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- THE TELEGRAPH

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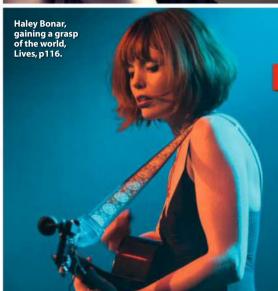
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- NEW ALBUMS The Shins and Jesus And Mary Chain return, Jessi Colter sings The Psalms, The Magnetic Fields in 50 bits, and more.
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Anton Corbijn

Just as 30 years ago, photographer/film-maker Corbijn is working with Depeche Mode on all visual output and with U2 on The Joshua Tree Tour and their new record (his classic shots of U2 start on p72). Currently also prepping his next movie, Anton's book U2 & i: The Photographs is still available.



Andrew Male

MOJO's Senior Associate Editor,
Andrew also currently writes for
The Guardian, Sunday Times
Culture and Sight & Sound. For this
month's issue he spoke to Umar Bin
Hassan and Abiodun Oyewole
of The Last Poets (see
page 60). Inevitably,
he is also working
on a book.

Michael Weldon Michael is an illustrator who lives in Melbourne, Australia. His work has

Melbourne, Australia. His work has appeared in Rolling Stone, The New Yorker and Time. His exhibition of portraits opens in Melbourne in May and he illustrates our lead album (p89). See recent work at weldonillustration. blogspot.com

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In Mind



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MOJO PRESENTS 15 TRACKS OF COSMIC ROOTS MUSIC

MEAT PUPPETS, CASS McCOMBS, THE LONG RYDERS, VICTORIA WILLIAMS, THE GUN CLUB, LIFT TO EXPERIENCE, MICHAEL CHAPMAN, HOWE GELB, JULIE BYRNE, MARK EITZEL, HARVEY MANDEL & MORE



1 MEAT PUPPETS

UP ON THE SUN

While Phoenix outfit the Meat Puppets emerged from the hardcore underground of the early '80s, by the middle of the decade they'd grown bored of that scene's reductive approach. Hence, their third effort, 1985's Up On The Sun, saw them develop the psychedelic elements in their sound, aided by the requisite lysergic stimulation – the latter often enjoyed in the wilds of the Arizona desert. The title track of that album underlines the band's use of spidery guitars and ragged melodies.



2 HOWE GELB

WARM STORM

Few artists have been as prolific as singer, songwriter and producer Howe Gelb who, under various monikers (the collective of Giant Sand among them), has released and recorded a remarkable body of work during the last four decades. Indeed, his musical adventures have been as vast as the Arizona desert that so inspires him. Warm Storm, from way back in 1991, comes packed with the man's swirling, lyrical vignettes which populate so many of his songs.



3 JULIE BYRNE ALL THE LAND GLIMMERED

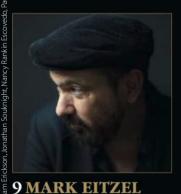
If Julie Byrne's debut 2014 LP, Rooms With Walls And Windows, established her as a songwriter to watch, then its successor, the recently released Not Even Happiness builds on her promise. Inspired by her continued journeys through America, the album confirms her as a songwriter who manages to fuse the personal with a sense of universal longing. The enchanting All The Land Glimmered showcases her deft picking style and the rare intimacy of her vocal delivery.



4 CASS McCOMBS

LOW FLYING BIRD

Having experimented with assorted sounds and directions over the course of seven studio albums, Cass McCombs emerged with Mangy Love, an eighth outing that was immediately hailed as a highwatermark in his storied career. The hugely evocative Low Flying Bird exemplifies his ability to inject soul into his initial indie-folk approach, but it is the instrumentation here that truly transports you. Listen closely and the canyon McCombs sings of does indeed appear to open wide.



THE LAST TEN YEARS

As the leader of American Music Club between 1982 to 1994, Mark Eitzel was instrumental in building bridges between post-rock, slowcore and Americana. In that time he also emerged as a fine songwriter and, following AMC's reformation in 2003, he's continued to release impressive, well-crafted solo records in tandem with his role in the band. The ironic reflection of The Last Ten Years is testament to his talent as wry lyricist and his melodic acumen.



10 GUN CLUB

MOTHER OF EARTH

Creeping Ritual, one of Jeffrey Lee Pierce's early bands, were in thrall to The Slits and Bo Diddley. Then, forming The Gun Club in Los Angeles in 1979, Pierce went deeper into the Delta blues and created a sound that connected post-punk with American roots music. The brooding Mother Of Earth encapsulates the band's darkhearted romanticism which is topped by Pierce's punk-blues vocal wail, latter springing from his own all-tooreal inner turmoil.



11 ALEJANDRO **ESCOVEDO**

BEAUTY OF YOUR SMILE

Having cut his teeth in punk group The Nuns in the late '70s, Escovedo graduated to alt country outfit Rank & File before forming roots rockers The True Believers. A prized songwriter, his last LP, Burn Something Beautiful, was co-written and coproduced Peter Buck and Scott McCaughey, who both felt enriched by the experience. The Beauty Of Your Smile should tell you why.



12 HARVEY MANDEL

NIGHTINGAIL

Raised in Chicago, guitar innovator Mandel learnt to play the blues by playing with legends of the genre. His unique, sustain-heavy style earnt him a reputation that led to stints with Canned Heat, John Mayall and the Stones (he plays on two tracks on 1976's Black And Blue). But Mandel remains at his best when he is given a free rein, as on the recent Snake Pit from which NightinGail is taken.

CCORDING TO BONO, U2'S SEMINAL 1987 ALBUM, The Joshua Tree, is defined by "the mythic idea" of America rather than the reality of that country. Most recently, that reality has been severely challenged by social and political events. And yet for all the recent tumult, the idealism associated with the United States remains ingrained in our collective psyche. Music has played a central role in that perception, celebrating and chronicling the sense of freedom that we so admire. Nowhere is that romantic notion more evident than in the wilds of the Mojave Desert – a place that seems symbolic of a deeper, ageless sense of truth. This month, MOJO is proud to bring you a collection that evokes the very spirit of that place. Indeed, the 15 songs included here are by artists who music embodies the hope and beauty that lies at the heart of mythic America...





5 LONG RYDERS

IVORY TOWER

Emerging from Los Anegeles's socalled Paisley Underground in the early 1980s, The Long Ryders delivered music that nevertheless recalled the America at its most wild and glorious. Their love of The Byrds and Gram Parsons was evident, turning a new audience on to those heroes of cosmic roots music. Their full-length debut, 1984's Native Sons, remains a latter-day classic, their songwriting prowess evident on the jangle-pop power of Ivory Tower.



6 RAINER PTACEK

LOSING GROUND

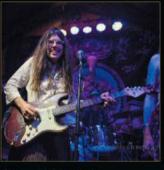
Born in East Berlin, guitarist and songwriter Rainer Ptacek moved to Chicago as a child, and eventually settled in Tuscon. There he forged an alliance with Howe Gelb. In 1996 he was diagnosed with a brain tumour and lymphoma. The musical community - including Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and Emmylou Harris rallied round for a tribute album, but he passed away a year later, at the age of 46. This hugely evocative tune underlines just what a loss he was.



7 DEVIN SPROULE

TREE DETAIL

Raised in the communal eco-village of Twin Oaks Community in Virginia, Devon Sproule began making music from an early age, releasing her first album in 1999 when she was just 16. Since then she has continued to make fascinating records that are full of her own free-spirited view of the world. The space in her music is also an element that allows her to create a sense of wild romanticism through her lyrics, as is evident on this spellbinding track from her new album, The Gold String.



8 VICTORIA WILLIAMS

SUMMER OF DRUGS

Blessed with one of the most distinctive voices in American music of the last 30 years, Victoria Williams has created a substantial body of work despite battling multiple sclerosis since 1993. Time spent living out by the Joshua Tree also makes her someone who seems to connect with Gram Parsons' sense of cosmic America. A lyric of hers once claimed "every day is poetry" – an idea reinforced throughout her songwriting, as this playful tune reveals.



13 MICHAEL **CHAPMAN**

SOMETIMES YOU **IUST DRIVE**

Veteran British guitarist/songwriter Chapman has spent much time travelling in America – one journey resulting in two LPs titled Americana (2001 and 2002). In many respects, they began his musical rehabilitation. His latest, 50 (co-produced by Steve Gunn), is already a highlight of 2017, Sometimes You Just Drive conjuring the exhilaration of the open road.



14 LIFT TO **EXPERIENCE**

JUST AS WE TOLD

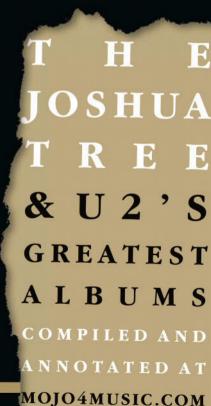
One of America's great 'lost' bands – Lift To Experience were torn apart by their own torment (see MOJO 280 for their full story). The reissue of their sole album, *The Texas Jerusalem* Crossroads (now remixed), underlines their unique and righteous approach to making music. The monologue on Just As We Told exemplifies the lyrical and musical fervour which so richly exemplified their music.



15 JACK ROSE

CROSS THE NORTH FORK

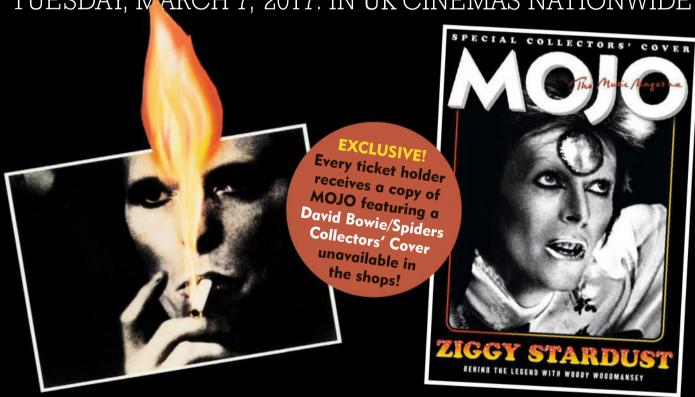
Initially a member of noise outfit Pelt, guitarist Jack Rose began to explore acoustic music and drawing on the work of so-called American primitives such as John Fahey and Robbie Basho. His dexterous style is showcased on this fast-moving epic, characterising his prolific output, though many of his recordings were released in limited form. Tragically, Rose's career was cut short on the morning of December 5, 2009, when he died of a heart attack at the age of 38.



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The evening also includes the screening of an exclusive new film produced by MOJO magazine. This film will feature MOJO's Editor-In-Chief Phil Alexander in conversation with The Spiders From Mars drummer Woody Woodmansey, whose own acclaimed memoir, My Life With Bowie: Spider From Mars, has just been published by Sidgwick & Jackson. As well as reliving that fateful night in 1973, Woody will provide further insight into what he describes as "the adventure of a lifetime."

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Karen Elson

MUSICIAN, MODEL, WALKING GHOST

What music are you currently grooving to?

Hope Sandoval & The Warm Inventions new record, Until The Hunter, seen on a lot, and a friend got me Miles Davis's Ascenseur Pour L'Échafaud for my birthday, which is really beautiful. And I love Kurt Vile. Wakin On A

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Pretty Daze has such a good groove.

Cat Stevens' Tea For The Tillerman. Every song is absolutely gorgeous. He has this way of being so tender while also quite harsh. Wild World is such a broken-hearted love song but it's so brutal as well!

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I collected tokens off a Kellogg's Corn Flakes box when I was eight or nine, from the Co-op in Oldham. I've got a twin sister and we got flexidiscs of Bananarama's Robert De Niro's Waiting, and one by Bonnie Tyler. I can't remember which one was mine. Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be? Elizabeth Fraser from the Cocteau Twins. That voice! I used to listen to everything on 4AD in my late teens.

What do you sing in the shower? Harry Nilsson's Everybody's Talkin' sounds brilliant in the shower.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

The Cure, Seventeen Seconds. I've always been a secret goth. Susan Cadogan's Hurt So Good is a genius song for a party. And The Upsetters' Chase The Devil. We'll have wine and a dance round the table.

And your Sunday morning record? Little Bit Of Rain off Fred Neil's Bleecker & McDougal is the most perfect thing for a Sunday. Also Bill Withers' Use Me and Mazzy Star's She Hangs Brightly. I'll read the newspapers, make my kids pancakes, and try to do fuck all. That is the plan.

Karen Elson's album Double Roses is out on April 7 on H.O.T.

FILL DEISTE OMI PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Cosey Fanni Tutti

T.G.'S ART-MUSIC DISSENTER

What music are you currently grooving to?

Well I'm not grooving to anything at the moment because I'm actually putting together a new set for a solo gig and I don't want anyone else's music bleeding in there.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Because it's so emotionally rich and beautiful and evocative, it's got to be Songs Of Leonard Cohen. I listen to it quite differently now – I appreciate the beauty of his lyrics and his delivery and the sounds he used. He tugs at you something incredible.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I bought:
I bought Jimi
Hendrix's Are You
Experienced in Hull,
possibly from Binns.
I'd listened to the
singles and seen him
perform, but ironically I didn't even
have a record
player, I had
to go round
to my mates'

houses.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

I don't want to be anyone else.

What do you sing in the shower?

Melodic songs like Joni Mitchell's Clouds or Nico's My Only Child, or even '50s songs and Doris Day that my mum used to sing round the house. I sing like she does, nothing like I sing on our records.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

For a good time, what I regard as 'up', like **The Doors**, is someone else's down! **Abba**'s going to come into it though, and **Blondie** is wonderful as well. I was so into industrial music and anti-pop in the '70s, but now I enjoy pop music as something I couldn't do. I like listening on a big PA, so if I want something to dance about to I'll go in the studio. It's like being in a club.

And your Sunday morning record?

Soundtrack music,
mainly – **Micachu**'s
Under The Skin and
Jackie. I like to be
taken away from the
music I normally do.
Cosey Fanni
Tutti's Art
Sex Music
is published by
Faber on

April 6.







NOW PLAYING

 When she's entertaining Karen Elson pumps up Susan Cadogan's Hurt So Good, a hit in 1975.

- or If he did socialise on Saturday nights, Stephin Merritt would play Silicon Teens' Music For Parties, 1980 Mute oddity.
- Cosey Fanni Tutti's all-time fave record? 1967 debut *Songs Of Leonard Cohen* with how many of his signature songs? an eternal delight.

Stephin Merritt

MAGNETIC COMPOSER

What music are you currently grooving to?

François Couperin's harpsichord pieces. I'm a sucker for harpsichord and organ music. Pop music? No. I make enough of it. But I do listen to maybe one song, just once, in the morning, to get whatever song is in my head, out of my head. Recently Japan, Gentlemen Take Polaroids – beautiful.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

I don't have one. I don't have favourite things. But I listened to [Fleetwood Mac's] Tusk a great deal. I'm sure I'd enjoy Rumours on headphones – but why listen to Rumours when you can listen to Tusk?

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

ABC by **The Jackson 5**, one of the towering bubblegum classics. It was on the back of a box of Alpha-Bits cereal, I made my mother buy it for me at the supermarket. The grooves were in the cardboard.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

On 50 Song Memoir I have a



song about wanting to be **John Foxx**. I still want to be John Foxx. He is elegant and sophisticated and not annoying, or only annoying when he's avant-garde, in the perfect way, in ways I wish I'd thought of. He is pointedly artificial.

What do you sing in the shower?

I never sing unless there's a microphone. I don't sing for pleasure, ever.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

The **Silicon Teens**, *Music For Parties*. I don't like parties: I'm sure Silicon Teens don't either.

And your Sunday morning record?

Congotronics 2: Buzz'n'Rumble From The Urb'n'Jungle. It's incredible, it sounds like people playing kalimbas and marimbas through giant stacks of Marshall amps. I don't know why it hasn't caught on.

The Magnetic Fields' 50 Song Memoir is out on March 3 on Nonesuch.

MOJO

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Among this month's photographers:

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The Byrds (inset, Getty Images);
David Bowie cover
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THEORIES, RANTS, ETC.

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"IT SEEMS LIKE WE'VE KIND OF COME FULL

circle," says Bono, assessing the current political climate. "We're back there with a different cast of characters," he adds, recalling the cultural uncertainty that shaped U2's 1987 album, *The Joshua Tree*. Thirty years on, the context has changed slightly, but the same sense of insecurity has re-emerged. That is why, says Bono, the band are touring the album in question. A deeply personal record, *The Joshua Tree* is also a celebration of the great American ideal at its most open. That in itself could now be considered to be a political statement. Above all, *The Joshua Tree* reminds us that we should be ready for anything. And that music should still have the power to unite people and to reflect humanity at its best...

puis f

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It's a musical journey

Reading your Ray Davies cover story [MOJO 280], it was refreshing not to hear the same old stories of sibling rivalry and the feuding with Dave that has clearly lain at the heart of The Kinks since Day One. Equally, it was amusing to hear Ray declare that, "Dave should've been the frontman." Who knows what would've happened if Dave had been. Hard to imagine.

Still, it was also really good to get to the heart of what actually went down on that fabled American tour of 1965. It's only a shame that the scars that were left ran so deep.

Roger Mortensen, via e-mail

When I got there, I enjoyed it...

I had to write to thank you for you Something Else: A Tribute To The Kinks covers CD that accompanied your last issue. Something Else is one of my favourite albums of all time, but to hear those songs interpreted by so many great artists was a real treat. Wreckless Eric's version of Death Of A Clown is magnificent, Modern Studies' take of Harry Rag really captured the spirit of the song, and Ty Segall's decision to cover the 'uncoverable' Waterloo Sunset was actually well judged.

I could go on... But maybe I'll just say thanks again, MOJO. I look forward to your version of Village Green Preservation Society next year! Michael Harrison, via e-mail

I wouldn't want them in the film

Enjoyed your Ray Davies issue. Am I right in saying that the headlines from your letters page Theories, Rants Etc. were taken from the script to Absolute Beginners this time around? Can't say that film has

aged that well. But if I'm right about the headlines, do I win a prize for getting that right? Dan Simon, via e-mail

You are indeed right. But sadly there's no prize...

Rock'n'roll stops the traffic

Always nice to hear from Ray Davies. But, Ray, may I go on record to assert that, whatever you may occasionally say to the contrary, Terry and Julie will always be and have always been for me Terry Stamp and Julie Christie? And, Julie, if you're reading this, what a shame we never met. It would have been the love affair of the century.

Paul Bandey, Actor, Paris, France, via e-mail

Where's the glory in that?

I was intrigued by Ray Davies's parenthetical pronouncements in your last issue concerning the current state of world politics.

"What does Donald Trump really want?" he asked. I think we're finding out right now. And that, I'm afraid, makes me disagree with Neil Young's view in your same issue where he suggests that the leader of the free world may indeed be open to suggestion. I wish I felt otherwise.

Stuart Jones, Liverpool, via e-mail

Talk about the resistance

I have to say that I really enjoyed your recent piece with Anohni [MOJO 280] and her attempt to put the world to rights. Of course, in black and white some of the sentiments expressed can seem a bit foolhardy, and I enjoyed her phone call to your journalist to apologise for ranting. But we live in an age where artists *should* rant more and music *should* actually mean something deeper than mere

entertainment. In that respect, Anohni is a shining beacon of hope in a sea of lyrical sludge.

David Williams, via e-mail

Sing no more!

Having just read your Buried Treasure piece in the last issue [MOJO 280], I need to get something straight... the *drummer* in Animals That Swim thinks that Frank Turner is "shit" (among other less polite terms)? Wow! It comes to something when a member of a minor league band that no one remembers or gives a toss about is given a platform to have a go at a musician who is actually trying to write music that makes people think.

Frank Turner may not be 'fashionable' in your pages but he stands in the lineage that springs from Billy Bragg onwards. He is also a man who wants to put his money where his mouth is by playing benefits for causes that matter to him and treating his fans well. In fact, you can tell quite a lot about Frank from the title of his last album: *Positive Songs For Negative People*.

Long may he continue to do what he does. And long may members of Animals That Swim continue to work in "school improvement".

Alice Andersson, via e-mail

Am I bugging you?

Just read this month's Hello, Goodbye [MOJO 280]. I'm pretty sure Slim Jim is referencing the movie Swingers when describing the Fifth Amendment club in Long Island. It's only a capital letter but the alternative is... err... harrumph... a very different kind of scene!

Don McKinlay, via e-mail

The eternal flame

I was very privileged to have known drummer Mike Kellie (Spooky Tooth, The Only Ones), as a friend and as a member of his recent band The Hidden. It was with great sadness that we heard of his death after a very short illness. Tributes are growing for him from those who have known and played with him over the last 50 years. I thought you might be able to mention him in your obits section.

Julian Crook, via e-mail

Mike Kellie's sad passing is marked in our Real Gone section on page 39 of this issue.

That's kinda bullshit!

RE: Clive Prior's review of *This Time It's Personal* [the John Cooper Clarke and Hugh Cornwell album, MOJO 277]. Reviewing music is a thorny issue, and although there is a lot of subjective response to any given piece of music, there are clearly some objective observations that can be made in reviewing how a piece fits into the development of a genre and a particular artist's development. Clive Prior fails in every respect here.

Nobody approaching this album came to it expecting JCC to have a wonderful singing voice, neither would anyone expect a collaboration with Hugh Cornwell to be a novelty comedy record, although Mr Prior seem to expect one or both of these things. What this so-called review does is look at all that it is not and completely ignores what it is, a rather charming bunch of songs, played by a rather good band, a sung by a singer with an untrained voice. I just heard this for the first time and it did confirm my belief in the John Peel approach to star ratings in MOJO. He said that the albums that he would be attracted to would be the one-star and two-star rated albums.

OK, *This Time It's Personal* is never going to be in my Top 10 releases of 2016, but it deserves a much more professional review than this trite, dismissive excuse for a review

Ugo, Edinburgh, via e-mail

I don't mean to bug ya'...

Having just finished the article in you companion magazine, MOJO '60s [Issue 8] about the Bee Gees, I got to wondering whether we can expect a similar article on the 'forgotten' Gibb brother, Andy? Although never an official member of the group (as far as I am aware), there is no doubt Andy did perform with his three brothers and was undoubtedly a fine songsmith in his own right (evidence of both can be found by checking out the 2010 four-disc box set *Bee Gees Mythology*).

Andy, of course, died tragically young in 1988 aged just 30, so now, some 29 years on, would be the right time for his story to be told and his legacy to the music world be re-evaluated.

Kevin Rawlings, Clevedon, via e-mail

It would have been better...

Your January issue [MOJO 278] paid fine tribute to Chris Wood in a review of his *Evening Blue* album, even mentioning his wife Jeanette at length. However, there was no reference to her main contribution to music, The Cake, or indeed to her own death two years prior to Wood's.

Jeanette Jacobs was one-third of a '60s girl group that produced two outstanding albums under the guidance of Dr. John. Rare for a band of that type, most of their best songs were self-penned.

After The Cake split up, Jeanette and fellow bandmate Eleanor Barooshian upped sticks for London, joining Ginger Baker's Airforce. Eleanor quit the music business after Jeanette's death and returned to the States a few years later. She died just last September at the age of 66.

Which leaves Barbara Morillo as the sole surviving member of The Cake. Thankfully, Barbara is still in good health and voice, singing with her band The Shrine. Thanks for listening,

David Arnoff, via e-mail



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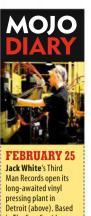




band's Chinese sojourn saw them travelling for just over an hour from

winter. Usually, during the summer there's like 50,000 people per square foot or something like that, but we had the whole place to ourselves. It was weird to think that it was built in the 14th and 15th centuries and there we were walking along it. And it really is vast. You hear about it but you have no real idea what it's like until you get there. It really is a total mindfuck!"

Phil Alexander



Jack White's Third
Man Records open its
long-awaited vinyl
pressing plant in
Detroit (above). Based
in The Cass Corridor
(once home to Creem
magazine) it will be
a "boutique production
facility" giving "visual
evidence to visitors
of vinyl's beauty and
importance." It will
create 50 new jobs,
be environmentally
friendly and can
produce a new record
every 45 seconds.



MARCH 2 David Rodigan's memoir My Life In Reggae (Constable) is published. Reggae's John Peel, the veteran DJ and broadcaster started on Radio London in the 1970s, was embraced by every conceivable reggae stár (Bob Marley, King Tubby, Lee Perry all feature), was namechecked by the **Beastie** Bovs and continues to promote new acts today. It promises to be a thumping read, so



watch your bass bins.

MARCH 22 Berliner Manuel Göttsching (above) plays his groundbreaking electronic work of 1984 E2: E4 live at the Barbican. As if this wasn't enough excitement, for the second half he'll be joined by Ariel Pink and psych Australians Oren Ámbarchi and Shags Chamberlain who'll play as The Ash Ra Tempel Experience, performing songs from Ash Ra's 1972 albums Schwingungen and Seven Un.

CARRY ON THEN.
FOLD UP YOUR OF YOUGO

HEY'STRIPPER IN I relieved! My four boys like the concept!

PICTURE YOURSELF

Fabs intimate Klaus Voormann turns the story of his legendary *Revolver* cover into a graphic novel!

hich is the best Beatles record covers?

Sgt.Pepper? The White Album? Yesterday And Today? MOJO's money is on Revolver, with its black and white combination of Aubrey Beardsley and photo collage presenting the group at their most surprising and subversive. Indeed, 50 years ago Beatles confidante Klaus Voormann won a Grammy for designing it. To celebrate the anniversary, he's prepared a new boxed edition of his book Revolver 50, limited to just 500 copies. Including a signed Voormann drawing, it tells the story of the sleeve's creation in comic-strip form, beginning on the Reeperbahn and taking in Abbey Road listening sessions and the Fabs' reactions to the finished work.

Ironically, Voormann was never much of a comics buff, he tells us down the line from his home in Germany. "We had Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck and maybe Superman when I was a kid, but it was only much later that I got interested in the graphic novel," he says. "A friend of mine showed me some great artists that work with a lot of effort. I must mention my really good

friend, Thomas von Kummant – he does great graphic novels and he helped me a lot. There was a comic of M, the film with Peter Lorre [M – Eine Stadt Sucht Einen Mörder, Jon J.Muth, 2009] and I really got into this story. You looked at each little thing, what they are saying, the atmosphere, it was all right. Then I thought, well, that would be a good thing to do for

The comic bomb: (above) a pivotal scene from Revolver 50 by Klaus Voormann; (below) the new book edition and the artist with his Grammy.

this Revolver at 50 years. For me words are difficult anyway, I've got this dyslexic problem, So for me most things are visual anyway."

Toiling for 18 months on the project, he eschewed computer techniques, using pencils and post-it notes as he refined a story that went through numerous phases of editing, expansion and experiment. "I did it all analogue, all by myself," says Klaus. "I drew on those little pieces of paper and shifted them around, and if they didn't look good enough I threw them away. Eventually I kept them. It was supposed to be a rough but I stayed with this way of working."

It is a subtly evocative piece of work: we see Voormann working late at his kitchen table in Parliament Hill, and experience, via carefully rendered speech balloons, George Martin's refined manner of speech. Did visual revisiting differ from simply being interviewed about it?

"I've talked about those things again and again," he says equably. "It's established, because I made a point of remembering, and actually, I have a much better picture of myself because of that. Whenever I thought, What was it like in that little attic flat? I'd remember, the roof was not straight, the bathtub was in the kitchen... so that's what I tried to show. What did the EMI office look like? I had photographs too. It was a handicap, I could not just invent things and do crazy stuff, because if you had free will you could have people with three eyes and

fifteen legs if you wanted. So it made it difficult, but it's authentic."

One reader who appreciated it was Paul McCartney, who wrote the foreword. "I sent him the rough version, and he loved

foreword. "I sent him the rough version, and he loved it," says Klaus. "I even asked him a few questions, but he was not very helpful in that direction, because he couldn't remember much! I sent it to Ringo too. They've seen the whole story."

REVOLVER 50 – The Grammy Anniversary Edition by Klaus Voormann. The signed limited edition book is available at www.revolver-book.com from Genesis Publications

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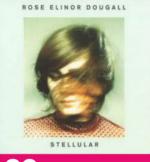
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rock heroes prepare album five.

ide were lionised for their layered early '90s psych pop EPs, and albums Nowhere and Going Blank Again. But they split in 1996, having being mugged by Madchester and besieged by Britpop. How to react to such drastic shifts in public taste? "Go underground for a bit," says singer/ guitarist Andy Bell, "and come back when it's blown over."

After touring America and Europe in 2015, the comeback will also include a new album. We're sat with Bell, Ride bassist Steve Queralt and producer Erol Alkan in the latter's Phantasy Sound set-up in north London to hear some of it. As Alkan lights up some vibe-purifying sage, Queralt recalls starting work in October 2016 at Vale Studios, Worcestershire. "Mark [Gardener, singer/guitarist] introduced us to it. It's like a spa for boys, a great big manor house, the food's brilliant and you see nobody... and there's a studio there."

Sessions took just 17 days, using ideas devised on tour and before, as well as new creations. "Being on tour, playing all your old songs you wrote and created when you were 18, 19, it does connect you with the energy of that," says Bell.

The material is varied. Integration Tape, influenced by William Basinski's avant-ambient The Disintegration Loops series, was improvised on the day they announced their reunion in November 2014. "It was our way of celebrating getting back together," says Bell, who played an effects

made, we were paralysed by fear."

Elsewhere, Charm Assault brings riffing, howling beat pop (it concerns "the general parade of

cunts that we have in front of us in the news at the moment," says Bell). Eco-unease song Weather Diaries combines Ride's dream pop shimmer with anthemic moves suggestive of Bell's time in Oasis, while Home Is A Feeling is, says Queralt, "the closest we get on the album to a traditional Ride sound. We didn't want to go in and make a record that everyone wants us to make - i.e. sounding like it was 1991 again - but I think we're guilty of it on that song."

Says long-term fan Alkan, seeing them play Charm Assault live in Brighton convinced him the auguries were good. "In the studio, everything that was going down was going down really quick," he says, "because it felt like the hard work was already done."

Having returned to creative and collaborative health, are Ride redeeming unfulfilled promise? "Maybe the first few gigs on the reunion tour had that euphoria," says Bell, "but now it just feels like we're a working band again, in a cycle of album/tour. The album doesn't feel like a grand statement - I'd like to think of it more as just the next Ride album, rather than a real celebration of being back, in big letters. Just imagine we've been doing stuff all this time.

THE FIRST **NOISE WE** MADE. WE WERE PARALYSED BY FEAR."

OWORKING I

.ROGER WATERS (right) is continuing work on his first solo album since 1992 with **Nigel** Godrich. He's said that 2 per cent of the setlist on his impending tour will be new material... out in spring,

DAN AUERBACH's new solo LP has been recorded at his Easy Eye Sound Studio in Nashville: Duane Eddy guests, as does Johnny Cash's bassist

Dave Roe. Mark Knopfler also contributes guitar to the song

Shine On Me. Auerbach's Black Keys partner Patrick Carney, meanwhile, has co-produced Call Your Name on Double Roses, the new album by **Karen Elson**, out in April... MAC DE MARCO's new record This Old Dog arrives in May. Featuring songs A Wolf Who Wears Sheep's Clothes, My Old Man and Sister, word is the playful Mac has grown up, but not too much. live dates permitting, FOO FIGHTERS will

spend 2017 recording their ninth LP.. Perth psych-rockers **POND**'s new album The Weather arrives in May Produced by Tame Impala's Kevin Parker, it's described by vocalisty guitarist Nick Allbrook as, "a concept album... focusing on all the weird contradictory things that make up a lot of colonial cities around the world... at the end of all this confusion in our weird little white antipodean world, there's the beach,

purity and nature that brings us all together"... INTERPOL are recording a sixth album, due in 2018 ..and there was excitement when four members of Britpon contenders **ELASTICA**

(left, guitarist Donna Matthews) were seen, minus front-womanturned-artist Justine Frischmann, at Abbev Road studios. They were remastering their two

albums for re-release.

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NADIA REID

From New Zealand, after-dark folk visions for the environmentally attuned.

If I'm worried that I've made another heartbreak album," says Nadia Reid, laughing a little, her image glitching slightly on the Skype feed from her home in Port Chalmers, New Zealand. Reid's new album, Preservation, is sure to be one of the year's landmark releases: a series of narcotic late-night tales, mapping the stormy peaks, desolate valleys, and far horizons in the wild landscape of a young romantic life, it's delivered in her consoling, lonesome voice, and illuminated by a jazz-schooled trio of sympathetic accompanists. A work of wisdom and often ruthless poetry, it bears comparison to such after-dark confessionals as the Cowboy Junkies' The Caution Horses and Mazzy Star's She Hangs Brightly, moving seamlessly from boldness to self-doubt, in a manner that is oddly similar to encountering Reid "in person".

"Sometimes I'm really apologetic about my songs," says Reid. "Thinking, Oh God, do people really want to hear all this again, but part of this new album is about sitting with the way I am, alone, and feeling OK about it."

Something of *Preservation*'s power lies in the contrast between the sadness in Reid's lyrics and the warmth of their delivery, so it comes as something of a surprise that she came late to singing. Born in Devonport, Auckland, and raised in Dunedin by her actress mother, she never thought of herself as a singer. "When I was nine I auditioned for my

Spirit of Dunedin: Nadia Reid works on her perspective.

"IF I WAS UP ALL THE TIME IT WOULD BE

VERY

BORING."

high school choir and didn't get in," she explains. "I've never forgotten it. I still lose perspective and think everything is a load of shit, but I am learning."

An apprenticeship in the welcoming Dunedin and Christchurch folk and indie scenes, plus a borderline obsession with The Be Good Tanyas, fed into her stunning 2014 debut, Listen To Formation, Look For The Signs, an album informed as much by her New Zealand surroundings as its lyrics of

heartache and fortitude. "I'm really sensitive to place and environment," she says. "Touring Europe was incredibly inspiring, and that in turn fed into the new album."

As with its predecessor, *Preservation* was recorded in Christchurch's Sitting Room studios, with producer Ben Edwards and a group led by long-term guitarist Sam Taylor. Thematically, however, the album differs in that, "I now have more confidence in myself. These songs are more about me; the first album was more about people around me."

For the next album, Reid envisages "just guitars and voices", the emotions of the songs liberated from their seductive production. "A lot of artists suffer," says Reid, "and there's still a huge stigma talking about mental health. I guess if it was any other way I would be doing something completely different. But, yeah, if I was up all the time it would be very boring."

Andrew Male

FACT SHEET

Club, Jolie Holland

Of Winn-Dixie, about a

lonely girl who befriends

a stray dog.

One of her guitar teachers

"I had no idea who he was at

was Bob Scott of The Clean.

the time," says Reid.

For fans of Joni Mitchell,

Mazzy Star, American Music

 Reid discovered the music of The Be Good Tanyas in a 2005 children's film, Because

WESLEY STACE

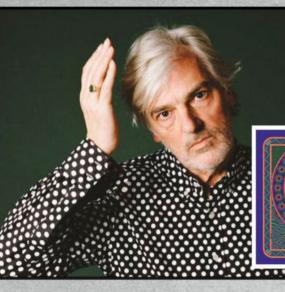
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LAMBCHOP

WHEN YOU WERE MINE

Where the FLOTUS soothsayers take Prince's heartbroken new wave gem from 1980, slow it down and let Kurt Wagner mush-mouth the lyrics in almost dubular style, finding a soulful poignancy and wistfulness and inferring a deep poetic wisdom. YouTube reveals Bob Mould covering the same song at First Avenue in Minneapolis the week Prince died. Two great tributes from across the musical spectrum assure cosmic significance. Find it: Soundcloud/YouTube

ANOHNI PARADISE

Reunited with producers Hudson Mohawke and Oneohtrix Point Never, Anohni's new ecocide lament is fittingly downtempo, agitated by footwork beats and ending with a sucking vortex of distortion. Remix this, Guetta.

Find it: Soundcloud

RAY DAVIES POETRY

RECORDED FOR INT

Recorded with The Jayhawks, and from the long-awaited Americana album, a bittersweet roots rocker that finds Ray wondering, despite the market satisfying every conceivable consumer need, where has the depth and meaning gone, eh? Find it: YouTube

DELTA 7 THE JUNGLE

4 DELTA 7 THE JUNGIE
From Eastbourne, a seven-piece whose members have various learning disabilities bring focused tribalistic punk-funk action. Are they pursued by some unidentified threat or just doing it for fun? "You feel like you want to fit in with everyone else," muses one in the short explanatory film, We Rise, "but not everyone's the same." Find it: YouTube

BOB DYLAN I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU

A Carl Sigman and Jimmy Van Heusen song first recorded by Sinatra in 1953, here we find Bob once again in a country jazz reverie, singing of the eternal verities of cheating and heartbreak. From the new LP Triplicate.

Find it: YouTube



RHODA DAKAR DOLPHINS Mixing reggae, jazz and soul, the ex-Bodysnatcher and Special AKA-er covers

Fred Neil's song of ecology, the heart's longing and waiting for world peace, in sizzling style. From her EP The LoTek Four Volume 1.

Find it: Pledgemusic

GOLDFRAPP ANYMORE

After the agrarian moves of her last few albums, it's back to the fruity robo-disco oddness of Supernature and Black Cherry with this teeth-bearing groover for riding into nightclubs on a horse.

Find it: YouTube

MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment ROKSAN

In a purple world: Kurt Wagner of Lambchop channels Prince; (below) Alison Goldfrapp, returning to supernature.

"GOLDFRAPP **MOVES BACK** TO FRUITY **ROBO-DISCO** ODDNESS.

STONE FOUNDATION (FEAT. PAUL WELLER) YOUR BALLOON IS RISING

Neo-vintage soul, with Weller revisiting his Style Council days with Memphis-meets-Midlands friends. From the Weller-produced Street Rituals LP, which features William Bell and Bettye LaVette. Find it: YouTube



9 MARK EITZEL MR HUMPHRIES A poignant rock tribute to the late John Inman's Are You Being Served? character. "Millions loved him," laments Eitzel, adding, "You can't calm the savage beast but you can make him much less of a bore."

Find it: Hey Mr Ferryman (DECOR)

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON IODY AND THE KID

Unreleased track from Kristofferson's 1997 album of de-Nashville-ised catalogue gems The Austin Sessions. A sweetly nostalgic 1968 song about family, mortality, love and letting go. Find it: Rhino Soundcloud

FAITH EVANS & THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. NYC (FT. IADAKISS)

Taster from long-awaited Biggie-from-beyond LP The King And I, it salutes New York in style, ie, plenty of '93 scratching and rhyming. Find it: YouTube

CRYSTAL FAIRY CRYSTAL FAIRY

Melvins/Mars Volta supergroup fronted by Le Butcherettes singer Teri Gender-Bender whose cabaret swish invigorates Omar Rodriguez and Buzz Osborne's sludge-prog guitars Find it: YouTube

13 JARVIS COCKER AND CHILLY GONZALES TEARJERKER

Pulp's acrylic confessor and the reinvented piano impressionist collaborate on a sombre put-down song from their LP Room 29, a short story collection

centred around a piano in a hotel room in Hollywood's golden age. Find it: www.room29.tv

14 PUSSY GALORE PIG SWEAT
Bracing, farcical 85 seconds of smashed guitars, beyond-basic drums and smokers' cough blues hollering, which trip over each other before coming to a sudden stop. From 1987 LP Right Now! Find it: YouTube

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' 15 BILLY BRAGG

Could've filled this list with Trump protest songs, but let's settle for the Barking bard's audacious Dylan update: "Martin Luther King is spinning in his grave to see a bigoted bully taking the stage". Find it: YouTube

16 PINS AND IGGY POP AGGROPHOBE Mr Osterberg does louche, lisping narrative over a track from the Manchester group's Bad Thing EP. The contrast between his black-hearted noir cool and Pins' hypnotic, ping-pop melodic hooks and swirls is

an unforeseeable triumph. We await his shoegaze reinvention. Find it: Spotify

INSECURE MEN ROXETTE

TINSECURE WEN ROAD ITE

Fat White Family's Saul Adamczewski covers the Dr. Feelgood great on a home organ and a reverb unit. He's also done covers of The Nips, Van Morrison and Springsteen in "patheticist" style, ie, mangled lift music for drinkers of bogus "screen wash" vodka. Find it: Soundcloud

18 WIRE SHORT ELEVATED PERIOD Economical yet rich, forward-driving art-punk – which can't help but suggest their late-'70s output - from a group who seem to gain momentum the further they get away from '77 year zero. Find it: YouTube

SLOWDIVE SLOW ROVING

19 SLOWDIVE SLOW ROVING
With a title like this, 'gaze heads could be forgiven for imagining a cloud of reverb and dry ice rolling over the stage of the Windsor Old Trout. Instead, it's quick off the blocks, gauzy and melodic, as it heads into wider reaches of space.

Find it: YouTube

THE TRINARY SYSTEM DAVE DAVIES

A new trio for Roger Miller (Mission Of Burma). Their EP Amplify Amplifiers opens with a snarling garage nod to the younger Kink's influence on MoB's razored-amp electric fizz ("He kinda helped me go crazy").

Find it: Amplify Amplifiers EP/Bandcamp



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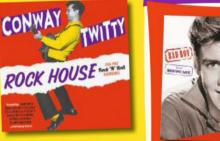
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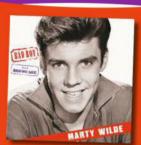




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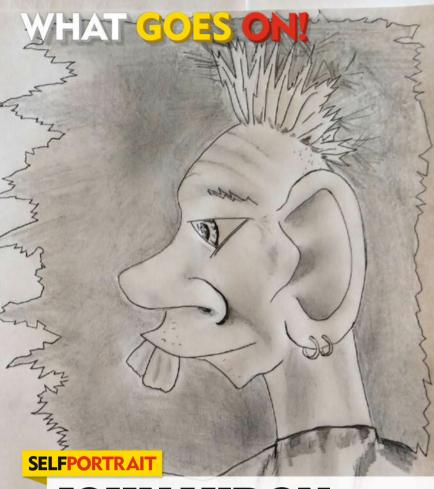
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JOHN LYDON

The PiL and Pistol agitator in his own words and by his own hand.

I'd describe myself as... fucking ugly! I like to present myself as arrogant and aloof sometimes, on TV interviews in particular, because I found out years ago that's the best defence in the world. I think I've built. over the years, a fucking great suit of armour, which in the last five years I've been trying to dismantle, but it's rusted in places and hard to get off. Generally speaking I'm really quiet.

Music changed me... positively, for the best, at a very early age. My mum and dad always played music and always bought records. When they had parties I loved to be the DJ... putting the records on the Dansette stack and watching the automatic arm drop them, it utterly fascinated me. A very Irish thing too, and a very Jamaican thing. It was a very mixed neighbourhood [in Finsbury Park] so

you grew up listening to a lot of unicicii aspects oi masic, ana you were prejudice-free because of that.

When I'm not making music... I'm doing very little. Occasionally I take a look at the ocean, but I don't really have any hobbies apart from drawing. And there's TV watching, and long periods of indolence. The trouble is I've got one of those Robin Williams-type heads of non-stop gabble. There's a billion thoughts crashing into each other.

My biggest vice is... I don't know. I would never consider alcohol as a vice. I call that a luxury.

The last time I was embarrassed was... all the time! Shy as hell, I am. So what do I do? I walk into a career where it's the opposite. That's how it works, once I'm on-stage all the fears, the nerves, everything is gone.

My formal qualifications are... I passed all my exams except Maths – I can't count to 10! – to 'A' level, I got five 'A's, History, Geography, English

"When I learned he was Irish and saw his green teeth...": John renders himself in profile.

Language and Literature, and the other one might've been Technical Drawing, which I loved.

The last time I cried was... I'm capable of a real good tearjerk if there's some kind of sloshy romantic tragedy film on, or just hearing of any death. I feel an attachment to every human being, and I don't know how to cope with the sadness of it. George Michael there, kicking the bucket, I felt really bad and sorry for him. He died alone, and there's no need for that, but that's what this industry does. The showbiz side comes at a heavy price.

Vinyl, CD or MP3?... Vinyl first, CD second, everything else is a mess. It's a waste of time listening to anything on a computer, it's a two dimensional version of what should be a three dimensional excitement. To put it simply - where's the bass?

My most treasured possession is... Silly little things like the PiL ring that [friend] Rambo made for me when PiL first started, when he was a jeweller. And paintings, some of them by [wife] Norah's ex-husband. Gifts from fans... and a lot of drawings.

The best book I've read is... The Public Image by Muriel Spark. It's not a great book, but the idea of a self-centred actress slowly destroying herself and everyone around her - I thought, "That's not what I'm going to do."

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? ... I always make sure it's bloody full to the top! I ain't leaving the bar 'til there's nothing left.

My greatest regret is... the death of anyone. It seems sadness is a necessity, you need to go through grief in order to understand it fully, and cope with the next load of grief that's on its way, in between the hysterical comedy acts.

When we die... God knows. Hahaha! I think that's it, you cease to exist. I'm a complete atheist. This is to me why life should be led to the fullest.

I would like to be remembered... hilariously. And accurately. I admire people who die with a sense of humour, too, whether it be WC Fields or Oscar Wilde. It's so helpful to those who are left living. Saying that, I'll probably die screaming like a baby!

Ian Harrison

Mr Rotten's Songbook is out on March 31. For more info go to johnlydon.com



"I FEEL AN ATTACHMENT TO EVERY HUMAN **BEING.**

ONDOMOJO 1

STEVIE NICKS has said she'd prefer Fleetwood Mac to tour than make an album. However, an imminent LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM **CHRISTINE MCVIE** (right) album, with musical contributions from **John**

McVie and Mick Fleetwood,

should lessen the blow ...coming soon, a new way

to play vinyl - the LOVE 'Intelligent' turntable, which resembles a compact record player arm/ tech-podule controlled via your smartphone ... ROBERT **PLANT** sings on **Fairport** Convention's 50th anniversary McShee ... prior to the Trump

album 50:50@50, as does **Jacqui** auguration, a press release was issued declaring, "Musician Kelley Deal joins the fight to repeal the Affordable Care

Act... in Washington DC." This was soon followed by "Correction: Musician Kelley Deal joins the fight against repealing the Affordable Care Act..."...**DWEEZIL ZAPPA** has taken to PledgeMu sic to offer subscribers (AKA 'Others Of Intention') new music and the chance to help

him with the intra-familial legal hassles that may see the Zappa name trademarked (and not by

him) ...FLYING LOTUS's stomach-turning Kuso caused walk-outs when screened at the Sundance Film Festival in January. The film, which features sex, horror and George Clinton (left) as a doctor with a giant magic cockroach living in his rectum, is

soundtracked by Kamasi Washington, Aphex Twin and



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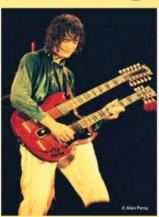
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THE RESIDENTS

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MOONDOG NEW AMSTERDAM

(from Sax Pax For A Sax, Atlantic, 1994)

"The Residents never saw Moondog, but appreciated his work. From the late '40s' til the early' 70s, he stationed himself on Sixth Avenue between 52nd & 55th Streets, often in Viking drag. He composed a huge body of work, and was later 'discovered' by producer James William Guercio, who produced two Columbia LPs. They gained notoriety among hippies, on whose fringes were the early Residents. When he was dropped he relocated to Germany and in 1994 he made one final major label album, Sax Pax For A Sax, this lovely, melancholy valentine, showing his everlasting love of his adopted city."



2 FRANK AND CLYDE THE MUSIC YOU'VE ASKED FOR

(Carriage LP, circa 1960)

"Back in the pre-CD era, The Residents were big record collectors. A favourite event was a semi-annual sale at a store called The Record House in San Francisco, where you could buy completely unknown, usually crappy, LPs, two-for-25 cents. One was by Frank And Clyde, a duo, performing in Indiana motel lounges who somehow managed to rise above the cheap sentimentality of their oeuvre (jazz from the '20s and '30s), infusing the clichéd material with a feel of genuine emotion and authenticity. The real deal, you'll never find Frank And Clyde on Spotify.'



ENNIO MORRICONE RETATA SECONDA

(from II Pentito soundtrack, GDM, 2007)

"Long-time devotees of film soundtracks, The Residents heard rumblings of Ennio Morricone's brilliance long before succumbing to it via 1975 compilation I Film Della Violenza (Films Of Violence). Glomming on the Italian soundtrack master like lampreys on a whale, Morricone became as influential on the group as Sun Ra, James Brown, Harry Partch, Barry White, Captain Beefheart or any of their heroes. Given he's not a pop artist creating 'albums', it's impossible to pick a definitive work, but Retata Seconda from 1985 film II Pentito The Residents consider all but perfect."



BO DIDDLEY BRING IT TO **IEROME**

(B-side of Pretty Thing, Checker, 1955) "In the 1950s and '60s, the

ultimate event of one's senior year at C.E. Byrd High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, was nothing if not atypical. Immediately after the Senior Prom, everyone went to the real party - the German Dance, rocking out from 2 to 6am. The performer in 1963 was Bo Diddley. In some ways, though, the real star was Jerome Green, Bo's maracas player, with his tour de force being Bring It To Jerome. The highlight of the set was his ability to embrace a lit cigarette with his tongue, then somehow flip it around causing it to disappear into his closed mouth. only to have the cigarette reappear seconds later. still smoking - while never missing a beat with his maracas. The crowd went wild."

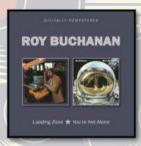


JAMES BROWN OUT OF SIGHT

(The T.A.M.I. Show, 1964)

"Watch this T.A.M.I. Show clip to see James Brown at his peak. After several of the group saw him at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1965. James Brown – a manic blur burning an indelible imprint into the memories of the Residents-to-bebecame a major cultural hero. After, they saw the group at a gas station, seeking directions to the new highway. One of the Residents' group offered to lead the way. After a meandering trip, James himself approached the group's car, looking sceptical. Flustered, the future Resident pointed to the freeway entrance a few hundred feet away. Reassured, James shook hands with everyone, returned to his Cadillac and sped off.

And the Beat Goes On...



