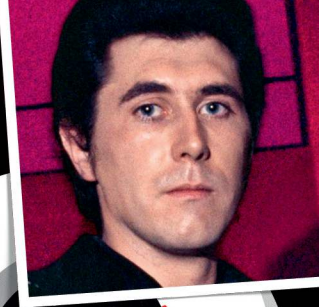
AMY WINEHOUSE
20 YEARS OF BACK TO BLACK

ROXY MUSIC
FOR YOUR PLEASURE!



MOJO

The Music Magazine

124 REVIEWS
FONTAINES D.C.
U2, TOM PETTY
NU-SOUL
& MORE

1966.
1976.
2026.
THE WILDEST, STRANGEST ERAS OF...
BOB DYLAN

SIMPLE MINDS
RETURN TO POST-PUNK

JIMMY WEBB
ON GLEN CAMPBELL

ALICE COOPER
"MY EVIL-UTION!"

BERNIE TAUPIN
STEPS OUT OF ELTON'S SHADOW

FELA KUTI
TAKES ON THE WORLD

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
"IT WAS DO OR DIE. LITERALLY."

PLUS
TWISTED TEENS
BRIAN EPSTEIN
SOFT MACHINE
TONY IOMMI
CHEETAH CHROME R.I.P.

&
CHUCK BERRY AT 100

MYSTIC MOOD
EWAN BLEACH



"Ewan's music is, by turns, anarchic, sweet, melancholic and joyous. It's the sound of musicians who are faithfully reproducing not old recordings, but rather the 'enormous yes' that Larkin compared to love."
Jonny Greenwood, Radiohead

"Otherworldly, like captured transmissions from other universes and other pasts"
Stevie Chick

ALBUM OUT NOW

LIVE IN LONDON AT
HOXTON HALL
SATURDAY 24TH
OCTOBER 2026

Tickets available via the QR code

O.S.R. OLD STYLE RECORDS
MOTION TALENT
hmv

www.ewanbleach.com

CONTENTS

LONDON ✦ MEMPHIS ✦ KALAKUTA

DECEMBER 2026 ISSUE 397



"I spent a week lying on my kitchen floor, crying, listening to The Shangri-Las."
AMY WINEHOUSE, P62

FEATURES

30 BERNIE TAUPIN
He writes the words that Elton John weaves with melodic gold. Now Bernie Taupin's writing music too. Just don't remind him about Starship's We Built This City…

36 QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE Out of the crucible of divorce drama and health scares, Josh Homme emerges with a newly versatile band, tackling the mysteries of love with '70s swagger.

42 FELA KUTI Released from jail 40 years ago, the architect of Afrobeat picked up where he left off: nettling the authorities, annoying his allies, and making unique music.

48 TWISTED TEENS
With three mind-blowing albums in 2026 alone, these new roots radicals are beguiling Kurt Vile, Jeff Tweedy and more. "The spirit of rock'n'roll beckoned to us."

52 ALICE COOPER
How a sickly, geeky kid from Detroit reinvented himself as the pantomime villain of rock, and what it cost: "If you stay that character, you'll go crazy."

56 CHUCK BERRY
On his 100th birthday, family and famous fans explore the trials, tribulations, innovations and transgressions of the Father Of Rock'n'Roll.

62 AMY WINEHOUSE
Twenty years since its release, the people who helped her make *Back To Black*, then watched her fall apart, remember the ecstatic highs and tragic lows.

COVER STORY

66 BOB DYLAN As he approaches our shores once more, and a box set of his extraordinary 1976 shows is unveiled, we look at the tours that sealed his legend, from 1964 to now: "It was some incendiary stuff to witness."

Alex Lake



Oz fest: Kim Gordon and Kim Deal go Down Under in The Best Summer doc, Screen, p107.

MOJO

REGULARS

9 ALL BACK TO MY PLACE Jane Wiedlin, Dr John Cooper Clarke and Eliza Carthy select their favourite music.

110 REAL GONE Cheetah Chrome, Cassandra Wilson, Catherine Ringer and more, thanks for everything.

120 ASK MOJO Who named the guilty men – in song?

122 HELLO GOODBYE He asked for a song one afternoon in '68, and he got one. Did it ever end? Jimmy Webb recalls his friend Glen Campbell.

WHAT GOES ON!

12 BRIAN EPSTEIN The Fabs' manager's address book for 1967 is full of keys to that miraculous year. Now its new owner Gary Kemp has turned it into a book any Beatles fan will have to read.

16 SIMPLE MINDS Jim Kerr thought they were through making new albums. Then a new creative impetus came out of nowhere. "It was so against the odds I found it all invigorating," he says of Simple Minds' new LP.

18 TONY IOMMI The godfather of heavy metal guitar has new solo LP *From The Dark* to discuss. But what have Christopher Lee and tennis ace Sue Barker got to do with it?

19 SOFT MACHINE A humungous box set covering the storied Canterbury scenesters' years of tumult, 1970 to 1974, is upon us. Read on to find out what riches it contains.

22 FOLKWAYS RECORDS A new book celebrates the genius of Ronald Clyne, sleeve designer for the celebrated label.

MOJO FILTER

82 NEW ALBUMS Fontaines D.C. expand their universe, plus Steven Wilson, U2, Danielle Ponder and Shovel Dance Collective.

94 REISSUES Roxy Music's big glam moment revisited, plus Manics, Tom Petty, Phil Lynott, Johnny Clarke and more.

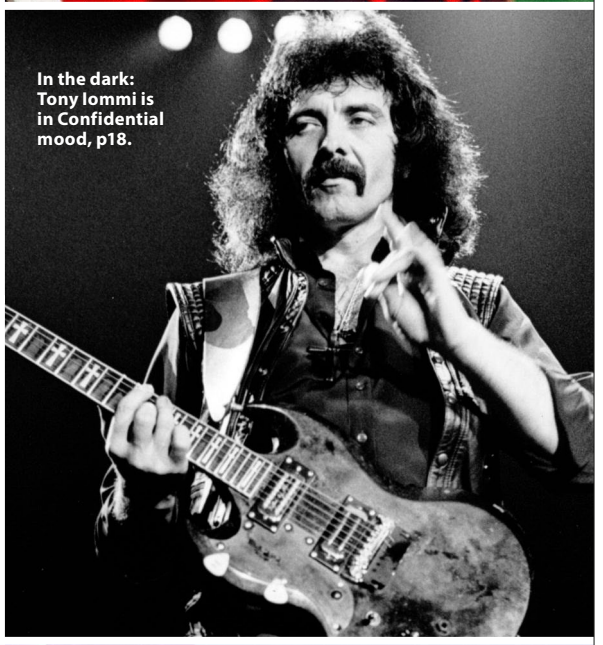
104 BOOKS The Beatles' origin story retold, plus Neil Young and Strokes biogs examined.

107 SCREEN Oasis, Pulp, punk, Bill Evans and Queen come to a big or small screen near you.

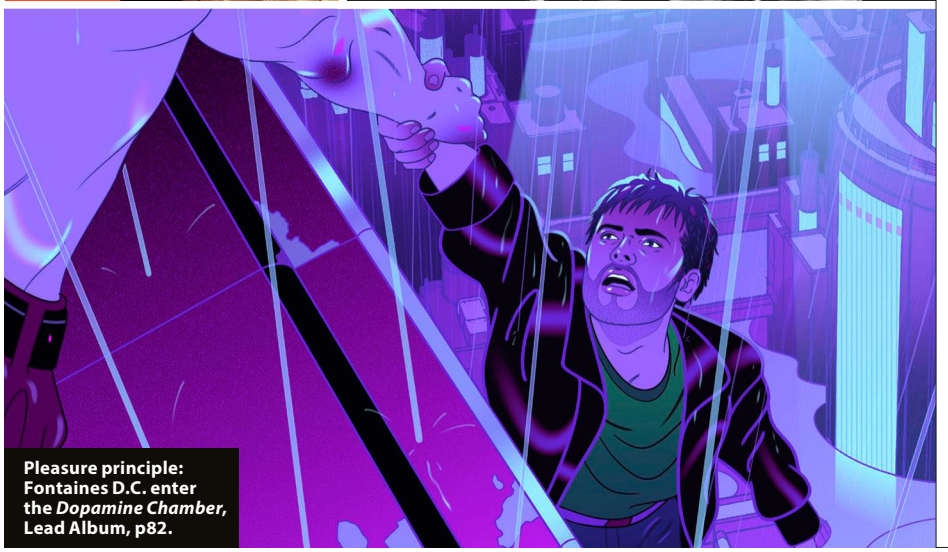
MOJO ISSN 1351-0193 (USPS 17424) is published 12 times a year by H Bauer Publishing Ltd, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6EA United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container INC 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MOJO, Air Business Ltd, c/o World Container INC 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Subscription records are maintained at Bauer Media, Subscriptions, CDS Global, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 9EF, United Kingdom. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.







In the dark: Tony Iommi is in Confidential mood, p18.



Pleasure principle: Fontaines D.C. enter the *Dopamine Chamber*, Lead Album, p82.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE...



Ray Padgett
This month's Rolling Thunder (see p72) chronicler was in high school when he first saw Bob Dylan and only knew Like A Rolling Stone. Now he writes the Dylan newsletter Flagging Down The Double E's and has interviewed dozens of Dylan collaborators for his book Pledging My Time.

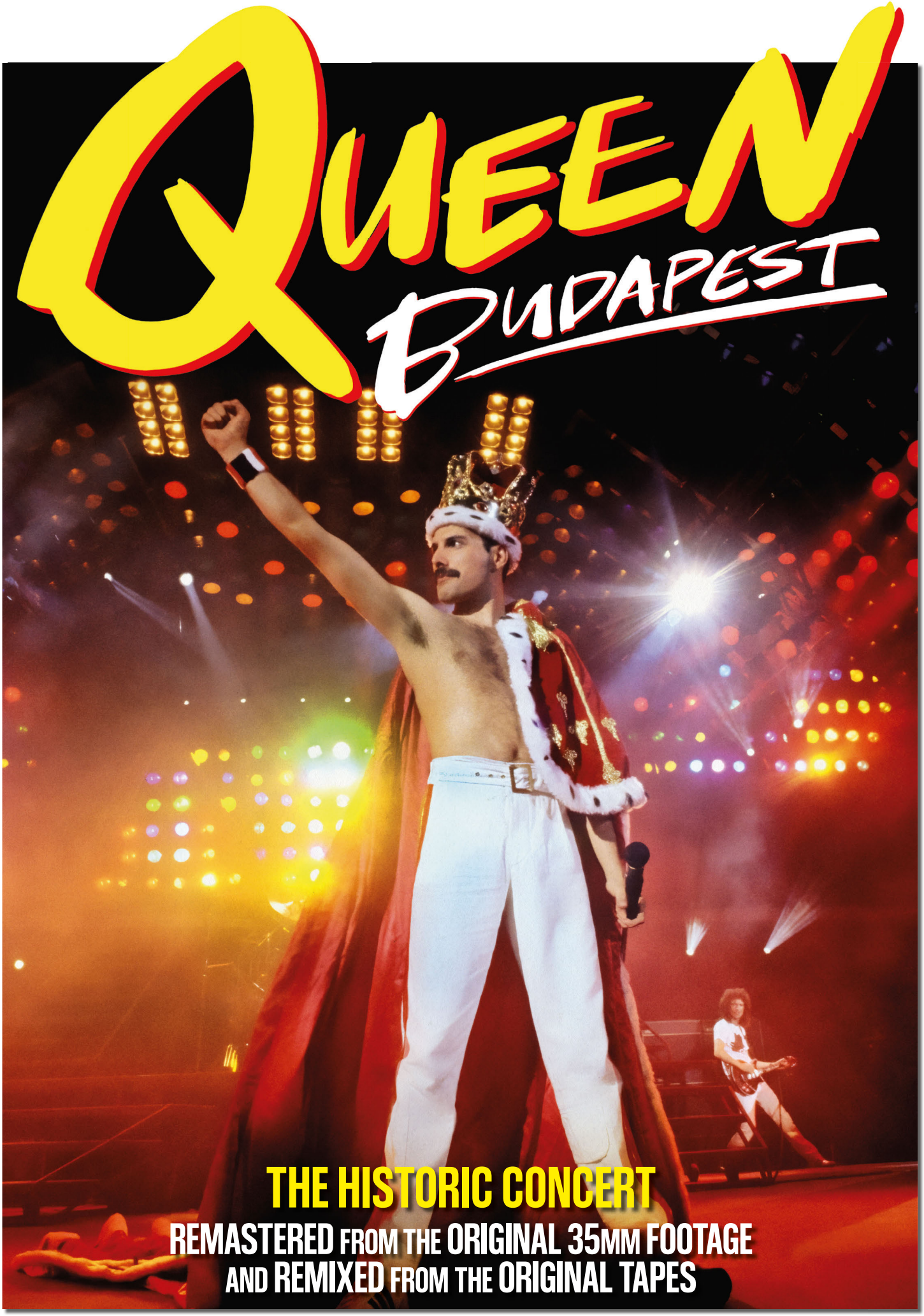


Graeme Thomson
Graeme has written about music for numerous publications and penned biographies of Kate Bush (Under The Ivy) and John Martyn (Small Hours). His latest book is In Another World: The Four Seasons Of Talk Talk. In this issue, he investigates Fela Kuti's tumultuous 1980s (see p42).



Jesse Jarnow
Jesse, who covers Bob Dylan's current Long Hot Summer tour from p78, is the author of Heads: A Biography Of Psychedelic America, co-produces the official Good Ol' Grateful Deadcast, and hosts the Frow Show on freeform WFMU. Da Capo will publish The Invisible Hit Parade: A Taper's History Of Music in 2027.

Chris Walter/WireImage/Getty, Andrew Archer



2CD / 3LP / BLU-RAY / DVD / 4K UHD BLU-RAY / DIGITAL OUT NOVEMBER 6

MYSTICAL CHILDREN



UNHEARD EXCLUSIVE DYLAN TRACK



THE MEN AND WOMEN OF ROLLING THUNDER



1 BOB NEUWIRTH
Eye On The Road

Dylan's batman in the mid-'60s returned to the fold for Rolling Thunder, after having co-written Mercedes Benz for Janis Joplin. Neuwirth's solo career, though, was surprisingly low-key: Eye On The Road, with fellow Rolling Thunder alum Steven Soles, T Bone Burnett and David Mansfield, comes from 1988's *Back To The Front*, the second of only five solo albums.

Written by Bob Neuwirth. Published by Dryclam Music. ℗2026 Dryclam Music. Licensed courtesy of Dryclam Music. ISRC USA370680199. www.bobneuwirth.com



2 BOB DYLAN
You're A Big Girl Now (Live At Tarrant County Convention Center Arena, Fort Worth, TX – May 16, 1976)

An emotional highlight from one of the last shows of the 1976 tour. A *Blood On The Tracks* song absent from the 1975 leg, Dylan remained adamant a decade later that its break-up narrative was not about his own marriage…

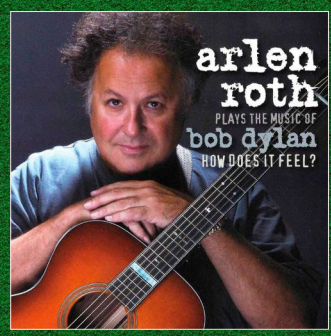
Composer: Bob Dylan, Lyricist: Bob Dylan. Published by Ram's Horn Music. ℗2026 Columbia Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment. Repertoire Owner: Columbia. ISRC USSM12603528



3 RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT
Pretty Boy Floyd

A forerunner of Dylan on the Greenwich Village folk scene and fellow Woody Guthrie acolyte, Elliott was a mainstay of the Rolling Thunder's first leg, before he was replaced by Kinky Friedman for reasons still unclear to him. This Guthrie song (also covered by Dylan) regularly featured in Elliott's sets on the tour.

Written by Woody Guthrie. Sanga Music Inc. First released: 1961



4 ARLEN ROTH
It's Alright, Ma

An almost-man of Rolling Thunder – the guitar virtuoso played the Revue's launch party at Gerde's Folk City, backing Patti Smith, but missed the cut for the tour. The New Yorker's CV also includes work with John Prine, Bee Gees, Simon & Garfunkel, Ry Cooder, Pete Seeger and Dusty Springfield: this beauty comes from a 2009 solo CD of Dylan covers.

Written by Bob Dylan. ℗Aquinnah Records 2009. Published by Special Rider Music/SESAC. Licensed courtesy of Arlen Roth. www.arlenroth.com



9 STEVEN SOLES
Shake The Dust

A country-funk/gospel nugget from Rolling Thunder guitarist Soles, plucked from his first post-Alpha Band solo album, 1980's *The Promise*. David Mansfield's there again, plus Elvis's old rhythm section, Jerry Scheff and Ron Tutt.

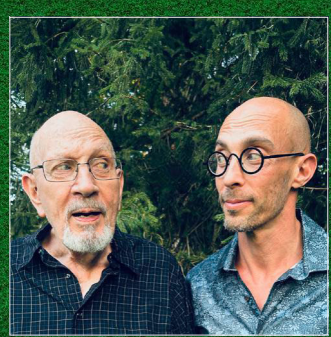
Words and music Steven Soles. Produced by Steven Soles. Engineer: Larry Hirsch. Steven Soles: Vocals, acoustic guitar. Jerry Scheff: Bass. Ron Tutt: Drums. David Mansfield: Electric guitar. Back ground vocals: Wendy Matthews & Jude Johnston. Published by Specific Gravity Music. BMI, Master use licensed through Steven Soles Productions.



10 ROB STONER
Maggie's Farm

A key member of the Rolling Thunder crew, bassist Stoner also had a productive career working with rockabilly revivalist Robert Gordon and Link Wray. This shitkicking live cut from 2022 brings it all together, as Stoner uncovers the raw, Sun Sessions-style rock'n'roll at the heart of Maggie's Farm (the most played song on the Revue's second leg, incidentally).

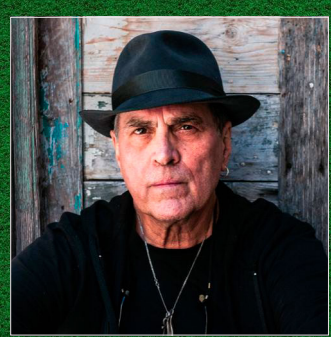
Written by Bob Dylan. Published by Universal Publishing Group. ℗2022 by CDX Records Written Licensed courtesy of CDX Records. www.CDXCD.com



11 RIX
Blow Wind Blow

One of the lesser-known denizens of Rolling Thunder, drummer/percussionist Rix also played with Leonard Cohen and Bette Midler, before resurfacing in 2025 as a duo with his son Jano, channelling New Orleans flavours on this joyous cover of a Dr. John/Huey 'Piano' Smith chestnut.

Written by Huey P. Smith. ℗2026 Royal Potato Family. Published by Warner Tamerlane Publishing Corp. Obo Franmar Music (BMI) ISRC No. USME32400976. Licensed courtesy of Royal Potato Family www.royalpotatofamily.com



12 ERIC ANDERSEN
The Plague (Song Of Denial)

Another Greenwich Village folk scene survivor, Andersen only appeared at two Rolling Thunder shows – the Gerde's Folk City warm-up, and Niagara Falls. Still one of the family, though, as this intense musical take on Albert Camus proves – the prominently-featured violinist on The Plague is none other than Scarlet Rivera.

Words and Music by Eric Andersen. Wind and Sand Music. ©2014/2018 ASCAP/GEMA. Administered World-Wide by BMG. All rights reserved. ISRC: DEPB81822301. Licensed courtesy of Meyer Records

Paul Clampin, Ellen Rix, Renni Larry Bercow, Awakening/Getty Images, Gus Stewart/Redferns/Getty, Michael Loccisano/Getty Images for SXSW



LIKE MOST PHASES OF BOB DYLAN'S EXTRAORDINARY career, the Rolling Thunder Revue was not destined to last. The sprawling raggle-taggle troupe played 57 American gigs, across autumn 1975 and spring '76, before Dylan called a halt. Two years later, when he returned to the road, only three Rolling Thunder vets – David Mansfield, Rob Stoner and Steven Soles – figured in his band. As ever, the sound and the songs were in constant flux. Dylan had, inevitably, moved on.

Still, many enduring alliances were at the core of Rolling Thunder. Old friends and sparring partners – Joan Baez, Allen Ginsberg, Roger McGuinn, Bob Neuwirth – featured in the band. Newer associates, meanwhile, would continue to work together in myriad configurations over the next half-century. This is the rambunctious cast of *Mystical Children*, a deep dive into the music made in the wake of Rolling Thunder. There are Dylan songs here too, of course – not least one from the man himself, a preview of the forthcoming *1976 Live Recordings* box set. "What a shame if all we've shared can't last…"



5 T BONE BURNETT WITH STEVEN SOLES
Baby Fall Down

Perhaps the most significant Rolling Thunder alliance was made between Burnett, Steven Soles and David Mansfield. The trio immediately formed The Alpha Band for three albums, and reunited on this track from Burnett's third solo album from 1983, *Proof Through The Night*, the LP also featuring Pete Townshend, Ry Cooder, Richard Thompson and Mick Ronson.

(2026 remaster). Written by T Bone Burnett. 1983 Warner Records Inc. Licensed Courtesy Of: Warner Records ISRC USWB10606380



6 SCARLET RIVERA
Señor

"She wore a sword everywhere she went, that girl," Dylan claimed of his Rolling Thunder fiddler, who he'd reputedly spotted carrying a violin case through Greenwich Village. Rivera's swooping drama became a crucial part of the tour, and her relationship with Dylan's music has lasted 50 years: here she sings Señor, from her 2024 Dylan Dreams EP.

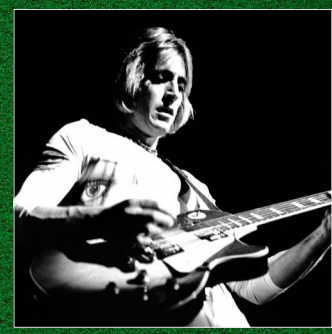
Written by Bob Dylan. ©2023 Red Violin records. Publisher: Special Rider Music/Universal Music Publishing Group ISRC No. Licensed courtesy of Red Violin Records



7 RICHARD THOMPSON
Stringer

"[*Proof Through The Night*] is where I first met Richard," David Mansfield tells us. "We traded solos on Shut It Tight." Forty-three years on, their musical conversation continues on Thompson's latest album, *Hippies, Thugs And Heroes*, as Mansfield's fiddle jousts again with the guitarist. Peak Thompson in its buccaneering folk rock, but there's also something of Isis in the swagger of Stringer.

Written by Richard Thompson. Administered by Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc. (BMI) US27Q2662711



8 MICK RONSON
I'd Give Anything To See You

The erstwhile Spider From Mars had recorded two solo albums between leaving Bowie's band and joining up with Dylan. But soon after the second leg of Rolling Thunder ended in 1976, Ronson recorded his third, at Bearsville Studios in Woodstock. Left on the shelf until 1999, *Just Like This* featured this showstopper, Ronson's singing and songwriting chops a match for his incandescent guitar soloing.

Written by Mick Ronson. ©1976 Lisa Ronson. Published and licensed by Lisa Ronson.



13 JOAN BAEZ
Last Leaf

No introduction needed for this First Lady Of American Folk; an animating force, in whiteface and flowered hat, alongside Dylan at the front of the Rolling Thunder Revue. This fragile, moving version of the Tom Waits song comes from Baez's last album to date, 2018's *Whistle Down The Wind*.

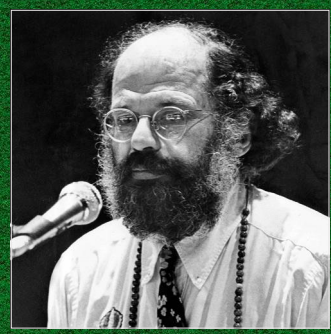
Written by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan. From *Whistle Down The Wind* (PRPD146). ℗2018 Proper Records Licensed courtesy of Joan Baez ISRC: USNVE0902928



14 KINKY FRIEDMAN
Poet Of Motel 6

The antic Texan was a mischievous presence on the second leg of Rolling Thunder, partying with Steve Martin as well as his bandmates. This charming memorial to his friend Billy Joe Shaver comes from Friedman's final album, produced by David Mansfield and released the year after Friedman's death In 2024.

Written by Kinky Friedman. © & ℗2025 Hardcharger Records. Marketed and distributed by Blue Élan Records , LLC, All rights reserved. From *Poet Of Motel 6,* HCR017



15 ALLEN GINSBERG
Extract From Kaddish (Poetry Centre, San Francisco, 1959)

Dylan's favourite Ginsberg poem. The poet, long infatuated with Dylan, provided an essay that accompanied *Desire* on release, illustrated by Tarot cards (as was the album's back cover). "He kept telling me all through the Rolling Thunder tour that I was a king, but that I hadn't found my kingdom," Ginsberg claimed.

Written by Alan Ginsberg. Copyright Control. First released: 1959

"OH MY GOD, WE'RE GONNA ELECTROCUTE BOB!"
ROLLING THUNDER
RETURNS ON PAGE 72

Binder/Ullstein Bild via Getty Images, Noam Galai/Getty Images for Tibet House US, Houston Chronicle via Getty Images, NBCUniversal via Getty Images, John Byrne Cooke Estate/Getty Images

DEACON BLUE

PERFORMING THE ICONIC DEBUT ALBUM IN FULL

RAINTOWN

AND MUCH MORE



THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY UK & IRELAND TOUR 2027

WEDNESDAY 06 OCTOBER
BELFAST
THE O2

THURSDAY 07 OCTOBER
DUBLIN
3ARENA

SATURDAY 09 OCTOBER
LIVERPOOL
M&S BANK ARENA

SUNDAY 10 OCTOBER
LEEDS
FIRST DIRECT BANK ARENA

TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER
HULL
CONNEXIN LIVE

WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER
NOTTINGHAM
MOTORPOINT ARENA

THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER
NEWCASTLE
UTILITA ARENA

SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER
CARDIFF
UTILITA ARENA

SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER
BRIGHTON
CENTRE

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER
BOURNEMOUTH
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER
BIRMINGHAM
UTILITA ARENA

FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER
MANCHESTER
CO-OP LIVE

SHOW ADDED DUE TO DEMAND

SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER
LONDON
EVENTIM APOLLO

MONDAY 25 OCTOBER
LONDON
EVENTIM APOLLO

WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER
ABERDEEN
P&J LIVE

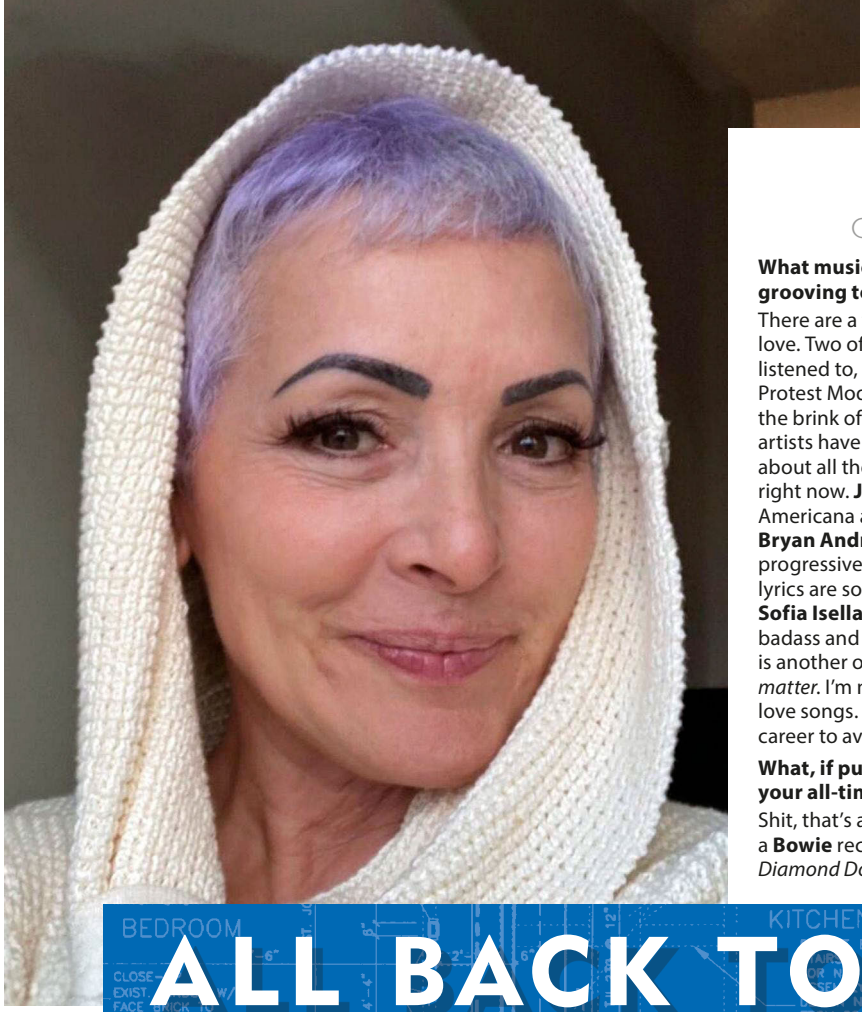
FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER
GLASGOW
OVO HYDRO

SHOW ADDED DUE TO DEMAND

SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER
GLASGOW
OVO HYDRO

LIVENATION.CO.UK

A CHAS COLE FOR CMP ENTERTAINMENT, LIVE NATION, DF CONCERTS & SINGULAR ARTISTS PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH ASGARD & TOPM



Jane Wiedlin

GO-GO (HER PRONOUNS ARE MAY/HEM)

What music are you currently grooving to?

There are a few new artists that I love. Two of them genres I've never listened to, but I am in full-blown Protest Mode because the US is on the brink of destruction. All these artists have strong things to say about all the fuckery in the world right now. **Jesse Welles** is an Americana artist. His songs are great. **Bryan Andrews** is country but is as progressive as they come and his lyrics are so on point. I also love **Sofia Isella** and **Yungblud**. She's a badass and is only 21. **Paris Paloma** is another one writing songs that *matter*. I'm not a bit interested in love songs. I've tried my whole career to avoid them.

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

Shit, that's a tall order. Gotta be a **Bowie** record. I think *Low* or *Diamond Dogs*.

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

It was a 45. Build Me Up Buttercup by **The Foundations**. I got it at Thrifty Drugstore, a chain that doesn't exist anymore. They had a rack near the door that had all the hit singles. There was a fuck ton of great pop hits in California in the 1960s.

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

Imogen Heap.

What do you sing in the shower?

Seize The Power by **Yonaka**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Saturday Night by the **Bay City Rollers**.

And your Sunday morning record?

Anti-Pope by **The Damned**.

TMI: Memoirs Of A Go-Go by Jane Wiedlin (Da Capo, £28) is published on November 26. Her covers album ¡I PROTEST! will be released concurrently.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

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

Dr John Cooper Clarke

THE PUNK LAUREATE

What music are you currently grooving to?

At the front of the vinyl queue, **Dion & The Belmonts**' *Reunion: Live At Madison Square Garden 1972*. I love the way they replicate those ensemble harmonies in a live situation, after being separated for so long. Sensational, the state of the doo wop art. And I was sent an inspired compilation by a friend named Rudy in Los Angeles, it contains a tune called Mishugana Mambo by **Slim Gaillard**, who became a friend of mine. There's a bunch of reggae on there as well, **Chris Farlowe** singing his version of Air Travel, **Hank Williams**, **? & The Mysterians**…



Mark Slater, Ed Hill, Courtesy Jane Wiedlin

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

Hound Dog by **Elvis Presley**. It breaks all the rules. It's not really a song, it just keeps getting more and more intense.

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

Diana by **Paul Anka**, from Oldfield Electric Ltd in Higher Broughton, Salford.

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

Jerry Lee Lewis. Imagine being able to play piano like that.

What do you sing in the shower?

Usually something projectile, like [Mexican standard] Granada. The **Sinatra** version, you start off operatic, then it kind of gets into a swinging groove, and then it goes romantic, with a big finish. The ideal exercise for the old throat. Alternatively, Hear My Song, made famous by the late **Josef Locke**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

For getting ready to go out for a night on the town, Night Fever by the **Bee Gees**. But even when it came out, I was too old for it to really apply to me.

And your Sunday morning record?

Every morning we start with the best of **Dean Martin**. Bright and breezy.

John Cooper Clarke's Have It is published by Pan Macmillan. The poet tours the UK until November: see johncooperclarke.com for dates.

Eliza Carthy

FOLK SCION (MBE)

What music are you currently grooving to?

I'm still stuck on the **Pulp** album *More*. It just reminded me how good they are. And a lot of old Italian music. Cos'è Uno by **Riccardo Tesi**, an Italian accordionist, is a traditional counting song and it's beautiful. And I'm in love with **Goran Bregović**. *Alkohol: Šljivovica & Champagne* is one of my all-time tops, and I love the one he did with the Polish singer **Kayah**, *Kayah I Bregović*. But the big banger of the touring season has been Disko Partizani by **Shantel.** Danceable yet militant? Isn't all the best stuff?

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

[The song] I Heard It Through The Grapevine, **Marvin Gaye**. Perfectly expressed and perfectly sung.

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

Walking In The Sunshine by **Bad Manners**, probably from Woolworths in Whitby. When I was a kid I had a huge fondness for the wrestlers Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy, so I sort of added Buster Bloodvessel on to them.

> **"Danceable yet militant? Isn't all the best stuff?"**
> **ELIZA CARTHY**



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

Freddie Mercury. **Ani DiFranco**. **Ian Dury**. **Lauryn Hill**. Sounds a bit woo-woo, but I still like the 'sitting in your power' thing.

What do you sing in the shower?

I'll do my warm-ups.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

My own sound check! If I was going to a party, a classic bit of **OutKast**. And my son is very into pop punk, so there's quite a lot of **Fall Out Boy** and **Gym Class Heroes** goes on in this house.

And your Sunday morning record?

Billie Holiday. Or **Emily Portman**, specifically *Hatchling*. She has the most elegant turn of phrase and a grasp on the mythic. I'll sit on the couch and watch Friends with my dad, and make some nice food.

Eliza Carthy And The Restitution's Frenemies is released on October 25 on Hem Hem.

MOJO

H Bauer Publishing
The Lantern
75 Hampstead Road
London NW1 2PL
Tel: 020 7437 9011
Reader queries: mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk
Subscriber queries: bauer@subscription.co.uk
General e-mail: mojo@bauermedia.co.uk
Website: mojo4music.com

Editor
John Mulvey
Senior Editor
Danny Eccleston
Creative Director
Mark Wagstaff
Production Editor (Entertainment)
Simon McEwen
Associate Editor (Reviews)
Jenny Bulley
Associate Editor (News)
Ian Harrison
Deputy Art Editor
Del Gentleman
Picture Editor
Matt Turner
Senior Associate Editor
Andrew Male
Contributing Editors
Phil Alexander, Keith Cameron, Sylvie Simmons

Thanks for their help with this issue:
Keith Cameron, Chris Catchpole, Colin Overland, Ian Whent

This month's contributors:
John Aizlewood, Martin Aston, Mike Barnes, Mark Blake, John Bungey, Keith Cameron, Chris Catchpole, Stevie Chick, Andy Cowan, Grayson Haver Currin, Max Décharné, Tom Doyle, Priya Elan, David Fricke, Andy Fyfe, Pat Gilbert, John Harris, David Hutcheon, Jim Irvin, Jesse Jarnow, David Katz, Andrew Male, James McNair, Bob Mehr, Lucy O'Brien, Ray Padgett, Jon Savage, Victoria Segal, Michael Simmons, Sylvie Simmons, Mat Snow, Graeme Thomson, Kieron Tyler, Charles Waring, Lois Wilson, Jim Wirth.

This month's photographers:
Cover: Lynn Goldsmith/Camera Press, (inset, Jorgen Angel/Redferns/Getty), Jill Augusto, Martin Crudo, Barry Feinstein, Andy Gotts, Tom Hill, Ross Kirton, Alex Lake, David Magnus, Gary Miller, Alice Ochs, Ken Regan, Patrick Rouchon.

MOJO SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
0185 8438884
For subscription or back issue queries contact **CDS Global** on **Bauer@subscription.co.uk**
To access from outside the UK
Dial: +44 (0)185 8438884

Theories, rants, etc.

MOJO welcomes correspondence for publication.
Write to us at: MOJO, H Bauer Publishing, The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 2PL. E-mail to: mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk

ROBBIE ROBERTSON. MICK RONSON.

Roger McGuinn. Doug Lancio. Bob Britt. Julian Lage. Joel Paterson. Jad Tariq. The world of Bob Dylan is full of mysteries – and, currently, a lot of those mysteries revolve around guitarists. As we prepare for Dylan's latest bout of touring to roll into Europe and the UK, his band seems more unstable than ever. Dylan's summer US tour, Jesse Jarnow notes on page 78, rarely featured the same line-up for more than a couple of nights in a row.

We don't go to see Dylan for the supporting cast, of course. But it's been part of his complicated genius, over the past six decades and some, to perpetually evolve with a ruthlessness that can capitalise on flux and chaos. In this month's MOJO, besides checking up on 2026 Bob, we wind back to two of his epochal jaunts from 1966 and 1976: "Wild and uncontained," Scarlet Rivera calls the latter.

All those guitarists matter, too, because sweating the small stuff is MOJO's vocation. The details, the personnel, the small print can often be where the weirdest untold tales hide. It's a never-ending story, and one we're here to chase to the end. See you at the Royal Festival Hall!



JOHN MULVEY, EDITOR

You guys think I'm just some untouchable peasant? Serf? Peon? Well, maybe so.

As a devoted Fish-era Marillion fan in my early-to-mid teens, I was both highly amused and intrigued by Mark Blake's sharp-tongued How To Buy feature in MOJO 396. I totally agree that a person's birthdate probably decides which iteration of the band they prefer (if either): I can still sing most of the "swallowed thesaurus" lyrics word for word, but my listening stops dead after (not my favourite) *Clutching At Straws*.

I'm genuinely curious as to Mark's comments about Fish being a "divisive presence", "confrontational", "closer in spirit to… Morrissey and Boy George than Phil Collins". I saw them multiple times between '83 and '86, and met him in the bar at the Marquee where he was very charming. As I remember it, the audience seemed to always universally love him. Were there spats with other bands, or journalists, maybe Mr Blake? Please tell! He knows, you know.

Nick Black, via e-mail

The next time I have to come in here, I'm crackin' skulls

Many thanks for a magnificent tribute to John Coltrane on his centenary [MOJO 396]. One overlooked 'Trane studio session was recorded for Roulette in Los Angeles on September 8, 1960 with McCoy Tyner (piano), Steve Davis (bass) and Billy Higgins (drums) playing One And Four (AKA Mr. Day), Exotica (two takes) and Like Sonny (AKA Simple Like). These memorable performances mark the first time that 'Trane and Tyner recorded together, and they are available on the little-known CD *Like Sonny* (Roulette CDP 7939012) which is well worth tracking down.

PS: I find it shameful that BBC television could find no time to mark the centenary of this hugely influential jazz musician, yet BBC Four recently devoted over three hours to celebrate the 75th birthday of Sting!

Dave Taylor, Purbrook

I won't tolerate any losers in this family

David Polster, in his search for American bands to appear on his Mount Rushmore [MOJO 395], might consider that practically unknown combo known as The Beach Boys?

Ken Ward, Crewe

…David Polster suggests a rock band royalty Mount Rushmore could be all British. I am going to suggest something different for a Mount Rockmore (see what I did there?). What if it were a tribute to the Americans

who inspired all the British bands he named? So Elvis got them rocking, but then they found out about Chuck Berry and Little Richard. I am going to suggest Muddy Waters to represent the blues artists along with Hank Williams to represent country; and Fats Domino to represent New Orleans. Buddy Holly as a songwriter. On my mountain there would be no Cliff (geddit?)

David Anderson, Weymouth

I was just in my office and I heard a ruckus

Thanks for the article about Deaf School [MOJO 393]. Being from the Netherlands I hardly knew anything about the Liverpool music scene in the '70s, apart from bands that really got attention overseas. I did, however, regularly read an amazing Dutch music magazine (Muziekkrant Oor, meaning Musicpaper Ear), which was the gateway to international music. In 1976 a favourable review of *2nd Honeymoon* caught my attention, so I trotted off to my local record store and gave it a listen. This was like nothing I'd ever heard. I bought it and it has remained a gem in my collection ever since. The article has, for the first time since then, given me some background information on the band. Reading their story, I played *2nd Honeymoon* again and it still sounds as weird and fresh as it did back then!

Maarten Mens, The Hague

An easy way to maintain my grade point average

I feel the older we grow, the less we find new stuff that really knocks us out. Of course, we discover tons of music to love, but such finds, that give us teenage-like elation, become fewer and further between. Which is why I'm throwing a big thank you to your review section [MOJO 394], where your recent reissue area enlightened me to the still completely obscure private press gem that is Blue Eyed Soul. That one 1980 album floored me like nothing had for years. My love for such diverse things as the Staple Singers, Spacemen 3, Motown and spiritual jazz seemed to converge in one album, which sounds like the last thing you listen to before the apocalypse (which shouldn't be far now).

That's where I'd return to the recent discussion in your letters section about the ratings. I for one don't care much for them, it's the review itself that tells me if I should give something a go. Down the years your review section has always brought out hidden wonders.

Sander Varusk, Tallinn

…You should rate LPs 1 'til 100! One gets 77, one 89! It would be more varied, more nuanced – and funny!

Gunnar Gran, Stavanger

I'm doin' society a favour

In your feature evaluating the albums of Ry Cooder [MOJO 394], you quote the guitarist as stating his preference for sharing the stage with other musicians over being the sole focus. It seems characteristic of Cooder's aversion to the spotlight that when he developed a penchant for songwriting his songs were never about him. He was a storyteller, as opposed to a confessional singer-songwriter like many of his contemporaries. Check out Cooder's 2011 collection of short fictional prose pieces, Los Angeles Stories. They're not only good, they're good enough to stand comparison with the output of another dispenser of LA-based noir fiction: a man who shares his initials – Raymond Chandler.

David English, Acton, MA

We had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was we did wrong

I think you've made a mistake [MOJO 395]. Bootlegs of The Beatles recording the harmonies for If I Needed Someone have been around for quite a while, and some books have transcribed the dialogue spoken during the session where John Lennon is messing around. It's him that says, "I'm sorry, sometimes I feel less than useful at these sessions, I really do." Classic Lennon mucking about I'm afraid, not poor old George.

Steve Kendall, via e-mail

I know it's kind of a weird time

Surely the first intro to dub [MOJO 393] for, let's say, Woolworths customers in the UK (like me as a schoolboy) came with Rupie Edwards' Ire Feelings (Skanga) in late 1974 ? I wonder how that broke out to be heard enough to reach the Top 10 singles chart?

Rob Bishop, via e-mail

Who the hell are you to judge anybody, anyway?

I have something in common with Marco Pirroni [MOJO 396]. Ride A White Swan was also the first record I bought. From Rediffusion (a TV rental shop) in Hanley, in the days when, weirdly, non-music shops would sell the Top 10.

Andy Dean, Monaco

You have exactly eight hours and 54 minutes to think about why you're here

Great to have Neil Young gracing the cover of MOJO 396. His latest LP is beautiful and by far the strongest collection of songs he has produced in the last few years. Now, the movie quotes in the letters section of said issue are all from Touch Of Evil, starring Orson Welles, who also directs. The connection with Neil? His song and also the name of an official bootleg *Citizen Kane Jr Blues* – Citizen Kane being, of course, Welles's acclaimed debut film as director, which he co-wrote.

Ru Rahman, Uxbridge

Good call, Ru, but A Touch Of Evil was actually chosen because Cabaret Voltaire covered the theme on *Red Mecca*. – JM

MANAGEMENT
Publisher Lauren Holleyoake
Director Of Brand & Content Sophie Hearsey
Director Of Magazines Lisa Sinclair
Group Production Lead Jenny Croall
Business Analyst Tracey Pickering
Production Manager Carl Lawrence
CEO, UK Publishing Amrit Baidwan
COO, UK Publishing Rob Aherne
Chief Financial Officer, Bauer Magazine Media UK Anna Partington
PA to Publisher/Director Of Magazines Tayla Todd
PA to Director Of Brand & Content Kacie Dhiman
EA to CFO Jo Hepworth-Green
Managing Editor Michelle Thorn

ADVERTISING
Group Commercial Director Iain (Reg) Grundy
Brand Director Joel Stephan
Media Planner Lorna Mellowes
Head Of Agencies Tom Meadowcroft
Classified Sales Executive Imogen Jackaman
Inserts Manager Simon Buckenham
Chief Commercial Officer Nicola Bates
MD Bauer Media Advertising Simon Kilby

MARKETING
Head Of Marketing Sarah Norman
Marketing Executive Sofie McIntyre
Direct Marketing Manager Julie Spires
Direct Marketing Assistant Holly Aston
MOJO CD Director Dave Henderson

Printing: William Gibbons

Subscription queries: To contact us about subscription orders, renewals, missing issues, back issues or any other queries, please email bauer@subscription.co.uk or call our UK number on 01858 438884.
To manage your account online visit https://secure.greatmagazines.co.uk/Solo
For enquires on overseas newsstand sales e-mail kristina.koshevaya@seymour.co.uk

No part of the magazine may be reproduced in any form in whole or in part, without the prior permission of H Bauer Publishing. All material published remains the copyright of H Bauer Publishing and we reserve the right to copy or edit any material submitted to the magazine without further consent. The submission of material (manuscripts or images etc) to H Bauer Publishing, whether unsolicited or requested, is taken as permission to publish that material in the magazine, on the associated website, any apps or social media pages affiliated to the magazine, and any editions of the magazine published by our licensees elsewhere in the world. By submitting any material to us you are confirming that the material is your own original work or that you have permission from the copyright owner to use the material and to authorise H Bauer Publishing to use it as described in this paragraph. You also promise that you have permission from anyone featured or referred to in the submitted material to it being used by H Bauer Publishing. If H Bauer Publishing receives a claim from a copyright owner or a person featured in any material you have sent us, we will inform that person that you have granted us permission to use the relevant material and you will be responsible for paying any amounts due to the copyright owner or featured person and/or for reimbursing H Bauer Publishing for any losses it has suffered as a result. Please note, we accept no responsibility for unsolicited material which is lost or damaged in the post and we do not promise that we will be able to return any material. Finally, whilst we try to ensure accuracy of your material when we publish it, we cannot promise to do so. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage, however caused, resulting from use of the material.

For syndication enquiries go to: syndication@bauermedia.co.uk H Bauer Publishing is authorised and regulated by the FCA (Ref No. 845898). Distributor: Frontline, 1st Floor, Stuart House, St Johns Street, Peterborough PE1 5DD. Tel: 01733 555161. H Bauer Publishing is a company registered in England and Wales with company number LP003328, registered address The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 2PL. VAT no 918561701

COMPLAINTS: H Bauer Publishing is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (www.ipso.co.uk) and endeavours to respond to and resolve your concerns quickly. Our Editorial Complaints Policy (including full details of how to contact us about editorial complaints and IPSO's contact details) can be found at www.bauermediacomplaints.co.uk

Bauer Media Group abc recycle When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it. ipso. Regulated

SAVE MONEY ON NEWSSTAND PRICES!

AND GET MORE FROM MOJO WITH A SUBSCRIPTION!

BECOME A SUBSCRIBER AND GET EXCLUSIVE REWARDS AND CONTENT

SEE PAGE 28 FOR DETAILS...



WHAT GOES ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND BIZARRE STORIES FROM PLANET MOJO



A Year In The Life

Gary Kemp opens Brian Epstein's address book for 1967, the Fabs, Swinging London and more.

GENUINELY REVELATORY books about The Beatles are now vanishingly rare. But this month sees the publication of a work of Fabology that is exactly that. 1967: The World Of Brian Epstein And The Beatles brims with details and stories that may well boggle the minds of even the most hardcore experts. And for that we have to thank the author whose elegant writing and dogged research propels the whole thing along: ex-Spandau Ballet songwriter and guitarist (and current mainstay of Nick Mason's Floyd spin-off Saucerful Of Secrets) Gary Kemp.

The book's foundation is the address book that Epstein constantly used during the year of his death. In 2020, Kemp saw that this magical-looking item was up for auction at Sotheby's. "I don't buy memorabilia normally," he tells MOJO. "But there was something when I saw that this was coming up for sale, and the names in it, that really drew me to it. It just seemed like a great cross-section of an era before the fall, really."

Epstein's passing, The Beatles' drawn-out break-up and a spate of rock star deaths were just around the corner – but the names either carefully typed or handwritten on each page also evoked a cutting-edge London full of energy and optimism. Kemp paid £10,700.

The idea of a book came from his close friend Simon Halfon, the renowned sleeve designer and co-producer of the Oasis documentary Supersonic. So it was that while Halfon saw to the book's look and picture research, Kemp spent a year forensically looking into Epstein's surreally



The life of Brian: Epstein with The Beatles at Abbey Road Studios for the Our World live TV broadcast, London, June 25, 1967; (below) pages from Epstein's revelatory address book.

varied contacts: to pick a random handful, Dean Martin, Mick Jagger ("on WEL – West End London – 9879"), Keith Moon's mum and dad, Epstein's Sussex electrician, Atlantic Records' founder Ahmet Ertegun, and hundreds more.

The book ultimately works as a kind of biography, ending with a glorious twist, and is full of the sense of unease and change that seems to have fed into Epstein's death, often seen through the stories of his gay associates. "There are a lot of people in here like Robin Maugham, who was [writer] Somerset Maugham's nephew, like The Beatles' lawyer David Jacobs, and Brian's interior designer, Tom Parr," says Kemp. "They were people who had relationships, and they lived with their lovers. Brian suffered with his homosexuality not just because it was illegal but because he couldn't find love. The Beatles were his relationship.

"And we're at this point in '67 where his contract is about to be renewed with the boys," Kemp continues. "He's having to renew their EMI contract. He's no longer feeling purposeful because they've stopped touring. You know, Paul [McCartney] is running the show in many ways and coming up with the concepts."

> **"It seemed like a great cross-section of an era before the fall…"**
> **GARY KEMP**

Meanwhile, the other core people in the address book are transforming the pop-cultural world. "Discovering who they were – or still are – seems like a way of putting Brian back together again," Kemp writes, a justified claim followed by the reason he and Halfon created the book: to "create a picture of who Brian was just before he died in 1967, a year that is seen by many as the apotheosis of popular music."

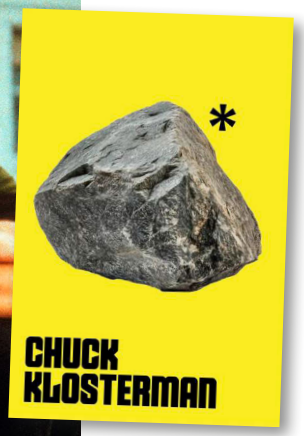
John Harris

1967 – The World Of Brian Epstein And The Beatles by Gary Kemp and Simon Halfon is published by HarperCollins.

Courtesy Harper Collins/Shutterstock, Photography by legacyandart.com



We'll be your mirror: The Velvet Underground & Nico, 1967, re-imagined as the most influential '60s band in (below) Chuck Klosterman's new book Rock* (above).



A WORLD WHERE THE VELVETS WERE BIGGER THAN THE BEATLES? CHUCK KLOSTERMAN EXPLAINS

APRIL 10, 1993: taking a break from low-end touring, cult stars The Beatles play an Unplugged TV gig. While they go down well – Harry Nilsson comes on for How Can You Sleep? – it is, sadly, a temporary renaissance. They're soon back on the road playing a club near you.

We are in the parallel but disturbingly well-drawn fictional universe of Rock*: A Mainstream Alternative History Of Alternative Mainstream Music, where writer and cultural imagineer Chuck Klosterman has invented a world where *the* '60s band who influenced the culture down to its very DNA were… The Velvet Underground. Yet while the Velvets prospered in the '70s with hit singles and albums including *Transformer, Berlin* and *Paris 1919*, there was also tragedy: in 1983, Lou Reed was assassinated by crazed fan Mark Chapman, while in 1988, Nico died in a unicycle accident.

Presented straight in the style of a history of rock from 1967 to 2002 (purportedly on its third edition), Rock*… is full of strangeness, laughs and synapse-twanging inversions. Altamont is the iconic festival of the 1960s. The National Association Of Rock Critics wield huge power. Kiss die in an exploding box kite accident. Zeppelin and the Stones wither on the vine. GG Allin is a pop star. The Strokes are blamed for 9/11. John Lennon has a Twix addiction. And Phil Spector's attempt to murder Andy Warhol – then producing Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* – is caught on tape.

"It was fun to write," Klosterman tells MOJO from Austin, Texas. "It was also difficult – I essentially had to do an entire nonfiction book and then do an insane fiction book on top of that. It really forced me to take things I have believed for 25, or 40, or whatever years, and reverse them."

A former music writer, he recalls "speculating on hypothetical outcomes of rock music if things had been different" with colleagues and describes the book as a puzzle and a maze where god-like authorial power was not his. "People have asked me, am I saying 'This is how things should have been', or am I saying, 'This is terrible'?" he says. "It's neither. It certainly isn't how I would have wanted music to unspool. I'll admit it fucking bothered me writing negative things about The Beatles. I'm sure some people could be very offended by parts, but I don't think it goes too far. The vast majority of artists in this book are bands that I like. Maybe not GG Allin, but I do like the idea that he existed."

Within, there's also affection for the world of music journalism, with Rolling Stone renamed Velveteen, a mature Lester Bangs penning the foreword and critics' faves Big Star achieving the crossover denied them in our own space-time continuum. "You cannot make fun of snobs without being a snob," says Klosterman, whose favourite bands are The Beatles and Kiss. "If you're satirising something like [this], you're all in it together."

The book may provoke debate about validity, success, criticism and how histories are written, but the author's intent is more immediate. "This is not an attempt to reconfigure how we're supposed to think about these bands," he says, preparing to go for a stroll and listen to Steely Dan. "The main goal is for people to be entertained who spent their whole life thinking about rock music."

Ian Harrison



"Some people could be very offended but I don't think it goes too far."
CHUCK KLOSTERMAN

Rock: A Mainstream Alternative History Of Alternative Mainstream Music is published by Da Capo.*

GIMME FIVE… CITY SONGS

Marie Laforêt
Manchester Et Liverpool
(DISQUES FESTIVAL, 1966)



The French screen star and André Popp-produced singer delivers a rag and bone waltz where the North-west rivals co-exist in romantic misery. Oddly, the tune was used for the TV weather forecast in the USSR.

Leroy Carr And Scrapper Blackwell
Memphis Town
(VOCALION, 1930)



Singing and piano-playing Carr and his jazzy guitarist Blackwell take a train to Memphis. Leroy's so keen to see his gal he threatens the station master for being unprofessional.

Japan
Life In Tokyo
(ARIOLA HANSA, 1979)



Giorgio Moroder takes Catford's glam rockers to the electronic future city where "life can be cruel". A Top 30 hit on its third release, just weeks before Japan's downer send-off Nightporter.

Fela Kuti
Monday Morning In Lagos
(EMI, 1973)



To a snaking James Brown-in-Africa fanfare, Kuti tells of tough city living, as weekend drinking gives way to stark reality, debts called-in, angry cabbies and hungry bellies.

Elvis Presley
Fun In Acapulco
(RCA VICTOR, 1963)



The British were coming, but until then, Elvis gets on with singing anything however goofy with full commitment. He plays a former trapeze artist in the movie of the same name, while filming in Hollywood rather than Mexico.

Jochen Mönch, Sony Music

ROCK THE CASBAH • CLAMPDOWN • TRAIN IN VAIN • BRAND NEW CADILLAC
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN • I FOUGHT THE LAW • THE GUNS OF BRIXTON
SPANISH BOMBS • LONDON CALLING • LOST IN THE SUPERMARKET
SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO

The World According to

THE CLASH

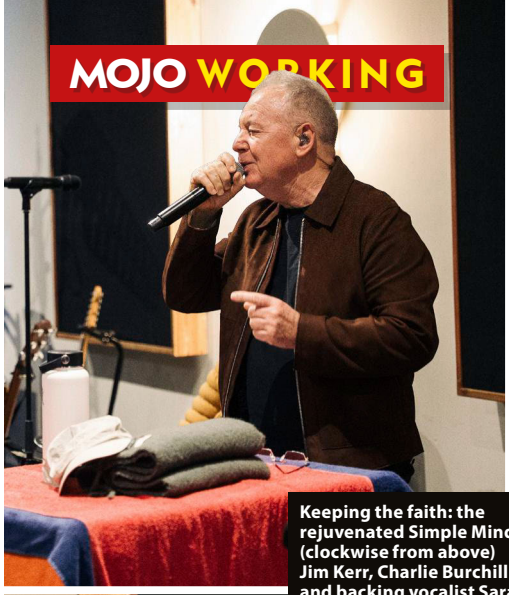


Vinyl / CD / Digital

Available 13th November

theclash.com

COLUMBIA





Keeping the faith: the rejuvenated Simple Minds (clockwise from above) Jim Kerr, Charlie Burchill and backing vocalist Sarah Brown get ready, 2026.



FACT SHEET

Title: *Sacrosanct*

Date: January 29, 2027

Production: Simple Minds, Andy Wright and Gavin Goldberg.

Songs: King Of The Underworld; Our Secrets Are The Same; Jerusalem (State Of Mind); Elysium; The Next Right Thing

The Buzz: "We love the energy and directness of it. Were we not looking at ourselves a year ago as being tired and over it? So we love the notion of, God, should we be sounding like this after 50 years?!"
Jim Kerr

SIMPLE MINDS RETURN! WITH 20TH ALBUM *SACROSANCT*

"A YEAR AND A half ago, maybe, I said to my manager, I don't think we'll be doing any more albums," says Simple Minds frontman Jim Kerr. "We've kind of said about all we have to say, and I don't need to be sitting indoors looking at a screen. Pro Tools – fucking hell! Death by a thousand cuts, you drive yourself nuts."

However, manager Ian Grenfell suggested he reconsider after reviewing new song ideas the band had accumulated. "He said, 'Why not just go at it like you did in the old days?'" says Kerr. "He was very persuasive."

Aware that a new track or two wouldn't hurt, Kerr and guitarist Charlie Burchill convened for a three-day session at Eastcote studios in west London in spring 2025, immediately before going on tour in South America. They were joined by bassist Oscar Golding and drummer Geoff Holroyde, who were suggested by regular production team Andy Wright and Gavin Goldberg. "We started working fast, very much bass and drums and three backing tracks in an afternoon," says Kerr. "And suddenly it was like, Maybe we can do this. It was very kind of guerrilla, and so against the odds I found it all invigorating."

> **"New wave, post-punk, whatever you call it… I thought, That's where we should be."**
> **JIM KERR**

Over the next year and a half, they periodically repeated the process: with three days of finessing at Wright's space in Acton, and mixing by Andrew Scheps, Kerr estimates that making the LP now titled *Sacrosanct* took around a month in total. Big US dates in summer '25 further influenced the album's direction, says Kerr. "We were playing the big songs, but I never thought I'd see American audiences jumping up and down to the fourth track on the second side of *Sons And Fascination* [1981], or so-called deep cuts from *Empires And Dance* [1980]. New wave, post-punk, whatever you want to call it… I thought, That's where we should be, in that vein again."

As well as Kerr and Burchill, there are songwriting contributions from Iain Cook of Chvrches and Paul Statham of '80s contenders B-Movie. Some songs date as far back as 2013, but the singer stresses, "I wouldn't want anyone thinking they were things that had been discarded – sometimes a song needs to find its time."

He admits a debt to key early inspiration Magazine on attitudinal opener Elysium ("Magazine, in our dreams," he says), calls second song King Of The Underworld unapologetically "epic" and lead track Beginner Boys "wistful, romantic, but with a bit of a new wave thrash." William Blake manifests on Jerusalem (State Of Mind), while Our Secrets Are The Same reflects on the long association of Kerr and Burchill.

Aptly, the track Songs reflects on the miraculous power of music to redeem when all else fails. Does he still feel like they won't make any more albums, then? "I've already started the next one. We feel rejuvenated," Kerr says, and then addresses why it's called *Sacrosanct*: "we've found the faith again."
Ian Harrison

ALSO WORKING

…last month, **Nile Rodgers** announced, "I spent today recording new music with **BRYAN FERRY** (right) at Abbey Road, my home… Bryan will forever be my hero." He added that five new songs were cut …appearing on Absolute Radio, **Johnny Marr** confirmed that **NOEL GALLAGHER** is "writing songs for fun, recording songs…" whether they will be for a new **Oasis** album or solo project is unclear (Oasis will tour again in 2027) …Barnsley metal veterans **SAXON** release *Gods Of Thunder* in January. Tracks include The Bloody Tower (The Ballad Of Anne Boleyn), Remember The Alamo and MI5 …in January **INSPIRAL CARPETS** release *Burn Like The Sun*. Their first album since 2014, it's produced by **Jagz Kooner**: lead track Touching From A Distance Too Far is reportedly influenced by Joy Division …**LABI SIFFRE**'s *Unfinished Business* is expected in 2027 …**LLOYD COLE** is recording new music. After working on one track, in September he announced, "Very happy with where this song is, and also somewhere between relieved and astonished that, after 12 years, I think I've nailed it" …**COURTNEY LOVE** (above) has confirmed that the follow-up to 2004's *America's Sweetheart* is ready for release. "I believed this was my last record so I made the record I always wanted to make," she wrote. "I was in the hospital mostly but when I wasn't all I did was write and record it." Guests include **Michael Stipe**, **Will Sergeant**, **Melissa Auf der Maur** and **Billie Joe Armstrong** …**MICK FLEETWOOD** is continuing work on his second official solo album…





Getty (2), Trent Barboza



MANIC STREET PREACHERS

THE HOLY BIBLE LIVE



THE 2014 ROUNDHOUSE RECORDINGS OF 'THE HOLY BIBLE' PERFORMED LIVE IN FULL

DELUXE • DOUBLE LP • CD & BLU-RAY • DIGITAL

OUT 23RD OCTOBER 2026

COLUMBIA SONY MUSIC

MANICSTREETPREACHERS.COM



Back to Black: Tony Iommi, still coming up with new riffs.

Ross Marino/Getty Images

Tony Iommi

Black Sabbath's mighty guitarist talks Ozzy, bagpipes and his archive of riffs.

IN RECENT years Black Sabbath's affable riff-god has embraced celebrity fragrances. Promoting his aftershave Tony Iommi Deified alongside Italian perfumers Xerjoff, the black-clad, crucifix-bedecked master of the devil's tritone penned the instrumental Deified in 2024. So began *From The Dark*, his first studio set since 2013's *Black Sabbath 13*, and his first solo record since 2005's *Fused*. An undead thriller penned with Norwegian singer Jørn Lande, previously of operatic supergroup Avantasia, it also sees "dear old friend" Brian May play a solo on Death Wake. There's still something darkly monolithic about Iommi's pioneering sound. It's the Brummie brick that heavy metal was built with; enduring testament to late bandmate Ozzy Osbourne and all Black Sabbath achieved.

From The Dark's subject matter includes nuclear Armageddon. Are we still dealing with the war pigs?

Well the world's not in great shape, is it? It's so sad that we keep spending millions on weapons.

Django Reinhardt overcoming fire damage to his fretting-hand was inspirational when you lost the tops of two fingers in an accident aged 17. Were you a fan of Django's music too?

Very much so. Especially his stuff with Stéphane Grappelli. I suppose there's a bit of a Django influence on stuff like Planet Caravan [from 1970's *Paranoid*].

Ozzy: what images endure?

Oh god. So many. When I picked him up for our first European tour he came out of his house with one shirt on a coat hanger. I said, Oz, we're going away for six weeks! He said, "I know." *(Laughs).* I remember playing the piano part for Changes [from 1972's *Vol. 4*] and Ozzy coming up with that fantastic melody.



SAB GEAR

Tony's five tastemakers.

1. **Jimi Hendrix Experience** *All Along The Watchtower* (TRACK, 1968)
2. **The Shadows** *Apache* (COLUMBIA, 1960)
3. **Chicago** *25 Or 6 To 4* (COLUMBIA, 1970)
4. **Django Reinhardt** *Stardust* (FRENCH DISQUE GRAMOPHONE, 1935)
5. **Frank Sinatra** *Summer Wind* (REPRISE, 1966)

He was brilliant with melodies. It's quite Beatles-ish, that one.

You have a huge store of unused guitar riffs. What will happen to them after you've gone?

Where do you think I'm going? *(Laughs).* I should sift through them, but every time I go into the studio I come up with something new. Brian May was over and he said, "Got any riffs?" I found some old cassettes and played him about 150 ideas. He was like, "You've got to use these!"

You once befriended horror film icon Christopher Lee…

We interviewed each other at a London hotel and his son-in-law filmed it. I have a copy and Sir Christopher had a copy, but the film was never released. I told him I loved The Curse Of Frankenstein and The Mummy. He said, "Really? They were rubbish!"

A little bird tells MOJO you've seen the ABBA Voyage avatar show.

Yes, my wife's Swedish, and we took along [tennis player] Sue Barker and her husband. It was very good, but it left me with a strange feeling. Nobody on-stage – just these images.

John Bonham was best man when you first married in 1973.

Strange old day, that was. We went out to the club in Birmingham for my stag night before. John said, "Open all the champagne you have." He wanted me to down 12 glasses for starters. I refused, so he polished them off – and the rest. I had to get him home, but he was pissed as a parrot and he'd lost his keys. When I pressed the buzzer Pat [Bonham's wife] said, "Is he drunk?" I said, "He is a bit, yeah." She said, "I'll open the door, but he's not coming up. Leave him in the hallway." Next morning he was right as rain.

Legend holds you played bagpipes on 1973's _Sabbath Bloody Sabbath_.

Not true! I did send out one of the crew to get a set. I thought it might be quite haunting. But when he brought them back I couldn't get a tune out of them.

Prior to Sabbath's last stand at Villa Park last year, Andrew Watt wanted to produce a final album with the original line-up. You declined. Why?

Working with Rick Rubin [on 2013's *Black Sabbath 13*] had already been awkward, and Bill [Ward] had pulled out. Andrew's good but I couldn't imagine Bill or the rest of us being OK with him telling us what to do. And then Ozzy died, sadly. We would never have had enough time.

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

I've got a great yacht rock playlist I put on when people come for dinner.

As told to James McNair

From The Dark is released on October 23 on BMG.

> "ABBA Voyage left me with a strange feeling. Nobody on-stage – just these images."
> TONY IOMMI

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

Jake Xerxes Fussell

The folk/blues savant gives it up for Huayno Music Of Peru, Vols. 1 & 2 (Arhoolie, 1989).



I WAS a teenager in the mid '90s in Georgia. I had a sort of folk background and as well as R.E.M. and Bob Dylan I listened to a lot of roots music. I was aware of the Arhoolie label. They had a quarterly that you could order CDs through, and I saw *Huayno Music Of Peru*, a two-CD set of commercially recorded music compiled by [documentarian/musician] John Cohen. I was marginally aware of him, and I sent off for it.

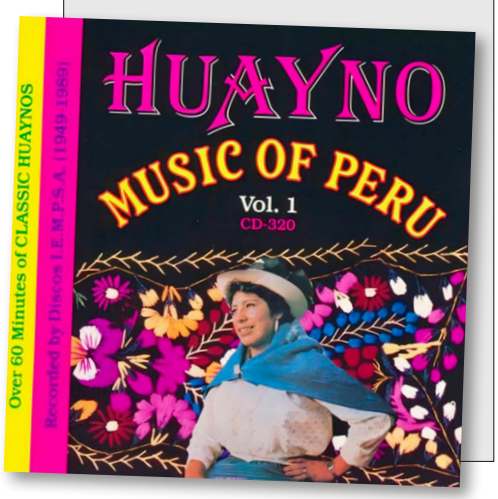
I knew very little about Peru or Peruvian music, but when I listened, it opened up my mind. It's very lyrical with beautiful melodies and interesting chord changes, with combinations of instruments – one band will have an accordion, a saxophone, and a harmonica, then there'll be a really beautiful brass band. Some of the songs are quite wistful, with a lot of minor keys. It's sort of one genre with many different forms of expression within it.

I listened to those CDs about as much as I've listened to anything. I don't reference them directly, but there's something about the audacity in the way these singers are approaching recording and arranging which opened my eyes and my mind to what music could be. I've owned three copies of it because I've worn them out – they're probably still on the floor in a car I owned years ago.

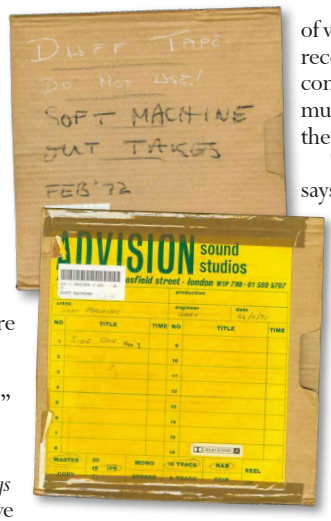
Years later, I went out to the West Coast, dating a girl out there, and got a part-time job working at Down Home Records, which was the storefront for Arhoolie. I was around a lot of the staff and [founder] Mr Strachwitz. Les Blank, the documentary filmmaker, had his office upstairs. That was a real interesting time. John Cohen became one of my real heroes, and I got to meet him many years later too.

As told to Ian Harrison

Jake Xerxes Fussell's The Old Beloved Path is out now on Fat Possum.



A HUGE NEW SOFT MACHINE BOX? OUT-BLOODY-RAGEOUS!



LONG-TERM SOFT Machine fan Damon Albarn says he's looking forward to a "deep dive into their wonderful world". The Softs' old pal Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, meanwhile, gets misty eyed over when they shared stages at the UFO Club and then the Rainbow. "I tend to think that the one ingredient that both bands were unique in providing," he says, "was playing music that was simply impossible to dance to."

Enter the 14-CD, three Blu-ray Soft Machine box set *Slightly All The Time – Recordings 1970-1974*. It explores the five numerically titled LPs a variety of line-ups recorded for Columbia, and is augmented by a plethora of live radio sessions and TV performances.

Well-educated Canterbury boys with nutty psychedelic tendencies who'd toured the US with Jimi Hendrix, the Softs had steadily morphed into a solely instrumental band by 1971. They surfed the prog years well, despite questionable management, apparent indifference to the norms of either stage or market, and constant line-up changes that suggest members' individual muses didn't always sit well with communal endeavour. Or, alternately, as Sid Smith's linernotes suggest, these were years which mark "an everchanging continuum in which musicians might shake off the mundane world and exchange it for a kind of transcendence in the moment."

Veteran Soft Machine compiler Mark Powell is particularly pleased with the various TV and radio appearances he's sourced which display a band whose material is constantly developing. "There's Radio 1 John Peel sessions or European broadcasts where you can hear evolving versions of what they will eventually record," he says, "while the radio concerts give you a sense of the musicians flying by the seat of their pants."

The earliest footage included, says Powell, "dates from March 1970 at the Theatre de Musique in Paris with saxophonist Elton Dean and Lynn Dobson in the band. It's very pure, very jazz in presentation. The players just wander on and off stage as their parts come and go, there's nothing remotely showbiz about it. But you can see how the band interacts by following the eye contact."

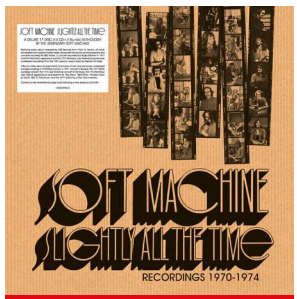
The copious footage and recordings trace Soft Machine's journey from the playful avant rock endorsed by the Proms in 1970 to the jazz-rock outfit that play the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1974. Mike Ratledge with his Lowrey organ, shaded stare, and helmet of hair is the only constant, and some fans struggled to recover from the departure of founder member Robert Wyatt after *Fourth*.

