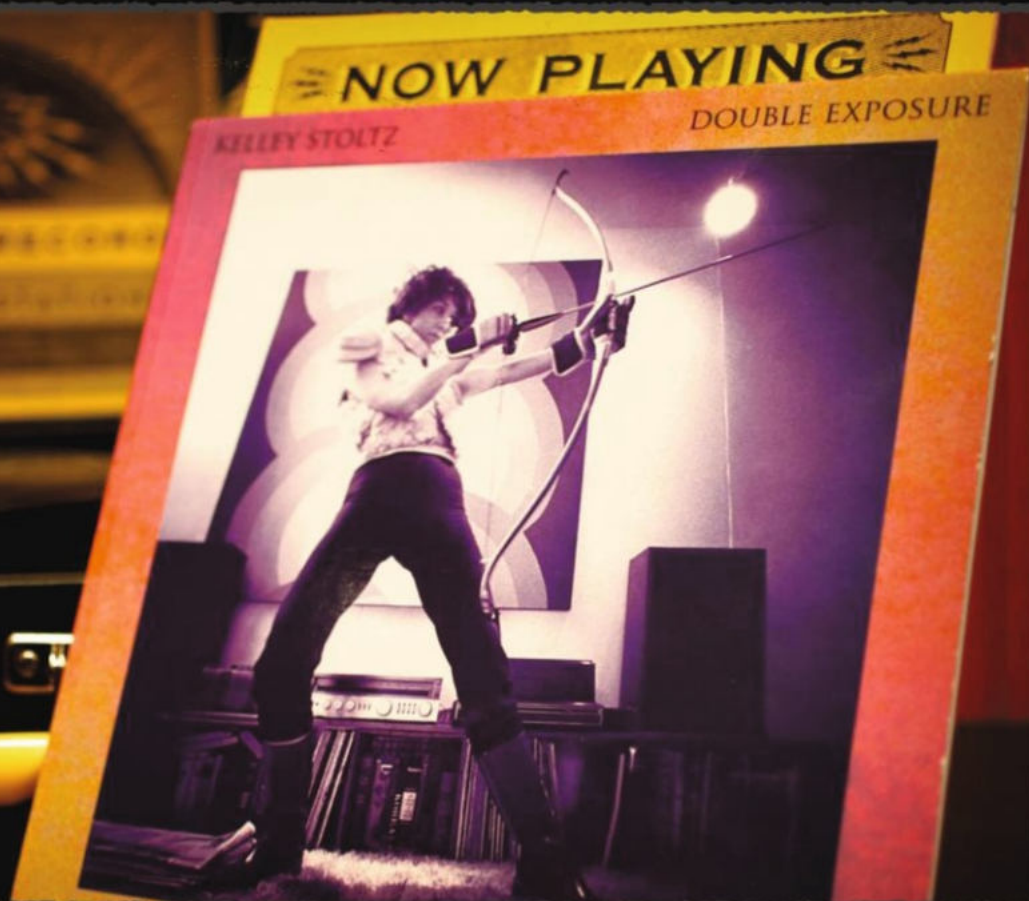
And that's *Bright Phoebus* in its essence; like Judy Henske and Jerry Yester's similarly unsteady portmanteau piece, *Farewell Aldebaran*, it's a florid one-off, slate-grey trad folk melting into dayglo surrealism. "Last chance to join in," beams Eliza as proceedings close with the jaunty "Shady Lady". Just for tonight, maybe, but *Bright Phoebus* shines on implacably. **JIM WIRTH**

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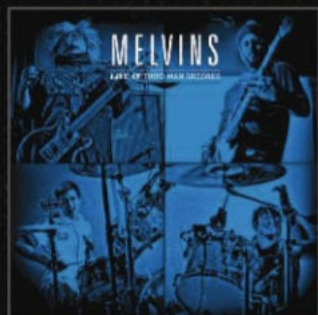
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27 LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM:  
[SEETICKETS.COM](http://SEETICKETS.COM) | [TICKETMASTER.CO.UK](http://TICKETMASTER.CO.UK)  
[THEHEAVY.CO.UK](http://THEHEAVY.CO.UK)  
 A METROPOLIS MUSIC, SJM CONCERTS, DF CONCERTS, DHP & PFC PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

THE GLORIOUS DEAD EUROPEAN TOUR 2013

SJM CONCERTS PRESENTS

SJM CONCERTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CODA PRESENTS

## FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS

THE TAPE DECK HEART TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS **FLOGGING MOLLY** *Beams on Top*



**FEBRUARY 2014**

**THU 06**  
CARDIFF  
MOTORPOINT ARENA

**FRI 07**  
NOTTINGHAM  
CAPITAL FM ARENA

**SAT 08**  
EDINBURGH  
CORN EXCHANGE

**SUN 09**  
MANCHESTER  
PHONES 4U ARENA

**TUE 11**  
PLYMOUTH  
PAVILIONS

**WED 12**  
LONDON THE O2

**SOLD OUT**  
PORTSMOUTH  
GUILDHALL

GIGSANDTOURS.COM  
TICKETMASTER.CO.UK  
0844 811 0051  
0844 826 2826

FRANKTURNER.COM  
@FRANKTURNER  
/FRANKTURNERMUSIC

# CHVRCHES

MARCH 2014

**07** NEWCASTLE  
O2 ACADEMY

**08** GLASGOW  
BARROWLAND  
GIGSINSCOTLAND.COM - DF CONCERTS

**09** LEEDS  
METROPOLITAN UNI

**10** BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTE

**12** CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION

**13** CARDIFF UNI SOLUS

**SOLD OUT** LONDON FORUM  
EXTRA DATE ADDED

**15** LONDON FORUM

GIGSANDTOURS.COM • 0844 811 0051

THE BONES OF WHAT YOU BELIEVE, FEATURING THE NEW SINGLE 'THE MOTHER WE SHARE' OUT NOW.  
AN SJM CONCERTS, DF & EYOCE PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE AGENCY GROUP



# BE BEADY EYE

AN SJM CONCERTS, METROPOLIS MUSIC, PCL & REGULAR MUSIC PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH WINE

NOVEMBER 2013

**SUNDAY 10**  
GLASGOW BARROWLAND  
**SOLD OUT**

**TUESDAY 19**  
LEEDS ACADEMY  
**SOLD OUT**

**WEDNESDAY 13**  
NEWCASTLE ACADEMY  
**SOLD OUT**

**FRIDAY 16**  
MANCHESTER ACADEMY  
**SOLD OUT**

**SATURDAY 16**  
MANCHESTER ACADEMY  
**SOLD OUT**

**MONDAY 18**  
WOLVERHAMPTON CIVIC HALL  
WOLVES.CIVIC.CO.UK

**TUESDAY 19**  
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL  
PORTSMOUTHGUILDHALL.ORG.UK

**THURSDAY 21**  
LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO  
EVENTIM.CO.UK

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK  
PCLPRESENTS.CO.UK  
0844 811 0051 | 0844 826 2826  
BEADYEYEMUSIC.COM



# PRIMAL SCREAM

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST  
ANDY WEATHERALL

**WED 11 DECEMBER**  
LONDON  
O2 ACADEMY  
BRIXTON

**SAT 14 DECEMBER**  
GLASGOW  
SECC

**SUN 15 DECEMBER**  
MANCHESTER  
ACADEMY

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | 0844 811 0051 | 0844 847 2269

AN SJM CONCERTS & REGULAR MUSIC PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

The album **MORE LIGHT** out now  
[primal scream.net](http://primal scream.net)



GREATEST HITS LIVE / CHRISTMAS 2013

# shed seven

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST  
MARK MORRIS (THE BLUETONES)

DECEMBER

**FRI 06** NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY

**SOLD OUT** MANCHESTER ACADEMY

**SUN 08** SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY

**MON 09** LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY

**WED 11** WOLVERHAMPTON  
WULFRUN HALL

**SOLD OUT** GLASGOW BARROWLAND

**SOLD OUT** YORK BARBICAN

**SOLD OUT** BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTE

**SOLD OUT** NORTHAMPTON ROADMENDER

**TUE 17** CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION

**WED 18** NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

**SOLD OUT** LONDON FORUM

**SOLD OUT** LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | 0844 811 0051

facebook.com/shedseven | twitter.com/shedseven | shedseven.com

An SJM Concerts & DF presentation by arrangement with 13 Artists  
Arl Barwell www.musicphotographer.co.uk