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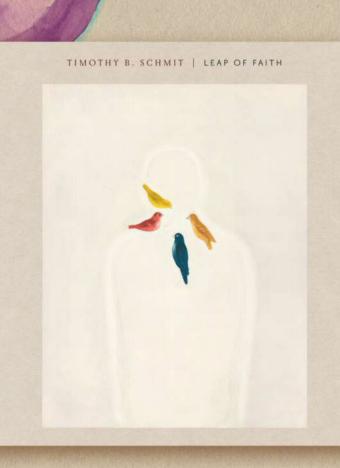
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ROLLING STONE







MARIO BATKOVIC

Bosnian-Swiss lightning-conductor drags humble accordion screaming into futurity.

If I maservant to the music," smiles one-man accordion army Mario Batkovic, who has stunned festival crowds at ATP, Montreux Jazz and Le Guess Who? with the wildness and invention of his playing. The Swiss-based virtuoso began his explorations 'accidentally' aged four, when bequeathed a red accordion by a jaded uncle. "Where I grew up [Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina] you either played music or sang in a group. It could have been a flute, a trombone or something cool like a guitar, but my uncle was happy to get rid of it – it meant he didn't have to play at every party. I can still smell that accordion!"

Soon Batkovic was spending every waking moment experimenting with his new main squeez, eking out its nuances and expanding its pitch, volume and timbre. By his teens he was the unavoidable centre of attention in a series of folk, punk, rock and pop outfits, memorising songs due to his limited resources.

"I didn't own a radio or records; I had to play what I wanted to hear. Later, at college, I loved to play bass to Beethoven symphonies because I missed something just listening – I always had to add my own note."

He moved to Switzerland aged 14 and, despite being "the opposite of the classical idea", radically prospered at Hanover's Hochschule für Musik und Theater and Basle's Musik-Akademie. Afterwards he began his highly physical and impassioned solo performances. One of these so

Mario Batkovic: reacting badly to guidelines again.

"I SIMPLY
PLAY A TONE
AND LISTEN
TO WHAT
THE MUSIC
TELLS ME."

impressed Geoff Barrow that in 2015 the Portishead founder took Batkovic on tour with his

krautoid-electric trio Beak. Barrow later signed him to his Invada imprint and challenged Batkovic to compose differently in the studio.

"Meeting Geoff definitely had an effect on my music," says Batkovic. "When I'm writing I either listen to what's in my head – there's a 24-hour annoying radio station in there – or I simply play a tone and listen to what the music tells me. No rules! I react badly to guidelines."

The pair spent over a year battling technical issues to perfect the contrasting resonant bass and fluttering high melodies of his eponymous debut album. Given rhythmic life by the instrument's in-out bellows action, the album criss-crosses classical, chamber and contemporary classifications, and suggests Glass and Mozart as well as analogue electronics and demonic rock opera.

"I try to find beauty in the darkness," he says. "I fight for artistic freedom. I'm really lucky to do a peaceful thing, and make a positive contribution at this time."

Get lost in it and you'll quickly forget its creator is wielding an accordion, and figure on something far more open, galvanising and ethereal. "The accordion is a musical rough diamond to me, wonderful but unfinished," he says modestly. In Batkovic's miraculous hands, though, it truly is something else.

Andy Cowan

documentaries and cartoons.

KEY TRACKS

Ouatere

Restrictus

Mario Batkovic's self-titled debut is out on March 17 on Invada.

ALSORISING



he title of Istanbul duo **JAKUZI**'s (left) haunting, haunted debut album, *Fantezi Müzik*, "is a reference to **Roxy Music** and a sarcastic reference to a sub-genre of Turkish Arabesque music from the early '80s," explains bassist **Taner Yücel** (on right). Sarcasm, Yücel explains, because Jakuzi's own '80s-redolent sound post-punk synth-rock eschews the macho stance of the 'old' Turkey. "In Arabesque music," he adds, "the singer judges his partner in the relationship, he doesn't reflect. But Jakuzi lyrics are about judging your own mistakes and faults. For this, we are better off using the mood of new wave and punk." *Martin Aston*



yneside's **PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS** (left) have taken avenging sevenfold to new extremes, raging at everything from globalisation to heavy-handed policing via their name's porcine repetition. Fittingly, their music tilts at doom-prog riffola through a filter of post-hardcore gnarliness. Renowned at home for their Buckfast wine-charged live shows, singer/keyboardist **Matt Baty** claims they only listen to one song (eponymous, death knell opener of **Black Sabbath**'s debut album) plus local black-metal originators Venom. The rampaging 15-minute-plus wig-outs on their debut, *Feed The Pigs* (Rocket Recordings), suggest additional lashings of lysergically crazed **Butthole Surfers**. *Andrew Perry*

Patrick Principe, Deniz Ezgi Sürek

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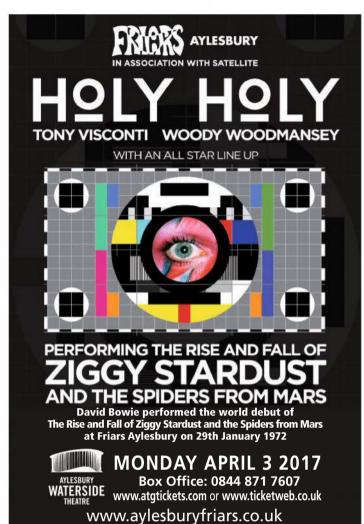
Uncut − Album of the Month ★★★★

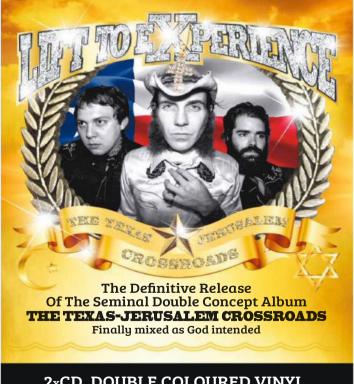
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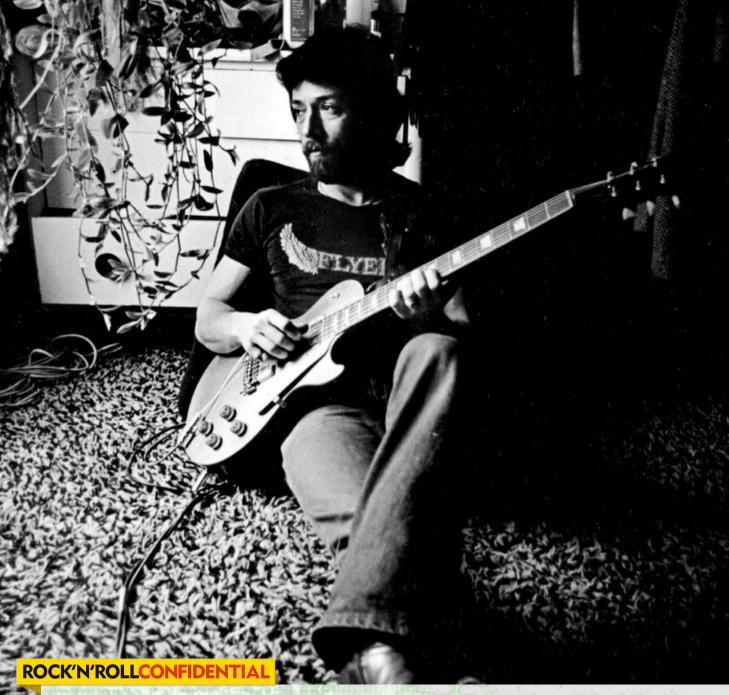
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HARVEY MANDEL

The travelled guitar spell-caster talks blues, magic and the Stones.

sking an interviewee how they are is, for the most part, simple journalistic politeness. With Harvey Mandel, it's more pressing. The 71-year-old Michigan-born guitar god has just completed his penultimate prolonged treatment in a three-year battle with nasal cancer. "I'm doing better," says Mandel, simultaneously tough and tired. "I'm hoping I'll need only one more operation and be back in business." That means touring Snake Pit, his first full studio album since 1974. Recorded at Creedence's Fantasy Studios with Ryley Walker's Chicago band, Snake Pit is a storming return to the sinuous, supercharged, heavysustain guitar jazz-blues-rock-funk gumbo old heads and young cratediggers revere him for, a sound that draws on 50 years of playing with Muddy Waters, Magic Sam, Canned

Heat, and John Mayall, plus a very brief period in The Rolling Stones. "I didn't reany get grant recognition from that, says Mandel.

The new album sounds like you haven't been away, which of course you have. How did it come about?

My manager in Chicago got approached by [fan and Tompkins Square label proprietor] Josh Rosenthal. We set it up together and Josh brought in these young Chicago musicians. They were all Grade A guys. What you're hearing is live cuts, set up in the studio. I'd vocally run down my ideas and we did it in one or two takes. It worked out great.

You've been seriously ill. Were you able to keep playing in that time?

Nowhere near like what I normally would, but I'm at that point in my life where I don't play for two or three months, pick it up for one day and I'm ready for action. It's automatic.

Still rolling: in the mid-'70s, Harvey Mandel sustains that long note.



HARV'S CUTS Mandel's five big bangers.

1 The Ventures Walk Don't Run (DOLTON, 1960) 2 Cannonball Adderley Somethin' Else (BULUNDT, 1958) 3 John Coltrane A Love Supreme (IMPULES, 1965) 4 B.B. King King Of The Blues (ROWN, 1960) 5 Freddy King Sings

You didn't even start playing guitar until you were 16...

Almost 16, I was playing bongos with this guy in Chicago who was doing the beatnik folk business, just having fun. One day at his house I said, "Hey, show me a chord on that guitar." He showed me an E chord, I played it and I was hypnotised. From that day on I went crazy. For the next few years I devoted 23 out of 24 hours, learning, working with records, practising guitar.

Soon you're playing Chicago blues mecca Twist City with Buddy Guy.

I was a little white guy, in the heart of the ghetto, but nobody ever messed with me. I started as a beginner but after a few months I was playing better than most guys. I jammed with all the major blues guys. Buddy was king of the hill, but B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Magic Sam... I hung out there for a year and a half. I was a night person. I finished at 4am, slept, had dinner and was off again. Dinner was breakfast.

When did you recognise that you had your own distinctive style?



It was always in my mind but it took a little while to come out. I had to experiment with different amplifiers, different toys. In my head I had that sound, like a violin, steel guitar and harmonica sounds, that gave me the idea of the sustain and I kept working on it until I could emulate those sounds with my equipment.

Your 1971 LP, Baby Batter credits Harry Nilsson as "Wine Consultant and Bearer", and you called your mid-'70s outfit Pure Food And Drug Act. Wild times?

On occasion, on occasion. We had a lot of different magic people that would come by. PF&DA was put together after I'd played with Canned Heat and John Mayall. We would jam all the time. Unfortunately, the "drug" element was Sugarcane Harris. There was no one on the planet who could play better violin on rock and blues but he was a total heroin addict. Dealing with him, and the drug thing, was a real nightmare. We lost a couple of giant record deals because of that.

Is it around this time that you developed your famous finger-tapping technique of playing?

I picked it up from Randy Resnick but took it to a whole 'nother Harvey Mandel world. I first did it with the *Shangrenade* record in 1973. Not long after that I was playing at the Whisky and Eddie Van Halen came in, saw me doing this tapping stuff. Next thing he's playing on Michael Jackson's Beat It. I wouldn't say I was annoyed but I wouldn't mind if I got better recognition for doing that first. Unfortunately, Van Halen made all the money.

How did you end up working with The Rolling Stones?

At home one night about three or four in the morning I got a call from Mick Jagger. He said, "We're in Munich, Germany, we want you to come play on a couple of songs. Leave tomorrow." The idea was I'd be a replacement for Mick Taylor, playing the slick guitar. But there was a whole argument in the studio. Keith wanted Ron Wood because he wanted to keep it all English. Mick was leaning towards me because he wasn't looking for another guitar player on-stage, leaping around doing crazy stuff. Unfortunately, I lost out. I played on Hot Stuff and Memory Motel from Black And Blue.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

Well, when I got the call to do Black And Blue I was taken to the fancy hotel, getting ready to sleep, and, all of a sudden, tap-tap-tap on my door, there's Mick Jagger in his bathrobe. For a split second I thought, "How far will I go to become a Rolling Stone?" Anyway, that's my funny Rolling Stones story.

Andrew Male

LAST NIGHTA RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

MARK EITZEL

The American Music Club principal was led to The Modern Lovers' 1976 LP by haunting song Hospital...

was in the south of England in Beaulieu, in a bar called Spats, drinking with my friend, as we did, every day. I was 15, 16. I really liked Joan Armatrading, Joni Mitchell, Sex Pistols, The Stranglers, Slaughter And The Dogs and X-Ray Spex. I was writing terrible songs, and refusing to wear punk rock clothing, because I thought, "Fuck these people."

The Modern Lovers song Hospital came on the radio. It was a complete revelation. I think I almost cried. It was such an emotional, real song. "So when you get out of the hospital/ Let me back into your life..." It's almost like he's pretending to be a teenager while he plays this teenage angst music. That's the genius of it. That was all I wanted to write about. As a kid I was completely isolated and hated and reviled - I think my high school years were the loneliest. And Jonathan Richman was so, like, telling the truth, in a way that was attainable to me, like, I could reach that height. Mind you, I never have.

It's a young people's song and the whole album is for young people.

Strong medicine: Eitzel (below) reflects on the health-giving properties of The Modern Lovers.



"HE SAID,
"HERE'S
YOUR ALBUM
BACK, IT
REALLY
SUCKS."

There's a genius behind his way of being dumb. He's never dumb. He's absolutely deliberate. It's the sign of a great songwriter that he's not the song. So it's such a gormless sort of genuine album, you're never really sure whether he meant it or not. Just the assumption on that record, too - "I saw you with Hippy Johnny, he's stoned" on I'm Straight - that was me, as a kid. Like, everywhere I went it seemed like everyone in the room was cooler than life, and Jonathan Richman was not. He was actually engaged. The truth of songwriting is, it's not about being clever, it's about having your heart always exposed.

When American Music Club opened for him [1988], we gave him a copy of [LP] California and the next day he said, "You know, you shouldn't be playing with me, I don't like your music, here's your album back, it really sucks, there's no melodies, there's no songs, I think it's just shit." Yeah! Ha ha! I honestly didn't mind – it's Jonathan Richman.

I've met him a few times since. Last time I told him this story about Hospital, and how it's probably the song that made me start writing. A year later I was in a crowd watching him and he sang it. I wept. I was a complete mess. He's a fucking genius.

Mark Eitzel's Hey Mr Ferryman is out on Decor. He tours the UK in March.



WHAT GOES ON!





Soul legends Solomon Burke and Ben E. King on the start and end of a dream.

Solomon Burke: "The [original, 1967] Soul Clan was more than a bit of business. It was a direct request to become entrepreneurs of the future. Our plan was to build houses, have scholarships for underprivileged children, to leave something in every city that we played, even if it was no more than food for the poor. What do you need to do that? You need seed money. We got that. Joe Tex, Ben E. King, Otis Redding, Don Covay – hits right and left. [But when we] put the record out, it got played two or three months, then it disappeared. No stores had the record."

[On July 24 1981, The Soul Clan partially reformed with Ben E. King, Wilson Pickett, Solomon Burke, Joe Tex and Don Covay at the Savoy Theater in Manhattan].

Wilson Pickett: (speaking at a press conference reported in The New York Times) "Our whole aim is to prove to the music world that this kind of thing works, that five guys like us can stick together and be loyal and mean business. And we hope the rebirth of The Soul Clan will open the doors for rhythm and blues again. R&B was cast aside during the disco age, cast aside by radio programme directors and record companies. We were thrown to the dogs! But you can't cry. The thing to do is to team up."

Ben E. King: "Yeah, that night was... um... that was different. We had too many drinks, and we had too many discussions. Oh God, we had rehearsals, and money spent. And this one was complaining... the typical thing would happen, again. The thing that I loved about it though was again we had no managers, no agents, no nothing involved, but when we put the fact out that we were going to do this concert everyone that could get into the theatre was there [Mick Jagger was among the celebrities who attended]. The media was out there for us. We did a press day and it was crazy. It did grow but we didn't have someone's input – again – to make sure we was saying and doing and acting the right way. Because once you get in front of a camera the public makes a decision on whether they're going to see you or like you at that moment.

The show was completely discombobulated, it was all over the place [each singer did a short hits spot, with a ragged mob-handed jam to finish, sans their best known song, Soul Meeting]. The music to me was great, but all the behind the curtains stuff was crazy. And Wilson got crazy... Joe Tex was out there doing Skinny Legs, and he had girls with skimpy outfits on, and Wilson literally walked out on-stage with his robe on and pulled one of the girls off.

Gathering of the Clan: soul

Joe Tex, Don Covay, Wilson

Pickett take it live; (insets)

Soul Meeting single and the Clan go international.

SOUL CLAN

UNION CON SOUL

Pickett, Solomon Burke: (bot

tom, from left) Covay, Tex and

brothers on-stage at the Savoy, New York City, July 24, 1981 (from left) Ben E. King,

And she was raving and yelling, "Don't be touching me, I'm going to call my husband, and he's going to come and punch you out." I am sober 'cos I don't drink well, my daughter's with me, Solomon's a reverend, and we're thinking, How do we handle Wil? She's threatening him and her husband's a young pup and he's going to come down and punch Wilson in the mouth. All the audience thought it was a joke.

I think Don had had so much to drink that he fell over backwards into the drum set. And we couldn't laugh that one off, because you could see from the audience, this thing is going downhill. (Laughs) I had more fun that one night than I ever had in my life. It was like watching the Three Stooges. You didn't know what the hell was going

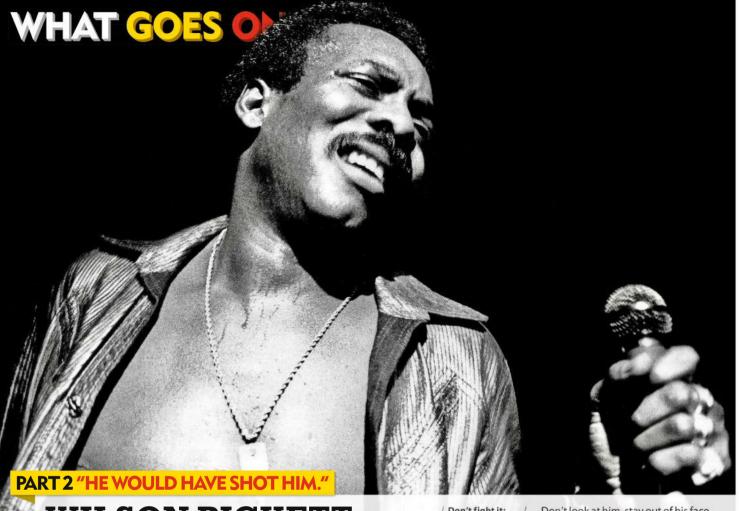
on. Not taking away from our talent, but we partied too soon for the party. Know what I mean?

The whole thing was comic. It was us for real. We just didn't have anyone to hold our hands and keep us out of trouble. It was four or five guys being... I think we were more or less overwhelmed with the success of what we had achieved that day, with the crowds that were there, the entertainers that had come to see us. It was bigger than we could have dreamed of."

Solomon Burke interview courtesy of Geoff Brown; Ben E. King interview: Tony Fletcher

TURN OVER! FOR MIND GAMES, ALL-ROUND PARANOIA





WILSON PICKETT EXPLODES IN EUROPE, 1982

Pickett's tourmates recall guns, vodka, cocaine and ambushes from above.

JOHN ABBEY (tour manager): "We did a European tour with Wilson with Sam Moore, Carla Thomas and Eddie Floyd. Went on for about four weeks. Whenever Pickett was normal, it was fine. Once he mixed the vodka and the cocaine, that's when the crazy shit started.

In all fairness to him, until Paris, it never really affected the actual shows, because he was so used to working under those conditions. Once we were staying in a motel-like hotel, and Sam, Joyce [McRae, then Moore's manager and fiancée] and her daughter were walking to their room to check in. Somehow or other Pickett had gone into the ceiling, and when Sam came by he jumped out of the ceiling onto him. It was just unbelievable.

Another time [in Italy] Pickett and his valet had his personal manager over a balcony hanging there until he would admit cheating or stealing Pickett out of money."

Joyce McRae-Moore: "When we went to Portugal, Sam had an incredible show, and Pickett was knocked and he was looking for us, 'cos he wanted to fuck Sam up. He was running through the halls, pounding on people's doors, 'I will find you motherfucker Sam Moore, you aren't going to hide from me.' We're scared shitless. I call downstairs, they send a Portuguese policeman to sit at the vestibule of our hotel room, with a pistol pointed at the door, all night, so that if Pickett broke down the door he would have shot him."

Sam Moore: "On-stage, Pickett could bring it. He could really bring it. He could just stand there and just squall all night with those songs. Off the stage, I'm personally trying to stay away from him as much as I could. I know a lot of people said they'd sooner not do a show with Pickett 'cos of how he could get inside your head and intimidate you from doing a good performance."

Marc Ribot
(Pickett tour
guitarist): "I
didn't even
meet Wilson
Pickett until we
were on the bus
on the way out to the
airport. Crusher
[Green, drums] was
coaching me and
said, 'Don't think
you're going to be

Wilson's buddy.

Don't fight it: soul great Wilson Pickett has the key, France, 1982; (below) Eddie Floyd and Carla Thomas.

"THIS IS A

FORMULA

FOR

STARTING

A RIOT."

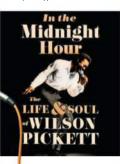
Don't look at him, stay out of his face, don't have anything to do with him.'

I'll be frank: the cat was kind of a gangster. Both in his image and the

it was a great vibe. But you never knew: you could play a great night and Wilson would be in a 'bad mood' and he'd dress the band down like a drill sergeant. He was accompanied by a bodyguard, who was reported to be armed. Plus, he had your pay.

He decided to end the tour in Paris. There was this new club that had opened on the Champs-Élysées. The show was two hours late, it was packed to the rafters. Wilson delayed. People were getting heavy. Finally Wilson came on, did one tune and split. Walked out the back door, got in a car and drove away. This is a formula for starting a riot – and it worked. I had the forethought to grab my pedals and guitar and we hid in the basement while people tore the club apart. But the music was astounding. When it was cooking, it rocked like crazy and I can't imagine anything better."

Interviews from Tony Fletcher's In The Midnight Hour: The Life & Soul of Wilson Pickett (OUP), available now.



ııcpıx.com, Getty Images (2)



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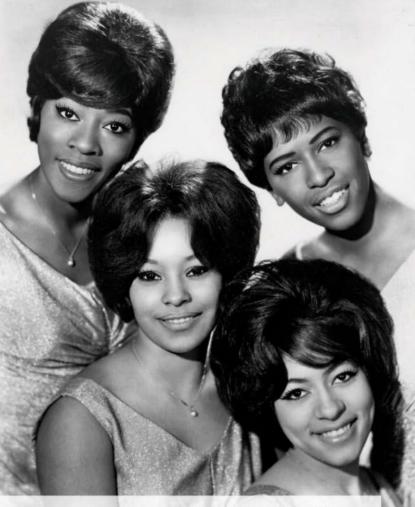












MARCH 1963 ... THE MONTH

OF HARMONY HITS

THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

MARCH 2 It was the month when vocal harmonies filled the US airwayes.

TIMEMACHINE

The first Number 1 of March was The 4 Seasons' Walk Like A Man. Next up, on March 23, was Ruby And The Romantics' Our Day Will Come, while the month's tally of chart-topping harmony hits concluded on March 30 when The Chiffons' He's So Fine began its four-week reign at the top of the Billboard charts.

All revelled in high harmonies, a certain pep and a feel for matters of the heart – and all three had a tale to tell. Walk Like A Man provided The 4 Seasons with the accolade of being the first group in the history of the all-important Hot 100 to notch three consecutive Number 1 singles. Our Day Will Come came from a session that marked the first time lead singer Ruby Nash had ever entered a

recording studio. And He's So Fine would stake a second, belated, claim to fame when, in 1976, a judge decided that George Harrison had subconsciously cloned My Sweet Lord from The Chiffons' 1963 hit.

Walk Like A Man, penned by the song-making machine that was Bob Crewe (with Bob Gaudio), proved literally hot right from the very beginning. According to session guitarist Vinnie Bell, Crewe, who also produced the single, locked the studio door while it was being recorded, unaware that a fire had started somewhere in the building. After a couple of takes, smoke began to filter through but Crewe refused to abandon the session and continued on his search for the perfect take until fire-fighters smashed the door down and dashed into the studio on an urgent rescue

Polyphonic sprees: (clockwise from above) The Chiffons; He's So Fine writer Ronnie Mack with his mum Louise; three big hits; Ruby And The Romantics; The 4 Seasons.

"FOR RONNIE MACK, IT WAS THE LAST THROW OF THE DICE."

mission, flattening Crewe in the process.

Like The 4 Seasons, the Romantics, from Akron, Ohio, started out as a male quartet. Originally known as The Supremes, they got together in high school but after graduation headed for New York to try their luck with various small labels. Returning to Akron, they met up with Ruby Nash, a singer in the city's clubs. The Supremes' bass singer, Leroy Fann, suggested Nash might provide them with a new image and, more importantly, a commercial sound.

Kapp Records thought the group had something to offer but Allen Stanton, the label's A&R man, doubtless aware that something was happening over at Detroit's Motown hideout, insisted: "First you gotta come up with a new name."

It was Stanton himself who dubbed them Ruby And The Romantics. They hated the idea but went along with Stanton's suggestion. After all, Kapp

was a company with an impressive roster, one that included hitmakers such as Jack Jones, Roger Williams and Julius La Rosa. There was an audition at which, Ruby Nash claims, "Everyone in the group sang everything we knew." It lasted six hours. But Stanton liked what he heard and did the deal. Meanwhile,





songwriters Bob Hilliard and Mort Garson had penned Our Day Will Come, which sounded a cert hit.

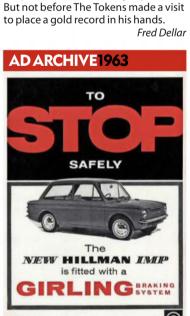
"Let us do that song," pleaded Ruby. But there was a snag - Hilliard and Garson didn't want their latest creation to be recorded by nobodies. However, a deal was hammered out: if Ruby And The Romantics' version, which would be their debut single. flopped, the song would be offered to Jack Jones.

But it didn't flop. Instead, hauled along on the back of some roller-rink organ, Our Day Will Come headed to the top of the charts, albeit for one week only. Years later, someone from that time would remember it: in 1975, a solo Frankie Valli, late of The 4 Seasons, the group the Romantics once toppled from the heights, recorded Our Day Will Come and took it to Number 11 in the US Hot 100.

The story of He's So Fine got underway when writer Ronnie Mack took the song into the office of a production company run by doo wop group-turned-production team The Tokens. They were smitten and asked Mack if he had a group to record it. Mack promptly hurtled back to the Bronx to alert The Chiffons, a former high school quartet.

Eventually they were hauled into a studio to deliver He's So Fine, in all its "doo-lang, doo-lang, doo-lang" glory. At which point The Tokens, who also played all the instruments on the recording, became the first vocal group to produce a Number 1 record for another group.

But it was Ronnie Mack's last throw of the dice. Shortly after He's So Fine clambered to the top, the songwriter, who had Hodgkin's disease, collapsed in the street and was taken to a nearby hospital where he died, aged just 23.



Imps were fast. See Norman Wisdom, dressed as a nurse, crash one into a giant

thermometer in 1963's A Stitch In Time.





LIMBO LAND 2 Chubby Checker (above) hosts The Limbo Party at San Francisco's Cow Palace. Among others on the bill are Marvin Gave Lou Christie and The 4 Seasons

CATCH DC5 IF YOU CAN

2 Three hundred girls march on Tottenham Town Hall to demand The Dave Clark Five resume their residency at the local Royal Ballroom instead of being switched to a Basildon venue by the Mecca Leisure Group.

MANCINI IN THE MOVIES

5 Henry Mancini arrives in London for a two-month stay. He's writing the score for Charade, a film starring Cary Grant.

TOPS ONE

8 The Four Tops sign to Berry Gordy's Motown label for a \$400 advance.

FAB FROLIC

9 At the Granada, East Ham, The Beatles start a tour supporting Tommy Roe and Chris LP. Please Please Me. follows on March 22

MANN IIP

11 Manfred Mann, headed by the eponymous South African keyboardist. make their first major public appearance at London's Marquee Club

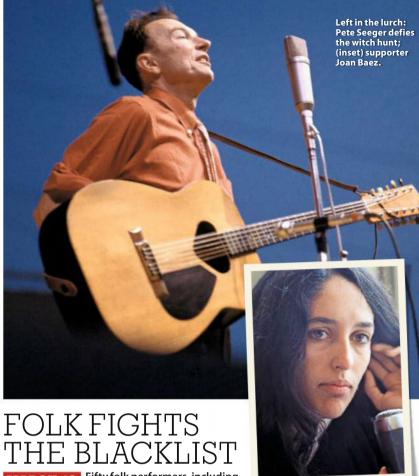
LEE FREAK!

11 Brenda Lee's month-long UK tour begins at Cardiff's Capitol. Sounds Incorporated, Mike Berry & The Outlaws and **Tony Sheridan** support.

ACAPULCO SOLD

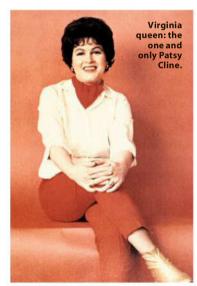
12 Principal photography on Elvis Presley's film Fun In Acapulco ends; manager Colonel Tom Parker throws a party for cast and crew

29 Otis Redding chart debut with These Arms Of Mine



MARCH 19 Fifty folk performers, including Dave Van Ronk, Judy Collins, Ed

McCurdy and Tommy Makem meet in Greenwich Village to protest about Pete Seeger and The Weavers being blacklisted by ABC's Hootenanny TV show. The station's decision follows a contempt of Congress citation by the US Supreme Court, which arose out of Seeger's refusal to answer questions about past Communist affiliations before a Congressional committee. Joan Baez announces that she will definitely not appear on the TV show.



GOODBYE PATSY

MARCH 5 Following a benefit concert in Kansas City, country star Patsy Cline is killed in an air crash near Camden, Tennessee. Hawkshaw Hawkins and Cowboy Copas also perish in the crash. The disaster occurred in the middle of a severe windstorm, which accounts for reports that the plane may have been flying upside down when it crashed.



BILLBOARD 'MIDDLE-ROAD' SINGLES MARCH 2

RHYTHM OF THE RAIN THE CASCADES VALIANT

2 WALK RIGHT IN THE ROOFTOP SINGERS VANGUARD WALK RIGHT IN THE

3 FROM A JACK TO A KING NED MILLER FABOR

WHAT WILL MY MARY 4 SAY JOHNNY MATHIS COLUMBIA

5 SKEETER DAVIS RCA THE END OF THE WORLD

FLY ME TO THE MOON -6 BOSSA NOVA JOE HARNELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA KAPP

7 OUR WINTER LOVE
BILL PURSELL COLUMBIA

8 THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES BOBBY VEE

9 CAST YOUR FATE TO THE WIND VINC GUARALDI TRIO FANTASY

OGREENBACK DOLLAR THE KINGSTON TRIO CAPITOL

> Mary tale romance: Johnny Mathis.





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GET MY LIFE WITH BOWIE: SPIDER FROM MARS BY WOODY WOODMANSEY!

With the confidence of youth, Woody always thought he'd be in a famous band but the 19-year-old rocker from Hull never expected to be thrust into London's burgeoning glam rock scene, and also into a bottle-green velvet suit and girl's shoes.

Playing with Bowie took him on an eye-opening and transformative journey. In Spider From Mars he writes candidly about the characters who surrounded Bowie, recalling the album sessions as well as behind-the-scenes moments with one

of the world's most iconic singers. The result is an insightful, funny, poignant memoir that lovingly evokes a seminal moment in music history and pays tribute to one of the most outstanding and innovative talents of our time.

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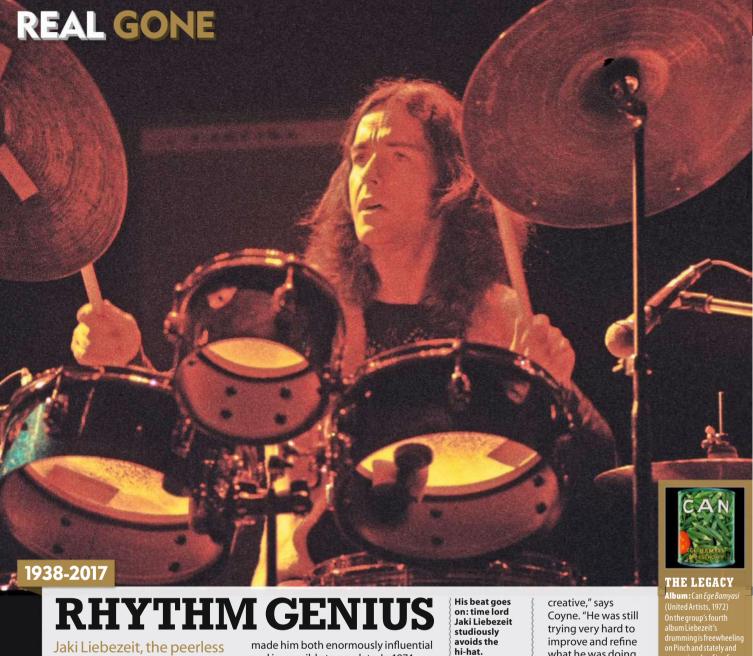
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RHYTHM GENI

Jaki Liebezeit, the peerless drumming superpower of Can, left us on January 22.

7 hen Jaki Liebezeit – whose surname translates as 'Lovetime' - joined Can in Cologne in 1968, he found himself in the company of like-minded musicians who wanted to de-learn what they had been taught and create something entirely new.

Born in Dresden in 1938, Liebezeit was a young devotee of Indian, Turkish and Arabic music, as well as jazz. He was a reluctant free jazz drummer, when he recalled being collared by "some kind of freak" after a gig who told him that he "must play monotonously". That famous exchange may have gained both in translation and the retelling, but it nevertheless represented a moment of epiphany, for after joining Can, Liebezeit began exploring rhythm in the most singular manner.

Whether playing straight 4/4 or more complex compound rhythms, his drumming had both a formidable precision and an elegant 'feel' in the timing and weight of each beat, which provided its hypnotic quality, and

made him both enormously influential and impossible to emulate. In 1974, iournalist Ian McDonald joked that the drummer could "stop clocks at will".

Creating spontaneously with Can, his playing could be flamboyant and expansive, and of the competing elements within that most telepathic of groups his was arguably the most important. He admitted that 1971's mighty Tago Mago was his favourite of their albums, and that he was less keen on later, more technically accomplished works.

After Can's dissolution in 1979, with collaborators including Phantom Band, Jah Wobble's Solaris, Club Off Chaos, Burnt Friedman and Cyclopean, he pared down his drumming style as if in single-minded pursuit of some underlying rhythmic truth. He also stripped down his kit, with the bass drum deemed redundant. Liebezeit described sitting behind it, perched on his drum stool, as too much like "riding a horse".

Singer, guitarist and songwriter Robert Coyne recorded three albums with Liebezeit from 2013. He was surprised that Liebezeit had also ditched the hi-hat. "He'd devised a kit that would oblige him to be more

on: time lord Jaki Liebezeit studiously avoids the

"I'M NOT TRYING TO SHOW OFF, I **JUST WANT** TO MAKE **MUSIC.**"

Coyne. "He was still trying very hard to improve and refine what he was doing. He was particularly disdainful of hi-hats, saying, 'It was invented to play the Charleston! Lam not often playing the Charleston these

days.' He had a very dry wit. He played simple but perfectly conceived and executed parts to everything. After one take, he said to me, 'I'm not trying to show off, or show you how much I can play. I just want to make music."

A man not given to unnecessary talk – in 2012, he described his modus to MOJO simply as "I must obey the rhythm" - Liebezeit had planned to write a book on his theories of rhythm, titled, with typical economy, Drum Rhythm Theory. He continued playing until his death from pneumonia, and had been looking forward to appearing at The Can Project concert at The Barbican in April, with bandmates Irmin Schmidt and Malcolm Mooney. "He was quiet, gentle and thoughtful," says Coyne. "An incredible musician and a wonderful man."

Mike Barnes ៏



worked with everyone from Bowie

Martin poached him to help set up

Air studios. There he manned the

sessions, jumping ship to Wessex

studios in Highbury New Park just

as UK punk flowered in 1976. After

helping to create the classic 'Wessex

rescue Guns N'Roses' mega-selling

Use Your Illusion LPs. An entertain-

ing interviewee, whose estimation

of the damage maverick producer

Guy Stevens caused to Wessex's

piano seemingly increased with

every retelling, he lost his battle

Pat Gilbert

with cancer on December 22.

to Tom Jones, before George

console for Pink Floyd, Harry

Nilsson and Paul McCartney

sound', he became hugely in

demand, and was drafted in to

MAGGIE ROCHE

SIBLING, SINGER, SONGWRITER

BORN 1951

The eldest of three harmonising sisters from Park Ridge, New Jersey, some of Maggie Roche's early public performances were singing at fund-raisers for the Democratic party. With her outgoing siblings Terre and Suzzy, she would later lay the foundation of The Roches with her strong contralto, contributing to a smart, cheering and sometimes caustic body of work that deserved wider recognition. After singing in a duo with Terre – they featured on Paul Simon's 1973 LP There Goes Rhymin' Simon - Maggie would enter the studio with both her sisters for 1979's Robert Fripp-produced folk-pop gem The Roches. Among her tracks on that album were Hammond Song and Quitting Time, compositions of sensitivity, insight and weight that gained in impact amid the group's unserious, swinging live performances and her sisters' more upbeat writing. Maggie would sing on another 10 Roches albums, which included Christmas songs, music for kids and their 2007 farewell Moonswept, and worked with her sisters separately. She died on January 21 after fighting cancer. Suzzy paid tribute to her as "a private person, too sensitive and shy for this world, but brimming with life, love and talent."

Ian Harrison

BILL PRICE

PRINCE OF WESSEX

BORN 1944



An unflappable, urbane presence, Wessex studio engineer Bill Price was the man who gave two of punk's greatest landmarks, Never Mind

The Bollocks and London Calling, their indestructible sonic clarity, but his career stretched way beyond those iconic recordings. Apprenticed to Decca in 1961, he

MIKE KELLIE

PAN-GENERATIONAL NOMAD OF THE DRUMS

BORN 1947

Driven by hard, relentless yet economical drums, The Only Ones' classic Another Girl, Another Planet would not be what it is without its flying rhythmic base. The same applies to Spooky Tooth's Sunshine Help Me, whose funky percussion was sampled on the Kanye West-Jay Z track No Church In The Wild in 2011. The first of these beats was issued in 1978, the second in 1968. The drummer in both bands, bridging the decade between genres, was Birminghamborn Mike Kellie.

Straight-backed and solid, he was all over his kit but without flash. Yet despite playing drums from his early teens, his was a life ducking in and out of music. In 1967, he joined the soul-inclined V.I.P.s, who, under the guidance of producer Guy Stevens, became Art.

After a brief diversion with Hapshash And The Coloured Coat, Kellie was back with Art, now renamed Spooky Tooth. They recorded four albums, including 1969's Pierre Henry collaboration Ceremony: An Electronic Mass, an outlandish collision of blues rock and electronics of which Kellie reflected, "I got castigated for

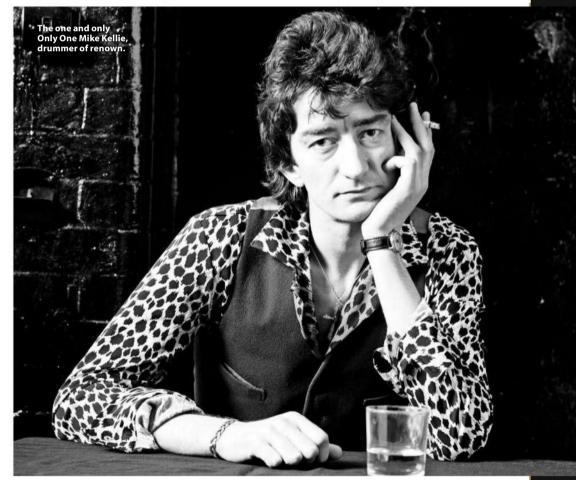
saying it was crap when the album came out."

In 1976 he joined The Only Ones, who recorded three albums and, in 1978, backed the wayward Johnny Thunders as ad hoc band The Living Dead. After The Only Ones' messy, drug-assisted collapse in 1981, Kellie lived in isolation outside Toronto in Canada for four years, and spent the mid-'80s as a hill farmer in Wales and Scotland.

Reunions with Spooky Tooth followed - the last was in 2008 while in 2007, against most expectations, The Only Ones got back together for international touring. Throughout there were abundant session credits, for Jim Capaldi, Joe Cocker, Peter Frampton, Steve Gibbons, Johnny Thunders, Pat Travers, The Who's Tommy soundtrack and even, in 2011, off-beam Manchester punks The Distractions, plus his solo collection Music From... The Hidden in 2012. Kellie might have been a discographer's nightmare, but his path was his own.

His look never changed, and his manner was formal but not unfriendly. In 2007, on being asked to sign the sleeve of the 12-inch version of Another Girl, Another Planet he held it at arm's length, then brought it close to peer quizzically at his photo on the cover. "Ah, this," Kellie said. "Not much has changed then."

Kieron Tyler







ONE OF THE BOYS

Overend Watts, the flamboyant bassist with Mott The Hoople, died on January 22.

tanding nearly seven feet tall in his winged platform boots, Mott The Hoople bassist Overend Watts stalked the planet as 1972's most extreme manifestation of glam rock flash, flaunting tresses sprayed in Rolls-Royce silver car-paint as he wielded his colossal swallow-shaped bass. But he spent his last years as a genially eccentric recluse, living in a Scottish croft or walking Britain's footpaths, only returning to the spotlight when Mott reunited in 2009, despite secretly fighting throat cancer.

Born Peter Overend Watts in 1947 near Birmingham, he grew up in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, where he played in local bands with school friend drummer Terence Dale 'Buffin' Griffin (who passed away last January), local guitarist Mick Ralphs and then organist Verden Allen. Known as Silence by 1969, the band sufficiently impressed Island Records' Guy Stevens to clinch a deal after Ian Hunter passed his singer's audition. Stevens suggested Watts use his middle name and called the band Mott The Hoople before producing their self-titled debut album. As Mott's reputation for riotous live shows predicted glam and punk, Watts epitomised the band's flash image with his proto-platform boots and waterfall of hair.

Electric warrior: Overend Watts in full rock samurai resplendence; (right) with Hoople, Royal Albert Hall.

July 8, 1971.

"HE WAS 1972'S MO EXTREME **MANIFES-**TATION OF GLAM ROCK FLASH...'

March 1972. Watts remembered David Bowie had sent them Suffragette City, which they'd rejected, and he phoned to ask for a job. Told Mott had split, a horrified Bowie played him the embryonic All The Young Dudes on 12-string guitar. The group recorded it and, buoyed by its success, embarked on a glorious stretch of hits including All The Way From Memphis. until Hunter quit in 1974. Watts, Buffin and keyboardist Morgan Fisher carried on as Mott, releasing two

After three further Island albums flopped, Mott split in

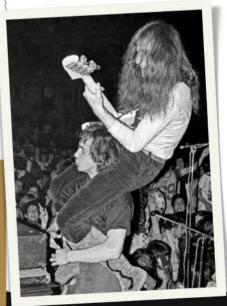
subtly-hewn albums before the band morphed into the British Lions, who broke up in 1982.

After producing bands such as Hanoi Rocks, Watts ran antique shops before retiring from public life. He declined to appear in the Ballad Of Mott The Hoople film or to join Mott collecting their MOJO Honours Hall of Fame award in 2009, but was coaxed from his fishing and walking for a triumphant reunion later that year, and a second reformation in 2013. Despite his illness, Watts commanded the stage with his old affable flamboyance. He underwent severe treatment, but still completed his mission to walk Britain's footpaths, describing his triumph in 2013's The Man Who Hated Walking.

Hunter spoke for many when he sang "Overend's just a rock'n'roll star" in Ballad of Mott The Hoople (March 26, 1972, Zurich). On hearing of Watts' death, he said he was "devastated".

Watts had sent one final heartbreaking e-mail in December from the hospice to Morgan Fisher, who says: "His bravery, honesty, generosity, open heart and still-devastatingly witty humour during his final days utterly blew me away. He left this world as a total hero, a samurai."

Kris Needs



MAGIC ALEX

A FABS GURU **BORN 1942**



Born in Athens. Yanni Alexis Mardas (left) was working as a television repairman when he impressed John Lennon with his

Kinetic Light Sculptures, exhibited at Indica Gallery in 1965. Renamed Magic Alex, the persuasive Mardas would remain in The Beatles' orbit until 1969, accompanying them to India to see the Maharishi and heading the Apple Electronics division. His legend includes such proposed inventions as sonic forcefields, invisibility paint and an "artificial sun", among other wiggy late-'60s ideas, though all went unrealised, and George Harrison was scathing of Mardas's insistence that he could build a 72-track studio in the basement of Apple Corps' HQ on Savile Row. Upon Allen Klein's arrival, Magic Alex would leave The Beatles' employ, having allegedly spent the equivalent of £3million in today's money. He died in Greece of pneumonia on January 13.

Ian Harrison

IOHN WETTON

BASSIST SUPREME

BORN 1949



Born in Derby and raised in Bournemouth, John Wetton's bass prowess can be gauged from those who sought him out: after playing in

Mogul Thrash, he worked with Renaissance and Family, and was recruited for King Crimson's 1972 incarnation. That group ran aground in 1974, after the Larks' Tongues In Aspic, Starless And Bible Black and Red albums, whereupon Wetton toured with Roxy Music and recorded with Uriah Heep. In 1977, Wetton and King Crimson rhythm section partner, drummer Bill Bruford, formed short-lived prog supergroup U.K. After a short liaison with Wishbone Ash, from 1981 Wetton fronted the even more high-powered Asia with members of ELP, Yes and Buggles; their self-titled debut sold in the multimillions. He also recorded solo and with collaborators such as Phil Manzanera, Brian Eno and Steve Hackett, and with the progressive group Qango, before rejoining a reconstituted Asia in 2006. A recovering alcoholic, he assisted others in similar difficulties, and was planning a return to activity less than three weeks before his death from cancer on January 11.

Clive Prior.

THEY ALSOSERVED



DRUMMER BUTCH TRUCKS (above, b.1947) was a founder member of

The Allman Brothers Band, in 1969, combining his powerful percussive drive with the jazzier beats of rhythm partner Jaimoe. Through triumphs like 1971's Live At Fillmore East,

the tragedy of Duane Allman's death, lulls and line-up changes, Trucks endured, the only member to play with the group continuously until their final dissolution in 2014. He then played with Les Brers and his Freight Train

Band. An avid reader with an interest in philosophy and history, he died from a self-inflicted gunshot.

ENIGMATIC CULT musician WILLIAM ONYEA-BOR (b.1946) recorded from 1977 to 1985 in Nigeria, but found wider recognition for his pumping afro-electronic and psychedelic sounds when the Luaka Bop label released the Who Is William Onyeabor? compilation in 2013. The release was followed by tribute group the Atomic Bomb! Band, who have featured David Byrne, Damon Albarn,

Green Gartside and Hot Chip. A born-again

Christian, Onyeabor maintained his enigma and declined to capitalise on his belated fame, though in 2014 he did phone in to Lauren

Laverne's BBC6 show to promise new music.

HARD SWINGING jazz voice and pianist BUDDY GRECO (b.1926) had his

first success with The Three Sharps, and joined Benny Goodman's band in the late '40s. He would go on to record more than 30 albums and become a Vegas lounge entertainer par excellence. A peer of Frank Sinatra and the Rat

Pack, he played the resort from the '50s onwards, his signature tune being an effervescent finger-snapping take on The Lady Is A

Tramp. An Anglophile who played regularly in Britain he had a particular liking for Essex he continued working hard into his late eighties, one of his last appearances taking place at the Hippodrome in London in 2014, Last November, too frail to sing, he was inducted into the Las Vegas Entertainment Hall of Fame, where he told the assembled audience,

DOO-WOP vocalist RONALD 'BINGO' MUNDY (b.c.1940) was a member of bi-racial Pittsburgh group The Marcels, who had a Number 1 hit in Britain and the USA in 1961 with their rock'n'roll version of Rodgers & Hart's Blue

Moon, Mundy left that same year, later becoming a bus driver, but would rejoin his old bandmates to celebrate their biggest hit on several occasions. In 2002 The Marcels were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame.

BACKS records founder JOHNNY APPEL

(b.c.1952) founded the Norwich record shop of the same name in 1979. He moved into the label business in 1982, releasing music by The Farmers Boys, The Higsons and The Bible, among others,

and became part of the independent distribution network The Cartel Though the shop closed in 1991. Backs distribution continued and after merging with fellow traders Shellshock, was renamed Shellback.

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST GEOFF NICHOLLS (b.1948) played, in turn,

quitar, bass and finally keyboards with the interregnum

Black Sabbath from 1979 to 2004. He had previously been a member ofBirmingham heavy rockers Quartz. Before

his death he had been playing with another former Sabbath member.

Tony Martin.in vocalist's

Headless Cross.



GUITARIST and keyboardist **DEKE LEONARD**

"Never quit": **Buddy Greco**,

(b.1944) played with South Wales rockers Man from their formation, a few departures notwithstanding, until 2004. In the interim. Leonard also formed Iceberg and played with Help Yourself, Sean Tyla

Larry Wallis and Walter Egan. Later he appeared on BBC Radio Wales, devised a one-man show of songs and stories, and wrote five books including 1996's yucksome memoir Rhinos, Winos & Lunatics: The Legend Of Man. Most recently he played in the Llanelli area with Sons Of

Man, a band featuring Man alumni and their children.