Powell prefers to emphasise the journey, enthusing about remastering the notoriously muddy production of the band's masterpiece *Third*, a double LP which combines live recordings with each band member 'owning' a side, and the surprise discovery of an earlier alternate version of *Fifth* with Wyatt's short-lived successor Phil Howard.

What's inarguable is the inspired bloody-mindedness of the band that so bewildered their label Columbia. "We can't tell if you're selling really badly for a rock band," one executive reportedly remarked, "or really well for a jazz group."

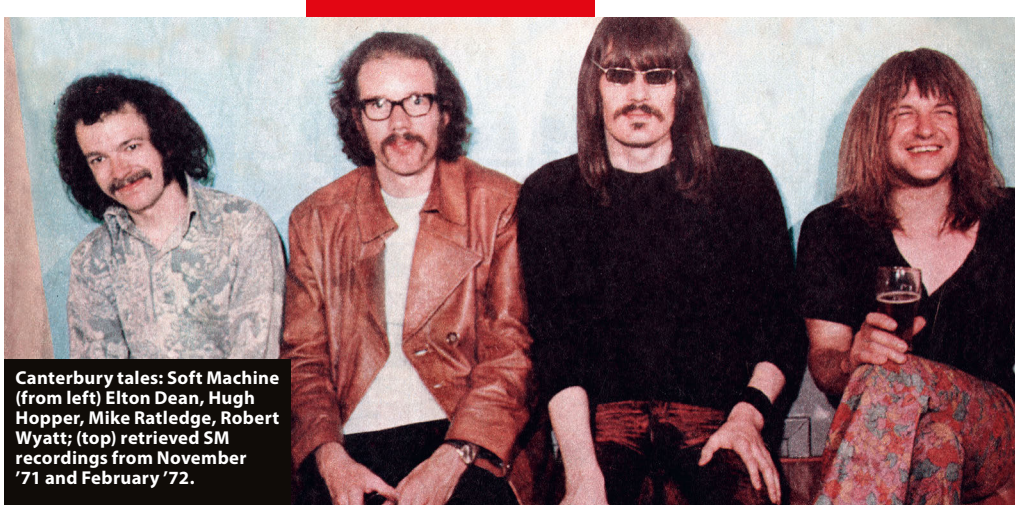
Mark Cooper

Slightly All The Time – Recordings 1970-1974 is released this month by Sony.

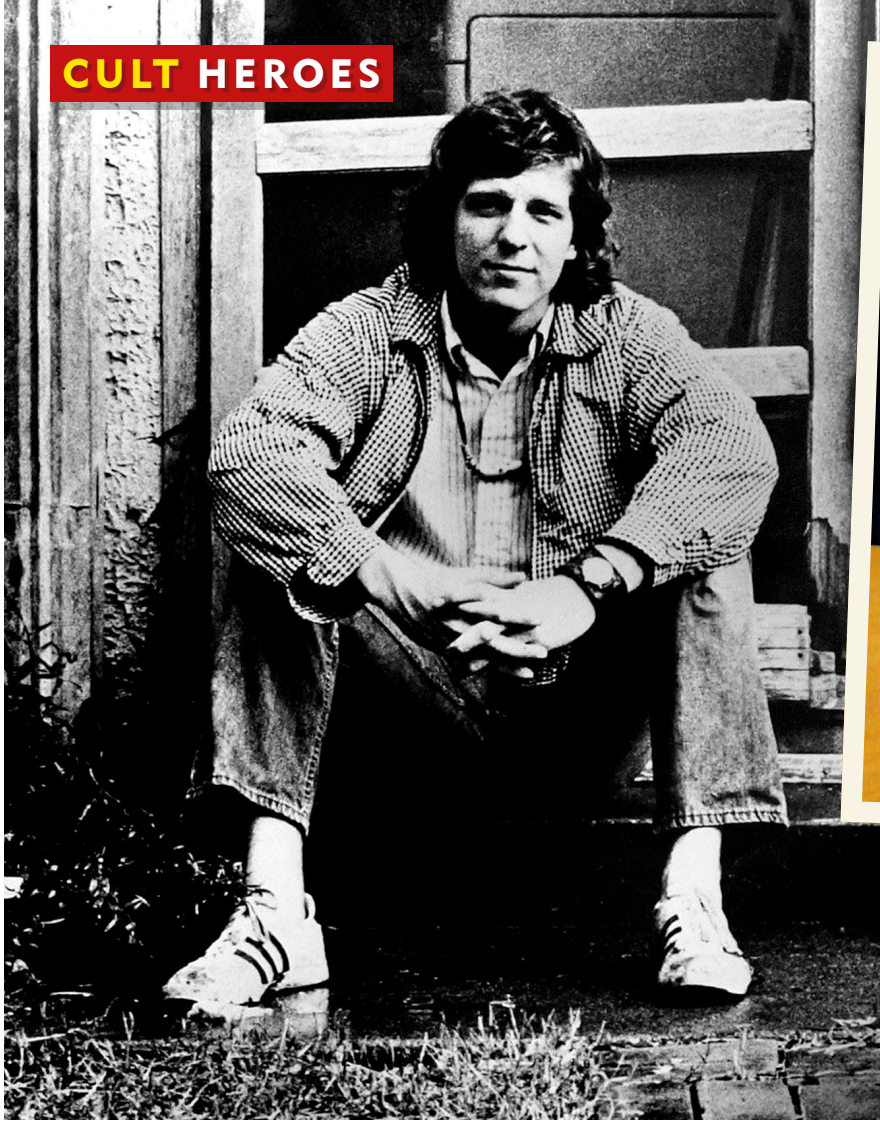


"It's very pure… nothing remotely showbiz about it."
MARK POWELL

Jochen Mönch, Sony Music



Canterbury tales: Soft Machine (from left) Elton Dean, Hugh Hopper, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt; (top) retrieved SM recordings from November '71 and February '72.





***Gentilly* does it: (left) Willis Alan Ramsey in the early '70s; (above) performing in Austin, Texas, 2019.**

LESS IS MORE! WITH ONE-ALBUM WONDER WILLIS ALAN RAMSEY

BACK IN '94, the music world lost its mind because it had waited five years for The Stone Roses to make a second album. Compared to American troubadour Willis Alan Ramsey, whose long-promised second album still hasn't materialised after nearly 55 years, the Roses are mere amateurs in the follow-up stakes.

Bad news, however, for fans of the luxury storytelling blend of country, soul, folk and blues on Ramsey's self-titled debut: the second album – long referred to as *Gentilly* – may never appear.

"To be honest, I think it's pretty much dead at this point, so I'm moving on to the third," Ramsey chuckles on the phone to MOJO, just before a flight to a gig in Austin. "I've always liked odd-numbered albums anyway."

Born in 1951, Ramsey was raised in Birmingham, Alabama before his family moved to Dallas, Texas. Inspired by the R&B he heard on the radio coming out of Nashville, he started writing songs and playing bars alongside contemporaries such as Townes Van Zandt and Jerry Jeff 'Mr Bojangles' Walker.

Eventually, *Willis Alan Ramsey* was released in 1972 to high acclaim and almost no sales. Featuring a host of first-call Los Angeles sessions players from Leon Russell to Jim Keltner, Eddie Hinton and Leland Sklar, it also introduced his best-known song, Muskrat Love, made famous through covers by soft rockers America (1973) and proto-wine bar keyboard duo Captain & Tennille (1976). Over the years the album, about to be reissued with appropriate embellishments, has sold nearly 250,000 copies as listeners discover it through the many, many cover versions of its songs by Lyle Lovett, Shawn Colvin, Jimmy Buffet, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and others.

It's allowed Ramsey to continue his troubadour life: he's played almost constantly apart from during the 1980s. "I got divorced, had to sell a studio I had barely finished building, and my audience just stopped listening to music in smaller venues, too busy courting their future wives and husbands," he says. "When I came back to it around '89 they'd already partnered up, had kids, and wanted to go see some music again, so back I came."

With *Willis Alan Ramsey*'s re-release, its creator hopes to finally tour outside of the US.

"I particularly want to play in Britain and Ireland. I lived in Ireland some of the '80s, working on a kind of modal choral project, taking traditional Celtic instruments and putting them to different orchestrations from Bach to African rhythms. I'd love to finish that album."

Whether or not Ramsey is joking about the fate of *Gentilly* remains to be seen. In the meantime there's still the debut, and as the singer has often replied when asked about a sequel, "What's wrong with the first one?"

Andy Fyfe

Willis Alan Ramsey is reissued this month by Antarctica Starts Here.

> **"I'm moving on to the third album…"**
> **WILLIS ALAN RAMSEY**

Gary Miller/Getty Images

RAMSEY TREATS

Willis Alan's songcraft, covered.

Shawn Colvin
Satin Sheets
(FROM *COVER GIRL*, COLUMBIA, 1994)



Ramsey's favourite cover, Colvin's softly acoustic version was recorded live in NY folk club The Bitter End (in her band was Jim Keltner, also drummer on Ramsey's original). Hear its knowing fantasies of fame given full vocal vent by Waylon Jennings on 1977 album *Ol' Waylon*.

America
Muskrat Love
(FROM *HAT TRICK*, WARNER BROS, 1973)



Ramsey wrote this daffy but endearing smoocher about rodents in love as Muskrat Candlelight, before soft rockers America's cover demanded a name change. The writer, whose original is all shimmer and shimmy, says it "kind of trivialised the song."

Jimmy Buffett
Ballad Of Spider John
(FROM *LIVING AND DYING IN 3/4 TIME*, DUNHILL, 1974)



Storyteller's storyteller Jimmy Buffett doffed his hat to his friend Ramsey's tale of a smalltown kid who goes badly wrong and loses his girl. Dark subject matter for the writer of Margaritaville, but it suits Buffett's lighter touch.

SCAN TO LISTEN

CARGO COLLECTIVE

CARGO INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTION



VANISHING TWIN
ARCHIVES
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

Another bold step forward, Vanishing Twin guide you on a playful, hypnotic journey of avant pop. These radiophonic experiments orbit between the real world and an imagined one. “Sublime” – Pitchfork



TEENAGE FANCLUB
DO NOT DARE TO DREAM
MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

Do Not Dare To Dream by Teenage Fanclub is full of songs that are calmly resolute, taking stock of the fraught state of the world without succumbing to despair.



DEATH VALLEY GIRLS
WELCOME TO EARTH
SUICIDE SQUEEZE LP / CD

Death Valley Girls’ most intimate yet expansive album confronts loss head-on, emerging open to wonder and disguising a radical idea within a danceable rock-and-roll record.



ARBORIST
LOOKING FOR LOVE
FIKA RECORDINGS LP / CD

Northern Ireland Music Prize winner Arborist’s 4th album of exquisitely inventive Americana is staggering, devastating & uplifting in equal measure, calling to mind Songs Ohia’s Magnolia Electric Co., The Divine Comedy’s Regeneration & Wilco’s Ode to Joy.



BRITISH BIRDS
MURMURATE, OSCILLATE
SKEP WAX RECORDS LP / CD

British Birds combine the garage-punk energy of Billy Childish, the wry English sophistication of XTC and the pop inventiveness of The Lovely Eggs. Huge energy, great lyrics: an important new band.



KARATE BOOGALOO
ACCESS ALL AREAS
COLEMINE RECORDS LP / CD

Vivid instrumental funk & soul from Australia—traditional shapes drawn with KB’s unmistakable crooked lines.



TWIN TEMPLE
DOOMED LOVERS
PENTAGRAMMATON RECORDS LP / CD

Twin Temple have become cultural provocateurs & one of music’s most talked about cross over acts. Expanding the cinematic scope of their unmistakable sound while remaining rooted in the timeless traditions of early rock ‘n’ roll. The band’s most ambitious & fully realised artistic statement yet.



THE NERVES
BEST COLLECTION
THIRD MAN RECORDS 2LP / CD

The most cohesive collection yet from legendary American power pop trio. This 50th Anniversary collection gathers everything they released, including classics “Hanging On The Telephone,” “When You Find Out” & “Working Too Hard,” plus previously unheard demos & live recordings.



WISHY
NATURE’S PILL
WINSPEAR LP / CD

Nature’s Pill bears all of Wishy’s trademarks: zany lyrics transfiguring melancholia into freedom, choruses set to become instant classics, and an unholy fusion of sugary grunge, indie rock and dream-pop.



CLUTTER
SUGAR RUSH
PNKSLM RECORDINGS LP / CD

From riot grrrl thrash and grunge-inspired fuzz to dreamy lo-fi ballads, hotly tipped Clutter’s debut thrives on contrast: sweetness and chaos, vulnerability and confidence, heaviness and glitter.



VISION FORTUNE
III
GRINGO RECORDS LP

Vision Fortune return with III, following 2015’s Country Music on ATP Recordings. Channelling echoes of This Heat, Can, Young Marble Giants and Liars, it reveals a leaner, subtler sound.



ANDY BELL & MASAL
COMMON PRIMITIVES
SONIC CATHEDRAL LP / CD

The stunning second collaboration between Andy Bell (Ride, Oasis) and Masal veers from kosmische and astral jazz to Turkish folk. Double vinyl also includes their first album ‘Tidal Love Numbers’.



ROLLO DOHERTY
THE JELLY MAN
LEWIS RECORDINGS LP / CD

Produced by The Still Brothers, ‘The Jelly Man’ is Rollo Doherty’s debut album. Includes the singles ‘Sway’, ‘Flowers’, ‘Andrew’s Song’, ‘Waterfall’ and ‘On Your Way Home’.



N8NOFACE
TOMORROW’S WORLD
STONES THROW LP

N8NOFACE’s new album Tomorrow’s World, produced by Dave Sitek, imagines “what the punks and street kids might be listening to in 2077.



SENNEN
NEW QUIET
SONIC CATHEDRAL LP / CD

Their first album in 10 years is wonderfully warm and fuzzy – for fans of Yo La Tengo, Teenage Fanclub and Sonic Youth. Self-recorded by the band and mixed by James Chapman, aka Maps.



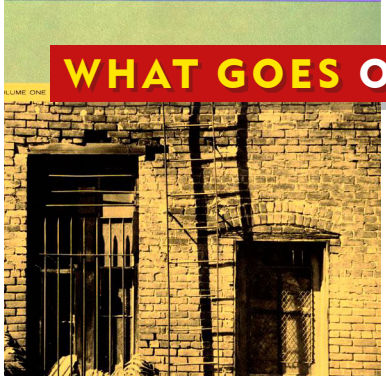
CALEB NICHOLS
STONE AGE IS NOW: POEMS FROM LITHIC
ROYAL OAKIE LP / CD

Across twelve tracks Nichols interpolates spoken word poetry from Lithic: A Hyperballad with tracks from Stone Age Is Back, bringing new depth to his indie-rock and alt-folk compositions.

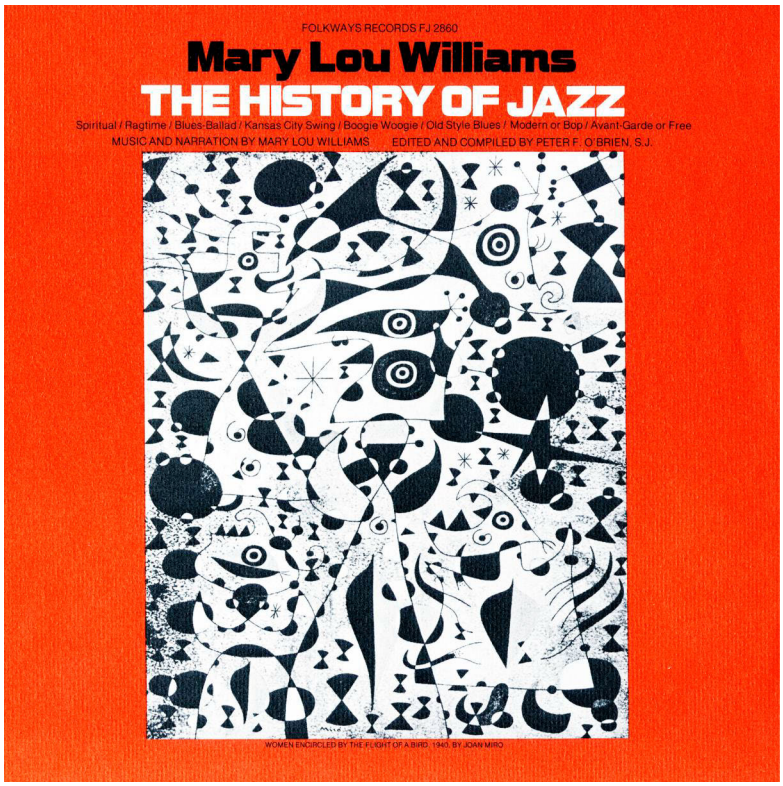
AN AMALGAMATION OF RECORD SHOPS AND LABELS DEDICATED TO BRINGING YOU NEW MUSIC

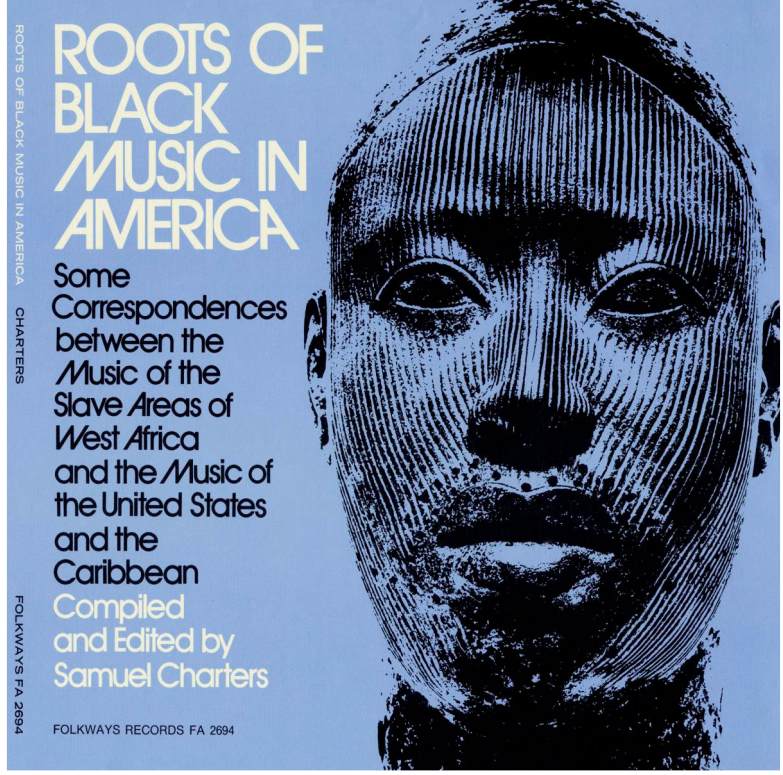
IRELAND: DUBLIN - SPINDIZZY / KILKENNY - ROLLER COASTER SCOTLAND: DUNDEE - ASSAI / EDINBURGH - ASSAI / EDINBURGH - THORNE RECORDS / GLASGOW - ASSAI / GLASGOW - LOVE MUSIC / GLASGOW - MONORAIL WALES: ABERYSTWYTH - ANDY’S RECORDS / CARDIFF - SPILLERS / NEWPORT - DIVERSE / SWANSEA - DERRICKS NORTH- WEST: LIVERPOOL - 81 RENSHAW LTD / LIVERPOOL - PROBE / LIVERPOOL - ROUGH TRADE / MANCHESTER - PICCADILLY RECORDS / NANTWICH - APPLESTUMP RECORDS LTD / PRESTON - ACTION RECORDS NORTH-EAST: BINGLEY - FIVE RISE / HARROGATE - P & C MUSIC / HEADINGLEY - VINYL WHISTLE / HUDDERSFIELD - VINYL TAP / LEEDS - CRASH LEEDS - JUMBO RECORDS / NEWCASTLE - BEATDOWN / NEWCASTLE - REFLEX / SHEFFIELD - BEAR TREE / SHEFFIELD - RECORD COLLECTOR / SHEFFIELD - SPINNING DISCS MIDLANDS: CAMBRIDGE - RELEVANT / COVENTRY - JUST DROPPED IN / LEAMINGTON SPA - SEISMIC / LEIGHTON BUZZARD - BLACK CIRCLE / LETCHWORTH - DAVID’S MUSIC / LOUTH - OFF THE BEATEN TRACK / NOTTINGHAM - ROUGH TRADE / OXFORD - TRUCK STORE / WITNEY -WITNEY TRUCK SOUTH: BEXHILL ON SEA - MUSIC’S NOT DEAD / BLANDFORD FORUM - REVOLUTION ROCKS / BRIGHTON - RESIDENT / BURY ST.EDMUNDS - VINYL HUNTER / CANTERBURY - VINYL STORE JR / LONDON - BANQUET GRAVITY / LONDON - CASBAH / LONDON - FLASHBACK / LONDON - ROUGH TRADE EAST / LONDON - ROUGH TRADE TALBOT RD / LONDON - SISTER RAY / LONDON - STRANGER THAN PARADISE RECORDS / LUTON - VINYL REVELATIONS / NORWICH - SOUNDCLASH / NORWICH / VENUS VINYL / ROMSEY - HUNDRED / SOUTHSEA - PIE & VINYL / SOUTHEND ON SEA - SOUTH RECORDS / ST ALBANS - EMPIRE RECORDS / WATFORD - PARADE VIBES / WIMBORNE - SQUARE RECORDS / WHITSTABLE - GATEFIELD SOUNDS / WINCHESTER - ELEPHANT RECORDS SOUTH WEST: BRISTOL - ROUGH TRADE / CHELTENHAM - BADLANDS / FALMOUTH - JAM FROME - RAVES FROM THE GRAVE / MARLBOROUGH - SOUND KNOWLEDGE / TOTNES - DRIFT MAILORDER AND INTERNET ONLY STORES: BLEEP.COM / BOOMKAT.COM / JUNO / NORMANRECORDS.COM / RECORDSTORE.CO.UK

CARGO-INDEPENDENT.CO.UK













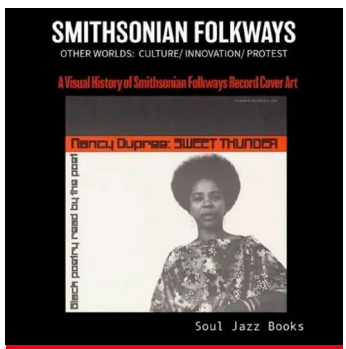
Smithsonian Dynamite

Saluted! Folkways Records sleeve designer Ronald Clyne.

REISSUE SPECIALIST label Soul Jazz are known for their compilations of distinction, and they're a dab hand at publishing too. So far, the imprint's record sleeve cover art books have focused on Studio One Records, first-wave punk and the world of revolutionary jazz. To these we can now add Smithsonian Folkways: Other Worlds: Culture/Innovation/Protest.

Extant from 1948, the Folkways label catalogue is a wildly eclectic, third eye-opening thing, encompassing jazz, blues, folk (Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music* is one notable release), avant-garde and global musics, as well as nature sounds, political expression and intriguing field recordings. What unites this canon is the cover art of graphic designer Ronald Clyne, who died in 2006 aged 80.

Using uncluttered colour palettes, inventive typography and, surprisingly, mainly public domain images, his striking, strongly identifiable sleeves (examples shown) provide abundant stimulation in themselves. "What was Ronald Clyne doing?" wonders book compiler and Soul Jazz mainman Stuart Baker. "It's hard to define. It's very idiosyncratic and eye-catching and it still looks fresh today. He wasn't doing it for a time or a fashion – it's his own style. Also, he was connected to the music in a way that I think many designers aren't. Clearly, the guy knew what he was doing."



"I had freedom. I didn't get instructions."
RONALD CLYNE

Baker began working on the book around two years ago, after a decade-plus licensing music from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC (the family of Folkways founder Moses 'Moe' Asch bequeathed the label in 1987). Also an admired illustrator for pulp magazines and book jackets, Clyne first worked with Asch in 1948. Quoted in the book, the artist recalls, "[Moe] never mentioned price. He never mentioned how fast I should do them, or what I should do… of all the work I've done commercially, that's the one I enjoyed the most, because I had freedom. I didn't have to deal with an art director. I didn't get instructions I'd be forced to follow. It was all up to me."

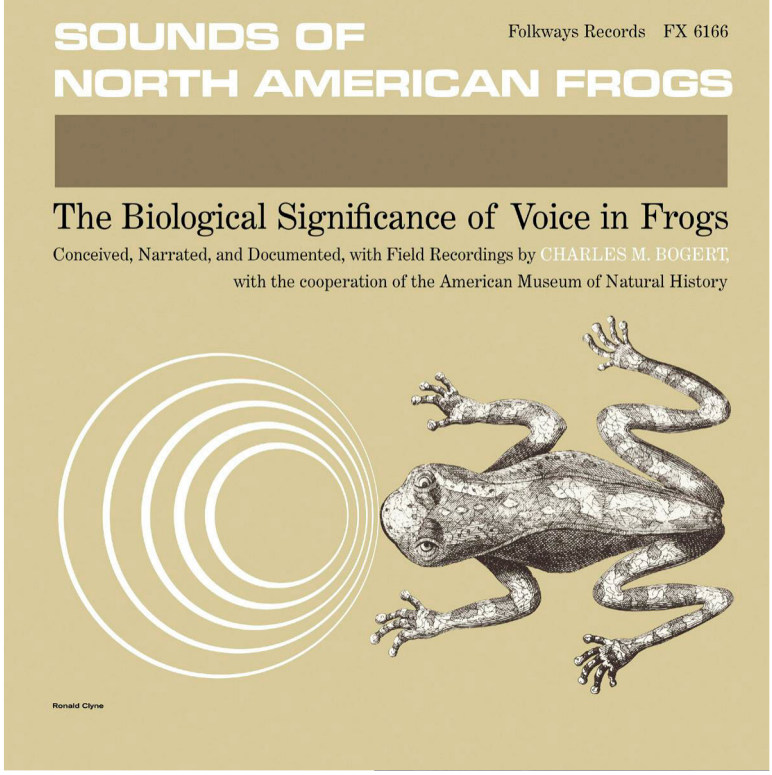
"I think comparisons to [Factory Records designer] Peter Saville are spot on," says Baker. "Whatever Factory Records did, it would look like a Factory record – and this is the same."

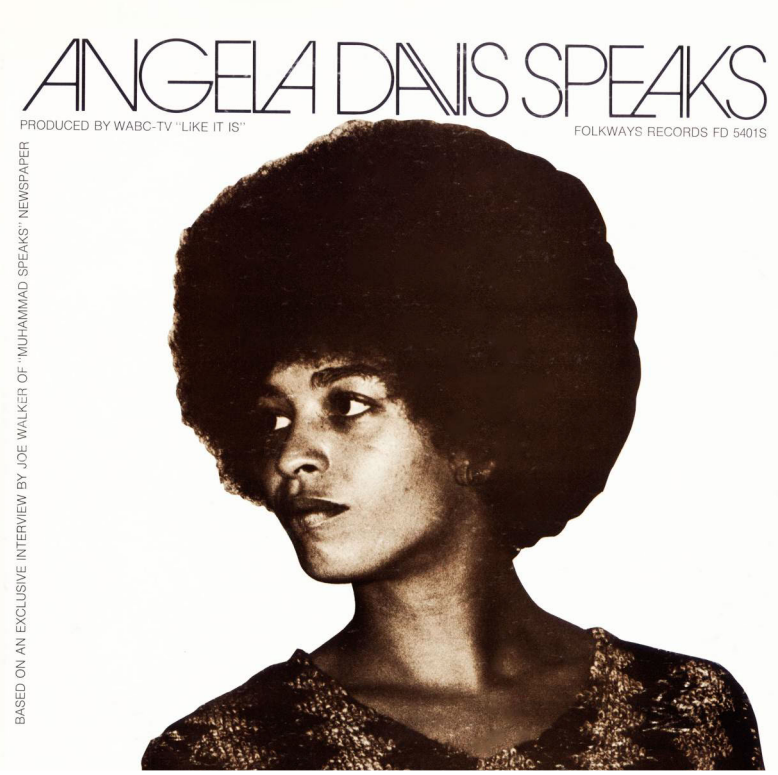
Baker also notes that Folkways covers were economically produced, printed in just two colours and then glued to a sturdy cardboard sleeve. Some of the label's more niche releases only sold 20 copies a year, but Folkways endured, a paragon of self-sufficiency with its founder Asch an "anti-capitalist capitalist" who ran a business while sidestepping marketplace restrictions.

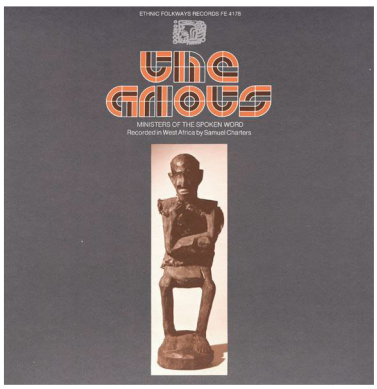
"Moses Asch was a guy on a mission from the first day," says Baker, whose favourite Folkways sleeves include *Computer Music*, *The Griots: Ministers Of The Spoken Word* and *Sounds Of North American Frogs* (see above). "He's recording John Cage and Langston Hughes and Mary Lou Williams in the '50s – this is totally out there, innovative stuff, literally the cutting edge. I can't imagine how he would know that what they were doing was important and would have a legacy. But he did know."

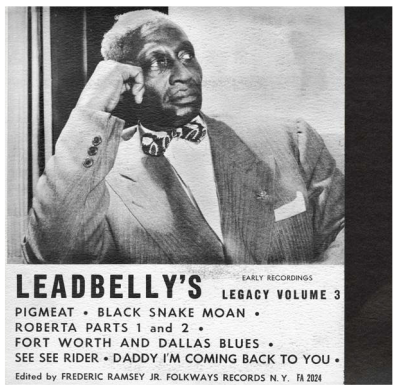
Ian Harrison

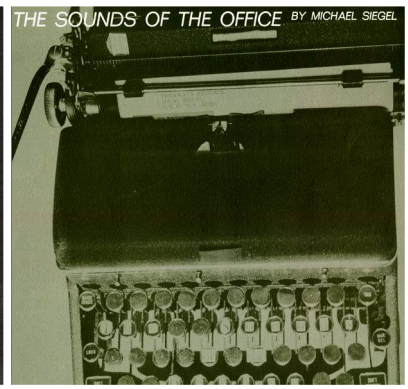
Smithsonian Folkways: Other Worlds: Culture/Innovation/Protest is published by Soul Jazz.

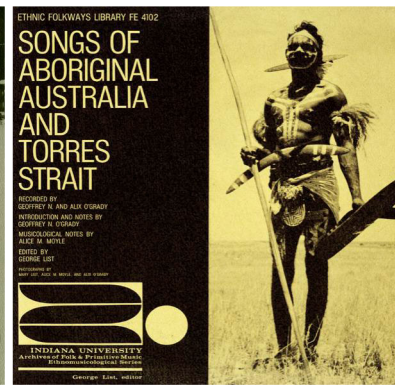

SOUNDS OF
NORTH AMERICAN FROGS
Folkways Records FX 6166
The Biological Significance of Voice in Frogs
Conceived, Narrated, and Documented, with Field Recordings by CHARLES M. BOGERT,
with the cooperation of the American Museum of Natural History
Ronald Clyne

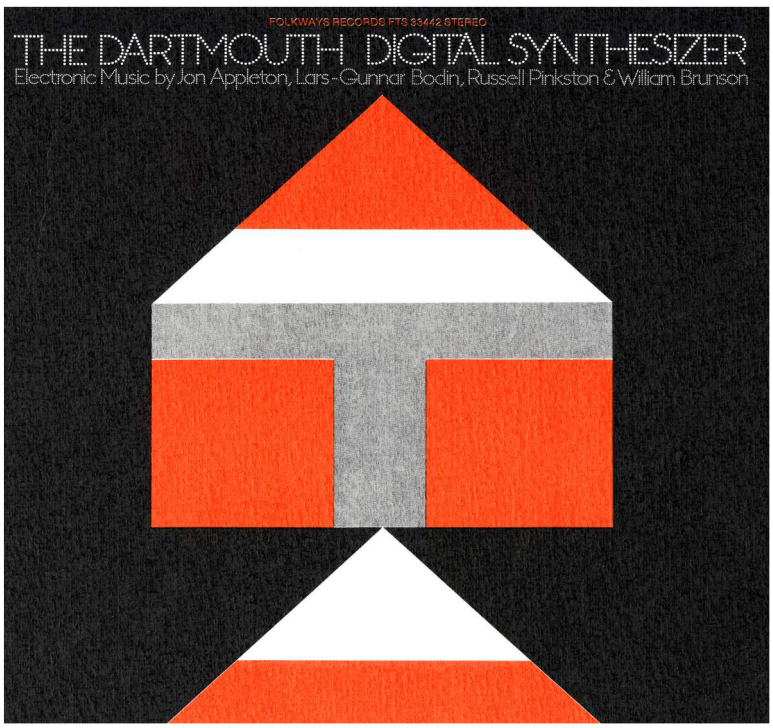

ANGELA DAVIS SPEAKS
PRODUCED BY WABC-TV "LIKE IT IS"
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FD 5401S
BASED ON AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW BY JOE WALKER OF "MUHAMMAD SPEAKS" NEWSPAPER

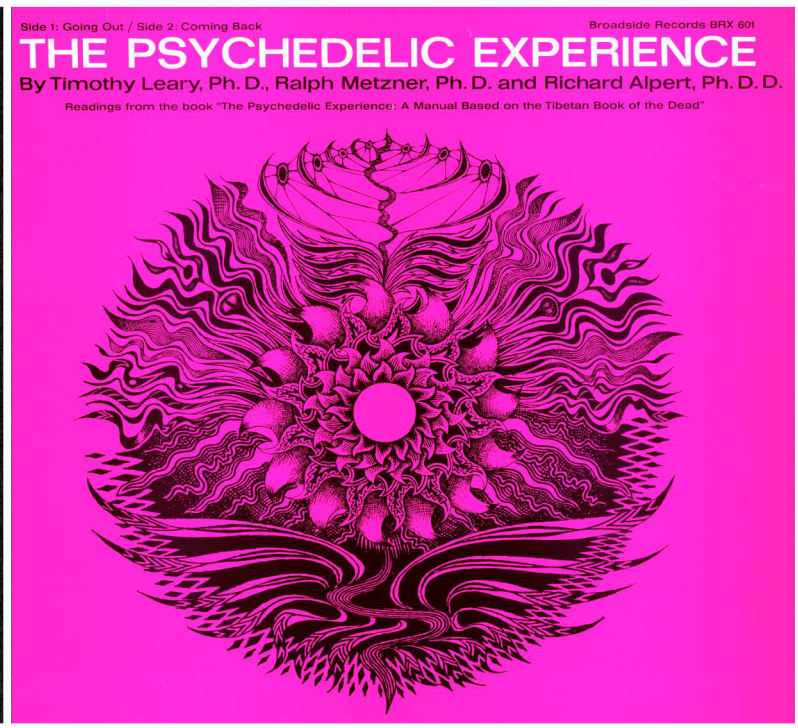

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4178
THE griots
MINISTERS OF THE SPOKEN WORD
Recorded in West Africa by Samuel Charters

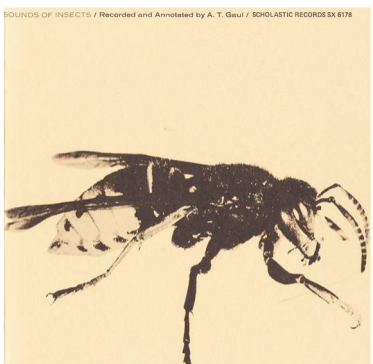

LEADBELLY'S
EARLY RECORDINGS
LEGACY VOLUME 3
PIGMEAT • BLACK SNAKE MOAN •
ROBERTA PARTS 1 and 2 •
FORT WORTH AND DALLAS BLUES •
SEE SEE RIDER • DADDY I'M COMING BACK TO YOU •
Edited by FREDERIC RAMSEY JR. FOLKWAYS RECORDS N.Y. FA 2024


THE SOUNDS OF THE OFFICE BY MICHAEL SIEGEL

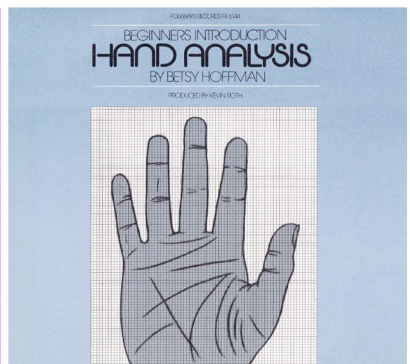

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4102
SONGS OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA AND TORRES STRAIT
RECORDED BY GEOFFREY N. AND ALIX D'GRADY
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY GEOFFREY N. D'GRADY
MUSICOLOGICAL NOTES BY ALICE M. MOYLE
EDITED BY GEORGE LIST
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Archives of Folk & Primitive Music
Ethnomusicological Series
George List, editor

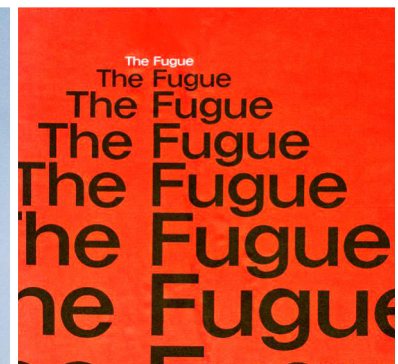

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 33442 STEREO
THE DARTMOUTH DIGITAL SYNTHESIZER
Electronic Music by Jon Appleton, Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Russell Pinkston & William Brunson


Side 1: Going Out / Side 2: Coming Back
Broadside Records BRX 601
THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE
By Timothy Leary, Ph. D., Ralph Metzner, Ph. D. and Richard Alpert, Ph. D. D.
Readings from the book "The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead"


SOUNDS OF INSECTS / Recorded and Annotated by A. T. Gaul / SCHOLASTIC RECORDS SX 6178


FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 3832
BLUEGRASS FROM THE BLUE RIDGE
COUNTRY BAND MUSIC OF VIRGINIA


BEGINNERS INTRODUCTION
HAND ANALYSIS
BY BETSY HOFFMAN


The Fugue
The Fugue
The Fugue
The Fugue
The Fugue
The Fugue



In a flutter: Dragonflies' Nigel Godrich (left) and Dhani Harrison, like "two kids in a sandpit".

> "We're a pantomime horse, and I'm definitely the back end."
> **DHANI HARRISON, DRAGONFLIES**

NEW WINGS! NIGEL GODRICH AND DHANI HARRISON ARE DRAGONFLIES

"WE'RE GOING to go and find our fortune in the big Wild West," says Dhani Harrison, pinging a smile at his partner in crime, Nigel Godrich. "Just two crazy kids starting our music careers."

We know Harrison and Godrich individually, of course. The former as the son of Beatle George, solo artist, screen composer and member of Thenewno2 and Fistful Of Mercy; the latter as Radiohead's longstanding right-hand man, producer to the stars (including Beatle Paul) and part of Atoms For Peace.

But we've never heard them like this. The pair's new collaborative project, Dragonflies, is a suck-it-and-see exercise in old-school music-making. Recorded at Godrich's Brixton lair – "it's not really a studio, it's just a room full of stuff" – their eponymous debut album features gentle psychedelia, hazy space-rock and trip-hop, built from looped rhythms with treated atmospherics, sweeping strings and Harrison's high, wide-eyed vocals layered on top.

The friendship began in the early 2000s in Los Angeles. More recently, both returned to live in London. Harrison was recording at Friar Park, the studio his father built in the extensive and eccentric family home in Henley-On-Thames, and invited Godrich over to hear the genesis of his 2023 solo record, *Innerstanding*.

"It started a conversation about music and records that we like," says Godrich. "After some other hangs it came up as, 'Do you want to try something?' I wanted to distil the pure thing out of Dhani that I know is really great and collaborate with that."

"Being in Nigel's studio, it's like being captive," says Harrison, who mostly ceded editorial control to Godrich. "I mean, Nigel has made some of my favourite ever records, so I picked my battles. It's like we're a pantomime horse, and I'm definitely the back end! It's kind of weird, but it's the most fun I've had for a long time. Very visceral."

"I see it as a very equal thing," says Godrich. "It was two kids in the sandpit. I've got this way of building up tracks with multi-track tape loops, which involves a lot of throwing clay in the air and making stuff and editing in real time." The album's hypnotic opener, Slower, came together in just four hours. "We both, I think, were on a bit of a high after that: wow, we could just keep going. So we did."

Dragonflies launch the album with two shows in LA this month, where they will be joined on-stage by R.E.M./Beck/Oasis drummer Joey Waronker, Maurice Talbot and The Strokes' Nick Valensi. "The exercise is to try to play without backing tracks and clicks, and just interpret the music," says Godrich. Watch this space for news of UK shows and festival slots.

As to the future? "We recorded a lot more, and we've talked already about getting in with the band, as well," says Godrich. "It's a nice vehicle for us to play with, so that will definitely happen," Harrison beams. "I mean, if Nigel will have me – then yeah, definitely!"

Graeme Thomson

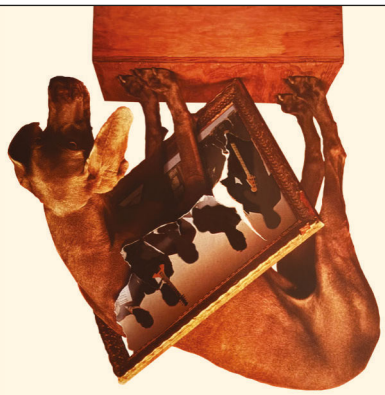
Dragonflies' self-titled debut is out now on Dark Horse Records/BMG.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Dungen, Neil & Liam Finn's *Lightsleeper*, Tame Impala.
- Working at Godrich's Brixton studio was a welcome break for Harrison from being "Mr In-Control. At Friar Park, the buck stops with me. I'm constantly worrying about every file, every plug-in, the mikes, the mixing. Going into Nigel's studio was so great. It was like, OK, everything works, and no one can get to me."
- While Godrich "hates analogies", Harrison is happy to acknowledge certain "spirit animals" whose music "lives in the same village as ours: David Sylvian's collaborations with Ryuichi Sakamoto, or Beth Gibbons singing at Roseland with the New York Philharmonic. That weird shit."

KEY TRACKS

- Slower
- Straight Line
- End Of World



THE POGUES

Play The Hits

plus special guests MARTIN STEPHENSON AND THE DAINTEES

Sat	28	Nov	**Portsmouth**	Guildhall
Mon	30	Nov	**Nottingham**	Rock City
Tue	01	Dec	**Leeds**	O2 Academy
Thu	03	Dec	**Birmingham**	O2 Academy
Fri	04	Dec	**Manchester**	O2 Apollo
Sa	SOLD OUT	Dec	**London**	O2 Academy Brixton
Mon	07	Dec	**Newcastle**	O2 City Hall
Tu	SOLD OUT	Dec	**Glasgow**	O2 Academy
Tue	15	Dec	**London**	O2 Forum Kentish Town

gigsandtours.com ticketmaster.co.uk pogues.com

An SJM Concerts Presentation

SUPERGRASS

LIVE '27



Mon 26 April
NEWCASTLE NX

SOLD OUT EXTRA DATE
Tue 27 & Wed 28 April
GLASGOW BARROWLAND

Fri 30 April
LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

SOLD OUT EXTRA DATE
Sat 01 & Sun 02 May
MANCHESTER ACADEMY

SOLD OUT
Tue 04 May
NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

Wed 05 May
BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY

SOLD OUT SOLD OUT EXTRA DATE
Fri 07, Sat 08 & Sun 09 May
LONDON O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN

LOW TICKETS
Tue 11 May
BRISTOL BEACON

Wed 12 May
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | SUPERGRASS.COM

SJM Concerts, Live Nation and DF Concerts by arrangement with Primary Talent International

EMBRACE

PLUS GUESTS

THE ROLLING PEOPLE (ALL DATES) + THE BRACKNALL (+DATES ONLY) + THE BUNNY SUIT (●DATES ONLY)



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS - PLAYING ALL THE HITS AND FAN FAVOURITES

NOVEMBER 2026

MONDAY 09★
ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL

TUE SOLD OUT 10★
GLASGOW BARROWLAND

THURSDAY 12●
NEWCASTLE NX

FRIDAY 13●
LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

SA SOLD OUT 14●
MANCHESTER ACADEMY

SUNDAY 15●
NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

TUESDAY 17●
BRIGHTON DOME

THURSDAY 19●
BRISTOL BEACON

FRI SOLD OUT 20●
LONDON ROUNDHOUSE

SATURDAY 21●
BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY

SUNDAY 22★
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

TUESDAY 24★
MARGATE DREAMLAND

THURSDAY 26●
TORQUAY ARENA

FRIDAY 27●
SOUTHAMPTON O2 GUILDHALL

SATURDAY 28●
CARDIFF TRAMSHED

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | EMBRACE30.COM

AVALANCHE - THE NEW ALBUM OUT NOW

SJM, DF, DHP, FORM & PROPAGANDA BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

SIMPLE MINDS

UK TOUR



LIVE 2027

CELEBRATING 5 DECADES OF MUSIC

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUEST GARY NUMAN

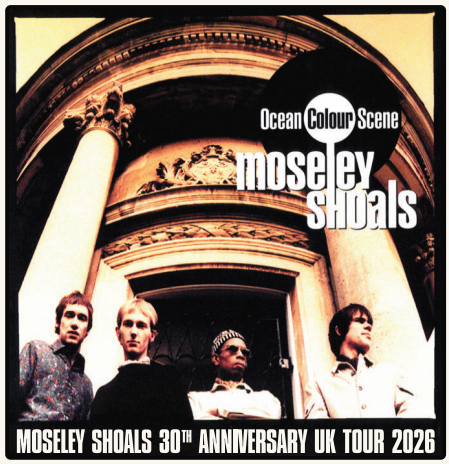
MAY 06	THE O2	LONDON
MAY 07	CO-OP LIVE	MANCHESTER
MAY 08	UTILITA ARENA	BIRMINGHAM
MAY 10	MOTORPOINT ARENA	NOTTINGHAM
MAY 11	FIRST DIRECT BANK ARENA	LEEDS
MAY 13	UTILITA ARENA	NEWCASTLE
MAY 14	OVO HYDRO	GLASGOW
NEW DATE ADDED DUE TO DEMAND		
MAY 15	OVO HYDRO	GLASGOW
MAY 17	3ARENA	DUBLIN

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | AXS.COM

PRE-ORDER THE NEW ALBUM SACROSANCT FROM SIMPLEMINDS.COM

AN SJM CONCERTS & DF CONCERTS PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH 13 ARTISTS

Ocean Colour Scene



MOSELEY SHOALS 30TH ANNIVERSARY UK TOUR 2026

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

The Enemy ★ SHOWS ONLY

TRAMPOLENE ● SHOWS ONLY

SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER
★ **GLASGOW OVO HYDRO** ★

MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER
● **ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL** ●

TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER
● **DUNFERMLINE** ●
ALHAMBRA THEATRE

THURS SOLD OUT MBER
● **CAMBRIDGE** ●
CORN EXCHANGE

FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER
★ **BRADFORD LIVE** ★

SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER
★ **MANCHESTER** ★
AO ARENA

MON SOLD OUT MBER
★ **NEWCASTLE** ★
O2 CITY HALL

TUESDAY 01 DECEMBER
★ **DERBY VAILLANT LIVE** ★

THURSDAY 03 DECEMBER
★ **SWANSEA** ★
BUILDING SOCIETY ARENA

FRIDAY 04 DECEMBER
★ **CARDIFF UTILITA ARENA** ★

SATURDAY 05 DECEMBER
★ **BOURNEMOUTH** ★
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

MONDAY 07 DECEMBER
★ **PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS** ★

TUESDAY 08 DECEMBER
★ **BRIGHTON CENTRE** ★

WEDNESDAY 09 DECEMBER
★ **LONDON THE O2** ★

FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER
★ **BRISTOL** ★
PROSPECT BUILDING

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER
★ **BIRMINGHAM** ★
BP PULSE LIVE

CROSSTOWN CONCERTS

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
CROSSTOWNCONCERTS.GIGANTIC.COM

MIKE JOYCE & STEPHEN STREET
In Conversation
The Queen Is Dead at 40



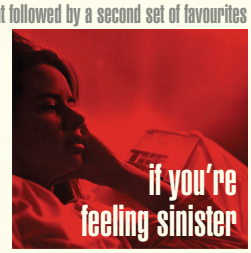
AN EVENING CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE SMITHS MASTERPIECE WITH STORIES, MEMORIES, BEHIND-THE-SCENES INSIGHTS, AUDIENCE Q&A, VIDEO ARCHIVE FOOTAGE AND MEMORABILIA

THU 1ST OCT	STOCKTON LOW TICKETS	ARC THEATRE
SUN 4TH OCT	MANCHESTER	NEW CENTURY HALL
THU 8TH OCT	FROME	CHEESE & GRAIN
SUN 18TH OCT	KIDDERMINSTER	TOWN HALL
THU 22ND OCT	LEICESTER	Y THEATRE
SUN 8TH NOV	LIVERPOOL	TUNG AUDITORIUM
THU 12TH NOV	SHEFFIELD	FOUNDRY
THU 26TH NOV	EDINBURGH	QUEENS HALL
SAT 5TH DEC	LONDON LOW TICKETS	KINGS PLACE

A CROSSTOWN CONCERTS PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH F-IO

belle and sebastian
30th anniversary tour
performing one album in full each night followed by a second set of favourites





11/12/26	Nottingham	Rock City	
12/12/26	Norwich	The LCR	low tickets
13/12/26	Cardiff	The Great Hall	
15/12/26	Bristol	Beacon	low tickets
16/12/26	Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	low tickets
18/12/26	Liverpool	Mountford Hall	
19/12/26	Sheffield	City Hall	
21/12/26	Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	low tickets

a crosstown concerts, dhp family and dl concerts presentation by arrangement with wme

uk 2026

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOVIE LMS
DEVOTCHKA
A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS. SONS OF TOWN HALL



OCTOBER 2026

TUE	06	ORAN MOR	GLASGOW LOW TICKETS
WED	07	GORILLA	MANCHESTER
FRI	09	HEAVEN	LONDON
SAT	10	CHALK	BRIGHTON
SUN	11	LANTERN	BRISTOL

A CROSSTOWN CONCERTS & FRIENDS PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH DMF

STORNOWAY
BEYONDER
TOUR 26/27
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
ALICE BOYD

24/10/26 - PORTSMOUTH - THE WEDGEWOOD ROOMS
25/10/26 - BRIGHTON - CHALK
27/10/26 - SHEFFIELD - CROOKES SOCIAL CLUB
28/10/26 - NOTTINGHAM - RESCUE ROOMS
29/10/26 - LEEDS - LEEDS IRISH CENTRE
31/10/26 - BRISTOL - BEACON
01/11/26 - EXETER - PHOENIX
13/02/27 - BIRMINGHAM - THE CROSSING
14/02/27 - CARDIFF - Y PLAS
15/02/27 - CAMBRIDGE - JUNCTION
17/02/27 - EDINBURGH - THE QUEEN'S HALL
18/02/27 - SUNDERLAND - THE FIRE STATION
19/02/27 - MANCHESTER - NEW CENTURY HALL
20/02/27 - LONDON - O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE

WELCOME BACK MY FRIENDS
ELP

RARE FOOTAGE RETURNS KEITH & GREG TO THE STAGE

PERFORMING ALONGSIDE CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY LIVE!

AN EVENING WITH
EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER



FEBRUARY 2027

SUN 07 - GATESHEAD - THE GLASSHOUSE
MON 08 - LIVERPOOL - PHILHARMONIC
TUE 09 - LONDON - PALLADIUM LOW TICKETS

A CROSSTOWN CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ITB

PRESENTED BY ACADEMY EVENTS, CROSSTOWN CONCERTS, AEG, DF CONCERTS, SALT EVENTS, BY ARRANGEMENT WITH MOTION TALENT

THE WONDER STUFF
inspiral carpets

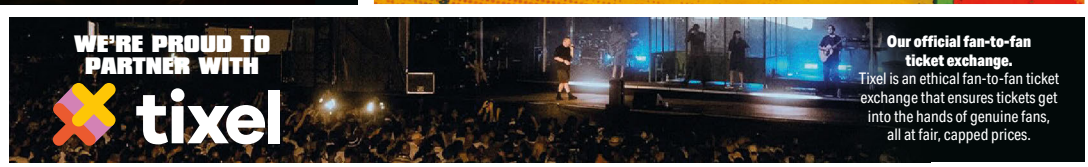
2026

1st Oct	Newcastle, O2 City Hall
2nd Oct	Manchester, O2 Victoria Warehouse
3rd Oct	Sheffield, The Octagon Centre low tickets
8th Oct	Brighton, Brighton Dome low tickets
9th Oct	Bournemouth, O2 Academy
10th Oct	Margate, Dreamland (Hall by the Sea)
14th Oct	Glasgow, Barrowland low tickets
15th Oct	Cardiff, Great Hall
16th Oct	Leeds, O2 Academy
17th Oct	Leicester, O2 Academy
22nd Oct	Scarborough, Scarborough Spa
23rd Oct	Bristol, O2 Academy
24th Oct	Norwich, University of East Anglia
29th Oct	Lincoln, Engine Shed
30th Oct	Wolverhampton, Civic Hall low tickets
31st Oct	Liverpool, Olympia
8th Dec	London, O2 Academy Brixton

revolve music

STAY IN THE KNOW
SIGN UP TO HEAR THE LATEST NEWS FROM CROSSTOWN CONCERTS

WE'RE PROUD TO PARTNER WITH
tixel



Our official fan-to-fan ticket exchange.
Tixel is an ethical fan-to-fan ticket exchange that ensures tickets get into the hands of genuine fans, all at fair, capped prices.

LAEL NEALE LOCATES THE MAGICK AND WEIRDNESS OF MODERN LOS ANGELES

FOUNDED IN 1934 by Hollywood occultist Manly P Hall, The Philosophical Research Society houses one of the world's largest collections of esoteric literature. When singer-songwriter Lael Neale moved to Los Angeles from San Francisco, she found herself drawn to its repository of magick and mysticism.

"I walked into this library and there were books from the 1600s about ancient Egypt. It was incredible," she recalls. "I learned that all these celebrities and writers and philosophers were related to this place. Charles Bukowski was into it. Ronald Reagan, even. It made me understand that Los Angeles has this deep history of esoteric spiritual interest. California has always seemed like the new earth in some way. That's why I love it so much. It really does feel like it's a different world."

It's not surprising that Neale feels so tuned into LA's psychic energy (she used to live in a 1920s apartment block where Elizabeth Short, AKA the Black Dahlia, resided before she was murdered in 1947), given the séance-like quality of her music.

Neale's fifth album, *As Killers Do,* is typical of the between-worlds space she and collaborator Guy Blakeslee have carved out. Recorded on an 8-track tape recorder in the kitchen of a rented bungalow in LA's Echo Park, it finds her high, quivering vocals communing through a haze of spectral arpeggios, drones and drum machine ticks, provided by her vintage Omnichord electronic autoharp.

Though Los Angeles looms over her work, Neale was raised in rural Virginia by bluegrass- and Grateful Dead-loving parents, and is currently staying on the family farm. "I feel connected to a lineage in Virginia," she says. "We call it the high lonesome sound. The old bluegrass and spiritual gospel singers, I resonate so strongly with that. Then Los Angeles in the modern world is a huge theme in my songs. I'm trying to find that pure expression in what often feels like Babylon. It's a stark contrast, but I think I need to live between those places."

> "California has always seemed like the new earth. It's a different world."
> LAEL NEALE

Released in 2015, Neale's first album, *I'll Be Your Man,* was far more rooted in the Appalachian folk and country of her home state. It wasn't until a friend handed her an Omnichord that her musical axis shifted completely. "It felt like I was launched into another dimension," she recalls. "It's like a portal. There's something about the Omnichord that is extraterrestrial. It had such an effect on me and on the trajectory of the music I was making."

While the minimalist sonic identity she and Blakeslee have since honed together is so distinct, the pair recently welcomed another voyager into their creative bubble, recording an as-yet-unreleased album with Spacemen 3's Pete Kember. "I was really nervous. It had been a really long time since I'd recorded in front of other people," Neale admits. "But we're so aligned that I trusted him wholeheartedly. I can safely say he is the only other person I would ever consider working with."

Chris Catchpole

Lael Neale's As Killers Do is released November 20 on Consensual Sound.



All killer: Lael Neale goes LA confidential.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Cindy Lee, Suicide, Spacemen 3.
- Neale was lent her fateful first Omnichord by producer, Beatles-in-the-studio expert, and occasional MOJO contributor Brian Kehaw. "I was nonplussed at first," she recalls. "It looked like a shitty children's toy!"
- Released on her own Consensual Sound label, vinyl editions of *As Killers Do* will be limited to 500 copies, each with individual hand-painted artwork by Neale. "It's the clarity of making everything myself," she explains. "Having a personal imprint on everything is really important to me."

KEY TRACKS

- Slip Away
- I Am The River
- Tell Me How To Be Here

MOJO PLAYLIST



Cristian Bravo, Tom Oldham

Open up! For acerbic boogie, breakbeat dub and punk scuzz.

1 ROBERT PLANT TWO COATS
Widely available after its Record Store Day vinyl release, Plant and co-voice Suzi Dian sing of organised religion's promise, with mired, death-folk ambivalence.
Find it: *YouTube*

2 PAUL WELLER THE ETON RIFLES
A fierce version of The Jam's call to class war from new live set *In The Shadow Of The Sun*. Weller's also been recording with Mad Professor recently – is a new dub chapter soon to open?
Find it: *Spotify*

3 JEFF PARKER MILES' MODE
Covering John Coltrane for his centenary, the Tortoise guitarist and friends lock into spiralling, glancing jazz suspensions.
Find it: *Bandcamp*



4 U2 SILENCIO
Rocking out with a sprinkling of The Sonics' Strychnine, U2 herald new album *Carnaval De Luz*. Within, the Devil rocks and rolls: is that MacPhisto making a cameo in the video?
Find it: *YouTube*

5 TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS PARADE OF LOONS
From November's box *Origins 1971-1978*, an acerbic 1978 boogie which evokes Dylan and Stealers Wheel.
Find it: *YouTube*

6 COLIN MOULDING WANT IT BAD
XTC's ex-bassist politely suggests everyone pulls together, over a hymnal, English Beach Boys balm.
Find it: *burningshed.com*



7 BAD BRAINS PAY TO CUM
This primordial '79 demo is all treble, gluey velocity and New Rose scuzz. From impending archive set *Are You Ready*.
Find it: *Spotify*

8 THE WAR ON DRUGS WHO'S THAT
The group's first song since 2022 gauzes the heartland as mainman Granduciel balances despair with basking in the wonder of it all.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

9 RENEGADE SOUNDWAVE THE PHANTOM (CARL COX REWIRE)
From the *RSW Rewired* remix project, the veteran DJ dubs up the Clash-sampling mutant breakbeat track from 1989.
Find it: *Spotify*



10 WARRINGTON-RUNCORN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN ASTMOOR
Analogue synth hauntology for an unrealised brutalist 1970s, with some Popol Vuh thrown in. From new album *Industrial Growth*.
Find it: *Bandcamp*









FREE ACCESS TO MOJO DIGITAL WITH EVERY PRINT+ SUBSCRIPTION*

















SUBSCRIBE TO MOJO

*GET 12 ISSUES OF MOJO AND SAVE ON SHOP PRICES

Offer closes 9th November

A MOJO SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDES:

- The print copy of MOJO delivered to your door each month
- Bespoke CDs
- Instant access to our digital editions
- Free UK delivery

























SUBSCRIBE TODAY

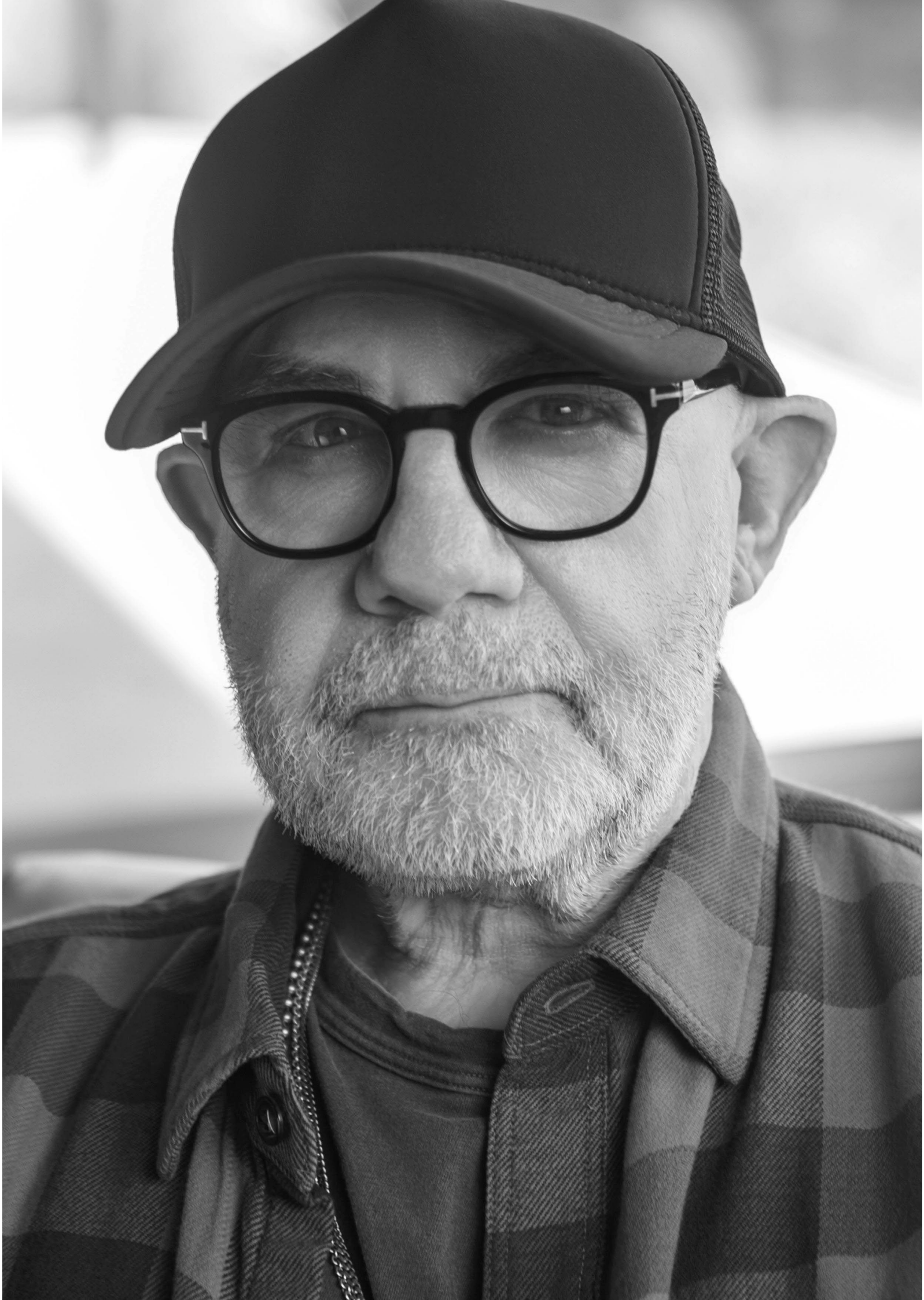
WHEREVER YOU ARE IN THE WORLD

Or call 01858 438884‡

greatmagazines.co.uk/mojo

SCAN HERE

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: *Saving applies to lowest priced subscription option. The minimum term is 12 months. Offer closes 9th November, 2026. Subscriptions will start with the next available issue, please note that the front cover displayed may not be the first issue that you receive. Offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Order line open 0800hrs – 2100hrs (Mon-Fri). 1000hrs – 1600hrs (Sat). Calls may be monitored or recorded for training purposes. Call costs from mobiles vary according to the calling plan chosen. Typically, they are included in free call packages. However, if you call an 01/02 number outside of any inclusive minutes, they can cost between 3p and 65p per minute. Calls from landlines to 01 numbers are typically charged up to 16p per minute. Many providers charge a 23p call set-up fee (or 'connection charge'), but this can vary. Please refer to ofcom.org.uk for updated pricing. Costs for calls from overseas vary depending on the location. For general terms and conditions please visit: www.greatmagazines.co.uk/offer-terms-and-conditions



In the **classic songs** he's penned with **Elton John**, his **words** conjure **romance, humour and sadness.** Now, on his **new solo album**, he's writing the music, too. **"I wanted it to be 100 per cent me,"** says **Bernie Taupin**.

Interview by **SYLVIE SIMMONS** • Portrait by **JILL AUGUSTO**

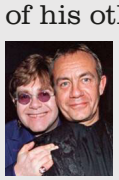
IT'S A PERFECT BLUE-SKY MORNING IN SANTA Ynez Valley, a peaceful rural spot in Santa Barbara County. There are farms and horses, grapevines and rolling hills that look like a watercolour painting. Bernie Taupin moved into the valley in the '90s, having had enough of Los Angeles. His first home was a 30-acre ranch where he lived out his childhood dream of being a cowboy. One too many rodeos later, he moved to a smaller ranch house that he shares with his wife and their two daughters. Dressed in black jeans and a well-worn Dr. Feelgood shirt, he welcomes MOJO inside.

It's a long way, you can't help thinking, from Owmby-by-Spital in Lincolnshire, where Taupin, born in 1950, grew up. "A minimalistic civilisation," is how he describes it to MOJO today, "where there was no way out except on the seat of a tractor." He might still be there now, he reckons, "drinking at the same pub every night", had fate not lent a hand. It came in 1967, in the form of an ad that Ray Williams, a 19-year-old producer at Liberty Records, placed in the New Musical Express, looking for songwriting talent. Taupin, then 17, answered it, as did Reginald Dwight, aged 20, from Pinner, north-west London. Williams decided that each of them had what the other needed. So Bernie gave Reg some words he'd penned and Reg took them away and wrote music for them. It remained that way when Reg became Elton John and their careers went stratospheric, the partnership 50/50, the songs always starting with Bernie's lyrics.

Jill Augusto, KMazur/WireImage

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

Elton John: in praise of his other 'alf.



"We're so in sync after all this time. There's a natural telepathy between us. The biggest surprise and delight for me is when I get the lyrics and I have no idea what I'm gonna get. I don't think I'd have enjoyed myself so much without having the relationship with Bernie. His lyrics are quite astonishing."

Full of humility and relatability ("I know it's not much, but it's the best that I can do," confessed Your Song), Taupin's lyrics for John drew from both of their experiences and would shape public perceptions of the singer. Outside of that partnership, Taupin produced David Ackles' 1972 album *American Gothic*, and co-wrote the songs on Alice Cooper's 1978 album *From The Inside*. He's in the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and has a Lifetime Achievement Grammy. Among his other gongs are an Oscar, an Ivor Novello Award and a CBE. His words have been sung by artists including Willie Nelson and Courtney Love. He also wrote the lyrics to a song routinely described as one of the worst ever: Starship's 1985 US Number 1, We Built This City.

He still has a British accent, despite having lived in America for more than 50 years (36 of them as a citizen), and his songs hold a torch for a romantic idea of the US, something still tangible in the elegant folk-Americana of his new solo album, *The Sea Has No Mercy*, his first since *Tribe* almost 40 years ago and his first written entirely alone, words *and* music.

"Elton told me, 'This is the album you had to make,'" he chuckles. "Whatever *that* means."

What was the first record you owned?

It was *Gunfighter Ballads And Trail Songs* by Marty Robbins. I was fascinated by the American West from my early childhood. When we were kids we were all listening to American music whose terminology was completely foreign to us: sock-hops, drive-ins. I wasn't interested in ➢

sock-hops, I was obsessed with that cantina in the West Texas town of El Paso. That record opened up a new world for me.

What was your old world like?

A small village in Lincolnshire. I left school at 15 because that's as far as you could do if you failed your 11-plus. After that you go to the Youth Employment officer and they go, "We've got a job in a factory for you." I tried saying I liked to write, maybe I could work on a newspaper. They gave me a job printing the paper. I did manual labour and I worked on a chicken farm – an appalling, Dickensian situation. We had this outbreak of fowl pest and I ended up having to incinerate the chicken bodies. Standing in the howling wind throwing dead chickens into the incinerator, I just went, I can't.

How do you go from chicken-slaughtering in the East Midlands to writing songs in north London?

Flying by the seat of my pants. Desperation. I was out of work and thumbing through the NME and I saw the ad looking for songwriters. I had zero idea how to write a song; I thought back then the person who sang the song wrote it as well. But I enjoyed writing, so I sent six or seven pieces of really bad poetry to Liberty Records, Ray Williams. There was no formulation to it, no verse and chorus and middle eight, because I didn't know how to do that. I just wrote down all this stuff that was a complete cribbing of whatever was contemporary at the time – Ban The Bomb, the Irish Revolution – and put it into this narrative poetry that wasn't particularly good, but had some sort of strategic emphasis to it. Ultimately it was kismet. Luckily Ray Williams picked out something and went, "Well, this is kind of weird, but it's interesting."

Where did Elton come in?

Ray said, "This kid can't write a lick, lyrically. So let's try and shuffle this around and put these guys together."

What did your parents make of you moving to Pinner and living with Reg Dwight and his mum?

They were extremely happy. The first time I went down to London and met Elton I stayed with my father's brother in Putney. But when Elton and I realised that we had something going on with the songwriting, it just made sense to move in together. Thankfully his mother acquiesced to it. We put this back room together with the bunk beds and our record collections and our books and, as he has often said, I became the brother that he never had. I don't know if he became the brother I never had because I already had one. But my brother and I really had nothing in common. With Elton, we had everything in common.

What was life like in Pinner with Elton and his mum?

Well, 80 per cent of the day was writing. We'd go to London, make demos in the Dick James studios and go back on the tube at night to Northwood Hills. We'd go to shows. We loved buying records though we didn't have the money to buy much. Musicland in Berwick Street was where we spent our spare time. It was our oasis, because they got the American imports two months before they came out, and the imports were shrink-wrapped, where English albums had awful, flimsy covers. I remember getting Love's *Forever Changes*, Buffalo Springfield, *Electric Ladyland*, Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen. We went to see music too. I remember seeing Julie Driscoll and Brian Auger at Klooks Kleek and being absolutely overwhelmed by Julie Driscoll, not just her singing, the way she moved. The best concert I think I ever went to with Elton, because I'm a jazz nut, was Charles Lloyd, Keith Jarrett and Jack DeJohnette at the Albert Hall.

Can you define what Elton needed from you?

I think there were two things. Brotherly love – I think he had an intense love for me that was realised very quickly, that was not physical on my part but still intense. And at the same time, I think he saw very much the imagination in what I wrote. He wasn't stupid. If he'd felt that what I was writing was kind of inane and not interesting, I don't think it would have worked. He was far more knowledgeable than me on every level. I was incredibly naive and he'd been on the road with Long John Baldry.

Did you disagree much over lyrics?

Half the time we lived in our own worlds. In his mum's place in Frome Court I would be in the bedroom, writing, and he would be in the living room, banging away on the stand-up. I'd go to him and say, This is what I just wrote, and he'd come back to me and go, "Come here and listen to this." You have to understand it was magical for me to have my words put to music, even if it wasn't particularly good. The very first song we ever created was a thing called Scarecrow [released in 2020 on John's rarities album *Elton: Jewel Box*]. I still have the lyrics sheet, torn to bits, in a plastic folder. It's a perfect example of how all over the place I was, just this block of strange observations and verbiage of the time it was written in. I remember when we did the metal demo disc, taking it around and playing it to family and friends. And it was probably appalling. All that mattered was that we'd written a

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Bernie's in!: Taupin down the ages.