# THE NAKED AND FAMOUS

PLUS GUESTS  
SONS & LOVERS

**THU 21 NOVEMBER**  
MANCHESTER  
RITZ

**FRI 22 NOVEMBER**  
BIRMINGHAM  
INSTITUTE

**SAT 23 NOVEMBER**  
NORWICH UEA

**TUE 26 NOVEMBER**  
BELFAST LIMELIGHT

**WED 27 NOVEMBER**  
GLASGOW O2 ABC

**FRI 29 NOVEMBER**  
BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY

**SAT 30 NOVEMBER**  
OXFORD O2 ACADEMY

EXTRA DATE ADDED  
**SUN 01 DECEMBER**  
**MON 02 DECEMBER**  
LONDON O2  
SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

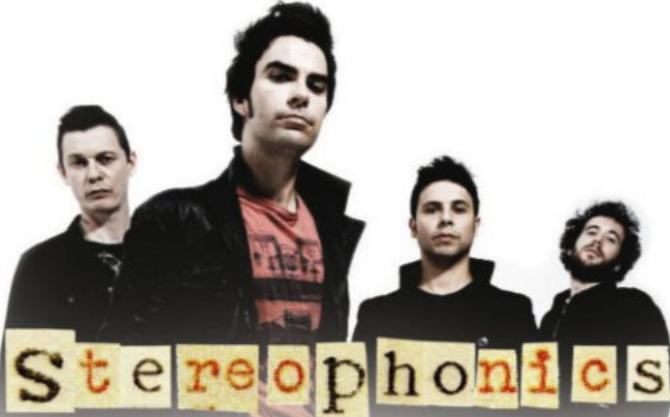
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GIGSINSCOTLAND.COM / 0844 811 0051 / 0844 826 2826

NEW ALBUM 'IN ROLLING WAVES' OUT NOW | THENAKEDANDFAMOUS.COM  
AN SJM CONCERTS, LIVE NATION, DF & MCD PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CAA



SJM CONCERTS PRESENTS

SJM Concerts, Kilimanjaro, Idve Nation & Regular by arrangement with X-ray present



# Stereophonics

**November**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Thursday 07<br><b>DUE TO DEMAND EXTRA DATES ADDED</b><br>Glasgow<br>The SSE Hydro | Saturday 16<br>Newcastle<br>Metro Radio<br>Arena | <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Bournemouth BIC  |
| <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Glasgow<br>The SSE Hydro                                       | Monday 18<br>Nottingham<br>Capital FM<br>Arena   | <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Cardiff<br>Motorpoint Arena                                      |
| <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Aberdeen AEGC  | Tuesday 19<br>Birmingham<br>LG Arena             | <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Cardiff<br>Motorpoint Arena                                      |
| Thursday 14<br>Manchester<br>Phones 4u Arena                                      | <b>SOLD OUT</b><br>Brighton<br>Centre            | Tuesday 26<br><b>DUE TO DEMAND EXTRA DATES ADDED</b><br>Cardiff<br>Motorpoint Arena |
| Friday 15<br>Leeds first<br>direct Arena  | Thursday 28<br>London The O2                     |   |

gigsandtours.com / ticketmaster.co.uk / 0844 811 0051 / 0844 826 2826

New album 'Graffiti On The Train' out now featuring the singles 'Indian Summer', 'In A Moment' and 'We Share The Same Sun'.  
stereophonics.com

SJM CONCERTS PRESENTS

# THE POGUES



PERFORMING THE CLASSIC ALBUM

**RUM SODOMY & THE LASH**  
IN ITS ENTIRETY  
& OTHER FAVORITE SONGS

**December**

- |             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Sunday 15   | <b>MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO</b> |
| Tuesday 17  | <b>GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY</b>   |
| Thursday 19 | <b>LONDON</b>               |
| & Friday 20 | <b>O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON</b>   |

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

0844 811 0051 | 0844 826 2826

POGUES.COM

**C2C**  
Country to Country  
\*\*\*\* EVENT HOSTED BY BOB HARRIS \*\*\*\*  
**SATURDAY 15 MARCH**  
*Zac Brown Band*  
**DIXIE CHICKS**  
*Dierks Bentley Martina McBride*  
**SUNDAY 16 MARCH**  
**BRAD PAISLEY**  
**RASCAL FLATTS**  
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST TO BE ANNOUNCED  
**CHRIS YOUNG**  
The O2  
AXS GIGS AND TOURS  
AXS.COM/C2C 08448 24 48 24  
GIGSANDTOURS.COM 0844 811 0051  
CMA  
C2C-COUNTRYTOCOUNTRY.COM | COUNTRY2COUNTRY | COUNTRY2COUNTRY  
PRESENTED BY THE O2 & SJM CONCERTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CMA

SJM CONCERTS, DE, DHP & P/C BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY & CRUISIN MUSIC PRESENTS

## IN CELEBRATION OF 40 YEARS



# the Stranglers

**THE RUBY TOUR**

1974-2014

**FEBRUARY 2014**

- Thu 27 Inverness Ironworks
- Fri 28 Glasgow O2 Academy
- Sat 01 Dunfermline Alhambra
- Mon 03 Liverpool O2 Academy
- Tue 04 Lincoln Engine Shed
- Thu 06 Brighton Dome
- Fri 07 Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall

- Sat 08 London Eventim Apollo
- Mon 10 Nottingham Rock City
- Tue 11 Leamington Spa Assembly
- Thu 13 Southend Cliffs Pavilion
- Fri 14 Newcastle O2 Academy
- Sat 15 Sheffield O2 Academy
- Mon 17 Oxford O2 Academy

- Thu 20 Cardiff Uni Solus
- Fri 21 Leeds O2 Academy
- Sat 22 Birmingham O2 Academy
- Mon 24 Portsmouth Pyramids Centre
- Tue 25 Guildford G Live
- Thu 27 Bristol O2 Academy
- Fri 28 Cambridge Corn Exchange
- Sat 29 Manchester Academy

GIGSANDTOURS.COM • TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | 0844 811 0051 • 0844 826 2826 | STRANGLERS.NET

For tickets to any UK gigs, tours or festivals please call the 24-hour Uncut Ticketline on 0870 160 1600

AN AEG LIVE & FRIENDS PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH THIS IS NOW AGENCY

## PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING NIGHT MAIL TOUR 2013



04 NOV	ABERDEEN	THE LEMON TREE
05 NOV	GLASGOW	ORAN MÓR
06 NOV	EDINBURGH	THE PICTURE HOUSE
07 NOV	MANCHESTER	ACADEMY 2
08 NOV	NEWCASTLE	WAREHOUSE34
09 NOV	SHEFFIELD	THE LEADMILL
11 NOV	LEEDS	STYLUS
12 NOV	BIRMINGHAM	INSTITUTE LIBRARY
13 NOV	NOTTINGHAM	RESCUE ROOMS
14 NOV	STOKE-ON-TRENT	SUGARMILL
15 NOV	BELFAST	STIFF KITTEN
16 NOV	DUBLIN	BUTTON FACTORY
18 NOV	CAMBRIDGE	JUNCTION
20 NOV	LONDON	THE FORUM
21 NOV	CARDIFF	GLOBE
25 NOV	LIVERPOOL	EAST VILLAGE ARTS CLUB
26 NOV	BRISTOL	ANSON ROOMS
27 NOV	BRIGHTON	CONCORDE 2
28 NOV	SOUTHAMPTON	THE BROOK

www.publicservicebroadcasting.net  
A EGLIVE.CO.UK / SEE TICKETS / TICKETMASTER

# MIDLAKE



PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

**FEBRUARY 2014**

THU 20	MANCHESTER RITZ
FRI 21	WOLVERHAMPTON WULFRUN HALL
SAT 22	GLASGOW O2 ABC
TUE 25	BRISTOL ANSON ROOMS
WED 26	LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

BUY ONLINE AT [TICKETMASTER.CO.UK](http://TICKETMASTER.CO.UK) | [LIVENATION.CO.UK](http://LIVENATION.CO.UK)

