



**ARCTIC MONKEYS RETURN**  
**"I JUST WANTED TO BE ONE OF THE STROKES"**

# UNCLUT

**REVIEWS FRENZY!**  
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**BEGGARS BANQUET SPECIAL!**

*The*

# STONES

*Plus!*  
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**"WE WANT TO KEEP GOING!"**

**REBIRTH, REVOLUTION AND A ROCK'N'ROLL MASTERPIECE**

**"NOW I AM A FISH!"**  
**THE WISDOM OF**  
**LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY**

**"LSD, JIMI AND ME!"**  
**THE WILD TALES OF**  
**ERIC BURDON**

**DOWN THE PUB WITH**  
**JACK WHITE**

**"THINGS HAVE CHANGED!"**  
**FRANCOISE**  
**HARDY**  
**GETS DEEP**

**DÜSSELDORF '78**  
**JENNIFER HERREMA**  
**LIZ PHAIR**  
**JOHN CALE**  
**JEFF BECK**  
**BITCHIN BAJAS**  
**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
**THE MC5**  
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# PARADOX

A LOUD POEM



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On the cover: The Rolling Stones by Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

**A**T the end of this issue, in My Life In Music, Jennifer Herrema from Royal Trux recalls the first time she saw The Rolling Stones. "I fell in love with the Stones at a very early age," she says. "What sealed the deal was my dad taking me to their Tattoo You concert when I was a kid. The Stones blew my mind. I cried because we couldn't go back the next night."

This month, of course, the Stones play their first UK dates since 2013. Coincidentally, this year also marks the 50th anniversary of *Beggars Banquet* and for our cover story, Graeme Thomson talks to the band's closest confidants and collaborators to get the definitive inside story of their first masterpiece. Graeme's terrific piece depicts a band in transition, regrouping after the failure of *Their Satanic Majesties Request* and responding to the diminishing powers of their de facto founder, Brian Jones, before emerging at the year's close a tougher, stronger and better band. "Remember," cautions the band's former manager Andrew Oldham, "what drags the mere man down only propels The Rolling Stones further."

It's a busy month for Graeme as he also caught up with Lee 'Scratch' Perry in the basement of a club in Edinburgh for what can only be described as a colourful chat. Meanwhile, Tom Pinnock travels to Paris for an audience with Françoise Hardy, Stephen Dalton outlines the startling musical events that transpired in Düsseldorf in the late '70s and Eric Burdon shares some suitably wild tales about his peers, including John Lennon, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison.

Burdon talks, too, with great wisdom and insight about the power of music as a force for positive change: "I believe in the spirit of the people. I believe in the power of the human voice." It's a sentiment shared elsewhere in the issue by James Taylor, who tells Sam Richards, "Music does help us. It's food for the soul and a connection with the universe. I don't think music will save the world, it's just a beautiful part of it."

Enjoy this issue of *Uncut*.



**Michael Bonner, Acting Editor.** Follow me on Twitter @michaelbonner

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# INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF *UNCUT*

FEATURING... Stealing Sheep | Wayne Kramer | Bitchin Bajas

## Public house reach!

**Jack White** plays a storming impromptu gig at *Uncut's* local

**I**T'S not every day that a rock star of international repute plays your local pub, offering to stand you a pint into the bargain. But that's essentially what happened on March 28 when Jack White announced that he'd warm up for his intimate gig at London's Highbury Garage with an even more intimate gig at the George Inn on Borough High Street, a stone's throw from the *Uncut* office. You can see why the George Inn, built in 1676, appealed to White's sense of history, though its narrow saloons weren't made for rock'n'roll shows; instead, a temporary stage was constructed in the courtyard, in the shadow of the Shard, creating something of a festival atmosphere. Clutching their free pints of bespoke Jack White Humoresque ale – complex, earthy – the expectant crowd was a mix of students, hipsters and office workers cutting loose, plus a couple of Jack White lookalikes in black hats and white face powder.

The real Jack White was in playful mood, joking topically about Russian spies. Featuring not one but two synth players, his new band are markedly looser and choppier than his previous outfits, allowing White to dominate proceedings on his new black EVH Wolfgang (Eddie Van Halen's signature

guitar, which says a lot). He kicked off with two of the best tracks from quixotic new album *Boarding House Reach*: "Over And Over And Over" was thrillingly brash, while stop-start funk jam "Corporation" provided ample opportunity to showboat.

This was Jack White in full "Jack White" mode, hamming it up to the max, the Frank-N-Furter of vintage rock. More than once he pretended the plug was about to be pulled before launching into another song. He transformed a couple of White Stripes numbers: "Dead Leaves And The Dirty Ground" became a swirling cacophony; "Fell In Love With A Girl" was a teasing half-speed strut before finally exploding, prompting a bout of well-dressed crowdsurfing. On *Boarding House Reach*, White's swashbuckling self-indulgence eventually becomes wearisome, but for 40 minutes between rain showers in a pub courtyard, it was a lot of fun. **SAM RICHARDS**



Shard rock:  
Jack White plays  
courtyard jester



# She bangs the drums

To celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage, Liverpool band **Stealing Sheep** are marching through festivals with a 33-strong, all-female percussion and dance troupe

**H**OW do you devise a performance that meaningfully celebrates the centenary of women's suffrage while simultaneously showcasing and inspiring women in music across the north of England? This was the daunting challenge put to Stealing Sheep in a co-commission from music charity Brighter Sound and Edge Hill University, but the band have responded with what's shaping up to be an unforgettable spectacle: a procession around Liverpool's Baltic Triangle featuring 15 female drummers/percussionists and 15 female dancers, plus the Sheep.

"We decided a procession would be a good ode to the suffragettes, as marching symbolises their active protest," explains vocalist and keyboardist Rebecca Hawley. "So we involved a choreographer [Kate Cox] to devise formations and simple, synchronised movements that are symbolic of the lack of female presence and voice. We decided on drums because they've got quite a powerful sound and also because it's a more conventionally male instrument, in some respects. There's a lot of solidarity around people drumming together, too."

Stealing Sheep have previous in

terms of staging unique public events with a strong visual impact. The trio initially made waves with their mix of psych-pop, pastoral folk and post-punk, but distinguished themselves with their second LP, 2015's *Not Real*. It set their heavenly vocal harmonies against dream-pop backdrops of a more experimental bent, with synths and electronics taking the lead. Visuals, including facepaint and matching outfits, are an important part of Stealing Sheep's aesthetic: 2015's tripped-out "Mythopoeia" shows found them exploring dream states and optical illusions via mythical characters.

When *Uncut* speaks to Hawley, the Sheep are still working on a bespoke piece of music for the procession, but she does reveal they're "taking a lot of inspiration from Kraftwerk for the electronic, mechanical side of it and listening to a lot of minimal techno. We're doing quite a lot Steve Reich-style patterns that work with the choreography, so it should have a strong visual and sonic presence.

**"Everything is fully mobile. We carry the amps as rucksacks and the synths are on harnesses"**

REBECCA HAWLEY

But we like the arpeggios in Phillip Glass and are looking to incorporate those with our synths. The piece is between contemporary classical and electronic techno."

Aside from unknown quantities like the 15 drummers themselves (still being recruited online at the time of writing), how are the band grappling with the logistical challenge of playing instruments while marching? "We've conceived the performance so that it's versatile and can travel to festival sites," says Hawley. "It doesn't require a stage

and everything is fully mobile. We actually carry the amps as specially designed rucksacks and the synths are on harnesses. At past festivals we've done quite a lot of procession-based work and marching bands, although this is the largest scale version of it and none of them has had such a powerful theme."

Asked if the Suffragette Tribute has required the three to set aside their identity as a band to serve a greater purpose, Hawley says not. "It feels like an extension of what we're doing as Stealing Sheep; as three women with an equal role in the band and always wearing uniforms, we're already becoming one. This project feels like an empowering expansion of that: it's lots of people standing together for the same purpose – to celebrate women. To lose yourself within that is very liberating." **SHARON O'CONNELL**

*Stealing Sheep's Suffragette Tribute will premiere at Liverpool Sound City on May 5*



Stealing Sheep, rustling up some dream states: (l-r) Rebecca Hawley, Lucy Mercer and Emily Lansley

THE CLASSIFIEDS

This month: Post-punk extravaganza. Taken from the *NME*, April 19, 1980

Einstürzende Neubauten performing in Box Canyon near Mecca, California, 1984



# “I got sand in my teeth!”

**Punks on acid! Exploding fridges! Desolation Center tells the amazing story of the original California desert sessions...**

“IN a time of arena rock, we wanted to do something different – so why not try trippy venues?” Minutemen’s Mike Watt is remembering the time his band played in the middle of the Mojave Desert, surrounded by LA punk kids on acid. Along with Sonic Youth, Meat Puppets, Redd Kross and Einstürzende Neubauten, Minutemen took part in a series of unique guerilla events in the mid-’80s called Desolation Center – also the name of a new film documentary, put together by their original promoter Stuart Swezey. Slick of the police shutting down shows in LA, Swezey decided to start his own where the cops couldn’t find them. A fan of local post-punks groups Minutemen and Savage Republic, he asked if they would play a dry lake bed in the Mojave Desert and they agreed. There were no permits, no toilets and no stage; just a clearing in the sand. “I got sand in my fucking teeth!” Watt recalls of the first 1983 show. The audience was made

up of wild LA kids who arrived on requisitioned yellow school buses, freaking out truck-stop attendants along the way. Minutemen even had to syphon gas from one of the buses when the generator ran out. “It was just youthful recklessness and hubris,” says Swezey, who was only 20 at the time of the first Desolation Center event. “I didn’t really think anything could go wrong.”

For the second show, he booked German power-tool abusers Einstürzende Neubauten. Along with cyberpunk performance artist Mark Pauline and his Survival Research Labs, who brought a stack of dynamite and a home-made Gatling gun, it made for a literally explosive lineup. “I did trust Mark, despite the fact that he had previously blown the fingers off his own hand,” laughs Swezey.

Even though the gunfire made for a few bad trips, he felt the event was always under control. “People were in danger at regular shows from the cops and the neighbourhoods they were in, where people got shot or stabbed. The desert was chill compared to that.” As soon as Neubauten struck up, Swezey knew it was worth the hassle. “When they started their set, it just felt like this incantation. It was so much better than seeing them in a concert hall.”

There were fewer explosions for the next show but a hell of a lot more LSD after someone brought

500 doses – more than enough for everyone in attendance. Redd Kross, Sonic Youth, Meat Puppets and Perry Farrell’s first band, Psi Com, played under the desert moon to a tripped-out crowd.

“It was a miracle that all three [events] came off,” reflects Watt, although after the third one Swezey felt he had done the desert, so he put the Minutemen and the Meat

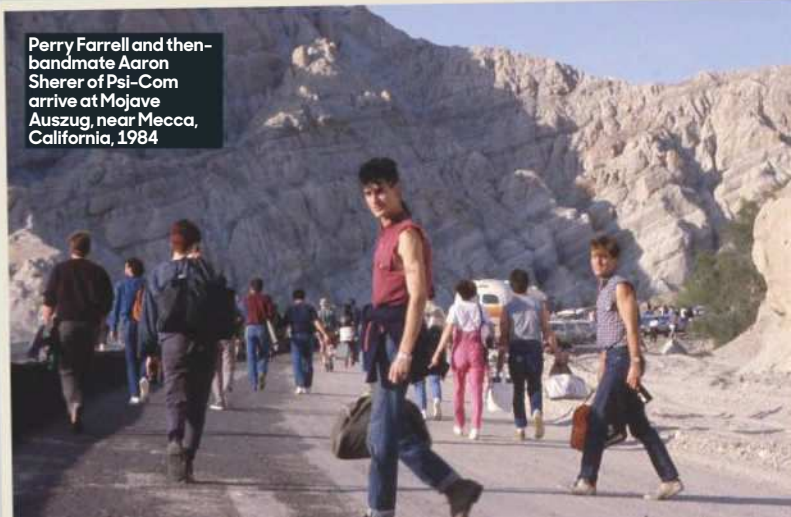
**“People were in danger at regular shows from the cops. The desert was chill compared to that”**  
STUART SWEZEY

Puppets on a boat around San Pedro harbour instead. A 1985 warehouse show with Sonic Youth and Swans followed, but the very same night, Minutemen’s D Boon was killed in a road accident. This tragic event prompted Swezey to withdraw from the scene and he never promoted another show, moving into book publishing. However, he’s hoping to revive the Desolation Center premise to coincide with the release of the film. “The Meat Puppets and Mike Watt are in, so we’ll see,” he says.

“It’s not all just corny-ass nostalgia for the old days,” adds Watt. “It’s a way for young people to see how things can be done and as a launchpad for their own out-there trips.” DANIEL DYLAN WRAY

Check [desolationcenter.com](http://desolationcenter.com) for future screenings

Perry Farrell and then-bandmate Aaron Sherer of Psi-Com arrive at Mojave Auszug, near Mecca, California, 1984



A QUICK ONE

Also from the *Uncut* family this month, our deluxe, updated **Fleetwood Mac Ultimate Music Guide** – featuring the usual wealth of archival interviews from *Melody Maker* and *NME*, a recent catch up with Buckingham and McVie and in-depth reviews of every album – is in shops now. Meanwhile, hot on the heels of our Glam special, our next



**Ultimate Genre Guide** is devoted to all things **Britpop** and goes on sale from April 27. It's 25 years since Suede's debut album, with the Manics and Jarvis on tour, Noel and Liam both gearing up to play... so what better time, then, to recall the heady days of the '90s?

Rejoice! **Cowboy Junkies'** return in July with their first album of new material since 2012's *The Wilderness*. *All That Reckoning* will be released in the UK on Proper Records. Talking to *Uncut* at the end of last year, Michael Timmins explained, "We're in our late fifties now, so this album is about us with our partners, with our kids having grown up, and the weird place we find ourselves in the world right now."

Our friends at **End Of The Road** have added a clutch of new artists to this year's festival bill – including **White Denim, Iceage** and **The Posies**. They join **Vampire Weekend, Yo La Tengo, St Vincent, Feist, Jeff Tweedy, John Cale** and more at Larmer Tree, Dorset between August 30 and September 2. You can find more info at [endoftheroadfestival.com](http://endoftheroadfestival.com). Tickets on sale now.

The MC5: a total assault on the culture... with exceptional hair

# Testify once more

Prepare to have your jams kicked: **MC5's Wayne Kramer** is back with a new lineup of the incendiary band

**W**AYNE Kramer turns 70 at the end of April, but the hard-living MC5 guitarist has no plans to slow down. To mark the 50th anniversary of the seminal *Kick Out The Jams*, he's embarking on a world tour with a reconstituted MC5 supergroup dubbed MC50, as well as publishing his autobiography, *The Hard Stuff*. Drawing a parallel between 1968 and the current political situation in the US, *Uncut* suggests it might also be high time to relaunch Kramer's White Panther Party, the outfit formed by MC5 manager John Sinclair, who advocated a "total assault on the culture by any means necessary, including rock'n'roll, dope and fucking in the streets". Kramer laughs at the thought. "Young people are doing a fine job themselves, marching on government, so I trust the future to them. The situation is ugly beyond belief. Fifty years ago I thought it was touch and go if the Earth would survive; now it's worse than ever."

Kramer's autobiography relives those energising days of the late '60s, when Detroit's MC5 mixed rock and

revolution with free jazz and exceptional hair. He says one of his priorities was to admit errors. "I can now see where I made bad decisions and the consequences. Deciding to finance my band [*Radiation*] by dealing drugs [in 1974] was not a wise move. Where I blew it, I cop to it."

Overall, however, *The Hard Stuff* is an inspiring and redemptive tale. "It was illuminating to put it all together. I tried to zero in on the big-ticket items,

**"Deciding to finance my band by dealing drugs was not a wise move"**

**WAYNE KRAMER**

the formative moments of my youth, the emergence of the MC5, my descent to the gutter and experiences as a criminal and in prison, then figuring out how to live without drugs and alcohol and building a life with

meaning." That includes his work with Jail Guitar Doors, for whom he leads a weekly songwriting programme at an LA prison. It was through this initiative that Kramer met former Fugazi drummer Brendan Canty, who will play on the MC50

tour. "I had friends in the prison reform movement who introduced me," says Canty. "Cut forward another couple years and Wayne called me up and said he wanted to put together a band for the 50th tour and would I be into it." Canty didn't need to be asked twice. "MC5 mean the world to me. In terms of influence, they are right at the top. They play with soul and groove but have the heaviness of a rock band without feeling bullshit. Their politics are front and centre and yet realise you can't win the day by being didactic. Wayne is a real player. I think he wants a band who can improvise enough to make the night special and different in every way."

Joining Canty and Kramer will be Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil, King's X bassist Doug Pinnock and "secret weapon" Marcus Durant, once of Zen Guerrilla, who has the unenviable task of channelling Rob Tyner on vocals. MC5's only other surviving original member, drummer Dennis Thompson, also hopes to join them for some shows. When the new quintet first got together, reveals Kramer, "We didn't play songs – we had to improvise to see if we could play together organically. Then the songs become a joy. They're a portal to get in and out of the experience. They all had a great appreciation for the MC5, so they understood that sense of unlimited possibility and energy. This isn't going to be a laid-back gig; they have to get sweaty." **PETER WATTS**

*The Hard Stuff* is published by Faber in August; *Kick Out the Jams: The 50th Anniversary Tour* kicks off on Sept 5 in Ft Lauderdale, Florida and runs through October, concluding with two nights in Detroit



MC50 (Kramer centre): no plans to slow down



# Alexis Taylor Beautiful Thing

New album  
LP / CD / DL



“Beautiful Thing’ is house music from  
a better parallel universe”  
Justus Köhncke

“It’s like the band Can were somehow transported  
from 70s Germany to Love Ranch club in 90s  
London, spent only a few moments there  
then back to 70s... then set about trying to make  
what they saw and heard!” Edwin Burdis

“Demonstrates Taylor’s mastery of his peculiar strain  
of zonked late-night soul” 8/10 UNCUT



bonnie prince billy  
wolf of the cosmos



LP/CD/DL





WE'RE NEW HERE

# Bitchin Bajas

**Recommended this month: Bonnie 'Prince' Billy collaborators offering up hallucinatory synth jams**

**B**ITCHIN Bajas are the Chicago trio who set the controls for the heart of the synth, finding the sweet spot between the playful repetitions of minimalism and the lambent flicker of the best New Age music, accessing the unspoken revelations buried deep in the psyche. Their latest and best album, 2017's hallucinatory *Bajas Fresh*, plays out like an unspooling weave of electronics, its seven meditative songs spiralling in and out of each other: long, hypnotic tones swoop over lightly shuffling percussion, while flutes glide in long arcs across the waves.

They're a tight-knit unit, even though they often open their music up to collaborators such as Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, Haley Fohr of Circuit Des Yeux and Ben Chasny of Six Organs Of Admittance. "We all live in the same building," lead Baja Cooper Crain reveals, explaining why Bitchin Bajas move as one. "There's a storefront we use as a practice space, and we do most of our recording there. It's like a kibbutz!"

The Bajas began late last decade as a solo project for Crain, the guitarist and organist in drone-rockers Cave. But with the addition of Dan Quinlivan and Rob Frye, Bitchin Bajas have evolved at a fierce clip, embedding their music within minimalism's rich history by taking cues from the mesmeric repetitions of Terry Riley and Ariel Kalma and the sensuous sound patterns of Pauline Oliveros. They haven't been shy about crediting their influences, with 2013's *Bitchitronics* named in obvious tribute to Robert Fripp's *Frippertronics*. "On that one, we just had two tape

machines, and we set it up like the diagram on *Discreet Music*, where Eno's like, 'Here's what you do!' It's bound to sound a bit like what they're doing, because it only does that one thing." Not that audiences were necessarily too bothered about the band's fidelity to the original tenets of minimalism. "We did a show once where we brought the two tape machines out and used them live," Quinlivan reflects. "No-one cared at all."

Subsequent albums have expanded their palette without compromising their approach.

"We record tons of stuff, and at one point, when you go through it, your ears perk up: 'Oh, that's the part!'" says Crain. They're all for flow and flux, capturing the moment when the music takes to the air and riding that out as long as they can.

Given the way they embrace duration, repetition and interlocking patterns, their 2016 collaboration with Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, *Epic Jammers And Fortunate Little Ditties*, might come as a surprise. But anyone who's caught Will Oldham on mercurial form, improvising responsively through his live shows, will know that he's able to ride the moment, too. "We were just in Louisville, and we went over to his house and recorded it all in one afternoon," Crain says. "He had the idea of using fortune cookies as the lyrical conceit for the whole record."

Adds Frye: "He came into our world a bit, but he brought his own thing." The result is a beautiful set of loose, open-ended songs that build from a simple process and yet manage to access something completely new. Like all Bitchin Bajas records, the framework is familiar but the end result is a mystery. "We know the process," Crain concludes, "but we have no idea what it's actually going to sound like." **JONDALE**

**I'M YOUR FAN**



"I feel as great or greater a kinship to the methods and creations of Bitchin Bajas as I do to any other musical entity. As humans, they are awesome. As a trio, unplumbable." **Will Oldham**

*Bajas Fresh* is out now on Drag City; the band tour the UK from May 14

## UNCUT PLAYLIST

On the stereo this month...



**NATALIE PRASS**  
**The Future And The Past**  
ATO RECORDS  
The best Spacebomb LP yet? Prass's mellifluous melodies gain a sleek disco pulse.

**GRUFF RHYS Babelsberg** ROUGH TRADE  
So it's not a new SFA record.... But only Gruff could spin tales of selfies and coughing up blood into a set of glorious, Lee Hazlewood-style orchestral pop.

**THE 4TH MOVEMENT**  
**The 4th Movement** DRAG CITY  
You dig proto-punkers Death? Well now dig their other band: proselytising rock'n'soul from 1980, the missing link between Shuggie Otis and The Make-Up.



**BLOOD WINE OR HONEY**  
**Fear & Celebration**  
PLASTIC PAGAN/DO RIGHT! MUSIC  
Heady gumbo of post-punk, Afrodelic jazz and ersatz tribal chants from Hong Kong-based outfit - led by the ex-cellist from The Auteurs!

**DOCTOR OCTAGON**  
**Moosebumps: An Exploration Into Modern Day Horrification**  
BULK RECORDINGS  
Years after being struck off for serious malpractice, Kool Keith's renegade medic returns with a fresh dose of addictive, dystopian rap.

**LUMP Lump** DEAD OCEANS  
Laura Marling takes an intriguing left turn, teaming up with Tuung's Mike Lindsay for droll lyrics and crespeular synth-folk.

**KAMAAL WILLIAMS**  
**The Return** BLACK FOCUS  
Another dazzling testimony from London's bustling new jazz scene: 10 tracks of glimmering Rhodes magic from the former Yussuf Kamaal man.



**SHY LAYERS**  
**Midnight Marker** BEATS IN SPACE  
Hot on the heels of the E Ruscha V album, Beats In Space keep the good vibrations coming with this enticing vision of Stereolab gone Balearic.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Paris In The Spring** ACE  
Saint Etienne survey the French pop scene in the wake of the '68 uprising. *Sous les pavés, la plage!*

**PRIMITIVE WORLD**  
**White On White** ECSTATIC  
Electronic freakout of the month: a suitably angular tribute to British constructivist artist Marlow Moss, improvised on a 1980s PPG Wave synth.

Josh T. Pearson

# **THE STRAIGHT HITS!**

**3 CHORDS AND THE TRUTH  
10 BRAND NEW TRACKS  
DIRECT FROM JTP**

*INCLUDES  
'STRAIGHT AT ME' AND  
'STRAIGHT TO THE TOP!'*

*OUT NOW*

**THE JOSH T. PEARSON BAND  
LIVE IN MAY!**

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**16th - BIRMINGHAM**

**18th - DUBLIN**

**19th - GLASGOW**

**20th - MANCHESTER**

**22nd - LONDON**



# Pleased to meet you...



15 tracks of the month's best new music



Courtney Barnett

**1 COURTNEY BARNETT**  
**City Looks Pretty**

We begin this month's CD with a highlight of the Melbourne songwriter's strong second album; kicking off with the endless propulsion of "Heroes", it ends, thrillingly, in a swinging Pavement-style jam. Review on p29.

**2 BEACH HOUSE**  
**Dark Spring**

Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally's seventh album is a reliably hazy work filled with shoegaze textures, melancholy harmonies and slowcore drones. Opener "Dark Spring", complete with some gorgeous key changes, is one of the most captivating cuts.

**3 JESS WILLIAMSON**  
**White Bird**

This Austin-born singer-songwriter has already released two albums, but her new long-player, *Cosmic Wink*, is a huge leap onwards, mixing spacey Americana with an evocative writing style that recalls PJ Harvey and Angel Olsen as much as it does The Byrds. Reviewed at length on p36.

**4 SHAKEY GRAVES**  
**Backseat Driver**

Alejandro Rose-Garcia's fifth album as Shakey Graves finds him leaving behind country, blues and folk for a lo-fi pop sound – the sublime, spooky "Backseat Driver", then, suggests *XO*-era Elliott Smith hanging with Calxico.

**5 STEPHEN MALKMUS AND THE JICKS**  
**Shiggy**

It's business as usual on Malkmus'

reliably excellent seventh album as a solo artist – wry, multi-layered songs, a dynamic band and just the right balance between indie, classic and psychedelic rock. "Shiggy" is one of the heaviest and most immediate excursions on *Sparkle Hard*, reviewed as our Album Of The Month on p18.

**6 YONATAN GAT**  
**Fading Casino**

Originally hailing from the fiery Israeli band Monotonix, guitarist Gat has now mixed surf-rock and free jazz on his second album as a solo artist. The subtle, organic flow of "Fading Casino" suggests Connan Mockasin jamming with Animal Collective.

**7 SIMONE FELICE**  
**The Projector**

The title track of Felice's latest album is an enticing example of his record's many charms: an angry, raw ballad carried by Felice's lonely guitar strums and Natasha Khan's distant backing vocals.

**8 DYLAN CARLSON**  
**When The Horses Were Shorn Of Their Hooves**

The former Earth Lynchpin conjures up more wind and fire on *Conquistador*, his proper debut as a solo artist. This six-minute cut is a slowly building tapestry of distorted guitar that's as accessible as it is cinematic.

**9 RYLEY WALKER**  
**Can't Ask Why**

Across five minutes and 45 seconds, Walker here essays the breadth of his new album, *Deafman Glance*,



Riley Walker



reviewed at length on p34: we have ambient electronica à la Popol Vuh, John Martyn-esque jazz-folk and a mighty, devilish outro that sounds like prime King Crimson. Out there, but perfectly in the pocket.

**10 ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER**  
**Everything**

After the earnest, analogue *New View*, Friedberger's new record, *Rebound*, revels in drum machines, synths and eccentricity; "Everything" gloriously recalls The B-52s, Fleetwood Mac and, for once, The Fiery Furnaces. Friedberger is the subject of this month's Album By Album on p70.

**11 WAND**  
**Pure Romance**

With a work ethic almost as puritanical as their friend Ty Segall's, Cory Hanson's quintet are back with a mini-album, *Perfume*. "Pure Romance", with its intertwining lead guitars and anthemic chorus, continues the band's transformation into a psychedelic, West Coast version of *Bends*-era Radiohead.



Daniel Blumberg

**12 DANIEL BLUMBERG**  
**Stacked**

Battling heartbreak and mental illness, the former Yuck and Hebronix man has returned with a deep, dark solo debut which, typified by the broken, beautiful "Stacked", recalls Talk Talk's *Laughing Stock* and Neil Young's 'Ditch Trilogy'.

**13 DIE NERVEN**  
**Neue Wellen**

The opener to the Stuttgart noise-rock trio's fourth album, *Fake*, "Neue Wellen" perfectly captures their angular fury, bringing to mind Gang Of Four, Mission Of Burma and early, ear-bleeding Tocotronic.

**14 THE SEA AND CAKE**  
**These Falling Arms**

On their first album in six years, Sam Prekop's collective are in fine form, their melodic post-rock as subtle and sensitive as ever on this closing track.

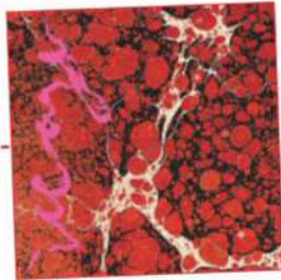
**15 MARY LATTIMORE**  
**It Feels Like Floating**

To round off this month's CD, a quasi-ambient, New Age harp epic from Los Angeles' finest wrangler of the 47 strings, and sometime collaborator with Thurston Moore, Kurt Vile and The Clientele.

# new music



iceage  
beyondless  
04/05/2018



blossoms  
cool like you  
27/04/2018



gaz coombes  
world's strongest man  
04/05/2018



peace  
kindness is the  
new rock & roll  
04/05/2018



king gizzard &  
the lizard wizard  
gumboot soup  
04/05/2018



beach house  
7  
11/05/2018



aidan moffat  
& rm hubbert  
here lies the body  
11/05/2018



okkervil river  
in the rainbow rain  
27/04/2018



belly  
dove  
04/05/2018

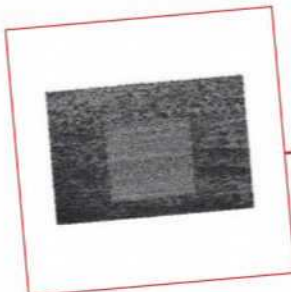


speedy ortiz  
twerp verse  
27/04/2018



we are  
scientists  
megaplex  
27/04/2018

grouper  
grid of points  
27/04/2018



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# “I never trusted celebrity or fame”

## AN AUDIENCE WITH **JAMES TAYLOR**

**J**AMES Taylor's former manager Peter Asher once remarked that the singer had been through so much by the age of 20 that he sang with the conviction of someone more than twice his age. Asher was referring to Taylor's spell in a psychiatric institution, his ongoing heroin addiction, a debilitating motorcycle accident and the death of a close friend, struggles he poured into 1970 breakout hit "Fire And Rain". The mellow vibe that made Taylor a superstar was particularly hard won.

Having just celebrated his 70th birthday, Taylor now enjoys the tranquility he once found so hard to come by.

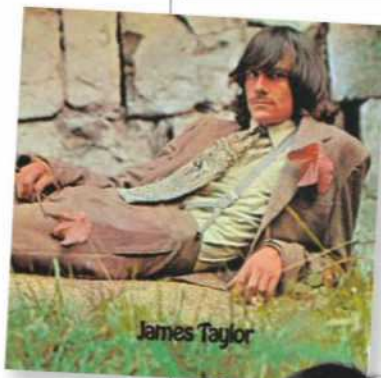
Thirty-five years clean, he lives in the liberal western Massachusetts enclave known as The Berkshires with his wife Kim and their 17-year-old twin sons. He rehearses and records in his property's custom-built barn, which is also the scene of his DIY projects – in a charming recent video on his Facebook page, Taylor demonstrates how to make a humane mouse trap with a bucket and a water bottle coated in Nutella.

These days he is more likely to be troubled by the identity of his president – "I'm appalled by what's happened" – than anything personal, though he has found it beneficial to keep working as much as possible. This summer's extensive world tour will soon be followed by an album of jazz standards he's currently tracking in the barn. "I have my own arrangements on the guitar of about 20 of these songs and we're working our way through them."

That's not to say the songwriting muse has deserted him. "The inspiration still comes regularly," he reassures, relating

**As the quintessential singer songwriter prepares for another world tour, he talks candidly about addiction, auditioning for The Beatles, travels with Joni, and why he's proud to be a navel-gazer**

Interview by **SAM RICHARDS**



his typical method for crafting that initial spark into a finished song. "I take a lot of walks... I find that if I lie down and close my eyes and take a 20-minute nap, it's like putting a bucket down into a well and some ideas will come back up."

**What was it like to audition for Paul McCartney and George Harrison? *Hayley Cross, Uxbridge***

I remember it only very sketchily. It was in Baker Street where Apple had its offices before they moved to Savile Row; a small room on the third or fourth floor.

Peter Asher brought me by. It was an otherworldly experience because I was a complete Beatles devotee, I'd studied every song and every chord change. McCartney was a real hero to me. He and George Harrison were in this small room and they gave me five minutes of their time. Imagine that! I was thrilled and delighted but also extremely nervous. When I left the room they talked to Peter Asher for a moment. Essentially Paul said, "Do you feel like making a record with this guy?" and Peter said, "Yeah, I think he'd be good." So they signed me to Apple. It was an unbelievable experience. I was incredulous.



Taylor in September 1968, and (above) his Apple album

**Which of your songs still has the greatest impact on you emotionally when you sing it?**

**Joseph Nield, Avon, Indiana, USA**

It varies. How a song impacts me has a lot to do with how it's affecting the audience, because I sort of feel what they feel. But there are lesser-known songs of mine that still have private meaning to me: "Letter In The Mail", "Everyone She Knows", "If I Keep My Heart Out Of Sight", "I Was A Fool To Care", "Only For Me"... these are tunes that are off the radar, and for that reason I look at them as personal possessions rather than public property.

**How did you feel when you first heard "All I Want" and other Joni Mitchell songs you knew were about you?**

**Richard Weissmann, York**

I don't think that song was written about me. Joni already had that song when we met. I did back her up on guitar when she recorded it. I thought it was a beautiful song... I wished it was about me! It's a strange thing to be referred to in other people's work, but it's inevitable if you're writing from personal experience. But I still feel detached from songs I know are about me. I don't take it that seriously.

**What are your memories of trying to break into music with The Flying Machine in New York in the mid-'60s? *Martin Carruthers, Kent***

Flying Machine was essentially a band formed by Danny Kortchmar and myself. Kootch and I knew each other from summering together on the Atlantic coast. Initially we borrowed space to rehearse in the basement of a hotel on the Lower East Side. Then we got a job in a nightclub in the West Village and started playing there six nights a week, three sets a night. We modelled ourselves on people like Buffalo Springfield, The Lovin' Spoonful. In those days, you had to get a record ▶



With Joni Mitchell during the recording of Carole King's *Tapestry* at A&M Studios, L.A., January 1971

out – that was the brass ring, the threshold over which you had to step. We got into the studio, but only for two days. When the guys who signed us backed out of the deal, we fell apart. I had some addiction problems, so did the drummer, and it was getting impossible for us to move forward without having a record out there. We called it off and I went back to North Carolina in the fall of '67 to lick my wounds and eventually talk my folks into buying me a ticket to London, and that's where the story picks up with Apple. It was exciting to be in New York in 1966, but it was also dangerous. It was terror incognito. When I think of having two 17-year-old kids, letting them go to the West Village would seem like a criminally negligent thing to do. I was really lucky to survive it.

**I saw you at an acoustic festival in Lincoln in 1971 when you seemed to be in a foul mood, telling the photographers to "get the hell away from me with those cameras". Did you struggle to come to terms with fame?**  
*John Tondeur, via email*

Being a cloistered and very private person, which is my creative process, and the oxymoron of making that public... of course you're hoping for recognition, for people's attention. But if you're lucky enough to get it, it's the second major challenge: with something that's extremely private, how do you take that to market? The fact is that I never trusted celebrity or fame; I still don't. I'm much better off with the job I have than the job of being a professional celebrity.

**How did you feel when Frank Zappa referred to singer-songwriters like yourself as "navel-gazers"?**  
*Rob Frinton, Montpellier, France*  
I think that's accurate. That's an adequate description of me. It's all about my personal experience, that's what I write on. Occasionally I'll write a song that's motivated by something or someone outside of myself, but generally it's

## "I thought Joni Mitchell's 'All I Want' was a beautiful song... I wished it was about me!"

personal experience, and sometimes it'll resonate with other people too. A song like "Fire And Rain" is an example of that. It's a very personal song – when I wrote it I had no real concept of anyone other than myself and maybe two or three other people hearing it. But it turned out that, as personal as it was, it was useful to people. As much as people talk about being outwardly focused, everyone is trapped in their individuated consciousness. Navel-gazing may not be particularly admirable, but it's as honest as we get.

**What do you remember of filming *Two-Lane Blacktop*?**  
*Graham Templeton, Sunderland*

It was my only movie. I've never seen it, I just felt it wouldn't be helpful to me... I had no control over it, I'm not an actor, I was basically going through the motions. We only got one page of script at a time and the non-actors in the film weren't allowed to take responsibility for our own characters. It was a hectic time but it was a great time, mostly because I was travelling with Joni Mitchell and we

spent a lot of time with my co-star, Warren Oates. We rode from location to location in Warren's RV and had a fantastic time. I came away from that experience knowing that I was better off focusing on music and I didn't need to become a film star.

**I find the song "That's Why I'm Here" really inspiring. Is addiction something you still have to battle with every day and how do you do it?**  
*Hannah McIntyre, via email*

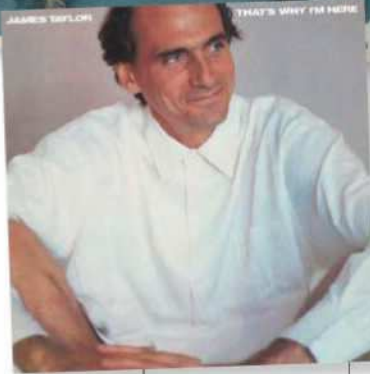
Yeah, you do. It never goes away. But there are ways of getting support: 12-step groups. You have to surrender to the fact you're an addict and you have to pray to be willing to find a way through it. And you have to build enough of a sober life. The one thing that's helped me, aside from Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, is physical activity. I became a workout junkie, I trained three hours a day for 15 years. That's what made it possible for me to live in my own skin in those days of early recovery. And then just my friends, the recovery community... you go to meetings and prioritise your recovery on a daily basis or it'll come back and get you again. It's as smart as you are, by definition, and it'll come back and get you in a weak moment. It was 1983 when I finally got the [12-steps] program and I credit it with saving my life.

**What are the physical challenges for both your singing and your guitar playing as you've grown older?**  
*Tom Glynn, via email*

Ageing has an effect on your dexterity and also one's voice does age. Tony Bennett, who is my role model on this, said that you have to do your vocal exercises every day, when working or not. Tony used to say, if you skip your vocal exercises for one day, you will feel it; if you skip it for two days, the band will feel it; if you skip it for three days, the audience will feel it; and if you skip it for four days, the critics will feel it!

**After the American election result, do you still have faith that music can help change the world for the better?**  
*Clem Foster, Wimbleton*

Music does help us. It's food for the soul and a connection with the universe. I don't think music will *save* the world, it's just a beautiful part of it. The fact that [Trump's election] happened at all and is tolerated is very alarming. You're asking somebody who worked on both of Obama's campaigns and I was on the road for Hillary for three months, so we were active participants and I'm really glad we were. But every day I shake my head and wonder what's going on. 🙏



With Laurie Bird and Dennis Wilson in *Two-Lane Blacktop*; (below) his 11th album, from 1985

*James Taylor tours the UK from July 9, including an appearance at Barclaycard British Summer Time 2018 in Hyde Park on July 15*



# new music



**janelle monae**  
dirty computer  
27/04/2018



**simian mobile disco**  
murmurations  
11/05/2018



**leon bridges**  
good thing  
04/05/2018



**plan b**  
heaven before all hell breaks loose  
04/05/2018



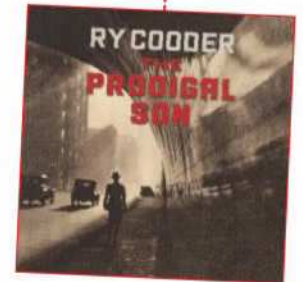
**dj koze**  
knock knock  
04/05/2018



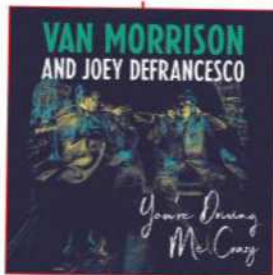
**idris ackamoor & the pyramids**  
an angel fell  
11/05/2018



**ry cooder**  
the prodigal son  
11/05/2018



**van morrison & joey defrancesco**  
you're driving me crazy  
27/04/2018



**bonnie prince billy**  
wolf of the cosmos  
20/04/2018



**dinosaur**  
wonder trail  
04/05/2018



**portico quartet**  
untitled (aitaoa #2)  
27/04/2018



**damien jurado**  
the horizon just laughed  
04/05/2018

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THE UNCUT GUIDE TO THIS MONTH'S KEY RELEASES

# STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS

## Sparkle Hard

DOMINO

Eccentric but accessible – his best yet? *By Jason Anderson*

**F**OR two icons of American alternative rock's golden age to unite for their first ever duet somehow feels like a more momentous occasion than it probably should.

After all, it's been a while since Gen Xers of a certain slack disposition were the pinnacle of cool. Nearly a quarter-century has passed since Stephen Malkmus and Kim Gordon – who trade the mic on "Refute", a loopy highlight of the former Pavement frontman's seventh album with his band the Jicks – shared stages on the same Lollapalooza tour, a rite of passage for any act that carried the favour of the flannel-clad masses. What with the many cultural revolutions (and one big digital one) that have taken place in the intervening years, those times ought to feel several lifetimes away.

Somehow, though, the '90s have edged back into the present. Original articles like The Breeders and Weezer are on surprisingly fine form of late, and relative youngsters such as Courtney Barnett, Speedy Ortiz, Parquet Courts and Wolf Alice have been tearing pages out of their scrappy playbook. And while "Refute" may offer a milder kind of pleasure than the noisier ones of its singers'

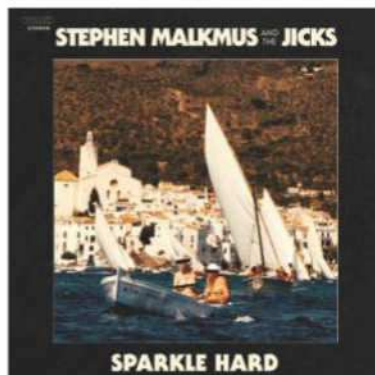


old bands or these newer successors, this ambling, affably middle-aged piece of ragged country-rock is still a testament to its performers' stubborn commitment to their own idiosyncrasies. Malkmus, for one, is content to do things pretty much as he's always done, albeit a little bit differently so there's a reason to come back for more.

The man's never been much for radical reinvention, anyway. Over the course of his career with the Jicks – who have now outlasted Malkmus's previous group by two albums and seven years, not counting Pavement's 2010 reunion tour – he's essentially oscillated between two prevailing tactics. One is to further refine his aptitude for almost-power-pop in the mould of "Box Elder", the jagged wonder on Pavement's first

EP, "Slay Tracks (1933-1969)", and the earliest sign of his casual flair for sticky melodies. The other is to let his freak flag fly in ragged jams full of florid guitar solos, all while spouting the sort of inscrutable non sequiturs that suggest the most profound influence on Malkmus's sensibility was always American poet John Ashbery, no matter what Mark E Smith ever had to say about Pavement.

Whereas Malkmus's 2001 self-titled solo debut and







The Jicks in 2018: (l-r) Joanna Bolme, Stephen Malkmus, Jake Morris and Mike Clark

2011's Beck-produced *Mirror Traffic* were sometimes overly hemmed-in examples of the former, *Pig Lib* (2003) and *Real Emotional Trash* (2008) were more sprawling successors to *Wowee Zowie* (1995), a work whose absurd overabundance made it the most divisive but the richest of Pavement's LPs. Like 2014's *Wig Out At Jagbags*, *Sparkle Hard* exists at a comfortable place between those two poles; in fact it may be the most satisfying synthesis of those extremes he's ever achieved in the Jicks.

Recorded last year in Portland's Halfling Studios with The Decemberists' Chris Funk serving as producer, the new album also boasts a wider range of sounds than he's generally used on his recordings with the Jicks: bassist Joanna Bolme, guitarist and keyboardist Mike Clark and drummer Jake Morris. The string contributions by Kyleen King are the most dramatic example of the additional colours here.

Malkmus's dreamy tumble of tranquil and more turbulent images in "Solid Silk" take on a more ethereal aspect thanks to King's lovely, Robert Kirby-like arrangement. "Brethren" is a further suggestion of the music Malkmus might've made had he traded his allegiance from lo-fi to orch-pop back when those designations were ubiquitous among the indie cognoscenti. While "Refute" benefits from some gentle embellishments of lap-steel guitar by Funk, other songs get burlier thanks to the swirls of Mellotron

and blurts and burlbles of vintage synths. Malkmus even distorts his vocals with Auto-Tune tweaking on "Rattler", which may be the most surprising thing he's done with his voice since his stab at an Isley Brothers slow jam on the *Wig Out At Jagbags* standout "J Smoo".

Of course, he also gets to bring out his favourite guitar pedals and make like it's an afternoon jam at Bonnaroo. "Shiggy" – a nonsense word that nonetheless feels like the right one to describe the sounds he likes to make – is another superb showcase of his loopy and oddly languid playing. One of *Sparkle Hard's* two songs to pass the six-minute mark, "Kite" slinks along in a funkier, more wah-wah-heavy manner until he flips the "Dark Star" switch and covers it all in a distorted, psychedelic smear of cascading licks (not for nothing was the Jicks' medley of "China Cat Sunflower" and "I Know You Rider" a highlight of Aaron and Bryce Dessner's Grateful Dead tribute project *Day Of The Dead*). *Sparkle Hard's* finale "Difficulties/Let Them Eat Vowels" is equally expansive and enthralling. What begins as a stately, synth-heavy channelling of Bowie in Berlin culminates in an *Ege Bayyasi*-worthy slice of space-rock boogie.

All of those reference points may comprise a familiar sweet spot for Malkmus, but even the lengthier, wilder songs feel more carefully considered in their construction. Likewise, he makes the effort to give some heft and complexity to

ones that may have stayed throwaways on previous albums. Built on the herky-jerky rhythm that's long been one of his default modes, "Future Suite" evolves into an ebullient piece of cosmic pop thanks to its deftly arranged thicket of guitars and Malkmus's multi-tracked vocals.

Surprises abound in the lyrics, too. While Malkmus has never been much for sociopolitical concerns in his writing, he's evidently disturbed by the turbulence, divisiveness and general crudeness of the Trump era. Full of rumbling, fuzzy guitars and an oddly jaunty electric piano part by Clark, "Bike Lane" is uncharacteristically direct in its take on the story of Freddie Gray, the young man whose death after injuries sustained during an arrest prompted anti-police riots in Baltimore in 2015. "They got behind him with their truncheons and choked the life right out of him," cries Malkmus in this dark, strange song. A younger cousin to "Gold Soundz", "Middle America" is milder in nature but thick with references to the contemporary climate of blame, fear and anxiety. "Men are scum, I won't deny," he sings in one of many barbed couplets. "May you be shitfaced the day you die." His frustrations may run highest in "Difficulties/Let Them Eat Vowels", in which Malkmus likely becomes the first songwriter to ever deploy the word "microaggress" before describing the world as "a cavalcade of reactive morality", which sounds like the way Nietzsche might have described Fox News. In any case, there's more than enough here to suggest he's awake even if he's far too sardonic to ever be what the kids call woke.

Despite its sometimes laidback nature, *Sparkle Hard* also bristles with an energy that proves he's got a place in the present, and a new accessibility that compromises none of his eccentricities. Perhaps he fits best next not just to the likes of Courtney Barnett, but also Kurt Vile and Father John Misty, two less '90s-centric artists whose work still bears the influence of his reliably acerbic sensibility and eagerness to be anomalous. Just goes to show that it pays to be one of a kind, at least if you're able to outlast most of your peers.



SLEEVE NOTES

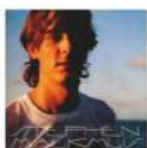
- 1 Cast Off
- 2 Future Suite
- 3 Solid Silk
- 4 Bike Lane
- 5 Middle America
- 6 Rattler
- 7 Shiggy
- 8 Kite
- 9 Brethren
- 10 Refute
- 11 Difficulties/Let Them Eat Vowels

**Produced by:** Chris Funk  
**Recorded at:** Halfling Studios, Portland  
**Personnel:** Stephen Malkmus (vocals, guitar), Joanna Bolme (bass, vocals), Jake Morris (drums, vocals), Mike Clark (piano, synthesiser, electric piano), Kyleen King (strings), Chris Funk (lap steel guitar), Kim Gordon (vocals on "Refute")

HOW TO BUY...

# { KINDLING FROM THE MASTER }

Three essentials by Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks



**Stephen Malkmus**

MATADOR, 2001

Intended as a Jicks album but ultimately self-titled in the tradition of solo debuts since time immemorial, Malkmus's first post-Pavement release is far sprightlier in spirit than his former band's tense swansong, *Terror Twilight*. The Stockton native may have never sounded more quintessentially Californian than he does on "Phantasies", a jaunty stab at beach-party pop. "Jenny & The Ess-Dog" adds a surprisingly poignant note with its tale of mismatched lovers who can't make it last. **9/10**



**Pig Lib**

MATADOR, 2003

Malkmus's second album introduces the looser, jammier tendencies that come to the fore on his releases and at his concerts for the rest of the decade. At nine minutes, "1% Of One" captures him in epic mode. But he keeps it relatively tight on gems like "Vanessa From Queens" and "Us", an entrancing closer that has the feel of a Springsteen classic even if it evidently involves "chatting up a panda in a bar". **8/10**



**Wig Out At Jagbags**

MATADOR, 2014

The Jicks begin their current hot streak with a consistently entertaining outing that commences with a jokey reference to Cream's "I Feel Free", continues with "Lariat"'s quips about Tennyson and The Grateful Dead, and delivers some genuine glam panache with "Chartjunk", before capping it all off with "Surreal Teenagers," which roughly resembles all the highlights of *Faust IV* as performed by The Cars. Quite the feat, really. **8/10**



Q&amp;A

## Stephen Malkmus on the age of anxiety, Kim Gordon and Pavement reunion rumours

### *Sparkle Hard* might be your best album with the Jicks – what felt different about making this one?

It felt better this time in a certain way. With the last few, I just went about my business and stuck my head down and made the albums and toured without considering anything beyond that. That's sometimes a good thing – if you're creating stuff people like and nobody's really questioning what you're doing, you just plough ahead with your masterpieces or whatever! But with this, I had more time off to think about things, and although this may be totally present-day-biased, the world feels different in the last few years. It's not because of Donald Trump – it's maybe my interaction with the internet or the way people think now that feels different. It's our digital selves have fully become our selves; it's become part of us in a deeper way. That seems especially true of young people. It's nothing I care to sing about in a dystopian manner – I'm just talking about the culture in general and I'm finding my way through it.

### Does that explain the more anxious and political aspect to some of the new songs?

I found this quote in a new book by my friend Patrick deWitt. When people ask me what these songs are about, I want to tell them this even though it's kind of pretentious of me. "Certain of their days were devoted to unanswerable auto-queries relating to the mean stupidity of existence, the fallibility of romantic

love, her suspicion that dissatisfaction and shortcomings were constants of the human condition..." I saw that and thought, "Yeah, that's the subtext of all my music!" But I don't want the music to beat you over the head with that. It's all still good times – being with the band, making songs, physically playing music. That's the joy of production in a post-Fordist world!

### Is fun a big reason the Jicks have lasted longer than Pavement now?

It's a more adult relationship probably than it was in Pavement. We were in our early twenties then and we burned the candle at both ends, though when I first started in the Jicks, I still toured like a maniac. Speaking hypothetically, if everyone quit the Jicks, I could still keep that name, I suppose. But the name is just the name – the people are real. Joanna Bolme is a great bass player and an even, mature person who can deal with me. And Mike Clark, the keyboard player, likes the role of adding to the tunes and we get along. I think we're all searching for a song that we like and they're still surprised a little bit by what I do. And maybe a better gig hasn't come along!

### How did Kim Gordon come to guest on "Refute"?

I didn't imagine it for her originally. It's a song that pokes fun at marriage being an untenable arrangement or not useful in a way in our modern society, the way the family is changing. It had he/she lyrics, so we thought we should get somebody to sing the other part. I initially had some more country-style singers in my mind, but then I was like, "Kim's my friend too – we could invite her." I wasn't necessarily sure a country song was right for her but she was really up for it. I'm really grateful. She is an iconic person, for sure. She owns that voice, too. When I think of her, I think: "Sonic Youth", "fashion", "art", "clever". So it was kinda cool just to see her in the role of a session singer.

### It's great that you balance the spare songs like that one with some much wiggier ones.

Yeah, we've got five songs that are really straight-ahead – just relatable, catchy songs. Then there's some trippy stuff on it too that pushes the envelope a bit. It's indie-pop that subverts itself – hopefully it does a little of that.

### Were you surprised about the recent wave of rumours that Pavement was planning a reunion for the band's 30th anniversary next year?

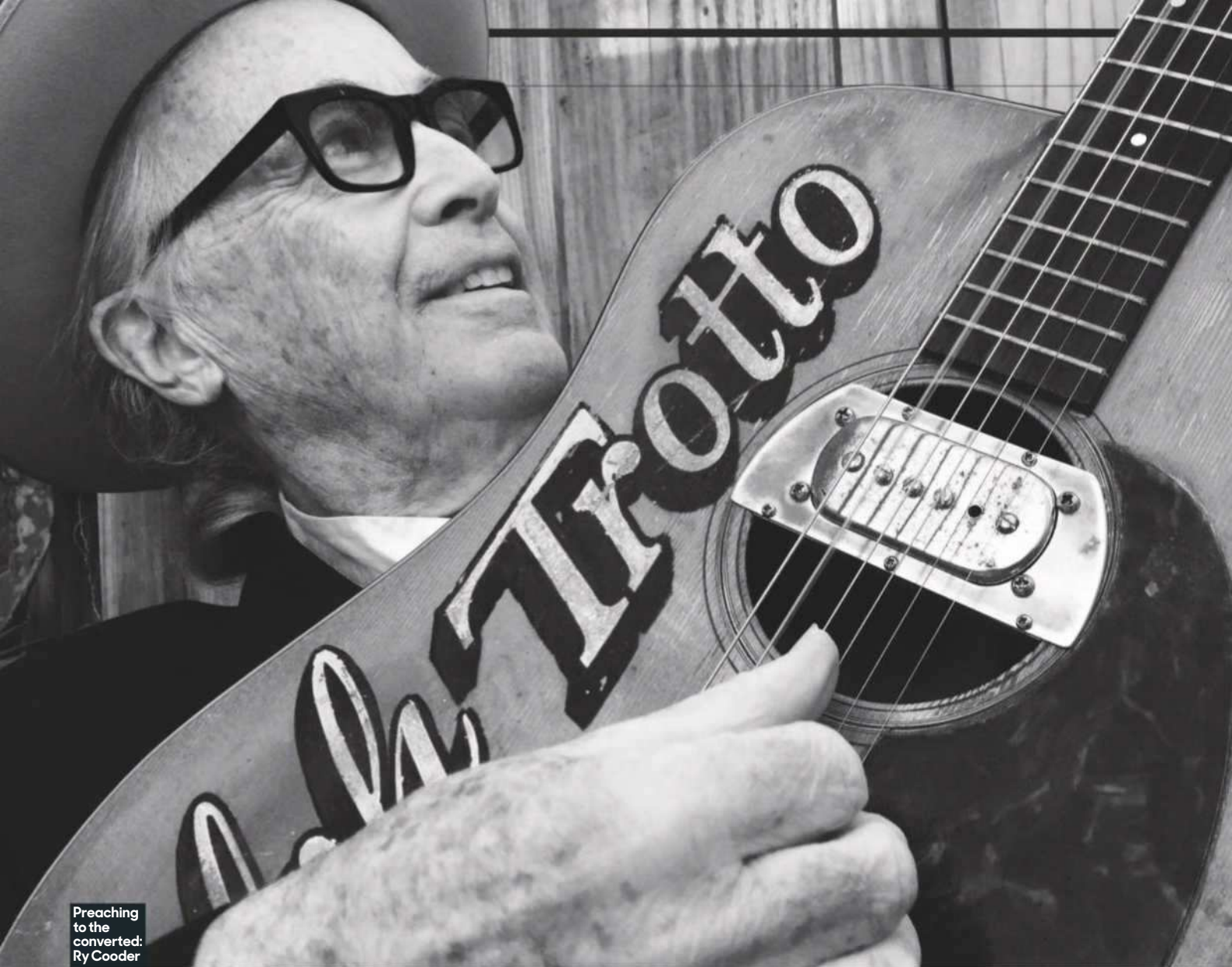
I was a little bit surprised people were asking me about it. I didn't say anything about it and I haven't heard anything about it. When I tried to find the genesis of this idea, all I could find was in one Italian phone interview by Scott Kannberg, the guitarist in the band, when he was on tour supporting his solo album. It's obviously nice to know people are psyched about the concept – I just haven't thought about it that much, being so involved with doing this music and other projects. I really don't feel like I'm the person to ask somehow.

### Is it odd for Pavement to become such a focus of '90s nostalgia, which even some younger fans seem to have?

That's true. Because the way we take in entertainment and listen to music is so different now, there is a bit of nostalgia for that time. The pre-internet era can seem rosy to people. It seems a little unique now, like looking at analogue photographs instead of pictures on your iPhone. I'm certainly open to people thinking that, 'cos it benefits me! I thought the '90s were back in seven years ago, but I'm hearing from people now that the '90s are really great. As someone who lived through them, I didn't know that was the case. That said, I had a great time, though I think people are having a great time now even when times are totally anxious. Life can be pretty fun even when it's kinda bleak.

INTERVIEW: JASON ANDERSON

**“Our digital selves have fully become our selves; it's become part of us in a deeper way”**



Preaching to the converted: Ry Cooder

# RY COODER

## The Prodigal Son

FANTASY

8/10

The gospel according to Ry – a reverent selection of spiritual songs. *By Neil Spencer*

**R**Y COODER is not a religious man – on the contrary, he casts a cold eye on its organised form – but he has just made an album stuffed with gospel music and hymns, all from the best part of a century ago. What gives? As the greatest curator and interpreter of Americana in all its diversity, Cooder has always loved this music; go back to his very first album (there are well over 30) and you’ll find devotional songs by Alfred Reed and Blind Willie Johnson, who both figure on *The Prodigal Son*. He’s never done God, but he’s always played God’s music. Cooder calls it ‘reverence’.

The eight ‘reverend’ cuts here – there is also a trio of originals – take assorted

forms, from the dreamy visions of the after-life on Carter Stanley’s “Harbor Of Love” to the rip-snorting title track, where Cooder is joined by a trio of gospel vocalists. Every cut gets a different setting, for which Cooder credits his son, drummer and visioner Joachim. The pair have become quite a team, recording this album in a matter of days on what Cooder describes as a “one-take live vocals” approach.

The exuberance shines through, one reason *The Prodigal Son* often feels like something from Cooder’s 1970s canon, another being that while reverence provides a theme, Cooder is no longer boxed in to a concept album like *I, Flathead* or *Pull Up Some Dust And Sit Down*.

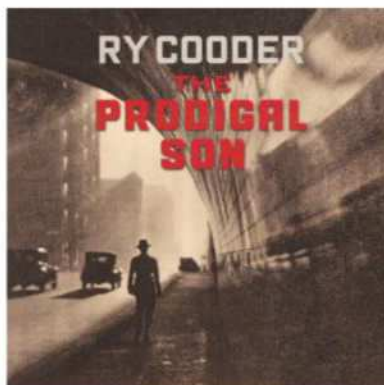
The parade of fretboard styles Cooder brings to the album is masterly. Take “Shrinking Man”, the album’s real starter once Cooder and his singers have ambled down “Straight Street” to a low-key banjo accompaniment. It’s

a rollicking blues chopped out on a spiky electric guitar, with a solo that comes across as a tribute to Chuck Berry.

Something entirely different drives “Gentrification”, the only number that gives voice to Cooder’s political anger, albeit with humour. Cooder punctuates its catchy rhythmic tic with slabs of West African soukous guitar, bright and boisterous. By contrast, Blind Willie’s “Everybody Out To Treat A Stranger Right” comes with a murky slide part that honours its composer’s abilities, while “The Prodigal Son” boasts a barking fuzz-tone solo.

If the album has a centrepiece – and its moods keep shifting – then it’s another Johnson number, “Nobody’s Fault But Mine”, which Cooder slows down to a melancholy contemplation of human error, studded with his trademark slide, sparse and eerie. Effective, if over-extended.

There are other versions of holy life on offer. Alfred Reed’s “You Must Unload” preaches the way of the straight and narrow: who knows who Reed had in mind when he admonished “money-loving Christians who refuse to pay their share”, but Cooder must surely have in mind Bible-toting Republicans when he deplores their hypocrisy with the



## This music is “a conduit for feelings, a sense of force beyond the visible..”

Closer “In His Care” is similar in mood, a celebration of heavenly blessings, from another pre-Second World War African-American composer, William L Dawson. Cooder plays things both side of the wire here; the sentiments may be righteous, but the clanging riff that Ry and Joachim lay down is from the sinners’ side of the tracks, with all the visceral power of Howling Wolf.

Bluegrass, of course, has its own history of Christian metaphysics. “Harbor Of Love” imagines death as a glorious reunion with God, the austere tone of the original softened by Cooder’s softly shimmering guitar. “Jesus And Woody” perhaps takes us closer to Cooder’s own beliefs, an intensely personal tribute to one of his heroes, delivered solo, sometimes dropping to not much more than a murmur; one feels like an eavesdropper. Offering homage to Guthrie the “dreamer” for his songs and his fight against fascism, Cooder hits a forlorn note for our current time, reflecting that, “They’re starting up their engine of hate.”

One might expect more in the way of bile and anger from Ry Cooder, but an album that meditates long on mortality is perhaps his response to the darkening of the political landscape. He describes the music as “a conduit for feelings and experiences from other times”, but also as “a sense of force beyond the visible”; religion of a kind, then.