1 Six-string hero: a young Bernie Taupin, Lincolnshire, England.

2 Partners in rhyme and music: Elton John and Taupin in 1968, shortly after signing contracts with Dick James Music.

3 Freedom pass: the ad placed in NME by Liberty Records' Ray Williams which caught the eye of Taupin and John.

4 B here now: high roller Taupin with second wife Toni Lynn Russo, Los Angeles, 1979.

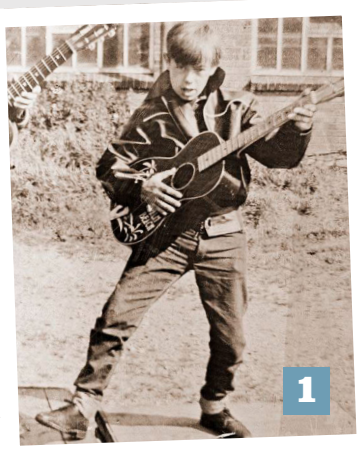
5 Gold standard: Taupin and John with their haul of discs, 1973.

6 Paws for thought: Farm Dogs (from left) Jim Cregan, Taupin, Dennis Tufano, Robin Le Mesurier, 1996. "I thought it would be fun to be in a band for a while," says Taupin.

7 Badge of honour: Taupin receives his CBE medal with Sir Elton John and Ray Williams, Los Angeles, 2022.

8 True bromance: Taupin and John stay close, West Hollywood, 2005.

9 Waxing lyrical: Taupin in 1975 – "Reflective with a little bit of imagination, not necessarily truth – I built my career on that!"









Bernie Taupin Archives (2), Sam Emerson, Chris Cuffaro, Terry O'Neill/Iconic Images, Getty (4), Alamy

song and we were going to continue in that vein.

When did things start taking off?

It really was the two of us against the world for a long time. I think people may have the concept that we became successful overnight, but from 1967 to 1970 we were just treading water. We would go through incredible depths of depression and then great senses of high. We'd maybe get a cover and we'd think, Phew! This was all before Reg became Elton.

The late '60s found you living in a flat in London with Elton and his fiancée, Linda.

(*Laughs*) A *huge* mistake. The whole story of how Elton met this woman is too intricate. All I remember is him telling me about it and me being incredulous. I knew he was gay, so why get into a relationship with somebody he had nothing in common with? She did not like me – and I can't say I blame her, because why would you want somebody encroaching on your pre-nuptials? She made me take down the Simon & Garfunkel *Bookends* album poster I had on the back of my door! We shared this place in Islington that was very dark and dank, sort of subterranean. I don't think we had a piano there, which seems insane. I don't think we did any work there. She stifled every creative urge we had. It was a dead spot.

Almost literally? Elton shut the windows and lay on the floor by the gas oven…

Oh that's the most overblown story! He left the window open and got a pillow. It was hysterical! I started laughing when I saw him lying there. And she walked in and rolled her eyes.

I asked Elton about it once and he said, "I never liked confrontation."

It took Long John Baldry and what I call the Night Of A Thousand Knives. I remember Baldry saying, "You love Bernie more than you love her. You're a gay man. What the hell are you doing? Don't put yourself through this, you're going to ruin your future." Because even I didn't have the guts to tell him that. I wish I had. But Baldry really, really saved his ass. That night we came back at two in the morning, falling over trash cans, crashing through the door and Elton going to meet his Waterloo with her. And I scurried off to my bedroom.

> "I tried saying **I liked to write,** maybe I could **work on a newspaper.** They gave me a job **printing the paper."**

You got a song from it, Someone Saved My Life Tonight?

But that was many years later. Reflective with a little bit of imagination, not necessarily truth – I built my career on that!

You built this city on rock'n'roll!

Oh please don't go there. (*Laughs*)

Well it's quite the contrast: Someone Saved My Life Tonight is one of your best-loved songs; We Built This City, not so much.

I wear it as a badge of honour that it was voted the Worst Song Of All Time by several periodicals. At the same time, as I always say, people don't understand that the original song was much different. But that song has paid the rent for many decades.

Let's go back 15 years to the rather more popular Your Song [1970]. You've said you wrote it while eating eggs on toast in Pinner; Elton said there was a yolk stain on the paper you handed him when you finished eating.

I did write that lyric in the morning at the breakfast table, and not sitting on the roof in Denmark Street as myth had it. It wasn't written about anybody in particular, but Elton at the time thought it was. Probably a girl I'd seen back in Lincolnshire occasionally. I wrote it when I was 17, 18. It came from a very idealistic place. A very virginal place, because I was. My experiences were absolutely nil. But I remember he took that lyric and, wearing his dressing gown, sat down and wrote the music.

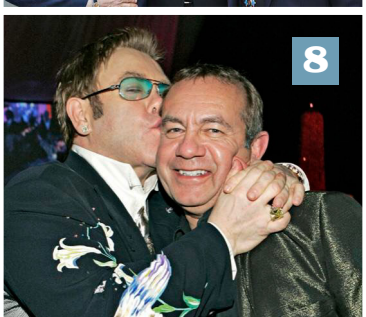
When you went to America for the first time in 1970, was it all you hoped it would be?

It was *everything* I had ever wanted it to be. We were kids from '50s England – we took a bath once a week. I'd never stayed in a hotel in my life. We went to the Continental Hyatt House and there was this room and what is this thing, a shower? And a TV in the ➢













Jill Augusto

"At some point you think, There's **no way** you can **keep this up.** You're never going to make them **as good as the ones you did before."**

◅ room. Do you know how mind-fucking that was?

Did America change the way you wrote?

The interesting thing is that America infused my writing absolutely before I went there. I wrote all of *Tumbleweed Connection* before I'd ever set foot in California. So when I got there, I went, Whoa, I'm right where I need to be. One of the first things I did when I was living in LA was to rent a car and drive on my own across country. I needed to go to Tombstone, Arizona and all those places in Texas and Mississippi. And what I got from that was the *Madman Across The Water* album, the most American album we've ever written.

Candle In The Wind was about an American movie icon.

I was never a fan of Marilyn Monroe. I'd originally written the story of Montgomery Clift. The idea was how people are memorialised in probably the best sense when they die young, but mostly it was a fiction in my own mind. When that song came out, people started sending me so much Marilyn memorabilia. Sharon Osbourne, then Arden, gave me Marilyn's shoes from some movie. Elton gave me the dress form that her dresses were made on, in a huge purple Perspex case with flashing light bulbs.

Later came the rewrite after Princess Diana died…

I don't want to sound cold or cruel, but it's not something I intended to do. Elton called and said they were asking him to sing at the memorial or funeral. I said, Do you want me to write a new song? I can't remember who said it but it became, What about rewriting the lyrics to Candle In The Wind? All I remember is I did it really quickly. To this day, if you ask me to recite one of the lyrics, I'd not be able to even if you held a gun to my head.

The hot streak of US Number 1 albums began with *Honky Château* [1972], made at Château d'Hérouville near Paris.

I remember the château wasn't particularly comfortable. It was spooky too. I didn't care for it, the rooms were very spartan. But we did a tremendous amount of work there. It was a kind of communal living situation, but more like a sort of factory, not unlike a more expanded version of our working relationship at Furlong Road [Islington] when it was just



Go West: Bernie Taupin at home in Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara, 2026. Taupin's new LP is "a 76-year-old man's manifesto of his life."

the two of us. When the band were in their room recording during the day, I would sit in my room, writing on a big sketch pad. I had a pouch of bits and pieces, particles of songs written on cocktail napkins, stationery, which I took to the château with me. I remember writing the beginnings of Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters when I was in New York and bringing it with me. There was a piano in the canteen, and as I completed the songs I took them down and stuck them on the piano, and Elton would come in the morning while the band was having breakfast, and he'd write two songs within the space of that time, and everybody would traipse over to the studio and go to work.

Did coke keep the factory running?

No, no. Cocaine didn't come into play until we made *Caribou* [1974]. We never made a record that had anything to do with drugs – well, there might have been some joints smoked. I didn't because it was hash and I hated that stuff.

What was the effect on you of that run of Number 1s?

It had never happened before. Elton was one of the first artists in that era to be playing stadiums. At some point you think, OK, there's no way you can keep this up, right? You're never going to make them as good, or people aren't going to think they're as good as the ones you did before, because people never do. But if you maintain a sense of competence and make decent records you may not maintain the same kind of apocalyptic adulation, but you could stay in the mainstream as we've done.

Elton said of 1975's *Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy*, "It's the first album that was about me and Bernie."

He was completely correct. It was literally a testament of our first years together before we came to the United States. But I think all the albums previous to that probably had things on that were experiences we once had.

In the '90s you formed a rootsy Americana band, Farm Dogs, with yourself on lead vocals…

People would like to refer to it as a 'mid-life crisis band'. No. I think this was the first time I thought it would be fun to be in a band for a while. I put together a band with some guys that I knew. We made two, I think, very good country rock records at my ranch in my home studio – a bit Eagles or Poco kind of thing – and we went on the road. Those guys were great and they taught me a lot. But it also taught me that I needed to do things on my own terms and not have other people interject their ideas on mine.

Before that, had you never had the urge to grab a guitar, jump on-stage and sing those songs you wrote for Elton?

Absolutely not, and I'll tell you why. Because ever since Elton and I began this journey, if you ever go back and look at interviews or footage, he always says "we". He never says "I". And look how present I was in all those album covers. At least, in the '70s. I stepped out of it later on because I was becoming too recognised, and I value my anonymity.

If you were ever in need of a lyricist one day, who would you go to?

You know who I love lyrically? Jagger. Tom Waits is really good. I love Dylan. But you have to go a long way to beat Leonard Cohen.

***The Sea Has No Mercy* is the first album you wrote entirely alone.**

I wanted it to be 100 per cent me – my feelings, my reflections, my stories and the way that I feel. I could only have written it at this point in my life. It's a 76-year-old man's manifesto of his life.

And Elton's heard it?

The whole thing, yes, he was very impressed with it. I was very nervous for him to hear it. I don't think these would fit with Elton and his kind of wheelhouse right now. He's not interested in doing retrospective, in-depth kind of folk-oriented music any more. He's definitely someone with his finger on the pulse of current contemporary pop music. He's moving forward in a different way and I'm happy to assist. But in order to be creatively viable in my own right, I need the opportunity to go in my own direction. Elton's whole way of recording now is completely different because of his eyesight. He can't sit down at a piano with a sheet of lyrics and write a song, he has to be kind of fed lyrics, which is difficult for him. So, now, almost for the first time in over 50 years, he wants to write melodies and have the lyricist work to those melodies, which we've done currently on a few tracks. He keeps fighting.

Has your relationship changed over time? Are you still always in touch?

Oh yes. The one good thing about technology is that we can talk face to face now. I haven't talked to him for a couple of weeks, but he always FaceTimes me when he's in bed at night. Thanks a lot! He likes that because it's his quiet time. We live entirely different lives, as you can see, but I adore the man. (*Smiles*) I think we're always in each other's heads, no matter where we are.

A LIFETIME AT BERNIE'S

Three great albums he (half-) wrote – by **Sylvie Simmons**.

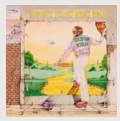
THE MEGA MONUMENT

Elton John

★★★★★

Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

(DJM, 1973)



"Epic" is how Taupin described this big-screen, 17-song chart-topper. It's also testament to the lyricist's versatility: from the heartbreak of I've Seen That Movie Too to the narrative strength of The Ballad Of Danny Bailey and the extreme empathy of the flawless Candle In The Wind. Taupin, who wrote all the lyrics in two and half weeks, denied he'd written a concept album but admitted that might be how it turned out.

THE MUSICAL MEMOIR

Elton John

★★★★★

Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy

(DJM, 1975)



The story of Elton and Bernie and all they went through in an album made to be listened to, like *Sgt. Pepper*, from beginning to end. Its one and only single was the album's centrepiece, the moving Someone Saved My Life Tonight. Nearly seven minutes long, Taupin and John declined to edit it for radio – likely why it didn't race up the charts. The album, however, was another transatlantic Number 1.

AND THIS IS ME!

Farm Dogs

★★★★

Last Stand In Open Country

(DISCOVERY, 1996)



The first and best album by the country-rock band Taupin put together with old friends including Jim Cregan and Robin Le Mesurier from Rod Stewart's band. Imagine an earthier Poco, or a cool, acoustic Eagles with a sense of humour. Among the highlights are The Ballad Of Dennis Hopper And Harry Dean and Burn This Bed, featuring Sheryl Crow on backing vocals. Willie Nelson would later cover the title track.

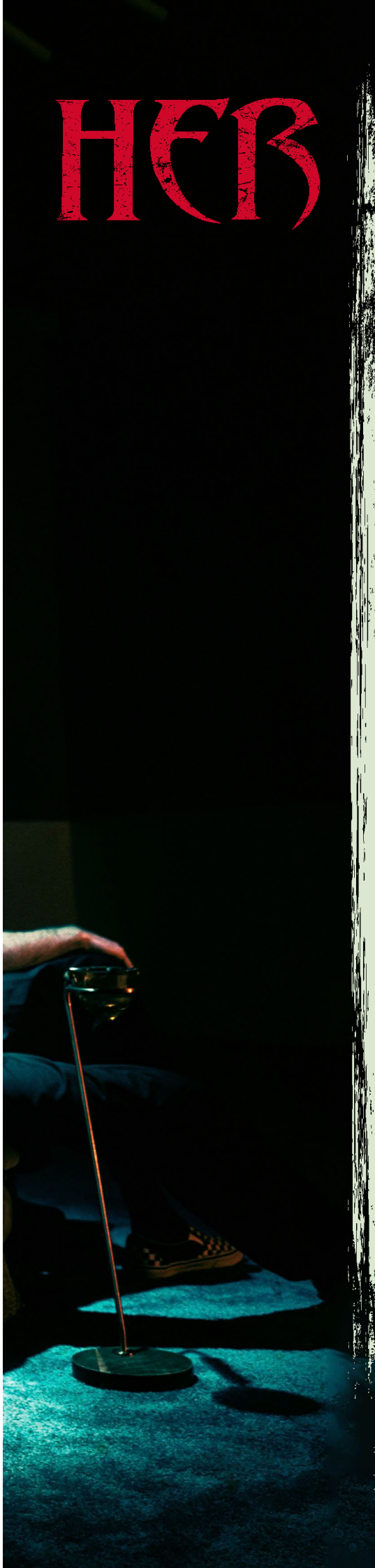
Love And Ot



Shadow players: Queens Of The Stone Age, Los Angeles, April 2026 (clockwise from front) Josh Homme, Dean Fertita, Troy Van Leeuwen, Michael Shuman, Jon Theodore.

HER DISEASES

After divorce, and cancer, and complications from both, Josh Homme is leading QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE out of the Catacombs and into the light. On their new album, his songs embrace vulnerability and imperfection, with a '70s shimmy, but don't think for a minute he's lost his serrated edge. "I'm not really interested in being *nice*," he tells TOM DOYLE.



Andreas Neumann

TWENTY METRES BELOW STREET LEVEL, DEEP IN THE CATACOMBS of Paris, Josh Homme was experiencing an epiphany. It was July 8, 2024, and Queens Of The Stone Age were in the middle of recording and filming their unplugged EP/video project, Alive In The Catacombs, a radical stripping back of their typically fuzzbox-heavy songs. When the rest of the band and crew paused for lunch, Homme elected to stay behind in the subterranean ossuaries that serve as the final resting place of more than six million souls, and attempted a nap on a cot bed amid walls constructed from layers of 18th and 19th century skulls and bones.

"I just felt at peace and I felt accepted," Homme offers today with a serene grin. "There was truly nothing to fear."

In reality, there was a lot for Homme to fear. Two years before, the QOTSA singer had undergone surgery for a cancer that he chooses not to be drawn on. To MOJO, he now gently but firmly points out that he's walked out of a couple of interviews when writers wouldn't stop pressing for explicit details. "I don't want to be known for being injured, y'know," he warns with a laugh.

Still, down in the Catacombs, Homme was suffering from unspecified complications, and in acute pain. His bandmates were sick with worry.

"He's a stubborn motherfucker," says bassist Michael Shuman. "I was just trying to make sure he'd stay alive. I tried to convince him to go home because he needed to get in the hospital immediately."

For his part, Homme realised he might be pushing himself too far. The next day, with the remaining dates of the group's European tour cancelled, he was forced to fly back to the US for emergency surgery.

"When I first came down the stairway that day," he remembers of the Catacombs recording, "I pulled off and turned down a dark, unlit corridor by myself and thought I was going to quit. It was just a *lot*."

"There was a very real feeling of like… this could be it," says drummer Jon Theodore.

"It was just do or die," says guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen. "Very literally."

In this eerie environment and under such ominous circumstances, certain QOTSA songs began to take on new resonances. Not least Villains Of Circumstance, the closing track of the band's Mark Ronson-produced 2017 album *Villains*. As Homme sang of there being "no magic bullet, no cure for pain" and having "no intentions of letting go", Shuman admits, "I just broke down crying, watching him struggle."

"If a moment has that much heaviness," the frontman lightly states, "I feel almost at my best. Because there's only one thing to do. That singular focus casts aside all your doubts about yourself."

THE LIFE AND NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE OF ALIVE IN THE CATACOMBS, and the subsequent, primarily acoustic 2025-26 Catacombs Tour of European and American theatres, saw Queens Of The Stone Age shapeshift into an almost entirely different group.

"We were classing up the joint everywhere we went," Theodore jokes of this on-stage incarnation where the sound palette included synths and strings and glockenspiel. "Wearing our suits, and drinking wine, and playing these beautiful halls."

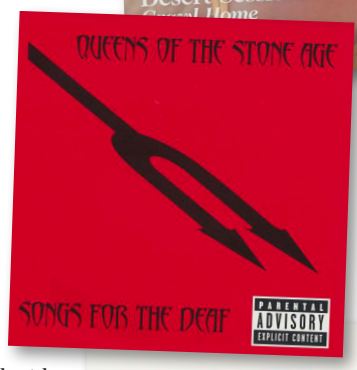






Sons of the desert: (above) Kyuss in Chicago, 1992 (from left) John Garcia, Brant Bjork, Scott Reeder, Josh Homme; (right, from top) Homme with Brody Dalle, February 12, 2004; Homme on-stage during Queens Of The Stone Age's Catacombs European tour finale at London Royal Albert Hall, October 29, 2025.







"In a lot of ways, after Catacombs, we're two bands now," says Homme. "Or we're a million bands."

Queens Of The Stone Age's ongoing transformation is further showcased on the band's ninth studio album, *Perfecth*, their most eclectic yet, moving between acoustic pop, '60s lounge balladry and '70s FM radio rock. It's the latest staging post in a three-decade musical journey that began with the unrelentingly heavy stoner rock of their self-titled 1998 debut and continued with their commercial breakthrough, 2000's *Rated R*, featuring Feel Good Hit Of The Summer, a lyrical litany of intoxicants culminating in a chorus cry of "c-c-c-c-cocaine".

From that point to now, QOTSA have managed to blur or defy genres, veering between the smooth (the dancefloor-ready, Ronson-produced *Villains*) and the rough (2023's angsty and brutal *In Times New Roman...*).

Homme talks to MOJO at his home in Los Angeles, surrounded by vinyl records and visibly in rude health: hair immaculately quiffed, single gold cross earring dangling from his left earlobe. For someone with a reputation built on gnarly, if melodic rock, he's softly spoken and thoughtful, his soul-searching flow punctuated by bursts of dark laughter.

If anything, Homme seems to have been renewed by his serious health crises. In one of the album's more typically rocky moments, the cryptically titled Where The Goth Girls At?, he passionately declares, "Never felt so alive as the day I almost died".

"That's something that's been reoccurring in my life at times," he says. "I almost drowned when I was 12, and I remember this incredible burst of life post-that. And so I've taken this as a near-life experience. It feels very much like being in the sun afterwards."

Homme's doctors advised him that, following his surgery, it would likely take him 18 months to two years to recover. Ignoring medical advice, he bounced out of bed after eight months and got on with the Catacombs Tour and recording *Perfecth* (its title a playfully amended word to highlight the imperfection of everything).

"I was told many times to stop," he chuckles. "But that's just someone's opinion, y'know. They don't know what it takes for me to survive. They just know what it takes for me to die, and I'm not interested in that second half."

"I think he bounced back a little too soon," Shuman admits. "Because there were some more complications. But it's really hard to tell him to sit down and shut the fuck up and just take a break."

"He's so defiant," concurs guitarist/keyboard-player Dean Fertita. "He probably should have listened to the doctors on some days, but that's part of how he operates, and I love him for it."

"Man, he's like a Terminator," says Theodore. "It's like you can't kill that guy. He's had 150 lives already, and I'm just so impressed by his resilience."

PRECEDING HIS HEALTH woes, in 2019 Josh Homme suffered a messy split from his wife, Brody Dalle, Australian frontwoman of US punk band The Distillers, and four years later won sole custody of the couple's three children. His raw emotions became the fuel for *In Times New Roman...*, effectively his divorce album.

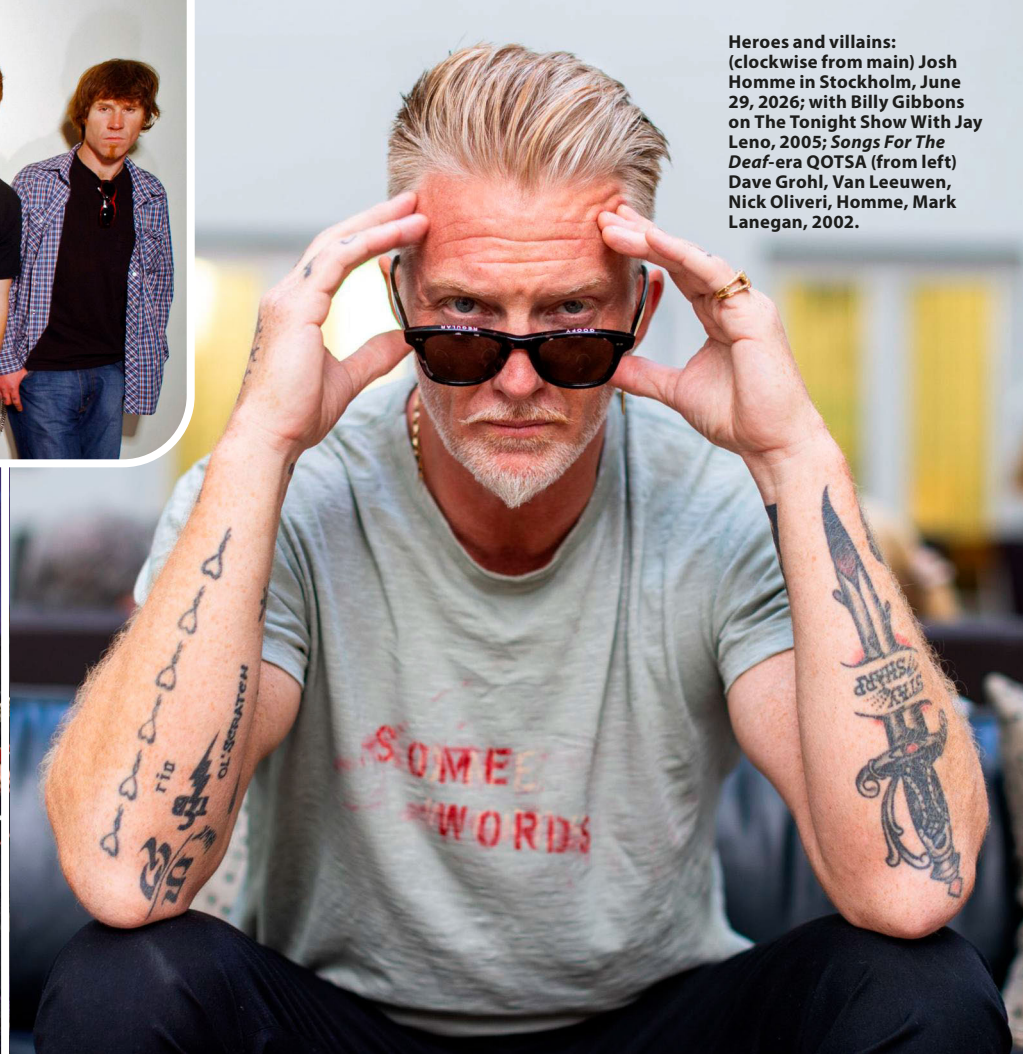
"He was in a hard spot," says Shuman. "It was a fucking struggle, man. It was not fun. Once we finished, I was like, Can we please make a record that's fun, finally?"

Not quite, as it turned out. While *Perfecth* is a less abrasive and more inviting proposition, some of its songs were written in the same period as *In Times New Roman...*, and so the darkness persists. Its opening track, It's Only Love, finds the song's narrator throwing

Getty (4), Shutterstock, Paul Drinkwater/NBCU Photo Bank/NBCUniversal via Getty Images







Heroes and villains: (clockwise from main) Josh Homme in Stockholm, June 29, 2026; with Billy Gibbons on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno, 2005; *Songs For The Deaf*-era QOTSA (from left) Dave Grohl, Van Leeuwen, Nick Oliveri, Homme, Mark Lanegan, 2002.

himself onto railway tracks and concludes with screeching train noise. In the slinky, radio-friendly Insignificant Other, the singer coolly observes of a former partner, "You're so clever/Never even saw the blade."

"Well," Homme sighs, "looking for direction, it became clear to me that I finally am old enough, or experienced enough, or scarred enough, or *enough* to write a record about the many facets of love, exclusively. And so one of those is the acceptance of a negative consequence: 'I don't care about anything else.' Y'know, 'I accept.'"

In the beautifully murky and orchestrated Mono, which begins in the titular sonic format before exploding into stereo, Homme's pain feels real. It turns out the track is built around a home recording he made in the depths of his emotional malaise.

"It was just him in this isolation, and you can hear it," says Shuman. "And so, when we talked about putting it on the record, it was like, 'There's no way you can re-record these vocals… all this fucked-up shit.' It paints the picture of the time and the hurt that he was in. You cannot recreate that."

"A song like Mono," Homme carefully elaborates, "that's about being destroyed by love, y'know, full heartache. When you feel [driven] insane by love… where it's crushing you into pieces.

"But I've also been someone who's 'conflict-interested' in my life, not conflict-averse. I adore that addiction to friction. I know that that's how the universe was made, and how babies are made, and how music is made. So that pinballing off of someone, and pinballing off of situations, and not running away but running toward, has always been an exciting part of this.

"Definitely, in the last so many years," he decides with a smile, "I've had this strong desire to only pursue green lights."

"IT BECAME CLEAR TO ME THAT I AM OLD ENOUGH, OR SCARRED ENOUGH, TO WRITE A RECORD ABOUT LOVE."
JOSH HOMME

AS A MUSICIAN AND BANDLEADER, JOSH HOMME has experienced a unique trajectory: growing up in the remoteness of California's Palm Desert, being taught guitar by the only available tutor (whose speciality was polka) and then further learning his chops as a teenager at unregulated generator-powered hardcore gigs in the middle of nowhere, from which his first real band Kyuss developed.

"These generator parties were completely lawless," he stresses, "and so that meant they were so beautiful, and it also meant they were terrifying and dangerous. There was a culture of violence. That's the world I understood."

While Homme later left the desert, moving to Seattle in 1995, the desert never quite left Homme. Shortly after forming Queens Of The Stone Age in '96 he instigated the first of The Desert Sessions, a series of jam-based recordings at Rancho De La Luna studio in the Mojave Desert. Down the years, these have produced a series of improvised albums featuring a diverse cast of participants including Mark Lanegan, Billy Gibbons and Polly Harvey.

It was an inspired idea – inviting musicians to an isolated location and encouraging complete spontaneity. But not everyone was immediately comfortable with the arrangement.

"On the drive out to the desert with Polly," he remembers, "she was saying, 'Y'know, I don't like to sing in front of people, and I like to be able to have time to work on things, and I don't know these people.' I kept saying to her on the ride, Yeah, I understand. That's fine.

"But I also knew what that environment does to you. And within four hours, she had clippings of papers and magazines and lyrics all around her, and she was singing on the floor. I was just watching her get it and flip into this absolute ➢



STONE IDOLS

Five shapers of *Perfecth*'s imperfecth perfecthion.

WEEN

"Early on in my first band, Kyuss, we toured with them," says Homme. "When Queens started, it was the first time I sort of understood how I liked music from all over the place, and that genre was just a way to help you navigate the record store. Ween did such a great job of being whoever they really believed they were. That just seemed like a good influence: I think I could do that too."

MANDY

Troy Van Leeuwen cites director Panos Cosmatos's 2018 trippy horror movie, starring Nicolas Cage as a lumberjack intent on slaying a cult leader, as an oblique influence upon *Perfecth*. "Just the way that that film looks and feels. Of course it's dark and kind of fucked up, but it's kind of psychedelic in a way too, where you're a little unsure of how things are going to work out."

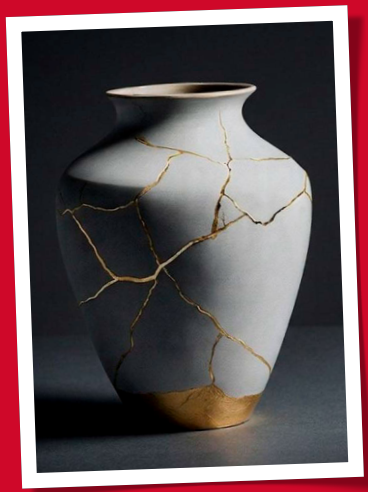
KINTSUGI

The Japanese art of repairing pottery using gold or silver to let the cracks show held a personal resonance for the singer. "When we were in Japan, I went to this kintsugi exhibition that really felt like the right fit for just where my own head was at. When it comes to music and any sort of arts, I immediately am a bit ridiculous with my romanticism of things. I need them to mean something."



BEASTIE BOYS

"I love the Beastie Boys records like *Check Your Head* and *Ill Communication* and *Paul's Boutique*," Homme says, "where it kind of feels like someone made you a mixtape. And as you know good and goddamn well, a mixtape is only made with love, as an expression of, This is how I feel about you, and I wanted to take you on this journey."



NEW ORLEANS

QOTSA recorded parts of *Perfecth* at Marigny Studios in The Big Easy. "It's a music town," says Homme. "It's also a dirty, magical, beautiful, dangerous, elegant place where you can leave the studio and walk the 15 blocks to your hotel and sort of be seasoned by your journey (*laughs*). You see the strangest folks there." Jon Theodore goes further, saying, "the city of New Orleans ended up being the sixth member of the band."



Cracked actor: Josh Homme goes with the flow as James Bond, 2001; (above, from top) the inspirational Ween, 1995; a Zulu Warrior at New Orleans Mardi Gras; the kintsugi metaphor for Homme's state of mind.

Andreas Neumann, Ross Halfin, Gie Knaeps/Getty, Getty (3), Shutterstock

≺ beast (*laughs*). She's an incredible force of talent."

Further transformed were Arctic Monkeys, who emerged from Rancho De La Luna and the Homme-produced sessions for their 2009 album *Humbug* as a quartet of long-haired desert rockers.

"The truth is, they were looking to change," he says. "They were looking to shed their skin, and they needed a safe place to do it with someone that wasn't going to tell on 'em. What they needed was protection and someone to know when to shut the fuck up. A lot of that is just tuning the outside world out."

Homme says he learned a lot from the Monkeys in return. "When we went to the desert, Alex never had a lyric book and he would change words [at the microphone]. I just found that fascinating. It was fun to show them things, because I'd see them do it in a way I never would have. So it was a bit like looking at a different side of a Rubik's cube."

IT WAS ONCE AGAIN TO THE DESERT THAT HOMME retreated when he assembled the crack band – comprising himself, QOTSA's Dean Fertita and Arctic Monkeys drummer Matt Helders – for the recording of Iggy Pop's late-career high, *Post Pop Depression*, released in 2016.

"There's so many things I learned from Iggy," Homme enthuses. "He's just the greatest poet and collaborator. And no matter who Iggy collaborates with, he gives all he's got to give. He was singing at the time from a 69-year-old's perspective, and it was as vital as anything I'd ever been around. I just felt like, Oh my God, there's a light way down the road." Iggy's attitude and third-act energy galvanised Homme and pointed a way to his own future: "If I can do this, maybe I could save myself one day."

On *Perfecth*, Homme revisits Sunday, a rolling-grooved standout of *Post Pop Depression* – in effect covering his own song.

"When I wrote that in Joshua Tree while recording with Iggy," he says, "I loved it so much I wanted to keep it for myself. But I told Iggy the next morning, Hey, I wrote this thing. I was going to keep it for myself, but I want you to know I love you, and the only way I can prove that is to not be Gollum about this (*laughs*). I said, If it turns out great, and if I ever need to, I'll just cover it. It's *ours*."

In Queens Of The Stone Age's disco-leaning version of Sunday, Homme sounds less like Iggy, and more like Pop's former co-conspirator, David Bowie. While the latter's style seems to have indelibly inked Homme's singing from the start, he insists Bowie's influence was incidental. Latterly, particularly on Alive In The Catacombs, he seems informed by the crooners and even opera.

"I mean, I don't scream," he smiles. "That isn't something that's a feature of my voice. I love Bowie, and I think it's more indirect, but y'know, His Chameleonship is duly noted."

What's more, Bowie's Let's Dance has become something of a signature tune for Homme. Having turned in an impressive performance, alongside Nile Rodgers, at the Dave Grohl-organised Wembley Stadium tribute for late Foo Fighter Taylor Hawkins in September 2022, he's reprised it at a couple of benefit shows in California. "It's so much fun to sing," he bashfully notes.

But QOTSA's own pivot into (albeit weighty) pop with Ronson and *Villains* proved more controversial among fans.

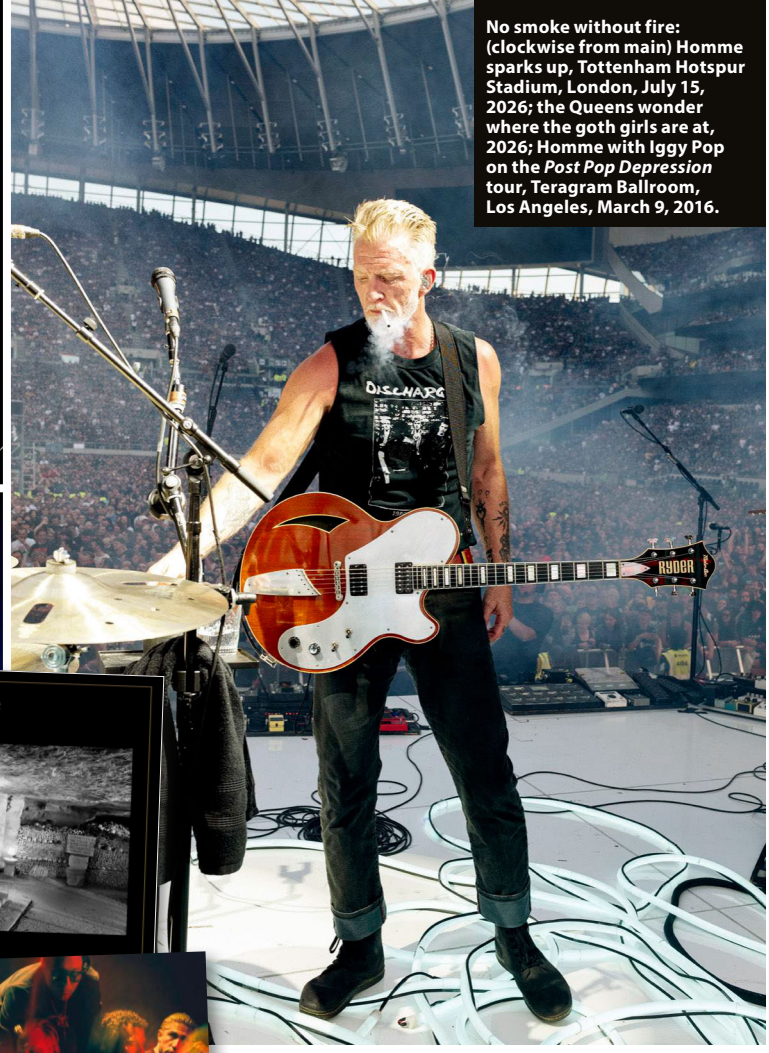
"Well, Mark Ronson was a dirty trick," Homme hoots. "Y'know, I love to frustrate and confuse. I don't know why, but I've always thought it was fun."

"I hate it for [Ronson] that people said he changed our sound or whatever," says Shuman. "It's like, Nah, he supported our vision."

Jon Theodore, meanwhile, seems ambivalent about *Villains*. "It was a really difficult record to make," the drummer admits, "because we ended up getting hyper-focused on the process. And I think, to some degree, that sort of supersedes the actual songwriting. Certainly in the overall Queens discography, it stands alone."

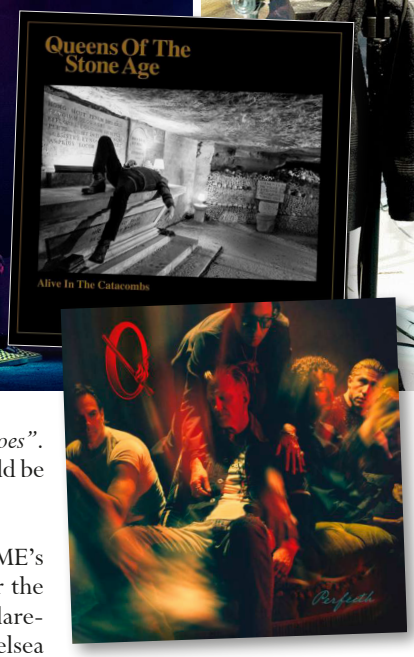
Meanwhile, some speculated that





No smoke without fire: (clockwise from main) Homme sparks up, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London, July 15, 2026; the Queens wonder where the goth girls are at, 2026; Homme with Iggy Pop on the *Post Pop Depression* tour, Teragram Ballroom, Los Angeles, March 9, 2016.





the album's title was a sly inverse of Bowie's *"Heroes"*. "Oh, yeah, it sort of is," Homme says. "Yeah, you could be heroes. We're villains."

THE MOST NOTORIOUS ASPECT OF HOMME's personality has been his unruly temper. Over the years, QOTSA gigs have seen various angry flare-ups, not least the singer kicking photographer Chelsea Lauren's camera into her face as she was taking pictures of the band at The Forum in Inglewood in December 2017. Two days later, Homme posted a video apology in which he appeared ashamed and remorseful, confessing he had been a "total dick".

A rarer – and more comedic – flash of the singer's fury came on August 6 of this year when the group were opening for Foo Fighters at Detroit's Ford Field. After the band were informed by their tour manager that they were banned from smoking anywhere on-site, Homme lit up on-stage, risking a $10,000 fine, and urging the crowd, "Don't let some fucking corporation tell you what to do."

"I thought it was fucking hilarious," Shuman beams. "But I was also like, Are you really gonna cost us $10,000?"

"We didn't get charged," Homme confirms. "It wasn't about smoking to me. I just see a world constantly telling you how you should be, how you should think. And it's largely owned by a few corporations, all monopolies. I find their desire for control of other people revolting."

Has Homme made attempts to stem his public eruptions of anger?

"Yeah, I have tried to, y'know," he says. "This also is a strange job. Because the making of music and the expressing yourself is my favourite part, and at times I've really struggled with the other sides of this. At times it's made me confused and frustrated and fucking pissed off.

"I'm not really interested in being *nice*," he adds. "I just want to be kind. I don't want to get rid of my anger completely. I don't think it's necessary (*laughs*)."

The other members of the current QOTSA line-up have now known Homme for a long time – Van Leeuwen joined in 2002, Shuman and Fertita in '07, and Theodore in 2013. Shuman in particular recognises positive changes in their frontman.

"He's changed dramatically," he attests. "I mean, he's still snarky and funny and is wild and unhinged. But he's a little softer. Certain situations [in the past] I remember him wanting to burn the place down, or give people a mouthful, and he's learned to be a little softer. I think that's with raising his three kids, and going through all the bullshit that he's gone through. He's realised what's important in life, and the way he wants to be."

Still, Homme admits that, for him, making music remains both an act of catharsis and a compulsion.

"It's just an attempt to get free for moments that won't last," he quietly muses. "I've already got the maximum I can get from this record, and now it's your problem (*laughs*). I feel satisfied when I'm trying to do what feels good and I can outrun what feels bad."

Ultimately, it seems, the greatest lesson Josh Homme has learned is how to let his guard down.

"I think I started this band fully armoured, and like this," he says, raising both fists in punchy demonstration. "Come and get me. Let's go. But along the way, I've realised that it's about taking off that armour, one piece at a time, until there's nothing to protect."

"MAN, JOSH IS LIKE A TERMINATOR. IT'S LIKE YOU CAN'T KILL THAT GUY. HE'S HAD 150 LIVES ALREADY."
JON THEODORE

THE RETURN OF THE KING

FORTY YEARS AGO, AFROBEAT ORIGINATOR FELA KUTI WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON IN NIGERIA, HAILED AS A HERO BY FREEDOM FANS WORLDWIDE. BUT, UNCOMPROMISING AS EVER, HE SCORNED THE DO-GOODING AMNESTY TOUR HE JOINED JUST AS HE BERATED THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT OPPRESSED HIS PEOPLE, AND THE MUSIC HE MADE IN HIS LAST DECADE SMOULDERED WITH SIMILAR DEFIANCE. "FELA WAS BIGGER THAN NATURE," DISCOVERS GRAEME THOMSON. PORTRAIT BY PATRICK ROUCHON.

BY THE MID-1980s, THE VARIOUS CURRENTS of rock's collective liberal conscience were in full spate. Less than a year after Live Aid, Amnesty International celebrated its 25th anniversary with the A Conspiracy Of Hope, a concert tour of US stadia designed to raise awareness for global human rights. The dates featured U2, Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel and Sting heading a rolling cast of artists in six cities.

On June 15, 1986, at Giants Stadium in New Jersey, a real-life political prisoner was added to the bill. Fela Kuti arrived freshly sprung from jail in Nigeria, having spent 18 months incarcerated on trumped-up charges of money laundering. "When Fela was arrested I contacted Amnesty, and they declared him a prisoner of conscience," says his former manager, Rikki Stein. "It was on that basis that, when he was released, they invited him."

As it turned out, Kuti was in no mood to extend the hand of gratitude. At the official press conference, sitting at a table heaving with superstars, he punctured the air of platitudinous goodwill with a few choice words. "In Africa, nobody gives a shit about Amnesty International," he said. "If you want to do something significant, do it in the places where the shit is happening. Not in New Jersey."

"At which point," Stein recalls, "everybody turned their backs on him."

Kuti's blunt dissent, cut from all media coverage of the event, was quickly glossed over at the time – the morning after the show Sting told an interviewer, "I know that these kind of events work." Yet it left a mark. "A year later the head of Amnesty wrote a letter of apology to Fela saying he understood what he meant and inviting him to do a world tour," says Stein. "Fela didn't even answer."

1986 WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR IN THE EXTRAordinary life of the extraordinary Fela Kuti: architect of Afrobeat, music scholar, would-be President, 27-times polygamist and perennial thorn in the flesh of corrupt Nigerian governments. "Fela was bigger than nature," says his manager during the early 1980s, Martin Meissonnier. "He could be as funny as he could be frightening. He was as brilliant as he could be… *crazy* is not the right word, but he could be really very difficult."

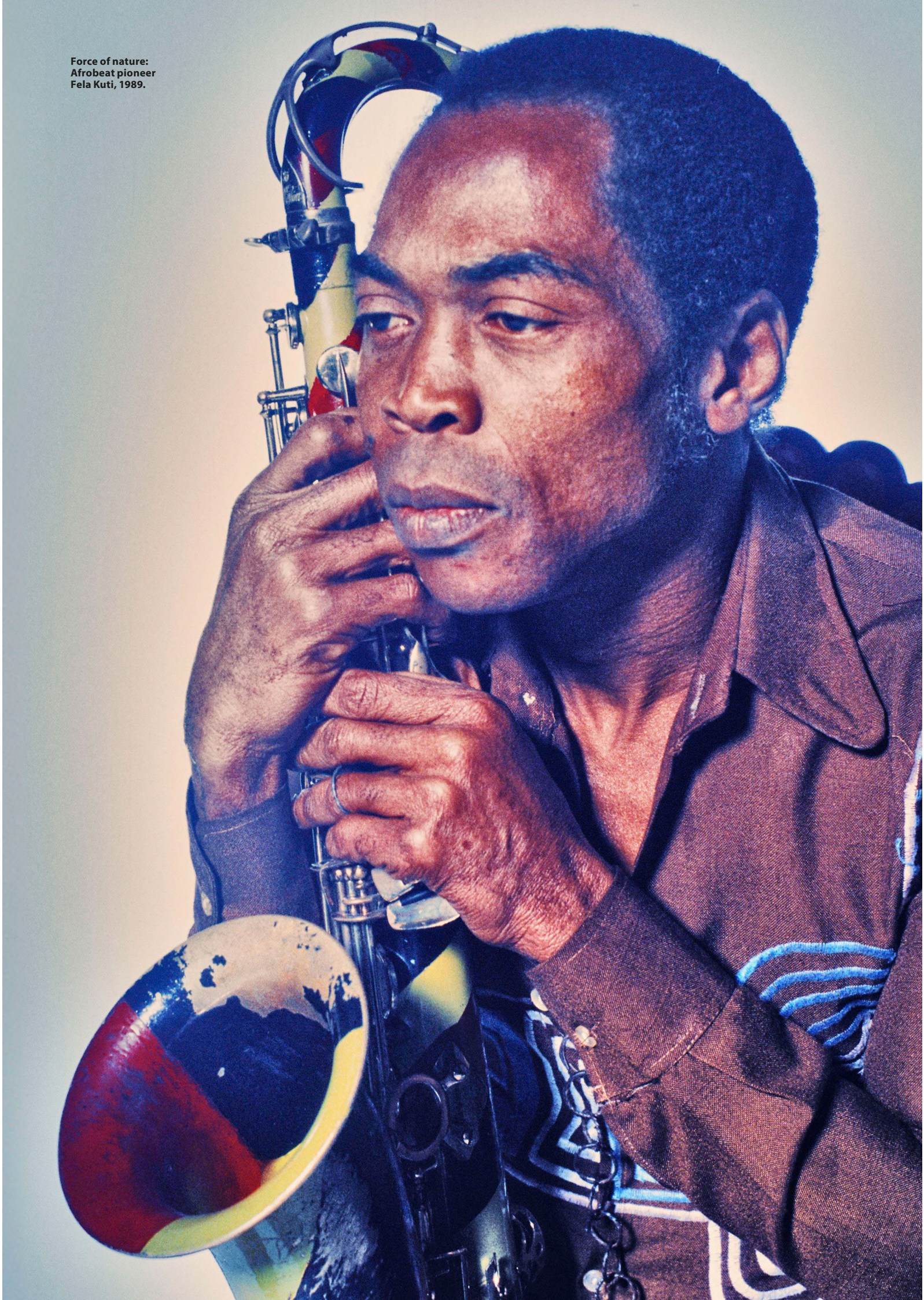
Born Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome-Kuti in Lagos in 1938, Kuti came from a family of disruptors. His mother, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, was a formidable women's rights advocate and aristocratic African socialist. His elder brother Olikoye became Deputy Secretary General of the World Health Organisation. His younger brother Beko was a prominent physician and human rights activist. "In their own ways, they were all fighters for social reform, and that was the atmosphere in which he grew up," says Stein. "It goes a long way to explaining his mindset and how he went about living his life."

By the time a Nigerian military court sentenced Kuti to two concurrent five-year prison sentences in September 1984, he had been arrested at least 200 times. His notoriety had caught up with his musical influence. With the revolutionary Africa 70 band, propelled by drummer Tony Allen, Kuti fused American funk and jazz with salsa, calypso and high life to create Afrobeat, a fiercely percussive form of pan-African, polyrhythmic funk that sent Ginger Baker and Paul McCartney rushing to record in Lagos in the early 1970s. Kuti's finest records – *Gentleman* (1973); *Expensive Shit* (1975) – were layered, melodic, wildly exciting and highly politicised. The title track of his most celebrated album, *Zombie*, released in his homeland in 1976, was an unsparing attack on the dead-eyed compliance of Nigeria's enforcers. It became an unofficial national anthem.

"The vast majority of the Nigerian population were in awe of Fela," says Stein. "They loved him, man. It was only the leaders who had [a problem] and they passed those orders on to soldiers. Zombie really pissed them off. They'd be walking down the street, and hear, 'Zombie, Zombie' – taunting them. So they weren't happy."

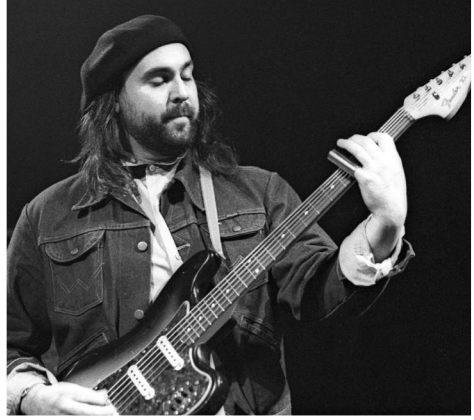
On February 18, 1977, 1,000 troops laid siege to Fela's Kalakuta Republic commune in Lagos and burned it to the ground. During the attack his mother was thrown through a window; she ➢

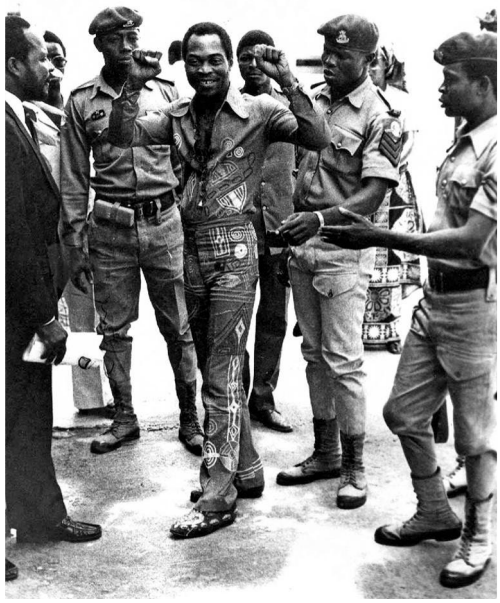
© Patrick Rouchon/Dalle/Eyevine



Force of nature: Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti, 1989.







King of the 'Beat: (clockwise from below) Kuti takes a cigarette break, 1986; producers Dennis Bovell and Bill Laswell; Kuti being released from prison, 1986.







Bob Gruen, Getty (2), William F. Campbell/Getty, Alamy

◀ died two months later from her injures. Her son was severely beaten.

It was the beginning of a period of profound upheaval. In 1978, Kuti married 27 women simultaneously. His motives, claims Stein, have often been misunderstood. "These women had suffered enormously," he says. "They'd been beaten, arrested, vilified by bourgeois society. It was on that basis that Fela married them all in one day. He said, 'You called them prostitutes. Now they're my wives.' Protection was the basis of it. At the same time, he'd say, 'A woman can be President if she wants, but when she's in my house, I should be free to kick her ass.' I'm not saying he beat his wives, which I never witnessed, but he was a Yoruba boy. There's a lot of machismo in that culture."

"My dad has the fewest number of wives among some of his friends," adds Fela's son, the musician Seun Kuti. "I know people who had 30, 50 wives. Living in Nigeria, being Yoruba, the number is not outrageous. What was wild is that he did it all at once."

The same year, an appearance at the Berlin Jazz Festival marked the end of Africa 70 after most of the group, including Tony Allen, quit in a dispute over money. "Tony was paid $50 for the show, and the other members $20," says Meissonnier. "When they found out that the fee was $100,000, the band got upset and left."

KUTI STARTED THE 1980s LEADING A NEW BAND, named Egypt 80 to reflect his view that ancient Egyptian civilisation should be reclaimed as the foundation of African culture. Musically, the group marked a shift away from Afrobeat into what Fela called a "classical African sound". The songs became much longer and more strictly orchestrated, the scale vast. On-stage, his wives, the 'queens', danced and chanted. There were several percussionists, up to six guitarists, two bass guitars, keyboards, multiple horns.

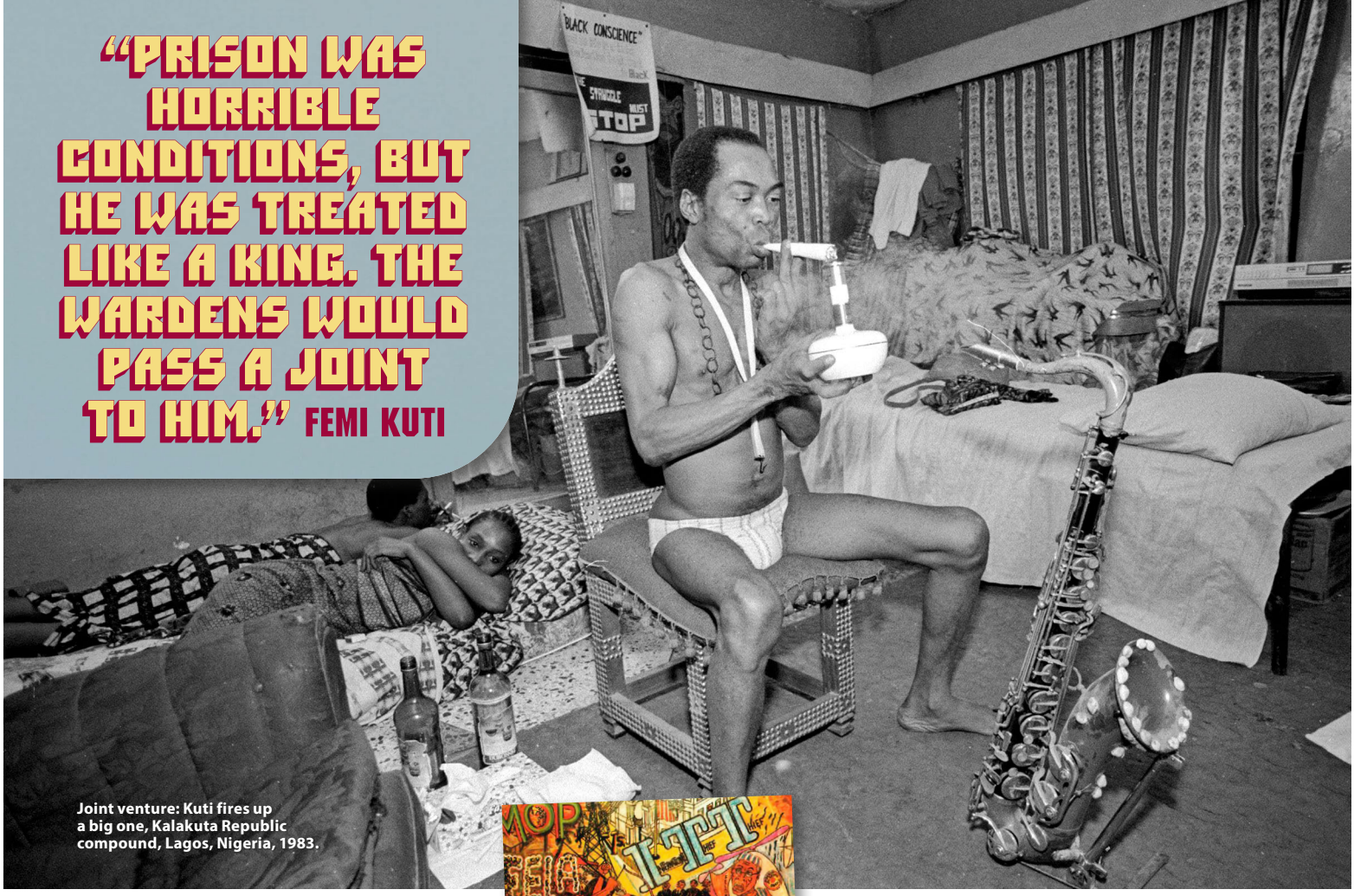
Egypt 80 blended a few remaining veterans from Africa 70 with young, raw, unschooled musicians, including Fela's 18-year-old eldest son. "The band was tight," says Femi Kuti. "Fela was trained. He knew where he was going. First, he wrote everything down. Then he called in the bass, rhythm guitar, drums, percussion. He'd get all this sorted out, then add some lyrics. Then he would call the horns, they would be the final part. We saw this time after time with Egypt 80. Everybody had to fall in line to play what he wanted."

During soundchecks, he would personally tune every instrument. "He was so clear about what he wanted to hear, down to the last detail," says Stein. "We have to remember he had four years of classical training [at London's Trinity College of Music from 1958-62]. I once asked him, Who is your favourite musician? He said, 'Schubert'. His music is the opposite of jamming. Heaven help any musician who strayed from the groove: 'Motherfucker: two days' allowance!'"

Largely thanks to Martin Meissonnier, Fela signed to Arista in 1980. A&R Tarquin Gotch saw the potential to turn him into "the African Bob Marley", perhaps overlooking the fact that Marley could write catchy three-minute pop songs whereas Kuti's lasted the entire side of an album. When Arista prepared radio edits of I.T.T. (International Thief Thief) for promotion, a furious Kuti demanded they be recalled. "He was not a singles act," says Gotch. "You'd say, Can we cut this? and the answer was a quite fierce response that we were not to fuck with his music at all. So you were kind of trapped."

Following the release of *Original Sufferhead* in 1982, the multi-album deal with Arista ended prematurely. However, Kuti was

"PRISON WAS HORRIBLE CONDITIONS, BUT HE WAS TREATED LIKE A KING. THE WARDENS WOULD PASS A JOINT TO HIM." FEMI KUTI



Joint venture: Kuti fires up a big one, Kalakuta Republic compound, Lagos, Nigeria, 1983.

making greater inroads into Europe, which he toured extensively for the first time in the early '80s. He was already a superstar among Paris's large African diaspora, and his reach was growing. "Fela was an easy sell," says Meissonnier. "He had his 27 wives, which was spectacular, visually. He had the political message, he was very articulate, the corruption in Africa he was denouncing was an interesting topic. Plus the music. So we packed all the gigs very easily."

Back home in Nigeria, fresh broadsides such as I.T.T. and Kuti's insistence that he would run for President via his Movement Of The People party ensured he was continually harassed by General Buhari's military dictatorship. On September 4, 1984, while readying to board a flight to New York to begin Egypt 80's first US tour, he was detained on charges of exporting foreign currency. "There was no evidence," says Stein. "They were just fed up with him calling them names."

In Fela's absence, Femi Kuti led Egypt 80 to America. The tour was, unsurprisingly, a disappointing affair. On returning to Lagos, Femi visited his father in Ikoyi prison. "It was horrible conditions, but he was treated like a king," he smiles. "The wardens only made life difficult for him when their bosses were around; they would pass a joint to him later. He could get anything in prison: extra food, cake. He was sick once and we took him to hospital. That was very funny; he turned the hospital into Kalakuta. He was having all his women in the room."

Eventually, Kuti was moved from Lagos to a prison in Maiduguri, in the far north-east of the country. Eighteen months into his sentence, with Buhari's junta having been overthrown the previous year, the original judge came to visit and confessed to having jailed him under pressure from the military. When the news became public, the judge was sacked and Fela freed on April 24, 1986. "I jumped on the plane," says Stein. "It was a wonderful day. Pure joy." Kuti held a press conference announcing that he would revive his Presidential bid. Then he and Egypt 80 played a celebratory concert at the National Stadium in Lagos and immediately went back to work.





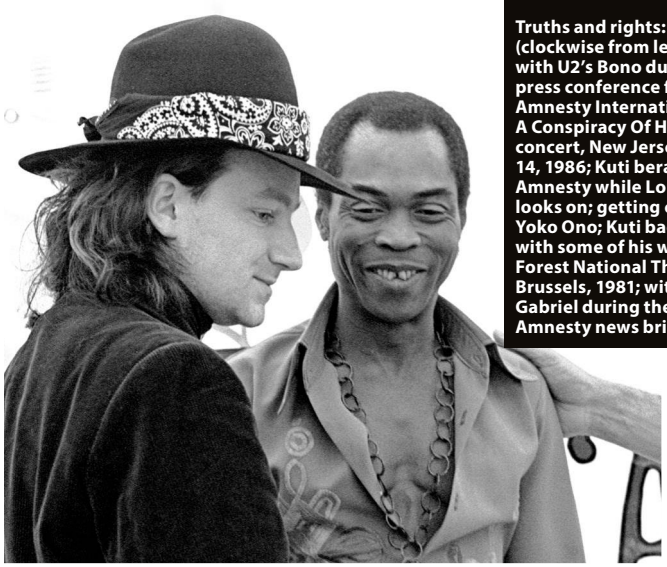


LESS RENOWNED OR PROLIFIC THAN the more acclaimed Africa 70 band, in some ways Egypt 80 were more ambitious. "The records were musically more studied," says Stein. "Fela went much deeper into things. It was much more sophisticated."

Having left Arista after the release of *Original Sufferhead*, in 1984 Kuti signed a new record deal with New York-based Celluloid Records, founded by Frenchman Jean Georgakarakos. The first fruits of the relationship quickly turned sour. The basic tracks for *Army Arrangement* had been cut in London with Dennis Bovell, but while Fela was incarcerated they were subjected to fresh overdubs in New York by Celluloid's in-house producer, Bill Laswell.

"Fela was starting to fade a little bit," claims Laswell. "When I received the tapes, I thought it was pretty lazy. Dennis Bovell did fine, but it was not too inspired. I replaced Fela's meandering electric piano solos with Bernie Worrell on organ. Sly Dunbar from Jamaica played drums and Aïyb Dieng from Senegal played percussion. So it was nothing to do with Nigeria! Fela didn't appreciate that at all. There was a lot of bad talk back and forth."

"Fela was very angry about *Army Arrangement*," says Femi Kuti. "He didn't like what they did because it was polluting his music." According to Stein, "Laswell just fucked it up. He used Linn drums and all kinds of nonsense. Somebody took a copy to Fela when he ➢







Truths and rights: (clockwise from left) Kuti with U2's Bono during a press conference for Amnesty International's A Conspiracy Of Hope concert, New Jersey, June 14, 1986; Kuti berates Amnesty while Lou Reed looks on; getting close to Yoko Ono; Kuti backstage with some of his wives, Forest National Theatre, Brussels, 1981; with Peter Gabriel during the Amnesty news briefing.









Bob Gruen, Ebet Roberts/Getty, Getty (5)

was in prison, and he said, 'It's worse than being in jail!' We went into the studio, remixed it and released it without all that nonsense."

Despite this debacle, Stein continued to "beg" Kuti to work with a producer. "I told Fela, It's that mix of high-tech and skin that I'm interested in. Finally, reluctantly, he agreed." Produced by Wally Badarou, a staple of Island Records' Compass Point All-Stars session team, 1986's *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense* was a somewhat more lush take on the Egypt 80 sound. Recorded in Paris, it consists of two tracks: Look And Laugh, a punishing chronicle of the attack on Kalakuta which killed his mother, and the title track, which urged Africans to take their educational cues from their own culture rather than the West.

Fela and Badarou worked well in the studio (*see panel*) but Kuti still had control issues. When he heard the final mix, he turned to Stein and shouted, "Bastard!" "We never had a cross word until that point," says Stein. "He said, 'Man, that's not my brass.' And it's true, the brass was mixed clean, and Fela's brass is like a Mack truck hurtling down the freeway. He was never happy with it, but too bad. It still sounds pretty good."

With a strong new LP ready for release, in June Kuti headed to New York for the Conspiracy Of Hope concert, where he was shoehorned into the bill, guesting with Rubén Blades and the Neville Brothers. His incarceration had received prominent coverage in print and on TV; there'd been petitions, 'Free Fela' T-shirts and benefit concerts. Several Africa 70 LPs had been reissued by Celluloid. Brian Eno and David Byrne were already avowed Fela fans; Peter Gabriel called his music "smart, sexy and political". Now, in New York he was the toast of the town, snapped by Andy Warhol hanging out at Mr Chow with Grace Jones, Keith Haring and Jean-Paul Basquiat.

"He had become a bit of a *cause célèbre*," says Stein. "Being in jail probably hadn't harmed his profile in that respect, commercially. Not at all."

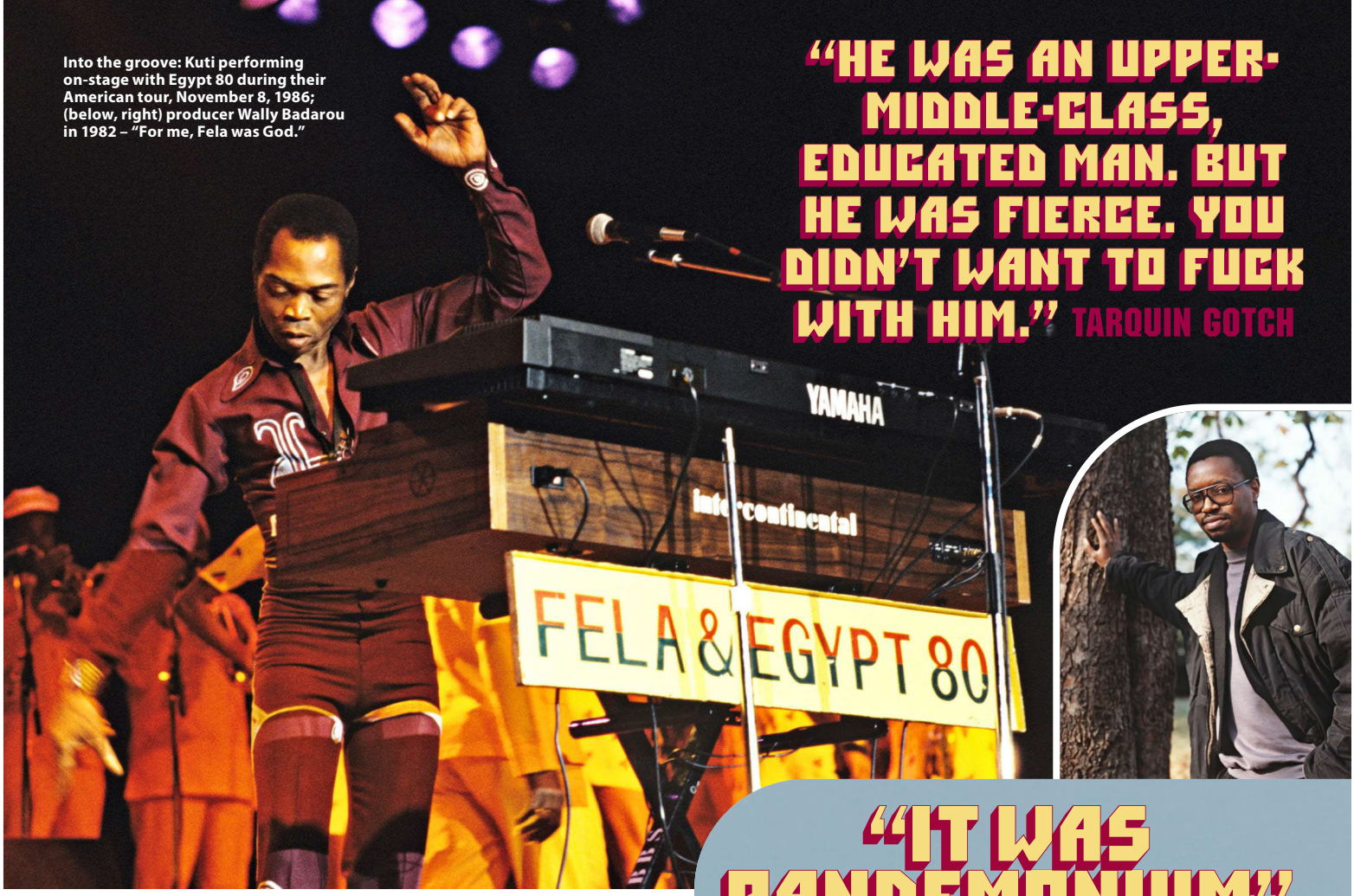
HIS US TOUR IN NOVEMBER DULY sold out almost everywhere, but the economics of touring with Egypt 80 were challenging. "The US tour grossed $600,000 and $680,000 went out," says Stein. "I sometimes had 70 people on the road: somebody looking after the wives, somebody looking after the guys. Two sound engineers, two lighting engineers, a tour manager, and Fela was always flying women in and out. It was a challenge, but we never missed a plane, which I'm kind of proud of! It was all worthwhile, but they were a pretty feisty bunch of people to carry around the world. Taking over hotels, cooking in their rooms. It was quite something."

At the centre of the madness, Fela lounged, often wearing nothing but a pair of Speedos, exuding an intoxicating mix of loquacious charm and dictatorial menace. "He wasn't a street guy," says Tarquin Gotch. "He was an upper-middle-class, educated man. But he was fierce. You didn't want to fuck with him. He was thrilling and kind of scary. I mean it in a nice way, but there was an edge to it."

The entire entourage was often spaced on Goro, a concoction Fela created from slow-cooking marijuana seeds, adding molasses and several "secret ingredients" to produce a thick, dark green paste. It was consumed by either eating a teaspoonful or smearing it on the outside of cigarettes. "It's a very intense high, just another trip altogether," says Stein. "He would cook it in a huge wok. I'm afraid the recipe is now gone. Ask Seun if he still knows how to make it."

"No, I don't!" Seun insists. "My dad used to give it to me as a kid. He summoned the whole band, and everybody would come and get a teaspoon each. I was 6, 7, 8, and they would give me a quarter dose. The guy was the best dad ever. All my trauma was fun!"

The US tour included a concert at the Fox Theatre in Detroit on November 7, released in 2012 as *Live In Detroit 1986*. The album gives a thrilling *verité* account of Egypt 80 in full flood. They played just four songs in a set lasting more than two hours, including the furious Just Like That, recorded by Badarou during the *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense* sessions but held over until 1989's *Beasts Of No*



Into the groove: Kuti performing on-stage with Egypt 80 during their American tour, November 8, 1986; (below, right) producer Wally Badarou in 1982 – "For me, Fela was God."

"HE WAS AN UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS, EDUCATED MAN. BUT HE WAS FIERCE. YOU DIDN'T WANT TO FUCK WITH HIM." TARQUIN GOTCH

Nation. The live performance builds from Kuti's rap: "In my country, things happen just like that. You go your own way, mind your own business, next thing I know I'm in prison, man. Just like that."

Where Africa 70 brought intense attack, Egypt 80 traded in slow-burning martial funk, often meditative and conversational but punctuated by intense peaks, hair-raising chants, squealing saxophone solos and funky keyboards. "They would take half an hour to 50 minutes to get the engine rolling properly," says Meissonnier. "But little by little, the magic started. And when Fela came on stage, he would transcend the whole thing."

FROM THE US, EGYPT 80 HIT EUROPE IN LATE November. In the UK they played Brixton Academy and taped a performance of Just Like That for TV show The Tube. In the accompanying interview, Kuti critiqued Anglo-American attitudes to Africa – "the English seem to think we're still bushmen" – while sporting a voluminous fur coat.

Touching 50, he still seemed invincible, but in some ways Bill Laswell was right. By the end of the 1980s, Fela *was* on the fade. Before his concert at the Felt Forum in November 1986, he had told the New York Times, "I will be President of my country one day. There is no doubt about that." It never came to pass. Instead, when he died of AIDS in 1997, he had produced little work of note in a decade, and his lifestyle had become increasingly dissolute.

Yet his status has grown in the decades since. There has been a Broadway musical of his life, and earlier this year he became the first African artist to be awarded a Lifetime Achievement Grammy. Seun Kuti now leads Egypt 80 while, in Lagos, his music is kept alive at a new iteration of his legendary music hub, the Shrine. It's a legacy that arguably transcends the impact of a three-minute hit single.

"At one point I had appointments with the president or vice-president of every major label in America," recalls Stein. "They all received me respectfully, and they all had one question: 'Rikki, which three minutes out of this 28-minute song do you want me to put on the radio?' I didn't have an answer to that. I'd say, Fela, write me a short song. He'd say, 'You don't fuck around with Tchaikovsky, so why do you want to start on me?'"

"IT WAS PANDEMONIUM"

WALLY BADAROU ON PRODUCING THE UNPRODUCEABLE FELA KUTI.