WWW.MIDLAKE.NET  
NEW ALBUM 'ANTIPHON' OUT NOVEMBER 4TH ON BELLA UNION

A LIVE NATION, RF CONCERTS, METROPOLIS AND WOH CONCERTS PRESENTATION

MAMA PRESENTS

## THE JAZZ CAFE CAMDEN

TICKETMASTER 0844 847 2514  
SEETICKETS 0870 060 3777  
RESTAURANT 0207 688 8899  
5 PARKWAY, CAMDEN, LONDON, NW1

### THE CUBAN BROTHERS LIVE NYE 2013 PARTY

ALSO FEATURING SMOOVE AND TURRELL SOUND SYSTEM  
AFTER PARTY WITH THE CUBAN BROTHERS (DJ) AND DAN LE SAC (DJ)

COMING SOON

FEMI KUTI & THE POSITIVE FORCE	4 & 5 NOV
RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC	15 & 16 NOV
DODGY ALBUM LAUNCH	23 NOV
CORNELL CAMPBELL MEETS SOOTHSAYERS	24 NOV
DA LATA & DJ PATRICK FORGE	2 DEC
HACKNEY COLLIERY BAND CHRISTMAS PARTY	14 DEC
JON B WITH FULL LIVE BAND	18 & 19 DEC

BOOK TICKETS ONLINE AT [www.mamacolive.com/thejazzcafe](http://www.mamacolive.com/thejazzcafe)

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## GARAGE

20-22 Highbury Corner London, N5 1RD  
A MAMA & COMPANY VENUE  
TICKETWEB.CO.UK

MAMACOLIVE.COM/THEGARAGE • FB.COM/MAMACO.THEGARAGE • @THEGARAGE\_MAMA

Mon 11 Nov THE CORRESPONDENTS	Fri 29 Nov AKALA
Fri 15 Nov BLANCMANGE	Sun 1 Dec ODDISEE
Wed 20 Nov JASON ISBELL Amanda Shires	Thu 5 Dec ELIZA AND THE BEAR
Thu 21 Nov LEE RANALDO & THE DUST	Fri 6 Dec DAVE HAUSE
Fri 22 Nov DILATED PEOPLES BROTHER ALI	Mon 9 & Tue 10 Dec JAMIE LENMAN (EX REUBEN) Kill Chaos + Oxygen Thief
Sat 23 Nov MOLOTOV JUKEBOX	Fri 27 & Sat 28 Dec RISE ABOVE RECORDS ANNIVERSARY SHOWS Blood Ceremony + Iron Man

NEW YEARS EVE @ THE GARAGE

**I ♥ THE 80s** VS **I ♥ THE 90s**

VS

**SILENT DISCO**

9PM - LATE

# MARK LANEGAN

with special guest Duke Garwood + Lyenn

01/11 Brighton  
St. George's Church  
01273606312 seetickets.com

02/11 Birmingham  
The Institute  
08432110100 seetickets.com

03/11 Leeds  
College Of Music  
01132223434 seetickets.com

04/11 Edinburgh  
Queens Hall  
01316682019 ticketmaster.co.uk

07/11 Manchester  
RNCM 01619075555 seetickets.com

08/11 London  
Union Chapel  
*extra date added due to popular demand*

29/11 London  
Assembly Hall  
08444771000 ticketweb.co.uk

A Schoneberg Concerts, SIM, Lout & Triple G presentation by arrangement with XRay

 IMITATIONS In Stores Sep 17	 BLACK PUDDING In Stores Now
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www.marklanegan.com / @MarkLanegan / facebook.com/marklanegan

KILILIVE PRESENTS

Muchacho Tour 2013  
**PHOSPHORESCENT**  
 + **CAVEMAN**



November  
 04 Gateshead Sage  
 05 Leeds Brudenell Social Club  
 07 Belfast Empire  
 09 Liverpool Kazimier  
 TICKETS: KILILIVE.COM | SEETICKETS.COM | 0844 871 8803  
 The New Album 'Muchacho' Out Now!  
 A KiliLive.com & friends presentation

10 Bristol Thekla  
 12 Cambridge Junction  
 26 London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire  
 phosphorescentmusic.com

**Jonathan Wilson**  
 fanfare



NOVEMBER  
 27 LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB  
 28 MANCHESTER GORILLA  
 29 LIVERPOOL KAZIMIER  
 30 BRISTOL THEKLA  
 DECEMBER  
 02 NORWICH ARTS CENTRE  
 03 BRIGHTON STUDIO THEATRE  
 04 LONDON ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL  
 TICKETS ONLINE:  
 KILILIVE.COM | SEETICKETS.COM  
 24HR BOOKING LINE: 0844 871 8803  
 SONGSOFGONATHANWILSON.COM

NEW ALBUM 'FANFARE' RELEASED OCTOBER 2013  
 A KILILIVE.COM & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ITB

**SLOW CLUB**  
 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
 TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER  
 LONDON  
 O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE  
 TICKETS: KILILIVE.COM  
 SEETICKETS.COM | 0844 871 8803



NEW ALBUM 'SLOW CLUB' OUT NOW ON LOGO MUSIC  
 A KILILIVE.COM, COMMUNION & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 472 LIVE

**TREETOP FLYERS**



NOVEMBER  
 12 BRIGHTON GREEN DOOR STORE  
 13 LONDON ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL  
 14 BRISTOL THE FLEECE  
 15 MANCHESTER NIGHT & DAY  
 16 WHITSTABLE THE BUBBLE CLUB  
 TICKETS: KILILIVE.COM | SEETICKETS.COM | 0844 871 8803

DEBUT ALBUM 'THE MOUNTAIN MOLES' OUT NOW ON LOGO MUSIC  
 A KILILIVE.COM, COMMUNION & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 472 LIVE

COMMUNION AND KILIMANJARO PRESENT

**FOY VANCE**  
**JOY OF NOTHING**  
 UK TOUR



17 NOV DUCHESS - YORK  
 18 NOV CLWB IFOR BACH - CARDIFF  
 19 NOV NORWICH ARTS CENTRE - NORWICH  
 21 NOV HARE & HOUNDS - BIRMINGHAM  
 22 NOV EPSTEIN THEATRE - LIVERPOOL  
 23 NOV GORILLA - MANCHESTER  
 24 NOV THE BODEGA - NOTTINGHAM  
 27 NOV WEDGEWOOD ROOMS - PORTSMOUTH  
 28 NOV KOKO - LONDON  
 29 NOV LEADMILL - SHEFFIELD  
 30 NOV NON ZERO'S - DUNDEE  
 02 DEC TUNNELS - ABERDEEN  
 03 DEC TOLLBOOTH - STIRLING  
 04 DEC ELECTRIC CIRCUS - EDINBURGH

TICKETS FROM:  
 WWW.KILILIVE.COM | SEETICKETS.COM  
 0844 871 8803 | WWW.FOYVANCE.COM

NEW ALBUM 'JOY OF NOTHING' OUT NOW

**SARAH BLASKO**

THU 28 NOV  
 Warwick Arts Centre  
 FRI 29 NOV  
 Manchester  
 The Deaf Institute  
 SUN 1 DEC  
 London Islington  
 Assembly Hall  
 MON 2 DEC  
 Leeds The Wardrobe



TICKETS  
 0844 871 8803  
 www.kililive.com  
 www.seetickets.com

NEW ALBUM 'SARAH BLASKO' OUT NOW ON LOGO MUSIC  
 A KILILIVE.COM, COMMUNION & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 472 LIVE

**SHOVELS & ROPE**




MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER  
 LONDON SCALA

TICKETS: KILILIVE.COM | SEETICKETS.COM | 0844 871 8803

NEW ALBUM 'BE JEFFER' OUT NOW  
 A KILILIVE.COM, COMMUNION & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 472 LIVE