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Straight Street
- 2 Shrinking Man
- 3 Gentrification
- 4 Everybody Ought To Treat A Stranger Right
- 5 The Prodigal Son
- 6 Nobody’s Fault But Mine
- 7 You Must Unload
- 8 I’ll Be Rested When The Roll Is Called
- 9 Harbor Of Love
- 10 Jesus And Woody
- 11 In His Care

#### Produced by:

Ry and Joachim Cooder

#### Recorded at:

Sage and Sound Hollywood and Wireland, CA

#### Personnel:

Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar, banjo, mandolin, bass, keys), Joachim Cooder (drums, percussion), Robert Francis (bass), Aubrey Haynie (violin), Terry Evans, Arnold McCuller, Bobby King (vocals)

warning, “You’ll never get to heaven in your jewel-encrusted high-heel shoes.” Reed’s hymn is given due decorum, with a stately violin part from Aubrey Haynie.

“I’ll Be Rested When The Roll Is Called” is a spiritual with a triumphal ring written by Blind Roosevelt Graves, another voice from the 1920s and ’30s, and is whooped along by the trio of backing voices to Cooder’s sprightly mandolin playing.

## Q&A

### Ry Cooder talks about *The Prodigal Son*

#### Why an album of religious songs?

I fell in love with this stuff when I was a teenager – “In His Care”, for example, was on a Sonny Terry/Brownie McGhee 10in album on Folkways. I snuck the odd one in on previous albums, like “How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times”. I am sick to death of politics so it was time for it. We have just been on tour with Ricky Scaggs playing this material and it got a tremendous response.

#### You and Joachim have become a real team, playing and producing together.

He’s developed his own musicality over time – he’s 40 now – and he likes ambient material as well as songs, which fed into this LP. He can take pieces of my material and sample them, blend them, and he provides ethereal settings, like the spooky Fritz Lang thing for “Nobody’s Fault But Mine”, and I used ambient material for “Harbor Of Love”.

**And Chuck Berry for “Shrinking Man”?** You’re sharp! I put the solo for “Johnny B Goode” in there; it was one take.

**How did “Jesus And Woody” arrive?** Woody had a hard-bitten optimism, and after World War II, people believed that fascism had been defeated, that people would be kind, as Jesus likewise hoped. But a song like “This Land Is Your Land” is the opposite of what is going on right now.

#### It’s a record about mortality. You’re not planning on checking out are you?

No, I’m in good shape, and we have two beautiful grandchildren next door, so I’m sticking around.

#### Do you believe in an afterlife?

Oh no. I can’t imagine that.

INTERVIEW: NEIL SPENCER

# AtoZ

## This month...

- P24 BEACH HOUSE
- P25 ARCTIC MONKEYS
- P26 ASHLEY MONROE
- P28 DAMIEN JURADO
- P29 COURTNEY BARNETT
- P32 JON HOPKINS
- P34 RYLEY WALKER
- P36 JESS WILLIAMSON

### IDRIS ACKAMOR & THE PYRAMIDS

An Angel Fell STRUT

7/10

Reactivated Afro-American cosmic jazz veterans still blowing



In 2012, Ackamoor & The Pyramids unleashed their first new music since the 1970s, and this third instalment

in their reincarnation trilogy – and means the reborn collective has now made as many albums as in its original heyday. Recorded in London and sympathetically produced by Malcolm Catto of The Heliocentrics, Ackamoor’s vision of fusing free-jazz blowing, African tribal grooves and spiritual black-consciousness musings remains unwavering as his sax weaves phantasmagorically through the dense rhythmic undergrowth created by original Pyramids percussionist Bradie Speller on the title track, ventures into Fela Kuti territory on “Warrior Dance” and cries mournfully on “Soliloquy For Michael Brown”. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

### STEVEN ADAMS & THE FRENCH DROPS

Virtue Signals

HUDSON

6/10

Broken Family man returns with new band and old laments



Following the demise of Broken Family Band, with 2014’s *House Music* Steven Adams seemed to have

completed his journey from hard-drinking cowboy of the Fens to wistful east London indie troubadour. Recent developments (Brexit, online trolls) have got his dander up, however, and he returns with a new band and fresh intensity – particularly on the furiously Neu!-like “Ex-Future” and “Free Will”. He’s at his best addressing the state of his heart rather than the state of the nation, however, as on “Desire Lines” with its beautifully rueful conclusion, “all we have are these moments of joy”.

STEPHEN TROUSSÉ

BEACH HOUSE

7  
BELLA UNION  
7/10

Seventh album from Baltimore dream-pop duo



After releasing two full-length albums in 2015 and following those with a collection of rarities and B-sides, Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally are hailing 7 as a “rebirth” after a process of “cleaning out the closet”, both literally and metaphorically. In truth, it’s more of a subtle restyling than a full-on reincarnation, the soft-edged weightlessness, sumptuous tones and gauzy vocals still instantly recognisable on songs such as “Woo”, the drop-dead gorgeous “Dive” and “Drunk In LA”, albeit with a marginally less polished sense of friction and greater immediacy, qualities attributed to the input of guest collaborator Spacemen 3’s Sonic Boom. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

BELLY

Dove  
BELLY  
8/10

Twenty-three years on, a fine third album from Donnelly and co



It is no disrespect to Tanya Donnelly’s solo works to suggest that Belly always felt like unfinished business: they split in 1996

after their second album, *King*, failed to turn them into the megastars they were widely anticipated to become. They reformed to tour in 2016, and enjoyed themselves sufficiently to write and record *Dove*. It sounds, to its considerable credit, very much like the record that might have followed *King*: highlights include the giddy power-pop shimmy “Artifact”, the sweet but barbed acoustic ballad “Suffer The Fools”, and a frankly overdue voyage into near-outright country on “Heartstrings”. **ANDREW MUELLER**

BLOSSOMS

Cool Like You  
VIRGINEMI

4/10  
Stockport rockers follow up Mercury-nominated debut



It’s odd, given their anodyne sound, that Blossoms should be such a divisive band. To some they’re the post-post dregs of “landfill indie”; to others, the latest torchbearers in the north-west’s notable traditions of making guitar music for communal enjoyment. The Stockport outfit say they write songs for big crowds, not technicians, and they don’t claim to innovate. Which is honest, because *Cool Like You* is largely a synth-heavy rehash of New Order, Soft Cell and The

REVELATIONS



BEACH HOUSE

Going producer-free in pursuit of “rejuvenation”

**T**he title of Beach House’s latest is both prosaic and freighted with significance. “It’s our seventh full-length record and we have now written and released a total of 77 songs together,” explains Victoria Legrand, the duo’s vocalist and keyboardist. “But most early religions also had a fascination with seven as the highest level of spirituality, and at our best creative moments we felt we were channelling some kind of heavy truth. Our goal was rebirth and rejuvenation.”

Past albums have been limited by only recording parts that could be performed live. On 7 they rejected such self-imposed limitations in favour of a more textured sound

and layered production, guitarist Alex Scally explains. Paradoxically the album has no producer “in the traditional sense”, so that “the ideas drove the creativity, not any one person’s process”, although vital outside input came from Spacemen 3’s Sonic Boom (Pete Kember), who assisted in “the shedding of conventions and in helping to keep the songs alive, fresh and protected from the destructive forces of over-perfection”.

As for the “heavy truth”, the songs reflect “societal insanity and a pervasive dark field that we had little control over”, several of them addressing the questions being posed by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

Kooks filtered through leader Tom Ogden’s romantic experience. Well constructed, yes, but countless others have done a variation of the same, and it’s rarely this dreary. **GREG COCHRANE**

DANIEL BLUMBERG

Minus  
MUTE  
8/10

Introspective explosion from former Yuck man



Blumberg made creditable false starts with Cajun Dance Party and Yuck; his solo debut is the culmination of five years among the community of improvisational musicians around London’s Cafe Oto. Working with violinist Billy Steiger, double-bassist Tom Wheatley and Dirty Three drummer Jim White, this seven-song

album has the neurotic insistence of Josh T Pearson’s *Last Of The Country Gentlemen*, though the backdrops to the lyrical repetitions are scratchier, more deconstructed. The bruising “Madder” betrays the influence of Scott Walker producer Peter Walsh, but there are flickers of respite, notably “The Bomb”, which tethers its emotional unravelling to a lovely piano figure. **ALASTAIR MCKAY**



LEON BRIDGES

Good Thing  
COLUMBIA  
7/10

Follow-up confirms debut’s lack of fluke-ish qualities



Leon Bridges’ 2015 debut, *Coming Home*, was a set of soul ballads so perfectly poised that they transcended charges of pastiche: the album’s great strength was that it sounded like something actually recorded in 1968, rather than something that wished it was. *Good Thing* continues in that classicist yet meticulous vein, with terms of reference advanced perhaps half a decade: just as it’s a struggle to name parallels beyond Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, it’s equally difficult to imagine why anybody would want to. The noirish funk of “Bad Bad News” and the gleeful boogie of “You Don’t Know” are especially svelte. **ANDREW MUELLER**

DYLAN CARLSON

Conquistador  
SARGENT HOUSE  
8/10

Heavy desert sounds on Earth founder’s solo LP



Carlson, founder of doom rockers Earth, plays guitar like he’s slowly trying to kill it, and *Conquistador* plays out against a cavalcade of dark, intense, downward thrusts that linger and fold back on themselves, each time getting slightly deeper and more daunting. Carlson has previously been inspired by Cormac McCarthy’s dense and bloody prose, and *Conquistador* is cut from that same cloth: “When The Horses Were Shorn Of Their Hooves”, “Reaching The Gulf” and “Scorpions In Their Mouths” are the sound of desert and death, shorn of normal rhythm but not lacking in their own austere, clanging beauty. **PETER WATTS**

CHAS & DAVE

A Little Bit Of Us  
ROCKNEY/COOKING VINYL  
7/10

Pathos-filled comeback from the godfathers of Britpop



Their first album of new material in 31 years features some knockabout comedy but a lot more pathos. “Wonder Where He Is Now” is a beautiful reminiscence about a childhood fishing friend; “Modern Robin Hood” sounds like an episode of *Only Fools And Horses* rewritten by Lionel Bart; “Nothing You Can Do” is a terrific, heart-tugging 6/8 rock’n’roll ballad; while uke-led interwar standards like “Nagasaki”, “Dry Bones” and “My Little Grass Shack” showcase the roots of their Tin Pan Alley songcraft. **JOHN LEWIS**





# ARCTIC MONKEYS

## Tranquility Base Hotel + Casino

DOMINO

7/10

Bet he looks good on the keyboard. A brave reinvention from Alex Turner and co. *By John Robinson*



SNUG in his robe, he relaxes in his suite. No longer an outsider but a welcome guest, he reflects how all the doors to this and other establishments,

formerly closed, now open to welcome him. He endorses the place with his edgy celebrity; it endorses him with exclusivity. But just because he has arrived, doesn't mean he is completely at ease. Now when he looks around, he does so a little more wryly – and writes his thoughts down at the piano.

And of course that is very much Josh Tillman, who makes luxurious and ironic records as Father John Misty, locating his persona in some detailed and decadent modern LA. It's odd, though, that within a month of the arrival of a succinct and amusing new Tillman single, we should now be listening to the new Arctic Monkeys album and finding it to contain many of the same qualities.

Of course it says Arctic Monkeys on the cover, but this is an album more close-mic'd around its singer. Alex Turner has ever been the face and creative powerhouse of the Sheffield group, but the band has evolved together: through desert-rock experimentation to the masterpiece

of 2013's *AM* – a work that paid homage to heavy rock, to music of black origin and to the band's adopted home in Los Angeles. As much as the record told of Turner's heartbreak and cultural dislocation, the album felt very much the fulfilment of a collective process.

Five years on, Turner and drummer Matt Helders are the only band members who remain in LA – and the new Arctic Monkeys album feels, if not exactly like a solo LP, then very much more the product of an artist working in isolation. Composed for the most part on a grand piano gifted as a birthday present, and with many vocal takes apparently remaining from Turner's original home demos, *Tranquility Base...* is a wordy, interior monologue of a record, with about the same sort of relationship to his previous work as *The Boatman's Call* has to Nick Cave's.

This is no kind of guitar album. *Tranquility Base...* has some of the classicism that Last Shadow Puppets were shooting for, a cinematic Jean-Claude Vannier feel – it's the first Arctic Monkeys work you can imagine anyone sampling. Turner plays the dry, worldly-wise Serge Gainsbourg of the piece (the album begins with the line “*I just wanted to be one of the Strokes...*”), delivering (particularly on “American Sports” and the

title track) some wonderful, Bowie-esque vocal performances.

It's an album you read as much as listen to. Against the backdrop of the moon and space (“Tranquility Base” is the site of the original 1969 moon landing; most of the 11 songs mention space in one way or another), Turner roams an imagined LA, a persona with one toe in a Charles Bukowski bar crawl and another in a seaweed wrap at the day spa. Threads from one song (a lounge singer; Batman; US politics; a briefcase) will show up in another, giving it all an appealing cohesion and mystery.

It's a timeless, dream-like kind of space, ancient and modern, an effect much assisted by the music. Subdued, but warm and classic in the way that musicians who seek out storied mixing consoles aspire to, the album begins the loose space/fame analogy with “Star Treatment” and Turner channelling a Major Tom/Bowie-style character who was “*a little bit too wild in the '70s*”.

However much it uses its vocabulary, this is not simply an investigation of the fame condition, but about a bigger American picture. No longer an outsider looking in, Turner has now completely tuned in to big American themes: power, freedom, a perceived golden age. Bombarded with a surplus of information and distraction, however, it can be difficult to focus on what's of enduring value.

On the single “Four Out Of Five”, a Bowie-ish glam song, he deconstructs achievements, luxuriating in the vocabulary of reviews. In “One Point Perspective” (musically a super-simple hip-hop beat), there's a hook that outlines the problem of focus more precisely: “*Bear with me man, I lost my train of thought.*” His own place in this, as an artist, he sends up with a string of spectacular flourishes in “Science Fiction”: “*I want to make a simple point about peace and love but in a sexy way where it's not obvious/ Highlight dangers and send out hidden messages...*”

What's particularly engaging in this endlessly quotable album is the way that Turner will emerge from deep immersion in the fantasia of the songs and resurface to remind you that he's not been sucked in by any of it. At the end of the rousing “She Looks Like Fun”, a '60s-style novelty track, he stops himself dead: “*I'm so full of shite, I need to spend less time stood around in bars.*” At the end of the album, there's a grand ballad that reprises the *Lost Weekend* vibes of the great “No 1 Party Anthem” from *AM*. Turner, obviously, has called this “The Ultracheese”.

Low-key but engrossing, *Tranquility Base...* is a slow-burner, self-doubting but pushing ever onwards. It's a brave new step, even if it can be a little one-paced, and a little withholding. In such a landscape, though, it's worth following Alex Turner's example. Make yourself at home – see if you can't get to know the place a bit better.

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Star Treatment
- 2 One Point Perspective
- 3 American Sports
- 4 Tranquility Base Hotel + Casino
- 5 Golden Trunks
- 6 Four Out Of Five
- 7 The World's First Ever Monster Truck Front Flip
- 8 Science Fiction
- 9 She Looks Like Fun
- 10 Batphone
- 11 The Ultracheese

**Produced by:** James Ford and Alex Turner  
**Recorded at:** La Frette, La Frette-sur-Seine, France; Vox, Los Angeles; Lunar Surface, LA; London

**Personnel:** Alex Turner (vocals, bk vocals, guitar, baritone guitar, bass, drums, piano, organ, synth, Orchestron, harpsichord, dolceola), Jamie Cook (guitar, baritone guitar, lap steel), Nick O'Malley (bass, guitar, baritone guitar, bk vocals), Matt Helders (drums, timpani, synth, Farfisa, bk vocals), James Ford (drums, perc, vibraphone, Farfisa, harpsichord, synth, RMI Rocksichord, baritone guitar, acoustic guitar, pedal steel, Orchestron, timpani), Tom Rowley (electric guitar, acoustic guitar, piano), Zach Dawes (baritone guitar, piano), Tyler Parkford (piano, Farfisa), Evan Weiss (acoustic guitar), Loren Humphrey (drums), James Righton (Wurlitzer), Josephine Stephenson (piano), Cam Avery (bk vocals)

# { AMERICANA }

Another country



## ASHLEY MONROE

**Sparrow**  
WARNER NASHVILLE

8/10

Golden country-politan vibes from Nashville songwriter



*Sparrow* feels like a watershed moment in Ashley Monroe's artistic life. Having slipped various bits of autobiography into prior work, most notably 2013's *Like A Rose*, on this fourth

album she examines her past in a way that seems designed to allow her the freedom to move on.

Now in her early thirties, Monroe arrived in Nashville from Knoxville as a 15-year-old, two years after her father had died from cancer. The family had fallen apart as a result, her mother suffering a breakdown. This psychic terrain is revisited on *Sparrow*'s opening track, "Orphan", on which Monroe intones over piano and mournful cello. It's a sad, beautiful song that finds her reaching out for some form of directive that never actually comes.

But that's only part of the spiritual narrative that unfolds. By the time we get to penultimate tune "Daddy I Told You", set to a delicate country shuffle, Monroe is carrying her dad's memory like a torch, lighting the way through a career that's brought Grammy nominations and

big-selling success as one third of all-female supergroup Pistol Annies. Such emotive depths require a similarly rich musical framework. The liberal use of strings by producer Dave Cobb, who's overseen minor classics by Sturgill Simpson, Jason Isbell and Chris Stapleton in recent years, gives these songs added scale and grace, especially on more vigorous outings like "Wild Love" and "Rita".

Monroe's voice, meanwhile, remains a thing of wondrous restraint, her aching quiver always stopping shy of easy sentimentality. There are varying moods here too, perhaps attributable to a battery of co-writers that includes Brendan Benson, Anderson East and Pistol Annies bandmate Angaleena Presley. "Hands On You" is the tale of an unconsummated one-night stand, Monroe regretting the decision to put a lid on lust. And "Keys To The Kingdom" is downright glorious, a dramatic string arrangement filling out a travelogue ballad that gives thanks to "everyone I've ever loved and then some". What lingers longest on this remarkable record is an uplifting sense of resilience. **ROB HUGHES**

### AMERICANA ROUND-UP

While we await further news on **John Hiatt**'s next album (*Robber's Highway*, named after the Natchez Trace Trail in the American South and due later this year), June sees the return of two more old travellers. **Dave Alvin** and **Jimmie Dale Gilmore** team up for *Downey To Lubbock* YEP ROC, tackling songs steeped in classic traditions: R&B, old-time folk, early rock'n'roll and Texan and Cali country. Alongside covers of Lightnin' Slim, Brownie McGhee, Woody Guthrie and others, Alvin adds a couple of originals in the shape of the title track and US outlaw tale "Billy The Kid And Geronimo". Another veteran in rude health is **Del McCoury**. To mark the 50th anniversary of solo debut *Del*



*McCoury Sings Bluegrass*, he and his (mostly) family band deliver the neatly titled *Del McCoury Still Sings Bluegrass* at the back end of May. The singer-guitarist adds, "I consider myself traditional at heart, but I don't have any boundaries." Look out, too, for *Things Change* NEW WEST, the latest from fellow North Carolinians **American Aquarium**. Leader BJ Barham

has an entirely new lineup for the country-rocking set, produced by John Fullbright. And there's still time to catch the inimitable **Courtney Marie Andrews**' UK tour, which ends at Islington Assembly Hall on April 24. And don't miss folk-country duo **Kacy & Clayton**, who begin a two-week jaunt across these shores on May 1. **ROB HUGHES**

## GAZ COOMBES

### World's Strongest Man

HOT FRUIT/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL

8/10

Former Supergrass singer, now simply super



If 2015's Mercury-nominated *Matador* semi-successfully freed Gaz Coombes from the legacy of 17 years in Supergrass, the follow-up should further establish him as a solo artist of some standing. A bold, brisk, rather beautiful zip through multiple pop genres, it careens from squelching funk ("Talk The Talk"), lushly tripped-out soul (the title track; "Weird Dreams"), small-hours torch songs ("Slow Motion Life") and anxious acoustica ("Oxygen Mask"), without dropping a beat. Best of all is "Deep Pockets", a hard, motorik pulse that gleefully channels Robert Fripp's guitar work on Bowie's "Heroes".

**GRAEME THOMSON**

## DIE NERVEN

**Fake**

GLITTERHOUSE

7/10

Stuttgart's sonic youth go widescreen on their fourth LP



Of the many German acts now filtering across the world, the vast majority are electronic and cerebral; not Stuttgart trio Die Nerven, however, who channel US noise-rock and German punk to document their rage at the 21st century. *Fake*, their fourth album, continues the onslaught of 2015's *Out*, but their wiry power has been switched for a more cavernous, reverb-heavy sound; the martial shock-rock of "Alles Falsch" is a little too on the nose, perhaps, but the (slightly) more tuneful moments – the bittersweet rush of "Niemals", or the nimble, Banshees-esque "Explosionen" – perfectly capture the anxieties of our overloaded, troubled era.

**TOM PINNOCK**

## DIE WILDE JAGD

**Uhrwald Orange**

BUREAU B

7/10

Düsseldorf dreamer's gothic grooves



Die Wilde Jagd – The Wild Hunt – trampled into view in 2015 as a duo of Sebastian Lee Philipp and Ralf Beck, peddling a self-titled set of handsome industrial new wave that drew on Rhineland luminaries such as Neu! and DAF. This time Philipp leads the charge from Beck's well-appointed Uhrwald Orange studio (*uhrwald* translates as "clockwood", a place of dreams and sounds), concocting a softer and more tuneful collection of lysergic electronics that saunters from the louché pop of "2000 Elefanten" to the narco-boogie of "Flederman" and "Kreuzgang". Decadent and druggy, it all sounds suitably expensive and Philipp excels as the strung-out bohemian. **PIERS MARTIN**

## MIKE DONOVAN

### How To Get Your Record Played In Shops

DRAG CITY

7/10

Second solo outing, rife with melancholy surprises

**HOW TO GET YOUR RECORD PLAYED IN SHOPS**

A lifetime ago, Mike Donovan was a member of lo-fi psych-pop weirdos Sic Alps; there, he perfected a kind of dissolute, vague wonder at the world, through songs that were equal parts fuzz overload and Kinksian melody. His new album starts in a similar zone, but the surprises come when he spins a web of melancholy from the piano, a clunky cello pre-set underneath "Sadfinger", Donovan sounding like Tymon Dogg, or Liam Hayes of Plush (but on a budget). No-one seems to know quite how he does it, but Donovan keeps going, quietly, from strength to strength.

JONDALE

## DR DOG

### Critical Equation

WE BUY GOLD/THIRTY TIGERS

8/10

Less proves to be more as Philly indie-rock veterans seize the moment



The deep, pulled-back grooves of *Critical Equation* reveal the harnessed intensity of the songs and performances

so deliberately that their myriad pleasures and embedded hooks will sneak up on you. The decision by producer Gus Seyffert (Bedouine, Beck) to record to 16-track tape challenges the band to make each part count, as Scott McMicken pushes his upper register and Zach Miller squeezes out Garth Hudson-like Hammond drama, while Toby Leaman's bass and Eric Slick's drums interlock with Sly & Robbie tautness. The album's key songs – the unsettled "Listening In", the hopeful "Coming Out Of The Darkness" and the defiant anthem "Go Down Fighting" – allusively capture the roiling anxiety of present-day America. **BUD SCOPPA**

## SIMONE FELICE

### The Projector

NEW YORK PRO

9/10



Simone Felice

Yonatan Gat: rock of the surf, glam, glitch and tribal varieties



Alt.country songwriter/producer unveils exotic guestlist and sings songs of the lost and damaged



Simone Felice keeps interesting company on *The Projector*, notably on its title track. Bat For Lashes' Natasha

Khan (whose last album Simone co-produced) lends windswept vocal support and Four Tet provides electronic effects, murmuring disturbances that here and elsewhere make this Simone's most musically expansive album since the two he made with the unfortunately short-lived *The Duke And The King*. The songs, often as angry as they are tenderly beautiful, describe, as ever, the marginalised, dispossessed and lost, damaged lives in a ruined world, where love is the only amnesty. Go dig. **ALLAN JONES**

## ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER

### Rebound

FRENCHKISS

8/10

Former Fiery Furnaces singer goes on a mellow, reflective Aegean odyssey



In her own laconic fashion, Eleanor Friedberger is rejuvenated on fourth solo album *Rebound*. Having seldom made life easy for herself after The Fiery Furnaces' laboured art-rock and her increasingly mature solo albums, the singer sought salvation in Greece and spent much of last year in Athens assessing her options. The result, alluded to in "Nice To Be Nowhere" and "My Jesus Phase", is her most satisfying record yet: a cool-headed collection of whisky-soaked ruminations furnished with warm synthesisers and an easy-going, melodic swagger. On "In Between Stars" and "The Letter" there are shades of Fleetwood Mac's *Tango In The Night*; a surprising – and gently reckless – throw of the dice. **PIERS MARTIN**

## GAS RAUSCH

KOMPAKT

7/10

Back after a long hiatus – ambient-techno guru Wolfgang Voigt



Designed to be heard as one continuous piece of music, *Rausch* employs the same orchestral palette as last year's

long-awaited *Narkopop*, though it's far more restrained, foreboding and ultimately effective. About 10 minutes in, a threatening martial pulse emerges from the oppressive hum; later, distant trumpets wail as if counting the dead. An accompanying poem talks of bells tolling and seas of flames. *Rausch* is the German word for ecstasy or intoxication, but it's also a near-homonym for *rauch*, meaning smoke. By the end of this album, it feels as if Voigt is razing his famous Königsforest to the ground. **SAM RICHARDS**

## YONATAN GAT

### Universalists

TAK:TIL/GLITTERBEAT

9/10

Crazed secular and sacred mashup from Israeli maverick



Yonatan Gat played guitar in the revered Tel Aviv garage band Monotonix (renowned for setting themselves alight on stage), and since going solo and moving to New York his music has got even weirder. The opener here, "Cue The Machines", mixes *Mystère Des Voix Bulgares*-style vocal harmonies, shamanic glam-rock drums and surf-rock guitar, and the entire LP continues this slightly manic fusion of international styles. The tribal chants of "Medicine", the terrifying thrash-jazz howls of "Cockfight", the Elliott Smith-like "Backseat Driver" and off-kilter "Dining Alone", with its whistling-cowboy intro and portrait of an inner fantasy life. **ROB HUGHES**

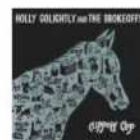
## HOLLY GOLIGHTLY & THE BROKEOFFS

Clippety Clop

MEGAFORCE/TRANSDREAMER

8/10

Ex-Headcoatee reunites with multi-faceted Lawyer Dave



Setting tentacles deep into vintage Americana, a world where Wanda Jackson and Marty Robbins remain superstars, *Clippety Clop* divests itself of the literal and topical. In fact, horses – by the dozens – emerge as the allegorical centrepiece. Guitars clank, drums sputter, the singers often harmonise like John Doe/Exene Cervenka of X. Elements of rockabilly, hillbilly and folk swirl into the mix, but gritty, emotionally fervent blues, on loan from Big Maybelle ("Jinny Mule") and John Lee Hooker ("Two White Horses"), are the bedrock. "I Ride An Old Paint", the pair pouring their souls into a rickety, century-old piece of cowboy poetry, somehow achieves pure transcendence. **LUKE TORN**

## SHAKEY GRAVES

### Can't Wake Up

DUALTONE

7/10

Radical dreampop makeover for Texan troubadour



The slow-built success of 2014's *And The War Came*, allied to being voted Best Emerging Artist at the following year's Americana Awards, has created an expectant buzz around Alejandro Rose-Garcia, aka Shakey Graves. Slightly perversely, this third LP does away with the gnarly folk-blues that made his name, Graves instead choosing to reinvent himself as wistful purveyor of psych dreampop. It happens to suit him, too, from the electro-noir of "Big Bad Wolf" to the Elliott Smith-like "Backseat Driver" and off-kilter "Dining Alone", with its whistling-cowboy intro and portrait of an inner fantasy life. **ROB HUGHES**

**GROUPEUR**  
**Grid Of Points**

KRANKY  
7/10

Concise collection of piano-focused ambience

Picking up where 2014's *Ruins* left off, Liz Harris's 10th album continues her slow ascent out of the appealingly murky haze of her early releases towards structured, if still frail, songwriting. Heavy on reverb but these days lighter on tape hiss, its mere 22 minutes begin with an unaccompanied choral vignette, "The Races", before she adds piano to the other six tracks, tracing out "Parking Lot"'s soothing melody and turning "Birthday Song" into an acoustic Cocteau Twins experiment. Atmosphere is paramount, its peace interrupted only by passing traffic on the closing "Breathing", and the skeletal beauty of "Driving" is undeniable. **WYNDHAM WALLACE**

**LUKE HAINES**  
**I Sometimes Dream Of Glue**

CHERRY RED  
6/10

How the ex-Auteur lost it to Bostik

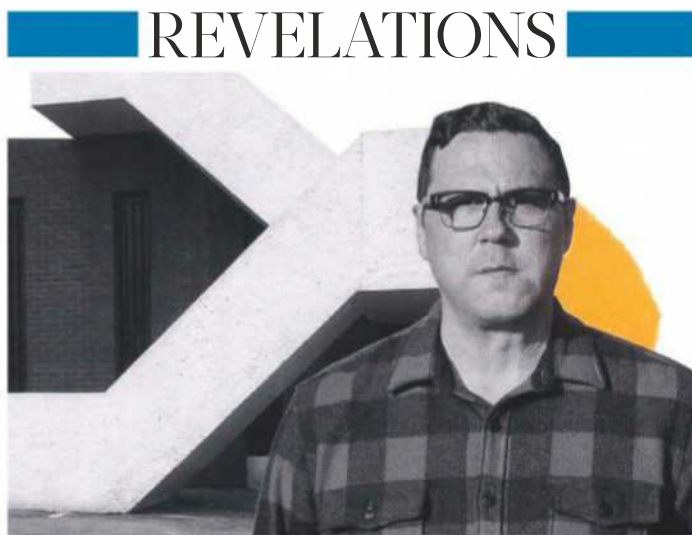
Psycho for sex and glue, the two-and-a-half-inch-tall denizens of Glue Town – as depicted in Luke Haines' latest homemade mini-world – fill their shrunken lives with child sacrifice and repeats of 1970s kids show *Pottyland*. However, the mildewed-Bagpuss whimsy of *I Sometimes Dream Of Glue* barely masks real-life anguish: a failed marriage on "I Fell In Love With An OO Scale Wife" and male-pattern entropy on "Solvents Cure The Ego". The best postcoital hope pretty closer "We Could Do It" can offer is "we live for a few more hours". Haines' mean-spirited gifts abide, but Airfix cannot mend a broken spirit. **JIM WIRTH**

**Françoise Hardy**  
**Personne D'autre**

PARLOPHONE/WARNER MUSIC FRANCE  
7/10

Mortality and melancholy on Hardy's first LP for six years

After 2012's *L'Amour Fou*, Françoise Hardy became gravely ill and lost interest in writing songs. Last April, though, she was creatively revitalised when she heard "Sleep" by Finland's Poets Of The Fall. Her own version is here, but the majority of the songs feature Hardy's own lyrics, examining mortality, ageing and regret. Musically, there are gauzy ballads so coated in reverb they could almost be shoegaze ("A Cache-Cache"), acoustic pieces ("Un Mal Qui Fait Du Bien") and a jaunty throwback to her early albums ("Trois Petits Tours"). Though some of its textures



**DAMIEN JURADO**

The singer-songwriter's still looking for a place to land

**T**HE notion of home has always been a key element of Damien Jurado's work. Latest album *The Horizon Just Laughed* finds the US singer-songwriter digging deeper into what it means to belong. "A lot of it's tied to my own experiences," he explains. "When I grew up, my father wasn't present and my mother was chasing him around the country, towing my siblings around from state to state. I really had no sense of home, so I would say I've been looking my entire life for a sense of it." This restless spirit feeds directly into the luminous folk-rooted songs that tie the album together,

particularly the likes of "The Last Great Washington State" and "1973". "I've just recently moved, having been a resident of Washington State for 33 years," he continues. "These songs are about starting over, having that place to land."

They also tie in to the existential concerns of his recent sci-fi trilogy with producer Richard Swift: "It's a lot like *Maraqopa* [2012], where a guy boards a plane in the 1950s and lands decades into the future. The character feels out of touch because he can't connect with the world around him. I didn't know where I was going either."

**ROB HUGHES**

could do with a little more edge, the result is undeniably poignant, with Hardy's voice elegant and expressive as ever. **TOM PINNOCK**

**JOSHUA HEDLEY**  
**Mr Jukebox**

THIRD MAN  
8/10

The arrival of a new honky-tonk hero

Florida native Hedley's savvy songbook catches the new-traditionalist country wave that shone a light on

Sturgill Simpson and Third Man labelmate Margo Price, although his honky-tonk hues are closer in spirit to another astute archaeologist, Dwight Yoakam. The title track of this debut is the kind of saloon-bar two-stepper George Jones would have killed for back in the day, while "Counting All My Tears" and "These Walls" echo with vintage Nashville Sound elegance and Willie Nelson poetry. Pedal steel and fiddle waltz around a crystal-clear

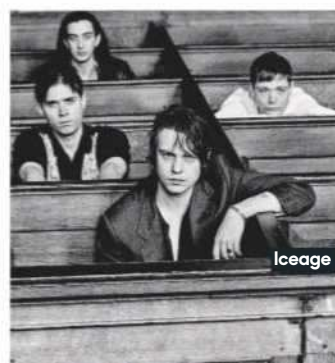
baritone on a succession of laments to hillbilly heartbreak that ooze class from every pore. **TERRY STAUNTON**

**ICEAGE**  
**Beyondless**

MATADOR  
8/10

Once-precocious Danish punk sensations hit their stride

Like their fellow Scandinavians in *The Refused* back in the '90s, Iceage have experienced an unusually swift and



successful maturation period, hurtling from the snarling retro-punk of 2011's *New Brigade* to sounds that are more sophisticated but no less compelling than their output as ornery teens. On their fourth album, their means of tempering that early fury include adding horns and backup vocals by Sky Ferreira to the stormy, Saints-like "Pain Killer". Elsewhere, the band's newfound eagerness for moodier tempos and treatments allows frontman Elias Bender Ronnenfelt to dig deeper into his Gun Club fetish on "Under The Sun" and make like he's stumbling out of a Kurt Weill musical on "Showtime", a stunning piece of punked-up cabaret.

**JASON ANDERSON**

**PARK JIHA**  
**Communication**

GLITTERBEAT  
7/10

Solo debut from boundary-crossing Korean avant-gardist

The Korean post-rock scene is a rich and fascinating one awaiting wider western discovery. Jambinai and

Black String have already made inroads, and now comes Park Jiha with an extraordinary instrumental album full of hypnotic rhythms and minimalist melodies that are both stunningly beautiful and at times oddly unsettling. She composes for traditional instruments, including piri (bamboo flute), yanggeum (hammered dulcimer) and saenghwang (mouth pipes), but the addition of sax, clarinet and vibraphone root the music as much in western classical sensibility as in oriental tradition. The glib comparisons would be Terry Riley or Steve Reich, but the melodic ebb and flow probably makes Michael Nyman a closer analogue. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

**DAMIEN JURADO**  
**The Horizon Just Laughed**

SECRETLY CANADIAN  
6/10

Seattle singer-songwriter strips back to acoustics

Having dispensed with producer Richard Swift, who helped shape the esoteric psych-pop of his *Maraqopa*

trilogy, Jurado has returned to the unmediated folk stylings of his earlier work. The mellow-sounding *The Horizon Just Laughed* – the first entirely self-produced album of his 20-odd-year career – is a series of memories and impressions, the smoky warmth of his voice taking the forlorn chill from themes of regret and reflection. It sometimes feels a little pedestrian, though Jurado excels when upping the pace, particularly on the witty sophistication of "Percy Faith" and the almost casual jazz swing of the gorgeous "Florence-Jean".

**ROB HUGHES**



# COURTNEY BARNETT

## Tell Me How You Really Feel

MARATHON ARTISTS/MILKI RECORDS

8/10

Return of the hardest-working slacker in showbiz. *By Stephen Troussé*



“SPRAWL”, according to the country’s unofficial laureate Les Murray, is that quintessential Australian quality of cheerfully casual

excess. It’s “full-gloss murals on a council-house wall” and “the rococo of being your own still centre”. Across a couple of EPs, her 2015 debut album and last year’s collaboration with Kurt Vile, it’s why we’ve grown to love Courtney Melba Barnett – the goofily exuberant loose magic with which she has re-enchanted grungey ’90s garage rock.

It’s there still on the comeback single “Nameless, Faceless”, where, in her zen insouciance, she even finds it in her heart to sympathise with comment-box trolls. “I could eat a bowl of alphabet soup and spit out better words than you,” her detractor claims, but it’s part of her great charm that Barnett gives the impression of managing exactly that: effortlessly transmuted the quotidian details of Melbourne life – swimming, gardening, looking at a new flat – into casually profound, delirious pop art.

But it’s the album’s second advance track, “Need A Little Time”, that really indicates where she’s heading on this difficult second album. It’s a slow, patient number, led by a humdrum strum and unfussy Hammond organ, that builds patiently and very deliberately refrains from wisecracks or wordplay. “Shave your head to see how it feels,” she sings with tender weariness. “Emotionally it’s not that different/But to the hand it’s beautiful.” It feels like a key line on an album that endeavours to pare back unnecessary extravagance, to speak boldly and baldly.

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Hopelessness
- 2 City Looks Pretty
- 3 Charity
- 4 Need A Little Time
- 5 Nameless, Faceless
- 6 I’m Not Your Mother, I’m Not Your Bitch
- 7 Crippling Self-Doubt And A General Lack Of Confidence
- 8 Help Your Self
- 9 Walkin’ On Eggshells
- 10 Sunday Roast

**Produced by:** Courtney Barnett, Burke Reid and Dan Luscombe  
**Recorded at:** Soundpark Studios, Northcote, Victoria, Australia  
**Personnel:** Courtney Barnett (guitar, vocals), Bones Sloane (bass, backing vocals), Dave Mudie (drums, percussion), Dan Luscombe (keys, organ, guitar, backing vocals), Kim Deal (backing vocals, guitar), Kelley Deal (backing vocals)

The song is most eloquent in the way Barnett’s sprained voice cracks into falsetto on the simple words “me... and you”, and the ragged, sad glory of her guitar solo.

The album begins with “Hopelessness” – a typically happy/sad Barnettish coinage – and a riff that’s a kissing cousin of Nirvana’s “All Apologies”. “You know what they say: no-one’s born with hate”, she sings. “We learn it somewhere along the way.” Putting such a dejected, downbeat number at the start of the record could lead you to think that *TMHYRF* might be Barnett’s *In Utero* – an album about the soul-destroying, dementing consequences of sudden international fame, at a time when anonymous misogyny is emboldened as never before. But in fact this is a jumping-off point. The track ends with the sound of a kettle boiling, and the album that follows is the sound of someone trying to reconnect to the marvels of the mundane

after months stoking the star-making machinery behind popular song.

It’s hard not to hear these songs in the context of Jen Cloher’s self-titled album from last summer, where she pitilessly described the pain of watching Barnett – her partner, fellow label boss, and sometime guitarist – be swept away on waves of global acclaim (on “Forgot Myself”, Cloher magnificently appropriated Jagger: “You’re riding around the world/You’re doing this and signing that... I’m driving in my car/Your song comes on the radio/And I remember what I always forget: loneliness.”)

It’s not a comparison that necessarily flatters Barnett. “Friends treat you like a stranger/And strangers treat you like their best friend,” she sings on “City Looks Pretty”, one of a couple of songs that tries to rock without its heart really being in it. At her worst, Barnett’s lyrics can feel like ironic motivational posters for slackers – the album is full of entreaties to “pull yourself together and calm down” and reminders that “darkness depends on where you’re standing”. Admittedly, Kurt Cobain might still be with us if he’d sat down with a cuppa and looked on the bright side, but they can feel a little trite without the usual shaggy-dog wit or vim.

The album comes into its own in the second half, after the much-needed spleen of “I’m Not Your Mother, I’m Not Your Bitch” (“I try to be patient but I can only put up with so much shit”). “Walkin’ On Eggshells” is a frazzled, bittersweet ballad that might have found a home on the Kurt Vile collaboration, but the closing “Sunday Roast” takes the record, and Barnett’s art, to a new dimension. It starts out as a shuffling, dreamy REM reverie of reconciliation. But then the key changes and it’s like the sun coming out at the end of a dismal week: “Keep on keepin’ on/ You know you’re not alone/I know all your stories but I listen to them again.” Barnett is hopefully never going to mature into a straightforwardly po-faced confessional singer-songwriter, but it feels as if she now trusts the power of her music to imbue every cliché with emotional power. The hardest-working woman in slacker rock doesn’t look like slowing down any time soon.

### Q&A

#### Courtney Barnett “Humour covers up a much darker feeling”

#### “Hopelessness” is a bold choice for an opening track...

For so long it was going to be the last song. The tracklisting always gets me stuck. It can make or break the listening process, which is such a pity when you’ve put so much effort in. At the end of the Kurt Vile tour, Jen [Cloher] and I did this road trip across America and we listened to the album in 10 or 15 different orders

until it felt right. Putting that song at the start seemed to make sense. It gave me the feeling of the orchestra tuning up and everything slowly falling into place.

#### This feels like a much more direct album – there are fewer gags or puns. Are you becoming a grown-up singer-songwriter?

I dunno – it’s hard to tell from my position. I definitely faced up to a lot more emotions and tried not to fall back on easy humour to mask things

as much. Any time I’ve used humour before was to cover up a much darker feeling. It’s probably a more vulnerable representation of it now.

#### For someone characterised as a slacker, you are incredibly productive. Do you feel on top of your game right now?

I feel there’s always something you can be doing better. But yeah, I feel lucky to be able to create all this stuff with people I love.  
 INTERVIEW: STEPHEN TROUSSÉ



King Tuff: goofball turned groovy guru

## KING TUFF The Other

SUBPOP

8/10

*Fine return to form from reimagined LA singer-songwriter*



Kyle Thomas's latest album as King Tuff is the first since 2014's *Black Moon Spell*, Thomas having decided to take a break

and rethink the King Tuff persona, which had run into a dead end. *The Other* sees the slacker goofball King Tuff reborn as a spiritual thinker, albeit one with an excellent groove. "Raindrop Blue" and "Birds Of Paradise" and the fantastic "Circuits In The Sand" all combine glammy disco beats with soul-searching lyrics, while slower numbers such as the acoustic "Thru The Cracks" and stately, neo-pysch "No Man's Lead" come loaded with enough punch to puncture any suspicions of self-indulgence.

PETER WATTS

## LA LUZ Floating Features

HARDLY ART

7/10

*A surf-noir take on the LA dream*



If some of the source material for 2015's Ty Segall-produced *Weirdo Shrine* was nightmarish (Charles Burns' grotesque graphic novel *Black Hole*), the third long-player from the surf outfit is quite the opposite. The theme of dreams – of the slumber, aspirational and uniquely Californian variety – is brought to life. Inspiration wasn't in short supply once the foursome moved from Seattle to Los Angeles – superficially these songs smile sweetly like the bartender with film-star aspirations, but they conceal daggers. That's La Luz's knack – there's an appealing American cynicism lurking beneath their enchanting '60s doo-wop-indebted sound. GREG COCHRANE

## LAKE STREET DIVE Free Yourself Up

NONESUCH

6/10

*Eclectic Bostonians expand their musical gene pool*



Having made their name with a Jackson Five cover that scored five million YouTube hits, LSD boldly announced their

intention to "sound like The Beatles and Motown had a party together". The addition of keyboardist Akie Bermis to the original quartet seems to have grown their scavenging ambitions yet further. "Baby Don't Leave Me Alone With My Thoughts" sounds like Steely Dan might've done if they'd come from Memphis. "Shame Shame Shame" finds charismatic lead singer Rachael Price sounding like a female Lowell George, and "Hang On" would make a classic Bonnie Raitt ballad. Magpies, for sure – but rather brilliant ones.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

## DANIEL LANOIS & VENETIAN SNARES Venetian Snares X Daniel Lanois

TIMESIG / PLANET MU

8/10

*Electronic titans share an Alien Vs Predator soundclash*



Two Canadian soundscapers from wildly different hinterlands share a pleasingly fissile musical chemistry

on this collaborative effort, which was recorded live inside a former Buddhist temple in Toronto. Veteran U2 and Bob Dylan producer Daniel Lanois sculpts



La Luz

his pedal-steel guitar into warm ambitrone treacle, which breakcore beat-mangler Venetian Snares, aka Aaron Funk, then bombards with cacophonous electro-punk artillery. It may sound like a gimmicky stunt but it produces mostly beautiful results such as "Mag11 P82" or "Mothors Pressroll P131", whose sun-drenched palaces of Floydian guitar gloop shine through the ferocious crunch and clatter, like cathedrals rendered more beautiful by bullet holes and graffiti. STEPHEN DALTON

## MARY LATTIMORE Hundreds Of Days

GHOSTLY

7/10

*Enchanting third from LA-based harpist*



Mary Lattimore is the go-to harpist for the discerning indie artist, having recently plucked her 47-string Lyon & Healy harp for Kurt Vile, Steve Gunn and The Clientele, but it's on her solo albums that she fully indulges her talent for the romantic, windswept gesture. Composed during a residency in San Francisco, the predominantly instrumental *Hundreds Of Days* is a more expansive affair than 2016's *At The Dam*. Lattimore embellishes the 12 minutes of "It Feels Like Floating" with keyboards and a celestial vocal, concocting a kind of rococo kosmische, for example, while "Baltic Birch" is a fragrant lullaby sure to soothe any restless infant. PIERS MARTIN

## LORD HURON Vide Noir

WHISPERING PINES/REPUBLIC

6/10

*LA-based quartet hones its sound on panoramic third LP*



Formed in 2010 by Michigan transplant Ben Schneider, Lord Huron can now fill amphitheatres thanks primarily to the ballad

"The Night We Met", which became a hit after appearing in the 2017 Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. Like its two predecessors, *Vide Noir* unspools with cinematic seamlessness, as quicksilver psychedelic buffers bridge its 12 tracks, which shift between folk, country and heartland rock. The band enters new terrain with the spaghetti-western vibes of "Secret Of Life" and the Tame Impala-like swirl of "Ancient Names (Part I)", but the stickiest cut is the doo-wop-inflected slow-dance song "Wait By The River", which is doubtlessly destined to become a go-to tune for music supervisors. BUD SCOPPA

## THE MELVINS Pinkus Abortion Technician

IPECAC RECORDINGS

7/10

*Two bassists bring new dimension to veteran punks*



The Melvins bring the swing to their latest record, with two bass players providing a whole lot of bottom end, and giving

*Pinkus Abortion Technician* a real flavour of its own. The title is a nod to the presence of Butthole Surfer bassist Jeff Pinkus, and the band top and tail the LP with the Buttholes' "Moving To Florida" and "Graveyard". They also break out a freakish take on "I Want To Hold Your Hand", and add some new originals, including the country twang of "Flamboyant Duck" and the ZZ Top-esque "Break Bread". There's nothing here not to love. PETER WATTS

## MODERN STUDIES Welcome Strangers FIRE

8/10

*Melancholic magic from Scottish troubadours*



Following 2016's debut, *Swell To Great*, Modern Studies' Emily Scott, Rob St John and their cohorts once again supplement their brackish folk with tape loops, harmonium, a Mellotron and more to create songs both ancient and modern. The landscape is a semi-mythic Albion, "ringing from the dark places, rising from the hills". Anchored by a guitar jangle that recalls Johnny Marr's hazier reveries, "Mud And Flame" celebrates the richness of the soil, "where the sky meets the sea meets the land". Elsewhere, the wheezy hubbub of "Horns And Trumpet" recalls the febrile, electrified folk of Polly Harvey's *Let England Shake*. "Phosphene Dream", meanwhile, is Nancy and Lee via Sarah Records; a mournful love song to people and places "where hills and roads become ribs and bones". MICHAEL BONNER

## AIDAN MOFFAT & RM HUBBERT Here Lies The Body

ROCK ACTION

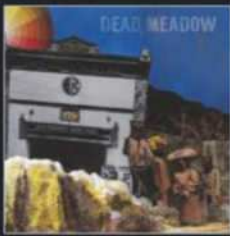
8/10

*Glasgow pair cook up a gloriously mangled feast*



These two go back to the earliest days of Arab Strap, though they first hooked up on record in 2012, when Moffat guested on Hubbert's award-winning *Thirteen Lost & Found*. This greater collaboration involves a digressive narrative about a lost relationship, Moffat's pithy tones laying bare all kinds of heart-thumping joys and quiet tragedies over busy percussion and dry acoustic guitar. Meanwhile, guest vocalist Siobhan Wilson helps smooth some of the sharper edges. It's droll, evocative and occasionally moving, switching tenor like unpredictable weather, from the libidinous "Party On" to the dissolute "Keening For A Dead Love". ROB HUGHES

# CARGO COLLECTIVE



## DEAD MEADOW

THE NOTHING THEY NEED

XEMU RECORDS LP / CD

Dead Meadow's first album of new material in 5 years sees them continue to fuse their love of early '70's hard rock and '60's psychedelia into their own unique sound.



## INTERROBANG?

INTERROBANG?

ALL THE MADMEN RECORDS LP / CD

Former Chumbawamba rejecting nostalgia. An agit-post-punk-funkstorm; angular, taut, and intense; tight and to the point. Hard hitting songs for hard hit people.



## MIEN

MIEN

ROCKET RECORDINGS LP / CD

MIEN are an incredible new band featuring Alex from The Black Angels, Tom from The Horrors, John-Mark from The Earlies and Rishi from Elephant Stone. "Apocalyptic psych rock" Pitchfork. "MIEN is the line up of your dreams" Clash



## μ ZIQ

CHALLENGE ME FOOLISH

PLANET MU LP / CD

An album of lost  $\mu$ -Ziq material dating from 1998-99. A companion to his 'Royal Astronomy' album, imbued with a sense of pastoral colour, and optimism, utilising bells, orchestral arrangements and airy synthesizers.

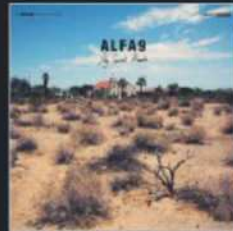


## CZARFACE & MF DOOM

CZARFACE MEETS METAL FACE!

GRANDSTAND MEDIA LP / CD

Blending DOOM's trademark abstractions & Czarface's in-your-face lyrical attack, this album is ripe with cartoon violence, societal observations & pop culture musings. Over banging beats provided by The Czar-Keys.



## ALFA 9

MY SWEET MOVIDA

BLOW UP LP / 2CD

Psych folk-rock, with layered harmonies & guitars, Morricone-esque cosmic country. "Sublime psych" - 9/10 Vive Le Rock. "There's plenty here to love" 4/5 Shindig. Limited - 180g Clear vinyl / Deluxe double CD.



## MAJOR MURPHY

NO. 1

WINSPEAR LP / CD

Brimming with jangly guitar, shimmering riffs, synth-sheened grooves, and commanding backing vocals, No. 1 reimagines 1970s radio rock with bristling sensitivity for our present era.



## WYE OAK

THE LOUDER I CALL, THE FASTER IT RUNS

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

The bracing culmination of a decade of stylistic evolution and experimentation. UK & European tour April/May 2018.



## MIND OVER MIRRORS

BELLOWING SUN

PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD

The arresting double album Bellowing Sun is the majestic culmination of composer, harmoniumist, and synthesist Jaime Fennelly's immersive explorations of the natural world's sensory dimensions.



## FACS

NEGATIVE HOUSES

TROUBLE IN MIND LP / CD

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KHÔME KAKKÀ

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THE CAVEMEN

DIRTY WATER RECORDS LP / CD

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# JON HOPKINS

## Singularity

DOMINO

7/10

Versatile collaborator follows up *Immunity* with ambitious psychedelic epic. *By Stephen Dalton*



ACHIEVING a kind of stealth stardom over the past decade, Jon Hopkins has amassed a stellar portfolio of projects without ever quite

edging into the pop mainstream. This classically trained composer from the south London suburbs released his breakthrough fourth album, *Immunity*, in 2013, a sumptuous blend of analogue techno belters and lush electro-acoustic audioscapes that earned rapturous reviews and a Mercury nomination.

But his real big break came years before, as a session player barely into his twenties, when Hopkins first caught the ear of Brian Eno. This led to co-production credits on three Coldplay albums, film scores and multiple joint ventures with Eno. He has since remixed and collaborated with a prestige gallery of artists including King Creosote, Four Tet and David Lynch.

Hopkins and Eno have not worked together for years, but the ambient godfather's influence clearly still lingers, and is arguably more manifest on *Singularity* than on *Immunity*. Blending dancefloor dynamics with richly layered sound paintings, this album is designed to flow as a single musical journey that loosely maps the stages of a psychedelic experience, from fuzzy first tingle to ecstatic peak to woozy comedown. It was partly inspired by Hopkins spending a year in California, where he deepened his interest in transcendental meditation

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Singularity
- 2 Emerald Rush
- 3 Neon Pattern Drum
- 4 Everything Connected
- 5 Feel First Life
- 6 COSM
- 7 Echo Dissolve
- 8 Luminous Beings
- 9 Recovery

**Produced by:** Jon Hopkins

**Recorded at:** Café Music Studios, London

**Personnel:** Jon Hopkins (piano, keyboards, programming), Emma Smith (strings), Leo Abrahams (guitars), Lisa Elle (vocals), Jon Thorne (double bass), Austin Tufts (drums), Clark and Cherif Hashizume (drum programming), Sasha Lewis (sound design), Tim Exile (patch design), London Voices choir

and embraced the breathing methods of Wim Hof, a Dutch "extreme athlete" who preaches a kind of extreme mindfulness rooted in conscious hyperventilation and self-immersion in freezing water.

As on *Immunity*, the thrusting kinetic energy of club music is a key thread running through *Singularity*. Emerging from a fog of phased drone effects, the opening title track builds into a kind of lavish electro stampee in Underworld or Chemical Brothers vein, a chugging dancefloor locomotive that also works as a luxuriant collage of twangs, shudders and glitches. But more than on any previous album, Hopkins frequently wrong-foots our expectations with compositions that morph in tempo and texture as they progress. Nothing begins as it ends; shapes shift, arrangements dissemble, rhythms bend. All that is solid melts into air.

Several tracks begin like club bangers before blossoming into more exotic musical hybrids midway through. Tunes like "Neon Pattern Drum", which opens as a functional EDM stomper before Hopkins applies ear-blocking filter effects, slicing the audio flow into pulsing rhythmic chunks that eventually dissipate into dreamy chimes; or "Everything Connected", a 10-minute epic that starts

with the fleet-footed bounce of a classic Ibiza trance anthem, then mutates and corrodes into a stew of circuit-bending, pitch-tweaking, acid-glitch sizzle. Hopkins calls this marathon track a "massive techno bastard", not inaccurately.

Vocals feature sparingly on *Singularity*, for emotional and melodic shading rather than lyrical engagement. A ghostly siren voice calls from the depths of "Emerald Rush", a perfumed effusion of twinkly piano arpeggios and elasticated rhythms that gradually coalesces into half-speed techno. Then the beats drop away entirely on "Feel First Life", which begins as a cloud of weightless melody before a celestial choir of heavily treated voices becomes increasingly audible through the ambient white-out, recalling Sigur Rós at their most beatific. Both are lush listening experiences, full of cinematic mystery and unexpected swerves.

But this kind of pristine sparkle is best used sparingly. After a very strong start, *Singularity* becomes a little too eager to soothe our senses in its latter stages, beginning with "COSM", a measured glide through vivid colour bursts of Eno-ish abstraction. The effect is pleasing but anodyne, a gleaming sonic backwash for a Coldplay song that never materialises. There are similar passages of tinselly bliss in the symphonic 11-minute-plus professional "Luminous Beings", which moves through mildly abrasive electro before hitting a sustained peak of bubbling trance euphoria, followed by mellow ambience and tingly piano afterglow. The two short Satie-esque piano pieces that bookend *Singularity*, "Echo Dissolve" and "Recovery", reinforce this sense of soul-cleansing New Age meditation music. Eternal sunshine for spotless minds.

Hopkins, ultimately, is too smart and versatile a composer to let *Singularity* drown in a bubble bath of serotonin. This is a deeper and more ambitious album than *Immunity*, with a sonic richness that transcends its loose psychedelic concept, and a dense attention to detail that rewards repeated play. Even if the landscape is occasionally a little too pleasant, the overall trip is well worth taking.

### Q&A

#### Jon Hopkins on CA, collabs and Coldplay

#### What has changed in your life in the five years since *Immunity*?

I spent a bit of time in California, had way more open space in my life. But also moving to Ableton from Logic changed very much my way of writing. I became very interested in more unusual song structures. In the past I've been bound to tracks working their way back to the beginning. But this time I wanted tracks to be like a

story, a journey that ended up in a different place from where it began.

#### After years as a session player and collaborator, how does it feel to become a cult star?

This was always the plan, really. Collaborations and films scores came my way, and I was grateful to do them, but the goal ultimately was to make my own music. I wouldn't have been able to make *Immunity* had I been doing other things at the same time.

#### Coldplay are huge, but not among critics. Some electronic artists might have balked at working with them...

They are the only major band I've ever worked with, and they are very good friends. I think that level of songwriting is extremely rare – you don't get to that position by being rubbish. It really doesn't bother me how people react to them – they are my friends and it's been a relentlessly amazing experience working with them.

INTERVIEW: STEPHEN DALTON



**VAN MORRISON WITH JOE DEFRANCESCO**  
**You're Driving Me Crazy**

SONY LEGACY

6/10

Hammond vet DeFrancesco helps Van's hat-trick of jazz and blues albums



"Things I used to do, I just won't do them any more," Morrison sings here. Despite the presence of Astral Weeks' "The Way Young Lovers Do" among these versions of his own songs and jazz and blues standards, those things currently include transcendent songwriting. Though his jazz instincts can still send him into incantatory live orbit, all he wants here are the boyhood comforts of his early record collection. His voice remains admirably supple, though, relishing its swoop and stuttering scat through sole new song "Close Enough for Jazz". Its owner just doesn't care to say much with it. **NICK HASTED**

**MT EERIE**  
**Now Only**

PW ELVERUM & SUN

6/10

Album nine - an uncompromising exercise in raw grief



Phil Elverum's last album, *A Crow Looked At Me*, was an unsparing immersion in the grief that followed his wife's

death in 2016, at 35, from cancer. *Now Only* finds him circling the same terrible terrain, "living in the blast zone with our daughter". These long, fluid, half-spoken pieces at times recall Sun Kil Moon and Sufjan Stevens, but Elverum is more uncompromising. Parts of the title track are deceptively pretty - even while reminding us that "people get cancer and die" - but the abrasive "Earth" and meandering "Distortion", whispered to his dead wife, are more typical. You fervently hope the process proves therapeutic, but the results are almost too intimate to bear. **GRAEME THOMSON**

**MUGWUMP**  
**Drape**

SUBFIELD

6/10

Belgian DJ fronts a spiky post-punk collective



For more than 20 years, Belgium's Geoffroy Mugwump made his name as a top house and techno DJ, but has recently assembled a four-piece rock band, in which he groans, non-tonally, in a blank, heavily accented baritone over minimal post-punk backing. The opening track, "No Trepidation", is actually the one track here that has any sense of trepidation, with Mugwump growling over a pulsating, arrhythmic backing of doomy synths and Wire-y



Morrison and DeFrancesco

guitars. Nothing here is quite as good as this, although the Johnny Marr-ish rockabilly of "The Mechanism" gallops along nicely and "The Flag" has a low-key majesty, while "Rain/Frame" hits a certain Cure-like grandeur. **JOHN LEWIS**

**WILLIE NELSON**  
**Last Man Standing**

LEGACY

9/10

One of Nelson's best, and hopefully not one of his last



It is intended as nothing but a compliment to remark that, give or take some minor quirks of production, *Last Man*

*Standing* could be slotted seamlessly anywhere into about the past 40 years of Nelson's nigh-incalculable catalogue. Now well into his mid-eighties, Nelson's voice has lost none of its wry warmth, his fretboard fingers little of their astonishing agility. And the songs here are terrific, both spirited and reflective, from the sardonic upbeat blues of "I Ain't Got Nothin'" and "She Made My Day" to one of his finest ballads, "Something You Get Through". **ANDREW MUELLER**

**DAMIAN O'NEILL AND THE MONOTONES**  
**Refit Revise Reprise**

DIMPLEDISCS

7/10

Undertone goes back to the garage



As co-writer of "My Perfect Cousin", among other Undertones classics, Damian O'Neill has little to prove. He

continues to play in the Feargal-free group, as well as producing more experimental work, sometimes with his That Petrol Emotion bandmates. His debut solo album is an experiment in tone, an exploration of paths not taken, and a treat. The Undertones' "Love Parade" is reborn as garage rock, TPE's "Gnaaw Mark" has the playfulness of

Edwyn Collins' solo work. The closing demo of "Compulsion" outshines TPE's released version, before dissolving into a playful strum of "It's Gonna Happen".

