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Back in 2025, Ace Records were delighted to release a collection curated by Paul Weller of some of his favourite soul music. We now present a second volume, where Weller digs even deeper to present another set of favourite tracks. Limited edition D2C exclusive on coloured vinyl.

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4. **The Coasters** - Young Blood
5. **Millie Foster** - Love Wheel
6. **Bo Diddley** - Road Runner
7. **Ramsey Lewis** - Slipping Into Darkness
8. **The Politicians** - Free Your Mind (instrumental)
9. **Billy Easton** - I Was A Fool (To Say That I Didn't Care For You)
10. **Garland Green** - You Played On A Player
11. **Esther Phillips** - Home Is Where The Hatred Is
12. **Candi Staton** - Too Hurt To Cry
13. **Major Lance** - Rhythm
14. **The Donays** - Devil In His Heart
15. **The Cookies** - Chains
16. **Eddy Giles** - Losin' Boy
17. **The Dells** - Wear It On Our Face
18. **Billy Watkins** - The Ice-Man
19. **Bobby Bland** - These Hands (Small But Mighty)
20. **Ben E King** - I Can't Break The News To Myself
21. **Joe Simon** - Most Of All
22. **Gwen McCrae** - Rockin' Chair
23. **Milton Wright** - Keep It Up
24. **The Mystic Moods** - Cosmic Sea



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Lonnie Liston Smith
The Best Of Lonnie Liston Smith
CDBGPD 327
HIQLP 185
Ace Records have reissued all of Lonnie Liston Smith's Flying Dutchman records and are delighted to put this compilation back onto vinyl.



The Dixie Cups
Two-Way-Poc-A-Way /
What Kind Of Fool
CITY 114
'Two-Way-Poc-A-Way's captivating deep rhythms and echoing vocals is aurally unputdownable once heard. The flip is a lovely, mid-tempo, soul song.



Ripple 'Be My Friend'
b/w
Deep Velvet 'Is There Someone Else?'
CITY 116
Primarily a funk group, Ripple's 'Be My Friend' was an album-only track in the US on their eponymous GRC LP. The flip was originally an unreleased harmony ballad who recorded for GRC's sister label, Aware.



The Cheques 'To Stone'
b/w
The Buddhas 'Lost Innocence'
UPP 006
Again, back to the garage for the sixth release on Keb Darge's Uprising label.



Keep The Fire Burning
The Willie Hutch Songbook
CDTOP 540
70s soul favourite was a prolific songwriter for himself and others





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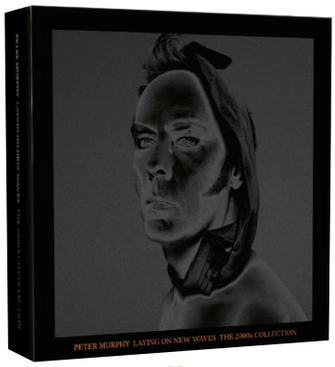
PETER MURPHY

LAYING ON NEW WAVES: THE 2000s COLLECTION

4 TH DECEMBER



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The *RC* staff's favourite... 1966 song

PAUL LESTER **THE BEACH BOYS**
I Just Wasn't Made For These Times
VAL CUTTS **THE BYRDS** **Eight Miles High**
CHARLES DONOVAN **LOVE**
Seven And Seven Is
TIM JONES **SPENCER DAVIS GROUP**
Gimme Some Lovin'
SIMON GODDARD **THE STONES**
Have You Seen Your Mother...
DARYL EASLEA **THE BEATLES** **Rain**
JOHNNY SHARP **WALKER BROTHERS**
The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore
BILL EDWARDS **THE BEATLES** **Rain**
PETE BARRY **THE BEACH BOYS** **Good Vibrations**

Spotify

Record Collector | Issue 591 | Christmas 2026 Playlist
The Best Of 2026

Dexys Midnight Runners My Life In England
Beatles Rain
Rolling Stones Rough And Twisted
Paul McCartney As You Lie There
Joy Division Shadowplay
Live Hope And Anchor
Boards Of Canada Prophecy At 1420 MHz
10cc Fresh Air For My Mama
Kneecap Fenian
Style Council Paris Match
Squeeze What More Can I Say
Lemon Twigs Look For Your Mind
Echo & The Bunnymen Take Me By The Hand
Soft Cell Danceteria
Chaka Khan Boogie's In My Soul
Roxy Music Beauty Queen
Beach Boys The Night Was So Young
Scritti Politti Faithless
Ma Rainey Slave To The Blues
TRex Light Of Love
Siouxsie Melt!
Elvis Costello Alison
Funkadelic Maggot Brain
Elastica Line Up
Happy Mondays God's Cop
Donna Summer Wasted
Slayer Hell Awaits
Iain Matthews Keep On Sailing
Durutti Column Echoes In The Memory
Peter Hammill For A Rainy Day
Richard Thompson Cocaine Walking, Booze Talking

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Salutations, one and all!



Although you're probably reading this one at a time. So… salutation, one.

Justin Hawkins of The Darkness and *Justin Hawkins Rides Again* here. Somebody recently asked me what I wanted this Christmas. I was in a sombre mood, so I just said, "A glass of water. I'll have an ascetic Christmas with no joy involved. That's all. I want to experience a joyless Christmas just so I know what it's like."

However, it turns out Christmas has come early because I've been asked to be guest editor of *Record Collector* instead. Thrills and joy abound!

I'll be honest with you. I've never edited a magazine in my life before and have no idea what it involves. Fortunately, my work was made easy as a lot of this issue had already been commissioned before I got involved. Thank god.

What's in here? We've got Bob Stanley – and me! – raving about Christmas singles. There's a feature on 80s rockabilly. We meet everyone from The Mission and Martha Reeves to Kim Carnes and The Slits. Producer Steve Levine talks about rescuing The Beach Boys from mid-80s synthpop oblivion, and we go on a musical tour of Liverpool. Oh, and in our cover story, we try and answer the question: do the classic albums of 1966 still sound good in 2026 – and what are they worth these days?