**ASAF AVIDAN**  
 DIFFERENT PULSES TOUR



**o2empire**  
 SHEPHERD'S BUSH  
 TUESDAY  
 12TH NOVEMBER  
 2013

BUY ONLINE AT WWW.O2SHEPHERDSBUSHEMPIRE.CO.UK  
 PARALLELLINESPROMOTIONS.COM  
 ASAFVIDANMUSIC.COM

MIDNIGHT MANGO

MIDNIGHT MANGO PRESENTS

## Wille and the Bandits GROW TOUR

'I love the soul in the music'  
Bob Harris, BBC Radio 2

'One of the best live acts in the country'  
The Daily Telegraph

'Wille is a superb slide player, I love what these guys are doing'  
Joe Bonamassa

NOVEMBER 2013

01 PENZANCE THE ACORN	01726 383 545	13 LEEDS BRUDENELL 2	0113 245 5570
02 BRISTOL LOUISIANA	0845 413 4444	14 NOTTINGHAM THE BODEGA	0845 413 4444
03 EXETER CAVERN	01392 495 370	15 BURY THE MET	0161 761 2216
05 BOURNEMOUTH THE WINCHESTER	01202 597 937	16 NEWCASTLE THE CLUNY 2	0871 220 0260
06 OXFORD THE BULLINGDON ARMS	0845 413 4444	17 PRESTON THE CONTINENTAL	01772 498 425
07 LONDON THE ISLINGTON	0845 413 4444	20 NORWICH THE BICYCLE SHOP	01603 550 930
08 FARNHAM FARNHAM MALTINGS	01252 745 444	21 BIRMINGHAM THE HARE & HOUNDS	0844 870 0000
09 BRIDPORT BRIDPORT ARTS CENTRE	01308 424 204	22 MARGATE WESTCOAST BAR	01843 447 032
10 EASTNEY THE CELLARS	0844 477 1000	23 HASTINGS THE BRASS MONKEY	01424 443 075
12 SHEFFIELD THE GREYSTONES	0114 206 5598	24 BRIGHTON THE LATEST BAR	01273 687 171

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM: [WWW.WILLEANDTHEBANDITS.COM](http://WWW.WILLEANDTHEBANDITS.COM)  
NEW ALBUM 'GROW' RELEASED 14TH OCTOBER 2013

By arrangement with Midnight Mango, Mr and Mrs Mowson Presents

## MUD, BLOOD & BEER TOUR 2013

# The Bad Shepherds

TROY DONOCKLEY    ADRIAN EDMONDSON    ANDY DINAN

PLUS TREVOR MOSS & HANNAH-LOU ON ALL DATES

November	December		
13 GATESHEAD THE SAGE, GATESHEAD	0191 263 961	01 BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2	01273 672 311
14 GLASGOW O2 ABC 2	0844 477 2000	04 COLCHESTER ARTS CENTRE	01206 800 800
15 SALE WATERSIDE ARTS CENTRE	0161 912 9616	05 NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS	0845 413 4444
16 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY 2	0844 477 2000	06 HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME	0844 478 0898
17 LEEDS CITY VARIETIES	0113 243 0808	07 CLITHEROE THE GRAND	01200 421 589
20 BATH KOMEDIA	0845 293 8480	08 POCKLINGTON ARTS CENTRE	01753 658 417
21 BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL	0121 345 0603	11 FOLKESTONE QUARTERHOUSE	01303 658 506
22 EXETER PHOENIX	01392 687 000	12 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY 2	0844 477 2000
23 FALMOUTH PAVILLION	0871 220 0260	13 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION	01223 511 511
24 SOUTHAMPTON BROOK	023 264 8556		
27 CARDIFF THE GLOBE	0871 220 0260		
28 GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL	01452 503 050		
29 CORBY THE CORE	01536 470 470		
30 FARNHAM MALTINGS	01252 745 444		

14 LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE  
+ VERY SPECIAL GUEST **JOHN OTWAY**

TICKETS FROM: [WWW.THEBADSHEPHERDS.COM](http://WWW.THEBADSHEPHERDS.COM) OR See TICKETS [ticketweb](http://ticketweb.com)

NEW ALBUM 'MUD, BLOOD & BEER' OUT ON 19TH AUGUST

# MAD DOG MCREA

With Special Guests

## Away with the Fairies Tour 2013

THU 31 OCTOBER LONDON 100 CLUB 0871 220 0260  
*IT'S HALLOWEEN SO COME IN FANCY DRESS!*

NOVEMBER 2013

FRI 01 NORWICH THE WATERFRONT 2	01603 598 890	FRI 15 CHESTER THE LIVE ROOMS	0871 220 0260
SAT 02 ROCHESTER ROYAL FUNCTION ROOMS	0115 950 7908	SAT 16 LIVERPOOL THE LOMAX	0115 950 7908
SUN 03 OXFORD THE BULLINGDON ARMS	0845 413 4444	SUN 17 STROUD THE PRINCE ALBERT	01453 755 600
TUE 05 WOLVERHAMPTON ROBIN 2	01902 481 211	TUE 19 LEICESTER THE MUSICIAN	0115 950 7908
WED 06 NOTTINGHAM BODEGA	0845 413 4444	WED 20 NORTHAMPTON THE ROADMENDER	01804 231 500
THU 07 LEEDS BRUDENELL 2	0871 220 0260	THU 21 SOUTHAMPTON TALKING HEADS	023 8067 8448
FRI 08 MANCHESTER RUBY LOUNGE	0844 478 8086	FRI 22 BRIGHTON THE HAUNT	0871 220 0260
SAT 09 YORK FIBBERS	08444 77 1000	SAT 23 SEATON THE GATEWAY	01297 825 099
SUN 10 NEWCASTLE CLUNY	0845 413 4444	SUN 24 CARDIFF THE GLOBE	0871 220 0260
TUE 12 EDINBURGH SNEAKY PETE'S	08444 77 1000	TUE 26 BOURNEMOUTH THE OLD FIRE STATION	0871 220 0260
WED 13 GLASGOW NICE & SLEAZY	08444 77 1000	WED 27 BRISTOL THE FLEECE	0845 413 4444
THU 14 PRESTON THE CONTINENTAL	01772 498 425	THU 28 FARNHAM FARNHAM MALTINGS	01252 745 444
		FRI 29 PENZANCE THE ACORN	01726 878 500
		SAT 30 PLYMOUTH PLYMOUTH GUILDHALL	08444 77 1000

WITH: FEROCIOUS DOG, SLIPDOWN DOG AND FRIENDS...

Tickets from: [WWW.MADDOGMCREA.CO.UK](http://WWW.MADDOGMCREA.CO.UK) See [ticketweb](http://ticketweb.com)

NEW ALBUM 'MAD DOG MCREA' OUT ON OCTOBER 14TH

# AN EVENING WITH ANDY MCKEE

'McKee is an artist who has to be seen to be believed.' DAILY TELEGRAPH

MARCH 2014

TUE 11 LONDON THE TABERNACLE plus special guests 08444 77 1000	FRI 21 CLITHEROE THE GRAND 01200 421 589
WED 12 BRIGHTON ST GEORGE'S 08444 77 1000	SAT 22 KENDAL BREWERY ARTS CENTRE 01539 725 533
THU 13 BATH KOMEDIA 0845 293 8480	SUN 23 GLASGOW ORAN MOR 0141 204 5152
FRI 14 WIMBORNE TIVOLI THEATRE 01202 885 546	TUE 25 EDINBURGH PLEASANCE THEATRE 0131 220 3234
SAT 15 BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL 0121 345 0600	WED 26 GATESHEAD SAGE GATESHEAD 0191 443 4661
SUN 16 CARDIFF GLEE CLUB 0871 472 0400	FRI 28 DERBY ASSEMBLY ROOMS 01332 255 900
WED 19 MANCHESTER RNCM 0161 907 5555	SAT 29 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION 2 01223 511 511
THU 20 LEEDS CITY VARIETIES 0113 243 0808	SUN 30 LONDON UNION CHAPEL plus special guests 08444 77 1000

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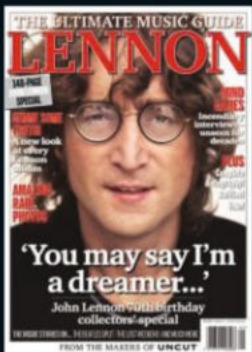
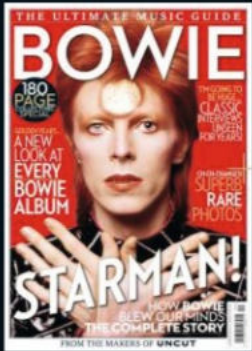
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# Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