ALASTAIR MCKAY

**OKKERVIL RIVER**  
**In The Rainbow Rain**

ATO

7/10

Will Sheff's gently spiritual new direction



Okkervil's last album, *Away*, was Will Sheff's elegy for that band's former lineup, recently dead relatives and the rock age itself. Two years on, Quaker worship, micro-psychedelics and a wish to reject the Trump malaise have led to this hopeful new beginning. It starts in more familiar style, with the deadpan showbiz epic "Famous Tracheotomies". Elsewhere, Okkervil's recent chamber-rock is replaced by synth-heavy Big Music, while "Human Being Song" is lyrically typical in its humbly phrased, hymnal effort to connect. If Sheff's still finding the best way to speak this newly direct, loving language, its naked conviction is touchingly plain. **NICK HASTED**

**ONCE & FUTURE BAND**  
**Brain**

CASTLEFACE

8/10

Triumphant progressive pop from Oakland foursome



As you would expect from a label co-run by John Dwyer of Thee Oh Sees, Castle Face have marked themselves out as purveyors of garage rock of a fast and mischievous stripe. Even in this context, though, this mini-album feels like an elegant curveball. A four-piece comprising alumni of Drunk Horse and Howlin Rain, Once & Future Band play a generous progressive rock that balances tricky instrumental proficiency with a warm, songwriterly spirit - think *Fragile*-era Yes fronted by Harry Nilsson, or similar. In the '70s, songs such as "Destroy Me" or "Heavenly Bodies" might have been massive; today they're more likely to be of cult concern, but this is a cult worth joining. **LOUIS PATTISON**

**PARQUET COURTS**  
**Wide Awake!**

ROUGH TRADE

8/10

Punk meets funk on Danger Mouse-produced fifth from NYC crew



Parquet Courts' fifth album in seven years sees them continue with proto-punk propulsion while managing to evade predictability. There's a focus on rich songcraft, with an added sparkle from Danger Mouse's production, exploring the political and the personal. This manifests in the agitated guitar strut of "Total Football" and the straight-up good-time funk of "Wide Awake", whereas "Violence" feels like a Funkadelic-tinged reworking of Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised". Parquet Courts have always possessed a seamless energy and infectious intensity, but here they sound truly alive, impassioned and buoyant on their finest LP to date. **DANIEL DYLAN WRAY**

**CHRIS PRICE**  
**Dalmatian**

OMNIVORE

8/10

LA-based throwback unearths more gems from his hard drive



While notching his bona fides as a producer (Emitt Rhodes, Linda Perhacs, Jeffrey Gaines), Chris Price showed he could stand alongside his heroes with 2017's *Stop Talking*, a beguiling evocation of early-'70s LA songcraft and sonics. *Dalmatian*, a grab-bag of heady power pop and bittersweet balladry culled from the same sessions, further spotlights Price's supple vocals, instrumental prowess and studio wizardry. "The Dream Is Over (But We're Just Waking Up)" conjures a fantasia out of nothing more than Beatles-style percussive piano and swooning harmonies, "Discount Love" harnesses razor-sharp wordplay and Beach Boys-borrowed ommmm-dot-didits to a pumping Motown groove, and the dazzling "Peculiar Lake Superior" could be mistaken for a Nilsson *Schmilsson* outtake. **BUD SCOPPA**

Parquet Courts: wake up, Boots!



EBRU YILDIZ, RICHARD WADE



# RYLEY WALKER

## Deafman Glance

DEAD OCEANS

8/10

Quixotic chamber folk jazz from Chicago's questing six-stringer. *By Jon Dale*



FOR a number of years now – ever since 2015's *Primrose Green*, really, a fluid, languid daze of an album, a drifting jazz-folk odyssey

– people have been waiting for Chicago singer-songwriter Ryley Walker to make the one, the album that would capture his spirit and essence, that would mark him out as one of the greats among his peers – and of his times. It's something that Walker seems a little uncomfortable with, particularly given his tendency to torch, or at least actively disown, the music of his recent past. In 2016, for example, in an online interview around the release of *Golden Sings That Have Been Sung*, he pretty much crossed a line through his early guitar soli and folk-song years: "It wasn't my strong suit. I did that for a few years, and I was like, 'Goddammit. Why am I doing this? It's not me.'"

For Walker, locating the self in one's own music has landed him, in 2018, with *Deafman Glance*, another album where he's finding his feet, exploring what's possible within the new world of song he's tracking, and enjoying the liberties gifted when you find musicians who really seem to be on your wavelength. There have been a number of diversions along the way – two lovely collaborative albums with guitarist Bill MacKay (who is central to *Deafman Glance*, and who released a low-key solo gem, *Esker*, last year), an album with Chicago jazz drummer Charles Rumbach (who's also played with MacKay), and a guest appearance on Six

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 In Castle Dome
- 2 22 Days
- 3 Accommodations
- 4 Can't Ask Why
- 5 Opposite Middle
- 6 Telluride Speed
- 7 Expired
- 8 Rocks On Rainbow
- 9 Spoil With The Rest

**Produced by:**

LeRoy Bach and Ryley Walker

**Recorded at:**

Minbal Studios, Chicago; USA Studios; LeRoy Bach's kitchen

**Personnel includes:**

Ryley Walker (guitar, vocals), Bill MacKay (guitar), Brian J Sulpizio (guitar), LeRoy Bach (guitar, piano, keyboards), Matt Lux (bass), Andrew Scott Young (bass, double bass), Mikel Avery (drums, percussion), Quin Kirchner (drums, percussion), Nate Lepine (flute, saxophone), Cooper Crain (synthesizers)

Organs Of Admittance's latest, *Burning The Threshold*.

But you'd be forgiven for thinking Walker was caught in the complex fug of self-analysis, especially after reading his notes to accompany *Deafman Glance*, where he's typically laconic about the struggles of the album's sessions, and his aims to make something "anti-folk... something deep-fried and me-sounding". To that end, then, Walker's succeeded admirably. *Deafman Glance* picks up the thread he'd laid down with the stronger songs on *Golden Sings That Have Been Sung* – notably, the tangled beauty of its opener, "The Halfwit In Me" – and moves further forward with its strange, oxymoronic, blissed-out tension.

When *Golden Sings...* appeared, both Walker and critics talked a lot about the relationships between the album's songs and the tricky, complex structures of Chicago post-rock, groups like Gastr Del Sol, The Sea & Cake and Tortoise: music that was in the air when Walker was growing up in Chicago. But he seems to have more fully absorbed the possibilities offered by those groups now – it's less about reflecting their sound, and more about understanding the terrain they blasted open. You can certainly hear

their experimental approach reflected in the open circuits of "Accommodations", with its clattering, tightly scrawled interruptions from flute and synth, the latter played, with a typically deft touch, by Cooper Crain of Bitchin Bajas (who also recorded and mixed the album).

But those moments also place Walker's music in a much longer historical trajectory, where songs meet freedom, and the edges of structure get beautifully blurred – think of Chris Gantry jamming with folk-jazz trio Oregon; Tim Buckley getting loose on *Lorca* and *Starsailor*; the liquid reveries of Willis Alan Ramsey's lone, self-titled album from 1972, whose voice and writing Walker's often recalls. The songs repeatedly spiral out of and back in to focus: "Can't Ask Why" sends Walker's humbled melodies out on tinkling percussion and spinning tops of electronic incident; "Telluride Speed" glistens with a kind of limpid melancholy, its lagoon of repose suddenly disrupted by a distinctly prog-esque break, all fast-fingering riffs and descending sequences.

Those moments are often the strongest on *Deafman Glance*, but not all the experiments work, still. The cresting structures of "22 Days" feels a bit forced and anticlimactic, and sometimes the playing and writing can get unnecessarily tricky – not everything here is in service of the song. But those moments are relatively rare. And most often, the compelling moments are where Walker effortlessly manages to balance simplicity and complexity – see "Opposite Middle", where he finds a weird sweet spot somewhere between The Sea And Cake, Kirwan-era Fleetwood Mac and Mark Eitzel.

Walker seems to have set himself one of the hardest tasks any artist can ask themselves: what would happen if we let down all our defenses and made the art that really resides inside? You can tell that he's still searching on *Deafman Glance*, but even its occasional missed steps feel instructive, somehow, as though Walker's getting closer to the core of the matter. As he himself reflects: "I just wanted to make something weird and far-out that came from the heart finally."

### Q&A

#### Ryley Walker on "the punching bag of reality"

**On the first play of *Deafman Glance*, I thought, 'This is a Chicago record.' How do you connect the city with the songs – what's the psychogeography of *Deafman Glance*?**

The whole city is a cracked sidewalk with weeds growing out of it. Sort of an off-blue hue to everything. I take long walks at night. There was a lot of inspiration drawn from the frozen-over cold nights.

Chicago has everything to do with the tunes.

**The team on the album is a motley crew – Chicago jazz players, Cooper Crain... What kind of stew were you wanting to create?**

Old style, Malört, OxyContin, Xanax, cocaine, American Spirits, no sleep. Nowadays I prefer red wine and the occasional English breakfast tea.

**The album's come out of a rough patch for**

**you, and the sessions were tough. Listening back, does the album feel worth the fight? It certainly sounds as though you've broken through to somewhere new.**

It's really weird to say "tough" when recording music. I'm stupidly lucky to be in a position where indie-rock pays the rent. Life is an uphill battle because I so choose it. Music makes the punching bag of reality worth the struggle. It's all worth it.

INTERVIEW: JON DALE

## JESSICA RISKER

### I See You Among The Stars

WESTERN VINYL

6/10

Former social worker provides hauntingly melodic comfort



With a voice that wavers between childlike wonder, precious frailty and weary resignation – but more Stina

Nordenstam than Joanna Newsom or Coco Rosie – Chicago's Jessica Risker demonstrates a supernatural ability to flit between worlds. It's matched by her arrangements, built upon little more than acoustic guitar and keyboard but punctuated by moments of understated psychedelia, tape hiss and ambient sounds. At times she wafts too far towards the fey, as on the unremarkable "Shallow Seas", but the title track offers a bewitching, music-box innocence, and the delicate "Reassign Me" will delight Sibylle Baier admirers. **WYNDHAM WALLACE**

## SARAH LOUISE

### Deeper Woods

THRILL JOCKEY

7/10

Woodsy folk tunes from a North Carolina guitar picker



A deft and imaginative 12-string picker, Sarah Louise Henson makes music that is deeply rooted in the Appalachian

folk tradition as well as in the dense North Carolina woods where she lives. After a handful of solo guitar albums, *Deeper Woods* foregrounds her vocals and songwriting to create prismatic meditations on nature and solitude. On songs named for native flora and fauna, she strikes a mood of contemplative wonder, which she reinforces through fiddle drones, gentle footstep percussion, and even the occasional birdsong (a Carolina chickadee gets a performing credit). Like a long walk in the woods, it's richly and deeply transporting. **STEPHEN DEUSNER**

## THE SEA AND CAKE

### Any Day

THRILL JOCKEY

8/10

Urbane Chicago trio stick to their guns on unruffled 11th



Across a quarter-century of refined, jazz-flecked indie-pop, The Sea and Cake's evolution has been so gradual as to be almost invisible. Since 2012's

*Runner* they have lost a bassist and gained an occasional clarinetist, though at this stage you feel it would take an earthquake to knock them off course. *Any Day* is their sharpest set of songs to date, but Sam Prekop's languid melodies still prove defiantly elusive: "I haven't given up nothin'!

*I never will,*" he sighs with attitude on "I Should Care". This is not big-picture stuff; rather it's very small-picture stuff, perfectly capturing the exquisite ennui of fumbled conversations and wasted afternoons. **SAM RICHARDS**

## SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

### Murmurations

WICHITA

6/10

Electronic duo explore choral techno on immersive fifth LP



Collaborating with the Hackney-based vocal collective The Deep Throat Choir, SMD

here offer up nine tracks that explore minimal beats alongside ethereal multi-layered vocals to create a blend of choral techno. There's almost an undercurrent of gospel on songs like "Caught In A Wave", as voices rise and crash against the pulsating beats. The collaboration is largely a success, with "Gliders" feeling texturally rich and "A Perfect Swarm" sputtering with lively electronics, but the album could sometimes benefit from a shift in pace from its often locked-in, mid-tempo state. **DANIEL DYLAN WRAY**

## SONS OF KEMET

### Your Queen Is A Reptile

IMPULSE!

8/10

Idiosyncratic UK jazz quartet salute the "alternative queens"



The London jazz scene is undergoing a precipitous burst of activity, and one of its prime movers is the saxophonist

Shabaka Hutchings, leader of The Comet Is Coming and Sons Of Kemet. *Your Queen Is A Reptile* is as incendiary as its title might suggest. Its track titles shout out courageous black women, from abolitionist Harriet Tubman to Hutchings' own great-grandmother Ada Eastman, while its distinctive musicianship – Hutchings on tenor sax, backed by tuba and twin drum kits – leads to some powerful moments. "My Queen Is Mamie Phipps Clark" is a dubwise lope fired by Rasta sermonising, while "...Doreen Lawrence" excoriates a racist establishment to music that builds unbearable tension. **LOUIS PATTISON**

## STING & SHAGGY

### 44/876

POLYDOR

4/10

They meant well, but...



They came together to record just one song, but "hit it off so well" that they created an entire album. Why they bothered

is unfathomable, for the result has to be the blandest record in which either Sting or Shaggy has ever been involved. The lyrics are beyond banal ("The ghost of Bob Marley haunts me

# REVELATIONS



## HAILEY TUCK

...on emotional baggage and "tons of fucked-up times"

**W**hen Hailey Tuck decided she wanted to make a jazz album, she looked at the small print on her favourite records by singers such as Madeleine Peyroux and Melody Gardot and found the credit "produced by Larry Klein". "So I got his email address and sent him a message saying I thought we could make a great album together," she tells *Uncut* during a 24-hour whistle-stop visit to the UK for a showcase at London's Arts Club.

Knocked out by her characterful voice, Klein – whose other production credits include Tracy Chapman and his ex-wife

Joni Mitchell – concurred, and although the result is titled *Junk*, the LP is a masterclass in sophisticated artistry.

"Junk is the theme that ties the songs together," explains Tuck, who ran away from Texas at 18 with what was supposed to be her college fund and found a different kind of education singing in the jazz and burlesque clubs of Paris.

Although the songs on her debut are mostly covers, she sings them as if she has lived them. "All sorts of emotional baggage is on there, tons of fucked-up times," she says. "Topics on which, believe me, I'm an expert." **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

to this day," Sting sings with all the sincerity of a voicemail message) and the music drifts between deracinated supper-club reggae ("22nd Street") and the sort of throwaway you might find on a Craig David B-side ("Gotta Get Back To My Baby"). So innocuous it's positively offensive. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

## EMMA TRICCA

### St Peter

DELL'ORSO

7/10

Italian émigrée's alluringly low-key fourth outing



Singer, songwriter and guitarist Tricca's peripatetic tendencies (lately, she's been shuttling between her London home,

Rome and NYC) have now extended to collaborative adventuring. Howe Gelb and Steve Shelley are among the guests on a deep-rooted but expansive set that strikes Tricca's target of "The Velvet Underground meets Fairport Convention" only once, with any obviousness – on "Buildings In Millions". Which is no reprimand: there's widespread subtlety and quiet strength in both the ensemble playing and arrangements, notably on the

Astrud Gilberto-ish "Julian's Wings" and mournful, whistle-accented "Green Box". And although Judy Collins' voice is central to "Solomon Said", she, Perhacs and Denny are only touchstones; Tricca's easy grace is all her own. **SHARON O'CONNELL**

## HAILEY TUCK

Junk SONY

8/10

Exquisite debut from globe-trotting Texan jazz chanteuse



It takes a special voice to interpret songs by the likes of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Paul McCartney and Ray Davies and make

them sound autobiographical, but Tuck not only has the chops but the character and backstory to pull it off. Produced in LA by Larry Klein and backed by a bunch of veteran jazz sophisticates, she sings these dozen songs – which also include an extraordinary version of Pulp's "Underwear" and show tunes from *Cabaret* and *On The Town* – with a delicious, risk-taking guile that is dark and addictive and yet witty and playful, like Holly Golightly meets Billie Holiday. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

# DISCOVERED

Searching out the best albums new to Uncut



## JESS WILLIAMSON

**Cosmic Wink** MEXICAN SUMMER

8/10

Sweet ecstasy and anguish in equal parts on Texan's stellar label debut. *By Sharon O'Connell*



UNLIKELY as it seems, confusion, self-doubt and the feeling of being utterly

at a loss can be a spur to creativity, rather than a serious stumbling block. At least, that's how it panned out for Jess Williamson.

In 2016, the singer, songwriter and guitarist took a leap of faith and moved from her native Texas to LA, where she started writing the songs for her third record. She'd followed her heart there – an unexpectedly profound love had flared into life like a supernova – and was newly intent on living “in a more magical way”, inspired by her reading of Carl Jung's *Man And His Symbols* and an astrology website's advice to pay attention to life's synchronicities. For Williamson, that meant choosing to see events (and her dreams, which she started writing down) as meaningful signs that might guide her through the fog – hence the album's title.

All of which might sound wilfully naïve, but it served Williamson's purpose – to shift the mood and tone of her writing and give her songs a newly dynamic expression.

She self-released her debut album, *Native State*, in 2014: Williamson played banjo (she took it up after seeing Austin traditionalist Ralph White live) in songs of a spare and slightly gothic nature, redolent of cotton fields and desert scrub, with a band featuring dulcimer and cello and a bluesy twang borrowed from the *Paris, Texas* soundtrack. The 2016 follow-up, *Heart Song*, also on her own Brutal Truth label, was heavy on the reverbed electric guitar and made the open road its *mise en scène*, but Williamson's voice – lustrous and edged with foreboding in the manner of Angel Olsen and Cat Power – was again her songs' spiritual heart.

However, having her records interpreted time and again in one particular way had become restrictive for the singer, who wanted her new LP to reflect the “peaceful easy feeling” of California: “I used to be into making music that was sad and dark, and it was always described as ‘haunting’. Then I moved out here and just didn't want to do that any more. I used to be afraid to come off as anything even remotely resembling mainstream. I think it's because I always felt like I wasn't freaky enough for the

freaks, but also not normal enough for the normals. I didn't know where I fitted in. Then I moved to LA and just let all that go.”

Rather than a mainstream reinvention, though, *Cosmic Wink* is an inspired recalibration, with Williamson relaxing into a looser, more expansive and sensual band sound that conjures dream states via abstract country rock, gospel soul and psych/desert blues, while her lyrics simultaneously celebrate deep love and acknowledge its twin – vulnerability. The songs suggest Kevin Morby (another LA-based Texan, with whom Williamson has toured) and Amen Dunes as kindred spirits, alongside Howe Gelb and Other Lives, freeing Williamson from strict genre boundaries. Co-produced by RF Shannon's Shane Renfro, who also plays guitar, piano and organ,

some of these songs feel like a blast of clean white light, others a gentle flowering, but all are as profound in thought as they are emotionally direct. Opener “I See The White”, with its echoes of The Byrds and *Is This Desire?*-era PJ Harvey, starts with Williamson demanding, “Tell me everything you know about consciousness/I don't know where we go, but I need you to be there.” The title refers not to the fabled white-light experience prior to death, but to the greying hair around her dog's eyes – a poignant reminder that time is running out for both of them. “Dream State” is more opaque, hallucinatory and sensual in its heat-haze languor, a taste of west Texas in California by way of a Fender Rhodes, while “Forever” pins peals of reverbed guitar and organ to gauzy abstraction in a balancing of romanticism with realism.

Very different are the sprightly, Gram Parsons-ish “White Bird”, the majestically minimal “Wild Rain” – which builds like a desert storm around a funereal beat and has an anguished Williamson wondering, “What did I do to deserve a man good as you?”, even while she's giving thanks – and “Thunder Song”, a slo-mo, compellingly panoramic sweep that's the album's pivot point.

Sultry, compelling and ever so slightly spooked, *Cosmic Wink* flickers and flashes like a series of time-lapse landscape photographs, but the place it documents is the heart. “Haunting” is no longer accurate – its sweet afterglow points Williamson to her future, not the past.

### Q&A

#### Jess Williamson on musical heroes and life crossroads

##### What sound did you have in mind for *Cosmic Wink*?

I wanted it to be uplifting music... an album that would make people feel good, something that felt classic and that would be a lot of fun to play live – I had started touring more, and that was huge for me. Shane's production was key to making this happen.

##### You chose Nina Simone, Chan Marshall and Townes Van Zandt as spirit guides...

They are some of my heroes: Nina Simone for her fierce, unapologetic passion and the power she has when

she sings; Chan Marshall for her vulnerability and sensitivity married with strength; Townes Van Zandt for his ability to dive down to the darkest depths of humanity and always maintain a sense of humour and ease. All of them for their deep commitment to and respect for music.

##### What lies at the heart of “Mama Proud”?

There was a time right before I started writing this album where I had to make some big decisions... It was the first time in my life where I was truly at a crossroads. Ultimately, I took a leap. “Mama Proud” is about dealing with the consequences and lingering unknowns. *INTERVIEW: SHARON O'CONNELL*

## TWIN SHADOW

Caer

WARNERS/REPRISE

5/10

**Soft-rock auteur treads water on familiar fourth album**



George Lewis Jr.'s delirious 2010 debut, *Forget*, was ahead of the curve with its crafty infatuation with *Purple Rain*, *Tango*

*In The Night*, "Boys Of Summer" and David Lynch soundtracks. Eight years on, though, this is a pretty exhausted soundworld. Fellow travellers Haim show up to add backing vocals to "Saturdays", but even they can't help shake the nagging feeling that this is a mid-'80s Bryan Adams cast-off. "Little Woman" is the best thing here, a nicely atmospheric melodramatic meld of Auto-Tune and orchestration, and suggests a future as a Lana Del Ray co-writer. **STEPHEN TROUSSÉ**

## VIVE LA VOID

Viva La Void SACRED BONES

7/10

**Moon Duo member spotlights her synths**



Despite having released two albums in 2017 as one half of Moon Duo, Sanae Yamada's still found time these past two

years for this impressive solo debut. Largely focused on synths, it still leans on hypnotic, motorik rhythms, if more reflectively than her band, and at times sounds like it's pairing krautrock with Desireless' evergreen "Voyage Voyage", especially on "Devil", whose restrained tension builds over eight long minutes. Respite from the cultivated monotony of tracks like the Vangelis-flavoured "Red Rider" can be found in Yamada's breathy vocals and closer "Atlantis", with its keyboard doodles and bird-like noises. **WYNDHAM WALLACE**

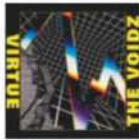
## THE VOIDZ

Virtue

CULT RECORDS/COLUMBIA

7/10

**Julian Casablancas cuts loose with his other band**



In his endearingly guileless way, Julian Casablancas recently declared his mission to "build a world where Ariel Pink is

as popular as Ed Sheeran". *Virtue* plays its part by leading Strokes fans into weirder zones, marrying Casablancas's lazy melodic gifts to mutoid synth-punk and schlocky yacht rock as The Voidz make out like the house band from *Escape From New York*, or something the Beastie Boys would have signed to Grand Royal. "Lazy Boy" is the best song he's written since "You Only Live Once"; there's also some nonsense. As with Casablancas's worldview, this 15-track album is daft, sprawling, naïve and full of contradictions – but rarely less than entertaining. **SAM RICHARDS**

## WAND

Perfume

DRAG CITY

8/10

**LA psych upstarts maintain their momentum with mini-album**



Like their friend Ty Segall, Wand are determined to fill the world with as many of their psych-pop marvels and mayhem-strewn garage nuggets as humanly possible. Not content to release four increasingly strong albums since 2014, they follow up 2017's *Plum* with another 30 minutes of top-drawer action. Their more muscular tactics come to the fore in *Perfume*'s opening seven-minute title track and "Town Meeting", which evokes The Soft Boys at their most frenetic. Yet as befits the EP's title, there are many softer aspects to the music here, too. A bucolic duet between frontman Cory Hanson and singer-keyboardist Sofia Arreguin, "I Will Keep You Up" ends this outing somewhere closer to Laurel Canyon than Spahn Ranch. **JASON ANDERSON**

## KELLY WILLIS

Back Being Blue

THIRTY TIGERS

7/10

**Alt.country heroine returns with broken heart still in place**



Kelly Willis's bittersweet twang and country fatalism made her a major-label also-ran in the early 1990s and an alt.country heroine later in the decade, and her deft navigation of the industry straits has made her a model for a generation of younger Nashville artists. Her first solo album in a decade sounds almost too breezy, too insubstantial for a comeback, but *Back Being Blue* reveals richer shades of sorrow with each spin. Especially on the title track and "Afternoon's Gone Blind", Willis conveys heartache and fortitude in equal measure, as though she's fighting a deep hurt just to get her words out. **STEPHEN DEUSNER**

## JENNY WILSON

Exorcism

GOLD MEDAL RECORDINGS

8/10



Jah Wobble: Moroccan role

**Swede channels sexual assault into a powerful #MeToo statement**



Swedish singer-songwriter and The Knife collaborator Jenny Wilson has a flair for turning personal trauma into emotionally charged music. She recorded her previous album, the award-winning *Demand The Impossible!*, during treatment for breast cancer. *Exorcism* is darker still, chronicling a real-life sexual assault and its aftermath in unflinching detail. There is no mistaking the meaning of "Rapin\*" or "Disrespect Is Universal", on which Wilson endlessly replays her ordeal in a numbed monotone over nervy, pulsing, heart-thumping electronica. On later tracks, she chronicles the fragile psychological recovery that followed. Harrowing subject matter, and yet these raw confessionals have a stark, compelling beauty that ultimately feels bravely defiant. **STEPHEN DALTON**

## JAH WOBBLE & MOMO

Maghrebi Jazz

JAH WOBBLE

7/10

**North Africa meets east London on ex-PIL bassmaster's latest global fusion project**



Prolific collaborator and PIL veteran Jah Wobble self-releases at least one album a year, sometimes more. Not everything is gold,

but Wobble's inclusive, wide-open, globalised approach usually yields fine results. And so it proves again in this special Record Store Day release, which partners the veteran bass virtuoso's regular band with Tahar Il Idrissi and Hussan Niania from the UK-based Music Of Moroccan Origin (MoMo). These five expansive tracks range across simmering Afrofunk, dubby trance, silky lounge jazz and even a kind of North African krautrock on the 11-minute epic "Jillali". Il Idrissi's cascading Arabic vocal lines serve as a silvery thread throughout, ideally suited to sunny afternoons at WOMAD. **STEPHEN DALTON**

## XOR GATE

Conic Sections TRESOR

8/10

**Brand-new pseudonym from veteran Detroit Afrofuturist**



Perhaps more than any other figure in his field, Gerald Donald has been responsible for imbuing Detroit techno with a sense

of mystique. One half of Drexciya, and the sole creative force behind projects like Dopplereffekt and Arpanet, Donald approaches dance music as a conceptual space – a place of futurism and fantasy – as much as fodder for dancefloors. His new pseudonym, XOR Gate, debuts with a 30-minute piece that covers impressive ground: from Kraftwerkian techno-pop to pale synth ambience to twinkling systems music, it's a brisk shift through styles, but all the better for it. **LOUIS PATTISON**

## NEIL YOUNG + PROMISE OF THE REAL

Paradox (Original Music From The Film) WARNERS

6/10

**Patchy, scratchy soundtrack for Young's Netflix film**



Young's latest project is an eco-sci-fi-western that casts the musician and Promise Of The Real as cowboys

prosppecting out in the wilderness. At its best, Young's bleakly poetic solo score recalls his work on Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*. But such pieces are interrupted by other music – some old, some new. Highlights include an instrumental jam from "Cowgirl In The Sand" at the 2016 Desert Trip festival and a handful of instrumentals like "Running To The Silver Eagle", driven by some ferocious interplay between Old Black and a harmonica, and "Hey", which sounds like a distant cousin to "Love And Only Love". Some, like "Offerings", are little more than light sketches. You'll also find Willie Nelson, Jimmy Reed and Lead Belly covers. The ramshackle, campfire vibe is endearing, but this is neither a fully immersive experience like *Dead Man* or a third LP with POTR. **MICHAEL BONNER**



The Voidz: Julian Casablancas (second right)



REISSUES | COMPS | BOXSETS | LOST RECORDINGS

# LIZ PHAIR

## Girly-Sound To Guyville: The 25th Anniversary Box Set

MATADOR

Excavating the tapes behind Phair's era-defining debut.  
*By Stephen Deusner*

**I**N 1993 Liz Phair seemed to come out of nowhere to upend indie rock. She had a deal with Matador Records, which was then home to Pavement and Superchunk, and she had a debut, *Exile In Guyville*, which was a hit before it was even released. The album was audacious in every way: musically, lyrically, emotionally, sexually, even visually. She appeared nearly topless on the cover, her left nipple half-cropped out of the frame, but she revealed even more of herself in songs like "Fuck And Run" and "Divorce Song", her unrestrained confessionism recalling Fleetwood Mac and her careerism at odds with a generation still highly sceptical of success. Billed as a song-for-song response to *The Rolling Stones'* 1972 double epic *Exile On Main Street*, *Guyville* bristled and bared its teeth, daring you to dismiss it or its creator.

Such a meteoric rise from nobody to Gen X mouthpiece churned up a backlash that made her "the most hated woman in Chicago", as her friend and drummer Brad Wood told the *Chicago Tribune* in 1994. But Phair was no overnight success. She'd been defining and refining her music for years, although she took a



circuitous route to notoriety that bypassed all the ways her peers had paid their dues. What's remarkable about this new boxset is its emphasis on the build-up to her debut rather than its aftermath, portraying her as a very deliberate artist striving to raise her voice in a scene that often drowned out women.

Initially, Phair's ambitions were hardly musical. In college she studied visual art and interned with feminist artist Nancy Spero and painter Ed Paschke, and those experiences would eventually inform her recordings as much as any musical influence would. Returning home to suburban Chicago after an inauspicious year in San Francisco, Phair taught herself to play guitar, devising her own tunings and techniques she describes as painterly. Holed up in

her bedroom at her parents' house, Phair wrote songs the way others might keep a diary, setting her most intimate thoughts to rough guitar chords. That privacy allowed her a greater sense of candour than she would have mustered if she'd been fronting a band or performing at open-mic nights.

She recorded some of these early compositions on a four-track and made cassettes for a few friends. She christened the tapes *Girly Sound*, which





wasn't so much a band name or musical identity – more like a sardonic jab at genre labels in what she recognised as a male-dominated field. That initial collection was never intended for commercial release, but the feedback was so encouraging that she made two more *Girly Sound* collections to circulate well beyond her circle of friends.

Many of the songs on *Guyville* and later studio albums started out in primitive – but not tentative – form on these cassettes, which made them something like a holy grail for Phair's fans. Until now, however, they've been more legend than reality. A few of the recordings ended up on the "Juvenilia" EP in 1995, and a few more were appended to the 15th-anniversary edition of *Guyville* in 2008. Another handful were included on a bonus disc with her otherwise forgotten 2010 album *Funstyle*. Mostly the tapes were distributed as bootlegs, although the format changed with the technology: first as cassette, then on burned CDs, then as MP3s.

The *Girly* tapes have the documentary quality of old field recordings – unpolished, unproduced, unpretentious. It's just Phair alone with her thoughts and her guitar, and on most of the tracks, particularly those recorded in her bedroom but even a few later studio cuts, the hum of the room is audible, as though she's captured her own solitude on magnetic tape. Her songwriting is irreverent and sometimes caustic, hilarious and occasionally sombre, horny and angry and dramatic and even melodramatic. "Free love," Phair sings on "Hello Sailor," "is a whole lot of bullshit." Neither love nor art is free in these songs or in the world they depict. Everything is transactional. Someone always pays.

"It's nice to be liked, but it's better by far to get paid," she sings on "Money." "I know that most of the friends that I have don't really see it that way." She retitled the song "Shitloads Of Money" when she recorded it for 1998's *Whitechocolatespaceegg*, but it sounds steelier, far more transgressive in this lo-fi version. There's a sharp crackle in her voice, a withering brush-off to the keep-it-real crowd. Less effective is "Wild-Thing", a sour diss of a materialistic woman that's most notable for the way



Phair rewrites the Troggs' radio staple of the same title. That's one of so many rock and soul references embedded in her songs. "Slave" commandeers the chorus of The Jesus & Mary Chain's "Head On" and melds it to an old jump-rope rhyme. "Easy Target" includes snippets of both Betty Everett's 1964 hit "Shoop Shoop (It's In His Kiss)" and The Contours' 1962 smash "Do You Love Me?". Phair slyly alters them as a plea to a lover to shut up: "So the next time we make love, drop the words, just do the stuff/Speak softly and use that big stick."

Almost from the beginning she is interrogating rock history, using it the ways hip-hop MCs sampled old breakbeats. She would expand that approach on *Exile In Guyville*, appropriating not just a song but a full double album by the Stones – who were equally schooled in appropriating older tunes. Her official debut might have its conceptual roots in the work of Spero and Paschke and other contemporary artists, as it shows Phair thinking about what the album can be as an art object – not just how it sounds, but what it does. *Guyville* is a kind of sculpture or perhaps

an avant-garde installation, a work that lays bare the place of women in rock'n'roll by using the language of that form. Songs like "Fuck And Run" and "Flower" (with its notorious promise to "be your blowjob queen") cast men with big sticks as the objects of her rock'n'roll lust. Perhaps that's why *Guyville* sounds so rich and even exciting 25 years after its release and 10 years after its last reissue. It doesn't just align itself with the #MeToo movement or against the sexual predator America elected to its highest office. More crucially, it offers a possible strategy by which women might combat such inequity through art and music.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of this reissue of *Guyville* is the fact that it's not really a reissue of *Guyville*. By gathering all these early recordings into one place for the first time, *Girly-Sound To Guyville* is something much more revealing than an anniversary commemoration. It's a document of an artist finding and raising her voice: a souvenir from an era that questions long-held assumptions about the sex and the business of rock'n'roll.

HOW TO BUY...

# { THE SOUND OF GIRLY }

Three gems from Phair's early cassettes

**"Open Season"**

This harrowing song from her third *Girly-Sound* cassette has stuck with Phair over the years. "It's really tough subject matter," she says. "It's about the exploitation of female sexuality in pop culture. It's about someone getting raped on camera for a TV programme, and we're letting it into our homes as if it's just entertainment."



**"Flower"**

With its nursery-rhyme melody, overlapping vocals and ejaculations of industrial noise, Phair's most experimental tune was one of the most notorious tracks on *Guyville*. In its original incarnation, it was slower and more austere, with Phair playing a relentless one-note guitar theme as she lists all the things she wants to do to a particular guy.

**"Suckerfish" (aka "Go Speed Racer")**

Phair frequently incorporated the lyrics and melodies of other songs into her own compositions. On "Suckerfish" she deploys the theme song to the popular Japanese cartoon *Speed Racer* to block a dude's sexual propositions: "The very first car in a race around the world has got to wipe out somewhere," she sings in a devastating deadpan. "That somewhere isn't me."



SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 6'1"
- 2 Help Me, Mary
- 3 Glory
- 4 Dance Of The Seven Veils
- 5 Never Said
- 6 Soap Star Joe
- 7 Explain It To Me
- 8 Canary
- 9 Mesmerizing
- 10 Fuck And Run
- 11 Girls! Girls! Girls!
- 12 Divorce Song
- 13 Shatter
- 14 Flower
- 15 Johnny Sunshine
- 16 Gunshy
- 17 Stratford-On-Guy
- 18 Strange Loop

**Yo Yo Buddy Yup  
Yup Word To Ya  
Mutha (Girly-Sound Cassette 1)**

- 1 White Babies
- 2 Shane
- 3 6 Dick Pimp
- 4 Divorce Song
- 5 Go West
- 6 Don't Holdyrbreath
- 7 Johnny Sunshine
- 8 Miss Lucy
- 9 Elvis Shark
- 10 Dead Shark
- 11 One Less Thing
- 12 Money
- 13 In Love W/Yself

**Girls! Girls! Girls! (Girly-Sound Cassette 2)**

- 1 Hello Sailor
- 2 Wild-Thing
- 3 Fuck And Run
- 4 Easy Target
- 5 Soap Star Joe
- 6 Ant In Alaska
- 7 GIRLSGIRLSGIRLS
- 8 Polyester Bride
- 9 Thrax
- 10 Miss Mary Mack
- 11 Clean
- 12 Love Song
- 13 Valentine

**Sooty (Girly-Sound Cassette 3)**

- 1 Gigolo
- 2 Flower
- 3 Batmobile
- 4 Slave
- 5 Open Season
- 6 Suckerfish
- 7 California
- 8 South Dakota
- 9 Bomb
- 10 Easy
- 11 Chopsticks





Q&amp;A

## Liz Phair "I absolutely had every right to take a swing"

### What does it mean to you to be back on *Matador* for this reissue?

It means a lot, actually, because that's where it all started. It's hard with something that's 25 years old. A lot of people have very strong opinions about the album, so it's reassuring to work with people who will treat it very carefully. They won't tarnish the legacy, but they won't be too precious either. They understand the context, so we can be playful with it.

I could trust them and the decisions they made, and they could trust me. As you'll see in the oral history [included in the liner notes], everyone has a different opinion about it and what went down. And we encourage that in a weird way, because no one side of that story is the right one. To me it just brings everything from the past into greater focus to give you a sense of the Chicago scene as one big, bickering, dysfunctional family.

### That seems to be the subject of the album as well – these disagreements and different perspectives within this particular scene.

That was the impetus behind me wanting to use another record as a template. I wanted to take the definitive rock'n'roll album, and *Exile On Main Street* certainly set the bar high. It's a band at the height of their powers. To take that on was audacious to begin with, but it also says: 'Hey, Rolling Stones, the girl in your song could be me.' I wanted to respond to that, to show what it's like to be around rock stars. The guys in the Chicago scene, and specifically

Liz Phair and Beck at McCabe's Guitar Store, Santa Monica, December 8, 1993

in Wicker Park, weren't necessarily rock stars, but it applies to any scene. There are the cool kids and then there are the people who want to be them or hate their guts.

### What was that scene like in the early 1990s?

It was really just a bunch of bands together on the west side of Chicago taking advantage of cheap rent and large spaces where they could rehearse in a pre-gentrified neighbourhood. It was a community that was all about: who played last night? Where did they play? Are they going to get a record deal? Those were our daily concerns. Everybody knew everybody, and it was very raucous and rowdy to me. But it was also very innocent and naïve in a way, because success hadn't really come to anybody yet.

### You were one of the first people in that scene to have a lot of success. Did that create any backlash against you?

It did. I had come into an already formed scene. Smashing Pumpkins were already big. Material Issue and Urge Overkill already had followings. It was very quick, me entering that scene and then having success. I think it rubbed people the wrong way who had been paying their dues and

waiting for that kind of attention. But when I was making *Exile* I was pissy and tired of being the girlfriend of the guy in the band. I was tired of being told my musical tastes were subpar. A lot of things were really chapping my ass, and I absolutely had every right to take a swing.

### You make a point in the liner notes that you based your guitar playing on visual art.

That was my background, and it's still a major part of my life. When I look at a fretboard, I'm not thinking in terms of key or note; I'm just making shapes in my mind. If I've been working at the low end of the frets, I'll switch things out and move up to the top. What if I put this finger here? Can I move my pinky somewhere to find an extra note? I'm very aware of that visual aspect of guitar-playing, and I think the imagery in my lyrics is very visual. I'm dropping you into a small moment in my life and making it important, but really it's just a moment – an interaction between two people that becomes monumental after a couple or seven verses.

### According to the liner notes, you weren't thinking about releasing these early songs commercially. Did that free you up in terms of what you wrote about?

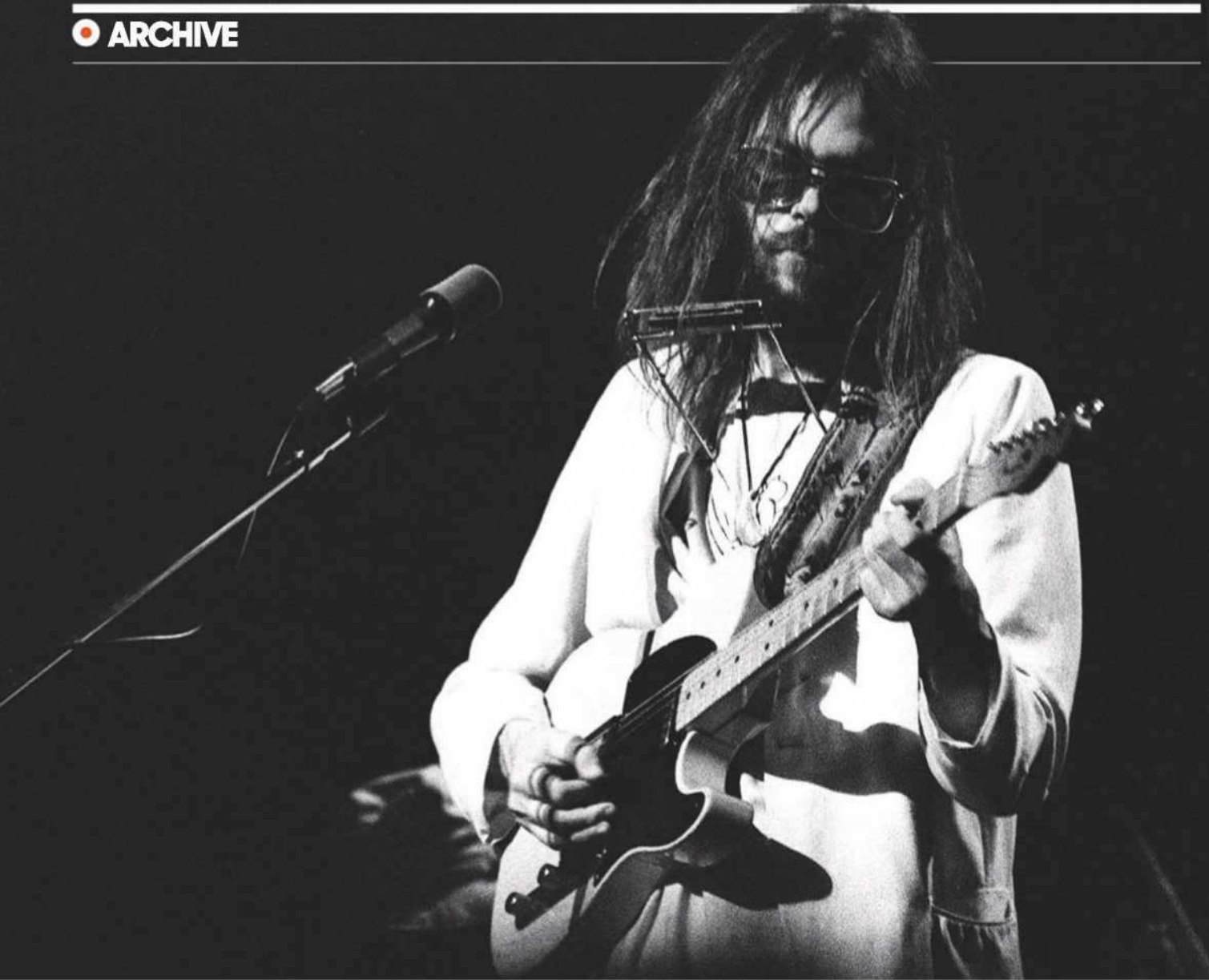
Absolutely. I was so stream-of-conscious about it. I would come home at night after a couple of beers and just sit around in my room, fucking around and making stuff up. Some of the songs I got really into, like "Open Season". That stuff wasn't really written about very much. It went from hair bands and male-dominated arena rock in the '80s to grunge bands and male-dominated indie rock in the '90s. Women got passed over... just like in the election.

### And it's interesting to hear this album in 2018 for that very reason. Do you think indie rock has changed much since *Exile In Guyville*?

It's distressingly similar, but what really makes me optimistic is how many young women are getting into music. I'm excited that they feel like they can do it and just start writing songs and releasing them. So it's far, far better in terms of how many young women are out there playing shows. In that regard, it's enormously different. But is it easy for them? Do they have a free ride? Hardly. Nobody does. But these women are complaining about the same things I was complaining about. Culture hasn't moved as far as we would have thought.

INTERVIEW: STEPHEN DEUSNER

**"I was tired of being told my musical tastes were subpar. A lot of things were really chapping my ass..."**



# NEIL YOUNG

## Roxy – Tonight’s The Night Live

REPRISE

10/10

Painstakingly ramshackle reconstruction of a then-unheard classic. *By Allan Jones*

“WELCOMЕ to Miami Beach,” Neil Young told a Los Angeles audience on the September 1973 opening night of an eight-show stand at the swanky new Roxy, on Sunset Strip. The go-go dancers had just done their gyrating thing. He was standing in front of a stage set featuring a withered palm tree, a wooden Indian, fake moon, a piano festooned with boots, here to premiere *Tonight’s The Night*, an album his record company had recently refused to release.

He was supposed to be recording a new CSNY album that summer, but the interminable squabbling during sessions in August made him wonder what he was

doing with those fucking buffoons. On his way to a band meeting, it occurred to him there was music he needed more urgently to make that addressed recent trauma, specifically the death from a drugs overdose of Crazy Horse guitarist Danny Whitten, for which he felt a dreadful responsibility. So *Tonight’s The Night*, the album he made instead, became a blasted requiem for Whitten, CSNY roadie Bill Berry, another recent drug casualty, and the many like them.

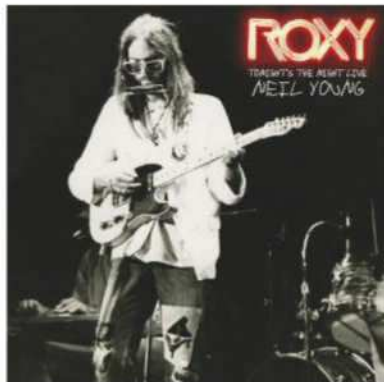
When Reprise heard it, they were aghast. Where was Linda Ronstadt, Willie Nash? Where were the beloved winsome melodies? What they’d wanted, of course,

was a follow-up to the homespun virtues of *Harvest*. What they were listening to was a bunch of tuneless dirges about drugs and people dying from them, apparently played by a group of stoned drunks, which was actually the case. They refused to put it out, but they

couldn’t stop Neil taking the show on the road. And so here we are at the Roxy on September 20, 1973, Neil on stage welcoming the audience to Miami and offering a silver boot to the first woman to walk topless across the stage (the boot going to his then-girlfriend, actress Carrie Snodgrass).

What followed was most of *Tonight’s The Night*, played slightly out of sequence, plus a ghoulish snatch of “Roll Out The Barrel”, linked by Young’s deadpan asides to the audience, mostly lame one-liners that barely deserve track titles.

The original studio album had been recorded live on a sound stage in a grubby LA rehearsal space at Studio Instrument Rentals. Producer David Briggs taped everything, as it happened, no second takes or overdubs, just the ugly sound of anger and grief, a howling bereavement. A lot of bands at the time were taking such full advantage of developing recording techniques that they struggled to replicate on stage the complexities cooked up in the studio. Young and the band he’d christened The Santa Monica Flyers had something of an opposite problem – how to sound as slovenly, dank, malodorous and blearily off-the-cuff as they had at SIR, where they sounded as if they were



HOWARD BARLOW/REDFERNS

# AtoZ

## BARK PSYCHOSIS

///Codename: Dustsucker (reissue, 2004) FIRE

8/10

*Neglected, belated follow-up to genre-defining debut*



When Graham Sutton swapped Bark Psychosis for Boymerang's drum'n' bass in 1994, he wasn't to know that purveyors of post-rock were about to flourish. It

took him a decade to revive the band – now ostensibly a solo project, though samples of former drummer Mark Simnett were employed alongside further assistance from Talk Talk's Lee Harris – but the muted reception afforded ///Codename: Dustsucker suggested he'd missed his own boat. The musical universe in which they operated nonetheless remained distinctly theirs, its melancholy nebulous, its grace uplifting, not least on the subdued, liminal "From What Is Said To When It's Read". Furthermore, Sutton, whose own vocals tended towards a mumbled whisper, at points handed the mic to contributors Anja Buechele and pianist and flautist Rachel Dreyer, lending "400 Winters" a welcome feminine refinement and emphasising the contrast between "Shapeshifting"'s meek opening, noisy midsection and percussive finale. Admittedly, Sutton pursued the jazzier aspects of the lush, cymbal-heavy *Hex*, but this was to the benefit of the brittle hush of "Burning The City", while TJ Mackenzie's trumpet shines on an ornate "The Black Meat". **Extras:** None, though the double-album is a gatefold. WYNDHAM WALLACE

## COCKNEY REBEL The Human Menagerie/The Psychomodo (reissues, 1973, '74)

CHRYSALIS

8/10 / 8/10

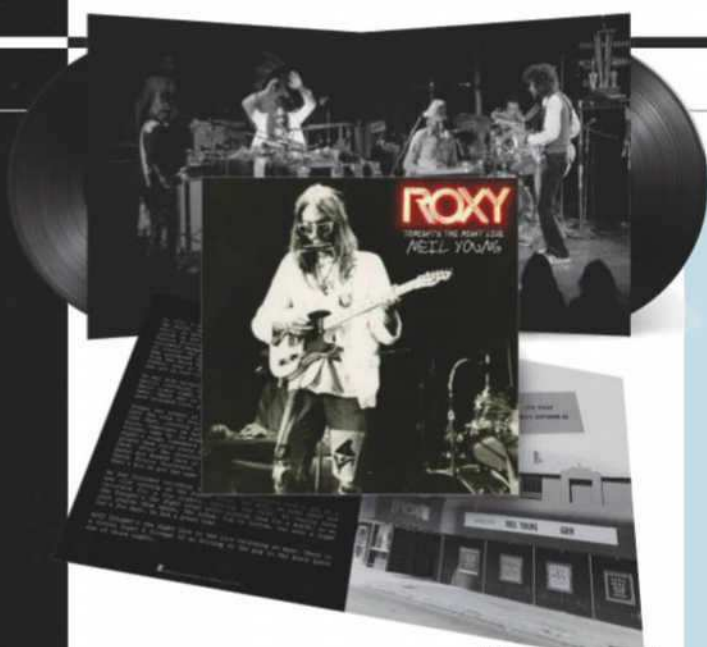
*Killer opening one-two from Harley and co*



Cockney Rebel's pastel-shaded silk suits looked gratuitously effete, even in the wake of Bolan and Bowie's gender-fluid successes. That Steve Harley

was also a chippy autodidact with ideas above his station did not help the "Cocky Rabbie" in their quixotic quest to be taken seriously, but their first two LPs – now returning to the wild on vinyl – were justly seen as car-boot classics until demand out-stripped supply. 1973's *The Human Menagerie* is a flyweight Anglicisation of Lou Reed's *Transformer*, with a killer closer, "Death Trip", that sounds like Mantovani's take on prog, while the Weimar darkness of *The Psychomodo* transcends an unfortunate use of the N-word on "Cavaliers", with "Bed In The Corner", "Sling It" and "Tumbling Down" one of the great album-closing salvos of its age. (Vain)glorious.

**Extras:** 6/10. Both LPs remastered for vinyl, but CD buyers could purchase a copy of 2012's *Cavaliers* box, which includes *The Human Menagerie* and *The Psychomodo*, plus non-LP singles "Sebastian" and "Judy Teen", radio sessions, demos and a live set. JIM WIRTH



duplicates of the SIR performances, as if the band had rehearsed the original imperfections, a typical Neil mind-fuck, when you think about it. Even the apparently discursive piano and guitar solos on the swampy "Speakin' Out" on closer comparison are nearly identical to the album arrangement – down to Neil's ad-libbed original shout-out to Nils. The key to it all for Neil was to stay in character, fully inhabiting the brute loneliness of "Albuquerque", the dishevelled self-disgust of "Roll Another Number", a highlight here, along with a scarily spaced-out "Tired Eyes", the two-part death-rattle squawk of the title track, and a rousing early version of the then-unrecorded "Walk On". Forsaken piano ballad "Borrowed Tune" and two late *Tonight's The Night* additions, "Lookout Joe" and "Come On Baby Let's Go Downtown", were the only album cuts missing from the set.

As the tour rolled on, audiences in America and Europe were confounded by the band's ramshackle racket – no-one had heard the original album, which wasn't released until June 1975. To make matters worse, Young was nightly drunk on stage and worryingly started playing parts of the set wearing a Richard Nixon mask.

He seemed to be becoming the thing he was writing about. The feeling generally was that pretty soon he wouldn't just be singing about drug casualties like Whitten and Berry, he'd be one of them. His father, Scott, later recalled hearing that Neil had died of an overdose in Paris. He called his son. "Are you dead?" he asked. "Not that I know of," Neil replied. What times.

### SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Intro
- 2 Tonight's The Night
- 3 Roll Out The Barrel
- 4 Mellow My Mind
- 5 World On A String
- 6 Band intro
- 7 Speakin' Out
- 8 Candy Bar Rap
- 9 Albuquerque
- 10 Perry Como Rap
- 11 New Mama
- 12 David Geffen Rap
- 13 Roll Another Number (For The Road)
- 14 Candy Bar 2 Rap
- 15 Tired Eyes
- 16 Tonight's The Night Part II
- 17 Walk On
- 18 Outro

**Produced by:** David Briggs  
**Recorded live at:** The Roxy, Los Angeles  
**Personnel:** Neil Young (guitars, vocals, harmonica), Billy Talbot (bass), Ralph Molina (drums), Ben Keith (pedal steel), Nils Lofgren (guitars, piano)

Ditch black: Young and the Santa Monica Flyers play tracks from *Tonight's The Night at the Palace Theatre, Manchester, November 3, 1973*

playing live to a room full of ghosts. It turned out not to be much of a problem.

Young had come a long way from the perfectionist psychedelic technician of "Expecting To Fly" and "Broken Arrow" and had reached a point in his career where one note was as good as any other, however fucked up it sounded. In every respect, the performance captured here is as raw and un-redacted as the original record.

Unusually for a Young live album, the songs here don't take on an extended afterlife. There are no *Live Rust* or *Arc/Weld* blowouts, the kind of guitar marathons that leave you feeling like a flogged husky. Even Lofgren's showier instincts are reined in. The versions here are in fact eerily exact

**It's as if they had rehearsed the original imperfections – a typical Neil mind-fuck when you think about it**

# WIRE

## Pink Flag/Chairs Missing/154 (reissues, 1977, '78, '79)

PINK FLAG

9/10 | 9/10 | 9/10

The first three albums remastered. *By Louis Pattison*



WIRE'S first three LPs chart an evolution that appears so accelerated, you typically only see its like displayed by rogue AI in sci-fi potboilers. In the space of three short years, the London quartet learned how to play their instruments, released one of the great major-label punk records, perfected the art of the obtuse pop song, and then left the orbit of rock'n'roll entirely. Wire's tone could be lofty – arrogant, even. But their early music is also hugely generous, packed with unusual melodies, smart studio tricks, unusual concepts; a Wire song might be about swimming, or insects, or air travel, or something altogether more enigmatic and obscure.

This new raft of reissues collecting remastered versions of Wire's first three LPs come in two flavours – as a run of single-disc editions that faithfully replicate the design scheme of the original release, and in expanded editions that add a host of extras. 1977's *Pink Flag* is expanded to two CDs, while 1978's *Chairs Missing* and 1979's *154* grow to three discs apiece. Each is accompanied by an 80-page hardback book the size of a 7in single, which is filled with interviews and sleeve notes from Jon Savage and Graham Duff and excellent, mostly newly uncovered photos from official band photographer Annette Green.

Freshly remastered, the albums themselves still thrill. *Pink Flag*, oikish punk rock with a pack of Brian Eno's *Oblique Strategies* cards in its back

pocket. *Chairs Missing*, a hallucinatory blend of post-punk melody and art-school surrealism. And finally, *154*: sophisticated, enigmatic, extremely European. Arguably, the least essential of these expanded editions is *Pink Flag*, if only because its additional content diverges least from that which made it to the final LP. The lion's share of the bonus tracks are yielded from six demos that the group recorded for EMI, and while it's interesting to hear work-in-progress takes on "Reuters" and "Ex Lion Tamer", the elements – Colin Newman's insouciant hooligan drawl, grinding electric guitars, Robert Grey's drums beating like an angry metronome – remain broadly the same.

*Chairs Missing* is where things get interesting. This was Wire's flowering as a studio group, marking their first real experimentation with sequencers and synths. In Graham Duff's informative sleeve notes, he quotes Newman talking about "the dream sequence", band parlance for the moments where a song got suddenly, psychedelically, strange – a tactic he points to in "Sand In My Joints", the vocal debut of bassist Graham Lewis. A very substantial 32 bonus tracks explore the album's fastidious groundwork. It's fascinating to see some of the finished LP's more outré, synthesised pieces delivered as *Pink Flag*-style thrashes. There are also a handful of demos that remained tantalisingly undeveloped – angular new-wave charges like "Culture Vultures" and "It's The Motive" prove Wire were discarding the sort of material other bands would hold close. Mind you, nothing was entirely forgotten. Another demo here, "Underwater Experiences", finally found finished form on 2013's *Change Becomes Us*.

Come *154*, Wire had exchanged their punky pop-art concision for something more open-ended and conceptual, with multiple – and often competing – voices in play. The demo material proves just how profoundly they – aided by producer Mike Thorne – would reshape songs in the studio. "The Other Window" began life as a familiar punky thrash, Newman relating an existentially gloomy tale of a foreign train journey ("The seat was hard/The carriage fetid..."). By the time it made it to *154* itself, though, it had become a haunting soundscape with a sombre spoken-word vocal by Bruce Gilbert and drums looped in from another album track, "Single KO". It wasn't all about queering the pitch, though: the demos of "A Mutual Display" and "Map Ref. 41°N 93°W" – a dazzling airborne travelogue that became the album's first single – show how Wire had become adept at using the studio to transform already finely wrought songs.

Additional here are a handful of tracks released around and just after *154*, when they had been released from their EMI deal. "A Question Of Degree" and "Our Swimmer" are poppier than almost anything on *154*, showing off the band's interest in forward propulsion. The abrasive, noise-strafed "Former Airline" gives a glimpse of the difficult territory Wire would venture into in the '80s, while "Go Ahead" turns an arch sarcasm to the music industry that had tried – and failed – to market a band as innovative and unusual as Wire. Even today, 40 years after these records were released, they still have the capacity to bewilder. But if listening to Wire can sometimes make you feel like you're struggling to keep pace, it's still a thrill to follow in their slipstream.

### SLEEVE NOTES

#### PINK FLAG

##### Vinyl/CD disc 1

As original album

##### CD disc 2 (demo sessions)

- 1 The Commercial
- 2 Mr Suit
- 3 Pink Flag
- 4 Surgeon's Girl
- 5 Field Day For The Sundays
- 6 106 Beats That
- 7 Fragile
- 8 Reuters
- 9 Different To Me
- 10 Ex Lion Tamer
- 11 Mannequin
- 12 Champs
- 13 Start To Move
- 14 Three Girl Rhumba (Alt)
- 15 Ex Lion Tamer (Alt Mix)
- 16 12XU (Mono Mix)

##### 17 Mannequin (Mono Mix)

##### 18 It's So Obvious (Alt Mix)

#### CHAIRS MISSING

##### Vinyl/CD disc 1

original album

##### CD Disc 2

- 1 I Am The Fly (single)
- 2 Dot Dash
- 3 Options R
- 4 Outdoor Miner (single)
- 5 Practice Makes Perfect (single)
- 6 Underwater Experiences (Advison version)
- CD Disc 3 (studio demos)
- 1 Practice Makes Perfect
- 2 Oh No Not So
- 3 Culture Vultures
- 4 It's The Motive

##### 5 Love Ain't Polite

##### 6 French Film Blurred (v1)

##### 7 Sand In My Joints

##### 8 Too Late

##### 9 I Am The Fly

##### 10 Heartbeat

##### 11 Underwater Experiences

##### 12 Stalemate

##### 13 I Feel Mysterious Today

##### 14 Dot Dash

##### 15 French Film Blurred (v2)

##### 16 Options R

##### 17 Finistaire (Mercy)

##### 18 Marooned

##### 19 From The Nursery

##### 20 Indirect Enquiries (v1)

##### 21 Outdoor Miner

##### 22 Chairs Missing (Used To)

##### 23 Being Sucked In Again

##### 24 Men 2nd

##### 25 Another The Letter

##### 26 No Romans

#### 154

##### Vinyl/CD disc 1

original album

##### CD Disc 2

- 1 A Question Of Degree (single)
- 2 Former Airline (single)
- 3 Go Ahead (single)
- 4 Our Swimmer (single)
- 5 Midnight Bahnhof Cafe (single)
- 6 Our Swimmer [2nd Length] (single)
- 7 Catapult 30 (single)
- 8 Song 1 (154 EP)
- 9 Get Down 1 + 2 (154 EP)
- 10 Let's Panic Later (154 EP)
- 11 Small Electric Piece (154 EP)

##### CD Disc 3 (demo sessions)

- 1 40 Versions
- 2 Ignorance No Plea (I Should Have Known Better)
- 3 Blessed State
- 4 A Touching Display
- 5 The 15th
- 6 A Mutual Friend
- 7 Once Is Enough
- 8 The Other Window
- 9 Stepping Off Too Quick
- 10 Indirect Enquiries v2
- 11 Map Ref 41°N 93°W
- 12 Single K.O.
- 13 On Returning
- 14 A Question Of Degree
- 15 Former Airline
- 16 Two People In A Room

**ENTOURAGE**  
**Ceremony Of Dreams:  
 Studio Sessions & Outtakes,  
 1972-1977**

TOMPkins SQUARE

8/10

*Dance-troupe-friendly US  
 ambient chasers, compiled*



Happily obscure is probably the phrase for Entourage, whose two albums for Folkways have since their 1970s

release become a crate-digger's grail (their "Neptune Rising", included here, was sampled by Four Tet for the lovely "She Moves She" in 2003). In their lifetime they enjoyed an even more selective audience, working chiefly in collaborations with dancers. Not that this seems likely to have troubled them much. A band whose work aimed to make, according to the five-piece's sole surviving member, Wall Matthews, "cliché-free" travels between folk, classical and jazz idioms, theirs was a career spent being commissioned by the Danish National Ballet and exploring with music the dream state between consciousness and unconsciousness. As evinced by the three discs here (the two albums released in their lifetime, a third that went unreleased and accompanying demos from Matthews' archive), that was a very chill way to spend time. Some material might have made a bit more sense in its original theatre context, but a good hour-and-a-half passes here in a bucolic ambience, part Popul Vuh, part George Winston, part nature film of swooping eagles.