SINGER PETER SARSTEDT (b.1941) reached Number 1 in the UK in 1969 with unsatisfied rags to riches waltz Where Do You Go To (My

Lovely)?, which won an Ivor Novello award the following year. Though

he had only one more hit sinale Frozen Orange Juice, also 1969 - he continued to record and perform, latterly in oldies packages

In 1997 he recorded a sequel to his

Who was he?: William Onyeabor, enigmatic afro-fusionist.

The Last Of The Breed (Lovely 2). Sarstedt retired from playing live in 2010, and released his final album, Restless Heart, in 2013.

VOCALISTRICHIE INGUI (b.1946) originally played in New York group

The Dedications with co-singers his brother

Charlie and Kenny Jeremiah. After they changed their name to The Soul Survivors and

joined forces with the then-rising Philadelphia production team Gamble & Huff, they scored a Number 4 US hit in 1967 with Expressway To Your

Heart. In the later '70s, Ingui left music to become a painter and decorator, but returned to playing shows with his brother in the late '80s. Hearing of his death, Gamble & Huff released a statement saying, "Richie was a true soul singer who sang from the heart.

ROCKABILLY guitarist and producer TOMMY ALLSUP (b.1931) worked with the likes of Bob Wills,

Roy Orbison and Willie Nelson. He played on **Buddy Holly** songs including Heartbeat and Love's Made A Fool Out Of You, and was part of **The** Crickets touring band. Famously, the Oklahomaborn Allsup lost his seat on the plane that crashed

killing Holly, The Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens on February 3, 1959 in Iowa, when he and Valens tossed a coin for the privilege of taking the flight, and Allsup lost.

Clive Prior



THE MOJO INTERVIEW

Folk prodigy-turned-Bob Whisperer, he watched The Byrds' pirate ship founder, the money melt away and noisier pals hog the tale. But he and his songs endure. "The dead guys get all the attention!" smiles Roger McGuinn.

Interview by BOB MEHR • Portrait by STEVAN NORDSTROM

MONG THE BUSINESSMEN AND GOLF-loving retirees in this upscale suburban Orlando eatery, he cuts a distinctive figure. Tall and lean, dressed in a uniform – jacket, jeans and cowboy boots – of all black, Roger McGuinn introduces himself in a voice that's as airily familiar as the sound of his signature 12-string Rickenbacker guitar.

It's a warm winter afternoon in Central Florida and McGuinn is joined by his wife and business partner Camilla. The McGuinns left Los Angeles and limped into the region some 30 years ago in a state of disarray. His Byrds royalties were sequestered in a byzantine maze of contracts, which Camilla was eventually able to navigate, getting Columbia Records to pay up and put them back on their feet. "It wasn't a lot, but it was enough to keep us from being

homeless," he says. "To the label's credit, they've been very good ever since."

The couple had met in the late '70s, when McGuinn was in the midst of an uncertain post-Byrds solo career and searching, personally and professionally. He would find love (marrying Camilla a few months later) and religion. A spiritual seeker, McGuinn had adopted the Subud religion in the '60s (precipitating his name change from Jim to Roger) and became a born again Christian in 1977, a faith he still maintains.

WE'RE NOTWORTHY

Wilco's **Jeff Tweedy** gets himself uplifted.



"Roger and The Byrds were an elemental discovery for me. As a kid, my favourite 45 was Turn! Turn! Itrn! Its sound was so intoxicating and otherworldly – it's stuck with me my whole

life. All their albums still get played and shared with my kids. And Roger still doing what he loves – that's a great inspiration."

Turning 75 this summer, McGuinn has the relaxed air someone who lives as he pleases. Following a brief Byrds reunion and a major label solo deal with Arista in the early '90s, he's mostly turned his back on the industry, resisting further Byrds projects (somewhat to the chagrin of surviving bandmates David Crosby and Chris Hillman). Instead, the McGuinns run their own label and touring business. Last year, they released a 20th anniversary edition of his Folk Den project — a 100-song exploration that he began in the mid '90s — and McGuinn continues to play solo shows around the world. Meanwhile, thanks in part to his 1966 ditty Mr. Spaceman, he's become a popular figure among the fraternity of veteran astronauts who gather at nearby Cape Canaveral, performing at their annual Hall Of Fame ceremonies. "You think rock and rollers party hard... you should hang with Apollo mission guys," he says.

McGuinn got his first guitar after hearing Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent and rockabilly, but swopped it for

Vincent and rockabilly, but swopped it for a banjo during the folk boom. After a few eventful years on that scene — as well as detours backing Bobby Darin and working in the Brill Building — McGuinn would return to rock. Inspired by The Beatles, he helped found The Byrds and led them for nearly a decade through numerous musical and personnel changes. For the last 25 years he's returned to the folk songs that first fired his teenaged imagination.

"So which is it – am I rocker or

✓ a folkie?" he asks, rhetorically. "I still don't know. I'm just Roger McGuinn."

In the late 1940s your parents, Jim and Dorothy, wrote a bestselling book, a satire of Baby And Child Care, Dr Spock's famed child-rearing manual.

It was called Parents Can't Win and it was based on their experiences trying to raise me using child psychology and how it backfired all the time. It was considered very topical and sold well. After that, we travelled quite a bit – moved from Chicago to Florida, and then lived in New York for a while, then back to Chicago. As a kid that probably broadened my perspective in life. I didn't just grow up on one block.

Was your family musical?

My parents sang show tunes around the house. My mother had studied piano. Her mother composed things in the classical vein and performed at the Art Institute of Chicago sometimes. I didn't pay much attention to music until I heard Heartbreak Hotel. The transistor radio had just come out and I'd ride my bike around Chicago and listen to it. It was the drama of the song - and that really fabulous echo. I asked for a guitar after I heard it and got one. It was a Harmony [acoustic] with a huge action, and I couldn't play it. Then my father got me a Kay 161 electric guitar, like Jimmy Reed had. That's when I learned to play the lead from [Gene Vincent's] Woman Love, which was the flipside of Be-Bop-A-Lula. When I met George Harrison later it turned out he'd learned the same thing at the same time.

But you soon abandoned rock'n'roll in favour of folk music.

I had heard folk music before – Burl Ives and The Weavers – but I wasn't really that interested until Bob Gibson came around. He played five-string banjo and did these story songs that captivated me. After that I went out and bought his records. I learned how to play the banjo on my Kay electric. Took the guitar strings off and tuned it like a banjo. Learned the Earl Scruggs three-fingered picking style. That's the underpinning of all the Byrds stuff – the jingle-jangle arpeggios.

You got your professional start working with The Limeliters while you were still in your teens.

I was already playing coffeehouses in Chicago by then. I'd get 10 bucks a night to play a couple sets. I would emulate Gibson and Pete Seeger. At 17, I got hired by The Limeliters to do a session out in Los Angeles and be the opening act for them at the Ash Grove. I thought I'd be with The Limeliters for a long time, but after the recording they said, "See ya later!" But they'd only given me a one-way ticket.

You also made the passing acquaintance of a young thespian with musical aspirations...

David Crosby. He had been an actor and was hanging around the Ash Grove. I showed him some chords and he taught me to drive. It was a stick shift, an old Chevy convertible from the '50s. I remember getting up to the top of La Cienega, and having to juggle the clutch and the brake and trying not to hit anybody... with David sitting there. That was a trial by fire. We hung out briefly – I stayed with him at his mother's house in Santa Barbara for a bit, then I headed to San Francisco.

From there you ended up playing with The Chad Mitchell Trio, before being snatched up by Bobby Darin.

It was a couple years with The Chad Mitchell Trio, though I was more a sideman. We did some interesting things – played the Bell Telephone Hour television show with Segovia. We did a 90-day tour of South America that was pretty intense, and I got into a fight with Chad and he punched me in the mouth... so I'd about had it. Just then Bobby Darin saw us

opening for Lenny Bruce in LA. He came backstage and said, "I'm thinking about putting a folk segment in my act and I'd like to hire you." I told him I already had a job. He asked what they were paying me. I told him and he said, "I'll double it." So I went with Bobby. I used to ask Bobby a lot of questions about the business. He said, "If you can make it in rock'n'roll you can do anything else." It put a seed in my head for later.

Darin stopped performing for a time due to his health – but he set you up as a songwriter in the Brill Building working for his publishing company.

To show up in a cubicle for eight hours every day wasn't my idea of fun. There'd be a metal folding chair, a piano, and I'd sit with someone like Artie Resnick or Kenny Young trying to write a hit. But from there I got into studio work for Elektra Records, played with the Irish Rovers, Judy Collins, and Paul Simon hired me for the demo of The Sound Of Silence. He wanted a 12-string on it. I was the go-to guy for the acoustic 12-string.

By early 1964, you'd had a Beatles epiphany.

I saw a promo for The Beatles with the screaming girls and went and bought *Meet The Beatles*. I was doing all those songs at coffeehouses and other folk songs with a similar backbeat. I had the idea that you could take any old song, and put that 4/4 beat to it and it would sound good. I got hired by the Troubadour [in LA] to play with Hoyt Axton and was doing the songs that way. The audience reaction was negative. I got mad at them: "What's the matter with you people?" [Country singer] Roger Miller was on the bill too. He said, "It sounds good, but you'd do a lot better if you didn't get so grumpy with the audience." (*Laughs*)

In that audience was one Gene Clark...

Gene came backstage and said, "I get what

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Limelite to spotlight: McGuinn's moves.

- Just plain Jim: 1960, McGuinn in his senior year at the Latin School of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.
- Three plus One: Jim (far right) with The Chad Mitchell Trio in the early '60s. "I got into a fight with Chad and he punched me in the mouth."
- Farther along: McGuinn in 1971 and by now a Roger, on-stage in London.
- The classic 1964-65
 Byrds: (from left)
 Gene Clark, David Crosby,
 McGuinn, Chris Hillman,
 Michael Clarke.
- Escape to the country: 1968 and The Byrds embrace C&W (from left) McGuinn, Kevin Kelley, Gram Parsons, Hillman.
- The Byrds at their Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, 1991, (from left) McGuinn, Crosby, Hillman. "Honestly, I just didn't want to," Roger says of proposed reunion gigs.

- You must be Byrdmaniax: early '70s quartet (from left) Skip Battin, Clarence White, Gene Parsons, McGuinn.
- "Hit the road and play little gigs," Ramblin' Jack Elliott told McGuinn, here together at Madison Square Garden, 2009.
- "It was more like a pirate ship – every man for himself!" Rogers remembers the chemistry of The Byrds.









Seth

you're doing – let's get together and write some songs." I saw him as a rugged John Wayne character; he didn't get fragile until later in life. He had a 12-string acoustic too, liked folk music and The Beatles. So we started constructing these Beatley songs. The first one was You Showed Me. As we were writing it, the guitars started doing this figure-eight thing. We weren't doing it. It was like a divining rod. Something is going on here...

And it was then that David Crosby re-entered your life.

Me and Gene were writing tunes, and Crosby came around. He sang harmony and it sounded good. He said, "I wanna be in your band." I told him, "We don't have a band, we're just writing songs." He said, "If I can be in your band, I know a guy who's got a recording studio we can use for free." I told him: "You're in the band!" (Laughs)

I was a little leery of him, because when we were hanging out in Santa Barbara he was pretty wild. He had the substance abuse problem even back then. I don't know if I want to work with his guy. But when we sang together, it just clicked. Then we got into the studio and that's when we decided we needed more musicians and [bassist] Chris Hillman and [drummer] Michael Clarke came in.

Your Rickenbacker sound was something of an accident wasn't it?

The engineers at Columbia had no experience working with rock'n'roll bands. They were worried we'd blow out all their equipment. So they added a lot of compression to temper it, to keep from pinning the needles. It did dramatically change the sound of the Ric, made it sustain longer. It gave it an airy quality, almost like a wind instrument. Later on, when Rickenbacker made a signature

model for me, I had them put a compressor into it, so I always got that sound.

You cut Mr. Tambourine Man – your first serious Dylan cover, but you'd actually known him for a while before that.

Yeah, I'd run into Dylan in the Village at Gerde's Folk City, when he was just playing hootenannies. Then he got the deal with Columbia. I was happy for him... but I was kind of surprised. The thing about Dylan, though, was the girls in the audience always liked him. That was unusual for folk singers. I mean,

"Crosby taught me to drive. It was an old Chevy convertible from the '50s. That was a trial by fire."

Cisco Houston or someone like that was kind of neutral for the girls.

He came by the studio and I remember we were playing something of his and when it was over he said, "What was that?" I said, "It's one of your songs, man." He didn't recognise it.

The Byrds would soon become a fairly fractious group. But early on, did it feel like a tight ship? Were you pulling in the same direction?

It was more like a pirate ship – every man for himself (*laughs*). At least compared to The Beatles, who were all for one and one for all and stood up for each other. After Mr. Tambourine Man the game of getting more

of your songs on the record got to be intense. [Byrds producer] Terry Melcher and I were kind of friendly. David Crosby didn't like Terry, and Terry didn't like David. So he didn't get many songs on the record, and that was a big dividing.

Most bands have a natural leader. Is it fair to say you assumed that role in The Byrds?

I wasn't that great or dynamic a leader. "Come on boys – we're gonna do this!" It was never like that. The way I got the part was when we recorded with the Wrecking Crew, cutting the

band track for Mr. Tambourine Man, I looked at the amounts of money that people were getting and this guy named Roger Webster, the 'session leader', got twice as much as I did. So I said, "From now on I'm gonna be the leader." And that's how I got to be the leader. I wanted that money, the double pay.

The relative stability of The Byrds ended in 1966, when Gene Clark left the band after suffering a panic attack aboard a flight.

We thought we could soldier on just the four of us. But the truth was the gigs weren't the same without him, because Gene was a chick magnet. Girls used to go wild and that wasn't happening without him.

I didn't know this until many years later, until [co-manager] Jim Dickson was ill and I visited him in the hospital – he probably thought he was going to die, though he didn't. But he told me a story of him and [co-manager] Eddie Tickner taking Gene aside with the idea of going solo, making him into another Elvis or something. So maybe there was more to it than fear of flying.

The following year's Monterey Pop Festival was a triumphant breakout moment for a number of acts, but not The Byrds.













"When Elvis died, he was only seven years older than I was. I thought, Man, I better straighten out."

✓ I enjoyed the show, loved seeing Jimi Hendrix and Otis Redding and all that stuff. But as far as The Byrds, it was not happening. It was a little nightmarish actually. It was already falling apart at the seams.

Soon after Michael Clarke quit and then you fired David Crosby.

Chris [Hillman] was the catalyst with Crosby. David was being insufferable going, "You guys aren't good enough musicians to play with me." And Chris said, "We gotta get rid of him." We went up to his house and said, "Sorry David, we just don't want to work with you." He said, "Aw man, but we make such great music together." David thinks I said, "We can do better without you" – I didn't say that. I said, "We can still make good music without you." But, in fact, we did miss him. It was a mistake. But he wasn't happy and Stephen Stills was trying to get him away from us because he saw what a tremendous harmony talent he was.

Sweetheart Of The Rodeo and the arrival of Gram Parsons in 1968 was a reboot for The

Byrds, one that led to a long period of country-rock with a series of line-ups.

I had messed around with country music, stuff like Chris's Girl With No Name, and even Mr. Spaceman was country-oriented, 2/4 time. When Gram came in he was flat-out in love with country music. I liked it, but he loved it. And his love of it was infectious. So I started to listen to country radio and went out and bought a Nudie suit and cowboy boots. Chris and Gram were really united in the country thing, too. I liked it up to the point where Gram wanted to hire a steel guitar player in the band and get rid of me (laughs).

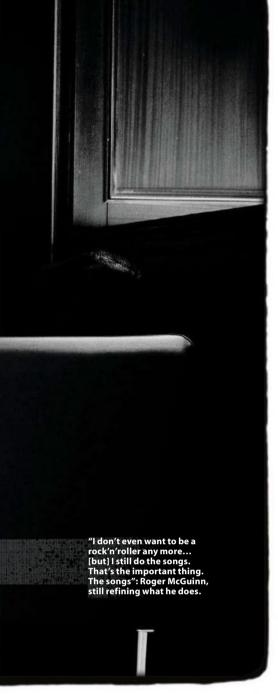
A romantic cult built up around Gram, and Gene Clark to a lesser extent, in part due to their tragic early deaths.

Chris always complains about that: "These dead guys get all the attention!" I thought Gram had a good amount of talent, but he wasn't diligent about it. He wouldn't show up to gigs, 'cos he didn't have to. He was independently wealthy and didn't need to

make money with music. I remember he was hanging out with Rolling Stones and Jagger said, "You got a gig man." And Gram's like, "Eh, I'm not gonna bother with that."

You recorded the title song to the Easy Rider movie. Dylan started it with a few lines he scribbled on a napkin and handed to the film's co-star Peter Fonda, with instructions to pass it along to you.

He gave the napkin to Fonda who gave it to me – it was like the Holy Grail. Really, Dylan just didn't want to be involved with the movie. He thought it was gonna be a lousy B-movie, biker flick. He didn't know it was going to be an iconic film. A couple weeks after it came out he called me at two in the morning – he was mad he'd been credited on the song. "What's with this credit? I don't need the money. Take it off!" It was nice of him. After I took Dylan's credit off, the thing generated like \$500,000, but Columbia didn't pay me that because I was still one-fifth of the old Byrds contract. So they kept \$400,000 of it.



In a way, you're a big part of the film, because Peter Fonda was sort of playing you.

That's what Peter told me. He told me that he was doing me and Dennis Hopper was doing [Crosby]. When I first saw the film I didn't get that, because Peter was kind of a quiet, cool character anyway. I once told Peter, "I wish I'd been in the movie." He said, "Well, you were."

During that era, everyone was exploring drugs and alternative spirituality – but you'd got into Subud and dropped acid in the early '60s.

I wasn't very spiritual. I'd gone through Catholic schools and kinda threw it all away – threw the baby out with the bathwater. But I started going to these Subud meetings in New York and gradually felt something happening. It was an interesting way to get spiritual. It was non-verbal, there wasn't any doctrine. It was going into a room and speaking in tongues and whirling like a dervish. It was automatic stuff and there was music in it, natural harmonies.

My drug experience came when I had some time off from working with Bobby Darin in '62. I'd just gotten married and rented a house in San Francisco in the Mission District. It was kind of a commune and we got some Sandoz labs acid in sugar cubes wrapped in aluminum foil. It was the real stuff. It was amazing.

I smoked pot, but wasn't into downers. I was

always into pills, amphetamines. And eventually cocaine. There was a time when I wanted to make enough money to get all the cocaine I wanted. That was an ambition for a while. But I finally quit it.

You worked with Terry Melcher, before and after his involvement with Charles Manson. Was he dramatically altered by the experience?

Oh yeah, he was beside himself, he was terrified. I took him on the road at the time to kinda cool him out. He was totally devastated by that. I think he thought it was his fault – that he had promised Manson something and somehow caused everything.

He came back to produce those later Byrds records, including [1971's] Byrdmaniax. Then we did Farther Along which was a kneejerk reaction to Terry's over-production of the previous album with all the strings and things.

WING CO.McGUINN

Three landmark albums, with and without feathers, by **Bob Mehr**.

THE FOLK ROCK VISION

The Byrds

Turn! Turn! Turn!

(COLUMBIA, 1965)



The defining statement of The Byrds' original line-up, the title track to their second LP – a Rickenbacker reworking of the Biblical Pete Seeger number – represents the

apotheosis of McGuinn's seen-through-granny-glasses vision of folk rock. The album also features some of Gene Clark's most vulnerable love songs (The World Turns All Around Her; If You're Gone) and exquisite singing by David Crosby. Arguably, only The Beatles possessed a fuller array of talents.

THE COUNTRY COMEBACK

The Byrds

Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde



The first offering from the McGuinn-led 'new' Byrds – featuring flash Telecaster genius Clarence White and multi-instrumentalist Gene Parsons – the album title hints

at its dual personality. Slotting psych-flecked songs (Bad Night At The Whiskey; Child Of The Universe) alongside country-rock reveries (Old Blue; Drug Store Truck Drivin' Man) and the habitual Dylan covers, the album marks the group's transition from pop phenoms to roots explorers.

THE CURATORIAL FEAT

Roger McGuinn

The Folk Den Project — Twentieth Anniversary Edition (APRIL FIRST PRODUCTIONS, 2016)



Looking back and forward at once, during the mid-'90s' infancy of the internet the ever tech-savvy McGuinn became a digital Harry Smith, beginning an odyssey

through the history of folk music, recording and uploading a new song (along with lyrics, tabs and notes) onto his website every month. This four-disc, 100-song set collects those efforts – with McGuinn unearthing centuries' worth of material, from murder ballads to sea shanties.

We decided to produce ourselves in London and that was not a good idea. We didn't have a gatekeeper. At that point, that version of the band had run its course.

Which led you into a reunion of the original Byrds in '73.

David Crosby came out to my house with [manager] Elliot Roberts and said, "You know, some of this stuff you guys have been doing is OK, but some of it isn't" – and I had to agree with him. He said, "Let's get the original guys together and we'll make an album." It sounded like a good idea. I put the other version of The Byrds away and did the reunion. It turned out it was not what people hoped it would be. Partly, it was David's revenge for being fired – he was the producer and he put the Rickenbacker way in the back. It wasn't really like The Byrds.

Other than getting back together briefly for legal reasons in 1989 and for your Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction in 1991, you don't seem to have been much tempted to do anything else as The Byrds.

Honestly, I just didn't want to. Gene Clark and Michael Clarke had been in a bogus Byrds for a while – they even had Rick Danko and other people in it. I thought, "I don't want to do that kind of thing." I don't even want to be a rock'n'roller any more. When I play now, I still do the songs – that's the important thing. The songs hold up.

Do you still talk to the others?

I'm internet buddies with Crosby, we talk on Twitter. Chris doesn't do Twitter, but he did send me a video for my birthday on Facebook. He did Dave Brubeck's Take Five. This is a guy who didn't like jazz, but he learned Take Five on mandolin and sent it to me as a kind of present. The three of us are still friendly.

In the late '70s you cleaned up and also found religion, becoming a born again Christian. What prompted those changes?

When Elvis died, that was the catalyst. I was doing speed and the same kind of drugs he was. He was only seven years older than I was, and I thought, "Man, I better straighten out." At the time, I was experiencing a physical depression. I was feeling this heaviness that was so overwhelming. I ran into this jazz guy, this piano player, and he said, "That sounds like spiritual oppression to me. Do you believe in the power of prayer?" He took my hands and he prayed: "Lord Jesus come into this man's life in your own time." That was it - and nothing happened. Couple weeks later I started to get this really heavy thing again. I thought, "How can I keep from feeling this?" I didn't hear an audible voice, but I thought, "Well, you could accept Jesus." And I did, and bam, that negative feeling just went away.

Since your last major label album – 1991's star-studded *Back From Rio* – you've operated as a family business. Are you happier doing it this way?

Absolutely. Ramblin' Jack Elliott once told me, "Rog, the best fun I ever had was when I packed the Land Rover and me and [wife] Polly hit the road and played these little gigs." I thought, "Man, that would be a great life." So that's what we've been doing. We keep refining the show, refining what we do.

You seem to be in good health and great voice still – safe to say you'll continue to refine it rather than retire?

Well, my mother lived to be 102 years old. Segovia was performing into his nineties, so was Ravi Shankar and Pete Seeger. So it's conceivable. (Holds his hands up) As long as these still work, it's conceivable.









The soul of New York, and its Puerto Rican immigrants, has inspired HFTRR'S latest sound, a rich and game-changing *guisado* of New York and Nuyorican, from pop, doo wop and new wave to Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena*, supporting a concept album about ancestry, identity and change, all lent cinematic breadth by Bees man and Michael Kiwanuka producer Paul Butler. "Before, I'd thought, This is good enough, that's what it sounds

like, I can play it live," says Segarra. "Before, I was experimenting with songwriting," she concludes. "This record is me being who I am."

O, WHO IS ALYNDA SEGARRA? TWENTY-seven years old, dark-haired, dark-eyed, skinny and well-read, she answers every single question MOJO throws at her while also devouring her food. She

Her family are from Kingsbridge in the northern-most reaches of the Bronx, a rich mix of working-class Dominicans, Irish, Jews and Puerto Ricans. Her parents split when she was two, and with her mother a workaholic politician and her music-teacher dad taking sole care of her brother, she went to live with her aunt. But when visiting her father, she'd sing as he played piano. "I loved '50s Broadway musicals," she says, "and my goal in life was to sing like Judy Garland, but I was obsessed too with Jerry Lewis, the Rat Pack, I Love Lucy. My parents thought I was the weirdest kid!"

Reading the Beats, she learnt about their jumping trains, and though none of the Beats were tiny 17-year-old girls, she took her chance after meeting a bunch of freight-hopping kids, and didn't look back. "I knew I wasn't good at school, and that I had something to offer but didn't know what. I just needed to figure out how to hack the system because I couldn't play by the rules."

She was caught freight-hopping in Asheville,



Alynda navigates in the studio: (above) with New Jersey doo wop king Joel Katz (front left) and pals; (bottom) tattoo'd.

> North Carolina. She could have served a month, but after two days in jail, friends raised her bail. "It was terrifying," she confesses. "Other times, my intuition said, Leave right now! You're on edge most of the time, and you don't sleep much. But at that age, you feel invincible, and I believed in guardian angels, humanity. And I had this patriotic streak, that this is what America's real history was, out on the road."

> A friend's suggestion in 2004 that she visit him in New Orleans provided the next essential intervention; the Crescent City was home until 2014. "New Orleans was similar to New York in that people won't give up on what makes it, and its history is so heavy, and deep. I found people there were very open, but I had to prove myself, which I appreciated, because I like that toughness. It began to feel like family, like home.'

> Segarra arrived the year before Hurricane Katrina, but was in Montreal when it hit, busking with her street crew, the Dead Man Street Orchestra. They encouraged Segarra to sing after she'd gone quiet during her "shyer and insecure" teen years. The songs started coming too: witness her knuckle tattoos that spell out 'SONG BIRD', bought by a friend for her 19th birthday: "I needed some kind of commitment to the idea that music was my path," she says.

Still, fidelity was probably too much of a thing in her early music.

"The first records were influenced by New Orleans – minor key, cabaret and circus-y," she says. "But I felt limited and unfulfilled by that – I wanted to write a really good, catchy song, with different influences. I started listening to Townes Van Zandt, and finally The Beatles, Dylan and The Band, because I didn't want to get to stuck in country music either."

Yet she moved to Nashville in 2014. "My living situation in New Orleans had gotten weird and I was on tour so much, I felt like an

outsider for the first time. But I didn't belong in Nashville. The country nights felt different, the crowd weren't like weirdos!" It was too...? "White? Yeah. But it was good to be lonely there, to face myself, and realise I'm not a southern person, I'm a city girl, a Puerto Rican kid."

Segarra investigated her Puerto Rican DNA, fastidiously researching records, books and documentaries. She also discovered Ziggy Stardust - "I was so late to the game! But I was struck by the idea of a concept, which freed me up in terms of writing about my past, my story."

HE NAVIGATOR IS SET IN AN imagined "Gotham City", Segarra claims, where her 'Ziggy' is Navita Milagros Negrón, "a street kid, always out." The album title denotes "the idea of who's driving us. Is it your intuition, God, your guardian angel? It means even more now – is anyone driving the train in this country?"

Segarra describes the narrative as "a play, in two acts" and begins a 20-minute exposition. She agrees to a more succinct version, as if pitching a screenplay. "Act One, Navi's with her people, but she feels suffocated by the oppression of the city, so she asks to be put under a spell, to wake up and not recognise anything - which is like me running away from New York. She sleeps for 40 years, and wakes to find her city has been so gentrified. She doesn't recognise anything, which is an extreme version of me returning to New York. Act Two, she tries to find her people in this dystopian Trump Land, and realises her role is to remind them of their past, their accomplishments, their pride, their poetry and music, and pa'lante, which means 'forward', don't give up. But I don't have this big ending. I don't know, and Navi doesn't, how to fix these problems. I don't even know if she survives."

Leftovers secured in a doggie bag, MOJO and Segarra leave Casa Adela's, and head for Electric Lady studios on New York's West Side, where The Navigator was part-recorded. Under a framed poster of Patti Smith – who made Horses here - Segarra talks of her own survival instincts. "I'm living back in New Orleans now," she says. "I'm so relieved, especially in the midst of all this political hardness, it feels like people aren't brainwashed there."

But wherever her rambles take her, Segarra

will be guided by a renewed sense of mission. "My only goal in life now is to put out something positive," she says, "art that makes people more loving to one another. That's all I hope to do."

heartstrings, I think partly because he was raised by his aunt too, but also his vulnerability, being so open about being imperfect, and trying so hard to be an idealist, and to make his music mean something, for world peace, beyond him. He's one of my saints. Ghetto Brothers "They were a Bronx street gang in the '70s that became a political organisation when their leader Benjy Melendez recognised that Puerto Ricans were killing each other, and needed to bind together instead. They also became a band, and they clearly loved The Beatles too, but their harmonies were from doo wop. I

shouts out to

The Navigator's

guiding lights.

John Lennon

"He's always done something to my

Rodriguez
"Ilove his sound, but the song Street Boy really affected me, because it was the story of my childhood, and Navi's, always out on the street, where the action is, restlessly searching for something, trying to get as deep underground as possible. He was such a street poet, and I wanted to harness that kind of energy."

love their mish-mash of influences, and

their pride in being Puerto Rican."

Hector Lavoe "Puerto Ricans consider



Lavoe their best singer. My dad talked about him. how he sang for the people, and they felt his voice. I especially love the album

Crime Pays he recorded with [trombonist and bandleader Willie Colón. lalso love how salsa was put together by Puerto Rican, Cuban and Dominican kids in New York, almost like a punk thing, to mix all these different rhythms together."

Patti Smith "Isawher 40th

anniversary show of Horses at Electric Lady, for around a hundred people. I've never been to a shaman, but I think that was what it feels like! Just electrifying. I'd immersed myself in her music before, but I'd read [Smith's 2010 memoir] Just Kids, which was everything I want my life to be."



Hurray For The Riff Raff play the Green Man Festival, Glanusk Park, August 17-20, 2017.



STARDUST MEMORIES

AS 1970 DAWNED **DAVID BOWIE** WAS BRITISH ROCK'S RANK OUTSIDER. THREE YEARS LATER HE'D TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO THE MOST FLAMBOYANT STAR OF THEM ALL...

WOODY WOODMANSEY, THE HEARTBEAT OF THE SPIDERS FROM MARS, RELIVES THE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE TO THE TOP, AND THE HUMAN COST THAT CAME WITH IT...

WORDS: MARK PAYTRESS PIC: GIJSBERT HANEKROOT

N AN UNREMARKABLE day in March 1970, Mick 'Woody' Woodmansey took the train down to London from his family home in the Yorkshire market town of Driffield. On the recommendation of his friend Mick Ronson, the long-haired drummer dressed in T-shirt and denims was making his way to Beckenham, Kent, a leafy suburb on the outskirts of south-east London. He'd just turned down a promotion at Vertex, his hometown spectacles factory, in order to pursue his musical ambition. And yet, as a fan of earthier prog rock, he had doubts about the man he was heading down to meet.

"I turned up and knocked on the door of this big gothic-looking house," Woody remembers today. "David answered. He wore this rainbow T-shirt, red corduroy trousers, a silver belt, bangles and blue shoes with red stars." The stars looked as if they'd been hand-painted. "I was impressed," Woody says. "But it was like two worlds colliding."

Haddon Hall, a grand Victorian villa that had been occupied by David Bowie and an assortment of pals since the previous autumn, would become Woody's home, on and off, for the next 18 months. As he arrived, over his curly-haired host's shoulder he could see the massive hallway and a Gone With The Wind-style staircase that curved into a galleried first floor. Everything was bare floor-

boards and very little furniture. Number 7, the ground-floor room Bowie shared with his new wife Angie, was, Woody soon discovered, the spiritual heartbeat of Haddon Hall. With pink walls, silver ceiling and antique table and chairs painted red with gold inlays, it was, he says, "all very arty", the communal set-up leading the 19-year-old drummer to suspect he'd landed in "a throwover from the hippy thing."

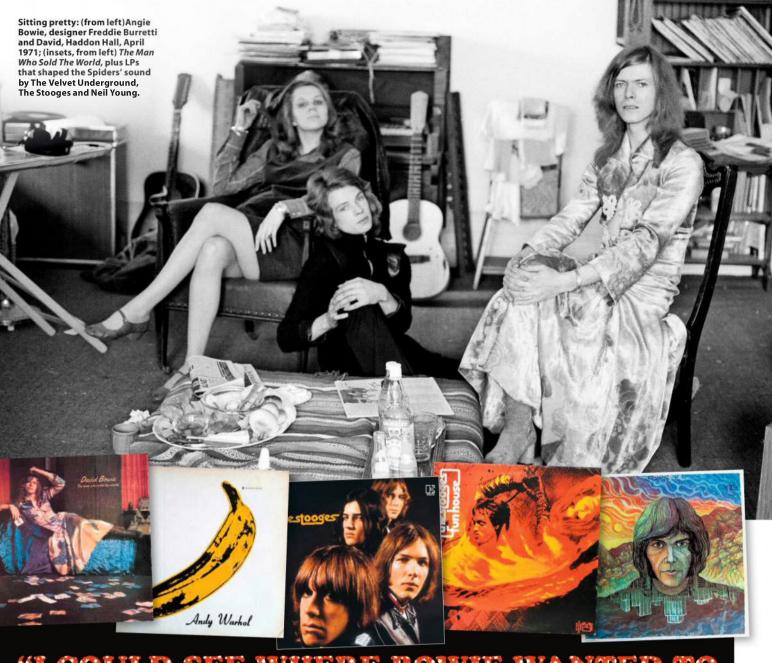
Ronson, Woody's bandmate in The Rats — "the coolest band in Yorkshire" — had recently teamed up with Bowie and had suggested Woodmansey as a suitable candidate to round out a line-up that also featured producer Tony Visconti on bass. Woody had heard Bowie's autumn 1969 hit, Space Oddity, but dismissed it as "lightweight and poppy", its singer another here today, gone tomorrow merchant. "All Mick had told me was, 'He can write and he can sing'," he recalls. First impressions did little to help the situation, Bowie spinning a few of his earlier records to little avail. "It was all a bit folky and twinkly for me," continues Woody.

Then Bowie picked up his 12-string guitar and sang Wild Eyed Boy From Freecloud, the B-side to Space Oddity. Musically, the song – whose lyrics rippled with alienation – was probably Bowie

at his twinkliest, but Woody was already somewhere else. "I heard this great ability to communicate, in a unique and very English voice, and I was instantly involved in the story of the song," he says. For now, it was all Woody needed as proof that he had not been engaged

on a fool's errand.

It's a scream!: David Bowie, on-stage at London's Earls Court, May 12, 1973.



'I COULD SEE WHERE BOWIE WANTED TO GET TO. HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO."

OODY QUICKLY DISCOVERED MORE ABOUT Bowie's world, and his close circle. Angie introduced herself by announcing that she was a lesbian. "I knew what a lesbian was," Woody noted in his recent memoir, Spider From Mars: My Life With Bowie, "but I'd never spoken to one." In the pseudo-communal set-up, Bowie's mother Peggy would sometimes visit for Sunday lunch with David's half-brother Terry. "I don't think Terry had any filters," Woody says. "Someone once asked him what he'd been doing and he said, I've been wanking."

One of a clutch of new songs Woody heard Bowie play during those early days at Haddon Hall was All The Madmen. "That was a bit weird," he says, "because you knew it was about his brother." Woody soon realised that most of Bowie's songwriting came "from an odd standpoint". As a lyricist, his was a sense of unease, perhaps even fatalism, that chimed with a wider cultural shift.

"The '60s were going to change the world. Then came all the drugs and people dying," he says of the period that saw the loss of key founders of the so-called 27 Club, Jimi, Janis and Brian Jones. Musically speaking, experimentation had also turned to indulgence. "I liked all that progressive stuff," Woody admits, "but it had gone up its arse a bit. We'd chat about what would be next." No one, not even that all-creative sage from Flat 7, seemed to know. "I could see where Bowie wanted to get to, and that it wasn't a small thing,"

Woody adds. "He just didn't know how to. All he knew was that he wanted to record an album with a rock band."

Cultural despair, as well as a haunted chill blown in from Haddon Hall, deepened the muscular rock of *The Man Who Sold The World*, recorded during April and May 1970. Having dug deep into his psyche for the raw material, Bowie was happy to let his new instrumentalists loose in the studio. "He'd throw us the chords and we'd jam it through," says Woody. "When it started to feel like a song, David would come in, adjusting bits to fit the lyrics."

Bowie's vaguely hands-off attitude was, say some, down to an excess of newlywed bliss. But he was also extricating himself from manager Ken Pitt, his mentor since 1967, who'd been nurturing Bowie as a culturally sophisticated artiste. Rocked by the recent death of his protective, Pitt-trusting father, Bowie wanted to feel the freedoms seized by the new rock culture. Handwritten on a Haddon Hall wall was the slogan: "Not conformity but radical". Scrawled next to the word "conformity", Woody recalls, was Pitt's name.

For all its questing complexity, Bowie's first unsupervised venture into subversion was stillborn. The album's release was stalled by problems at Philips/Mercury, while gigs were restricted to the occasional low-key acoustic set, often with Woody playing nothing more than bongos. "We didn't feel we were going anywhere," he admits, adding that something else hadn't quite sat right with the



band during the recording of the album. "That voice at the end of Black Country Rock. We thought, Why are you doing a Marc Bolan impersonation? It sounded a bit desperate."

On their way to a Bowie gig in Leeds that summer, Woody and Mick saw a sign to Hull and, disillusioned with their frontman, they followed it. There, they called up ex-Rats vocalist Benny Marshall and regrouped as Ronno. Unable to offer them a better option, Bowie kept up intermittent contact. Then, in late May/early June 1971, he rang them. "He told us he'd got new management, had been writing a lot and wanted us back to do another album," Woody says. "Ronno was treading water, so Mick and I said, 'Let's go back." Rookie Ronno bassist Trevor Bolder went with them.

"David was completely different," says Woody. "It was like chalk and cheese. There was a certainty about him, both within himself and with his writing. America pulled him out of his Britishness. It was the missing link."

Earlier in the year, Bowie had visited the States to promote *The Man Who Sold The World*. He caught The Velvet Underground in

New York, albeit without Lou Reed, declared that rock "should be tarted up [and] made into a parody of itself" and returned home raving about the first two Stooges albums. His songwriting, already spurred by a lucrative new publishing deal signed with Chrysalis in October 1970, grew sharper and cast its net wider still.

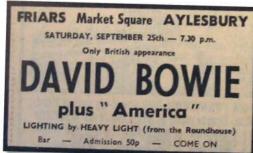
"While singers like Paul Rodgers or

says. "I know it sounds a bit weird but he genuinely liked all music. The foundation was always the songs." Changes, one of several written on the upright piano at Haddon Hall, revealed a more conversational style indicative of a new willingness to engage with an audience. "We'd all been listening to Neil Young and John Lennon's solo album," says Woody, "which were more straightforward but still had a lot of character. David wasn't a pianist. He plonked! But the songs certainly became more direct. He'd learned not to waffle."

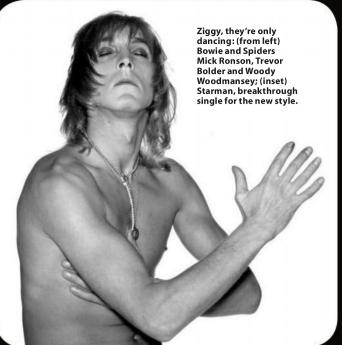
This piano-led material formed the basis of *Hunky Dory*, recorded over the summer. "It wasn't a rock set but a collection of great songs," says Woody, singling out Life On Mars. "That's when I thought, There's more to this guy than we'd imagined." Woody adopted a 'John Bonham goes classical' approach for the piece. "But I did wonder whether we'd gone too far down that road."

On September 25, 1971, Bowie made a rare live appearance at Aylesbury Friars. He started the show with Fill Your Heart and Buzz The Fuzz, two covers of songs by comic US songwriter Biff Rose. After an intense version of Jacques Brel's Amsterdam, he was back to his giggly, between-song self. "I thought it would be nice to bring

the boys on... before we go to America in a few months," Bowie said, before previewing songs from *Hunky Dory*. Towards the end of the set, Ronson launched into the Velvet Underground-inspired guitar intro that unleashes Queen Bitch. The earnest show warmly appreciated by a crowd seated on the floor now rocked hard as Bowie's character seemed to grow with each >







"RCA ASKED, 'WHERE'S THE SINGLE?' SO WE

song. Climactic covers of Chuck Berry's Round And Round [sic] and the Velvets' Waiting For The Man had the crowd hand-clapping and on its feet.

"Bowie realised that the best way to communicate would be with a rock show," Woody explains. So too had Marc Bolan. A mate from mid-'60s Mod days, the hippy throwback had recently reinvented himself as an Electric Warrior. Now fronting the four-piece T.Rex, Bolan revitalised the singles chart, sparkled for the cameras and ignited a new era of 'Glitter Rock'. Bowie's "It could have been me" refrain from Queen Bitch would have sounded especially bittersweet that autumn, not least because the man behind T.Rex's sound was Tony Visconti whose production work had seen him fly the Bowie coop.

"There was a strong affinity between Bowie and Bolan," says Woody. "Bowie admired what Marc had done but it wasn't right for him. It was too pop, too one-dimensional. But we definitely took something from it." Bowie had to have been fired up by Bolan's transformation. It was another indication that the hands of destiny were now working in his favour. Behind the scenes, manager Tony Defries, now giving Bowie his undivided attention, had recently secured a hefty new three-album deal with RCA. There was just one last change to make.

EVERAL TIMES DURING OUR conversation, Woody speaks of Bowie having "everything he needed, but not necessarily in the right order or place". Queen Bitch, for instance, a scorching Velvet Underground homage, was, says Woody, "the first big step towards Ziggy. But when Mick and I went back to Yorkshire, Bowie said, 'You can have that one'."

The great Bowie giveaway continued when

THE RISE OF THE SPIDERS #1

FREAK-OUT The Man Who

(Mercury, 1970)

While David Bowie enjoyed a 'honeymoon at home' with his new wife, Angie, whom he'd married on March 20, 1970, the three-piece of bassist and producer Tony Visconti, guitarist Mick Ronson and drummer Woody Woodmansey began routining the material that would appear on his third album. Bowie presented them with the songs and chord structures which the three-piece would then thrash out in the rehearsal space they'd built in Haddon Hall's old wine cellar. Moving away from the whimsy of his self-titled 1969 set, the band developed a heavier sound which is immediately evident on the eight-minute opener, The Width Of The Circle. Ronson absorbed the art of arranging from Visconti, while the latter introduced $Wood mansey \, to \, exotic \, percussion \,$ instruments, including the gourd-based guiro which he employed to fine effect on the introduction to the title track. Indeed, self-confessed hard rock fan Woody found subtle ways to punctuate the more dramatic material such as After All, Bowie's rumination on mortality. On the Nietzsche-inspired romp of The Supermen, however, he played the song "almost like Thor with his war hammer. Despite the creation of an impressive, new progressive sound, Mercury struggled to find a radio-friendly track to spearhead the album mercury

to spearhead the albur campaign. All The Madmen was considered and promos pressed, but the single release was shelved. The knock-on effect was an album that didn't chart on either side of the Atlantic.

Moonage Daydream and Hang Onto Yourself, both inspired by his US trip, appeared on a May 1971 single credited to The Arnold Corns. The 'group', was Bowie's Warholinspired venture into star-making, the frontman one Rudi Valentino, alias Freddie Burretti, a fashion designer who, says Woody, resembled "a living Michelangelo statue".

"Bowie was gonna write and produce. Freddie was gonna be the rock star. There was one flaw. He couldn't sing a fucking note," says Woody. "So when Arnold Corns didn't work, he was like, 'I'd better do it my fucking self then.' That's when you saw this change."

It took a whole summer for the penny to drop, but when it did, the whole band would feel it. "In a word, dynamics," says Woody. "By the time we did [The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars], we'd all learnt what was needed. The songs felt like they belonged to the same band. And we were hungry. We wanted to make a rock album we could take out on tour."

The band, no longer Ronno but not yet The Spiders, came into their own. "When we went into Trident to begin *Ziggy...*, we spoke about the sound of the instruments," Woody recalls. "I told [co-producer] Ken Scott, You made the drums sound like fucking Yorkshire puddings on *Hunky Dory.*" The new material and upbeat mood in the Bowie camp demanded a brighter, more open sound. Woody's drums were tuned higher. There was little need to dampen the skins.

Seven of Ziggy's 11 songs were taped during a whirlwind week beginning November 8, 1971. The last in the batch was Five Years. Woody: "David said, 'It's going to be the first track on the

album and I want it to start with a drum beat.' I knew the song was about the end of the world, so I

Duffy ©Duffy Archive (www.duffyphotographer.com) (4)



went back and banged out starman."

tried to figure out a beat that would mean something. I thought, If it's the end of the world I'm not gonna hit a cymbal or play a drum roll. So it starts like Hunky Dory, and by the time the band comes in, it's Ziggy"

Woody's restrained, unfussy intro, sets up both song and album and symbolises what he calls "the less is more" philosophy that underpinned Ziggy's making. He even learnt to utilise Bowie's cut-and-paste creativity too, borrowing (and accelerating) drum patterns from Hendrix's I Don't Live Today for Star and King Crimson's 21st Century Schizoid Man for Ziggy Stardust. Trevor Bolder, a "solid and powerful bass player", drew on his

early days as a trumpet player, which had given him a melodic sensibility that's clearly apparent on Moonage Daydream. "Mick would take a lot of ideas from Trevor's playing," Woody says.

Ronson, who'd returned to music lessons while back in Hull, was now very much Bowie's right-hand man. "David encouraged him to work on arrangements for

Hunky Dory," Woody says, "and he'd come up with the string part for Life On Mars." Ronson had a freer rein over Ziggy, scoring strings (notably for Five Years and Rock'n'Roll Suicide), taking Moonage Daydream into the stratosphere with that ever-swelling solo, and driving everything with sharp, spiky guitarplaying throughout.

Not audible at the sessions was any hint of Ziggy being a concept LP, the album's loose narrative centering on an alien being who dons the guise of a rock star, descending to earth with a message of hope as the apocalypse looms. "That all came later," Woody

(RCA Victor, 1971)

If The Man Who Sold The World chimed with 1970's heavier music climate, then Hunky Dory represented a distinct about-face. Gone is the neo-metallic brawn of the previous effort, replaced by Bowie's desire to shine as a serious songwriter. To suggest that failure had forced him to decide to just be himself is perhaps stretching the point;

Hunky Dory is still an album where a clear synthesis of external ideas can be heard. However, the album's first track, Changes, is evidence that he no longer viewed mere rock bands as the competition. Equally, while that song chronicled the shifts in his own life (fatherhood included), Bowie remained hungry for success, so tracks such as Queen

Bitch and Oh! You Pretty Things (initially off-loaded to Herman's Hermits' Pete Noone) seemed designed as crowd-pleasers. Just as significant, however, is the continued development of the band's musical approach. With Trevor Bolder and Ken Scott replacing the departed Tony Visconti on bass and as producer respectively, Ronson collaborating further with Bowie on the arrangements and Woodmansey perfecting his controlled approach, the album benefits from a genuine unity of sound. And this despite Bowie's insistence that no more than two or three takes be laid down of any one tune in order to maintain the spontaneity. The obvious quality on offer – and the album's perennial appeal – aside, Hunky Dory stalled at Number 44 in the UK album charts upon release in December 1971.

Andy Warho

says. "Otherwise, why wouldn't Life On Mars have been included?" There's more tangible evidence. A provisional track-listing, put together by mid-December, included Jacques Brel and Chuck Berry covers, yet was still missing key concept cut Rock'n'Roll Suicide as well as definitive Spiders rocker Suffragette City. Both were added in January 1972. Woody: "Then RCA asked, 'Where's the single?' So we went back in and banged out Starman. Now if that hadn't been on the album, where's the concept? Everything was created as we went along, just as the clothes were."

With the exception of those final three tracks, Bowie recorded Ziggy Stardust with long, '40s-style Veronica Lake locks. But as the album came together, Woody noticed that Bowie was presenting himself differently. "You felt he started to become an artist in the studio. He was taking it on."

Bowie also encouraged his soon-to-bechristened Spiders From Mars to rise to the occasion, taking them to see Alice Cooper at the Rainbow ("He walked out"), the ballet and the theatre. "He was educating us," Woody says. One afternoon, the band ventured out to the fabric department at Liberty. "Angie was pulling material off the racks and Bowie's going, 'What about this?' I'd think, Are you making curtains? Then a designer came along and said, 'I see pastel colours for the band.' I thought, Fucking hell, where are we going with this?" His manliness affronted, Mick Ronson quit. "I had to talk him into coming back," says Woody, who ended up with the pink costume.

When Bowie returned to Aylesbury Friars on January 29, 1972, the affable longhair from the September show was a man transformed. Dazzling in a quilted jumpsuit and shiny red wrestling boots, his hair spiked and carrot-red, Bowie and his similarly at- ➤



"WHEN ZIGGY WALKED OFF STAGE, HE WAS STILL ZIGGY STARDUST, WITH HIS

NO LONGER DAVID BOWIE."

✓ tired Spiders debuted the Ziggy Stardust show. Included in the set was a version of the old Cream hit, I Feel Free – its title reflecting the sense of liberation coursing through the band.

"You had to play your part," Woody says. "You had to walk on stage as if you were from another planet and believe it." Even at the Toby Jug in Tolworth, where the Ziggy tour proper began on February 10. "Especially there. It would look even more over the top in a pub. I remember thinking, Will the audience go, 'Who the fuck do you think you are' and laugh us off-stage?"