So, what does that leave me with? Well, upon perusing the initial manuscript for this crucial edition I realised that it needed more of The Darkness! That's why we have my brother Dan in this month's Birth! School! Work! Death! 'formative records' feature, our drummer Rufus in 33 1/3 Minutes With..., a record shopping feature with our bassist Frankie, and for this month's epic *RC* Interview… moi!

By the time you read this our new best-of, *Crock Of Hits*, will already be on the shelves and we'll be limbered up and ready for our long-anticipated UK arena tour starting 8 December in Glasgow, then Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff, Brighton and finishing at London's O2 on 16 December.

Hopefully, we'll see you there in suitably festive attire (black T-shirt with The Darkness written on it and a headband forged of tinsel).

In the meantime, please to enjoy this magazine and I do hope that Santa brings you all, both or at least one of the things you desire.

Seasonal tip: under no circumstances let the bells end!



Justin Hawkins
Guest Editor

JEZEBEL SPIRIT

Re: *RC* 590. If you'll feature Gene Loves Jezebel, surely you should feature Flesh For Lulu?! The band are back together for the CD reissues of *Long Live The New Flesh* and *Plastic Fantastic* (I'm told vinyl might be coming soon, too), the first gigs featuring three out of four of the classic line-up (sadly, Nick Marsh is no longer with us) in February 2027. It's a sprawling story with Rocco Barker back in Wasted Youth, Nick's time in Urban Voodoo Machine (who deserve a feature of their own!), sword fights with Sisters Of Mercy, fist fights with John Lydon and now the return with everyone sharing lead vocals, 'cos no one can replace Nick Marsh, not to mention Rocco's TV debacle buying a rock'n'roll retreat in Barcelona.

Crying out for a feature, I reckon!

Tony Pooley, email

LONG & WINDING ROAD

Love your magazine! Bernie King wrote [in *RC* 590] that he regards *Revolver* by The Beatles as the most important album of the last 70 years. Then he said Yellow Submarine is a great kids' song.

He's right. And that's why, until the late 90s, I just never got into Beatles albums. I hate that trite, twee sort of vaudevillian music, especially on otherwise great albums. I avoided buying Beatles records until then as I was afraid I'd get records full of Yellow Submarine rubbish, which I heard on the radio ad nauseam.

I dipped my toe in and bought *Revolver* in about 1998 and loved it, bar Yellow Submarine – crap. Bought *'The White Album'*. Ob-La-Di, Honey Pie? Absolute tripe. Thankfully, enough meat on the rest of the album. So, I bought *Rubber Soul*. Better. More uniform quality than *Revolver*, surely. Some outstanding songs. (Just stopping for *the* deluxe vinyl box, in fact).

Abbey Road was next. Christ. Two pieces of drivel, Octopus' Garden and Maxwell's Silver Hammer, almost back-to-back. Utter disappointment. Thankfully, the rest of the record was brilliant. *Let it Be*? Bought it, some nice tunes, but some clunkers. I could not go back any further in their catalogue.

So, that's where I stopped buying their albums (except for the Mono Vinyl box set, bought solely as an "investment").

I could never get into listening to early Beatles albums. I loved that they did explode, that they created proper and wonderfully produced albums, and that they opened the doors for others. But She Loves You, Love Me Do, I Want To Hold Your Hand, all heard via radio? Horrid. Loved Eight Days A Week, Ticket To Ride etc, their serious stuff, just not their twee stuff. Not my cup of tea musically. Thanks to streaming I know I've missed nothing I'd want to buy.

Long live The Rolling Stones.

Rod Davies, Western Australia

Readers, can you think of other examples of major artists' catalogues' purity being besmirched by quasi-vaudevillian novelties or half-baked whimsy? Much of The Smiths' output, anyone? Sloop John B's jarring inclusion on Pet Sounds*, surely?* **PL**

AND ALSO…

Re: Simon Mullins' letter in the December issue in which he said that *Rubber Soul* was the first Beatles LP "to contain all original compositions" – it wasn't. *A Hard Day's Night* was. It's also the only album to feature all Lennon-McCartney songs.

Douglas Pike, email

SIMON (AND SIMON) SAY

RC 590 – what a pleasure! Boppin' through Simon Goddard's 16-page "70s rock'n'roll 50s revival" article reminded me of just how good Mud and Showaddywaddy were. Two of the best (imo) albums I still regularly spin: Wizzard's *Introducing Eddy & The Falcons* and the self-titled Chris Spedding. Not forgetting just how well Johnny Rotten and Joe Strummer rocked the crepes'n'drapes in the fashion stakes. A great-looking nostalgic feature.

Next up, Roxy Music, who completely avoided the awkward "second album syndrome" in 1973. Frontman Bryan Ferry made sure of that, leaving his distinct artistic imprint on every aspect, taking

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I Was There

Gigs of seismic import – to you, or the culture

This month: The Beatles, Apple Corps HQ, January 1969

It was just after midday on 30 January 1969, and the Howells were en route to the West End on a characteristically chilly afternoon, with dad Ralph, a display designer, on one of his regular work trips to London.

Ralph and his wife, Audrey, headed towards Piccadilly Circus via Savile Row, in their slightly shabby, faded blue Vauxhall Velox, with their three-year-old son Morgan sliding around in the rear (there were no seatbelts in those days).

As we edged forward in the traffic jam, Mum Audrey asked the nice policeman what was occurring. Meanwhile, three storeys higher up, The Beatles were running through their first take of Get Back.

And so, yours truly, Morgan Howell, at 3 years and 101 days old, became perhaps the youngest eyewitness (or at least, ear-witness) of John, Paul, George and Ringo's celebrated final live performance atop their Apple Corps HQ.