THE RECORD company didn't think that Fela should produce his albums. They suggested me because I had a name in production, as well as being African Yoruba. I was a bit fearful. Who are we to even pretend we can produce Fela? He's a driving force. For me, Fela was God.

On *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense* we used Studio Davout in Paris, which had a room large enough to accommodate a 60-piece orchestra. The first day, we barely exchanged a word. I was too afraid of unsettling him. I felt like a stranger in town. There were so many people in the studio, it was madness: all the food, the wives, the kids. One of his kids managed to find the SSL computer on/off button. At the beginning of one take, he pressed it and everything went blank. It was so funny. Even Fela laughed, which was an achievement. You didn't make him laugh many times. Then [Simply Red singer] Mick Hucknall came to visit. I was down in the recording room fixing some cabling and I see Mick shouting, "Fela, Fela, I love you!" By the time I went upstairs, he'd disappeared.

The place was pandemonium, but when we started recording Fela knew how to discipline everyone. The band was fully rehearsed and ready to go. The only thing I had to make sure of was that the technology would be no hindrance to him. The longest we could record to tape was about 15 minutes, which was much shorter than the songs. We had to synchronise two machines, one that was ready to go when the other was about to finish. That, and the placement of the microphones – because you're talking about a band that's basically a symphonic orchestra.

"ONE OF HIS KIDS MANAGED TO FIND THE DESK'S ON/OFF BUTTON. AT THE BEGINNING OF ONE TAKE, HE PRESSED IT AND EVERYTHING WENT BLANK."
WALLY BADAROU

We did it all in three days, mixing included. One take each. The only overdub was Fela's sax solo. I made him feel comfortable with the idea of doing many takes. That was my main contribution: making him feel comfortable. He definitely was a figure you didn't want to be living around too long. There were some kinds of dictatorship going on, some misogynism; all of that I was aware of. But I was happy to be associated with the project, and on the last couple of days he was very grateful because he saw I wasn't trying to fabricate his music.

As told to Graeme Thomson

MOJO PRESENTS

Hooked on electric Dylan, Link Wray and garage punk, TWISTED TEENS are two New Orleans buskers on an express train to fame. As their third album of 2026 arrives, and Jeff Tweedy covers their songs, they explain their mission to seize rock'n'roll back from the digital content creators. "That's fried gold," they tell BOB MEHR.

Photography by **MARTIN CRUDO**



"YOU WANT TO KNOW THE LORE?" BELLOWS CASPIAN HOLLYWELL, "you want to hear our origin story?" The frontman for the New Orleans duo Twisted Teens and his partner, guitarist RJ Santos, are reminiscing on the eve of their biggest show to date, a sold-out concert at the Hollywood Palladium opening for The Breeders.

The pair are howling as they recall their very first gig, just over two years ago, held in an abandoned Crescent City warehouse. A local underground promoter had promised a good show and a big crowd, but when they turned up there was no power at the makeshift venue, and the entire audience that night "was just three meth heads," says Santos. "Still, they seemed to enjoy what they heard."

Such has been the strange journey of Twisted Teens. The prolific combo formed and released its debut in 2024, and so far in 2026, they've already put out two of the year's most acclaimed LPs, with a third due in November. Mostly unknown just a year ago, they've recently signed to Sub Pop, opened for The Breeders, confirmed a national tour with Kurt Vile, and had one of their songs covered by Wilco's Jeff Tweedy.

"When we made all of this music, no one gave a fuck," says Hollywell. "But ideas create ideas and eventually they gain a spirit. And the spirit of rock'n'roll is very much alive – what it did was it beckoned to us, wanting to be saved. We just took on the calling. We're taking rock'n'roll back to the fans. It's like Ronald Reagan putting crack in the 'hood in the '80s. It's addictive." ➢

Martin Crudo



Teen spirit: RJ Santos (left) and Caspian Hollywell nail it, Chicago, July 2026; (left) new album *The Holy Cross Tigers*.

"WE'RE TAKING ROCK'N'ROLL BACK TO THE FANS, LIKE REAGAN PUTTING CRACK IN THE 'HOOD IN THE '80s. IT'S ADDICTIVE."

Caspian Hollywell



Grape expectations: Hollywell and Santos making sure they eat well on the road, Chicago, July 2026.



IT'S LATE AUGUST IN Los Angeles' Los Feliz neighbourhood, where Twisted Teens have set up camp at a rented bungalow ahead of their Palladium performance. Even in the sleepy Sunday brunch hour, Hollywell's boisterous energy shakes the house awake, as he and Santos chart their improbable rise.

Together, they make an odd double act. In a bent bill baseball cap, Hollywell is big and broad-shouldered, with a barking voice and cackling laugh, while the diminutive, nattily dressed Santos is quieter, breaking up his partner's stream of consciousness raps with sly, witty asides.

The 42-year-old Hollywell grew up in the Bay Area, starting his career playing in a variety of punk, metal and noise bands in high school. Later, he headed down the coast to Santa Cruz, where he picked up a mandolin and fell in with anarchist folk-punk collective Blackbird Raum and began busking and squatting across the US and Europe for the better part of 20 years.

The 33-year-old Ramon Jose Santos was born in the Philippines and moved to Guam as a baby, before settling in Toronto. Though he grew up playing guitar from the age of eight, he also pursued a path as a visual artist, briefly attending the Ontario College of Art And Design. He quit school and began riding the rails, "bumming around the West Coast" playing music, before finding his way to New Orleans in 2016.

"A lot of people who play music think they're pretty good until they move to New Orleans," says Santos, laughing. "I got there and I was so embarrassed by my skills. I went through an ego death. I was like, Dude, I suck. I just had to soak it all up and figure it out."

Santos arrived in New Orleans just as Hollywell returned to the city – he'd first lived there after Hurricane Katrina – following a spell studying old-time banjo and fiddle music in the South. Eventually, they connected through mutual friends, and forged a relationship over morning coffee, cigarettes and conversation.

"I'm always walking around my neighbourhood yakking at people, and we started talking every day – usually about theology or Carl Jung," says Hollywell. "First thing in the morning, we're either talking about theosophical concepts or we're reading people to filth."

Their chats soon began to touch on shared musical interests, and they soon began making plans to form a group of their own that would draw on the psychedelic sound of 13th Floor Elevators, the hiccupping rockabilly of Charlie Feathers, Bob Dylan's early electric period, and, especially, the post-instrumental work of Link Wray. Hollywell acknowledges Wray's 1965 cover of Dylan's Girl From The North Country as "the formula" for the fledgling project.

Twisted Teens' other defining element would come with Santos's decision to play console steel guitar in the band. Unlike the more familiar pedal steel, with its atmospheric washes of sound, the console offered a more articulated quality. "It's the closest thing to the human voice," says Hollywell. The Teens' music would be defined by the interplay between Hollywell's vocals and Santos's steel. "The moment he started playing the console," says Hollywell, "we were like, That's fried gold."

"We basically started the band and started recording the first album maybe a week later," says Santos. With their 11-track self-titled debut done within a fortnight at Hollywell's apartment recording studio, Twisted Teens set out for Europe. "I dug up all my old punk DIY contacts and basically begged, borrowed and stole a tour to get us out the gate," says Hollywell. No-one at the shows had heard the group before, but the audiences' reactions were immediate and visceral. "The response was different to any other band I've ever been in," says Hollywell.

Hollywell and Santos cite their shared roots in the busking scene as part of Twisted Teens' unique appeal. "Modern musicians learn how to sing into a microphone, they're whispering in their bedroom trying not to wake their neighbours up," says Santos. "Whereas [buskers] are trying to get heard all the way down the street so we can get some attention and get some money together to eat. That's still how we approach it."

The band's other defining characteristic is Hollywell's voice – a raw, raspy instrument that also possesses a beguiling sweetness.

Martin Crudo (2)



Tough as steel: RJ and Caspian keep it real in the garage.





Tigers ride: TT's live band (from left) Mel Billiard (guitar), Santos, Hollywell, Howe Pearson (drums), Sonya Badigian (bass), Los Angeles, August 2026.

Holy communion: it's the Teen-age rampage at The Crepe Place, Santa Cruz, August 2026.

Chelsea Moosakian (3)i

Wilco's Tweedy, an avowed fan, recently covered their song Wild Connection, and noted of Hollywell that "it's really been a long time since I heard a voice that was so unique."

"I wanted to be a singer my entire life, but I was a bit shit at it," admits Hollywell. "As a kid, I asked my mom to take me to singing lessons and apparently the teacher took her aside after a couple times said, 'He's never gonna learn.'" It wasn't until the Covid-19 lockdown when Hollywell finally had his real breakthrough. "He's a problematic fave, but I sat around over the pandemic and just listened to Ike Turner's Cobra Records sides," he recalls. "One day, Ike Turner hit a line and I sang it back just like he did. I'd been trying to sing this shit my entire life and I was like, Now I've got something – let's go!"

Returning from the road, the band resumed recording and cut some 70 songs, from which they would put together their next two albums. Released in February and July of this year, *Blame The Clown* and *Florida Water Blues* coming in such rapid succession broke something open for the band: Twisted Teens became a phenomenon, particularly among fellow musicians.

Merge Records artist and Los Angeles rocker Mike Krol became one of the group's earliest supporters after hearing a snippet of their debut album on an Instagram post. "What I tell everybody," says Krol, "is if you listen to the first four songs and don't think that's the best record you've heard in two decades, then we don't have anything in common. To me, the music is undeniable."

Krol helped Twisted Teens book their first LA show and, crucially, he tipped his wife, the singer-songwriter and Anti- Records A&R Allison Crutchfield, to the band. Crutchfield began advising the group informally and officially signed on as their manager this spring.

"All these people that had a bunch of musical clout were saying you need to listen to this Twisted Teens shit," says Hollywell. "I knew there was no way we would get that much support if we weren't doing something right."

TWISTED TEENS' THIRD ALBUM of 2026, *The Holy Cross Tigers*, is another rapidly recorded affair, composed and cut over a few days in the aftermath of a romantic break-up for Hollywell. Santos jokes that the rather moody platter, with songs like When We First Met and I Spend My Time Crying, is the band's *Blood On The Tracks*. "I was having some emotions," says Hollywell. "I was miserable and thought, Jeez I gotta take advantage of this." The album was basically "me trying to do Judee Sill over Jay Reatard."

Members of their expanded touring band have recently been encouraging Hollywell to make the next record a faster, punkier affair and, while he is open to the idea, he prefers to let the muse, "the Goddess of song", dictate. "When we go to make the record," he says, "the Goddess is going to decide for us."

"Before Twisted Teens, I was depressed, wondering, If I want to play music do I have to make fucking Instagram reels?" Hollywell adds. "But when this band started, we decided we don't need to do all that, maybe we just need to make really banger records, play good shows and have an interesting visual aesthetic.

"Does the public want me sitting around fucking with my phone or do they want me writing songs and playing guitar?" he continues. "If you signal to the musicians and artists that they need to spend a lot of time messing with their phones, then you're going to get way better content and way worse music. And our only concern is the music."

MISSING LINKS!

Twisted Teens reveal four key influences.

LINK WRAY

Sings And Plays Guitar

(Vermillion, 1964)

Girl From The North Country

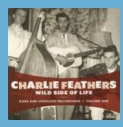
(Swan 7-inch, 1965)

"He's the guy who invented punk rock – what more do you need to say?" says Caspian Hollywell. But it's Wray's '60s vocal numbers like Walking Down The Street Called Love, and, especially, Girl From The North Country that resonate. "If you listen to that, you're going to be like, 'Oh, this is totally what Twisted Teens are trying to do.'"

CHARLIE FEATHERS

Wild Side Of Life: Rare And Unissued Recordings, Volume One

(Norton, 2008)



"The whole rockabilly identity was based off Charlie Feathers' personality," observes Hollywell. "He hung out with Junior Kimbrough and these black country-blues musicians and that's why Feathers had the swag." This 2008 Norton comp of unreleased tracks and demos is a favourite, filled with "weirder recordings – it's a little bit of a window into his brain."

DOLLY MIXTURE

Demonstration Tapes

(Self-Released, 1983)



The '70s Cambridge female pop-punk combo Dolly Mixture is a relatively recent discovery for Hollywell. "I first heard them around the time we formed our band," he says. "I thought that's what Twisted Teens need to be. We need to be like the macho Dolly Mixture! We're trying to be an all-girl band of dudes."

TEE VEE REPAIRMAN

What's On TV?

(Total Punk, 2023)



Aussie one-man band Tee Vee Repairman, AKA Ishka Edmeades, had been a favourite of Hollywell's. Then, last autumn, they shared a bill at Memphis's Gonerfest. "I saw them three times in one weekend, and then I came home and made *The Holy Cross Tigers*," says Hollywell. "Our new album sounds like if Tee Vee Repairman was a '70s folk singer."

american psycho

alice cooper's new memoir plays God-fearing Vincent Furnier off against his nefarious on-stage creation. It also claims to speak the truth about his booze-and-drugs breakdown and the bitter split with his OG band. But after an 'imaginative' previous attempt to come clean, can we believe him? "The villain must get his comeuppance," he tells martin aston.

Portrait by andy gotts.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1975, VINCENT FURNIER WAS riding higher than he ever thought possible. The self-described "sickly child" from Detroit, Michigan who almost died, aged 13, from peritonitis, Furnier – now styling himself Alice Cooper – was a hard rock figurehead and glam rocking pin-up, despite giving off Ugly Sister vibes. On-stage, he was upping the psychodrama, waving sabres, decapitating dolls and fondling snakes before facing execution, either by electric chair, the gallows or the guillotine.

Cooper was also a Hollywood celebrity, the only rock'n'roller to be invited to join legendary showbiz social The Friars Club. Moreover, after the Alice Cooper band had imploded, he had scored monster hits with his solo debut album *Welcome To My Nightmare* and subsequent OTT stage spectacular.

Almost inevitably, exposure and workload came at a cost. Hyperactive and unable to step back ("anything I liked doing, I did too much of"), Cooper was now slowly poisoning himself with alcohol. By the end of the decade he was freebasing, after believing a friend who said smoking cocaine instead of snorting it wasn't addictive. Solo albums began to come and go in a blur; his long-term producer Bob Ezrin walked away, likewise Cooper's wife Sheryl (twice). Having play-acted on-stage in a straitjacket, in late 1977 the singer was committed for three months to a psychiatric ward at Cornell Medical Center in White Plains, New York. It seemed that Alice Cooper had eaten Vincent Furnier alive. Or had he?

"Alice was so much fun to play, but if you stay that character, you'll go crazy," Cooper tells MOJO today. "When I finally got sober, I understood: the curtain comes down, and Alice is gone. My psychiatrist asked how much I drank on-stage. Never, I said. 'So, Alice isn't the problem,' he said, 'it's you. It's not the monster, it's Doctor Frankenstein.' Alice didn't need alcohol or cocaine. It was Vince."

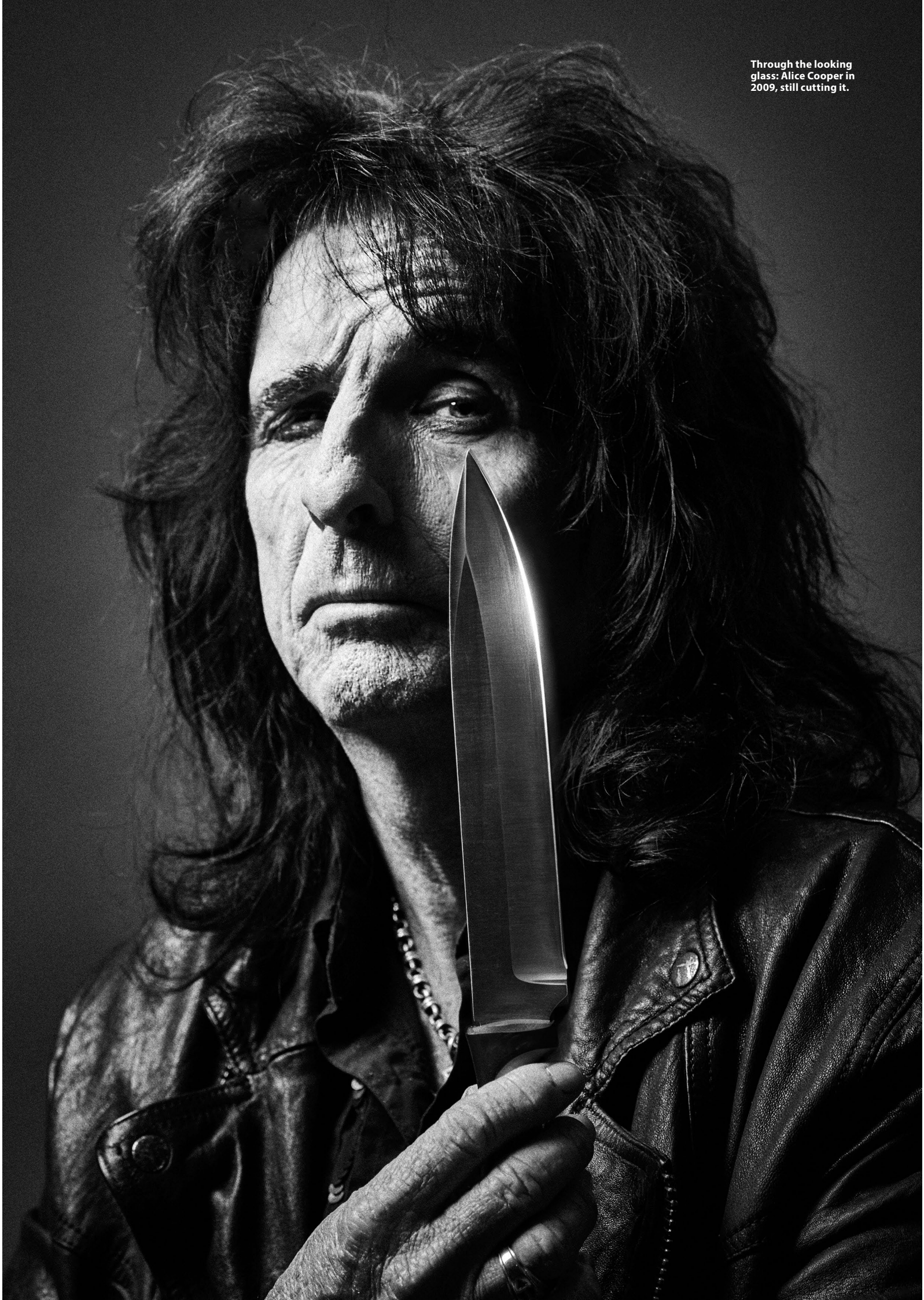
> "MY PSYCHIATRIST ASKED HOW MUCH I DRANK ON-STAGE. NEVER, I SAID. 'SO, ALICE ISN'T THE PROBLEM,' HE SAID, 'IT'S YOU.'"
> alice cooper

THIS JEKYLL AND HYDE SAGA UNDERPINS COOPER'S new memoir, Devil On My Shoulder. It's his third, following 1975's Me, Alice (only the second rock autobiography, following I, Elvis) and 2008's Alice Cooper, Golf Monster: A Rock'n'Roller's Life And 12 Steps To Becoming A Golf Addict, which addressed how Cooper replaced self-destructive habits with a healthier alternative. Another addiction of sorts picked up post-recovery is religion. Having veered wildly away from the examples set by his grandfather (a pastor) and father (evangelist and missionary), Cooper embraced Christianity in 1984, and it's now cemented in his daily routine: rise at 6am, read the Bible, play 18 holes of golf. Even on tour, if possible, he will cram in nine holes.

Today, MOJO encounters Cooper at central London's Dorchester hotel, a good half-hour's drive from the nearest golf course. It's his base while rehearsing for a UK tour of his occasional band The Hollywood Vampires, also starring Aerosmith's Joe Perry and actor Johnny Depp.

Cooper had dinner with Depp last night: "We were up pretty late," he chuckles. It's now 9am, a time when Alcoholic Alice, as Cooper calls him, would more likely have been going to bed – a reminder of how much has changed since the ➢

Andy Gotts/Camera Press



Through the looking glass: Alice Cooper in 2009, still cutting it.



"IT'S ALICE'S *EVIL*-UTION. HOW DOES THIS LITTLE KID FROM DETROIT END UP BEING *THIS*?"
Alice Cooper





Time the tale were told: (clockwise from top left) the classic line-up (from left) Michael Bruce, Dennis Dunaway, Neal Smith, Cooper, Glen Buxton, 1972; fasten seatbelts!: Cooper on-stage in London, 1975; the latest autobiography; producer Bob Ezrin at the mixing desk with band during the recording of *Billion Dollar Babies* at Morgan Studios, London, 1972.

Heilemann, Getty (4), Shutterstock, Elliot Holceker, Devil On My Shoulder published by Ebury Spotlight

Alice Cooper band's first US smash single, I'm Eighteen. "I make fun of myself singing I'm Eighteen now," says Cooper, now 78. "I walk around waving a crutch… I should come out with a walker! And have it explode into flames."

Me, Alice was largely a fantasy concocted under the influence of drink, Cooper has confessed. By contrast, Devil On My Shoulder, although ghost-written by Canadian journalist and broadcaster Daniel Richler, is "the actual true story" of his life and career. Along with some sex, copious drugs and non-stop rock'n'roll, the Alice/Vince dichotomy takes centre stage.

"Daniel and I had a good idea," says Cooper. "What about Alice talking to me, and him and me having ongoing conversations? It's a great device. I just liked the idea of the devil on your shoulder, which we all have, whispering all the wrong stuff."

Did he feel bad that Me, Alice turned out to be more of a marketing device than a *bona fide* memoir?

"No, it was fun, and I just didn't care at the time. We just wanted to do something sensational. Even Golf Monster had a lot of truth, but it didn't go into any depth."

Three quarters of Devil On My Shoulder is devoted to the period from Furnier's birth to the dissolution of the original Alice Cooper band in 1975. Key chapters: in 1961, the God-fearing Cooper family move from Detroit to Phoenix, where young Vince excels at track and cross-country at Cortez High School. Seduced by rock'n'roll, he forms The Spiders, who become The Nazz, then Alice Cooper, moving to LA (where Frank Zappa's Straight label signs them for two albums), and then back to Detroit in 1970, where their hard rock/proto-punk makes more sense in proximity to local degenerates The Stooges and MC5.

"It's this journey, Alice's *evil-ution,*" as Cooper styles it. "How does this little kid from Detroit end up being *this*? And then, understanding it. When we first came to the UK [in 1971], I didn't understand Alice. I was doing 14 interviews a day, with no time to think or thinking on my feet. But I knew it worked – I knew controversy worked. And I knew the audience loved Alice."

Sometimes Cooper would justify the sex-and-violence shtick as social comment. Other times, he'd just wallow in it. "Everyone loves sick things," he told the teen readers of 16 Magazine. "Everyone is sick – and getting sicker all the time!" In the UK, Cooper's publicity campaign had "lots of help" from Labour politician Leo Abse and conservative campaigner Mary Whitehouse, leading the charge to have the band banned from Britain ("Pop is one thing, anthems of necrophilia are quite another," said Abse). "I kept sending Mary flowers and she kept saying she was trying to ban us!" chuckles Cooper. "I said, Yes, please keep trying!"

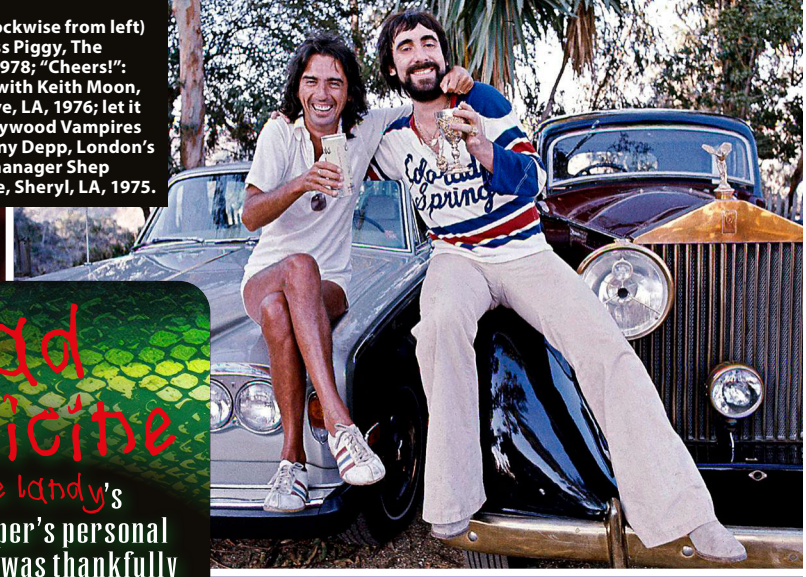
But once success turned into infamy, Cooper started to feel he had been "painted into a corner. I was just the scary guy. [Manager] Shep [Gordon] and I talked about it: let's do The Johnny Carson Show, let's do [game show] Hollywood Squares, let's make people laugh. It softened up Alice."

Cooper's existing fans continued to enjoy the *grand guignol*, while the America that saw him on TV was soothed by his knowing deference to showbiz traditions. "Alice was always the fish out of water," says Cooper, "because he didn't belong on those shows, which appealed to me. It opened up another, bigger audience, while on-stage I maintained the villainous, dangerous Alice. Even then, I wanted people to know there is Alice, and there is me."

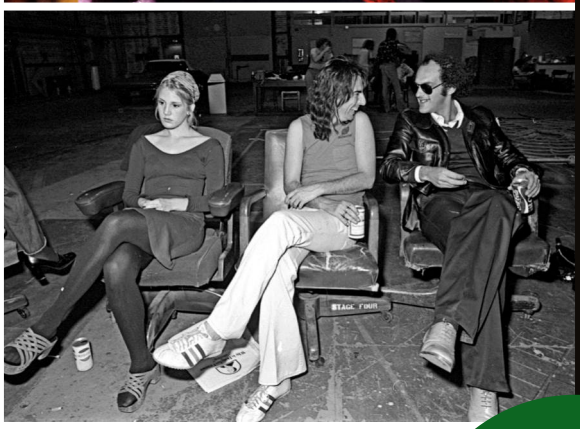
AS HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITY ALICE HUNG OUT WITH his new best friend Groucho Marx, the rest of the original band – guitarists Glen Buxton and Michael Bruce, bassist Dennis Dunaway and drummer Neal Smith – stayed in their lane. Devil On My Shoulder's apparent honesty extends to allowing Cooper's old bandmates their say about the bitter split and Cooper patenting the band name for himself. The singer says Dunaway remains his best friend, though his new book calls Dunaway's own memoir Snakes! Guillotines! Electric Chairs! My Adventures In The Alice Cooper Group "libellous". What was the beef?

"That was more [ghostwriter] Daniel's words than mine," Cooper insists. "But the libellous part was, when I broke away from the band, it wasn't about money. For me, they lost the script. I said, Let's take it to the next step, make it even more theatrical, more





Pigging out: (clockwise from left) Cooper with Miss Piggy, The Muppet Show, 1978; "Cheers!": sharing a drink with Keith Moon, Mulholland Drive, LA, 1976; let it bleed: with Hollywood Vampires bandmate Johnny Depp, London's 02, 2025; with manager Shep Gordon and wife, Sheryl, LA, 1975.





bad medicine

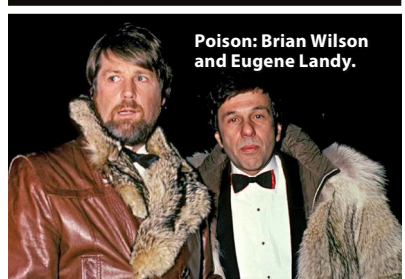
eugene landy's stint as Cooper's personal psychiatrist was thankfully short-lived . . .

JUNE, 1977: the televised "Alice Cooper And Friends" (Nazareth, Sha Na Na and The Tubes) concert at California's Anaheim Stadium in front of 50,000 looked like another peak for the singer. But by that point, he confesses in Devil On My Shoulder, "I didn't care about performing, or recording, or writing… I look lost on the vast stage, surrounded by all those huge, expensive props."

Industry buzz around Brian Wilson's association with Eugene Landy alerted Cooper manager Shep Gordon to ask the psychologist to help stem the singer's alcoholism. Landy's introduction was gentle ("He lifted my spirits for a little while by forcing me to go through a heap of my most positive press clippings") but then came the new regime: "aggressive, intrusive, round-the-clock monitoring and medical 'care'," Cooper writes, including injections before and after each show. Cooper's book quotes producer Bob Ezrin: "Landy gets you on stage and the show goes on. Great! The money flows. Next show! Then Landy says to Shep, 'I can get him on stage again, but it's going to cost you $25,000…' and Landy ratchets up the extortion." Ezrin told Gordon: "You're killing him. Look at him."

Investigation revealed Landy was not a qualified psychiatrist, and not licensed to prescribe drugs. According to Cooper, "Shep threatened him with a baseball bat and sent him packing," and concludes, "Moral of the story: If your doctor wants to pose with you for pictures, get another doctor."

Within weeks, Cooper was admitted to the Grasslands psychiatric hospital – but it would take another seven years for him to conquer his addictions.



Poison: Brian Wilson and Eugene Landy.

mindblowing. But the others wanted to stop, and spend the money. I can't blame them – we'd been touring non-stop for seven years. They also wanted to stop using Bob Ezrin, who was as much a part of the band as we were."

> "MORAL OF THE STORY: IF YOUR DOCTOR WANTS TO POSE WITH YOU FOR PICTURES, GET ANOTHER DOCTOR."
> alice cooper

Ezrin's importance was clear from the moment he cut down I'm Eighteen's original eight-minute sprawl to a three-minute nugget, then helmed a succession of anthemic songs: Under My Wheels, School's Out, Hello Hooray, Elected. Meanwhile, the band graduated from dive bars to stadiums, while off-tour they still shared a 42-room mansion in Greenwich, Connecticut. Keys to their success included Bruce's songwriting and Dunaway's vision; in high school, the bassist and Cooper had worshipped Salvador Dalí. As Cooper writes, Dalí "wasn't just an artist. He was an entertainer… He produced nightmares with humour in them… He also made me think that you can be as outrageous as you want to be, so long as you have the goods."

Minus the band's chief hellraiser Buxton, who died in 1997 of viral pneumonia, the gang reunited on last year's *The Revenge Of Alice Cooper* album. They're currently writing for another Alice Cooper band album. Wife Sheryl and producer Ezrin reunited with Sober Alice in 2010. And for years now, the stage show has had a theme of redemption. After Alice's head is chopped off, he returns in white hat and tails. Is Religious Alice saying: I am the resurrection?

"It's telling everyone, This is a show," he says. "It's going from evil to good. The audience finds it so satisfying. As much as I love Darth Vader, I didn't want him to win! The villain must get his comeuppance."

AT LEAST VINCENT FURNIER HAS survived. "I should have died with all the guys at 27," he reckons. "But that wasn't the plan. In the end, the plan was at a much higher level than me. I have Teen Centres [Alice Cooper's Solid Rock 'provides free after-school training in music, dance, art, and vocational programs'] where kids can come in, talk about their troubles, and it's all because of this villain."

On-stage every night, Cooper sings "Dead babies can't take care of themselves". And after apparently murdering the subject of the song Cold Ethyl (played by wife Sheryl – notebooks out, psychoanalysts), he is marched to the guillotine. It's strong stuff for a 78-year-old. Can the singer ever foresee an end to it?

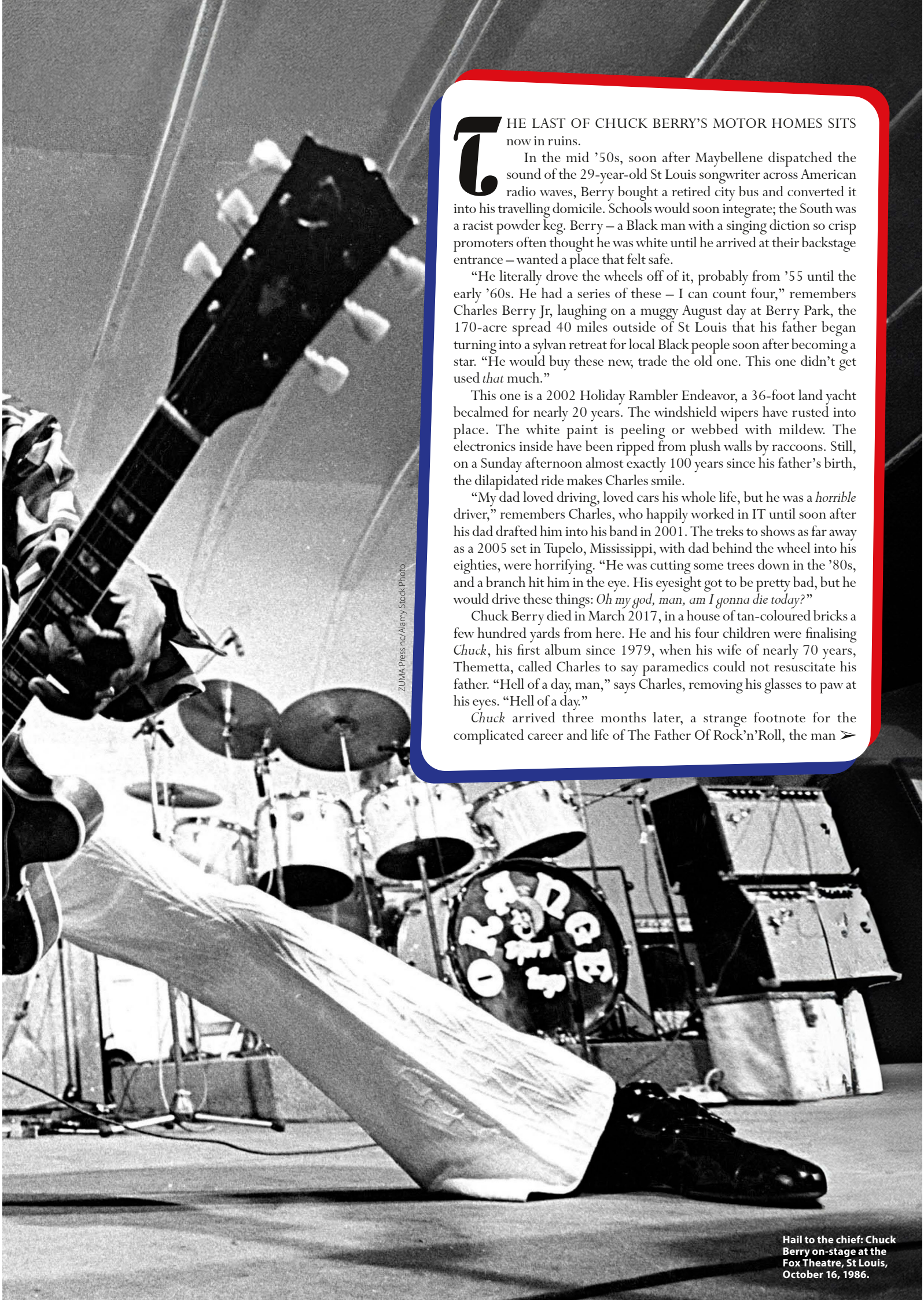
"I've never lost my love for Alice – or for the power chord," he insists. "And I can play Alice better now, because I understand him better. Before, I'd found Alice to be a whipping boy, he was everything that was wrong with society. When I got sober, I couldn't play Alice as a victim any more, so I made him a villain: the most arrogant, condescending, aristocratic villain. There's something comical about that. Alice can murder someone, but he can slip on a banana peel too.

"But if I couldn't play him the way I have all these years, then yes. If I got fat, for example, because that wouldn't be Alice. I think I play Alice better now than I did back then. I've been doing this for 60 years, but if you keep creating, and pushing it… let's see what happens next." Ⓜ

Rockin' And Reelin'



While his popularity waxed and waned, his reputation rocked by scandal, *Chuck Berry*'s primal status in popular music was a given. This month his 100th birthday is celebrated with tribute shows and releases, as family and famous fans toil to rejuvenate his legacy. And with unheard music tantalisingly at hand, who's to say they won't succeed? "His music will never die," they tell *Grayson Haver Currin*, "because it's embedded in everything we do."



ZUMA Press nc/Alamy Stock Photo

THE LAST OF CHUCK BERRY'S MOTOR HOMES SITS now in ruins.

In the mid '50s, soon after Maybellene dispatched the sound of the 29-year-old St Louis songwriter across American radio waves, Berry bought a retired city bus and converted it into his travelling domicile. Schools would soon integrate; the South was a racist powder keg. Berry – a Black man with a singing diction so crisp promoters often thought he was white until he arrived at their backstage entrance – wanted a place that felt safe.

"He literally drove the wheels off of it, probably from '55 until the early '60s. He had a series of these – I can count four," remembers Charles Berry Jr, laughing on a muggy August day at Berry Park, the 170-acre spread 40 miles outside of St Louis that his father began turning into a sylvan retreat for local Black people soon after becoming a star. "He would buy these new, trade the old one. This one didn't get used *that* much."

This one is a 2002 Holiday Rambler Endeavor, a 36-foot land yacht becalmed for nearly 20 years. The windshield wipers have rusted into place. The white paint is peeling or webbed with mildew. The electronics inside have been ripped from plush walls by raccoons. Still, on a Sunday afternoon almost exactly 100 years since his father's birth, the dilapidated ride makes Charles smile.

"My dad loved driving, loved cars his whole life, but he was a *horrible* driver," remembers Charles, who happily worked in IT until soon after his dad drafted him into his band in 2001. The treks to shows as far away as a 2005 set in Tupelo, Mississippi, with dad behind the wheel into his eighties, were horrifying. "He was cutting some trees down in the '80s, and a branch hit him in the eye. His eyesight got to be pretty bad, but he would drive these things: *Oh my god, man, am I gonna die today?*"

Chuck Berry died in March 2017, in a house of tan-coloured bricks a few hundred yards from here. He and his four children were finalising *Chuck*, his first album since 1979, when his wife of nearly 70 years, Themetta, called Charles to say paramedics could not resuscitate his father. "Hell of a day, man," says Charles, removing his glasses to paw at his eyes. "Hell of a day."

Chuck arrived three months later, a strange footnote for the complicated career and life of The Father Of Rock'n'Roll, the man ➢

Hail to the chief: Chuck Berry on-stage at the Fox Theatre, St Louis, October 16, 1986.



Pure motorvation: (clockwise from left) Berry in an early publicity shot; Chuck on-stage circa 1956; Berry with members of The Animals and King Size Taylor & The Dominos at Pye Studios, London, May 25, 1964; Berry behind the wheel, 1965; Berry with Sandy Stewart and Alan Freed while filming 1959's Go, Johnny Go!

Hulton Archive/Getty, Dezo Hoffman/Shutterstock, Daily Mirror/Mirrorpix/Mirrorpix via Getty Images

≺ who twisted bits of jazz, blues, and country into staggering songs that squeezed sagas of the open road and puppy love, Black anxiety and youthful oblivion into perfect two-minute bursts. Berry broke critical American colour barriers at a particularly dangerous time, a true pioneer. He was, however, also convicted of trafficking a minor across state lines and, decades later, keeping videotapes from a women's restroom in the restaurant he owned. He went almost half a century without releasing new music and developed a reputation for browbeating promoters and playing perfunctory sets. What image endures of someone so pivotal and problematic?

"Chuck Berry's music will never die, because it's embedded in everything we do," Steve Jordan, the Rolling Stones drummer who heard The Beatles cover Berry before hearing Berry himself, tells MOJO. "I understand people wanting to keep the legacy alive, but it's not going anywhere."

For half a century, though, Berry's reputation received periodic jolts – the superstars who surrounded him in the 1987 birthday fête Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll, the placement of his hits in Pulp Fiction or Back To The Future, even his death. But nine years later, for his centenary, his family is trying to accelerate his rejuvenation, via tribute shows featuring the likes of Jordan and Ivan Neville in St Louis in October, to a covers album due February next year featuring Jeff Tweedy, Valerie June, and Lucinda Williams. There's another documentary in the works, and Charles's band – hilariously, What The Chuck! – is one of several St Louis acts releasing Berry covers this year.

"Like anything, it can be forgotten. It will flourish if you nourish it, or die on the vine if you don't," Charles says. "There's a lot of music he brought to this world, a lot of indirect contributions he made to the Civil Rights movement. If people don't know about it, they won't realise that."

TWO DECADES AFTER BERRY RELEASED MAYBELLENE, his legacy was already in jeopardy.

"The only salvation for Chuck Berry as a serious artist will be when an audience actually turns on him," Mick Farren wrote in New Musical Express in a March 1975 review of a Berry set in London. "It's a saddening sight to see one of the greatest musicians of the last 20 years turning himself into a mediocre clown."

After Muddy Waters pointed Berry to the Chess Records office in the spring of 1955, the singer and his band delivered a titanic string not of hits but of instant standards – Roll Over Beethoven, Back In The USA, Johnny B. Goode. But four years into that run, Berry was arrested for violating the Mann Act for transporting a teenage girl "across state lines for the purposes of immoral practices or debauchery." After the first conviction was overturned due to the judge's racist invective, he was convicted again.

By the time he emerged from prison in October 1963, the world had shifted. Beatlemania was beginning. The Rolling Stones released a cover of Come On – a Berry single issued just before his prison stint – as their debut single months before he got out. There were subsequent hits, including No Particular Place To Go, Nadine (Is It You?), and Promised Land, the incisive and racially subversive travelogue Elvis would make even bigger.

But there was a prevailing sense not just that Berry's moment had passed but that he was also trying to salvage the recent past. He seemed to bristle when an NME reporter asked him about the similarities between a new single and an old one. "That is as intended," he said. "The chord progression is exactly the same, and the melody is slightly off."

Charles was born months before his father went to prison. "I didn't know about it until fourth grade, and that's because the kids were teasing me – 'Your dad's a jailbird,'" he remembers. This was the late '60s, as his dad's commercial prospects cratered.

But in 1972, Berry had his first revival. At a British festival early that year, tape rolled as he played with a pick-up band, as had become his wont. "The fellers are too preoccupied in their domestic affairs to travel," he told a reporter in 1973 of the band who had made his hits. "And sometimes it's even better because it would not be the same."

For 10 minutes, they played My Ding-A-Ling, a subtlety-free novelty number Berry labelled "a fourth-grade ditty… a beautiful song of togetherness." A four-minute edit topped the charts on both sides of the Atlantic, making it his only Number 1 hit and earning him, he once recalled, a $200,000 cheque. It became a live staple, an extended bit that allowed him to coast through a









Michael Ochs Archives/Getty, ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy, Everett Collection Inc/Alamy, Alamy Stock Photo

Pleased to meet you: (clockwise from left) Berry in Chicago, 1958; throwing shapes on-stage at the St Louis Fox Theatre for Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll, October 16, 1986; "You wanna get it right, let's get it right!": Chuck keeps a firm hold on Keith Richards while filming Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll; Berry joins John Lennon and Elephant's Memory at KYW-TV studios in Philadelphia, during Lennon and Yoko Ono's 'takeover' of the Mike Douglas Show, February 16, 1972.

"He was an entertainer, and you literally become addicted. He had to get that fix."

Charles Berry Jr

chunk of his show. "Next came the My Ding-A-Ling ritual, with the interminable audience sing-along," Farren wrote in *NME*. "Again the crowd loved it, right down to the same jokes as on the live recording."

It was the major American songwriter's last hit. He made three more albums during the '70s, releasing *Rockit* in August 1979, its Space Age cover a homage to the golden record containing Johnny B. Goode that had been launched aboard the Voyager I and II space craft two years earlier. But Berry was already back in jail, having pled guilty to tax evasion from 1973, around the time the My Ding-A-Ling money arrived. He wrote most of his memoir there, as if anticipating his fading star. He would not release another album during his lifetime.

"He was too busy, making too much money from touring," Charles reckons. "No, that's too simple: he was an entertainer, and you literally become addicted. He had to get that fix."

STEVE JORDAN REMEMBERS THE TIME BERRY scolded Keith Richards.

It was in early October 1986, in the studio the songwriter had built long before at Berry Park. In January, in the ballroom of New York's Waldorf-Astoria, Richards had inducted Berry into the inaugural class of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "It's very difficult for me to talk about Chuck, because I lifted every lick he ever played," Richards said, grinning before he removed his formal jacket to reveal a leopard-print one. "This is a gentleman that started it all, as far as I'm concerned." Berry, 59, duck-walked his way to the stage, beaming as he clasped Richards' hand.

Richards would build an all-star band to back Berry for two 60th birthday shows at St Louis' Fox Theatre, the extravagant architectural gem from which the singer had been barred during segregation. He'd even flown to Jamaica to rehearse with Richards and Jordan, his polyester suit drenched in sweat the moment they scooped him at the airport.

Back in St Louis in October, rehearsing in Berry Park days before the shows, Berry was in charge. As the band cranked into Carol, he told Richards to stop, explaining how a split second of the lick worked. Richards mirrored him until Berry exclaimed "Perfect!" They restarted twice, only for Berry to tap Richards on the arm again. "You wanna get it right," he urged, "let's get it right." Jordan's eyes widen with alarm during this bit of Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll, but he was happy to see Berry demand better. The riff, after all, was compositional, not some happy accident.

"Keith's whole motivation was to refamiliarise Chuck with his own genius. By this time, he'd become one big Chuck Berry song," says Jordan, recalling how, if Berry liked the pick-up band a promoter had assembled, he'd reach into his bag of cash and hand over a grand. "Everybody's been butchering Chuck Berry songs for 30 years. When Chuck saw he had a band that could execute, he did the deep dive: 'Let me tell you *exactly* how it's done.'"

The real tension of those rehearsals stemmed from a pair of assistants who didn't give Berry the dignity due "the guy who invented this thing", as Jordan puts it. Those assistants wired the room so that Berry's guitar signal bypassed the amplifier he thought he was using, going instead to an amplifier they controlled just out of sight. That way, the assistants reckoned, they could manage how much distortion made it onto tape. "Once Chuck realises what ➢



Let us pray: His Lordship's James Walbourne (left) and Kris Sonne.

"It Was Dangerous. It Was Rock'n'Roll. It Was Chuck Berry"

Pretenders guitarist and His Lordship frontman James Walbourne turns his Chuck Berry fandom into records and shows, as he tells Danny Eccleston.

IT'S DECEMBER 1986, the Hammersmith Odeon, and the six-year-old James Walbourne is here to see the legendary Chuck Berry.

"My dad took me," he recalls today. "He loved that kind of rock'n'roll and it's what I grew up on. So going to see Chuck Berry in the flesh was a real event."

There were still elements of Berry's UK audience you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. "There were Teddy Boys still. A t those gigs, fights broke out. It was dangerous. It was rock'n'roll. It was Chuck Berry." Walbourne pauses, grins. "It was great."

At the other of two Odeon shows that December, Berry's set was cut short as Teds invaded the stage during Nadine. "Next year," says Walbourne, "I went to see Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll at the Plaza in Camden. Both those events were seismic for me."

Walbourne, the London guitar whizz who's been in the Pretenders since 2008 and forms half of raucous duo His Lordship with drummer Kris Sonne, expresses his devotion in two upcoming releases. His Lordship's cover of Nadine is released as a single on Chiswick this month. Then an album of Berry songs attacked in slavering garage style, entitled *Promised Land*, drops in November. Walbourne admits, however, that His Lordship's approach to the Berry canon was initially over-reverential.

"It sounded like some blokes playing Chuck Berry songs," he says. "Quite disappointing and not what I'd heard in my head."

In despair, they went back to the live room and unleashed their frustrations on a punked-out version of Nadine. Thus their way forward was found. "I guess you've got to channel something of what Chuck would have been channelling," says Walbourne.

His path back into Berry's catalogue started very differently, though. In October 2025 he was hired to play at Chuck Berry's Birthday Bash, the St Louis Symphony Orchestra's stately celebration of Berry's 99th that also featured Rolling Stones alumni Chanel Haynes and Bernard Fowler, bassist Doug Wimbish et al. He met Berry's son Charles and wife Themetta, getting their blessing for his covers record plus input into a November 18 Chuck Berry tribute show at London's 100 Club.

"There were Teddy Boys still. At those gigs, fights broke out."

"He was unique," Walbourne asserts. "He played the guitar in a wild way. And his songwriting was groundbreaking. We should be reassessing that work… or just fucking listening to it."

The Nadine 7-inch is out on Chiswick on October 30 and the Promised Land LP on November 12 via PIAS. Walbourne and co. play London's 100 Club in November. On the 17th, His Lordship And Friends feature Primal Scream, Nick Lowe and more. On the 18th they hail Chuck Berry, featuring Charles Berry and Charlie Berry III.

happened, he blows a gasket. They're lucky that it didn't come to blows," says Jordan, sighing. "It was a racist thing, very condescending. We're in the '80s, still dealing with this crap."

Berry's relationship with the music industry had always been contentious, ever since two white men (including powerful DJ Alan Freed) extracted songwriting royalties on Maybellene. Prison only intensified his suspicions, catalysing his transformation into an infamously demanding performer. He required payment in cash before he would step on-stage, and would earn an extra $500 (eventually $2,000) if the promoter hadn't secured the proper amp, a Fender Showman Reverb.

Billy Peek, a St. Louis guitarist 14 years younger than Berry, met him just before the Mann Act arrest. He was delighted by Berry's humility. When they began playing together in the '70s, Berry had changed.

"When he came out of prison, I could tell he had a chip on his shoulder. He would dot every 'i', cross every 't' on his contracts," says Peek, wearing a Berry T-shirt in his St Louis basement, a jukebox-filled shrine to his work with Berry and Rod Stewart. "He wasn't going to let anybody screw him around."

IN NOVEMBER 1997, BERRY STEPPED ON-STAGE IN THE Duck Room. For the next 17 years, it would serve as his on-stage headquarters, the place where international audiences could find him at his most relaxed and consistent, backed by a band of friends and family.

A quarter-century earlier, St Louis native Joe Edwards had opened the pub Blueberry Hill in a benighted section of the city. Edwards was a music enthusiast who had paid $2.50 as a kid to sit in the balcony at Black soul shows. He constantly rotated the records in Blueberry Hill's jukebox, labelling 200 new selections by hand every two weeks. And he loved Berry since the moment he heard Maybellene on the radio as a kid. "It was so different, so exciting, so rhythmic. It tells a story," says Edwards. "It broke through to all-white audiences on all-white stations. It changed the culture."

Over the decades, Edwards and Berry became friends, the businessman driving out to visit the star at Berry Park. Edwards eventually put up cash for Berry to play an outdoor show at a local college and was even his dinner date with Paul and Linda McCartney when the Beatle played St Louis in 1993. In the mid-'90s, Edwards went to a restaurant in Wentzville, near Berry Park, to watch him play for the first time in years. He sat in the front row.

The prior decade had been a roller-coaster for Berry. In March 1989, a fire tore through the studio where he had corrected Richards. Three months later, he was the first person to get a star on the St Louis Walk of Fame, an Edwards project. In December, he was sued for videoing women in the bathroom of Southern Air, the restaurant he'd owned for a year. He received a suspended sentence and settled a class-action lawsuit. In 1993, the US Supreme Court rejected his claim it had been "tantamount to an economic lynching". And in 1994, You Never Can Tell scored a Pulp Fiction dance scene between Uma Thurman and John Travolta.

"It was so cool seeing him have fun again, being able to play like he liked," Edwards remembers of that show. "I said, It'd be cool if we had a place you could play regularly. We looked at each other for a split second and said, 'Let's do it.'"

Edwards built the Duck Room inside Blueberry Hill specifically for Berry, raising the ceilings and stretching the stage so he could do his famous duck walk or scoot. Berry often stopped by to watch the construction. In 2011, as he inched toward 200 shows there, Edwards unveiled an eight-foot bronze statue of Berry, visible from Blueberry Hill. He cast Berry's enormous hands in plaster, putting them in cases that house Berry's guitars, records, and captain's hat, likely the world's largest such display.

As summer arrived in St Louis in 2014, it was clear that Berry's Duck Room run was nearing its end. His hearing was failing, and his fingers would slip down the strings, sliding into the wrong key. He would forget lyrics, though Charles sometimes put large-print versions on-stage. Peek began arriving early, sneaking his amp

Paul Kelly, Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo, Bobby Bank/Wireimage/Getty, Bill Greenblatt/UPI/Shutterstock







Keep on running: (clockwise from left) Berry in his mid-'60s pomp; with son Charles Berry Jr at B.B. King Blues Club, New York, December 31, 2011; Themetta Berry with Chuck on his 80th birthday, October 18, 2006.

"When he came out of prison, I could tell he had a chip on his shoulder. He wasn't going to let anybody screw him around."

Billy Peek

on-stage, and gently backing him up as needed. "I'd seen how great he was," Peek says. "To see him like this really broke your heart."

After four such shows, in October 2014, Edwards and Charles told Berry they should stop the shows until springtime, since he hated winter, anyway.

"He had an out that way, because I was the one suggesting the pause. The weather was a factor, not his decline," remembers Edwards. "It was the right thing to do to protect him and his legacy. But it was hard, to suggest that one of the strongest-willed people I've ever met park it."

It was Berry's 209th show in the Duck Room, his last.

IN THE FIRST WEEKS OF 2017, THEMETTA BERRY TOLD Charles to go into the basement and look for photos. The family was putting finishing touches on *Chuck*, and searching for artefacts fit for linernotes. Expecting to find nothing, Charles protested and went anyway, unlocking a storage room he assumed was empty.

"I go in and say, I knew there was nothing down here. I'm walking out, and I just freeze – there are 14 Ampex 2-inch tapes," says Berry, a touch breathless. "We were thinking *all* of them had been destroyed."

When the clubhouse that housed his Berry Park studio burned in 1989, decades of tapes were incinerated. Money and validation notwithstanding, it was another reason Berry didn't release new music – he'd simply lost the goods. Soon after Berry rebuilt his studio in his St Louis basement in the early '90s, he transitioned from tape to ProTools. Charles assumed he'd heard everything; were these tapes some kind of Chuck Berry Dead Sea Scrolls?

Within weeks, he headed four hours south-east to Nashville, where he'd found a studio that could salvage the aging tapes. Suspicious of leaks, Charles had only given the studio owners his first name; by the time he returned to hear what they'd done, they'd figured it out. "This guy goes, 'You're Chuck Berry's son, *aren't you?* There's some good shit on here – listen!'"

He made more trips to Nashville early that year, dropping off batches of tapes – some containing ideas and alternate takes dating back to the '70s – and picking up others. A day after returning from picking up the final set, he was washing his dad's last Cadillac when Themetta called. He raced down Interstate 70 to Berry Park and found his father lying there, as if asleep. A doctor broke the news: "I never curse in front of my mother, but I screamed, *Fuck* – what did you just say?"

Amid the memorials, tributes, and interviews leading up to the release of *Chuck*, no one thought much about the discovery. Charles eventually gathered his family at his mother's house to listen to the finds. "Everybody's jaws just dropped," he says. "They'd never heard any of this."

Nine years later, almost no one outside of the family has still heard it. Several of the players are dead, so Charles worries about getting proper clearances from estates. His hesitation seems a vestige of his father's legal struggles, in and out of music. And, he wonders, do people want to hear his dad's demos, no matter how good he thinks they are? Deciding what to do with the tapes can wait until after his father's 100th birthday, maybe after interest surges once more.

He's hoping his mother, who will turn 100 in November, will sign off on using Berry Park as a wedding venue, even if the guitar-shaped swimming pool is long gone. There's talk of building a museum at Berry Park, too, but Charles wants to house it in downtown St Louis. The goal, after all, is for as many new people as possible to encounter Chuck Berry, people of all ages and ethnicities. Charles remembers how his dad saw racism as a challenge, something he could push against. That's a story he wants to share.

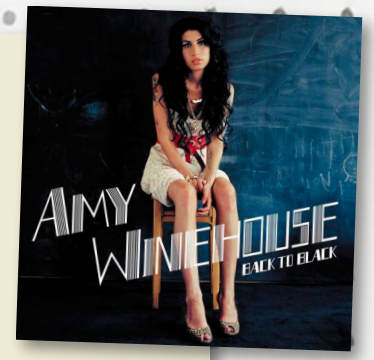
"The ropes down the middle of the theatres? The Black kids in the balcony with the white kids below?" Charles says, smiling. "The music would have those kids in a frenzy – they didn't care who they were dancing with. He caught hell doing it, but one way or another, he was going to find a way for that velvet rope to come down."

Berry's official centenary celebrations continue into 2027 with US and UK concerts, and a documentary directed by King Hollis. The covers album, Chuck Berry Reimagined, is out in February on One Riot.

AMY WINEHOUSE GOES *BACK TO BLACK*

Three years after her debut *Frank*, a wild soul talent in turmoil channelled emotional pain into her masterpiece. "*Back To Black* had its seeds in real love and heartbreak," her collaborators recall, 20 years on. "Amy had so many extreme highs and lows going on at the same time."

Interviews by **TOM DOYLE** • Portrait by **ROSS KIRTON**



SHE'S A NORTH LONDON STAGE school expellee with a wise-before-her time voice of preternatural expressive power. 2003's *Frank*, where jazz, soul, hip-hop and torrid experience meet, is critically acclaimed but outsold by lesser talents. Then, something shifts for Amy Winehouse. Fame, heartbreak and booze – as articulated on October 2006's Top 10 hit Rehab – are alchemised with the help of producers Salaam Remi and Mark Ronson and soul-revivalists The Dap-Kings, and *Back To Black* is the breakthrough, cathartic result. "I made an album of 11 songs that I'm so proud of," she said in 2007. "I tend to write songs about things that I'm trying to make sense of, or I can't quite get past…"

Darcus Beese: After [2003 debut] *Frank*, I wasn't experienced having an artist that would take nearly three years to come up with the follow-up. Three years is a long time for someone that hadn't proved it on the first album, commercially.

Amy Winehouse [speaking in 2007]: I stopped working in January 2005 and I started playing pool all day because I could. Then I met a nice fella [Blake Fielder-Civil]. When that all became too much [and the couple split for the first time], because I wasn't working, I didn't have something to throw myself into. I spent a week lying on my kitchen floor with a bottle of Jack Daniel's, crying, listening to the fucking Shangri-Las' I Can Never Go Home Anymore on a loop.

DB: Knowing how *Frank* came together, Amy probably needed an amount of time to gather things to write about. *Frank* is a pointed, sarcastic, observational, sometimes comedy break-up record. *Back To Black* had its seeds in real love and heartbreak.

AW: I was listening to a lot more kinds of music when I made my first album. For *Back To Black* I was listening to a very narrow spectrum of music, so all of the stuff kind of sounds the same, whereas the first album was a bit of a melting pot, really. ➢

© Ross Kirton/Eyevine



Black celebration: Amy Winehouse, 2006; (below) *Back To Black*, the LP she was so proud of.



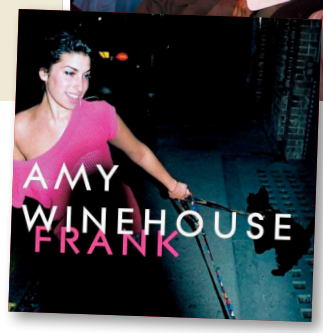




Voice of the beehive: (clockwise from left) Winehouse with Mos Def, 2007; with Mark Ronson at the Brit Awards, Earls Court, February 20, 2008; backstage with The Dap-Kings at Camden's Koko, September 25, 2006; debut album *Frank* (2003).

"WHAT'S THE BEST THING? KEEP HER ON THE ROAD? PUT HER IN REHAB? PUT HER UNDER HOUSE ARREST?"

Darcus Beese



DB: She came into the office and said, "I'm ready to make this record." And she sat down and played Love Is A Losing Game. Bob's your uncle.

AW: Writing songs is very cathartic. I tend to write songs about things that I'm trying to make sense of, or I can't quite get past.

Salaam Remi: She came to Miami, and during that trip we recorded what was at that point Fuckery [Me & Mr Jones] and started a few other songs. Also we had gone to the record store and bought a bunch of records. We bought The Shangri-Las, The "5" Royales, The Platters, Neil Diamond's Blue Destiny. She was kind of saying, "This is where I'm thinking, like, in this area." She wrote Tears Dry On Their Own in my garden. Then she went to New York and worked with Mark.

Mark Ronson: The first or second day she played me Wake Up Alone, Love Is A Losing Game. Then Rehab she wrote while we were in New York.

DB: I get out to New York and down to Mercer Street in SoHo, where Mark's studio was. Amy's just kind of shy and nervous like anyone about to play something new. Mark played Rehab, and I sit there and I go back to the conversations and arguments that were happening with management and her dad and Amy [about forcing the singer into treatment for her alcohol problem], and I'm like, You didn't… (*laughs*). She's looking at me with a smile. Then he plays Back To Black. Then he plays You Know I'm No Good. And I'm sitting there, going, What?!

MR: She would only need two or three takes. It was so honest. She would never sing it the same way twice 'cos that felt ungenuine. It's like, "Well, why would I do the same exactly again? Then it becomes false."

Neal Sugarman: [Daptone Studio, in Bushwick, Brooklyn] was surprisingly small. It was not like a hangout. We got there, we did work and left. But, man, over the years a lot of great records were recorded there.

Thomas Brenneck: It wasn't a dangerous neighbourhood, but it was a poor and ugly neighbourhood. The house was very funky. It was a pretty rundown, shitty place. Doing Rehab, there was [originally] no riff. The whole of the song me and Nick [Movshon], the bass and the guitar, double this riff that wasn't in the demo. It was just fun. We did it in like two days.

NS: We were working on it, and we were in a good flow with Mark, so it was just kinda trying to make cool-sounding music. I don't think any of us really were aware what the outcome of this album was gonna be.

SR: Once it got to a point where the step-up of the production happened, Darcus came back to me and he was like, "Hey, I want to get Amy back to you. But how do I pull this album together? Because it's kind of like we're in two different spaces." With Tears Dry On Their Own, as I was looking at the record I felt like there were too many things that were in this downtempo space.

DB: Salaam had the soul of the record because it started off as slow heartbreak songs. He had the genius to just take them, produce them, interpolate Tears Dry On Their Own with [a sample from Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell's] Ain't No Mountain High Enough. Tears Dry… is the transition between what Mark was doing and where Salaam was. He took that record to a tempo where even Amy was like, "Whoa, that's generally a bit faster than I like." Some Unholy War, that was a funeral march when they first wrote it.

SR: Unholy War had two versions. It had a downtempo version and then the one that was on *Back To Black* that was kind of Shangri-Las-influenced.

DB: He produced it with intent. What Salaam was able to do was to maintain the soul of the record. Mark managed to pop it off.

AW: Basically I made an album of 11 songs that I'm so proud of. When I gave it to the record company, I said, Do whatever you want… first single, second single, third single. And they went with [Rehab]. I was like, Really? I thought they'd go with You Know I'm No Good or Back To Black.

DB: [The album was short at 35 minutes] and she wouldn't add anything to it. It was like, "I've written the record as it is for the story I'm telling. Go fuck yourself." It's not a conversation you can have over the phone. So I went to her flat in Camden, and it was a very short meeting. I was back in my car within three minutes, driving back to the office (*laughs*). Voices in Radio 1, especially with Rehab, [were saying] "the record's a bit pastiche". I think there was a bit of a mandate that Amy wasn't going to get played. Then Zane [Lowe] played it on his evening show on Radio 1, and it lit up. Off the

Alex Lake, John Ricard/FilmMagic/Getty, Dave Hogan/Getty Images, Simone Joyner/Getty Images, Getty (7), Justin Goff Photos/Getty





Specials attention: (left) Winehouse with Terry Hall (centre) and Lynval Golding, 2009 Q Awards, London; Winehouse performing on-stage at Koko, November 14, 2006.

back of Zane, they playlisted Rehab two weeks before it came out. It ended up at Number 7 [in the UK].

TB: We played a really amazing, really memorable show at Joe's Pub in New York City. A really small venue, a supper club sit-down. Dr. John was in the audience, Jay-Z and Beyoncé, Mos Def. All these iconic musicians were in that tiny little space. Coachella was wild. We did a tent, not the main stage. It was crammed. Danny DeVito and a bunch of people were backstage. Then we played The Roxy in LA. Courtney Love and Bruce Willis were there. It was wild shit hanging out with her. Crazy people were always popping up.

NS: Going backstage and seeing Bruce Willis was kinda cool (*laughs*). But Amy never gave a shit.

AW: There's no such thing as being famous, it's more like being fucking bigged up by the media. D'you know what I mean? Or highlighted by the media. Like, there's no real such thing as fame, really. I don't think.

Dale Davis: Unfortunately, things started to go astray in the middle of 2007. We did many shows and after four or five shows, she'd changed the song completely. Every night she sang something differently and I think ultimately that cost her because she gave so much in performance and in her personal life that I think she just left herself short.

You get a lot of artists who sing the same every night, and they preserve themselves as a result. But with someone like Amy who gave her all every single night trying to do something different, I think eventually that leads to a bit of burnout. She had been on the road for nearly a year at that point and she'd got married [to Fielder-Civil, in May 2007], so I think her personal life was starting to take over. It was very hard at that point. Really she should've stepped up to the next level with the big stadiums and stuff. But I think her personal life took her [away] from that.

DB: I remember I was coming out of Mayfair Studios in Camden. I was working on another project. It was summer, and I'm walking behind these two people, and I'm like, I know that voice. There was this [girl with a] tall beehive, real thin, with shorts on, walking with this guy in a trilby, and I went, Amy, and she turned around. There was a sheer, marked change in appearance and that's when I was like, There's something not right here.

DD: It all seemed to happen so fast. It caught us all by surprise really.

DB: Everyone's like, "What's the best thing for her? Do you keep her on the road? Do you put her in rehab? Do you put her under house arrest? Do you give her security?" And there's no answer. Because you can do all of those things. But if the person genuinely is not ready to be healed yet…

DD: It was just such an incredible evening really [February 10, 2008, when Winehouse won five Grammys, via satellite from the Riverside Theatre in Hammersmith, after visa issues prevented her from travelling to the US]. But on the flipside of that, I remember sitting on the stage with Amy when she'd just got her third. I congratulated her and she said, "This is shit". And I went, Why, Amy? You're getting recognised for all your work. She said, "No, it's not that, Dale, my husband's in jail." [Fielder-Civil was arrested in November 2007 in connection with an assault on a pub landlord and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. They divorced in 2009]

It was quite representative of Amy's life. She had so many extreme highs and lows going on at the same time. I always thought that there was a chance that Amy would get herself back together. It wouldn't have taken her much to get back to where she was. But then it was a big step in the end to try to get back to that point [Winehouse died from alcohol poisoning on July 23, 2011, aged 27].

TB: Sometimes the thing I'm most sad about is that the world doesn't get to hear more songs that Amy wrote.

DB: She would have been 43 [now], and she would have been an icon. She's an icon through her passing. But can you imagine? Can you just imagine?

To mark its 20th anniversary, Black To Black is reissued on multiple formats this month by UMR/Island.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- Amy Winehouse (singer/songwriter)

- Darcus Beese (Island Records A&R)

- Salaam Remi (*Frank* and *Back To Black* co-producer)



- Mark Ronson (*Back To Black* co-producer)



- Neal Sugarman (sax player and former Dap-King)



- Thomas Brenneck (guitarist and former Dap-King)



- Dale Davis (bassist, musical director)

HARD TRAVELIN'

It's on the road that BOB DYLAN has faced, and set, his greatest challenges, reinventing his songs while juggling drugs, dames and divorce. As a box set of his extraordinary, incendiary 1976 shows looms, MOJO takes the long view, tackling the tours that took the biggest risks – of disaster, damnation, even electrocution – and asks the $64,000 question: "Who the fuck cut up Bob's paintings of Christ?"

Portrait by BARRY FEINSTEIN.

'66-'26 DYLAN ON TOUR

ON THE BILL

THE 1966 WORLD TOUR:
John Harris on the shows that revolutionised rock, and pushed Dylan to the brink.

ROLLING THUNDER, PART 2:
How Dylan transformed private turmoil into nightly catharsis, by Ray Padgett.

ROWDY WAYFARER:
Dylan on-stage in 2026. Low volume, high turnover, good value, reckons Jesse Jarnow.

ROAD RASH:
Mat Snow rounds up the Dylan tours that bemused, outraged and amazed, from 1964 to now.

Barry Feinstein

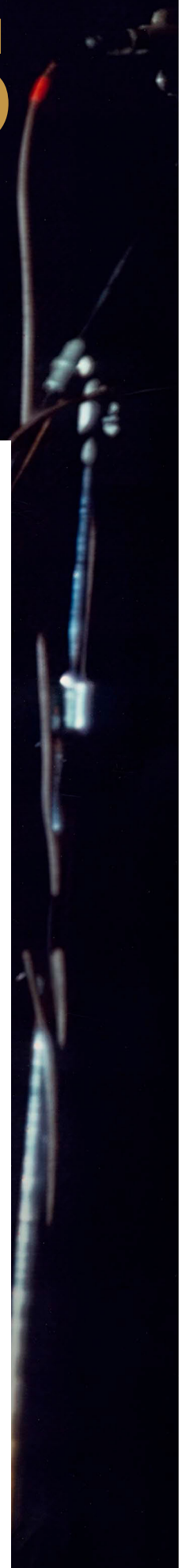


Rolling down the years: Bob Dylan aboard the Dublin to Belfast train, May 1966.

1966 DYLAN ON TOUR

OBVIOUSLY SIX BELIEVERS

From February to May 1966, DYLAN AND THE HAWKS made music on-stage that was never captured in a studio. Loved and loathed, it pushed its creators to the limit and established a truth about Dylan tours that still holds: if you think you know what to expect, think again. "And it was loud," discovers JOHN HARRIS, "louder than anyone played in those days." Portrait by ALICE OCHS.



ON MAY 27, 1966, A MATTER OF HOURS after Bob Dylan and his five-piece band had completed a World Tour with two shows at the Royal Albert Hall, his guitarist and close associate Robbie Robertson was interviewed by two correspondents from the Melody Maker.

What, they asked him, was his band called? "There is no name for this group," he said. "We've been playing together for a long time, working with different people just for fun, and mainly in the [American] South. Bob asked me to do a couple of jobs with him, and I did, just for the sake of science fiction. Then the other guys joined."

Another question: had Dylan's music become what some people were calling 'watered-down R&B'?

"It's not R&B and I certainly wouldn't call it folk rock," Robertson replied. "It's street music. Everyone in this organisation comes from the street."

Or, to be more accurate, several wildly different streets. Those of Greenwich Village, where Dylan had made his first New York appearances and begun to find out who he was. The thoroughfares in Helena and Marvell, Arkansas, where the young Levon Helm had ecstatically immersed himself in authentic rural blues. Southern highways where the group then called Ronnie Hawkins And The Hawks sometimes played behind chicken wire to protect them from flying projectiles. And Yonge Street in Toronto: the byword for the city's nightlife where – led by Hawkins – Helm, Robertson, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel and Garth Hudson had not only acquired their chops *à la* The Beatles in Hamburg, but eventually developed a growing conviction that it was time to break free of their bandleader and mentor.

The molten, seemingly boundless music that resulted from their partnership with Dylan caused not just the audience hostility of legend, but euphoria. At a stroke, the kind of lush, electrified treatment of Dylan's songs pioneered by The Byrds was dead: this new noise made it sound not just fey, but quaint. In November 1969, the writer Greil Marcus said that Dylan and the group we will from here on in call The Hawks were "without exceptions or qualifications" the finest rock'n'roll band he had ever seen and heard. "The sound they produced was stately, extravagant, and visionary – there is nothing with which to compare it in all of Dylan's recordings," he said. "And it was loud, louder than anyone played in those days."