## JACKIE LOMAX

Singer-songwriter, Beatles collaborator

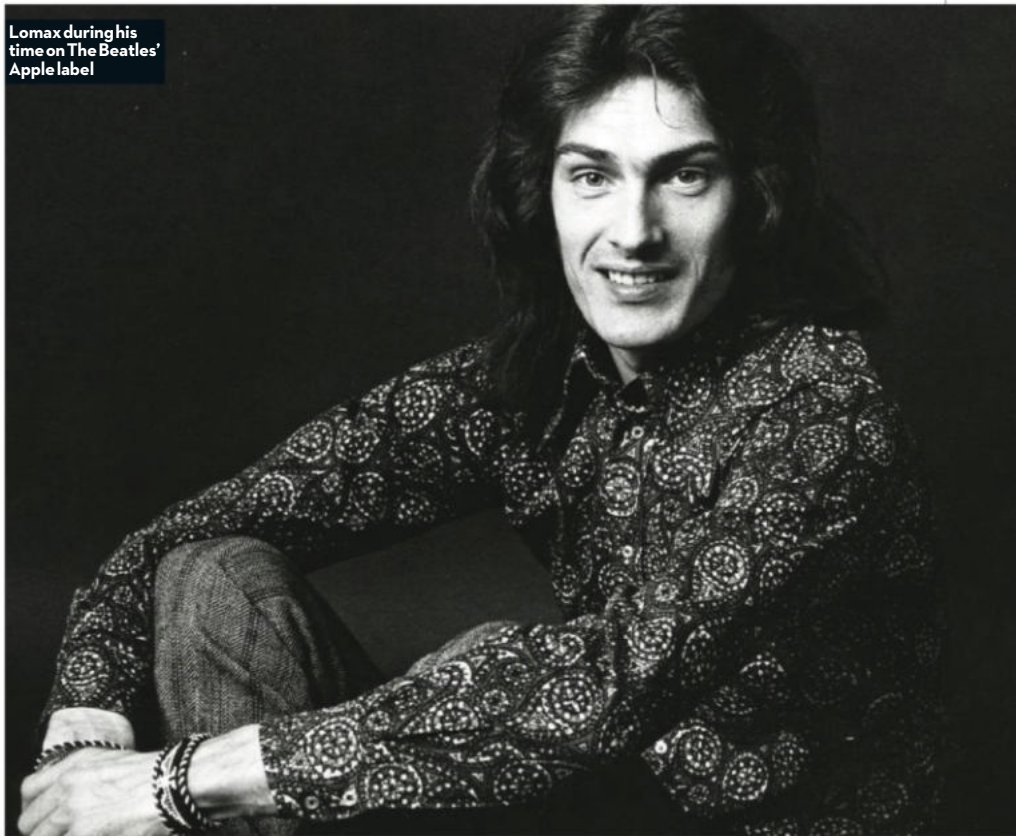
1944-2013

JACKIE LOMAX ADMITTED to being somewhat overwhelmed when it came to recording his debut single for Apple. "I started to think, 'I'm not sure if I can sing this damn thing because it sounds so good as an instrumental!'" he recalled. "When I sang it, there were three people in the booth looking at me: George, Paul and Ringo." It was 1968 and the song in question, "Sour Milk Sea", had been written for Lomax by George Harrison. Yet despite the presence of three Beatles, plus Eric Clapton and Nicky Hopkins, the single flopped.

Lomax and Harrison pressed on with parent LP *Is This What You Want?*, recorded in LA with the Wrecking Crew, but sales were similarly disappointing. It was to be indicative of most of Lomax's career, which saw him graduate from Merseybeat combo The Undertakers to spells as a prog-rocker and session guitarist.

He began by following The Beatles' trail to Hamburg, landing a contract with Pye while with The Undertakers, for whom he was bassist and frontman. None of their releases sold in numbers. Undeterred, he formed The Lomax Alliance and found a champion in Brian Epstein, who secured them a berth with CBS. When The Beatles' manager died in 1967, Lomax became the first act to sign for Apple, where Harrison offered his services as producer. Lomax was also drafted in as one of the voices on "Hey Jude" and added a low harmony part to "Dear Prudence". There were two further solo singles, "New Day" and a cover of "How The Web Was Woven" (the latter featuring Leon Russell), before The Beatles' dissolution left Lomax at a loose end in 1970.

Lomax during his time on The Beatles' Apple label



He briefly joined acid-blues quartet Heavy Jelly, before heading out to Woodstock, striking a deal with Warner Bros and reviving The Undertakers. Both resulting albums failed to shift in any great quantity and Lomax returned home in 1973 to join prog-rock outfit Badger, initially formed by one-time Yes keyboardist Tony Kaye. Lomax's songs were a prominent feature on their sole

album, *White Lady*, but, again, few bought it.

The '70s saw him relaunch his solo career in the US, issuing two LPs on Capitol, and by the next decade he was playing in touring versions of The Drifters and The Coasters. Most recently Lomax, who has died after suffering from cancer, completed a new album under his own name, *Against All Odds*, due for release in January.

## LINDSAY COOPER

Experimental rock bassoon and oboe player, composer

1951-2013

A LIFE IN classical music beckoned until Lindsay Cooper fell in with prog-folk types Comus in the early '70s. Already an accomplished bassoon player, the ex-Royal Academy member took up oboe and flute and began exploring new avenues. She stayed with them for a year, featuring on the title track of *To Keep From Crying*, before Henry Cow invited her in as replacement for Geoff Leigh in late 1973.

Cooper's tenure with the avant-rock ensemble was initially brief. She joined them for the following year's *Unrest* and its tour, but found herself the victim of a reshuffle. She

then lent her talents to albums by Steve Hillage, Egg, Hatfield And The North and Mike Oldfield. However, by February '75 she was back with Henry Cow, becoming a key fixture until their split in 1978.

Her time with them reached a creative peak on 1979's *Western Culture*, which devoted a side to Cooper's experimental, complex compositions. By then her repertoire had extended to include



Lindsay Cooper in the mid-'70s

piano and sax, though it coincided with the onset of the multiple sclerosis that would force her to retire in the late '90s. From '77-'82 she was a member of the Feminist Improvising Group, a set-up which numbered Maggie Nicols, Irène Schweizer, Sally Potter and ex-Henry Cow bandmate Georgie Born. There were also spells with National Health, Bill Bruford, Mike Westbrook, News From Babel and The Pedestrians, led by Pere Ubu's David Thomas.

## LOUIS KILLEN

Folk singer and Clancy Brother

1934-2013

AS ARCHIVIST, SCHOLAR and consummate performer, Louis Killen was an important figure in

the post-war British folk revival. In 1958, he co-founded the Folk Song And Ballad club in his native Newcastle, where he became known for singing sea shanties and maritime songs accompanied only by a concertina. Topic signed him up three years later, for whom he cut two EPs and, in 1965, solo debut *Ballads & Broadsides*. By the mid-'60s Killen had moved to the US, where he collaborated with Pete Seeger before joining The Clancy Brothers in 1971. He stayed with the group for five years, featuring on *Save The Land!*, *Show Me The Way* and *Live On St. Patrick's Day*, recorded in Hartford, Connecticut in March '72. Most recently he had returned to Tyneside and, after undergoing gender reassignment to fulfil a lifelong wish to become a woman, was known as Louisa Jo.



Phil Chevron performing with The Pogues in Sydney, February 1990

## PHIL CHEVRON

Pogues guitarist and songwriter

1957-2013

JEMFINER'S PATERNITY leave afforded Phil Chevron the chance to join The Pogues in 1984. Undeterred by the temporary nature of the offer, or his lack of experience on Finer's banjo, Chevron set about his task with an enthusiasm and efficacy that soon found him in his preferred role of guitarist once Shane MacGowan had given up the six-string to concentrate on singing. Chevron duly became an integral part of the band that recorded much-admired second album, *Rum, Sodomy & The Lash*. By the time of 1988 follow-up *If I Should Fall From Grace With God*, he'd established himself as a creative force, offering up the great Irish immigrant ballad, "Thousands Are Sailing". He later re-recorded it for a BBC documentary on the history of Irish music, *Bringing It All Back Home*.