At the beginning of the year, I obtained the full 44-minute recording, and to my amazement, at around eight minutes in, the film crew on the ground capture our little blue car, pulling out of Savile Row into New Burlington Street.

Record Collector has published my work a few times over the years – giant hand-painted 3D facsimiles of 45RPM records. I was particularly keen to paint a diptych of Get Back/Don't Let Me Down. Because I was there.

Morgan Howell

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Joel McIver (**The Mission**, p70) has been writing for *RC* since 1999. His 36th book, the official Alan Parsons Project biography, is out now; his 37th, a heavy metal album covers collection, is out next year.



Felix Rowe was once serenaded down the phone by a **Beach Boy** (p66), singing The Beatles' hit they knocked off No 1. This month, he meets producer Steve Levine, who's preparing a new mix of the Boys' overlooked 1985 self-titled synthpop record.



Charles Donovan, who spoke to **Kim Carnes** (p88), is a London-based writer whose most recent liner notes appear in *Runaways*, a Danny O'Keefe anthology on Cherry Red, and *Memories Linger* by revitalised 80s synth duo 50/50, out now on Light In The Attic.



Regular *RC* contributor **Rob Hughes** interviewed various members of punky reggae trailblazers The Slits (p84) for this month's in-depth feature, as well as revisiting a host of albums from 1966 for our 60th anniversary salute to a pivotal year in pop (p100).

complete control and dominating the entire project.

For Your Pleasure remains a cut above the rest. I held onto my original vinyl for years but this (slightly over) 50th anniversary release was impossible to pass up: a ltd blue pearl double LP featuring the remastered 8-track album plus two sides of unreleased Air Studio sessions. I've pre-ordered.

Details are everywhere: the songwriting, the musicianship, absolute precision. It's ART, pure and simple. Even the cover artwork remains iconic, directed by Nicholas de Ville; it stars Dali muse and actress Amanda Lear clad in a stunning Anthony Price leather dress and gloves. Glorious. On the reverse Bryan plays her chauffeur – a touch of effortless class. Don't worry; the rest do appear inside the gatefold.

Behind the music lies sheer brilliance with top-notch production, ensuring their No 4 chart success. The only downside, sadly, is that it's the end of an era – Eno's last studio outing with the band.

With only two songs held over from their debut, the weight of the songwriting fell to Ferry, who spent a solitary fortnight in a Derbyshire cottage crafting away the rest of the tracklist. A chunk of those home demo cassettes can now be explored on the expanded 3CD/1 DVD option, alongside radio sessions, singles, outtakes and instrumentals. The journey is documented in an impressive 116-page book with Steven Wilson adding the ultimate in dedicated new 5.1 surround mixes.

Critic Jason Draper rightly gives it the five-star treatment, a fitting tribute to a timeless classic. The Q&A with Bryan was a bonus.

And as this is now your much anticipated annual festive special publication, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone at *RC* Towers and our whole loyal music community a very Jolly Holly Christmas! This past year has been an absolute blast.

Simon Mullins, email

Thanks, Simon, as ever for your scintillating correspondence. Keep it coming in '27! And Happy Christmas! **PL**

GEEKY FEELINGS

Sylvie Simmons' interview with Elvis Costello [*RC* 589] struck a chord. Having seen him perform in Edinburgh during a Six Nations weekend and at the London Palladium, I recognised exactly what the interview captures so well: Costello refuses to treat songs as fixed artefacts, frozen in time. They remain living things, open to reinterpretation through new arrangements, tempos and the passage of time.

His reflections on (The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes illustrate this beautifully. His songs are robust enough to survive reinvention, yet sufficiently elusive to resist a definitive interpretation. Perhaps this is the secret to his longevity: his songs continue to evolve, as does the meaning we find in them.

My own connection with *My Aim Is True* found a new chapter in 2024, when I unearthed an original first pressing in a quirky Istanbul record shop for just £10. There was something wonderfully fitting about finding this landmark debut so far from home, nearly half a century after its release.

That, perhaps, is the real meaning of a starting pistol: not simply the launch of a career, but the moment a body of work begins a life of its own, continually renewed by the artist and the listeners who carry it forward.

Federico Forni, London

Shame we no longer give out record tokens for letters of the month, because this would have won it. **PL**

I WANT YOUR SECT

Due to a busy schedule I've only now got around to the article on Vic Godard and Subway Sect in your October issue. As one of my all-time favourites (Nobody's Scared!!) I was very much looking forward to bringing back the sweet memories to an unforgettable period in my life.

I was also looking forward to the Selected UK discography that usually accompanies such stories and was very much disappointed that there was none. A missed opportunity, to say the least. I don't know what the criteria is for adding such a discography to an article but would very much appreciate it still.

Stef Kuijpers, The Netherlands

There's no fixed set of criteria for giving an artist the full – or even partial – RC *discog treatment. It's a combination of space, aesthetic excellence, big audience, ineffable collectability… Fact is, we should have done the Sect. Next time*. **PL**

UNBELIEVABLE

The 50 Best Songs about *MY* Kate and no "THE SENSUAL WORLD"???

Are you MAD? 😉

And what about *MY* 10cc discography?

Marco Bonacchi, email

Memo to self: must remember to run that 10cc/Queen joint discog from last Xmas, this Xmas. Oops – just gone to press! Many apologies, Marco, next year. **PL**

LETTERBOCKS FRENZY

I wonder if Morrissey has considered the irony in releasing a new 7" vinyl single entitled Kerching Kerching for £18.99 plus postage? Ye Gods, I used to be able to get newly released 7"s delivered to my door from Sister Ray for around £3 maybe 13 years ago and this adjusts to just about £5 today after taking inflation into account.