**Extras:** None.

JOHN ROBINSON

**JOHN FOXX**  
**Metamatic: Deluxe Edition**

METAMATIC

8/10

*Never mind the Ballards, as  
 synthpop classic expands  
 across three discs*



Entourage:  
 leading crate-  
 diggers a  
 merry dance



A landmark in British analogue electro-pop, John Foxx's first solo album after quitting Ultravox successfully

caught the dystopian post-punk mood in 1980. Packed with strident sci-fi mini-movies like "Underpass" and "No-One Driving", it became a Top 20 hit, serving as a kind of musical bridge between Bowie's chilly new-wave Eurocentrism and the embryonic New Romantic movement. With its pitch-bending ARP Odyssey monophonic synths and Ballardian visions of future-shock urban alienation, much of *Metamatic* sounds stilted and overwrought today, but it remains a seminal design classic. Easily parodied but never bettered.

**Extras:** 8/10. *Metamatic* has been reissued multiple times, most recently as a 2014 remaster that serves as the basis for this lavishly packaged triple-album set. The bonus tracks on the second disc find Foxx anticipating a decade of electronic Britpop, from Human League to Sigüe Sigüe Sputnik. But for die-hard fans, the third disc yields the most treasure. It chiefly features archive instrumental pieces recently unearthed from the *Metamatic* sessions, some of them reassembled and tweaked into shape. From the lyrical Kraftwerkian retro-futurism of "Fragmentary City" and "A Man Alone" to the sinister *Blade Runner*-ish gleamscape of "Critical Mass", this is high-calibre material, adding a significant new dimension to its parent album. **STEPHEN DALTON**

**GOMEZ**  
**Bring It On: 20th  
 Anniversary Reissue**

UMC

7/10

*Four-disc celebration of Britpop's  
 out-of-kilter comedown album*



A winner of the Mercury Music Prize in 1998 (joining Speech Debelle and Antony as useful answers on *Pointless*), *Bring It On* sounded utterly out of time on its release. As the country was still getting wasted to English-accented Britpop and big beat, these five 22-year-olds from Southport seemed to have been beamed in from a virtual *Old Grey Whistle Test* episode from 1972, playing rootsy, muso-friendly Americana on dobros and woody slide guitars. The band's most distinctive singer, Ben Ottewill, remains an acquired taste: his dry heave of a voice pitched somewhere between Eddie Vedder and Captain Beefheart. But *Bring It On* features some undeniably excellent songs – be it the jaunty, McCartney-meets-Beck electronica of "Whippin' Piccadilly", the White Album-ish "78 Stone Wobble" or the slow-burning Pink Floyd vibe that characterises the back end of the album.

**Extras:** 7/10. Extra discs include early demos, a rootsy Glastonbury set (featuring a version of The Doors' "Soul Kitchen"), riff-based B-sides (some, like the Pentangle-ish "Wham Bam"

or the bossa-tinged "Flavors", as good as anything on the album) and an interesting Radio 1 session where they steam through Smokey Robinson's "The Way You Do The Things You Do" and "Stag O Lee". **JOHN LEWIS**

**ROBERT  
 GÖRL**  
**The Paris Tapes**

GRÖNLAND

6/10

*Synths in exile: lost demos from  
 German post-punk pioneer*



As one half of DAF, Robert Görl was among a Neue Deutsche Welle of German post-punk musicians

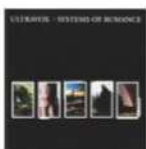
dispensing with rock'n'roll tradition and embracing the possibilities of the synthesiser and sequencer. After a brace of albums that refined their pneumatic proto-techno sound, they split, and Görl moved to New York to study acting, commencing a period of accidental exile. Turned away by immigration control, on return to Germany he was detained for dodging mandatory military service some years earlier, and before being charged decided to flee to Paris, new ESQ-1 synthesiser tucked under his arm. The next year was spent lying low in a Parisian boarding house, in which time he worked on the music collected here, for the first time, as *The Paris Tapes*. There are echoes of DAF here – the steely modernism, the crisp, almost martial rhythms. But these nine numbered instrumentals lack the duo's libidinous playfulness, instead aiming for notes of nocturnal introspection and plaintive melancholy. The story continues: after his exile, Görl intended to use these tracks as the basis of a new solo album, before a near-fatal car accident consigned him to a hospital bed. The story is a good one, but *The Paris Tapes* remains a curio, diverting but not quite essential.

**Extras:** None.

LOUIS PATTISON

HOW TO BUY...

{ JOHN FOXX }  
 The electro-futurist outsider



**ULTRAVOX**  
**Systems of  
 Romance**

ISLAND, 1978

Torn between the post-glam New

Wave signifiers of the first two Ultravox albums and his cinematic electro-futurist vision, Foxx called time on the band's original lineup with this transitional collection, co-produced by Conny Plank. With synths and drum machines prominent in the mix, "Slow Motion" and "Dislocation" anticipate the Ballardian psy-fi alienation that Foxx would perfect on later solo releases. **8/10**



**JOHN FOXX**  
**The Golden  
 Section**

VIRGIN, 1983

This glossy stab at mainstream

commercialism is nevertheless a fascinating example of an art-rock outsider being groomed for major-label synth-pop stardom. Drawing on his love of vintage psych, church music and old-school crooners, Foxx reveals a manicured tremolo warble to rival Bryan Ferry on lustrous Europop anthems like "Endlessly" and "Like a Miracle". Dated and stilted in places, sure, but still a Top 30 guilty pleasure. **8/10**

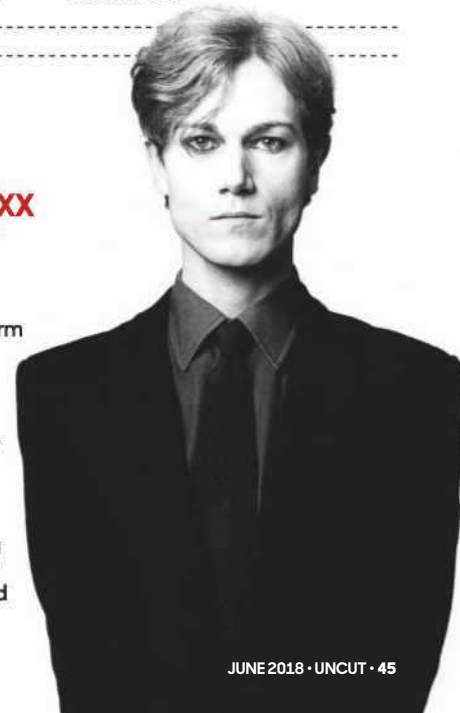


**JOHN FOXX  
 AND THE  
 MATHS**  
**Interplay**

METAMATIC, 2011

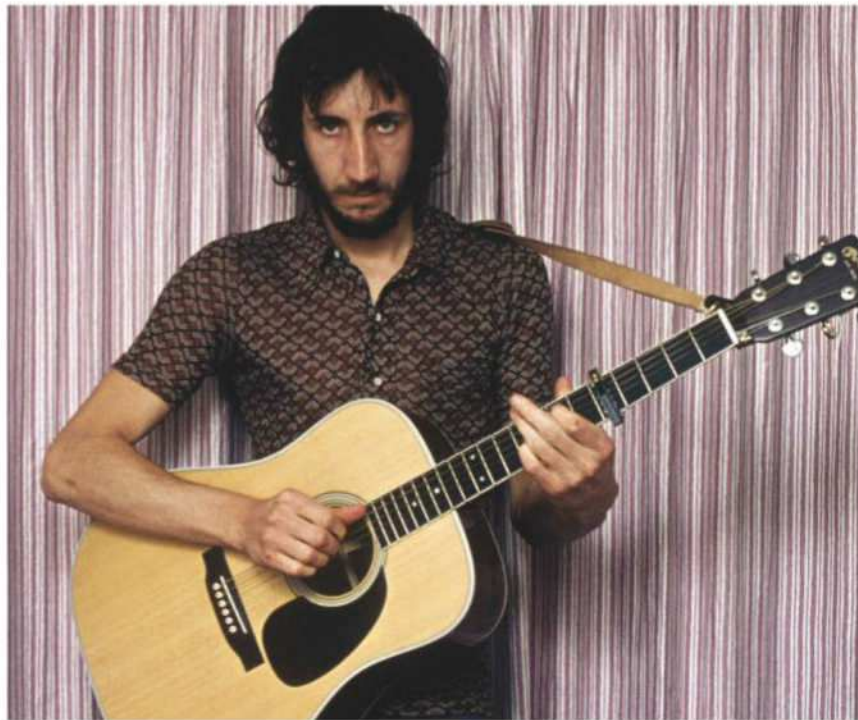
A return to form

after extended sabbaticals and low-key projects, Foxx found the perfect studio foil in Ben "Benge" Edwards, an analogue keyboard collector/producer. Streamlining the future-shock aesthetic of his classic post-punk LPs, *Interplay* finds Foxx surveying vivid new vistas in a gleaming electropop universe he helped design. **8/10** **STEPHEN DALTON**



# { REDISCOVERED }

Uncovering the underrated and overlooked



## PETE TOWNSHEND

Who Came First (reissue, 1972)

UMC

7/10

Repackaged, unpretentious solo debut still intrigues



SANDWICHED between *Who's Next* and *Quadrophenia* on Townshend's timeline, this debut solo effort is partly comprised of demos dating from the recording of the first of those group albums, initially earmarked for the guitarist's aborted 'Lifehouse' project. Consequently, the record, though a modest success upon its release, retains the feel of a patchwork collection of loose ends, more folksy than his band ever were.

Were such things in existence at the time, it might feasibly have first seen the light of day as a bonus disc on a more cohesive, substantial release. The Who were arguably the first rock band to explore the financial possibilities of out-take material, a willingness to share works either in progress or abandoned, with the 1974 compilation *Odds And Sods*, but *Who Came First* nonetheless has enough merit to warrant its own entry in the Townshend canon.

"Pure And Easy" is distinguished by a gentle jangle and Pete's plaintive yelp, but the rustic charm of the Ronnie Lane-penned "Evolution" finds him relinquishing the lead vocal mic to the Faces bassist, as a kind of curtain-raiser to their 1977 joint album *Rough Mix*. It may come across as a haphazard or scattergun offering, although it's also refreshing that a musician of Townshend's standing didn't feel the need to make his first move beyond the group dynamic a headline-hungry grand statement.

As it stands, the record's humble lack of intention (or pretension) proves to be its greatest strength. There are few things as tedious as a

musician writing about how beset with misery his glamorous existence can be, but Townshend gets away with it on the jaunty and frivolous "Sheraton Gibson", a cute snapshot of life as a long-distance rock'n'roller in another interchangeable hotel room.

Nods to his guru Meher Baba come in the form of the ponderous "Parvardigar" (based on Baba's own "Universal Prayer") and a strait-laced country cover of Jim Reeves' "There's A Heartache Following Me", supposedly one of the spiritual man's favourite songs.

It's always been hard to argue a case for *Who Came First* as a substantial, pivotal work, despite how much this elaborate repackaging might have us believe. However, as an illustration of Townshend's maverick personality and clues as to where his head was at it's still an intriguing listening experience, and is perhaps more significant in the context of today than it was when it first graced record racks.

**Extras:** 7/10. A bonus disc of rich pickings demos and alternate versions, including nine previously unreleased recordings. "Nothing Is Everything" is a taut acoustic version of the song that would become "Let's See Action", its shift in tempo less incongruous than on the more familiar group recording. "There's A Fortune In Those Hills" rattles along at the strumming pace of "Join Together", but geared towards the sepia-toned rustic vibes of The Band. "Meher Baba In Italy" is a brief instrumental, with Townshend's delicately plucked guitar embellished by intermittent drifts of mandolin and violin, like something Ennio Morricone might fashion for a movie montage sequence. **TERRY STAUNTON**

## INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER Remains

SILENCE

8/10

Two albums and deep archival digs from Swedish psych-out kings



The roots of International Harvester grow deep in Swedish soil. Their guitarist Bo Anders Persson was involved with experimental music, realising the wild "Proteinimperialism" on a split album with composer Folke Rabe; Persson had also been making blasted noise-rock in Pärson Sound, who came across like The Dead C, 20 years early. Other members of Pärson Sound moonlighted with proggers Mercki Mark Men; they were all part of a small but feverish scene of heads and freaks leading an underground cultural revolution in and around Stockholm. By the time Pärson Sound had turned into International Harvester (for 1968's *Sov Gott Rose-Marie*), and then Harvester (1969's *Hemåt*), they'd found their metier – quietly wasted free-rock that was basic as hell, and glorious. *Sov Gott Rose-Marie* is the classic – wrung-out, Fugs-like chants of "Ho Chi Min" mingle with cavernous, fuzzed-out stompers like "The Summer Song", with "I Mourn You" and "How To Survive" swallowing the entire second side of the album, two languorous stumbles into the light. *Hemåt* stretches its limbs, reaching for primitive folk forms and sluggish blues rambles: the extra live material is great to listen to, but you probably only really need the two albums.

**Extras:** 6/10. Poster, interview.

JON DALE

## STEVE MILLER BAND Complete Albums Vol 1 - 1968-76

CAPITOL

9/10

First eclectic nine albums collected in a vinyl boxset



Fifty years ago, Miller released a transcendent debut album *Children Of The Future* that stands as one of the landmarks of 1960s West Coast psychedelia. That posterity hasn't afforded it the totemic status of, say, *Forever Changes* or *Surrealistic Pillow*, is surely down to Miller's chameleon nature. Subsequent albums featured Beatlesque melodies (*Brave New World*), country-rock (*Number Five*), extended blues workouts (*Rock Love*), epic song cycles (*A Journey From Eden... Recall The Beginning*) and glorious three-minute classic rock radio jingles ("Take The Money And Run" and "Rock'n Me" from 1976's quadruple platinum *Fly Like An Eagle*). Then there was the role-playing. In various songs Miller posed as 'The Space Cowboy', 'The Gangster Of Love' and 'The Joker', which led to a suspicion that he wasn't quite serious at a time when rock music took itself very seriously indeed. Yet as a body of work, it was brilliant, dazzling stuff as he abseiled across the face of popular music, embracing and discarding styles with dizzying speed and ease. A 'greatest hits' collection released at the end of his first decade sold a staggering 13 million copies. And yet Miller today has become something a forgotten man. This set suggests it's time for a major reappraisal.

**Extras:** None.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

# CARGO COLLECTIVE



**JON BRION**

**LADY BIRD**

FIRE SOUNDTRACKS LP / CD

Jon Brion's score to Greta Gerwig's incredible directorial debut, and winner of two Golden Globes, 'Lady Bird'. The soundtrack "subtly and deftly mirrors the existential ambling of this outstanding film" Pitchfork.



**DJ TAYE**

**STILL TRIPPIN'**

HYPERDUB LP / CD

The debut album by Teklife's DJ Taye is ambitious in its range and scope, expanding the potential of the Footwork template, broadening the possibilities of the sound.



**TURBONEGRO**

**ROCK'N ROLL MACHINE**

BURGER RECORDS LP / CD

Turbonegro's new album, Rock'n Roll Machine is a top shelf super killer rock'n roll record made for the freaks, weirdos and dropouts of today.



**THE LOVELY EGGS**

**THIS IS EGGLELAND**

EGG RECORDS LP / CD

The Lovely Eggs return with Flaming Lips producer Dave Fridmann for their new album "This Is Eggland." Heavy in-your-face pop-psych from the Great British Underground.



**BUFFALO TOM**

**QUIET AND PEACE**

SCHOOLKIDS RECORDS LP / CD

Buffalo Tom's most mature album yet, full of nostalgic and dusky imagery, a sort-of poetic travelogue of faded colours and woods, illuminated in the light of the Boston seaside.



**THE SKULL ECLIPSES**

**THE SKULL ECLIPSES**

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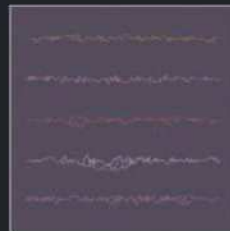


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# {THE SPECIALIST}



## BRIAN ENO

### Music For Installations

UMC

9/10

Zentastic times with the ambient grandmaster



IN February this year, Brian Eno unveiled his latest project: an immersive installation modelled on *Bloom*, his 2008 generative music app co-created with Peter Chilvers. Using

virtual reality headsets, visitors to *Bloom: Open Space* could fashion 'blooms' – Augmented Reality bubbles – that burst into being with a musical note before floating heavenwards. Like all good art, the installation asked a number of searching questions of its participants. Chief among these regarded the hierarchy of the creative process: what is more important here, the people, the music they made via 'blooms' or the technology that enabled them to make it?

Similarly, *Music For Installations* comes with its own set of questions for the listener. Assembled over six discs, it mostly features material Eno used in his installations from 1986 to the present day. How do these particular pieces interact and overlap with Eno's other creative disciplines? Eno's 2016 album, *The Ship*, for instance, began life as a music installation at Barcelona's Fundació Antoni Tàpies that was, he outlined, an attempt to unite the "three different threads of [his] career: the creation of pop music, with songs; creating ambient music, without lyrics; and installations". The *Ship* itself was one of Eno's very best records; but at what point did music for an installation become an album?

It's possible to detect something of *The Ship*'s submarine tones in "Kazakhstan" (they're roughly contemporary pieces), particularly the electronic creaks and glum sonar pulses. "Atmospheric Lightness" and "Chamber Lightness" are both from a 1997 installation at the State Russian Museum in St Petersburg and unfold in the same mournful, minor-key register. Originated for Helsinki's Kiasma Museum Of Contemporary Art, "Kites I" through to "Kites III" are meditations on the same four-note sequence. But for the most part, these are otherwise unconnected

pieces assembled from installations in London, Tokyo, Italy and elsewhere. Regardless, they all have a shared textural feel and a slow unfolding like rolling electronic fog. Only on "77 Million Paintings" might you suddenly discern a heavily treated human (?) voice in the background, or what sounds like someone sawing wood.

Some of the material here has already been released as limited-run CDs – like 2010's *Making Space*, which takes up Disc Five and was first sold at venues exhibiting *77 Million Paintings*. It is unique here in featuring actual musicians – Leo Abrahams on guitar and Tim Harries on bass – although their organic contributions are ghostly scratchings on the bed of electronica shifting beneath them. This being Eno, Disc Six comprises music for *future* installations; titles including "Unnoticed Planet" and "Sour Evening (Complex Heaven 3)" suggest the hand of a computer algorithm, an extension of Eno's generative music experiments. These experiments, which dot *Music For Installations*, present yet another line of inquiry: can artificially generated compositions be as effective as pieces made by human hand? It is a question you suspect that Brian Eno – always one step ahead of the game – already has an answer to.

MICHAEL BONNER



## NEW YORK DOLLS

### Personality Crisis: Live Recordings & Studio Demos 1972-1975

CHERRY RED

6/10

Mixed bag of outtakes, demos and live recordings



There are several existing albums of the Dolls' various pre-Mercury studio demos, but this collection brings together songs from three major sessions in 1972 and

1973 over two discs. It then adds a further three discs of live shows from gigs recorded across Europe and the US between 1973 and 1975, some taken from radio broadcasts. Given the timeframe and the band's limited repertoire, this obviously makes for a lot of repetition, but the first two discs reward close listening as the band rapidly develops. You can hear in something close to fine detail how they get tighter and more confident on a song like "Bad Girl" from its initial raw demo in New York's Blue Rock Studio demo in June '72 through a beefier, zesty version from the UK in October and then the perhaps-too-solid take delivered back in New York in March 1973. Are any of these versions better than that on the Rundgren-produced debut album? It's questionable, but they certainly aren't worse. Unfortunately the same can't be said for the live shows, which largely sound awful albeit with moments – Long Island, April 74; Vancouver, June/July 74 – when the band's sheer audacity and joie de vivre just about punch through the sonic soup.

Extras: 5/10. Remastered with new sleeve notes. PETER WATTS

## STARS OF THE LID

### Gravitational Pull Vs The Desire For An Aquatic Life

KRANKY

7/10

Second album from Texan drone luminaries, remastered



Drone groups are 10 a penny these days, but when Brian McBride and Adam Wiltzie formed Stars Of The Lid in Austin, Texas in the

early '90s, their ultra-slow, gorgeously textured soundscapes were a clear outlier in the American indie-rock firmament. Following the word-of-mouth success that greeted 2001's *The Tired Sounds Of Stars Of The Lid*, their sound has even edged into the mainstream – Wiltzie composed for the Oscar-nominated *The Theory Of Everything* – and today vinyl copies of their early catalogue go for silly money. Their second album, *Gravitational Pull vs The Desire For An Aquatic Life*, captures the group in vestigial form. Recorded to a cranky reel-to-reel four-track in a Texas basement, it's a sort of US DIY take on Eno's ambient experiments and the mystic drones of Terry Riley, processed guitars stretching out into foggy golden vistas. "Jan '69" and "Lactate's Moment" are shimmering ragas that every now give a sense of guitars being played – the strum of strings here, the twist of a tremolo arm there. But the 19-minute "Cantus II; In Memory Of Warren Wiltzie" is more abstract still, an ambiguous reverie that swings from contemplation to grief to – finally – nothingness.

Extras: None. LOUIS PATTISON



**THE STREETS**  
Original Pirate Material/A Grand Don't Come For Free (reissues, 2002, 2004)

LOCKED ON/679

9/10|8/10

UK garage poet laureate's first two, back on wax



Sixteen years have passed since the release of *Original Pirate Material*, but it still sounds unique. Mike Skinner's

calling card drew on the upbeat and aspirational garage sound that was the toast of London clubland in 2001, but his lyrical ingenuity and punter-level perspective positioned him miles from his peers: a sort of Ian Dury for the pills and PlayStation generation. The Streets' debut LP moves deftly through sounds and moods, taking in bouncy Specials skanking ("Let's Push Things Forward"), luvved-up love letters to the dancefloor ("Weak Become Heroes") and sharp social commentary ("The Irony Of It All"), which pits a beered-up geezer against a spliff-smoking student type – both played by Skinner, natch). Its follow-up, 2004's *A Grand Don't Come For Free*, can't quite match the debut hit for hit, but its ambitions are elsewhere. A sprawling concept album that traces the loss and recovery of £1000 against the backdrop of a faltering love affair, it occasionally gets lost in soap-opera exposition, but still contains some The Streets' very best songs – namely epic weepie "Dry Your Eyes" and "Blinded By The Lights", a vividly realised tale of clubbing and chemical misadventure. Both albums are reissued on double vinyl with the original artwork.

**Extras:** None.  
LOUIS PATTISON

**U2**  
All That You Can't Leave Behind (reissue, 2000)

ISLAND

8/10

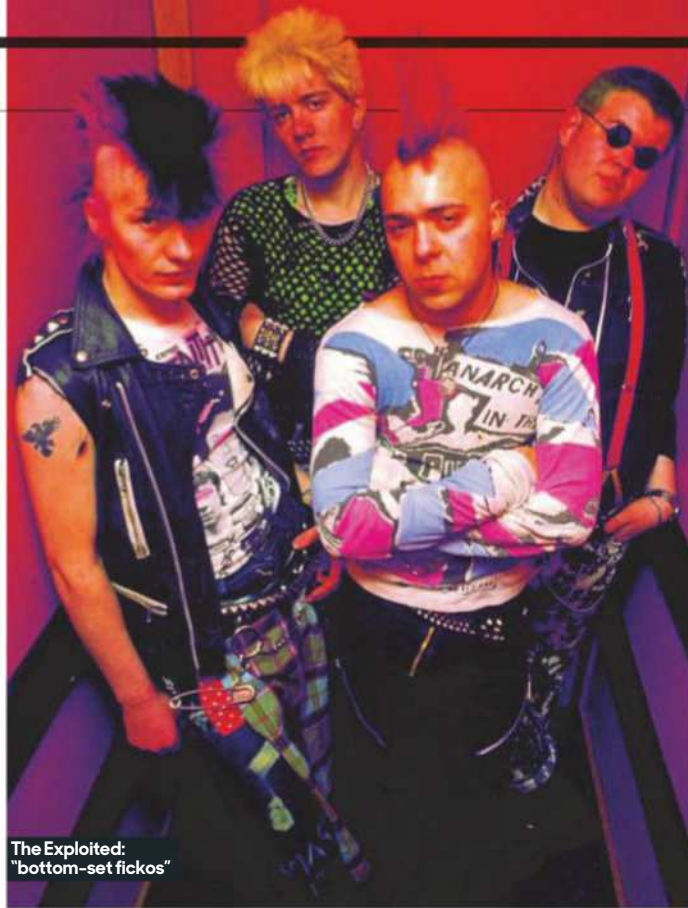
A 180g double-vinyl remaster of millennial landmark



When the Big Bonography is finally carved in stone, U2's 10th studio album will likely be heralded as their last sustained

brush with glory. It famously found them "reapplying for the job of best band in the world" after the dance-rock curveballs of the '90s had culminated

U2: the last of the rock stars...



The Exploited: "bottom-set fickos"

in the hubristic sprawl of *Pop* (also being reissued on vinyl, alongside 1985 mini-album *Wide Awake In America*). Shining in this crisp remaster, *All That You Can't Leave Behind* still sounds like a highly persuasive submission for the post. The euphoric "Beautiful Day", rowdy rave-rock of "Elevation" and yearning "Walk On" are custom-built for summer stadium nights, while "In A Little While" displays a hitherto hidden knack for crunchy R&B balladry. It sags a tad during "When I Look At The World" and "Peace On Earth", but "Wild Honey" exhibits a ragged energy. Bono even offers an astute precis of the band's predicament on the defiant "Kite": "The last of the rock stars/When hip-hop drove the big cars/In the time when new media/Was the big idea." U2 can already see diminishing returns on the horizon, but they're not going down without a fight.

**Extras:** None.  
GRAEME THOMSON

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Burning Britain: A Story Of UK Independent Punk 1980-1984

CHERRY RED

8/10

The droogs don't work; dole punx of the '80s anthologised



If speed was the mean-spirited drug of choice for the punks of 1977, glue and homebrew had taken command by the time Margaret Thatcher's election brought

the Sex Pistols' "no future" mantra home for huge swathes of smalltown teenagers. Violence, unemployment and nuclear war are the overwhelming themes of this 4CD redux of early '80s punk, Oi!, D-beat and anarcho, and while sixth-form *NME* readers wrote off the likes of The Exploited, the Angelic Upstarts and Discharge as bottom-set fickos, there are mighty songs as well as generic, biscuit-tin clatter here: the Clash-ultra of the Cockney Rejects' "Bad Man", Anti Pasti's churning "No Government", the Destructors' moronic "Northern Ripper", the Mob's mournful "Witch Hunt". The absence of Crass and allies Flux Of Pink Indians, Zounds and Rudimentary Peni lowers the



**COMING NEXT MONTH...**

**I**N June, **Natalie Prass** returns with her second album *The Future And The Past*, **Gruff Rhys** unveils the lush *Babelsberg*, and **Melody's Echo Chamber** are back after a long wait, with the release of second album *Bon Voyage*.

Meanwhile, **Neko Case** releases *Hell-On*, while **Dr Octagon** is back with the wonderfully named *Moosebumps: An Exploration Into Modern Day Horrification*.

In the dusty world of archival releases, there's **Otis Redding's Dock Of The Bay Sessions**, exciting reissues from **The Gun Club**, **The Cure** and **Ornette Coleman**, and **Bruce Springsteen's The Album Collection Vol 2: 1987-1996**.

TOM.PINNOCK@TIMEINC.COM

collective IQ level, but amidst the leather, bristles, studs and acne lurks cheeky fun aplenty – Threats' "Go To Hell", Disorder's "Rampton Song" and the Notsensibles' other song, "I Thought You Were Dead". In similarly apocalyptic times, it's a badly spelled banner of hope.

**Extras:** 6/10. Enthusiastic sleevenotes by UK82 true believer Ian Gasper, though no explanation of the compilers' decision to include the 'wrong' Chaos UK track. Wot no "Four Minute Warning"?

JIM WIRTH



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“People think  
I’m mad.

If it wasn’t for  
that, I don’t  
know what  
would happen...”

---

Welcome to a quiet backstage chat with LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY. As the godfather of dub holds court in his own indomitable fashion, Graeme Thomson hears tales involving Bob Marley, The Clash and Perry’s own fabled Black Ark HQ. There is the British monarchy to consider, as well as “the devil’s business” and some of the most enduring records from the golden age of Jamaican music. “You say this is an interview? I say this is an *outer-view*.”

Photo by © ADRIAN BOOT/URBANIMAGE.TV



**T**WO weeks shy of his 82nd birthday, Lee 'Scratch' Perry pokes and potters around the tiny dressing room of an Edinburgh club. Moments ago, backed by the most recent iteration of his band, The Upsetters, he finished an hour-long set with a pounding version of Bob Marley's "Exodus", exhorting the audience to "get crazy".

The man himself requires no such encouragement. His beard and hair are dyed a garish chemical red. His hat is festooned with badges, sphinxes and mirrors, while his multi-patterned jacket has a cartoon alien on the front and a huge psychedelic sunflower on the back. The epaulettes are the colours of the Ethiopian flag. His fingers are ringed with massive rocks, his neck adorned with beads and jewellery. His vibe is imperial imp, a mercurial and slightly menacing space-dub pirate. Perry gained his nickname from his first recording, "Chicken



Scratch", cut in 1961, but his other nom de plume, the Upsetter, is perhaps more fitting. "My style is to criticise, to warn with rain and fire," he says. "Is a fire-style! I am the burner."

During the show there were off-beam eulogies to Haile Selassie, ganja, vegetables and monkeys, balanced by fierce words of condemnation for cigarettes, meat-eating "cannibals", Marley and Island Records boss Chris Blackwell. The audience – ranging from star-struck teens to grizzled campaigners – passed him spliffs while a young woman joined him to skank along to "Sun Is Shining", the song Perry first recorded with Marley and The Wailers in 1971. The light glinted off the mirrors on his hat as he shuffled around, demanding that we "grin like the monkey" and toasting his "divine fans" with ginger wine.

It was good theatre, but there was also some fine music – deep, dark and heavy. We heard a terrific "Super Ape", from The Upsetters' 1976 album of the same name, a spacey rendering of Marley's anti-establishment anthem, "Crazy Baldheads", and a soulful interrogation of The Staples Singers' "If You're Ready (Come Go With Me)".

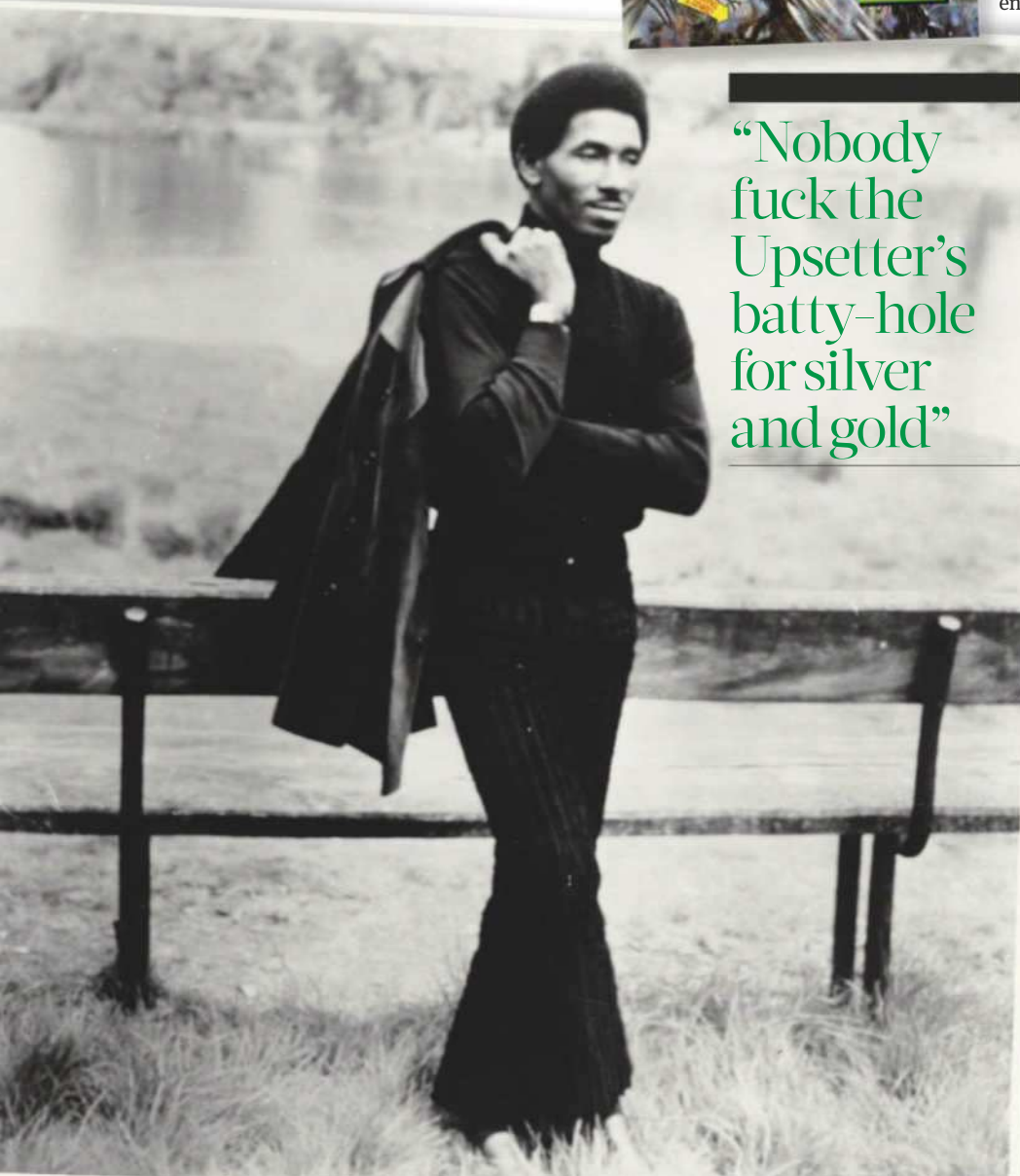
Yet it amounted to a mere sliver of the legacy of one of music's few genuine game-changers. Perry was a pioneer at the legendary Studio One in the early '60s, mentored Marley before he became a superstar, and made some of the most sonically innovative and enduring reggae records of the '70s at Black Ark, the

low-tech, high-concept studio he built in his back garden which boasted "four tracks on the machine, 20 from the extra-terrestrial squad". Later, his unique talents were sought by everyone from John Martyn and The Clash to the Beastie Boys and The Orb.

Now, as his band sprawl on sofas and his tour manager arranges Chinese food, Perry turns his attention to *Uncut*. "You say this is an interview, I say this is an *outer-view*," he proclaims in an unvarnished Jamaican accent. Cases of cider and Guinness sit on the table, untouched. On top of a small blue suitcase lies a twiggy bush of pungent weed. A few years ago, Perry claimed to have stopped smoking. If so, he has clearly reconsidered. He stuffs the bowl of his pipe, which glows like a Belisha beacon, draws in the smoke, and leans back.

Conversing with him backstage – and again three days later, from his home in Switzerland – involves negotiating a blizzard of puns, rhymes, riddles, scatological riffs, detours and non-sequiturs. He makes a series of lurid allegations about the British royal family and suggests that *Uncut* change its name to "Good Luck". As he meanders through his singular career, you begin to better understand how Perry has created such a unique and innovative catalogue. His thought process is entirely his own. "I was a human being, now I'm an animal," he states matter-of-factly. "Now I am a fish. Right?" I nod solemnly. He smiles. "OK. You ready to do the *outer-view*?"

"Nobody fuck the Upsetter's batty-hole for silver and gold"



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

**LEE PERRY** leader of The Upsetters

**What were your earliest musical loves?**  
I loved dancing. Right at the start, I love dancing to the sound system. I use me own sound system to dance. Then I start to love music. Mostly foreign music, good artists. I was listening to rhythm and blues and a little

jazz, but I loved soul music very much. Otis Redding used to be one of my best artists – you know the way Otis Redding sing? Beautiful. Gladys Knight And The Pips; The Impressions, and Curtis Mayfield.

**You came to Kingston from the countryside. In 1961 you started working with producer Clement ‘Coxsone’ Dodd at Downbeat Sound System and then at Studio One, alongside people like Prince Buster and U-Roy. Was that a good time?** Me and Coxsone get together because at the time he was a bit better than the rest, he was on the top. But they never liked my style. My style was too judgemental. Prince Buster was a nice guy, but you never hear about him. He was a friendly person.

**You fell out with Coxsone finally over the lack of money and credit.** Me like to create justice. Coxsone only can copy. If you want him to compose a song, it take a million years, but if you want him to copy a song, he can do that. He wasn't really a promoter or a producer, he just a user. Coxsone was a user, U-[Roy] was a user. Most Jamaicans are users. Most of them are politicians. See, I'm not a Jamaican, I'm an African-Ethiopian. But Coxsone have no influence, he was not bright enough.

**With tracks like “People Funny Boy” and “Run For Cover”, which you cut in 1967 and 1968 after parting with Coxsone, we hear the seeds of reggae.** Yes, you're right. It's the start. “People Funny Boy”, “Run For Cover” and [The Pioneers] “Long Shot”, songs like that. Then “Return Of Django” was a hit. It bring me to London, that song. They use it in a chocolate commercial, and it become a hit. It come out of a blue sky and into the chart. I like London very much, but bear in mind everything didn't go right for me in England. Everything is about people going crazy about things that me saying.

**What did you say?** What me say in England, is that the Queen is a bad mind! The Queen of England is a cannibal. The Queen not in my dream.

**In the late '60s you set up the Upsetter label and established your house band. What were your aims?** Me come into it with a spiritual toast. Dancehall is dangerous people with gun and ratchet knife and all them things. Me decide to make different music. Me start to make holy, righteous, Godly music. Jesus music. I had to choose different things from other people, I had to choose the things that I love. See, I wasn't born in Kingston. I was born in Hanover, so why should I make Kingston music? I'm not a rebel, so why should I make rebel music? I'm not a devil, so why should I make devil music? And I'm not from the ghetto, so why should I make ghetto music?

**Do you remember the first time you met Bob Marley?** Yeah, he was singing for a guy they called Beverley, a Chinese guy [this was Leslie Kong, a prominent Chinese-Jamaican producer who set up Beverley records and discovered Jimmy Cliff]. Bob was singing a Coxsone tune, ska music. He was not in the spiritual world, he was in a rude boy world! A rebel world. Very close to the devil's business.

**What made you want to work with him?** Maybe me want to help him. To me, he was just like a little boy who needed help. I think he did need some spiritual help and some spiritual knowledge. So I take him to my spiritual college, and tried to teach him spiritual knowledge. I did not have any rebel business to teach him. I could teach him about Jesus.

**The story is that Marley stole Aston and Carlton Barrett from The Upsetters for The Wailers.** He not



With Coxsone Dodd: "Just a user..."

## JAMAICA'S MOTOWN

The history of **Studio One**

**S**TUDIO One was a label, songwriting and recording facility established by producer and entrepreneur Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd in Brentford Road, Kingston, in 1963. Throughout the '60s and '70s it was at the vanguard of the evolution of Jamaican music, from ska, dancehall and bluebeat to reggae and dub. Perry worked there from 1963–66, initially as general dogsbody, later as (uncredited) songwriter and recording artist on bawdy early tunes like "Doctor Dick" and "Wishes Of The Wicked". After five years of being "exploited" by Dodd, Perry departed with a grudge and the following year released the menacing "I Am The Upsetter", aimed squarely at his former boss. Dodd's legacy remains impressive, however. Studio One was responsible for a string of

seminal records by a who's who of Jamaican music, including Toots & The Maytals, The Skatalites, Burning Spear, Horace Andy and Sugar Minott, as well as Bob Marley And The Wailers.



steal them, me gave them to him. People think him steal the boys, but no, he didn't steal them. Some of them were corrupted, too. They were really rotten inside. Them looking like human beings, walking up and down, but them cannibals.

**You still perform Bob Marley songs: “Crazy Baldhead”, “Sun Is Shining”, “Exodus”. Are you proud of the work you did with him?** Yeah, “Crazy Baldhead” is very good. I love it, I am addicted to that tune! I'm proud of the fantastic music, it couldn't be better. He was one of the best artists I've ever met. He's one of the artists that you think, he's not going to do anything unless it follows what you did and improves on it. You can depend on them. He was something very good. I don't know the bad part of him. The real bad part of him was his soul.

**On stage tonight, you said that he sold his soul. What did you mean?** Well, man do things for money. Human beings do things for money. Him didn't do what was right, so God killed him. If he had given me his soul and not sell it to Chris Blackwell, he would be here still. It's a shame he had to do that. They got him corrupted. His fault, not mine.

Bob Marley took to manifest himself as being a rebel. Bob Marley became reassured that everything would be OK, that him be a rebel and be a devil, but him were paid to be God! When he hear that he was like a preacher and a prophet, I think that mess with him big. Him were judged to be Godly. Some big problem happened there.



# MADELEINE PEYROUX

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- edinburgh rose st
- glasgow union st & byres rd
- london covent garden
- manchester brown st
- nottingham broadmarsh
- shopping centre
- oxford gloucester green

frank turner  
be more kind  
04/05/2018



melvins  
pinkus abortion technician  
20/04/2018

a perfect circle  
eat the elephant  
20/04/2018



black stone  
cherry  
family tree  
20/04/2018



ost: various artists  
baby driver volume 2:  
the score for a score  
out now

middle kids  
lost friends  
04/05/2018



**You sound angry at him.** Why should I be angry? Revenge is manifest. Why should I hate him? What I give I get, and what him give him get. If Bob Marley loved Selassie I, he would not die. I think he should be here. It's not nice that he's not here now, but if he's not here it's because he made a mistake, or his family made a mistake. And it's not a good mistake to make, because I like him very much. He was my best artist. He was too good.

**You also condemned Chris Blackwell from the stage tonight, calling him the devil. Island distributed your own productions, and many people would praise the contribution he made to reggae.** Of course, he did something good, he tried to help reggae music. He *did* help reggae music. It wouldn't have been so big without him. He put his money in reggae music and he deserved to get back his money. But devil don't have 'nuff money to pay me. Nobody fuck the Upsetter's batty-hole for silver and gold.

**P**ERRY has lived near Zurich in Switzerland since 1989, with his Swiss wife, Mireille – who's also his manager – and their two children, Gabriel and Shiva. Laying roots in Europe marked the end of an unsettled period in the early '80s.

In 1973, Perry had set up a studio in the yard of his home in Kingston's Washington Gardens. He named it Black Ark. From this base, he forged new frontiers in spaced-out dub production, becoming a crazed midwife to some of the greatest reggae records every made, among them groundbreaking albums by Max Romeo (*War In A Babylon*), The Upsetters (*Super Ape*), Junior Murvin (*Police And Thieves*), The Heptones (*Party Time*) and The Congos (*Heart Of The Congos*).

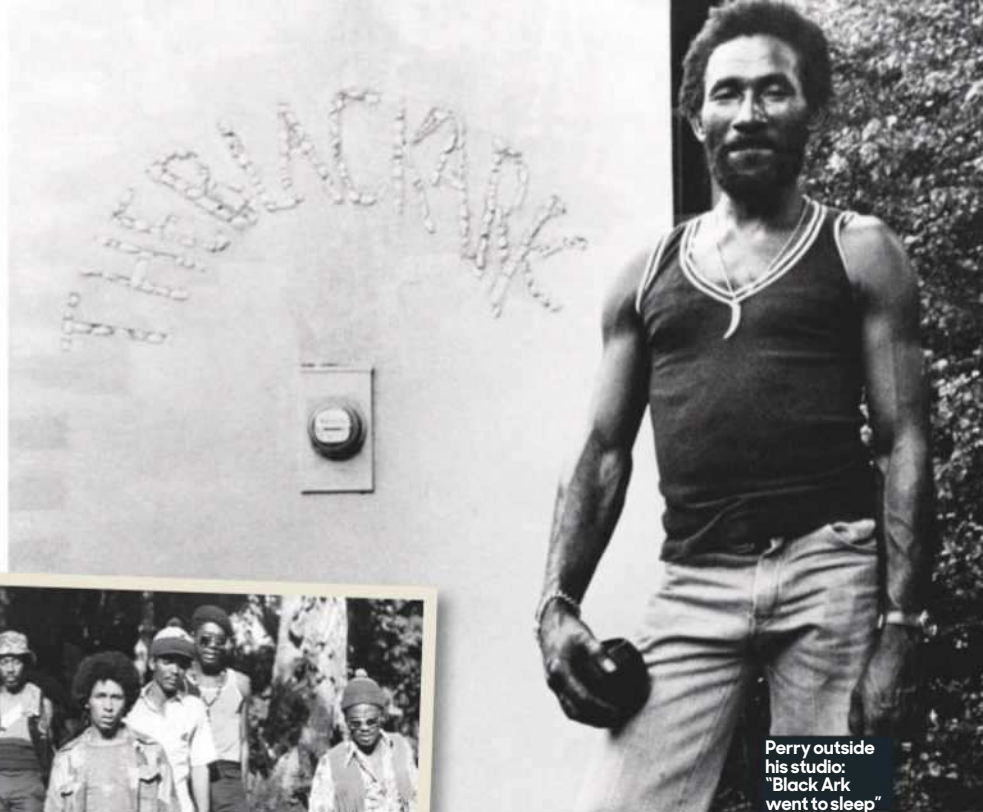
By the late '70s, however, the golden age was starting to fade. Black Ark became an HQ for dark vibes and local heavies. His health and music suffered. The studio fell into disrepair and was eventually destroyed in a fire in 1983. Perry claims he burned it down himself to clear out bad spirits that had infested the studio, his music and his life.

"Black Ark went to sleep," he says, his voice rising. "There was too much parasite, as regards to when natty dreads was in the Black Ark. I unlocked the Black Ark, I unlocked the black arts, and I unlock my black heart. I don't want no poor reggae. Poor reggae is poverty. Poor reggae is not good for our Imperial Majesty Selassie I. It's bad luck. So, by the power invested in me, I destroy poor reggae."

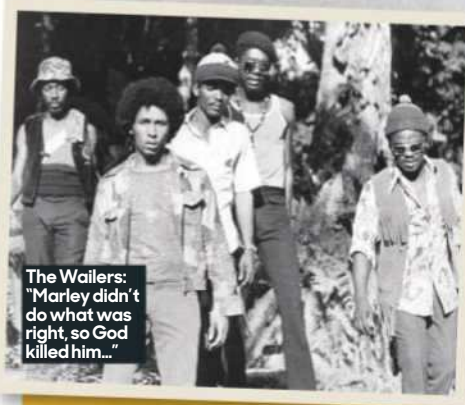
Other sources insist the culprit was faulty wiring. As ever, the truth arrives liberally remixed with the legend. It's true, however, that the Upsetter's life is steeped in flames. A fire at his Swiss home in 2015 destroyed another of his studios.

Somewhat revived by the mid-'80s, Perry embarked on a series of collaborations, notably with Adrian Sherwood's Dub Syndicate, the Beastie Boys and The Orb. A recent documentary, *Visions Of Paradise*, proved his instincts as a mischievous provocateur remain intact, as he cast mad magic over his music: tooting car horns, donning yellow Afro wigs, painting with his feet and banging stones. "Yes, I do things perfect," he smiles. "I do perfect things."

**Who are your favourites of the artists you worked with at Black Ark?** All my records I like,



Perry outside his studio: "Black Ark went to sleep"



The Wailers: "Marley didn't do what was right, so God killed him..."

all my records are angels. They are not flesh and blood, they are spirits. Junior Murvin, "Police And Thieves". Very good. I worked also with The [Wailers]. [Perry cackles] Bunny Failer. You write his name 'Bunny Failer'. I did a song with Bunny named "Dreamland". From the bed in dreamland you don't stop dreaming.

## THE UPSETTER & TUFF GONG

Clash of the titans...

**P**ERRY and Bob Marley became friendly in the late '60s, meeting at Perry's Upsetter record shop in Kingston. When The Wailers' early success tailed off, Marley, impressed by the success of "Return Of Django" overseas, set his sights on Perry's band, The Upsetters. After a standoff, Perry agreed to let Marley use the group, but only if he could produce the sessions. The results were two vibrant early Wailers albums, *Soul Rebels* (1970) and *Soul Revolution* (1971), mixed with typical daring by Perry, who placed the vocals in the right channel and the rhythms on the left. The albums featured original renditions of signature Marley songs like "Duppy Conqueror", "Kaya", "Mr Brown" and "Sun Is Shining". The partnership between the two volatile characters wasn't destined to last. Marley jumped ship in 1971, taking Upsetters rhythm section Carlton and Aston Barrett with him, although he worked with Perry again during sessions for 1976's *Rastaman Vibration*, and in London, in 1977, on "Punky Reggae Party".

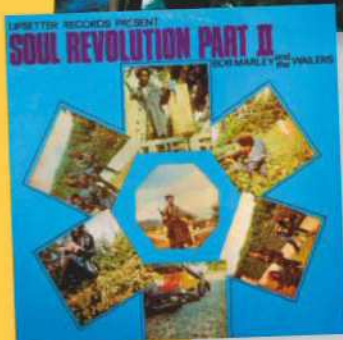
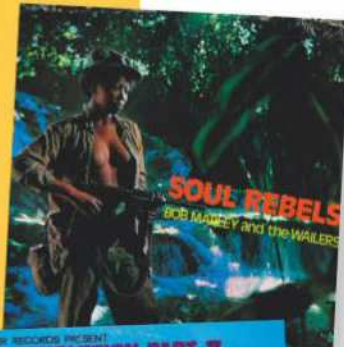
**I love Heart Of The Congos...** Well, The Congos, them all right. Let me say that everything would be perfect but some of the people, they go so far into cannibalism they can't come out. It pains me. All the rude boys have locks in them hair, dreadlocks, you know, very Holy, then they came and eat meat.

**How did you come to work with John Martyn?** How is John?

**He's dead.** He dead? Oh. Who killed him? I meet him with Island Records. He was full of fresh ideas. I write "Big Muff" [from Martyn's 1977 album, *One World*] with him, and we also have big puff. He was a good artist, musician, singer. Not all the people are honest like John. All those Bob Marleys...

**Your antics in Black Ark became legendary: blowing smoke on the microphone, lighting fires, rubbing the tape head. Do these rituals work?** Cliff Richard?

**Rituals!** Ah. Everything I do in the studio is rich. Everything me believe in, it works. The reality is all that craziness, all that madness, I made it work, because it's nature. It's natural grace. In nature we have the big space overhead, the big sky, the orbit. Nature is crazy! I want my records to sound as crazy as nature. You see the bass? The ➤





Live at The Village Underground, London, 2017

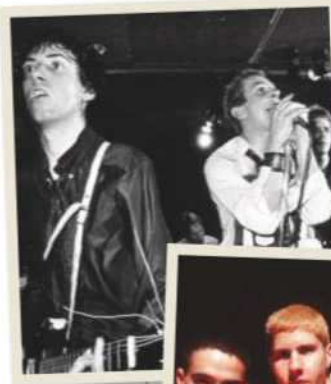
part that the bass play in dub – boom boom boom – that mean the bass poop, right? The drum is the heartbeat – boof-boof, boof-boof – and the bass is the brain cells. This song is the beat of your heart and your gut. That's dub, that's how it works.

**In 1977 you worked with The Clash on "Complete Control", after they had recorded a version of "Police And Thieves"...** No, The Clash work with me. I don't work with Bob Marley, Bob Marley work with me. I never work with The Wailers, The Wailers work with me. OK?

**OK. Did you like The Clash?** The Clash was fantastic. Fantastic, because they want to know and want me to teach them sense. They were playing ignorant loud music, so me tell them, "You be preaching like a preacher, like you want to be like a priest? Then be like a teacher, teaching people peacefully." They start playing loud guitars and not listen to me. I go rush down and then something happened, me have to illustrate to them. I lift them up and say, "OK, are we ready?" They got to want to be willing. Then I start to work with them.

**Did you like punk?** Of course, me like punk! Me a punk more than a reggae artist. Me addicted to punk music. It's pretty reality, a pretty perfection. It was fun, everybody could speak any way they want to speak. If the punks want to piss, then they piss. They spit anywhere they want to spit. That's punk. People want to do anything that would make them free.

**"Me like punk! Me a punk more than a reggae artist"**



Scratch collaborators: the Beastie Boys and (above) The Clash

**Was it a difficult time for you after the end of Black Ark?** Me not have a hard time, me had a little problem with money. The thing about me, me is not too much of a businessman. So, people rob me and rip me off very easy, but after a while they die. I leave them to take what they give and give what they take, and if they want to die they can rob me.

**In the mid-'80s you worked with Adrian Sherwood and The Dub Syndicate, which seemed to rejuvenate you.** Yes, it was a very good relationship, and we made very much good music. He has a good heart. Adrian is a very good person. Him think of me maybe like a brother or a father. He see me with the original recipe, and then me see him take the recipe and cook for himself.

**Later, you worked with the Beastie Boys, and recently, Alex Paterson from The Orb. Are you proud to have influenced these people?** All them guys talk to me like they have known me for 2,000 years or something. They are talking to me like they are kids, and like me is a kid, too. I have a beard, and grey hair, but them see me like kids, and me see them like kids too. They understand to get through life you have to have a good spirit. You can't copy people with bad spirit. You must only copy people with good spirit. If you want to copy, copy God. Don't copy the devil, the rebel. Don't copy bad luck, copy good luck.

**You had a terrible fire at your home in 2015. Have you rebuilt your studio?** I don't think I want to rebuild everything. I think what happened was the judgement. There was nothing I could do about the things thrown at me.

**Does it help you, the fact that people think you're mad?** Of course! That's how me get so lucky, because people think I'm mad. If it wasn't for that I don't know what would happen. God keep me mad. God is mad, see? The real God is totally mad. Mad, but not crazy.

**Do you worry people might misunderstand you?** Whoever not understand, it not my fault, it's theirs. I over-stand everything I say. If you enlighten the people, give them something simple, you can go on forever to teach them. So, everything is good. Tell the magazine that Lee 'Scratch' Perry not like the rest. Me different from the rest. Me wish not to be like the rest, and never will be. You see? Me have no reason to bow. 🙏

HOLY COMMUNION

# SCRATCH RECORDS

Four classic **LSP** collaborations



**THE CLASH COMPLETE CONTROL (1977)**

Impressed by The Clash's cover of

"Police And Thieves" on their debut album (he reportedly hung up a picture of them in Black Ark), Perry agreed to work with the band. The anti-corporate "Complete Control" echoes Perry's anti-establishment ethos, although reportedly many of his more spaced-out production flourishes were culled from the final version.



**ADRIAN SHERWOOD & DUB SYNDICATE SECRET LABORATORY (1986)**

Perry's two albums with the On-U Sound maestro – *Secret Laboratory* and 1990's *Time Boom X De Devil Dead* – rejuvenated his post-Black Ark career. The former is one of his greatest discs, with loving echoes of his '70s work in the dark, heady rhythms and eccentric lyrics of "I Got The Groove" and "Vibrate On".



**BEASTIE BOYS DR LEE PhD (1998)**

In 1996, Perry opened for the

Beastie Boys in Japan. A year later, they collaborated on this warm, slow cut on 1998's *Hello Nasty*. "He came down and heard the song not even a whole time," Mike D recalled. "He had a poster upon which on the back he had written a lot of lyrics. Then he did, like, two takes. We mixed it much later and... boom!"



**ALEX PATERSON THE ORBSERVER IN THE STAR HOUSE (2012)**

A simpatico union in dub and minimalist techno between The Orb's Paterson, Thomas Fehlmann and an in-the-mood Perry, who provides a series of characteristically wild vocals. Loose, summery and obviously extemporised, it has reshaping of "Police And Thieves" and "Little Fluffy Clouds" (as "Golden Clouds").



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AND MORE



Dandies in the underworld: the Stones in 1968



# “It was like being let out of a cage”

For **THE ROLLING STONES**, 1968 was a year of intense transformation dominated by “Jumpin’ Jack Flash”, *Beggars Banquet* and the fall of Brian Jones. What emerges from this remarkable 12-month period is a portrait of a band overcoming adversity – going back to basics in order to move forward. Here **Graeme Thomson** talks to key collaborators and confidants about fires, food fights and a “documentary of temporary insanity”. As one insider reveals, “What drags the mere man down only propels The Rolling Stones further...”

**PLUS!** Keith, Charlie and Ron on the Stones on the road in the 21st century



Their Satanic Majesties: Jagger, Richards and Wyman rehearse "Sympathy For The Devil" at London's Olympic Studios, 1968

It is an auspicious day for The Rolling Stones. The band are in residence at Olympic Studios, west London where, under the watchful eye of film director Jean-Luc Godard, their song "Sympathy For The Devil" is shape-shifting into something extraordinary. Now, in the early hours of June 11, 1968, Marianne Faithfull looks out from the control room into the brightly lit studio. With red lipstick she writes "BURN BABY BURN" – backwards, so that her boyfriend Mick Jagger can read it – on the glass. Moments afterwards, "A piece of paper on the roof caught fire from the film-crew lights," recalls assistant engineer Phill Brown. "A few bits started falling, then the whole thing just took off." "The first we knew about it was when one of these massive neon lights came crashing down, and missed Keith literally by inches," says engineer Glyn Johns. "It would have killed him if it had hit him, without question."

Three fire engines are eventually required to stop the blaze. Such tales do little to dispel the late '60s mythology of The Rolling Stones as a Luciferian proposition, quite literally playing with fire. Closer inspection of the band's activity over the course of this remarkable year, however, reveals a more complicated and altogether more human picture.

It's a portrait of a band bruised by recent misfortunes – drug busts, messy relationships, creative confusion, establishment hostility – yet regrouping with ruthless

resilience and intense focus. "Remember," says their former manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, "what drags the mere man down only propels The Rolling Stones further." If ever there's an example of a band making a virtue out of adversity, the Stones in 1968 is it.

Early in the year they write and record the song Keith Richards still regards as their greatest achievement. Yet "Jumpin' Jack Flash" is only the prelude, its propulsive riff the starting pistol on a 12-month period during which the Stones make *Beggars Banquet*, the LP that launches a five-year run of golden music. They participate in three controversial films, each of which, in different ways, captures something of the prevailing mood. They lead the cultural shift from psychedelia back to earthier pleasures and reflect the tumultuous times with equally tumultuous music. As the year draws to an end, they perform for the final occasion with their rapidly deteriorating founder member.

"*Beggars Banquet* was going back to their blues roots," engineer Eddie Kramer tells *Uncut*. The album is often described as return to first principles, back to basics, and it's easy to hear why. It sounds rough, raw and spontaneous. Yet it is a work of deceptively sophisticated primitivism. Its 10 songs took five months of intense labour, painstaking attention to detail and obsessive rigour: shaping layers of artfully warped guitars, hunting day and night for the perfect groove, deploying new sonic innovations and strategic exotic touches, all the while ruthlessly planing away everything extraneous.

*Beggars Banquet* isn't a return to anything. It is instead a deepening, an immersive exploration of the band's bedrock sources. It is not, in any sense, pop music. "*Beggars Banquet* was the amalgamation of



everything the Stones had been trying to do,” says Dave Mason, the ex-Traffic guitarist who played on the LP. “It all came together in a unique, very cool form.”

It’s the work of young men creatively energised, socially engaged, slyly humorous, and in love with their own music. “There were a lot of casualties around the Stones, a lot of weird things, but that vibe hadn’t really kicked in yet,” says Brown. “It was before all that death and darkness came around them. *Beggars Banquet* was very up, very focused. It was magical.”

The Stones in 1968 are a band with something to prove, pursuing a hot new streak to new heights. By the end of the year, which culminates with the much-misunderstood Rock And Roll Circus, there has been a profound and permanent shift in their dynamic. Before *Beggars Banquet*, The Rolling Stones are one thing. Afterwards, they are something else entirely.

**T**HE Summer Of Love had been tough on The Rolling Stones. There had been ethically dubious drug busts meted out on Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Brian Jones, resulting in media hysteria and custodial convictions. Their sentences were later quashed, although not before Mick and Keith had spent a night in jail.

If they felt hounded by outside forces, the internal logic of the band was also under pressure. Jones was increasingly lost in a fog of drink and heavy drugs. In March 1967, during a trip to Morocco, his girlfriend, the German-Italian actress and model Anita Pallenberg, had switched her allegiance to Keith Richards – badly damaging both Jones’ fragile ego and his relationship with his friend. He became the Stones’ whipping boy, slipping down the hierarchy. When their manager and producer, Andrew Loog Oldham, left abruptly in August 1967, they took up with Allen Klein, a New Jersey music-biz hustler whose antics were already arousing the suspicions of Jagger.

And then there was the music. *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, self-produced in scattered moments during a troubled year, had been released on December 8, 1967. Hindsight has afforded its half-hearted, derivative psychedelic daubs something close to respectability. At the time, however, it was widely dismissed as catastrophic. Shortly after its release, Jann Wenner, in *Rolling Stone*, described it as “disastrous... a recording episode as unfortunate as any for any group in the world”. It was, says Oldham, “a pitstop fuelled by

“Satanic Majesties was a complete crock of shit...”