Chevron quit The Pogues in 1994 due to drink and drug issues, three years after MacGowan left under similar circumstances, though both men returned to the fold in 2001. As unofficial spokesman for the revived group, Chevron personally oversaw the remastering of their entire back catalogue.

His pre-Pogues career was notable for the Radiators From Space, formed in Dublin in 1976 and often cited as Ireland's first punk band. A deal with Chiswick led to the release of two albums, *TV Tube Heart* ('77) and *Ghostown* ('79), the latter produced in London by Tony Visconti. Despite its commercial failure, *Ghostown* was applauded by critics and fellow artists alike. Christy Moore made Chevron's "Faithful Departed", a poignant diary of growing up in Ireland, a central pillar of his own live set.

When The Radiators split in 1981, he issued mini-LP *Songs From Bill's Dance Hall*, comprised of tunes from Brecht and Weill. It was a continuation of a theme Chevron had first explored in 1977, when a fascination with cabaret singer Agnes Bernelle led to him producing her album, *Bernelle On Brecht And....* He reunited with Bernelle for 1985's *Father's Lying Dead On The Ironing Board*, released on Elvis Costello's IMP label.

In 2003 he reformed his old band as The Radiators (Plan 9), cutting *Trouble Pilgrim* and *Sound City Beat*. Diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in 2007, Chevron's last public appearance was at a benefit gig in Dublin this August. The fundraiser for his medical care featured MacGowan, Gavin Friday and writers Roddy Doyle and Joseph O'Connor, who called him "one of the greatest Irish songwriters of all time, certainly the best of my generation".

## RAY DOLBY

Inventor of Dolby Noise Reduction

1933-2013

"I WAS NEVER a gold-digger or an Oscar-digger," claimed award-winning US billionaire Ray Dolby, inventor of the Dolby Noise Reduction system. "I just had an instinct about the right sort of things that should be done in my business." In 1965 he founded Dolby Laboratories in London, where he pioneered an electronic sound filter which served to reduce levels of tape hiss. Decca were the first label to adopt it on their recordings. Portland-born Dolby's other notable innovations included surround sound and, while still a student at Ampex in the '50s, the co-creation of the first videotape recorder.

## PRINCE JAZZBO

Reggae MC, producer and DJ

1951-2013

THE FOUR-DECADE career of Jamaican MC and producer Prince Jazzbo didn't reach the populist

heights of friends and peers like U-Roy and Max Romeo, but he was no less influential. He began recording at Coxson Dodds's Studio One in 1972, where he cut the kinetic "Crab Walking", an answer song to Horace Andy's "Skylarking", alongside others like "School", "Fool For Love" and "I Imperial". He's perhaps best known as toaster on "Croaking Lizard", a highlight of 1976's *Super Ape*, The Upsetters' Lee Perry-helmed dub classic, on which he can be heard extemporising over Max Romeo's rhythm track for "Chase The Devil". The same year also found him working with Perry on *Ital Corner*. Twelve months later, Jazzbo founded his own Ujama label, which became home to reggae



Prince Jazzbo, March 1988

heavy-hitters like U-Roy, Horace Andy and I-Roy. He eventually recorded with the latter, with whom he'd previously engaged in a mock-feud vinyl clash by way of "Straight To Jazzbo's Head" and "Straight to I-Roy's Head", in 1990. Jazzbo's career had begun to fade by then, though the Beastie Boys memorably namechecked him on '94's "B-Boys Makin' With The Freak Freak". He continued to record up until his death, the most recent release being "What A Tribulation".

## MARVIN RAINWATER

Country singer-songwriter

1925-2013

AN APPEARANCE ON '50s TV show *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* became the jump-off point for Kansas-born Marvin Rainwater, earning him a regular spot on *Red Foley's Ozark Jubilee* and a recording contract with MGM. Mixing rockabilly with country, he first hit big with 1957 signature tune, "Gonna Find Me A Bluebird", swiftly followed by "Whole Lotta

Woman" (a UK No 1 for six weeks), "Nothin' Needs Nothin' (Like I Need You)" and "Half-Breed". Hits dried up in the '60s, though Rainwater's "I Miss You Already", originally cut by Faron Young, was a major success for Billy Joe Royal in 1986.

## HARRY GOODWIN

Music photographer

1924-2013

HARRY GOODWIN ONCE recalled that John Lennon introduced him to Yoko Ono as "the greatest photographer in Britain". He first shot The Beatles at the Apollo Theatre in his native Manchester in 1963, a year before he took a job with the BBC's new show, *Top Of The Pops*. Starting out on £30 a week, Goodwin remained as the programme's official photographer until 1973, missing only six shows during that run. His personable manner endeared him to his subjects, making for refreshingly informal portraits of everyone from The Beatles and the Stones to Hendrix, Dylan, Pink Floyd, Bowie and Michael Jackson. **ROBHUGHES**

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## THE DARK SIDE OF THE DOME

I loved the article in the November *Uncut* about Pink Floyd and *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. I never tire of reading about Floyd and that album, and there is always another story I haven't heard before.

I was particularly interested as I attended the gig on January 20, 1972, where they played "Eclipse" for the first time and I saw that you had added a copy of a ticket stub from the Brighton Dome in the article. Imagine my surprise when I looked at my tickets and found that it was *my* ticket from my own collection! Although I am very pleased to be part of this historic event I have to wonder how you managed to get a copy of my ticket.

The story of that night didn't end with their equipment breaking down during "Money". They promised they would come back and perform *TDSOTM* in full and played two nights in June that year. I went to the gig on June 29. They didn't disappoint and played the album in full. They also treated the fans to "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun", "Careful With That Axe, Eugene" and "Echoes", which was always a crowd pleaser.

On January 20, 1997, 25 years to the day of the first Pink Floyd gig, a tribute band called Sheep played the Brighton Dome. They of course played *TDSOTM* in full along with a couple of songs from the Syd Barrett days and the earlier albums.

So thanks, *Uncut*, for helping me to be part of the history of that fabulous event. Great magazine. Keep up the brilliant work.

**Paul Clarkson, via email**

Your ticket showed up during a random online search, Paul. How it got where our art editor found it, I have no idea! - Allan

## WHITE NOISE

Thanks for the attention paid to Clarence White in last month's *Uncut*. He was one of the best guitar players to have ever lived. I met Clarence a number of times when he played in Holland in the early '70s, first with The Byrds, later with The Kentucky Colonels. With The Byrds he was standing still like a cardboard cutout in his white Nudie

Early '70s Pink Floyd and, inset, the mysterious ticket stub



suit most of the time with only his hand moving and the occasional grin, pouring out the most amazing licks without blinking an eye. I asked him to show me some licks and intros, but even at half speed they were very hard to follow.

Clarence definitely had the big three: technique, taste and timing.

When the Colonels played Amsterdam in May 1973, Jim Dickson called me and asked me to help them record their Paradiso show. I advised them not to record there as the acoustics of Paradiso, an old church, were not suited for an acoustic outfit. They did record a show at another venue later that week and that show is available as a CD through the website of Roland White. These may well be the last recordings of Clarence who sadly was killed just a few weeks later.

For people interested, I would like to recommend a CD by The Gosdin Brothers, *Sounds Of Goodbye*, on Bakersfield International/Big Beat, where you can hear Clarence on many tracks with his buddy Gene Parsons on drums, developing his Telecaster style.

Again thanks for keeping his memory alive.

**Leo Koster, Utrecht, The Netherlands**

## MID-MAC MATTERS

Love your magazine! Have been subscribing about eight years now and every issue continues to amaze me. I have to agree with the writer from last month. It is high time for a Danny Kirwan retrospective. I know his health has been a concern for decades, and he lives a very sheltered private life, but the man was responsible for my favorite period of the Mac and I continue to play these LPs and his solo work (esp. *Second Chapter*) to this day. For me, as a Yank, starting with "Earl Gray" from *Kiln House* through all of his beautiful work on *Future Games* and *Bare Trees*, he represents that wonderful singularly English autumnal melancholy. Not to downplay the earlier work with Green and Spencer, but I think *Kiln House* represented that initial turn of the band's direction. "Sunny Side Of Heaven", "Dust" and the wonderful

sound of Mrs Scarrott reading her poetry on "Thoughts On A Grey Day" remain absolutely peerless.