Yours etc,

Paul Wren, email

Is it any wonder that one of our companion titles up here is Viz*…?* **PL**

STORE BLIMEY

Re: Vinyl Experience, *RC* 589

I visited this shop many times. The article highlights the worst side of shops that deal in second-hand records. The writer states, "We always tried to be fair with our valuations" … and then goes on to describe paying £15 for some items, one of which then sells for £400. Perhaps it's not such a bad thing that shops like this have closed.

Steve Young, email

NEXT ISSUE IN SHOPS: 23 DECEMBER

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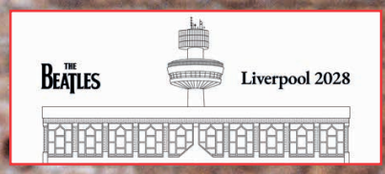


Fab plans for Liverpool in 2028

In my Liverpool home

The Beatles Story museum expands in 2028 with additional attractions across the city

Following the release of Sam Mendes' four **The Beatles** biopics in April 2028, the Liverpool Beatles Story museum moves to a new 100,000 feet^2 site in St John's Shopping Centre. Four times larger than its current home, the attraction will include sets from the films and re-create The Cavern Club, part of Shea Stadium where they performed, Abbey Road Studios and the London Savile Row Apple Corps HQ. In addition, the 400-feet high St John Beacon tower will house a *Yellow Submarine* immersive experience.

Of the upcoming projects, **Paul McCartney** said, "I find it incredible and humbling that people are still interested in our story and it's very exciting to me that The Beatles Story and The Beacon are being transformed in such an exciting way in the heart of Liverpool city centre. I love Liverpool. It's part of who I am and of who The Beatles are. If you'd told us this was going to happen when we were hanging out and getting started, we'd never have believed it. The extraordinary plans that the Apple Corps team have shown me for The Beatles Story take me right back to that journey from Liverpool to the world and back again. It couldn't have happened without Liverpool and I can't wait for people to be able to step into our story and share in the experience."

"The Beatles Story expands to 100,000 square feet"

Fellow surviving Beatle, **Ringo Starr**, added, "When we grew up in Dingle, we never thought that we'd be on a plane, much less all the places this long, long road took us to. I was blessed from the moment that I first held a drum at 13 years old and, from then on, it's been my dream to be a drummer. I remember it all so well. On Saturdays, Roy [Trafford] and I would spend many great hours at the Bodega and then the Cavern. I have such great memories of the first band that I was in – me, Eddie [Miles] and Roy were all working in the factory when we started a skiffle group. Who would have thought where the story went from there, leading to me joining The Beatles? Liverpool was, and still is, Music City. And now that we are expanding The Beatles Story Experience in Liverpool, how far out! The beat goes on. I also love that proceeds from every ticket will go back to support new Liverpool artists. It's great to be part of this. Deep down, I am still a scouser. I love what Apple Corps and Liverpool are doing. Peace and love."

Sam Mendes pitched in, "Filming recently in Liverpool for our four Beatles movies brought home just how extraordinary the band's legacy in the city is. Their imprint can be felt everywhere. It's particularly fitting that this new Beatles experience will be helping to support the next generation of talent coming from this extraordinary city."

Finally, the leader of Liverpool City Council, **Liam Robinson**, reflects, "It gives us the opportunity not only to create an incredible new home for The Beatles Story, but to kick-start the regeneration of an important gateway into our city centre, attracting visitors from across the world and creating opportunities for our city and the wider UK economy. I'm particularly excited about what this can mean for the next generation. Liverpool has never been short of talent. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn't, which is why The Apple Corps Liverpool Trust matters. The success of this attraction can directly help open doors for emerging Liverpool artists."

See thebeatles.com/Liverpool. See our feature on Liverpool on page 92.

HELLO IT'S ME

Dick Suit

Armitage Shanks' Dick Suit on their first set for 25 years



How come you're back now?
Me and Rod [Vomit] had been kicking my songs about for a year – an excuse for two old friends to drink tea and make a noise. Billy Childish offered himself and Wolf [Howard] as the rhythm section/ producer. We jumped at the chance to work together again.
How does it fit in your canon?
It could go between *Shanks Pony* and *Never Mind The Ballcocks*, recorded fast, first or second takes. Billy and Wolf had no idea how the songs went, so we twisted them to fit.
Were there any amusing episodes during its creation?
Rod got 'punk finger,' which you get through playing the same chord for 37 years. Apparently, it was agony, but it did make me chuckle. His 14-year-old son, Galapagos, finished off his guitar parts and was much better, to be fair.
How long did it take from start to finish?
All bleeding afternoon, mate.
What happened during the interregnum?
I got rheumatoid arthritis and could only play half a chord. So, I trained as a speech/language therapist and taught music to children with ADSD. I get up early, drive a school bus and work with ex-coppers/ army, scaffolders, roofers, doormen. It's *The Sweeney* meets *On The Buses* in the tearoom.
Where have your most successful markets been?
We almost earned a living touring Germany, Holland, Belgium and France, and we toured the US for 10 years.
What's been the standout moment?
Harry Dean Stanton singing Irish rebel songs to us outside a bar in Hollywood. And driving out of Motel 6 in Los Angeles after forgetting to lock the back doors of our van and our equipment and cases flying across eight lanes of freeway.
What's been the worst?
We played a sold-out show in Vancouver and the promoter disappeared with the money. We were stranded in the freezing cold. Also, a friend gifted me with a 70s bottle of aftershave shaped like a revolver and when it went through Seattle airport it triggered sirens, shouts and being forced to the floor at gunpoint! It got me a mark on my passport that means that I get rubber-gloved every time that I go on holiday to Magaluf. By the time that we got home, three of us had been left by our wives.
Who's been the biggest help along the way?
Billy Childish, my best friend and sternest critic. And his riffs are easy to copy.
How does it feel to still be doing it?
The same as when I was 12, just with less hair on my head and more pubes, so it evens out. It's yet another penultimate chapter, but we have something new to say. Though, will we say it? Probably not.
What'd a biopic tagline be?
The most unreasonable band in punk.
What's next?
After five heart attacks, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and cardiac stents? A split 7" with Thee Headcoats, Garage By Numbers, on Memphis Goner, then we go back into the studio to record the next LP, which is half written. By then, the orange shit gibbon should be dead or in jail and then we can go to America and start the whole thing again.