On July 6, 1972, Bowie and the Spiders promoted Starman on Top Of The Pops. "That was the big one," says Woody. "We'd arrived." The single went Top 10 while the album, released three weeks earlier, hit Number 5 and kept on selling. By the time they played two extravagantly theatrical, wildly acclaimed shows at London's Rainbow in mid-August, the billing had become "David Bowie Is Ziggy Stardust". In September, the band hit the States for three months. "We travelled together, ate together before gigs, partied together, recorded songs for *Aladdin Sane* together," says Woody. "It was Ziggy And The Spiders on tour as a real band. Yes, you were aware that David was a leader, but you need a leader whether you're David Bowie or Free."

In Woody's memoir, the tone changes in June 1972 when he writes: "Bowie fucked off to New York for a weekend to see Elvis Presley perform." But, he says, it was the second US tour during February and March 1973 when battle commenced. In fact, there were two theatres of conflict: Bowie versus the band, and Bowie versus 'Ziggy Stardust'.

"On the early tours, he'd put the Ziggy make-up and outfits on, we'd do the show, then back in the limo afterwards it'd be a gang again. Now when Ziggy walked offstage, he was still Ziggy Stardust, with his own limo and hotel. It was no longer David Bowie. He'd snub you or give you a dirty look, and you'd think, Was it something I said?"

During the tour, Woody heard that the new supporting musicians were being paid double, and in pianist Mike Garson's case, 10 times as much as his £50 a week. Bowie had not long told the band they were all going to be millionaires. "We realised we were being taken for a ride and wanted to protect our careers," says Woody. Word was put out and CBS offered them £100,000 for first refusal on a Spiders From Mars deal.

Tony Defries got wind of the situation and called a meeting. "That didn't go well," says Woody, who'd recently converted to Scientology ("It gave me a better sense of self-worth," he says). "You're just a fucking backing band," Bowie barked. "I could have made it with anybody." Woody hit back: "If I wanted to back somebody, I would have picked someone who can fucking sing. There wasn't an ounce of truth in it. But when the manager's just said he'd rather pay the road crew more than you, you wanna hit back, even if it was like throwing potatoes at bombers." Within days, the rhythm section got a raise to £500 a week with an end-of-tour bonus. "Everything went more or less back to normal," says Woody.

Then, on July 3, 1973, the show rolled in

to London's Hammersmith Odeon for the second of two nights. The furore around the gig was such that a cavalcade of Rolls-Royces lined the front of the venue, their owners — Mick Jagger, Ringo Starr and Elton John among them — keen to catch what had become a must-see

show. "It was the last gig of the tour," says Woody, "so we pulled out all the stops." Especially Bowie. With D.A. Pennebaker's film cameras capturing the moment, Ziggy dropped his bombshell: "This is the last show that we'll ever do!" he declared before one final blast of Rock'n'Roll Suicide. The audience gasped. Unaware of Bowie's intentions prior to the show, the band looked bemused. Woody hurled a drumstick and stormed off. "I'm thankful I didn't know," he says now, "because it was a great show and it's on film for ever."

Four days later, and 90 minutes after his wedding ceremony was over, Woody took a call from Defries. "I'd assumed it was to apologise that he and David weren't at the wedding. Instead, he said, 'You won't be going to France to record *Pin-Ups*.' I said, Why not? 'Because you said you didn't want to be in the band.' It went on like

that. It was like talking to a fruitcake." Woody makes no bones about his reaction. "It knocked the shit out of me."

DAVID BOWIE

ALADDIN SANE

(RCA Victor, 1972)

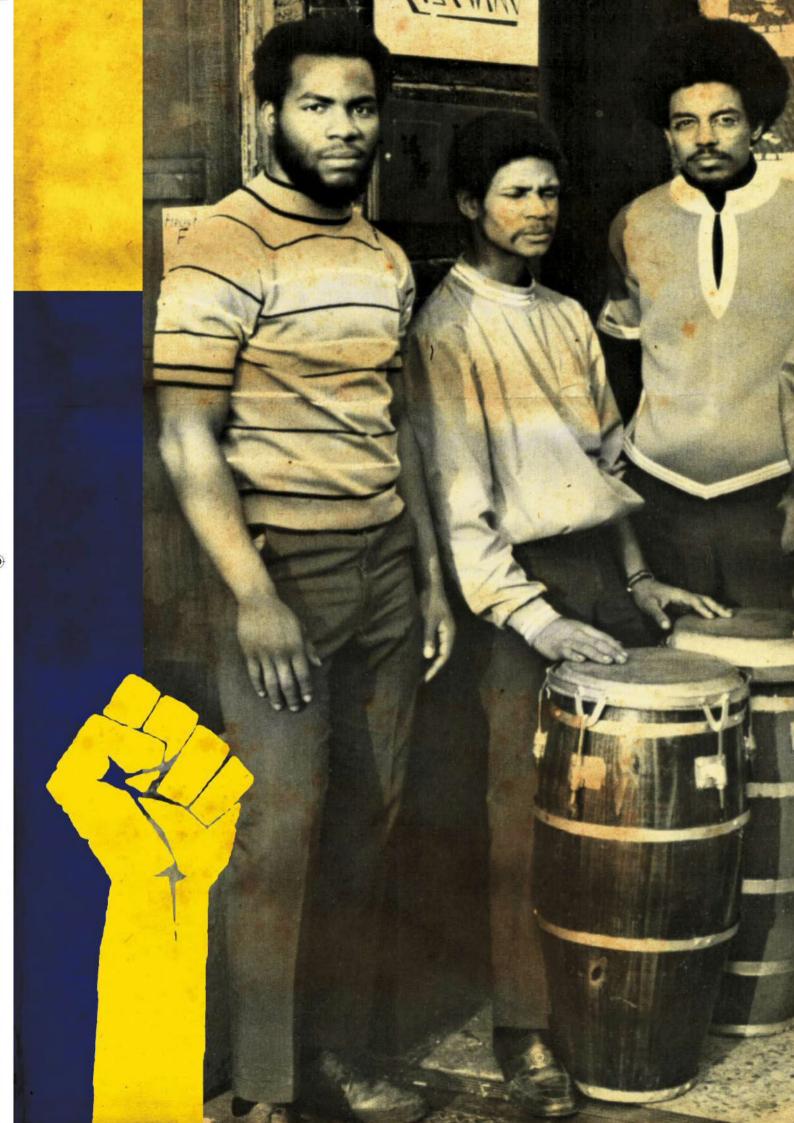
Hindsight allows us to view the directness of Ziggy Stardust as a response to the commercial impasse of its more considered predecessor, but in reality much of the material for the former had already been recorded prior to the release of Hunky Dory. Having written a lion's share of the songs that would appear on Ziggy, Bowie enjoyed a two-week holiday in Cyprus with Angie, Woody Woodmansey and Trevor Bolder in the late summer of '71, before returning to the UK to begin work on the album. As usual, the material was presented to the band along with the album title and a loose narrative. Ronson, Woodmansey and Bolder returned to the wine cellar to start fine-tuning the material. With Ken Scott again at the helm, the band headed back to Trident Studios in November for what proved to be a set of intense sessions. Deliberately designed as a rock album, the material set for inclusion was revised and Starman added as a last-minute single (see main piece). When the album was finally completed, the band – now rechristened The Spiders From Mars – felt they'd captured what Woody refers to as "something special". But, he wondered, "Was it too weird?" He need not have worried. On release, the album hit the UK Top 5. Its impact also propelled Hunky Dory back into the charts, allowing it to peak at Number 3 in the summer of 73. After three years of hard graft the Spiders, it seemed, were truly on a roll. But while they would contribute to his next album, Aladdin Sane, Bowie it seemed had other ideas...

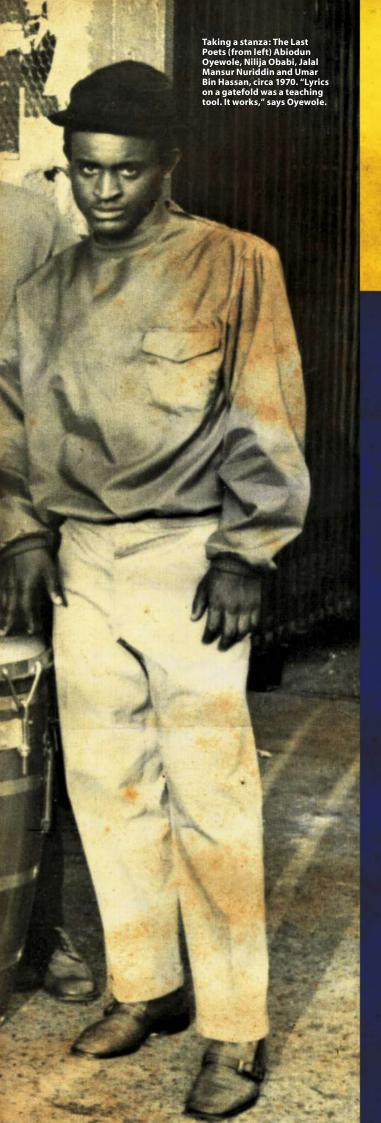
RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN Bowie and Woody took a while. In the end it came during one of the Low sessions at Château d'Herouville, the pair speaking openly and apologetically about the past. It was only then that Woody fully understood the role that cocaine had played in Bowie's transformation into Ziggy a few years earlier. Meanwhile, Bowie himself admitted he'd kept his drug intake hidden.

Today, following the passing of Mick Ronson (April 29, 1993) and Trevor Bolder (May 21, 2013), Woody Woodmansey is the last Spider standing. Our conversation at MOJO HQ takes place after the drummer's return to Trident Studios in Soho where he filmed an interview that will introduce a nationwide screening of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars: The Concert Movie, taking place at UK cinemas on March 7. While the film holds bittersweet memories for the 65-yearold, he has come to terms with the past. With Tony Visconti, he now fronts Holy Holy, a supergroup, of sorts, that performs Bowie's 1969-73 work. On March 25, he takes the band to Hull to perform Ziggy Stardust in its entirety, prior to a run of further shows.

"It's The Rise And Fall And Resurrection," he laughs, adding that he'd not change a thing. "The adventure is the adventure, and it's the good, the bad and the ugly. I've gained an understanding of what a good song is. It's one of the most powerful things in the world.

"People say that Bowie wasn't quite human," he concludes. "He wasn't really. I once heard him say that writing good songs is like searching for God. He came from a spiritual place. He was one of the best."





BACKTO BACKTO

THE LAST POETS BATTLED NIXON, CRACK AND THE KKK TO PREACH BLACK REVOLUTION WHILE LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIP-HOP. AND THEY'RE NOT FINISHED YET. "IT'S UNDERSTOOD YOUR LIFE MATTERS," THEY TELL ANDREW MALE: "BUT YOU WANT POWER TOO."

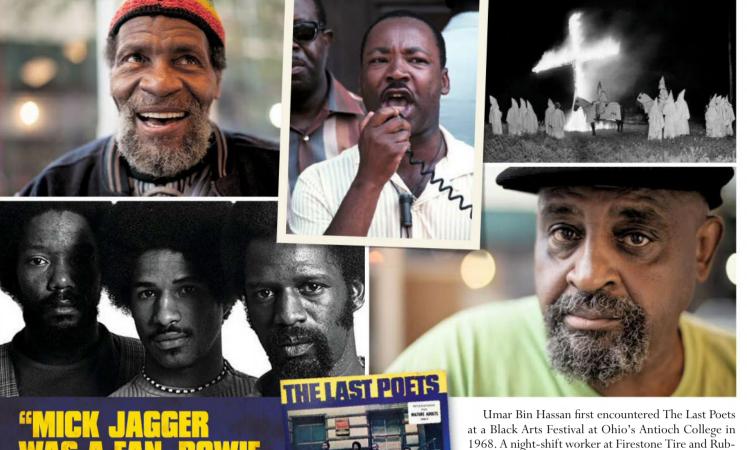
OR ABIODUN OYEWOLE THE LAST POETS WERE conceived in death. It was spring 1968, and this tall, 19-year-old Queens-raised "middle-class negro" was working for a New York anti-poverty programme with a young man named David Nelson. Nelson had been talking about a poetry collective to promote unification within the black community, but Abiodun, raised on jazz, soul, and gospel, schooled in Hemingway, and writing French love poetry for his girlfriends, wasn't too keen. Then on April 4, 1968, everything changed.

"When they killed Dr [Martin Luther] King I lost my mind," he says. "I took it as a personal insult. He was on a non-violent platform. How can you blow the man away? I'm not a turn-the-other-cheek person, but I thought he was righteous. I called David and said, We got to get this group together because if not I'm going to get a gun and do something stupid."

Augmented by poet and playwright Gylan Kain, whom Nelson had met at Columbia University, the group decided to perform at Malcolm X's birthday memorial at Harlem's Mount Morris Park on May 19. Due to his gospel upbringing, Oyewole could sing and orate but Nelson's voice was weak "and Kain couldn't hold a note if you handed it to him", so they decided they'd chant together instead. Backed by an on-stage drummer, each armed with incendiary new poems they'd written, the trio opened their performance with a chant Oyewole had heard on the news, as black students at Howard University in Washington DC demanded the resignation of their president. "They were singing, 'Are you ready niggers? You got to be ready.' I was blown away. So I said, Let's go out singing that. Pretty soon, everybody in the park was chanting it."

Christened by David Nelson after a poem by South African poet Keorapetse Kgositsile (Odd Future rapper Earl Sweatshirt's dad), who believed he was writing in the final era of poetry before uprising, The Last Poets were born.

"WE WALKED INTO THE MOTOR
LODGE WHERE THE KKK HAD
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WITH 8,000 DOLLARS IN A
PAPER BAG." ABIODUN OYEWOLE



"MICK JAGGER
WAS A FAN, BOWIE
WAS A FAN. IT WAS
RAINING DOLLARS,
AND EVERYONE
WAS PARANOID."
UMAR BIN HASSAN

OVEMBER 2016, AND ABIODUN Oyewole is backstage at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club with fellow Last Poet Umar Bin Hassan, and on-off drummer for the past 30 years, Baba Donn Babatunde. In

the 48 years since Mount Morris Park, the group's fortunes have heaved and pitched, along with their reputation. While their spare, drum-led chants, dextrous rhymes and incendiary lyrics are cited as the blueprint of hip-hop, hip-hop has weakened their message. Their pejorative use of the word "niggers" in early numbers like Wake Up, Niggers, and Niggers Are Scared Of Revolution, was designed to stir a dormant black nation to action. And while they're still sampled and saluted by Nas, Common and Dead Prez, their most famous line, from Oye-

wole's 1970 call-to-arms, When The Revolution Comes, is currently "party and bullshit", sampled ironically on Biggie Smalls' 1993 single of the same name, and currently floating free of meaning on Rita Ora's How We Do (Party), currently standing at 49 million YouTube views.

"I'm suing a bunch of people as we speak," says Oyewole, with a wry, booming authority. "When Biggie sampled it, I let it go. Not any more. Hearing Rita Ora is like someone throwing knives in my chest."

Times have changed, as have The Last Poets. Live, the group are warm, funny, wise and inspiring, especially when Umar Bin Hassan stops proceedings to address the US President Elect. "Everyone asking how it feels to have a racist president," he says. "Ain't nothing new. Black people have had 400 years of racist presidents."

Umar Bin Hassan first encountered The Last Poets at a Black Arts Festival at Ohio's Antioch College in 1968. A night-shift worker at Firestone Tire and Rubber in Akron, raised in the Elizabeth Park projects, he had fought in Cleveland's Hough race riots of 1966, and watched the TV news in excitement as Black Panthers occupied California's State Capitol Building in May '67. Part-time heavy for Ahmed Evans's Black Nationalists of New Libya, Umar was working as the festival's head of security — "Head down, frisking everyone" when "I heard this boom: 'I'm Abiodun! I'm with The Last Poets I don't have to check in 'I showed him my

The Last Poets. I don't have to check in.' I showed him my .38 and I said, You checkin' in or checkin' out. On-stage, Abiodun shouted, 'Who's that crazy motherfucker on the door? He's going to kill all of us before the white people do!' But when I saw what they did with the drum and their voices... Man. It was like seeing The Temptations."

After the show Umar told Abiodun, "I'm coming to New York, I'm going to be a poet. Dun said, 'We've got a loft called East Wind on 125th Street. Come visit."

Funded by Jason Benning's New Breed clothing company, who'd popularised the dashiki as a symbol of black cultural identity, East Wind was home to fashion shows, Last Poets recitals, Panther benefits and jazz performances from Albert Ayler and Sun Ra. However, by the time of Umar Bin Hassan's arrival in 1969, Last Poets Mk 1 was already over. "David left at the end of 1968," says Abiodun. "Kain went back to the East Village. I was literally 'the last poet'. But Umar had a captivating style so, OK he's in the group." To keep the trinity Abiodun also enlisted "This guy Jalal

[Mansur Nuriddin] that Kain called 'that nursery-rhyming bitch'. Jalal never did anything that didn't rhyme. Kain thought it was corny. I thought he was a genius."

HE LAST POETS' NEW LINE-UP GRABBED THE ATTENtion of jazz producer Alan Douglas, who saw them on TV, drove to Harlem to see the trio perform, and booked them into Impact Sound Studios that very day.

"We just recorded our live set," says Oyewole, with understatement. "But I asked Alan Douglas to put the words on the inside cover, because I didn't think people would understand us. Lyrics on a gatefold became protocol. We never get credit for that. It was a teaching tool. It works."

Seeds of a revolution: (left, clockwise from far left) Abiodun Oyewole in London, 2016; "righteous" Dr Martin Luther King; the Ku Klux Klan (Oyewole robbed a North Carolina chapter of \$8,000); Umar Bin Hassan, London, 2016; the band's 1971 and '73 LPs plus Rita Ora's 45, "like someone throwing knives in my chest"; poetry contest – an alternative Last Poets (from left) David Nelson, Felipe Luciano, Gylan Kain; (bottom) Gil Scott-Heron.

From Abiodun Oyewole's opening cry of "I understand that time is running out" on album opener Run, Nigger to Umar Bin Hassan's declaration that Niggers Are Scared Of Revolution, all set against a dizzying interlacing of urgent voices and the agitated heartbeat of Nilija Obabi's drumming, *The Last Poets* captured the nervous insurgent spirit of post-MLK black America. By the time the album was released, however, Abiodun Oyewole was in jail.

"I was getting credit for being a revolutionary without having done anything," he explains. After working with The Harlem Committee For Self Defence, "a Marxist-Leninist group of women campaigning against land encroachment", Abiodun formed "the supercultural nationalist" Yoruba Society at North Carolina's Shaw University. When two of the Society were arrested for robbing a pair of gun shops in Raleigh, North Carolina, Oyewole decided to fund their defence by robbing the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.

"Me and my partner Alexander dressed up like hunters, walked into the motor lodge where they had their meetings, walked out with 8,000 dollars in a paper bag. Outside these guys in a Pepsi Cola truck started firing at us."

Firing back, Young and Oyelowe ran into the woods, leading the police on a seven-hour manhunt. "We went to this house to hide out. A little boy ran out of the back. Alex said, 'He's going for the police,' and aimed his gun. I said, Shoot him and I'll shoot you. Next thing, we see the cop cars, real easy, coming through the trees. I threw up my hands. I knew it was over."

While Oyewole was in jail, Umar Bin Hassan and Jalal Mansur Nuriddin came to terms with the phenomenon they had created. "In the first couple of weeks that first album sold 400,000 copies just by word of mouth," says Hassan. A second long-player, *This Is Madness*, shot through with a nightmare horrorcore militancy, was promoted in Billboard with an advert that read, "If you're white this record will scare the shit out of you. If you're black this record will scare the nigger out of you."

"Mick Jagger was a fan, Bowie was a fan." says Hassan. "It was raining dollars. We were getting paid 55k a week, and everyone was paranoid. [The FBI's covert surveillance group] COINTELPRO had people watching us. Pick up my phone, click, voices on the other line. Jalal started taking martial arts because he was so scared of me. He wanted to be the star."

Their success brought another unwelcome phenomenon. Three ex-members — Gylan Kain, David Nelson, and late recruit Felipe Luciano — reformed as The Original Last Poets and fought Umar and Jalal for rights to the name. 'Fought' is possibly an understatement. Following a brutal attack by Umar and Jalal on Kain at East Wind, Luciano, then leader of New York's Puerto Rican Panthers, The Young Lords, told Kain he had good men, revolutionaries, ready to take out Umar and Jalal for good. Kain wouldn't allow it. He didn't need to. The Last Poets had become their own worst enemies.

ERVING 12-TO-20 FOR ARMED ROBBERY, OYEWOLE was out on parole in two for good behaviour. He finished his education at Shaw, began teaching at Columbia, started a jazz group and became a playwright. By that time Bin Hassan had quit The Last Poets, while under the pseudonym Lightnin' Rod, Jalal cut the protogangsta rap *Hustlers Convention* LP. Produced with Alan Douglas, it marked a mid-'70s cultural shift from black power consciousness to high-rolling braggadocio. "That's what Jalal wanted to be," says Umar, "a kingpin street hustler. Opportunity came, he jumped on it. Never bothered me. He got fucked real bad, and he's still trying to get royalties."

In stark contrast, Hussan left the industry and joined Brooklyn's Ya Sin Mosque. Then, on February 4, 1974, Ya Sin was attacked by a rival Harlem mosque. Four men died in the ensuing gun battle. "Fucked me up," says Hassan. "Next thing, I'm on the streets, taking drugs, poems for drugs, standing ovations in crack houses." The '80s blurred into the '90s. Sometimes Umar would be at the door of a crack house and hear that his old buddy Gil Scott-Heron was inside. "I never went in," he says. "That would be too fucked-up, to see Gil Scott-Heron and Umar Bin Hassan in the same motherfucking spot, smoking crack. I kept working hard to get off this shit. About '89, some brother played me a tape, some hip-hop, said, 'You got to get back out there'."

"Umar came to me and said we got to take our crown back," says Abiodun. Introduced to Bill Laswell via Jalal, who'd been given \$50,000 to reform the group, Umar recorded a strong 1994 comeback LP, Be Bop Or Be Dead, and with Abiodun two further Last Poets LPs, '93's Holy Terror and '97's Time Has Come. There'll be a new album with Laswell in 2017, possibly called Black Lives Matter.

The Last Poets have not lost their dark humour.

"Black. Lives. Matter." says Abiodun, drily. "It's a feeble attempt at a movement. We're Black Power children. 'Black Lives Matter' sounds like we're back in first grade. It's understood your life *matters*. But you want power too."

The Last Poets' UK tour was supported by applesandsnakes.org. Further reading: The Last Poets, a literary biography by Christine Otten (World Editions).

TOO TOUGH TO DIE

Five killer songs of black protest. By ANDREW MALE.

CLEO PAGE Black Man (Too Tough To Die)

(Wonder, 7-inch)

Recorded after the Watts riots, this undated collaboration between LA-born blues shouter Page, guitarist Wilbur Reynolds and producer Jimmy Johnson (credited as 'Black Man Power'), may have been conceived in parody but remains one of the most powerful cries of black identity on vinyl: a sickly rhumba beat, backed by weird-tuned electric guitar and Page's furious bellows of indignation at "100 years of false democracy".

Stand-out line: "If I had my way/ Wouldn't even frown/ Take a lona"

ELAINE BROWN The End Of Silence

battle-axe/And cut the ghettos down'

(from Seize The Time, Vault, 1969)
A member of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panthers, Brown was commissioned by chief of staff David Hilliard to record an album of songs in tribute to murdered Panthers Bunchy Carter and John Huggins. Of them all, this is the most startling, a piano-led gospel song of hope that ends, not with a call for unity, or a prayer to the Lord, but the insistence that "Believe it my friend/ That this silence will end/We'll just have to get guns and be men."

Stand-out line: See above

THE WATTS PROPHETS Dem Niggers Ain't Playin'

(from Rappin' Black In A White World, Ala, 1971)

Recorded by LA-based poets Amde Hamilton, Richard Dedeaux, and Otis O'Solomon, with voice and blues-piano backing from Motown songwriter Dee Dee

McNeil, Rappin' Black... is a collection of protest poems and theatrical polemics transformed with McNeil's help into sinister sing-song spells, never more unsettling than here, as the quartet play the parts of suburbanites, watching the distant flames of "new black pride" on the edge of their neighbourhoods.

Stand-out line: "Look at them flames lightin' up the sky/Ain't never seen flames shooting up so high"

GIL SCOTT-HERON The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

(from Pieces Of A Man, Flying Dutchman, 1971)

Drawn from the raw template of The Last Poets' 1970 LP track Niggers Are Scared Of Revolution, and inspired by Langston Hughes and John Coltrane, ... Televised targeted NBC and CBS as much as the NAACP, an anti-media diatribe that moved from drumpatterned poem on Scott-Heron's 1970 debut Small Talk At 125th And Lenox to spoken-word funk on 1971's Pieces..., flittering flute and loping bass investing the poem's surreal wit with a bright, effortless cool.

Stand-out line: "The revolution will be no re-run, brothers/The revolution will be live"

SWAMP DOGG God Bless America For What

(from Uncut And Classified 1A, Charly, 1981)

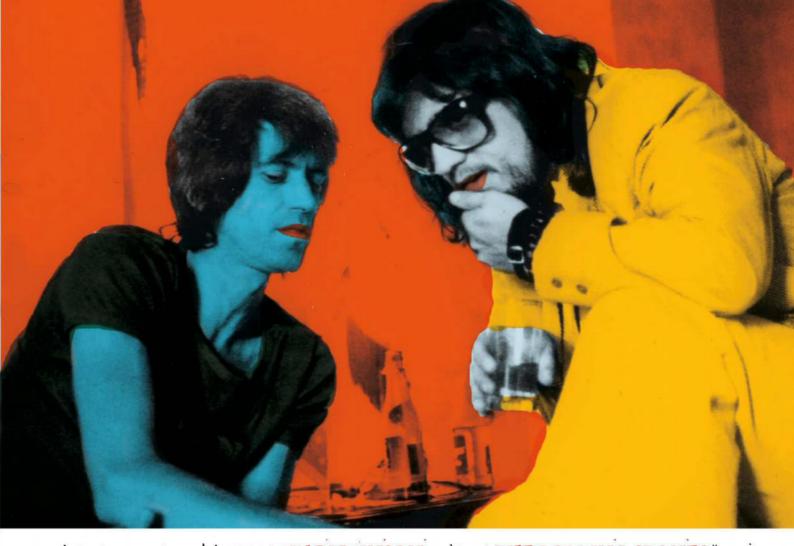
As heard on 1971's Ratt On, Jerry Williams Jr's soulful dissection of Irving Berlin's jingoistic 1918 hymn to the US is fine enough. This version, cut live in the studio in 1972 after Williams had been through the wringer with Berlin's lawyers, really scorches, an exhausted, heartbroken blues for troubled times and a 'fuck you' to a government still sending its young black men to Vietnam.

Stand-out line: Where the cry of "God bless America!" gradually becomes a scream of "God help America!"



LET'S GET DIXIE FRIED





It's late 1969, and rock 'n'roll lifer **JIM DICKINSON** is helping **THE ROLLING STONES** "soak up the old south's ghosts", consume their high-grade drugs and cut a troika of songs destined to rank among the greatest ever. Let this extract from the late pianist, bandleader and raconteur's forthcoming memoir transport you to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where - strictly hush-hush and on the QT - something funky is afoot...



HEN HE DIED IN 2009 FOLLOWING triple bypass heart surgery, incorrigible Arkansas rocker James Luther Dickinson left a musical legacy that embraced primitive rock'n'roll singles (cf. Cadillac Man by The Jesters – one of Sun Records' last great releases), authentically R&B-flavoured musical environments for the

likes of James Carr, Aretha Franklin, Dion and Bob Dylan, and production work for Big Star, The Replacements, Green On Red and more. He also left his mark in other ways: for instance, the work of his sons, Cody and Luther, in The North Mississippi Allstars, The Black Crowes and others; and also, an unpublished manuscript of hilarious reminiscences and deep musical moments, as chock-full of hustles, sessions, substances and hipster argot as you could wish for, and scheduled at long last for publication in April. Back in 1969, he was working in Memphis as a session bandleader, along with Charlie Freeman (guitar), Michael Utley (keyboards), Tommy McClure (bass) and Sammy Creason (drums). The line-up, dubbed The Dixie Flyers, had perhaps outstayed their welcome at Stan Kesler's Sounds Of Memphis Studio (Freeman discharging his shotgun in the control room hadn't helped) and were close to inking a deal with Jerry Wexler and Ahmet Ertegun to become the Atlantic label's house band at Miami's Criteria Studios, when The Rolling Stones — in the middle of an ultimately notorious jaunt across the States, in fighting shape and looking to jack into the mainline of American music – came a-calling...

Y FRIEND THE WRITER STANLEY Booth was on the road with The Rolling Stones. He called in the middle of the night. "The Stones have three days off at the end of the tour," he said. "They're looking for a place to record. How about Memphis?"

In those days a foreign band could get a touring permit or a recording permit, not both. The Stones had been denied permission to record in Los Angeles and needed a place without a strict union policy. I could think of no place in town where a secret session could be pulled off. I told Stanley, "No."

"Where could they record?"

"Muscle Shoals Sounds," I said without hesitation. "Nobody will even know who they are." I could tell it made Stanley mad. He snapped back, "I don't know any of those people. Who could put that together?"

"Call Wexler," was my answer. I didn't hear back from Stanley for a couple of weeks. My phone rang in the middle of the night again. Stanley said, "Be at Muscle Shoals Sounds on Thursday. The Stones are recording."

I didn't drive my too-well-known, lime-gold, fastback Mustang to Muscle Shoals. I took my wife's nondescript tan Plymouth station wagon, incognito. Secret mission. The parking lot was empty. What the hell. I went to the back door and knocked. Jimmy Johnson cracked the door and peeped out, "Dickinson, what do you want?"

"Here for the Stones session," I said.

"Oh, hell, does everybody in Memphis know?" he asked, his voice high-pitched with excitement. I assured him nobody in Memphis knew. I was there to meet Stanley.

"Come on in, man. They just made it to Muscle Shoals airport. The largest plane that ever landed there and three people got off." We wait-

Keith. He walked into the room like a scarecrow, mumbling to himself and chuckling over his private joke. His skin was greenish blue or bluish green. His best tooth hung from his left ear and formerly belonged to a cougar. Tied scarves and bracelets hung from his skeletal arms like ragged, bloody bandages on a wounded soldier. The front of his projectile spiked hair was peroxide orange, like a high school harlot from 1957.

Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman were tiny. That's the first thing you think when you meet the Stones. They seemed so inappropriately small. They were friendly. Stanley was with them, THE ROLLING STONES thank God, but Jagger and others were not.

COC 59100

STICKY FINGERS

1. BROWN SUGAR (3:50) Mick-Jagger - Keith Richard

They accepted my presence as Stanley's friend. We shot the shit, easily and comfortably. Before long Keith and I were sitting at the studio piano playing Hank Williams songs. They had just met Gram Parsons, who turned them on to country music. I think somehow Keith associated me with Gram, which warmed him up to me naturally, bullshitting and talking to me good naturedly, musician to musician. Wyman and Watts were beautiful. Bill was quiet, lurking with his gorgeous brunette wife all covered in

white bunny fur like the ice princess. 8 Charlie prowled the studio, checking everything out, microphones, speakers, etc. He seemed like an old school jazz cat.

Ahmet Ertegun, the big he-bull himself, appeared grinning 🚆 through expensive teeth. You knew, instantly, every hair in his beard was precisely the same length. Ahmet was starting a R.B. Greaves day session while the Stones would record at night. He seemed to be waiting for Mick before he split.

Y THE TIME THE REST OF THEM ARRIVED, I HAD passed the test and was part of the session crew. Jimmy Johnson was the engineer. No one else was inside. Business was about to pick up.

Late arrivals: Mick Jagger, Little Mick (Taylor), road man- ➤ €





JIMMY JOHNSON CRACKED THE DOOR AND PEEPED OUT, 'DICKINSON, WHAT DO YOU WANT?' 'HERE FOR THE STONES SESSION,' I SAID. 'OH, HELL, DOES EVERYBODY IN MEMPHIS KNOW?'





Not Spanish Tony Sanchez, but a security guy for the Stones who shows up in the Altamont video with his arm in a cast. He broke both fists at the ill-fated gig. Once Jagger settled in, things began to pop. They started to run down Fred McDowell's You Gotta Move. They were doing it in their live set as a Mick/Keith duet with acoustic guitar and vocal. When they started to play it as a band, it wasn't working. Stanley and I retreated to the control room with engineer Jimmy Johnson.

Wyman played the Wurlitzer electric piano; no one played bass. It wasn't coming together. I thought, what a drag, after all this I'm going to watch the Stones blow it. Stanley had become romantically involved with the little sister of an old Macon friend, and was anxious to go to the motel and telephone her, which would give me a chance to smoke a joint. The Muscle Shoals boys were paranoid about dope since the State Police had recently busted another local studio. Things started pretty tight, but they soon loosened up.

Stanley and I headed to the Holiday Inn. When we returned to the studio not 45 minutes later, the Stones were gathered in the control room for the first playback. Charlie Watts was smiling. What issued from the speakers at the old coffin factory was a far cry from Fred McDowell at Hunter Chapel. Jagger's voice put an ominous tone on the old gospel song. Keith hammered the hook-riff in a way that sounded more like Bo Diddley than Old Fred. "When the Lord gets ready," Jagger snarled, "You got to moooove."

His accent seemed oddly appropriate. He mutated his young man's English voice into the world-weary moan of an old black field hand from darkest Mississippi Delta. Delighted, Keith overdubbed the guitar hook that announced every vocal line with any guitar he could find – Telecaster, a 12-string Stella. The guitar riff started to take on a whip-crack chain gang sound. The drums sounded a sort of death march. In the brief time Stanley and I had been gone, they had turned the ragged beginning of a disaster into a Rolling Stones classic.

work on the sounds as the band played the song instrumentally.

Somebody said, "Charlie, you need to tune the tom-tom, so it doesn't rub the bass."

Charlie said, "I never tune me drums."

Ian Stewart, the road manager and sideman piano player who had been with them since the beginning said, "Wait a minute. You can't say something like, 'I never tune my drums' and just go on."

"Why should I tune something I'm going to go out there and beat on? I'll hit for a while and it will change," Charlie said, and walked off into the studio. He did and it did. Two more takes and they had it. That was the second night.

They stashed a vial of cocaine in the tack piano in the back corner of the studio. Not Spanish Tony slept on a nearby couch, guarding the goods. Keith offered Stanley and me a line. Charlie Freeman and I had done coke with Bettye LaVette on her session at Sounds Of Memphis but I didn't get it. It made me feel supernormal, taking away brain clouds I carefully constructed, but I was polite, taking my share.

That night somebody brought barbeque sauce and containers of pulled pork. As we made sandwiches, Jagger and I ended up together. "Don't you think you could stand to lose a bit of weight?" he asked. Before I could reply, Charlie Watts answered, "He ought to kick your ass."

Mick picked up a container of meat and walked away, eating it by hand. The same thing happened when you passed him a joint: he walked away with it. The privilege of celebrity.

■ HE STONES WANTED TO PLAY A FREE GIG, WHICH seemed simple enough. Their touring permit had run out; they wanted to promote it themselves. They wanted to schedule a gig in California. Rolling Stone editor Jann Wenner helped them over the telephone from San Francisco. It wasn't going well. Keith had visions of state police troopers blocking his entry to

JAGGER PICKED UP A CONTAINER OF MEAT AND WALKED AWAY, EATING IT BY HAND THE SAME THING HAPPENED WHEN YOU PASSED HIM A JOINT: HE WALKED AWAY WITH IT.

HE NEXT NIGHT WAS DIFFERENT. THEY started with a heavy guitar. Keith was in G tuning, but he didn't sound like Furry Lewis. The inversion of the intervals in what is actually a fivestring banjo tuning creates a meat-heavy twang that somehow propels the beat of the music like a melodic drumbeat, somehow mean and hard with a sexual strut like a belly dance rhythm.

Keith sang what weren't words but grunts and groans, painful and sexual. Jagger wrote on a green stenographer's pad as if taking dictation. He was translating. When he had the idea, he walked away, humming to himself. He circled the room like a buzzard over a carcass. After what seemed like not enough time, he turned over three pages of finished lyrics to Brown Sugar. Some say it's about Claudia Lennear, the Ikette from Ike And Tina Turner's Revue, who toured as an opener for the Stones in '69. Be that as it may, Jagger had responded to his environment. He soaked up the old South's ghosts and the deep Alabama accents that

surrounded him. In the first verse he refers to "Sky-Dog Slave-Trader". Sky-Dog was the nickname the Muscle Shoals gang had for slide guitarist Duane Allman. When he finished the lyrics, he stood in the centre of the room with a hand-held mic and ran it down with the band until they had an arrangement. Then he went E into the control room with Jimmy Johnson to the festival ground. He was looking forward to the confrontation like some bizarre civil rights demonstration.

Albert and David Maysles, documentary film-makers, showed up for the third night of sessions. They manoeuvred around without speaking. They had filmed the Stones' first concert of the tour in New York, and were following the band to San Francisco for the free concert.

My mother read in the Chicago newspaper an article with the headline, "WHERE ARE THE ROLLING STONES?" Nobody knew. Another thing nearly nobody knew was that their recording contract with EMI/ London Group was expiring. They had signed early in the "British Invasion" and did not receive high royalty front money. Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler knew it. Wexler flew in for the last day of the session to talk turkey. Ahmet was the super cool jetsetter. Wexler was the snake charmer, old-school record man who could sweet talk the most extreme hard bop blues musician hip to record industry hype and typical bullshit jive. Before you knew it, you had signed the nap-

kin and given him your first-born.

When Jerry arrived the stage was set and the >



M:DOWETT



PAY NO ATTENTION TO KEITH, SAID BILL WYMAN. 'HE ONLY KNOWS are represented by numbers and look like a WHERE HE PUT HIS

✓ cast was complete for the Stones' final act at Muscle Shoals Sounds. I dressed carefully for the session. Black and white striped bell bottoms, black Spanish boots, a purple button front undershirt, and a shiny black jacket-shirt with a multicoloured paisley print scarf tied around my neck. I looked like the Summer of Love.

YESTERDAY

As different as the second night had been from the first, the third night was different still, lower key. The studio was more relaxed, settled in, yet with the feeling this was the last act.

The song was different, too. Keith had fathered a son, Marlon; this was a lullaby. "Wild horses couldn't drag me away" was about Keith not wanting to tour. He had a fully developed melody and chord progression, a complete chorus, and sketchy non-word verse melodies. Jagger took his green steno pad and walked to the lounge. This song took him a little longer. Celebrity gossip columns had carried a story about Marianne Faithfull, Mick's old girlfriend, and her rumoured marriage to Lord somebody, unconfirmed. Jagger was like a high school boy about it. He turned the simple lullaby into a metaphoric tale of unrequited love and betrayal.

As they started to run down the song, Ian Stewart rose from the piano and started packing gear that wasn't being used, as if leaving. "Well," said Jagger. "I assume we need a keyboardist."

He stood with Wexler and me. Wexler said, "Baby, we could call Bewey Beckett," in his Jewish Elmer Fudd voice.

I said, "I don't think that's what he means." I didn't find why Stew didn't play on Wild Horses for another 10 years, when he told me in a bar in New York: "I do not play on songs with minor chords."

HE STONES WERE TOO out of tune for the studio's concert grand and the Wurlitzer [electric piano]. So I sought the old upright tack piano in the back of the studio where they had their cocaine stashed. When I started to play, Not Spanish Tony woke from a deep sleep and moved the stash, making for a nice little dramatic scenario. I found a section of the old piano just out of tune enough to work with the Stones, and started trying to interpret the chord chart I had gotten from Keith. It was instantly apparent something was wrong.

Keith had just learned to write a "Nashville" system chord chart, where the chords

phone number.

Bill Wyman saw me having trouble, and said, "Where'd ya get them chords,

"I got them from Keith."

"Pay no attention to him," he said. "He has no idea what he's doing. He only knows where he put his fingers yesterday." This is the best description of rock'n'roll guitar playing I have heard.

Once I figured the song out, it all made sense. The song was in the key of G but the progression started on B minor, which Keith had called #1 on his chart, throwing the following chords up a minor third. Bill and I rewrote the chart. Little Mick came over, snatched my copy of the chart, and walked away. Fuck it, I thought, and

started to play.

The song had a sort of cowboy ballad feel. All I had that would fit was my old Texas Ramsey Horton/Floyd Cramer licks. I had two. Starting with a one-note bass and an open fifth after the downbeat minor sixth, I applied my Floyd second interval grace note phrases wherever they

fit. Charlie was dropping out for whole "A" verse patterns and coming back in like a drunken sailor falling down stairs. Several times in the song I was literally leading the changes in

the form. We struggled along for say 45 minutes, playing the changes instrumentally with Jagger in the control room with Jimmy. I heard the click of the talkback and Jagger spoke the words I had been dreading. "Hey, Keith," he snarled. "What do you think about the piano?" Silence. Then Keith replied, "It's the only thing I like." I breathed a sigh of relief and put in my second Floyd Cramer lick with silent thanks to God and Ramsey Horton.

W SUGAR O WILL

We got the cut quickly. Jagger was pleased with the track. Jimmy Johnson set up to overdub vocals. They took the songs in the order they were recorded. Mick and Keith were in the vocal booth on the same mike, passing a fifth of Jack Daniel's Black Label bourbon whiskey back and forth, singing background and lead on the same pass. They were redoing Brown Sugar during a break in overdubbing. Stanley Booth and I were in the control room. I thought we were alone. I said, "He's leaving a line out that he was singing last night on tracking. And it's a good one."

"Tell 'em." Charlie Watts' voice came from the couch in front of the console. "Tell 'em," he said, again, more emphatically.

"I'm not going to tell him," I stuttered. Charlie rose from the couch and pressed the talkback button. "Tell him," he ordered.

"Mick, Mick," I said. "You're leaving out a line that you were singing last night."

"What is it, then?" Jagger replied.

"'Hear him whip the women.' Last night you were singing 'hear him whip the women' as a pickup to the chorus of the first verse."

"Who said that?" Mick asked. "Was that Booth?"

"Dickinson," Charlie replied through the talkback.

"Same thing," Jagger replied. I've never figured out what he meant, though I'm sure it was a put down.

With the vocals finished, Jimmy Johnson and Mick set about rough mixes. Jimmy had been playing guitar on the daytime R.B. Greaves sessions and cutting the Stones overnight. He'd been awake for at least three days. His eyes were bugging out like a tree frog's.

S THEY MIXED, I COULDN'T HELP NOTICE THE Maysles brothers setting up two lights pointing at the control room window from the tracking side. They had been shooting with available light only, which was lacking. My vast theatrical training at Baylor Theatre in Waco, Texas, led me to realise that whatever they shot with lights had more chance of making it to film. I studied the situation. Nobody was on the couch where Charlie had been. The lights and the camera aimed directly at it. I had the last joint. Keith knew it. As they started working on Wild Horses, I put the joint behind my ear and sat on the couch. Keith joined me. The light came on. Tape and camera began to roll, and I was in the movies.

Two shots from the Muscle Shoals session survive in Gimme Shelter: a shot of Mick and Jimmy Johnson behind the mixing console and the shot of Keith and me on the couch, eyes closed during the Wild Horses playback. Thank you, Baylor Theatre.

We all met at the Holiday Inn restaurant for a farewell breakfast. Jagger disappeared for 20 minutes. When he re-emerged, he had changed clothes for the first time in three days, now wearing a white suit, a long red and white striped scarf, oversized golfer tam, a cartoonish be-bop cat-hat, and dark glasses. He had also managed to get high as a kite. His voice had dropped at least an octave. He sat between Wexler and Ertegun and started talking about \$18 million.

During our time on the couch, Keith had asked me, "What do you think about Atlantic?" I gave him the old party line: tradition, catalogue, musical and genre knowledge, Tom Dowd, the atomic scientist engineer. I gave him the hard sell. Now with Jagger talking turkey with Wexler and Ahmet, it started making sense. They were negotiating the Stones' new record deal.

I was sitting in a booth with Bill Wyman and his white bunny fur-clad ice princess. A waitress asked, "You boys in a group?"

"Yes," announced Wyman. "We're Martha and the Vandellas."

The girl shrugged and took our order.

The Stones (and Stanley) went to Altamont. I went back to Memphis with a seven-and-ahalf ips reel-to-reel tape of Wild Horses.

"Don't let your disc jockey friends copy that," Mick warned.

"He ought to kick your ass," said Charlie. 🐼





In another highlight from the Dickinson memoir, meet SAM & DAVE: "the Soul Men who ate white boy musicians for lunch"...

IN JANUARY 1970 Jim Dickinson and the rest of The Dixie Flyers signed $of fat \, Sounds \, Of \, Memphis \, and \,$ clocked on as Atlantic Records house band at North Miami's Criteria Studios. Cue "cool rum drinks with umbrellas and fruit" and a procession of landmark sessions, notably for Aretha Franklin's Spirit In The Dark album. But one of the wildest, as Dickinson's memoir relates, was a date with soul legends Sam & Dave...

We had heard horror stories about Sam & Dave, tough tales of the Soul Men who ate white boy musicians for lunch. But with the backwards good luck of The Dixie Flyers, we came closest to doing our thing on the Sam & Dave date. Unfortunately, the record did not come out for 20 years and then in Japan, which is another story.

Sam Moore and Dave Prater were

vocal booth. They worked hand-held microphones, back to the rhythm section, facing the control room glass like a live nightclub performance. I have never seen another performer do it, yet it seemed so natural. They performed for Jerry Wexler, who was producing, and an unseen audience of future listeners. When A Woman Needs A Man, She Needs A Soul Man was such a performance that they threw their mikes down, and walked out to an imaginary audience's applause and screams. They walked down the hallway, out the front door, got into their cars, and drove away. Elvis has left the building

Dave's car was an XKE roadster with an embossed leather top that read "Soul Man" in print only visible from an overhead helicopter. He took more dope than any other human I ever witnessed. Charlie and I followed him into the bathroom and watched him unfold two \$100 bills on top of

WE WATCHED DAVE UNFOLD TWO \$100 BILLS, ONE FULL OF COKE AND THE OTHER WITH GLOWING BLUE HEROIN.

raised in Miami Central, the for-real hood. They feuded notoriously and only tolerated each other's presence when doing the act. I see nothing wrong with this situation; The Dixie Flyers were not friends. We seldom interacted socially. But when somebody counted to four, we were there

Anyway, we blew Sam & Dave's socks off. They cancelled other work and cut for a second week in Criteria. On one song, Knock It Out Of The Park, we hit our old Sounds Of Memphis syncopated retro groove with the wah-wah clavinet and machine-gun guitar. Another soul ballad, When A Woman Ne Man, She Needs A Soul Man, had hit written all

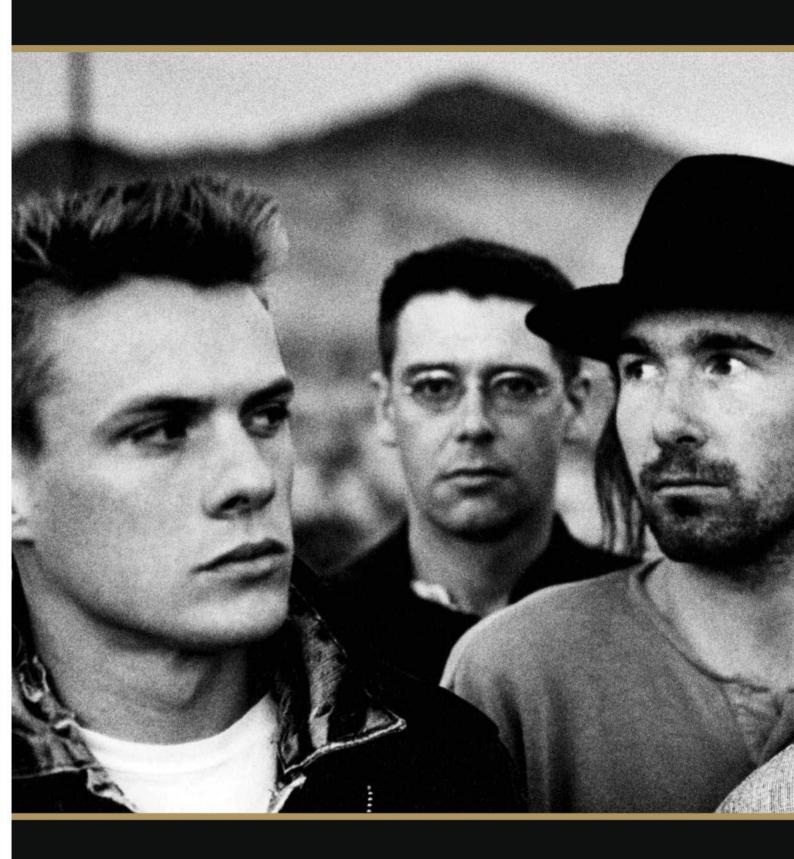
Sam & Dave, like Brook Benton, never went into th the urinal, one full of coke and the other with glowing blue heroin Without removing his shades, he bent over and hit each side of his huge nose with controlled substances. He turned, went out of the john, and sang as if he had just brushed his teeth.

Sadly, Dave is no longer with us. He was the fast-dancing, funky, low-harmony singing Soul Man, the second best R&B voice I ever experienced, the first being James Carr.

The Sam & Dave session turned out so well, Sam & Dave



A M E R I C A N



The Joshua Tree was the album that launched **U2** into the stratosphere – musically, commercially – and consummated a love affair with the 50 States that even *Rattle And Hum* couldn't curdle.

DREAMS





Thirty years on, in a rare mood of retrospection, they're taking it back on the road, only to find eerie parallels between 1987 and 2017. "It seems like we've come full circle," they tell **Tom Doyle**. Photography by **Anton Corbijn**.

UN DEVIL STADIUM, TEMPE, ARIZONA, DECEMBER 20, 1987. IT IS the final night of the Joshua Tree tour and, on-stage, in the hyper-alert minds of the four members of U2, the air is bristling with danger. The FBI are here, scanning the 55,000-strong crowd for a potential gunman who has issued a death threat against singer Bono, declaring that he will be shot tonight if he dares to sing the third verse of Pride (In The Name Of Love), which directly addresses the assassination of Martin Luther King, 19 years before.