GLYN JOHNS



She smiled sweetly: Anita Pallenberg with Brian Jones, 1966

frustration, dead flowers, acid, velvet and not enough songs or money”.

“Mick felt they were under pressure because of *Sergeant Pepper*,” says Glyn Johns, who engineered the album. “I remember him sitting me down before we started and saying that he wanted me to come up with more innovative sounds. I said, ‘As far as I’m concerned, I’m here to record what you do.’ I thought that record was actually embarrassing.” He laughs grimly. “A complete crock of shite.”

On *Satanic Majesties*, the Stones traded in their core identity to service the demands of a passing fad. “It wasn’t awful, just twee,” says Jethro Tull’s Ian Anderson, who worked with the band on The Rock And Roll Circus. “Trying to ignite the dying embers of a hippie era that was already past its bedtime. By trying to show they weren’t second fiddle to The Beatles, they ended up doing exactly that.” Suddenly, rock’n’roll’s arch rebels seemed dated, detached, complacent, and out of touch. “You can’t write down to the public,” says Oldham. “They can smell it.”

For a band not necessarily inclined to admitting their mistakes, the Stones’ saving grace was to own up to their predicament. When they convened for three weeks of rough rehearsals on February 21, 1968, at RG Jones Studios in Morden, Jagger was no longer interested in playing the hippie princeling. The mantra from Richards, meanwhile, was, “Let’s strip this thing down.” The basis of the next album would be the acoustic guitar and acoustic piano, exploring not just blues but folk and country. “We’d run out of gas,” Richards wrote in *Life*. “We had to pull out the good stuff. And we did.”

Crucially, they also accepted the necessity of having a producer. When the sessions began at Olympic’s Studio One in mid-March, Jimmy Miller was behind the desk, working alongside his assistant, Eddie Kramer and Glyn Johns. Seventeen-year-old Phill Brown – later to record with everyone from Bob Marley to Talk Talk – was tape operator.

A 26-year-old New Yorker who’d cut his teeth producing The Spencer Davis Group, Traffic and Family, Miller – who died in 1994 – was a drummer who responded directly to rhythm and groove. He bonded immediately with Richards, both musically and personally. “Jimmy created a really good atmosphere in the studio,” says Johns, “in as much as he got high with Keith. That was the key, really.”

JWILDS/GETTY IMAGES; MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/REDFERNS

## LEFTOVERS FROM THE BANQUET

Four **outtakes** from the Stones’ ’68 sessions

### “HAMBURGER TO GO” (AKA “STUCK OUT ALL ALONE”)

Richards’ soulful, fluid electric guitar lines dominate this half-formed but beautiful ballad, with its echoes of “Sway” and “Wild Horses”. Jagger slurs the lyrics and stumbles around the edges of the melody, writing the song as he hears it.

### “HIGHWAY CHILD”

Recorded at Redlands and featuring only Richards, Jagger and Watts, this terrific rocker boasts a scything

electric guitar riff and the air of raw malevolence later perfected on *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile On Main Street*.

### “DOWNTOWN SUZIE” (AKA “SWEET LUCY”)

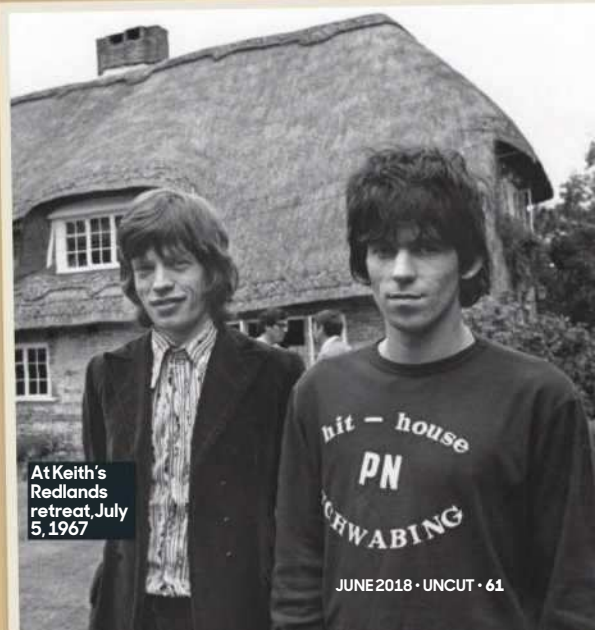
An agreeable if slight nod towards The Small Faces’



*Ogdens’ Nut Gone Flake*. Written by Wyman, with a jokey Greek chorus and a chirpy Cockney vocal from Jagger, it ended up on 1975 Decca compilation *Metamorphosis*.

### “AND I WAS A COUNTRY BOY”

A fully fleshed-out instrumental backing track, with Nicky Hopkins’ driving piano and Watts’ excitable drums to the fore. Sounds like the foundation of an unwritten country-blues classic.



At Keith’s Redlands retreat, July 5, 1967

“Jimmy brought great energy,” says Mason, who worked with him on the first two Traffic albums. “He was great at keeping the right atmosphere going with a bunch of egomaniac young personalities!” “Jimmy was a vibe merchant,” says Brown. “He wasn’t interested in saying, ‘Add more top.’ That’s why he had Glyn, who was a great engineer. Jimmy was about coming up with ideas, humour, and keeping the vibe really positive.”

*Beggars Banquet* was recorded in three discrete chunks between March and June. From the start, the mood was upbeat. “I don’t remember anyone actually saying they had made a wrong turn [with *Satanic Majesties*],” says Johns. “I think that was pretty obvious, but there was no sense of, ‘Wow, that went awry, we need to salvage this!’” There were hints, however, that they relished feeling like outsiders again. One new song, “Jigsaw Puzzle”, captured something of the collective sense of defiance. “*Oh, the singer he looks angry/At being thrown to the lions,*” sings Jagger. “*The guitar players look damaged/They’ve been outcasts all their lives.*”

Olympic was a record-making cathedral, a high-ceilinged former theatre in Barnes that had become the Stones’ home from home. Early in 1968, a new Ampex eight-track machine was installed, replacing the old four-track. The extra space, perhaps counter-intuitively, allowed the group to be less beholden to technology. “When you’re working with eight-track, so



Jagger and Jones backstage at the Empire Pool in London with a smokin’ Marianne Faithfull, May ‘68

“Brian was just a mess. He was shot, really...”

**PHILL BROWN**

much happens live,” says Brown. “A typical take would be a guide vocal from Jagger, drums, bass and main guitar. Maybe some keyboards. A lot of the stuff happened pretty much straight off.”

Though ultimately left off the album, “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” unlocked *Beggars Banquet*. It was based on a piano motif that Bill Wyman stumbled upon – he later groused about the usual lack of credit – and was shaped by Richards into a killer riff, an ingenious inversion of the guitar phrase on “Satisfaction”. The title was inspired by Jagger waking up one morning at Richards’ country pile, Redlands, to the sound of the gardener, ‘Jumpin’ Jack Dyer, stomping around outside in his wellies. On a deeper level, the lyric was an articulation of hard times in 1967, and the need to forge a more robust identity after “all the acid things”. “*I was drowned, I was washed up and left for dead,*” he sings. “*But it’s all right now, in fact it’s a gas.*”

The finished track possessed a turbo-charged sense of upward motion, as though an engine were revving beneath the band. It was quickly agreed to peel away the song from the album and release it as a stand-alone single. As the *NME*’s resident Stones-man, journalist Keith Altham was given a preview at RG Jones.

“I was the first [outside] person to hear ‘Jumpin’ Jack Flash’, in a Surrey studio, one afternoon,” he says. “It was just me and Jagger at one point, then they all drifted in. They were desperate to find out what I thought of the record. They were [nervous]. They knew the previous album was a bit of a headless chicken, and that this single and album were very important. I thought it was fantastic, but I played it quite cool!”

Back at Olympic, during the March sessions the Stones also recorded “Parachute Woman”, “Stray Cat Blues”, “Jigsaw Puzzle” and “No Expectations”, as well as several outtakes. The first pair were the most sexually rapacious songs they’d ever recorded, pushing the boundaries of the new permissive society.

The former was a nasty Chicago blues stomp nailed to a lyric (“*Parachute woman, will you blow me out?/ Well, my heavy throbber’s itchin’...*”) that left little to the imagination. Brown recalls listening to the finished track at 3am in a crowded control room and being transported by its chugging energy. “Stray Cat Blues”, meanwhile, detailed a fictional liaison with a 15-year-old groupie. The opening guitar line was inspired by

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/REDFERNS; BETTMAN/GETTY IMAGES

An isolated Jones at the sessions for “Sympathy For The Devil”, Olympic, 1968



The Velvet Underground's "Heroin". In both respects, it was about as far from "We Love You" as it was possible to travel in six months. The impressionistic sprawl of "Jigsaw Puzzle", meanwhile, owed plenty to Bob Dylan. "There's a tramp sitting on my doorstep/Trying to waste his time/With his methylated sandwich/He's a walking clothesline..."

Most of the early batch of songs were laid down quickly, according to Brown. "Some were straight blues and they knew what they were going to do straightaway. 'No Expectations' was 80 per cent there on that first take."

As well as being perhaps the most haunting and heartfelt ballad the band ever recorded, "No Expectations" contains Brian Jones's last truly meaningful musical act as a Stone. His health and influence had continued to deteriorate. When he was in the studio – and he frequently wasn't – he was often distanced and distracted, a shadow of the intuitive musician who could once pick up any instrument and make it sing. "Brian was not particularly together," says Johns. "Quite tricky, really. He made an extraordinary contribution to the band initially. Unfortunately, as his health declined, his ability to contribute – to play, even – diminished, and it became a hell of a struggle."

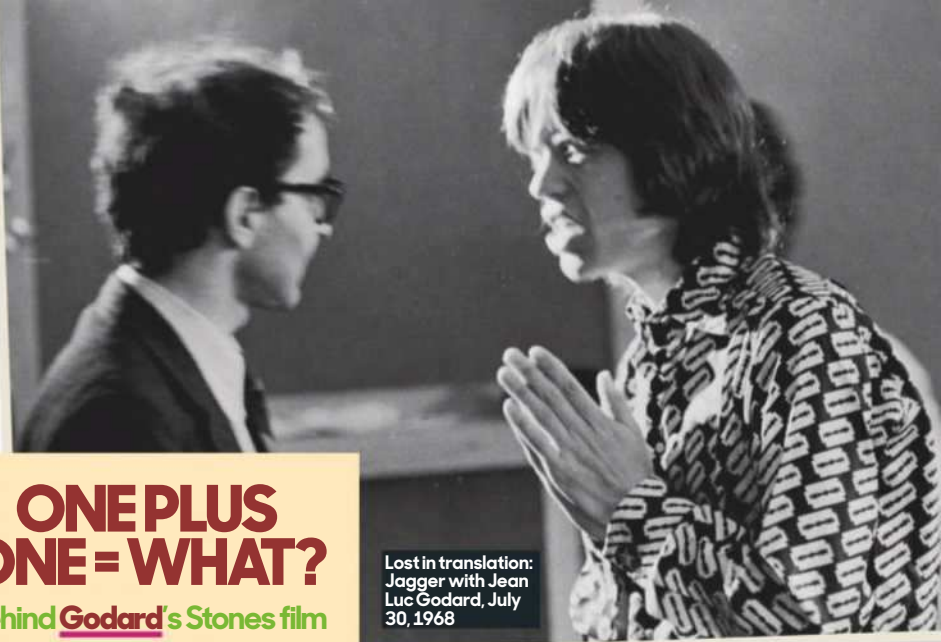
"I've always felt sorry for Brian," says Brown. "He had a reputation as quite a tricky guy, but when I met him, he was just a mess. I know he was taking other things – speed, whatever – just to stay alive, but alcohol was the main problem. He'd put on a lot of weight, was quite sweaty, and he'd been ostracised. He was shot, really. He was having an incredibly tough time."

On the sessions, "he'd come in with his guitar and half an hour later he'd keel over and be out cold," Nicky Hopkins later recalled. A stellar session musician, Hopkins practically became a sixth Stone. The prominence of his piano on *Beggars Banquet* was partly due to the fact that the band were an instrumentalist down and needed to colour in the gaps. "Nicky was very quiet, very reserved, but he was putting in the most amazing piano parts," says Brown. "He hung out a lot, trying out things on Hammond, Rhodes or Wurlitzer. He was pretty important."

Hopkins did not completely supersede Jones. On "No Expectations", his gorgeous Floyd Cramer-style fills lock in with Jones's heart-rending slide guitar. As the band sat in a circle on the floor, singing and playing into open microphones, Jones conjured a wonderfully empathetic accompaniment. Within a year, it sounded like an elegy.

There were other brief flashes of his waning genius, but for most of the sessions Jones was symbolically apart from the band, stuck in a booth with an acoustic guitar. He had wanted "Child Of The Moon" to be the A-side of the new single but was voted down. On May 21, the week that "Jumpin' Jack Flash" began its march to No 1 in the UK, he was arrested on yet another drugs charge, and was bailed to appear in court. The prospect of another trial, and possible imprisonment, ate away at him through the year.

In the lead-up to the release of "Jumpin' Jack Flash", the Stones made their first live appearance for more than a year to preview the single during a surprise appearance at the NME Poll Winners' concert at Wembley's Empire Pool on May 12. They were rusty but enthusiastic. For the rest of the world, the atmospheric performance video – shot by Michael Lindsay-Hogg at Olympic – marked the



Lost in translation: Jagger with Jean-Luc Godard, July 30, 1968

## ONE PLUS ONE = WHAT?

Behind **Godard's** Stones film

**B**EFITTING his reputation as Europe's most daring auteur, Jean-Luc Godard (*Breathless*, *Pierrot Le Fou*) attempted to capture the tone of 1968 with this entertaining, if borderline incoherent, fusion of art, rock and revolution. The in-studio Stones scenes are interwoven with a series of Situationist set-pieces: Black Panthers mobilising and terrorising a group of white women; readings from *Mein Kampf*; Marxist hippies and urban warriors spouting their muddled credos. The film's producer changed the title to *Sympathy For The Devil* for its release, receiving a punch from Godard for his pains. It didn't help: the film was panned critically and flopped commercially but remains a fascinating insight into the Stones' working methods, and the radical chic agenda of the age.

first sighting of the band in six months. The mood music had changed markedly from the cover of *Satanic Majesties*, which, in the words of Keith Altham, "looked like a fancy-dress party for kiddies aged under seven". Now, they wore dark, heavy eye make-up and muted colours. Jagger was daubed in tribal face paint and Runic symbols. Richards and Jones looked menacing in superfly shades. The entire band projected a surly, blank-eyed superiority; a considerable distance from the peace and love vibes of the previous year.

**T**HE Rolling Stones' shift to a more primal musical direction wasn't happening in a vacuum. Even as Pink Floyd's *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, the first Soft Machine album and The Incredible String Band's *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter* took psychedelia to more progressive heights, a heavier, earthier transformation was

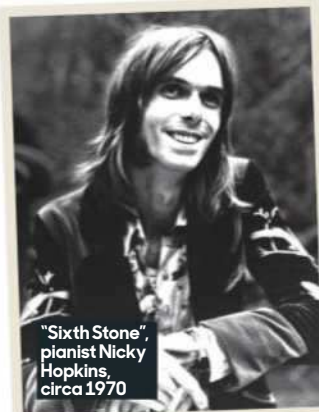
taking place elsewhere.

Released at the close of 1967, Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* was a talisman for a newer, simpler ethic. After the cool reception to *Magical Mystery Tour*, The Beatles began piecing together "The White Album"'s often-raucous patchwork, featuring heavy-duty workouts like "Yer Blues", "Why Don't We Do It In The Road?" and "Revolution".

In the spring, The Who played an explosive 33-minute "My Generation" at Fillmore East. Released later in the year, Cream's *Wheels On Fire* and Jimi Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* were considerably deeper, heavier incursions than their predecessors. Before the year was out, Glyn Johns recorded the first Led Zeppelin album. "We all wandered off into psychedelia land," says Dave Mason. "Then it became more grounded." The Stones were at the vanguard of bringing things back down to earth.

By the time they re-entered Olympic in May for the second extended stint on *Beggars Banquet*, the working methods had been established. "We'd book a session for seven o'clock and most of them wouldn't show up 'til midnight if you were lucky," Eddie Kramer told *Uncut*. "Then they'd go 'til five or six in the morning."

Girlfriends, gophers and musicians all added to the atmosphere. "It wasn't unusual to go over and hang out," says Mason. "I dropped in and out while they were doing the album to hear what was going on." Eric Clapton came and didn't play; Ry Cooder came and did, reportedly adding mandolin to the country-fied "Factory Girl" and guitar to some of the outtakes like "Downtown Suzie". In contrast to *...Satanic Majesties*, this time the more exotic musical touches were deployed as supporting colours rather



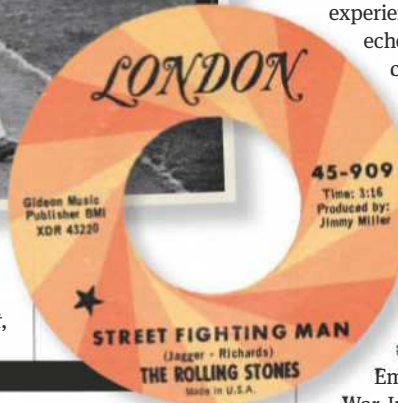
"Sixth Stone", pianist Nicky Hopkins, circa 1970



Jones on his way to court after his arrest on drugs charges, May 21, 1968



Marching, charging feet: Jagger attended this antiwar demo outside the US Embassy, London, March 17, 1968



paid high dividends, particularly on the album's most famous, and infamous, tracks, "Street Fighting Man" and "Sympathy For The Devil".

PART of the power of *Beggars Banquet* is that it is the sound of The Rolling Stones stepping out into some turbulent sociopolitical weather to take a reading. Some of it was personal. The humorous "Factory Girl" and rousing "Salt Of The Earth" idealised working-class experience; after their brushes with the higher echelons of the establishment, these might be considered the sound of the Stones picking sides. On "Jigsaw Puzzle", when Jagger informs us that "*The Queen is bravely shouting, 'What the hell is going on?'*" it feels like a variation of Dylan's generational taunt on "Ballad Of A Thin Man", that "*something is happening here, but you don't know it is*".

Other songs had a more direct resonance. On March 17, Jagger had been among the crowds marching on the US Embassy in London to protest the Vietnam War. In New York, Mexico City, Tokyo and Paris, thousands more were doing the same. In April, Martin Luther King had been shot dead in Memphis, raising the heat of the Civil Rights protests in America. In Czechoslovakia, the Soviet tanks had crushed the Prague Spring with ruthless efficiency. Little wonder that "Street Fighting Man" fizzles with the hot-metal tang of reportage, driven by the "*sound of marching, charging feet*". Yet however spontaneous it feels, the song exemplifies the Stones' painstaking approach to recording.

than primary textures. On "Factory Girl", the folksy mandolin and Ric Grech's country fiddle are married to an Eastern rhythm; the breakdown in the middle is raga-like. Like much of *Beggars Banquet*, it's not quite as simple as it sounds.

Between sessions, the band divided their time between London and their grander country homes: Jagger at Stargroves in Hampshire; Wyman at Gedding Hall in Suffolk; Watts in Lewes and Richards in his Elizabethan manor house, Redlands, in Sussex, where he, Jagger and Watts would often meet to bash through ideas. At Olympic, the partners of the three leading Stones – Marianne Faithfull, Anita Pallenberg and Suki Potier – regularly paid court. "It was a great team," says Brown. "Marianne was such a fantastic woman, very friendly. And the odd roadie would come over and give you a toké. Everyone was smoking spliffs back in those days, even Charlie, but it was very focused." Even so, Johns reckons "the most work got done when we were on our own and there weren't people hanging around".

In the vacuum created by Jones, a new power dynamic took shape. Watts and Wyman were, says Johns, "extremely nice and pliable, but Mick and Keith were a really strong double act. They contributed enormously, not just by writing and performing the material, but by having a massive say in the production. They were very much in control of what they wanted."

The musicians played in a loose semi-circle, often sitting on the floor. Though the amplifiers were screened off, the setup encouraged ensemble playing. Several of Jagger's final vocals were recorded live with the band. "They were experimenting to a degree," says Brown. "Keith moved around. He played guitar on some tracks, bass on others, he might tell Bill Wyman to play percussion. Charlie is playing kit, but he might also be messing around on African drums. Jagger was very professional, very sorted. Whatever his limitations, he knew what he could do with his voice. There was a lot of dancing around in the studio as well."

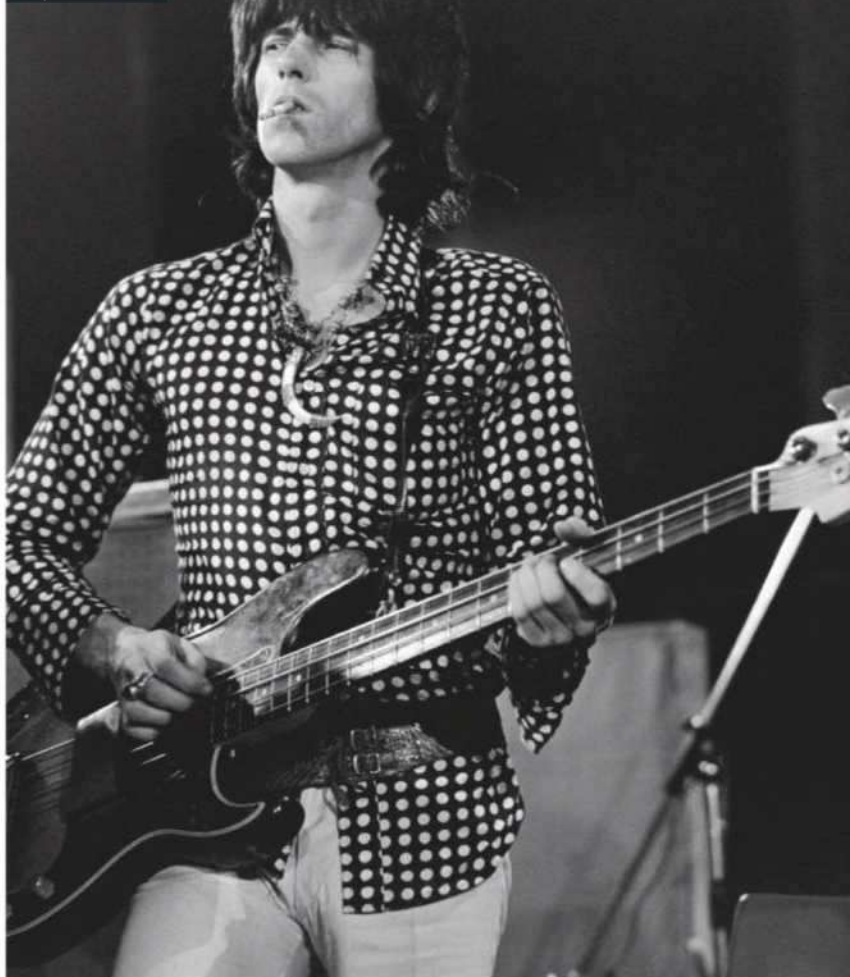
While the hokey shaggy dog tale of "Dear Doctor", written wholly by Jagger, was in good shape from the first take, others took an age. The process would typically start with a snatch of a riff, a provisional groove, a sliver of melody. From there, it had to be kneaded slowly into shape. As Richards later told *Guitar World*: "The thing with a good band is not to put them in a studio and say, 'It goes like this.' Put them in there and see what they come up with. If we've got the song, we'll chase the damn thing all around the room, up to the ceiling..."

There was plenty of chasing on *Beggars Banquet*. "There was lots of experimentation," says Johns. "Very rarely did anybody turn up with a song written. The process would all take place in the studio. That was pretty unusual, I didn't work with anyone else who would use the studio as a demo situation. Also, it would depend on how together Keith was whether you got anything done. He would sit and play an idea for two days, over and over again. Charlie would play along with him, and everybody else would come up with ideas as that progressed. It was quite a lengthy process, but it worked." The approach could be hugely frustrating – and intensely boring – but it

## "Mick and Keith were very much in control"

GLYN JOHNS

Richards at Olympic during the filming of Godard's *One Plus One*, June 1968





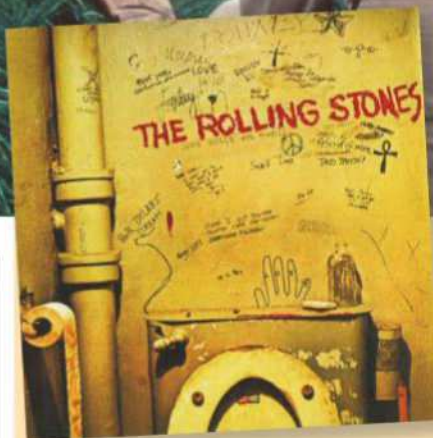


In a field of their own: Swakestone near Derby, June, 1968

According to legend, “Street Fighting Man” was built on the crackling foundations of Richards’ overloaded guitar riff, captured at home on his Philips recorder. “Keith had this idea, this sound, and the plan was for the band to play to it,” says Brown. “In the end, a big chunk of [the demo] is the record.” Eddie Kramer recalled it slightly differently. “Jimmy Miller brought in his Wollensak – basically a cassette machine with one mic built in – and said, ‘Let’s try this,’ stuck it in the middle of the band on the floor, pressed record, and the band made a circle around it. When it played back we hooked up a little six-inch Philips loudspeaker and put one mic in front of it and recorded that onto one track of the four-track machine, and that became the basis for that track. Now, of course, Keith says it was his idea and his tape machine, but I don’t quite remember it that way...”

Not unusually on *Beggars Banquet*, the band cut the backing track before they’d written a song. Visiting the studio, Dave Mason was drafted in to help. “Me, Charlie and Brian sat around playing a hotchpotch of drums to the track, with Keith laying down [another] acoustic guitar part. Charlie had this little briefcase and inside there was a tiny little snare drum.” This was a 1930s toy drum kit that Watts had found in an antique shop. “I played this big Afghan drum, basically the bass drum, and Brian had a slightly smaller one,” Mason continues. “The three of us created that groove for Keith. That’s the way the track was cut. Then I played that weird horn on the play-out, the shehnai, an Indian [woodwind] instrument. I guess Brian was supposed to do it, but I don’t know whether he was particularly coherent at that point.”

Another old friend witnessed the next stage in the song’s evolution. Andrew Loog Oldham hadn’t seen the Stones since he’d left almost a year earlier. While visiting The Small Faces in Studio Two, he “nervously” popped in to say hello. “Keith and Mick were alone in the studio around a mic trying to finish what would become ‘Street Fighting Man,’” he recalls. “It had a different title at that time: ‘Can Anybody Do Something Or Other’ [“Did Everybody Pay Their Dues?”] I thought it was rather alien, because it was the opposite of how I’d worked with



## JUMPIN’ JACK FLUSH!

The truth behind *Beggars Banquet*’s ‘banned’ cover!

ON June 7, 1968, the Stones took a break from recording “Sympathy For The Devil” to be photographed by Michael Joseph at Sarum Chase, a Mock Tudor mansion in Hampstead. The pictures of the band in dandified Victorian finery, projecting a state of post-prandial dissolution, were used – in treated form – on the inside gatefold sleeve. Capturing the cover image was more complex. Having stumbled across a particularly grotty toilet in Los Angeles, on July 26 Jagger and Richards dispatched photographer Barry Feinstein to shoot the scene. Feinstein added some choice scrawls of his own, including song titles and assorted credits. All was set for an August release, until Decca dismissed the cover on grounds of extreme poor taste. The Stones held firm, and the standoff delayed the album for three months. They finally agreed to release the album in a plain white sleeve, featuring the name of the band and the record in an ornate scroll, with the letters RSVP in the bottom left-hand corner. Arriving two weeks after The Beatles’ new album, resplendently modish in a pure white gatefold sleeve, it looked, once again, as if the Stones were following, rather than leading, their rivals.



them. The song was the reason you recorded. I didn’t think that slaving 36 hours to compose and sing a song on a finished track was magic, but I was not a Rolling Stone.” “Did Everybody Pay Their Dues?” used the same backing track as “Street Fighting Man”, with added electric guitar and violin. The melody was similar, the lyrics entirely different. Jagger took it away and returned with “Street Fighting Man”, tweaking the chorus melody and writing words that referenced the anti-Vietnam protest and embraced the roar of the world around him. The insurrectionary feel of the verses – “Think the time is right for a palace revolution!” – is tempered by the cautionary realism of the chorus: “What can a poor boy do, ‘cept to sing for a rock’n’roll band?” Through the second half of 1968, the question echoed on the pages of countercultural journals and underground meeting rooms. “Street Fighting Man” pulls off the trick of sounding like classic Stones while being something entirely new. “It might be my favourite track that I ever did with them,” says Johns.

The momentous times also found their way into the final song recorded for the album. Originally titled “The Devil Is My Name” and inspired by Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel *The Master And Margarita*, “Sympathy For The Devil” began as an acoustic folk song written by Jagger, in which he assumed the role of a seductive devil, casting a dark spell through history, from the crucifixion of Christ to the Russian Revolution, the Second World War and the murder of JFK in 1963. Incongruously, Charlie Watts recalled first hearing it one spring evening on the doorstep of his Surrey home.

Its evolution typifies how the Stones inched towards greatness, circling their prey from all available angles until it yielded what was required. Recorded between June 4 and 10, its tortuous progress was tracked by French film director Jean-Luc Godard and his crew, who spent two days in Olympic making *One Plus One* while the band were working on “Sympathy For The Devil”. Their cameras, blinding lights and dollies made for a surreal atmosphere, even before the studio burst into flames. Afterwards, as the firemen doused the blaze, Jimmy Miller calmly spooled off all the tapes, put them in their boxes, ordered a cab, and drove

into the night. Godard, meanwhile, “stood in the doorway of the studio with a 16mm camera with a rather odd grin on his face, filming everyone running around like ants,” says Johns. “It was pretty extraordinary. Unbelievably, we were back in there the following night. There was a bit of a stink, but other than that it was fine.” ➤

The LP launch banquet gets rowdy in the Elizabethan room, the Gore Hotel, London, December 5, 1968



From folkish origins, “Sympathy For The Devil” had become a sparse, slow country drag, with layers of acoustic guitar, heavy Hammond and an oddly syncopated drum beat. “It’s a bit dead,” reckoned Jagger, not incorrectly. Much shuffling ensued. New rhythms, fresh configurations. Days passed. Finally, Ghanaian percussionist Rocky Dijon was drafted in on congas. Richards switched to bass and Hopkins to piano. Wyman picked up some African shakers and Jones stayed out of harm’s way, welded to acoustic guitar.

Dijon fell upon the menacing tattoo that opened the LP; Watts chimed in with a Latino jazz groove inspired by Kenny Clarke’s playing on Dexter Gordon’s “A Night In Tunisia”. The pace quickened, energy levels rose, and the song mutated into a pulsing rock’n’roll samba. This was where the days and weeks of seemingly aimless noodling paid off. The music had soaked deep into their muscle memory. When the crucial moment arrived, they were ready.

The song’s final act was written by fate. On June 6, Robert Kennedy was assassinated in the Ambassador Hotel in LA. Jagger quickly adapted the lyric, “I shouted out, ‘Who killed Kennedy?’” to “Who killed the Kennedys?” Phill Brown’s lasting image is a happier one: recording the backing vocals with the band and their girlfriends. “I loved that,” he says. “Everyone in a circle, around one mic, in their hippie robes. Keith is pointing up in the air for the key changes. It’s so rough and ready, but brilliant. They were all so young and positive. On the record it sounds fantastic.”

“SYMPATHY For The Devil” was the last song cut for *Beggars Banquet*. The LP was completed in mid-July in LA, where Glyn Johns was now working with the Steve Miller Band at RCA Studios. Jagger, Richards and Miller flew over with the tapes, and they spent a week mixing between midnight and 4am. “They had a tremendous influence on the way I mixed everything,” says Johns. “Mick would always want his voice buried!”

Jagger initially hoped that the album might be released by the end of August, but a row with Decca



Jagger on the set of *Performance* with (from left) Michèle Breton and Anita Pallenberg



over the “offensive” cover art [see panel, previous page] caused a delay of several months. In the interim, “Street Fighting Man” was released as an American single. Banned by several radio stations for its “subversive” intent at a time of great social upheaval, it barely scraped into the Top 50 but, as a declaration of the Stones’ newfound potency, it could hardly have been more effective.

With no tour planned and the album in limbo, the band sweated while their lead singer spent the autumn shooting Donald Cammell and Nic Roeg’s arthouse gangster movie, *Performance*. Although Jagger’s rumoured involvement with his co-star, Anita Pallenberg, Richard’s girlfriend, momentarily soured the mood and reported scuppered plans for the Stones to contribute to the soundtrack album, the film yielded another great song in a year full of them. In November, Jagger recorded the first version – there would eventually be three – of “Memo From Turner” for the soundtrack, most likely with Ry Cooder and Charlie Watts assisting.

Although *Performance* wasn’t released until 1970, its exploration of London’s criminal underworld and daring depictions of graphic sex, fluid sexuality, extreme violence and drug use chimed with the transgressive

ambience of the Stones in 1968. Jagger’s characterisation of the mysterious, reclusive rock star, Turner, meanwhile, bore relation to the personae he’d recently created in “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” and “Sympathy For The Devil”. Glyn Johns, for one, scoffs at the notion that Jagger was cultivating some kind of demonic alter ego. “Darker? More dangerous? What nonsense! He was playing a part. I don’t remember any dark side to Mick at all.” Perhaps not, but it was brilliantly effective theatre.

*Beggars Banquet* was finally released on December 6, 1968, almost exactly a year after *Satanic Majesties*. It was launched the previous day with a mock-medieval banquet in the Elizabethan room at Kensington’s Gore Hotel, an event that ended in a mass food fight, somewhat underscoring Johns’ point. “There was quite a bit of cake flying around,” recalls Keith Altham. “I spent a lot of time under the table.”

The reviews widely heralded a rebirth, celebrating the Stones’ decision to indulge their most primitive urges while enhancing their underground credentials. *Time* recognised that *Beggars Banquet* fitted the prevailing mood for “raw vitality” and “authentic simplicity”. *Chicago Sun-Times* called it “beautiful... their rawest, rudest, most arrogant, most savage record yet”. *Rolling Stone* simply heralded the return of rock’n’roll. “It was an absolute return to form,” says Ian Anderson. “*Beggars Banquet* was what we might call progressive blues. It wasn’t just 12-bar imitation white-boy blues. It takes a step forward.”

TAPED less than a week after the album release, The Rolling Stones Rock And Roll Circus was an ambitious live-in-the-studio extravaganza filmed for future transmission on the BBC. Directed by Michael Lindsay Hogg, who also made *Let It Be* with The Beatles, the idea of a musical big-top circus show, complete with fire-eaters, jugglers and huckstering ringmasters, was partly a hangover from the original plan to involve The Small Faces in the lineup; Ronnie Lane had a deep love of the carnival life, and enthusiastically pitched the idea. This would not simply be a Stones performance, but a tasting menu for the sounds of 1968. From the title down, it was every inch a rock’n’roll show, featuring Taj Mahal, Jethro Tull, The Who and a cameo from John Lennon, Eric Clapton and Mitch Mitchell, billed as The Dirty Mac, at their most savage on The Beatles’ “Yer Blues”. The Stones were cast as cultural curators, leading from the front.

"I thought the concept was really clever," says Glyn Johns, who recorded the concert and was involved in every production meeting. During the planning, he made one intriguing suggestion. "I'd just done the first Led Zeppelin album and took an acetate of it to one of the meetings. I said, 'I really think you should have them on, they're going to be fantastic.' Mick didn't get through one side! There was no conversation, it was, 'Shut up and go away.'"

There was genuine enthusiasm, however, for the artists involved. The Stones had first met Taj Mahal after his show at the Whisky A Go Go in Hollywood in mid-July, around the time they were mixing *Beggars*. A few months later, eight first-class round-trip tickets to London arrived. "They said they were doing the Rock And Roll Circus and would like us to be part of it," says Taj Mahal. "They took care of everything, treated us royally. They were the most gracious hosts."

With Intertel Studios in Wembley decked out as a down-at-heel circus tent, taping began at midday on December 11, 1968, spilling over into December 12, finishing around 5am. "It was moderately shambolic," says Ian Anderson. "It was a long couple of days, spent waiting in a TV studio. Jagger was buzzing around, very involved, working with the director. You could tell it was his baby. It was a Jagger initiative."

The Stones had prepared a six-song set to close the show, consisting of "Jumpin' Jack Flash", "Parachute Woman", "No Expectations", "You Can't Always Get What You Want", "Sympathy For The Devil" and "Salt Of The Earth". Nothing predated 1968 and, in the case of "You Can't Always Get What You Want", they were previewing a song attempted during the *Beggars Banquet* sessions, which would not be released until a year later, on *Let It Bleed*.

The material was strong, but they were ring rusty, and effectively down a man. In rehearsals, they were sluggish. "Brian was struggling," recalls Taj Mahal. "If you talked music with him it seemed he could come out of whatever [trauma] he was in, but we all could see he was having difficulties. I assumed he was doing some pretty strong drugs." With Bill Wyman, Taj Mahal enjoyed a rather different conversation. "Bill



## THE SOUND OF '68

Keith's new "dirty tone" revealed!

**K**EY to the new music the Stones made in 1968 was the "grinding, dirty sound" Richards coaxed from his Gibson acoustic guitar. He had started using his new Philips cassette player as a mini studio, overloading its tiny speaker to create a ferocious, unruly tone, "with a little tingle on top", as Richards wrote in *Life*. On "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and "Street Fighting Man", his home recordings of their mighty origin riffs were woven into the finished track. On the latter, the Stones built an entire song around the demo, playing to the recording and adding layer after layer of distorted acoustics. "We copied things from one format to the other much more than people realise," says Phill Brown. "This was early on in cassettes. The wow-and-flutter was wild!"

belonged to the [Royal] Horticultural Society, and I was a Future Farmer of America," he says. "We talked a bit about bass and boogie, and then we had a conversation about plants."

The recording was beset by technical hiccups, and there were five full run-throughs before the final taping. When the Stones hit the stage, it was 4am, and band and audience were leaking energy. "Jagger was an example to all of us in terms of commitment and energy," says Anderson. "Unfortunately, he'd given so much in rehearsal he was sung out by the full run through. He was doing it for the guys in his band, to get them to pick up the pace, but he sang himself out a bit."

The result was not quite the climactic triumph they had hoped. The following day, the band convened to review the tapes, and decided to shelve the BBC transmission. They felt their performance didn't measure up; they may also have winced at some of the creaky comedic interludes. "Mick said he wasn't at all happy with what they'd done, so they sat on it," says Johns. "It wasn't that bad at all, it was just their mood at the time. The rumour was that they felt they were upstaged by The Who, but I don't think they were blown away by what The Who did."

"The Who were in good shape, fighting fit and road ready, but the highlight for me was 'Yer Blues,'" says Anderson. "That was good. Harder-edged, a bit angry. But the Stones were still very credible. They were back, that was the important thing. They hadn't been performing together for a while, it was a bit rickety, but they were finding their feet. It was a return for them."

The evidence backs him up – yet the show was as much a departure as a return. Finally released in 1996, *The Rolling Stones Rock And Roll Circus* is not just, in Anderson's words, a "documentary of temporary insanity", nor the oddly triumphant denouement of a landmark year. It also an act of secession from the past. The film documents Brian Jones's final performance as a Stone. Within six months he'd been thrown out of the band he founded and then dead a month later. The next time the world caught sight of the Stones, playing a ramshackle free concert at Hyde Park on July 5, 1969, with debuting guitarist Mick Taylor, they'd completed

a transformation into a different band for a different time.

The change began with *Beggars Banquet*, where the Stones fashioned an entirely new working dynamic, creating their now inimitable music in an entirely self-regulated world. "It was the start of the way they would work in the future," says Phill Brown. "Taking over a chateau or moving the mobile studio to a house. Having time to experiment and mess around."

It resurrected a faltering band, launching a five-year spell of unparalleled magnificence – *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers*, *Exile On Main Street* – a reign in which all self-doubt was excised. "Beggars is the highlight of what they achieved," says Glyn Johns. "It led to a magical period in their discography, transformed them into something completely different from what they had been before. It was like being let out of a cage." ➤



The show must go on: recording the Rock And Roll Circus, December 11, 1968

The Stones in Paris, October 25, 2017, to announce Part Two of the No Filter tour in Europe and the UK, starting in Croke Park, Dublin, May 2018

# "THIS IS THE STONES..."

## Keith, Charlie and Ron talk touring, decompression rituals and the mood in the Stones camp: "It's a creative hub!"

**S**TART 'em up! On May 17, The Rolling Stones play Dublin's Croke Park – the first of nine UK shows that include stop-offs for the Tongue & Lips in London, Southampton, Coventry, Manchester, Edinburgh and Cardiff. A continuation of the No Filter tour that ran on mainland Europe last autumn, this latest leg also marks the first time the Stones have played the UK since their Glastonbury/Hyde Park triumphs of 2013.

As ardent Stones watchers will know, the band have revised their touring practices since 2007's *A Bigger Bang*. Out are the gargantuan, continent straddling treks of old and in are sharp, localised bursts of activity – like the *América Latina Olé* tour and the Fall 2016 US tour. Around that time, they told *Uncut* about the challenges and opportunities facing the world's greatest rock'n'roll band as they entered their sixth decade.

### Are these bite-sized tours a more manageable way of working?

**CHARLIE WATTS:** That's age. Also it gets boring after a while. When you look at a sheet with 150 dates on it, it's like, "Bloody hell." Now I wouldn't get on the train to get to London to start the thing let alone go on the road... it's all based on a willingness and desire to play.

**RON WOOD:** It's a different emphasis now. The input that we have now in live gigs is more of a

drive. We want to keep it going all the time. There's hardly any time. We used to have years off between tours, didn't we?

### But the tours lasted years!

**WOOD:** That, too! Some of our promoters in the past were slave drivers. Playing in 5ft of snow in Chicago, in the open air. We thought, 'Hang on, we're not getting any younger!' There's a limit to how much you can do comfortably.

### What's the mood in the Stones' camp at the moment?

**WOOD:** It's a creative hub. Everyone's enjoying it and they don't want it to stop. 'Hang on, that's not a very long tour. What are we doing?' We're still waiting for the big thing, but nobody's saying what it is. But I suppose that's what keeps our ambition fired up. No one knows where it's going to lead us next.

### Who plugs in first?

**WOOD:** Charlie, because he's not electric. Charlie put the challenge with the different tempos.

### How does it work with you and Keith live; how do you share out the lead lines?

**WOOD:** It's in the moment. If it's a long-established

song, where Keith had the solo in the original, he might say, "You take it." As long as you have a guide-post. Or I will say, "I think I should do this." He'll go, "OK, I'll agree."

### What's your favourite song to play live?

**WOOD:** Oh, God – the *Some Girls* time was so much fun. I had a lot of input. A lot of the songs we play live, although I wasn't on the original, I've now played for so long that I've played them far more than Brian ever did. But there's still nothing like being in at the inception of a song.

"We're working on new stuff right now..."

KEITH RICHARDS

### Charlie, you do a lot of design work for posters and T-shirts.

**WATTS:** Mick and I have always been aware of what you look like. So I usually get asked. But most of it is yessing and noing – yes, no, yes, no.

But it's what I used to do before I joined them. At the time you do it, you think, 'Oh blimey, is it any good?' But looking back, you've got a whole wodge of stuff and you think, 'Yeah, we designed that.'

### Do you have a decompression ritual when you come off tour these days?

**KEITH RICHARDS:** Very much. Every tour, when it ends, you're so much in the groove of it you suddenly realise there is nothing to do, nothing you have to do. It's always been like that, the wind goes out of your sails for a bit. Anyway, I kind of enjoy being lethargic. I catch up with the family, do some reading.

### Although you've cut back your tour itineraries, the South America run was substantial. What did you learn from that?

**RICHARDS:** South America? Incredible. And we got a very good movie out of it. I'm not a big fan of filming, but Paul Dugdale came out with *Olé, Olé, Olé!* – yeah, it's the Stones, but it's more about South American people, the energy and optimism, which we need a lot more of in this world right now.

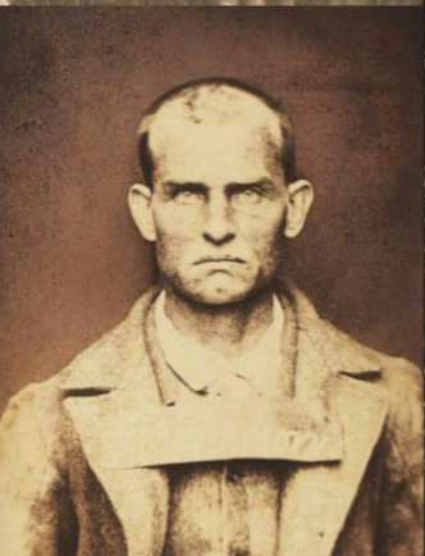
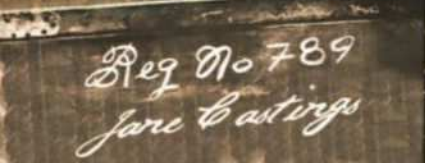
### Exhibitionism is still running [it's currently on its final US stop in Nashville]. Were you surprised at its success?

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, I didn't think anybody would want to go and see that flat of mine – or our flat. You should have smelled it!

### After *Blue & Lonesome*, expectations are high for a new studio record. How's it going?

**RICHARDS:** We're working on some new stuff right now. We recorded some last year. Blow the cobwebs aside. We're not talking Madonna here. And obviously we're not looking to set the world on fire with some great big new pop hit. This is the Stones... **©MICHAEL BONNER**





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## Album by album

# Eleanor Friedberger

From Fiery Furnaces' invitingly odd indie-rock to wildly diverse solo LPs

“I HAVE no musical training, and I could barely play the guitar,” says Eleanor Friedberger, thinking back to the beginning of her solo career. “It really forced me to learn how to write a song.”

The singer and guitarist is perhaps being too humble, though: through her years as half of The Fiery Furnaces alongside her older brother Matt, Friedberger created some of the strangest, most labyrinthine and infectious indie-rock of this century. Since their split in 2010, she has embarked on an increasingly impressive solo career, with this year's *Rebound* – led by drum machines and synths – the polar opposite of the Laurel Canyon lilt of 2016's *New View*.

If Friedberger's solo career is going from strength to strength, though, she's still proud of all the records she's made, especially the Furnaces' 2003 debut.

“Part of me wishes that The Fiery Furnaces had had maybe a little bit more success,” she explains, “so we could have continued making more extreme and experimental albums, and then I could have done my own thing simultaneously.” **TOMPINNOCK**

### THE FIERY FURNACES GALLOWSBIRD'S BARK

ROUGH TRADE, 2003

The Fiery Furnaces' hastily recorded debut, a warped version of bluesy garage-rock



I think the first thing somebody does is somehow the most authentic version of themselves, and to me, this was such a special time. We made this in a vacuum, we didn't have a record label, we had a bunch of songs we really liked and we knew how they should sound. So we borrowed money from friends and did the recording very quickly. I still remember that after the first day we sat in our car – which had belonged to our mother, it was a Nissan Ultima – and listened to the rough mixes. That still stays with me as the most exciting, satisfying, gratifying moment. My brother and I were so pleased with each other, and I feel like he and I have never been as close and happy as we were that day. It was never really the same again, to be honest, but I think it would be impossible to be. We recorded it at the Rare Book Room in Greenpoint, which was the neighbourhood where we lived. We did the basic tracking in three days. I would love to go back and re-record

the whole album, despite everything I just said! It makes me cringe a little bit, listening to the singing. The way that I first started playing music was by finding blues lyrics that I liked and changing the perspective – usually from a male to a female point of view. My brother and I did that a little bit to start with; “Single Again” started off like that. In hindsight, I wouldn't call Matt dictatorial – every band has a leader and a music director, and he was that. He's just incredibly prolific, and he wasn't always very good at sharing what he was working on. Later, I would have to just wing it in the studio, which was pretty difficult.

### THE FIERY FURNACES BLUEBERRY BOAT

ROUGH TRADE, 2004

The duo's second album is an ambitious technicolour epic, and one of the weirdest records released this century



We started recording this before the first album had even come out. We had more confidence because Rough Trade had signed us, but I think they were really shocked by *Blueberry Boat*. The only time I remember having a real conversation with my brother about

this album was with “Straight Street” – the lyrics are all about cellphone companies, crazy stuff that I could never imagine singing, and I remember him handing me a piece of paper and me looking at it dumbfounded. He said, “You're gonna sound so great singing this!” And he was really convincing. We had more time in the studio compared to our first album – some of those songs used like 50, 60, 70 tracks, and we were experimenting for the first time combining tape and ProTools. My brother always wanted to make these mini-rock operas – as a kid, he was obsessed with The Who, and the opportunity presented itself. But Geoff Travis and everyone at Rough Trade were really supportive. It wasn't until the next record that we had any A&R advice, which we... didn't take. We recorded some of the songs for *EP* and were about to go on tour supporting Franz Ferdinand, and Keith Wood – who now manages LCD Soundsystem – said, “There's no reason for you to be supporting Franz Ferdinand. Go and record six more songs that sound like this.” But we didn't take that advice – instead, we just put together some more absurd songs that we loved, to stick on the rest of *EP*, and then went about making the album with our grandmother. And we know how that turned out!

### THE FIERY FURNACES REHEARSING MY CHOIR

ROUGH TRADE, 2005

Eleanor and Matt recruit their grandmother for this concept album based on her life



My brother and I are so grateful for having done this, just on a personal level, because our grandmother died shortly afterwards. We loved her very much. At the time, it did seem kind of crazy. She had just had heart surgery and she kept saying, “You don't want me to do it, get your mother to do it,” but when it came time to be there, she was like, “No-one else could do this but me!” Just getting to record vocals with her for a few days in John McEntire's studio on the west side of Chicago was really one of the coolest things. Almost all of the album was based on her life, and on stories she had told us over the years. She was a great storyteller, and great vocalist – if I get my enunciation from anybody, it's from her. The process was again very secretive, on my brother's part – to be honest, I think Matt was making it up as he went along, some of it! For me, the most beautiful, iconic song is the first one, “The Garfield EI”, and it starts off with my grandmother saying,

Friedberger in 2018, up to solo album number four with the processed-sounding *Rebound*





With brother Matt, Fieri Furnaces' "secretive", "prolific" music director, in 2007

"Faster, hammers!" It's such an emotional sound, it makes me almost cry just thinking about it – hearing her say that and hearing the hammers of the piano. I sometimes think if this LP had come out now, it would be received so differently. But at the time, nobody wanted to hear an old person talk. And we were poised to be this cool band, then people rejected it.

## THE FIERY FURNACES WIDOW CITY

THRILL JOCKEY, 2007

Joined by a new, powerful rhythm section, *The Fiery Furnaces* record their heaviest album, with help from some vintage tape loops



I don't listen to any of these albums with any frequency, but this one I've occasionally gone back to

and listened to for some kind of pleasure. On a personal note, I feel like I learned how to sing on this album. This is the first one where I knew what I was doing. We'd started playing with Bob D'Amico and Jason Loewenstein, our rhythm section, and Bob was a very strong drummer, and suddenly we could play in this hard-rock '70s style that my brother and I loved. So we went about making a very '70s hard-rock album. We went back to the Key Club in Benton Harbor, and since we had been there last, Bill Skibbe had acquired two Chamberlins, which

are like Mellotrons, and that again defined the sound of the album – my brother was drawn to these new gadgets like candy. So if you hear flutes or strings, it's all from these Chamberlins. We had a few different ways of writing, but we were trying to write the lyrics together. I had found a huge stockpile of '60s and '70s *House And Garden* and *House Beautiful* magazines in my grandmother's basement, and a lot of the lyrics came out of these magazines. I think we were just trying to make a '70s prog album, which would have those little suites in them. That's really the music that we grew up listening to on the radio in Chicago, and to me we really captured that.

## THE FIERY FURNACES I'M GOING AWAY

THRILL JOCKEY, 2009

The final *Fiery Furnaces* album to date featured more streamlined songs, and a greater writing role for both members



I started writing a bunch of songs, and doing recording at home, for the first time in a long time. I'm

*Going Away* almost could have been a solo record, I guess, but we did it together. We recorded this on our own, at my house, at Jason's house, at Bob's house, and Jason recorded it himself. I would say this was the most collaborative album since our

first one, it's safe to say. We had been playing epic sets in 30-minute blocks or 60-minute blocks without stopping, but for this album's live sets we went back to playing songs and then stopping, maybe saying something or not, letting the audience clap and then playing another song. When I look back now, saying this out loud, it sounds a little boring to be honest! We'd been through a hell of a lot in a short amount of time, and we'd made a huge amount of material, and done a lot of touring. We were still at a level where my brother and I would share hotel rooms because we didn't have enough money to get our own rooms. That's a hard thing to sustain, and that's just on the personal side – musically speaking, it's hard to keep making things for somebody else, you know? But to me, it seems like the beauty of having a band with your sibling is that we could make albums in our fifties and sixties and that wouldn't be weird, that would be cool. So we've got another decade to go, 'til the fifties, at least!

## ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER LAST SUMMER

MERGE, 2011

Suddenly a solo artist, *Friedberger's* debut was tentative and charming



It was a nice gateway for me to then make my first album on my own, with the experience of

*I'm Going Away*. I don't know if I would have been able to do it without having done that album. We did a lot of touring after *I'm Going Away*, and then in the summer of 2010 I made this album. Suddenly I was hiring people to play on my album, and people are looking at me to tell them what to do. I worked with a producer, Eric Broucek, and it was mostly just he and I working together. It was very calm, very organized; he was always trying to figure out a way to service the song. I think he did a really great job. I paid for the album myself, and gave it to a few people, and Mac from Merge Records said he liked it and he'd put it out. And that was it. I wanted to be as quiet about it as possible, because I wasn't particularly confident about it. I knew it was good, but I wasn't like, 'This is my big artistic statement – I've been waiting 10 years to get out from under the wrath of my brother, and this is it!' I didn't feel that way at all, I wanted to make a nice little record. I know that sounds incredibly lame. When I first moved to New York years ago, I was working temp jobs and then getting drunk or smoking pot or taking ecstasy at night and on the weekends. And a big part of that was recording songs. So in that way, the album was me going back to that 23-year-old version of myself and making an album for that person who I was. Then I've been slowly building from that point. ➤

Friedberger in 2016, at the time of *New View*



## “Athens has a great nightlife... Because everyone smokes everywhere still, it feels like you’re in the ‘90s”

### ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER PERSONAL RECORD

MERGE, 2013

*Building on the success of Last Summer, Eleanor teams up with Wesley Stace, aka John Wesley Harding, for this follow-up*



After the first album, that went so well that I wanted to see how much better we could make a second record. I had also been touring with these guys who I wanted to do some recording with, so the second one was very much an extension of the first. I didn’t want to play Fiery Furnaces material live, so I had to immediately start writing new songs just to have a longer set. Half of *Personal Record* was written while we were touring *Last Summer*. Wesley is someone I met in New York before *Last Summer* came out – he does this variety show with musicians and writers and comedians. We became fast friends and started an email penpal-ship, and started writing songs through emails, which is something I never imagined doing. Now, with some time, I can see it a little bit differently... Maybe I was looking

for someone like that, because my brother and I stopped having that relationship a long time ago – Wesley was quite an aggressive friend, he was very much in my virtual face. He is a massive record nerd who really enjoyed showing me things over a period of a couple of years, and because I had this newfound role for myself as a ‘singer-songwriter’, I was playing with the idea of that. I didn’t know anything about that role and the history of that, so he introduced me to a lot of singer-songwriter-y music.

### ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER NEW VIEW

FRENCHKISS, 2016

*Her most sophisticated work to date, tracked live to tape with a full band*

I moved upstate at the end of 2013. It was a big change! It is nice, although I’ve turned into a cold-blooded killer of mice. I was a total city kid and city person, but it’s me against nature here. I recorded this about 40 minutes from where I live, so it’s pretty close in upstate New York terms. Everything’s about 40 minutes away. The guy who has the studio is called Clemens

Knieper, he’s German but he moved to the US when he was a teenager to live with his godmother, who is a German folk singer called Sibylle Baier. I met Clemens through someone I was playing with at the time – they had gone to college together. We met, I liked him instantly, but the big kicker was that he lived in the house that my brother and his ex-wife had briefly lived in – so I’d been to this house many times. At the time, as my relationship with Clemens has matured, I’ve come to think that he’s definitely the little brother that I never had. I thought this was really the best album I could make that was in that singer-songwriter tradition. And I did it with my touring band – we spent two months in LA and I presented them with the songs and we arranged them together, and then we played them live, did all the things that bands do, but that I’d never done before. Then we went upstate, recorded

UNCUT CLASSIC



in a barn live to tape, and it was just the perfect example of that kind of record. The perfect thing I could do to continue that singer-songwriter tradition. By the end of 2016, I never needed to revisit that record – I’m completely done with that! That year was really difficult; I did more touring than I’d done in years, and it ended with me playing some shows in Europe and being in Tel Aviv playing on the night of the election, and then going to Rome to do one more show by myself – just feeling the weight of all that was a lot.

### ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER REBOUND

FRENCHKISS, 2018

*A left-turn, towards a more electronic, quirky sound reminiscent of The Fiery Furnaces*



My mother is Greek-American. I’ve always wanted to spend more time in Athens, and after the election I didn’t wanna be here for the inauguration. So I left for Athens, and the idea was I was gonna write the album there – but instead I formed a Greek band, played some shows, and had a really interesting time. So much of my experience in Athens is not like any other city I’ve been to. I don’t know whether to blame it on the cultural moment, but I felt like I didn’t want anyone’s help, I wanted to do the whole thing myself. So I made these demos when I came back from Greece that were much more elaborate than anything I’d ever done. Bradford Cox and I had talked about him producing me for a while, so I ended up going down to Atlanta, and it was a disaster. What happened? Nothing! We fought like cats and dogs, and the first demo I played him, he was like, “This is done. Anything I do is going to take away from that.” He boosted my confidence, but the demos still weren’t good enough for me, so I recruited Clemens to help me finish it. We kept the idea of not having real

drums, to have it sound artificial and the opposite of the warm, live-to-tape sound of the previous record. The LP is named after a goth club in Athens, and “It’s Hard” is about going there. The city has a great nightlife, most people don’t even eat dinner until 10pm. Because everyone smokes everywhere still, it feels like you’re in the ‘90s. Weirdly, this sounds more like a Furnaces record than my other solo albums, I don’t know why. 🎧

*Rebound is out May 4 on Frenchkiss*



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DÜSSELDORF '78





"The guys from the other side of the Rhine": Kraftwerk at Düsseldorf railway station

# "THE MEMPHIS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC"

Welcome to **DÜSSELDORF, 1978**. As **Stephen Dalton** discovers, the city's nascent new-wave scene incubated wild avant-garde happenings, conceptual artists and shocking public outrages. There is street violence, lost cult stars and terrorist paranoia – plus the tensions between radical new acts and local aristocrats Kraftwerk. Says one musician, "Music could be wild, it could be punk."



La Düsseldorf, featuring Klaus Dinger, Hans Lampe and Thomas Dinger

**D**URING the mid-to-late '70s, Kraftwerk became accustomed to unexpected visits from unwelcome guests. During the political turmoil of the time, the group had their homes in Düsseldorf and even their Kling Klang studio searched on several occasions by the police. "They didn't come and knock on the door," Ralf Hütter told *Uncut*. "They'd be coming in with pulled guns: 'Where are the weapons?' It happened again in some houses; they would climb the walls to the third floor, where we were working on the artwork for *Radioactivity*. So you had the whole paranoia of the situation. We travelled late at night and we'd be stopped just for controls. Düsseldorf is a very controlled city, so they would stop your cars and ask for your papers and permits."

To the members of Kraftwerk, change was coming. A knock at the door might mean many things. The arrival of the police searching for evidence of terrorist activity – or perhaps the sound of a new generation of musicians seeking to make themselves heard. Kraftwerk had once been fêted as cutting edge, but now a new and more radical revolution was underway – and, it became clear, Kraftwerk were anything but welcome. On June 3, 1978, the Carsch-Haus – a former Düsseldorf department store in the centre of the city – played host to Germany's first punk festival. Bands on the bill included Male, frequently cited as Germany's first punk band, and Charley's Girls, a chaotic collective of fluid membership. At the door, meanwhile, two smartly dressed men in their thirties tried to gain entry.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/UG VIA GETTY IMAGES; FROHLING/KRAFTWERK/GETTY IMAGES

"It was Ralf and maybe Karl," recalls Ralf Dörper, a teenage punk at the time. "They wanted to come to the festival, and they were sent away. 'You're too old! We do not want you people here!' That was the attitude to Kraftwerk among most people."

"They wanted to come in, but they were not allowed, and then they were nearly beaten up," adds another eyewitness – musician, author and Düsseldorf rock historian Rudi Esch. "Another friend of mine took care of this situation. He said, 'No, no, no! They are cool people, you can't beat them up!' So he helped them. This was Trini Trimpop, who later formed Die Toten Hosen."

Punk arrived in Germany a little late, but its supporters certainly made up for lost time. In 1978, underground bands, venues, fanzines and labels began to emerge from the key urban centres of Berlin and Hamburg. But it was the more genteel, compact, arty Rhineland city of Düsseldorf that led the charge. Orchestrated by a tiny handful of ambitious amateurs, the German new wave scene howled and hammered itself into existence. Even in a city as placid and well heeled as Düsseldorf, the climate was ripe for revolution – or perhaps several revolutions all at once. During 1978, Düsseldorf was not only caught up in its own punk insurgency, but also rocked by other forms of turmoil – creative, intellectual and political.