Armitage Shanks* Charge Of The Shite Brigade *is on Damaged Goods.

What's Happening?!?!

Collecting's roads less travelled

At *RC* Towers, we suggest that new music could well pop up from **Oasis**, **The Cure**, **Dream Theater**, **D'Angelo**, **Guns N' Roses**, **Transvision Vamp**, **Type O Negative**, **Sinead O'Connor**, **Dollyrots**, **Arch Enemy**, **Michael Stipe**, **GUN**, **The Fell**, Little Mix's **Jade**, Virgin Steele's **David Defeis**, **Suede**, ex-Cradle Of Filth's **Lindsay Schoolcraft**, **McFly**, **Jimmy Webb**, **Steel Panther**, **Cher**, **Last In Line**, **Lady Gaga**, **Storm Corrosion**, **The Zombies**, **Fear Factory**, **Colin Blunstone**, **My Chemical Romance**, **Chrissie Hynde** (two albums), **The Kiln** (with Silverchair's **Ben Gillies**), **Boyz II Men** (Warners), **Shemekia Copeland** (Forty Below), **Soil** (Better Noise), **John Mayer** (Sob Rock), **Drake** (Universal), **Burn Eternal** (with Killswitch Engage's **Adam Dutkiewicz**, ex-colleague **Howard Jones**, Metal Blade), **Ugly Kid Joe**, **Snot** (BLKIIBLK), Coney Hatch's **Andy Curran** (with *Caramel*, *Leisureworld* LPs, Vault Press); a series of **Strawbs** live albums (on Witchwood), **Mary J Blige** reissues (Primary Wave), ***JoJo***, *The High Road*, *Clover Room Edition* 180g LP revamps, *The High Road* 180g 2LP with five bonuses (Seeker); and *Subject To Change – A Dance For* ***David Bowie*** premieres at Les Théâtres De La Ville, Luxembourg, spring 2028.

CELLULOID HEROES

Projects due include Bao Nguyen's *Spectacle:* ***Michael Jackson*** *At The Superbowl* documentary, on Hulu, February 2027; NIN's **Trent Reznor/Atticus Ross** *The Further Mis-Adventures Of Cliff Booth* film, Netflix, 23 December, Jeremy Saulnier's *Slayground* film, soundtracked by them, in cinemas, 29 January 2027; the *Bad Fairies* film, cinemas, 21 May 2027, with **Cynthia Erivo**, **Kylie Minogue**; John Wilson's **Harry Styles** documentary; Martin Scorsese's *What Happens At Night* film, with **Charli XCX**; ***Fleetwood Mac****: The Chain* documentary, Apple TV, 29 January 2027; **Alan Jackson** *The Last Show*, US NBC TV, 8 December; Benny Safdie's *Lizard Music*, soundtracked by **Raye**, cinemas, 25 December 2027; Joss Crowley's ***Pretenders*** documentary; a **Justin Timberlake** four-part documentary series on Apple TV in December; Joel Coen's *Jack Of Spades* film, soundtracked by **Carter Burwell**; John Fusco's *Crossroads II* film, with **Steve Vai**.

KIT & CABOODLE

Legends Series guitars from **Marty Friedman**, **David Ellefson**, **Randy Rhoads** and **Scott Ian** are out via Jackson Guitars; five **Tom Petty** 50-copy *Flying Five* series Flying V guitars are out via Gibson; **George Harrison** white, black and orange Stratocaster guitars with 12 Dark Horse plectrums each are out via Fender, while **Kim Gordon** has out a Jazzmaster and Blink-182's **Mark Hoppus** a Jaguar bass.

ACOUSTIC+

February 2027 (12) **Indigo Sparke** *There Is A Light On The Horizon*, producer John Parish (PJ Harvey), Everwilde.

BLUES

February 2027 (26) **Ollee Owens** *From Now On*, producer Colin Linden (Bob Dylan), Ollee Owens.

INDIE

February 2027 (5) **Luft** *Hellingly*, producer **Luke Haines**, Tough Love (19) **Daytime TV** *Rodeo*, producer Pete Hutchings (Foals), Marshall April (9) **Kingfishr** *Weight Of The Feather* CD, LP, cassette, producer James Flannigan (Weezer), shop.kingfishr.ie.

METAL

March 2027 **Bokassa** *Anomalies* CD, green, coloured LPs, co-producers George Perks (Skindred), Adrian Bushby (Muse), tigernet.no.

POP

January 2027 (29) **Coldharbourstores** *Significant Others* clear LP, producer Graham Sutton (Jarvis Cocker), Enraptured.

POST/PUNK

January 2027 (29) **Philip Frobos** *Taste For The Unsavory*, co-producer Rodrigo Avendano (Soccer Mommy), Upset The Rhythm.

ROCK

February 2027 (28) **Ayron Jones** *Excuse Me*, producer Marti Frederiksen (Aerosmith), Thirty Tigers.