It is only seven years since the murder of John Lennon in New York, so the FBI are taking death threats against rock stars seriously. On-stage the 27-year-old singer is thinking: Is he in the building? Could he be on the roof

of the bleachers? In the rafters?

Never ones to shy away from expressing their views, U2 had stirred up trouble eight months earlier when they'd chosen to begin the tour in Tempe, arriving in town to discover that the recently-elected Republican governor of Arizona, Evan Mecham, had cancelled MLK Day, a paid holiday for state employees in honour of King, claiming it had been illegally established by his predecessor. As a result, Stevie Wonder has already announced that he will boycott the state. Later, Public Enemy will go much further, on By The Time I Get To Ari-

zona, a protest song with a video where they apparently affix a bomb to the underside of the governor's car.

Ahead of the tour opener at Tempe's 12,000-capacity Activity Center back on April 2, U2 made a "sizeable financial contribution" to the Mecham Watchdog Com-

mittee, an organisation committed to removing him from power and, on the night, had promoter Barry Fey read out a statement from the band: "Mecham is an embarrassment to the people of Arizona..."

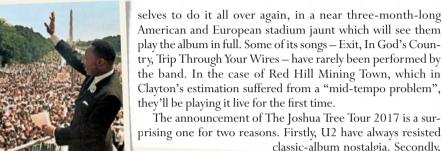
"We had a go at him," says Bono today, recalling the December 20 show. "The travelling circus had arrived and we're in a pitched battle for the honouring of Dr King. There were a lot of death threats and one of them was taken seriously. The FBI came and we were all spoken to: 'Do you wanna go ahead with the show?' And we did."

Seventeen songs in, U2 launch into Pride. In the third verse, Bono crouches at the front of the stage and closes his eyes to sing. "I looked up at the end of the verse and I clearly wasn't dead," he laughs. "But not only that... Adam Clayton was standing in front of me."

Astonishingly, U2's bassist had protectively stepped between Bono and the audience, ready to take a bullet or dissuade the shooter. "It's weird what goes through your head," says Clayton now. "Or maybe not even through your head. Maybe it's just an instinctive thing of daring someone to carry out a threat like that.'

The Edge, with the guitarist's habitual gift for understatement, says, "I just thought, That's a mate..."

HE ORIGINAL TOUR FOR The Joshua Tree was one filled with incident and drama. Now, 30 years on, U2 are readying them-



classic-album nostalgia. Secondly, they had already spoken of their plan to release their in-progress album Songs Of Experience this year and resume their Innocence + Experience tour. So what changed?

"Well, the new songs were about ready to go," says Bono, "and then the world changed. We just had one of those moments where you go, 'Let's step back from this for a second.' It is a very

personal album, and it's not gonna become a political album overnight. But it has to now go through the filter of what's happened in the rest of the world.

"We all thought, OK, we better give ourselves a moment to think about this. We really wanted to reflect on

"Contextually," adds Clayton, "The Joshua Tree seemed to in some ways mirror the changes that were happening in the world during the Thatcher/ Reagan period. It seems like we've kind of come full circle and we're back there with a different cast of characters."

U2's initial idea was to perform just a couple of Joshua Tree shows, possibly at festivals in the

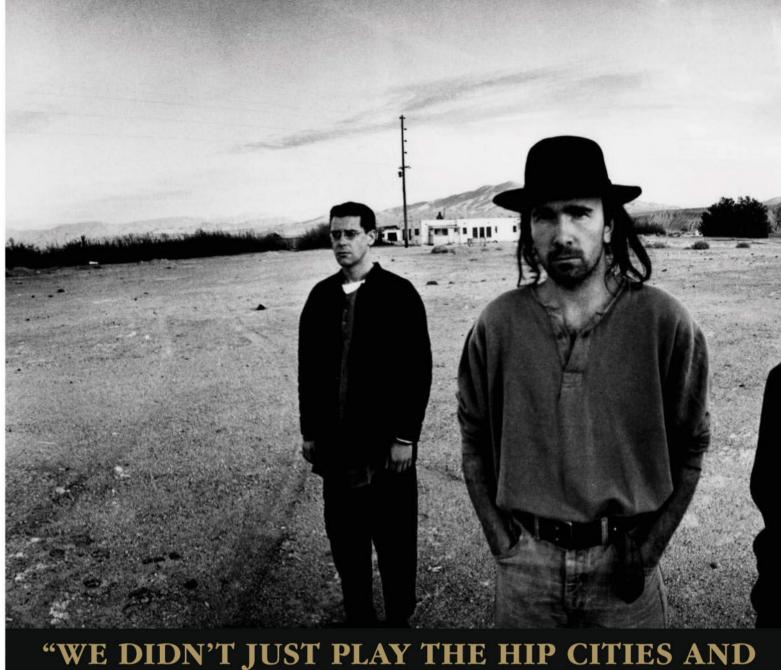
> UK and the US, then the plan snowballed. An inspiration may have been Bruce Springsteen's acclaimed 2016 tour of The River – as much for the way it appeared to allow Springsteen to take stock as for its pecuniary success (The River was the highest-grossing tour of the year). "As Bruce Springsteen recently said," notes U2 drummer Larry Mullen Jr, "the songs take you back and they take you forward. I believe that."

"If you remember, I was the one who wanted to cut down The Joshua Tree," quips Bono. "But I think the experience of Songs Of Innocence had quite a profound effect on all of us. If you want to $\begin{tabular}{l} \begin{tabular}{l} \begin{t$ get on to the future, you're going to have to at least visit the past. You may not ➤ §



"MY COMING MATTER OF **CONSCIENCE.**" **BONO**





"WE DIDN'T JUST PLAY THE HIP CITIES AND WERE TRAVELLING THROUGH. THIS MYTHIC

✓ want to dwell there, but you're gonna have to visit."

The Joshua Tree — now nearing the 30-million worldwide sales mark — was U2's ambivalent love letter to the US, an album written and released in the time of Reagan, now to be revived in the uncertain era of Trump. Back in 1987, Bono was quoted as saying that the lyrics on the record were about "my love of America and my fear of what America could become". Three decades on, it remains a potent statement.

When it comes to the newly-inaugurated forty-fifth President, U2 have already set out their stall, by including video grabs of the campaigning Trump in their two standalone shows of last year. In Las Vegas in September, during the song Desire, Bono echoed the Republican candidate's repeated phrase, "What do you have to lose?" with the response, "Everything!" In California the following month, the singer furiously dialogued with clips of Trump during *The Joshua Tree*'s Bullet The Blue Sky before yelling, "Candidate... you're fired!"

"Well, y'know, my coming out against Trump was much more personal than political actually," Bono says now. "It was a matter of conscience for me. His threatening of protesters with violence had me on guard (*laughs*), as I'm naturally one of those protesters."

Of course, few predicted Trump would bag the presidency. But

now that he holds high office, it presents Bono with a dilemma. As an artist, does he go on criticising Trump, knowing that, as a leading face of the ONE campaign against global poverty who has taken a bipartisan stance to deal with George W Bush and Barack Obama, he might have to cool his ire if he's any hope of working with him? It's a question the singer is clearly still working out how to answer.

"I hope that the organisation can suffer me breaking ranks," he sighs. "But I'm an artist as well as a member of ONE, and at times, I have to stand up and speak the truth as I see it to power. In my work in the ONE campaign, if we can find common ground to work, I'd be very happy to. I had a messenger from a long-time associate of President Trump come to me and say, 'Look, we're not thinking about the past, we're thinking about the future, and please be ready to work together."

But can Bono really imagine doing that?

"My thoughts were... if there was something real behind that, and there were *real* commitments — and I know his daughter Ivan-ka's very keen on gender issues — then we would work together. But I still have very strong feelings about America and I'm not likely to stop, if you like, exhaling on this moment in time."

In other words, like the rest of us, Bono is watching this fastmoving news story unfold, and preparing himself for anything. He

Desert sky dreamers: Adam, Edge, Bono and Larry, lost in God's country, The Joshua Tree album shoot, 1986; (below) Bono at Live Aid with (from left) promoter Harvey Goldsmith, Paul McCartney, Bob Geldof, Freddie Mercury, July 13, 1985.



FUCK OFF. WE LOVED THE LANDSCAPES WE AMERICA." BONO

does, however, insist that the US leg of th Joshua Tree tour will be issues-based and a "meditation on America".

"So when I sing Red Hill Mining Town in wherever, it's resonant now," he points out. "The America that we came across in our early twenties is not unlike the one that's there now."

T WAS IN THE SPRING OF 1985, WHEN TOURING IN support of The Unforgettable Fire took them from the major US cities and out into the heartland, that U2 first began to fall hard for America. Travelling on tour buses borrowed from country stars - the dark stained-oak interiors of which, as Adam Clayton remembers, "looked a bit like a western bar... invariably they'd have a set of cow horns somewhere" - the band members motored for miles through the vast continent.

Looking out on this endless, epic scenery, seeing their faces reflected in the glass of the tour bus windows, they began to wonder how they fitted into this enormous picture. "We didn't just come in, play the hip cities and fuck off," argues Bono. "We loved the landscapes we were travelling through. This mythic America, I think we were all lost to."

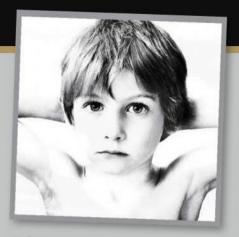
To kill their hours and hours of downtime, the band steeped themselves in Americana: reading Flannery O'Connor, Norman Mailer and Raymond Carver, tuning into local radio stations to hear country and blues, pulling into truck stops that sold stetsons and leather waistcoats. "We were part of the post-punk movement," says Edge, "which was a denial of the blues and American influences. It was like a wellspring of inspiration we were able to tap into."

At the same time, as their audiences grew to arena level and The Continues on page 80 🖔



COMING TO AMERICA

The road to Joshua Tree, in five and a half U2 albums, by Danny Eccleston.





BOY



(Island, 1980)

An exuberant debut, establishing the canonical elements – Larry's bastard loud drums, Edge's plangent, enmeshing guitars, Bono's yearning leaps into falsetto – just about transcending its influences (the Skids on Out Of Control; the Banshees on An Cat Dubh). The orthodox post-punkness seems now, ironically, a strength, and its lyrical ambiguities ("Your eyes make a circle / I see when I go in there") brew a nagging disquiet that U2 would occasionally but, arguably, too rarely revisit. And apart from an inexplicable fucking glockenspiel on I Will Follow and Into The Heart, you can see why producer Steve Lillywhite's still on the payroll.

OCTOBER



(Island, 1981)

U2's crisis album (stack it with all of U2's other crisis albums) was recorded under pressure when a briefcase containing Bono's lyrics was snatched at a Portland, Oregon show and the singer found himself improvising new ones as the studio clock ticked at £50 an hour. In 2017, it stands up surprisingly well, though the 'Have you heard the Good News?' doorstepping vibe of Rejoice and With A Shout (Jerusalem) is not for everyone. In fact, the album is best when doubt gnaws at faith: as on Tomorrow, where Bono and uillean pipes grasp at the anguish of bereavement, and the spectral title track, with The Edge going all Erik Satie on the piano. How American does it sound? Not in the slightest bit.

WAR



(Island, 1983)

U2's idea of the political anthem – fiercely pacifist, intensely humanist – coalesces around a newly streamlined sense of their own power, springing from Larry Mullen's venomous boom-bap on Sunday Bloody Sunday and (especially) the chiming icicle rock of New Year's Day, and despite a lack of depth beneath the crisp layer of singles (Drowning Man, or The Refugee, anyone?), it provides the artillery that softened up the States. "The songs here stand up against anything on The Clash's London Calling," spake Rolling Stone, invoking the band whose dropped baton U2 would seize. Meanwhile, Seconds sounds Talking Heads-y enough to explain U2's next step: employing their producer, Brian Eno.

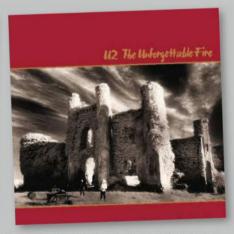


UNDER A BLOOD RED SKY



(Island, 1983)

Up to that point, U2's most blatant come-hither to the American market: a live album only 3/8 of which was recorded in the States (the rest in Sankt Goarshausen on the Rhine) but which manages, thanks to Bono's helpful "Hey, this is Red Rocks!" during the opening Gloria and constructive confusion created by a film of their Colorado show broadcast under the same title (and later released on VHS), to come off as an American moment. But wherever they are, U2 are superbly spiky, urgent and spontaneous – although Bono's invocation, during a lull in The Electric Co, of Stephen Sondheim's Send In The Clowns would cost the band \$50,000 for the copyright violation, and it was cut from most (but not all) subsequent pressings and formats.

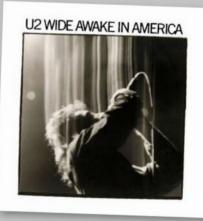


THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE



(Island, 1984)

U2's first great sonic reboot, swopping the fist-pumps of *War* for Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois' oblique strategies. American themes – Dr Martin Luther King on the passionate Pride (In The Name Of Love) and valedictory MLK – and titular resonances – Elvis Presley & America, 4th Of July (although U2 had Edge's daughter Hollie, born 4/7/84, more in mind) – prevail and even the gauzy Promenade intones the American tropes of "Coca-Cola, football, radio, radio, radio..." Meanwhile, the slowburning Bad combines the skyscraping high of heroin with the anguish of watching a friend succumb. Detractors who decry U2's perceived bigness and certitude may wish to revisit the group at their most woozy, trancey and precarious.



WIDE AWAKE IN AMERICA



(Island, 1985)

A live mini-album, but only "...In America" in the contrived sense of "originally available only In America", since U2's bravura performance of Bad – the main event here, presaging the Live Aid breakthrough to come – hails from 1984's Birmingham NEC show. Unforgettable Fire opener A Sort Of Homecoming – recorded at a Wembley soundcheck with crowd noise overdubbed by crowd-noise-overdubber-supreme Tony Visconti – gains clarity, excitement and gospel emphasis, while ... Fire outtakes – superior, ethereal The Three Sunrises; the less essential Love Comes Tumbling – bring matters to a close.

Continued from page 77
Unforgettable Fire reached
Number 12 in the US, the hits
weren't happening there for
U2, with Pride (In The Name
Of Love) disappointingly
stalling at Number 33 on the
Billboard Hot 100. "We were
trying to get on the radio and
break a track," the band's
then-manager Paul McGuin-

ness admits, "and we didn't succeed in doing that."

Then, in the summer of 1985, came Live Aid, which U2 initially felt they'd botched. Bono disappeared off the stage during Bad – *The Unforgettable Fire*'s extended addicts' elegy – as he laboured to pull a girl out of the audience for a slow dance. Meanwhile, their time slot evaporated, forcing them to cut Pride from their short set. But as the drama played out on nearly two billion TV screens, it was the performance that made them. "It had an enormous effect on U2's career," says McGuinness. "All the albums went into the chart the following day."

Much, then, was riding on the next U2 album. In January 1986, following a positive experience recording on location at Slane Castle near Drogheda with Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois for *The Unforgettable Fire*, the same team entered Danesmoate, a Georgian manor house in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains, on the south edge

of Dublin's sprawl. Removing the door between its high-ceilinged living and drawing rooms and replacing it with a sheet of Plexiglas, they fashioned a makeshift recording environment where they would be freed from the pressures of the ticking studio clock.

"Edge found it... I think he needed more rooms for his guitar equipment," jokes Mullen. "It was something different, with few distractions. The house had a special vibe about it."

In contrast to the punchy, increasingly digital productions of the '80s, Edge remembers that part of the sonic inspiration for *The Joshua Tree* came from Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds' 1985 album *The Firstborn Is Dead*, recorded in the reverberant ballroom at Hansa Studios in Berlin. U2 drafted its co-producer, Mark 'Flood' Ellis, into their sessions. "We just thought, This is what we want... the sound of a room," says the guitarist. "That ambience, that non-clinical feel."

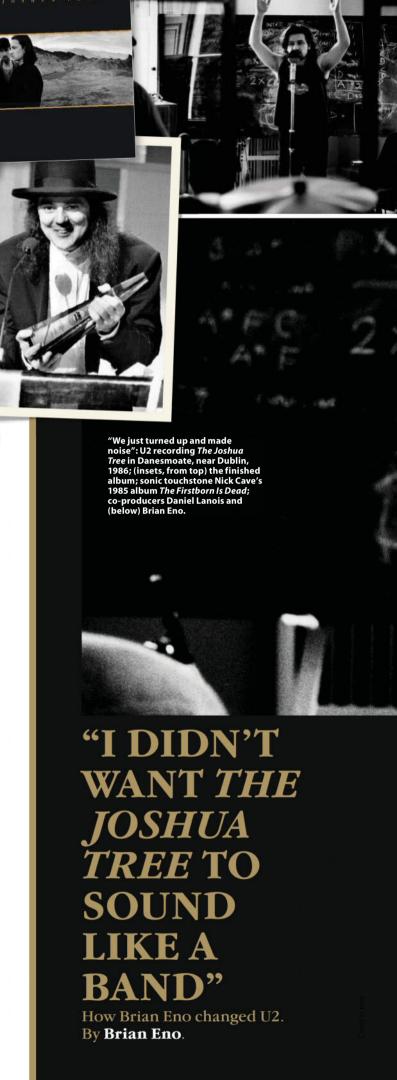
"It was our sound workshop," says Clayton. "We just turned up, we made noise and we let the chemistry of the band and Brian and Danny happen."

Then as now, U2 were a band without a creative formula, which was both to help and hinder them. Brian Eno admitted to this writer in 2006 that it was sometimes a hairy way to operate. "They were moving towards a more exploratory way of working," he remembered. "[But] then you get into that problem of going in the studio and there is really nothing to start from and that's a bit terrifying."

"For us the magic often happens at those moments where *no one* is paying attention," Edge explains. "It's about experimentation and exploration and discovery."

N ADDITION, THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE AND commitment U2 had suffered around 1981's *October* – when they'd painfully wrestled with how life in a rock'n'roll band squared with the Christian faith that three out of four of them espoused – had still to be fully resolved. "We were and are still Bible-reading believers," Bono points out. "And that made you such freakish company. There was a little bit of... are we weirdos? And answer... yes. We were struggling for reasons to be in the band and to not let being in the band destroy our lives and our marriages."

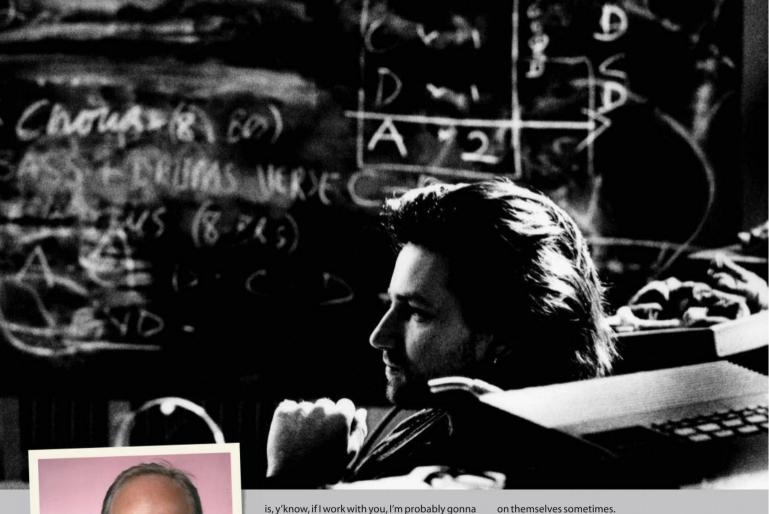
Some of that anguish was to surface in With Or Without You, a song which caught Bono torn between a life of domesticity and free-spirited artistry. "I had some difficult emotional stuff going on," he confesses. "I didn't understand at that point the freedom that I would receive from a committed relationship. (*Laughs*) I











DIDN'T KNOW MUCH about U2 before they got in contact with me. I knew one or two of their songs. I liked Sunday Bloody Sunday a lot. I was living in America at the time and I hadn't really been thinking much about producing. It came as a surprise to me actually that they got in touch.

I remember the first conversation I had on the phone with them. I said to Bono, The only thing

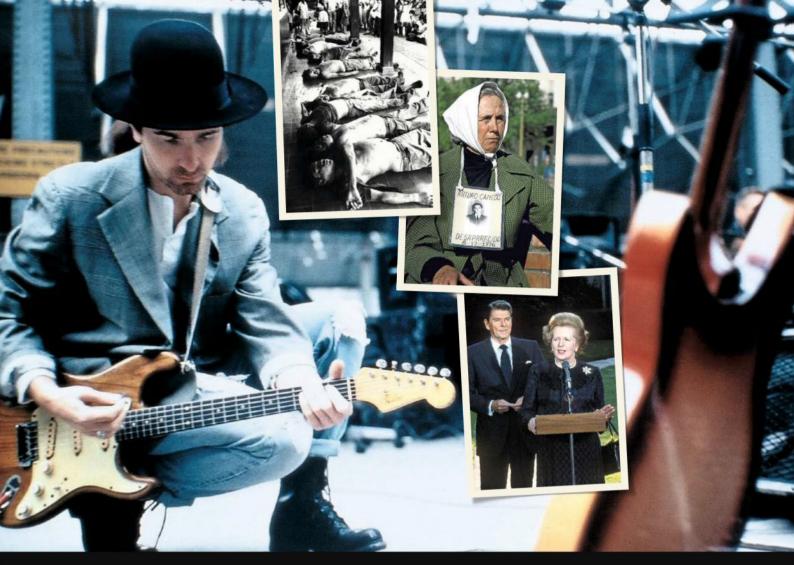
push the music in a completely different direction.' He said, 'That's exactly what we want to do.' I still felt quite cautious about the whole thing because I'm very opinionated. I've never been the kind of producer who sits there and smiles while something is going on that I don't like. I always think my responsibility is to try to make the best music that I can imagine.

We came from quite different musical backgrounds. I had been moving towards quieter and quieter music which was the opposite direction of where they were going. They had an obvious career trajectory in front of them if they wanted to take it and they didn't. They wanted to do something more than that.

The working relationship, as always, took a little while to settle down. The different roles that people took fell into place fairly quickly. Of course, Bono is very, very visionary and ambitious. I think one of the things that impressed me about the band was that they were very reluctant to settle for anything less than absolutely brilliant. They're very hard working. Very determined and obstinate. Pig-headed almost. You tend to think, Gosh they make it hard

One of the things that I brought with me very much was that modern music is *made* in studios. So you're possibly missing a lot of opportunities if you just rehearse your music and stand in front of microphones and perform it. A lot of the things that they were listening to and enjoying musically really were products of the studio, for instance the Talking Heads records. They were starting to understand that there are things you can do in studios that you can't do otherwise.

I didn't want *The Joshua Tree* to sound like a band. I'm never very happy when I'm listening to music and I get the picture of four people playing instruments in my head. What I want is something different from that. I want a film of some kind. I always wanted to create bigger pictures in people's minds and one of the ways I thought about doing that was to say, I don't want the music to have a clear edge to it. I don't want people just to hear guitar, bass, drums, voice. I want those sounds to be located within a sonic world of some kind. That was my thought – to try to expand the music in some way to make for a bigger picture.



"WE WERE LIKE, WOW! THIS IS A STEEP LEARNING THIS IN PUBLIC, IN FRONT OF A STADIUM FULL OF

✓ was feeling guilty if I was talking to somebody in the record company who was really attractive. I was, y'know, just... everything was at 11. But that's why With Or Without You is so operatic, and that's OK."

Reference for the song originally came from studio playbacks of Suicide records (not least, Cheree from the New York electronic duo's eponymous 1977 debut) and the arrival of Lanois' friend Michael Brook's Infinite Guitar — a prototype instrument promising ultimate sustain that, if assembled wrongly, would give its player electric shocks. In The Edge's hands it produced the song's atmospheric, humming heart.

"I'm in one room experimenting with this thing," he recalls, "and [Virgin Prunes singer and U2 compadre] Gavin [Friday] and Bono are in the other room listening to With Or Without You. They're suddenly hearing me and I'm not hearing the track and they're like, 'What the fuck's that? That's amazing."

Another moment of inspired spontaneity came when the band were playing over a Mullen Jr drum part salvaged from an abandoned, Clash-aspiring track called Under The Weather Girls and Lanois began singing a soul-styled vocal hook in Bono's ear. "He said, 'OK, don't sing too much!'" Lanois remembers. "And then off he went." The result was the light-seeking, gospel-tinged I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For, created virtually on the spot. "I don't think that would've happened if Danny wasn't in the room," Bono admits.

Working titles for U2's fifth studio album began to emerge – The Desert Songs, The Two Americas – partly informed by Bono's recent travels in Ethiopia and Central America; in El Salvador he witnessed

first-hand the US's intervention in the country's civil war. "Yeah, the trips to Salvador and Nicaragua were really eye-opening," he says. "I went with this sort of leftist Christian group who were smuggling people out. But we also went into rebel-backed territory and got a fright when we witnessed, I guess from a distance, the firebombing of rebel territory."

The result was the thunderous, Zeppelin-shaped Bullet The Blue Sky, in which Bono depicted Ronald Reagan with "his face red like a rose on a thorn bush" slapping down hundred dollar bills. Before recording its skyscraping guitar solo, Edge was vividly instructed by Bono to "put El Salvador through your amp." Elsewhere, what Clayton calls the "death squad darkness" of Mothers Of The Disappeared was a hymn to those who had been "vanished" at the hands of regimes in Central and South America.

"It's kind of ominous," the bassist says of the song. "But there's an optimism in the melody that we can survive these dark forces, as well as an acknowledgement that those dark forces are demonic in these situations."

As the sessions for what was to become *The Joshua Tree* accelerated to an end point, one track was proving almost impossible to nail. Built around a triplet echo Edge guitar riff that slipped tricksily from 6/8 to 4/4, it was conceived as a song that would sum up all the band's ideas for the record and walk tall in a live setting (no pressure, then). But the creation of Where The Streets Have No Name infuriated and exasperated all involved.

"It was more like Neu! than it was like anything that we'd done before," says the guitarist. "None of us had had to play with that sort of precision and discipline."

82 MOJO



Angels and Devils: (opposite, main) The Edge in 1988's film Rattle And Hum; (insets from top) El Salvador death squad victims, 1983; a Mother of the Disappeared, Argentina, 1985; Reagan and Thatcher; (this page) Bono and hat, Nassau Coliseum, NY, October 9, 1987; (insets from top) Suicide's Cheree, key to With Or Without You; Bono and wife Ali, Cork, 1987; I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For and Where The Streets Have No Name 45s.

white — producer of their first three albums and a trusted pair of ears, especially where potential singles were concerned. "Brian and Danny were a bit fried," says Lillywhite today. "It was just a case of passing the baton." Especially important was Lillywhite's mix of With Or Without You. "It's like a flower opening," he says. "The whole song just keeps growing."

"A great 45, as they were known," says Bono. "We were never great at that kind of compression and coherence. It just wasn't U2's forte. Steve did a masterful mix and that suddenly came into focus. With Or Without You and I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For came together right at the very end. So now we've got two singles. The band that didn't usually have any. And the excitement of that... that's what I think changed everything for us."

N MARCH 1987, WITH OR Without You began to fill the airwaves, and became U2's first US Number 1 single. But the group's transition from arenas to stadiums was not fated to be an elegant one. The U2 live show of 1987 was a high-wire act and, some nights, they fell off. "It was both exciting and terrifying," says Mullen. "To be honest, though, I think it had

the biggest impact on the singer."

U2's inconsistency as a live band would some nights enrage Bono, whose attempts to connect with audiences often bore an air of desperation. "We were street fighters more than boxers," he reflects. "To be powered by the Holy Spirit is one thing. To be powered by the fumes of your own rage is another, and on a good night (*laughs*) we were the

former. But oftentimes we just seemed to be a distance from the band we wanted to be. And I wasn't helping matters. I mean, I needed some sort of counselling. I definitely did. 'Cos these songs were unlocking all kinds of stuff in me.

"So we would play Exit [inspired by the murderer Gary Gilmore, as reflected in Norman Mailer's The Executioner's Song], and it's a really dark song. I was really black, and I would bring the

band into that blackness with me. Occasionally I'd end up in the audience or fall off the stage or do stupid shit and damage myself."

Bono's list of calamities included gashing open his chin on the hand-held spotlight he wielded during Bullet The Blue Sky at the first Tempe show and, later in Washington, DC, slipping over on a wet stage and detaching three ligaments from his left clavicle, forcing him to perform in a sling. In retrospect, was the singer's recklessness a form of self-harm by proxy?

"Yeah, it's not wonderful, and it's not psychologically sound,"

Bono concedes. "I do remember one of the shows we were playing somewhere and I got really bleak. Sometimes, if I really wanted to beat myself up, I would just almost stick my head in the bass drum (*laughs*). I'd face into the audience but with Larry's bass drum kicking my head in. And, man, he can kick your head in."

It's easy to forget how young the members of $\stackrel{\bigcirc}{\triangleright}$ U2 were in 1987 – men just past the mid-

CURVE. TO BE DOING PEOPLE." EDGE

Daniel Lanois remembers having to "conduct" U2 through the song's changes, written on an enormous blackboard, which he pointed to at the appropriate points with the tip of a pool cue. "I think we could diplomatically and fairly say," he deadpans, "that U2 had not fully achieved their PhDs in music yet. And so I had to be science teacher."

But tinkering continued on the song's master tape, as chords and parts were endlessly changed. At the end of his rope, Eno tried to stage an "accident" to erase the track and force U2 to start again, only to be restrained from doing so by engineer Pat McCarthy. "Eno was not quite as patient as I was at the time," laughs Lanois. "He was a cranky old duck, even back then."

"It was a ridiculous saga, that song," Eno lamented. "God, it was terrible. I estimate that 40 per cent of the time was spent on that one song. It became a kind of weird obsession. So I thought, Well if the tape got lost or damaged, we'd have to start again. [But] I didn't do it."

Into the final furlong, U2 brought in Steve Lilly-





BLAKE EXPECTATIONS

Back in the studio, U2's work on Songs Of Experience continues. Tom Doyle gets an update.

ONO WAS ALREADY talking up the imminent release of the second part of the William Blake-inspired Songs Of Innocence/Songs Of Experience diptych as soon as the first arrived in September 2014. But it wasn't until last year, after the completion of what the band still consider the first leg of the Innocence + Experience tour (it'll return in spring 2018) that U2 properly got down to work.

Then, at the end of 2016, following the shock of the US election, work stopped, leading to a rethink of the creative process. "I mean, I've been writing and changing things a little bit," says Bono. "Just tinkering. Edge too."

"A couple of tunes may get lyric updates," says Edge, "and we might even write a new song or two. We have to regroup and just compare notes and see how we all feel about it and what the implications are, based on where the world is at."

"I'd say we're at the 85 per cent mark," reckons Clayton. "We have probably about 15, 16 songs that could justify a place on the record. We have to cut it down to 12, and it's a case of moving songs in and out of the narrative, if you like."

More surprising, perhaps – and yet perhaps not – after reported sessions with producers Andy Barlow of Lamb and Jacknife Lee (who worked on 2004's How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb), U2 have been re-rehearsing the tracks for Songs Of Experience, with a view to cutting some of them again live at Electric Lady Studios in New York in March with Steve Lillywhite.

"The band are rehearsing now," says Bono, "so they'll be coming from a rehearsal phase into a recording phase. I'll be in and out. They don't really like me around rehearsals (laughs).

"Once we'd decided we're doing this, I went in to hear them rehearse. They're really good. They're better than good. They may be even better than great. I mean, they have the thing that you just can't learn or practise or whatever. When they play as a band and they're really committed, it's kind of... jaw dropping. So I'm interested to see where it goes. It references the past but it's about where we're at right now."

Of the songs Bono currently imagines will make the final tracklist, his current favourite is The Showman. "It's like something from Rubber Soul," he enthuses. "It's about singers. It's not me." To illustrate his point he quotes the song's lyrics to MOJO: "The showman gives you front row to his heart/The shaman prays that his heartache will chart/Making a spectacle of falling apart/Is the heart of the show."

Other likely inclusions are The Best Thing About You Is Me and The Little Things That Give You Away, while both Red Flag Day and Summer Of Love reference the refugee crisis in Europe. "Two songs that have a similar theme," says Bono,



"about people running for their lives on the same Mediterranean that we're running through the shallows. Summer Of Love is achingly beautiful and empty. It could be a big song and it's tiny. These are real tunes. The progressive rock lurgy has been defeated. It's dead. But not the spirit of innovation, not the spirit of experimentation."

Clayton says lessons have been learned after Songs Of Innocence: "There wasn't clarity to some of the mixes and we needed to be a little bit more inventive sonically. I mean, that record, when we performed it live, the songs became very, very masculine and very tough and we didn't really capture that on the record. So again one of the reasons why we're trying to slow this down a bit is we really want to get the mixes right. We don't

want a soup. We want a consommé."

The plan, for now, is that Songs Of Experience will be released in the latter half of 2017.
Famous last words, of course, as Bono himself acknowledges. "I mean, the only rush was the hubris of me telling everyone that this time I'm serious, the Songs Of Experience will be out shortly. And of course (laughs), the public flogging and the humiliation of the singer only delighted the band even more."

point of their twenties, suddenly thrown in the deep end. "We were like, Wow! This is a steep learning curve," Edge remembers. "Doing this in public, out there in front of a stadium full of people."

"I just remember the utter misery of it," Clayton admits. "It's unfortunate to say, but that tour, at the time when we should have been enjoying ourselves and rejoicing in the success, we were trying to figure out how to perform the songs in stadiums in the days when there wasn't video reinforcement. And it was very hard."

Every night, as Paul McGuinness remembers, there would be an aftershow post-mortem held where he and the band assessed their performance. Often, tempers erupted when it came to Bono's dangerous antics: "There'd be a row and he would promise not to do it again. But those promises were not always kept."

Night by night, U2 began to get their collective act together, to shine brighter. Demand was building, too, and in a summer European leg, they sold out two nights at Wembley Stadium. Meanwhile, *The Joshua Tree* had become the fastest-selling album in UK chart history. On their return to America, where the album had hogged the top spot for nine weeks, U2 scored their second US Number 1 single with I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For.

A moment for contented reflection, perhaps, but no – Bono's furies returned at the McNicols Sports Arena in Denver on November 8, 1987, when the news came through of the horrific Remembrance Day bombing in Enniskillen where 11 people, many of them pensioners, were murdered by the IRA, with a further 63 injured.

Far from home, on-stage, in an incensed speech Bono declared: "Fuck the revolution! What is the glory in bombing a Remembrance Day parade of old age pensioners? To leave them dying or crippled for life or dead under the rubble of the revolution that the majority of the people in my country don't want."

It was U2 versus the IRA: "We cost them money in America," says Bono today, "because we were campaigning against NORAID, the funding arm of the IRA. Speaking out about that meant in certain neighbourhoods [back home], we were not welcome."

Did the band fear reprisals? "That never really entered our minds," says Edge. "We just felt compelled."

"Y'know," Clayton sighs, "whenever you go up against a terrorist organisation or certainly a culture that has become used to the law of the gunmen, you're not dealing with rational people. But that's not a reason for not speaking out."

Amid this whirlwind, with *The Joshua Tree* topping the albums charts in 20 countries, U2 acclimatised to their new level of success. Well, more or less. "Looking back," says Edge, "I can see there were lots of things going on where we were starting to show the signs of the stress of it all and the impact on us as individuals."

"Your way of fitting into the world and evaluating things is just thrown for a while," says Clayton. "Unfortunately my response to that was you become a bit of an asshole (*laughs*). And then eventually you calm down."

2'S DISCOVERY OF TEQUILA CERTAINLY HELPED. Somewhere in the midst of the Joshua Tree tour, thanks to the socially-lubricating Mexican spirit, the band began to loosen up and have fun. "We discovered the upside-down tequila," Edge remembers. "Somebody puts their head back and they get salt poured in their mouth, a lime squeezed, two shots of tequila. Their head is shaken and then they stand up and swallow."

Post-show, the party would roll on into the small hours. By 5am, U2 were often looking for a hot tub. "You would see the sun come up from the dubious cleanliness of a jacuzzi," Clayton recalls, "shared with all your mates."

Another channel for blowing off steam was The Dalton Brothers, the hokey and under-rehearsed country and western band they impulsively put together to open for themselves one night in Indianapolis when support act Los Lobos were delayed due to bad weather. In crap wigs, shades and cowboy hats, as Alton Dalton

(Bono), Luke (Edge), Duke (Larry) and Betty (Adam), they performed shonky covers of the Eagles' Tequila Sunrise and Hank Williams' Lost Highway, to the boos of their own fans who didn't recognise them.

≪ "Again, I think, without video reinforcement, nobody could see us really," Clayton chuckles. "All they heard was some kind of duff country band."

"We did take the work incredibly seriously," says Edge. "But we never took ourselves seriously. Y'know, we always had a laugh. We always understood that difference."

Elsewhere, being embraced by the world of Hollywood showbiz took some time for U2 to get used to. When Jane Fonda threw a party in their honour, the band, misunderstanding the etiquette, turned up hours late when most of the guests had left. In Las Vegas at the Golden Nugget Casino, seated at a front row table for an intimate Frank Sinatra show, it suddenly dawned on them that they were woefully underdressed. At one point the star asked for a light to be shone on U2's table, offering the wry words, "They may be Number 1 but they haven't spent a dime on their clothes.

"I remember Bono grabbing me," says Paul McGuinness, "saying, 'Oh God, what do we do?' I said, You get up, take a bow."

"Frank was genuinely shocked at the lack of sartorial elegance he had just introduced to his diamond-encrusted crowd," says Bono. "We did look like a bunch of vagrants. But that was a big moment."

Less welcome was Michael Jackson's growing obsession with U2 after The Joshua Tree beat Bad to 1988's Album Of The Year Grammy. Later, he put in a request to U2's management asking to send a private film crew to Dublin to record the band at work in the studio. "Michael wanted to observe us in our natural habitat," notes a stillincredulous Bono. "I thought it was a little creepy," says McGuin-

ness. Understandably, they said no.

In fact, U2 had their own movie plans, with a crew shadowing them throughout The Joshua Tree tour, filming what would become Rattle And Hum, a self-financed film venture that ran away from them when Paramount became involved. Edge remembers alarm bells ringing at a meeting with the studio heads where six-foot-high promotional posters of the band members were presented to them: "They'd airbrushed all my stubble."

Subsequently disparaged as an unfortunately po-faced and slavish surrender to Yankophilia, Rattle And Hum nevertheless had its iconoclastic and punkish moments, not least when U2 were seen hastily working out the chords to Dylan/Hendrix's All Along The Watchtower minutes before taking the stage at an outdoor concert in Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco.

"I was so embarrassed because I had only two strings working [on my guitar]," winces Bono. "But I thought it was quite cool to do something so, so garage band. Bob Dylan would always say, (bone-dry Dylan drawl) 'Thank you for that All Along The Watchtower. I never got to finish it..."

Nonetheless, the heavily-hyped Rattle And Hum – the film, the album, the T-shirt – spent much of the credit that The Joshua Tree had accrued.

"Instead of U2 paying homage as amateurs," says Bono, "it was a bit like 'U2 now think they're experts on American music'. We were discovering that 'authenticity' in the kind of easy reading of that word was not where U2 should be. Standing there as 'real musicians' with other much better real musicians (laughs), dressed as troubadours. We could never compete in that world of so-called authenticity. We were from a different tradition. We were from no tradition."

Famously, from the stage of their 1989 New Year's Eve gig at The Point in Dublin, the singer announced that U2 were going to go away and "dream it all up again". One track on the Rattle And Hum album perhaps pointed the way forward - the thumping, drum machine-assisted, strikingly modernist God Part II, particularly its telling couplet, "Don't believe in the '60s, the golden age of pop/ You glorify the past when the future dries up." A message to themselves, then and now?

"Well, that's the badge," says Bono, owning up to mixed feelings about their pending bout of retrospection. "We should make Tshirts of that for this tour... because that's it. If we're looking in the rear view mirror for much longer than this summer (laughs), somebody should call the cops."

7ITH 1.1 MILLION TICKETS SOLD WITHIN 24 hours of on-sale, the Joshua Tree anniversary tour returns U2 to stadiums, and reminds us – and them – of who they were as a band in a time that was very different and, in some ways, much the same. For Bono, preparations have meant going back to the original album and encountering a former self. It hasn't been an entirely comfortable experience.

"I can hear some of the artists I would've been listening to," he says, "whether it was Nick Cave or Echo And The Bunnymen. I can

> hear it in the lyrics. I can also hear it, rather annoyingly, in the singing. It's big singing and I get that, and I get that it's declarative and it's open. But it slightly spoils my fun."

> Which explains why, for a brand new mix of Red Hill Mining Town helmed by Steve Lillywhite and earmarked for an upcoming release, Bono has gone back to the master and re-recorded his vocal. "We've also brought out the colliery brass band which was recorded at the time," says the singer. "You can't hear it in the original mix."

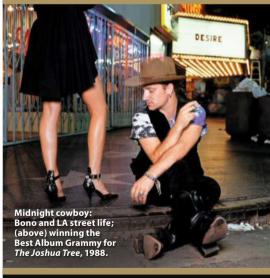
> In some ways, of course, we'd all like to revisit the past and change things. U2 are in a privileged position. "I think these shows this summer," says Clayton, "will be about taking back the Joshua Tree tour and perhaps infusing that repertoire with some fun and lightness that was never in the original. So I think we'll be reclaiming it."

Some things, however, deserve to remain emphatically in the past.

"An unforgivable mistake was made," declares Bono, mischievously. "I think it's important to own up to this. But we did start wearing cowboy boots. And I know that there are people, particularly readers of MOJO and some of them, y'know, respected figures in the world of great songwriting, like Paul Weller, who have never forgiven us for the cowboy boots...

"And I'm here to say to them," he firmly concludes, "you're right. There are things worth bearing a grudge about, and that's one of them. The cowboy hat I have worn since. I might wear it again, but I promise, I will never wear cowboy boots. I'm ready to take a few punches. I think it's time."





"THEY MA BE NUMBE BUT TH HAVEN'T SPENT FRANK SINATRA

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY JENNY BULLEY

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RATINGS & FORMATS

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DISAPPOINTING BESTAVOIDED DEPLORABLE



Geno Washington & The Ram Jam B GENO - LIVE!!!



Ace of base

James Mercer turns his experiences as a homesick US air force kid into pop gold on the first Shins album since 2012. By James McNair. Illustration by Michael Weldon.

The Shins



Heartworms

COLUMBIA/AURAL APOTHECARY. CD/DL/LP

T's not the kind of pop gold he's known for, but like Buddy, Chuck or Marc, Shins linchpin James Mercer can hew magic from the most familiar of 12-bar structures. That much is clear listening to Mildenhall, a relaxed, beatbox and nylon string guitar-driven stand-out from his band's fifth album,

"At 15 we had to leave the States again/Dad was stationed at an RAF base they call Mildenhall," begins the Hawaii-born, Portland, Oregon-based singer's slap-back echo-treated vocal. He's namechecking the military outpost in Suffolk, England that he and his family moved to in 1985. Rich in lyrical detail, effortless sounding and quietly compelling right through to its neat coda, Mildenhall is at root a vivid snapshot of Mercer's musical awakening – or the crucial second half of it, at least (see Back Story). We learn of teenage gig-going at the Cambridge Corn Exchange, and of the Jesus And Mary Chain tape that Mercer, a homesick American kid with a flat-top haircut, was gifted by a girl at school. It's another of the song's verses, though, which is key: "I started messing with my dad's guitar/Taught me some chords just to start me off/Whittling away on those rainy days/And that's how we get to where we are now."

While Mercer's full transit from neophyte to dab hand was blindingly obvious by the 2007 release of The Shins' Grammy-nominated, US Number 2 album *Wincing The*

Night Away, precisely where he is now, some five years on from its 2012 follow-up Port Of Morrow, needs explaining.

From 2009, Mercer has of course been rather active with his other ongoing concern Broken Bells, an experimental indie outfit comprising himself and Brian Burton, AKA Danger Mouse. More tangentially, he recently busied himself creating Pasted, an app that enables users to create photo collages on their smartphones.

It's So Now What?, though, a ballad as pretty and subtly moving as China Crisis's Wishful Thinking, that seems to shine light on Mercer's domestic situation. "It's hard to imagine/The lives we used to have/When the nights were ours alone," sings this insomniac 46-year-old and father of three daughters. He might be one of the finest pop songwriters of his generation and a man passionately engaged with the ongoing efficacy of his relationship, but those school runs don't do themselves.

Heartworms was recorded at Aural Apothecary (lovely the way



KEY TRACKS

- Rubber Ballz
- So Now What?

"TRIM AND
ADMIRABLY
INVENTIVE,
HEARTWORMS
RARELY
LOSES SIGHT
OF PERFECT
POP IDEALS."

that alliteration signals music as meds) studios in Portland, from June 2015 to June 2016. With Modest Mouse's Joe Plummer on drums and fellow Oregon-based songwriter/producer Richard Swift (Damien Jurado, Foxygen) handling keyboards alongside Crystal Skulls' Yuuki Matthews, Mercer brought most of the band that toured *Port Of Morrow* with him into the studio. It was, however, the week when Mark Watrous (The Raconteurs; Brendan Benson) came up from Nashville to bed-in the string arrangement he'd written and recorded for conspicuously-epic closer The Fear, Mercer says, that marked a turning point in the album's gestation: "We were all stoked and full of good ideas after that."

Quite so. Trim and admirably inventive, *Heartworms* rarely loses sight of perfect pop ideals. Mercer's striking, sometimes lightly codified lyrics and appetite for melody prove extremely satisfying, and beneath the surface there's more pleasing intricacy than in a horologist's workshop. Cherry Hearts, with its ricocheting, '80s-synth intro and shades of both Erasure and The Cure, is a tale of unrequited love made worse by a moment of drunken intimacy, while Half A Million is near perfect razor-edged pop. Thrillingly, the latter song's high-energy guitars and hooky keyboards slog it out in a manner broadly reminiscent of The Cars circa Just What I Needed.

Whether autobiographical or otherwise, there are a lot of relationship songs on *Heartworms*. With its shades of early '60s Beatles, the title track is pretty and forlorn, Mercer sketching the power differentials that complicate many a romance when he sings: "There are those who own the mines and those who crawl."

Rubber Ballz, by contrast, is dryly comic, its protagonist and his testicles eternally bouncing back to a purely physical relationship he knows he should end ("So much for Simon's 50 ways"). The song's intro, evocative of a lone Swingle Singer at the wrong session, is wonderfully odd, then we drop to another fabulous Beatlesesque verse (did something rub off when The Shins covered The Word for Netflix's Fabs-themed kids show Beat Bugs last year?).

Initially, at least, the abundance of ear-worms – brisk, bright opener Name For You has the kind of hook quotient you might expect from 10cc or Abba – makes the album's two less brazenly flirtatious tracks sound a little out of step. The surrealist psychedelia of Painting A Hole and aforementioned closer The Fear do win you over in time, though, even if the latter, a slice of widescreen Americana about the anxieties that can stop us enjoying our lives, takes time to get airborne. It's been a while, all the same, since this writer heard a pop-rock record so sure-footed and ingenious. Dead Alive, a giveaway single last Halloween, ties its Zombie-glam stomp to walking bass, disembodied voices and another ace vocal melody, while Fantasy Island exemplifies a knack for perfect first verses: "Long in tooth/Olives and vermouth/I dine like an ageing pilot/Where are they now/The money and the crowd/Must I really come back down?"

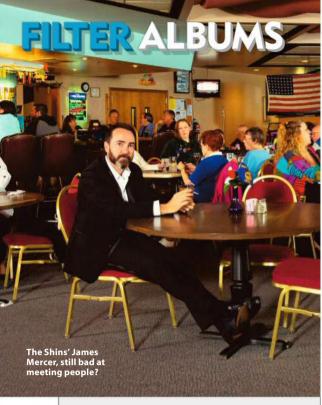
Those five-year gaps between the last three Shins albums may not have been planned, but with *Heartworms* James Mercer has produced another fine crop of pop. Sometimes it pays to let the field lie fallow for a bit.

JAMES TALKS! MR MERCER ON EMOTIONAL DISEASE, REALING THE DOUCHE-BAGS.

peopled by prostitutes and this later inspired Mercer's song of that name from Port Of Mol That record's producer Greg Kurstin, also live Germany as a child, an Mercer has spoken of t shared love of Krautro and kosmiche prog.

BACK STORY:





"Douche-baggery has always pissed me off."

James Mercer talks to James McNair.

What events and influences fed into Heartworms?

"Everything I've experienced. The art I've seen. The real life shit. Loving and hating a lot of this world. Having a family. The usual things, I guess. I've also been really loving Ariel Pink's stuff lately and his attitude. [It] gave me inspiration to be brave and take risks.'

Is a heartworm some kind of significant event that lodges in the heart?

"That's kinda the idea. I wanted a word to describe what it feels like to love someone who doesn't love you back. It's like you're infected with some sort of emotional disease. Then I remembered the '90s band Heartworms and it made me nostalgic. It all made sense somehow.

You've said Name For You is a call for female empowerment inspired by your three daughters...

"I don't want women in general to have to put up with frat-boy bullshit. I think I'm more sensitive to the issues because of my family life, but douche-baggery has always pissed me off. I think everyone should own their own sexuality and not be reliant on the society around them for some sort of approval."

Do you fear for your daughters in a Trump-led

"No more than anybody else's."

Mildenhall documents your time living at an RAF base in England aged 15, and in Ramstein, Germany. As an American kid passing through, was it tough to

"I think I was especially bad at meeting people. The first year I moved to England I really didn't hang out with anybody outside of school hours. But it also meant time spent alone listening to records and singing along in

That song mentions a kid in school passing you a Jesus And Mary Chain tape. Which one?