"IT'S STREET MUSIC. EVERYONE IN THIS ORGANISATION COMES FROM THE STREET."
ROBBIE ROBERTSON

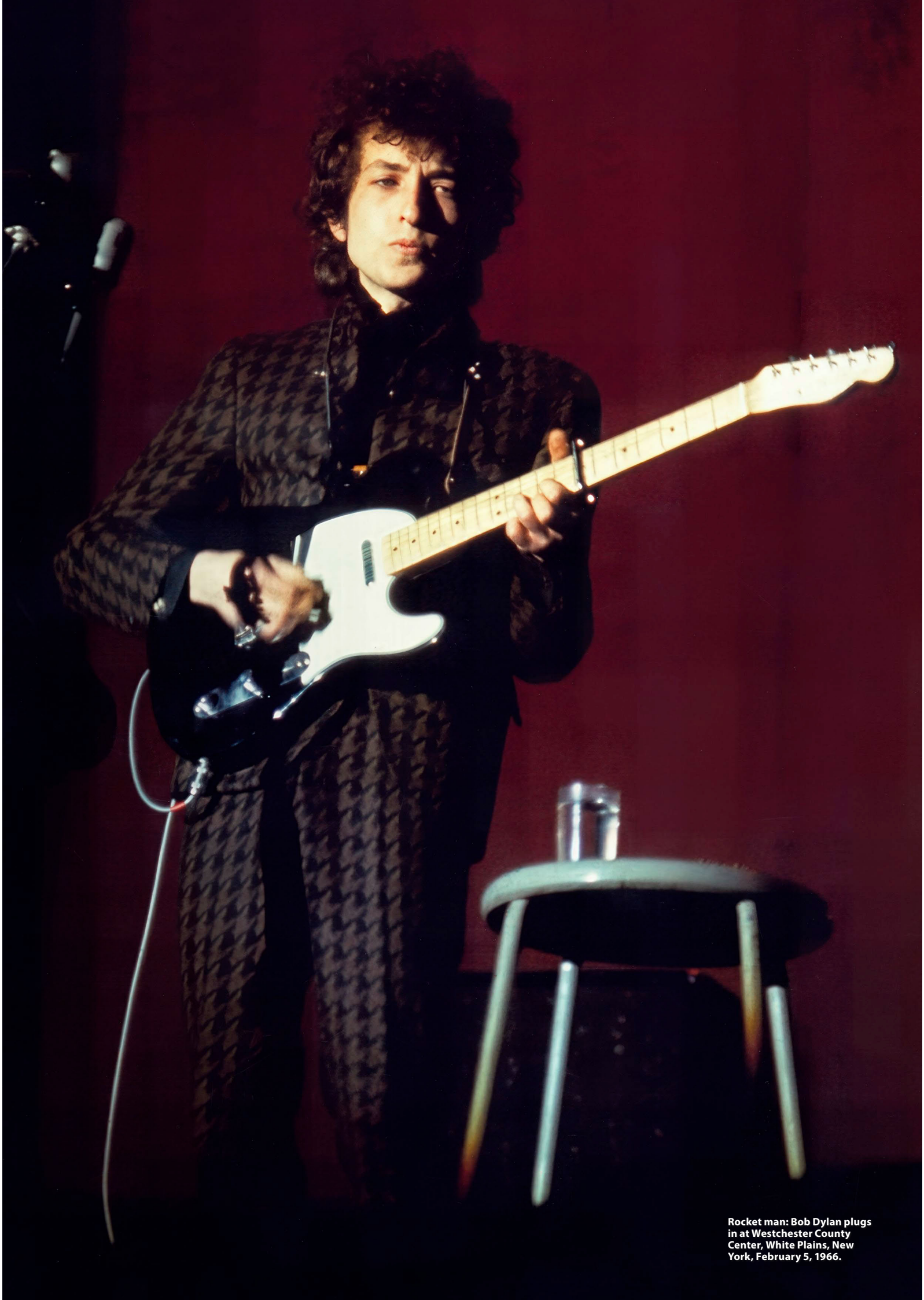
MOST OF US KNOW THE BOOKENDS OF THIS story. It began with Dylan's watershed electric appearance at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, then gained momentum at Forest Hills tennis stadium in New York on August 28, 1965, the first time Helm and Robertson played with Dylan. Before they went on-stage, the singer gathered them into a huddle, and gave them a speech like an army officer: "We don't know what's going to happen. It may be a real freakshow out there. I want you guys to know this upfront. *Just keep playing, no matter how weird it gets.*"

It ended at that final Royal Albert Hall show in 1966, after which Dylan evidently came close to total collapse. In between unfolded a rapid evolution, the musicians finding their space amid audiences split between seething antipathy and justified awe. Soundboard recordings of the gig at the Hollywood Bowl that happened six days after the riotous Forest Hills show are crystal clear. On the version of Tombstone Blues that opens the electric half of the show, the tone of Robertson's soloing and his interjections between vocal phrases – caustic, metallic, almost mocking – perfectly complement Dylan's vocal delivery. Helm and bassist Harvey Brooks are taut and perfectly locked-in, and keyboard player Al Kooper adds colour and body.

The audience response, moreover, appears noticeably supportive. But what you miss, in comparison with what came later, is intensity and sheer power. The electrified It Ain't Me Babe is a dud. Even Like A Rolling Stone is too tentative and restrained, with Kooper's organ sounding dangerously close to the kind of backing you might hear in a British working men's club. Clearly, things still needed work.

The next run of shows began in the Texan cities of Austin and Dallas. Kooper bailed: "Look at what they did to JFK down there," he later said. So it was that Robertson and Helm seized their ➢

Alice Ochs/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images



Rocket man: Bob Dylan plugs in at Westchester County Center, White Plains, New York, February 5, 1966.

chance: Why couldn't Dylan just hire all five of The Hawks? He came to hear and see what they did at the Friar's Tavern in Toronto, rehearsed with them after hours, and agreed that they should all hook up and "see how it goes" (adding a picaresque sub-plot, The Hawks were embroiled in a court case centred on a batch of Panama Red cannabis for which Rick Danko took the rap – to cheers of relief, he was given a one-year suspended sentence and a spell of probation).

SO HERE THEY FINALLY WERE: DYLAN AND ALL FIVE Hawks, not least Garth Hudson, whose mercurial, often stunning organ-playing – as on every version of Ballad Of A Thin Man from this point on – would add a crucial element to the ensemble's sound. In 2015, Columbia Records put out a download-only collection of 208 songs recorded on the 1965 tour, most from illicit audience tapes, and therefore extremely lo-fi. But you can hear the fierce sorcery at work. It's all there in a recording from the Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 30. Helm plays with the subtleties and deft touches singularly lacking from the *Live 1966* recordings from London and Manchester. A rendition of Positively Fourth Street – greeted with rapturous applause – crystallises the exactly-right mixture of resentment and melancholia; on a delightfully uptempo Like A Rolling Stone, everyone – including Dylan, whose vocal is great – manages to tap into the flowing, inexorable quality of the original 45.

There was also work in the studio. But then, in the wake of a show in Washington DC, Helm – who had been quietly seething for a while – quit, telling Robertson "I don't like this damn music" and "I don't trust [Dylan's manager] Albert Grossman and these people." Looking back, this was the first sign of a crack between the two of them: Robertson, by contrast, relished Dylan and Grossman's company and the elevated bohemian milieu he was being exposed to. Helm's first replacement was Bobby Gregg, the sessioneer who had played on just about all of *Highway 61 Revisited*, and was summoned not just to join the tour, but to play with The Hawks on more studio tracks – among them, a second recorded version of Can You Please Crawl Out Of Your Window?, released as a single to a noticeably underwhelmed response. In the linernotes for the exhaustive 1965-66 box set *The Cutting Edge*, the writer Bill Flanagan rather sniffily commented that "the 1965 Hawks were too jumpy and inexperienced in the studio to equal the standard *Highway 61* had set."

But were they? The case against is crystallised by the jettisoned Take 7 of Visions Of Johanna.



"THERE WAS THIS PHALANX OF OLD FOGIES OUT TO CAUSE TROUBLE, BECAUSE THEY KNEW THEIR DAYS WERE NUMBERED."
MICK FARREN

Dylan instantly maligned it as "not right at all". But it's superb: a treatment in which the acoustic version's fever-dream of New York City in the dead of night becomes something completely different: a desperate, frantic sprint through all the oddities and outrages of nocturnal Manhattan – and, by extension, 1960s America. It was followed by even more studio work, this time with the experienced Sandy Konikoff on drums, who had just undergone a personality-changing immersion in jazz. Just before they began four takes of She's Your Lover Now – unheard officially until 2015 – Robertson took him to one side, and issued orders that may amount to the '65-66 First Commandment: "Don't swing. *Never* swing."

Everything was moving at a completely insane pace. In February 1966, Dylan, Al Kooper and Robertson connected with a set of Nashville pros to work on *Blonde On Blonde*. Then touring began again – again! – in Louisville, Kentucky. By the time Dylan reached Hawaii in April, Konikoff was gone, and the latest drummer was the Texan Mickey Jones, who was built like a Sunday league rugby player, and played the drums in the way other people chop down trees: crudely, but with an undeniable strength and belligerence that usually suited the occasion, sounding like a counterattack to all the boos and heckles.

But this music could also express so much more: the mockery and scorn that defined Tell Me Momma and Brand New Leopard Skin Pill Box Hat, or the break-of-dawn regret that oozed from One Too Many Mornings, crystallised in Danko's expression of the single word "behind". By the time the musicians got to Ballad Of A Thin Man, it sounded like they were evoking – whether consciously or not – Vietnam, all the horrors that happened in the South, a new generation in open revolt and so much more. This might have been the meaning of the US flag they unfurled when they played in Paris on May 24, and Dylan's insistence at the Albert Hall that "These are all protest songs". What he said sounded sarcastic, but maybe it was true.

BY RIGHTS, THE MUSIC DYLAN AND The Hawks made should have immediately redefined their chosen art form. But at the time, almost no examples of it were officially released (a version of Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues from Liverpool Odeon was the B-side of I Want You in June 1966, but that was that). The '66 world tour was quickly followed by both Dylan's disappearance after his motorcycle accident and the continued rise of love, beads, bells and acid rock.

The six of them would soon revolutionise music, but not via the stuff they had played in '65 and '66: psychedelia was effectively killed by their contemporaries hearing acetates and copied versions of the so-called Basement Tapes, and the release of the hugely influential *Music From Big Pink*, the work of a troupe by then called The Band, whose downhome example was followed by The Beatles (Paul McCartney on the Apple roof, attired and bearded as if plucked from an Elliott Landy image of The Band in Woodstock), the Stones, Eric Clapton and more.

But in London, those shows at the Albert Hall catalysed something significant. The late writer, musician and activist Mick Farren nailed it: "There was this sort of phalanx of old fogies out to cause trouble," he recalled, "because they knew their days were numbered. Of the 3,000 that the Albert Hall holds there were about 700 fogies and everybody else was like these strange-looking people that we'd only sort of glimpsed from the hilltops… there'd be geezers marching in there with their wellies sprayed silver and looking a trifle ridiculous, like psychedelic landgirls… [and] a lot of people basically dressed up like Bob Dylan, me included.



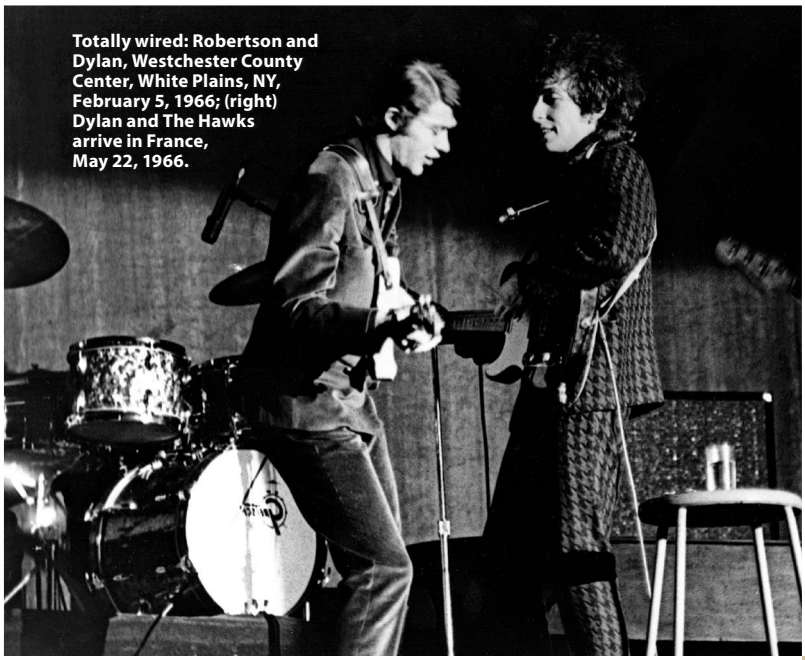
Come fly with us: the short-lived seven-piece line-up of Levon & The Hawks, 1964 (from left) Bruce Buono, Jerry Penfound, Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Richard Manuel, Garth Hudson, Robbie Robertson.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty



No fogies allowed: (left) Mick Farren with The Deviants, 1969; (right) Dylan enjoys a press conference with drummer Mickey Jones (right), Savoy Hotel, London, May 1966.





Totally wired: Robertson and Dylan, Westchester County Center, White Plains, NY, February 5, 1966; (right) Dylan and The Hawks arrive in France, May 22, 1966.



[And] first of all there was this sort of cultural burial, when Dylan comes out… (*mimics Dylan folkie whine*). Folkies go, 'Yeah, hooray!' But everybody knows the fucking Band are coming on after the interval. Then The Band come on and they all go crazy.

"It seemed that everybody was poised for something to happen," Farren continued. "All those bad-trip records came out – 19th Nervous Breakdown, *Revolver*… [And] by the end of the summer there'd been sufficient sort of encounters that people were starting to get to know each other. People were going to different pubs outside their own neighbourhoods because they'd heard a bunch of freaks hung out there… [and] they'd chat: 'Did you go and see Dylan? Fucking great, wasn't it?'… It was all going on."

And there surely were records made under Dylan and The Hawks' spell. We know The Beatles were at the second Albert Hall show, something which we perhaps consider when it comes to *Sgt. Pepper*'s title track and its reprise: the expectant audience noise at the start, the rumbling, warmly distorted rhythm guitar, and sharp, stinging lead interjections – by McCartney on the former track and George Harrison on the latter – that sound strikingly Robertson-esque. Then there was the Stones' turn into menacing noise and a frantic tempo on Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing In The Shadow? – recorded through August and September 1966.

As Robbie Robertson told those Melody Maker reporters, what Dylan and The Hawks played wasn't R&B and you definitely wouldn't call it folk rock. Even now, it sounds like the explosive birth pangs of a future in which popular music – even at its loudest and most combative – could express a whole world of meaning, and the best artists felt the imperative to take chances, and challenge and confront their audiences. Its legacy burned slow, but even 60 years on, it makes you catch your breath: raw art, delivered night after night until it had changed music forever.

Fiona Adams/Redferns/Getty, Alice Ochs/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty, AFP via Getty

ROAD RASH PT.1

Dylan's other key tours, in a nutshell…

1964 World Tour

February 1 – December 7, 1964

It started as a month-long On The Road recreation with cronies in a Ford station wagon playing a few shows, writing, hanging out and taking a break from Dylan's increasingly tangled love life. But against the background of erupting Beatlemania, as Dylan's old Village pal Maria Muldaur realised just four weeks later after a packed Santa Monica Civic Auditorium performance when she saw the erstwhile coffeehouse troubadour being vamped by a bevy of beautiful women at a Hollywood party, "the Big Star Trip Has Now Officially Begun." Without any seeming strategy or effort save for set-piece shows in London's Royal Albert Hall and the Newport Folk Festival, 1964 would make Dylan a celebrated and debated name on both sides of the Atlantic, the misgivings of folk protest fans and pundits as his songs grew less political and more personal only raising his status as an avatar of cool, an artist on his own path.

Judas value: ★★

1965 Tour of England

April 30 – May 10, 1965

Bobmania had gripped Britain when Dylan returned for his first ever proper tour but also solo acoustic swan song. Though his rocking new hit Subterranean Homesick Blues divided fans – "a mistake," thought Pamela Barron of Swanley, Kent; "I don't like that at all," a sweet Liverpudlian teenage autograph hunter told Dylan in the Adelphi Hotel – the tour was a triumph; DA Pennebaker's fly-on-the-wall documentary Dont Look Back captured every aspect save the off-stage amphetamine atmosphere reported by such friends as Marianne Faithfull, the star mostly approachable, courteous and good-humoured until snapping as hotel hangers-on get out of hand ("Be groovy or leave, man!"). The shows? Though Dylan was by now itching to electrify, his fans hung onto every syllable: hip but intimate, profound but funny, poetic but sly. "There was something special about that," he mused after the Royal Albert Hall show attended by The Beatles and the Stones. There was indeed.

Judas value: ★★★

BLOWN OUT ON THE TRAIL

Leg 2 of the ROLLING THUNDER REVUE was beset by ill omens: not least its principal's failing marriage. But as a new box set from the singer's archive makes clear, bad vibes were nightly transformed into "incendiary" performances and unpredictable reinventions. As Dylan's bandmates assure RAY PADGETT, "All bets were off."

Picture by KEN REGAN.

1976 DYLAN ON TOUR

EARLY MAY, 1976. DEEP IN THE LOUISIANA swamps, the musicians of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue are with Bobby Charles, the cult hero who'd made an album with The Band in 1972, and who also, in a previous life, had written See You Later, Alligator. Down South for the second Rolling Thunder tour, a show has been cancelled and Charles – whom Dylan later calls "one of the most melodious voices ever transmuted into a piece of vinyl" – has invited everyone to his place in the bayou for a barbecue. But he isn't cooking hamburgers.

According to percussionist Gary Burke, not long before his passing earlier this year, "There were a lot of local characters and this unusual-looking stew. This guy with a Bowie knife in his belt, somebody you don't want to mess with in a dark alley, says, 'It's alligator. I caught this last night.'"

"There were no plates or utensils or anything," says Roger McGuinn, one of the tour's featured performers. "You go and take a handful of alligator, put it in your mouth, and chase it with a beer."

Everyone stays over, eating alligator, drinking beer



Shelter from the storm: the Rolling Thunder Revue's 'Midnight Special' at the Belleview-Biltmore Hotel, Starlight Ballroom, Clearwater, Florida, April 22, 1976 (from left) Scarlet Rivera, Joan Baez, Roger McGuinn, Mick Ronson, Donna Weiss, Howie Wyeth, Bob Dylan, Rob Stoner, Gary Burke, Steven Soles, Bob Neuwirth.

Ken Regan

and mezcal. Meanwhile, Charles strums his guitar and spins records by 1950s Cajun band The Louisiana Aces. Every time anyone says something memorable, Charles drawls, in his thick Louisiana accent, "Pencil and paper… pencil and paper," then scrawls it down as a possible future song title.

The guy who caught the alligator calls himself Bird, and he doesn't take kindly to all these hippy musicians coming into his swamp. Suzi Ronson, partner to ex-Bowie now-Dylan guitarist Mick Ronson, remembers: "They were gambling, and the guy threw this enormous knife. It whizzed right past Mick's face and stuck in the thing behind him. Then he picked up his gun and laid it across the table. I was frightened that Mick might get killed and dumped in the bayou. Bob Neuwirth rushed in and took Mick outside."

David Mansfield, the baby-faced 19-year-old who played steel guitar, mandolin, and violin, calls it "a lost weekend" – one of many such moments of chaos on the second Rolling Thunder tour.

ROLLING THUNDER 1976, IT QUICKLY BECAME clear, was not at all like Rolling Thunder 1975. The travelling gypsy carnival spirit of Dylan's autumn jaunt had departed and Dylan's mood had plummeted. His marriage to Sara Dylan, who appeared occasionally on the tour but mostly kept her distance, appeared in jeopardy; they would formally divorce in spring 1977.

Desire had been released in January, but many of the album's songs, which had featured so prominently on the autumn dates, had been jettisoned. Instead, Rolling Thunder 1976 became the *Blood On The Tracks* tour that had never happened. Idiot Wind, If You See Her, Say Hello, and Shelter From The Storm all made their live debuts in cutting new arrangements. Dylan wrote those songs when his marriage began to struggle. Now, as it collapsed completely, they got angrier.

"That Idiot Wind, oh my god, that's one of the most impassioned vocals I ever heard," says bassist and bandleader Rob Stoner of one of the nightly highlights. "And there's Sara sitting right in front while he's singing this shit. It was some incendiary emotional stuff to witness."

As a massive new box set – *The Rolling Thunder Revue: The 1976 Live Recordings* – makes clear, dour off-stage vibes translated to incredible on-stage music. The nine-track *Hard Rain* live album, released in September 1976, barely scratched the surface. Across 39 discs, fans can now hear almost every 1976 show, some never heard before even by the most dedicated bootleg collector. The set makes a powerful case for a tour that some Dylan fans have given short shrift.

There was an "edgy punk energy" to Dylan's new sound, says Gary Burke: songs reinvented in loud and aggressive ➢



new ways, sometimes screamed at top volume. "It was more wild and uncontained," adds violinist Scarlet Rivera, a dominant presence with Dylan both musically and visually ever since her playing on *Desire*. "It felt like two different tours."

AFTER THE SECOND OF A PAIR OF BENEFIT CONCERTS for imprisoned boxer Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter had wrapped in Houston on January 25, everyone assumed that was the end of the Rolling Thunder Revue. But in April, Dylan called them all back – or most of them; for reasons he still doesn't understand, Ramblin' Jack Elliott was replaced by bawdy Texas raconteur Kinky Friedman. They set up in the Belleview-Biltmore Hotel in Clearwater, Florida to rehearse. Stage manager Gerry Bakal remembers his arrival there: "We pull into the parking lot, and there is a barefoot, tuxedo-wearing, purple glasses Roger McGuinn telling people where to park. Rumour has it LSD was involved."

Rehearsals began, but one key person was often absent. "Bob hardly ever showed up," says Rob Stoner. "So we didn't know what the hell he wanted." Dylan might not have felt up to working, he posits: "After we got there, we heard Phil Ochs had killed himself. Phil had wanted to be on Rolling Thunder."

On opening night in Lakeland, Florida, April 18, none of the first 10 songs was a holdover from 1975. In classic Rolling Thunder fashion, the gig had been announced less than three weeks before – on April Fool's Day – making some fans wonder if they were being pranked. But the short-notice approach that worked in tiny theatres in the North-east struggled down South. Newspaper reports of the first show noted empty seats and compared it to the packed arena for the Doobie Brothers the day before. "The North is Bob's territory," says tour director Jacques Levy's partner Claudia. "The South, not as much."

It was Easter Sunday and the band performed in front of giant paintings daubed onto plywood by Dylan; one depicted Jesus Christ pierced by arrows. In case anyone missed the connection, Dylan played Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues for the first time, pointedly repeating the opening line at the end: "If you're lost in Juarez and *it's Easter time too*."

Kinky Friedman kept the holiday theme going by wearing a one-of-a-kind jacket Dylan purchased for him featuring pink crucifixes and a depiction of Jesus on each lapel while he sang They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore. (Friedman later sold the jacket, and Dylan never let him hear the end of it. He called selling it "one of my few regrets in life.") Joan Baez almost upstaged Friedman, dancing sidestage during his set wearing short shorts, a halter top, and an orange Afro wig.

The music was no joke, though. For the second song, Dylan delivered a radically altered If You See Her, Say Hello. It was the first time he'd ever performed it live, and he'd already entirely rewritten it. He began, "If you see her, say hello/She might be in North San Juan/She left here in a hurry/I don't know what she was on." By the end, he practically spat the threatening new lyrics, "If you're making love to her/Watch it from the rear/You'll never know when I'll be back/Or liable to appear." It all built to a new conclusion: "But I know she'll be back someday/Of that there is no doubt/And when that moment comes/Lord, give me the strength to keep her out." All the lyrics were new, and were never heard again after this tour.

Dylan's young children tagged along for the first few shows. At one point, Dylan's and Baez's kids got into a backstage debate over which of their parents was more famous. Baez told a local reporter, "They yanked out this poster and Dylan's kids said 'See, our father's name is on top. He's more famous.' And [my son] Gabe said, 'Yeah but look at the fancy writing my mother's name has. She's more famous.'" To solve the argument, Baez called Dylan's room and asked him directly: "Who's more famous, you or me?" After a pause, Dylan said, "I'm going to have to sleep on this one," and hung up.

AFTER THREE SHOWS, THEY RETURNED TO the Clearwater hotel ballroom. Dylan had struck a deal with NBC to produce a TV special and hired Burt Sugarman, the LA producer behind the network's late music showcase, The Midnight Special, to film it.

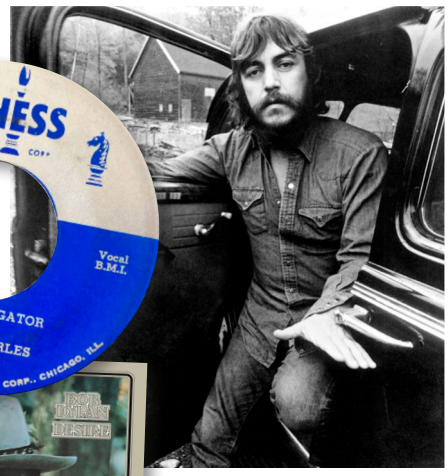
When the cameras rolled, Dylan jettisoned most of the songs they'd been playing. The band weren't thrilled at him calling a bunch of barely rehearsed tunes, but from the evidence in the new box set, at least Dylan sounds like he's having fun. Multi-instrumentalist David Mansfield recalls a moment during one of his solos when Dylan mimed twisting the tuning pegs on his mandolin "like a Three Stooges routine." (The box set contains 10 of the more than 30 performances recorded.)

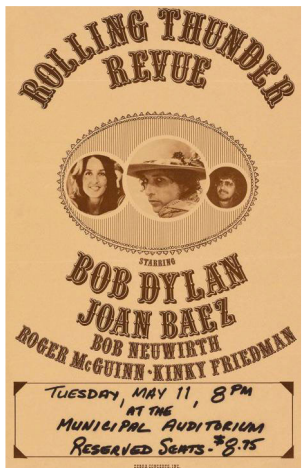
Nevertheless, the special got scrapped. Participants blame Sugarman's direction, saying the film looked like John Denver, the Elvis comeback special, even The Monkees. Sugarman's team positioned Dylan far in front of his band, in a bright spotlight surrounded by audience legs dangling from scaffolding. "Who knows why Bob hated it," says Mansfield, "but, staging-wise, it was corny."

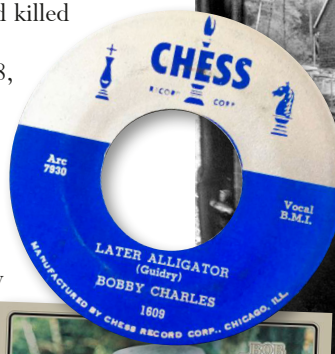
As the tour continued, Dylan carried on

"EVERYONE ON THE STAGE WAS OBVIOUSLY LETTING LOOSE. THERE WAS NO CONSTRAINT. THERE WAS NO SENSE OF BEING CAREFUL."
PAUL GOLDSMITH

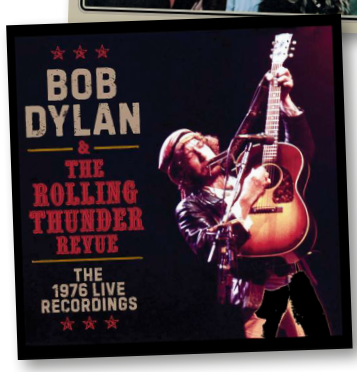












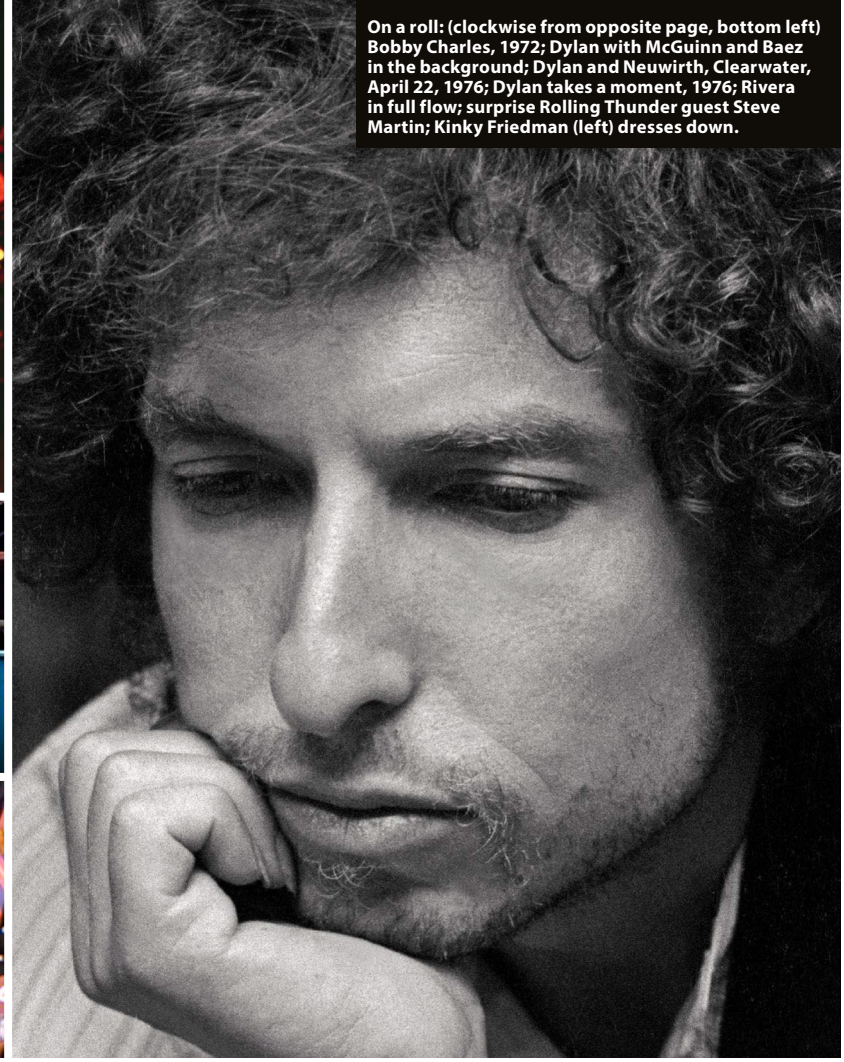
Michael Ochs Archives/Getty











On a roll: (clockwise from opposite page, bottom left) Bobby Charles, 1972; Dylan with McGuinn and Baez in the background; Dylan and Neuwirth, Clearwater, April 22, 1976; Dylan takes a moment, 1976; Rivera in full flow; surprise Rolling Thunder guest Steve Martin; Kinky Friedman (left) dresses down.

tweaking his lyrics. Lay Lady Lay received one of the most dramatic rewrites, with a new nightly verse beginning, "Forget this dance, let's go upstairs!/Let's take a chance, who really cares?" "That really upset a lot of people," Burke remembers. "Instead of a romantic song, it was more like a *demand*."

Dylan experimented musically, too. He favoured lurching stop-start arrangements that abruptly shifted musical gears. Mansfield recalls, "You might start the thing at one tempo, and then it turns into a slow blues shuffle, and then it turns into a boogaloo, and then there's a rubato section. All bets were off."

Dylan drove these jolting arrangements with his guitar. "It was rough," Mansfield adds. "He later became a much better electric guitar player, but at that time, he tended to pull the strings out of tune. So it was quite abrasive, but it sort of worked with the general ethos of the tour."

On several songs, Dylan played slide guitar on a crazy-looking white National shaped like the United States, possibly a nod to the USA's 200th birthday that year. "This one we're going to do in honour of the bicentennial," he said a few times to introduce I Pity The Poor Immigrant, a song eventually paired with the Woody Guthrie song Deportee in a poignant rejoinder to anyone who thought Dylan had stopped being political.

AS THE TOUR ROLLED ON, THE MUSIC GOT BETTER, but Dylan's demeanour got worse. "He impacted the whole tour with his moods," remembers tour manager Chris O'Dell.

Expressions of the singer's marital dissatisfaction were hard to miss. The 70-plus person touring crew included a woman he claimed was his tightrope instructor (Baez noted how she quietly vanished whenever Sara turned up). Another woman was supposedly the tour astrologer; a third the tour herbalist. Dylan's paranoia increased as well. "When we would leave a place, security would go into the room where he was staying and take everything out," remembers Gary Burke. "Every piece of garbage, everything. They would put it in bags so that nobody went in and tried to find the lost verse to Tangled Up In Blue or something."

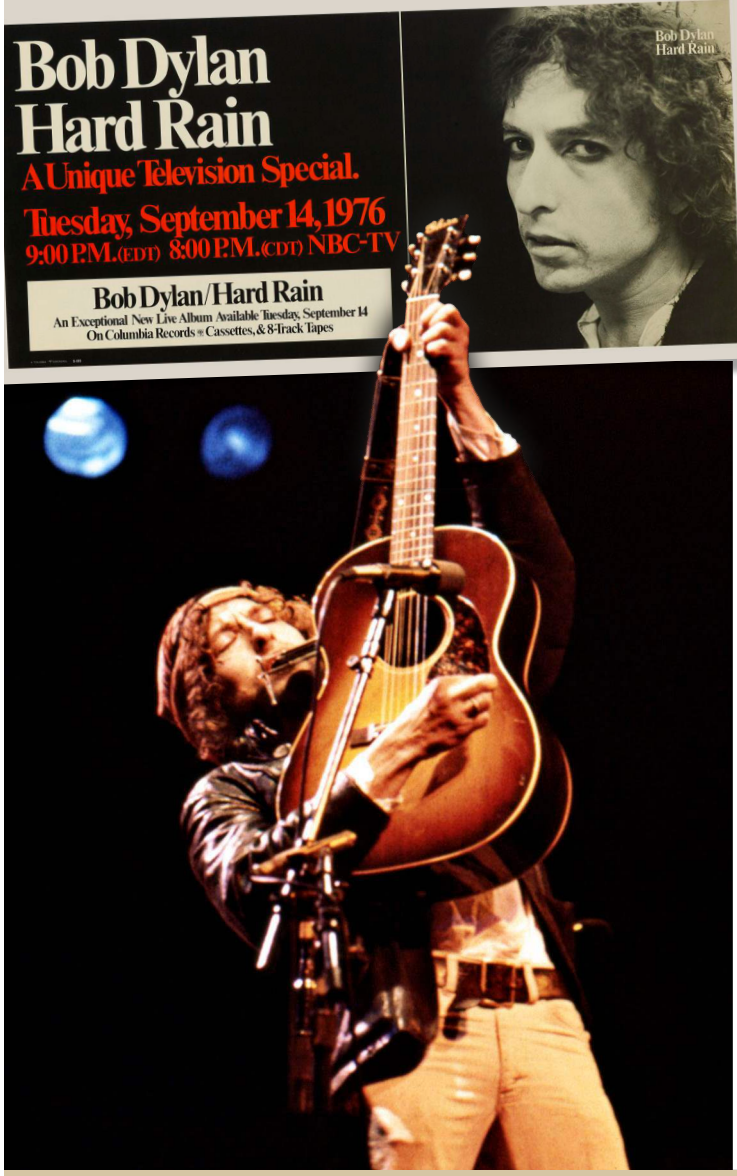
Meanwhile, the tour was floundering financially. A half-dozen shows were cancelled due to low sales. Bakal recalls being sent to local bars to give away hundreds of unclaimed tickets. "I'd walk in with a fistful of tickets, order a beer, and then start walking around saying, Hi, you want to go see Bob Dylan tomorrow night? How many? Two, four, six?" Eventually a bouncer would kick Bakal out, assuming he was scamming the customers. For the musicians, it was dispiriting. "You're coming off this heady Rolling Thunder thing and suddenly people aren't showing up," remembers Stoner. "It takes the wind out of your sails."

Still, vestiges of Rolling Thunder '75's freewheeling ethos remained, with special guests appearing unannounced. In Gainesville, a young Steve Martin did a short set after reportedly partying with Kinky Friedman the night before. In New Orleans, Dennis Hopper read a Rudyard Kipling poem to pacify an audience annoyed by technical delays – though his rambling delivery only made them madder. "By the time he was done, we were really scared," remembers Claudia Levy. "The place was shaking." Near the end of the tour, Joni Mitchell, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and Allen Ginsberg, three veterans of the first leg, all reappeared.

In Houston, Willie Nelson joined a show to help sell tickets, and his presence made for an unusually rowdy crowd. "The audience loved it," Mansfield says, "and they showed their love by throwing empty bottles of Jack Daniel's at us." It culminated in a joyfully chaotic Will The Circle Be Unbroken singalong with Dylan and Nelson, never bootlegged and heard for the first time on the new box set.

Dylan also brought in more songs he hadn't played previously (I Want You, You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go), unearthed early folk covers he hadn't performed in years (Dink's Song, Spanish Is The Loving Tongue), and debuted brand new songs he never put on an album (Seven Days, Rita May). The marathon shows pushed four hours, including sets by Baez, McGuinn, Friedman, and a song or two apiece from various band members: Ronson cheekily played a song called Is There Life On Mars? that bore no relation to his old bandmate's hit. The format gave the whole ensemble plenty of room to experiment. "The shows ➢

Ken Regan, Camera Press/Lynn Goldsmith, NBCU Photo Bank/NBCUniversal via Getty





Play some Zeppelin!: T-Bone Burnett, Dylan and Ronson rock up for a free show at Gatesville State School for Boys, Gatesville, Texas, May 15, 1976; (left, from top) an ad for the Hard Rain film; Dylan on-stage in Houston, May 8, 1976; (opposite page, clockwise from top left) Tom Waits, unimpressed by the "Rolling Blunder Revue"; Burnett, McGuinn and Baez; Wyeth and Stoner; Sara and Bob Dylan.

ROAD RASH PT.2

Dylan's other key tours, continued…

1978 World Tour

February 20 – December 18, 1978

"I've got a few debts to pay off," Dylan admitted to the Los Angeles Times. "I had a couple of bad years. I put a lot of money into the movie [Renaldo & Clara], built a big house… and there's the divorce. It costs a lot to get divorced in California." Signing up with Elvis, Sinatra and Neil Diamond tour promoter Jerry Weintraub, Dylan committed to a year-long global trek to perform 114 shows, including Surrey's massive Blackbushe aerodrome headliner, to two million people. With Rolling Thunder bassist Rob Stoner he assembled an eight-piece band and rehearsed hits, new songs from that year's *Street-Legal* and curveballs like rockabilly legend Roland Janes' Repossession Blues; he'd be styling out his Alimony Tour with panache and backstage hedonism. Captured in *The Complete Budokan*, Dylan found his inner medallioned Vegas showboater in songs strong enough to survive considerable cheesification: a Bobcat guilty pleasure.

Judas value: ★★★

The Gospel Tour

November 1, 1979 – May 21, 1980

"BORN AGAIN DYLAN BOMBS," blared the San Francisco Examiner of the opening show at the Fox Warfield Theatre, a venue a fraction the size of those Dylan had been selling out just a year before. Promoters doubted that strong *Slow Train Coming* album sales would translate to box office appeal and they were right; multitudinous fans boycotted the self-proclaimed born-again Christian's display of faith or phoniness according to taste, and kids who hadn't got the memo heckled for greatest hits. Undaunted, Dylan was charged with Jerry Lee Lewis-level conviction, his band the best since The Band itself. But if he later chose to forget the entire episode ("Nobody cares what Billy Joel's religious views are"), minority fans like Nick Cave hadn't, and, whether feeling the force of righteous hellfire theatre or sincere devotion, the Christian Dylan sub-cult has grown, with *Trouble No More* released in 2017, one of his greatest live albums.

Judas/Jesus value: ★★★★★

were so long, if you had to go to the bathroom, you'd just leave the stage," Burke laughs. "No one would miss you."

For all Dylan's aloofness, he looked out for his people. In New Orleans, Rivera remembers encountering a chauvinist promoter she'd dealt with before. "That information got to Bob Dylan, and he wanted to know why I didn't want this guy anywhere near me." She told him and later that night Dylan's crew played cards against the promoter. "They took this guy for everything he had, and Bob said something to the effect of, 'You need to learn how to treat a woman.' [The promoter] kept his distance from me after that."

In New Orleans there was also a tour outing to a Tom Waits concert. At a small club, a drunken McGuinn, Friedman, and Baez commandeered the stage for an hour in between sets while a pipe-smoking Dylan looked on. The local newspaper reported, "Dylan didn't budge from his front-row center seat, and he left shortly after Waits finally was able to see his way clear to the stage."

Waits was not amused by the shenanigans: the "Rolling Blunder Revue", he later called them.

THE TOUR NEARED ITS END IN TEXAS WITH ONE highly unusual show. In an echo of their appearance the previous December, at the New Jersey prison where 'Hurricane' Carter was held, the Revue played an abbreviated concert for a boys' juvenile detention facility. Bakal remembers how the worst offenders were not going to be invited to attend. When Dylan heard the plan, he objected. "Bob insisted that everybody sees the show or nobody's going to see a show."

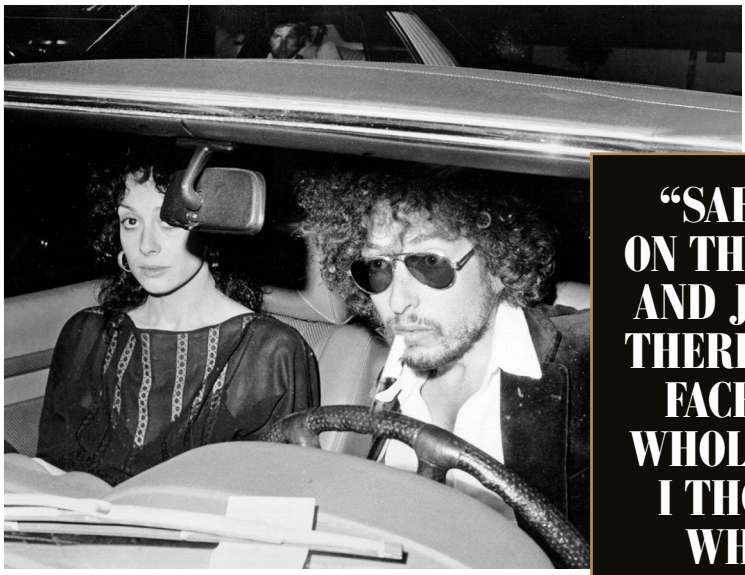
How much the audience cared was another matter. "The poor kids at the institution didn't know who Dylan was," Stoner recalls. They seemed more engaged by Baez and Mitchell dancing in the crowd than by the music. "Play some Led Zeppelin," one of the kids yelled.

Nicolas Russell/Getty, Movie Poster Image Art/Getty, David Gahr/Getty









"SARA HAD ON THIS TIARA AND JUST SAT THERE STONE-FACED THE WHOLE SHOW. I THOUGHT, WHAT IS GOING ON?"
GARY BURKE

It all built to the tour's best-known show: Fort Collins, Colorado, on May 23, the penultimate show filmed for the replacement TV special Hard Rain. The venue was Hughes Stadium – the home ground of Colorado State University's football team – and the titular downpour was real. The crew remained sequestered for days in the nearby Stanley Hotel (the inspiration for Stephen King's The Shining), ostensibly to rehearse but mostly to kill time – and drink – until the rain subsided.

Sara arrived with Dylan's mother Beatty. "You could feel the chill in the air," Stoner says. "Bob and Sara were not a happy couple, and here he was cooped up in a hotel with her for way more time than he had anticipated. Beatty took me aside a few times when she'd see Bob raging around the public areas of the hotel with a bottle in his hand, and she'd say, 'Isn't there something you can do?'"

At the show itself, Burke recalls, "Where I was set up, I would turn around and there was Sara. She's sitting there in a chair, very regal, with her sons around her. She had on this tiara and just sat there stone-faced the whole show. I thought, What is going on? So I asked Bob, and he said, 'She's just reminding everybody who the matriarch is.' I guess even Bob!"

When the show finally started, the musicians were miserable. "It wasn't my favourite show," admits Roger McGuinn. "It was cold and rainy and 5,000 feet and we couldn't breathe." Breathe or, in some cases, play; Mansfield recalls his foot shaking so much on the volume pedal of his pedal steel he couldn't hold it steady. Rivera adds, "We were all out of tune because of the rain. We were drinking to stay warm."

There was more at risk than out-of-tune instruments. "There's also the knowledge that electricity and water do not mix," local Colorado concert producer Rick Wurpel says. The roof covering leaked, soaking the stage with water. Less than two weeks before, Yardbirds guitarist Keith Relf had died after being electrocuted while playing in his basement. Wurpel says that in the back of everyone's mind was: "Oh my God, we're gonna electrocute Bob!"

As always, though, Dylan channelled that dark energy – the wretched weather, his disintegrating marriage, another half-empty venue – into passionate music. Cameraman Paul Goldsmith, also battling the elements on-stage filming Dylan, says, "Everyone on the stage was obviously letting loose. There was no constraint. There was no sense of being careful."

They even added two songs they'd not played before, Tangled Up In Blue and A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall. Both rank among the highlights of the box set. On bootleg rehearsal tapes, you can hear them attempt several different Tangled… arrangements. The first two verses are fast and frenetic, that "edgy punk" Burke described. Then the third verse dramatically downshifts to a slow distorted croon. A few verses later, the music switches again, to a swampy blues thud. "I'm just hanging on for my life," Burke remembers.

For A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall, the last song of the show and of the box set, Dylan "called the tune in waltz time," Stoner says. "The band was unprepared." While it did not end up on the *Hard Rain* LP, it opened the TV broadcast.

At Fort Collins, the band again played in front of Dylan's giant paintings. They, too, caused backstage drama. When erecting the stage, the carpenters needed scrap lumber and grabbed some loose plywood they saw lying around. Someone soon ran up to the producer shouting: "Who the fuck cut up Bob Dylan's paintings of Christ?" They rapidly reattached the pieces, and Bob was none the wiser.

The next day, the venue staff toured the football field to assess the damage. As Wurpel recalls, "It looks like a war zone. Not only is it thigh-deep mud, but there's boots, there's shoes, there's garbage. The athletic director and the coach, they were both in tears. They were like, 'There will never be another concert in this venue.' I'm not sure there ever has been."

TWO DAYS LATER, THE ROLLING Thunder Revue sputtered to an end in Salt Lake City. True to form, they played a half-empty venue – which didn't stop them delivering something special. Dylan performed what remains the solitary live version of Lily, Rosemary And The Jack Of Hearts as a duet with Baez, cribbing the lyrics from notes he'd scrawled on his sleeve cuff. Tragically, no tape exists. This final show was a last-minute add-on, announced only four days in advance. The usual soundboard, the one from which soundman David Hendel had taped all the other concerts, had already been shipped home.

After the show, Dylan organised a band meeting. Did they want to continue? "It was really a downer," Burke says. "People were just tired. You can only keep that energy up for so long." Newspaper reports teased negotiations to bring Rolling Thunder to the Soviet Union, but instead Dylan went home to edit his two tour films: Renaldo & Clara from the first leg; Hard Rain from the second.

Hard Rain, both the album and the film, received mixed reviews. "Dylan's least accessible, most chaotic and contemptuous album since *Self Portrait*," said Rolling Stone. Dylan gave one interview to promote the special, to TV Guide, and barely mentions it.

When Dylan next returned to the road, in 1978, he wore eyeliner and sparkly jumpsuits and belted glossy treatments of his greatest hits. Band members recall a happier frontman; Mansfield jokes that the 1978 tour was the first time Dylan actually spoke to him. But over 39 discs of this new box set, we hear how all the *sturm und drang* led to some of the best live music of Dylan's career.

"He might have been miserable," Mansfield says. "But we all got the benefit of it." Ⓜ

The Rolling Thunder Revue: The 1976 Live Recordings 39 disc box set will be released November 6 on Columbia/Legacy.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty, Andrew Putler/Redferns/Getty

YOU GO YOUR WAY AND I'LL GO MINE

In his 86th year, DYLAN's commitment to the road – and to finding new ways of subverting his own live shows – remains unwavering. As he brings his ever-mutating band back to Europe, JESSE JARNOW recaps Dylan's bizarre summer 2026 jaunt round the States, shedding and recruiting guitarists at every stop… Live portrait by GARY MILLER.

2026 DYLAN ON TOUR

SOME ARTISTS CHANGE THEIR SETLISTS FOR each show. For the summer of 2026, however, Bob Dylan kept his setlist mostly static. Instead, it was his band's line-up in flux, his tour unfolding with a hushed chaos that delighted longtime Bob-watchers yet may have been less fun for the band themselves. The venues were outdoors, but the ever-mutating combo evoked endangered dive bar vibes, achieving lift-off at a volume where waitresses could still have taken orders.

With nary an official announcement nor even stage introductions, the 85-year-old Dylan cycled through five guitarists and as many band configurations over the 34 shows of his American tour between early June and early August, transforming his sound several times in the process. It was classic Dylan: engaging longtime fans; befuddling anybody with fixed expectations of how he might present himself; and, perhaps, charming listeners with no expectations at all.

"I'm always so curious how intentional his every move is," says Sonic Youth co-founder Lee Ranaldo, who's been seeing Dylan gigs since 1978. "It seems like there is a masterplan in [Dylan's] head sometimes, that he's following some higher purpose that only he is subject to – but then again, maybe his whole operation runs completely on intuition… Who knows?"

ACCORDING TO THE MESSAGES CONVEYED BY WHAT was written on official merchandise, Dylan ended his five-year trek promoting 2020's *Rough And Rowdy Ways* this May. When he set out again the following month, there was a new name for the live shows: the Long Hot Summer Tour. After spending the last two outdoor seasons in the stony bosom of Willie Nelson's Outlaw Music Festival, it was Dylan's first time headlining the States' summer sheds by himself in a solid decade, with a rotating cast of low-key openers, including Lucinda Williams and blues guitarist Jimmie Vaughan, and about as low-key a headliner as it's possible to imagine.

> **"IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S A MASTERPLAN IN DYLAN'S HEAD, SOME HIGHER PURPOSE."**
> **LEE RANALDO**

So low-key that Dylan performed all 34 shows with the hood up on his jacket – a black one or a white one, that seemed to alternate at random. Hence the soft launch of two new Dylan characters: Bob The White and Bob The Black.

The Long Hot Summer began innocently enough as a continuation of the ever-quietening spring, with both Bob Britt (in the band since 2019) and Doug Lancio (since 2021) playing acoustic guitars. Eight shows into the tour, however, Lancio disappeared. In his place on-stage in Santa Barbara was 38-year-old ethereal jazz twanger, and former child prodigy Julian Lage. No explanations were forthcoming from Dylan, nor were any expected. A job condition, perhaps.

After another week's worth of shows, both Britt and Lage disappeared. "I was not fired but left of my own accord for reasons I would prefer to keep private," Britt posted on social media.

In Texas on June 29, Dylan took to the stage with his leanest band in years, a five-person line-up featuring 55-year-old swing guitarist Joel Paterson, identified first by fans who ran a grainy cellphone picture through an image search and found the page for Paterson's weekly gig in Chicago. A week later, Paterson was joined at the Cincinnati show by 29-year-old Memphis R&B guitarist Jad Tariq. And then, when Lage didn't have prior commitments, he was back for a few more gigs, except when he wasn't. Got all that?

The bobserve.com database, launched in 2023 by an international coterie of Dylan fans, is perhaps the best way to sort through the musicians and repertoire. Part of a thriving ecology of serious Dylanologists, there are multiple centres of action including Laura Tenschert's Definitely Dylan! podcast and Ray Padgett's Flagging Down The Double E's newsletter (to which this writer is an occasional contributor).

In Lee Ranaldo's Flagging Down… scene report for the New York tour stop, he mentions a 2021 backstage conversation with Dylan's longtime bassist and bandleader Tony Garnier about the band's ongoing attempt to lower their volume. Despite the fact that Dylan once again went electric this summer, the shows remained quiet.

Where Dylan's legendary '90s line-ups with guitarists Larry Campbell and Charlie Sexton had a swagger that bordered on mystical, his move to keyboards in the early 2000s continues to rankle some. But the past 20 years have seen a variety of micro-eras, including a divisive organ sound (circa 2008), a spectrum of growls (the 2010s and probably most decades, if we're being honest), a frizzily elegant standards period (2015-2017), and the graveyard omniscience of the *Rough And Rowdy* years, which included Dylan's rebirth as a conversational piano player who might now fit in better with the Grateful Dead than he did on their joint tour in 1987.

AT THE NEW YORK CITY PERFORMance at the 13,000-capacity Forest Hills Tennis Stadium on July 21 – site of the Second Electric Battle of '65 – Bob The White and band took to the stage in daylight, with no great change in atmosphere other than the dimming of the quiet PA music. While Dylan didn't require fans to seal their phones in pouches, as he's done on most indoor ➢

Gary Miller/Getty Images



The body electric: Dylan performing at Farm Aid, Noblesville, Indiana, September 23, 2023.



He contains multitudes: Dylan guitar disciples (from bottom left) Joel Paterson; Julian Lage; Doug Lancio; Bob Britt; Jad Tariq; Lee Ranaldo.

tours in recent years, both signs and ushers reminded attendees that photography and recording were strictly prohibited, as were binoculars.

So it was that fans had to squint, or make furtive use of their phone's zoom functions, to determine the night's line-up: alongside Tony Garnier and drummer Anton Fig (who joined last year), newcomer guitarist Jad Tariq was on the left and only slightly-less-new guitarist Joel Paterson on the right. There was no sign of hometown hero Julian Lage, who featured in Tariq's place at the tour's previous stop in Connecticut.

On paper, anyway, the summer's show was very much like Dylan's Outlaw appearances: Dylan centre-stage behind a keyboard, reinventing classics (It Ain't Me, Babe, I Shall Be Released, the Puttin' On The Ritz arrangement of When I Paint My Masterpiece), turning *Rough And Rowdy Ways* material inside-out (I've Made Up My Mind To Give Myself To You is now in the time signature 21/8, as one musicologically-astute Dylanologist observed). There are deeper favourites (Man In The Long Black Coat, Under The Red Sky) and a handful of not-entirely-familiar covers (Charlie Rich's I'll Make It All Up To You, Bo Diddley's I Can Tell). But as part of Dylan's larger arc, his Long Hot Summer arguably contained more variation than nearly any tour since he transitioned towards fixed setlists around 2011.

"The *Rough And Rowdy* shows in 2021 and early 2022 lived up to that name sonically, with some real rock'n'roll oomph and grit to them," observes UK-based fan Bennyboy, who has taken to mastering tapers' illicit live recordings and assembling compilations of tour highlights, circulated among fans. "But as the years have passed, things have generally got quieter," he confirms.

Bennyboy's recent unofficial compilation, *Get Your Mind Off Wintertime*, highlights the range of the Long Hot Summer, which did include a few setlist surprises, including the inexplicable live debut of *Basement Tapes* mega-obscurity Baby, Won't You Be My Baby (and one more subsequent performance), a few one-offs (Love Sick and You Ain't Goin' Nowhere at the tour opener), and a final slot that alternated between the existential bell-ringers Every Grain Of Sand and I Shall Be Released. Dylan also picked up an electric guitar for a few songs at one early show.

For some, Lage was the most exciting addition to Dylan's band in years, and a welcome surprise to many music heads. "If you had no clue this was only his second night, you might've assumed Julian had been there for years," says Tyler Wilcox, bassist in Colorado dream-jazzers Prairiewolf, who caught Bob The White with the Britt/Lage line-up at a Native-run casino east of Los Angeles.

"It's been great to have guitar solos back again," adds Lee Ranaldo, who caught Forest Hills with one of his sons. "I love Bob's piano playing and have loved the last few years, where it seems to me it's been more and more featured every time I've seen him, which has been great. Now, the fact that he can switch gears and pull its dominance back a bit, giving the guitarists some room to stretch out, has been wonderful."

THE NEW YORK STOP, AND LIKELY MANY OTHERS, WAS thick with musicians of many stripes. "The show was as gorgeous and emotional as the Beacon shows from 2019," says John Colpitts, AKA Kid Millions, drummer of long-running Brooklyn psychedelic noise collective Oneida. A longtime fan, Colpitts was disappointed when he finally saw Dylan in 2007 but blown away when he returned in 2016, and has caught him as often as possible since. "He'd replaced his entire band except the bassist and they were turning on dimes," he raves of the Forest Hills show. "The sound was crystalline. I felt that same emotional connection that I've always been chasing."

A good way to start a kerfuffle among Dylanlogists is to ask when the Never-Ending Tour ended and something else began. Officially, the fall European leg has been dubbed the Lights Of Autumn Tour. By the time it arrives in Bournemouth on November 25 and concludes with five nights at London's Royal Festival Hall, the music may well be some recognisable admixture of Rough, Rowdy, Long, Hot, and Never Ending. But it's still probably not wise to lay bets on anything – least of all the personnel – beyond that fans will receive an evening in the presence of Dylan, probably bassist Tony Garnier, and some beautiful new quiet shade of confounding. M

Courtesy Bob Britt; James Fraher/Redferns/Getty; Bianca de Vlar/Getty; Jordi Vidal/Redferns/Getty; Mary Gunning; Andrew Toth/FilmMagic/Getty

ROAD RASH PT.3

Dylan's latest key tours… until the next one

Dylan & The Dead Tour

July 4–26, 1987

Aged 46 Dylan felt burnt out, blocked and estranged from his old songs, his self-confidence shot. Hoping for rejuvenation, he linked up with disciples Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers, but found their disciplined stagecraft crushed his craving for spontaneity. His spirits even lower, he hitched up for a hot-ticket stadium stint with his generation's foremost Americana-rooted improvisers. Though a logical pairing in theory, the Grateful Dead liked to grasp a song's structure before feeling free to fly, and out of self-sabotaging belief that under-rehearsal and last-second setlists made the magic happen, Dylan refused to play ball. While the Dead did their best – guitarist Jerry Garcia and keyboardist Brent Mydland played some lovely stuff – the bard sounded broken: feeble, forgetful and far older than he would even in his eighties. Belatedly released in 1989, despite a passable Queen Jane Approximately the live album sucked.

Judas value: ★★★★

The Never Ending Tour

June 7, 1988 – December 8, 2019

Over 3,000 shows with never fewer than 1988's 71 and peaking in 1999 with 117: until Covid forced a natural break, chances are that every year Dylan would play a venue near you. Claiming that rejuvenating guitarist G.E. Smith's departure in 1991 actually ended The Never Ending Tour, Dylan differentiated each subsequent annual trek – setlists, band members, time itself: nothing stood still – but who outside his management office ever thought of his 1992 European sortie as the Why Do You Look At Me So Strangely Tour? For Bobcats and civilians alike, regularity, continuity and consistent excellence from the band if not always the star blurred the distinctions, the key constant being bassist and de facto musical director Tony Garnier, ever present since 1989. Good nights, bad nights, divisive nights – one fan's jazzily fresh reinterpretation being another's taking the piss – Dylan remains a poet in motion, a work in progress, thrillingly alive.

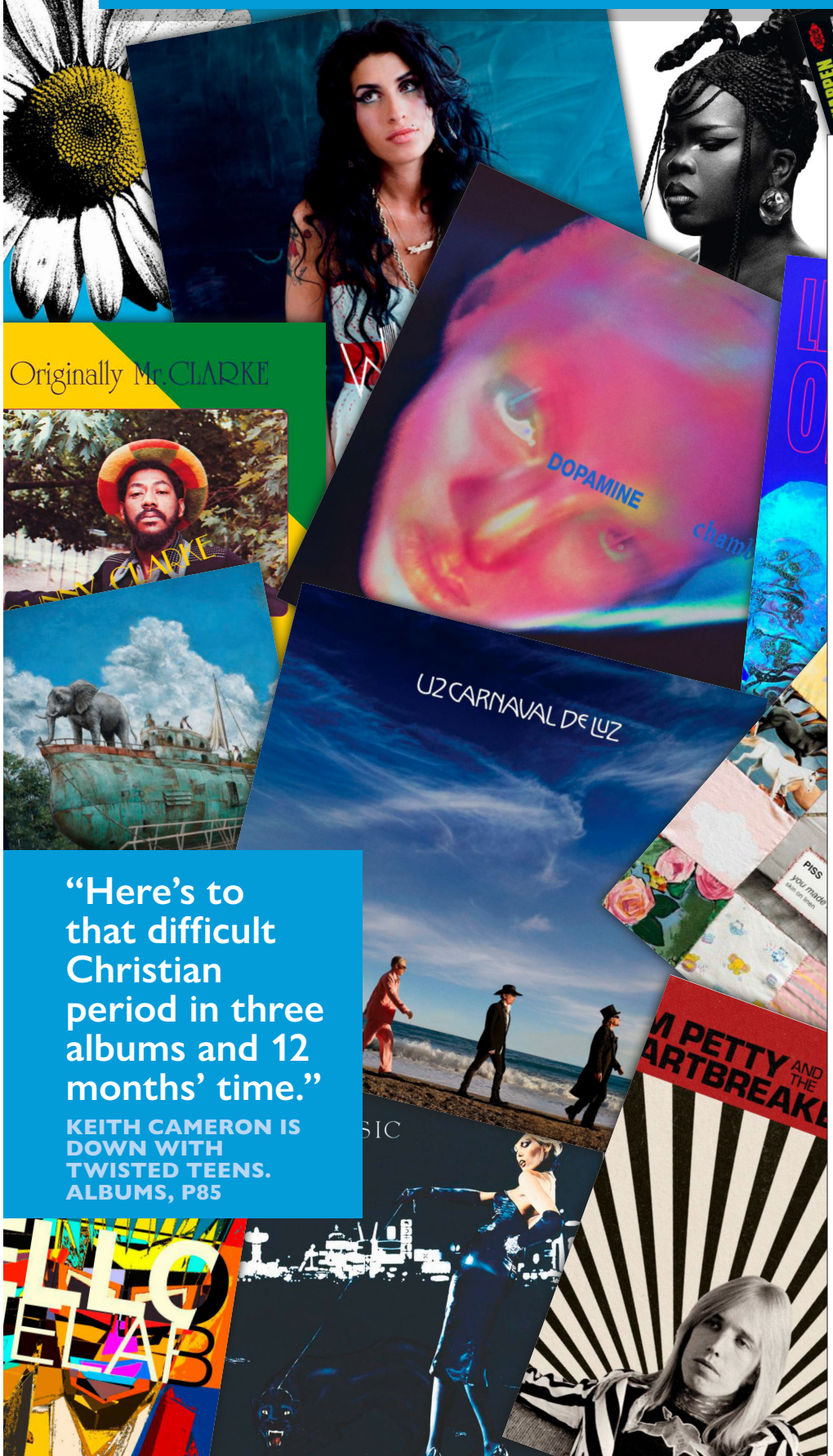
Judas value: ★★

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC

EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY** jenny.bulley@bauermedia.co.uk





"Here's to that difficult Christian period in three albums and 12 months' time."

KEITH CAMERON IS DOWN WITH TWISTED TEENS. ALBUMS, P85

CONTENTS

82 ALBUMS
- Fontaines D.C. are the real thing
- U2 party on
- Shovel Dance Collective are hot to trot
- Danielle Ponder stirs the soul
- Plus, Orchestra Baobab, Cameron Winter, Yello, Steven Wilson, Sheryl Crow, Queens Of The Stone Age, Syd Barrett, Johnny Flynn, PISS and more.

94 REISSUES
- Delight in Roxy's enduring *For Your Pleasure*
- Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers' origin story
- The unique career of Creed Taylor
- Plus, Marlena Shaw, Labi Siffre, Genesis, Amy Winehouse, Yoko Ono and more.

104 BOOKS
- The pre-Beatles Fabs by their official biographer.
- Plus, The Strokes, Neil Young, Alice Cooper and more.

107 SCREEN
- Pulp, punk, The Best Summer of the '90s and more.

116 HOW TO BUY
- Neo-soul by Stevie Chick.

INDEX

Acid Casuals 103
ALA.NI & Younge, Adrian 92
Ashby, Dorothy & Wess, Frank 98
Boyd, Moses 86
Carthy, Eliza And The Restitution 89
Chat Pile 91
Chiu, Jeremiah 91
Clarke, Johnny 101
Clinic 84
Coltrane, John 96
Crow, Sheryl 84
Dur-Dur Band 103
Editors 91
Elastica 101
Erickson, Roky And The Aliens 96
Ex:Re 92
Fagan, Scott 92
Family Silver, The 101
Flynn, Johnny & Lillie 89
Fontaine, Brigitte 103
Fontaines D.C. 82
Gainsbourg, Serge 97
Garefowl 91
Genesis 98
Ghost Dubs 90
Helen 89
Hoffs, Susanna 86
Holmes, Richard 'Groove' 97
Iommi, Tony 90
Jarrett, Keith & Haden, Charlie 103
Jennings, Waylon 98
Kings Of Leon 91
Kuti, Seun & Egypt 80 91
Lynott, Philip 98
Manic Street Preachers 97
Masin, Gigi 98
McDoom, June 85
Ministry 85
Movietone 101
Nau, Michael 86
O'Keefe, Danny 97
Ono, Yoko 96
Orchestra Baobab 90
Petty, Tom And The Heartbreakers 99
Psychic Ills 103
PISS 86
Ponder, Danielle 88
Protomartyr 90
Queens Of The Stone Age 85
Reeves, Martha 90
Roxy Music 94
Sangaré, Oumou 103
Shaw, Marlena 96
Shelley, Joan 103
Shepherd, Sheldon 89
Shovel Dance Collective 92
Siffre, Labi 97
Silverstein, Jeffrey 90
Sinatra, Frank 103
Sing-Sing 103
Skidmore, Alan 103
Studio G 103
Sundfør, Susanne 89
Sunnan 86
Swansea Sound 90
Tallest Man On Earth, The 86
Taupin, Bernie 84
Twisted Teens 85
U2 87
VA: Diesel Smoke And Dangerous Curves 101
VA: Heart Of Gold 84
VA: Jon Savage's 1976 101
VA: On The Corner 97
VA: Rough Trade 45s Vol 2 97
VA: Studio One Dub Plate Special 103
VA: The Songs Of Syd Barrett 86
Waits, Tom 98
Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan 92
Who, The 98
Wilson, Steven 85
Winehouse, Amy 96
Winter, Cameron 85
Withers, Bill 101
Wow! Scenario, The 85
Yeates, Macdara 89
Yello 84

Promise of the real

Fontaines mix past, present and possible future on high-contrast follow-up to *Romance*. By **Tom Doyle**. Illustration by **Andrew Archer**.

Fontaines D.C.

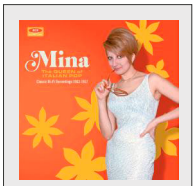
★★★★

Dopamine Chamber

XL. CD/DL/LP

THE SOUND of a band expanding their universe – growing bigger and bolder with each record – never loses its thrill. Upon their arrival in 2017, in an era when guitar music was regularly declared to be in terminal decline, Fontaines D.C. powered on through, painting in primary colours and frontman Grian Chatten's vivid poetry. If their first three LPs, culminating in 2022's *Skinty Fia*, seemed intent on rebooting indie rock, it made 2024's *Romance* and their pivot into electronics all the more surprising – not least because the band also underwent a sudden 1990s visual makeover of floppy hairdos and rave colours.

It's worth remembering that, for the members of Fontaines D.C., that decade is as distant as the 1960s was to Oasis and Blur. And so, in effect, with *Romance* the group beamed themselves into a version of the 1990s that never quite existed: one built from the progressive promise of The Stone Roses jamming along to breakbeat records, Happy Mondays retooling their songs with remix electronics, and The Young Gods chopping up their grinding performances in samplers. It was a brief window before bands turned guitar-centric and traditional again with Britpop – and it's this unrealised, future-facing 1990s that Fontaines D.C. continue to explore on *Dopamine Chamber*.

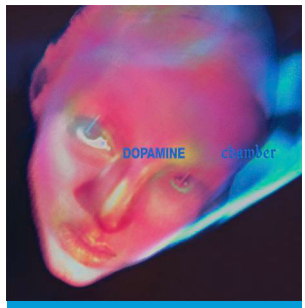


BACK STORY
AMORE '60S ITALIAN POP

• The main artist on Grian Chatten's playlist when making *Dopamine Chamber* was Italian singer Mina (now 86), particularly her soaring, orchestral '60s work. "Just the luscious strings and the liveliness of the vocal of Mina is something that informed the nostalgia and sense of humanity that I wanted to put in the record as something that we're leaving behind potentially," Chatten says. "I think the Mina stuff informed how the old days would feel. The kind of rose-tinted feeling of that. It was interesting to pair that with the slightly more dystopian, darkwave-influenced stuff, and have those two interact together on the album."

In fact, they ditch the guitars altogether – save for Conor Deegan's rumbling bass – in brooding opener Six Shot Morning, morphing into a synth band whose sixth member is producer James Ford (returning from *Romance*) adding icy chords on a vintage, telephone exchange-proportioned ARP 2600. At other points, they disappear as a band completely, as in the first two minutes of One Man, leaving strings and keyboard effects to carry the song until acoustic guitars and a rolling drum tattoo enter the picture. It makes the unexpected blasts into rock – everyone hitting the grunge pedals at once in Happy For You, and the metallic two-note solo in Tongue – all the more surprising and effective.

Meanwhile, Chatten's depiction of "the darkest room, on the brightest day" in Where Is Gone? encapsulates a record that veers between the shadows and the light. In Mimesis, a super-catchy New Order-styled pop song about burn-out, he notes, "Well everybody's depressed/We're running on a wheel", before offering support: "I'm here to fight your corner/My heart is open". The fact that this is a band operating in an age of absolute sensory overload is made explicit throughout *Dopamine Chamber*: a term from One Man describing the empty, addictive rewards available at the touch of a button in our hyperconnected world.



"Fontaines continue to explore an unrealised, future-facing 1990s."

The effect on Chatten's lyric writing often appears to be a kind of dissociation that, with its frequent movie-making references – the "cinematic feeling" in Marianne, the "melancholy hearts in a motion film" of Six Shot Morning – makes parts of the record feel as if they're unfolding on a screen. There's also a sense of others furtively capturing images, in the singer's deadpan suspicion, voiced in the latter song, that "Silicon Valley took a photograph".

Along with sonic expansion, Fontaines D.C. have set the bar even higher in terms of their songwriting. Chatten is a great melody writer in the sense that he sticks to the hooks without much variation, reducing the tunes to their essence without giving the sense that he's preparing to spoon-feed them to the growing crowds who've come to sing along to Starburster, I Love You or Boys In The Better Land. Here, Japan, tucked away as the penultimate of the 11 tracks, features a naïve melody that recalls early-years Noel Gallagher in its smart simplicity, even if Chatten uses it to describe a mutually cold partnership – the kind of romance in which both parties are using one another.

Often, in the songs that focus on relationships, the lines are intriguingly blurred. In Happy For You, a slow-burning mid-pacer that builds and builds from its chorus-effected Cure guitar intro, Chatten – ever the short story writer, so we shouldn't necessarily confuse the singer with the song – details an argument with a partner that results in a break-up, sweetened with a conciliatory gift of flowers. "On leaving I key your car," he adds, revealing a sly act of revenge-motivated criminal damage.

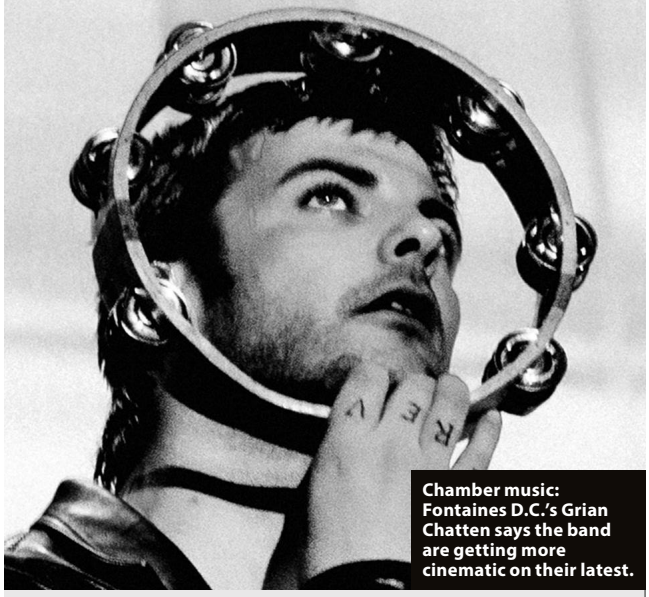
Elsewhere, Chatten is a wholly unreliable narrator. In the baggy synth-pop of Marianne, he appears to be reaching out to someone in trouble, but is he saving her from danger or inviting her into his own hazardous world? "I can help you disappear," he promises or, possibly, warns. "This could be your fatal match." Amid the '80s goth contours of You Miss Me, he turns even more menacing. "You're messing with something you don't know," he croons in a sinister tone, hinting that this dodgy character might even be doping his partner ("Your smile comes out of my pocket"), before the sky brightens with a deceptively uplifting chorus that features a Stone Roses stomp and stabbing, '60s strings.