Ayron Jones gets the Aerosmith vibe

Photo: Matthew Becker (Ayron Jones) Ken Lapworth

Memorabilia lane
Auction houses around the world

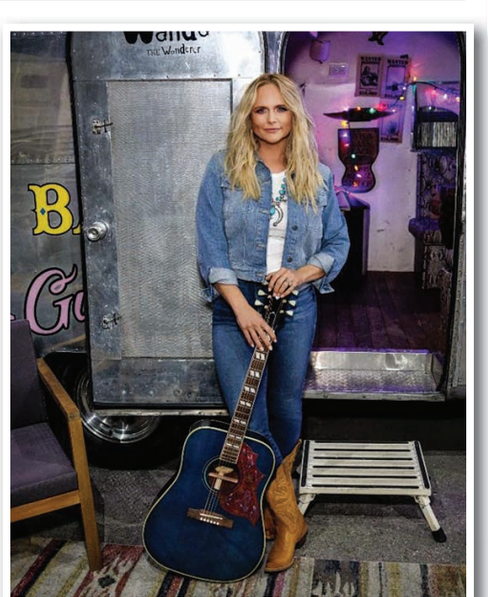
Dolly Parton's 4,689 feet^2, four-bed, six-bath 70s home in Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles, with media room, spa, pool, 0.35-acre garden, was offered in October via Westside for $7.95 million. ★ **Cyndi Lauper**'s *Suitcase Memories* auctions of 22-23 October via Bonham's New York included clothing, video scripts/props, dulcimer, record awards, her personal CD collection. ★ On 24 October, an **Elvis Presley** watch was offered via Cardenas Auctions, Miami, Florida. ★ On 25 October, a **Tom Petty** record award and **Alice Cooper** guitar were offered via Auction Aid, Musselburgh. ★ On 24 October, **Chappell Roan** offered jewellery, clothing, guitar, for charity on eBay. ★ A 14 November sale at backstageauctions.com included **Jimmy Page**, **Eddie Van Halen** guitars, **Stevie Ray Vaughan** hat, **Prince** goblets. ★ A 30 October auction via gottahaverockandroll.com included handwritten lyrics from **David Bowie**, **Michael Jackson**, **Bob Dylan**, **Prince**/coat, **Jimi Hendrix** recorder, clothing, **Lady Gaga** outfits, **Harry Styles** dress, top, **Stevie Nicks** hat, tape-recorder, tapes, self-created painting, **Elvis Presley** jewellery, microphones, jacket, top, guitars from **Slash**, **Tom Petty**, **The Rolling Stones**, **Eagles**, **Eddie Van Halen**, **Paul McCartney**, **AC/DC**, **Jimmy Page**, **Janet Jackson** top, dresses, **Dua Lipa** outfit, **Billie Eilish** T-shirts, **Beyonce** dress, **Jim Morrison** microphone, **Ariana Grande** top, **Nicki Minaj** outfit, **Lana Del Rey** dress, **Kesha** jumpsuit, top. ★ The 19 November ***Phil Collins*** *Collection* charity auction via juliensauctions.com included **Genesis** handwritten lyrics, his *Miami Vice* suit, *Live Aid* outfit, guitars from **Mark Knopfler**, **Yungblud**, **Muse**, **Paul McCartney** boots, **Ringo Starr** shirt, drum sticks, **Elton John** glasses, **Led Zeppelin** record award from **Robert Plant**, **Mick Jagger** shirt, **Nick Mason** drumhead. A 24 October auction of Cheap Trick's **Rick Nielsen** items included his five-neck guitar for $313,600, others for $256,000, $76,500. ★ A *Music, Vinyl & Film Memorabilia* sale is held 9 December via hansonsauctioneers.co.uk. ★ In October, musicgoldmine.com offered guitars from **Trans-Siberian Orchestra**, **Alice In Chains**, **Shinedown**, **Muse**, record awards from **Montrose**, **Panic At The Disco**, **Whitney Houston**, **Rod Stewart**, **Van Halen**, **The Doobie Brothers**, **Robert Palmer**, **AC/DC**, **ASIA**, **Billy Squier**, **Cyndi Lauper**, **The Kinks**, **Fall Out Boy**, **Foghat**, **Twenty One Pilots**, **Billy Joel**, **Genesis**, **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Bob Dylan**, **Fear Factory**, **Megadeth**, **Led Zeppelin**, **2Pac**, **Blur**. ★ *Marvels Of Modern Music* sales are held via rrauction.com, 17 June, 16 December 2027. ★ Omegaauctions.co.uk has audio equipment/music memorabilia/vinyl sales on 23-24 February 2027. ★ *Music & Entertainment* sales are held via specialauctionservices.com, 2 February, 6 April, 29 June, 24 August, 12 October, 14 December 2027. ★ On 30 October, discogs.com and Black Plastic Records, Dortmund, Germany, offered a collection of 1,400-plus **The Beatles** records, including *Please, Please Me* 1963 promo LP, UK mono first pressing LP, *The Beatles* 1968 LP on Parlophone. ★ An 11 December charity auction includes signed guitars from **Fatboy Slim**, **Peter Hook**, **Johnny Moped**, **OMD**, **Lucy Spraggen**, **The Prodigy**, **Moby**, **We Are Scientists**, **Skindred**, **Madness**, **The Amy Whitehouse Band**, **The Selecter**, **Editors**, **The Maccabees**, **Badly Drawn Boy**, **Passenger**, **Evanescence**, **Levellers**, **Nick Cave**, **Saint Etienne**, **Stereo MCs**, **Starsailor**, **Mel C**. The sale follows a 4-11 December exhibition at Brighton Helm Gallery. ★ On 15 October, a **Lonnie Mack** guitar sold via ha.com for $550,000 and, on 5 December, Roger Dean's original **Yes** *Fragile* album sleeve artwork is offered. ★ On 15 December, a 1962 **Brian Jones** handwritten letter is offered by Sotheby's New York. ★ An 8 November charity auction via eBay included artwork by **Damon Albarn**, **Nick Cave**, **Robert Smith**, **Olivia Rodrigo**, **The Prodigy**, **Levellers**, **My Bloody Valentine**, **All Saints**, **CHVRCHES**, **Gorillaz**. ★ The **David Bowie** *On Tour* exhibition, including *Ziggy Stardust*, Ashes To Ashes clothing, *Low* album art proof, guitar, saxophone, ring, handwritten lyrics, is at Dundee V&A to 15 February 2027. ★ On 27 October, **George Michael**'s *Faith* guitar sold via Sworders of London for £180,000. ★ On 16 November, A Perfect Circle's **Billy Howerdel** offered 120-plus items via analogr.com, including guitars, cabinet, amp, recording equipment, album art.