"Psychocandy. It sounded absolutely bizarre to me. But slowly the songs revealed themselves. They were just pop songs dressed up in hip threads and dark glasses."

Half A Million sounds as though it's channelling early Cars or Split Enz. What is it about?

"I really wanted it to sound like a Cars song. It's about the pressures that we all feel I think nowadays to be many different things at once. I especially like the line directed at a girl when the character says: 'A virgin in the moonlight, a freak on the scene."



Alison Krauss

*** Windy City

DECCA/CAPITOL. CD/DL

Grammy award-winning voice of country' raids the classics songbook.

After 2007's Raising Sand, her inspired pairing with Robert Plant, Alison Krauss returned to more familiar territory and her usual backing group Union Station for 2011's Paper Airplanes, Windy City was produced by Nashville studio guru Buddy Cannon, and contains 10 classic songs by Willie Nelson and Glen Campbell among others; some deliberately chosen from before Krauss was born. These measured readings of Gentle On My Mind, Brenda Lee's Losing You and Nelson's I Never Cared For You stay faithful to the originals, while a lively take on Poison Love, made popular by bluegrass kingpin Bill Monroe, is a welcome change of pace after back-to-back ballads. Truthfully, Krauss's voice could bring gravitas and emotion to the Southern Rail timetable, and Windy City is a rather safe album. That said, any number of modern country vocalists would probably kill to sound this safe – and this good.

Mark Blake

Laura Marling

 $\star\star\star$

Semper Femina MORE ALARMING/KOBALT. CD/DL/LP

Largely written on her US tour in support of 2015's Short Movie.



Billed as an acute exploration of femininity/female relationships. Laura Marling's

 which translates as "always a woman" – from Virgil's The Aeneid, part of which the Berkshire-born singer-songwriter has tattooed on her leg Big on strings, picked acoustic guitars and vintage-sounding electric guitar tones, the record's nine songs are exquisitely performed, while rising producer de nos jours Blake Mills (Alabama Shakes: lim James) shines again, conjuring snare sounds like horses breathing (Wildfire), and making a bass-guitar-led texturefest of Soothing, the album's sultry, early Kate Bush-like opener. In the dense press release accompanying Semper Femina, Marling asserts the work grew out of "a masculine

time" in her life, and some might find the work's almost wilful-seeming opacity and slight whiff of academia off-putting. Judged on purely musical terms, however, it's a thing of great beauty.

James McNair

Rhiannon **Giddens**

Freedom Highway NONESUCH CD/DL/LE

Powerful second solo disc from former Carolina Chocolate Drop.



Giddens fades in her cover of The Staple Singers' Freedom Highway, a clever

acknowledgement that this music of resistance has been playing for decades. But her storytelling sweeps back much further than the Civil Rights Movement, At The Purchaser's Option balances on a clause that allowed masters to buy or refuse their slaves' newborn babies, Julie and Come Love Come are originals set during the American Civil War. But then Better Get It Right The First Time drops the listener right back in the present, playing like a Curtis Mayfield take on #BlackLivesMatter. Giddens plies soul, R&B and hip-hop as easily as she does old-time music, blues, gospel and jazz. The cohesion across settings and styles is a testament to both her characters' resilience and the skills of Giddens and co-producer Dirk Powell. A vital album for an anxious era.

Spiral Stairs

Doris & The Daggers DOMINO CD/DL/LE

Scott Kannberg's fourth post-Pavement album hits the mark



Guitarist Scott Kannberg, AKA Spiral Stairs, always was Pavement's spiritual con-

Chris Nelson

science, and he's struggled to establish a creative identity outside that legendary band. But following 2009's The Real

Feel. Kannberg relocated to Brisbane, and the Antipodean air clearly infused his work with a fresh perspective. With violin splashing through its strum, AWM has a laconic Go-Betweens sensibility, while Dundee Man is a pan-hemispheric conceptual coup: a Scottish travelogue styled after the efflorescent Dunedin peal of The Chills, Recorded back home in California with help from psych-pop magus Kelley Stoltz, the bittersweet jangles suit Kannberg's lugubrious croon, peaking amid the yearning Angel Eyes, an emotional tribute to Kannberg's friend Darius Minwalla. the Posies/Hugh Cornwell/ Spiral Stairs drummer who died just before recording began: "We've all got angel eyes, in the end." It's been a long journey, but Spiral Stairs has finally found his voice. Keith Cameron

The Residents

The Ghost Of Hope CHERRY RED/MVD. CD/DL/LP

Always crashing in different trains - a short musical history of rail disasters.



Through lyrics based on contemporary newspaper accounts. mainly from

late 19th century USA, all spoken and sung in a folky kind of way, these are songs describing a time when technology was progressing faster than society could regulate or control. Instrumental passages, locomotive rhythms and all manner of sound effects are used to colour in these morbidly compelling stories. These include a tale of a circus train of performers and animals destroyed - with the jovial sound of calliopes and steam organs; and a family who'd been out picking strawberries near the railway line hit by a locomotive. The group examine these incidents in a matter of fact way and the neutral, world weary singing creates a peculiar poignancy within the archness. The stand out is Elephant Vs Train, based on an incident in Malava in 1894, an instrumental punctuated by pachydermal trumpeting.

Mike Barnes



American prayer

The ultimate country-gospel duet: an outlaw queen covers King David by David Fricke.

Jessi Colter



The Psalms

LEGACY. CD/DL

THERE ARE certainly older bodies of song, born and gathered as soon as humankind discovered the expressive

power of voice. But the Psalms of David were the first Greatest Hits. Ascribed to the Old Testament king and musician in the Hebrew and Christian faiths, with 3,600 specifically credited to him in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, they are a sturdy canon of wonder and warning, travelling far in interpretation from Stravinsky and Steve Reich to Bob Dylan, U2 and, yes, Megadeth. But the profound communion on this album - Jessi Colter's first in over a decade, produced with spectral affinity by Patti Smith guitarist Lenny Kaye – is at once fearlessly modern and firmly humbled: strict, lyric readings of 12 Psalms in dynamic vocal and piano improvisations at a crossroads of old-time Nashville, outlaw country, wide-open church and avant pop. This is bold, seeking rapture, given on bended knee.

The genesis of *The Psalms* goes back to 1995, when Kaye was collaborating with Colter's husband, Waylon Jennings, on his

autobiography. One day at the couple's Nashville home, Kaye found Colter at the living-room piano, performing striking, impromptu versions of the Psalms. After Jennings' death, Kaye recorded Colter in 2007 and 2008 in that solitary, immersive worship. There was no rehearsal, some accompaniment on guitar, and subsequent colouring overdubs by an empathic corps including Al Kooper on organ and French horn, The Jayhawks' John Jackson on mandolin and jazz drummer Bobby Previte.

On occasion, other spirits pass through the room: the Dylan of *New Morning* in Psalm 75, Unto Thee; Neil Young at his *Harvest* piano during Colter's opening, instrumental ascent to Psalm 114, And The Mountains Skip Like Rams. It is no surprise, given Kaye's experience with slow-burn rock'n'roll trance, when Colter evokes Patti

Smith's chant-like urgency in the chastening redemption of Psalm 73, Like A Beast.

The Psalms comes with plenty of mainstream country – in the supple, drawling warmth of Colter's voice – and spiritual certainty. But it is easy to recognise the broader, ecumenical grace and relief of Joni Mitchell's early records and Laura Nyro's salvation songs in Colter's passionate focus and rolling, intuitive aplomb at the piano. Her closing Psalm 72, Arise O King Of Old, is all descriptions of God's indisputable power – except Colter emphasises the charity in that force, often lost in many stern, evangelical sermons: "For he shall deliver the needy when he cries... and him that hath no helper." It is often said that the day of reckoning is at hand. For Colter, on The Psalms, it is also one of giving – and it is always here, every day.





Nadia Reid



Preservation
BASIN ROCK, CD/DL/LP

More luminous heartbreakers from philosophical Kiwi singer-songwriter.

Three years on from her exquisite debut, Listen To Formation, Look For The Signs, Nadia Reid is back, the same, but different. Her soft-sung songs still catalogue the pains of romance, ghostly narratives set within the real and metaphorical harbours and highways of her Port Chalmers home, but whereas Listen To Formation... found Reid shackled and sold to the worst aspects of love, Preservation now sees her singing from a place of relative, if solitary defiance: "All of my undoing/ Will become a lonely life," she states on the haunting Hanson St. Pt 2. Working with the same

producer, Ben Edwards, and the same trio of jazz-savvy musicians, Reid offers up dreamlike meditations on pained experience possessed of a quiet rhythm and disarming lyrical beauty; meticulous, ethereal songs of loss to hold onto when all else has failed.

Andrew Male

THE PSALMS

Dirty Projectors



Dirty Projectors

Art rock meets R&B producing an over-egged new hybrid on eighth album.



Dirty Projectors' songs have always incorporated unexpected

twists, and while this album is full of invention, Dave Longstreth, the group's sole constant, has packed so much in that they are often fussy, fidgety and over-ornamented. Things start promisingly with the gospelly I See You, Longstreth's voice at its most impressive when launching into space rather than being buffeted by cloying, showy backing vocal harmonies. The

most overtly R&B-influenced songs are Cool Your Heart and Death Spiral, where the listener has to pick a way through the sonic pile-up of glitchy beats, bass synth slides, acoustic guitar, strings, frilly piano and rather oppressive vocodered and manipulated voices. On Keep Your Name, Longstreth's voice is varispeeded to a grotesque, comic degree, from baritone to chipmunklike. For a break-up song it feels emotionally vacant and ends bathetically with a cartoonish chorus.

Mike Barnes

Jarvis Cocker & Chilly Gonzales



Room 29

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON. ${
m CD/DL/LP}$

Sparksian piano/voice study in LA hotel froideur.

JARVIS COCKER CHILLY GONZALES ROOM 29 Since Pulp sputtered out in 2002, their beloved mouthpiece has beaten a

characteristically haphazard path of variable solo records, occasional oddball one-offs (who could forget Relaxed Muscle?), and reunion shows yet to spark an eighth Pulp

album, Now Cocker materialises alongside outsidethe-box ivory-tinkler Gonzales for a moody song cycle set inside the eponymous chamber - once occupied by the likes of Howard Hughes and Jean Harlow, no less – at swish Sunset Strip auberge, the Chateau Marmont. The title track establishes a scene of *This Is Hardcore*-style solitary paranoia ("where do germs come from?" our hero gibbers), while Chilly G veers between jaunty foyer tootling and Erik . Satie abstraction. Quintessential Hollywood types saunter through - the fallen rich kid (Clara); the on-the-make hottie (Bombshell) – until an accordingly fazed Jarvis winds up eating "ice cream as main course". A familiar narrative, perhaps, but rendered with uniquely mordant wit.

Andrew Perry

Real Estate

In Mind

Gorgeous sun-dappled indie melodies from New York via California.

Having lost founding member/guitarist Matt

Mondanile in 2015 (to concentrate on his other band Ducktails), Real Estate regrouped with his replacement Julian Lynch in a rehearsal studio housed in a former high school in Beacon, upstate New York, before recording in LA with Beck and Julia Holter producer Cole M.G.N. The result is a refocusing of their gentle, hazy guitar pop, with Lynch adding grit to the trippy Serve The Song. Frontman Martin Courtney's lullaby-like vocals add a mesmerising quality to the Big Star-via-Teenage Fanclub echo of Two Arrows, which stretches out to sixminutes-plus, while the beautifully drifty waltz After The Moon is reverie inducing stuff. Though Real Estate are not a band to holler for attention, In Mind is an altogether lovely album that quietly demands to be heard.





Candy crush saga

The brothers Reid deliver their first LP in 19 years. By Keith Cameron.

The Jesus And Mary Chain



Damage And Joy

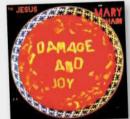
ARTIFICIAL PLASTIC/WARNER MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

IN 2006, Jim Reid released a solo single called Dead End Kids. It was great – a synthetic beat-driven sleaze blues, oddly suggestive of Suicide

sleaze blues, oddly suggestive of Suicide covering Bruce Springsteen's Pink Cadillac – but no one heard it, besides the few Jesus And Mary Chain diehards keeping the faith almost 10 years after Reid's acrimonious estrangement from brother William.

Now, Dead End Kids finally has its day: retitled Amputation, it opens The Jesus And Mary Chain's comeback album. Beneath the new name and spiffier production, Amputation is the same song, with a lyric depicting Jim "trying to win your interest back": a forgotten man feeling amputated from the rock'n'roll world which had until relatively recently venerated him and his brother William as sonic visionaries.

Amputation isn't the only lost soul to find a home on *Damage And Joy*. Three songs were released by Jim Reid's post-Mary Chain band Freeheat, thereby predating Dead End Kids by five years. Album closer Can't Stop The Rock was recorded in 2005 by Sister Vanilla, aka Jim and William's younger sister Linda. All Things Pass is



the former All Things Must Pass, which appeared on the 2008 soundtrack to NBC TV series Heroes, hinting that the siblings' recent on-stage reunion might lead to recording a new album. For this to have taken almost another 10 years – and with seven of its 14 tracks previously available in alternative guises – hardly suggests a fount of creativity. Yet song-forsong Damage And Joy is the most

rewarding Jesus And Mary Chain album since their prime, when *Psychocandy* condemned the Reids to the impossible task of emulating perfection. It even sounds like it was fun to do.

Credit to Youth, who as producer (and doubtless peacemaker) has resisted bulking up the sound, instead emphasising the naivety that underpinned the early Jesus And Mary Chain's chaotic brinkmanship. Following Amputation's nimble welcome, War On Peace is a quintessential JAMC hymn to enervation, siphoning the body and spirit of The Velvet Underground's Ocean then adding wheezy amp distress, lonesome guitar twang and "ah-ah"s in an awestruck lament for time's passing: "I once shone but now I'm old." The ensuing All Things Pass junks its previous version's hi-carb rock for brittle grooves that better suit the lyric's numbed trash talk: "Every drug I take, it's gonna be my last/I hope I don't fry, I hope I don't die." Through the prism of middle-age, there's a new poignancy to such hallmark nihilism.

Exile has clearly raised the stakes in gallows humour too. "I killed Kurt Cobain/I put the shot right through his brain/And his wife gave me the job/'Cos I'm a big fat lying slob," declares William on the self-produced Simian Split, a more palatable variant on his solo Lazycame releases. He switches to widescreen powerpop on Presidici (Et Chapaquiditch), a bittersweet reprise of Reverence's JFK obsession ("A messed up head is better than none") that also revisits the brothers' formative days: "We grew up with the Spiders and the Beatles from Mars/Tiger Feet and the T.Rex cars." Jim, meanwhile, dusts down Sidewalking's primordial riff to underpin Facing Up To The Facts' merry Farfisa-flecked negaholia: "I hate my brother and he hates me/ That's the way it's supposed to be."

Fellow Scottish enigma Isobel Campbell supplies femme fatality on Song For A Secret and the sweetly euphoric The Two Of Us. Deploying the Nancy & Lee duet gambit ought to be a moribund concept by now, but on these songs and Can't Stop The Rock – featuring sister Linda – it feels like the Reids are reconnecting with the pure impulses of what drove their younger selves to dream beyond the mundane reality of life in an East Kilbride sitting room.

Remarkably, then, Damage And Joy is spiritually closer to the band's original age of innocence than any of the subsequent records they ground out in the name of maintaining a career. You could call it an unforeseeable triumph – except that in 2006, with prospects of a reunion as yet remote, the Mary Chain's erstwhile patron Alan McGee proclaimed William Reid a genius, then offered MOJO an oddly specific prediction: "William could still blow everyone away. At 59 he could come back and you'd go 'Fuck, he's still got it." William Reid turns 59 this year. Now that's candy talking.

Coco Hames

Coco Hames

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Countryish jangle-pop with a pleasingly menacing side.



Nashvillebased Hames is an interesting woman. She fronted

combo The Ettes, touring with Kings Of Leon and The Black Keys; after that, she co-owned a vintage store/record label/ petting zoo (yup), then became a Montessori teacher, offering sing-alongs to preschoolers. But when a ballad was featured on country drama Nashville, it all took off. This solo debut sits her ripe, occasionally darkly brooding voice - Rachel Sweet with a hatchet - against grungey country and knowing '60's vibes. When You Said Goodbye shimmers with Hollies-style rainbows of power chords; bass and electric harpsichord shade the bubblegum-fuzz of If You Ain't Mine into something vengeful; Dead River, with its stalkerish pace and eerie lyrics, has a Tallahatchie Bridge feel. I Don't Wanna Go, a satisfying Ramones thrash, sums things up: "Watch yourself and think twice/'Cos I don't play very nice." Which can only be good. Glvn Brown

Gizmo Varillas



El Dorado

MUSICA. CD/DL

Spiritual salvoes on Spaniard's debut, assisted by a Beatle.



The sunbathed shimmer of Gizmo Varillas' music suggests it's arrived in the wrong

season, but it's actually perfectly timed, in light of the post-truth rise of the new US president. From Bilbao, Varillas has created a loose concept LP around the mythical El Dorado; the 'Golden One' who supposedly covered himself in gold dust and dived into a lake as an offering to restore peace

to the world. Musically, it comes doused in Mediterranean duskiness, like a light-footed Manu Chao. Varillas operates almost single-handedly, playing guitar, flute, ukulele and percussion, but on No War taps none other than John Lennon (with Yoko Ono's permission, rarely given), pertinently ruminating on the BBC in 1970: "Our society is run by insane people, for insane objectives, run by maniacs..."

Martin Aston



Spectres

★★★★ Condition

SONIC CATHEDRAL. CD/DL/LP

Volcano-force second album from West Britain's guitarnoise dream team.

The Devon-born, now Bristoldwelling Spectres peeled paint in 2015 with their scorching debut album Dying. Its followup, Condition, lifts roofs. The twin touchstones of Sonic Youth's Bad Moon Rising and My Bloody Valentine's You Made Me Realise remain, but this is a harder-edged, less direct, more individual album than its predecessor and much more satisfying than Dead, last year's superfluous remix reconfiguration of *Dying*. *Condition* sounds huge, as if the quartet were playing at maximum volume in a canyon. Sudden shifts between grinding white-noise guitar and metronomic strumming evoking vintage Steve Albini - are set off against terse riffs and hazy, choirboy vocals. Springy drums and elastic bass save the whole from being unremitting. There are no hits but gale-strength Welcoming The Flowers and the almostballad Colour Me Out are toetappers extraordinaire. The uncompromising Condition is extremely attractive

Kieron Tyle



Imelda May

Life. Love. Flesh. Blood

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

Dublin's rockabilly queen decides it's time to change everything. Good move.



Well, that's a relief: Imelda May drops the 1950s rockabilly shtick and goes

natural. Obviously, no one ever disputed the quality of her voice, it's just that now it's delivering with no frills, no arch curlicues. The old look – bleached quiff and kitsch dresses - is gone, too. At 42, she looks 20 years younger, singing with clear-eyed honesty and simple emotional heft. It's all occasioned by a split with husband Darre Higham: the upshot is a confessional – heartbreak, insight, redemption, honed by production from T Rone Burnett. Honeyed country-soul opener Call Me is a shock: gentle, measured, the microphone up close and May sounding not unlike Randy Crawford. Black Tears could be an undiscovered Patsy Cline gem, and further on. there are elements of Rosemary Clooney and the Shangri-Las. Occasionally things get laboured or dull; still, a powerful new direction. Glyn Brown

Venn

★★★ Runes

FULL TIME HOBBY. CD/DL/LP

Moody, textural pop from London duo's early '80s-infused debut album.



In 1964, Gestalt psychology was introduced to the world at California's Esalen

Institute. Esalen 64 is title of the fourth track on London duo Ben Leverock and Stuart Gardham's debut album as Venn. Writing a song marking the arrival of a philosophy stressing that social interactions are key to the human experience smacks of Tears For Fears drawing inspiration from the John Lennon-approved primal therapy. Fittingly, the '80s are never far from Runes. Faith-era Cure, Liverpool's Modern Eon and Blackpool's Section 25 come to mind as the album unfolds. So do Brighton's more-recent Fujiya & Miyagi. Venn have an edge though. Lyrics with thematic substance are complemented by fine tunes: Bigger Fiction is driving, Kraut-rhythmed pop and album closer Waxen . Palm is as memorable as indeed – a Tears For Fears gem. For Venn, the past and the present inhabit the same continuum

Kieron Tyler

SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE



Minimalist Oz electronica score rescued from obscurity.

ORIGINALLY WITHDRAWN from release, Charles Wain's score for Peter Weir's 1977 supernatural eco-thriller is a poignant work of minimalist electronic unease. Combining lonesome ARP Odyssey synth chords, discordant ARP Solina strings, romantic Spanish guitar, tape-manipulated didgeridoo, Floydian arpeggios and chunks of black dissonance, it's an unsettling yet also deeply moving work possessed of a deep, forlorn power. Fascinatingly, the excellent sleevenotes reveal that "Charles Wain" was a pseudonym for eccentric Australian advertising jingle composer Wayne Myers, a man who placed hidden messages of socialist dissidence inside his KFC and corn chips jingles. Taken from Myers' original master tapes, this is only the latest in Roundtable's remarkable run of vinyl-only releases, which includes the complete original Walkabout soundtrack, combining the introspective John Barry score with six pop-psych oddities and prepared to the specific guidelines of the ill-fated 1971 LP release. Excellent work all round.

ALSO RELEASED

Graeme Miller & Steve Shill

The Moomins

FINDERS KEEPERS. CD/DL/LP



From Leeds-based DIY post-punkers Steve Shill and Graeme Miller, the long-thought-lost

UK-only soundtrack for Lucjan Dembinski's late '70s TV animation of Tove Jansson's tubby troll family adventures; woodwind, thumb piano, ocarina and analogue synths uncannily evokes the funny, sad fairytale world of Sniff, Toft, Moominpappa and gang.

Julia Holter

Bleed For This



Threaded through this mélange of '80s pop (George Michael) and '70s rockers (Bad

Company) are three Willis Earl Beal tracks and a mini-LP's worth of Holter at her mesmerising best; hazy electronic currents that lend a melancholy undertow to Ben Younger's agonising comeback portrait of boxer Vinny Pazienza.

Mica Levi

Jackie



Proof that her soundtrack for Under The Skin was no fluke, Levi's score for Pablo Larraín's

dreamlike Jackie Kennedy biopic is another near-masterpiece, a mournful, impressionist interlacing of violin, cello, piano, flute, and military snare drum, possessed of the same taut elegance, romantic fracture, and alo

Nick Cave & Warren Ellis

Mars



Six months on from their Hell Or High Water score, another Cave & Ellis collaboration, this

time for National Geographic Channel's drama about a space mission to the red planet. Complete with theme song ("heaven is a trick of the light") it's a satisfying blend of orchestral sweep, music-box miniatures and buzzy dread. AM



Fifty shades darker

Stephin Merritt's latest breaks his life into 50 witty pieces. By Jim Farber.

The Magnetic Fields



50 Song Memoir

NONESUCH. CD/DL/LP

HOW CAN you sum up a half-century life in a song? Stephin Merritt has found a novel way – penning 50 different pieces, one for each year of his life so far. If that makes for a massive, and

factually questionable, project, Merritt tackles it with both cunning and pith.

Memoir isn't the first time this songwriter has dreamt up a daunting conceit. Merritt made his name with his band The Magnetic Fields in 1999 by penning 69 Love Songs, a sprawling set which beguiled listeners by lacing those love songs with scepticism, agony and bile. Askew music and desert-dry vocals sealed its withering mission.

Merritt's new project takes an equally arch approach to its subject. The author superimposes an adult's level of awareness even on his one-year-old self. The first track, set in 1966, finds him asking, with a poised bemusement, "I wonder where I'm from." By the age of three, Merritt has experienced the first in a seemingly

endless series of rejections – this one by a family cat named Dionysus. The next year, he assesses the connection between the death of Judy Garland and the modern gay rights movement. From there,

Merritt sifts in sly pop culture references to New York clubs (Danceteria, The Pyramid), and a wide swath of his youth's idols, from John Foxx to Edith Wharton.

Much of the album's early plot involves Merritt's dippy hippy mother, who has a thing for dead-beat men and spiritual charlatans. The author reacts by avoiding eye contact and creating worlds of his own. As always, Merritt's verse approaches nearly everything with a wry horror. The chorus in one key piece – '85 Why I Am Not A Teenager – echoes the way the world treats young aspirants with the edict: "Piss on your dreams/Muzzle your screams".

Accordingly, much of Merritt's music sounds squashed, dazed or appalled. It miniaturises '60s chamber-pop and '80s new wave with a sound that's both screwy and inventive, hilarious and tortured. Often, it's quite catchy. Every instrument – and there are more than 50 – sounds like it was manufactured in Pee-Wee's Playhouse.

The first half of *Memoir* tends towards the smug or the accusatory. But things pivot crucially in his 27th year, in the song '92 Weird Diseases. Here, Merritt wonders, with good reason, if he has Asperger's. By his thirties and forties, the writer becomes more vulnerable and open, if no less subversive and riotous. He's most moving in '11 Stupid Tears, where he can't let go of a failed love. Towards the end, in '14 I Wish I Had Pictures, Merritt finally drops his poses and admits that "the things I remember are probably wrong." In factual terms, that's true of most memoirs. Emotionally speaking, however, Merritt has recreated an inner life that sounds agonisingly real.



Timothy B. Schmit

Leap Of Faith

The singing bass player of the Eagles takes flight on sixth solo album.

Timothy B. Schmit's public persona suggests he knew the gods were smiling when he was airlifted out of struggling roots rockers Poco to join the Eagles in 1977. When Don Henley and Glenn Frey revived the Eagles brand in the mid-'90s, Schmit wisely kept a smile on his face, did their bidding and picked up a fat cheque at the end of the tour. His voice remains a thing of great beauty, but Leap Of Faith, like its predecessors, is a little short on character. Schmit doesn't have Henley or Frey's grit, but anyone starved of their old band's lilting pop

country and gimlet-eyed white boy soul can feed on My Hat, Goodbye, My Love, What Should I Do and, especially, All Those Faces and You're So Wild; those last two would have given that final Eagles album a very welcome boost.

Mark Blake

The Raveonettes



2016 Atomized
BEAT DIES. CD/DL/LP

Trump this: recorded one song per month, the Danes' album inspired by 2016.



Long before celebrity culls or post-truth populism, The Raveonettes decided to

document 2016 by recording a new song each month and collating them together. As years go, they picked a doozy. Consciously free of references to Bowie or Brexit, political commentary or 'dear diary' detail, Atomized's dark yet dreamy pop still eerily echoes 2016's peaks and troughs. Hence year opener This World Is Empty (Without You) shimmers with uplifting, yet ultimately doomed goth disco;

the fried electro of August's A Good Fight veers between punkish rebellion and nostalgic waltz, while November's Fast Food decays in a crumbling wave of glacial guitar static. Neither the sound nor story of 2016, instead, this compelling song collection offers an abstract journey through the themes, influences and emotions of a most eventful year.

Paul Stokes



Temples

★★★★ Volcano

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Kettering band come of age with self produced second album.

As with Temples' 2014 debut Sun Structures, Volcano was produced and engineered by singer/guitarist and chief songwriter James Bagshaw in his Kettering studio. Again, the group balance carefully crafted prog-pop with transitional mood states. In the second camp: All Join In, a woozy wall of sound punctuated with orchestral flourishes and explosions of reverb, written by keyboardist Adam Smith, a Syd-head who channels his whimsy and strangeness well. Certainty, meanwhile, falls into both camps; its classic '60s melody underpinned by wheezy, whirring synths and spacey effects that spook and transfix in equal measure. Tracks such as Celebration, Mystery Of Pop and Roman God-Like Man, though, point to something entirely new. Their screwball pageant of glam stomp, Broadway musical, and driving synths make it clear. Temples aren't stuck in the past, they've glimpsed the future.

Lois Wilson

in Skip James or Mississippi Fred McDowell tunings. Lines keep popping up in the lyrics about his time not being long, not feeling at home in this world any more and needing to ease his troubled mind. Yes, a blues album. It's not the first time a Son Volt album has focused on one particular root of Americana; last time it was juke-joint country and roadhouse ballads. But actually he's not quite so deferential here – sometimes it's more about a blues feeling, encompassing high-lonesome (The Storm), electric countryblues rock (Midnight), twochord garage rock (Sinking Down) and, at its most beautiful on the opening track Promise The World, the kind of heartbreaking, steel-laden folk-country that Hank Williams called "the white man's blues"

Sylvie Simmons



★★★★ Notes Of Blue

THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP
Four years on from Honky
Tonk, 10 new songs

The sleeve shows Jay Farrar alone with his guitar, washed in blue. Most of the songs are



Urgent, stirring stuff from Tunisian singer-songwriter.



Fmel Mathlouthi looks like a cross between Juliette Binoche and Edith

Piaf, and sounds like a blend of Les Voix Bulgares and random tracks from This Mortal Coil
– exotic, meditative, demanding, occasionally warlike. Her track Kelmti Horra (My Word is Free) was a viral anthem during the Arab Spring, and since then she's been known as the 'voice of the Tunisian revolution". The mix of electronica. Arabic/Tunisian instruments and North African drumming, plus her ululating vocals, ranges from rousing and moving to dark and discordant - there's a cawing harshness to Mathlouthi's delivery that stops you in your tracks. Pounding, imperative Ensen Dhaif is clubby as Transglobal Underground, vamped up with zukra (Tunisian flute), gumbri (a bass lute) and giant bendir frame drums; Layem could be a marching army of tribal Amazons: while Fi Kolli Yawmen offers washes of heavenly vocals. Another world entirely.

Glyn Brown

Frànçois & The **Mountains**



Solide Mirage DOMINO CD/DL/LE

Frenchman's fifth album, adding political dissent to his Afro-beat modernism.



The press Frànçois Marry "rediscovered his adolescent passion for the

forming across the Middle East, post-Arab Spring. This lends Solide Mirage new politicised focus after the more personal slant of 2014's Piano Hombre; such as the migrant crisis in Grand Dérèglement (aka Great Deregulation). But the only

Her word is free:

Emel, "voice

of the Tunisian revolution".

musical shift is Bête Morcelée (aka Beast Spotted), which isn't grunge but zippy punk; the rest reprises Marry's trade-mark conjoining of equally joyous Afro-pop (he's part-Cameroonian) and Anglophonic guitar-pop (Vampire Weekend and Orange Juice fans will dig). If only we non-French speakers could get the full benefits. An English lan-guage version, à la Christine And The Queens' Chaleur Humaine, would open that particular door.

Martin Aston



Saltland

A Common Truth CONSTELLATION CD/DL/LP

More climate change-inspired chamber pieces by Montrealbased cellist-composer.

Saltland 2013's I Thought It Was Us But It Was All Of Us debut found Rebecca Foon's soaring yet ominous strings and ethereal vocals blended with percussive electronics and interventions from miscellaneous collaborators. Its nine-song successor deploys a similar palette, but with Foon's cello, whether raw or processed, the unequivocal centre, supported here and there by Bad Seed Warren Ellis's violin and pump organ. A passionate environmentalist, Foon's music deals, according to the accompanying blurb, in "the intimacy of the local/personal and the hope of the global/collective", and while such palpably pressing matters are only implied by the melancholy drones and lyrical bow-work of opener To Allow Us All To Breathe, or the toweringly symphonic but lyrically opaque I Only Wish This For You, one of five vocal-ornamented essays here, the geo-political subtext only adds gravity to Foon's already compellingly brooding soundscapes.

David Sheppard

Lowly

Heba

RELIATINION CD/DI/IP

Analytical and idiosyncratic

first album from schooled Danish meta-pop band. Danish quintet



Lowly occupy the space between triphop, Birmingham band

Pram's fragmented otherworldliness and the electroinfused pop of their fellow Dane Oh Land. If this suggests the conceptual, that they formed at The Royal Academy of Music in Denmark's second city Aarhus underlines their thoughtfulness. Debut album Heba takes time to get under the skin but, once there, lingers. Track four, Mornings, is the definitive Lowly statement. It begins with clattering programmed percussion and stabs of analogue synth texture setting the table for Nanna Schannong's detached, drained voice. "How have you been?" she asks. Then, the mood shifts with twinkling, uplifting interjections of treated, shoegazing guitar and a keyboard melody suggesting Lana Del Rey at her happiest. The song ends with each element coalescing in a brief sonic maelstrom. The considered Heba is not immediate, but it worms its way in.

Kieron Tyler

Depeche Mode



Spirit

COLUMBIA, CD/DL/LP

Fourteenth studio album sees the Mode turn dark and angry.



After a trilogy of records with producer Ben Hillier, Depeche Mode have changed

up and turned to James Ford . (Arctic Monkeys, Foals) for sonic guidance. The result is their heaviest-sounding album in years, filled with thumping electronics matched to a furious state-of-the-world address which reaches a peak with the railing against political apathy in Revolution and the distorted-voiced disgust of

Scum. In contrast, amid the Angelo Badalamenti-styled soundscape of The Worst Crime, violent racism is tackled with affecting sadness, and the noir 60s-echoing, Dave Gahan-written showstopper Poison Heart spot-lights the singer detailing a broken relationship with a femme fatale. Blow by blow, it all adds up to Depeche Mode's best album in years Tom Dovle



URBAN

whose life unravelled after the deaths of his lawyer father and younger brother, Ray found rapping a welcome way to salve the pain after Shabazz Palaces' don dada Ishmael Butler recognised his gifts. A natural storyteller, Ray unleashed a series of vivid mixtape portraits of his locale's druggy highs and lows that painted him as a new school Nas with the lyrical slickness of Roc Marciano. The street-wise intellect certainly lets his slightly off-pitched voice do most of the heavy lifting over the stuttering spacey synthetics, phased keys and warped Rhodes of B-Roc's atmospheric production. And if Ray is acutely on-trend when his mother's voice suddenly surfaces late on, eulogising his brainpower, it's safe to say she probably knows best.

ALSO RELEASED

Run The Jewels



Run The Jewels 3 RTJ INC. CD/DL/LP



Momentum is with El-P and Killer Mike. The unlikely MC tag team's incontestable third

rages hard over bass-driven beats positively thrumming with vitality. It cuts to the core on A Report To The Shareholders, as they fume, "We are the gladiators that oppose all Caesars", while their union with Kamasi Washington (Thursday In The Danger Room) is a rare shot of warmth in the dystopian doom.

El Michels Affair



Return To The 37th Chamber

BIG CROWN. CD/DL/LP



These Brooklyn retro-funk revivalists gave the RZA's productions

a run for their money on 2009's Enter The 37th Chamber. This belated sequel finesses their signature shtick on cinematic instrumental Wu-Tang Clan covers including the drunken master menace of Shaolin Brew and buzzing 4th Chamber. While impressive, one instinctively yearns for the superlative rough and smooth of Method Man and Mary J Blige on All I Need.

Wayne Snow



Freedom TV TARTELET, DL/L



Groove is at the heart of Wayne Snow. The Berlinbased, Nigerian debutant shares a

skewed take on R&B, jazz and house with his producer Max Graef that permits his Prince-like falsetto to gently run amok over the squelchy soul of Drunk and rugged, Dilla-esque drums of Red Runner. "I've got the rhythm for you," he asserts repeatedly on Rhythm, the sound of a gauntlet being thrown

Retrospective **For Love**

Random Activities Of A Heart

WORMFOOD CD/DL/LP



Burdened with an unwieldy name and chocolate box artwork, RFL are

better than they're prepared to admit. A virtuoso instrumental team flamed into being by Sicilian singer Davide 'Shorty' Sciortino, shades of D'Angelo, Maxwell and The Roots tussle on their debut. More workmanlike than those pointers suggest, its relaxed Sunday morning vibe will revive classicists and weary clubbers alike. AC



Julia Holter

In The Same Room DOMINO DOCUMENTS CD/DL/LE

Pristine live revue of Los Angeleno auteur's oeuvre.



Domino's new series of "live studio recordings" aims to chronicle their artists' "ever-

evolving arrangements" though Julia Holter hardly gives her modernist chamberpop a radical gabba-techno refit for this first Document. Cut at London's RAK Studios the day after their appearance at last summer's Green Man festival, Holter and her spare group - drums, viola and bass accompanying her piano faithfully essay highlights from her four-album songbook, rarely veering from the studio versions' blueprints. But if the performance is hardly revelatory, it still charms; Lucette Stranded On The Island is all the more affecting for its sparer arrangement, the warm piano of Silhouette played to the fore as Holter lucidly dream-walks through it's Arthur Russell-esque soundscape, the torch-song ache of How Long haunting its foreboding, cinematic symphonics. A perfect starting place for Holter neophytes, *In The Same* Room doesn't really add much to her extant discography.

Stevie Chick

Grandaddy

Last Place 30TH CENTURY, CD/DL/LP

Jason Lytle finally gets the gang back together.



Just over a decade and two homely Jason Lytle solo albums since Grandaddy's

2006 fire-sale 'finale' Just Like The Fambly Cat, and it's straight

back to business as usual. Not such a bad thing, but it high-lights the fact that Lytle hasn't come up with a different plan for Grandaddy in 20 years, the chanson accordion on That's What You Get For Gettin' Outta Bed notwithstanding. Man's battle to both control and respect his environment, technology's inevitable march and our obsession with consumerism are still major preoccupations, but gradually Lytle's also giving himself over to evergreater human sentiment, which is ironic as Last Place's synths sound more, well. synthetic than ever. Great to have back that little razor edge that Lytle loses when he steps away from his bandmates, but this might be the last time he gets away with it without a major rethink.

Andy Fyfe



Jeb Lov Nichols

*** Country Hustle CITY COUNTRY CITY CD/DL/LP

Taking his country back,

one beat at a time "We got Donnie Fritts, George Soule, Tony Joe White.. Missouri's finest rap-lovin' country-soul star is rarely slow to acknowledge the stations he has visited en route to his 11th solo album, but if this album feels like the one that arrives at such a fertile time it will take him overground, then he's making damn sure you stop to check out his influences. On Till The Teardrops Stop, it's as blatant as letting you know who's on the stereo; elsewhere - Long Live The Loser and I Hate Hate stand

out – the arrangements are built around vamps on short loops; strip the vocals out, you've got a hip-hop album that lives deep in the atmos-pheric funk of Bill Withers, the Chuck Berry voodoo of Come Together, the swampy gumbo of Dr. John... and applies them all to Luther Vandross's Never Too Much. Lovely.

David Hutcheon



Hurray For The Riff Raff

*** The Navigator ATO CD/DL/LP

Bandleader Alynda Segarra looks homeward.

The Navigator's title character is a restless young Puerto Rican woman from the city "ready for the world", but guarded. She charts her course through destruction, indifference and the city's sounds: doo wop (Entrance), Lou Reedy R&R (Living In The City), even indie rock (Hungry Ghost). It's not until she stares clear-eyed at those closest to her that the way is clear: she's to honour her Latin and Caribbean roots in story and sound. The title track becomes the album's fulcrum, the Navigator asking, "Where will all my people go? From there, the battle is on, against wall-building politicians and gentrifying developers, among others. On the climactic Pa'lante (Forward), she calls the rolls of those beaten down and those still soldiering on. "To all who came before we say, '¡Pa'lante!'" Now, she is ready for the world. Chris Nelson

Tamikrest

**** Kidal

GLITTERBEAT CD/DL/LP

Defiant stand from the last gang in town - in the last town before nothing.



Tinariwen's kid brothers they may be, but Ousmane Ag Mossa's band always seemed

a far better rock'n'roll proposition, an impression boosted by their fourth studio album which opens with a standard Tuareg boogie (Mawarniha Tartit) and closes with campfire acoustics (Adad Osan Itibat). However, the key tracks on these tales from Kidal, the city on the edge of the Sahara they call home and which became a focus of the fighting between Islamists, the government and the independenceseeking Tamasheq people, are the slow blues of Atwitas, a tune so alive with deep spacey guitars you can imagine David Gilmour wondering which Floyd album it was on, and the Segovia-flavoured Tanakra, which wouldn't sound out of place on *Forever Changes*. Exactly the sort of angry rebel rock you want from a band with their backs to the walls and foes on all sides

David Hutcheon



Julian Cope

Drunken Songs HEAD HERITAGE, CD/DL

The Archdrude unearths his inner sot.

Once an enthusiastic advocate

for LSD's psychic exploration as opposed to the bovine mainstream pursuit of booze, Julian Cope first talked of dipping his tongue in fermented waters circa 2004, after coming through the early years of parenting. Typically, he's since turned into an enthusiast, here celebrating beer as an expression of Anglo-Saxon primitivism (say no to Southern European wine!), via half-adozen thigh-slappin' ditties which hark back, ironically, to the humoristic 'acid-campfire songcraft of 1990's Skellington. Regardless of drug preferences, Cope-watchers have marvelled at their hero's recent reacquisition of his melodic touch, beloved from his Teardrop Explodes/early solo era, but largely shunned on jam-heavy noughties albums. Highlights on this pubby outing include Drink Me Under The Table (Wilder-era Teardrops, with the synths replaced by Cope's trusty Day-Glo Mellotron M400), and Liver Big As Hartle-pool, which takes an amusingly oddball (and Pete Wylietrouncing) strum through memories of post-punk Liverpool. Bottoms up, sir!

Andrew Perry



Spoon

Hot Thoughts MATADOR CD/DL/L

Texans' ninth album keeps a steady heat under their enduring career.

Since emerging in 1993, Spoon have developed a reputation as the safest pair of indie-rock hands out there, well-regarded producers of beautifully structured songs elevated by judicious texturing and lyrical guile. The Dave Fridmann-produced *Hot Thoughts*, the first Spoon album not to feature acoustic guitars, does nothing to wreck that smart image, the title track kicking off proceedings like a chess club version of Blue Öyster Cult. Us opens with mellow prog drift; Do I Have To Talk You Into It? is Saueeze in lumberjack shirts while the fierce Shotgun is a hopefully metaphorical description of an increasingly antagonistic relationship. Despite its tangents and twists, however, Hot Thoughts can feel like a record with the safety catches on, emotionally Scotchgarded, squeamish about genuinely messy sensation. The main feeling it provokes is sincere admiration at a job well done, but a raised pulse, unfortunately, is something Spoon can't craft from scratch.

Victoria Segal



Conor Oberst

Salutations

NONESUCH. CD/DL/LP

Full-band takes of last year's Ruminations long-player, plus strong new tracks.

Following last October's barebones Ruminations, Oberst took its 10 songs back into the studio with members of the Felice Brothers and storied drummer Jim Keltner, along with seven new tracks. The resulting sessions swap the lonely chill of the original recordings for a bucolic Highway 61 vibe that well suits the Dylanesque tenor of Oberst's recent songwriting, lending an amiable comfort to the likes of Tachycardia, and leavening the stark bleakness of Next Of Kin. The new songs, meanwhile, are no mere throwaways: Gossamer Thin a withering tale of "left-of-the-dial Bohemians" with "tracks down their arms"; Napalm a laudably rowdy Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues-tribute name-checking Himmler and Peckinpah; and Too Late To Fixate an acerbic meditation on meditation. Indeed, the increasingly salty bite of Oberst's lyrics is only sharpened by the homely warmth of Salutations' arrangements Stevie Chick

Benjamin Folke Thomas

Copenhagen LOUVAIO. CD/DL/LP

Third studio album from Swedish finger-picker.



Like a football manager with too many strikers, Benjamin Folke Thomas often

seems spoiled - and even sometimes a little overwhelmed - by the talent at his disposal. A precocious acoustic finger-picker, fearlessly confessional as a songwriter, the promise he showed on his early only-sold-at-gigs acous-tic albums has given way to full band recordings for three studio releases now. each of them frustrating in the best possible way. Packed with guilt, racked with remorse, Thomas's songs reach deep into his freewheeling lifestyle, but in his haste to move on he sometimes shoots just wide of the mark. Older track Rhythm And Blues ("You've got the rhythm baby, I've got the blues") nestles alongside the JJ Cale-like choogle of Hold On and beautifully crafted solos

on the title track, but as packed with thrills as Copenhagen is, we still haven't seen Thomas's full potential just yet. Andv Fvfe

Craig Finn

We All Want The Same Things PARTISAN CD/DL/LI

Midwestern singersongwriter AKA Mr Hold Steady's third solo road trip.



Three albums in and there's something liberating about Craig Finn's solo

career. Those who find The Hold Steady's relentlessness a bit much will find songs with more room to breathe here. As on 2015's Faith In The Future, this third solo outing shows Finn still writing wordy story songs, but the breathing space elevates those words. Jester & June sets the tone, as Finn sings about a fake drug deal over squiggly jazz saxophone. This is familiar territory, but his ability to put you right there in the nightclub bathroom is a gift which only deserts him on the album's final lap. Then, when you think he's spent, there's the closing Be Honest, where woodwind and brass help colour a tale of fortysomething angst and Finn delivers the album's greatest line: "It really sucks getting sick on the bus/Even worse when the teenagers cheer.'



Mark Blake

Brian Jonestown Massacre

Don't Get Lost A RECORDINGS, CD/DL/LP

Expansive dub-leaning brilliance on prolific collective's sixteenth album.

It's been a mere four months since Brian Jonestown Massacre released their last album, but there's little sign of creative fatigue here. Anton Newcombe may be uniquely brilliant and creative or frustrat-ingly undisciplined – but his output is only improving with age. The drone-jam of first track Open Minds Now Close is exactly how you always hoped BJM might sound: hypnotic, transcendent, insistent. Guest vocalists abound, including Tim Buraess on the Morriconegoes-dub

Laetitia Sadier: seek and she

of Fact 67

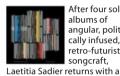
while Melody's Actual Echo Chamber burrows even deeper into spaced-out minimalist bass-and-drum territory. Where once Newcombe seemed entirely devoted to psychedelia, Don't Get Lost offers a much broader scope. drawing on post-punk, the best of shoegaze and, on closer, Ich Bin Klang, late-Can kosmische. It's something of a revelation. Clinging to his flapping smock-tails, a younger generation of psychonauts are taking notes.

Ren Myers

Laetitia Sadier And The Source Ensemble

Find Me Finding You DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Erstwhile Stereolab singer's hold new vehicle.



After four solo albums of angular, politically infused, retro-futurist songcraft,

fresh, versatile ensemble featuring keyboard plavers David Thayer and Phil M FU alongside guitarist Mason le Long and long-time collaborators Emmanuel Mario and Xavi Munoz. Throwing down a persuasive gauntlet, opener Undying Love For Humanity is all breezy percussion, percolating synths, chiming vibraphones and complex, wordless backing vocal arrangements a sunny, Tropicália-like setting for Sadier's typically liquid delivery of lyrics apparently advocating optimism as a weapon in politically oppressive times. Elsewhere, Love Captive is a doleful duet with Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor about open relationships ("We are made to love/Not to fall in love"), while Psychology Active (Finding You)'s multiple time changes and fluttering synths err toward prog, and the pointillist keyboards, needling guitars and processed, deadpan French language vocals of Committed suggest a Gallic take on Krautrock.



Clap! Clap!

A Thousand Skies

BLACK ACRE. CD/DL/LP

Joyful, energetic odyssey through African and urban electronic tropes

TAYI BEBBA, the debut album from Italian producer Cristiano Crisci AKA Clap! Clap!, joined the dots between the melodies and rhythms of Africa and the multitudinous urban electronica factions, and Crisci continues to do so here. Most of the tracks last just two minutes and change, an approach that suits the music's intensity. Fidgety footwork stylings underpin Betelgeuse's Endless Bamboo Oceans, while the similarly pithy Flowing Like A Snake In Ophiuchus' Arms straps north African strings to crunching hip-hop. When Crisci does expansive, with the six-minute Ode To The Pleiades, the tremor is sizeable, its rattlesnake beats sinking into jazz piano riffs and iridescent synth pads. There's a nod to Africa's storytelling heritage in a narrative woven into the record – a girl's journey across the stars - but the real trip's a musical one.

ELECTRONICA BY STEPHEN WORTHY

ALSO RELEASED

Hauschka



CITY SLANG, CD/DL/LP



Volker Bertelmann's work as Hauschka is a potent and emotive blend of minimalism.

electronica and classical. Here, Bertelmann imagines the near future with his trusty prepared piano, augmenting it with a Roland Jupiter-4 synth hooked up to an effects unit and, somewhat idiosyncratically, breakneck speed pianola. The results present a dense mesh of disparate tempos, hypnotic rhythms and passages of glittering beauty.

ADULT.



Detroit House Guests MUTE. CD/DL/LI



For Detroit House Guests, Nicola Kuperus and Adam Lee Miller have used a familiar

creative trope – the artist in residence – to invite collaborators to join them for immersive, three-week live-in workshops. These included Swans' Michael Gira and, fittingly, Nitzer Ebb's Douglas J McCarthy, whose own dislocated, radical electronica feels like an overt influence

Blanck Mass



SACRED BONES, CD/DL/LP



If not quite a total reversion of his solo debut's sweeping ambient techno, Fuck

Buttons' Benjamin John Power inhabits a far more contemplative space on his latest Blanck Mass album. When the melodic twinkle and glitchy, stumbling rhythms of Hive Mind intermittently give way to explosive rage, it feels an adroit demonstration of Power's aim to reflect today's festering political landscape

Lusine



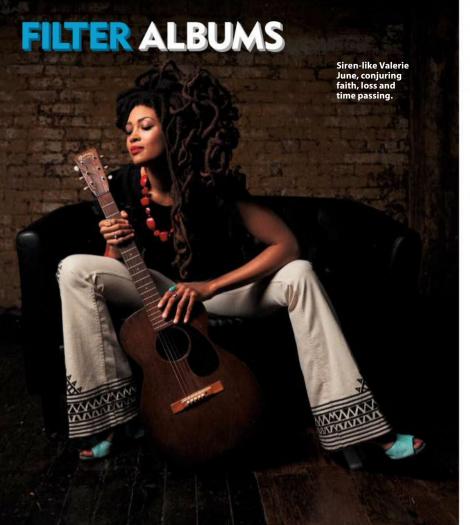
Sensorimotor

GHOSTI Y INTERNATIONAL CD/DL/LP



From early work that majored in gentle électronic glitch, through to

the abstract pop of 2013's The Waiting Room, Jeff McIlwain's music has an elegance. Sensorimotor overflows with bubbling melodies and muscular bass as it alights on slo-mo two-step (Witness), grandiose, fluttery ambient (Tropopause) and, on Flyway, instrumental '80s synth pop. Big, warm music that doesn't shout loud, yet makes itself heard. SW



The Moonlandingz

*** Interplanetary Class Classics

TRANSGRESSIVE, CD/DL/LP

Fabricated supergroup plugs into the mains.