The latter era is exquisitely evoked in Where Is Gone?, the most surprising cut on *Dopamine Chamber*, being a duet with Rosalía that comes across like some imagined Lee Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra duet arranged by Ennio Morricone. Gently driven by forever-changing orchestral fills from drummer Tom Coll and adorned with lovely, unobtrusive strings, it's a cryptic love song dealing with nothing less than the mystery of death. Featuring lines that sound as if they've been written in another language, with something lost in their English translation – "The picture frame is surely wrong", "There's no way I'm going back to how I feel" – it's a baroque pop beauty that further demonstrates Fontaines pushing at their stylistic boundaries.

Grian Chatten tells MOJO that, ultimately, he wanted *Dopamine Chamber* to "feel a little bit like the human race's life flashing before its eyes". In the end, with closer Intimate, he's viewing "the ruins of the human dream", while returning to his cinematic motif: "Colourful ending, so pretty in the final scene". It's a bleak vision, yet one that's elegantly rendered by the group throughout the album, both sonically and lyrically, by mixing the past, present and possible future. As dark chroniclers of their age, Fontaines D.C. are here to illuminate the gloom.

GRIAN SPEAKS! CHATTEN ON ROSALÍA, WRITING ABROAD AND GOING CINEMATIC.





Chamber music: Fontaines D.C.'s Grian Chatten says the band are getting more cinematic on their latest.

"Rosalía has a terrifying level of talent."

Grian Chatten speaks to Tom Doyle.

How did the preparation for this LP differ from *Romance*?

"Well, before we wrote this album, one of the fundamental questions I felt like asking myself was, Do we want to forget about *Romance* and kind of reinvent ourselves a little bit? Do like a rootsy album, take another left turn, or do we want to continue to pursue whatever this was with *Romance*? It felt like we had more to say in that area musically. More and more as we make albums, we've allowed the music to speak for itself. I suppose our music is getting a bit more cinematic. The lyrics were written after all the music."

What did your lyric-writing process involve?

"I wrote all the lyrics abroad. I went away to Vienna and then to Venice and did a very short, compressed writing trip, which was fun. Not all of it is the same in terms of how it responds to the state of world. But generally speaking, I try to write from kind of an emotional response to things that are happening in the world, and just hint at those things, as opposed to being explicit. I'd rather be implicit like that and be more explicit from the standpoint of the stage."

You travelled to a house in Palermo, Sicily, to record your vocals. Apparently building an ad hoc vocal booth out of mattresses and cushions?

"Myself and James [Ford, producer] were laughing because it was like two young lads having a sleepover and building a fort. And of course that is what it is, really. We're still just at play, y'know. It was a lot of fun, making all the music surrounded by equipment [at Decoy Studios in Suffolk] and then doing all the vocals with kind of nothing. Palermo is such a lively place. You're surrounded by a sense of oldness that commands a certain reverence."

Why was Rosalía perfect for Where Is Gone?

"Because I think her voice, there's a classical nature to it, but there's also something eerily sort of dystopian in it. She was on tour in America, so we sent her over the track, and within 48 hours she'd sent back this vocal. I just think she's a bit of an auteur. She reminds me of Bowie and Björk. She has a terrifying level of talent. So it's an honour."

Where do Fontaines D.C. go from here?

"The best place we can go from here is away for a while. Take stock, and give people a break from us after this one. I say that to you, but at the same time, I'm still writing a lot of music. I'll probably end up just writing and writing."

Another solo record, maybe?

"Yeah, I think so. I've been thinking about it recently. I've got a few tunes, and I have a bit of an idea of how I want it to be. I would say it'd be a lot more lively and a bit more kind of festival-ready."

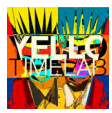
Yello

★★★★

Time Lab

UMR. BR/CD/DL/LP

Swiss veterans' 15th LP of deluxe interzone art pop.



Closing narration Zebra features Yello singer Dieter Meier huskily reciting a 1978 letter by visionary author Philip K Dick: relating to his epically nuts book VALIS, the novelist talks of warped realities and "intelligent electricity". It sounds like what Yello have been up to since 1979, and *Time Lab* is no exception. As ever, music brain Boris Blank suavely approaches production as perma-morphing, hi-gloss fantasy landscape, while spook-flâneur Meier gives voice to romance and glamorous danger. It's instantly familiar – '80s-model club track Spin Back reprises 2020's time-rewinding Spinning My Mind, which in turn referenced 1986's Goldrush – but as Saturday Morning looks for love in the metropolis, the breathless Streets Of Berlin recalls 1988's The Race and Swiss singer Heidi Happy emotes two rainy electro-reveries. The deep-DNA fealty to their own thing suggests less creative stasis and more the bespoke, ongoing work of true originals.

Ian Harrison

Clinic

★★★★

Wild In The Streets

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Liverpool's uneasy-listening champions return for Round 10.



Life on Clinic's uncanny estate is always different, always the same. As ever, succinct vignettes stop by just long enough to give you the willies. But rather than the anxious clamour of earlier days, now harps, zithers, xylophones and Omnichords summon queasy flashbacks. This music sounds like it wasn't recorded but Xeroxed, a grainy black and white thing that someone has nailed to a tree at the end of your street. It reads: "Missing. Trailer for children's sci-fi TV drama last broadcast in 1972. Can bite. May run away. Please call Ade or Hartley at this number." Using dub music-hall, lilting lo-fi and teenage opera, the duo draw an unhelpful map to their place with opium dens, penny arcades and a Hollywood soundstage along the way. The journey is its own reward.

Jim Irvin

Various

★★★

Heart Of Gold, Vol. 2: Out Of The Blue

CINEMA MUSIC GROUP/KILLPHONIC/CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

The first of two simultaneous sequels to last year's benefit for The Bridge School.



Last year's *Vol. 1* proved so successful, the label decided it deserved two companion volumes, each delivering 12 fresh interpretations of Neil Young songs not heard on the first instalment. Roughly speaking, *Out Of The Blue* skews toward the mainstream, and its cousin, *Heart Of Gold, Vol. 3: Into The Black*, veers toward indie, but those boundaries are fluid: the former opens with My Morning Jacket and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band swaying through Like A Hurricane in a version that would feel at home paired with MJ Lenderman drawling through Separate Ways on the latter. The appeal of *Out Of The Blue* is how Peter Frampton, Los Lobos, and Edie Brickell deliver familiar tunes played so straight and strong that Dramarama's concluding Kinda Fonda Wanda plays like a punchline.

Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Bernie Taupin

★★★★

The Sea Has No Mercy

VERTIGO/MCA NASHVILLE. CD/DL/LP

Elton John's musical other half's first solo album since 1987.



Even when his partner-in-song briefly and foolishly dumped him in the late '70s, Bernie Taupin never seemed wholly convinced by limelight-hunting. Three solo albums made before and after the split, plus two '90s outings with Farm Dogs passed by quietly. Today, though, the 76-year-old has written songs too personal to use John as a cipher and he's also moved away from the western shtick that's distracted him since he anointed himself the Brown Dirt Cowboy. Brandi Carlile guests on the rueful Come On California, while Taupin's daughter Georgey takes a verse on the brief but desperately moving mortality contemplation that is One Hundred Ways, but the spartan Joker ("I never drank the Kool Aid of the Kennedys") with its grizzled Tom Waitsian vocals suggests the old dog is up for new tricks.

John Aizlewood

Sheryl Crow

★★★

Pick You Up

OLD GREEN BARN PRODUCTIONS. CD/DL/LP

Crow revives the easy-rolling sound of her 1990s hits.



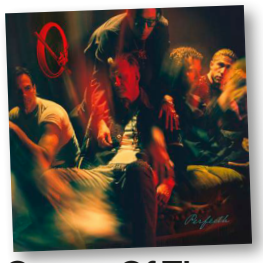
Sheryl Crow designed her thirteenth album as a tonic for troubled times, balancing soothing ballads with self-affirmations, all delivered in a fashion that deliberately evokes the sun-bleached sound of her early years. *Pick You Up* rolls so smoothly, it may take a moment to notice that Crow and Jesse Welles implore everybody "don't be an asshole, let everyone be" on the chorus of Freedom Bus. This profane refrain is the lone barbed moment on an LP that serves as a testament to the natural chemistry Crow has with Jeff Trott, her regular collaborator from the '90s who co-wrote all seven songs here. When the pair hit their groove on slow-burning Perfect and the jangling pop of I've Got Your Number, it seems like no time has passed between then and now.

Stephen Thomas Erlewine



Lab fab: Yello's Dieter Meier (left) and Boris Blank – true originals still at work.

Charlie Barclay Harris, Helen Sobiralski



Queens Of The Stone Age

★★★★

Perfecth

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

The erstwhile desert rock royalty's trickily-titled ninth.

Built amid the rubble of Josh Homme's marriage, 2023's *In Times New Roman…* had a faintly desperate consolidatory air, certain-age guys still struggling into skinny jeans. *Perfecth* is braver and better for being mostly rueful and reflective. "I'm not like that any more," sings Homme on the Nikki Lane-accompanied Easy Street, repudiating his outlaw self over cosmic Tex-Mex skiffle. A haunted mood infuses everything, from the opening It's Only Love's mortal thoughts through to Phantom Limb's darklands boogie ("I admit it, I need help"). Insignificant Other, meanwhile, is essentially Kiss's I Was Made For Loving You beautifully repurposed by '70s Fleetwood Mac, and there's even room in the stripped-down scheme for QOTSA's take on Sunday, the 2015 song Homme wrote for Iggy Pop. *Perfecth* is exactly the record a questing 30-year-old rock band ought to make.

Keith Cameron

Steven Wilson

★★★★

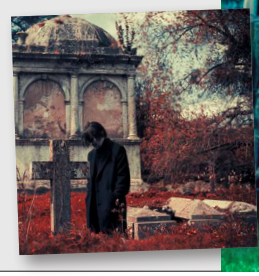
Requiem For A Village

FICTION. BR/CD/DL/LP

Neo-prog pioneer breaks new ground with kaleidoscopic dive into English culture.

THE ALBUM'S title derives from David Gladwell's 1976 film about rural lifestyle and traditions under threat, and opens with David Tennant's recitation of Andy Partridge's text describing a scene of "Fluffed and flattened farm gardens/Diced by dark hedge crosswords". But attempts to reconnect with such an idyll become increasingly disquieting on Now Departing, while on Hiraeth ("a longing for home" in Welsh) Wilson keeps warning, "The train will just bring you back here." On the title track, monastic chorales introduce a dazzling band performance of twisting riffs and flamboyant lead guitar over speedy syncopated drumming. By contrast, Murmuration delves into folk horror via sumptuous vocal harmonies, eerie mellotron and a nod to the traditional murder ballad Cruel Sister. Throughout all this turmoil the "Giant white horse on the hill" stares down, presumably with some bafflement. Wilson envisaged the album as a challenge and it's certainly one worth taking.

Mike Barnes





Rural soundscapes: Steven Wilson goes wild in the country.

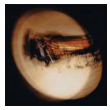
Cameron Winter

★★★★

Live At Carnegie Hall

PARTISAN. CD/DL/LP

Indie boy wonder earns his flowers.



Hardened music heads might raise an eyebrow at the ongoing canonisation of 24-year-old Brooklynite Cameron Winter, via his destabilising rock band Geese, his 2024 solo album *Heavy Metal* and, now, a concert film directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. This accompanying soundtrack, however, is a suitably intense and highly persuasive argument that all the praise is justified. Alone at Carnegie Hall, Winter pares everything back to piano ballads, putting his pinched tonal similarities to Rufus Wainwright and Beirut's Zach Condon into stark relief. It foregrounds the structural oddness of his songs, too, the way they flirt with the beat-up tropes of singer-songwriter tradition then drag them somewhere weirder: Laura Nyro circa *New York Tendaberry* is maybe the best analogue, as The Rolling Stones takes flight from Tin Pan Alley. Three previously unreleased songs, meanwhile – especially the rapturous systems glissando of If You Turn Back Now – are plausibly his best yet.

John Mulvey

June McDoom

★★★★

Follow The Light

JAGJAGUWAR. CD/DL/LP

Stellar debut where folk meets reggae and dub.



On the album cover, McDoom's eyes are closed, as clouds, or plumes of smoke, hover overhead. It's a suitable image for a record that floats and intoxicates, with dreamlike pulsations. The American-born Jamaican's debut isn't the first to combine folk, reggae and dub, but the way she aerates gossamer-soft sound – think Minnie Riperton, Françoise Hardy and Vashti Bunyan – with Caribbean heat is. McDoom also sometimes mirrors Elizabeth Fraser's most adrift moments in Cocteau Twins and Sun's Signature. Harp and strings add extra celestial vibes to Outside The Window as the lyric blisses out: "See my dreams in my mind/Become real inside." Flute and percolating synths gild Get Out Of My Life, a sentiment that affirms McDoom can do earthly as well as angelic.

Martin Aston

The Wow! Scenario

★★★

Stand In The Star. A Verse & A Chorus

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Comedian James Acaster's much delayed debut.



It's been a long haul for The Wow! Scenario since Acaster and Graeme Wicks recorded these songs in 2007. Graduates of the angular school of Cardiacs and Frightened Rabbit, they shelved this project for a decade, remixed it in 2018, before shelving it again until 2023 when B.C. Camplight and Emma Daman replaced Acaster and Wicks on vocals. Three years and another remix later, it's finally here. Daman does a stellar, albeit more grounded Liz Fraser turn on the chugging Golf Socks! and Alpaca Spinner!, but mostly it's random, staccato and knowingly all over the place, a world where song has been sacrificed on the altar of surprise. Brass and pub piano propel Once More!, while Instructions! marries distorted, almost African guitar to stop-start whimsy. It's not for the faint-hearted, or for those who relish structure, but it is an exhilarating roller-coaster.

John Aizlewood

Ministry

★★★★

Hate To Go (Take Out Or Delivery)

CLEOPATRA. CD/DL/LP/MC

Final album from the Chicagoan industrial pioneers.



Ministry's journey from mockney synth-poppers to capitalist deathmongers of industrial metal has been epic. But ever since 1996's deliciously grinding *Filth Pig*, frontman 'Uncle' Al Jourgensen has set his aim squarely at those in power with, musically at least, ever diminishing returns. Energetically propelled by his band's imminent demise and the continued presidency of "hair Mussolini", this is the band's best LP in decades. Nodding to Ministry's many eras through familiar vocal filters and use of samples, the band wave lovingly goodbye to the fascist state with a suite of songs which nod to their peak albums (from *Twitch* to *Psalm 69*). The much talked about musical reunion with original member Paul Barker on We're Still Here taps into the band's sleaze-pop beginnings whilst adding all the bacchanal pomp of a final album closer.

Priya Elan

Twisted Teens

★★★★

The Holy Cross Tigers

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP/MC

New Orleans duo's fourth hit of garage punk.

Around its predecessor *Florida Water Blues*, Twisted Teens joked that *The Holy Cross Tigers* would be "a break-up record… our *Blood On The Tracks*." It's all relative: remarkably, this is their third album of 2026 and a lovesick melancholy does somewhat percolate the duo's artfully ramshackle two-minute downstroke nuggets. Barfly anthem I Spend My Time Crying posits Caspian Hollywell as David Berman fronting Squeeze, with RJ Santos's console steel guitar weepily upfront. Mostly, though, Hollywell's Waffle House-chef-on-a-smoke-break holler is deployed chanting aphoristic riddles over beatbox drums and general mania. Blue Rose is suitably Damned-indebted ("'cuz you got a new rose"), while Armed With A Vision distils Twisted Teens' essence: "It's not so stupid to keep it simple." Prolific and terrific, here's to that difficult Christian period in three albums and 12 months' time.

Keith Cameron





Moses Boyd

★★★★

Songs For Sinners

EXODUS. CD/DL/LP

Stirring gospel-led return from London jazz drummer/producer explores faith and community.

Explorations of faith have long been fertile territory in jazz (Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, Pharoah Sanders' *Karma*, Sun Ra's *Sleeping Beauty*), but Moses Boyd adds a fresh spin on the follow-up to 2020's *Dark Matter*. While deploying singers such as Raelle (War), Steam Down's Shanteh (More To Life) and Zara McFarlane (Say Yeah), to voice '60s R&B-flecked songs of striving and self-actualisation, his fulsome use of a 'kitchen choir' (drawn from Boyd's extended family) and Niji Adeleye's forthright Hammond organ kicks them into another dimension. Other tracks distil a broad church of influences, taking in spacious grooves (Praise), discursive raps (Chuck Strangers on I Surrender) and a spiritual jazz overture (Precious). As on his solo debut, Boyd has a knack for making musical connections others fail to hear.

Andy Cowan

Sunnan

★★★★

Spaghetti Soul

AWAL. CD/DL/LP

Stockholm quintet bring psychedelic Scandi-western soul.



Swedish indie has often looked Stateside for inspiration, but few groups can claim Sunnan's heady blend of influences. Recorded in a barn in rural hideaway Sunnanhed, and a church on film director Ingmar Bergman's favourite island of Fårö – for maximum panoramic uplift – both Sunnan's 2024 debut *Cinema* and this scintillating follow-up have flawless taste, cross-fertilising *Forever Changes*, Morricone's shaping of westerns and Norman Whitfield soul, with a brief detour via Bristol for a touch of Massive Attack. Cue shivery melodies galore over vocalist Pär Stenhammar's crystal clear delivery, with an unshackled style to match their geographical influences: Blue is Beatles-esque, Sail is soulful sunshine pop, Echoes In Time would have suited Glen Campbell. Sunnan's mission statement is "a sense of timeless truth in a contemporary world" – which sounds ambitious but they execute it with honours here.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★★

Clowns And Jugglers: The Songs Of Syd Barrett

GONZO MULTIMEDIA. CD/DL/LP

David Gilmour, Rick Wright, Nick Mason and David Bowie feature on charity tribute to Pink Floyd co-founder.



Syd Barrett would have turned 80 in January this year – excuse enough for a mini-frenzy of activity, including October's tribute show and art exhibition in Cambridge, plus this family-sanctioned celebration, with profits going to mental health charities. Book-ended by two live Arnold Laynes (one from a 2007 Barrett tribute concert fronted by Rick Wright, and David Bowie's version from a 2006 David Gilmour show), it also includes an Astronomy Dominé from Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets, and a madcap assortment of Syd covers. Those who bought 1987's *Beyond The Wildwood* LP will know that such exercises seldom end well, but Robyn Hitchcock finesses Gigolo Aunt and Johnny Echols of Love does a chirpy Baby Lemonade, while Uncle Acid And The Deadbeats' Long Gone and Warmduscher's Maisie show a less reverent approach. Mixed bag/good cause.

Jim Wirth

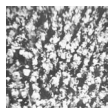
Michael Nau

★★★★

Popfly

SUICIDE SQUEEZE. CD/DL/LP

Sixth solo studio album from the effortlessly adept Maryland singer-songwriter.



It comes as something of a shock to see Michael Nau described as an "indie rock veteran" for this, his sixth solo LP. Despite releasing his first solo LP in 2016, Nau, 41, has been recording since his early twenties. Yet there remains an innocent, sunlit freshness to his music. Recorded in the Vermont studio Little Jamaica, with Nau's longtime collaborator and wife Whitney McGraw and their kids adding backing vocals, *Popfly* feels like an album born easily in the moment, emerging effortlessly as a series of lazily beautiful, DIY melodies and harmonies. That's arguably Nau's genius. You know there is 20-plus years of artistry and craft behind this music but it's presented to you as a dream-like summer afternoon hangout, where pop bliss is created in the moment, off the cuff and just for you.

Andrew Male

PISS

★★★★

you made me/ skin on linen

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Canadian punks' treatise on sexual violence.



With most mainstream horror films rooted in the bogeyman of personal trauma, it can be hard to make an original artistic statement about it. This Vancouver quartet have untied that Gordian knot and created something startling, combining monodrama scripts, non-linear broken glass bottle musical atmospherics and historical samples (from the likes of Andrea Dworkin and Toni Morrison) that dance into the songs like some sort of living theatre. There are many gob-smacking moments here: I Wanted To Be A Singer, which tackles the audience's thirst for the angry female archetype as front-woman Taylor Zantingh questions the trap of catharsis ("I don't know if writing about pain is helpful/Is it helping you?"); while Blocking A Scene You Can't Remember accurately frames how memories sludge together, post trauma.

Priya Elan

Susanna Hoffs

★★★

The List

BAROQUE FOLK. CD

Founding Bangle – now novelist – invites you into her confidence.



It makes sense that this album was recorded in Susanna Hoffs' Los Angeles home: these songs have a friendly intimacy, redolent of late-night revelations over a bottle of wine. Her voice, still possessed of that distinctive Eternal Flame flicker, helps draw you in, but her writing is just as intriguing. On Casablanca's heady folk rock, she recalls a magical evening in New Orleans with the Grateful Dead's Bob Weir ("The cute one/The heartthrob") while None Of Them Were You is a tender love song to her husband, listing previous failed suitors, among them "a very dapper Brit… in a band in Birmingham". Rufus Wainwright joins her for maudlin country duet Bad Case Of Loneliness, while Time is her own Slipping Through My Fingers. Generous, wise and full of understated intrigue, *The List* is good company all round.

Victoria Segal

Anton Corbijn

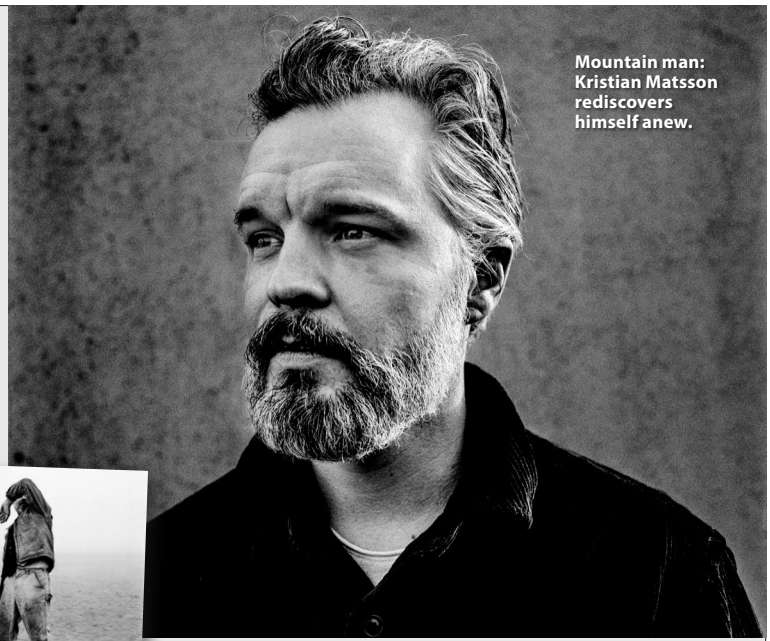
The Tallest Man On Earth

★★★★

Just Beyond Endless Mountain

ANTI-. CD/DL/LP

Swedish folk existentialist gets his head together in the country.



Mountain man: Kristian Matsson rediscovers himself anew.



THERE'S A characteristic blend of confusion and discovery in Kristian Matsson's eighth studio album as the wild-eyed boy from Leksand, Sweden, perhaps more famous for its ice hockey team than its folk singers, returns to the rural fastness of his Dalarna homeland and, like T. S. Eliot in Little Gidding, rediscovers himself anew. Ever the pilgrim as his first name suggests, Matsson's explorations and peripatetic 20-year career have brought him round to Sweden's 'old weird music' and the heartland of the folk tradition that he ignored whilst growing up. Dylan remains his main vocal inspiration, Josh Ritter and Damien Rice his most obvious peers, but the old fiddle tunes provide a refreshing hauntology for The Tallest Man On Earth's startling blend of alienation and wonder.

Mark Cooper



Hit parade: U2 offer up hope during the filming of the video for Street Of Dreams, Mexico City, 2026.

Eloisa Sanchez

Light fandango

Resurgent band whip up a defiant fiesta on fifteenth album. By Victoria Segal.

U2

★★★★

Carnaval De Luz

UMC/ISLAND. CD/DL/LP



"WE NEED some carnival here, it can't all be ashes," Bono told U2's official fanzine Propaganda earlier this year. "We're going to try to make the light brighter real soon." He wasn't joking: as the title suggests, *Carnaval De Luz*, the band's first album of new material since 2017's *Songs Of Experience*, is a wind-tunnel rush of colour and sound, a concerted attempt to work against the enveloping misery engendered by the current state of the world. "Don't want to make a devil bigger/Stop repeating his name," asserts the singer on the defiant bunker singalong of Midnight Sunshine. These songs are the opposite of doom scrolling, focusing on the tiny pinpricks of light, the little flashes of hope.

Carnaval De Luz is not, however, intolerably Pollyanna-ish, despite occasional platitudinous lapses. U2 have been operating according to their own slightly out-of-sync liturgical calendar this year, beginning with the Ash Wednesday release of the Days Of Ash EP. A bale of ripped-from-the-headlines protest songs addressing the Middle East, Ukraine, ICE. It was followed by the Easter Lily EP – a more meditative collection informed by the aftershocks that shake faith and friendships.

With Larry Mullen Jr back after his medical absence, this is U2 returned to full strength, cheerleading for a flawed humanity. Go (Carnaval De Luz) revs up into a jagged electronic call for community; Silencio, echoing a sweet-sour Buzzcocks call-and-response, capers between sacred and profane. La Reina's excitable Pop Musik, saluting a quasi-heavenly carnival queen, plays a similar game, theatrical sparkle replaced by spiritual glimmer: "nobody is alone," sings Bono, "but nobody knows that."

When it comes to the spiritual, it works on both micro and macro levels, the physical detail and the cosmic big picture. If The World Is At War We Better Not Be mistily recalls distant pre-U2 days ("I was standing in the schoolyard/Waiting for you to happen to me"), testament to the power of small-scale bonds: love, friendship, community, bands. The Greatest Show On Earth tugs at a With Or Without You thread, a Blakean search for God at the cellular level.

"Sing me a song like a boxing glove," sings Bono on Midnight Sun, and *Carnaval De Luz* can be on-the-nose. Street Of Dreams, betraying its Bon Iver-esque opening, is best treated as uplifting propaganda for the Street Child World Cup, while The Mirror Maker (Rosalía) is an uneasy salute to the Spanish pop star ("Mamaladyday!" yelps Bono excitably). There's a more successful elevation of female energy with Torn. As Can't Stop Us Now dissolves in chaos, a gentle electronic pulse clears the air and Dolly Parton materialises, duetting with Bono about "a house divided" – A family? A country? People at war? – her voice cracking with mother-of-the-world grief.

"Break the glass in case of emergency," whispers Bono on The Mirror Maker (Rosalía), and this record feels like U2's attempt to hand on a little supply of hope, comfort and light. It's hugely generous: bold, adventurous, refusing despair. Fifty years since they came together in the schoolyard, U2 still throw one hell of a parade.



Trouble in mind: Danielle Ponder gets poetically personal on her second album.

Revolution in the head

Compelling self-diagnosis from late-blooming soul star. By Mark Cooper.

Danielle Ponder

★★★★★

Everything Has Changed

DEAD OCEANS. CD/DL/LP

THE VOICE is centre stage from the get-go, unaccompanied at first on the opening Seasons for a profoundly personal declaration of self which yet tips a hat to the dark soul lineage of Massive Attack's Shara Nelson, the CeeLo of Crazy, the Ann Peebles of I Can't Stand The Rain. A voice that's seen its share of trouble and disappointment but that is determined to offer testimony and bear witness. The hint of reverb only accentuates the sense of a burden long borne and finally ready to be confronted. Suddenly Ponder lets that voice explode into a frankly awesome gospel-style release – "I stand in the lightness/And I can dance in the darkness". The scope and ambition of this release through Dead Oceans, in partnership with Phoebe Bridgers, are immediately clear.

This is Danielle Ponder's follow-up to 2022's *Some Of Us Are Brave* (on Future Classic) that announced her as a promising soulful singer and songwriter, an impression only confirmed by her ruminative theme tune for Apple TV's 2024 series Manhunt. There's a triumphant sense of this 44-year-old powerhouse from Rochester, New York, bearing down on her skills and coming into her own. If she's a little late to the table, it's because of the years spent training as a lawyer and then operating as a public defender after her brother was sentenced to 20 years to life for robbing a bar (no injuries). The result is a powerfully politicised vision, profoundly informed by Black Lives Matter and Me Too, that's yet poetically personal, never preachy.

God Of You focuses proceedings, a co-write with industry veteran Mike Elizondo who's worked with everyone from 50 Cent to Turnstile, in which Ponder restlessly broods away at how she's turned a man into a god, surrendered her sense of self and the keys to her car. A lot of disappointing men get their comeuppance in this collection, but from the title track to Made My Bed, what's impressive is how Ponder's lyrics deconstruct her own part in her downfall. Even more impressive are the next two tracks, Power and SKN, in which she widens the context to celebrate black culture across the diaspora with the kind of wide-eyed Afrocentric leap that fuels the barn performance sequence in Ryan Coogler's hit film Sinners. SKN is a co-write with Bartees Strange that's a pulsating meditation on blackness, slavery and selfhood, driven by Wendy Melvoin's pulsating bass. Brilliantly conceptualised with some heavy hitting collaborators, this is that rarity, a sophomore album in which the songs never falter, and a rare talent truly arrives.



Eliza Carthy And The Restitution

★★★★

Frenemies

HEMHEM. DL/LP

Folk scion's fierce songs from the other middle ages.



The violin-toting progeny of Martin Carthy and the late Norma Waterson, Eliza Carthy also makes fine pop records, with *Frenemies* mapping the stresses of being "equidistant cradle-grave" (Moisturise). With stylistic nods to St. Vincent and Kirsty MacColl, plus guests Robyn Hitchcock and Jools Holland, she weighs up unreliable friends (Honey), nasty men (The Tick) and, on Mr Sits-In-The-Dark, the challenges of caring for an ailing folk hero. "It's not the work that kills you, my darling," she sings, with a sorrowful nod to her father, recently retired due to ill health, "It's waiting around to die." An oxyacetylene torch ballad, closer The Wine Song is a sobering portrayal of 50-something singledom ("All of the men took the goodies and split; they didn't give a shit"), but *Frenemies* finds patches of sweetness and light in the sourest of times.

Jim Wirth

Helen

★★★★

Linda's Head

KRANKY. CD/DL/LP

Eleven years on, Grouper's Liz Harris revives her shoegaze trio with spectacular results.



Of all the musicians you can think of who wish they'd been in an early-'90s shoegaze group, top of the list is surely Grouper's Liz Harris. After all, what is the classic Grouper sound but shoegaze stripped of bass, drums, rhythm and forward motion, and left to float, unloved, in a liminal state of melancholy psychedelic lassitude? Reunited with bassist Scott Simmons and drummer Jed Bindeman, Harris has expanded on the late-night transmissions of 2015's Helen debut *The Original Faces*, incorporating elements of Sarah Records, the Shop Assistants' '80s fuzz-pop and the insular, lo-fi murk-jangle of Flying Nun Records. The result is the sound of melodic joy suspended in the bardo, ectoplasmic pop visitations from the wood between the worlds.

Andrew Male



Johnny & Lillie Flynn

★★★★

Beam Cottage

TRANSGRESSIVE. CD/DL/LP

Musician/actor siblings remember their childhood.

As writer and performer of the Detectorists theme tune, Johnny Flynn knows a thing or two about musical psychogeography. Alongside his younger sister Lillie, the duo pay homage to their family home in a Hampshire village with their own new songs, reworked back catalogue tunes, covers and, on the closing Sleepy Head, a lullaby written by their actor father, Eric. The covers include Boy In The Bubble, although set to a tune that more resembles Ghost Riders In The Sky than Paul Simon's original, Moon River and Billy Bragg's Between The Wars. While songs such as the old folk tune Hare On The Mountain and Johnny's Been Listening can be unsettlingly strange, the overriding vibe is a family fireside singalong, and *Beam Cottage* sounds like a childhood to be cherished.

Andy Fyfe



Ste Murray

Going deep: Helen bring melodic joy on their second LP.

Susanne Sundfør

★★★

Revelations Of Divine Love

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Norwegian's deeper dive into her folk roots.



Before incorporating electronics, Sundfør was more of a dramatic folkie. Her fifth and sixth albums *Music For People In Trouble* and *Blómi* returned to that source; *Revelations*… pares back further, to just voice and pipe organ. Key inspirations are motherhood, her new rural life and, more unexpectedly, medieval mystic Julian(a) of Norwich, whose Revelations Of Divine Love is the first recognised English language book by a woman. Co-composer/organist Kit Downes gets three instrumentals to himself – Hazelnut (serene), Vision (stormy) and Seven Nights Dead (pensive) – while album bookends A Revelation Of Love and Love Was Our Lord's Meaning are ambient/spoken word. The remaining eight songs are quintessential Sundfør, but they're more hymns than songs, like a mellow Nico; undeniably beautiful, but across music and words, a solemn, at times testing experience.

Martin Aston

Sheldon Shepherd

★★★★

Give Thanks

NOMADIC MOVEMENT/TUFF GONG. DL/LP

Mesmeric debut from former No-Maddz man.



Coming to prominence in the No-Maddz collective in the 2010s, Shepherd bagged the lead role in gritty film Better Mus' Come. He later played Neville Garrick in the Marley biopic and is currently starring in TV drama Possession, somehow finding time to craft this dub-drenched debut solo LP along the way. *Give Thanks*'s broad palette takes the listener to unexpected places: Key To Yuh City is downtempo lovers rock, the autobiographical One A Dem Youth Deh rides a skeletal Drum Song recut, and Bad Boy Ratty gives a nod to Sleng Teng-era dancehall. Ode To Dub Poetry, meanwhile, salutes the originators of the subgenre, Don Tan Natty offers a Rastafari alternate to Downton Abbey, and For Neville highlights Garrick's unsung contributions to Marley's *oeuvre*.

David Katz

FOLK

BY JIM WIRTH





Macdara Yeates

★★★★

Mudlark Ballads

MACDARAYEATES.BANDCAMP. CD/DL/LP

Understated Dubliner's lurid tales from the riverbank.

Sentenced to hang, Luke Caffrey – as recorded in the rarely sung ballad De Kilmainham Minit – ordered his cohorts to slit his jugular after his death, convinced that a sudden influx of air would restore him to life. As Macdara Yeates's kazoo-haunted interpretation records, it did not quite work out that way, but the follow-up to 2022's *Traditional Singing From Dublin* does an exceptional job of reviving this and other neglected songs. Produced – with noble restraint – by Gilla Band's Daniel Fox, *Mudlark Ballads* brings minimalist drones, bleeps and guitar to the service of Yeates's wonderfully soulful voice. His Matt Hyland is as good as the late Al O'Donnell's (Google it), and if he takes delight in roughhouse street songs, Yeates has a Nic Jones-ish ear for a mournful ballad, his classically minded Alexander and 'Tis Whiskey I Adore both luminous. Others take greater liberties with traditional material, but few will have these songs up and breathing again quite like Yeates does here.

ALSO RELEASED

Jim Ghedi

★★★★

The Death Of Robin Hood

A24 FILMS. DL/LP



Hollywood beckoned for Sheffield's rugged Jim Ghedi, the raggle-taggle pixy providing the music for Michael Sarnoski's The Death Of Robin Hood (starring Hugh Jackman). There are hurdy-gurdy nods to the Third Ear Band's nightmare Macbeth soundtrack, a fine Twa Corbies and high-gloss upgrades of Ghedi's own Lamentations Of Round-Oak Waters and What Will Become Of England. Steal a copy from someone rich.

Paahto & The Bull

★★★★

The 123

CLADDAGH. CD/DL/LP



Flat-picker Patrick 'Paahto' Cummins and eclectic Dublin traddie John Francis 'The Bull' Flynn played together in the Skipper's Alley back when Lankum were still called Lynched, and continue to collaborate. *The 123* – named after the bus route that once linked their houses – is a joyous collection of Bert And John-style guitar duets on Napoleon Crossing The Alps, Planxty George Brabazon and more. Worth the fare.

Josienne Clarke

★★★★

Regenerene MMXXVI

CORDUROY PUNK. CD/DL/LP



Trad-savvy Sussex auteur Josienne Clarke maintains her Stakhanovite output as she offsets moody originals with wiry trad on her latest – a bold swipe for June Tabor's Anglo-Nico crown. Hare On The Mountain and Silver Dagger get a P.J. Harvey *White Chalk* makeover, while her Sweet Primroses has an unexpected scent of '70s Eno. "Love is but a thousand little cuts," Clarke laments on Bushes, Briars & Thorns. True, but it hurts so good.

Spell Songs

★★★★

In Thin Air

HUDSON. CD/DL/LP



A sort of Harlem Globetrotters of modern folk, the Spell Songs collective (Karine Polwart, Julie Fowlis, Seckou Keita, Kris Drever, Rachel Newton, Beth Porter, Jim Molyneux et al) return for a third collection, this time dominated by concerns about birdlife. Think Kate Bush's *Aerial* interleaved with the "hullo trees, hullo sky" winsomeness of Virginia Astley's *From Gardens Where We Feel Secure*. A beaky blinder. *JW*



Tony Iommi

★★★★

From The Dark

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Former Black Sabbath guitarist's heroic return.

Tony Iommi's third solo album follows 2005's *Fused* and suggests the soundtrack to a Viking-themed Hollywood blockbuster, with longboats crashing on distant shores and villages being pillaged. Iommi's air-raid siren guitar is a constant brooding presence on Over The Violent Sun and Stormwatcher, but never at the expense of the songs. Instead, Norwegian vocalist Jørn Lande, who sings everything like he's warning of impending apocalypse, helps give this the feel of a band album rather than a solo project. Seasoned Iommi watchers will feel nostalgically triggered by the likes of World Alone and Return Of The Arbalist, which evoke Black Sabbath's early-'80s work with Ozzy's replacement Ronnie James Dio. The whole thing is biblically, sometimes exhaustingly epic, but a timely reminder of Iommi's pioneering musicianship. He invented this stuff, after all – and the devil still has all the best riffs.

Mark Blake

Protomartyr

★★★★

Hotel Usona

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Detroit natives' seventh studio album explores a nation in free fall.



Vocalist and literary wordsmith Joe Casey previously avoided overt political commentary, but now Protomartyr apply devastating critique and sonorous post-punk swagger to the vision of their country as an ageing hotel, each song a room haunted by a troublesome guest ("the boys are slovenly drunk on the job"). Co-producer Dave Fridmann's (Flaming Lips/MGMT) maximalist wall of sound approach is perfect here, pushing sonics to the point of discomfort, yet there's still a thrill to the cinematic tension of tracks like The Knife Dream, where House Of Cards-style horns are mangled with frenzied whispers, or Exalted Eagles, with its intense percussion and bruising, majestic chords. Symphonic overload alternates with fragile beauty, and dark humour too. Despite its bleak moral universe, the album ends with a glimmer of redemption. A visceral triumph.

Lucy O'Brien

Swansea Sound

★★★★

Pre-Post-Truth

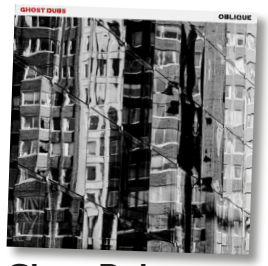
SKEP WAX. CD/DL/LP

Insightful third LP spans the personal and the political.

These are tough times for independent musicians, and few address the situation with more insight and wit than Swansea Sound. Having variously been members of Heavenly, The Pooh Sticks, Talulah Gosh, The Dentists and Death In Vegas, they've built a distinctive group identity, spurred on by the excellent songs of bass player Rob Pursey which are by turns angry, reflective, amusing, world-weary or romantic. That Life has a yearning hook married to a meditation on life in the digital age, while spirited opener 20mph features Bob Collins delivering stinging lead guitar lines that wouldn't have disgraced an early Mekons record. It's easy to imagine John Peel playing this back in the day, but lyrically Swansea Sound are firmly rooted in today's world, holding up a mirror to it, in what is arguably their best LP yet.

Max Décharné





Ghost Dubs

★★★★

Oblique

PRESSURE. CD/DL/LP

Second set of minimalist dub from Stuttgart artist formerly Jah Schulz.

Back in 2024, when I first played the debut Ghost Dubs LP, *Damaged*, I had to do it through headphones because my bookshelf speakers couldn't take the subsonic strain. However, it turns out that Michael Fiedler's abstract dubs are just as perfectly suited to the inner-space journey as the sound system demolition. *Oblique* arguably goes deeper into slurred, hypnotic interiority than its predecessor. Now closer to the rumbling '90s dub techno of Basic Channel and Pole than the Jamaican sound system space echoes of *Damaged*, *Oblique* is the dub of European container ports, empty neon-lit parking lots and something far more dystopian. As suggested by track titles such as Soft Collapse, Dead Channel and Bombed Suburbs, this is immersive, narcotic dub for our soon-due Ballardian future.

Andrew Male

Orchestra Baobab

★★★

Made In Senegal

STRUT/MADOKY MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

New generation comeback attempt.



Formed in 1970 as the house band at Dakar's Baobab Club, Orchestra Baobab's dynamic hybrid combined Wolof rhythms and griot-styled vocals with the melodies and cadences of Cuban son. Reissues of classic works in the 1990s led to a 2001 reunion and several successful overseas tours, but the death of prominent saxophonist Issa Cissokho and bandleader Balla Sidibé forced a hiatus in 2020. Now led by the veteran saxophonist Thierno Koité, *Made In Senegal* is the first album by the 'new look' Baobab, with sons, nephews and other collaborators shifting the mix. Tough tracks like Ana Maria, Togne Bakhoul and Ndiaga Niaw deliver the funky Wolof salsa grooves as expected, but Casamance unexpectedly diverts to soukous; suave singer Korka Dieng brings an R&B sensibility to Sibo Odia and Tioro Bye Samba, and Baobab 50 Ans celebrates the group's outstanding longevity.

David Katz

Martha Reeves

★★★

Searching

DEKO/MARTHA REEVES. CD/DL/LP

On her first album in two decades, the Motown legend settles into a sumptuous groove.



Returning after a 20-year hiatus, Martha Reeves headed to New Orleans to record *Searching* with Delfeayo Marsalis, who co-produces the album alongside Chris Roe, the singer's longtime manager. Traces of the Big Easy can be discerned in the supple, funky rhythms but this is hardly a funk workout. *Searching* glides easily as Reeves revives the neglected Vandellas chestnut I Got It Bad, covers To Know You Is To Love You by her old Motown compatriots Syreeta and Stevie Wonder, sings a couple of standards and unveils a gospel original. Occasionally, her voice betrays her years – the high notes on God Bless The Child are a little out of her reach – but the musical range more than compensates for her slightly diminished vocal range.

Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Eric Loeffler

Jeffrey Silverstein

★★★★

Doggone

FULL TIME HOBBY. CD/DL/LP

Third studio album from the New Jersey teacher turned alt-country hierophant.

JEFFREY Silverstein is a poster child for moving to the Pacific Northwest. In the six years that he's been making music in Portland, Oregon, this New Jersey-born teacher has immersed himself in the region's alt-country community and discovered a uniquely adumbrated twilight sound that deliciously resists full understanding. Recording with the Akron/Family rhythm section of Alex Chapman and Dana Buoy and with guests such as Devendra Banhart (who delivers exquisite backing vocals on the J.J. Cale drum-machine soul of Coming Back Around), *Doggone*, like its title suggests, is a muted muttering of gentle amazement. And while influences such as Silver Jews, Lambchop and the amiable motorik choogle of the Rose City Band can all be discerned, you hear them as if under a spell, spiked with a Lethean draught of magic Portland ale.

Andrew Male





Fill your boots: Jeffrey Silverstein hones his twilight sound.

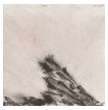
Garefowl

★★★★

Things That Vanish

AD93. DL/LP

Bewitching, primordial folk from international collective.



Originally conceived as a project by Ewan Macdonald, relative of one of the men who in 1840 killed the last Great Auk (Garefowl), this album follows his six-strong collective's 2020 debut *Cliffs*, with a deeper and more daring exploration of the history and declining seabird habitat of the Scottish St Kilda archipelago. Field recordings are mixed with traditional folk tunes and the shimmering acoustic warmth of bouzouki, fiddle, viola da gamba and cello. Drones created from rock and bone samples have been analysed using X-ray diffraction and mapped onto audio sine waves. On tracks like Cormorant and Shearwater, these drones create an ancient, eerie undertow that's primal in its intensity. Together with lilting melodies, long, swooping notes and fragmentary samples, each song is dedicated to a different seabird, creating a head-cleansing, otherworldly sonic universe.

Lucy O'Brien

Jeremiah Chiu

★★★★

Edge Conditions

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM. CD/DL/LP

Highly rhythmic electronic deviations dominate LA composer's second solo LP.



Best known for his work with trance-jazz quintet SML and collaborations with violist Marta Sofia Honer, Jeremiah Chiu's latest revels in levels of rhythmic complexity, playfully blurring the lines between man and machine. Awash with ascending synth melodies, melancholic drones and muzzy harmonies, A.M. Fuses' atypical jerky rhythms, Sentimental Object's blend of sweeping strings with techno glitch and the pattering title track's astute use of Marquis Hill's trumpet and Patrick Shiroishi's sax are laden with unpredictable manoeuvres that evoke Yellow Magic Orchestra, Steve Reich and Arthur Russell without sounding quite like them. More considered compositions than the quickfire synth improvisations of 2023's *In Electric Time*, Chiu's mazy grasp of modular synths makes them seemingly run against each other, teetering on the brink of chaos, before reharmonising in emotional unison.

Andy Cowan

Kings Of Leon

★★★★

O My Beloved

LOVE TAP. CD/DL/LP

The Followill clan's tenth album finds them in reflective mood.



Having conquered the world around the turn of the last decade, Kings Of Leon seemed blinded by the light, unable or unwilling to tamper. Until now. Self-produced and stripped back from the density of sound which made them, *O My Beloved* is their Americana album and where once they stomped, now they twinkle. These mostly hushed songs of hearth and home are showcases for Caleb Followill's voice and Matthew Followill's guitar intricacy, and when the bittersweet Such A Pretty Thing tenderly observes a former love's new family ("Your little girl, she looks just like you/I hear that she's really smart too"), there's a new depth of emotional connection. The Hand overflows with cascading but subtle hooks, Kick Off Your Shoes has a Ray LaMontagne level of warm intimacy and the whole package suggests a band newly at ease with themselves.

John Aizlewood



Rebecca Hawley, Virginia Santos

Watch the birdie: Garefowl conjure an otherworldly sonic universe.

Chat Pile

★★★★

Who Loves The Sun

THE FLENSER. CD/DL/LP/MC

Velvets-referencing third from Oklahoma City noise rockers.



The cover of Chat Pile's third album shows the litter trail of industrialisation: a corporate skyscraper stands erect, dwarfing a burned-out building in the foreground and a tent pitched next to it on the snowy ground. Steeped in the brutal language of metal and the dramatic dynamics of horror, *Who Loves The Sun* is a powerful treatise against an industrial age where indifference is studied and emotions are deadened in favour of climbing the greasy pole, as Raygun Busch sings on Deep Blue: "You let the mask become part of your life." From the cast of deplorables in the manosphere on PEN I S MALL to the lurching, deadened liturgies in Christabel '26 and the cold sexuality of Shrine, these tightly wound songs bruise and creep, recalling Slint, '80s Metallica and *Bleach*-era Nirvana. Eloquently terse.

Priya Elan

Editors

★★★★

Surface, Echo & Sound

PIAS. CD/DL/LP/CS

Birmingham band's eighth album sets them back on track.



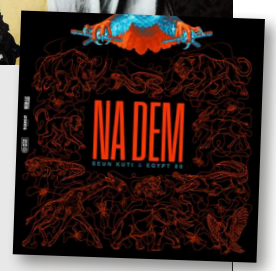
Not ones for surprises, over their 20-something years Editors have evolved from pioneers for indie retrenchment to being more forwards-looking purveyors of electronica, culminating in 2022's *EBM* and the recruitment of Fuck Buttons' Benjamin John Power, AKA Blanck Mass. That experiment is very much over: *EBM* was their lowest-charting album, so the plug was pulled. A quintet once more, Editors have gone back to basics, but with an older, wiser approach and a fistful of flourishes. The rather heroic Call It In and the appositely titled The Rush herald a lighter-on-their feet Editors. Singer Tom Smith channels his hitherto undetectable Bruce Springsteen on Butterfly Wings, and if Happiness is more Robert than Tom Smith, The Hills We Died Upon is a near-acoustic closer light years away from Editors' traditional wall of sound.

John Aizlewood

WORLD

BY DAVID HUTCHEON





Seun Kuti & Egypt 80

★★★★

Na Dem

DJANGO MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Sixth album from Fela's youngest and the Afrobeat veterans.

Never one to shy from recruiting a heavyweight name as producer – Brian Eno, Robert Glasper and Lenny Kravitz among them – Kuti here turns to the Ezra Collective's Femi Koleoso, a drummer whose immersion in Nigerian Afrobeat extends to replacing the late Tony Allen in Gorillaz and paying tribute to both Fela Kuti's influence and the pan-global success of Afrobeats via his own group. Throughout, then, little details stand out: the fairground keyboards and lightning-fast percussion on As How, Tom Morello's guitar work on the title track, the proggy intro to Real Life – all suggesting a dialogue in the studio in search of something new within a template more than 50 years old. "Too many Trumps, too many Musks, no real leaders" raps Seun, and his dad would surely approve of that.

ALSO RELEASED

Kefaya & Elaha Soroor

★★★★

Our Freedoms Must Be Won

RADIO INTERNATIONAL/ABSOLUTE. CD/DL/LP



Exiled from Afghanistan, Soroor teamed up with the multinational, London-based trio Kefaya to debut seven years ago with *Songs Of Our Mothers*; after an extended silence, this is a monster blast of folk, metal, techno and righteous fury guaranteed to blow away all cobwebs: Cold & Heavy, for example, sounds like Nirvana's Breed, but louder and angrier.

Nanaco Sato

★★★★

Lust

GEARBOX. CD/DL/LP



Almost 50 years since her debut – and 25 years since her previous solo album – the cult star of Japan's City Pop scene returns to answer the question: "What would Björk and Patti Smith sound like taking the blues into another dimension?" If you like Brigitte Fontaine, *Electric Ladyland* and Nada, Sato could be your next obsession.

Leenalchi

★★★★

Sugungga

LUAKA BOP. CD/DL/LP



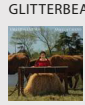
Having introduced pansori singing to Seoul's underground, this South Korean septet have now reworked their 2020 debut to convince an international audience that traditional Asian folk music and Talking Heads-like funk are natural bedfellows. There's nothing as irresistible as Hihi Haha from the spring's Here Comes That Crow EP, but it's one of autumn's nicer discoveries.

Ana Lua Caiano

★★★★

Devagar Que A Vida É Curta

GLITTERBEAT. CD/DL/LP



Born from "the tension between constant rush and the need for mindfulness", the Portuguese's second album continues her mission to bring traditional music into the 21st century. Each track feels like a chant drawn from the fields or playgrounds, yet the ritual of the communal song is stripped away, replaced by electronic innovation and melodic twists. *DH*



Digging for gold: Shovel Dance Collective mine their own seam on *Everything In Readiness*.



Industrial action

English folk experimentalists hot to trot with LP number three. By Jim Wirth.

Shovel Dance Collective

★★★★★

Everything In Readiness

TAK:TIL/GLITTERBEAT. CD/DL/LP

"JOWL, JOWL and listen, lads, before ye go a hewing," sings Nick Granata, taking an industrial stomp through a North-east pitman's favourite on Shovel Dance Collective's third studio outing. "There's many a miner missing, lads, because they wouldn't listen."

The times of Ewan MacColl orthodoxy – when hardcore folkies were mandated only to sing songs from their own culture – have long passed, but Jack Elliott of Birtley (the Durham miner who in the 1960s recorded the most famous version of Jowl, Jowl And Listen) might have raised an eyebrow at this coalition of art-school softies and board game nerds taking such a confident shot at one of 'his' songs.

That being said, the Shovel Dancers have become the cocks of the Britfolk coalface because of their absolute conviction that these old songs are theirs to do with as they please. In Ireland, Lankum have taken a similar approach, stitching extreme noise and experimental improv techniques into a daunting folk gothic. The Shovel Dancers, though, are a little more giddy, and for all *Everything In Readiness*'s interests in radical politics, what the nine-piece bring most of to this material is pure joy.

The opening suite is a case in point; the sprightly Jer The Rigger slams into a The Foxhunter's Reel that sounds like Lou Reed's Street Hassle, before Granata leads an ecstatic version of huntsman's hurrah Tally Ho! Hark Away!. According to the notes, their Brian-Blessed-meets-Philip Glass-on-fire rendition celebrates the fact that "the fox is freed from a world of brutality to an eternity of innocence, and the chase is forever theirs to make on high". A bit silly, a bit startling, it very much fits the Shovel Dancers' MO.

In a similar spirit, they take a tremulous journey into the hedgerow for Granata's manic rendition of Who Killed Cock Robin?, but if there is playfulness in their delivery, the Shovel Dancers' musicianship is stylish and nimble. Moreover, their resurrections of under-sung material are exceptional. Mataio Austin Dean takes the barrel-chested lead on Bold Captain Avery which morphs from a buccaneering ballad into a delightful rhapsodic tangle. Madcap utopianism, meanwhile, underpins the closing one-two of A Hundred Stretches Hence/I Wish There Was No Prisons, jingling bells, hovering drones and Evan Parker skronk vibes lighting the Shovel Dancers' path to a fairer, freer future.

The politics can seem naïve but are appropriate given the band's understanding that the only appropriate response to their material is a slightly wobbly wonder, *Everything In Readiness* embracing the unknowable, ancient beauty of the songs, while giving them glorious new life. Shovel Dance Collective may not be qualified to lecture anyone on mine safety, but *Everything In Readiness* shows they are immensely skilled workers in their own seam. And as the colliers of old knew, precious things rarely stay underground forever.

ALA.NI & Adrian Younge

★★★★

Proud Of Me

LINEAR LABS. CD/DL/LP

Paris-based British singer with Jazz Is Dead co-founder.



Noted for her voice's tonal purity and its conspicuous absence of gospel or blues shading – more Doris Day than Doris Troy – ALA.NI follows last year's *Sunshine Music*, a joyous celebration of her Grenadian ancestry, by taking a wholly unexpected turn, teaming up with the prolific LA-based producer Adrian Younge. The contrast between ALA.NI's ethereal pipes and Younge's cinematic orchestration, stained with melancholy and psychedelia, heighten the album's emotional inflections, creating a brooding, immersive song cycle reminiscent of Minnie Riperton's *Come To My Garden*, with Younge taking arranger/producer Charles Stepney's role. Combining autobiographical reflections with astute observations of life, the singer meditates on paternal honesty (Proud Of Me), racial injustice (the desolate Lament For Emmett Till), marriage breakdown (Road), and, in the haunting Zero, a Hollywood A-lister struggling with fame and addiction. It's all consummately done: a sumptuous sonic banquet.

Charles Waring

Brad Gilbert

Scott Fagan

★★★

Soon

EARTH. CD/DL/LP

South Atlantic bluesman resurrects his lost rock opera.



Richard Gere featured in Scott Fagan and Joseph Kookoolis's Aquarian age 1971 musical Soon, but given that its Broadway run lasted just three days, it quickly dropped off his CV. However, if Gere moved on, Fagan never did, this belated recording of the songs from the show scratching a painful itch for the Virgin Islands-born singer, whose 1968 album *South Atlantic Blues* is a cult favourite. Lyrically, *Soon* hasn't necessarily aged well; the 80-something Fagan sounds implausible singing "hope I still can dance when I'm 50" on What's Gonna Happen To Me When I'm 50, and his takedown of the uncool people on Straight is a little blunt: "Filthy they call us but they all want to ball us." However, Fagan's maniac commitment helps Let The World Begin Again and Music Music morph from hippy boilerplate to something transcendent.

Jim Wirth

Ex:Re

★★★

Save As

4AD. CD/DL/LP

Daughter singer's side-project returns for further alt-pop meditations.



"I was trying to make your picture out," sings Elena Tonra on the cloudy goth-hop of Sleep, "I drew and drew and drew you/Still I couldn't get the likeness." That lack of a strong line is apparent on the Daughter frontwoman's second album as Ex:Re, a record that specialises in murky emotional states: lapses in concentration or communication; the complexities of grief or, on Frozen Aisle, the inexplicable desire to cry in the supermarket. Drums skitter and tense, a cello bends and slides, and while it's often beautiful – the half-glimpsed Lana Del Rey of Am I Even Real?, or Radio Station twisting the dial between Thom Yorke and P.J. Harvey – Tonra's quest to capture fleeting light and shade can blur into elegant abstraction. Still, *Save As* has an impressive way with shades of grey.

Victoria Segal

Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan

★★★★

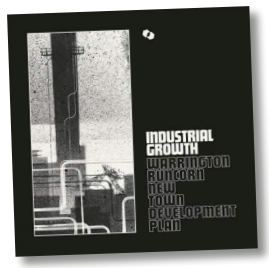
Industrial Growth

CASTLES IN SPACE. DL/LP

Dystopian synth futurist sends stark message.

Just after Andy Burnham became UK prime minister in June, Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan advised him to heed their 2023 album, *The Nation's Most Central Location*, and move Parliament northwards. Was Burnham, who grew up in the borough of Warrington, listening? If the PM were to delve into *Industrial Growth*, WRNTDP's sixth album, he'd encounter Gordon Chapman-Fox's latest collection of bewitching, state-of-the-nation polemics. His wandering kosmische grooves are heavier than ever here. *Industrial Growth* pivots around a melodic, twinkling motif, underpinned by a muffled beat that's unquestionably portentous. It's an effect mined throughout, notably the snarling, Satanic chords on the John Carpenter-esque Heavy Industry and elegant, paranoid atmospherics of Warrington Bank Quay. There's true Northern grit on display, but beauty too. Number 10 would surely be wise to listen.

Stephen Worthy





THE OFFICIAL STORY OF THE GREATEST LIVE BAND OF ALL TIME

A NEW BOOK FEATURING RARE PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTWORKS, WITH A FOREWORD FROM THE ROLLING STONES THEMSELVES

Scan the QR code to order or visit your local bookshop

© 2026 Musidor B.V.

BOB DYLAN & THE ROLLING THUNDER REVUE

THE 1976 LIVE RECORDINGS

39CD BOX SET

OUT 6 NOVEMBER 2026



ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3LP SET:
THE ROLLING THUNDER REVUE 1976:
FORT WORTH TEXAS, MAY 16TH



LEGACY

BOBDYLAN.COM

Futures and pasts

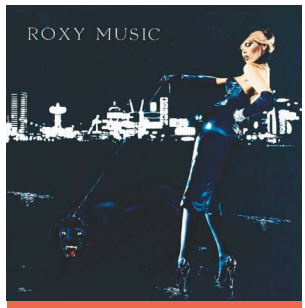
The glam era's most enduring album now with multiple add-ons, including Ferry demos, studio outtakes, radio sessions and TV performances. By **Mark Paytress**.

Roxy Music

★★★★★

For Your Pleasure

UMR/ISLAND/EMI. CD/DL/LP/DVD



"Ferry's ironic rictus grin encapsulates the Roxy aesthetic: serious or not, here we come."

OCTOBER 1972: with Roxy Music's first 45 Virginia Plain still airborne, Bryan Ferry, wearing gold-trimmed black silk pyjamas, was convalescing from a tonsillectomy. "I may never sing again," he said, drily. "But I can't promise anything."

Ferry's voice was musical Marmite, shivering and trembling like a lounge singer from Mars. Expressive to the point of caricature, it stretched the bounds of believability to such an extent that some questioned its sincerity. There were similar misgivings over Roxy's trailblazing, wildly eclectic music. "Style over substance," grumbled rock TV host Bob Harris earlier that year. Duane Eddy, '60s girl groups and King Crimson were all part of the band's mischievous raiding of pop's various pasts, a practice so unprecedented that detractors dubbed them 'Poxy Music'.

The naysayers got it wrong. Punk was raised on Roxy. So too the 'designed' acts of the MTV era. The mixing of styles that had enraged Roxy's enemies has now been standard for decades – with one major difference. Roxy Music's superpower was in its eccentricities, rather than adherence to orthodoxy or imitation. Multiple elements were juxtaposed like Ferry's art tutor Richard Hamilton collaging the pop world on canvas. Eclecticism ran deep.

After more than a year hatching the project, Roxy's June 1972 debut surprised many by breaking into the Top 10. Ferry, a virtual veteran nearing 27, began plans for a follow-up: it would be "quicker, cheaper, wilder". He even suggested reprising the album in the same track order to show just how far they'd come. None of it happened.

Because touring and promotion left little time for writing new material, Roxy first revisited a couple of existing pieces: Grey Lagoons, initially recorded as The Bogus Man Part 2 in July 1971, now included on this 3-CD+DVD Super Deluxe edition; and the roaming For Your Pleasure, started by Ferry during sessions for the first album. Early radio versions of Grey Lagoons (August 1972) and For Your Pleasure (November 1972), feature alongside four further BBC recordings.

With the labyrinthine, mostly instrumental The Bogus Man also earmarked for the new album, Roxy appeared to be moving towards more extended, album-oriented material. All changed when Virginia Plain peaked at Number 4 in September. The self-styled 'avant-rock' Roxy were now mixing it with the glam farceurs dominating the pop charts. Aflush with this new-found success, Ferry, now living in an apartment of his own, sat at a rented Steinway and began to craft a new set of songs. It was his first sustained period of writing since spring 1971.

Over several weeks, Ferry worked at his London home, retreating briefly to Roxy art director Nick de Ville's cottage in Derbyshire. The 10 demos he emerged with formed the basis for side one of the forthcoming album. These recordings, which sit at the heart of this vast and thrilling *Pleasure* package, offer an intimate glimpse of Ferry at the Steinway, the Hohner Pianet, occasionally switching to guitar, conjuring songs soon to develop into full band masterpieces.

Gripped by a sense of urgency, self-taught Ferry strikes the open-tuned guitar chords of Pyjamarama like a young Pete Townshend, pounds out basic piano chords on Do The Strand and Editions Of You, then returns to more familiar territory, channelling Jay Gatsby's Long Island ennui on Beauty Queen (in three echo-laden takes) and Strictly Confidential. A Farfisa version of In Every Dream Home A Heartache evokes the doomy Pink Floyd of 1968; a second, played on tremolo guitar, comes closer to *Space Ritual*-era Hawkwind. Even his brisker take on For Your Pleasure suggests a full rock band ending. With several sketches featuring intros, outros and breaks, Ferry's vision for the architecture of a song is palpable.

But it would be wrong to let his fine art and auteurist inclinations detract from the other members, substantially more than 'colours' in Ferry's exquisite palette. Eight engrossing rehearsal room and AIR studio outtakes attest to the collaborative nature of the February 1973 sessions.

In the accompanying 116-page book, saxist Andy Mackay describes this as "adding the Roxyness". Bob Clearmountain's new instrumental remix of the original album brings that 'Roxyness' into sharp focus – Mackay's sax, alternately blowhard and experimental; Phil Manzanera's blues-free guitar inventions; with both instruments 'treated' via Eno's tape and synthesizer manipulations. The arrival of new bassist John Porter, whose vigorous style locks in perfectly with Paul Thompson's strong-arm drumming, doubles the band's potency.

What surprises about the instrumental mix is just how much Ferry is missed. For all the musicians' madcap firepower and invention, Roxy Music doesn't quite make sense without him. The TV performances on the accompanying DVD – including a previously unseen Top Of The Pops clip of Pyjamarama – tell a similar story. Marvel at Manzanera's fly's-eye specs, Mackay's sci-fi rockabilly outfits and Eno's featherweight alien, but it's Ferry's ironic rictus grin that encapsulates the Roxy aesthetic: serious or not, here we come.

There was nothing like *For Your Pleasure* in 1973 (even Bowie was quietly awed), and there's nothing like it now: its blend of comic lounge balladry (Beauty Queen), consumer culture anxiety (Dream Home…), paranoid Krautrock (The Bogus Man) and off-kilter rockers (Do The Strand) wrapped in camp and innovation. Instrumental grandeurs too, from hypnotic improv on The Bogus Man to Mackay's guffawing sax and Eno's synth hysterics on Editions Of You, as well as archaic homages: psychedelic phasing on Dream Home…, doo wop on Grey Lagoons. And then there was the premonition.

Released in March 1973 and hitting Number 4 soon after, *For Your Pleasure* – here in Ferry's favoured 1999 Bob Ludwig remaster – ends with the title track's long, echoing fade set against solemn voices bidding "Ta-ra", Northern slang for goodbye. Four months later, Eno – whose Terry Riley-inspired electronic treatments for the piece make a fascinating outtake – was gone. Ferry toned down his vibrato and Roxy Music soon gained acceptance as a 'proper' band. *For Your Pleasure*, the most exciting, inspirational album of its time, demonstrates perfectly why we must always look beyond 'proper' bands.



BACK STORY
A FERRY RELUCTANT SHOWMAN

● "During the early days, Bryan was quite reluctant to front the band," remembers Andy Mackay. "Though he always saw it as his band, he preferred the idea of singing while playing keyboards at the side of the stage. But we soon realised that in a venue with people shouting, and wanting a bit of rock'n'roll, you needed someone in the middle of the stage. For a while, it had been me and Phil, and to some extent Eno, though he was a bit tied to his keyboards too. So we pushed Bryan. We said, You've got to do something that doesn't require the keyboard. Just stand and sing!"

ROXY SPEAKS! FERRY AND MACKAY ON QUIRKS, RISK TAKING AND THE ART OF POP.



Dream home boys: Roxy Music, (clockwise from left) Phil Manzanera, Andy Mackay, Rik Kenton, Paul Thompson, Brian Eno, Bryan Ferry, 1972.



Plain sailing: Roxy Music's Andy Mackay (left) and Bryan Ferry finished their second album on a high.

"My singing was pretty odd."

Bryan Ferry and Andy Mackay talk to Mark Paytress.

People weren't sure whether to take early Roxy Music seriously. Was that the idea?

Bryan Ferry: "Well, we certainly didn't intend to be a comic band! We wanted to do something that hadn't been heard before, do something that had a point to it even though we weren't sure what that was. We had a battery of sounds to work with. Phil [Manzanera] liked getting unusual sounds. Having [Andy's] oboe in the band was beautiful. I loved that sound. Eno could conjure up a million different things. Paul [Thompson] was strong and powerful. We were like beat brothers. He was the deep heart and soul of the band."

And you?

BF: "My piano playing was quirky, and my singing was pretty odd. It got better with practice. On the first album, a lot of the keys were too high. On *For Your Pleasure*, I found my way as a singer. I was more confident and not overthinking."

There's melancholy on songs like Beauty Queen and Strictly Confidential. Is that state of mind unavoidable for someone with a deep appreciation of the past?

BF: "I guess I just like sad songs. That's when you dig deepest and find the best way to communicate. I've always liked singers like Billie Holiday. Even on happy songs, she would add an element of *tristesse*."

The LP ends with you singing "Ta-ra". Afterwards, Eno left and you made a solo album. Was any of this coming?

BF: "We didn't have any quarrels, sorry to disappoint you! I just remember that I'd put everything into the album and I felt totally drained. We'd finished the album on a high."

Was it Roxy's intention to bring something new to rock?

Andy Mackay: "We were surprised that people found the first LP so avant-garde, but because none of us were rock'n'roll musicians we had no template to work from. And, yes, there was an expectation that we'd take more risks with the second LP."

How did the success of Virginia Plain change Roxy?

AM: "From being an arty album band, we'd become a pop band. We realised we needed songs that would work well on-stage, and that we had to work up our act. We enjoyed that, though maybe I overdid the rock'n'roll saxophone gestures! There was also an expectation that we'd come up with another hit single. Pyjamarama was a brisk little track, though if we'd taken a bit more time, we could have come up with something that should have been a Number 1, frankly."

Was it apparent during the sessions that Bryan and Eno weren't getting along?

"They got on fine in the studio. The problem was that Eno was very flamboyant. His stage presence was a kind of artistic statement. And some people saw him as the band's figurehead, which was not helpful. I don't think it was a big surprise that he left. It's fairly obvious that ego and ambition played some part."

Roxy were originals. How do you see the legacy?

"Rock'n'roll has always veered between the contrived and the natural, the organic. It's showbiz!"

Roky Erickson And The Aliens

★★★★★

The Evil One

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

US solo debut from 13th Floor Elevators frontman, now in 15-track edition.



How was this ever recorded? Conceived at Rusk State Mental Hospital, where Erickson was incarcerated from 1969 to 1972, it evolved over various sessions between 1974 and 1977, with the help of Doug Sahm, former Sir Douglas Quintet manager Craig Luckin and Creedence bassist Stu Cook. In 1978, recording sessions began with Moby Grape drummer Fuzzy Furioso, Penny Arcade guitarist Duane Aslaksen, Motown keyboardist Andre Lewis and electric autoharp maestro Billy Miller, and never ran smoothly, sidelined by Erickson's psychotic episodes and periods of incarceration. But thanks to Cook's Frankenstein-like syncing of vocal and instrumental takes, *The Evil One* emerges as a feral '70s rock monster, Erickson's clear-eyed visions of zombies, ghosts and demons bolstered by a band who sound like a union of Blue Öyster Cult and Television. Disintegration has never sounded so euphoric.

Andrew Male

Amy Winehouse

★★★★★

Back To Black

UMR/ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

Twentieth anniversary edition of what would become 2007's best-selling UK album.



It's impossible not to listen to Amy Winehouse's second album without being suffused by sadness. Fifteen years after her death, the impeccable songs of *Back To Black* only intensify the sense of needless loss, even as You Know I'm No Good or Rehab crackle with a fierce, formidable life-force. This expanded edition, with new sleevenotes from producers Mark Ronson and Salaam Remi, is accompanied by her blazing performance at Amsterdam's Paradiso on February 8, 2007 (including *Frank*'s Fuck Me Pumps and her cover of The Zutons' Valerie, generously name-checking the band). There are also B-sides and demos, among them Love Is A Losing Game and most strikingly, the impressionistic heartache of Tears Dry On Their Own, a perfect timestamp of a heavy state of mind. She walks away, the sun goes down.

Victoria Segal

Marlena Shaw

★★★★

The Spice Of Life

FONTANA. LP

Limited vinyl reissue of jazz soul luminary's 1969 album.



Produced and arranged by Richard Evans and Charles Stepney, Marlena Shaw's second and last album on Chess subsidiary Cadet captures her political voice, with her co-pens Woman Of The Ghetto and Liberation Conversion and a cover of Billy Taylor's I Wish I Knew. The first, her most famous song along with California Soul (also here), pits her expressive vocals – all jazz swing and blues articulation – over pulsing rhythms and widescreen orchestration. The second is compelling scat protest; while the third is testifying, take-it-to-the-river soul. The album never hit but it's provided hip-hop with heavyweight breaks and jazz dance with a benchmark. Shaw moved on to Blue Note; Stepney to Earth, Wind & Fire; and Evans to Natalie Cole and Peabo Bryson. Nothing they did beat this though.

Lois Wilson

John Coltrane Quartet

★★★★

The Tiberi Tapes

IMPULSE!. CD/DL/LP

Mythic 'bootleg' club recordings of Coltrane's coming of age finally gets a centennial release.