Cyndi Lauper's own CD collection on the block

Pictures At An Exhibition
Artwork, photos and ephemera on public display

A **Nelly Furtado** exhibition at Studio Bell, Calgary, Canada, runs to February 2027. ★ The **Alan Jackson** Museum, with 600-plus artefacts, is open at 3rd Avenue South, Nashville. ★ The **Miranda Lambert** clothing exhibition, *Velvet Rodeo*, is at the US National Cowgirl Museum & Hall Of Fame, Fort Worth, Texas, to November 2027. ★ The *Children Of The Night: The Visual World Of* ***The Cramps*** exhibition opened 23 October at Las Vegas Punk Rock Museum. ★ The *Mega Mega: Romford's Suburban Sound Revolution* exhibition on breakbeat hardcore is at Romford Atik Nightclub to 20 December. ★ The Rankin *Contact* photo exhibition including **Goldie** is at Annroy Studio, Grafton Road, Kentish Town, London, from 26 November, with a book on Hunger Publishing. Goldie's *Metalheadz* record shop/video exhibition is at London Chelsea Saatchi Gallery to 5 May 2027. ★ The *Ragtime: Cakewalk In Pianoland* exhibition is at Moyar Library & Museum, Madison Avenue, New York, to 13 June 2027. ★ *The Art Of* ***Metallica*** exhibition, including posters, album sleeves, is at San Francisco Haight Street Art Center to 10 January 2027. ★ Stuart Baile's *Alter Your Native Land – Punk In The North, 1976-2026* photo exhibition, including **The Undertones**, **Outcasts**, **Stiff Little Fingers**, **RUDI**, **Therapy?**, **Ash**, opened in November at Belfast Oh Yeah Music Centre.



Miranda Lambert threads on view

Acoustic

Iain Matthews/Egbert Derix *Wordsong* CD had a kickstarter.com campaign to 13 November. ★ **Archie Fisher** *The January Man, 1961-77* 4CD with 109 tracks (91 unissued), due via The Last Music Co, April 2027, has a kickstarter.com campaign from 4 January 2027.

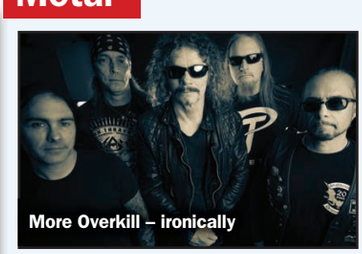
Biz

HMV on London's Oxford Street closes in March 2027. ★ The Spiritland hi-fi listening bar in London Barbican is open to July 2027. ★ The MAKBAS record pressing plant is due to open in 2027 at Al Muwaqar, Amman, Jordan, pressing 1,000 records per day. ★ Altar record shop/venue opened 23 October in Church Lane, Leytonstone, London. ★ Eva Moreda *From Brown Wax To Bytes* book about music formats is on Reaktion, May 2027. ★ On 23 October, the NinetyNine club venue opened on London's Regent Street. ★ The *Vinyl Digest: A Collector's Field Guide* series of books launches via Dust & Grooves Editions on 30 November with Amir Abdullah & Manu Boubli *Spiritual And Cosmic Jazz*, Manu Boubli & Uchenna Ikonne *African Funk, Soul & Disco*, Greg Belson *Gospel Soul* and Chris Menist & Maft Sai *Folk, Rock And Psychedelia In South And Southeast Asia*.

Indie

The The *The Ensouled Tour – Live At Sydney Opera House* 3LP, clear 3LP, 2CD/book; DVD, BD adding promo videos, documentary, Cineola, 22 January 2027, and a screening/Q&A is at London BFI IMAX, 21 January, with exclusive merchandise. ★ **Talking Heads** *New Feeling* photobook, on Abrams, May 2027. ★ **Pop Will Eat Itself** *PWEI.40 Deluxe* magenta LP/7" with two bonuses, CD with two exclusive unissued cuts, pink LP/*Lost Treasures And Unearthed Gems* yellow LP with 12 unissued, popwilleatitself.net, 19 February 2027. ★ My Morning Jacket's **Jim James** *One Wonders* book, Simon & Schuster, 13 April.

Metal



More Overkill – ironically

The Violent Hour *Pretty Girls Do Ugly Things*, with **Carla Harvey** (ex-Butcher Babies), Megaforce, 22 January 2027. ★ In October, **Mastodon**'s *Marrow Deep* was issued as a 170-copy mastodon fossil-filled coloured LP, available on Loma Vista via a raffle. ★ **Archon Angel** *Beyond The Grave*, with Savatage's **Zak Stevens**, Frontiers, 11 December. ★ **Mammoth**'s 24 November show at London Shepherd's Bush O_2 Empire was filmed for BD. ★ **Alex Skolnick Trio**'s 25 October show at New York Iridium was recorded for CD. ★ **Dynazty** *Dark Arts*, with **Nils Molin** (Amaranthe), Napalm, 5 March 2027. ★ **Overkill** *Bloodletting*, ➤

Photo: (Cyndi Lauper) Chapman Baehler (Miranda Lambert) Jeff Johnson

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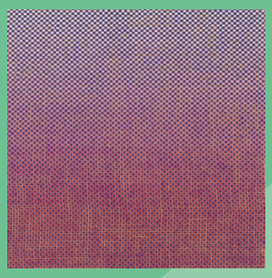


AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE & MARY HALVORSON

Slo-Mo Neon Luminate Hoverings

'Shifting from moods of fraught intensity to wistful reflection and carefree playfulness, two US groundbreakers in contemporary jazz team up for a collection of intimate duo pieces that are anything but safe or conventional.'