In the late 1960s, Germany had served as a giant laboratory for a new wave of experimental avant-rock bands including Can, Kraftwerk, Popol Vuh, Tangerine Dream, Amon Düül II, Neu! and Cluster. Now, a decade later, a fresh generation of musical dissidents were determined to forge a new German identity of their own. They flocked to Düsseldorf from as far afield as Munich, Frankfurt and Berlin to find the city awash with riotous young bands, wild avant-garde happenings, armed police and wanted terrorists. These were incendiary times, exciting but explosive.

"Everybody was doing something, everybody was looking for something," says DAF's Robert Görl. "There was a lot of exchange happening at that time."

"Too clean, too accurate": Kraftwerk in 1978 – (l-r) Florian Schneider, Ralf Hütte, Wolfgang Flür and Karl Bartos

# FULLY AUTOMATED LUXURY COMMUNISM

## The Man-Machine at 40

**R**ELASED 40 years ago this month, *The Man-Machine* is Kraftwerk's most fully realised pop-art statement, a succinct and melodious road map for the 1980s synth-pop boom. With Karl Bartos sharing full songwriter credit for the first time alongside Hütter and Schneider, it features the timeless techno-utopian anthem "The Robots", droll satirical vignettes like future UK chart-topper "The Model", and the sublimely romantic ballad "Neon Lights", later covered by OMD and U2. *The Man-Machine* is also Kraftwerk's most disco-era creation, nodding to Giorgio Moroder's Eurodisco throb on the rippling, gleaming synthscapes "Spacelab" and "Metropolis". The silky production was partly engineered by Leonard Jackson, renowned for his work with Rose Royce, Smokey Robinson and George Clinton. Featuring the four band members in matching militaristic red shirts, Karl Klefisch's striking sleeve artwork references both the Soviet Russian graphic artist El Lissitzky and the androgynous high camp of the Weimar era. Life is a kabaret, old chum.

**R**ALF Dörper turned 18 in January 1978. By this time he was already a key architect of the embryonic Düsseldorf punk scene, playing with one of Germany's earliest art-punk bands, SYPH. Inspired by reading the English music papers and listening to John Peel on the British military radio network BFBS, he was eager to shake up his sleepy hometown. "In Düsseldorf we had a punk scene, but we were a step behind," Dörper says. "More or less when punk stopped in England, it started in Düsseldorf."

Dörper admits the city's initial punk inner circle numbered barely 10 or 15 people, but he was determined to document it in the pages of Germany's first DIY punk fanzine, *The Ostrich* – named after a pre-Velvets Lou Reed song. Launched in March 1977 by Franz Bielmeier and Peter Hein, the magazine's tiny pool of writers used multiple aliases, mostly female, to magnify their cultural impact. They also shamelessly plugged their own short-lived amateur band, Charley's Girls, who later played the Carsch-Haus festival.

With strong roots in the visual arts scene, Düsseldorf's first-generation punk clique included several future prime movers in the German new wave (Neue Deutsche Welle) movement that blossomed in the early 1980s, spearheaded by electronic bands like Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft, Der Plan, Fehlfarben, Die Krupps. Rheingold and Liaisons Dangereuses. Some lived in the city, others in nearby

towns like Solingen and Wuppertal. In early 1978, for instance, the founding members of DAF were living in an eco-hippie artist commune in rural Gevelsberg, an hour east of Düsseldorf. They were focused on progressive jazz-rock at the time, but keyboard player Kurt Dahlke was converted after seeing proto-punk collective Mittagspause play one of their hilarious, combustible, wilfully amateurish shows. In

particular, the group's Spanish-born dancer-singer Gabi Delgado, a bisexual livewire fired up on LSD and Dadaism, Iggy Pop and Kurt Schwitters, was a revelation. "The drummer was an artist from the Academy, he couldn't play drums at all," Dahlke laughs. "They had only two guitarists as no one could play bass. They played three-chord things with funny lyrics. I thought at the time, 'There is no reason for playing jazz any more.'"

Düsseldorf certainly needed shaking up in 1978. The pop charts that year were dominated by Boney M, the Smurfs, and novelty Dutch disco trio Luv. In May, meanwhile, Kraftwerk scored a Top 12 album with *The Man-Machine*. But despite being widely hailed outside Germany by bands like Joy Division, Human League and OMD, Kraftwerk's pristine brand of electro-futurism sounded distinctly old hat to Düsseldorf's bright young things.

"At that time I found them too clean, too accurate," recalls Robert Görl of DAF, whose



pulverising, jagged, techno-punk minimalism felt like a stern rebuke to Kraftwerk's high-art perfectionism. "It was too commercial for us."

"I was not interested in Kraftwerk at all," agrees Kurt Dahlke. "For us they were hippies coming from a totally other music world. They were established. They made hit records, we didn't. We saw ourselves as a new generation in music."

This growing indifference towards Kraftwerk in Düsseldorf was not just generational but also lifestyle related. As Wolfgang Flür records in his Kraftwerk memoir *I Was A Robot*, the band were living a deluxe playboy lifestyle in the late 1970s, with nights spent hopping between VIP dance clubs like TV, Malesh and Sheila. This is the glamorous celebrity world they both celebrated and satirised on "The Model", the standout single from *The Man-Machine*; wealth, fame and privilege made them soft targets.

"We called them the guys from the other side of the Rhine, from Oberkassel," says Görl. "They came from rich families."

"Kraftwerk were night people," Dörper says. "It's important to understand, in the mid-'70s, Düsseldorf was very much a disco city. We had a few of the most popular discotheques in all of Germany. Posh ones. Very hip. You had to be rich and beautiful to enter these places."

**S**o where did the non-rich, non-beautiful people gather? The Ratinger Hof was a dive bar with a tiny dancefloor tucked away in the cobbled back streets of the city's Old Town district, the Altstadt. In 1974, Carmen Knoebel and Ingrid Kohlhofer took over the bar's tenancy and transformed it into a kind of living art gallery for creative misfits, students and teachers from the nearby Art Academy.

Two years later, Knoebel's painter husband Klaus "Imi" Knoebel redesigned the Ratinger Hof interior into a strikingly minimal concrete bunker. "He changed the appearance totally," Dahlke recalls. "If you went there in '75 it was like a totally hippie place with palms and nice atmospheric lights. But they threw everything out and made a white room with neon lights. This was kind of the opposite of all the other bars in Altstadt."

"It was modelled after CBGB in New York," says Rudi Esch, who was just 12 in 1978 but still clearly remembers the Ratinger Hof. "It was the brand-new thing, everyone went there. The '80s already started in 1978 in the Ratinger Hof. That was the first thing I learned at school, before I turned 15."

Under Carmen Knoebel's management, the Ratinger Hof became the crucible of the German new wave, developing a reputation to rival SO36 in Berlin and the Markthalle in Hamburg. The Hof became a routine stop-off for like-minded English and American bands, including Wire, Pere Ubu, Bauhaus, Killing Joke, Fad Gadget and XTC, who all played early European shows there.

But the Ratinger Hof also served as an experimental arts lab, rehearsal room and surrogate home for budding musicians, painters, photographers, filmmakers, creative troublemakers and future pop stars. Joseph Beuys, who taught at the Art Academy, was a regular. Sometimes painters and musicians would share the stage in anarchic avant-garde



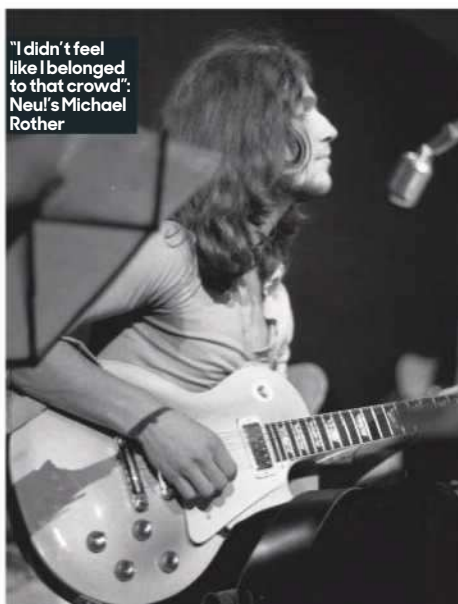
Gabi Delgado (left) and Robert Görl of electro-punk band Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (DAF)



The Ratinger Hof dive bar: Düsseldorf's own CBGB

**"It was not just like a weekend party at the Ratinger Hof"**

**ROBERT GÖRL, DAF**



"I didn't feel like I belonged to that crowd": Neu!'s Michael Rother

happenings, flooding the dancefloor with water and slaughterhouse waste.

"Early Kraftwerk played in art galleries, and that was something that also happened with the first Düsseldorf punks due to the connections of Carmen Knoebel," Dorper explains. "She got all the interesting, stranger bands into the Ratinger Hof. She could have gone totally commercial, but instead she got Pere Ubu, Tuxedomoon, people like that."

Munich native and classically trained drummer Robert Görl stumbled across the Ratinger Hof on a stopover in Düsseldorf after spending the summer of 1978 in London. Having caught the end of punk in Britain, he was inspired to find a similar scene just beginning in Düsseldorf. At the bar he met Gabi Delgado, his future partner in DAF. "Many bands were formed in the Ratinger Hof," says Görl. "People were hanging out there from the Art Academy, Beuys was there, there were people making their own fanzines."

When the old guard came to Ratinger Hof, the generational divide was clear. Neu!'s Michael Rother had already left the city for his rural retreat in Forst, but he still had family in Düsseldorf, and occasionally dropped by the Hof. "From my memory it wasn't glamorous at all," Rother says. "It was just a place where these people hang out. But I didn't feel like I belonged to that crowd. I was always sort of an outsider, and happy to be away in the country."

Rother's former Neu! partner, Klaus Dinger, also liked to visit the Ratinger Hof. In June 1978, his new band, La Düsseldorf, released their second LP, *Viva*. It proved to be a big commercial success, but reviews were mixed. The author of one unfavourable review, Conrad Schalensick, walked into the Hof at the wrong time. Dinger cornered him, punched him in the face and broke his nose. "Klaus was very eager to be loved and admired," Rother says ruefully. "My mother really liked him, but she didn't have to work with him."



Neul spin-off La Düsseldorf: in the late '70s, Bowie called them "the soundtrack of the '80s"

## A DÜSSELDORF

Open seven days a week from mid-morning to the early hours, the Ratinger Hof became a magnet for the city's punk crowd and hipster elite. Beer and marijuana were the main drugs of choice, recalls Görl. "It was not just like a weekend party," he grins. "We went out from Monday to Monday. The Ratinger Hof every night, already starting at midday. I think we can truly say we were living in the club."

**D**ESPITE such high spirits, tensions between the Ratinger Hof art-punk crowd and the grungy, biker-friendly rock bars elsewhere in the Altstadt occasionally boiled over into confrontation. Robert Görl remembers witnessing a smash-and-grab robbery on the cash desk, and rowdy raids in which the whole venue would end up trashed. Kurt Dahlke recalls another night when art-punk provocateurs Minus Delta T faced down an angry mob. "They made a performance and that evening one of these rocker gangs from the other side of the Rhine came in with their bikes," Dahlke says. "They tried to storm the Ratinger Hof. But Minus Delta T were totally prepared for that; they were turning around the billiard cues and just hitting them. So they went away. The battlefield was then moved to another place called the Okie Dokie."

The latent violence of the Altstadt took a tragic turn on August 21, when musician Wolfgang Riechmann was fatally stabbed by two drunken strangers on his way home. The 31-year-old had previously played with Michael Rother and Wolfgang Flür in their late-1960s covers band Spirits Of Sound, subsequently joining prog-rock band Streetmark. He died shortly before the release of his debut solo album, *Wunderbar* – mostly a collection of synthesiser instrumentals. Rother's photographer girlfriend Anne Weitz took the sleeve shot of Riechmann as an androgynous, blue-lipped alien.

"He was walking through Altstadt with his girlfriend, not doing any harm," says Rother. "These two guys, they had been kicked out of several bars. They were angry and frustrated. They put a knife into his chest and he bled to death. He died before the



Industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer, kidnapped and killed by the Red Army Faction, whose ranks included Willi-Peter Stoll (below), later shot



"There were a lot of police controlling you at night"

**RALF DÖRPER**

album was out. It was devastating, the senselessness of something like that."

Another, more politically charged strain of violence also visited Düsseldorf in 1978. The Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction) was a leftist terror group founded by Munich-born activist Andreas Baader and radical political journalist Ulrike Meinhof. Nicknamed the Baader-Meinhof Gang, their violent actions peaked with the "German Autumn" of 1977, when a 'commando unit' kidnapped and executed industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer, killing his driver and three bodyguards in the process.

On September 6, 1978, fugitive RAF member Willi-Peter Stoll died in a gunfight with police at a Chinese restaurant close to the Düsseldorf apartment shared by Wolfgang Flür and Karl Bartos. Two weeks later, Stoll's accomplices Angelika Speitel and Michael Knoll were arrested in nearby Dortmund.

Knoll and police officer Hans-Wilhelm Hansen both died from their wounds.

Because many youthful RAF members adopted a long-haired, hippie-like image, musicians became frequent targets of police suspicion. Roadblocks and random ID checks were routine in 1978. "It was like a police state," claims Ralf Dörper. "There

were a lot of police controlling you during the night on the motorways. They were pretty young, totally nervous, with machine guns. We had that quite often when we went to some punk events outside Düsseldorf, or we played somewhere ourselves. We were controlled like that."

Flür reported that Florian Schneider's apartment had once been raided erroneously by anti-terror police prior to his joining Kraftwerk; Flür was even mistaken for wanted RAF fugitive Christian Klar by armed officers who followed him home.

"That was a very troubling period," agrees Michael Rother. "I even remember earlier when we were with Harmonia in Brussels, we were sitting in the car and we had all these policemen surrounding us with guns. They did a body search, looking for drugs or weapons. This was the time of the Baader-Meinhof revolutionaries, or terrorists, depending on your point of view... Something went terribly wrong with these people."

Just as British punks like The Clash had borrowed urban guerrilla iconography, so their counterparts in Düsseldorf seized on the RAF's slogans and graphics for their own disruptive ends. Gabi Delgado of DAF later wrote a tribute song to the terrorists, "Kinderzimmer", likening them to his childhood heroes Bruce Lee and Emma Peel from *The Avengers*. Ralf Dörper had the group's wanted poster plastered on his bedroom wall alongside Alice Cooper. His first punk band, SYPH, even used images from the Schleyer kidnapping on the cover of their 1979 debut album, *Viel Feind, Viel Ehr*. The sleeve had to be altered after several printers refused to handle it.

These were not the earnest political statements of the previous generation – like the international student protests that exploded in Berlin in 1967 – but adolescent gestures intended to provoke extreme reactions. As Berlin punk pioneer Jaki Eldorado noted

in Jürgen Teipel's fêted 2001 'docu-novel' about the German new-wave scene, *Verschwende Deine Jugend*, "punk rock was so interesting precisely because there was no longer any ideological baggage. You could go crazy. Party. You wouldn't care if someone walked around with a swastika or if someone else supported the RAF."

"It was kind of a terror chic," acknowledges Rudi Esch. "In hindsight you can't be too fascinated by it. But it was like rock'n'roll. 'Street Fighting Man.'"

**F**OR the Düsseldorf punks, a decisive shift took place at the end of 1978, inspired by a run of Ratinger Hof shows that passed into local legend. One was by Wire, making their European debut teetering atop a makeshift stage straddling two snooker tables.

"Everyone formed a band after seeing Wire in November 1978 at Ratinger Hof," says Esch. "The best concert I saw there," confirms Dahlke. "It changed my life, actually. There was always crazy-good concerts going on, so I changed the way I was doing music at that time."

Another seismic Ratinger Hof debut came courtesy of Pere Ubu the following month, whose prominent use of synthesizers had a profound effect. "This really fascinated me," says Görl. "The Sex Pistols punks were not attracted by this kind of electronic, weird, Pere Ubu thing. But I thought this was great, electronics mixed with this new power music."

Dahlke recalls the liberating shock value of seeing Pere Ubu's Allen Ravenstine playing a primitive EMS VCS3 analogue synth. "Besides Brian Eno, I had never seen anybody playing this instrument on stage," he says. "He was so cool, just doing freaking noises. I thought, 'Wow, that is a totally new style of making music.' That was changing my style quite a lot."

Exposure to more electronic post-punk bands at the Ratinger Hof encouraged aspiring musicians like Dahlke and Dörper to embrace new directions. The launch of relatively cheap new synthesizers and sequencers in 1978, notably the Korg MS-20, also helped fuel this electronic rebirth.

"Early Korgs and early Rolands made a lot of things possible," nods Dörper. "And it helped to see somebody like Fad Gadget playing Ratinger Hof. You realised electronic music did not need to be bureaucratic on stage. It could be wild as well, it could be punk."

These new-generation music machines were affordable, but still not cheap. To raise funds, DAF

co-founder Chrislo Haas hit on the ingenious scheme of driving to Amsterdam and smuggling a carload of hashish back to sell in Düsseldorf. Result: 3,000 Deutschmarks to spend on shiny new synthesizers.

The Ratinger Hof's imperial phase ended when Carmen Knoebel left in 1979, but it continued as an important music venue for another decade. Some estimate between 20 and 30 bands formed there during its 18-month peak as Germany's avant-garde punk laboratory. Its legacy also endures in a nationwide network of DIY labels set up at the end of the decade, modelled on early British indies like Mute and Rough Trade. Knoebel herself launched Pure Freude (Pure Joy), while Kurt Dahlke formed Warning, later renamed Ata Tak, to self-release his early work with DAF, Fehlfarben and Pyrolator.

"We made so many contacts all over Germany with bands who had the same kind of spirit," nods Dahlke. "Not only in Düsseldorf, also the scene that was going on in Hamburg and Berlin. This was one thing that opened up the whole scene." As a new decade began, Düsseldorf's punk scene became a global concern. DAF proved influential on artists including Depeche Mode, Soft Cell and Frankie Goes To Hollywood. Dörper, meanwhile, joined industrial rockers Die Krupps before finding greater success as a founding member of Propaganda.

They may not be as fêted as the first krautrock generation, but Düsseldorf's late-1970s electro-punks have arguably had more lasting impact across multiple subcultures from synth-pop to techno to industrial metal. In Germany, their legacy has been celebrated in films, exhibitions, compilation albums and books, notably Esch's definitive oral history of the city's electronic scene, *Electri\_City*. Esch calls Düsseldorf "the Memphis of electronic music".

In recent years, many of these bands have been recording and touring again. Der Plan, Die Krupps and DAF remain sporadically active, still exploring the experimental fringes of rock, still making music on their own terms. "Our aim was always to become successful," says Robert Görl, "but in an underground way. We wanted to get famous in a weird way!"

*Electri\_City* by Rudi Esch is published by Omnibus Press. Robert Görl's previously unreleased 1987 LP *The Paris Tapes* is out now. Die Krupps play the UK this summer

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## BUYERS' GUIDE

# BEUYS KEEP SWINGING:

Five key albums that shaped the Düsseldorf new wave

## MICHAEL ROTHER

**Sterntaler** (SKY)  
Having left Düsseldorf for the pastoral haven of Forst, Rother's second solo album radiates a kind of soul-soothing bucolic beauty. Featuring Can drummer Jaki Liebezeit and legendary krautrock producer Conny Plank, *Sterntaler* blends Hawaiian guitar and sparse percussion with increasingly prominent electronic elements.

## LA DÜSSELDORF

**Viva** (RADAR)

Klaus Dinger's post-Neu! grab for leftfield pop fame found its most lusty expression on this modest commercial hit, with its Eno-ish shimmers, punky chants, fuzzy guitars and fizzing synthesizers. David Bowie called La Düsseldorf "the soundtrack of the '80s".

## RIECHMANN

**Wunderbar** (SKY)  
A Düsseldorf scene veteran who once played with both Wolfgang Flür and Michael Rother, Wolfgang Riechmann delved into synth-pop

futurism on his first solo LP, a stylish electronic affair that predicts much of the New Romantic movement. Tragically, he was killed in a random knife attack before its release.

## DAF

**Ein Produkt Der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Freundschaft** (WARNING/ATA TAK)  
The volatile original four-piece incarnation of DAF recorded their self-released debut after singer Gabi Delgado temporarily quit the band. A fast-paced pile-up of

metal-bashing instrumentals, all untitled, it called time on krautrock and signalled the exhilarating birth of German industrial electro-punk.

## PYROLATOR

**Inland** (WARNING/AKA TAK)  
Leaving DAF after just one album, Kurt Dahlke launched his solo Pyrolator alias with this uncompromising collection of ear-scraping synthscapes, found sounds and horror-movie gloomtronica. Four decades later, it still crackles with chilling sonic unease.

# Don't Believe The Hype

by Public Enemy

How a collage of hip-hop grooves, samples and polemical lyrics became a 1988 hit that's still relevant today: "Sometimes the crowd picks the record..."

**“W**E were using a bunch of elements that hadn't been put together before,” contends Hank Shocklee of The Bomb Squad, Public Enemy's production team. “It was socially relevant consciousness in rap form, combined with the artistry of all these different samples we loved. And that's not easy to do. We didn't care too much about artistic

value; the key thing was that this thing had to have miles on the street.”

Shocklee is reflecting on the gestation of '88's *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, the LP that took PE's audacious hip-hop grooves and biting polemic into the pop charts. At its heart was a trio of uncompromising singles – “Rebel Without A Pause”, “Bring The Noise” and “Don't Believe The Hype” – that brought their social commentary on the black experience in America into brutally sharp focus.

Led by MC Chuck D, alongside Flavor Flav, turntablist Terminator X and Professor Griff as their appointed ‘Minister Of Information’, the ensemble layered funk loops, drum machines and samples into a thumping collage of noise. “Don't Believe The Hype”, their first Top 20 hit in the UK, was assembled from the constituent parts of James Brown, Melvin Bliss, Whodini, The Trix Kids, Juice and Rufus Thomas. “We were looking for that something else,” says Shocklee, who co-wrote the song with Chuck D, Flavor Flav and fellow producer, Eric ‘Vietnam’ Sadler.

## KEY PLAYERS



**Professor Griff:**  
Vocals



**Hank Shocklee**  
Producer,  
co-writer



**Eric 'Vietnam' Sadler**  
Producer,  
co-writer



**Harry Allen**  
Activist and  
journalist, vocals

“Public Enemy couldn't give you what LL Cool J could give you, or what The Beastie Boys or Run-DMC were giving you. It had to be its own thing. And if it was going to be the case, then it had to be the *best* at its own thing. That's what we were pushing for.”

**ROB HUGHES**

**ERIC 'VIETNAM' SADLER:** There was a lot going on at the end of the '80s. There'd been vigilante shooter Bernhard Goetz on the subway, Reagan's policies, the outbreak of AIDS, the racial attacks in Howard Beach in Queens, Oliver North and the Iran-Contra scandal. And all the radio stations and news agencies were reporting the same things in the same way. The same went for Public Enemy. Whenever you'd give interviews or make statements, they'd pick apart what you said and spin it their own way.

**PROFESSOR GRIFF:** There was a lot of confusion about Public Enemy – “What are you *doing*? Are you guys bodyguards? Are you dancers?” It was new, it was different. We didn't expect people to understand. We weren't dancers, we were SiW – the Security Of The First World.

**HANK SHOCKLEE:** After you become known, you get all these copycats. It got to the point where the record companies were putting out any artists they could find that were close to what Public Enemy was trying to represent. And they were coming with all the hype behind it.

**SADLER:** They were saying lots of things about Public Enemy that just weren't true. It was annoying to Chuck and Hank particularly, because they were constantly out there doing interviews. Luckily, Chuck always fought back in his lyrics.

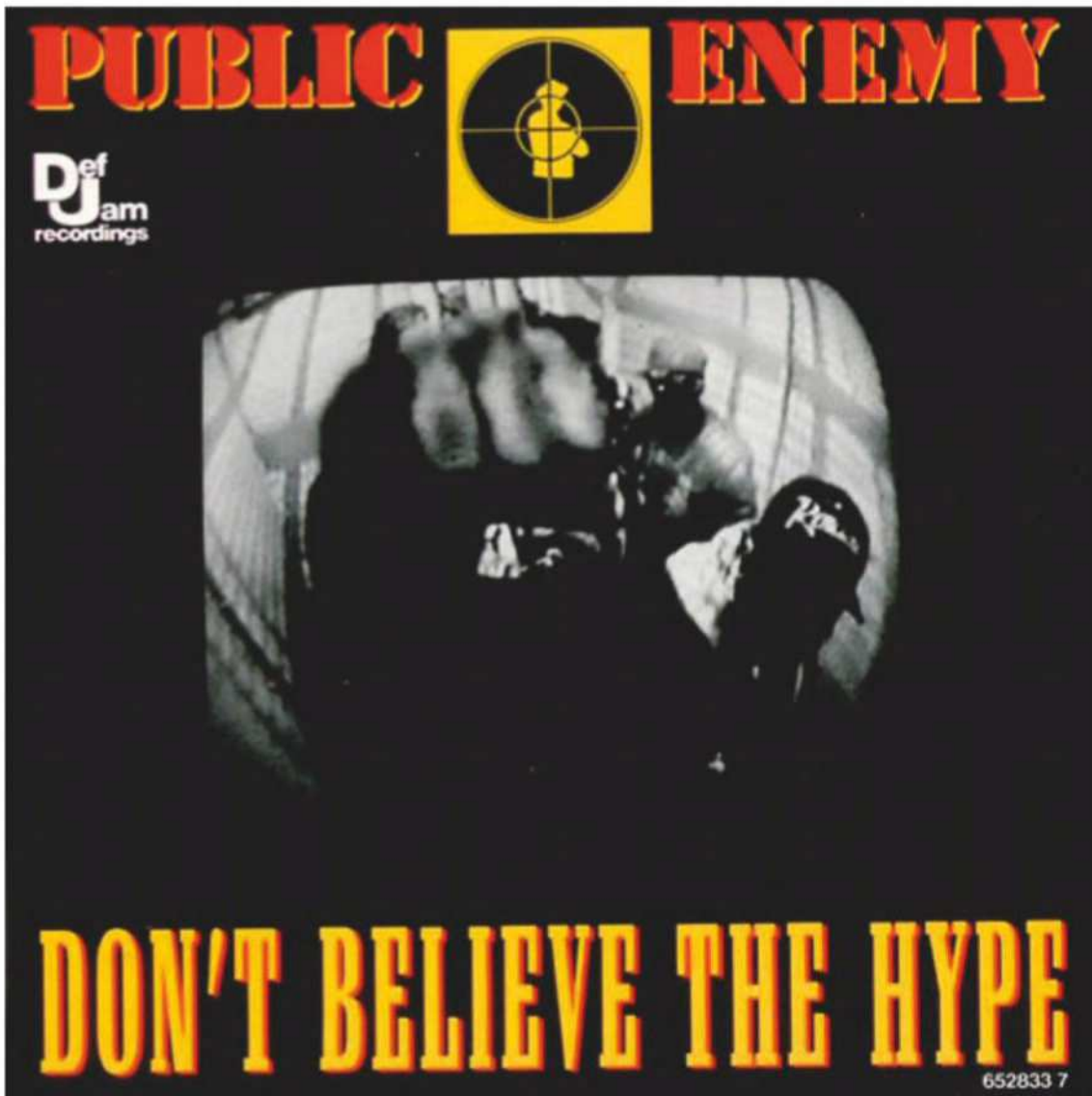
**GRIFF:** It was shocking. We recorded some of the stuff they were saying about Public



Public Enemy, New York, 1988: (l-r) Flavor Flav, Professor Griff, Terminator X, Chuck D

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; PRINCE WILLIAMS/WIREIMAGE.COM; RAY TANARRA/GETTY IMAGES





Enemy on the radio and we put it on *It Takes A Nation Of Millions*.... They were calling us suckers and a bunch of things.

**SHOCKLEE:** “Don’t Believe The Hype” developed as an answer to all the fake press people were getting. At the time, rap was all to do with bragging about what you had in terms of material possessions. And I didn’t feel that; Chuck didn’t feel that. We were more interested in issues.

**HARRY ALLEN:** Chuck says “don’t believe the hype” was something his parents used to say, as the family would discuss topical days’ events, or news stories, at dinner. It was their way of saying to Chuck and his siblings, ‘Don’t go along with what they’re saying on the news just because it’s on TV.’

**SADLER:** “Don’t Believe The Hype” came about through Chuck. He fancied himself as a scratchin’ DJ, but really stank at it. I went into the studio one day and he was spinnin’ on the turntable and listening to “I Got Ants In My Pants” by James Brown, trying to cut a sample of it and scratch it.

**SHOCKLEE:** “Don’t Believe The Hype” started off real experimental. I was looking for a different feel, so I pulled everybody together in the studio and we started jamming. Chuck might be on the turntable, one of us would be moving a reel-to-reel around, another would be on a drum machine, just checking out sounds. It was just random noise and everybody was playing at the same time.

## “America was being exposed for her evil wickedness and the blood dripping from her hands” PROFESSOR GRIFF

**GRIFF:** There was a lot of experimentation going on. If a drum beat sounded dope backwards, then we played it backwards. You’ve got to bring your spirit and soul to it. So we were playing around in our pre-production studio, trying to get an idea of how it was all going to sound. We’d have people around us – Johnny Juice [Rosado], Terminator X – coming in and out of the studio. It was a fun time.

**SHOCKLEE:** Everybody was just trying to get a feel together. Meanwhile, I’m recording all of this onto cassette, which was the only medium you had to record stuff on at the time. A couple of days later I listened to the whole cassette and there was this one little moment that was far out. It was only maybe two bars, but it came into a nice little groove. It felt organic and fluid, like it could be a good bassline. That to me became the starting point. There are lots of samples on there, and the most recognisable is James Brown. That’s what gave it its melody.

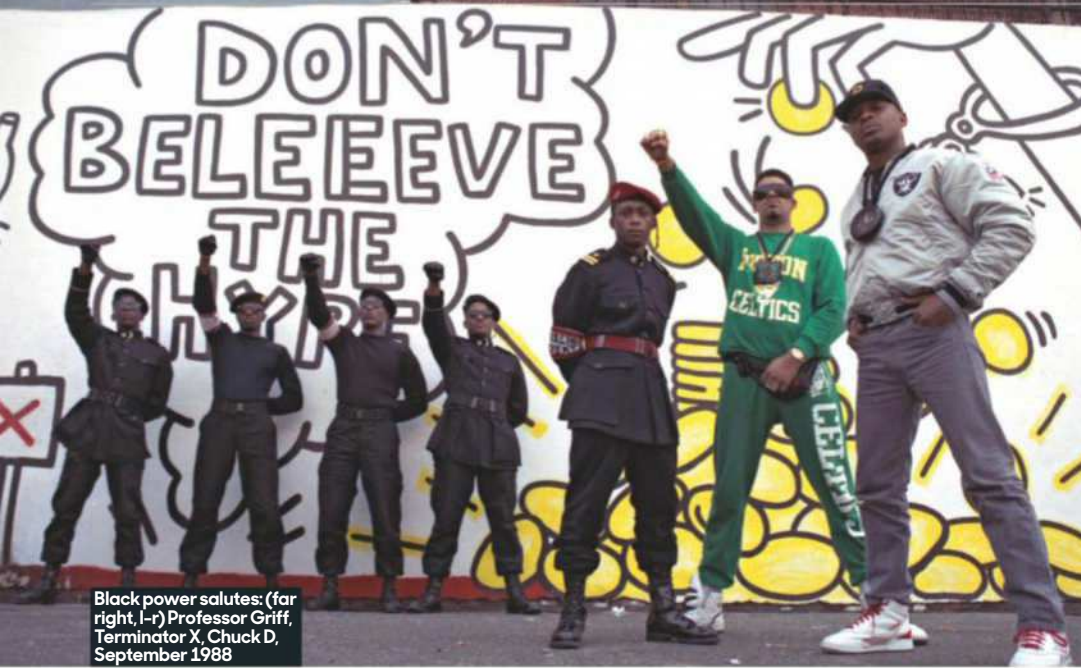
**SADLER:** I sampled the James Brown piece, but it was too smooth. So I had to sample *how* Chuck had been scratchin’ it, rather than taking it straight from the record. Then we had a few options for other stuff and that gave us the crux of the song. Once we had the basic track we made a cassette demo to see how it sounded, then started looking at the holes and gaps to be filled.

**SHOCKLEE:** The track was bottom-heavy. It didn’t have the driving drums, so it was closer to what we’d consider reggae. And it was dark. So I had to add something black on top of it – just to tag it to songs like “Bring The Noise” and “Rebel Without A Pause” – which ended up being another little horn hit on top. That pushed it.

**SADLER:** That screeching sax sample is from Chuck. We already had “Rebel Without A Pause”, but Hank and Chuck wanted to create something similar in feel. Between them they came up with the track, while I was going to be the scientist who had to put it all together. I wanted to make it sound relevant, music-wise.

**GRIFF:** The Bomb Squad was the sound of Public Enemy, the chaotic noise. And of course there was Chuck’s vision, along with Hank’s and Eric’s. I overheard Chuck saying one time he wanted to make music black women can’t dance to, so it forced you to think instead. And it probably took on a different meaning once black people in the hood heard it, as on a political

# The Making Of...



Black power salutes: (far right, l-r) Professor Griff, Terminator X, Chuck D, September 1988

## “When a Bomb Squad track meets Chuck’s vocals, it’s like mixing ammonia and bleach – lethal!” HANK SHOCKLEE

level it was saying, ‘No, you can’t believe everything that white America tells you, because they rewrote the history books.’ Get the fuck out of here with that.

**SADLER:** PE were renegades. We never had any radio play, it was all about getting known on the street. Chuck had already been out on the road and was quite well known, so his perception of celebrity had broadened his scope. That’s what lines like “*Reach the bourgeois and rock the boulevard*” were about. He was suddenly among the top celebrities and politicians in the western world, out there all the time.

**SHOCKLEE:** Chuck’s more like a [Jean-Michel] Basquiat or a Romare Bearden. He can take something that’s completely abstract and make it work so that it makes sense. When a Bomb Squad track meets Chuck and his vocals, it’s like mixing ammonia and bleach. It becomes lethal.

**SADLER:** Hank and Chuck came up with most of the ideas. Hank was a non-musician whose genius lay in knowing the industry, whereas I was the more musical one. If it ever got *too* musical, Hank would say: “This needs to be kept uglier. It needs to be more aggressive. Don’t fix it!”

**SHOCKLEE:** Chuck got to the point where

### FACT FILE

**Written by:** Chuck D, Hank Shocklee, Eric Sadler and Flavor Flav  
**Recorded at:** Greene St Recording, Manhattan and Sabella Studios, Long Island, NY  
**Produced by:** The Bomb Squad  
**Personnel includes:** Chuck D (lead vocals), Professor Griff (vocals), Flavor Flav (vocals), Terminator X (turntables), Hank Shocklee and Eric Sadler (programming)  
**Released:** April 5, 1988  
**Highest chart position:** UK 18; US -

he started talking about leaving part of it blank, as that’s where Harry Allen was going to come in after being mentioned by Flav and reply: “*Don’t believe the hype.*”

**ALLEN:** Chuck called me and said he had a part that he wanted me to say on a record. I didn’t even know what it was called. Instinctively, I tried to say my part to the beat. Chuck told me that was wrong, to “Just say it this way”, then demonstrated it. So I did exactly what he did. As I recall, the whole thing didn’t take 15 minutes.

**SHOCKLEE:** When we first made “Don’t Believe The Hype”, we felt it was a total failure. It came right after “Rebel Without A Pause”, which kind of blew open the doors for us, but we thought it was slower and didn’t have as much energy. It was one of those records that we’d put in the ‘dump pile’. But for some reason, a tape went out to Russell [Simmons] at Def Jam. Then Jason [Mizell, aka Jam Master Jay] and DMC [Darryl McDaniels] of Run-DMC just happened to take it. DMC had a Ford Bronco with this ridiculous boom system that acted like a giant speaker. He drove over to the Apollo in Harlem, where they had amateur night on a Wednesday. As everybody was filing out – there was a couple of thousand people – he blasted out the demo of “Don’t Believe The Hype”. It was analogous to the phones lighting up. I got a call, Chuck got a call, Run [Joseph Simmons] got called, Rick [Rubin, Def Jam] got a call. DMC was going: “Yo! You need to hear this! We played this track on 125th Street and everybody lost their minds!” So the song forced its way into the airspace. Sometimes the crowd picks the record.

**GRIFF:** The timing of that song was a major factor too. It gets right to the heart of the issues we were facing. The truth was getting out there and America was being exposed for her evil wickedness and the blood dripping from her hands. And all the lies they were telling, especially about black people, were finally being exposed.

**SHOCKLEE:** For me, music should always be a forward progression. Public Enemy was more of an experiment to see if you could take socially relevant issues, put them in record form and appeal to a new generation. We never went out to make a record for the radio or for people to dance to in a club. It was made strictly for what we considered to be the ‘heads’.

**ALLEN:** When I got back home after the session, I told my mom what I’d been out doing and her immediate question was: “Did they pay you?” I don’t know if I ever got to tell her before she died, but “Don’t Believe The Hype” has paid me so many times over I can’t even make sense of it. I’d like someone to tell me what part of Chuck’s analysis has dated. That track is still so relevant.

**SADLER:** Times change and people today might not understand “Don’t Believe The Hype” in the same way it was intended, but that song still holds up pretty well.

**GRIFF:** We knew we were doing something revolutionary, charting out new territory. No one was taking Farrakhan, Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson, Dr King and Ava Muhammad and putting that stuff into music for the world to hear. People would come up to us and say, “I was dead in the mud until I heard you guys.” It gave people hope, it did a lot of things for a lot of people.

**SHOCKLEE:** It’s funny, because now we’re going through the same era that “Don’t Believe The Hype” was warning about. It’s repeating itself, but the difference now is that it’s gone mainstream. Everything is being overly hyped, and because of social media and mad duplication, you’re getting hit with 300 times the saturation. It’s making the statement become more relevant as we start moving into this new age. To me it feels Orwellian, like *1984*.

**GRIFF:** I knew that Public Enemy was going to withstand the times and that we’d still be around 20 or 30 years later. And here we are. Just don’t believe the hype!

**SHOCKLEE:** Nowadays things tend to survive the test of time because they’re hugely popular. But very rarely does something underground, like Public Enemy, manage to do that. That was always the idea. We were going for Jimi Hendrix as opposed to Elton John. What we did with Public Enemy was create a new lifestyle, a new language. 🎧

### TIME LINE

**1986:** Formed in Long Island, New York, Public Enemy sign to Def Jam Recordings.  
**February 1987:** Debut album *Yo! Bum Rush*

*The Show* is released, produced by The Bomb Squad.  
**November 1987:** Following a European tour supporting LL Cool

J, UK debut “Rebel Without A Pause” enters the Top 40.  
**April 1988:** “Don’t Believe The Hype” is issued as a single, backed by

“Prophets Of Rage” and “The Rhythm The Rebel”. It peaks at No 18 in the UK in July.  
**July 1988:** Def Jam release parent album *It*

*Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, which makes the UK Top 10 and becomes Public Enemy’s first platinum disc in the United States.

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# “In my head I’m still very young...”

To Paris, then, for a rare meeting with **FRANÇOISE HARDY**. There is a splendid new album to discuss, of course – her first for six years. But the pioneering chanteuse also reflects on her remarkable career, recounts run-ins with The Beatles, Dylan and Nick Drake, and shares her own hard-won philosophies. “The truth?” she tells **Tom Pinnock**. “We will discover it after we die.”

Photo by DAVID CAIRNS

**T**UCKED away on the back cover of 1964’s *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* is a poem. “For Françoise Hardy,” writes Dylan. “At the Seine’s edge/A giant shadow/Of Notre Dame/Seeks t’ grab my foot...” Hardy has known about Dylan’s untitled poem for the past 54 years, but it was only a few months ago that she really began to understand it.

“Earlier this year, two Americans got in touch with me,” she says. “They had inherited some drafts of the poem that Dylan had left in a café. They sent me these drafts, and I was very moved. This was a young man, a very romantic artist, who had a fixation on somebody only from a picture. You know how very young people are... I realised it had been very important for him.”

It is early spring when *Uncut* meets Hardy at the chic Hotel De Sers, not far from the Arc De Triomphe. She prefers not to venture out of central Paris if she can help it, so our rendezvous is near Hardy’s home, and just two miles from the ninth arrondissement where the singer grew up. Just turned 74, Hardy is still slim and bright-eyed, quick to laugh and as stylish as ever – today she’s wearing dark skinny jeans, a black top and a fitted blazer, with a bright-red scarf and gold necklace her only accessories.

Bob Dylan’s not the only artist to have been captivated by Hardy and her work, of course – The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Nick Drake, David Bowie, Richard Thompson and

Far away guise:  
Françoise Hardy,  
June 17, 1969



With Bob Dylan and Johnny Hallyday, Paris Olympia, 1966



Graham Coxon have all paid tribute to her considerable musical gifts.

"My sister had a Françoise Hardy single," remembers Richard Thompson. "I think it was 'Tous Les Garçons Et Les Filles'. My sister had other French records of the period – Richard Anthony, Hugues Aufray – so I was used to the intimacy of style. [But] this was sexier! If you put it together with the pictures of Françoise, it was a powerful package."

Yet Hardy is not just a muse, but a compelling artist in her own right. She first came to prominence in 1962, aged just 18, with a mostly self-penned debut of infectious yé-yé – Europe's pop take on rock'n'roll – and swiftly scored a massive hit with "Tous Les Garçons...", which even cracked the UK Top 40.

"It was my first and most important hit," Hardy says. "Unfortunately, as it's not my best song!"

The tune was sprightly, but the lyrics were better suited to one of Émile Zola's more miserable heroines than a young purveyor of Gallic pop: "*I go alone through the streets*," Hardy sang. "*The soul in pain... I go alone, because nobody loves me.*"

"She was the opposite of all the French new artists trying to look and sound American," explains renowned photographer Jean-Marie Périer, Hardy's partner for much of the '60s. "And her melodies were sad, she didn't try to make them dance the twist."

Hardy continued mining this seam of melancholy through a run of albums that quietly and tastefully explore styles from Brazilian jazz to English folk-rock. We're in Paris to discuss these records, along with Hardy's unexpected new album, *Personne D'autre*, in which she examines mortality and spirituality; in many ways, the record's closest cousin may be



"Dylan played me two songs... I never saw him again"

Leonard Cohen's final album, *You Want It Darker*.

"At my age the lyrics you are singing cannot be the same as the ones you were singing when you were 30 or 40 or even 50," explains Hardy. "They have much to do with your past, but also with the idea of another life, in another universe."

As a teenager in late-'50s Paris, Françoise Hardy found herself carried away by the pop music of the time, much of it British and American. "It was extraordinary, because every week you had tremendous new songs," she says. "I was very fond of The Shadows and Cliff Richard, and also Marty Wilde. In the States, Elvis Presley, Paul Anka, Neil Sedaka, all these young people. I was only interested in that."

As intoxicating as this new music was, these pop stars also acted as something of an escape for Hardy, whose childhood was "humble", as Jean-Marie Périer puts it: her parents were unmarried – scandalous at the time – and her father was mostly absent, "married to I-don't-know-who", as Hardy explains.

"She lived in a very small family circle," recalls Périer. "Her grandmother was always telling her that she was nothing, not even beautiful. When we started seeing each other, she had never even been in a theatre to see a movie."

Hardy was intelligent, though, and by the time she passed her Baccalaureate at a younger age than usual, her interest in music was absolute. Her mother asked her father to buy her a gift, but Hardy had trouble deciding between a small radio and a guitar.

"I finally made up my mind for the guitar," Hardy laughs. "Why did I want a guitar? I didn't know anything about music! But I got the guitar, and I found out that with three chords I could make up quite a lot of

The girl with a guitar, circa 1966; (right) in the white trouser suit she wore during a residency at the Savoy in '65



As the decade swung into the mid-'60s, Hardy's music began to sound lush and richer, from the 12-string jangle of "Ce Petit Coeur" and the glacial, orchestral glide of "Il Se Fait Tard" (both written by Hardy) to the maverick fuzz-tone blues of "Je N'Attends Plus Personne", featuring Page.

"From when she was 18, she knew she was different," says

producer Erick Benzi, who has worked regularly with Hardy over the past 20 years. "She was capable of going in front of big artists like Charles Aznavour and saying, 'Your song is crap, I don't want to sing it.' She never made compromises."

Accessible, but never pandering to trends, her first five albums were enough for Hardy to be seen as a serious artist, but it was her refusal to play the showbusiness game that made her something of an icon. She modelled, sure, but only for the most modern designers such as Paco Rabanne or André Courrèges, and it's a fair bet that she would have been welcome at almost any high-society party; but Hardy preferred to mix in quieter circles, or stay at home and read.

"My job as photographer used to bring me into contact with acts like The Beatles and the Stones very often," says Jean-Marie Périer. "All the Anglo-Saxons used to ask me to introduce them to Brigitte Bardot and to Françoise! When I toured with Bob Dylan he was asking me questions about her all the time."

While she was performing a residency at London's Savoy in the mid-'60s, Périer organised a dinner with Paul McCartney and George Harrison. "I remember this day because Jean-Marie had no tie," says Françoise, "and so we couldn't get into the club, one The Beatles used to go to often. It was a huge stress! Finally, somebody found a tie and gave it to him."

Another sartorial debacle stymied a meeting with Burt Bacharach during Hardy's Savoy run in 1965 – it seems the UK wasn't quite ready for the futurist fashion Hardy preferred.

"In the audience was Burt Bacharach," Hardy recalls. "I was a huge fan of his beautiful songs, and he wanted to meet me. I was in my stage dress, which was magnificent – it had been made by André Courrèges, and it was trousers and a top, all white, so elegant and modern, even today. I went down to the audience to see Burt, but the people from the Savoy didn't let me in – I had been singing for three-quarters of an hour, but I couldn't have a drink with Burt Bacharach because I was in trousers! Things have changed!"

On May 24, 1966, Hardy met Bob Dylan for the first time when he played the Paris Olympia. Hardy was now a huge admirer of Dylan's songs, but the American's opening acoustic set was a disaster, with Dylan visibly unwell and struggling to tune his guitar. During the interval, Hardy was told that the singer would only return for the second half if she came to see him in the interval.

"So I went to meet him," says Hardy. "[After the concert] we were with some other French artists, like Johnny Hallyday, in Bob Dylan's suite at the Georges V Hotel. Usually I never do this, it's very embarrassing! Bob Dylan was already in his room, he wanted me to come in, and he played me two songs from his last album, which wasn't yet released in France [*Blonde On Blonde's* 'Just Like A Woman' and 'I Want You']. And that was it! I never saw him again."

Alongside the hippest artists of the day, Hardy attended the Isle Of Wight festival in 1969. "I wanted to go and congratulate Bob Dylan after his set, but it was so crowded, it was impossible. I'm very surprised myself that I made the trip to an island for

tunes which were bad copies of the songs I was listening to all the time on Radio Luxembourg – 'your station of the stars!'"

That Hardy then began writing her own songs is impressive – this was an era when pop stars generally employed professional writers (such as a young Serge Gainsbourg) and The Beatles were yet to release their first single. That much of her work still sounds strangely modern, eschewing the gaucheness of many of her yé-yé counterparts, is even more striking.

"At this time, the new artists in France used to sing American lyrics badly translated," says Périer. "Let's face it, the translators were not Marcel Proust. So she had no choice but to write her own – plus, she had things to say."

Hardy believes her desire to write came from French singer Barbara. "She was a great artist, who was writing all her own songs. I was a great fan of hers; I went to see her live, and I always brought a rose to her."

After signing with Vogue in late 1961, her debut – like almost all her albums, self-titled, but known by its most famous song, in this case "Tous Les Garçons..." – appeared in 1962. Within three months, Hardy was a major name in France, with her fame spreading throughout Europe. Despite the hits, though, Hardy was unhappy.

"I heard The Shadows behind songs like "Tous Les Garçons...", but I had such bad musicians, such a bad producer... I thought those recordings were terrible. But I was on tour with Richard Anthony, and he said to me, 'You have to record in England!' My first recordings had such a huge success that my recording company didn't want to change it, but finally we went to London, and for the first time I had a musical production I was happy with."

From 1964's *Mon Amie La Rose* onwards, Hardy was a regular at Marble Arch's Pye Studios, working with arrangers Charles Blackwell, Arthur Greenslade and John Paul Jones and musicians including Jimmy Page. Hardy is effusive in her praise for most of those she's worked with, but Jones' arrangements come in for some stick. "Terrible production, terrible! He wanted to do a French production, and I was expecting exactly the contrary."

## INITIALS FH

### Françoise remembers Serge Gainsbourg

**"H**E was a close friend, but I didn't work very much with him, no. After he died,

[Gainsbourg's partner] Bambou told me, 'Serge said sometimes that he didn't understand why you never asked him to make a whole album with you. I was very flattered – but I had never asked him because I preferred to make my own album, even if it was not as good as an album written and produced by him – because when you were recording with Serge, it was his album, not yours. He was a very strong personality; he was absolutely charming, almost like a child sometimes when he had not drunk anything, but when he had drunk alcohol – he was very fond of cocktails, sweet liquor – he could be very different [laughs]. Yes, when he was a little drunk, he became 'Gainsbarre'."





Hardy with singer Georges Moustaki at the Isle Of Wight festival, 1969: "Was I camping? No, I don't think so!"

it, in the worst conditions! Was I camping? No, I don't think so!"

If her presence in the festival's VIP enclosure was the pinnacle of her acceptance by the international rock scene, Hardy soon moved out of its circles altogether. By this point, she was in a relationship with the more rebellious Jacques Dutronc, singer and songwriter and, as the '70s dawned, Hardy pursued a rarer, stranger sound.

In autumn 1970, Françoise Hardy flew to Rio De Janeiro to sit on the jury for the city's Fifth Popular Song Festival. Her fellow judges included Lalo Schifrin, Marcos Valle, Ray Conniff and Paul Simon, with the latter acting as chair. "Every personality had a hostess," she explains. "I had, I don't know why, a very bad reputation, so the festival sent me their best hostess. But we very quickly became the best friends in the world."

Hardy's hostess, Lena, soon introduced the singer to a Brazilian singer-songwriter, Tuca, then performing in a Parisian restaurant, La Feijoada. Hardy fell in love with her music, especially the song "Même Sous La Pluie", and the two began writing a new album together. The result, *La Question*, driven by Brazilian-influenced nylon-string guitar, double bass and strings, introduced a new sound for Hardy: heady, sensual and atmospheric, with her voice floating above the meandering baroque backings.

"This album is one of my best souvenirs," says Hardy. "We started with Tuca on the guitar and a very good jazz bass player – I recorded the voice at the same time as them, then we went to Corsica on holiday with Tuca to decide if we would have strings or not on this record. When we were back in Paris, she played all the songs and for each song she proposed ideas to me for the strings. It has been the only time I have worked like that."

While she was working with Tuca, Hardy was also on the lookout for other musicians to collaborate with. One songwriter that interested her was Nick Drake. "He had read how enthusiastic I was about one of his albums," Hardy explains, "and so he came to the studio where I was recording in London, and he sat in the corner, almost hidden, and he never said one word. I was so full of admiration for his work, so I didn't dare to say anything, and he didn't dare to say anything [laughs]."

"Joe Boyd came up with this brilliant idea that Nick was going to write an album of songs for Françoise," says producer and arranger Tony Cox. "I was going to produce it. So we travelled over to Paris – it was all pretty weird because Nick was a painfully shy bloke. Françoise is incredibly neurotic. She won't do things like shaking hands, because she's scared of catching germs from people."



In her home studio, December 1980



Françoise in Brazil, 1970

The Drake collaboration never happened, but Cox was keen to work with Hardy regardless. So, in late 1971, the singer travelled once again to London, this time to Chelsea's Sound Techniques, to record a full album with Cox and a crack team of British folk-rockers, including Richard Thompson and Pat Donaldson.

"I remember they were all very keen to play on the Françoise sessions," remembers Cox. "Particularly Richard Thompson, which was kind of surprising because he wasn't someone who really volunteered to play on sessions much."

"We did the tracks as a trio," recalls Thompson, "and strings were overdubbed later. Françoise sang guide vocals on all tracks. We all got to hang out during breaks, in the Black Lion pub across the street. She was friendly and charming."

Chosen songs included Trees' "The Garden of Jane Delawney", Neil Young's "Till The Morning Comes" and two Beverley Martyn songs. The results were akin to an English version of the Brazilian-influenced *La Question*: intimate, moonlit, eerie and quietly experimental, as shown by the backwards guitar running through her take on Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Take My Hand For A While".

"If You Listen' was a pretty enough song, but there wasn't anything to really get your teeth into. So I gave all the string instruments a choice to play any notes in any order, but playing *col legno*, with the wooden back of their bow, and it sounded great. I remember everyone, including Françoise, getting very excited when that sound emerged."

Shy, reserved, yet strong-willed – it's this



peculiar combination of qualities that seem to have sustained Hardy throughout her career. There are certainly analogues with Nick Drake, in their personalities, voices and even a similar taste in chords and harmony. Yet, while Drake didn't have the chance to even try his hand at real fame, Hardy has survived decades of it. "The last time I saw Nick Drake," she says, "he called me at the end of one afternoon. I had always been feeling there was something wrong with him, but I didn't know exactly what. I was going that evening to the restaurant of the Tour Eiffel to have dinner, because Véronique Sanson was performing there. But I felt I couldn't leave him alone, so I said, 'Come, and I'll take you to the Tour Eiffel.'

"I don't recall how the night ended, probably in a very normal way. But I was not surprised when I heard... He had everything going for him; he was very good-looking, mysterious and talented. There are always many reasons [for depression], but maybe one of them is the fact he had no success at all. *C'était la goutte d'eau qui a fait déborder le vase* [it was the straw that broke the camel's back]..."



Hardy in 2018: "I have a fan's heart still"

**H**ARDY has remained something of a *trésor national* even as she's experimented with multiple genres – jazz on 1980's *Gin Tonic*, alternative rock on 1996's *Le Danger* and orchestral arrangements on 2012's fragile *L'Amour Fou* – and collaborated with the likes of Air, Iggy Pop and Blur.

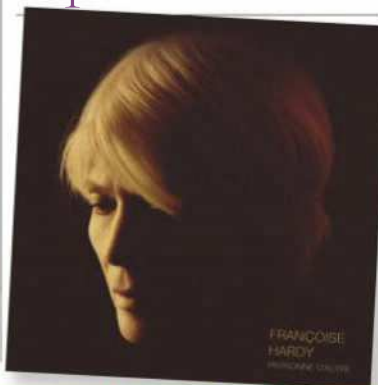
"She doesn't take the past as a burden," says Erick Benzi. "She's very precise. She knows what she doesn't like, so after a few times working with her I knew exactly what she expects from me and the music. First it's about the capabilities of her voice – she has a very small range – and then it's about the sensibility. There is a certain style that she likes."

"Françoise was good in that she liked things to be slightly more adventurous than the norm," says Tony Cox. "There was a bit of the Left Bank about her – she's not your average pop singer, that's for sure."

*Personne D'autre*, Hardy's new album – her 28th – came from trying times, with the singer suffering from health problems over the last few years. "I almost died," she says, bluntly.

"There are always heartbreaking songs on her

"I had, I don't know why, a very bad reputation..."



albums," says Benzi, "but on this one in particular, because of her recent history. She was nearly dead, she came back to life, so on two or three songs it's about this – like 'Train Special'."

"I thought, at my age, to take a 'special train' can only be a train which brings me to the infinite, to the cosmos," explains Hardy. "I'm afraid of dying, because most of the time you're suffering very much physically, but it's not sad – for me, death is only the death of the body. I'm sure that the link between the soul, and the loved ones who are still alive, stays."

"She likes it when the chords are a little weird," adds Erick Benzi, "she likes things not to be too simple. So there are restrictions – but at the same time she is capable of doing a duet with Julio Iglesias!"

*Personne D'autre* was unplanned by its creator until she stumbled upon "Sleep", a song by Finland's Poets Of The Fall on YouTube, and was inspired to work on her own French adaptation. The speed of the new album's production – Hardy only

began writing last April – bodes well for more new music in the future. "It's the first time in my life I am so quick writing lyrics, recording the songs and releasing them," she explains. "I didn't think I'd do anything else, but a lot of tunes and melodies came to me and I couldn't resist. I don't understand English enough to understand Leonard Cohen's words," admits Hardy, when *Uncut* compares the subject matter of some of *Personne D'autre* with Cohen's final work. "But I know he believed in spirituality, and I also have read a lot my whole life. There are many forms of spirituality, but when it is clever, there are many common points. I think Buddhism is very near to the truth... But the truth? We will discover it after we die."

The interview almost over, Hardy takes *Uncut*'s pen to excitedly write down for us the name of Oren Lavie, an Israeli singer-songwriter who she admires, and who reminds her of Nick Drake. "My body is very old, but in my head I'm still very young," she says, as she spells out his name in capitals. "I have a fan's heart, still." 🗨

*Personne D'autre* is out now on Parlophone/Warner France. For Tony Cox's Arco-X visit [arco-x.com](http://arco-x.com)

BENOITPEVERELLI

#### BUYERS' GUIDE

## MY MY, YÉ-YÉ

The finest of Hardy's long-players

### TOUS LES GARÇONS ET LES FILLES

VOGUE, 1962

As primitive as it sounds, Hardy's debut is packed full of rock'n'roll and yé-yé songs as infectious as her favourite tracks on Radio Luxembourg, chief among them the sashaying "Ton Meilleur Ami". **7/10**



### L'AMITIÉ

VOGUE, 1965

Accompanied by the Charles Blackwell Orchestra, Hardy was perhaps at the peak of her pop powers on this lush, varied LP. The title track is sublime, and Hardy's own "Tu Peux Bien" reaches Morricone levels of melancholy. **8/10**



### MA JEUNESSE FOUT LE CAMP...

VOGUE, 1967

Hardy begins to embrace subtler, folkier textures on her sixth album proper, with the title track ("My Youth Is Flying Away") and the grand torch song "Voilà" especially devastating. **8/10**



### LA QUESTION

SONOPRESSE, 1971

The masterpiece, an otherworldly mix of French chanson and bossa nova, wonderfully stripped down to fully show off Hardy's voice and peerless delivery. **9/10**



### IF YOU LISTEN

KUNDALINI, 1972

Lazily titled 4th English Album in some territories,

this is Hardy's take on British folk-rock. Her version of Trees' "The Garden Of Jane Delawney" is particularly striking. **7/10**



### LE DANGER

VIRGIN, 1996

Teaming up with writer Alain Lubrano, Françoise discovers the power of the electric guitar and retains her true character at the same time. **7/10**



### L'AMOUR FOU

VIRGIN/EMI, 2012

The Macedonian Radio Symphonic Orchestra join Hardy

for this low-key, piano-heavy set of melodramatic, super-Gallic ballads, including "Si Vous N'avez Rien À Me Dire...". **7/10**

### PERSONNE D'AUTRE

PARLOPHONE/WARNER FRANCE, 2018

Death, regret, the usual, this time featuring gorgeously gauzy and reverb-heavy textures; closer "Un Mal Qui Fait Du Bien" does recall *La Question*, though. **7/10**



“I’M STILL  
SINGING FOR  
PEACE  
AND  
JUSTICE  
EVERY NIGHT”

As **ERIC BURDON** prepares for what will “likely be my last” homecoming show in his native Newcastle, he looks back on a remarkable career – as frontman with The Animals, psychedelic warrior in late-’60s San Francisco and his current guise as indomitable elder statesman. **Michael Bonner** enjoys some wild yarns about John Lennon “singing obscene lyrics”, dropping acid with Janis Joplin and a Springsteen collaboration that never was. An old hippie at heart, Burdon tells us: “I still believe in the power of music to change the world...”



**I**N JUNE, Eric Burdon will make the trip from Ojai, the small, mid-coastal California town where he now lives, back to his birthplace Newcastle Upon Tyne. There Burdon will play a show at the City Hall. “It is always difficult to return home,” he admits. “You want to give everything you have. You want to prove that you’ve worked hard and made it. You want to come back as the hometown hero.” This show, Burdon anticipates, may well prove tougher than most: he turns 77 almost exactly a month beforehand and, he confesses, “This will likely be my last performance for my hometown. Let’s face it, I am not getting any younger here! Although ‘retirement’ is not a word in my vocabulary, being on the road is extremely tiring. So I’ll have to find other formats to express my musical needs and connect with my audience. As Leonard Cohen said, ‘I’m slowing down the tune’ but as long as I have a voice, I will always use it to speak my mind and sing from my heart.”

Speaking his mind is very much central to Burdon’s MO. An interview with the singer covers a lot of ground – including his friendships with contemporaries including Jimi Hendrix and John Lennon, his appetite for psychedelics and more – but these tales are delivered with the clear-eyed candour of a battle-scarred veteran reflecting on numerous campaigns, some successful, others not. He is still saddened by the acrimonious break-up of the original Animals – attributed to conflict with keyboard player Alan Price over royalties for the band’s peerless version of “House Of The Rising Sun” – but critically Burdon sees The New Animals, the band he formed in San Francisco during the white heat of cultural revolution, as a more positive and expansive creative force. He continued through the barrier-breaking funk group War, although his own solo career has moved at a rather deliberate pace: his most recent solo album, *Til Your River Runs Dry*, was his first album of original material since 2004.