His solo LPs were a bit spotty, but *Second Chapter* has moments to equal Nick Drake. A re-visit, please!  
**Roger Williams, via email**

...Greetings from across the pond. I was flipping through the new issue of *Uncut* last night (Take 197) and enjoyed much of it, but in Andy Gill's piece on Fleetwood Mac, he makes a passing reference to Bob Welch but misses what would have been an important and rare opportunity, which was to ask Mick why the band has kept Bob from being inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. We've all heard enough about *Rumours*, and about the sex, drugs and lifestyle that accompanied the making of it. Why not find out why one of its key members has essentially been written out of their history?

**Dave Steinfeld, via email**

## CALL THE DOCTOR

After seeing the review of *The Wicker Man: The Final Cut* in your



November issue, and noticing the mention that “even *Doctor Who* battled devilish forces summoned from a Bronze Age burial mound”, it got me thinking – where was/is the potentially interesting piece that could be written on the BBC’s great Radiophonic Workshop, as a neat nod to the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the programme?

Surely everyone knows that pioneering Delia Derbyshire ‘realisation’ of Ron Grainer’s theme tune? And with so many great composers from Ms Derbyshire to Dick Mills, Brian Hodgson and beyond, not forgetting their successors in the modern era, notably Murray Gold, there’s potentially a whole universe of sound – might I suggest *Uncut* hops into its Tardis and explores?

**Chris Morley, via email**

## HISTORY OF THE HERSH

So wonderful to see five pages dedicated to my favourite band, Throwing Muses, in last month’s *Uncut*. I haven’t been buying *Uncut* as much as I used to lately – too many covers dedicated to ‘His Royal Bobness’ (bleugh!) – but this feature reminded me how much of a lifeline *Uncut* was in my teenage years, as you were the only magazine that ever provided any coverage on the Muses. Thank you for pointing out what I’ve been telling everyone for years: that Throwing Muses made inimitable, feminine, beautiful, danceable and staggeringly original records. Great work!

**Joe Mitchell, Manchester**

## EVIDENTLY, EXCELLENT

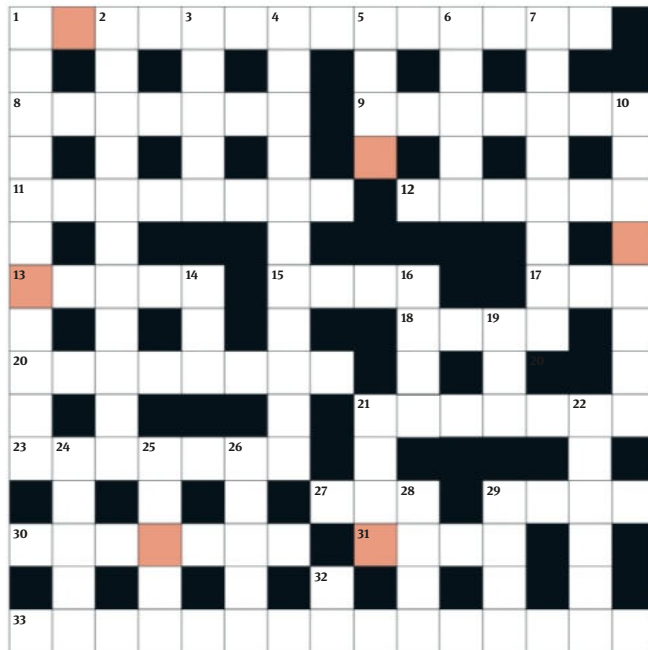
I went to see national treasure Johnny Clarke the other night in Bournemouth and it was superb. He was on such good form – jokes, anecdotes and yes, poems kept a packed hall enthralled for over an hour. I know you caught up with him last year, but he’s not in the best of health – as he joked: “Put it this way, I don’t buy green bananas.” So I think you should catch up with the skinny old Mancunian again.

**Tony Gill, via email**

## WRONG WRIGHT

There’s nothing wrong with your obituary of Tim Wright (Pere Ubu, DNA) except for the last sentence. Those solo LPs: that’s another Tim Wright. A sad mistake I hope you will rectify. I came to know him (the DNA Tim) during a period he spent in The Netherlands. A very likeable, modest person who had difficulty choosing between his New York life and various periods in Belize.

**André Salters, via email**



### HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by Joni Mitchell. When you’ve worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* December 2013 Xword Comp, 9th floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU. The first correct entry picked at random will win a prize. Closing date: November 27, 2013. This competition is only open to European residents.

### CLUES ACROSS

- It’s not the “Four Kicks” bucking bronco that automatically becomes “King Of The Rodeo” (10-4)
- Love-struck over a Buffalo Tom album (7)
- (See 23 across)
- So new thoughts then on this Leonard Cohen album (3-5)
- Mark \_\_\_\_\_, Pulp guitarist (or the Formula 1 racing driver if you prefer) (6)
- 30 & 31 Ernest’s nicer about this Santana album (5-7)
- Inclined to play an album by Scott Walker, Cozy Powell or The Lightning Seeds (4)
- Germans who are a bit Canadian and a bit American (3)
- (See 32 down)
- That’s the beauty of this Stranglers single (4-4)
- This planet Earth belongs to The Bee Gees (2-5)
- 23 & 9A “And one day she will see just how to say please and get down on her knees”, 1964 (7-3-4)
- 7ZT label group \_\_\_\_ Of Noise (3)
- “Left a good job in the \_\_\_\_ , workin’ for the man every night and day”, from Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Proud Mary” (4)
- (See 13 across)
- A bit of disco dancing with Led Zeppelin (4)
- 33 Seeing that Frankie Valli loved us, he went solo (2-4-6-3)

### ANSWERS: TAKE 197

#### ACROSS

- Up From Below, 7+26 A Men At Work, 9 Ace, 10 Al Stewart, 12 On Call, 13+11 A All I Got, 14 Dio, 16 Northern Lights, 19 Hup, 24 Ra, 25 Entreat, 29

- Epic, 30+20 D Trailer Park, 32 Ruin, 33 Dogs, 34 McElroy.

#### DOWN

- Up Around The Bend, 2 Fast Car, 4 Beat, 5 Little Lies, 6+21 A Walking To New Orleans, 7 Megadeth, 8 Not Now, 15 Mr Writer, 17+31 D How Men Are,

### CLUES DOWN

- “Put it in your pantry with your cupcakes”, 1968 (3-8)
- Nice mild hit arranged for Deep Purple (5-2-4)
- Pleasant idea to include a Wombats number (4-1)
- 4 What it means, perhaps, for a member of Kasabian (3-8)
- 5 Clannad album recorded in Panama City (4)
- 6 As proudly worn by Cream for their final chart single (5)
- 7 An easy-going solo Gregg Allman (4-4)
- 10 Roxy Music album that left us helpless (8)
- 14+29 D Was Roger Chapman sent off while recording this album with the Streetwalkers? (3-4)
- 16 Partly destroyed a Sinéad O’Connor recording (4)
- 19 “My \_\_\_\_ Ca Choo” was first hit for Alvin Stardust (3)
- 21 \_\_\_\_ And The Mambas formed in 1982 as an off-shoot project from Soft Cell (4)
- 22 Time for us to get moving with The Cars (4-2)
- 24 A mournful song on album by The Nice (5)
- 25 “She’s over-bored and self-assured/Ohno, I knowa \_\_\_\_ word”, from Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (5)
- 26 Blues testimonial to include name of legendary old bluesman Sleepy John \_\_\_\_ (5)
- 28 Live albums Farewell \_\_\_\_ by The Doobie Brothers or The Final \_\_\_\_ by Jim Croce (4)
- 29 (See 14 down)
- 32+18 A As Adam Horowitz of the Beastie Boys is better known (2-4)

- 18 Sur, 23 Nut, 26+22 D All Or Nothing, 27 Worry, 28 Rubin, 30+3 D Tom Odell.