John Tiberi was a working musician in his early thirties when he started surreptitiously recording Coltrane at clubs like The Showboat and Pep's on South Street, Philadelphia, in 1960. Coltrane had left Miles Davis, quit heroin, and after a period playing with Thelonious Monk, built his quartet. Fascinated by Coltrane's 'harmonic deceptiveness' and 'chordal substitutions', Tiberi dragged his bagged reel-to-reel recorder to gigs with the mike wired through his coat. Tracking Coltrane from *Giant Steps* to *A Love Supreme*'s chant-like Resolution in 1963, Tiberi's previously unreleased recordings capture the quartet evolving at a rate of knots as Coltrane turns the sax inside out with unstoppable force. The audio quality is often dodgy, but the inspiration is relentless.

Mark Cooper

Yoko Ono

★★★★

It's Alright (I See Rainbows)

SECRETLY CANADIAN. CD/DL/LP

Loss and grief shadow the bright spots on Ono's 1982 album.



Coming a year after 1981's harrowing *Season Of Glass*, *It's Alright (I See Rainbows)* initially seems to move with a lighter step. Matching the echoing trauma of John Lennon's murder to wayward synth-pop, Yoko Ono said this album – reissued on vinyl for the first time in 40 years – was finally where she felt "in sync" with the wider musical world. Emotionally, however, there remains an unsettling detachment, even as she reaches for positivity. "I've got nightmares I could never share with you," Ono sings on the lullabying Never Say Goodbye; Let The Tears Dry opens like an eerie disco Last Post, while My Man and Dream Love come with a gritted sense of somebody holding on for dear life, their toy boat pitching dangerously. A new creative dawn, maybe, but the skies overhead remain disconcertingly dark.

Victoria Segal



Evil spirit: Roky Erickson emerges as a feral '70s rock monster.

Courtesy of the Craig Luckin archives



Holy communion: the Manics (from left) Nicky Wire, James Dean Bradfield and Sean Moore on blistering form in 2014.

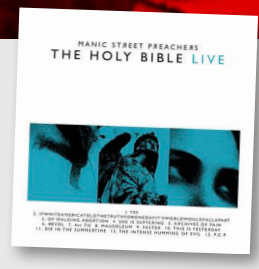
Manic Street Preachers

★★★★★

The Holy Bible Live

SONY. BR/CD/DL/LP

The 2014 tribute to 1994's classic album is finally released, plus film.



TWENTY YEARS after Richey Edwards' final bow as a Manic Street Preacher, his bandmates honoured their departed friend by playing *The Holy Bible* in entirety for three nights at London's Roundhouse. The trio summoned every shred of experience to re-engage with the cerebral causticity of a record defined by Edwards' genius, their blistering performances laced with gallows humour. "It's the feel-good singalong anthem of winter – take it a-fucking-way!" says Nicky Wire, introducing Mausoleum. Whether booing Thatcher or chanting Of Walking Abortion's chorus, the audience contributions are key, vividly so in Kieran Evans' accompanying concert film – Wire: "Less a movie, more a migraine" – where a fan's "God Bless Richey 4 The Holy Bible" placard is complemented by James Dean Bradfield smiling amid P.C.P's lyrical tripwires. The Blu-Ray has Steven Wilson's Atmos mix of the original LP. Heroic work all round.

Keith Cameron

Various

★★★★

Martin Freeman And Eddie Piller Present On The Corner

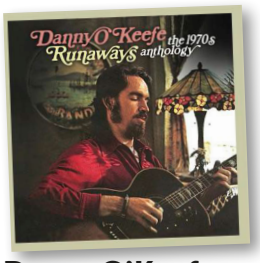
ACID JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Kaleidoscopic cache of rare and not-so-rare grooves.



Acid Jazz co-founder Piller and actor-cum-crate-digger Freeman reunite for their fourth and arguably most eclectic compendium yet. Spanning everything from pounding Mod anthems (Zoot Money's Big Roll Band) and heart-rending deep soul (Sandra Wright) to brassy Brit-funk (Light Of The World), proto jazz-rock (Gary Burton) and psychedelic spiritual jazz (Doug Carn), they take us on a joyous journey exploring the dusty nooks and crannies of popular music. Every cut is a winner, but worth singling out are the swinging I Can't Keep From Crying Baby Sometimes by the US jazz-folk trio Deirdre Wilson Tabac and Santana's cosmic hymnal Light Of Life, featuring singer Leon Thomas, while the presence of psych-folk singer Kadhja Bonet and composer Matt Berry adds a contemporary slant. With its panoramic sweep, this impeccably curated collection largely spotlights under-the-radar gems deserving wider recognition.

Charles Waring



Danny O'Keefe

★★★

Runaways: The 1970s Anthology

STRAWBERRY. CD

Well-connected Washington state singer-songwriter re-examined.

Produced by Arif Mardin, covered by Elvis Presley and capable of attracting such guests as Don Henley and Glenn Frey, Danny O'Keefe seemingly had it all. He certainly had a Top 10 US single in 1972 with the rueful Good Time Charlie's Got The Blues. He's still going today, but as this non-chronological trawl through the best of his six major-label albums suggests, his refusal to be pigeonholed scuppered his prospects for airplay and, consequently, his career. Veering between the lavishly orchestrated, confessional title track of 1977's *American Roulette* to the basic barroom stomp of Covered Wagon with Linda Ronstadt on backing vocals, via the echo-drenched, environmentally concerned Save The Whales, O'Keefe's constants were his rich voice and his intelligent songwriting. It wasn't quite enough then, but it's more than enough to rediscover him now.

John Aizlewood

Serge Gainsbourg

★★★★

Intoxicated Man

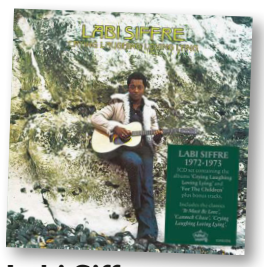
WAGRAM. LP

Thirty-six songs in two LPs from Gainsbourg's earliest albums.



Before Bardot, Birkin and the whole louche, smoky persona, there was Gainsbourg the songwriter, piano player and singer with a regular gig at a Left Bank jazz club. His voice high-pitched, his manner uptight, Gainsbourg wasn't everyone's idea of a singer, but his songs, even then, were remarkable. Sometimes classical (Chanson De Maglia), sometimes modern (Le Poinçonneur Des Lilas; Le Claqueur De Doigts), often ahead of their time with their references to world music – most strikingly, African percussion. Cool, smart, cynical, provocative and partial to wordplay, Gainsbourg made fans of influential novelist and jazz critic Boris Vian and cabaret star Michèle Arnaud. It was 1958 when Gainsbourg's first album was released, containing some of the songs on this retrospective, he was already the most inventive songwriter in French pop.

Sylvie Simmons



Labi Siffre

★★★★

1972-1973

EDSEL/DEMON. CD

Socially conscious acoustic folk from the still underrated UK singer-songwriter.

This 3-CD set collates Siffre's 1972 third and 1973 fourth albums *Crying Laughing Loving Lying* and *For The Children*, with B-sides from the same period. *Crying…* provided his breakthrough with the tender It Must Be Love, now a part of pop's fabric thanks to Madness's 1981 Top 5 cover. But it isn't all upbeat. Saved – a part spiritual, part field holler – still haunts. "I am a free man, and my father he was a slave/I have been broken but my children will be saved," he sings in haunting a cappella. *For The Children* followed Saved's blueprint. Empowered by *What's Going On*, Siffre set out to write his equivalent. The result was an album of unrepentant treatises on the state of mankind that hit hard with their quiet power.

Lois Wilson

Various

★★★★

Rough Trade 45s: Volume 2

ROUGH TRADE. 7-INCH

A freewheeling pop dream realised in 7-inch singles.



The nine 7-inch gems – pulled from 1980 to 1993 – featured in this second Rough Trade box highlight a set of artists, and a label, gleefully painting outside the underground's margins. Aztec Camera's Oblivious, The Sundays' Can't Be Sure and Scritti Politti's The Sweetest Girl are rich, timeless pop songs. Robert Wyatt's version of Shipbuilding and The Go-Betweens' Cattle And Cane are unique, poignant statements, while The Fall's Totally Wired is thick and potent and dangerously alive. This flood of free-wheeling aspiration bleeds into the B-sides, where Mazzy Star tear into Slapp Happy's Blue Flower and The Smiths' I Want The One I Can't Have helps shape their grand, imperial phase. Ambitious, joyful, creative: as Jonathan Richman says on the flip of his 45, "this kind of music is the kind I like".

Rob Fitzpatrick

Richard 'Groove' Holmes

★★★★

Six Million Dollar Man

FLYING DUTCHMAN. LP

First vinyl reissue of the 1975 soul-jazz organ gem arranged by Oliver Nelson.



On his first of three albums for Flying Dutchman after a successful run at Groove Merchant, Richard 'Groove' Holmes, with arranger Oliver Nelson and label owner/producer Bob Thiele, made a career best. Disc-O-Mite, Dumpy Mama and Mama's Groove are intense funk workouts with Holmes and his trusty Hammond B3 organ in a small group setting. His fierce staccato runs over throbbing bass and breakbeat drums with Tom Scott's brass interpolations are utterly thrilling. The remaining tracks are split between more easy-listening material, such as the laid-back Salsa De Alma, and TV and film soundtracks. These span Henry Mancini's tender Once Is Not Enough to the title track and 125th St And 7th Ave where Nelson brings orchestral expanse to Holmes' intensified rampaging.

Lois Wilson



Gigi Masin

★★★★

Wind

NUMERO GROUP. DL/LP

40th-anniversary edition of Italian multi-instrumentalist's ambient debut.

Intended as a jazz album, Gigi Masin's debut unexpectedly cast the Venice composer into a different genre entirely. Self-released, *Wind*'s reputation for beatless, floating arrangements and simple affecting loops built in the shadows, its relative rarity (most copies were ruined in a house flood) enhancing its reputation as an ambient classic. Throughout, the pillowy presets of Masin's Korg P-800 synth exude an undeniable warmth, subtly augmented with one-finger piano motifs, looping bass lines (Celebration Of Eleven), Marco Barel's spare sax (Swallow's Tempest), Massimo Donà's elusive trumpet (The Wind Song) and Masin's whispery murmur tracing a list of vulnerabilities (Call Me). Full of sparse minimalism and trademark fluttering synths, the five bonus tracks here don't reinvent the wheel, but the enveloping mellowness of Masin's first creation still impacts anew four decades on.

Andy Cowan

Waylon Jennings

★★★

Diamonds

THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Hit and miss collection of unreleased archive recordings.



The backstory for *Diamonds* – the second anthology of unreleased songs from Waylon Jennings' archive curated by son Shooter to follow last year's *Songbirds* – conveniently forgets 2008's admittedly forgettable *Waylon Forever*. Jennings Sr was arguably the man and artist who embodied outlaw country more than any other, but really he was a big softie romantic, witnessed here by The Good Things Don't Last Very Long, She Smiles Like A River and Lost Love Song. The 1978 title track Diamonds, featuring passing studio visitor Glen Campbell on lead guitar, is the album's money shot but in truth it still sounds unpolished. Much better are I'm Tired, with wife Jessi Colter, and Born Too Late, but some tracks, such as Bee Gees cover Words, were archived for good reason.

Andy Fyfe



Genesis

★★★

From Genesis To Revelation

ESOTERIC . CD/DL/LP

First officially sanctioned reissue of 1969 debut, expanded to four discs.

Housed in a bible-black sleeve with gothic font (blame mentor/label boss Jonathan King) which consigned it to the religious racks of record shops, Genesis's overlooked debut (it sold 646 copies) is always judged against the prog that followed. Without prejudice, a trove of velvety pop buried treasure emerges; an English-pastoral Bee Gees, on whom lead single Silent Sun was modelled. Not releasing the album's one outright classic, In The Wilderness, on 45 was another error; it resembles Genesis discovering Genesis while teenage Peter Gabriel's lyric reveals weightier themes: "How do people run their lives when their lives are run by time?" Alongside new mixes and remastered mono/stereo versions are the rarities, some unearthed for 1998's *Genesis Archive 1970-75* box but not the gorgeous Visions Of Angels, subsequently expanded on Genesis's prog 'debut' *Trespass*.

Martin Aston

Tom Waits

★★★★

Small Change

ANTI-. LP

50th-anniversary vinyl reissue of low-life high point.



"Everyone's a winner… Bargains galore!" Tom Waits' patter on Step Right Up is a litany of consumerist glitter, all destined for the scrapheap. The vivid lives on his fourth album have a similar doomed sparkle, the backdrops of strip clubs and bars beaming a little razzle-dazzle into desperate times. With his voice increasingly ground into the sawdust, Waits – in 1976 gripped by the alcohol-soaked life of the hard-touring musician – builds a world of broken dreams, fractured morals and threadbare joys, the beatnik bounce and chatter not masking the poignancy of his storytelling on Tom Traubert's Blues (Four Sheets To The Wind In Copenhagen) or the strong sad brew of Invitation To The Blues. By the time he hits dawn's ironic early light on I Can't Wait To Get Off Work, whatever he's selling, you're buying.

Victoria Segal

Dorothy Ashby And Frank Wess

★★★★

In A Minor Groove

REAL GONE MUSIC. LP

1958 harp and flute summit in a modern jazz setting.



Frank Wess was Count Basie's flautist who first met harpist Ashby in 1957. *In A Minor Groove* is their third collaboration and the pair's second of 1958. Recorded with drummer Roy Haynes and bassist Herman Wright, it captures the harpist's compulsion for forward motion with the LP's eight tracks – six standards, two Ashby originals – exploring harmonic tension on a lively bebop and swing set. On paper, it's an ill-suited exercise for her instrument yet in the studio it appears anything but. In fact, with the cacophonous It's A Minor Thing and her rhythmic reading of Bohemia After Dark, we witness her first steps towards her discovery of the harp's spiritual voice, something she would expand on with her more celebrated later works such as 1968's *Afro-Harping* on Cadet.

Lois Wilson

The Who

★★★★

The Who By Numbers

UNIVERSAL. CD/DL/LP/BR

Pete Townshend's not-quite-middle-aged angst revisited, in super-deluxe format.



Sandwiched between *Quadrophenia* and *Who Are You*, The Who's seventh is often unfairly overlooked. While not a concept album, its original 10 tracks saw Pete Townshend pondering the relevance of being a 30-year-old pop star in 1975. "Where do you fit in Zzzzip magazine, where the past is a hero and the present a queen?" he wrote on They Are All In Love. The whole thing is smart, witty and prescient, and both Slip Kid and Dreaming From The Waist would have fitted perfectly on 1971's *Who's Next*. The album's inner workings are revealed on this edition's multiple formats, which include 11 Townshend demos, 18 live tracks from 1976, and a disc's worth of early mixes where Townshend can be overheard berating producer Glyn Johns. "Don't look so bloody half-hearted!" he roars. "Roll the bloody tape!"

Mark Blake

Philip Lynott

★★★★

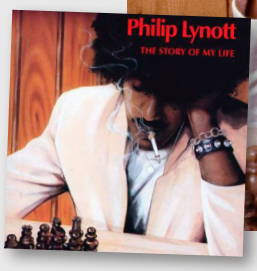
The Story Of My Life

UNIVERSAL MUSIC RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

The Lizzy laureate's solo work gets an 8-CD box.



King's gambit: Phil Lynott had an innate musical curiosity.



PHIL LYNOTT'S innate musical curiosity – and Thin Lizzy's mutable guitar personnel – prompted 1980's *Solo In Soho* and attendant synth-pop hit Yellow Pearl while Lizzy was still extant. His later solo output and post-Lizzy band Grand Slam seemed a little rudderless, however, heroin addiction and disillusionment with the biz sometimes clouding Lynott's judgement. Boasting 29 previously unreleased tracks, this box's demos and rarities include coulda-been Lizzy hits (see title track), curios (see A Tribute To Sandy Denny, which Lynott sang and produced for trad act Clann Eadair), a version of Parisienne Walkways with Huey Lewis on harmonica, and The Lady Loves To Dance, a sparky duet with Junior 'Mama Used To Say' Giscombe. What might have been had Lynott been well and not spread himself so thinly is all too apparent.

James McNair



American boys: Tom Petty (far right) and The Heartbreakers (from left) Ron Blair, Mike Campbell, Benmont Tench and Stan Lynch, 1976.

Adrian Boot

Learning to fly

Early, unreleased material tells the story of Mudcrutch becoming The Heartbreakers, to celebrate 50 years of their self-titled debut. By Mat Snow.

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers

★★★★

Origins 1971-1978

UNIVERSAL. CD/DL/LP/BR



"WELCOME TO one of the best origin stories in rock'n'roll: the long march from genesis to liftoff of Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers," trumpets David Fricke's essay in the beautifully illustrated and informative 'zine-style guide that accompanies *Origins*' 50-plus tracks plus a Blu-ray of the band's BBC Old Grey Whistle Test performance. But the actual story is less a glory-bound forward march than a stop-start of slow-downs, double-backs and dead ends before a serendipitous reset.

Save for the first two TP&TH albums not just in toto but with several tracks re-edited to run precious seconds in extenso, this is all reflected in the box's running order. *Origins* is no linear chronicle of their prehistory and first flush but a package to get lost in: fun first, homework second.

An intriguing what-if subtexts the story. The first recording here is Up In Mississippi Tonight, the self-financed debut single by Florida's upstate Gainesville band Mudcrutch, cut in Criteria Studios, Miami in September 1971 with 20-year-old writer and bassist Tom Petty on lead vocals and fellow future Heartbreaker Mike Campbell, 21, on guitar. On the other guitar and still only 18 was Tom Leadon, whose older brother Bernie was in LA starting with another new group – the Eagles.

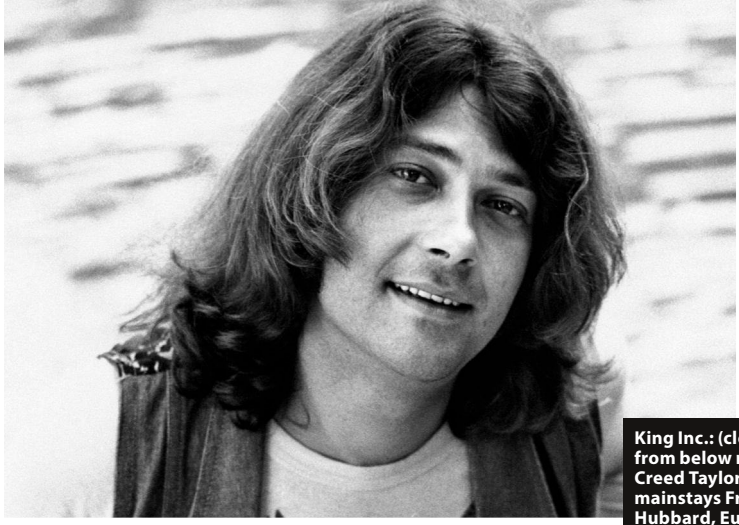
There's no denying the twanging, country-rock likeness between the two bands at this formative stage. But the Eagles were more seasoned players, in the right place at the right time with the extra uplift of nominative determinism favouring the all-American airborne over the backwoods earthbound.

It took nearly five years of falling short en route to LA's promised land before all concerned – which crucially included the band's expat British producer and label boss Denny Cordell of The Move, Procol Harum, Joe Cocker and Leon Russell fame – saw the light and ditched Mudcrutch murk for Heartbreakers flash, with Petty thrust, not altogether reluctantly, into the spotlight.

As chief songwriter he was the one irreplaceable element, over the years learning to craft material for a band which in turn stretched even to reggae thanks to Cordell's enthusiasm for the 1973 *Feeling High Vol. 1* compilation, featuring Dennis Brown, Max Romeo and I-Roy, which particularly influenced Benmont Tench's keyboards.

American Girl, however, cleaves closely to Petty's personal heartland where Dylan, rock'n'roll and West Coast sunshine converge in The Byrds, so much so that Roger McGuinn thought it was his song. In 2001 it was in turn lifted for Last Nite by The Strokes whose hip, flip, echt-New York pop-rock could have sprung fully formed from Anything That's Rock'n'Roll, another banger on the Heartbreakers' 1976 self-titled debut whose half-century this box commemorates. Thus did the East Coast imitate a Southern imitation of the West Coast with Zeitgeist rock anthems at every step.

All sounding splendid thanks to Ryan Ulyate's remixes and refurbishments, *Origins* leaves the story with the Heartbreakers established mid-table in loose league with the likes of Springsteen and Costello straddling old wave and new with energy, commitment, songcraft and high principles. The breakthrough blockbuster *Damn The Torpedoes* would follow in 1979 with success supplying its own struggles.





King Inc.: (clockwise from below right) Creed Taylor and CTI mainstays Freddie Hubbard, Eumir Deodato and George Benson.



FILE UNDER...



Smooth operator

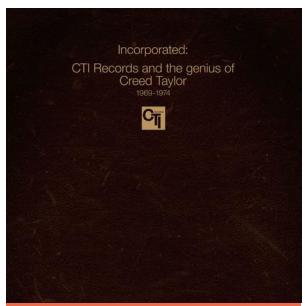
Manning a red telephone, he learned how to make jazz music attractive to a wider market. The unique career of Creed Taylor, by **Jim Irvin**.

CREED TAYLOR WAS a quietly obsessive A&R man and producer who oversaw every aspect of the records that bore his name. Many of them carried his signature somewhere in the artwork, shorthand for "Meticulously made using the finest players, arrangers, engineers and designers. Will class up your life." He developed this approach during a long career that spanned multiple labels: Bethlehem, ABC, Impulse!, Verve, A&M and his independent Creed Taylor Incorporated imprint, this last being the source of a new compilation of prime cuts from his vast output: *Incorporated: CTI Records And The Genius Of Creed Taylor 1969-1974* ★★★★ (Ace).

Born in Lynchburg, Virginia, an amateur trumpet player in his youth, from his teens Taylor was driven to leave "this hillbilly business" and escape to New York, where the jazz he heard on Symphony Sid's broadcasts from Birdland was cooking. Soon after he made it there, he discovered smoky-voiced singer Chris Connor and signed her to Bethlehem in 1954. Moving to ABC, he founded the Impulse! jazz imprint, and recorded landmark albums by John Coltrane, Gil Evans, Oliver Nelson and others, calmly directing proceedings via a red telephone connected to the live room in Rudy Van Gelder's New Jersey studio. Headhunted by MGM for Verve, he kickstarted the American bossa nova craze with records by Stan Getz, Charlie Byrd, Tom Jobim and Astrid Gilberto.

That ability to locate the jazz landscape's commercial zone led to a lucrative deal with A&M, guiding more than 30 CTI albums in three years with Wes Montgomery, George Benson, Jobim, Quincy Jones et al. In 1970, Taylor opted to go it alone, the independent CTI featuring Hubert Laws, Freddie Hubbard, Paul Desmond and Bob James on its roster. However, success proved to be its undoing. A million-selling Eumir Deodato record created cash flow problems when crooked distributors opted not to pay up. It was tempting for Taylor to imagine the record business was conspiring against him when, while financially vulnerable at the end of the '70s, his company was picked up by Columbia for a comparative song.

This fine CD and double-vinyl compilation draws from the first half of the '70s, when independent CTI was booming, selling plenty of lightly funky mood music that filled the air with the perfume of possibility. Compiler Dean Rudland points out in excellent linernotes that this sound was both more polished and tougher than the late-'60s iteration of CTI.



"Taylor had an ability to locate the jazz landscape's commercial zone."

A good example is Ganawa (Blue Moses) by undervalued pianist Randy Weston, with a typically dynamic Don Sebesky orchestral arrangement, kinetic drumming by Billy Cobham and fiery solos by Hubbard, Laws and Grover Washington. Weston himself seems a little subdued on electric piano. Apparently, he didn't care for it. Great track, nonetheless.

I love Gábor Szabó, but the '70s saw him receding into unremarkable funkiness (especially on his woeful Mercury releases). However, his tangy version of Seals & Crofts' Summer Breeze, arranged by Bob James, issued in 1973, the same year as the Isleys' cover, is excellent. George Benson's sinewy Body Talk and Deodato's Moog-out Skyscrapers epitomise this era, though by no means the best things either did for Taylor. I might have chosen Bob James's sassy Westchester Lady over the watery Nautilus – which I note streams better – but, hey, different strokes.

All told, it's a very pleasing introduction to a fruitful period, but as a celebration of Taylor's genius can't help but sell short a recording life that encompassed Nina Simone's *Baltimore*, Wes Montgomery's *A Day In The Life*, Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* and The Girl From Ipanema. Maybe one day someone will conquer the doubtless entangled rights issues and compile an album covering Taylor's whole career. That would really be something.

Getty (4)



Elastica

★★★★

Elastica

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP/MC

Keys, money, vinyl reissue… Suited-and-booted four-piece revisit 1995 debut.

In July, a tantalising post appeared on Elastica's Instagram: "Missed us?" Despite triggering brief excitement that Britpop's unlikeliest reunion might be imminent, it was actually flagging this Rough Trade 2-LP reissue of the band's 1995 debut. No real disappointment, though: Elastica hit their moment so perfectly with these songs, they never really needed to do much else. From Stutter's withering get-to-the-chorus punk and Car Song's Blondie erotica to the incipient '90s malaise of Waking Up and Never There, it's a brilliant capsule collection of their insouciant, insolent charm, sharpened over messy nights out and rumpled mornings in. Expanded with B-sides and rarities (a cover of Adam And The Ants' Cleopatra, the excellent See That Animal) and distanced from Britpop's distorting glare, *Elastica* still stands tall in its impeccably scuffed boots. Make a cup of tea, put this record on.

Victoria Segal

Movietone

★★★★

Day And Night

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

First reissue for the Bristol slowcore post-rockers' 1997 second LP.



The sound of Movietone is of a drowsy chamber jazz trio gradually becoming aware of the emptiness of the modern world, or late-era Talk Talk if the voice of Mark Hollis were replaced by the melancholy ghost of a suburban poet. Recorded, as the title suggests, in the daytime and late at night in empty rooms and cafés, where the narcotic sounds of nothing are allowed to wrap themselves around the gently played guitars, drums, and piano, *Day And Night* is an exquisitely haunted LP. Much of that is down to Rachel Brook's sensual vocals and barely-heard lyrics, which emerge like whispered spells amid the silences. But, ultimately, *Day And Night*'s brilliance is about ensemble playing of the finest kind, a slow, languid acoustic union of space, atmosphere, mood and restraint. Turn down the lights and listen.

Andrew Male

Johnny Clarke

★★★★

Originally Mr. Clarke

GORGON/17 NORTH PARADE. DL/LP

Quality remaster of 1980 collection from legendary Bunny Lee protegé.

JOHNNY CLARKE did serious business in Jamaica during the mid-'70s when Bob Marley was busy taking reggae global. It helped that producer Bunny Lee favoured the singer, and Clarke therefore had Lee's premier studio crew The Aggrovators on call, but his key asset was a mellifluous and versatile vocal style, equally suited to Rasta militancy or romance, enabling him to assimilate the decade's evolving rhythm trends. Released in 1980 by Brad Osbourne's New York Clocktower label, *Originally Mr. Clarke* showcases Lee-produced late-'70s steppers material like Blood Dunza and Every Knee Shall Bow, plus upgrades on earlier songs, notably a magisterially horn-powered Jah Jah We Are Waiting. Osbourne himself provides flute on the ominous It A Go Rough, while It's A Disgrace showcases Clarke as equal to his band's power, both a dancehall ruler and roots controller.

Keith Cameron



Here's Johnny: Clarke – both dancehall ruler and roots controller.

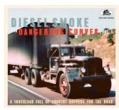
Various

★★★★

Diesel Smoke And Dangerous Curves Vol. 1 – A Truckload Of Country Boppers For The Road

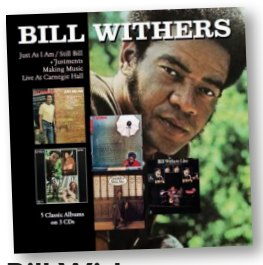
BEAR FAMILY. CD

Debut entry in Bear Family's new vintage country series, 1951-69.



If you believe the lyrics of these 33 well-chosen songs celebrating and mythologising the itinerant lives of drugstore truck-driving men, these road warriors hardly slept, bed-hopping their way across the States cranked up on a diet of cheap amphetamines, as Red Sovine sings in 10 Days Out – 2 Days In: "I took so many pills that when I die/They won't ever get my eyes to close". Slim Jacobs' laconic That's Truck Drivin' mines a seam dating back to Jimmie Rodgers, while Lonnie Lillie's 1956 single Truck Driver's Special is pure hiccupping Elvis-at-Sun rockabilly, lit up by Spud Goodall's expert lead guitar runs. Another highlight is It's The Mileage That's Slowin' Us Down, a 1954 duet between Opry veterans Red Foley and Ernest Tubb replete with wry double-entendres about worn-out machinery and rusting gears.

Max Décharné



Bill Withers

★★★★

Just As I Am/Still Bill/+ 'Justments/Making Music/Live At Carnegie Hall

ROBINSONGS/CHERRY RED. CD

The soul star's first five albums released at his height.

This 3-CD set covers Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Bill Withers' initial burst of fame from 1971 through 1975 and includes his most commercially and artistically successful releases. The late West Virginia singer-songwriter had huge hits in the UK and US with the unforgettably catchy Ain't No Sunshine and Lean On Me. While these repeatedly covered compositions transcend their era, the original tracks also capture a specific period in time. The hits and other originals like Grandma's Hands and Use Me poured out of the radio and jukeboxes of their day, blending blues, gospel and powerful melodies and swung with Withers' emotional vocal chops. He created an immediately distinctive sound that appealed to both pop and soul audiences. The final disc, 1973's *Live At Carnegie Hall*, drips with fatback funk and fun.

Michael Simmons

Various

★★★★

Jon Savage's 1976: Something Was Going To Happen

ACE. LP

Expert musical storytelling tracks a fast-evolving year.



Beginning with Roxy Music's Both Ends Burning and finishing with Buzzcocks' Time's Up, this chronological singles compilation by the writer Jon Savage slices a path through a year where Brotherhood Of Man and The Wurzels were dominant chart forces. Here's how he shook off his pop disillusionment in the year before punk broke: roots reggae (Max Romeo And The Upsetters' War Ina Babylon, Burning Spear's Old Marcus Garvey); speedy pub rock (Nick Lowe's Heart Of The City); over-ripe glam (Hello's Teenage Revolution) and on-the-turn disco (Lewis Furey's Top Ten Sexes, Miami's Kill That Roach). Patti Smith Group's feral My Generation salutes the ancestors, while "accelerant template" of Ramones' Havana Affair blazes ahead to the punk dawn of The Saints, Pere Ubu and The Damned. Waiting in the waiting room is rarely so much fun.

Victoria Segal

The Family Silver

★★★★

Electric Blend

SDE. CD

Sole LP from the acid jazz trio. Also available as a Blu-ray featuring unseen live footage.



The Family Silver are singer/guitarist Matt Deighton, bassist Damon Minchella and drummer Steve White. All three have played in Paul Weller's band and 2015's *Electric Blend* is full of little reminders of how they helped shape his '90s solo sound. Peace & Love (Don't It Feel Good?) is full of breezy optimism and jazzy rhythms (the song dates from Deighton's Mother Earth days). Only (From Out Of The Ashes) is more ruminative with its Soho folk club vibes while From Out Of The Blues is soulful rock with organ hum. Recorded live in Manchester's Blueprint studios, it flopped on release, but bolstered with 2018's Blaze Of Light EP plus a handful of gentle acoustic numbers, it deserves this second chance.

Lois Wilson

academyevents presents

Transvision Vamp

THEIR FIRST UK & IRE TOUR SINCE 1991

"Playing every single Transvision Vamp song you ever wanted to hear live!"

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS yee jai



2026

OCTOBER

14 CAMBRIDGE Junction
15 LEICESTER O2 Academy
16 LIVERPOOL O2 Academy
17 OXFORD O2 Academy
18 CARDIFF Tramshed
20 MANCHESTER O2 Ritz
21 BOURNEMOUTH O2 Academy
22 LONDON O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire
24 NORWICH Epic
28 BRIGHTON Chalk
29 BIRMINGHAM O2 Institute
30 BRISTOL O2 Academy
31 DUBLIN The Academy

NOVEMBER

01 BELFAST Limelight 1

THEWENDYJAMES.COM

*Except Dublin & Belfast

---

academyevents
& PINK DOT in association with ABBIE CARTER OF HAL CARTER ORGANISATION presents

DAVE HILL'S

SLADE

UK TOUR 2026

It's Christmaaaas!

DAVEHILLSLADE.COM

DECEMBER

01 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
02 NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
08 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
09 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
12 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY
13 CARDIFF TRAMSHED
16 BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
18 LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
20 MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
22 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY

---

academyevents
by arrangement with NEIL 'O'BRIEN ENTERTAINMENT presents

BIG COUNTRY

THE SEER 40th ANNIVERSARY TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

EVAN PETERS PRESENTS

ALARM



NEW ALBUM EASTWORLD

BIGCOUNTRY.CO.UK

2026

25 NOV BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
27 NOV OXFORD O2 ACADEMY
29 NOV LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY
30 NOV MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
02 DEC LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON
03 DEC BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
04 DEC LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
10 DEC BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY



academyevents
by arrangement with CMC & MOTION AGENCY presents

TREVOR HORN & HIS BAND

playing the songs he produced, played and sang on

DECEMBER 2026

SAT 05 EDINBURGH Queen's Hall
WED 09 LEEDS O2 Academy
THU 10 LIVERPOOL O2 Academy
FRI 11 BRISTOL O2 Academy
TUE 15 CARDIFF Tramshed
WED 16 BIRMINGHAM O2 Institute
THU 17 LONDON O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire
SAT 19 MANCHESTER O2 Ritz

---

academyevents
by arrangement with MPI presents

THE SHARON SHANNON BIG BAND

FEATURING GUESTS *LIVE* IN CONCERT

SHARON SHANNON
VERY SPECIAL GUEST
BOB GELDOF
MUNDY · CAMILLE O'SULLIVAN · LIAM Ó MAONLAÍ (HOTHOUSE FLOWERS)



WED 27 JAN GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
THU 28 JAN LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
FRI 29 JAN MANCHESTER O2 RITZ

---

academyevents
by arrangement with CIRCLE SKY presents

A CO-HEADLINE SHOW

the orb
OZRIC TENTACLES

NOVEMBER 2026

THU 19 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
FRI 20 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
THU 26 BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
FRI 27 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
SAT 28 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2*

DECEMBER 2026

FRI 04 MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
SAT 05 LONDON O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN

*OZRIC TENTACLES ONLY

---

academyevents presents

THE ICICLE WORKS

2027

FRI 14 MAY HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
SAT 15 MAY BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
FRI 21 MAY LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON
SAT 22 MAY LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY

---

academyevents
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CIRCLE SKY AGENCY PRESENTS

LOVE

with JOHNNY ECHOLS



60th anniversary of Forever Changes

2027

SAT 15 MAY LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
SAT 22 MAY OXFORD O2 ACADEMY
SAT 29 MAY LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE

LOVEWITHJOHNNYECHOLS.COM



The Alan Skidmore Quintet

★★★★

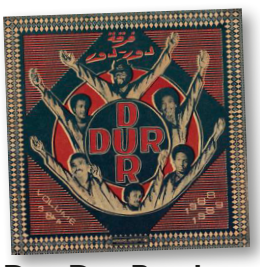
Once Upon A Time…

FONTANA. LP

Rare stellar Brit-jazz set from 1970. Excellent liner essay by Tony Higgins.

Sax-playing prodigy Skidmore, still in his twenties, was a dozen years into his far-ranging career before recording this debut as band leader. He'd assembled a crack squad to enter – and win – the Montreaux Jazz Festival in June 1969, an accolade that drew producer Peter Eden from Deram's Nova offshoot, who marketed the record in a colourful, trippy sleeve as a 'progressive' release, with promo shots of Skidmore in shades, beads and hipster moustache. It's unmistakably top-drawer modal jazz, however, Skidmore drawing on a deep love of Coltrane with impressive support from pianist John Taylor and flugelhorn player Kenny Wheeler in particular. In a gutsy, adventurous, sometimes challenging set, the lyrical title track composed by John Surman, and the lengthy Old San Juan, stand out, giving five fine players plenty of opportunity to shine.

Jim Irvin



Dur-Dur Band

★★★★

Dur-Dur Volume 3 (1988) & 4 (1989)

ANALOG AFRICA. DL/LP

The funky imperial years of Mogadishu's finest.

Terrific music and a revealing insight into how the music industry works abroad. With two great albums of floorfillers under their belts, the kings of the Somalian club scene in the mid-1980s were rocked by the departure of Shimaali Ahmed Shimaali, their lead singer. Unbowed, they set up a tape deck and some mikes in the grounds of the Jubba Hotel, recorded eight tracks and copied them onto a handful of cassettes to be sent to record stores to dub for fans. A bespoke service, true, but somewhat lacking in auditing and royalties. Making *Volume 4* was even more traumatic – bandleader Isse Dahir Qassim was electrocuted during a soundcheck in 1988 – yet the group carried on, recruiting a new keyboard player and more vocalists, to impressive effect. Bruised, but still funkier than a mosquito's tweeter.

David Hutcheon

Sing-Sing

★★★★

The Joy Of Sing-Sing

AERIAL. CD/DL/LP

Emma Anderson's 2002 post-Lush cinematic-pop debut gets a bells and whistles do-over.



If there was ever any doubt as to why Lush were such a good pop band skilfully hidden underneath a thick and gauzy shoegaze haze, then all the answers are here. Now presented with B-sides, demos and rare recordings, Emma Anderson's debut with Lisa O'Neill (not the Irish folk singer) showcases rich and cinematic songwriting devoid of stylistic reverb and distortion. Feels Like Summer has an unabashed Motown-bounce, Command pastes sweet harmony vocals over a Jah Wobble-like bass line, while Émigré's waltz-time prog-throb threads harps and analogue synths throughout. With Moogs, breakbeats and tremolo guitar lines aplenty, the Carpenters-meet-Astrud Gilberto In Dub production is very of its era, but pieces like radiantly joyful You Don't Know artfully prove this album's lasting worth.

Rob Fitzpatrick

COMING NEXT MONTH…

Radie Peat (below), Morphine, Peter Gabriel, His Lordship, The Flaming Lips, Howlin' Rain, Siouxsie And The Banshees, 10cc, Sufjan Stevens, James Yorkston and more…



REISSUES EXTRA



Acid Casuals

★★★★

Omni

CIRCUITRY ELECTRONIC. CD/DL/LP

Welsh Panda Bear/Sonic Boom vibes flow on melancholy 2006 avant pop gem from Super Furries' Cian Ciarán/Big Leaves' Kev Tame-led crew. Opener If I'm A Selt You're A Sunt invokes an infamous Richard Burton riposte, while Bowl Me Over goes the full Dennis Wilson. *KC*



Brigitte Fontaine

★★★★

Comme À La Radio

WEWANTSOUNDS. CD/DL/LP

1970 LP captures Fontaine's entrancing, husky tones with Areski Belkacem, Wadada Leo Smith and Art Ensemble Of Chicago exploring connective threads of spoken word, acid folk and free jazz. A bonus disc has unissued instrumentals and alternate takes. *LW*



Keith Jarrett/ Charlie Haden

★★★★

Jasmine

ECM. LP

From 2010's reunion, Haden's wooden bass timbre bedrocks some of Jarrett's most elegant solo piano improvisations. Be it a swinging Body And Soul or sighing Don't Ever Leave Me, these recreated standards trace loss, reverie and joy. *AC*



Psychic Ills

★★★★

Dins

SACRED BONES. DL/LP

NYC psychedelic rockers' 2005 debut: a genre-blur of exploratory chaos, metallic noise, spaced-out trance, soft/loud jolts and songwriting smarts, culminating in glorious eight-minute Can/Spaceman 3/MBV mishmash Another Day Another Night. 2016's *Inner Journey Out* is also reissued. *AC*



Oumou Sangaré

★★★★

Moussolou

WORLD CIRCUIT. LP

The radical potential for a singer confronting Mali's oppressive patriarchal society remains huge. Sangaré's 1989 debut found a sweet spot between trad Wassoulou and modern sounds with which to assert autonomy (Moussolou), reject forced marriage (Diya Gneba) and ignite a career. *JB*



Joan Shelley

★★★★

Over And Even

NO QUARTER. DL/LP

Joan Shelley's fifth album, from 2015, remains one of her best, now with eight demos that ramp up the intimacy even further. Written on a "total nightmare" of a trip to Greece, recorded back in Louisville; imagine Gillian Welch raised on Bert Jansch – it's that good. *JM*



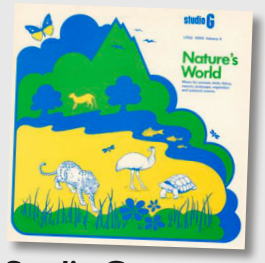
Frank Sinatra

★★★★

Sinatra At The Sands

CAPITOL/UME. CD/DL/LP

Sixtieth anniversary edition of Frank's swinging, zinging Vegas live LP debut with the Count Basie Orchestra, conducted by Quincy Jones. Available on 2-LP 'Vinylphyle' edition or a 5-CD box set featuring five complete shows from their 1966 residency at the Sands' Copa Room. *JB*



Studio G

★★★★

Nature's World

JAZZ DISPENSARY. DL/LP

Library composers James Harpham and James Asher let imaginations run amok over 20 minimalist synth-based soundscapes in 1982. Intended for nature documentaries, its forays into psych, jazz, ambience and synth funk were wildly repurposed by hip-hop sampler fiends and DJs. *AC*



Various

★★★★

Studio One Dub Plate Special

SOUL JAZZ. CD/LP

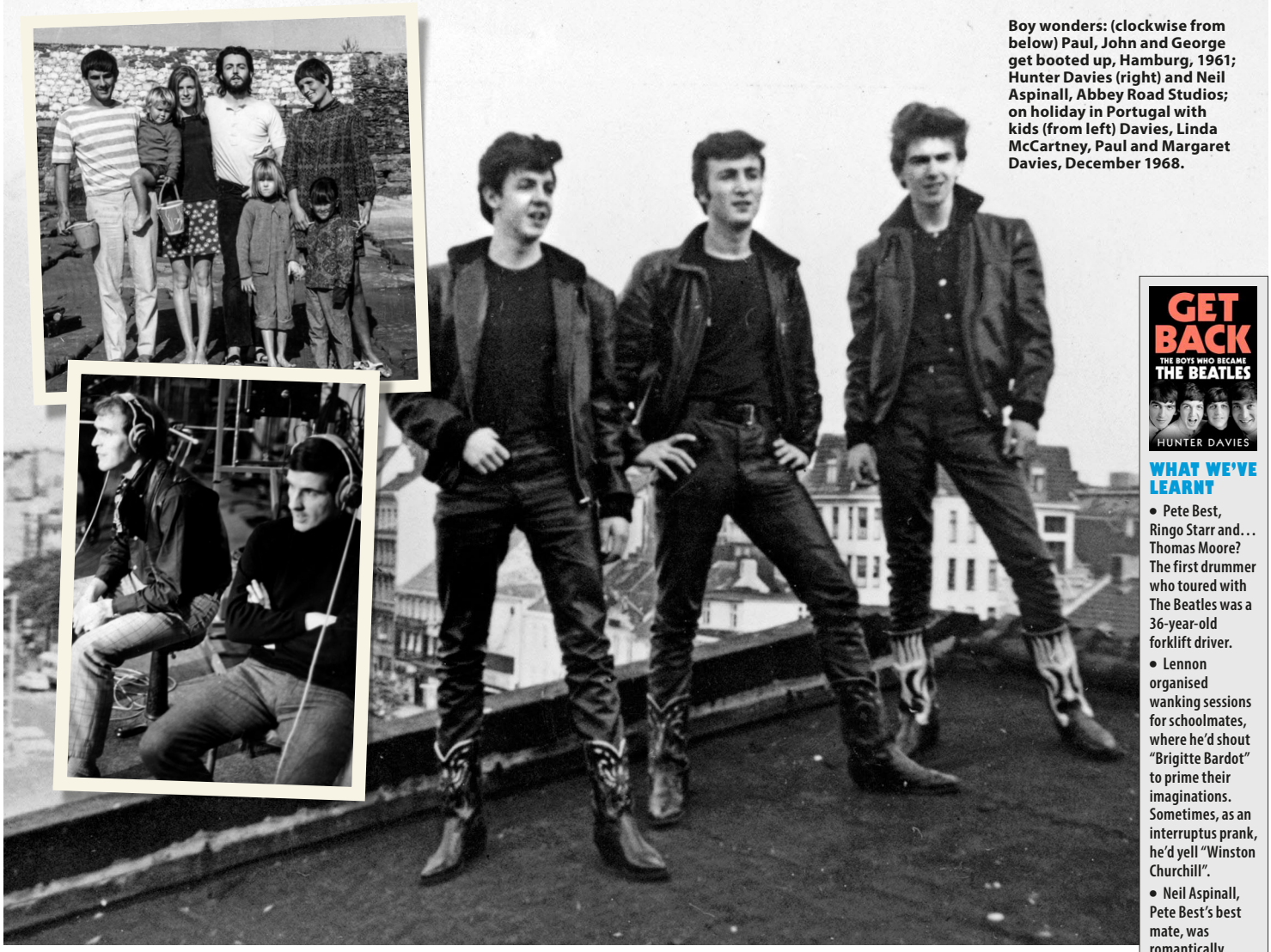
First time on LP/CD, this ace comp touts 10 previously unreleased S1 gems. Sultry ska instrumentals (Cedric Brooks, Soul Brothers), bumptious deejay cuts (Carey Johnson) and effortlessly soulful rocksteady (Alton & Zoot) make this a must-have. *SM*

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide.

CD COMPACT DISC DL DOWNLOAD ST STREAMING LP VINYL
MC CASSETTE DVD DIGITAL VIDEO DISC C IN CINEMAS BR BLU-RAY

★★★★★ MOJO CLASSIC ★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ BEST AVOIDED ☆ DEPLORABLE



Boy wonders: (clockwise from below) Paul, John and George get booted up, Hamburg, 1961; Hunter Davies (right) and Neil Aspinall, Abbey Road Studios; on holiday in Portugal with kids (from left) Davies, Linda McCartney, Paul and Margaret Davies, December 1968.

Tender Mersey

An intimate origin story reframes the act we've known for all these years. By Bill DeMain.

Get Back: The Boys Who Became The Beatles

★★★★

Hunter Davies

EBURY PRESS, £25

IN LATE 1966, Hunter Davies and Clive Donner met Paul McCartney at his Georgian townhouse in St John's Wood, to pitch him the idea of writing theme music for their film Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush. Alas, McCartney was too busy to do it. But as they were leaving, Davies casually mentioned there should be "a proper hardback about The Beatles, giving their whole history."

McCartney concurred and helped him draft a letter to Brian Epstein (Davies promised to be as thorough as "Truman Capote, dissecting the full anatomy of The Beatles phenomenon"). Epstein's agreement with Davies prevented other writers having access to the band for two years after the book's publication, in 1968.

"Chance things do happen in life," Davies writes, as he recounts the happy accident of how he became the Fabs' only authorised biographer, as well as a trusted insider and friend. And "chance things" is the recurring theme of his latest book.

At age 90, Davies, an affable gentleman detective on the page, has dusted off old case files – letters, photos, school report cards and "39 notebooks, now in the British Library" – to see "if I might've missed anything." As the "Boys" in the subtitle suggests, the bulk of Get Back finds our adolescent heroes – and Davies himself – straining against post-war Britain's black and white world of rations, council houses and tamped-down dreams. A world where "we never saw a banana and assumed that eggs would always come dried," Davies writes.

We know this story well, but his vivid retelling adds drama to each episode, reminding us how everything might've gone another way. McCartney fails an audition for the prestigious Liverpool Cathedral Choir, a musical future that would've surely precluded skiffle and Eddie Cochran. Lennon's absentee dad Freddie schemes to run off with his son to New Zealand but is stopped by his mum Julia. Brian Epstein just happens to be at the NEMS record shop counter to field a customer's request for My Bonnie. So many tiny fulcrum moments, so many monumental implications.

The comprehensive cast of supporting players includes Pete Shotton, Aunt Mimi, Louise Harrison, Astrid and Klaus. But because Davies interviewed them – and The Beatles – long before our era of curated legacy documentaries, there's a candour and specificity to their memories, such as Lennon describing being deported from Hamburg: "It was terrible going home on my own. I set off with my amp on my back, scared it would get nicked – as I hadn't paid for it yet."

Along the way, Davies apologetically sneaks in brief interludes about his own rise through the journalistic ranks, and marriage to fellow writer Margaret Forster, plus a most entertaining episode of Paul and Linda visiting them in 1969 at their beach house in Portugal.

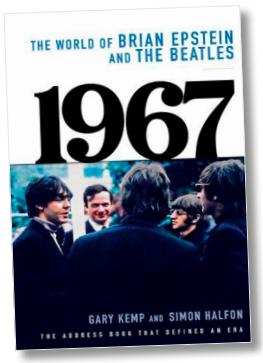
As a companion piece to McCartney's nostalgic *The Boys Of Dungeon Lane*, plus a bar-setter for the upcoming Sam Mendes-directed biopics, Get Back deserves a place on the crowded Beatles bookshelf, for giving us a fresh take on "that magic feeling".

"Get Back gives us a fresh take on 'that magic feeling'."

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Pete Best, Ringo Starr and… Thomas Moore? The first drummer who toured with The Beatles was a 36-year-old forklift driver.
- Lennon organised wanking sessions for schoolmates, where he'd shout "Brigitte Bardot" to prime their imaginations. Sometimes, as an interruptus prank, he'd yell "Winston Churchill".
- Neil Aspinall, Pete Best's best mate, was romantically involved with the drummer's mother, and they had a son together. Which made Best's firing even more uncomfortable.
- When McCartney discovered Davies' given name was Edward, he wrote a teasing tune, There You Go, Eddie, which popped up during the *Let It Be* sessions. Davies is still campaigning for the song's official release.

Courtesy of Hunter Davies



1967: The World Of Brian Epstein And The Beatles

★★★★★

Gary Kemp And Simon Halfon

HARPER COLLINS. £25

The '60s svengali's address book, and a whole universe of fascination.

This is one of the most fascinating, ingenious Beatles books yet published. In 2020, ex-Spandau Ballet songwriter and guitarist Gary Kemp bid at a Sotheby's auction for the 1967 address book of The Beatles' manager – as he puts it, "16 by 10 centimetres of Swinging London and beyond." With the exception of the four Fabs, Brian Epstein's contacts – from Elvis's manager 'Colonel' Tom Parker and Keith Moon to the band's Japanese promoter – are all here, each with comprehensive accompanying text, forming what Kemp characterises as a poignant "advent calendar" leading to Epstein's death that August. And the picture research pulled off by Halfon – a designer and film producer – is impeccable, full of fresh images that add to the sense of what he calls "an elegy – a snapshot of a world at its peak, just before the lights began to dim."

John Harris

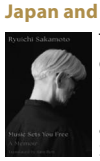
Music Sets You Free

★★★

Ryuichi Sakamoto

WILLIAM COLLINS. £25

The late global maestro follows his nose from Japan and back.



The post-war only child of an incommunicative book editor and a hat designer, Sakamoto's Tokyo upbringing shaped an eclectic combination of fashionista, activist and classicist who falls for the Stones, Derrida, Cage and Godard before encountering his prime inspiration, Debussy. Sakamoto's career kicks off in the late '70s with the still startling Yellow Magic Orchestra and blossoms internationally with 1983's *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*. The eternal polymath comes over like a musical Warhol, curious, absorbent, and oddly absent during a relentless litany of solo albums, film scores and collaborations. Nothing quite matches the fever with which he manages to score 1987's The Last Emperor in two weeks and his horror at seeing the finished film six months later, his meticulous and ultimately Oscar-winning score cut and redistributed seemingly at random.

Mark Cooper

Is This It: The Never-Ending Rise And Fall Of The Strokes (And Rock 'N' Roll)

★★★★

Steven Hyden

DA CAPO. £25

The anti Meet Me In The Bathroom.



"I was not at The Mercury Lounge, snorting coke off the same barstool as Carlos D," Steven Hyden confesses at the beginning of Is This It. Instead, he uses his outsider (read: Midwestern) perspective to humorously analyse the initial hype machine around The Strokes. With 25 years hindsight Hyden argues that the "saviours of rock" sobriquets were actually harbingers of the end of an era. Pre-internet culture, their hyped arrival was the last flicker of an arcane rock media obsessed with scuzzy rock archetypes, which the quintet fit musically, attitudinally and visually. In the real world, however, this gang of latchkey brothers could not stop the rise of nu metal and its ilk. As he writes, "rock did not need saving… [fans] loved their shirtless bros just fine." Fascinating myth-busting, which makes you want to listen to *Room On Fire* again.

Priya Elan

Corner Boy: Loiterings New And Old

★★★★

Nik Cohn

ZE. £25

Final collection of non-fiction by the pioneering rock critic.

Nik Cohn's most famous 'non-fiction' article – that



inspired Saturday Night Fever – does not appear here. That's because 20 years later the writer announced that it was largely made up. Instead, here are essays – erudite, funny, insightful – from the 1960s to the present by the author of the pop chronicle Awopbopaloobop Alopbamboom. As an early exponent of the "new journalism", in which the writer plonks himself in the midst of the story, Cohn encounters Phil Spector, Elvis and the Stones (Jagger later says he'd like to kill him). His reportage broadens to document unknown dreamers and schemers, then at 57 Cohn develops an unlikely obsession with New Orleans rap. There's not much from this century but early pieces on The Shangri-Las or Scott Walker show that, beyond the vivid prose, he was always a shrewd judge of merit.

John Bungey

Neil Young: Reflections In Broken Glass

★★★★

Sylvie Simmons

THIRD MAN. £15.99

An update of a book originally published as part of MOJO's Heroes series.



Initially published in a limited run at the dawn of the 21st century, Sylvie Simmons' biography navigates the convoluted turns in the Canadian rocker's career with efficient, evocative prose. This Third Man edition preserves the original text, which moves so briskly it feels as if Young has lived several lifetimes by the time Simmons' narrative concludes in 2000. She brings the story up to date with Neil Young Unfiltered, a compendium of four separate Q&As conducted between 1997 and 2021. Filled with offhand revelations that indicate the subject's ease with the author, the interviews capture Young's off-kilter sensibility and skewed sense of humour, humanising a musician who can sometimes seem like an enigma. It serves as a fitting coda to the tightest and best Neil Young biography yet published.

Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Devil On My Shoulder: A Memoir

★★★★

Alice Cooper With Daniel Richler

SIMON & SCHUSTER. £12.50

Vincent Furnier battles his rock alter-ego in fearless autobiography.



This is Alice Cooper's third memoir after 2008's Golf Monster and 1976's Me, Alice (the last he's since disowned). This one casts caring, sober Vincent Furnier as Dr Jekyll with 'Alice Cooper' as Mr Hyde, interrupting the narrative with mischievous thoughts, like the titular devil on his shoulder. The singer addresses his fractious relationship with his original AC bandmates, casts a wry eye over his '70s stage excess (four whips, six hatchets, 300 baby dolls), and tackles his addictions in greater detail than before; there are lost nights freebasing cocaine with producer Roy Thomas Baker and getting walloped over the head with a frying pan by his wife, Sheryl. Cameos from Raquel Welch and Salvador Dalí heighten the absurdity of a life well (and sometimes badly) lived by the man Groucho Marx once called "the last hope for vaudeville".

Mark Blake



Caught by the scuzz: The Strokes were the beginning of the end, according to Steven Hyden.

Camera Press

From WUTHERING HEIGHTS *to*
BEFORE THE DAWN *and beyond*
THE WHOLE STORY!



AVAILABLE NOW!

WWW.GREATMAGAZINES.CO.UK/MOJO-SPECIALS



The Best Summer

★★★★

Dir: Tamra Davis

VISIT FILMS/DOC'N ROLL FILM FESTIVAL. C/ST

'90s nirvana Down Under with Beasties, Sonic Youth, Foos, Pavement et al.

"There are no cute boys on tour," laments Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna at 1995's Summersault Festival in Melbourne. "What about Pavement?" her friend Tamra Davis suggests. Hanna looks doubtful. "I don't know about them… they're preppy!" Made from recently discovered camcorder footage shot for fun by director Davis while accompanying then-husband Mike D across Australia and SE Asia, 30 years later this travelling circus of backstage fun and on-stage action captures a charmed moment, when alt-rock's best and brightest navigated encroaching fame. Hanna's presence is pivotal: tasked with interviewing her tourmates, she draws telling insights from Kim Gordon and Dave Grohl ("I hate having to talk to the audience"), then gets to Adam Horovitz and falls in love on camera. Intimate, warm and bittersweet, like all the best summers.

Keith Cameron

Everybody Digs Bill Evans

★★★★

Dir: Grant Gee

BREAK OUT PICTURES. C/ST

Poignant portrait of the jazz pianist.



Drawn to a black and white photo of Bill Evans taken by Lee Friedlander, director Grant Gee was driven to make his first fictionalised drama on the troubled genius who played the piano on Miles Davis's *Kind Of Blue*. Taking Owen Martell's 2013 novel Intermission about Evans as his basis, he zeroes in on the months following the tragic death of his bassist Scott LaFaro in a car crash in 1961. Beautifully shot in County Cork, made to look like New York, and featuring Anders Danielsen Lie as an utterly convincing Evans – frozen, uneasy in his own skin and unable to play – it explores the cruel nature of grief, compounded by complex relationships and drug abuse, with sensitivity and understanding. A quite extraordinary film.

Lois Wilson

Anarchy! McLaren Westwood Gang

★★★

Dir. Phil Strongman

CADIZ MUSIC. DVD

Redux 2013 doc in a box set with soundtrack LP, Jamie Reid print and more.



Malcolm McLaren's life has been scrutinised before, but running at nearly two and half hours, Anarchy! provides the ultimate insiders' account of his bonkers journey. Key are the myriad interviewees – mostly talking heads – which include various Pistols, Boy George, Adam Ant, Bow Wow Wows, et al, but also in terms of revelatory detail his cab driver brother Stewart and stepson Ben Westwood, providing fascinating insights into life chez Malcolm and Vivienne, notably when the National Front turn up at their Clapham flat in summer '77 and try to kill him. Prone to self-aggrandising longueurs, Malcolm himself is somewhat tiresome, but what emerges is a man obsessed not with money but revolutionary ideas and cultural transformation; let's not forget, he unsuccessfully campaigned to become Mayor of London in 1999.

Pat Gilbert

Don't Look Back In Anger

★★★★

Dirs: Dylan Southern, Will Lovelace

MAGNA STUDIOS/SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT. C/ST

Where did it all go right? Emotional tour film of Oasis's 2025 comeback.



"I will not forgive people," insists Noel Gallagher as this film begins. Personal growth is real, however, and Don't Look Back In Anger joyfully documents both Oasis's 2025 reunion tour and the thaw between Noel and brother Liam, interwoven triumphs after 15 years of needling estrangement. Aside from tense, territory-marking scenes in the rehearsal studio, the story swerves any trickier issues around the mechanics of their reconciliation, superb live footage, endless audience weeping and touching fan testimony instead creating a deeply sentimental victory lap. The best moments lie behind the crowd's roar: when the interview camera suddenly draws back to reveal the brothers side by side, Noel fondly laughing at his brother's commentary on Mick Jagger, it's unexpectedly moving. If Don't Look Back In Anger is a little soft at its centre, it's because – who'd have thought it? – these days Liam and Noel are, too.

Victoria Segal

Newport & The Great Folk Dream

★★★★

Dir: Robert Gordon

NEWPORTFOLKDOC.COM/DOC'N ROLL FILM FESTIVAL. C/ST

Deep dive into festival's rich archive tracks the rise and fall of America's Great Folk Scare.



Exploring what Peter Yarrow calls Pete Seeger's "ethical point of view within folk music", Gordon's re-examination of the hundreds of hours of footage Murray Lerner shot between 1963 and 1966 for 1967's Festival! documentary revels in the rediscovery of country blues greats from Mississippi John Hurt to Skip James, while painstakingly explaining how Seeger's dream of a music by the people for the people withered when confronted by The Beatles, an electric Bob Dylan, and Albert Grossman's commodification of 'folk'. Alongside revelatory clips of ancients from Dock Boggs to Margaret Barry, Dylan's metamorphosis across three festivals track the seeds of a Dionysian youth culture whose electric excesses would extinguish Seeger's earnest dreams of communitas.

Mark Cooper



Queen Budapest

★★★★★

Dir: János Zsombolyai

SONY MUSIC VISION. BR/C/DVD

Their Iron Curtain-piercing coup, enhanced by 'Peter Jackson's people'.

Queen's July 27, 1986 show at Budapest's Népstadion was the classic line-up's final filmed gig, and their fifth-last Freddie-fronted concert. This striking restoration of Zsombolyai's 35mm-shot portrait renders Mercury "crisp and present", notes Roger Taylor, while Brian May, also newly quizzed for an introductory segment, accurately hails "Far and away the best-shot Queen performance ever." There are stunning renditions of Seven Seas Of Rhye and Under Pressure, the Budapest faithful are in raptures, and the live footage is interspersed with little cameos (Brian hot-air ballooning; John having a pint and a fag). Stay for Freddie singing an old folk song in phonetically learned Hungarian, smile at '80s Queen's crimes against stage-costuming, and marvel at the punch of Freddie and Roger's twinned voices when Rog comes up front to sing on Tutti Frutti.

James McNair

Pulp: What Do You Do For An Encore?

★★★★

Dir: Garth Jennings

MUBI. ST

Uplifting, emotional and revealing – a victory lap worth cheering.



Pulp's concert film-cum-documentary presents them as both supremely self-aware and still in thrall to change. "This performance is an encore," Jarvis Cocker says, before a June 2025 set rammed with hits from Spike Island to, inevitably, Common People. An interwoven series of Cocker voice-overs tells both his and the band's story: Barry White, the Milk Tray man, John Peel and Cocker's dad's (very) handmade Dalek all appear. Former guitarist Russell Senior pops up to denounce the whole project as "Stalinist", a delightfully acid moment amid the bed-warm jumble sale of nostalgic bonhomie. There is darkness here, bassist Steve Mackey dies far too young and Cocker's conviction that "pop was an improvement on reality" turns out to be "a very dangerous belief" – but the film's bold emotional uplift shines through it all.

Rob Fitzpatrick



Denis O'Regan

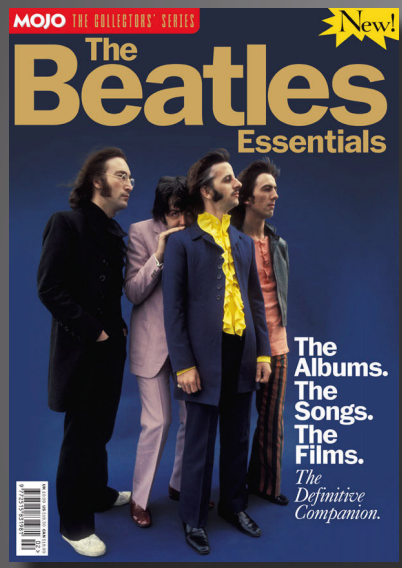
One vision: Queen backstage and behind the curtain, 1986.

MOJO THE COLLECTORS' SERIES

Music's legends. MOJO's finest writers. The full stories.

Available Now!





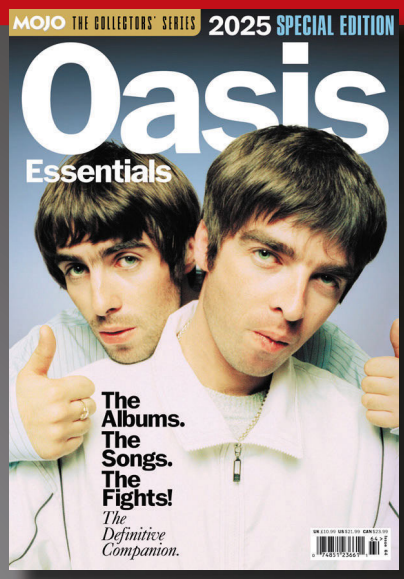










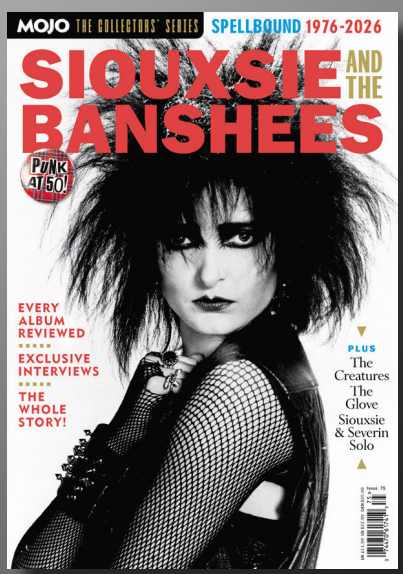


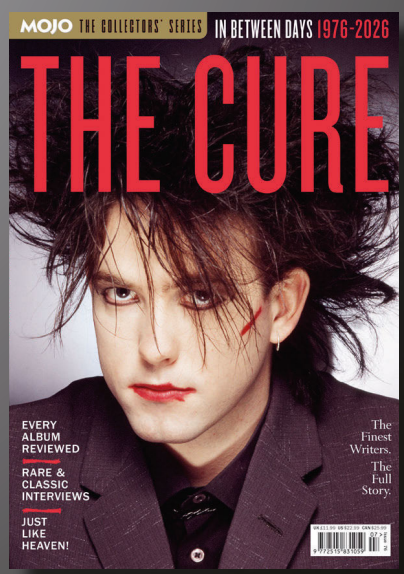














Buy online at greatmagazines.co.uk/mojocollectors



Loud and proud: Dead Boys' Cheetah Chrome, Agora Ballroom, Atlanta, Georgia, October 21, 1978.

Not Just Anyone

Loud and snotty Dead Boys guitarist and flamekeeper **Cheetah Chrome** left us on September 13.

ALTHOUGH SINGER Stiv Bators' blood-splattered antics got the Dead Boys noticed as America's first extreme punk band, it was the group's ginger-haired, dog collar-sporting guitarist Cheetah Chrome who led their furious charge with Motor City flash and songwriting flair.

Born Eugene O'Connor in Cleveland, Ohio on February 18, 1955, in 1974 he joined David Thomas's oddball proto-punk trailblazers Rocket From The Tombs. While their setlist included the Chrome/Thomas nihilist anthem Sonic Reducer, the group split in '75 before releasing a record. Thomas founded Pere Ubu, while Chrome and drummer Johnny Blitz formed the Dead Boys with confrontational frontman Stiv Bators. Named for a line in RFTT's Down In Flames, the group thanklessly gigged in Cleveland before Joey Ramone suggested they relocate to New York.

They hit Manhattan's downtown punk scene in late 1976 like an unholy collision of Iggy and the Sex Pistols. The Dead Boys covered Anarchy In The UK next to Chrome's RFTT songs and co-writes, and with extra lyrics by Bators, Sonic Reducer became their signature statement. Signing to Sire Records, the band recorded *Young, Loud And Snotty* at Electric Lady, which just scraped the Billboard Top 200. Hitting the UK in late 1977, they supported The Damned, including two nights at the Roundhouse.

Sire requested producer Felix Pappalardi furnish a punk-lite makeover for 1978's *We Have Come For Your Children*, and despite Dee Dee and Joey Ramone on backing vocals, sessions were fractious, with Chrome demoted to just three writing credits. It failed to chart and the group split in 1980.

Remaining in New York, Chrome doggedly kept the Dead Boys' legacy and songs alive with numerous collaborators, short-lived bands and one-off projects. He fronted The Casualties and The Ghetto Dogs, collaborated with Angry Samoan Jeff Dahl and instigated strained Dead Boys reunions from the mid-1980s (Bators died following a motorbike accident in Paris in 1990). In 1996, three years after Guns N' Roses covered Dead Boys lament Ain't It Fun, Chrome moved to Nashville after meeting his wife Anna, later taking time out from his tile company job to record 2000's *Alive In Detroit*.

Chrome and Thomas re-formed Rocket From The Tombs in 2003, with *Rocket Redux* revisiting the old songs and 2011's *Barfly* featuring all-new material. The guitarist continued live Dead Boys regroupings, formed The Batusis with New York Doll Sylvain Sylvain and published his 2010 memoir, *Cheetah Chrome: A Dead Boy's Tale From The Front Lines Of Punk Rock*.

In 2014, the year after he was played by Rupert Grint in the CBGB biopic, Chrome released his first studio album *Solo*. In 2017, he formed a new Dead Boys with Johnny Blitz to mark their debut's 40th, re-recording it as *Still Snotty: Young, Loud And Snotty At 40*. When he passed aged 71, he was planning a tour for its 50th.

Kris Needs

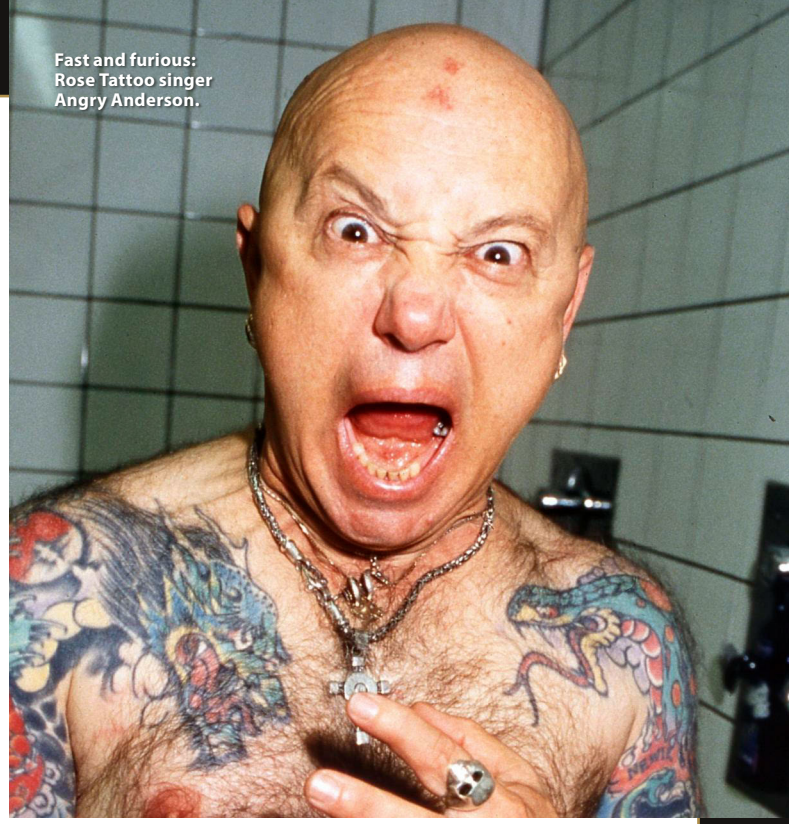
> "He doggedly kept the Dead Boys' legacy and songs alive."

THE LEGACY

The album: Dead Boys – *Young, Loud And Snotty* (Sire, 1977).

The sound: Later revealed by Chrome to be demos Sire insisted on releasing, *Young, Loud And Snotty* announced Cleveland's amped up, dumbed down challenge to NY's punk supremacy. Chrome's scathing Detroit-flavoured guitars are all over songs including Down In Flames, High Tension Wire and Caught With The Meat In Your Mouth. A US punk landmark.

Tom Hill/Wirelmage/Getty



Fast and furious: Rose Tattoo singer Angry Anderson.