Today, Burdon still adheres to the values he first encountered in America during the mid-’60s: to mark his 76th birthday last year, he released a version of Buffalo Springfield’s “For What It’s Worth”. Intended as a rallying cry against the forces of darkness, Burdon considers the song’s relevance undimmed by the passing of time. “I’m proud to have been a part of a movement of artists who stood – or stand – for freedom, peace and self-expression,” he confirms. “I still believe in the power of music to change the world – or, at least, people’s hearts. I’ve seen it happen.”

**You have a lengthy history with Newcastle City Hall. You saw Louis Armstrong there when you were 11, didn’t you?** I could never afford to go to the shows, but I soon discovered there were side doors to the building, which had a small gap in-between them. If I put my ear against gap, I could hear the music. I used to go to City Hall on a regular basis and stand in that backstage doorway. I realised that by standing there, I could meet anybody and everybody setting foot in Newcastle! I arrived early for Louis Armstrong. When the first set ended, one of the Hot Five came out. He put his hand over my shoulder and escorted me downstairs to the backstage area. There Louis was, a

towel around his neck, feet in a bucket with Epsom salt water, his wife cooling him down. He was smoking a big fat doobie. It was the first time I smelled marijuana. He looked at me and said, “How you doing, kid?” I stood there speechless. That’s when I realised this is what I want to be. This is the blues. I want to be a part of this. It became my religion, in a way. Or maybe it was just the marijuana smoke giving me a contact high!

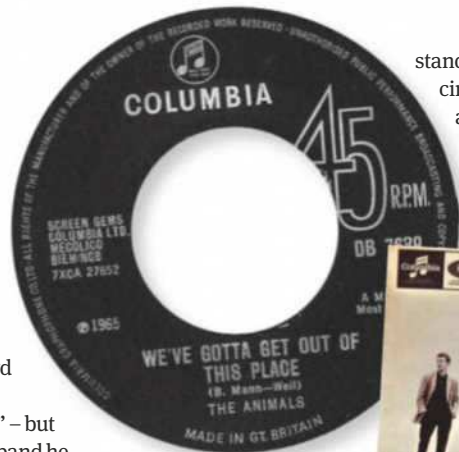
**One of your first jobs was designing a nightclub for Mike Jeffery. What qualified you for that?**

Five years of Newcastle University Art School and a National Design Diploma. I was hanging around at one of Jeffery’s clubs called The Downbeat. It was the ultimate punk place – before punk was punk. He heard that I had just graduated from art school, so he offered me the job. I guess he was just looking for someone with talent and a desire to succeed, and to do it cheap.

**Chas Chandler was obviously impressed with you, but what were your first impressions of him?** Chas was already working in the shipyards and he was a member of a working man’s drinking club. He was in a different world from the rest of us. I’d be

standing in a queue, for example, waiting to buy a ticket for the cinema, and he’d go storming past with a beautiful babe on his arm. We recognised his managerial skills right away. It was me who told him he’d be better suited as our manager instead of bass player. We were getting attention and we knew we’d make it, but we thought we could do with a stronger bass player and a better manager. Nobody was

willing to tell him, so I took it upon myself. From then on, he hated my guts. I wish he’d have listened. Maybe The Animals would have had a better future in the music world.



The Animals on Ready Steady Go!, 1965



A fun Experience: with Jimi Hendrix and Noel Redding backstage at Olympia, 1968

## "I KNEW NOTHING WOULD STOP JIMI..."

Eric Burdon recalls his first meeting with **Hendrix**

"I MET Jimi in London, at Zoot Money's apartment. There were just the two of us in the house. They dropped him off straight from the airport and I just happened to be there. I welcomed him with a cup of tea and a joint and we started talking. He was pretty scruffy, dishevelled, and tired from the transatlantic trip to London.

"The one thing that really amazed me, to the point that I knew Jimi would make it no matter what, was that at some point, over the TV screen came *The Black & White Minstrel Show* on BBC. Any black person would rightfully look at this programme with horror or disdain. I felt so embarrassed and I stepped up to switch off the TV, but he just sat there, watching, and it didn't phase him at all. Right there and then I knew that nothing would stop Jimi. I was more disturbed than he was, and knowing him better over a period of time, I came to realise why. In America, he faced racism every day of his life. We talked about class and the fact that you couldn't rise above class. I was a Geordie and we were the blacks of England. So I could relate to his predicament and I explained to him that although in the UK we don't have race problems, we had class problems. But with our cultural, musical movement we were trying to overcome class, and we succeeded just as Jimi succeeded in overcoming the issue of race."

**How autobiographical was "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place"?** We wanted to get out of Newcastle, so we went to London. We wanted to get out of London, so we went to New York. We wanted to get out of New York, so we came to LA. We wanted to get out of LA... It was an endless circuit of places that you wanted to get out of, which meant we were constantly on the road. Later on you wanted to get out of the madness... so we turned to drugs. Psychedelics were the great escape.

**Was there a lot of competition between the British Invasion bands? You were close to John Lennon, weren't you?** I'll never forget meeting John and the rest of The Beatles for the first time. The Animals were doing our first 'live' appearance on a TV show and The Beatles were already at the top in England and were on the same show. The set designers had made a New Orleans scene for us to perform in front of. Behind the scrim, Lennon was back there singing obscene lyrics to mess me up. After surviving this rite of initiation, we became close. I was with him when he was visited by his father, who had abandoned him and was now coming back to feed off of The Beatles' magic. Lennon was enraged, but I knew he was really hurt. Years later, John and Yoko banged on my door in Laurel Canyon in the pouring rain to give me a copy of the book they were excited about at the time – *The Primal Scream*, by Arthur Janov. A dedication said, "Eric, Becoming an American will not ease the pain, John & Yoko". We lost touch in the years he devoted to Sean and then, of course, we lost him to a madman's gun.

"In America, Jimi Hendrix faced racism every day of his life..."

**Is it true Jim Morrison recommended you move to LA?** Yes. I was up in San Francisco when he was playing at the Fillmore. I was waiting outside for Janis [Joplin]. A couple of cops started harassing me: "What are you doing here? You better keep moving." Before I could open my mouth, the backstage door flew open and Janis burst out, grabbed me by the hand and pulled me in. The

cops probably wondered who the hell I was. She gave me couple of hits of acid and it seemed to take us about an hour to get upstairs, across the crowded room and into the dressing rooms on the other side. The first guy I saw was Jim Morrison. To impress me how hippie he was, he grabbed me by the hand, pulled me towards him and whispered, "Welcome to San Francisco. It's pretty cool up here but not as cool as LA. That's where the devil lives." I think he thought I was someone special – like a poet or something. When I moved to LA, he always followed me around. He would sleep on my doorstep with a bunch of groupies. I got so tired walking over naked bodies that one day I threw him out the house.

**What was the appeal of Southern California during the Summer Of Love to a working-class lad from Newcastle?**

LSD and women! I mean, LSD was right off the pharmaceutical laboratory, being cooked by Owsley. We were stoned most of the time with a girl on each arm. We were living the dream. LA was so distorted. It was the perfect place to trip as everything looked horrible in the first place. I'd walk into people's offices and the first thing I would do is to feel the plants to see if they were plastic. Your reality was somewhat skewed just being there. ➤



Primal Screamers John & Yoko



Points well made: The New Animals in 1968

beliefs – like the movement up in San Francisco, the whole hippie culture. You talk about it these days and it seems so childish, so backward – but then it was a real political and cultural stand against the war in Vietnam. In Britain we didn't feel that. It was pretty much an American thing. And we were in America and we joined it. We felt we were Americans for the first time.

**LSD. Was it ultimately a blessing or was it a curse? Both for you and for the culture?** LSD is not for everyone. But I got lucky and had nothing but great experiences. We were young and struggling to find out what the truth really was. Taking acid and mescaline was like a rocket ship to the answer. But what answer? Along the way, we stopped looking. When I learned that the American Indians ate peyote, I did too. White men drink and get drunk and talk about God; the Indians eat magic mushrooms and they talk to God. I was convinced that I wanted to talk to God too. And I did, by virtue of a plant! Experimentation was at an all-time high, and not just because of LSD, but politically and spiritually, we were trying to leave behind a couple of thousand years of war, oppression, sexual rigidity, destruction of the planet, you name it. We wanted to change everything at once. But the drugs weren't the answer. If anything, the answer is get straight, and fight for a better reality with a clear mind.

**War had an expansive groove; more free jazz than straight blues, perhaps. Do you think they're often undervalued?**

When I got with War, they were against playing blues as they felt it was the music of the old folks they opposed. I introduced them to the music of Sun Ra, Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Miles Davis, but they chose the path of West Coast Latin funk. The truth is, once I helped them find their sound, they didn't need me any more. I helped break them and put them in the spotlight. Job well done, onward...

**You and Jimmy Witherspoon recorded in San Quentin with the Prison Band – what was that like?**

The time I spent with Jimmy Witherspoon was magical. He showed me the reality of being black in America. When we started touring the prisons and entertaining inmates, I found them a fascinating audience. We recorded *Guilty* at San Quentin. Jimmy was like a brother to me. He came into my life at a time when I'd lost my friend, Jimi, and War was going on without me. I was really depressed. He helped return me to my blues roots. He taught me to never sing the same song twice the same way. That's been my *modus operandi* for years now.

**Do you think the 1983's Ark tour was a satisfactory conclusion to the original Animals' story?**

No, it was a disaster! It's like going to bed with your ex wife after a nasty divorce and several years of bad marriage counselling. It would always be

ugly. I was dragged out to attend the shows. We were

hoping to rectify problems over royalties and proper credits for "House Of The Rising Sun". But in the end,

Alan told us all to fuck off. On the tour itself, Chas hired the cheapest PA there was, so I was screaming my guts out in order to be heard. When the tour was over I was left to finish an LP we owed the label, IRS. So Steve Grant and I had to assemble tapes to make up a live album – without the help of Alan Price, Chas Chandler or John Steel. Once again, they all split and left me to face the music alone. By the way, we also had gigs in Europe on the way back from the Far East that they ducked out on. They just got on the plane and went back home. It still makes me angry. But I think history has a way of correcting itself.

**How did you come to perform at Bo Diddley's funeral?**

**Did you know him?** I never met Bo face to face, until he was in his coffin being lowered into the ground. On the first Animals

"I'm one lucky individual to have come through the life I've lived"

But honestly? I have suffered with asthma my whole life and I found a climate where I could breathe for the first time. So when I first came to America, it was like someone switched on the lights. If the sun would only shine, I'd have stayed in Newcastle. After all, we have some of the best beaches in Europe.

**You were a sympathetic interpreter of other people's songs. What were the challenges you faced writing your own material?**

I enjoy interpreting other people's music. Mainly though it's because the band wasn't really with me. The band couldn't care less. I was unfortunate not to have a writing partner. I was always writing. Nina Simone was impressed when I showed her my diary. George Harrison was so impressed when he first heard "When I Was Young" and he encouraged me to keep writing. I never thought about it. There were so many great songs out there, and if I wasn't writing great songs, I wasn't trying to fool myself I could. Especially if someone brought something to me that was really me... I was gonna record it.

**You seemed fully converted to the psychedelic experience by the time of the *Winds Of Change* album. How did that help in formulating the band's approach towards performance?**

The New Animals became the real Animals to me. There was a better band all around. We moved away from the blues; we were more experimental. We were all doing acid, so we were all on the same wavelength. I started writing songs instead of just interpreting other people's work. Vic Briggs, John Weider and Danny McCulloch were all great players, great people. We all believed in "peace, love and brown rice". We were trying to change our lives, and in exchange, other people's lives. It lasted for a little while. We were surrounded by people with the same



Armed and possibly dangerous: Burdon in 1967





The Animals' original lineup at King's Cross Station, London, during a 1983 reunion tour: (l-r) Hilton Valentine, John Steel, Alan Price, Eric Burdon and Chas Chandler

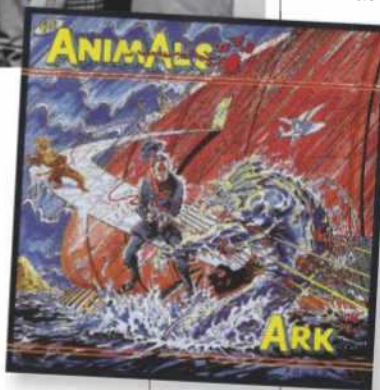
record, I wrote a song about him coming to visit our club when we were kids in Newcastle. The truth is, he never really did visit – but I wouldn't let the truth ruin a great story. However, he did like my covers of his work and had asked me to record more of his songs, which I was honoured to do. We sent messages to each other through mutual friends and people we worked with. When he passed away, I wanted to be there to wish him a fond adieu. So that's where I finally came face-to-face with him for the first – and last – time. It was a powerful experience. I wrote a song about it, "Bo Diddley Special". Unlike the early Animals tune, which was complete fantasy, this time the story is true.

#### What was it like playing with Springsteen at SXSW? Is it true you came close to collaborating on an album?

A collaboration was supposed to happen in the late '70s – and for whatever reason, I said no. Don't ask me to explain. I haven't always made decisions in my own best interest. But when Bruce decided to make The Animals the subject of his SXSW keynote address, I was so pleased no hard feelings were held. His generous comments gave me a much-appreciated boost and I'll always love the guy for that.

#### Hilton Valentine is joining you at the Newcastle City Hall show. Were you in contact with him through the decades?

Hilton is the only one I kept a good relationship with over the years. He stayed at my house for years after we broke up The Animals. He became a roadie of mine and eventually started his own thing, returned to his first love, skiffle. Years ago we reconnected and I invited him to join me on stage at



Bruce Springsteen makes his keynote speech about The Animals at SXSW, 2012



Hippiefest! After that, we toured for a year or so. He was on the verge of a mental breakdown from the things we went through together. It took him years to recover, and I guess I was his only contact from Tyneside. We were both deeply hurt by the way Alan Price grabbed the royalties from "...Rising Sun". But I kept pushing him to get on with life and get back to the guitar. I'm looking forward to seeing him and spending some time together in our hometown, the place where it all started.

**How are things between you and Alan Price?** Nonexistent.

#### For your 76th birthday, you released a version of "For What It's Worth". Do you still believe in the spirit of '67 – and the power of music as a force for positive change?

I believe in the spirit of the people. In the power of the human voice. With what's happening today – gun violence, racism, income inequality – we all need to raise our voices and sing more protest songs. When people ask me, "Where are the protest songs of today?" I say we still have Jimmy Cliff – his latest LP, *Rebirth*, has a lot of songs that reflect today – we still have Neil Young, Springsteen, Peter Gabriel, Sinéad O'Connor... I'm still singing for peace and justice every night. I don't know where the younger generation stands, and I admit, I haven't seen the equivalent of a Dylan or a Springsteen, but I'm sure they are out there. History repeats itself. Any young rebel soul needs to protest the inequality of the day.

#### Are you intending on recording any new music? 'Til Your River Runs Dry was well received.

I write constantly – thoughts, stories, ideas for songs. A record will come out of it eventually. I feel no pressure to put out a new album or announce a farewell tour. I've always been less calculated, which can be infuriating to some. But to the people who know me and my music, they can trust that when it happens it will be 100 per cent organic.

#### In "When I Was Young" you sang, "When I was young, it was more important / Pain more painful / Laughter much louder." Do you think much about your legacy?

No. A legacy is for others to make up about you after you're gone. I've lived a full life with many ups and downs. The only thing I can say about myself, is that I am one lucky individual to have come through the life that I've lived. In reality, you just have to get on with your life and you create your legacy from birth until you take your last breath. ☺

Eric Burdon plays Newcastle City Hall on June 23

ERICA ECHENBERG/REDFERNS; KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE

### BUYERS' GUIDE

## BEST OF BURDON



#### THE ANIMALS THE ANIMALS

(COLUMBIA, 1964)

The band's first long-player caught them at full-tilt R&B, documenting their live repertoire – covers by John Lee Hooker, Chuck Berry and Fats Domino. A snapshot of the original Animals at their best, their sound coalescing around Alan Price's distinctive keyboards, John Steel's dextrous timekeeping and Burdon's ragged vocals.

#### ERIC BURDON & THE ANIMALS WINDS OF CHANGE (MGM, 1967)

Full-blown psych with "San Franciscan Nights" and an acid-soaked "Paint It, Black" reflected

the spirit of the times. "Yes I Am Experienced" was Burdon's 'answer' to Hendrix's "Are You Experienced?". The evocative spoken-word allegory "The Black Plague" featured Gregorian chants, Hammond lines and funeral bells.



#### ERIC BURDON DECLARES "WAR"

(MGM, 1970)

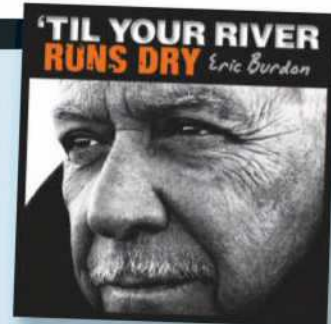
The first of Burdon's two albums with War was a wild, free-roaming excursion into psych funk. Consistently great. YouTube has audio of Burdon and War in full flight, recorded in Sept 1970 at Ronnie Scott's and joined on "Tobacco Road" by Hendrix – his final performance.



#### ERIC BURDON MY SECRET LIFE

(SPV, 2004)

His first LP since 1988's *I Used To Be An Animal*, this comeback was essentially Burdon's love letter to US music – passing nimbly through



folk, R&B, jazz and rock'n'roll – all delivered with customary blues grit.

#### ERIC BURDON 'TIL YOUR RIVER RUNS DRY

(ABKCO, 2013)

Burdon's most recent LP, this found him in, by turns, ruminative, defiant and bluesy mood. Politics was never far away – "Invitation To The White House" – nor the blues ("Bo Diddley Special"), but the highlight was the crawling blues of post-Hurricane Katrina epic "The River Is Rising".

# LIVE

## C2C: COUNTRY TO COUNTRY

O2 Arena, London, March 9–11

Margo Price, Emmylou Harris and Kacey Musgraves top three-day festival

**N**OW in its sixth year, C2C: Country To Country has evolved into a three-day festival spread across three cities. American country music royalty are imported as headliners rotating between London, Glasgow and Dublin on consecutive nights, though this exacting schedule may require rethinking – this year, Tim McGraw, doing his third show in three days, collapsed on stage in Dublin, apparently dehydrated. Local artists play on smaller stages during the daylight hours.

C2C has never made any pretensions to being anything but a jamboree of modern, mainstream, big-hat arena country. The bill-toppers at its first incarnation in 2013 were Carrie Underwood and Tim McGraw, since followed by the likes of The Zac Brown Band, Brad Paisley, Lady Antebellum and Miranda Lambert. On its own merits – as a celebration, that is, of music more spiritually akin to the traditions and aesthetics of *Nashville* the TV series than *Nashville* the city – C2C succeeds admirably, and is well-attended by country enthusiasts in cowboy hats and bolo ties. At the 2018 incarnation, however, by far the most interesting artists appearing on the main stage – both reaching London on the final night – are one relative newcomer noteworthy for a determination to disdain the cloying clichés of current pop-country, and one distinguished vet who remains,

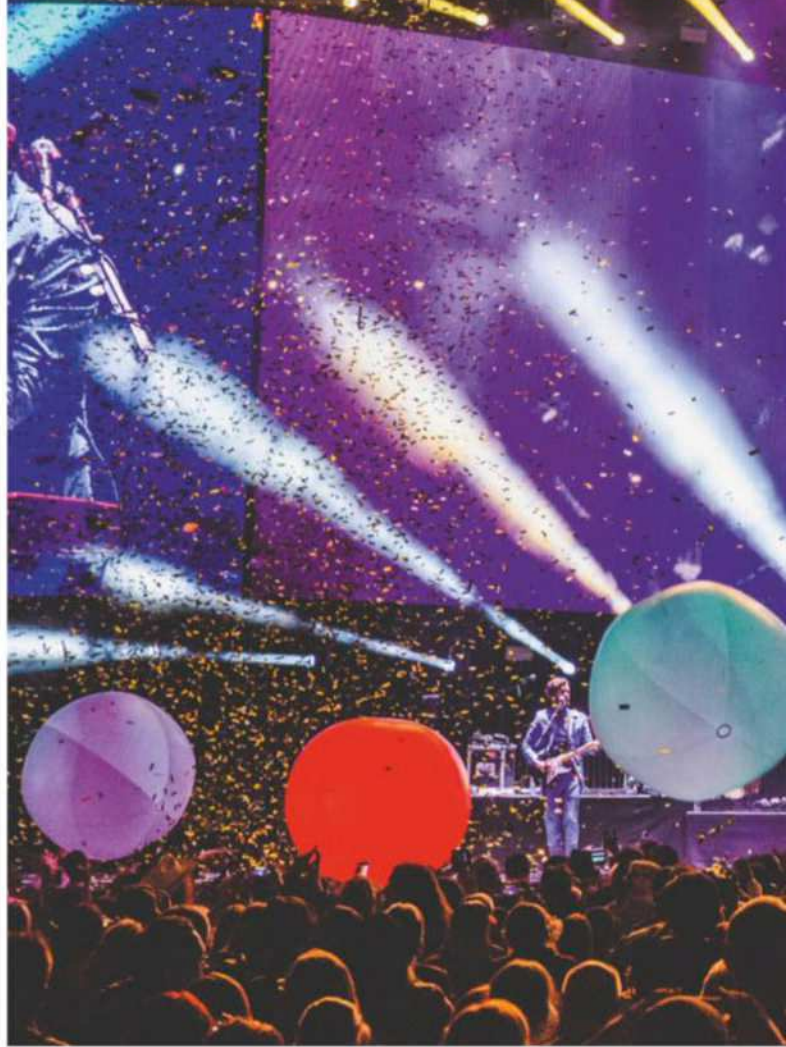
more or less, a genre unto herself.

The former is Margo Price, the latter Emmylou Harris. Price emerged in 2016 with the superb *Midwest Farmer's Daughter*, a classic decades-in-the-making overnight success; last year's terrific *All American Made* confirmed that the debut was no fluke. She appears with the same five-piece group with whom she played vastly smaller spaces last time she was in the UK, but dresses herself up somewhat in an embroidered white Nudie-style suit and cowboy hat.

Price and company are an astoundingly good bar band, but for the first few songs at least, seem a little lost in this hangar (this is not entirely their fault: the sound is weirdly quiet). The set is also blighted by the jarring showbiz self-indulgence of Price belabouring a spare drum kit during an overlong coda of "Cocaine Cowboys". But the peaks are tremendous, including a medley of Price's "Hurтин' (On The Bottle)" with Willie Nelson's "Whiskey River" and a guest cameo by Lukas Nelson on his father's part on the beautiful "Learning To Lose". Nelson's brief solo set on the venue's smaller stage the night before had been splendid, especially "Just Outside Of Austin"; in this stripped-back context, the degree to which he sounds like his old man is just eerie.

Emmylou Harris seems aware that she is the designated provider of gravitas amid C2C's prevailing glitz and/or schlock and sticks mostly to

Kacey Musgraves with band: "I'm headlining the fucking O2!"



the hits. On one hand, this is kind of a shame; some of Harris's recent recordings, especially *Old Yellow Moon*, the first of two albums she has made with Rodney Crowell, have been fit to stand alongside any albums bearing her name. On the other, it would be ridiculous to quibble with being in the same room, however vast it may be, when Emmylou Harris sings Townes Van Zandt's "Pancho & Lefty", Billy Joe Shaver's "Old Five & Dimers", The Flying Burrito Brothers' "Wheels" or her own "Boulder To Birmingham" – a song which, she says, "I wrote and recorded when I was still a brunette."

Price and Harris aside, for the attendee with a limited tolerance for the glittery high-sheen approach to clothes, hair, lyrical sentiment and musical production values, the main stage of C2C is something of a trial. Little Big Town headline the closing night in London, with a performance

that could almost be interpreted as a seminar on 21st-century country music and where it all went wrong. They start with a cover of Elton John's "Rocket Man", in keeping with what seems to be a widespread belief among C2C stars that it is necessary to throw a few homegrown bones (last year in this slot, Zac Brown performed an accurate but baffling facsimile of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" and an admittedly tremendous Southern boogie supercharging of The Who's "Baba O'Reilly"). LBT's "Rocket Man" is saccharine and dreadful, yet may be the high point of their set. They also do The Beatles' "With A Little Help From My Friends", for some reason.

Little Big Town are hardly the first group to have become less interesting and fun as they've become more successful, but there is an unusually vast chasm between such perfect early tracks as the arch,

ANTHONY MOONEY; GRAHAM JOY/LUKEDYSON





## Musgraves' ascent to Nashville aristocracy is impossible to begrudge...



witty, pre-emptive murder ballad “Welcome To The Family” (omitted tonight) and such boot-scooting, line-dancing glop as the more recent “Drivin’ Around” and “Pontoon” (regrettably included).

The night before, Sugarland end their set with an obligatory British cover version, in this instance Simple Minds’ “Alive And Kicking”. It says everything about what had preceded it that a bloated ’80s pop ballad was more appropriate, at that point, than any given Hank Williams tune. Sugarland’s specialities are upbeat uplift, with lyrics that might have been lifted from inspirational online memes, and melodramatic heartbreak ballads, during which Jennifer Nettles is obliged to unfurl the full (and admittedly impressive) range of her voice. During her solo hit “Unlove You”, one begins to fear for the lenses in one’s spectacles.

Early on in Kacey Musgraves’

set, she shares her delight at being where she is with the endearingly unguarded declaration, “I’m headlining the fucking O2!” before apologising to any of the more “classy” listeners who might have been tuning into the BBC simulcast. Her set, disappointingly, could do with a good few more affronts to taste and decorum – and so, by the sound of the stately and polished new tracks she previews, could her forthcoming album, *Golden Hour*. Musgraves’ ascent to Nashville aristocracy is impossible to begrudge, but it’s sad to think we might have heard the last of the irascible, sharp-eyed urchin who delivered *Same Trailer, Different Park*. The further back into bluegrass country Musgraves lapses, the better she sounds, the clear highlight being the winningly wry “Family Is Family”, as her drummer keeps time on one of his own legs with wooden spoons. **ANDREW MUELLER**



Emmylou Harris: a genre unto herself

It's difficult to call to mind another artist his age pushing musical boundaries so far

Cale live at the Barbican, still going his own way, and (below) with a non-electrified Cate Le Bon

## JOHN CALE

Barbican, London, March 9, 2018

Still contrary at 76, the art-rock pioneer underuses his special guests but continues to work new angles for himself

**J**OHN CALE, it's fair to say, is still vexed by The Velvet Underground's short reunion 25 years ago. "We wasted a lot of great opportunities," he told *Uncut* back in 2016. "The potential was there to do a lot of really great things, but Lou just wanted to regurgitate his catalogue."

That's a charge that could rarely be levelled at Cale: here in 2018, he's celebrating his 76th birthday with a 'Futurespective' at London's cathedral of high culture, the Barbican. Instead of regurgitation, we get radical reinventions, bold collaborations, unexpected paths and new songs. This brave approach isn't without its pitfalls, however. For an event that's pitched as career-spanning, with Velvets and pre-Velvets work promised, it's strange that we hear no Dream Syndicate drones and only one VU song, but two from 2003's "5 Tracks" EP.

What's more, Cale has enlisted the London Contemporary Orchestra, House Gospel Choir, electronic auteur Actress and Welsh singer and songwriter Cate Le Bon to assist him, but he sorely underuses their talents. The LCO sit silently on stage for the first two lengthy songs, and when they do finally play, on 1977's doomy "Hedda Gabler", they're drowned out by,

of all things, a string sound from Cale's keyboard. Whether it's down to expense, lack of rehearsal time or the maestro's own choice, they reappear only intermittently. Similarly, Le Bon merely strums an acoustic and sings on "Amsterdam" and Old West ballad "Buffalo Ballet", both from Cale's early-'70s period, but her skills on oblique lead guitar could have been put to suitably unusual use elsewhere. Actress also lends his excellent abstract electronics to only a handful of songs.

Quibbles aside, there are many stunning moments. "Magritte", which features the orchestra, choir and Actress, is a highlight, with beauty and darkness, melody and noise, in perfect balance; neither rock, modern classical or electronica, it's a fine

### SETLIST

- 1 Over Her Head
- 2 Dying On The Vine
- 3 Hedda Gabler
- 4 Els Missing
- 5 Helen Of Troy
- 6 Big White Cloud
- 7 Half Past France
- 8 Leaving It Up To You
- 9 Magritte
- 10 Buffalo Ballet
- 11 Mr Wilson
- 12 I Keep A Close Watch
- 13 Chums Of Dumpty
- 14 Amsterdam
- 15 Villa Albani
- 16 Waiting For The Man
- 17 Pretty People
- 18 Hatred
- 19 Emily

example of Cale's power as songwriter, performer and lightning-rod. Elsewhere, the LCO imbue *Paris 1919*'s "Half Past France" and *Helen Of Troy*'s "I Keep A Close Watch" with even more lush, melancholic poise than the originals, and transform 1984's "Villa Albani" into something feral and glowering.

At other points, when Cale settles in with just his three-piece band, the results are almost as impressive: "Helen Of Troy" finds the quartet locking into an angular groove for almost 10 minutes, the noise building as Cale and Dustin Boyer both savage their guitar strings during a mighty extended outro, while "Waiting For The Man"'s troglodytic perfection is pared down from three chords to just two. "Shut the fuck up!" bellows Cale, to no-one in particular, over seesawing, pounded piano. 1975's "Leaving It Up To You", meanwhile, is only recognisable by its lyrics, Cale spitting out his lines about Sharon Tate and tanks "like rattlesnakes in the sun" over an electronic *feu-follet*.

Aside from the soothing encore, "Emily", the climax of the set comes with two new songs, excellently utilising the House Gospel Choir and embracing the hip-hop Cale has been so fond of over the past couple of decades. "Pretty People" is metallic, electronic disco, with Cale and the choir ordering the crowd to "Rise up, rise up!" Meanwhile, the aggressive "Hatred"'s chorus – "Boo yah! Boo yah!" – might be faintly ludicrous coming from a 76-year-old from the Amman Valley, but it's a reminder that Cale can, and usually will, do whatever he wants. It's difficult to call to mind another artist his age pushing musical boundaries so far, with such hard-hitting results. "See you in another 76," he mutters. **TOPPINNOCK**



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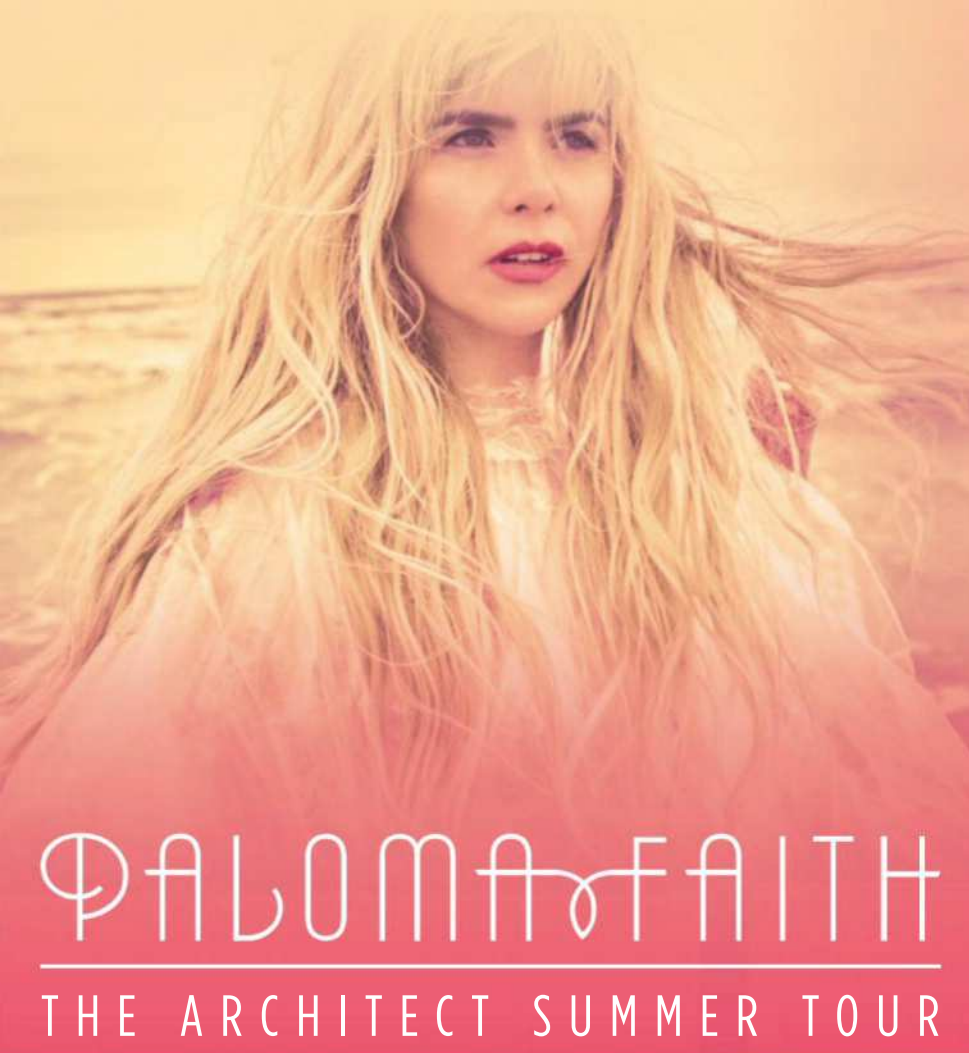
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 12th LONDON Royal Festival Hall  
 14th FOLKESTONE Leas Cliff Hall  
 19th PLYMOUTH Pavilions  
 20th BRIGHTON Dome  
 21st IPSWICH Regent Theatre  
 25th BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall  
 26th OXFORD New Theatre

AUGUST  
 22nd BELFAST Custom House Square

DECEMBER  
 12th PORTSMOUTH Guildhall  
 13th CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange  
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- FRI 13 JUL LIVE IN SOMERSET TAUNTON
- SAT 14 JUL STADIUM ZIP WORLD COLWYN BAY
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- SAT 04 AUG GLASTONBURY ABBEY EXTRAVAGANZA GLASTONBURY
- FRI 10 AUG HAYDOCK PARK RACECOURSE HAYDOCK
- SAT 11 AUG LINGFIELD RACECOURSE LINGFIELD
- FRI 17 AUG EDINBURGH SUMMER SESSIONS EDINBURGH
- SAT 18 AUG MARKET RASEN RACECOURSE MARKET RASEN
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*"The slide-fuelled romp 'Five Miles' and the evocative 'London Rain' are revelations, as Bechtolsheimer offers a sinewy, cinematic take on big-sky country roots rock." **Uncut***  
*"If dangerous living bothers you, look away now - but for everyone else, Curse Of Lono are a new beacon of darkness." **Mojo***

## CURSE OF LONO

### UK SPRING TOUR 2018

MAY 17	<b>BRIGHTON</b>	- ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE
MAY 24	<b>WITNEY</b>	- FAT LIL'S
MAY 25	<b>LONDON*</b>	- THE LEXINGTON
MAY 26	<b>BRISTOL*</b>	- DOT-TO-DOT, MR WOLF'S
MAY 30	<b>SHEFFIELD</b>	- GREYSTONES
MAY 31	<b>GLASGOW*</b>	- HUG & PINT
JUN 01	<b>MANCHESTER*</b>	- GULLIVERS
JUN 02	<b>BEDFORD*</b>	- THE ENT SHED

\*WITH SPECIAL GUEST **KERRI WATT**

Tickets at: [www.curseoflonoband.com/#shows](http://www.curseoflonoband.com/#shows)

*"Exile On Main Street meets William Faulkner."*  
**Classic Rock**

# GAZ COOMBES

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST

piney girl



MAY 2018		
THU	17	GLASGOW THE GARAGE
FRI	18	LIVERPOOL ARTS CLUB
SAT	19	LEEDS CHURCH
MON	21	BIRMINGHAM O <sub>2</sub> INSTITUTE2
TUE	22	BRISTOL THE TRINITY CENTRE
WED	23	LONDON PALLADIUM

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# THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD SHOW

1988

2018



## TIME

30 YEARS OF CELEBRATING PINK FLOYD



### NOVEMBER 2018

FRI	09	IPSWICH REGENT
SAT	10	LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO
MON	12	SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
TUE	13	MARGATE WINTER GARDENS
THU	15	BIRMINGHAM ARENA
FRI	16	BOURNEMOUTH INTL CENTRE
SAT	17	BRIGHTON CENTRE
MON	19	GUILDFORD & LIVE
TUE	20	READING HEXAGON
THU	22	STOKE VICTORIA HALL
FRI	23	OXFORD NEW THEATRE
SAT	24	CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA
MON	26	BATH FORUM
TUE	27	LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
WED	28	SCUNTHORPE BATHS HALL
FRI	30	PRESTON GUILD HALL

### DECEMBER 2018

SAT	01	GLASGOW THE SSE HYDRO
SUN	02	EDINBURGH USHER HALL
TUE	04	CARLISLE SANDS CENTRE
THU	06	LIVERPOOL ECHO ARENA
FRI	07	NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
SAT	08	MANCHESTER O <sub>2</sub> APOLLO
MON	09	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
TUE	11	NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL
THU	13	HARROGATE INTL CENTRE
FRI	14	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

SAT 15 HULL VENUE EXTRA DATE ADDED!

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 BY ARRANGEMENT WITH UNITED TALENT AGENCY



NEW SHOW FOR 2018



# THE DECEMBERISTS

Plus Special Guest

MON 05 NOV	*	GLASGOW O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
WED 07 NOV	*	LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO
THU 08 NOV	*	BRISTOL O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
SAT 10 NOV	*	LEEDS O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
SUN 11 NOV	*	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
MON 12 NOV	*	MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL

GIGSANDTOURS.COM \* TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

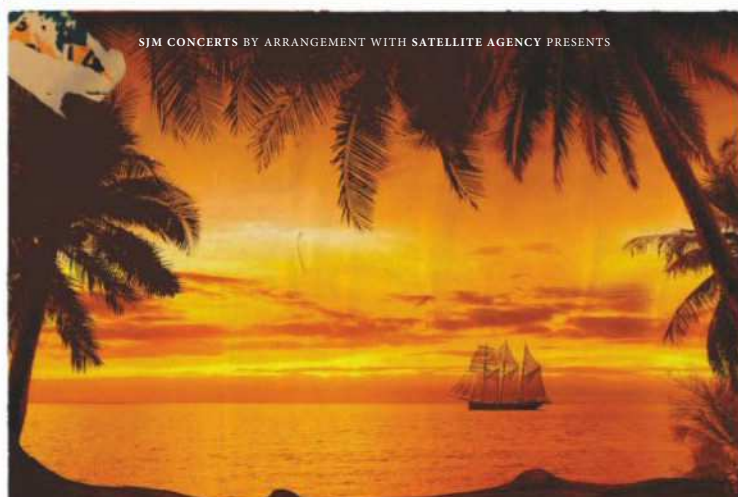


I'll Be Your Girl out now.

Buy the record at [Decemberists.com](http://Decemberists.com)

An S.J.M. Concerts and PCL presentation by arrangement with CAA

SJM CONCERTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SATELLITE AGENCY PRESENTS



# HEAVEN 17

'THE LUXURY GAP' IN CONCERT 2018

plus very special guests

Friday 09 November  
**NORTHAMPTON ROADMENDER**

Saturday 10 November  
**NORWICH UEA**

Friday 16 November  
**BOURNEMOUTH O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**

Saturday 17 November  
**BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> INSTITUTE**

Friday 23 November  
**GLASGOW O<sub>2</sub> ABC**

Saturday 24 November  
**LIVERPOOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**

Friday 30 November  
**LONDON O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE**

Saturday 01 December  
**BRISTOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**

Friday 07 December  
**MANCHESTER O<sub>2</sub> RITZ**

Saturday 08 December  
**SHEFFIELD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**

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[HEAVEN17.COM](http://HEAVEN17.COM)



# Gomez PLUS JOHN SMITH

20 YEAR CELEBRATION OF **BRING IT ON**  
VOTED FAVOURITE MERCURY PRIZE WINNER BY BBC 6 MUSIC LISTENERS

TUESDAY 24 APRIL  
**BRIGHTON**  
D **SOLD OUT**

WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL  
**NOTTINGHAM**  
R **SOLD OUT**

FRIDAY 27 APRIL  
**DUBLIN**  
O **SOLD OUT**

SATURDAY 28 APRIL  
**GLASGOW**  
B **SOLD OUT**

SUNDAY 29 APRIL  
**LEEDS**  
O **SOLD OUT**

TUESDAY 01 MAY  
**MANCHESTER**  
A **SOLD OUT**

WEDNESDAY 02 MAY  
**BRISTOL**  
O **SOLD OUT**

THURSDAY 03 MAY  
**LONDON**  
R **SOLD OUT**

SATURDAY 05 MAY  
**LONDON**  
O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN

SUNDAY 06 MAY  
**CAMBRIDGE**  
CORN EXCHANGE

MONDAY 07 MAY  
**LIVERPOOL**  
O2 ACADEMY

TUESDAY 08 MAY  
**GLASGOW**  
BARROWLAND

A CROSTOWN CONCERTS & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

**BUFFALO TOM**

TUESDAY 04 DECEMBER 2018  
**BRISTOL FLEECE**

WEDNESDAY 05 DECEMBER 2018  
**LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM**

THURSDAY 06 DECEMBER 2018  
**BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE 2**

'THIS IS THE GOLDEN SOUND OF A BAND IN THEIR ELEMENT'  
MOJO ★ ★ ★ ★

NEW ALBUM QUIET AND PEACE OUT NOW  
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SCHOOLKIDSRECORDS.COM/LABEL

A CROSTOWN CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

**KIEFER SUTHERLAND**

**Reckless**

UK TOUR 2018

THURSDAY 21 JUNE \* **LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM**

FRIDAY 22 JUNE \* **NORWICH UEA THE NICK RAYNS LCR**  
\* VENUE UPGRADE DUE TO DEMAND - ORIGINAL TICKETS VALID \*

MONDAY 25 JUNE \* **OXFORD O2 ACADEMY**

TUESDAY 26 JUNE \* **BATH KOMEDIA**

THURSDAY 28 JUNE \* **MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ATC LIVE

# Patti Smith and Her Band

~ SATURDAY ~  
02 JUNE 2018  
**BRIGHTON**  
D **SOLD OUT**

~ TUESDAY ~  
05 JUNE 2018  
**MANCHESTER**  
O2 APOLLO

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL



TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM  
SEETICKETS.COM - GIGANTIC.COM - STARGREEN.COM - TICKETMASTER.CO.UK  
GIGSANDTOURS.COM - GIGSINSCOTLAND.COM

@CROSTOWN\_LIVE - /CROSTOWNCONCERTS - @CROSTOWNCONCERTS

# UB40

featuring ALI, ASTRO & MICKEY

A Real Labour of Love  
40th Anniversary Tour



<b>2019</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Fri 05</b> Cardiff Motorpoint Arena
<b>Mon 25</b> Bournemouth Int'l Centre	<b>Sat 06</b> London The O2
<b>Fri 29</b> Birmingham Arena	<b>Mon 08</b> Brighton Centre

MORE DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

myticket.co.uk | ub40.org

@UB40 @ub40 @ub40

A Kilimanjaro presentation by arrangement with United Talent Agency

# THE BLUETONES

UK TOUR 2018

THE FIRST DECADE.  
1995 - 2005.

PLUS SUPPORTS

**THE VELVET HANDS**

(02 - 05 & 07 MAY)

**MIRACLE GLASS COMPANY**

(09 - 14 & 19 MAY)

**theGalleries**

(15 - 20 MAY)

**JORDAN ALLEN**

(17 MAY ONLY)

**MAY 2018**

- 02 PORTSMOUTH WEDGEWOOD ROOMS
- 04 EXETER LEMON GROVE
- 05 BRISTOL SWX \*VEHICLE CHANGE - TICKETS REMAIN VALID\*
- 06 BISHOPS STORTFORD THE BISH BASH
- 07 OXFORD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
- 09 GLASGOW O<sub>2</sub> ABC
- 10 BLACKBURN KING GEORGE'S HALL
- 11 SHEFFIELD THE PLUG
- 12 NEWCASTLE NORTHUMBRIA INSTITUTE
- 14 BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> INSTITUTE
- 15 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
- 17 MANCHESTER O<sub>2</sub> RITZ
- 18 YORK FIBBERS
- 19 LONDON O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
- 20 NORWICH EPIC STUDIOS

MYTICKET.CO.UK

BLUETONES.BAND **f** /THEBLUETONES

A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

## WYE OAK

+ SUNO DEKO

THURSDAY 03 MAY 2018  
LONDON  
VILLAGE UNDERGROUND

MYTICKET.CO.UK WYEOAKMUSIC.COM @WYEOAK



## DYLAN LEBLANC

+ NICOLE ATKINS

TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2018  
LONDON BUSH HALL

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DYLANLEBLANC.COM @DYLANLEBLANCMUSIC @NICOLEATKINS



**WAVVES**

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS **ZUNE RATS**

FRIDAY 08 JUNE 2018  
LONDON TUFNELL PARK DOME

MYTICKET.CO.UK WAVVES.NET

D A R L I  
N G S I D  
E E F F  
A X T R A

THURSDAY 01 NOVEMBER 2018  
LONDON O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE

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DARLINGSIDE.COM 'EXTRALIFE' OUT NOW

## UNSHELTERED: Chapter and Verse an evening with WILLIAM McCARTHY (AUGUSTINES)



- |              |                                   |                                 |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>APRIL</b> | 27 - BELFAST OH YEAH MUSIC CENTRE | 02 - MANCHESTER NIGHT & DAY     |
|              | 28 - GLASGOW BROADCAST            | 03 - LEEDS THE WARDROBE         |
|              | 29 - EDINBURGH SNEAKY PETE'S      | 05 - BRISTOL LOUISIANA          |
| <b>MAY</b>   | 01 - NEWCASTLE THE CLUNY          | 06 - BIRMINGHAM CASTLE & FALCON |
|              |                                   | 07 - LONDON OMEARA              |
|              |                                   | 09 - BRIGHTON HOPE & RUIN       |

MYTICKET.CO.UK WILLIAMMCCARTHY.ORG

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EDGE ST LIVE PRESENTS

# GRETCHEN PETERS

with very special guest KIM RICHEY




NEW ALBUM  
Dancing With The Beast  
OUT MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>  


## MAY

- 19 Stamford, Corn Exchange
- 20 Milton Keynes, Stables
- 22 Edinburgh, Queens Hall
- 23 Sage, Gateshead
- 25 Birmingham, Town Hall
- 26 Southport, The Atkinson
- 27 Manchester, RNCM
- 30 Leeds, City Varieties
- 31 Bury St Edmunds, The Apex

## JUNE

- 2 Bristol, St. George's Hall
- 3 Worthing, Pavilion
- 7 Lerwick, Mareel Centre
- 12 Cardiff, St. David's Hall
- 13 London, Cadogan Hall

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BY ARRANGEMENT WITH MONEYPENNY

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# Graham Nash

An intimate evening of songs and stories



## JULY

- 20 GATESHEAD The Sage, Gateshead
- 21 LIVERPOOL Philharmonic
- 22 LONDON The Bridge Theatre
- 24 BEXHILL-ON-SEA De La Warr Pavilion
- 24 BRISTOL St George's
- 26 BIRMINGHAM Town Hall
- 28 PERTH Concert Hall
- 29 SALFORD The Lowry

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BUY TICKETS NOW



VMS LIVE AND ARC PRESENT

# HAPPY MONDAYS

**SATURDAY 19 MAY**  
LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**DONCASTER RACECOURSE**  
DONCASTER-RACECOURSE.CO.UK

# HEAVEN 17

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS  
**LIGHTNING SEEDS**

LIVE AFTER RACING AT UTTOXETER RACECOURSE  
**SATURDAY 19 MAY**  
UTTOXETER-RACECOURSE.CO.UK  
MUSICLIVE

VMS LIVE AND ARC PRESENT

# DEACON BLUE

LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**NEWCASTLE RACECOURSE**  
**FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2018**  
NEWCASTLE-RACECOURSE.CO.UK  
MUSICLIVE



VMS LIVE AND ARC PRESENT

# UR40

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS  
**FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2018**  
**ZEBEDES YARD, HULL**  
INNERCITY




# Orbital

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS  
**FAITHLESS DJ SET**  
system7

**FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2018**  
**BRIGHTON RACECOURSE**  
**SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018**  
**INNERCITY HULL**  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE, ARC AND ARK

# CHASE AND STATUS DJ SET

BY MC RAGE



**SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018**  
**DANCING AFTER RACING AT**  
**DONCASTER RACECOURSE**  
DONCASTER-RACECOURSE.CO.UK

**FRIDAY 27 JULY 2018**  
**INNERCITY HULL**  
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST **HIGH CONTRAST**  
AND SHINOBI RESIDENT DJs  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE, ARC AND ARK



# PALOMA FAITH

THE ARCHITECT SUMMER TOUR

**SATURDAY 11 AUGUST 2018**  
LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**LINGFIELD PARK RESORT**  
WWW.LINGFIELDPARK.CO.UK  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE AND ARC  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAA  
MUSICLIVE

VMS LIVE AND ARC PRESENT

# HAPPY MONDAYS

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS  
**PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT** PERFORM THE BEST OF JOY DIVISION & NEW ORDER

**FRIDAY 24 AUGUST 2018**  
**INNERCITY HULL**

# KAISER CHIEFS



LIVE AFTER RACING AT:  
**WINDSOR RACECOURSE**  
**SATURDAY 25 AUGUST 2018**  
WINDSOR-RACECOURSE.CO.UK

**WOLVERHAMPTON RACECOURSE**  
**SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2018**  
WOLVERHAMPTON-RACECOURSE.CO.UK  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE AND ARC



# Ocean Colour Scene

**FRIDAY 31 AUGUST 2018**  
LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**WOLVERHAMPTON RACECOURSE**  
WOLVERHAMPTON-RACECOURSE.CO.UK  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE AND ARC

VMS LIVE AND ARC PRESENT

# THE WOMBATS

**SATURDAY 01 SEPTEMBER 2018**  
LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**LINGFIELD PARK RESORT**  
LINGFIELDPARK.CO.UK MUSICLIVE



# JAMES BLUNT

THE AFTERLOVE TOUR



**SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2018**  
LIVE AFTER RACING AT  
**BATH RACECOURSE**  
BATH-RACECOURSE.CO.UK MUSICLIVE  
PRESENTED BY VMS LIVE AND ARC

# PUBLIC IMAGE LTD




**THE PUBLIC IMAGE IS ROTTEN TOUR**

**MONDAY 04 JUNE 2018**  
**COVENTRY THE COPPER ROOMS**  
**WEDNESDAY 06 JUNE 2018**  
**NORWICH THE LCR**  
**MONDAY 18 JUNE 2018**  
**HULL UNIVERSITY ASYLUM**  
**SATURDAY 23 JUNE 2018**  
**EXETER LEMON GROVE**  
**SUNDAY 24 JUNE 2018**  
**WREXHAM WILLIAM ASTON HALL**

**PiLOFFICIAL.COM**  
A VMS LIVE PRESENTATION

# Tom Clarke

The Enemy Acoustic



**Friday 4th May 2018**  
**Preston Live**  
www.prestonguildhall.co.uk

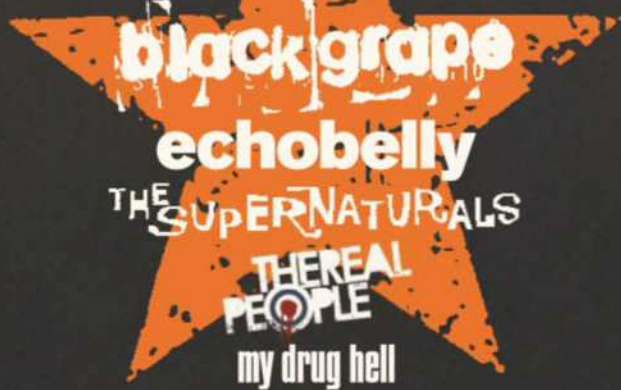
**Monday 7th May 2018**  
**Manchester Club Academy**  
www.manchesteracademy.net

**Thursday 17th May 2018**  
**Norwich Waterfront**  
www.thewaterfront.ticketabc.com  
Presented by VMS Live and friends

# Star Shaped Festival

## Ocean Colour Scene

special guests



Sat 29 Sept 2018  
O<sub>2</sub> Academy Brixton  
London

Absolute Radio 90s

LOUDER

ticketmaster.co.uk starshaped.club

Star Shaped Club @clubstarshaped @starshapedclub

Star Shaped The Home of Britpop

# PUBLIC iMAGE LTD



## THE PUBLIC IMAGE IS ROTTEN TOUR

MAY 2018

30 BRISTOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

JUNE 2018

01 BOURNEMOUTH O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

04 COVENTRY THE COPPER ROOMS

06 NORWICH THE LCR @ UEA

12 NEWCASTLE O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

13 GLASGOW O<sub>2</sub> ABC

15 SHEFFIELD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

16 MANCHESTER O<sub>2</sub> RITZ

18 HULL ASYLUM @ HULL UNIVERSITY

21 CARDIFF THE TRAMSHED

23 EXETER LEMON GROVE

24 WREXHAM WILLIAM ASTON HALL

26 READING SUB 89

27 FROME CHEESE & GRAIN

29 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

30 SOUTHAMPTON ENGINE ROOMS

AUGUST 2018

28 INVERNESS THE IRONWORKS

29 ABERDEEN THE ASSEMBLY

31 DUNDEE THE CHURCH

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AN ACADEMY EVENTS & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

ACADEMY EVENTS by arrangement with ITB presents

# Sleep

UK EXCLUSIVE

plus special guests

Monday 28th May 2018  
O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON

ACADEMY EVENTS in association with ITB and X Ray Touring presents

## mastersystem

ft. Scott Hutchison and Grant Hutchison  
(Frightened Rabbit), Justin Lockey (Editors),  
James Lockey (Minor Victories)



@mstrsystem @mastersystemband @MasterSystemBand

Wednesday 25th April 2018

MANCHESTER  
The Deaf Institute

Thursday 26th April 2018

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
The Cluny

Friday 27th April 2018

GLASGOW The Art School

Saturday 28th April 2018

LEEDS  
Brudenell Social Club

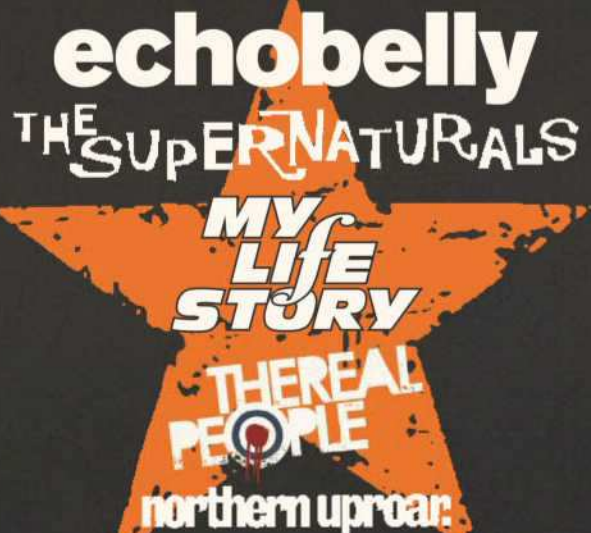
Monday 30th April 2018

BIRMINGHAM  
O<sub>2</sub> Institute3

Tuesday 1st May 2018

LONDON  
Oslo

# Star Shaped Festival



Sat 15 Sept 2018  
O<sub>2</sub> ABC Glasgow

Sun 16 Sept 2018  
O<sub>2</sub> Ritz Manchester

ticketmaster.co.uk starshaped.club

Star Shaped Club @clubstarshaped @starshapedclub

Star Shaped The Home of Britpop

Academy Events present

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by arrangement with CITI & United Talent Agency presents

# LITTLE STEVEN AND THE DISCIPLES OF SOUL

FEATURING ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAMER STEVEN VAN ZANDT OF THE E STREET BAND, THE SOPRANOS, LILYHAMMER, AND LITTLE STEVEN'S UNDERGROUND GARAGE!

THE SOULFIRE TEACHROCK TOUR EUROPE 2018

**SATURDAY 30th JUNE**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY LIVERPOOL

academyevents presents

# THE BEAT

STARRING **DAVE WAKELING**  
+ SPECIAL GUESTS

MAY 2018  
25 MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY  
26 PRESTON GUILD HALL  
27 WAKEFIELD WAREHOUSE 23  
29 NEWCASTLE O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
31 GLASGOW O<sub>2</sub> ABC

JUNE 2018  
01 LIVERPOOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
02 BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
03 SHEFFIELD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
09 LONDON ULU  
10 NORWICH WATERFRONT  
16 CARDIFF CLWB TFOR BACH

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH NEIL O'BRIEN ENTERTAINMENT

academyevents  
by arrangement with SELECTIVE AGENCY presents

# T-H-E ICICLE WORKS

35th ANNIVERSARY SHOWS IN CELEBRATION OF THE CLASSIC DEBUT ALBUM THE ICICLE WORKS (3hr PLUS SET)

4 SHOWS ONLY IN 2019

FRI 17th MAY 2019  
HOLMFIRTH  
Picturedrome

SAT 18th MAY 2019  
LONDON  
O<sub>2</sub> Academy Islington

FRI 24th MAY 2019  
GLASGOW  
O<sub>2</sub> ABC

SAT 25th MAY 2019  
LIVERPOOL  
O<sub>2</sub> Academy

THE ICICLE WORKS PERFORM THEIR DEBUT ALBUM AND IAN MCNABB'S HEAD LIKE A ROCK IN FULL TO CELEBRATE THEIR 35TH AND 25TH ANNIVERSARIES PLUS ALL THE OTHER FAN FAVOURITES

academyevents presents

# THE SMYTHS

"Unite and Take Over"  
TOUR 2018

Sat 28th April  
BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

Fri 4th May  
GLASGOW O<sub>2</sub> ABC2

Sat 18th May  
NEWCASTLE O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

Fri 21st September  
BRISTOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

Fri 5th October  
BOURNEMOUTH  
THE OLD FIRE STATION

Sat 6th October  
OXFORD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

Sat 20th October  
LEICESTER THE SCHOLAR  
@ O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

academyevents presents

# PROUD MARY

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

THURSDAY 7th JUNE 2018  
LONDON O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2 ISLINGTON

FRIDAY 8th JUNE 2018  
NEWCASTLE O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

academyevents  
and Edge St Live by arrangement with Asgard present

# STEVE EARLE & The Dukes

SUN 22 JULY 2018 MANCHESTER O<sub>2</sub> RITZ  
SAT 28 JULY 2018 BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> INSTITUTE

STEEVEEARLE.COM

academyevents  
in association with SPIDER TOURING present

# THE WEDDING PRESENT

1985 TOMMY 1987  
30th Anniversary Concerts

Performing Tommy which compiled the band's first singles (including My Favourite Dress & Go Out And Get 'Em, Boy!) and features the definitive sound of early Wedding Present. Plus other songs.