### HIDDEN ANSWER

“Corner Soul”

**Compiled:**  
Trevor Hungerford

IPC Media, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU  
Tel: 020 3148 6970/6982 www.uncut.co.uk

**EDITOR** Allan Jones  
**DEPUTY EDITOR** John Mulvey  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Michael Bonner  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** John Robinson  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR** Nigel Williamson  
**ART EDITOR** Marc Jones  
**SENIOR DESIGNER** Michael Chapman  
**PRODUCTION EDITOR** Mick Meikleham  
**SUB EDITOR/WRITER** Tom Pinnock  
**PICTURE RESEARCHER** Phil King

**CONTRIBUTORS** David Cavanagh, Tom Charity, Jon Dale, Stephen Dalton, Jamie Fullerton, Andy Gill, Nick Hasted, Mick Houghton, Rob Hughes, Trevor Hungerford, Wendy Ide, Danny Kelly, John Lewis, April Long, Pat Long, Damien Love, Alastair McKay, Geoffrey Macnab, Ben Marshall, Gavin Martin, Piers Martin, Andrew Mueller, Garry Mulholland, Sharon O’Connell, Louis Pattison, James Poletti, David Quantick, Sam Richards, Jonathan Romney, Bud Scoppa, Peter Shapiro, Neil Spencer, Marc Spitz, Terry Staunton, David Stubbs, Graeme Thomson, Luke Torn, Stephen Troussé, Jaan Uhelszki, Wyndham Wallace, Peter Watts, Damon Wise, Rob Young

**COVER PHOTO:** Norman Seeff  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Henry Diltz, Gered Mankowitz, Chris McAndrew, Fin Costello, Barrie Wentzell, Ed Thrasher, Jack Robinson  
**THANKS THIS ISSUE:** Lora Findlay (design), Charles Hannah, Alastair Davidson

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Email all ad copy to [laurie\\_king@ipcmedia.com](mailto:laurie_king@ipcmedia.com)  
**DIGITAL BUSINESS DIRECTORS** Andrew Sanders, Chris Dicker 020 3148 6709

**CREATIVE MEDIA**  
**HEAD OF CREATIVE MEDIA - MEN & MUSIC**  
Rob Hunt  
**DEPUTY HEAD OF CREATIVE MEDIA**  
Neil McSteen  
**CREATIVE MEDIA MANAGERS** Matthew Chalkey, Adam Bulleid, Holly Bishop 020 3148 6701  
**CREATIVE MEDIA PROJECT MANAGER**  
Elisabeth Hempshall 020 3148 6726

**CLASSIFIED**  
**CLASSIFIED SALES MANAGER** Robina Shahid 020 3148 2540  
**CLASSIFIED SALES EXECUTIVE** Ryan Burnett 020 3148 2886  
**COPY CONTACT** Chloe Wooding 020 3148 2612

**GROUP TRADING DIRECTOR** Kate Mackenzie 020 3148 3670  
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Benedict Ransley 020 3148 6783  
**MARKETING ASSISTANT** Charlotte Treadaway 020 3148 6779  
**CIRCULATION MANAGER** Chris Potter  
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**SYNDICATION MANAGER** Nicola Beasley-Suffolk  
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**HEAD OF FINANCE** Tony Falco  
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**GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR** Steve Sutherland  
**PUBLISHING DIRECTOR** Emily Hutchings  
**ACTING PUBLISHING DIRECTOR** Tracy Cheesman  
**PA TO TRACY CHEESMAN** Hollie Bishop 020 3148 6848  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR** Paul Williams

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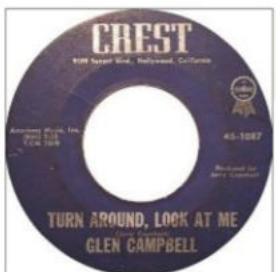




# MY LIFE IN MUSIC

## Jimmy Webb

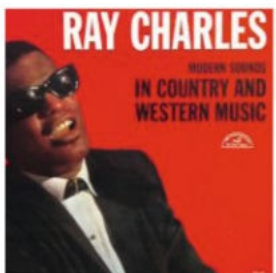
The records that made an Oklahoma boy freak out, jump off his tractor and become one of pop's greatest songwriters...



The song that inspired me to write my own

**Glen Campbell**  
**Turn Around, Look At Me** 1961

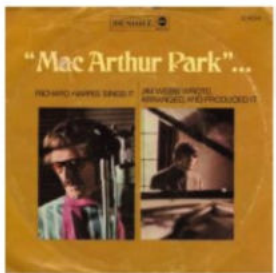
I heard this song on the radio in Oklahoma while ploughing a field. I was completely freaked out and I couldn't wait to get off the tractor. I went all the way over to Buffalo, bought this 45, and I played it 'til it wouldn't play any more. I remember praying, "Dear Lord, please let me write a song like 'Turn Around...', and, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, let me meet someone like Glen Campbell."



A record that shook my household

**Ray Charles**  
**Modern Sounds In Country And Western Music** 1962

This was one of those records that just tilts your world in a different direction. My father fell in love with it, and so did I. It taught me you could mix different elements and come up with marvellous fusions – it had elegant, sensual orchestration, and choirs. It was a creative blast of epic proportions. It really shook up the early '60s.



My favourite version of "MacArthur Park"

**Richard Harris**  
**MacArthur Park** 1968

This song has been recorded maybe 400 times – but I like the Harris version. People say, 'Surely you don't mean that?' Well, yes, I do. It captured the essence of 1968, the excitement of London and the clash of cultures. Richard Harris sang it very well, but also there was a dignity, a sense of drama, decorum and gravitas that came from stage actors. It was the fusion of two worlds.



The album that inspired me to sing my own songs

**Carole King**  
**Tapestry** 1971

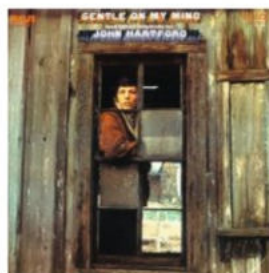
*Tapestry* woke all of us in the songwriting community up to the idea that it wasn't enough to just write songs. I wasn't much of a singer but I realised that people who only wrote songs were going to be relegated to the backrooms of the business – I got it in my head that that was what I was going to do and I stayed with it.



The album that put America to shame

**The Beatles**  
**Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** 1967

There were so many things going on here. You're hearing the studio being used as an instrument and driven harder than it's ever been driven before – in the US, musicians and producers were bewildered because we were thinking, 'Why don't our records sound that good?' The Beatles were not sparing the horses to get where they wanted to go.



A song I wish I'd written

**John Hartford**  
**Gentle On My Mind** 1968

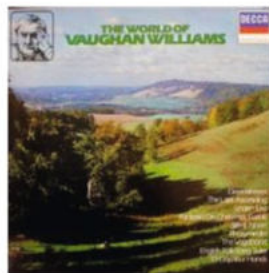
I've been thinking about this song quite a bit recently. I've heard it described as an enablers' anthem. It's about a woman who's willing to let her lover roam as far and wide as he needs to go to keep his spirit alive. The first line is "It's knowing that your door is always open/And your path is free to walk". And it's real poetry, not just stubbing lyrics on the back of an envelope. I wish I'd written it.



A perfect song

**Don Schlitz**  
**The Gambler** 1978

It locks together with such fearful symmetry, if you will. It was an almost supernatural experience he went through, as that's when a song grabs a hold of you and starts steering itself. It's just too perfect – all the metaphors from poker, the fact he invented this old character on a train and somewhere during the conversation the old guy dies. But he's left him with this code, you know, you've gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em...



My favourite classical piece

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**  
**The Lark Ascending** 1920

I have a Vaughan Williams autograph on my wall. Very close to my all-time favourite piece is "The Lark Ascending". It conjures up Britain for me. I've been from Salisbury Plain to the Lake District, from Land's End to the white cliffs of Dover, and I was in love with a couple of English girls when I was young – it's a very romantic place for me. Williams is really the national music of England.

Jimmy Webb's new album, *Still Within The Sound Of My Voice*, is released on November 4 by eOne Music

IN NEXT MONTH'S UNCUT:

"We bought fifteen hundred mattresses from the army which we nailed on the walls!"

INTERVIEW: TOM PINNOCK. PHOTO: JESSICA DASCHNER

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