They first manifested as an imaginary band on Sheffield conceptualists The

Eccentronic Research Council's 2015 album Johnny Rocket... Now The Moonlandingz fronted by The Fat White Family's Lias Śaoudi, in stackheeled glittery boots and cod-piece - might just have twitched into more vigorous life than both parent groups. A deviant blend of filthy pop and pre-digital electronics that suggests the glam era, Abba and Earl Brutus, this disc is bloated with anti-matter sing-alongs to savour. Single Black Hanz brings motorik hypno-boogie with dirty glitterballs ("castrate yourself, not once, but thrice!' it boomingly commands), I.D.S. is a novelty garage-surf spooker invoking "40,000 years of Job Club" and This Cities Undone is the final shattering detonation, a choral freakout suitable for the nuke-worshipping muties in Beneath The Planet Of The Apes, with a touch of Tomorrow Never Knows Top drawer psycho-disco for malcontents and the disillusioned, then

Ian Harrison

Les Amazones D'Afrique

République Amazone REAL WORLD CD/DL/LP

Storming set by all-star African supergroup.

Liam Farrell deserves plaudits for the sonic experiments on Mbongwana Star's 2015 debut, but live he was an awkward fit, and the Kinshasa-based band are a better ticket without him. The Irishman has landed on his feet, though, because his production on this coming together of 10 disparate female singers from different generations – from Kandia Kouyaté, the queen of the griottes, to the radical Nigerian hip-hop star Nneka, with Angélique Kidjo and Mariam Doumbia there for those who find comfort in recognisable names – sounds like a manifesto for a most radical future. The rhythms are African, electronica swirls around it, reggae bass thunders through the mix, dub distorts the senses, thumb pianos turn into thunder... The lyrics tackle domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and proceeds



go to charity – but if all you care about is the sound it's still terrific.

David Hutcheon

Holly Macve

**** Golden Eagle BELLA UNION, CD/DL/LP

Irish-born, Yorkshire-raised debutante takes country back to the source



Holly Macve's plaintive cover of Melanie's We Don't Know Where We're Goina sua-

gested a singer-songwriter road-less-travelled by 21st century standards. Likewise her voice, which sounds much older than her 20 years and echoes the Appalachian-tinged old-timers Patsy Cline and Kitty Wells, and Tarnation's comparable Paula Frazer, all framed by the pared-down boniness of Leonard Cohen, Johnny Cash (two of her mum's faves), and Gillian Welch. It's route one to the heartstrings. Macve's backstory – her parents' divorce when she was very young; a premature fear of death; a brutal end to her first love affair - gets the sobbing melodies it deserves, especially on Shell and Timbtuktu. The title track, written for her beloved granddad, unfurls over six minutes; with four more tracks exceeding five minutes, she's clearly not afraid to prolong the exquisite agony and, selfishly, you hope Macve never cheers up.

Martin Aston

Clap Your Hands Sav Yeah

The Tourist

THE ORCHARD. CD/DL/LP

Fifth album of worthy Brooklyn-based indieelectronica.



Ostensibly an Alec Ounsworth solo project, the fifth album by the band who

epitomise the notions of mid-'00s underground viral success is concerned with the suitably vague "difficult times" and "emotional confusion". It's an album largely built on synthesizers and acoustic guitars, often intimate, occasionally anthemic and perfectly at ease with being a lo-fi indie electro record, albeit one that is somewhat anaemic. A Chance To Cure offers cerebral dance music for the bookish, while Down (Is Where I Want To Be) combines juddering sub-Talking Heads bass lines over swirling synths and a chorus aimed squarely at dancefloors, while Unfolding Above Celibate Moon (Los Angeles Nursery Rhyme) is smart-pop à la Vampire Weekend. However, with Ounsworth's overwrought vocal gymnastics something of an acquired taste, and the overly-earnest tone, it's not an easy album to love.

Ben Myers

Alasdair **Roberts**



Pangs

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

The Glasgow-based folky goes electric (again). No one shouts "McJudas!



On this, his ninth (nominally) solo outing, Alasdair Roberts' instrument

credits include electric quitar, metallophone and synthesizer. He's joined by bassist/keyboardist Stevie Jones and drummer (and "canine yelper") Alex Neilson, among others, to parlay music that while irrefutably 'folk', gleefully shoves aside traditionalist tropes in favour of a buoyant, full-bodied combo sound that, passingly, recalls prime Fairport Convention while proffering a beguilingly mellifluous identity of its own. Roberts has been discreetly ushering British folk forms towards unchartered places for the best part of two decades now, sometimes indeed, with electric instruments, but when his adenoidal-toned narratives play out against the cascades of iubilant, almost African quitar and exuberantly plashing drums of An Altar In The Glade, or wind around the uncharacteristically urgent

pulses of The Anary Laughing God, it feels like folk rock has been relocated to new and alluringly sunlit uplands. David Sheppard

Johnny Flynn

*** Sillion

TRANSGRESSIVE. CD/DL/LP

Mumfords/Marling pal comes of age.



As the star of Channel 4 sitcom Lovesick and scion of a Brit acting dynasty (his

half-brother was one half of Robson & Jerome), it's tempting to view Flynn's musical endeavours as a dalliance. Performing as a solo folkie or with his band The Sussex Wit, it's been on the backburner for a couple of years since the birth of a daughter. Such experiences have given new depth to the 33-year-old's songcraft. Slow-building opener Raising The Dead ponders the weirdness of seeing his late father in his tiny child's features, while Heart Sunk Hank, whose crackly audio results from partial recording in a Voice-O-Graph booth, considers the impact of his frequent absences on his spouse. In that light, Sillion's political dimension, including a take on the traditional Barleycorn, feels more genuinely motivated. Mostly bolstered by an electrified 'Wit, with brass, fiddle and more, it's Flynn's warmest outing so far. Andrew Perry

Valerie June

The Order Of Time CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL CD/DL/LP

Heavenly blues, produced by Matt Marinelli and recorded in Vermont's **Guilford Sound.**



Musically, little has changed for the Humboldt, Tennessee singer/

multi-instrumentalist since her 2013 breakthrough album, Pushin' Against The Stone. Her unique voice, rooted in the church and country, still drives her songs. Those songs, perceptive porch blues about faith and loss and time passing, are still shrouded in guitar, banjo, ukulele and horns - and this time added warbly Hammond B3 provided by Norah Jones's keyboardist Pete Remm. Shake Down, a hypnotic boogie of the kind found in the North Mississippi Hills, is pocketed with fuzz guitar soloing and call-andresponse from Valerie June's father and two brothers. With You is intricate, fragile soul, with cascading strings and fingerpicking; Astral Plane is intense spiritual folk, Valerie June's siren-like vocal delivery both beautiful and tempting. Lois Wilson

FILTER ALBUMS EXTRA



Blackfield



K SCOPE. CD/DL/LP

Songwriter Aviv Geffen and prog linchpin Steven Wilson deliver a song cycle that mixes personal and oceanic themes. Alan Parsons helms three tracks of the 13, adding to the rich, sonic politesse on offer here. PA



Fink

Sunday Night Blues Club Vol 1

Berlin-based Brit Fin Greenall's modern blues mission. Results are better suited to sleek supper club than a rowdy juke joint but its downbeat brooding brings moments of real trance blues chill (see Hour Golden). JB



Devon Sproule

The Gold String

TIN ANGEL. CD/D

Singular Canadian-American returns with another lovely, entirely idiosyncratic set. The title track is inspired by the interconnectedness of things: a jazzy cover of Ed Askew's Drawing Circles fits perfectly into the LP's Joni-ish vibe. JB



Stone Foundation

Street Rituals

100% CD/DL/LP

Touchstones of Marvin, Curtis, Gil are well executed on this Paul Weller-produced album which covers everything from grit funk to neo soul. Jazzy Your Balloon Is Rising is voiced by the aforesaid Weller. William Bell also quests. LW



Dark Globes

Everyone I Know Is Falling Apart

HALE MACHINE DL/LE

Aptly entitled third from Southend band who blend indie introspection with subtle sonic dissonance and hazy melodic prettiness in the vein of Yo La Tengo or Sparklehorse. JB



Gary Guitar Lammin



Gary Guitar Lammin REQUESTONE CD/DL

Ex blues punker of Bermondsey Jovriders, Lammin cut this solo LP in 2000/3 with Pistols soundman Dave Goodman, mining psych guitars, spoken-word, and, on Hey Mr John Sinclair, euphoric political rave. PG



Dreadzone

Dread Times DUBWISER, CD/DL/LP

Ex-Big Audio Dynamite dubular ravers' eighth LP blends west London/Jamaica sound with contemporary tech-polish on songs of dissent, reggae history and consciousness. Closer After The Storm hits a similar bucolic spot to '96's hit Little Britain. IH



Grails



Chalice Hymnal

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE, CD/DL/LP

Fans of Dungen, Mogwai and Ulver will rejoice at the return of Portland instrumentalists Grails. First full-lengther since 2011 is full of detailed, progressive soundscapes. Its depth makes this their most satisfyingly sensual work to date. PA



Keith Christmas

Crazy Dancing Days BECN. CD/DL

A star of Bowie's Beckenham Arts Lab. and sporadic DR collaborator, raspy cult folkie Christmas returns with this open-tuned emotional outpouring - autobiographical, political, haunting – and it's his finest since the '70s. PG



Ibibio Sound Machine



Uvai

MERGE, CD/DL/LP

With Gary Numan-Nigerian disco source on opener Give Me A Reason, this London-Nigerian group's second offers a lively fusion of politically conscious Afro-beat electro pop. JB



Church Of The Cosmic Skull

Is Satan Real? BILOCATION CD/DL

A self-proclaimed 'cult' rather than just a band, Nottingham septet offer seven '70s-inspired hard-psych tunes on this wideranging debut. Fans of early Queen and Queens Of The Stone Age will nod sagely. PA



Meatbodies

Alice

IN THE RED CD/I P

Chad Ubovich's second LP with his own trio. The wig-out-in-wonderland title track has a poppy, Donovan approach before its unsettling phased climax. T.Rex-schooled Creature Feature and turbulent Touchless are also highlights, JB



Sodastream

Little By Little

SODASTREAM MUSIC. CD/LP

Perth duo back after 10 years with a fifth LP that sounds freshly minted; an indie delicacy of clipped upright bass, guitar, additional drums and horns embellishing their pithy, gothic folk poetry. Rustic, heartfelt, just a little crazed. JB



Thievery Corporation

The Temple Of I & I FSI CD/DI/IP

Washington DC duo return to deep reggae grooves to big up their 20th anniversary. Made in Port Antonio JA, with US singers Notch and Mr Lif; the real star is Kingston MC Racquel Jones. JB

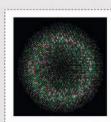
NOWSTREAMING

Arcade Fire feat. Mavis Staples

I Give You Power

7hile there was much speculation about the artists who'd play Trump's inauguration, the 45th US president's ascension to office yielded a new musical oeuvre: the pre-emptive protest song. Before The Donald even got to the Oval Office, Arcade Fire's surprise single I Give You Power mixed Win Butler's falsetto with Mavis Staples earthier, positively menacing vocals to twitching, Talking Heads disco, a less-than-subtle reminder that democratic power comes from the people, and if they ain't happy it will soon vanish. Paul Stokes (various streaming services)





Kayla Painter

On a bill for Independent Venue Week, Bristolian soundscaper samples the bands she's gigging with (Yama Warashi and Yo Ne Se) to create intriguing, organic, individualistic

amalgamation



Jupiter C

Westway Settling down near the Ladbroke Grove-stretch of London's highway, Invada-signed Jupiter C make an expansive suite of six sonas inspired by the motorway's grittie White City section. PS



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Love Music

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GLITTERBEAT



The Record Store Kiosk 4-5 Park Mall, Ashford, Kent TN248RY

The Record Store in Ashford recently opened. It is run by Vincent Monticelli (who is combining working in the shop with his telecommunications job)and his daughter, exLeeds University student, Tahlula. It is easy to find as it is housed in a U-shaped kiosk outside Wilkinsons. It's certainly a quirky shape and the only record shop with a memorial built into its wall. The shop has a fantastic range of second-hand vinyl and also stocks new vinyl, record players and CDs.



Tinseltown in the rain

Mr Smith goes to Hollywood: the Portland singer-songwriter's improbable 1997 breakthrough is expanded and remastered. By Victoria Segal.

Elliott Smith



Either / Or

ivision Street is not an uncommon American street name – it appears on maps of New York, Chicago, Nashville, Los Angeles. There's one in Portland, too, now the location of a guest house with an "Elliott Smith Room", paying tribute to the city's singer-songwriting son through the medium of Victorian writing desk and queen-sized bed. On Punch And Judy, a bitter lament from his third album Either/Or, Smith mentions "Driving around/Up and down Division Street". He would often use mundane geography as a fixative in his songs, preserving a tang of street level reality: scoring drugs at "6th And Powell" on Needle In The Hay, generating drama on Roman Candle's Condor Ave, "walking down Alameda" full of self-loathing. Division Street, though, seems especially resonant on Either/Or, a record that marked a clear fork in the road. Left: a big-fish-small-pond reputation on the Portland music scene, lowish profile, indie starvation rations. Right: an evening with Celine Dion.

Famously, Smith ended up in a big white suit on a Titanic stage at the 70th Academy Awards. Director Gus Van Sant picked three of Smith's tracks for the soundtrack to his film Good Will Hunting, and after an Oscar nomination for Best Original Song, Smith sang Miss Misery to a star-packed Shrine Auditorium. Watching the footage now, it looks like he's in an episode of Quantum Leap, beamed in from another time and place. Dion, whose My Heart Will Go On inevitably won, was by all reports very nice to him, but there was no doubt he was an aberration. "I'm the wrong kind of person to be really big and famous," he told a Dutch interviewer in 1998, an exchange used in 2014 documentary Heaven Adores You. "Who's that guy,' you know? 'In the

white suit with dirty hair who hasn't sold millions of records? What in the world is he doing here?' And I was wondering the same thing."

It's clear, however, that Smith didn't need an out-of-body experience in front of Jack Nicholson and Burt Reynolds to question who he was. Born Steven Paul Smith, he'd already undergone one fundamental transformation by changing his name, and Either/Or is a record preoccupied with dividing and splitting, not just romantically, but psychically, too. From its Kierkegaard-inspired title (Smith studied philosophy at college) to its cover shot - two Smiths, one a reflection - it is full of contradictions, clashes and the struggle to piece together the fragments. On the alcoholic salvation-seeking of Between The Bars, Smith sings about "People you've been before/That you don't



KEY TRACKS

- Pictures Of Me
- I Figured You Out

"SMITH ENDED UP IN A BIG WHITE **SUIT ON A** TITANIC STAGE AT THE 70th **ACADEMY AWARDS. IT LOOKS LIKE** HE'S IN AN **EPISODE OF** QUANTUM LEAP.

want around any more", a telling chorus in every way. Recording engineer Larry Crane, owner of Portland's Jackpot! Studios and Smith archivist since the singer's death in 2003, has remastered the LP, and it's newly striking how such beautiful music, tinted with rich pop shadings absent from his early, starker work, serves such bleak lyrics. Smith's interest in people holding themselves together is most obvious in harrowing night-time crisis 2.45am: "You beat it in me that part of you/But I'm going to split us back in two," sings Smith, before drums swing a series of punches, a controlled explosion of defiance that shudders on brink of something uglier.

These cracks show throughout Either/Or. "I'm damaged bad at best," sings Smith on Say Yes, a love song that closes the record with such pure, ineffable hope that it's hard not to be terrified by its vulnerability. The record was pieced together in studios, bedrooms, friends' houses, a transient, fragile creation. Yet the musical and lyrical strength of these songs runs deep. Pictures Of Me another song about possibly drug-fuelled disassociation is held together with brilliant Beatles glue, including a horribly ironic post-Cobain appropriation of Getting Better: "Everybody's dying just to get the disease."

The landscape these songs move through is specific, vivid, often nightmarish: black cathedral windows looming over the addiction imagery of Speed Trials, the cracked sidewalk in Alameda, the "dog in a choke-chain collar" that rears up from the self-loathing Rose Parade, a song about being alone in a crowd, at a 45-degree tilt from everyone else's reality. The Nirvana-like Some Song, included here in five fine live tracks from Olympia's Yo Yo A Go Go festival in 1997, charts more wretched, inevitable co-ordinates: "Better call your mom/She's out looking for you/In the jail and the army and the hospital too." Meanwhile, Alameda is testament to Smith's superb phrasing and timing, the second verse crowding out the first chorus. It sounds like someone trying to quash dark thoughts before they take hold ("Nobody broke your heart/ You broke your own 'cos you can't finish what you start"), by keeping moving, walking. By the end, it's stopped working. Since his death in 2003, it's been hard to play Smith's

music, not least because it feels wrong - if tempting - to listen out for sad foreshadowing and dire prophecy. Despite the misery they describe, though, these songs are remarkably warm and alive, their humanity burning through even - or especially, perhaps - at their bleakest. Letting them petrify into a series of little memorial plaques does nobody any favours, all the more reason to revel in this reissue. Among the extra tracks here is a version of XO's Bottle Up And Explode! with different lyrics, evidence of Smith's prolific creativity, a live version of Pictures Of Me (complete with heartbreakingly sweet on-stage message to his sister), and the intricate porch melancholia of I Figured You Out, a wonder anyone else would have clutched jealously to themselves but one he gave to touring partner Mary Lou Lord.

For some, *Either/Or* is the breaking point, the moment the underground treasure was pitched overground and was never the same again. What would have happened if the mainstream had never borrowed Elliott Smith for one strange night is the stuff of speculative fiction. What matters now is that these songs, divided, cracked, wholly beautiful, deserved to be heard from any stage, and still do. $\frac{k}{3}$



FILTER REISSUES



Annie Anxiety

Soul Possession DAIS CD/DL/LP

Debut from 1984 by the cult-legend, poetess sorceress, now on vinyl.

Known now as Little Annie, smoky-larynxed torch singer, Annie Bandez was first Annie Anxiety when she left New York for Crass's anarchocollective in Essex. Even so, she was no punk, politically or musically: one-off 1981 single Barbed Wire Halo mirrored the no wave jams and poetry of her NYC crew Annie & The Asexuals - Rush Tetras meets Lydia Lunch – while Soul Possession's anxious dubtronica added the sound of London's punk-funk underground, given depth-charge dynamics by producer Adrian Sherwood. Annie's searing lyrics explored Thatcher's Britain and Cold War tensions on the likes of the quasi-Yoko gibber of Viet Not Mine, El Salvador Yours.

Despite Third Gear's sample of Perry Como's Magic Moments, Soul Possession can sometimes be uneasy listening (also note the Lydia-isms of To Know Evil), but it's a thrilling travelogue from an inspired fish out of water.

Martin Aston

Guy Clark



The Very Best Of The Dualtone Years

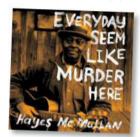
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greats taken from us in 2016, far less noise was made about

Guy Clark than he deserved Along with his close friend Townes Van Zandt, Clark was the embodiment of Texan singer-songwriting: hard living, long loving, a man's man of a songwriter. When he signed to Dualtone in his twilight years it wasn't like the company was getting the short end of the stick, either. His four albums for the label between 2006 and 2013 rank with his very best from the 70s, the beauty and power of Magdalene, My Favourite Picture Of You, Rain In Durango or Hemingway's Whiskey as essential as older tracks The Cape, and The Randall Knife, included here from 2011 live album Songs And Stories. Here are 19 very good reasons why Johnny Cash, Bobby Bare, Willie Nelson, George Strait and countless others recorded Clark's songs over the years. Ándy Fyfe



Hayes McMullan

Everyday Seem Like Murder Here

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD/DL/LP

Recollections of Charley Patton and the music of 1920s Mississippi.

Hayes McMullan (1902-86) of Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, knew Charley Patton and lived long enough to share his memories with researcher Gayle Dean Wardlow in the '60s. He had been a singer and guitarist himself, though he had not played for 30 years, and his nine anecdotes are interspersed with 22 songs. Some are associated with Patton, like Hitch Up My Pony and 'Bout A Spoonful, others perhaps with Ishman Bracey or Tommy Johnson, but McMullan's approach is less assertive than theirs, and in standards like Roll And Tumble or Kansas City Blues his warm voice and gently insistent picking patterns recall other elderly songsters like Joe Callicott or even. in Fast Old Train, Mance Lipscomb. Skilful sound restoration and illuminating notes by Wardlow and guitarist John Miller enhance a recital of enormous charm.

Tony Russell

Paul McCartney

Flowers In The Dirt UNIVERSAL. CD/DVD

Beatle's Elvis Costelloassisted eighth solo set with bonus book, demos and DVD.



In this box set's essay, Paul McCartney tells how his co-writer Elvis Costello sug-

gested he get his fabled Hofner bass out of retirement for their forthcoming collaboration. McCartney agreed, and never looked back. Flowers In The Dirt suggests it was a lucky talisman. Released in 1989, it rewarded the Beatle with a rare solo UK Number 1 Revisited now, This One, We Got Married and the Trevor Horn co-production Figure Of Eight's booming melodies

have withstood those late-'80s production tics. The original album has now been accessorised with two bonus discs. including several demos, plus a link to 16 extra downloadable tracks. On the demo for Tommy's Coming Home Again, Costello sounds eerily like John Lennon, confirming how well-matched their partner ship was. Flowers In The Dirt is that rare thing: an album praised as a return to form at the time, but which still lives up to the expectation. Mark Blake

Kitchens Of **Distinction**

Watch Our Planet Circle ONE LITTLE INDIAN. CD

Six-CD set of the trio's four studio albums from 1989-96,



Kitchens Of Distinction emerged somewhat imageless, and with a particularly clunky name, at the

start of the neo-psychedelic shoegazing trend, with a rather disjunctive trademark sound of Justin Swales' treated, echoed guitar billowing extravagantly across a grounded, indie approach to song and rhythm. Into the Britpop '90s. bass guitarist and singer Patrick Fitzgerald's lyrics, some of which frankly addressed gay issues, were rather harder to market than the androgynous teasings of Suede's Brett Anderson. Their debut Love Is Hell is somewhat foursquare and their songwriting chops were just still coming together. but on the superior Strange Free World and The Death Of Cool, both of which charted in the UK, their eclectic sonic elements knitted together powerfully. Cowboys And Aliens is a more polished set, but failed to chart and spelt the initial demise of the band. Good quality extras include BBC sessions and sundries.

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DEMON. LP

Orange vinvl edition of 1966 hit album, a true document of the time.

Former US serviceman Washington, a self-confident communicator but not a truly gifted singer, and the UK seven-piece put together by guitarist Pete Gage were like a super-efficient 60s tribute band to American soul. Uneasy



in the studio, Geno basked in an audience's adulation; thus this 1966 debut album, back with us on vinyl, was recorded live in Pye's London studios in front of an enthusiastic crowd who recreated the raucous atmosphere of the band's shows at the Flamingo, Marguee, Ricky-Tick and like clubs. With 14 covers, mostly Atlantic, Stax and Motown, it stayed in the UK charts for 38 weeks, peaking at 5, the band's commercial high-point. Their two other '60s live albums are available, with Hand Clappin'..., on 3-CD Geno – Live!!! (Edsel), while that label's Geno! The Piccadilly & Pye Studio Recordings collects the 1966-72 efforts away from his comfort zone, including their only studio album without an audience, Shake A Tail Feather. Geoff Brown



Tom Rush

The Circle Game MAN IN THE MOON. CD

Acoustic John The Baptist trumps his peers in classic sona set.

The end of the 1960s saw the club folkies and Dylan fans come to a greater prominence with a new introspection entering popular music as the singer-songwriter genre emerged. Often bellbottomed and navel-staring. this was a style of music both heralded and much improved by the arrival of New Hampshire's Tom Rush, whose gravel-chewing tones brought a masculine wistfulness to an over-wispy rock niche. On 1968's *The Circle Game*, Rush mostly covers material by other artists (including upcoming superstars Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne and James Taylor, adding a gutsiness to Something In The Way She Moves lacking in the original). But despite a plethora of fine interpretations of other people's work, it's for the last track that The Circle Game is best known, Rush's own composition, No Regrets, a classic manly weep ie which has survived death by a thousand covers ever since. David Quantick



Rare Byrd

Forgotten and discarded gems from The Byrds' great, overlooked songwriter. By Andrew Male.

Gene Clark



The Lost Studio Sessions 1964-1982

SIERRARECORDS.GOESTORES.COM. CD/DL/LP

IN THE spring of 1970, Gene Clark went into Los Angeles' Liberty Custom Recorders to cut demos for his second solo recording, Gene Clark (aka White Light). Three numbers, The Virgin, 1975 and One In A Hundred, ended up on that 1971 A&M LP, while a fourth, She's The Kind Of Girl, appeared on Clark's Europe-only 1973 release, Roadmaster. As for the rest, the recording went undocumented. For years no one knew of its existence. In fact, if it hadn't been for the decades-long work of archivist, engineer and No. 1 Byrds fan, John Delgatto, they might never have surfaced at all. Written while Clark was contentedly married, and living on the California coast in Mendocino, and imbued with a late-night mood of red wine introspection, these eight minor-key acoustic marvels form the hushed poetic centrepiece of the recordings Clark cut, lost, forgot about or abandoned during 20 years of working with producer and mentor Jim Dickson.

The collection begins in innocence, a wideeyed 20-year-old, fresh out of The New Christy Minstrels, singing folk rock ballads in earnest vibrato. Far better are two multitrack recordings

from January 1967. Cut just prior to his solo debut, they abandon that album's country rock harmonies

for sneering Stax soul on Don't Let It Fall Through (plus Hugh Masekela horn arrangement) and Back Street Mirror's baroque Dylanesque labyrinths, orchestrated by Leon Russell.

Clark's version of ...Mirror was long thought lost after Dickson overdubbed it with David Hemmings' vocals, for the British actor's 1967 folk rock LP Happens. The melancholy subtext here is that The Lost Studio Sessions are as much a document of failure as of achievement: albums abandoned, naivety exploited, hopes thwarted. Of four 1972 session tracks here, two - Bars Have Made A Prisoner Out Of Me and Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms – were inexcusably overdubbed by Terry Melcher for his own 1974 solo LP, while

Clark's forlorn cover of Flatt & Scruggs' Don't This Road Look Rough And Rocky, was simply discarded. Often, the glimpses of what could have been are heartbreaking. 1970 track She Darked The Sun finds Clark singing with Gram Parsons, Chris Hillman and Bernie Leadon, Burritos harmonies soaring like a ghostly broadcast from some blissful counterfactual past. The final five tracks, from 1982, find a lifestyle-weakened Clark again reunited with Hillman and Byrds/Burritos drummer Michael Clarke. They feel like too little too late, yet one track, Clark's worn, desolate cover of Rodney Crowell's No Memories Hangin' Round, points to new country sounds just around the corner. As such, The Lost Studio Sessions merely confirms what many Gene Clark fans know, that the sadness at what might have been never fully overwhelms the wonders of what came to pass.



Memories hangin' round: Gene Clark, in the lost and found in 1965.



Rico And Friends

**** Unreleased 1960 Recordings

DUB STORE, CD/DL/LF

Seven unknown proto-ska gems, straight from the master tape.

Trombonist Rico Rodriguez was a true pioneer. Mentored at Alpha by Don Drummond, Rico's expressive soloing placed him in high demand by all of Jamaica's earliest record producers. He reached . England in 1962 and after cutting the masterwork Man From Wareika in Jamaica in 1976, had a new lease of life in 2 Tone, both in The Specials and as a solo artist. Pre-dating all this activity, these seven astounding cuts of Jamaican R&B, recently unearthed at Federal recording studio by Dub Store Records of Tokyo, all feature Rico's unmistakable

trombone solos, but are otherwise unknown. Along with a boogie cut of South Of The Border and a duet with Herman Sang called Sinclair Special, there is a Hortense Ellis blues number and two songs by an unknown male vocalist. A must for all fans of ska and early Jamaican R&B. David Katz

The Band Of Holy

*** The Clouds That

Break The Sky TINY GLOBAL PRODUCTIONS. CD/DL

Definitive 3-CD round-up of south London marginwalkers' early outings for Flim Flam.



The Band Of Holy Joy existed in a solitary space. Founded by displaced

Geordie Johny Brown while sharing a New Cross squat with Test Department, they pointedly eschewed guitars for cheap pawnshop instrumentation (harmoniums, accordions, violas, Salvation Army drums) allied to primitive electronics. Emerging hot on the heels of

Portastudio demo box set (More) Favourite Fairytales For Juvenile Delinquents, these three discs trace their frenetic transformation from loony industrial disco into defiant Brechtian punk-folk cabaret. Raw emotions run rife on Mad Dot, Fishwives and Who Snatched The Baby?, microtragedies that suddenly slash from heartbreak to violence yet still summon warmth in the wilderness. The collection reaffirms Brown's status as a vivid chronicler of seamy London life with the forensic precision of Gordon Burn. Andy Cowan

Chicago



US jazz rock cooperative's 1970 album now fine-tuned by producer Steven Wilson.



Chicago's run of Roman numerically titled albums has continued almost but not

completely unbroken up to 2014's *Chicago XXXVI: Now.* In 1970, *Chicago II* (originally titled Chicago, just to confuse matters) delivered four sides

of brass-driven classical bluesmeets-soul-meets-politically charged rock. The multipart suites Ballet For A Girl In Buchannon and It Better End Soon were composed in the shadow of the Vietnam War, but also in that post-psychedelic, musical Age Of Aquarius. Guitarist Terry Kath's gruff vocals and keyboard player Robert Lamm's socially conscious lyrics ("They're killing everybody/I wish it weren't trué...") are often paired with chamber music strings and screaming horns in the space of a few bars. One song, 25 Or 6 To 4, distilled the whole chaotic mix into one brilliant hit single. But while Chicago II's dizzying scope and ambition is of its time, it's a journey still worth taking.

Mark Blake

Eddie Bo & **Chris Barber**

The 1991 Sea-Saint Sessions

THE LAST MUSIC COMPANY, CD/DL

The NOLA funk UK blues communion on previously unissued recording.

In 1954, Chris Barber released his debut album, New Orleans Joys. Thirty-seven years later, while he was there working for a month with Dr. John, the British jazz-blues pioneer paid tribute to the Crescent City again, hooking up with pianist Eddie Bo over two days to cut nine tracks in Marshall Sehorn and Allen Toussaint's Sea-Saint studio. With Barber also producing and a backing band featuring guitarist Wayne Bennett and tuba and string bass player Walter Payton, they are convivial on Bo classics Tell It Like It Is, Every Dog Has Its Day and Check Your Bucket. summoning the carnivalesque good times of Mardi Gras. Things get more serious, however, on Wake Up, which opens and closes the nine tracks here, as Bo, over a rolling groove, chants: "Who is the one to right this wrong? Wake up and bring power to the people!"

Lois Wilson





Chet Baker

Live In London

Rare recording of the trumpet legend live in the UK 34 years ago.



With his timeravaged face resembling Dorian Gray's attic portrait, perhaps, Chet

Baker looked considerably older than his 53 years when he ventured to London in the early spring of 1983 for a week-long series of concerts at a small Covent Garden venue called The Canteen. But as this 2-CD set reveals (painstakingly restored from a private cassette recording), musically, the Oklahoma trumpeter was far from a spent force. He was in scintillating form in the company of British musicians John Horler, Jim Richardson and Tony Mann, who provide sympathetic and, at times, inspired accompaniment on a set of jazz standards. Mostly, Baker is featured on horn but he also sings on a few songs; his fragile, world-weary voice revealing a vulnerability that's heartbreaking in its poignancy. Charles Waring



The Creation

Action Painting
NUMERO GROUP. CD/DL/LP

The most comprehensive collection of the freakbeat combo's work, 1965-68.

The joy to be found in this 2-CD/LP compilation is bound-

less. Neophytes, start with the original mono mixes of the pop art experimentalists' unimpeachable 1966 singles Making Time and Painter Man, defined by their combative attitude, crunching power chords, and violin-bowed guitar. For the connoisseur, there are new stereo takes. Remastered from the original tapes by the group's producer, Shel Talmy, the aforesaid Painter Man has an alternative vocal by singer Kenny Pickett – it's less punk, more pop. Life Is Just Beginning, meanwhile, has an extra verse. The inclusion of some of the pre-Creation group The Mark Four's 45s show a band already pushing limits with their use of feedback. The packaging is also spectacular, with previously unissued photos and reproduced picture sleeves.

Lois Wilson



Various

King Jammys Dancehall 1985-1989 Part 1

DUB STORE. LP

Prime early Jammys dancehall compilation, finally on vinyl.

Waterhouse-based audio engineer and sound system proprietor Lloyd James mixed superlative dubs at King Tubby's studio and produced captivating roots reggae under the moniker Prince Jammy during the late 1970s, but is better known for the digital dancehall he unleashed as King Jammy during the mid-1980s, operating from his

own studio premises. An earlier edition of this consummate compilation has been around for a few years, but it's now reconfigured as a double vinyl set, with a slightly different tracklisting: Little Kirk's Don't Touch The Crack, Junior Murvin's Jack Slick, Nitty Gritty's Good Morning Teacher and Wayne Smith's Icky All Over are just a few of the many examples of why Jammy was on top of the heap in Jamaica during the era with all things digital. A related second compilation, spanning 1983-90, is also worth investigating.

David Katz

Wilson Pickett

In The Midnight Hour/The Exciting...

EDSEL. CD

The first of five pairings of the Wicked Pickett's 10 Atlantic albums.



As raw, real and compelling as any of the great '60s soul singers,

including genre definers Otis Redding and James Brown, Wilson Pickett's body of work for Atlantic between 1965-71 touched the highest peaks, rarely plumbing the depths of mundane filler. These first two I Ps for the label, 1965 and '66 respectively, announced Pickett loud and proud. The former had its much-covered, nev-er-bettered title track, plus Don't Fight It, I'm Not Tired, two duets with Tami Lynn (Teardrops Will Fall, Come Home Baby) and tracks with pre-solo group The Falcons, including I Found A Love. Exciting is almost as good – 634-5789, Land Of 1000 Dances et al. Also recommended: the In Philadelphia/ Don't Knock My Love pairing (1970/71), with its 17 bonus tracks. The former, recorded

with Gamble & Huff, successfully modified his style; the latter returned him to the South, to Muscle Shoals. Pickett left when Atlantic lost soul focus in favour of white rock.

Geoff Brown



Various

Electro: Compiled By Joey Negro

Z. CD/DL/L

Loving homage to genre that sired house and techno.

Joey Negro – aka Dave Lee, stalwart DJ and genre-hopping dance music producer says this isn't the definitive electro compilation. It is, however, a fine documentary of a genre that, in the early 1980s, shone brightly and relatively briefly, but left a lasting legacy. Negro picks out records that soundtracked electro's accompanying breakdancing explosion, like Al-Naafiysh, Hashim's jerky, snarling anthem for floorrocking aficionados, and Tyrone Brunson's The Smurf, a marriage of slinky, slap bass and soaring Prophet 5 synth lines. One lesser-known entry is Two Sisters' High Noon, produced by Man Parrish; a New Yorker whose performances at Studio 54 attracted audiences including Warhol, Jagger and Haring, he would become, perhaps, electro's best-known name. Born out of disco, funk and synth-pop this music was the jump-off point for the hip-hop, house and techno to follow.

Stephen Worthy

Solomon Burke

Solomon Burke/ If You Need Me

SOUL JAIVI. CD

The King of Rock 'n' Soul's early years chronicled.



When Burke's self-titled debut album was issued by Apollo Records in 1962, it was

a time when the 26-year-old Philadelphia singer was no longer with the label and had just scored his first two US R&B Top 10 hits for Atlantic, Apollo desperately wanted to exploit Burke's new fame and rushreleased a 12-track album that collected singles and B-sides recorded between 1955 and 1957. None of the singles were hits, but it's an impressive compendium and Burke's church-reared vocals are sensational, especially on two mournful ballads, No Man Walks Alone and I'm In Love. His Atlantic debut LP, helmed by Bert Berns and with its ace 45, If You Need Me, is just as fine. This twofer is bolstered by six Atlantic-era bonus cuts, including the hit Cry To Me. Charles Waring

The Move

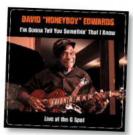
Magnetic Waves Of Sound: The Best Of...

Birmingham's first great pop band on audio and screen.

Somewhat obliterated by the global triumphs of its successors Electric Light Orchestra and, to a lesser extent, Wizzard, The Move were one of the most distinctive mid-to-late '60s UK pop-rock bands as this excellent Best Of illustrates. Fed by the melodious yet punchy Beatles-inspired songs of Roy Wood, a fourvoice frontline (Wood, Carl Wayne, Trevor Burton, Ace Kefford), and heavy industry bass guitar (Kefford, later Burton), their singles rarely disappointed as the nine Top 12 tracks, misses like Do Ya?, and LP tracks such as Walk Upon The Water reveal. On the DVD (Beeb and German TV), despite changing line-ups the band never loses its essential ooomph. They hear The Grass Grow and call the Fire Brigade three times each, go down Blackberry Way twice and, in 1968, predate most Americana fads to cover, masterfully, the Louvins' Christian Life.

Geoff Brown





David 'Honeyboy' **Edwards**

I'm Gonna Tell You Somethin' That I Know

OMNIVORE. CD/DI

2010 swan-song live show at Los Angeles's G Spot, Comes with DVD of his set.

He was born in Shaw, Mississippi in 1915 and died in Chicago in 2011. In between he took the blues on a journey, from the rural backwaters to the bright lights and big cities. He was first recorded by Alan Lomax in 1942; this live recording at LA's G Spot was captured on September 4, 2010. Honeyboy was 95 then and backed by his producer/guitarist Jeff Dale, his manager Michael Frank on blues harp and Dale's band The South Woodlawners, he puts Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, Howlin' Wolf and Robert Lockwood Jr songs in a juke joint setting. His voice is gruff like sandpaper, his guitar playing raw to the point of bloody, his band rough around the edges and gung ho. Catfish Blues is the best example of this at work. Honeyboy's passion and vitality riding its hypnotic groove. Lois Wilson



The Doors

The Doors: 50th Anniversary Deluxe Edition

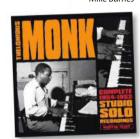
RHINO CD/DI /I P

Stereo and mono remasters of the epochal debut plus live tracks.

The Doors are habitually viewed as a Dionysian poetsinger and his shadowy cohorts, but this writer met a bass guitarist who played uncredited sessions with them in the late '60s, who called them a "cocktail jazz band on Quaaludes". But that contrast of the hip and the square, the dark and the cheesy is essential to their unique sound, from Break On Through (To The Other Side) – one of rock's most charged mission statements - to the metaphorical

murder ritual of The End. The live disc is the March 7, 1967 set from the Matrix, San Fran cisco, which has previously been released, but is here sourced direct from the recently rediscovered masters. The sounds is excellent and the band are coolly poised, well drilled, expansive at times, and Jim Morrison sounds young and fresh, his vocals often less intense than on the studio versions.

Mike Barnes



Thelonious Monk

Complete 1954-1962 Studio Solo Recordings

ESSENTIAL JAZZ CLASSICS. CD

Jazz genius captured alone at the piano.

Defined by unusual melodic leaps and dissonant harmonies, Thelonious Monk's musical language is so unique and distinctive that he can easily be identified by a couple of piano chords. Though his preferred formats for present-ing his music were trios and quartets, he occasionally made some unaccompanied piano recordings and this excellent 2-CD collection brings together all of his solo pieces during an eight-year period (including the complete albums Himself and . Thelonious Alone In San Francisco). Some of the composer/ pianist's greatest tunes are featured (including arresting versions of Round Midnight and Blue Monk) as well as his idiosyncratic interpretations of jazz standards like April In Paris and Body & Soul. Bolstered with rare bonus cuts, this retrospective etches an intimate portrait of Monk that deepens our understanding and appreciation of his maverick genius.

Charles Warina

Various

Ghana Soundz SOUNDWAY LP

Funk and fusion from the West Africa state in the '70s.



First released in 2002, when crate-digging in Africa seemed a

remarkably exotic way to waste money, Soundway's debut release has been out of print for a decade, 10 years that have seen dusty 7-inchers liberated from warehouses from Soweto to Algiers by DJs searching their own holy grail. It's fair to say Miles Cleret found a few floorfillers on his trip to Ghana all those years ago: Oscar Sulley's Bukom Mashie was the club hit, but to these ears it's as easy to imagine the heaving heavy breathing of Rob's Make It Fast, Make It Slow storming Studio 54 as it is to envisage Marijata's Mother Africa blowing up at the Flamingo in 1964. With Ebo Taylor, The Sweet Talks and the African Brothers among the other finds, this is still, as MOJO said 15 years ago, "seriously danceable from start to finish"

David Hutcheon



Steve Hillage

Various

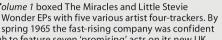
Searching For The Spark

MADEISH CD

Post-psychedelic British guitar adventurer is anthologised on 22 discs.

In a year of gargantuan box sets by everyone from Dylan to Pink Floyd, this one is exem plary. Unapologetically aimed at diehard fans and limited to 2,500 copies worldwide, it traces the career of Chingford-born Hillage from teenage progblues prodigy in Arzachel in '68 through to his first ambient techno release under the System 7 name 23 years later. While his tenure as Gong's guitarhero-in-residence is omitted here, the eight solo LPs he cut for Virgin between '75 and '82 make up the core of the box, confirming him as a supremely tasteful player. Most rewarding are the eight discs of material from his personal archive, ranging from entire live sets to demos and unreleased gems. A 188-page coffee-table book and a 60-page scrapbook

provide insight and context on what is a finely



spring 1965 the fast-rising company was confident enough to feature seven 'promising' acts on its new UK label, Tamla Motown, after distributing via Oriole and Fontana. Here, the EPs range from the musically 24 karat The Temptations' has My Girl, I'll Be In Trouble, Girl (Why You Wanna Make Me Blue) and The Girl's Alright With Me – to the collectable – two typically excited dance A-sides by The Contours nuzzled by a Smokey-like That Day When She Needed Me and Drifters' notes in I'll Stand By You. Mary Wells (she'd just left the label to slide into obscurity) and early Supremes EPs hold no surprises, but there's muddled thinking about Wonder's appeal (no longer 'Little', he's a jazz man), The Marvelettes' failure to break out in the UK remains baffling, while a just-emerging Kim Weston veers from a sub-Wells role to convincing ballad singing (Go Ahead And Laugh) on a desirable second set of EPs. GB

The Early Motown EPs Volume 2

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

curated and fantastically designed affair.

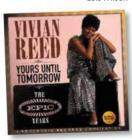
Phil Alexander

Vivian Reed ***

Yours Until Tomorrow: The Epic Years SOUL MUSIC CD

Pittsburgh soul singer's 1968 self-titled album plus As and Bs from 1968-71.

Goffin & King's Yours Until Tomorrow, in Vivian Reed's hands a dramatic torch song, was her sole hit in 1968, but the singer, remembered more for her Broadway career than her songs, recorded some remarkable 45s. Her first, Baby Baby (I'll Be Your Woman Till I Die), is rousing soul, delivered with power and urgency. I Wanna Be Free, the Boyce & Hart pop song, is turned into potent gospel protest, while West Side Story's Somewhere is pure lip-trembling spectacle, and contains one of soul music's most magisterial vocal performances. A medley of . The Righteous Brothers' You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin' and (You're My) Soul And Inspiration conveys joy and pain. Ace. Lois Wilson







All things at once

Nearly everything George Harrison did solo. By Jim Irvin

rom its arresting lenticular double portrait on a burgundy box inwards, George Harrison - The Vinyl Collection (UMC) ★★★★★ has been beautifully realised. Thirteen LPs, from Wonderwall Music to Live In Japan, warmly reproduced from original tapes, plus two picture-disc 12-inch singles, in a Friar Park Studio tape box. Anyone who's ever rated Harrison will purr, though the £350 price tag is chastening. However, all 13 vinyl editions will be available separately.

Contemplating an artist's complete works in a box-set binge feels very different from just selecting an album. The timing and circumstances of the individual releases become irrelevant, the spottier albums rise to meet the masterpieces - it's just about the work and how pleasurable or not it is to wallow in. I was surprised by Wonderwall Music and Electronic Sound, One I knew. one I didn't. Not what anvone wanted from a Beatle at the time (1968-69),

both now give fascinating windows onto the past. Wonderwall Music's filmic snippets of psychedelia and . İndian classicism celebrate an ingenuous time. Electronic Sound is akin to

full panoply of Harrison talent on vinyl.

"ELECTRONIC SOUNDS SPOOKY **HOOTS AND FARTS** BECOME **ODDLY**

ENGAGING."

first synthesizer, so basic he even tries out his scales, but its spooky hoots and farts become oddly engaging.

Perhaps the best solo Beatle LP, All Things Must Pass is a generous cornucopia of passionate performances. Perhaps too generous and passionate for some: Phil . Spector's production may be considered overblown and the third album of matey jamming tends to stay in the box, but its strengths far outstrip its weaknesses. Its 2000 remaster had extra sparkle, but it's good to hear it again as nature intended.

I recalled Living In The Material World as a downer, George wearing his pious hat. But it's lovely, some very fine singing and playing on songs reflecting turbulent times, spiritual doubts, the pressures of ever-greater fame and the protracted fade-out of his marriage to Patti. Stronger than memory served. Dark Horse, on the other hand, is still a mess. It flopped in the UK and, consciously or not, George coasted from this point, though every release has a couple of jewels. It wasn't until Cloud Nine, the Jeff Lynne one, that George

made another truly strong album, approachable today as a soft-rock

treat. However, the, posthumously released Brainwashed was probably his finest set after All Things Must Pass, gathering signature themes and sounds



Brett Anderson

Collected Solo Work

EDSEL/DEMON CD/L

Five solo joints by the Suede singer, the best is the spare. Talk Talk-esque Slow Attack (wintry moods by Eno pal Leo Abrahams) while the rockier Black Rainbows is a prelude, of sorts, to Suede's comeback albums, post-2012. DE



Bert Jansch

Live In Australia

EARTH. CD/DL/LP

Originally released in 2001 as Downunder, now on vinyl, this beautifully represented 1998 Melbourne concert is a great intro to the guitar legend (with bass and perc), featuring material both old (Angi) and new (Toy Balloon). KC



Sonny Stitt/Hank **Tones**

Cherokee

Fleet-fingered post-Bird saxman Stitt and pianist Jones bop mightily on four 1957-63 LPs. Stitt's fine-textured, long underrated playing is a full pleasure; Jones's understated accompaniment perfect. GB



Various

Muhammad Ali In The Greatest

VARESE SARABANDE. CD

1977 Ali-starring biopic's soundtrack has George Benson debuting The Greatest Love Of All, orchestral cues and tamed afro-funk, The Peoples' Champ sings Stand By Me and I Am The Greatest in 1964. Not a K.O. IH



Blonde On Blonde

*** Rebirth

ESOTERIC CD

Released in 1970, the second LP by British soft-psych cult heroes delivers nine tracks of varying quality but no little ambition Colour Questions the sprawling 12-minute-plus centrepiece, is symbol of that, and full of Aquarian spirit. PA



B.B. King

Blues On Top Of Blues

ELEMENTAL. LP

The sleevenotes to this 1968 effort see B.B. King placing himself "just sort of in between" Muddy Waters and Lou Rawls. With arrangements by Johnny Pate, it's an fair description of the sophisticated, brass-filled 12 tracks on offer, PA



Nolan Strong & The Diablos

Daddy Rockin' Strong

An influence on many Motown singers, most notably Smokey, Strong's controlled top register is a lovely thing on 29 rockin' R&B and doo wop cuts, '54-62, for Fortune. Title track is Daddy Rolling Stone's source. GB



Various

Rhythm On The Radio

Celebrating Charlie Gillett's Oval label' eclectic releases swamp pop, post-punk, house, Brit-funk, hi-life, Helen Shapiro. Lena Lovich and Jack & Chill had the hits, but like two deep cuts by photographer Ed Sirrs,

there's ample fun all over. IH

FILTER REISSUES EXTRA



Sam Cooke

Win Your Love For Me

SOUL IAM CD

Subtitled The Complete Singles 1956-1962, A- and B-sides in an era in Sam's career that had a lot of cheese. But when he sang his own songs (unsurpassed on Bring It On Home, Nothing Can Change This Love, Somebody Have Mercy) life lifted up. GB



The Kinks

The Mono Collection

SANCTUARY/BMG, LP

The first eight Kinks LPs, pressed in occasionally scuffed-sounding mono (Arthur the worst), but still handsome artefacts, with the bonus of the rare 1970 Black Album double comp and hardback 12-inch book. CP



Various

Bob Stanley & Pete Wiggs Present: **English Weather**

ACE, CD/LP

A rewarding splash in puddles of proto-prog and left-field pop in turn of the '70s Britain, by St Etienne chaps. Bill Fay, Camel, Caravan are roped in. Aardvark and T2 pleasantly surprise. DE



Various

Studio One Rocksteady Volume 2

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Stellar 19-track précis of JA pop's mid/late-'60s evolution, emphasising the influence of US soul. A host of heavenly voices (John Holt; Alton Ellis); Delroy Wilson's Run Run hints at reggae's tuffer narrative. KC



Dead Can Dance

Garden Of The Arcane Delights/Peel Sessions

4AD CD/LP

Australian duo's 1984 EP mixing cultures and eras like mystical magpies – lovingly reproduced on vinyl now in a gatefold sleeve with an LP of Peel sessions from the time. CP



The Manhattans

The Anthology: Columbia 1973-87

SOULMUSIC. CD

Misery never sounded so sweet! On 2CDs, rich leads and harmonies hit the ballad bullseye: Kiss And Say Goodbye, I Kinda Miss You, great Womack cover on I'm Through Trying To Prove My Love To You. GB



Various

Just Go Wild Over Rock n Roll

UMC CD/D

Bargain 2-CD plots the history of rock'n'roll at Chess from '51 (Jackie Brenston/Ike Turner's formative Rocket 88) to the '70s via label greats Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry and Dale Hawkins. Great for neophytes. CP



Zager & Evans

In the Year 2525

TUNE IN, CD

The first two albums by the duo behind 1969's dystopian title hit, plus extras. Both mix Aquarian free-love mawk, hippy snark and MOR arrangements. Not terrific, but fans of bloopy vintage synths will dig songs like The Candy Machine. IH



Graham Central Station

Three Original Classic Funk Albums

SOULMUSIC. CD

1977's Now Do U Wanta Dance by ex-Sly bassist lives up to this 2-CD set's 'Classic' title; My Radio Sure Sounds Good To Me ('78), Star Walk ('79), however, are patchier, GB



Pere Ubu

Drive He Said 1994-2002

After the MTV years, the trilogy of Raygun Suitcase, Pennsylvania and St Arkansas got back to basics. To alt.rock gnarl, David Thomas's cryptic man in black hints at what these things dotted across the land mean. IH

104

106

105

91

91

96

95

91



Jody Grind

One Step On ESOTERIC. CD/D

An 18-minute jazz-prog suite (including drum solo and incorporating the Stones' Paint It Black!) makes up side one of Jody Grind's 1969 debut. Self-indulgent? Perhaps. But Hammond-wielding 'wizard' Tim Hinkley is captivating throughout. PA



Red Lorry Yellow Lorry ***

Albums & Singles 1982-1989

CHERRY RED. CD

Not quite goth, despite singerguitarist Chris Reed's doomy boom, Leeds' Peel perennials purveyed dark, nasty postpunk. Of four LPs plus singles herein, '86's Paint Your Wagon is peak Foetus & western. DE



Screamin' Jay Hawkins

The Planet Sessions

Nine years after his signature hit, Screamin' Jay Hawkins entered Abbey Road Studios at Don Arden's behest to cut these of supper-club tracks. It failed to sell, as tunes like Night And Day stay oddly polite. PA



Status Quo

The Vinyl Singles Collection 1972-1979

Quo-related releases hit overdrive with guitarist Rick Parfitt's passing and here, if you have £90 to blow on prime '70s, denim-clad 12-bar boogie verities, is a box of 13 ace vinyl 7-inchers. CP

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COMING NEXT MONTH Bob Dylan, Goldfrapp, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Ray Davies, Karen Elson, Future Islands, Aimee Mann, Mark Lanegan, Father John Misty and more....