Friday 25th May  
BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

Saturday 26th May  
LIVERPOOL ARTS CLUB

Thursday 7th June  
OXFORD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

Friday 8th June  
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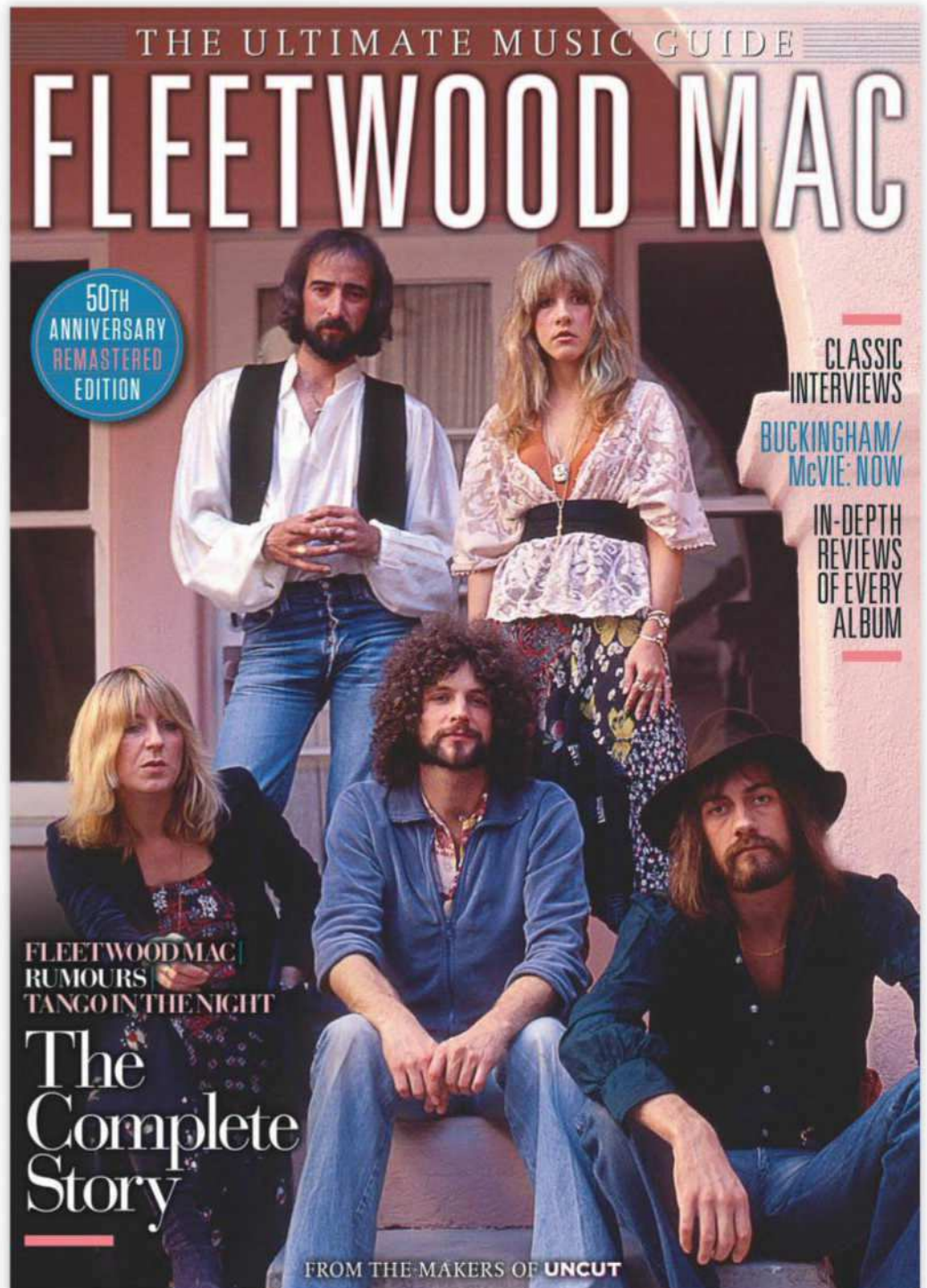
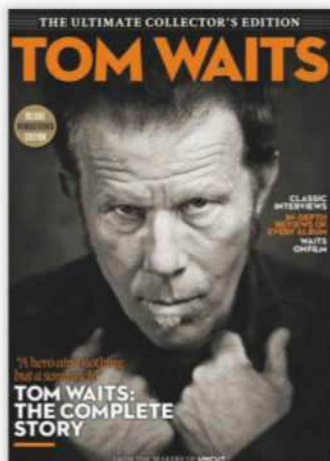
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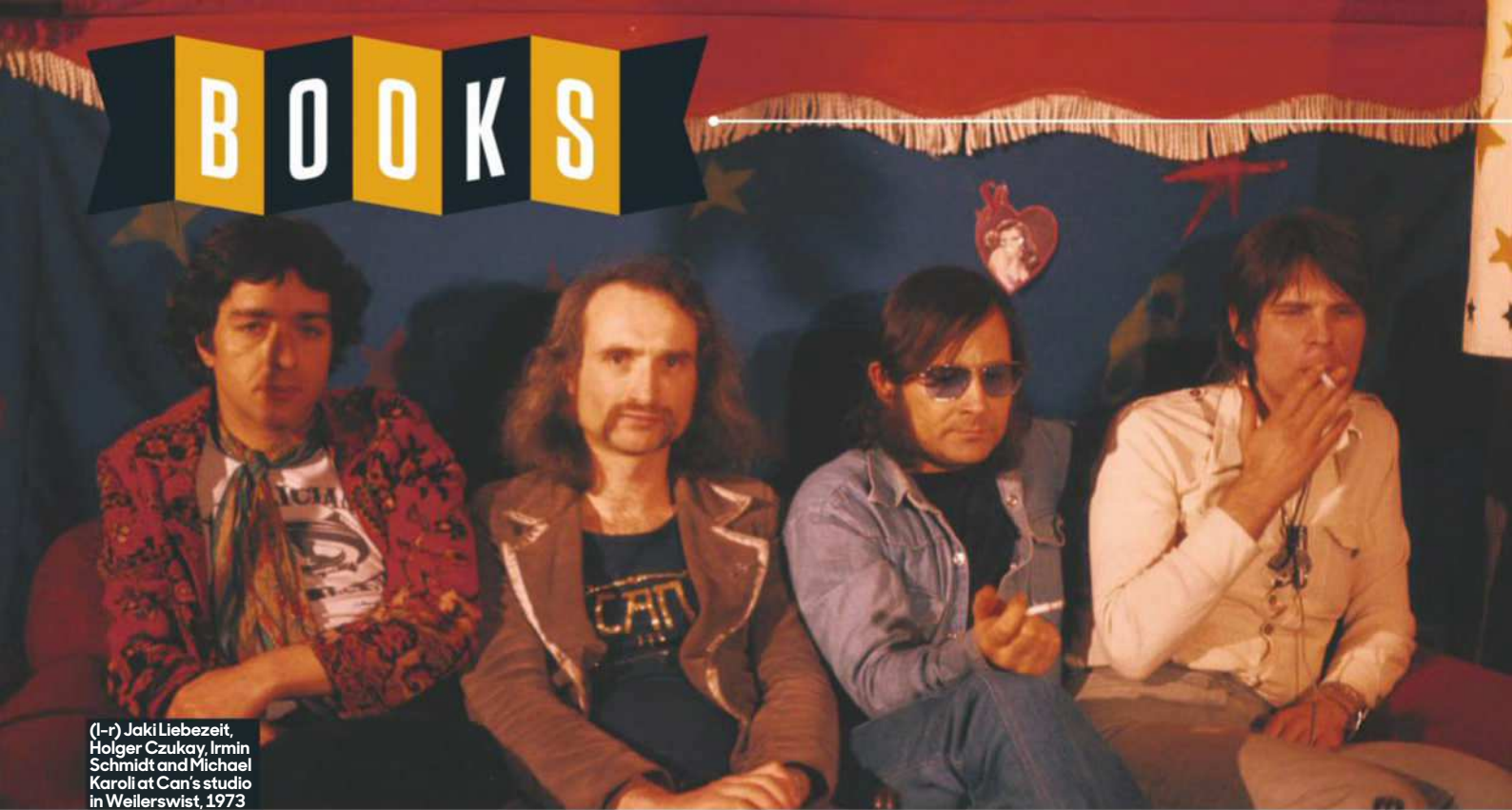
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# BOOKS



(l-r) Jaki Liebezeit, Holger Czukay, Irmin Schmidt and Michael Karoli at Can's studio in Weilerswist, 1973

SUCH is the significance of Can, arguably the most influential experimental band of the past 50 years, it seems only proper that the first serious excavation of their art comprises not one but two books, bound together for convenience. The first – **All Gates Open** – is an in-depth, intimate and culturally roving biography by *Uncut* contributor Rob Young. The second – **Can Kiosk** – is billed as a “symposium”, curated by the band’s keys player Irmin Schmidt. Like Can’s music, the pairing mixes aesthetic stringency with a loose, exploratory agenda.

Formed in Cologne in 1968, Can benefited from “growing up in a country which was in ruins, culturally”, as Schmidt says in the first book. “We reflected... the strangeness, the brutality, the harshness of what our parents’ generation did.” Young roots them in an unashamedly Germanic tradition – Bach at one end, Einstürzende Neubauten at the other – and within the wider streams of experimental culture: avant-garde minimalism, free-jazz, “proto-punk” cellists and all. Both Schmidt and bassist Holger Czukay studied under Karlheinz Stockhausen, while Schmidt recalls being “corrupted” by La Monte Young and Steve Reich on a trip to New York in 1966.

We track their wayward progress from their first rehearsal space, a cluster of rooms in a 14th-century castle rented by a rich friend, through the psychotic breakdown of original US singer Malcolm Mooney, the arrival of Damo Suzuki, and their imperial phase on *Tago Mago*, *Ege Bamyasi* and *Future Days*. Splitting in 1979, the muted final acts and partial reunions are placed in unsentimental context. “The first five LPs were enough,” said drummer Jaki Liebezeit. “The band could’ve then broken up in peace.”

Can’s expansive music encourages a

## REVIEWED THIS MONTH



**ALL GATES OPEN: THE STORY OF CAN**  
ROB YOUNG & IRMIN SCHMIDT  
FABER, £25  
8/10



**DO ANGELS NEED HAIRCUTS? THE EARLY POEMS OF LOU REED**  
LOU REED  
ANTHOLOGY EDITIONS,  
£22.95  
5/10

certain floridity, and Young has fun with this, describing guitars that “stray over the top like an elk in search of its young”. The rhythmic thrust of the mighty “Yoo Doo Right” is “like a squadron of mechanical deities manoeuvring through a ravine”. He is, however, also capable of capturing the essence of the music in a single potent line, nailing “Can’s signature monotony, in which everything appears to be changing over an unchanging same”.

Of Can’s founding quartet, all but Schmidt are now dead, which makes *Can Kiosk* the testament of the torch-keeper. The aim is to explore their enduring influence throughout the creative arts via a series of “virtual meetings” with a quorum that includes Mark E Smith, who sadly contributes very little of value, Primal Scream’s Bobby Gillespie and Andrew Innes, and Portishead’s Geoff Barrow, who is engaged and perceptive. There are lengthy extracts from Schmidt’s notebooks; later, Wim Wenders and John Malkovich turn up for a chapter on film music. It’s sporadically enlightening but hit-and-miss, occasionally mistaking lofty pontificating for profundity.

Young’s biography, on the other hand, is a work of deep access and impressive reach. Blending the granular detail of Can’s intimate life with a sweeping purview of the culture that created and fostered them, *All Gates Open* is an invaluable illumination of why the music of Can matters, and continues to resonate.

BETWEEN his departure from The Velvet Underground in 1970 and beginning his first solo album in the autumn of 1971, Lou Reed tired of music. Working in his father’s accountancy firm, he pursued poetry as his primary creative medium, and saw his work featured in several literary magazines. Five years after his

death, 12 mostly unpublished works from this period – 10 poems; two short stories – are collected in **Do Angels Need Haircuts?**, each prefaced with transcriptions of Reed’s spoken intros from a performance at St Mark’s Poetry Project on March 10, 1971 (a recording from this event is included with the book).

The anthology is intriguing but slight. “They are on the edge of lyric and perhaps best served with accompaniment,” writes NY poet Anne Waldman, Reed’s friend and contemporary, in her foreword. “But they swagger and bite and get giddy and investigate psychological complexity as well.” Well, some do, and some don’t. It’s fun to see “The Murder Mystery”, the sound-collage that appears on the third Velvets album, set out in colour-coded type to identify the overlapping voices. The title story, written in homage to John Rechy’s *City Of Night*, cleaves entertainingly to Reed’s milieu of dive bars, tarnished beauty and romanticised sleaze, while “Spirited Leaves Of Autumn” recounts conflicted college memories, and is dedicated to Delmore Schwartz, “playing Bloom to my Dedalus”. “We Are The People” has a Ginsberg-ian energy, and features some stirring lines – “We are the thoughts of sorrows” – but “Playing Music Is Not Like Athletics” (“*One may improve with age*”) is not alone in saying all it has to say in a single line. “Whiskey”, “Force It” and “Since Half The World is H2o” are half-formed and insubstantial. “A Bad Trip” is bad Beckett.

There’s a sweet afterword by Laurie Anderson, nice photos of Reed and evocative reproductions of magazine covers, cassettes, and typed notes. But Reed undoubtedly made the correct decision in returning to the studio to put his words to music. Poetry’s loss was minimal. Rock’n’roll’s gain was not. **G**

GRAEME THOMSON

# FILMS

## A slowburning hijack drama; a suitably bleak McEwan tale; terror in Jersey; and a moving bomb-disposal doc

**E**NTEBBE A number of films have already been made documenting the freeing of hostages from a hijacked Air France plane at Uganda's Entebbe Airport in 1976. Famously, Irvin Kershner directed *Raid On Entebbe* the following year, casting Peter Finch and Charles Bronson as, respectively, Israel's then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and leader of the commandos. José Padilha's *Entebbe* is now the fifth film to dramatise those same events; so what does the Brazilian director offer that previous filmmakers haven't?

A producer on *Narcos*, Padilha made his reputation with the hostage documentary, *Bus 174*, and *Elite Squad*, which fetishised the ruthless antics of Rio's paramilitary police force, BOPE. *Entebbe* fits broadly in with Padilha's own interests in historical crime and the social and political conditions that nurture them.

*Entebbe*'s strong cast is headed by Daniel Brühl and Rosamund Pike as two German radicals involved in the hijack. The script is by Gregory Burke, who wrote the Northern Ireland drama, '71. There is plenty of meat here – the rise of the radical left, the relationships between the countries involved and the hijack itself. But Padilha lets the pacing flag as he attempts to balance geopolitical nuance with suspense-thriller sensationalism. There have been a number of films to address a bigger picture of '70s terrorism: Spielberg's vastly underrated *Munich* (2005), Uli Edel's 2008 *The Baader Meinhof Complex* and Olivier Assayas' *Carlos* (2010). Padilha's competent slow-burner may not match them, but in Brühl and Pike he has two capable leads who bring complexity to what could otherwise be caricatures.

**ON CHESIL BEACH** Adapted from Ian McEwan's Booker nominated novel, *On Chesil Beach* opens in 1962 on the wedding night of young university graduates Florence and Edward. As Larkin noted, they are a year



**Expecting trouble:** Daniel Brühl and Rosamund Pike star in *Entebbe*

out – and much of McEwan's story pivots around that one excruciating night which takes place at a seaside hotel in Dorset's Chesil Beach. The film (which the author also adapted) is evocative of that grey hinterland before the conservatism of the 1950s was swept away by the Technicolor of the '60s – "Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban/And The Beatles' first LP". There are the sniggering waiters that attend Florence and Edward at their ghastly hotel, and in flashback we get the measure of Florence's prim upbringing versus Edward's more progressive family (another Larkin verse springs to mind here, about parents, from "This Be The Verse").

Being a McEwan joint, there are plenty of flashbacks, telescoping in and out of Florence and Edward's lives before they met each other. What emerges is a portrait of two bright, likeable people coming together during a period that had yet to really get a handle on either sex or relationships. Although their situation is evidently not unique, McEwan's gift for truffling out poetry in bleakness and art from cruelty is never far

away. Saoirse Ronan is a returning McEwan veteran (she made her film breakthrough in *Atonement*) and she brings warmth and lightness of touch to Florence, despite her repressive background, while the compassionate Edward (Billy Howle) has his own troubled backstory. Mercifully not as cruel as some of McEwan's work, *On Chesil Beach* offers accessible, hardback quality.

**TULLY** The reteaming of *Juno* writer/director team of Diablo Cody and Jason Reitman is a cause for celebration; not least when they're also joined by their *Young Adult* star, Charlize Theron. Together, these three deliver some of their best work. Theron plays Marlo, heavily pregnant with her third child. She is struggling, to say the least. When he's not on business trips, her husband Drew (Ron Livingston) plays computer games every night; their special-needs son Jonah is about to be excluded from his private kindergarten; Marlo's ongoing post-partum depression, meanwhile, seems never far away. For what presents itself initially as a comedy, *Tully* does not stint in its depiction of the strains

### REVIEWED THIS MONTH



**ENTEBBE**  
Directed by José Padilha  
Starring Daniel Brühl, Rosamund Pike  
Opens May 11  
Cert 12A  
6/10



**ON CHESIL BEACH**  
Directed by Dominic Cooke  
Starring Saoirse Ronan, Billy Howle  
Opens May 18  
Cert 15  
8/10



**TULLY**  
Directed by Jason Reitman  
Starring Charlize Theron, Mackenzie Davis  
Opens May 4  
Cert 15  
7/10



**BEAST**  
Directed by Michael Pearce  
Starring Jessie Buckley, Johnny Flynn  
Opens April 27  
Cert 12A  
7/10



**THE DEMINER**  
Directed by Hogir Hirori, Shinwar Kamal  
Starring Fakhir Berwari  
Opens April 27  
Cert 12A  
8/10



## Brühl and Pike bring a complexity to their roles

home life, in particular the treatment meted out to her by her fiercely controlling mother, Hilary. But critically, we learn that Moll has historic problems of her own; the more time Pearce spends with her, the more unsettling she becomes. Pairing up with Pascal appears to be an act of wilful revenge against her mother; but for all his strange charisma he appears to be the only person who understands Moll. Soon, she is defending Pascal as he becomes involved with the ongoing police investigation.

While, behind the camera, Pearce's film is very good indeed, what counts is on screen. To that effect,

Buckley and Flynn deliver well-judged performances – Buckley, in particular, doing fine work as the troubled, unhappy Moll.

**THE DEMINER** In the chaotic aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein, army colonel Fakhir Berwari went about his hazardous business defusing Iraqi IEDs. In 2014, having lost a leg in an explosion, he began working for the Kurdish Peshmerga, disarming booby traps left in and around Mosul by retreating Islamic State. A keen home movie enthusiast, Berwari also managed to shoot hundreds of hours of footage of himself at work, which forms the spine of Hogir Hirori and Shinwar Kamal's gripping documentary. Unlike *The Hurt Locker*, which wrung tension from the process of conventional bomb disposal methods, Berwari is no trained expert. We see him decommission booby traps with his bare hands, excavate mines with a pickaxe and use a pair of garden pliers to cut explosive wires. A penknife, it transpires, is an equally useful tool in this dangerously Heath Robinson approach to his job.

*The Deminer* is roughly contemporaneous to last year's *Nowhere To Hide*, which followed medic Nori Sharif during a five-year period of dramatic upheaval in Iraq's war-torn Diyala Province. In Hirori and Kamal's film a different kind of heroism comes under the spotlight. Although responsible for defusing thousands of bombs, Berwari is clearly reckless with his own life. Friends in the US military and elsewhere caution him to take more care, but evidently his desire to continue his work – and continue saving lives – is a powerful motivator. A moving and unique documentary. **● MICHAEL BONNER**

of fortysomething motherhood, a situation exacerbated by the lack of an adequate support network. Marlo's wealthy brother, Craig (Mark Duplass), hires her a night nanny: Tully (a sprightly Mackenzie Davis), who proves herself an almost supernatural aid to Marlo. They bond, and the pressure seems to lift on Marlo.

Cody has a terrific ear for natural dialogue and she has a lot of fun with Craig's privileged wife Elyse (Elaine Tan). "The ninth month is tough," she coos at her struggling sister-in-law. "I could barely make it to the gym." The first third of the film seems the most honest as Marlo battles simply to get through each day. Theron is magnificent here, carrying dramatic weight with intelligence and wit: "My body looks like a relief map for a war-torn country," she notes glumly. Later, the film turns in another, less satisfying direction.

**BEAST** Fans of *Bergerac* might find much to enjoy in this, the debut from TV director, Michael Pearce. There is a serial killer on the loose on Jersey; but alas John Nettles' fabled small-screen 'tec isn't available to investigate. As it is, the police have their eyes on a suspect, a rough outsider named Pascal (Johnny Flynn), who catches the eye of a local tour guide, Moll (Jessie Buckley). The title might be a riff on the real-life Beast Of Jersey, a serial sex attacker who terrorised the island during the 1960s. But it might equally refer to Moll's mother (Geraldine James) or even the wider community itself, rife with suspicion and bigotry.

The film's key scene, early on, is Moll's birthday, where Pearce unspools her grim

## ALSO OUT...

### AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR

OPENS APRIL 26

"The most ambitious crossover event in history", claim Marvel of their superhero team-up, ignoring that time a coalition of Rome, Rhodes, the Achaean League and Pergamum took on Sparta in 195BC.

### THE OLD DARK HOUSE

OPENS APRIL 27

James Whale assembles a team of real-life cinematic superheroes – including Boris Karloff and Charles Laughton – in this 1930s horror comedy, now restored to its full glory.

### ANON OPENS MAY 4

*Gattaca* director Andrew Niccol is back with another sci-fi on surveillance in the future, with Clive Owen.

### LEAN ON PETE OPENS MAY 4

Coming-of-age drama about a boy and his horse, based on the novel by Richmond Fontaine's Willy Vlautin. Co-stars Steve Buscemi and Chloë Sevigny.



Lean On Pete

### MARY AND THE WITCH'S FLOWER OPENS MAY 4

Japanese animé, about a young girl who is granted the power to become a witch for one night only.

### THE STRANGERS: PREY AT NIGHT OPENS MAY 4

Sequel, apparently, with Dollface, Pin Up Girl and the Man In The Mask terrorising former *Mad Men* star Christina Hendricks in a trailer park.

### HOW TO TALK TO GIRLS AT PARTIES OPENS MAY 11

'70s punk hits Croydon! Based on a story by Neil Gaiman.

### REDOUBTABLE OPENS MAY 11

New one from *The Artist*'s Michel Hazanavicius, about the affair between Jean-Luc Godard and the actress Anne Wiazemsky in the late '60s.

### THAT GOOD NIGHT OPENS MAY 11

John Hurt's final film, here playing a terminally ill writer who seeks to reconcile with his son before he dies.

### DEADPOOL 2 OPENS MAY 15

Marvel's black sheep returns: the transgressive superhero gets up to more X-rated hijinks.



## STILL ON THE RUN: THE JEFF BECK STORY

EAGLE VISION

7/10

Bio-doc can't quite catch up with the elusive guitar legend



PERHAPS the key to this engaging but at times frustrating portrait of one of rock'n'roll's most canonical guitarists comes when Aerosmith's Joe Perry notes, "There's a certain amount of fuck-you-ness to everything Jeff does."

Several others make a similar point without quite the same succinctness. David Gilmour calls out Beck as one of our most "reluctant" rock stars, the late Sir George Martin describes him as "temperamental" and Beck himself reinforces the judgement by defiantly insisting that folding The Jeff Beck Group two weeks before they were due to play Woodstock was the smartest move he ever made.

The problem is that by the end of Matthew Longfellow's 90-minute documentary, we're not really much closer to understanding

Garage rocker: Jeff Beck in his workshop

where the "fuck-you-ness" came from. Interviewed extensively at home and in his garage as he constructs another of his beloved hot rods, Beck comes across as an amiable and articulate man who thinks deeply about music. Although we're amply reminded of all his achievements and are provided with plenty of evidence of his inventiveness as a guitarist, what makes Jeff Beck tick remains an enigma.

Even those who have known him best during his 50-year career seem unable to shed much light. Rod Stewart offers a blow-by-blow account of the Woodstock no-show, involving Beck doing a runner under cover of the night during an American tour and his bandmates getting phone calls the following day informing them that their leader had gone home to his mum. Yet there's no explanation why, other than Beck's own vague claim that it was something to do with "integrity".

However nebulous, it's a notion that clearly means a lot to him. Only Neil Young has walked out on bands more times than Beck, and he recounts how he quit The Yardbirds in the middle of another American tour with palpable satisfaction. Playing on a bill with Gary Lewis & The Playboys to "teeny bop" audiences, after a couple of gigs he called fellow Yardbird Jimmy Page to his hotel room and told him he'd have to take over his lead-guitar duties because, "This is Middle America and we're telling people we're part of that and we're not." Once again he went home to Mum: "I had my Corvette parked in my mother's driveway and I was free to dream again."

Except that he wasn't, as the reissued "Hi-Ho Silver Lining", which he likens to "being asked to wear a pink frock", put him back in the charts and created a distorted image, which to some extent persists to this day.

Longfellow made his name on the 'classic albums' TV series, a sharply focused format that is the opposite of the episodic nature of Beck's stop-start career. However, he makes a decent fist of telling the disjointed story via a stellar cast of talking heads, judicious use of archive footage and some potent musical interludes, including Rod Stewart singing "Shapes Of Things" at the Fillmore East, Beck lazily but exquisitely picking Mingus's "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" while reclining on a sofa, playing with Clapton at Ronnie Scott's and performing a medley of "Immigrant Song" and "Beck's Bolero" with Jimmy Page at the Rock'n'Roll Hall Of Fame.

Coming fast on the heels of *Eric Clapton: Life In 12 Bars*, comparisons are inevitable, and *Still On The Run* is considerably lighter on personal revelation. If there's a central theme, it's that after realising he would never find another Rod Stewart, listening to John McLaughlin and Miles Davis persuaded him "to make his guitar his voice", a decision that resulted in the change of direction heralded by 1975's all-instrumental *Blow By Blow*.

The final section of the film is the least satisfactory, as a cast of famous collaborators pay tribute in such obsequious fashion that you might imagine Beck had already died and gone to guitar heaven. The gist, as Jennifer Batten gushingly puts it, is that "there's a difference between playing music and being music – and Jeff is music". It doesn't entirely ring true as he tinkers happily with his hot rods and cheerfully admits that he keeps a guitar in every room "to remind me I should be doing that".

Yet if Longfellow's objective is to restate Beck's claim as the equal of Clapton and Page in the trinity of British rock guitar pioneers, then *Still On The Run* does a decent job. "People need to up their awareness of him," Ronnie Wood claims. "I mean, where have they been?"

**Extras: 7/10.** Five previously unreleased tracks from Beck's Montreux Jazz Festival performance in 2007: "Eternity's Breath", "Freeway Jam", "Nadia", "Led Boots" and "Blue Wind". **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**



## RITCHIE BLACKMORE'S RAINBOW

### Memories In Rock II

MINSTREL HALL

6/10

*Metal legend revives the old band*



Pulled from three UK shows last year, the hits land on the two audio discs here – “I Surrender”, “All Night Long”, “Since You’ve Been Gone” – along with “Waiting For A Sign”, Rainbow’s first new single in 22 years. The DVD features live footage intercut with band interviews, with Blackmore revealing that he’s open to playing one final show with Deep Purple, despite the fact that he and old sparring partner Ian Gillan “will probably start fighting”.

**Extras:** None.

ROB HUGHES

## GUMSHOE

POWERHOUSE

7/10

*Raymond Chandler on Merseyside*



Stephen Frears’ 1971 directorial debut is, on the surface, cut from the same wide-lapelled raincoat cloth as other Brit gangster films of the era (*Get Carter*, *Villain*) but with a rich seam of humour to temper the violence. Albert Finney is the Liverpool bingo caller with ambitions of becoming a private eye, who gets his chance when investigating the shady family of Frank Finlay and Billie Whitelaw. An affectionate pulp spoof with a surprisingly tough centre.

**Extras:** 7/10. New interviews with Frears and screenwriter Neville Smith, shorts, trailers.

TERRY STAUNTON

## JOHN MELLENCAMP

### Plain Spoken: From The Chicago Theatre

EAGLE ROCK

7/10

*Gruff US veteran dishes out hits and history*



Longtime fans were slightly put out when *Plain Spoken* landed on Netflix last year, combining as it did this live show with Mellencamp’s somewhat intrusive narrative over the top. Thankfully, the CD/DVD release includes a non-commentary option as well. Mellencamp does his craggy heartland rock thing well enough, albeit in workmanlike style, but his recollections of growing up in Indiana are quietly engaging, not least his affliction with spina bifida and dad’s “bongo parties”.

**Extras:** None.

ROB HUGHES



# WOODFALL: A REVOLUTION IN BRITISH CINEMA

BFI

7/10

*Eight Brit flicks, from kitchen sink to Swinging London*



IF you were an obsessive indie kid in the mid-1980s, chances are that your introduction to the history of British cinema beyond *Carry On* films was via Morrissey interviews, where he devotedly extolled the virtues of black-and-white dramas such as *A Taste of Honey* and *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*, prompting diligent VHS recordings of Channel 4 matinees.

Both were produced by Woodfall Films, the production company founded in 1958 by playwright John Osborne, director Tony Richardson and producer Harry Saltzman following the sensation of the Royal Court stage production of *Look Back In Anger* in 1956. Osborne conceived of the company in blatantly avant-garde terms as “an assault on the suburban vapidness of British filmmaking”. Despite spirited flourishes, the films can’t match the European new wave, but do feature remarkable performances (from Finney, Tushingam and Courtenay) and chart an oddly engaging cultural history of Britain as ’50s austerity relaxed into ’60s abandon.

On the face of it, *Look Back In Anger* (1959) was an inauspicious opening salvo. Richardson had worked in TV but was an inexperienced film director (he had been associated with the Free Cinema movement, and co-directed the jazz documentary *Momma Don’t Allow* with Karel Reisz). Richard Burton was interestingly miscast as Jimmy (Saltzman was convinced the film needed some star power), bringing Shakespearean grandeur to scenes where he shakes jelly babies to cockney guttersnipes. And the combination of flimsy sets with more naturalistic location shots of east London markets felt incoherent.

*The Entertainer* (1960), based on Osborne’s play about a fading musical-hall comic, was a more interesting film – Laurence Olivier’s lead performance is still powerful

– but another box-office failure. Richardson stepped back to produce Karel Reisz’s far more successful take on *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*. Casting Albert Finney in Alan Sillitoe’s adaptation of his own novel of Nottingham factory life could hardly fail, and the film was the studio’s first major hit.

*A Taste of Honey* was Richardson’s own attempt at a Northern – this time adapting Shelagh Delaney’s tale of Salford schoolgirl pregnancy. You get the feeling that Richardson would have liked to make a Truffaut movie of adolescent alienation, but despite Rita Tushingam’s immense charm, the film is awkwardly stranded between Joan Littlewood’s rambunctious Royal Court production and generic landscapes of canals, slagheaps and gasworks.

*The Loneliness Of The Long Distance Runner*, released in 1962, for all its flaws is probably the best Woodfall production – a film that uniquely detected the existentialist as much as the anthropologist in Alan Sillitoe. “It is so true and beautiful in so many ways,” said critic Raymond Durnat, “that its crudities throw one into a positive fury.” *Tom Jones* (1963) is a sign of just how quickly British culture starts to change post-Beatles. Considered daring at the time for its sauciness, satire and formal play, and earning four Oscars, including Best Picture and Director, it now feels rather too close to a *Carry On* romp. *Girl With Green Eyes*, directed by Desmond Davis, and featuring Tushingam’s unique Irish accent, already felt like an anachronism in 1964. *The Knack... And How To Get It* was Richard Lester’s first post-Beatles film and inexplicably won the Palme d’Or in 1965. There’s some historical

“An assault on suburban vapidness”: *The Knack... (top)* and *A Taste of Honey*

interest in the beginnings of Swinging London, but to say that it has dated badly is a desperate understatement.

**Extras:** 8/10. New and archival interviews, commentaries, short films, trailers, stills galleries and an illustrated booklet.

STEPHEN TROUSSÉ



# Not Fade Away

Fondly remembered this month...

## MIKE HARRISON

*Spooky Tooth and solo singer*

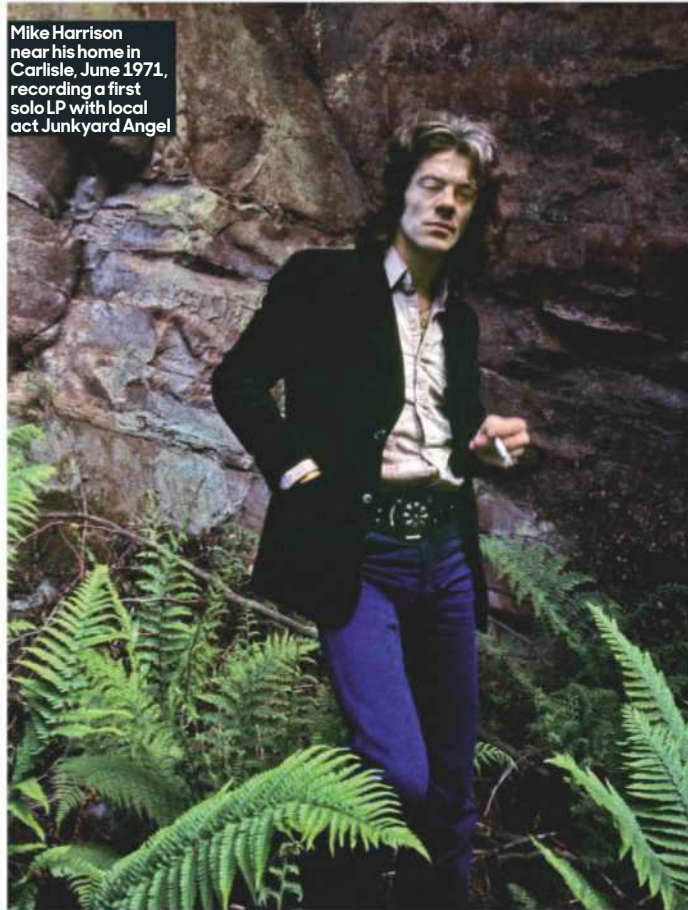
(1945–2018)

**D**ESPITE being blessed with inordinate talent, Spooky Tooth never enjoyed great commercial success, instead achieving cult status as an album-oriented band and formidable live draw. Singer Mike Harrison, who shared vocals and keyboard duties with Gary Wright, led them through a series of mostly fine recordings from 1967 to '74, before his disillusionment with the record industry prompted him to quit for two decades.

Carlisle-born Harrison began with local outfits The Dakotas and The Ramrods prior to forming R&B combo The VIPs in late 1963. "My earliest influence was hearing Elvis Presley do 'Don't Be Cruel,'" he told this writer in 2015. "That's what made me want to sing. But my main people were Ray Charles and Etta James."

The VIPs, whose ranks included Greg Ridley, Mike Kellie, Luther Grosvenor and Keith Emerson, folded when the latter quit to form The Nice in 1967. Harrison and the others morphed into Art, issuing the psychedelic *Supernatural Fairy Tales* on Island. Label boss Chris Blackwell duly introduced them to American musician Wright, at which point Spooky Tooth were born. Under the tutelage of producer Jimmy Miller, the band's mix of hard-edged soul and bluesy prog was characterised by Righteous Brothers-style harmonies and Harrison's muscular lead tones. 1969's *Ceremony*, an ill-advised set with French experimentalist Pierre Henry, prompted the first of several break-ups. By the following year's *The Last Puff*, Spooky Tooth essentially comprised Harrison backed by Joe Cocker's Grease Band.

Harrison recorded a couple of solo albums in its wake, 1971's self-titled effort and the following year's *Smokestack Lightning*, before completing the trilogy with *Rainbow Rider* in 1975. A dispute over royalties, however, resulted in him turning his back on music until he reunited with Spooky Tooth for 1999's *Cross Purpose*. He then joined The Hamburg Blues Band and revived his solo career with *Late Starter*.



## JIMMY WISNER

*Pianist and producer*

(1931–2018)

As alter ego Kokomo, US jazz pianist Jimmy Wisner reconfigured Grieg's "Piano Concerto In A Minor" as a rock'n'roll instrumental in 1961. "Asia Minor" duly cracked the Billboard Top 10 and became an international hit. Wisner also wrote for The Searchers ("Don't Throw Your Love Away") and, as arranger/producer, worked with Carly Simon, Miriam Makeba, Al Kooper and Brigitte Bardot.

## LIAM O'FLYNN

*Planxty co-founder*

(1945–2018)

Liam O'Flynn emerged as Ireland's leading practitioner of the uilleann pipes over a five-decade career that began as co-founder of folk legends Planxty, alongside Christy Moore, in 1972. When the band split 11 years later, O'Flynn found himself in

demand as a session player, working with Kate Bush, Mark Knopfler, Sinéad O'Connor and others, while also issuing five solo albums.

## PATRICK DOYLE

*Veronica Falls drummer*

(DOBUNKNOWN–2018)

Glaswegian drummer Patrick Doyle, whose cause of death, aged just 32, has yet to be revealed, co-founded London-based indie act Veronica Falls with singer/guitarist Roxanne Clifford in 2009. Previously members of Sexy Kids and The Royal We, they helped the quartet shape two albums of harmony-rich dream-pop, before Veronica Falls split in 2014. Two years later, Doyle released a self-titled album as Boys Forever.

## CLAUDIA FONTAINE

*Backing vocalist*

(1960–2018)

Alongside Caron Wheeler and Naomi Thompson in Afrodiziak,

Claudia Fontaine was one of the 1980s' most sought-after backing vocalists. She recorded with Annie Lennox, Elvis Costello, The Jam, Madness and Neneh Cherry, to name just a few, as well as singing on The Special AKA's 1984 hit, "Free Nelson Mandela". Ten years later, Fontaine joined Pink Floyd's The Division Bell Tour.

## NOLE FLOYD 'NOKIE' EDWARDS

*Ventures guitarist*

(1935–2018)

Washington-based 'Nokie' Edwards was Buck Owens' guitarist when Don Wilson and Bob Bogle poached him for The Ventures in 1959. Initially brought in as bassist, Edwards' move to lead guitar (two years later) coincided with the surf-rockers' status as America's biggest-selling instrumental band. He quit for a solo career in 1969, only to return to The Ventures in the early '70s.

## CHARLIE QUINTANA

*Punk drummer*

(1962–2018)

Charlie Quintana was still in his teens when Latino punks The Plugz recruited him as drummer in the late '70s. He was an integral part of the LA group's two albums, remaining in place as they morphed into the Cruzados during the following decade. In 2000 he replaced Chuck Biscuits in punk veterans Social Distortion, heralding a successful nine-year tenure.

## GARY BURDEN

*Album cover artist*

(1933–2018)

Designer Gary Burden created a slew of classic album covers – Joni Mitchell's *Blue*, The Doors' *Morrison Hotel* and CSNY's *Déjà Vu* included – but his most lasting association was with Neil Young. Beginning with 1970's *After The Gold Rush*, Burden created sleeves for Young for nearly

## KENNY O'DELL

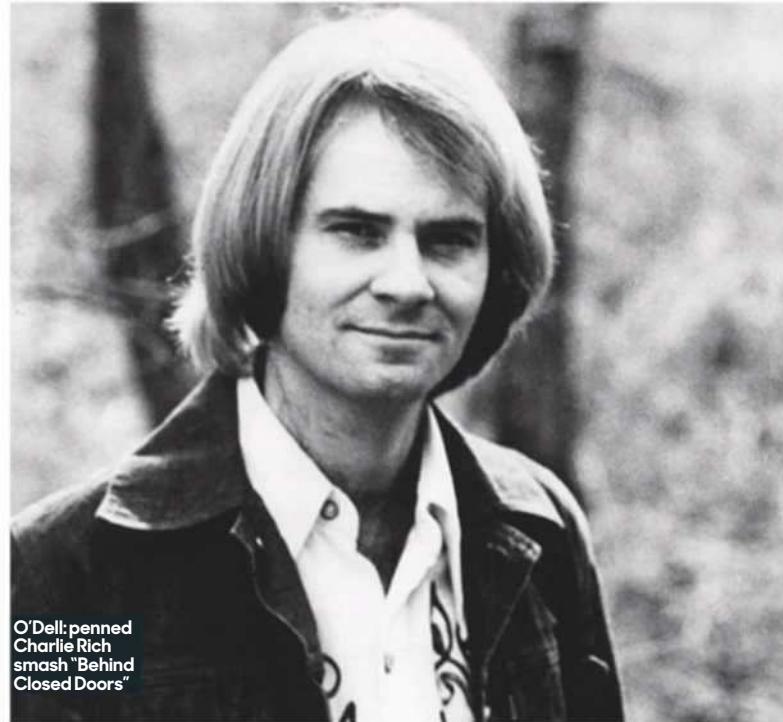
Country singer and songwriter  
(1944–2018)

It was at the suggestion of producer Billy Sherrill that Kenny O'Dell start crafting songs for the voice of Charlie Rich. The biggest of these, "Behind Closed Doors", gave Rich a platinum-selling country hit in the summer of 1973. Adapted from "a little guitar riff that I'd carried with me for a couple of years", O'Dell claimed its title was inspired by the Watergate scandal, though the tune inevitably became a romantic ballad.

"I always bent towards love songs," he said. Rich's first No 1 on the country charts, "Behind Closed Doors" also became an international crossover hit, picking up a Grammy and inspiring covers by Dolly Parton, Diana Ross, Percy Sledge, Tom Jones and Bettye LaVette.

Born in Antlers, Oklahoma, O'Dell began writing songs in his early teens. He set up his own record label on graduating from high school, before moving to Nashville in 1969 and helping run Bobby Goldsboro's publishing company, House Of Gold. O'Dell's solo career never quite took off, despite "Beautiful People" making the Billboard Top 40. Instead, his greatest moments were reserved for others.

"I Take It On Home" from 1972 was his first significant hit for Rich, while Loretta Lynn covered "Trouble In Paradise", Tanya Tucker took on "Lizzie And The Rainman" and Billie Jo Spears scored big in 1976 with "What I've Got In Mind", which made the UK Top 5. O'Dell also wrote 1984's "Mama He's Crazy", a Grammy-nominated success for The Judds.



O'Dell: penned Charlie Rich smash "Behind Closed Doors"

half a century, among them *On The Beach* and 2009's Grammy-winning boxset *The Archives Vol 1 1963–1972*.

## BUELL NEIDLINGER

Double bassist and cellist  
(1936–2018)

Cecil Taylor's double bassist of choice from the mid-'50s to the early '60s was former Yale scholar Buell Neidlinger. Equally proficient on cello, he was also a regular collaborator with saxophonists Steve Lacy, Archie Shepp and Marty Krystall. He issued nearly two dozen albums as leader, while providing session duties for Roy Orbison, Frank Sinatra, Ry Cooder and others.

## PETER COWLING

Pat Travers Band bassist  
(1946–2018)

English bassist Peter 'Mars' Cowling passed through Gnidrolog and The Flying Hat Band prior to joining forces with blues-rocker Pat Travers in 1976. He became a staple of the Canadian's band over the next six years, returning for a second spell from 1989-'93, appearing on 10 studio albums and Travers' most popular songs: "Snortin' Whiskey" and "Boom Boom (Out Go The Lights)".

## MATT DIKE

Delicious Vinyl co-founder  
(1962–2018)

Delicious Vinyl's first major success was Tone-Lōc's 1989 hit "Wild Thing", co-produced by label owners Matt Dike and Michael Ross. Dike had forged his reputation as a Los Angeles DJ and club owner during the '80s, before signing acts like Young MC and The Pharcyde. He also brought many samples for The Beastie Boys' *Paul's Boutique*, mostly recorded in Dike's apartment.

## ALLAHREAL

Hip-hop vocalist  
(1955–2018)

Under the alias Allah Real, Wu-Tang Clan affiliate Alfred Lynn made his reputation as guest vocalist on a series of hip-hop releases, most prominently RZA's *Birth Of A Prince* (2003), Ghostface Killah's *The Pretty Toney Album* (2004) and the same year's Masta Killa opus, *No Said Date*. He also helped mentor DJ/producer Mathematics and released a solo album, *Real Estate*, in 2005.

## ROBERT 'KOOSTER' McALLISTER

Recording engineer  
(1951–2018)

Robert McAllister started out as assistant at the mobile recording unit of New York's Record Plant in 1978, gradually rising to chief engineer. By 1991 he'd bought Record Plant Remote Inc, where his many credits included Eric Clapton's Crossroads event and

the revived Woodstock festivals. His work on acclaimed doc *Standing In The Shadows Of Motown* earned him a Grammy.

## KEN DODD

Comedian and singer  
(1927–2018)

Amid his wildly successful comedy career, it's easy to forget that Ken Dodd was also a supreme hitmaker, racking up 18 Top 40 successes in the UK. Bill Anderson's "Happiness" became his signature tune, but his cover of "Tears" topped the charts for five weeks in 1965, selling well

over a million copies and becoming Britain's third-biggest-selling song of the decade.

## KAK CHANNTHY

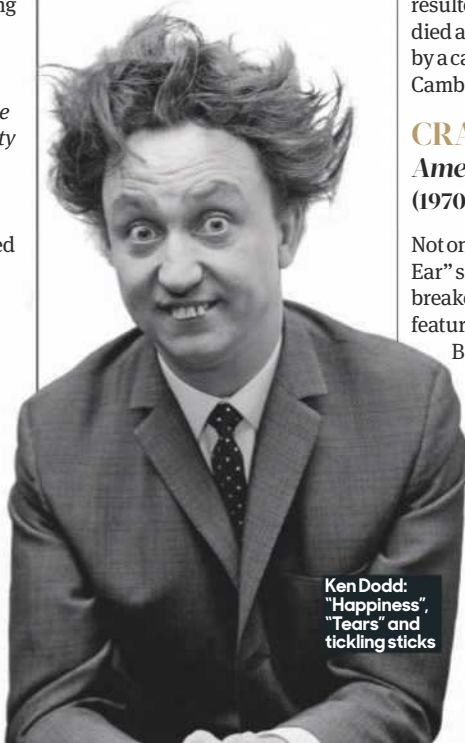
Cambodian singer  
(1980–2018)

Psychedelic rockers The Cambodian Space Project were formed in 2009 by singer Kak Channthy and her Australian husband, Julien Poulson. Inspired by the fertile Cambodian music scene of the '60s, they issued five albums and became the subject of a 2015 documentary that resulted in Channthy (who died after her tuk-tuk was hit by a car) becoming known as "the Cambodian Amy Winehouse".

## CRAIG MACK

American rapper  
(1970–2018)

Not only did 1994's "Flava In Ya Ear" signal US rapper Craig Mack's breakout hit, its remixed version featured his largely unknown Bad Boy labelmate The Notorious B.I.G. alongside LL Cool J and Busta Rhymes. The minor success of follow-up "Get Down" helped sales of the New Yorker's debut album, *Project: Funk Da World*, achieve gold status, but Mack disappeared from view after the release of 1997's inferior *Operation: Get Down*.  
ROB HUGHES



Ken Dodd: "Happiness", "Tears" and tickling sticks

# FEEDBACK

Email [uncut\\_feedback@timeinc.com](mailto:uncut_feedback@timeinc.com) or write to: Uncut Feedback, Basement 2, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Or tweet us at [twitter.com/uncutmagazine](https://twitter.com/uncutmagazine)

## AUSTIN POWERS

Liked the Austin “Progressive Country” article in the March issue. I recorded my first record in Austin, 1974, titled *Ring Of Bone* with Patricia Hardin. Rather than ‘Progressive Country’, we were sort of ‘Desert Mystical’. Chet Flippo reviewed our album for *Rolling Stone* magazine and we were on our way to a deal with Vanguard Records. Until it all fell apart. Later ended up driving a taxi in NYC until I picked up Robert Hunter [*Grateful Dead* lyricist] and he got me back into the music business.

Now on my 40th record or so and thinking about progressive country up to Americana. They used to blame myself and Dave Alvin for the Americana label when we recorded our *Tulare Dust* tribute to Merle Haggard 20 years ago. My aim in writing this is to wave the flag for the late Steve Young who should be at the top of the list of those pioneers of country rock, outlaw country, progressive country, and all of it.

Steve recorded his first record in LA, right next door to where Gram Parsons was recording in the late 1960s. Steve’s “Seven Bridges Road” was a major hit for The Eagles. Steve then went on to record two iconic outlaw country records for RCA which inspired Waylon Jennings and Hank Williams Jr, who recorded Steve’s songs. Steve almost invented “outlaw”. Steve is the figure hanging in the shadows of that film you mentioned, *Heartworn Highways*. Always in the shadows of Townes, Guy Clark, and Steve Earle... but every bit a major influence.

Always enjoy *Uncut*. On the road now in Vancouver, BC. Cheers.

**Tom Russell, via email**  
*Thanks for getting in touch, Tom; and for the Steve Young recommendation. Incidentally, Tom’s latest book of essays, Ceremonies Of The Horseman, contains a piece on Young. – MB*

## BE FAIR TO FOGERTY

I have been a fan of CCR for over 50 years and feel they produced some of the greatest ever rock songs. Having just read Andy Gill’s ‘interview’ with



John Fogerty: always in control?



John Fogerty, I was mightily disappointed at the ‘loaded’ nature of the questions, continually taking the stance that John was always the aggrieved party. John

Fogerty a great songwriter and guitarist; but, does like to be in control. I was in the audience at his Albert Hall gig, when he incensed the crowd by going off stage on numerous occasions for clothing changes to look good in the video! If you read the book *Bad Moon Rising*, I feel that you get a far more balanced version of the rise and fall of a great rock band... with failures from all the bandmembers. An interview with the other surviving members to get their views would be good, balanced journalism.

**Mike Gaffney, via email**  
*Hey Mike, sorry to hear you felt Andy’s interview with John was unfairly weighted against the other bandmembers. For the record, we’ve run several pieces on the band in the past, including an extensive cover story on our February 2012 issue [Take 177], which featured interviews with all surviving Creedence members. You can find the piece – along with many other gems from the archive – over on [www.uncut.co.uk](http://www.uncut.co.uk).*

## STARMAN

So good to see the Mick Ronson story shine the spotlight on the often overlooked starman [*Uncut*,

*December 2017*]. I was a card-carrying member of Friars Aylesbury, the Buckinghamshire club where he and Bowie cut their teeth, when I almost bumped into him in Cambridge, Mass, USA, in 1975. I’d somehow snared second row seats for the Rolling Thunder Revue. Dylan played head minstrel, in white face paint with feathers in his cap, accompanied by Joan Baez, Jack Elliott, Bob Neuwirth, Joni Mitchell, Roger McGuinn, Ronee Blakely, Scarlet Rivera – and the young Ronson. During a rare lull in proceedings, I shouted: “When you coming back to Friars, Mick?” More than a little surprised, he mouthed the word “Soon!” After the end of the show I made my way to the rear of the Harvard Square Theatre, hoping to meet my fellow Yorkshireman. I extended my hand through a campervan window, and a shadowy figure stretched out his arm to meet mine. I hadn’t shaken hands with Mick but, to my surprise, I had shaken hands with Dylan.

**Tony Curran, Central Coast, NSW**  
*Great story, Tony! Do any more of you have similar tales to tell where you’ve ‘accidentally’ encountered Dylan? As you can imagine, we’d love to hear them...*

## FANFATALE

Thanks for the news of the upcoming film about Nico [*Nico 1988*; previewed in *Uncut’s* January 2018 issue]. I still have visions of her 30 seconds on stage, with her keyboard, at the Bristol Locarno in October 1978 before being gobbled-off by the local youth. Halting her first song, she said,

“You obviously have not come to see me-e!” I was probably not alone in quietly seething over a can of beer during the interminable break before Siouxsie & The Banshees played their *Scream* set. They were wonderful, of course, but... maybe Nico wasn’t best choice as support for them that night.

**Dave James, Bristol**  
*It’s a great film; although it’s hard to top James Young’s astounding memoir, Nico, Songs They Never Play On The Radio.*

## COURTNEY ACT

Been with *Uncut* since day one, buying hundreds of albums over the years based on your reviews and recommendations. Sometimes, I feel your reviewers are over generous in recent times, giving eights and nines to albums that are very good but hardly outstanding. I appreciate personal tastes play a part in reviewing but the article should be an objective insight in to the particular album. Stephen Deusner’s review of Courtney Marie Andrews’ new album, *May Your Kindness Remain*, was anything but objective. The description of ‘ridiculous’ in reference to the tracks “Kindness Of Strangers” and “Two Cold Nights In Buffalo” is both unprofessional, insulting to the artist, vindictive and totally unnecessary. Having listened to the LP on a number of occasions I consider it to be a worthy successor to *Honest Life*. Such a pity Rob Hughes or even better your former editor Allan Jones, both excellent and balanced writers, were not given the album to write a constructive review.

**Declan Culliton, via email**

WIN!

## CROSSWORD

One of two copies of Courtney Barnett's *Tell Me How You Really Feel*

Over to our reviews editor Tom Pinnock to answer this... "Sorry you were disappointed with the Courtney review - Stephen is very much an expert on Americana, though, and a fan of Courtney's previous work, so I can assure you he gave this album a fair hearing."

## NEW VERSUS OLD

In reply to *Uncut's* query whether themed or new music CDs are preferable [*Feedback; Uncut May 2018 issue*], I am wholeheartedly in favour of the latter... it is a huge reason for buying *Uncut* every month! They have given me so much joy over last 20 years, vital way of discovering new music despite the onslaught of digital media - and because it's music picked by *Uncut*, it's invaluable. Along with What's On The Stereo and the editor's weekly playlist online, please don't change anything... happily take a download link every month if cost of CD is an issue.

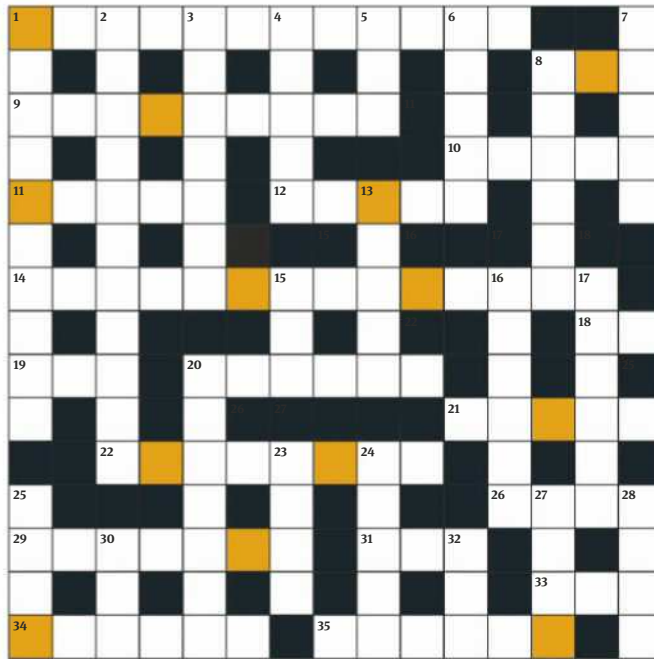
Stephen Donnelly, Dublin

...You asked readers for their opinion on your giveaways. Straight up, a themed CD for me every time. There's nothing wrong with new music. Like John Peel, I love hearing things I haven't heard before. But, a themed collection in many ways can be quite nostalgic. Putting together songs in a linked/themed way is an art. If done right, it's a piece of work that's intelligent, quirky, humorous and thought-provoking. How about letting the readers pick a theme occasionally? Bit of a challenge, eh? Andy Smith, Rotherham, South Yorkshire

...You asked for feedback - I'd prefer new music rather than old. I am sure most of your readers already access the type of music on your themed CDs but, to hear something new that we like could open our minds to a whole new genre of previously unheard music. Your new albums review section is second to none and I'd prefer to hear 15 tracks from those new releases each month rather than something I used to like in, say, 1969. A wider mix of reviews would be even better, that includes genres such as reggae, and this should be reflected on the CD. We don't all like Americana, country rock and folk music. Neither do we all like living in the past.

Steve Vanstone, Wolverhampton

Thanks for your letters so far on this. Forgive me, but here's another question for you: how do you feel about curated CDs, along the lines of the disc compiled for us last year by Robert Plant? As ever, we'd love to hear from you.



## HOW TO ENTER

The letters in the shaded squares form an anagram of a song by The Rolling Stones. When you've worked out what it is, send your answer to: *Uncut* June 2018 Xword Comp, Basement 2, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. The first correct entry picked at random will win a prize. Closing date: **Wednesday May 16, 2018**. This competition is only open to European residents.

## CLUES ACROSS

- 1+34A A pointless effort at a refrain from The Manic Street Preachers (10-2-6)  
 8 The Police shortly to cover a Shadows number? (1-1-1)  
 9 The musician that was Elvis Presley on single or JJ Cale on album (6-3)  
 10 (See 20 across)  
 11 Formed in 1975, their name means 'black' in Arabic (5)  
 12 A first appearance by Björk (5)  
 14 The Cure to release title misspelt (1-6-2-5)  
 18 (See 30 down)  
 19 A request for a number by The Smiths (3)  
 20+10A The Fall went on strike up country (3-3-5)  
 21 "And that man comes on the \_\_\_\_\_, he's tellin' me more and more", from The Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction" (5)  
 22 Woody Guthrie's early concept album \_\_\_\_\_ Ballads regarding drought on the prairies (4-4)  
 26 On leaving Bauhaus, Peter Murphy went down, really down, with this solo album (4)  
 29 (See 35 across)  
 31 Irish progressive folk band \_\_\_\_\_ Na Nog (3)  
 33 Remix that took in a record label (3)  
 34 (See 1 across)  
 35+29A "Don't say it in Russian, don't say it in German, say it in \_\_\_\_\_", Marianne Faithfull (6-7)

## CLUES DOWN

- 1 "We could be relaxing in my sleeping bag", 1970 (3-4-3)  
 2 Genesis found it hard to stay afloat after this single (11)

## ANSWERS: TAKE 251 ACROSS

- 1 Magazine, 5+30D Purple Haze, 8 Villains, 9 Tubby, 10+27A Not A Job, 11 Astro, 16+18A The Trumpton Riots, 21 Nutty, 22 RCA, 23 Vera, 24 Run, 25+6D White

- Rabbit, 26 Pin, 29 Booth, 31 Orange, 32 Loco, 33 Was, 34 Keep On, 35 Eels, 36 Eve.  
 DOWN  
 1 Moving To New York, 2+15A Go Let It Out, 3 Zwan, 4 Nina Simone, 5 Patio, 7 Lay, 12 Rat Trap, 13 Cult, 14 Fray, 15 In Rainbows, 17 Extricate, 19 Our House, 20 Sun, 28+27D Blue Jean.  
 HIDDEN ANSWER  
 "Free Man In Paris"  
 XWORD COMPILED BY:  
 Trevor Hungerford

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## My Life In Music

# Jennifer Herrema

The essence of Royal Trux revealed: psychedelic funk, forbidden rap, punk epiphanies and “many amazing acid trips”



### PARLIAMENT Motor Booty Affair (1978)

I heard “Aqua Boogie” on the radio in my dad’s car when I was about seven. I was so excited whenever it came on the radio – strange to think it was a fairly popular radio song. My dad bought the record to have for parties – or maybe for me? – but I’d sit and marvel at the artwork and the pop-up Atlantis painting that was so much like my kindergarten books. I didn’t know what acid was or “liquid sunshine”, but I knew it blew my mind and I was hooked. Funkadelic’s *One Nation Under A Groove* came out the same year and became a fast favourite, but something about “Aqua Boogie” and the bird calls at the start still occupies my mind to this day.



### RAMONES End Of The Century (1980)

I had a good friend whose older brother had some records we’d never seen. One day when he was out, we snuck into his room and grabbed *End Of The Century* and played it loud! He came home in the middle of us blasting it. We were so scared he was gonna give us a tongue thrashing, but much to our surprise he invited us to the Ramones’ all-ages show with him! They were on tour for *Subterranean Jungle* and I remember thinking “Everytime I Eat Vegetables It Makes Me Think Of You” was the funniest song title. My friend and I were so stoked to be going to an ‘adult’ concert with her big brother. It was monumental!



### LED ZEPPELIN Physical Graffiti (1975)

This became part of the soundtrack of my last year of high school. I had just met Neil Hagerty and he was living in an abandoned warehouse. *Physical Graffiti* accompanied us on many acid trips and came to life with characters in the walls. I remember being ‘stuck’ on a mattress night and day, surrounded by bottles of piss, as there was no bathroom. I was tripping so hard I thought I was on a boat in the middle of the yellow ocean. The record was skipping on “Houses Of The Holy” for what seemed like a year. Despite being lost at sea it was an amazing trip filled with white doves, satellites and yellow piss oceans. Unforgettable and transformative.



### THE ROLLING STONES Sticky Fingers (1971)

I fell in love with the Stones at a very early age. What sealed the deal was my dad taking me to their *Tattoo You* concert when I was a kid. The Stones blew my mind. I cried because we couldn’t go back the next night. Flash-forward to living in a room at the YMCA in NYC just out of high school. I was very young and living in a constant state of melancholy. My first real boyfriend had died of a heroin overdose a few years before and my ‘new’ boyfriend [Neil] and I did a lot of acid, and drinking and thinking. I used to sit and play along to *Sticky Fingers* in my tiny room, day after day. It felt like such a sad album to me and defined the way I was feeling.



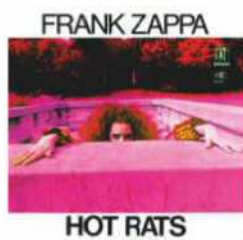
### METALLICA ...And Justice For All (1988)

This and Megadeth’s *Peace Sells...* became the soundtrack of my summer 1989. I was back in DC for a few months while Neil was on tour with Pussy Galore. I got a job at an ice cream store and spent my spare time drinking and doing drugs, writing songs for Trux’s “Spike Cyclone” and hanging out with Mike Fellows [*Rites Of Spring*], aka ‘The Mighty Flashlight’. I had the cassettes for both albums on heavy rotation on my boombox up in the attic where I had my shitty no-name amp and Kimberly guitar. Mike and I saw Metallica’s *Damaged Justice* tour at the Capital Center and it killed! I was so high off that concert it kept me going for the rest of the year.



### NWA Straight Outta Compton (1988)

At the end of 1991 I was living in an all-black ‘sober’ homeless shelter. As the months went by it was my daily routine before piss tests to borrow a Walkman from a guy who’d become a friend. There was no music allowed except on Sundays for worship. The *Straight Outta Compton* cassette was all he had and he’d leave the Walkman in a brown paper bag by the swingset every day and I’d put my hood on and walk the playground at recreation time. The songs became embedded in my mind. I’d been living a street life for some years, and dope, guns and money were part of that equation. The purity of those songs made me feel alive and not alone.



### FRANK ZAPPA Hot Rats (1969)

I left all my records behind in NYC when I moved to San Francisco, so I didn’t listen to them again until years later when I got a lot of money from Virgin. I bought a farm and a studio and tons of records. I remember after re-buying *Hot Rats*, I’d sit and listen to it over and over. “Willie The Pimp” with its Captain Beefheart vocals always made me smile, and Neil and I fucked around singing and playing it. Two other records I re-bought at that time were Blue Öyster Cult’s self-titled debut and Scorpions’ *In Trance*. Those three were on my turntable constantly during the mid-’90s and proved to be subconsciously influential in my writing.



### BUTTHOLE SURFERS Locust Abortion Technician (1987)

This record blew my mind as a teenager exploring new music outside of the hardcore/punk genres. I recall buying it and becoming obsessed until I had a chance to see them live. After seeing them live I was even more blown away... the strobe lights and Kathleen [Lynch] naked and painted, dancing to the double drumming, and Gibby [Haynes] with the megaphone. Butthole Surfers was the epitome of performance art on a par with early Alice Cooper and Kiss. Suffice to say many amazing acid trips were accompanied by the Butthole Surfers. They were in a class of their own, just like any given trip.



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