Cassandra Wilson

Outstanding jazz voice

BORN 1955

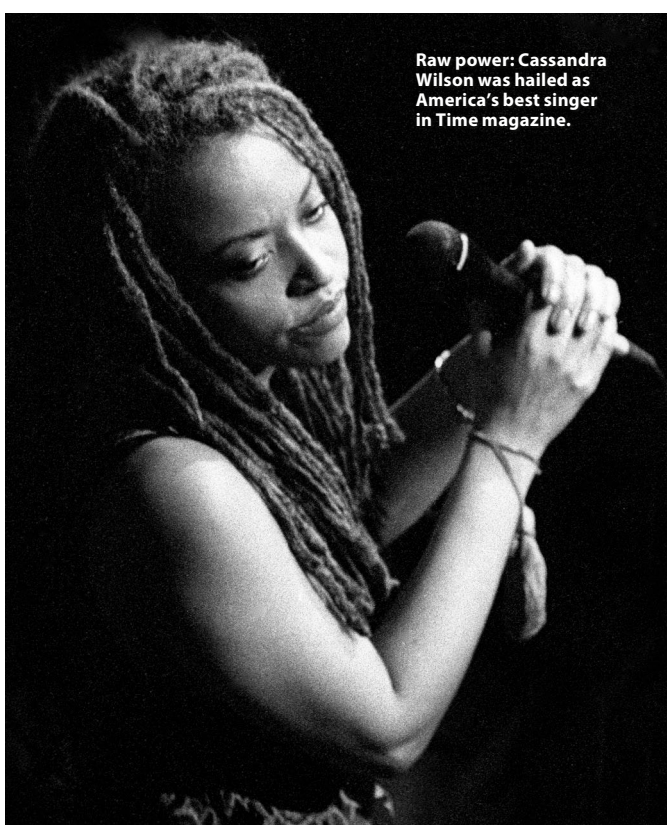
HAILED AS "America's best singer" by Time magazine in 2001, Wilson could communicate more emotion in one honey-drizzled note than many vocalists could muster in a complete song. Blessed with an immediately recognisable contralto purr – vulnerable in its timbre yet bittersweet and caressing – Wilson prized raw feeling over showy technique. And she also possessed the ability to recast every song she touched in her own image, whether it was Neil Young's Harvest Moon, Son House's Death Letter, or The Monkees' Last Train To Clarksville.

Wilson was born Cassandra Fowlkes in Jackson, Mississippi. She learned piano, clarinet and guitar, but only pursued music professionally when she moved to New York in 1982. There she entered the orbit of saxophonist Steve Coleman, whose groundbreaking M-Base Collective was shaking up contemporary jazz. Under Coleman's direction, Wilson's early solo records for Munich's JMT label in the late '80s adhered to an edgy, electric avant-funk aesthetic. In 1993, she reached a wider audience by joining Blue Note Records, debuting with *Blue Light 'Til Dawn*, which saw her adopt a rootsier, acoustic sound that became her preferred musical landscape for the next quarter of a century.

After 17 years and 10 albums at Blue Note – 1995's *New Moon Daughter* and 2008's *Loverly* both won Grammy Awards – Wilson made only two more records. Her final album, 2015's *Coming Forth By Day*, was a heartfelt tribute to Billie Holiday.

"Sometimes you have to tear a song down and build a new story for yourself so you can inhabit it," Wilson told me in 2015, explaining her compulsion to give familiar pop, rock, and blues songs radical makeovers. "It's like building a house with the same materials… but you have to find a way inside and make it resonate from your own experience."

Charles Waring



Raw power: Cassandra Wilson was hailed as America's best singer in Time magazine.

Keith Bailey

Here & Now, Planet Gong 'Missile Bass'

BORN c.1951



FROM SOUTHAMPTON, the young Keith Bailey had his world changed by American rock'n'roll. He started playing guitar aged 14 and then switched to bass, his natural home. After playing with numerous groups in London, he joined free festival/counterculture stalwarts Here & Now in 1975 (Bailey, nicknamed Da Missile Bass, recalled being recruited while hitchhiking to the Stonehenge free festival). In sync with drummer Kif Kif Le Batteur – AKA Keith Dobson, later of World Domination Enterprises – Bailey and band jammed for the people across Britain and Europe; the group would also combine with Daevid Allen's 'space punk' band Planet Gong for 1977's Live Floating Anarchy Tour and live album. Tellingly, Here & Now co-existed with punk, releasing the 1978 split LP *What You See… Is What You Are* with Alternative TV and gigging with The Fall, among others. As line-ups changed, Bailey kept their big idea going, periodically reuniting with old bandmates and finally retiring from the stage in 2025.

Ian Harrison

Tim Curry

Rocky Horror's Frank-N-Furter

BORN 1946



AS PATRICIA Quinn, AKA The Rocky Horror Picture Show's Magenta, said of Tim Curry, "Give a boy high heels and you don't know where it's going to lead." In 1971, having made his acting debut three years previously in a production of Hair, the Cheshire-born Curry got word that Richard O'Brien was putting together a tribute to '50s B-movie culture at the Royal Court, London. Duly cast as the charismatic Frank-N-Furter, the snake to ingénues Brad and Janet's Adam and Eve, he went on to steal the show – helped by being one of the few cast members who could sing – as the greatest sweet transvestite in history. Signed to A&M, he also recorded three solo albums from 1978 to 1981 – 1979's *Fearless* was the most successful – while later roles included the scary clown Pennywise in a 1990 adaption of Stephen King's It. He continued to work after suffering a stroke in 2012.

Will Hodgkinson

"Angry Anderson was built to front an Australian hard rock band."

Angry Anderson

Rose Tattoo singer

BORN 1947

BALD, PUGNACIOUS and possessed of a commanding growl, Melbourne-born Gary 'Angry' Anderson was built to front an Australian hard rock band. He sang with sharpies Buster Brown (with AC/DC's Phil Rudd on drums) before joining Sydney rowdies Rose Tattoo, who recorded four LPs with AC/DC production team Vanda & Young and scored an Australian Top 20 hit with Bad Boy For Love in 1977. The group split in 1987, the year Anderson had a solo hit with romantic ballad Suddenly, which soundtracked the wedding of the characters played by Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan on TV soap Neighbours. Rose Tattoo re-formed to tour with Guns N' Roses, who covered their song Nice Boys, in 1993; they returned full-time in 1998. Anderson was also an Australian TV personality and actor (he played Tina Turner's enforcer Ironbar Bassey in 1985's Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome), was active in charity work and stood for office. A farewell Rose Tattoo tour was cancelled when he suffered a heart attack in Germany in August.

Ian Harrison

Oran Tarjan/Classic Rock Magazine/Future Publishing via Getty Images, Evening Standard/Hulton Archive/Getty Images, Images of Jazz/Heritage Images via Getty Images, Marc Villalonga/Dalle/IconicPix

All types of memorabilia including vintage posters, t-shirts and clothing, promo shop displays, handbills, tickets, tour laminates and much more!!!

WHOSWAX

The Music Memorabilia Specialist

www.whoswax.co.uk Tel: 077699 23023 charlton1976@blueyonder.co.uk

Items and whole collections bought and sold

MOJO

PAPER REVOLUTION

79% of paper and 83% of paper-based packaging is recycled into new products; one of the highest recycling rates of any material in Europe!

Source: Cepi Key Statistics, 2023 and Eurostat, 2022
Europe: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK.

Scan for paper facts, activities, blogs and much more!

LOVE PAPER
www.lovepaper.org

BUY • SELL • TRADE

www.reckless.co.uk
recklessrecordsuk@gmail.com
Tel: 020 7437 4271

RECKLESS RECORDS

EST. 1983

Lots of fresh goodies in store every day!
Second-hand and new!
All types of music!

30 Berwick Street
Soho, London
W1F 8RH
10am–7pm, 7 days a week

VINYL • CDs • RARITIES



Spice of life: the fearless Catherine Ringer (left) with Les Rita Mitsouko partner Fred Chichin.

Catherine Ringer

Voice of Les Rita Mitsouko

BORN 1957

BY THE time would-be singer Catherine Ringer met multi-instrumentalist Fred Chichin in 1979 and they formed Les Rita Mitsouko, the 22-year-old's life was already defined by bold experimentation. Acting at 11, she moved into experimental theatre and took up interpretive dance before embarking on a career in pornographic films (the latter was ultimately revealed as an act of coercion by a partner several years her senior she later dubbed "a pervert").

Emerging from squat gigs and the Parisian demi-monde, the group's inimitable musical vision was evident from their first recordings. 1984's self-titled effort (produced by Conny Plank) and its successor *The No Comprendo* (helmed by Tony Visconti) established them as avant-pop pioneers. As evidenced by 1984 French hit and whirling signature song Marcia Baïla, no one sounded like them, although kindred spirits included Sparks, who collaborated with the duo on 1988's album, *Marc & Robert*.

The heartbreak of Chichin's death in 2007, soon after the release of the band's seventh album *Variety*, did not stop Ringer from continuing on her distinct musical path, her solo career spawning a further three adventurous sets.

Her final performance prior to her passing from cancer on September 14 was at Paris's Le Petit Bain in May. Billed as Catherine Ringer Performs With Family Affair, the evening featured her son Raoul Chichin on guitar. Two months earlier in Nice she performed The Eroticism Of Life, a touring show she'd first devised in 2021. A stage adaptation of the poetry of Alice Mendelson – a friend of Ringer's father; like him, a holocaust survivor – it celebrated the feminist view of sensuality through spoken word and sung passages set against an evocative piano backdrop. A brave and bold act, it proved that Catherine Ringer remained a unique, questing voice in modern music until the end.

Phil Alexander

THEY ALSO SERVED

R&B/SOUL SINGER **ROSALIND ASHFORD-HOLMES** (below, b.1943) was an original member of Detroit hitmakers **Martha And The Vandellas**. From 1962 she appeared on chart smashes including Heat Wave, Nowhere To Run and Jimmy Mack: their biggest success came with anthemic Motown cornerstone Dancing In The Street in 1964. The group also sang backing for **Marvin Gaye**. Ashford-Holmes left in 1969 and worked for the Detroit telephone company. She rejoined Reeves on occasion and sang without her as part of **The Original Vandellas**.



VOCALIST **PETE BYRNE** (b.1952) fronted Bath synthpop duo **Naked Eyes**, who had a Top 10 US hit with their cover of Always Something There To Remind Me in 1983. Three more Top 40 US hits followed before they split in 1984. Byrne, who sang backing vocals on **Stevie Wonder**'s 1985 hit Part-Time Lover, reactivated the band in 2005 for gigs and recording. Before Naked Eyes he was a member of **Neon** alongside **Roland Orzabal** and **Curt Smith** of **Tears For Fears**.

SINGER-SONGWRITER **DUNCAN SHEIK** (b.1969) made waves with 1996's Grammy-nominated US Top 20 single Barely Breathing. Though he continued to make albums, he found greater success writing for the stage: his music for 2006 Broadway musical Spring Awakening won Tony and Grammy awards. Other credits included a 2013 musical adaption of Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho.

UILLEANN PIPER **PADDY KEENAN** (b.1950) was born in County Meath to a Traveller family. In 1975 he joined **The Bothy Band** with **Dónal Lunny**. Suitably for a group who blended modern rhythmic energy with traditional Irish styles, Lunny nicknamed his bandmate the 'Jimi Hendrix of the uilleann pipes'. After the group ended in 1979, Keenan continued to record, toured the world and played with **Dolores Keane**, **Roy Harper** and **The Wainwright Sisters**. He also took part in Bothy Band reunions.

POP SINGER **CRAIG DOUGLAS** (right, b.Terence Perkins, 1941) was a milkman on the Isle of Wight before stardom came calling. From 1959 to 1962 he had nine UK Top 20 singles, including his chart-topping version of Sam Cooke's Only Sixteen. He continued to play the oldies circuit: later releases included 2011's *The Craig Douglas Project*, an intriguing covers set that found the former I ight entertainer singing moody versions of Creep, The Killing Moon and Enjoy The Silence.



BRITISH RAPPER **SWAY** (b. Derek Safo, 1982) self-released his Mercury Prize-nominated debut *This Is My Demo* in 2005, the same year he won a MOBO award. Over the next decade he had a UK Top 10 hit with 2012's Level Up, collaborated with **Ed Sheeran**, **Akon** and **Kaiser Chiefs** and walked the line between grime, hip-hop and dubstep. In 2010 he was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma.

DRUMMER AND VIDEO DIRECTOR **JON SMALL** (b.1947) played and wrote with his friend **Billy Joel** from 1966 to 1970, in his early bands **The Hassles** and **Attila**. Disaster struck when the Piano Man star stole away Small's partner Elizabeth. Small later directed videos for **Run-DMC**, **Anita Baker**, **The Highwaymen**, **Neil Diamond** and others. He also reconciled with Joel, and directed several concert films for him.

VIRGINIA POP AND COUNTRY SINGER **RONNIE DOVE** (b.1935) sang with **The Belltones** before going solo in 1964. From that year until 1966, he had 11 Top 40 US hits, his biggest being Right Or Wrong and One Kiss For Old Times' Sake (both Number 14 chart entries). In the '70s, he signed to Motown country imprint Melodyland. He played his last show in 2023.

GUITARIST/BASSIST **ANDY WILLIAMS** (b.1977) played rhythm with Buffalo metalcore band **Every Time I Die** from 1998 to 2022. They recorded nine albums and toured internationally. As The Butcher, Williams was also a professional wrestler: he collapsed during a tag-team event in Pennsylvania.

GUITARIST AND PRODUCER **CHAD GILBERT** (b.1981) co-founded Florida pop-punks **New Found Glory**, whose commercial peak in the US was 2002's platinum-selling *Catalyst*. He also sang with **International Superheroes Of Hardcore** and recorded solo. He had been fighting cancer, and joined his bandmates on-stage for the last time in Nashville in June.



JAZZ BASSIST **PAT SENATORE** (below, b.1935) played with **Stan Kenton**, **Bob Hope** and **Dean Martin** before joining **Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass** in 1965. He appeared on Number 1 albums including 1965's *Whipped Cream & Other Delights*. In 1969, after Alpert had an out-of-body experience in Munich, the original Tijuana Brass split. Senatore went on to play with **Sinatra**, **Peggy Lee** and others, ran his own Malibu jazz club Pasquale's, and was Artistic Director at Alpert's Vibrato grill and jazz club in Bel Air, CA.

KEYBOARDIST **ANDY CLARK** (b.1945) played with **Sam Gopal's Dream** and the short-lived **VAMP** with Viv Prince in the late '60s. Clark and guitarist Mick Hutchinson then formed the duo **Clark-Hutchinson**, playing everything on 1969's raga-rock jamathon *A=MH²* before turning to bluesier styles. After they split in 1971, Clark played with Jeff Beck-affiliated soulful rockers **UPP**.

Ian Harrison

Getty (3), Pictorial Press/Alamy



Grand designs: the Dave Brubeck Quartet (from left) Paul Desmond, Brubeck, Joe Morello and Eugene Wright in 1959; (clockwise from left) Brubeck's Baldwin piano and Neumann microphone; S. Neil Fujita's painting used for the cover of *Time Out*; Boris Artzybasheff's artwork for the cover of Time magazine; a selection of Downbeat awards.

Brubeck-A-Moolah!

The rarest records and artefacts from the planet's best collections: this month, Lennon's Lost Weekend specs, Kinks reel-to-reels and a load of Oasis gigs.

Original artwork for *Time Out*

Value: $576,000

Last month, Julien's Auctions of Hollywood sold more than 200 objects belonging to late jazz piano great Dave Brubeck. His Baldwin SD-10B grand piano sold for $22,400 and his Neumann U47 tube microphone went for $19,200, but the most valuable was the original S. Neil Fujita painting for the sleeve of the Dave Brubeck Quartet's celebrated 1959 LP *Time Out*. With an estimate of $15,000-$20,000, it raised a remarkable $576,000. Also featured were the pianist's Second World War bandsman cap, an original Boris Artzybasheff artwork for the cover of Time magazine, and a Christmas card from Ronald Reagan, plus sundry awards and artworks. Admire them and more at juliensauctions.com.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images, Peter Simins/WWD/Penske Media via Getty Images, Marcus Bryan

Tom Waits
Swordfishtrombones

ASYLUM. 1983

Value: £262.50



We know Waits's eighth for its 'TinTone' portrait of the singer with wrestler/actor Lee Kolima and Freaks star Angelo Rossitto (also a cover star on Dylan's *The Basement Tapes*). So what's this variant on Discogs.com? Waits floated it to his unenthused then-label Asylum, but then signed to Island. But it seems that some Asylum territories didn't get the memo, and so in Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand copies were pressed up featuring a completely different, Waits-illustrated sleeve and inner. These were meant to be destroyed but clearly some were saved: a Euro vinyl copy will set you back from £174.11 and there's also a cassette for £85.12. See Discogs.com for this true Waits curio.

ATTENTION COLLECTORS!

Have you got unique and covetable rock booty or records hidden under the bed? Send us your selections to mojocollections@bauermedia.co.uk

Shel Naylor
One Fine Day

DECCA. 1964

Value: £2,600



Rob Woodward found fame alongside his mum Hilda in Coventry novelty pop aces Lieutenant Pigeon, whose Mouldy Old Dough was a big hit in 1972. But before that he sang as Shel Naylor, and his second single One Fine Day is much desired: Kink Dave Davies wrote it, Shel Talmy produced it and among the sessioneers contributing to its rock'n'roll madness – not unlike a vocal version of The Ventures' Walk Don't Run, it well deserves the name freakbeat – were Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones, years before Led Zeppelin. In July a copy sold for $4,000 on Discogs.com, where you can also pick up a 2007 reissue for £30.

Oasis: The Desk Tapes

Value: £500,000 (starting bid)

Oasis have announced another monster tour next year, but earlier this month Littleton Auctions of Worcestershire offered choice items from simpler times. To wit, 209 DAT tapes, 73 analogue cassettes and three MiniDiscs of 63 live shows (including gigs at Knebworth and Loch Lomond), soundchecks and 100 hours-plus of



Specs appeal: John Lennon gets lost with May Pang; (below) his tinted glasses up for grabs; (bottom, from left) Oasis live tapes going to auction, plus an Epiphone guitar and a Kangol Oasis Tour parka.







rehearsals, all recorded at the mixing desk by the group's front-of-house engineer from 1995 to 1999, Huw Richards. Also on offer were tour documentation, setlists, an Epiphone guitar, a Kangol Oasis Tour parka and Noel Gallagher's limited Adidas Kegler Super Ostrich trainers. Winning bidders can't release the music, but they can wear the latter. See more at littletonauctions.com.

John Lennon's tinted 'Lost Weekend' specs

Value: £100,000-200,000

His 18 month, '73-74 'Lost Weekend' is an intriguing part of the Lennon legend. At this time he was rarely without his tinted prescription 'Windsor' spectacles, which he can be seen wearing on the sleeve of the Mind Games 45 and elsewhere. The pair offered for sale early this month by Rickmansworth auctioneers Propstore is rooted in the lunacy of the time: on March 12, 1974, Lennon and Harry Nilsson drunkenly heckled the Smothers Brothers at LA's Troubadour and were forcibly ejected. With punches thrown, Lennon lost his glasses, which were retrieved by Tommy Smothers' wife Rochelle. Two auctions later, here they were. See more at Propstore.com.

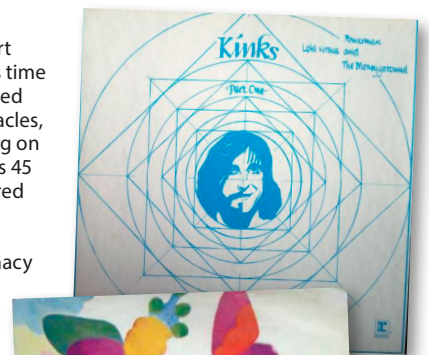
Kinks

Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround, Part One

REPRISE REEL-TO-REEL. 1970

Value: £198.75

Vinyl records can be addictive objects. But in the realm of analogue, some users need something stronger. Enter the world of reel-to-reel tape. To select a tempting example of the format, there are 23 different Kinks reel-to-reels on Discogs.com, with numerous Australian releases so rare they've never been offered for sale. But US releases are more available: while this US version of *Lola Versus Powerman…* goes for just short of £200, on Discogs.com you can pick up *Kinda Kinks* for £82.55 and *Face To Face* and *Arthur* for £75 each. Remember to have a reel-to-reel tape player to hand, of course.





Thanks to juliensauctions.com, littletonauctions.com, propstore.com and discogs.com.

SHOP TALK

Laughing Sam's Discs

To Natchitoches, Louisiana, USA, where vinyl is calling.

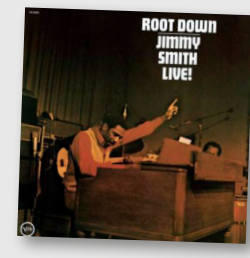
"LAUGHING SAM's Discs is a real hidden gem in a small town," writes reader Ritchie Dixon. "They have everything. And they're cool as hell too!" Owner Michael Morton worked in the restaurant business until 2021, but as he says, "My heart wasn't in it any more. I decided I might as well do something that I did have a passion for – records. I actually based my store model on the shops I went to in Manchester. They have the best record shops in the world and I wanted to bring that to the States." The first Laughing Sam's Discs was lost in Hurricane Ida, but he re-opened his new outlet in downtown Natchitoches. Stocking multiple genres, "75 per cent 'pre-loved' and 25 per cent new", he also sells vintage electronics, guitars, amps and vacuum tubes, and does repairs. "I love introducing people to bands or artists that they've never heard," he says, meaning certain titles are always on hand "to 'hip' people to." These include The Pretty Things' *SF Sorrow* and *Parachute*, *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*, Dorothy Ashby's *Afro-Harping*, Gene Clark's *No Other* and more by Baby Huey, Silver Apples and Os Mutantes. "There's a few more," says Mike, "but you'll just have to come into the shop!"

IN THE RACKS

Jimmy Smith

Root Down

(VERVE, 1972)



Visit Laughing Sam's Discs at **124 St. Denis, Historic Downtown Natchitoches, LA, USA.** See **laughingsamsdiscsstore.com** for more info.

Got a beloved record shop you want to tell the world about? Tell us what it is and why at mojocollections@bauermedia.co.uk





The platters that matter: Laughing Sam's Discs "have everything".



Erykah Badu: reluctant Queen of Neo Soul.

Neo-soul

New soul music from the '90s to the noughties. By Stevie Chick.

EARLIER THIS year, former Motown president Kedar Massenburg told Vibe that neo-soul had been "no marketing bullshit – this was a *movement*". Massenberg had coined the term in the mid '90s to describe his new discovery, Erykah Badu. But his definition – "new soul music, reminiscent of our ancestors" – also extended to many of Badu's contemporaries, similarly turning the page on the era of glossy R&B and new jack swing.

Neo-soul swapped contemporary hi-tech production for live instrumentation and organic vibes: goodbye synths and 808s, hello wah wah pedals and Fender Rhodes. The classic soul influence ran deeper than just arrangements, tapping into that cultural moment when Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Sly Stone emancipated themselves from the pop production-line to make the music *they* wanted. The neo-soul artists were auteurs, and their opuses were ambitious, experimental, fiercely personal and more focused on creative satisfaction than commercial success. Though when Ahmir 'Questlove' Thompson, drummer/bandleader of The Roots, warned Badu the market wasn't ready for her "artsy" 1997 debut *Baduizm*, she confidently responded: "Watch. You'll see." It has since sold over 3 million copies.

Neo-soul was no mere retro throwback: the movement was re-imagining soul for a world reshaped by hip-hop. The distinction between the genres blurred further at New York's Electric Lady Studios, with the formation of the Soulquarians.

> "Badu has shifted shape but she hasn't disappointed."

This loose collective of kindred spirits – including Badu, Philadelphian crooner Bilal, the mercurial D'Angelo, Questlove, rappers Common and Mos Def and visionary producer/beatmaker J Dilla – would be responsible for some of neo-soul's landmarks, such as Badu's *Mama's Gun* and D'Angelo's *Voodoo*, as well as hip-hop records of a similar creative hunger, such as Common's panoramic *Electric Circus*.

Neo-soul flourished far beyond Electric Lady: there was Jill Scott in Philadelphia, Detroit romancer Dwele, Atlanta-based Angie Stone, and neo-soul artists in the UK, Europe and beyond. Few could agree what exactly 'neo-soul' was, and fewer still were comfortable being labelled as such. "I never claimed I do 'neo-soul'; I do Black music," D'Angelo said in 2014. Badu, meanwhile, declared with 2003's *Worldwide Underground* that neo-soul was "dead", and later bridled at being described as "the Queen of neo-soul", saying "I don't want to be called the queen of anything, because I'm going to change and then everybody's gonna be disappointed".

Indeed, across each of her sporadic subsequent releases, Badu has shifted shape and redefined her paradigm, but she hasn't disappointed yet. Her latest, *Before The World Blows*, with hip-hop producer The Alchemist, is one of this year's best, along with *To Whom It May Concern*, the sprawling sixth album by Jill Scott, both suggesting the subgenre remains in rude health. Perhaps no longer so neo, then, but still soulful as hell.

CAST YOUR VOTES...

This month you chose your Top 10 Neo Soul LPs. Next month we want your Animal Collective (and solo) Top 10. Send selections via X, Bluesky, Facebook, Instagram or e-mail to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Animal Collective' and we'll print the best comments.

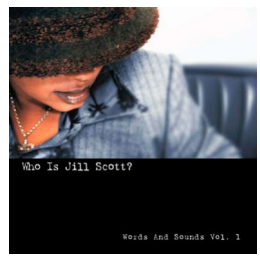


10 Maxwell
Maxwell's Urban Hang Suite

COLUMBIA, 1996, £68.75

You say: "Vocal wizardry, rhythmic fluidity and impenetrable grooves." Will Hodge, via Bluesky

From the opening crackle of vinyl surface noise, the debut album by this Brooklyn-born autodidact enveloped you in its world of longing and erotic obsession and never let you go. Only 22, Maxwell was aided in the painstaking arrangement of this symphony of funk, soul and ennui by members of Sade and living legends Leon Ware and Wah-Wah Watson, but he's always the star. A loverman to rival Marvin Gaye singing hymns of carnal devotion, his …'Til The Cops Come Knockin' was a majestic quiet storm. His later *MTV Unplugged* featured remarkable takes on Kate Bush and Nine Inch Nails.



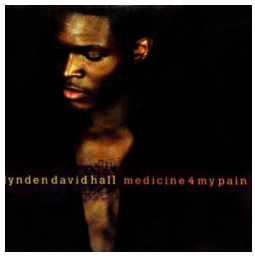
4 Jill Scott
Who Is Jill Scott?: Words And Sounds Vol. 1

EPIC, 2000, £68.96

You say: "Incredible artist. Live, all the hairs stood on end." Sylvia Dee, via Facebook

Scott was more than just a robust, jazzy voice. A spoken word poet, she co-wrote The Roots' breakthrough You Got Me (though label politics saw her vocal re-recorded by Badu), and saw her debut as a sprawl of songs and vignettes, a riotous mosaic of life. Post-coital reveries, (Exclusively), urban paranoia (Watching Me), bluntly facing off against her lover's exes (Getting' In The Way): Scott had it all. But love was her focus – from ecstasy to agony to madness on It's Love – and eroticism her speciality, describing herself as "like cayenne pepper: red hot, spicy".

Prices are for an original vinyl press, where available.



9 Lynden David Hall
Medicine 4 My Pain

COOLTEMPO, 1997, £25

You say: "He showed so much potential." Paul, via Bluesky

Seven years after Omar's dulcet, timeless *There's Nothing Like This* anticipated the coming neo-soul wave, another Londoner surfaced. Earlsfield-born producer/singer/songwriter Lynden David Hall's 1997 debut proved he could play the charmer – Crescent Moon invited his girl to "honeymoon in Antigua" and declared he was "ready to die by your side" – while the vulnerable Do I Qualify? and There Goes My Sanity showed depth. Hall won a Best Newcomer MOBO, while a cameo in Love, Actually suggested wider stardom. But in 2003 he was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma, which took his life in 2005.

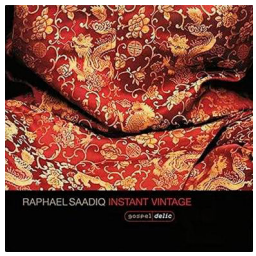


8 Dwele
Subject

VIRGIN, 2003, £59.20

You say: "Unfairly overlooked, but he did wonderful things with the Fender Rhodes." Owen Genower, via e-mail

Music had been Andwele Gardner's refuge since his father was murdered when he was 10 years old; "I put my emotions into music," he later explained. "It was my therapy." Anchored by Fender Rhodes and moving to an offset funk inspired by fellow Detroiter Dilla, his lyrics explored the tangle of a teenager becoming a man. He saw lust when he looked in your eyes on the title track, but it was the adolescent sweetness here that charmed: Twunéanunda capturing frustration at being too young to get inside the club; Let Your Hair Down finding a ray of sunshine in the darkness.



7 Raphael Saadiq
Instant Vintage

UNIVERSAL, 2002, £81.29

You say: "His Tony! Toni! Toné! arguably kickstarted the whole scene." Kevmarmol, via Bluesky

Saadiq's R&B trio Toni! Tony! Toné! blueprinted neo-soul with the grimy James Brown samples and live musicianship of their second LP, 1990's *The Revival*. Later sidelined by membership of fractious supergroup Lucy Pearl, he finally presented his full "gospeldelic" concept on his solo debut, a widescreen funk epic. With luxurious strings – and, on Still Ray, tuba – it stiffed on release, confirming the opening track's assertion that "the life of Raphael Saadiq has been one of quiet struggle". But its offbeat playfulness, infectious songcraft and ambition are truly charming, while D'Angelo duet Be Here is a must-listen.



6 Angie Stone
Mahogany Soul

J, 2001, £138.83

You say: "Because her voice is like fresh tobacco and old leather and, as she sings, 'Cuz soul music be who I be'." Nick Black, via Bluesky.

Stone was older than her peers, having rapped in hip-hop's first all-female group, The Sequence, in the early '80s. Her second LP crackled with the wisdom of an elder, and an appropriate intolerance of trifling nonsense: the way she sings "god-DAMN!" on Pissed Off speaks volumes. But beneath that exterior lay a vulnerability, a remarkable soulful eloquence. Wish I Didn't Miss You rewrote the O'Jays' Backstabbers as a magisterial portrait of heartbreak, while her melodic complexity and vocal expertise on More Than A Woman rivalled that of her ex-lover, D'Angelo.



5 Bilal
1st Born Second

INTERSCOPE, 2001, £60

You say: "The sweetest voice in neo-soul, but don't let that blind you to how deep he goes." Edward Kemp, via e-mail.

Bilal was a self-declared "rebel, a musical snob" from jazz school, and also, "the dopest n**** you ever wanted to fuck with". His debut made sublime sense of this duality, with bangers like Dr Dre-produced Fast Lane (all squelchy synth bass and boom-bap drums), dreamy balladry like breakthrough hit Soul Sist, and left-field genius like Sometimes, a baroque funk soliloquy that had him "spilling all my guts" and wishing "I wasn't me". The Soulquarians-enhanced successor *Love For Sale* was so experimental it remains unreleased, though those who heard leaked promos suggest it's a masterpiece.

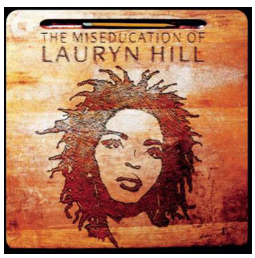


3 Erykah Badu
Mama's Gun

MOTOWN, 2000, £56.25

You say: "She told us she was a warrior princess. She did not lie." Sam Oshikanlu, via e-mail

Following the spiritual balladry of *Baduizm*, Erykah's ambitious, Soulquarians-enhanced second LP took aim at the world around her. These songs tackled police violence (A.D. 2000, inspired by the killing of Amadou Diallo), infidelity (Booty), self-worth (Cleva) and trauma (Bag Lady), wittily, incisively and with emotional lucidity. Aided by the ubiquitous Questlove and Roys Ayers and Hargrove, her musical lexicon expanded abundantly. When she returned to the balladry at the end, with Time's A Wastin' (reflecting on the end of her relationship with André 3000) and the epic, three-movement Green Eyes, it was truly sublime.

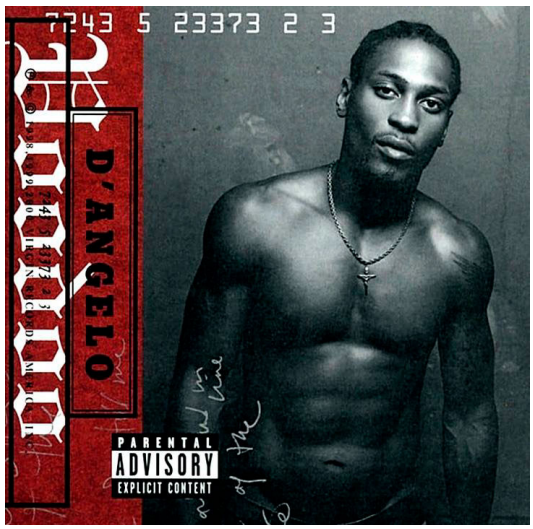


2 Lauryn Hill
The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill

RUFFHOUSE/COLUMBIA, 1998, £73.99

You say: "Nothing Even Matters, her duet with D'Angelo, is aphrodisiac on wax." Laura Chapman, via e-mail

Hill began her solo debut engulfed by drama: the Fugees were dissolving, and she was pregnant with a child her label wanted her to abort. *Miseducation* spun that drama into life-affirming brilliance, To Zion a paean to motherhood, Ex-Factor its era's deepest break-up ballad, and many devastating swipes at ex-lover Wyclef, who discouraged her from making the album. Rooted equally in classic funk and soul and hip-hop, *Miseducation* possessed magical alchemy. Its greatness only sharpens the tragedy that she has never managed to follow it up.



D'Angelo
Voodoo

VIRGIN, 2000, £263.60

You say: "Enough to make you believe in a higher power." – Gaz Swain, via e-mail

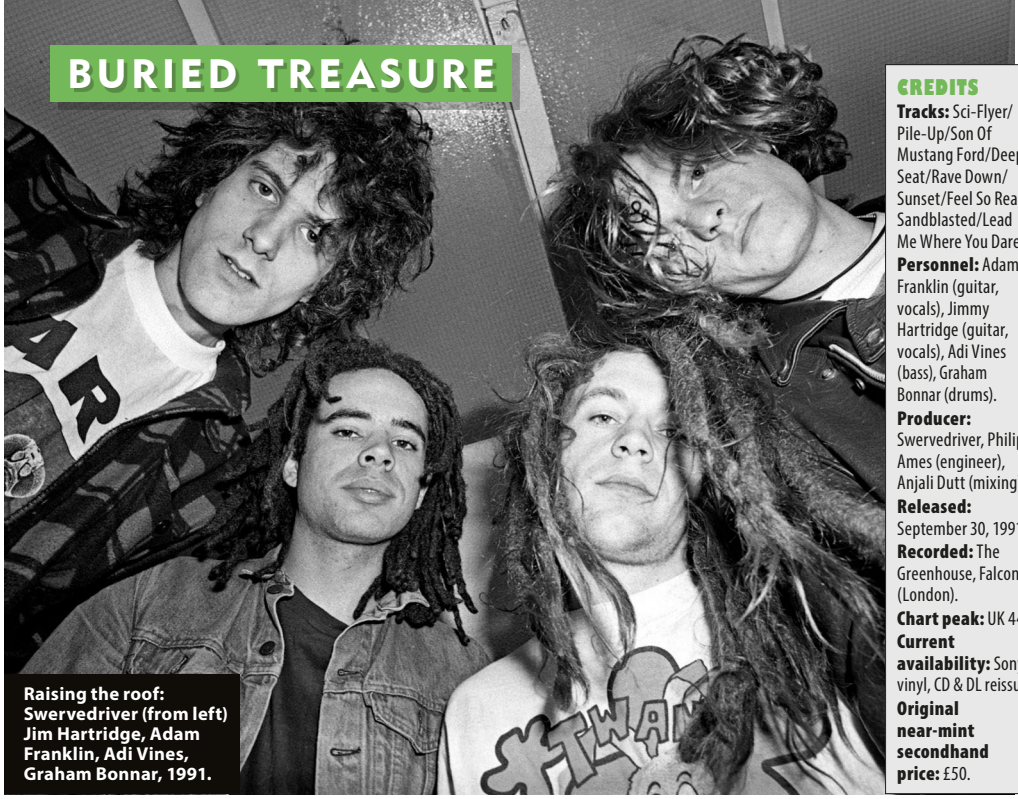
D'Angelo's aim for his second album was "To push it to the next level." He and 'co-pilot' Questlove spent much of their two years at Electric Lady watching Soul Train re-runs and bootleg concerts by Marvin, Hendrix and James Brown. Accordingly, *Voodoo* is steeped in the classics, but it's never beholden to them. Unique, spectral and, on Devil's Pie and Chicken Grease, filthy as hell, its songs are wreathed in multitracked harmonies and countermelodies, arranged with a genius touch. Untitled (How Does It Feel?) is the greatest ballad Prince never wrote. The video made him a star, and stardom broke him. He didn't resurface until 2014's *Black Messiah*, another masterpiece; tragically, his last. But if, during his short time on Earth, D'Angelo seemed mercurial, he also proved himself a miracle.

NOW DIG THIS



Essential neo-soul deep cuts include Philly singer **Res**, whose debut album was patchy but whose single Golden Boys, aiming at hollow superstar rappers, was magical, while **Mary J Blige**'s All That I Can Say, penned by Lauryn Hill, was a sublime nod to the subgenre. On the big screen, Carine Bijlsma's Devil's Pie: D'Angelo is an intimate portrait of the fallen angel on the upswing. The Michel Gondry-directed Dave Chappelle's Block Party, meanwhile, is neo-soul's Woodstock, chronicling a 2004 Brooklyn street festival showcasing numerous Soulquarians. Badu and Jill Scott duelling must not be missed.

Anthony Barboza/Getty, Rosalie Knox



Raising the roof: Swervedriver (from left) Jim Hartridge, Adam Franklin, Adi Vines, Graham Bonnar, 1991.

CREDITS

Tracks: Sci-Flyer/Pile-Up/Son Of Mustang Ford/Deep Seat/Rave Down/Sunset/Feel So Real/Sandblasted/Lead Me Where You Dare...

Personnel: Adam Franklin (guitar, vocals), Jimmy Hartridge (guitar, vocals), Adi Vines (bass), Graham Bonnar (drums).

Producer: Swervedriver, Philip Ames (engineer), Anjali Dutt (mixing).

Released: September 30, 1991.

Recorded: The Greenhouse, Falconer (London).

Chart peak: UK 44.

Current availability: Sony vinyl, CD & DL reissue.

Original near-mint secondhand price: £50.

Elevation Games

This month's neglected jewel: Oxford grunge-gazers hit the road and explode into space.

Swervedriver

Raise

CREATION, 1991

"I'M A BIT delirious," says Swervedriver singer and guitarist Adam Franklin, jetlagged after flying from Perth to Brisbane while touring Australia. "It's a good state to be interviewed in."

A positive rock delirium is all over *Raise*, the 1991 debut LP the group are currently performing in its entirety. "It's wall-to-wall riffs, really good fun to play," says the cordial Franklin. "Thirty five years though… at the time, you don't think of that. Really, you don't think about *anything*."

The road to *Raise* began with grebo-affiliated Oxford *Nuggets*/Stooges fans Shake Appeal. Active from 1985 to 1988, the garage rockers included Franklin, his brother Graham on vocals and guitarist Jim Hartridge. As the decade progressed, the retro-minded group began taking note of US acts including Hüsker Dü, Dinosaur Jr. and Sonic Youth. "We felt like there was something else, something current, we could be doing," says Franklin. After a last gig with World Domination Enterprises at Oxford Poly in December '88, Shake Appeal retired.

When Shake Appeal bassist Adi Vines heard Franklin's new demos, though, he insisted the group reconfigure to record them. With Franklin singing instead of his brother, the band imminently to be called Swervedriver – either notional US slang for a "social deviant" or the result of listening to Hüsker Dü's Reoccurring Dreams on midnight drives – duly dispatched cassettes to labels including Blast First. The last was sent to Ride's Mark Gardener to give to Alan McGee at Creation, home to My Bloody Valentine, Primal Scream and, soon, Slowdive. McGee later recalled enthusing over the tape in a limo on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles in 1989.

"We didn't think Creation would be interested," says Franklin. "But Alan McGee got straight back and wanted to sign us without seeing us play or anything. In no time we were on a tour with The House Of Love, playing the Liverpool Royal Court."

With the band now joined by Edinburgh drummer Graham Bonnar, Creation released three Swervedriver EPs before *Raise*'s September 1991 release (following *Never Mind The Bollocks*' example, McGee advised including all three EP title songs). Mooted producers included Wayne Kramer, Jamie Stewart from The Cult and Duran Duran's Andy Taylor; working at London studios The Greenhouse and Falconer, the band elected to produce themselves, with engineering help from tour manager Phil Ames.

Ames recalled the band playing up close to their amps and a relative dearth of effects pedals. "Me and Jimmy had like a wah wah and a distortion," says Franklin, who'd just bought a Vox AC30. "You could still get that whooshy, insane, spaceship-taking-off sound on Sci-Flyer."

Sci-Flyer – working titled Creedence for its debt to John Fogerty's band – was *Raise*'s climactic opener, which Franklin shorthands as "those chords at the beginning, drums crashing in, a crazy wah wah sound over the top, and then into the riff…" Its night drives and extraterrestrial visitations recur: jagged and melodic, Pile-Up adds emotional turmoil to the auto-velocity, while debut song Son Of Mustang Ford is a red-eyed motorway screamer with wired-nerves drumming from Bonnar.

His America-compatible obsessions with cars and flying saucers, says Franklin, is "all kid stuff. My favourite toy car when I was a kid was a Corgi 1966 Ford Mustang, and then I discovered Tyrannosaurus Rex – there's a song on their first album called Mustang Ford. There was definitely a wanderlust, a pining for something different, so let's just get in the car and drive. And then I guess it was science fiction and comic books, and songs about relationships, and the bands that we were excited about, all rolled into one thing."

Suitably for an album devised in the year of Loaded and *Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches*, it also edges onto the (indie) dancefloor, as third 45 Sandblasted dons baggy garb before firing up the guitars. Also with a swing in its hips is the flailing, kaleidoscopic Rave Down, which nods to The Yardbirds' mid-song 'rave up' overdrives similarly employed by Sonic Youth, MBV and Ride, and looks askance at ecstasy culture's pill-poppers. Etherised, psychedelic closer Lead Me Where You Dare… adds a groove, as does the slow-flowing, incandescent Deep Seat. 'Shoegaze' is a term Franklin says he can't remember being used when *Raise* came out, but the latter song probably warrants it.

Mixed at The Farmyard, former residence of screen great Dirk Bogarde, the album was released in the US on A&M and supported by heavy international touring. But pain was coming: Bonnar quit during a US tour and then Vines left to form rockers Skyscraper. "There were big expectations," says Franklin. "Grunge really had taken off at that point, so we had to rebuild from the ground up."

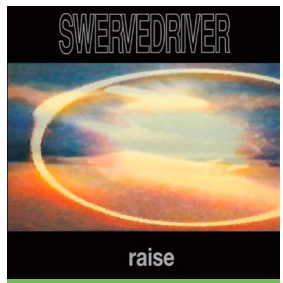
Five albums and a 1998-2008 hiatus later, Swervedriver bring their Raise At 35 tour to the UK this month. An expanded remaster of the album is also available, as is the illuminating *raise: demos* collection. "That really has scrubbed up nicely," says Franklin. "No overdubs, just my guitars on the left channel, Jim's guitars on the right channel… he said to me, it's still incredibly exciting playing these songs, and I had to concur. I mean, every band wants to make a killer debut record."

And what do they think about being called shoegazers?

"Having the word 'shoe' in a musical genre is a bit ridiculous, though the 'gaze' part makes sense," he says. "I suppose we're more shoegaze adjacent. But we're happy to be shoegaze O.G.s."

Ian Harrison

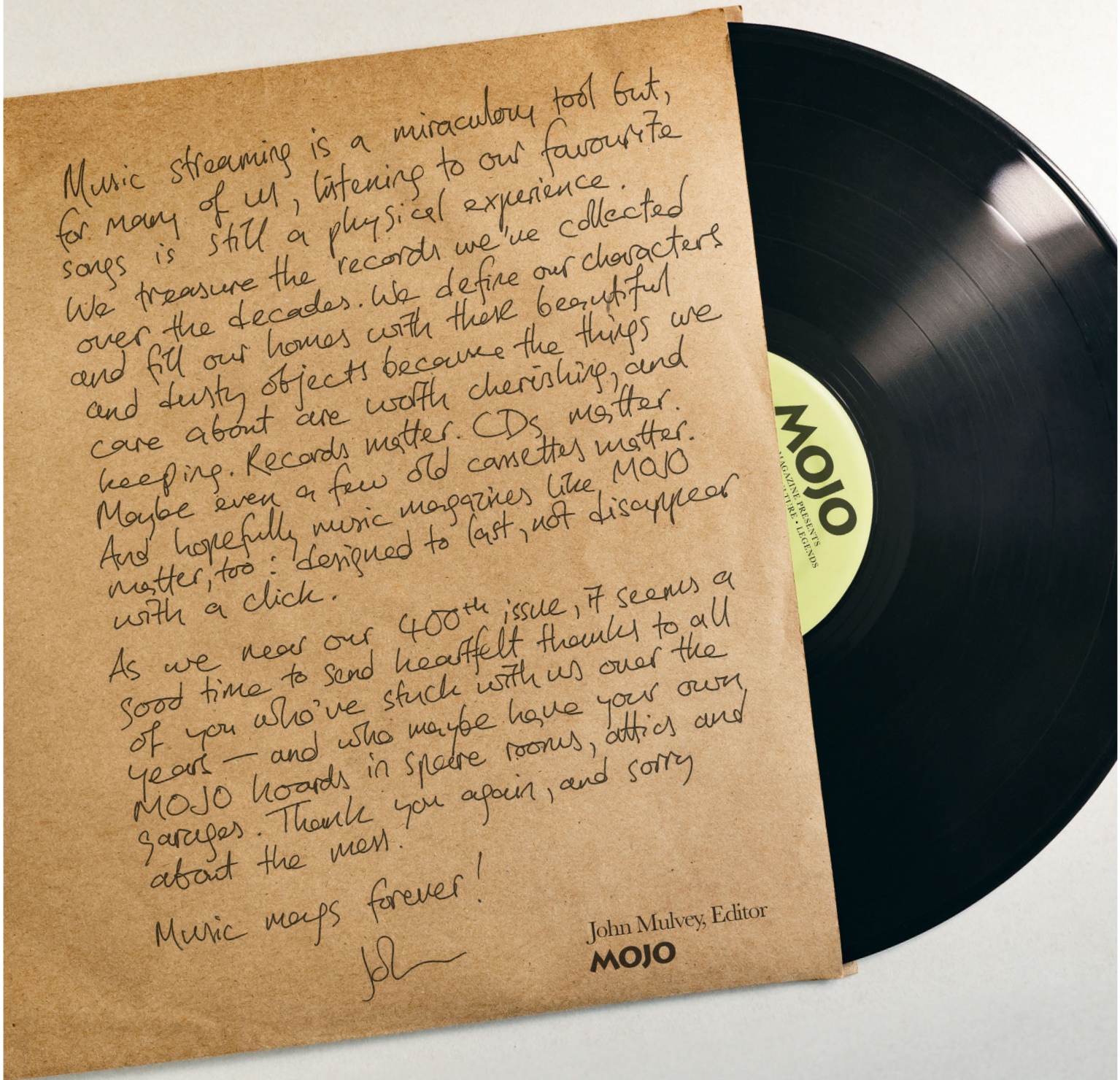
Raise is reissued by Sony this month. See swervedriver.bandcamp.com for the raise: demos.



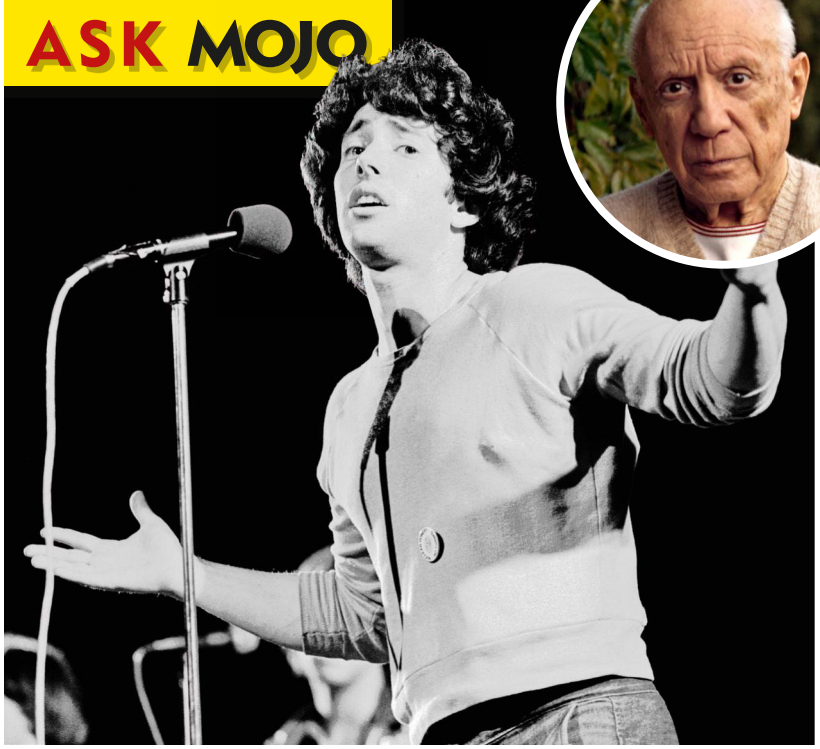
"Drums crashing in, a crazy wah wah sound, then into the riff…"

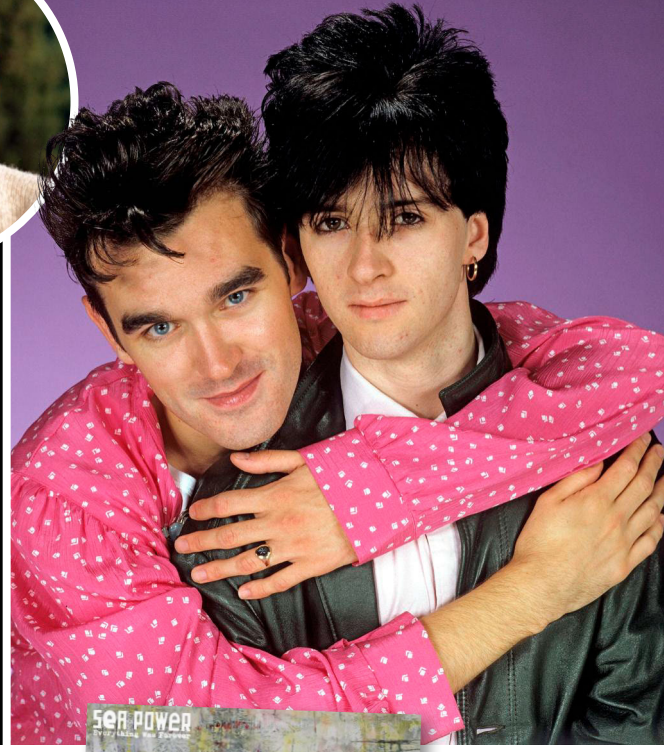
ADAM FRANKLIN

Martyn Goodacre/Getty Images



Magazines. In the world's BEST INTERESTS







Modern hater: (clockwise from top left) Jonathan Richman and (inset) his subject in song, Pablo Picasso; score-settlers The Smiths; the first LP from Sea Power after losing 'British' from their name; Hollywood tough cookie Joan Crawford.

Who went for the jugular (in song)?

Ian Harrison answers your musical questions and associated rock-related inquiries.

The list of painter songs in MOJO 394 (Gimme Five…) included The Modern Lovers' Pablo Picasso, which uses the word 'asshole' when describing the painter's relationships with women. Songwriters seldom seem to take a personal moral stance in a song. Are there any other songs with lyrics critical of a certain celebrity, because the writer does not like how this person behaved?

Johan Theorin, Stockholm

MOJO says: Many would agree that Jonathan Richman was on the money when he intimated the controversial Picasso was an 'asshole'. For other names-named critiques, it's hard to argue with 2Pac's Hit 'Em Up, which severely disrespected Puff Daddy, Biggie Smalls and other East Coast hip-hoppers for their lack of rap realness. Syd Barrett's Bob Dylan Blues, meanwhile, seemed sceptical of its eminent subject, noting in character "my gut and my wallet are fat". Also with a legend in its sights, Living Colour's Elvis Is Dead observed, "A black man taught him how to sing." Other examples are more trivial: see Guns N' Roses' Get In The Ring's raging at music journalists Andy Secher and Mick Wall; rapper B.o.B's song Flatline having a pop at astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson for pointing out that the Earth is a sphere; and the gratuitous beasting given to Rick Astley on Nick Lowe's All Men Are Liars and The Wonder Stuff's Astley In The Noose. The genre also includes Pink Floyd's Pigs (Three Different Ones) which blasts 'decency' campaigner Mary Whitehouse, Neil Young's George W Bush-bashing Let's Impeach The President and Mojo Nixon's Don Henley Must Die (in the latter case, Henley joined the artist to duet on the song on August 2, 1992, at Austin's Hole In The Wall). What are your favourite rock *j'accuse* moments?



Getty (4)

ALL BOOK'D UP

I'm reading The Drums by Mike Joyce, the third autobiography I've read by members of The Smiths (sadly we'll never get Andy Rourke's version). Seventy five per cent seems like a high percentage for band members writing their accounts. Are there any bands where all the members have published autobiographies?

Sam Griffin, Godmanchester

MOJO says: There are indeed. The classic Stanley/Simmons/Frehley/Criss Kiss line-up all wrote memoirs, as did Nod, Dave, Jim and Don from Slade. Other examples include Emerson, Lake & Palmer, The Police (though Sting ends the narrative just as fame comes knocking) and Cream, with Jack Bruce assisted in his by Harry Shapiro. As Bill Ward and Stephen Stills are currently writing memoirs, we'll soon have a clean sweep of Black Sabbath and CSNY autobiographies too. Self-chronicling groups who haven't made it to 100 per cent coverage include New Order (Gillian Gilbert the exception), The Doors (everyone but Jim Morrison), the Sex Pistols (minus Paul Cook and Sid Vicious), The Monkees (Peter Tork excepted), Blondie (Debbie Harry, Chris Stein, Clem Burke and Gary Valentine have all written books) and Genesis, with Steve Hackett, Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford putting their thoughts to paper and Peter Gabriel involved with an authorised biography. We should also mention that initial Smiths bassist Dale Hibbert published his memoir Boy, Interrupted in 2015, while early Smiths go-go dancer James Maker's AutoFellatio hit the shelves in 2010 – when's Craig Gannon writing his?

…AND MORE NAME CHANGES

Late-'80s/early-'90s UK punk/thrash band Bomb Disneyland responded to cease-and-desist missives from Disney by changing their name to Bomb Everything. The Greedies (a Thin Lizzy/Sex Pistols project) were originally named The Greedy Bastards but presumably would not have been considered for a Top Of The Pops appearance in December 1979 with their festive medley A Merry Jingle under that name.

Andy Roberts, Cardiff

MOJO says: Thanks Andy (who also mentions how The Pogues were originally called Pogue Mahone, or 'Kiss My Arse' in Gaelic). And thumbs ups to Neil Reid for noting that The Rezillos and The Damned had to become The Revillos and The Doomed respectively due to contract hassles, to Charlie Farley, who recalled how the Sex Pistols dodged irate local councils by gigging as SPOTS (Sex Pistols On Tour) in '77 ("I saw them at The Garden, Penzance," he adds), and to Ask MOJO stalwart John Burscough, who remembers how British Sea Power lost the 'British' to avoid connotations of "isolationist, adversarial nationalism". Could there be more?

HELP MOJO

Joan Crawford's image is used on the cover of Hatfield And The North's album *The Rotters' Club* and *Some Girls* and *Exile On Main St.* by the Stones. I wondered if her image pops up on any other rock albums.

Barry Cordon, via e-mail

MOJO says: We found a few sleeves featuring the screen great hailed in song by Blue Öyster Cult, Roxy Music and Iggy Pop: a 1985 German new wave comp called *Modern Times*, the speech-only *Bitch Bitch Bitch – Celebrities… At Their Worst! Volume 2.9*, which also features Roger Waters and Courtney Love, and *We Are The Joans* by twisted Chicago superfans The Joans. If you can add to the list, let us know!

CONTACT MOJO

Have you got a challenging musical question for Ian?
E-mail **askmojo@bauermedia.co.uk**
and he'll help untangle your trickiest puzzles.



Speaker Boo!

Win! A Lenco ORBITA-360 Bluetooth speaker.

MEET THE LENCO ORBITA-360: a Bluetooth speaker that looks as distinctive as it sounds. Inspired by the shape of a kettlebell, its rounded fabric-covered body and aluminium handle make it easy to carry anywhere. Inside, four full-range drivers, a 4-inch subwoofer and two passive bass radiators deliver powerful 360-degree sound at 60W RMS. Bluetooth 6.0 with Auracast lets you connect compatible speakers, even supported models from other brands, to spread the music further. Add IPX6 water resistance, 13 hours of playback, USB-C audio and charging, plus beat-synchronised lighting, and the ORBITA-360 is built to make every listening session look and sound the part.

Worth £229 each, we have TWO to give away: to win, complete the crossword and take the letters from each coloured square and rearrange them to form the name of a musician. Visit www.mojo4music.com/crossword and fill out the form, along with your answer, in the provided field. Entry is free and closes at 11.59 (UK time) on **December 1, 2026**. Winners are selected at random. For the rules of the quiz, see www.mojo4music.com.

For more info: www.lenco.com

ANSWERS

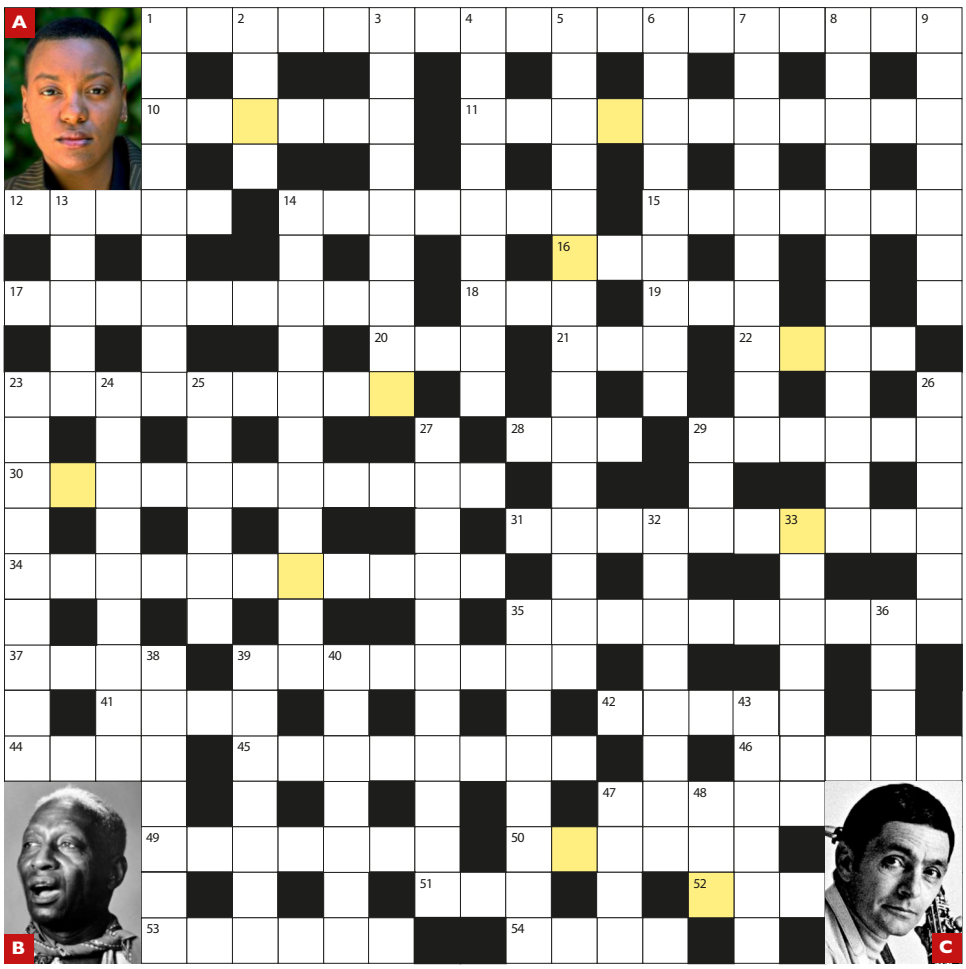
MOJO 395

Across: 1 Dave Greenfield, 8 Reg, 10 Never Can Say Goodbye, 11 Bakerloo, 13 Exodus, 14 Darts, 15 Nye, 16 PS, 17 Cherish, 18 Reissue, 20 Salt, 21 War, 22 Fat, 23 Razzle, 24 Gabor, 26 Lou, 27 Ghosts, 30 Lava, 32 Bez, 33 Hail, 34 Autobahn, 36 Cak, 38 Stex, 39 Panik, 40 Split, 41 U-She, 42 Era, 43 Er, 44 Food, 45 INXS, 46 Slade, 47 Dangerous, 48 Ruts, 49 Techno, 50 Action, 52 Racey, 53 Monsoon, 56 Loved, 58 Avalon, 59 Sisters, 60 Weird.

Down: 1 Dance Craze, 2 Viva Las Vegas, 3 Gordon, 4 Erase Errata, 5 No Smoking, 6 I'm Yours, 7 Droids, 8 Roberta Flack, 9 Greasy Truckers, 12 Ash Ra Tempel, 16 Pearl Harbor, 19 UFO, 21 Whole Lotta Love, 25 Alone (Again), 28 Hit, 29 Substance, 31 Anna, 35 Ape, 37 Wind Chimes, 43 Exile, 45 Island, 46 SST, 48 Rounds, 51 Noone, 54 Nas, 55 Raï, 56 Low, 57 Ear.

Anagram: Bobbie Gentry

393 Winners: **Alan Turner** of **Southampton** and **Jimmy Donnelly** of **Hamilton** win a set of Westone Audio AM Pro X30 in-ear monitors.



Getty (3)

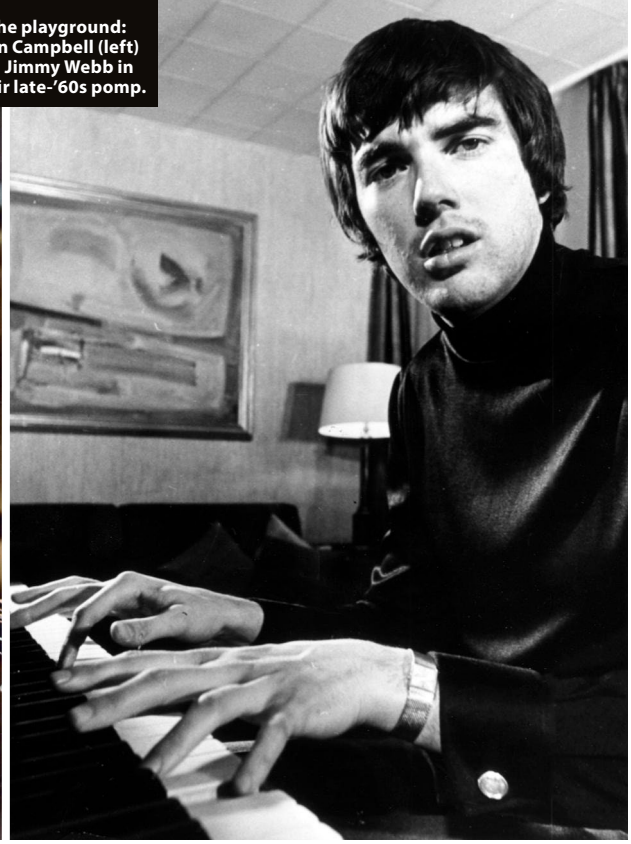
ACROSS

1 See photoclue A (7,11)
10 BÖC man Buck ------ (6)
11 Booker T & The M.G.'s signature groover (5,6)
12 LP title shared by Portishead, Soft Machine and Nathan Salsburg (5)
14 AKA Phil and Paul Hartnoll (7)
15 1957 Martin Denny LP which gave its name to a genre (7)
16 Lee Perry's was Black (3)
17 Carl Thomas's R&B hit album of 2000 (9)
18 Label home to R.E.M., the Go-Go's and more (1,1,1)
19 Music recorded at 16 across (3)
20 Label run by Factory Records historian James Nice (1,1,1)
21 Le Tigre's song for boxers? (1,1,1)
22 Chess's jazz subsidiary, later renamed Cadet (4)
23 Beatles rarities series, four strong so far (9)
28 Animal saluted in song by Flanders & Swann in 1957 (3)
29 Nirvana's mighty debut album (6)
30 Kid Creole's dancing singers (3,8)
31 They had late-'60s hits with Spooky and Stormy (8,2)
34 Dancehall singer nicknamed 'The Energy God' (8,3)
35 Steve Earle location for (Jonathan's Song) (4, 6)
37 ----, Fool Or Bum (Lee Hazlewood) (4)
39 Michael Head & The Red Elastic Band's get-out clause (8)
41 2007 Ben Lee album, ready to pick (4)
42 Massive Attack, Neneh Cherry, Associates label (5)
44 Megadeth's alternative metal LP? (4)
45 Massachusetts rockers, named for an Alice In Chains song? (8)
46 St. Vincent LP inspired by old Disney movies (5)
47 "It's not important/It's not worth a mention in the Guardian." (PiL) (5)
49 Prince-affiliated band fronted by Morris Day (3,4)
50 AKA 'The Voice of the Civil Rights Movement' (6)
51 Initially, Chris Bowsher's dub punks (1,1,1)
52 Rapper also known as Dirt McGirt, Ason Unique and Big Baby Jesus (3)
53 Macca gave them On The Bottom (6)
54 Van Morrison's first name band (4)

DOWN

1 Early Tom Petty band who re-formed in 2007 (9)
2 Noted Memphis soul label (4)
3 See photoclue B (4,5)
4 Killing Joke's album of 1985 (5,4)
5 The Love Affair's big hit of 1967 (11,4)
6 New Orleans singer known for 1961 US Number 1 Mother-in-Law (5,1-3)
7 Explosive Breeders favourite (10)
8 They hit US Number 1 with Brandy (You're A Fine Girl) (7,5)
9 Kate Bush's live EP of 1979 (2,5)
13 "Of flesh and blood I'm made… born to make mistakes." (The Human League, 1986) (5)
14 Danny Elfman's new wave band (5,6)
23 See photoclue C (3,6)
24 Their funky classics include Sophisticated Cissy and Cissy Strut (3,6)
25 Japanese jazz trumpeter Tiger ------ (6)
26 Coldplay's first major label single (6)
27 Martin Pugh's Worthing blues rockers (11)
29 South Korean boyband stars (3)
32 Frank Zappa's label (8)
33 Silver Apples album with a controversial sleeve (7)
35 Phil Collins' home studio in Surrey (3,5)
36 Indie label, home to Baby Bird, Moloko, Julian Cope (4)
38 '80s robot mimes who had a minor hit with Screen Me I'm Yours (3,1,3)
39 In '75, Andy Fairweather-Low was Wide Eyed And ------- (7)
40 K Records band ------- Relijun (3,4)
43 Gian Pieretti covers Neil Young's Harvest in Italian (6)
47 Peniston, Wynans or Rogers (4)
48 Dave Matthews-founded label (1,1,1)





In the playground: Glen Campbell (left) and Jimmy Webb in their late-'60s pomp.

Jimmy Webb and Glen Campbell

They began as a dream team making golden hits. And 50 years later they said adiós.

HELLO 1968

When I was 14 years old, I was driving a tractor, ploughing, on a very tiny farm in a very, very obscure place in Oklahoma. I heard Glen Campbell singing on the radio, a song called Turn Around, Look At Me. It was a substantial hit but didn't really break him as a star. The odds of meeting him, let alone collaborating the way we did, were nil.

In 1967 he'd recorded [Webb's song] By The Time I Get To Phoenix without my help. Glen got the song from Johnny Rivers, and that resulted in my collaboration with him. The first time I really physically met him was at the Grammy Awards in 1968. I collected my award for [The 5th Dimension hit] Up, Up And Away and as I was stepping off the stage, I passed his table and he reached out to me and I physically took his hand for a few seconds.

Some months later we were working on a commercial for General Motors. That was when we were actually in the studio together for the first time. I had fairly recently been to the Monterey Pop festival and was in full hippy regalia with quite long hair. Glen was perfectly coiffed, in sartorial cowboy splendour. He ignored my first couple of attempts to say hello, and then finally looked up, scanned me, and said, "When you gonna get a haircut?" So, an inauspicious beginning to a friendship that lasted 50 years.

He called me from the studio [in Los Angeles] one afternoon a few months later, I believe it was Western Three or Gold Star perhaps, and said, "Jimmy, I'm with [producer] Al De Lory, listening to some cassettes. I haven't heard a good song all day, just a pile of crap, can you write me a song? I really need a follow-up for By The Time I Get To Phoenix. How about a song about a town? Can you write me something geographical?" So I started working and I came up with Wichita Lineman that afternoon, one of the few times in my life I've actually ever written a song *for* anybody. Because of chance and the whims of the muses, it landed rather perfectly.



Amy Katherine Williams, Getty (3)

"He scanned me, and said, 'When you gonna get a haircut?'"
JIMMY WEBB

GOODBYE 2017

[Around 2000] we were back West, doing a concert for an automobile manufacturer, and halfway through By The Time I Get To Phoenix, he forgot the words. That was the moment that I knew there was something really wrong. I would say that marked the beginning of our goodbye. We still worked together, but you know, he began to fade away.

There's something undeniably heroic about Glen's last days. When they told him he had Alzheimer's, he said, "Well, I'm not done." His last album *Adiós* [2017] was recorded covertly by Carl Jackson, his banjo player for 30 years, who sneaked him into the studio and almost recorded him line by line. He insisted on touring the world when most people would have been happy to sit on the porch and think about past glories.

I remember [Glen's wife] Kim referring to Alzheimer's as the long goodbye. There were times when he would reach over and pick up his guitar and play an extraordinary lick. It was still there, all the wiring was in place. We would go through Marty Stewart's Legends book… one time Glen told me he could remember every song he ever heard. They would just float back – he'd play a song he learned when he was a kid, or when he was on the radio in New Mexico on his Uncle Boo's show. The last thing Glen forgot was music.

I do believe that when I visited him in hospital [in Nashville] the last time was with my wife Laura. We went in to see him, and he was asleep. The two of us walked around his room and looked at the pictures on the wall, of different moments during his life, and he slept. Finally Laura and I said, "Well, I guess it's time to leave," and we just quietly left the room, and that was goodbye. Otherwise, we would still be working together. Musically we lived in the same place and we created together on a level that was very, very high, and that never ended.

As told to Ian Harrison

Yours For The Taking: The Found Songs Of Jimmy Webb is released this month on Sun Records. Jimmy Webb: American Songwriter premieres on PBS on October 30.



Still on the line: Webb and Campbell in 2012; (left) Jimmy today.


THE SOUND MACHINE
DO YOU HAVE A VINYL RECORD COLLECTION TO SELL?
We are interested in viewing ALL quality collections of vinyl records and CDs ANYWHERE throughout the UK and Ireland. We'll travel to you.
Contact The Sound Machine if you would like to talk with one of our specialists or to arrange a viewing appointment.
Reading's Longest Established Independent Record Shop
Specialists in buying and selling new and second-hand vinyl records and CDs across all genres.
info@thesoundmachine.uk.com
0118 957 5075
07786 078 361
24 Harris Arcade, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1DN
thesoundmachine.uk.com



THE WHO BY NUMBERS

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

5CD + BLU-RAY · 2CD · 3LP · 1LP COLOUR

OUT 30 OCTOBER - PRE-ORDER NOW!

Polydor

thewho.com