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Homo superior

This month's reanimated exhumation from rock's unpitying tar pit, vanguard gay punk rock (via glam).

Handbag

Snatchin'

In 1975, artists who revealed their homosexuality were exceptions to the rule of the closet. Besides a thriving lesbian folk scene, the gay-male equivalent of singer-songwriter confessionals, such as Michael Cohen and Steven Grossman, were passed over in favour of disco and 'bisexual chic', namely David Bowie and Lou Reed's flirtatious role-playing (both were married to women). Glam rockers Starbuck's single Do You Like Boys was only ever released in Holland.

In its December 1975 edition, UK culture monthly Street Life wrote about "Britain's first ever gay concert", staged by Tom Robinson, one third of folk-rockers Café Society, who were signed to Ray Davies's Konk label. In an interview, Robinson enthused about a band called Handbag: "They've been banned everywhere," he claimed. "People can't see them."

Handbag's lead singer, songwriter and bassist Paul Southwell – or Paul South as he called himself – and fellow gay bandmates Dave Jenkins (guitar) and Allan Jordan (drums) were almost called Whore's Handbag before deciding it was a bit much. But Southwell wouldn't compromise on the lyrics. From Lancashire, he'd moved to London in his early twenties and had swiftly come out. "I had to be true to myself," he says, calling in from his current home in Cairns, northern Australia. "Gay Lib had started so I joined in with a vengeance."

Initially, Handbag covered Bowie and Reed but Southwell wrote about his newly liberated life in the pubs and clubs, and the Gay Lib movement, from Leather Boys to Will The World Ever Change For The Better, all driven by febrile, swaggering glam rock. The trio had seen The Rocky Horror Picture Show stage production in its first week, and ramped up the theatre: "We'd dress outrageously, wear make-up and mess about, like we'd kiss each other and bite on blood capsules or simulate buggery, whatever a song warranted."

An album was recorded for Jet Records, home of ELO. A&R man David Arden, son of the label's infamous boss Don, told Beat International: "I'm sure gay rock will be the next big thing. Now that gay is open, they need their own music and their bands to follow, just like everyone else. And why not?"

Glam rock snapper Mick Rock was commissioned for the press shots, and all was well until Jet stopped returning Southwell's calls. "I never found out why. I couldn't get my songs back either."

By 1977, the likes of Jayne (then Wayne) County, and punk in general, had legitimised outrage, but Handbag had moved on. "One label said, 'Change your gimmick and get another.' It wasn't a gimmick, but I thought, Maybe I do need to change." Retaining the zest and panache of their melodic blueprint, while streamlining it for the new wave era, the stage make-up and blatant content was toned down. So it wasn't obvious that the dreamy You Are My Destiny addressed a fling with the (married) future frontman of a globally successful metal band.

Otherwise, Southwell was "raging about being ripped off". Another reoccurring theme was the character Dino, "who was me, really. I found revealing intimate details a bit disturbing so it was easier in the third person. Dino was street, 'the laundrette kid' as I called him, a bit of a punk." Dino starred in Superstar Car Crash (inspired by Marc Rolan's

recent death) and

How does that grab you: Handbag (from left) Paul Southwell, Allan Jordan and Dave Jenkins; (below) in their glam phase. Just Raped, which fed off punk rock ("Baby in the dole queue, sucking off the state"). In the nick of time, Handbag found

a new ally, Reg McLean, a former manager of The Stranglers, who ran a small reggae label, Circle International, and funded new Handbag demos.

CREDITS

Released: 1978
Recorded: TW Studios,
Gooseberry Sound and

Another ally was Kevin St John, new manager of punk HQ the Roxy, who launched a Gay Night with Handbag as the house band. But after two months the Roxy lost its licence. Then worse: Reg "threw an album at me, and said. This has come out." McLean had sold their demos to an Italian label, Punk Rock, which had packaged them as an album, titled Snatchin'. To add insult to injury, it opened with two quasi-ballads, titles were mixed up and one was misspelt.

When punk blew up internationally, the Italians repackaged *Snatchin'* with a new title, *The Aggressive Style Punk Rock*, and put a Kings Road punk with a Union Jack on his jacket on the cover. Despairing, the trio changed their name to Dino Daz & The Machine, but only lasted months. "It felt like bashing your head against a brick wall," Southwell sighs. "The music business was run by sharks. It was too painful."

Handbag had not a single write-up in the music press over five years, or one record released in their homeland. After releasing his solo 7-inch The Anthem in 1980, Southwell turned to academia. In 2005, a Dutch indie, Low Down Kids,

independently pressed up 25 one-sided copies of Superstar Car Crash. Southwell doesn't know why, but was flattered by this anomalous intervention.

"When I first saw Snatchin', Reg and me had a hugeargument," Southwell says. "But people are still talking about it now, so maybe it was good that he diddo it!"

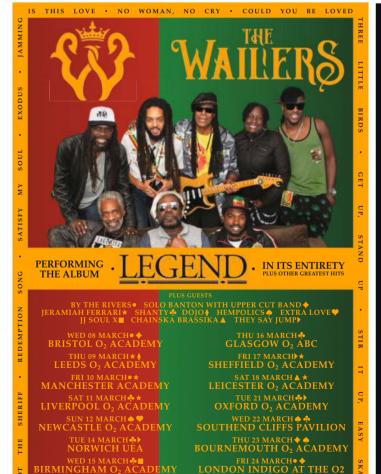
Martin Aston

"WE'D KISS EACH OTHER AND BITE ON BLOOD CAPSULES."









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Bill Callahan

Dream river pilot. By Andrew Male.

diting is writing," Bill Callahan told me in 2012. "Anyone can write a bunch of words. It's the taking away that's writing." That taking away process began in 1990, when this Maryland-born former hardcore kid recorded Sewn To The Sky, an abrasive collection of lo-fi noir interiors, hard-boiled imagery pulled from the hard-boiled pages of Black Mask magazine, and informed by an often unhappy, peripatetic and sheltered childhood, with two parents who both worked for the National Security Agency.

This ability to observe unseen, an NSA job requirement, was something Callahan also inherited, and it would inform the exceptional run of records he would release over the next 15 years under the veiled alias of Smog. Pared-down, spacious ballads of icy clarity, delivered in cold-blooded baritone, the best of Smog played like late-night Jim Thompson monologues, caught somewhere between downfall and insight. With the years, that

Having fun with God: Bill Callahan gets some air; (right) in jocund mood.

"IT'S THE TAKING AWAY THAT'S WRITING." outsider figure within Callahan's songs changed shape, moving from the city, to the suburbs, to the country, finding a new strange wisdom in nature along the way. In the process, the urban shroud was dropped, so that Smog became (Smog), which then became plain ald Bill Callahan.

became plain old Bill Callahan.

The records Callahan has recorded under his own name since the patchy Woke On A Whaleheart in 2007, have been wry, slow-drifting affairs, minimalist dream-haze narratives about landscape and America, imbued with a melancholy sense of quiet wisdom. However, one thing missing in all this is a glimpse of the artist at work. Callahan's B-sides, stray tracks and his remarkable way with a cover version reveal a master songwriter in search of new directions. Someone should definitively compile these off-map wanderings soon.



CAST YOUR VOTES!

this month you chose your Top 10 still Callahan/Smog LPs. Next month we want your Shirley Collins Top 10. Send selections to www.mojo4music. com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@ bauermedia.co.uk with the subject How To Buy Shirley Collins & Friends' and we'll orint the best comments.



The Doctor Came At Dawn

You Say: "Ten songs of how the heart can break. The sleeve art is haunting enough." Derek Coleman, via e-mail.

Arquably Callahan's bleakest work, 10 intense, intimate dissections of relationships, failed or failing, set against ghostly guitar atmospherics, horror movie strings, ironic handclaps and empty-room piano. A per fect late-night record, it also features one of Callahan's greatest songs, All Your Women Things, in which, against mournful cello, his narrator occupies an eerie middleground between sociopath and broken-hearted lover, listing all his ex-partner's belongings – "All your buckles and straps/Releases and traps" seven years after her departure (or is it her disappearance?), with a sincerity and a sorrow that edges into the macabre.



4 Smog Red Apple Falls

DOMINO 1997, FROM £7

You Say: "Alt country in Callahan's image... Beware, that red apple augurs no good." Cath Berry, via e-mail

With its mournful horns, lilting

pedal steel, scraping fiddle and quietly tick-tocking acoustic guitars, and enveloping Jim O'Rourke production, Red Apple Falls could simply be regarded as Smog-goes-country. However, from its opening track The Morning Paper, where the narrator falls back into sleep rather than face the horrors of the modern world ("It's all bad news on every page"), it's a country album that rarely goes outdoors, instead tracking the life of a room-bound loner, a new face in a new town, haunted by images of red apples, blood-red birds, and the ill deeds of his terrible past: "The widow says I broke her first/Of course I say just the reverse.

FILTER HOW TO BUY



Smoa Dongs Of Sevotion DOMINO 2000, FROM £7

You Say: "Essential for wit'n'groove (Dress Sexy At My Funeral) and heartbreak (Permanent Smile)." Philip R Bailey, via Twitter

It's patchy, possibly too long, sonically all over the shop, and very much a clearing out before the (Smog) reinvention. But beyond such set-pieces as Dress Sexy At My Funeral's wry Velvets chug, the cheerleader highlife groove of Bloodflow and Permanent Smile's funereal stomp, there's a still more sinister world, defined by tracks such as Strayed, Easily Led, Nineteen and Devotion. Hanging suspended on John McEntire's ghostly piano, Jeff Parker's etiolated guitar and Matt Lux's heartbeat bass, these lonesome avowals, inhabiting a dark territory between vulnerability and pathology, are some of the most unsettlingly memorable of Callahan's career.



Bill Callahan
Apocalypse DRAG CITY 2011, FROM £7

You Say: "Callahan at his most spontaneous and stripped down." Chris Lee, via e-mail

"Sometimes I Wish We Were An Eaale was me at my most fleshed out," Bill Callahan told MOJO in 2013. "Apocalypse ripped all that stuff off." Couched in the language of revelation and American myth ("Everyone's allowed a past they don't care to mention"). minimally sketched out on insistent two-chord guitar vamps, airy jazz flute, and Wurlitzer shimmer, occasionally building to points of distortion and interruption, Apocalypse finds Callahan reaching for enlightenment and his place in the Western landscape, across seven languorous, expressionistic riddles. Possibly his most opaque and perplexing album, this might also be his most enchanting, possessed as it is of a strange, elusive power.



Smog Wild Love DRAG CITY 1995 FROM **£7 99**

You Say: "A transitional LP with twisted brilliance and a sad, sad portrait of Prince. Will Fitzsimmons, via e-mail

Following the distorted lo-fi experiments of 1990's Sewn To The Sky, 1992's Forgotten Foundation and its superior follow-up Julius Caesar, Wild Love stands as Callahan's first truly great album. Recorded in a proper studio, with Drag City in-house producer Rian Murphy, this work of disturbed beauty unfolds like some chamber-pop reworking of Nico's The Marble Index (with cello by Jim O'Rourke). There are darkly comic tales of troubled childhood, injury, alienation, and on the swirling claustrophobic epic Prince Alone In The Studio, perfectionist woes ("And he finally gets that guitar track right/And it's better than anything any girl could ever give him"), related deadpan over fuzzed quitars, horn stabs, and droning strings.



6 (Smog) Supper DOMINO 2003 FROM £7

You Say: "Full of contrasts, a beguiling mix of forthrightness and mystery." Rich Stevens, via e-mail

After the wilfully lo-fi, nihilistic and edgy Rain On Lens, the second parentheses-fenced release engendered by Callahan's claustrophobic Chicago stay was seemingly the most straight-ahead recording of his career. Yet thanks to Supper's pillowy production, Callahan's sleepy delivery, Sarabeth Tucek's Iulling harmonies and the soft alt-country embellishments of pedal steel, banjo, Hammond organ – heard on stand-outs like the tensely erotic Our Anniversary, the disconcertingly elliptical Ambition or the forlorn A Guiding Light - the overall feel is decidedly unnerving, like walking into a house where something terrible has just taken place, but everything is momentarily back to normal.



📮 Bill Callahan Oream River DRAG CITY 2013 FROM £10

You Say: "Always had a bit of Gil Scott-Heron about it somehow to me." Alan O'Hare, via Twitter

The companion LP to 2005's A River Ain't Too Much To Love. yet conceived specifically as a "smooth and relaxing" latenight record ("the perfect end to a person's day"), Dream River clearly shows the results of Callahan's use of meditation as a writing tool. An attempt to realise the "already written narrative" of his life, Dream River floats on a dreamy zephyr of hand-drums, brushes, fiddles and flutes. A journey through intimate melancholy landscapes, moving between points of expansive silence and blissful release, it ultimately arrives at a strange kind of awareness, with Callahan singing on the quiet, crisp album closer Winter Road, "I have learned when things are beautiful/To just keep on.



Smog A River Ain't Too Much To Love

DOMINO 2005, FROM £

You Say: "Songs for meditating to... spare, gentle and haunting." James Morse, via e-mail

The first album Callahan wrote following a move to Austin, Texas, A River Ain't Too Much To Love was originally intended as the first solo Bill Callahan LP. Discouraged by his record label Drag City from taking that step, he did, at least, remove those prison brackets. Recorded at Willie Nelson's studio in Spicewood, Texas, with Connie Lovatt, Joanna Newsom and Dirty Three drummer Jim White, it's a warm, hallucinatory nearconcept album, threaded through with images of trees, horses, water, death and rebirth, and plays like a prayer of renewal, or a life-review that might all be taking place in Callahan's mind as he is swept down a roiling Colorado River.



Smog Knock Knock DOMINO 1999, FROM £7.90

You Say: "A classic Smog release, full of great songs. Love the backing choir on No Dancing." Ted Hill, Facebook

Like its predecessor Red Apple Falls, Knock Knock found Callahan working with sympathetic co-producer and fan Jim O'Rourke. Yet, whereas that album established an overall mood of troubling intensity, Knock Knock expands the Smog sound to an almost ridiculous degree, moving from the droning feedback whoop-funk on Held, to the handclapmotorik groove of Cold Blooded Old Times. Yet behind the up-tempo brightness could be found some of his most disarmingly emotional lyrics, particularly the lonesome childhood confessional Teenage Spaceship, and the darkly beautiful River Guard, one of the saddest songs ever written about life's momentary pleasures and eternal trials.



Bill Callahan Sometimes I Wish We Were An Eagle

DRAG CITY 2009, FROM £7.99

You Say: "A classic. Eid Ma Clack Shaw – need I say more?" Jan De Jong, Facebook

Although written in the wake of Callahan's breakup with Joanna Newsom, the singer denies that this had anything to do with his second post-Smog album, insisting instead that ... Eagle's lovelorn songs were inspired by his move to Austin, a place where "you can drive to where the city ends and see the grass begin. It shows you how things are put together." Whatever the reason, this spare, intimate collection is undoubtedly Callahan's finest work to date, with troubling aphorisms and koan-like riddles of nature, love and sadness all bound together by warm guitars, strange droning organs, and Callahan's achingly confidential baritone.



Until someone compiles that definitive cross label Callahan/Smog compilation you'll have to do the dig ging yourself. Start with The Kicking A Couple Around EP (for the chilling I Break Horses) and seek out Bill's cover versions on iTunes, particularly his heartbreak ing take on Kath Bloom's The Breeze/My Baby Cries. For further investigation there's the odd, awkward, yet compelling Apocalypse: A Bill

Callahan Tour Film, directed by Callahan's wife, film-mak er Hanly Banks. his imágist, epistolary 'novelette Letters To Emma Bowlcut, and 2014's sur prisingly effective dub remix of Dream River, Have Fun With God

ÉLANIE PAIN

10.04.17 - BIRMINGHAM, HARE & HOUNDS

11.04.17 - BRISTOL, THE FLEECE

12.04.17 - MANCHESTER, THE RUBY LOUNGE

13.04.17 - LONDON, 100 CLUB



MANCHESTER, THE RUBY LOUNGE FRIDAY 28 APRIL

NORWICH, ARTS CENTRE SATURDAY 29 APRIL

COVENTRY, THE EMPIRE FRIDAY 05 MAY

BRIGHTON. CONCORDE 2 SATURDAY 06 MAY

LEEDS. THE WARDROBE FRIDAY 12 MAY

LONDON, ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL SATURDAY 13 MAY





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Bristol, The Fleece - Sunday 21 May Manchester, The Ruby Lounge - Monday 22 May Cambridge, The Junction - Tuesday 23 May Birmingham, Hare & Hounds - Wednesday 24 May Southend, Chinnerys - Thursday 25 May Brighton, Concorde 2 - Friday 26 May London, Under the Bridge - Saturday 27 May







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MAY 11 NOTTINGHAM / RESCUE ROOMS

MAY 12 BIRMINGHAM / HARE & HOUNDS

MAY 13 SHEFFIELD / 02 ACADEMY 2

MAY 17 BRISTOL / THE FLEECE

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In The Midnight Hour: The Life & Soul Of Wilson Pickett

★★★★
Tony Fletcher

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, £18.99

Solid first biography of the Wicked Pickett.



Rock author Tony Fletcher (Keith Moon, Smiths, R.E.M.) tells Pickett's story with testimony from the Southern soul

man's family and partners fleshing out later, less wellknown chapters of a tale whose early arc is familiar from many books on soul. Schooled in gospel in Alabama, Pickett moved north to Detroit in 1956 aged 15 and screamed to prominence in The Falcons. Their raw, exultant I Found A Love alerted Atlantic's Jerry Wexler, who signed him in '64 and, after a couple of New York flops, sent him back south to write and record with the M.G.'s guitarist Steve Cropper at Stax. Pickett made more indelible soul at Muscle Shoals, but his drinking led to drugs, and both fuelled his often violent temper. Like Otis Redding's success, Pickett's was relatively brief, but their music's legacy lives on. Otis died young, enshrining his fame and our love of him; Wilson's popularity waned during a slow, steady decline. The sense of talent unfulfilled in both is immense.

Geoff Brown

Forever Words



Johnny Cash

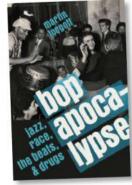
BLUE RIDER PRESS, \$25

Hardback of 41 verses, subtitled The Unknown Poems.



"My father," John Carter Cash writes in the foreword, "had many faces." We know a bunch of them through Kris Kristofferson's

song Pilgrim: poet, picker, prophet, pusher, user, seeker. This focuses on the poet, although the rest are as evident in his poetry as they were in his songs. Plain and direct in style, they're variously deep, funny, holy, carnal, light, dark, personal, philosophical or righteously angry on behalf of the downtrodden or the planet. Compiled from a stash of some 200 works, they're illustrated with facsimiles of his handwriting, the occasional doodle (Don't Make A Movie About Me, a fine, wry piece) and three photos: youth, adulthood and old age. The oldest poem. The Things We're Frightened At, Cash wrote at age 12. His last, Forever, written days before his death at age 71, appears halfway through this strong collection and stops you in your tracks. Sylvie Simmons



Bop Apocalypse

Martin Torgoff
DA CAPO, £21

Author expands further on the subject of 'jazz, race, the beats and drugs'.

Torgoff is a brilliant writer; blending detailed music biography with cultural analysis to explore the folk devils and moral panics of the bebop era and the beat generation. His research is phenomenal, with an extensive bibliography and impressive cast of interviewees including Stanley Crouch, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbert Huncke, Joyce Johnson and Jackie McLean. The real villain for Torgoff is Harry J Anslinger and his Federal Bureau of Narcotics. Anslinger's war on drugs policy was clearly racist, motivated by the clamp down on a predominately black music, but his actions, claims Torgoff, also facilitated creativity. single piece of legislation more effectively guaranteed the growth of an underground alternative culture in this country than the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937, and no single piece of legislation more decisively declared war on that culture," he states.

Lois Wilson

Inside Looking Out: More Rock'N'Roll Tales From The British Music Business



Mark Rye

Eyewitness anecdotes from almost 60 years of rock'n'roll.



Mark Rye's rockhistory.co.uk website is an online home for retired music business folk; a place where

veteran musos, A&R men and record pluggers share stories on camera. Rye's 2014 book, Over Under Sideways Down, transcribed some of those interviews, and this follow-up offers more of the same; great, if occasionally long-winded yarns about The Yardbirds, Stone Roses, Elton John, Culture Club and more. As before, it captures the hectic

spirit of rock's early days (like the time teenage drummer Mick Underwood sawed a piece off Gene Vincent's illfitting wooden leg). But stories such as the one about Associate Billy Mackenzie tricking his record label into paying for a cab from Kensington to Dundee suggest nothing much changed in the vears that followed. Some of the anecdotes don't quite work on the page, but rock archaeologists and even the mildly curious should find much to entertain them here. Mark Blake

Rock & Pop On British TV

★★★★ Jeff Evans

OMNIBUS, £20

Important case history full of memories of star-kickers, fame-seekers and more.



Author Evans here does us proud. He's listed just about every worthwhile TV programme that's tooted its flute on

behalf of pop, and keeps everything entertaining. He's dug back a bit too. Yes, there really was pop life before Jack Good. Admittedly it struggled more than a micron to shrug off the shackles of Lord Reith, but Evans recalls the efforts of such as trumpet-playing Jack

Jackson, whose radio and TV shows helped changed the face of British pop in an era where teenagers hardly existed. From there it's a brilliant ride, hurtling through Good's array of '50s gamechangers, the inevitable Top Of The Pops, the '60s pop art Mod parties of Ready Steady Go! and countless others you've either never met or maybe forgotten (Doing Their Thing, Breakers, Pop Down The Pub etc) before arriving (after making a Glastonbury stop-off) at the world of Pop Idol and X Factor. Remember when Dusty made her last TV appearance, on Later, with Alison Moyet and Sinéad O'Connor providing backups? This book does... and more.

Fred Dellar

Tranny: Confessions Of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist SellOut

★★★★ Laura Jane Grace

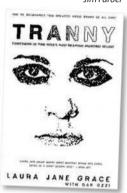
with Dan Ozzi

The long road to selfacceptance for the star of US punk band Against Me!

Four years ago, the leader of the successful punk band Against Me! came out as a

transgendered person in Rolling Stone. Yet only in her full memoir does Laura Jane Grace reveal the layered meanings, and the unresolved ache, behind her long quest for self-acceptance. Grace communicates it most poignantly in pages included from the diaries she kept that date back to her days as a closeted teen outcast in the backwater suburbs of Gainesville, Florida in the late '90s Raised as Thomas James Gable in a military family, the artist faced confusion, depression and shame. The enormity of Grace's burden in coming out to her fans, her band, and to the wife and child she lived with while presenting as a man, proves an often agonising read. In detailing what it took to make those steps, Tranny offers a poignant profile in courage.

Jim Farber







Hometown unicorn

On a tense night in the US, the head-turning singer-songwriter is on strident form in her adopted Minnesota base. By Bob Mehr.

Haley Bonar The Lemon Twigs

First Avenue, Minneapolis

lipping back a tendril of red hair, Haley Bonar ponders her evolution as a singersongwriter, which began with her penning tunes as a small-town teen and now finds her as a 33-year-old woman, artist and mother. "When you gain a bigger grasp of the world, it's going to come out in your work somehow," says Bonar.

Ostensibly discovered at age 19 by Low's Alan Sparhawk, the Canadian-born, South Dakota-bred Bonar is eight albums into a career that's just now gaining its most serious creative and commercial momentum. "I never would have believed you if you told me I'd be doing this 14 years later," says Bonar, sipping tea backstage at First Avenue, a few hours before her headlining turn at the club. "It's been a surprise, but the way it's gone feels so organic to me."

In 2017, Bonar has achieved hometown hero status in her adopted Twin Cities base, earned growing acclaim in the US for her latest (and best) album *Impossible Dream*, and turned heads during a blitz through the UK last fall (including a star-making appearance on Later... With Jools Holland).

On this late-January night, Bonar is topping the bill of a sold-out anniversary concert for influential Minneapolis Public Radio station The Current. "It's kind of a mini-BBC, they're tastemakers," notes Bonar, who's become one of its playlist staples.

The evening's other featured act is Long Island retro-pop fetishists, The Lemon Twigs. Led by teenaged brothers Brian and Michael D'Addario, the songs off their recent debut *Do Hollywood* draw on the likes of Nilsson and Todd Rundgren, Raspberries and Big Star, while their rather outré fashion sense borrows more directly from Slade and the Bay City Rollers.

Uncharacteristically dressed down in muted track suits and denim, their natural showiness — the brothers began their careers as child actors on Broadway and in film — is nevertheless on full display. Michael is the peacock of the pair: a mugging, stick-twirling Moon The Loon on drums, then a high-kicking, leaping Townshend on guitar. Meanwhile, Brian — a dead ringer for Gene Clark — offers a more grounded emotive counterpoint, as he plumbs romantic depths on halting power ballads These Words and How Lucky Am I?. Interestingly, the live versions of the songs outstrip those on record — the

album's twiddly bits and sonic clutter replaced by leaner arrangements and melodic Minnesota wild: (clockwise from main) Haley Bonar on adopted home turf; (top right) The Lemon Twigs' Brian D'Addario revs up while brother Michael (bottom centre) kicks out.

"BONAR

EMERGES

ELEGANTLY

ATTIRED IN

BLACK AND

PROCEEDS

TO TAKE

CONTROL OF

THE ROOM,"

muscle. The D'Addarios' rapid maturation is further confirmed with several stellar songs off their forthcoming second album – including set stand-outs So Fine and closer Queen Of My School – which augurs well for their future.

With the youthful Twigs having revved up the crowd with their giddy sprit, Bonar emerges – elegantly attired in all black – along with her four-piece band, and proceeds to take control of the room with an altogether different energy. She opens with Hometown, a Springsteen-style escape anthem about what's left behind and what lingers: "All grown up, saving up for my exit... But the further that I get/The deeper my regrets."

From the start, there is something strident in Bonar's manner and music. For most of the night, the audience have been furiously checking their phones, as newly elected President Trump's 'Muslim ban' has resulted in chaos and mass protests across American airports. There's a palpable unease about the state of the country — that tension and its release is at the core of Bonar's performance. Given current events, there's a particularly foreboding quality to something like From A Cage, as she belts its final chilling line: "Well they're closing down the party, and they're bringing heavy chains...but we'll learn to love our freedom from a cage."

The songs themselves, which move stylistically between indie rock, alt pop, and skewed folk, play as ethereal soundscapes built around her soaring voice, with drummer Jacob Hanson and guitarist Matt Vannelli layering atmosphere all around. She prefaces the title track of 2013's *Last War* with an introduction that notes the new value of vocal resistance: "The only time you should be silent is in a fucking library." Delivered as a howl of dissent, it ends with feedback drowning out the crowd's cheers as the band leaves the stage.

Bonar soon returns, grabbing an acoustic and opting for a more hopeful encore, the sprite roots of Down Sunny Roads. The night wraps with the joyously received garage gallop of Called You Queen. Bonar bows and moves on, marking her final show before a spring European tour. Her evolution continues apace.













Wonder baa

All change for this Nashville institution – but magic still comes easily to Kurt Wagner, says Stevie Chick.

Lambchop

Roundhouse, London

tepping on stage, Lambchop leader Kurt Wagner looks, well, how Kurt Wagner always looks: trucker cap, neat workwear, like an unassuming carpenter popped out for a smoke. But longtime Lambchop-watchers will note some radical changes this time round. Once a crowded Nashville arkestra with pedal steel and horn section in tow, here Lambchop consist only of Wagner, a drummer, a bassist, and garrulous pianist Tony Crow, who fulfils the shy Wagner's frontman responsibilities with a neat line

in scabrous Donald Trump jokes.

The setlist, meanwhile, draws mainly from recent album FLOTUS, which marked a determined step beyond for the everfluctuating 'Chop. Gone, save for ghostly echoes, are previous sonic touchstones: the gently twisted country ache of What Another Man Spills, Nixon's dark, velvety soul, the past-midnight crooning of Is A Woman. Instead, Wagner occasionally straps on a guitar, but mostly his hands operate a voice-manipulating TC-Helicon Voicelive 2, which is sat on a kitchen stool.

Wagner's bandmates, meanwhile, re-score FLOTUS's minimal, often-electronic music for live instrumentation. Crow engaging the graceful honks of sampled woodwind and stuttering synth of Writer with deft, conversational piano pitched somewhere between Erik Satie and Vince Guaraldi: remarkable but homespun, much like Lambchop, Indeed, for all the hitherto untaken paths FLOTUS

Lambchop, with TC-Helicon Voicelive 2 perched on the . stool; (below) the band and Wagner.

experiment, every unexpected influence

(Wagner has said the roots of the new album's sound lay in his ongoing appreciation for dirty south sounds, trap hip-hop and crunk) makes perfect sense, refracted through Wagner's hazy, droll, poignant, often resonant lens. Ultimately, as alien as it sounds on the surface, it all feels very Lambchop.

In part that's because Wagner's humanity always rises to the surface of even his most machine-conjured sounds. In a strange twist of creative synchronicity, his use of the TC-Helicon (which is like a Vocoder, only more so) echoes another of 2016's finer albums, Bon Iver's 22, A Million. In neither case are the electronics a gimmick, but where Bon Iver sought to make his vocals indecipherable, tonight Wagner transforms his gravelly tones into luminous transistor harmonies, gauzy and cobwebbed around his melodies.

The Hustle, FLOTUS's 18-minute closer, is shorn of a couple of minutes of its purposeful meander and calmly undulating electro rhythms tonight, but Wagner's words - beginning with "I don't want to leave you ever/And that's a long, long time" – ring clear, uniting these songs: the grain of love lasting across decades. The songs invest domesticity with magic, and locate sweet, palpable truths underneath "romance" better than any since Yo La Tengo's similarly hushed and brave ... And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out. And here, bathed in warm blue light, every note counts,

especially the quietest ones. . Swaying with his mikestand, Wagner seems lost in $memories, in \, the \, sting \, and \,$ balm of nostalgia, the long and still unfolding story of his marriage to Mary Mancini. With a love like that, you know he should be glad.

"WAGNER **TRANSFORMS HIS GRAVELLY TONES INTO** LUMINOUS **TRANSISTOR** HARMONIES.



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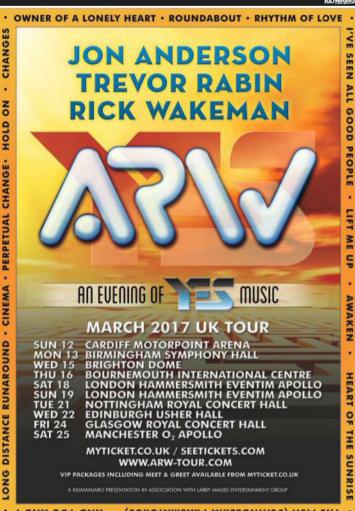
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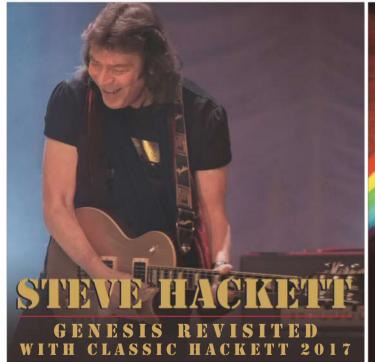
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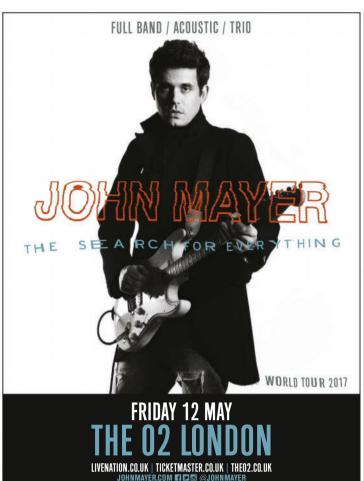
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DID COSTELLO DISS RONSTADT?

Got a niggling doubt, beef or need to know? Hang on tight for Dellar's film, LP and meatball revelations!

Did Elvis Costello fall out with Linda Ronstadt when she covered Alison? Karen Jackson, via e-mail

Fred says: Elvis was dismissive of Linda Ronstadt's Alison cover when she sang it on her Living In The USA album, though he was probably glad of the royalties which enabled him to move to an up-market part of Surrey. For her part, Ronstadt was an early Elvis admirer who was in the audience when he performed at Los Angeles' Hollywood High in June 1978. When she recorded Alison she claimed that she had one of her friends in mind: "a sweet girl but kind of a party-girl

type. I felt that she needed somebody to talk to her in a stern voice because she was getting married and she would have to change." Despite everything, Ronstadt remained a true believer. That year, she told Playboy that Elvis was one of her favourite performers and claimed: "I've never communicated with him directly but I heard that someone asked him what he thought [about her version of Alison] and he said that he'd never heard it but was glad to get the money. So I sent him a message: 'Send me some more songs, just keep thinking about the money.' And he sent me Talking In The Dark, and I love it. I also recorded Party Girl and Girls Talk." Ronstadt included all three songs on her 1980 platinum LP, Mad Love.

DID JOSH WHITE GET THE BREAD WITH ONE MEAT BALL?

At various times, I have seen bluesman Josh White's recording of One Meat Ball listed as a million-seller. But though I've tried, I can't find the record listed on any R&B charts of the '40s or '50s. Did it really sell a million or was this some hype fashioned by a record company? CL Thompson, via e-mail

Fred says: I doubt if the record ever sold that amount. It was released in 1944 by Asch, a minor company that lacked the facilities for producing records in any large quantity. But there's little doubt that Josh White's song about the little man who only had 15 cents and could only order one meat ball (without the bread) was hugely popular, gaining more than its fill of air and jukebox play. White was even signed to perform One Meat Ball in the 1945 film The Crimson Canary, a production that also featured an astounding array of jazz names in its cast list. However, the record proved to be an early example of the 'white cover version' syndrome, and it was The

Andrews Sisters' rendition of the song, released on Decca, that made its way into the US Top 20. It also became a hit in the UK, in the pre-chart period, via a Brunswick release.
Ry Cooder, Dave Van Ronk, Lonnie Donegan, Shinehead and Tom Paxton are among the many others who've recorded One Meat Ball. Tasty!

DID THE KILLER
DUB FOR DENNIS
QUAID?
Did Jerry Lee Lewis perform

all the songs for the Great
Balls Of Fire! biopic or
did Dennis Quaid
contribute some
of the vocals?

C Fox, via e-mail

Fred says: Though Quaid wanted to perform all the songs, The Killer nixed the idea at the very beginning. "He even threatened my life," the actor told a reporter. However, Quaid persevered and cut a version of



Elvisly hers: (clockwise from top) Elvis

Linda Ronstadt; The Doobie Bros let off some multi-vocalist steam; Jerry Lee Lewis and Dennis Quaid; Josh White and meatball; early Fabs CD. the film's title track that impressed Jerry Lee. He agreed that he and Quaid should each cut half of the songs, but director Jim McBride put the kibosh on that compromise and Jerry Lee headed back into the studio to re-record eight of his Sun classics for Quaid to lip-sync, though Quaid was permitted to muscle in on Crazy Arms. Quaid also played some piano. But it was all in vain. Jerry Lee hated the Great Balls Of Fire! film, the critics were divided and it disappointed at the box office. Meanwhile, the T Bone Burnett-produced soundtrack album failed to crack the US Top 50.

WHEN WERE THE FIRST CD BEATLES FOR SALE?

Is it true that EMI waited several years before releasing Beatles albums on CD? Jean Tweed, Halifax

Fred says: Though CDs were marketed in the UK during October 1982, it wasn't until February 1987 that EMI made the first Beatles albums available in the format, issuing Please Please Me, With The Beatles, A Hard Day's Night and Beatles For Sale. It wasn't the first time that the company lagged behind. Though Decca had released vinyl albums in Britain for the first time in 1949, EMI wasn't convinced that long-players were a viable product and didn't enter the vinyl LP market until 1952!

HOW MANY LEAD SINGERS DID IT TAKE?

RE: the note from David Pfenninger in MOJO 277 on lead singers... Eight singers performing lead vocals seemed a bit much, even for The Beach Boys. But there is certainly a bunch of groups who hit the charts with three singers, among them: The Doobie Brothers (Tom Johnston, Pat Simmons, Michael McDonald): Van Halen (David Lee Roth, Sammy Hagar, Gary Cherone); Genesis (Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, Ray Wilson). There are others who did it with four, namely Toto (Steve Lukather, Bobby Kimball, David Paich, Joe Williams) and the Eagles (Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Randy Meisner, Timothy B Schmit). And these did it with six: Fleetwood Mac (Peter Green, Lindsey Buckingham, Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, Rick Vito, Billy Burnette) and Chicago (Robert Lamm, Peter Cetera, Terry Kath, Donnie Dacus, Jason Scheff, Bill Champlin).

Ed Toth, via e-mail

Fred says: I'll think we'll wrap this one now. I always hated maths.

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

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MOIO 279

Across: 1 Smokey Robinson, 9 I Shall Be Released, 10 MacGowan, 12 Raised On Radio, 15 Fat. 16 Calexico, 17 Blockheads, 21 Mrs, 23 Mobscene, 24 Hank Ballard, 25 Yet, 27 Promise, 30 Shout To The Top, 32 K.L.F., 33 All This Time, 35 Angel, 37 Wings, 38 Word, 39 Rod Argent, 40 Vai, 41 Wishing, 43 Ian Astbury, 47 Nvlons, 49 MacGregor 52 Isaac, 54 Sal Solo, 55 Amsterdam. 58 Spyro Gyra.

Down: 1 Sting, 2 On How Life Is, 3 Ellen Foley, 4 Robert Smith, 5 Berlin, 6 Speed, 7 Nas, 8 Midlake, 11 Caleb Followill, 13 Ellington, 14 Once Bitten Twice Shy, 16/36 Come Play With Me. 18 Holger, 19 Amarok, 20 Sade, 22 Shout, 26 Eskimo, 28 I'm Hurtin', 29 Easy, 31 Plug In, 34 Eva, 35 Anger, 39 Reach Out. 40 Van, 42 Geremia, 44 Asylum, 45 Trio. 46 Y.M.C.A., 48 Oasis, 50 Rae, 51 God, 53

Amos, 56 Rea Winner: Sean

Crockett of Abertillery wins a set of Concept 40 speakers

30 34 33

ACROSS

- 1 He once bought John Peel a biryani (5,5)
- 6 Trio, the first real supergroup? (5) 9 Genteel Jimmy Swan becomes a
- Swedish guitar ace (6,1,9)
- **12** Morrison's first studio double (5,2,3,7) **14** Could be Bleu or maybe Penguin (4)
- 16 Arto Lindsay's No Wave band (1.1.1)
- 17 This Stevie Wonder hit was successfully covered by Jodeci (6)
- 19 Long lasting band, headed by Knox (9)
- 21 Irish bluesman Gallagher (4) 24 American, or possibly Humble? (3)
- 25 Chris put The Road To Hell for satnav (3)

- 26 Battled pink robots for Flaming Lips (7)
 28 She's Zydeco royalty (5,3)
 29/29D US group whose albums include Triangle and Bradley's Barn (4,8)
 30 Did this run Windows 10 or MacOS for Radiohead? (1.1.8)
- **31** Female group whose *Beauty And The Beat* album topped the US charts (3,2-3)
- 32 Henri, orchestra leader, made Music For The Weaker Sex (4)
- 33 Linked to pins by Jackie De Shannon (7)
- 34 Pink, Marquee or Dark Side? (4)
- **35** Out --- (Super Furry B-sides album) (6) **38** Peanuts Wilson's Cast Iron limb (3)
- 39 --- More Time (Daft Punk) (3)

- 41 Bryan, Oleta, Ryan maybe? (5) 42 Weird Al's Michael Jackson parody (3,2) 43 Music genre linked with W.C.Handy (5)
- **44** Doheny, first artist signed to Asylum (3) **46** --- And Cry (3)
- 48 Location for Lloyd Cole and The
- Commotions' Fire (6) **50** "I'm hearing the light from the window" (Mike Nesmith) (3)
- 51 Colin from Men At Work (3) 53 UK soul/funk outfit or Beach Boys hit (6)
- **54** Curtis Stigers' album cheer for love (6)
- **55** Label, its first success was Suede (4) **56** Novelty musical instrument (5)
- 58 Welsh DJ who was hailed as the world's No1 in 2000 (5)
- **59** Nick Kershaw's spivvy hit (4,3)
- **60** A Janet Jackson album or a Soul Train
- legend (6,2)
 61 An explosive female rapper (2,8)

- 1 America's biggest popstar? (7)
 2/15 It was the last song Jim Morrison performed live (5,2,4)
- 3 See photoclue A (9) 4 Elvis Costello's Nashville album (6,4)
- **5** Famed jazz arranger Evans (3)
- 6 Alexis Korner's Whole Lotta Love big band (1.1.1)
- --- Of Destruction (Barry McGuire) (3) 8 Did The Cure's vehicle have a hole in the middle? (4.3)
- 10 They recorded Incredible with General Levy (1.4) **11** See photoclue B (1.1.1.)
- 12 See photoclue C (5,7)
- 13 Poet/singer who led The Fugs (2,7)
- 15 See 2
- 18 Quincy Jones produced this Sinatra album (1,1,2,2,4) **20** Label founded by Lou Adler in 1967 (3)
- 22 R.E.M.'s colourful chemical warfare
- protest (6,5)
- 23 Two ---- In England (Everlys album) (5) **24** Bowie's 1973 covers album (3,3)
- 27 A bit religious, this Erasure album (6)
- 28 Mercury, May, Taylor and Deacon (5) 29 See 29 Across
- **31** ---- Beat (Sandy Nelson) (4)
- **32** Number 66, chosen by Chuck Berry (5) **36** Genre, more boozy than bluesy (3,4)
- 37 Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien OBE (5)
- 38 King Creosote had him meeting
- Appleman (9)
 39 Something that's different, like this
- Cocteau Twins EP (9)
- **40** Madonna's fully inclusive debut 45 (9) **45** "Take a look at me now" (Elton) (3)
- 47 Scott Walker and Sunn O)))'s album (6)
- **48** ---- Prison Blues (Johnny Cash) (6) **49** The High Numbers once (3,3)
- 52 Bert Jansch LP strictly for the birds (6)
- 57 Faith, Ant, Lambert? (4)

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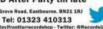
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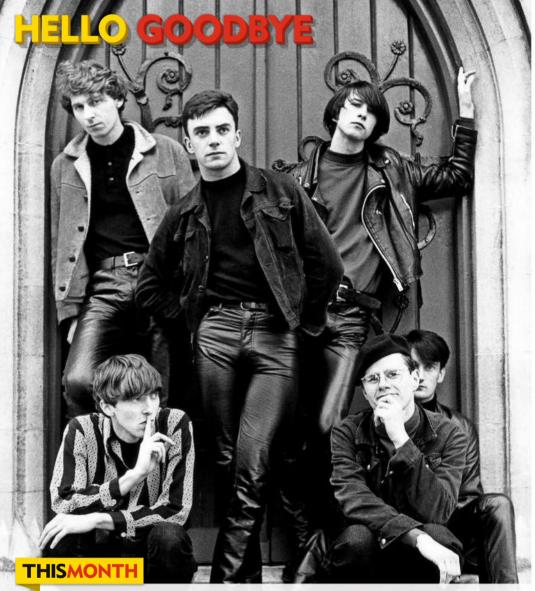
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MARTIN ST. JOHN AND PRIMAL SCREAM

AKA 'The Joogs', he banged his tambourine with the pre-Screamadelica garage band. Then it fell apart...

HELLO SUMMER 1984

I first met Bobby Gillespie around autumn 1983 in Glasgow, through a pal. I was just drifting about waiting for something to happen. Through him I met up with his co-conspirator Jim Beattie, and into 1984, the other members of Primal Scream. We'd meet up at Jim Beattie's house as none of us had left home by then. The chat mostly involved our different tastes in music - I was a total fanatic of The Cramps, Suicide, The Gun Club and Panther Burns, and it was around then that I also started to dig The Seeds and Pink Floyd's The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn. Bob G and Beattie were already massive fans of The Byrds and Love. The main catalyst that sent the three of us on a psyched out garage trip was the Julian Cope article in the NME [Tales From The Drug Attic] which was a total mindsnapper for us young eager-to-learn garage cats.

Hell for leather (trews): (above) Primal Scream circa '86 (standing, from left) Jim Beattie, Robert Young, Bobby Gillespie, (sitting, from left) Martin St. John, Paul Harte, Tam McGurk; (bottom right) before the end; (below) The Joogs today.

"I WAS ALWAYS UP FOR HAVING

HARD KICKS

FOR FUN."

I first moved to our flat Silverfoilcity on Byres Road [a crash pad decorated with tin foil à la Warhol's Factory] in June 1985 around the same time that [Glasgow club night] Splash 1 started up. It became the major HQ then for all sorts of bohemian west end high jinks that usually involved LSD being ingested along with band rehearsals at full pelt. I was first invited along in summer 1984, and got in the groove with my set of maracas, tamby and mouthie. The reason I picked up the tambourine was 'cos all the great '60s garage/pop groups seemed to have a full-time tamby basher who looked just as killer as the other members. Basically I practised along to all the early albums of The Seeds, The Byrds and the first Love album, and I dressed the part - bouffant hair, booted and buckled Seeds-style, plus I always had an upbeat attitude to life and was always up for having hard kicks for fun. I was also a major fan of Chas Smash from Madness, and the Clappers [backing singers] from Gene Vincent's Blue Caps were also a major influence.

The first gig I performed at was The Venue in Glasgow, in October 1984, with The Jesus And Mary Chain. It felt real good up on that stage. As we were packing our gear away, Jim Beattie came up and asked me, "Well, do you wanna join the band?"

GOODBYE JUNE 26. 1987

In September 1986 we signed to a major label, Elevation Records, c/o Warner Brothers, which was our kiss of death. Bad vibes had been simmering since the sackings of drummer Tam [McGurk] and Stewart the guitarist – who I took sides with – during the aborted first album [Sonic Flower Groove] debacle at Rockfield Studios. The original gang of Bob G, Beattie and Robert Young were all on songwriting publishing royalties and they got in hired hands to plod along for live gigs, but I received nothing in return for my band activities and I was skint.

The major rift happened on the last mini-tour in June 1987. There had been some ructions in Silverfoilcity in the previous months, I'd started seeing a girl called Joyce X which made issues even more complex... petty arguments and bickering a go-go. My last gig was at ULU. I never told them I was leaving and I puked up before I went on-stage. It was strange to discover on YouTube that someone had filmed it - Bob G's vocals are terrible but the rest of PS are on fire, as we blasted out [single] Imperial twice! After the gig, I just took my tambourine case and split pronto stage right, I don't think I even made it to the dressing room.

After I left I decided to put a false advert in the NME to put a rocket up their arse, quoting that I had the new tape of the forthcoming album for sale. Total lies, of course, but it didn't stop a former member turning up at my doorstop ranting and raving about handing over the invisible tape.

I must admit for about a year I was in total shock from the whole experience – we were thick as thieves, and then it just turned nasty. I went to see PS during their *Screamadelica* years and I definitely saw a blank spot on the stage for a tambourine basher-cum- maraca shaker, but it wasn't to be.

Get Martin St. John's memoir The Psychedelic Confessions Of A Primal Screamer: The Tambourine Years 1984-87 from July com!



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