– Record Collector



LAURIE ANDERSON & SEXMOB

Let X=X (Live)

'The considerable pleasure of listening to this live recording derives from Anderson's homespun wisdom and wry sense of humour. Musical accompaniment, supplied by the razor-sharp Sexmob provides a further extension of her voice, a vehicle for nuance and emphasis, rather than mere backing.' – **The Wire**



FLEA

Honora

'Flea's debut full-length solo album finds him returning to his first instrument, the trumpet, and first love, jazz. Conceived as an instrumental record with Flea playing every instrument himself, it evolved to include a team of elite jazz musicians, visionaries and occasional guest vocalists, including Thom Yorke and Nick Cave. A reflective gem.' – **Mojo**



RHIANNON GIDDENS

Hope Is The Thing With Feathers

'Giddens' wonderful seventh album finds her once again pulling from her North Carolina roots. Her exquisite voice, spare banjo and Dirk Powell's fiddle form the core of songs that address love, identity and community.' – **Uncut**



HURRAY FOR THE RIFF RAFF

Live Forever

'*Live Forever* cracks with outrage and compassion, culminating in the climatic pairing of 'Ogalalla' and 'Pa'lante', the latter sounding like an American standard.' – **Uncut**



NATALIE MERCHANT

Cabinet Of Wonder

'*Cabinet Of Wonder* finds Merchant reimagining Mother Goose and her nursery rhymes for a new generation of youngsters through modern interpretations of the classics children's cannon... dipping into an array of styles, including calypso, Dixieland jazz and Celtic-influenced tunes.'

– Classic Pop



PUNCH BROTHERS

The Unsung Adventures of Punch Brothers

'The first all-instrumental release by the multi-award-winning Americana darlings advances the quartet's mission to push beyond conventional stringband boundaries through wildly imaginative, virtuosic experimentation.' – **Songlines**



CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT

With Every Breath I Take

'A breathtaking widescreen collaboration with Metropole Orkest, the album features epic large-ensemble interpretations of some of Salvant's most cherished songs, ranging from jazz standards to Broadway arias. Highlighting the dynamic range, beautiful tone, and exquisite expressivity of Salvant's voice, it's nothing less than a sumptuous feast for the ears.' – **Record Collector**



NEBA SOLO & BENEGO DIAKITÉ

A Djinn and a Hunter Went Walking

'An album 15 years in gestation usually needs a story behind it, and this one is no different. The results are impressive, both as a traditional-sounding West African acoustic set and, with the volume right up, as a wall-shaking sonic experience.'

– Mojo



HENRY THREADGILL, VIJAY IYER & DAFNIS PRIETO

Fifteen

'By turns gleeful, sensitive, urgent and ruminative, this is a brilliant set that plays to the trio's formidable strengths. Hearteningly delightful contemporary music-making.' – **Guardian**

NONESUCH.COM

Altogether Now

Noteworthy guest-spots this month

Arandel *Cosmogonies Du Silence*, InFine, 22 January 2027: **Louis Delorme** (Air).
Anso Baya *Watch The Stars*, Scarlight, 26 February 2027: **Brian Griffin** (Lana Del Rey).
Blondie *High Noon* CD, LP, red LP, clear eco-LP, cassette, BMG, 26 February 2027: **Johnny Marr**, **Glen Matlock**, **Zach Condon** (Beirut).
Graham Bonnet Band *Circuit Breaker* CD, orange, yellow, gold, test-pressing LPs, Frontiers, 26 March 2027: **Bruce Dickinson**, **Roger Glover**, **Kai Hansen** (Helloween).
Robert Cray *All Over Again*, [TBC], 12 February 2027: **Steve Jordan** (The Rolling Stones).
Annie Dressner *Trying To Be Cool* CD, LP, Proper, 12 February 2027: **Steve Brookes** (Danny & The Champions Of The World), **Eric Heywood** (Pretenders).
Doro *Wild At Heart* shaped, picture disc, coloured, liquid-filled LPs, CD, box set adding poster, jigsaw puzzle, bonus CD with alternate artwork, Rare Diamonds, 11 December: **Alissa White-Gluz** (DragonForce).
George Fitzgerald *Lima Romeo*, Domino, 12 February 2027: **Alexis Taylor** (Hot Chip).
Martin Garrix *Marty*, STMPD, 5 March 2027: **U2**, **Madonna**, **Ed Sheeran**.
Beach House's Graham Hill *Taking In Stars*, Graham Hill, 22 January 2027: **Shane Theriot** (Willie Nelson), **Gabe Stillman** (Buddy Guy).
Hot Chip *A Long Way From Kansas* CD, 2LP, *Deluxe* 2LP/7" with two bonuses, Domino, 8 January 2027: **Beth Ditto** (Gossip).
The Nice's Davy O'List *After The Storm*, Omikron, 13 December: **Dave Wagstaffe** (Landmarq).
Ghost's Henrik Palm *Idiot Plot* CD, LP, Svart, 4 December: **Scott Carlson** (Cathedral).
Particle Kid/Daniel Lanois *The Ocean Floor*, Loosegroove, 26 February 2027: **Kyle Crane** (Lorde), **Daryl Johnson** (Bob Dylan).
Randy Rogers Band *Songbook*, Big Loud, 22 January 2027: **Miranda Lambert**, **Dierks Bentley**.
She Wants Revenge *The Loved*, shewantsrevenge.com, 12 February 2027: **Tony Bevilacqua** (The Distillers), **Lia Braswell** (Chelsea Wolfe).
Jeff Slate *A World Called Desire: The Townshend Tapes* CD, LP, Shamus, 27 November: **Simon Townshend**.
Soul Glo *Na I'm Gon Grab Allat*, Epitaph, 15 January 2027: TV On The Radio's **Tunde Adebimpe**.



Annie Dressner: kinda pretending

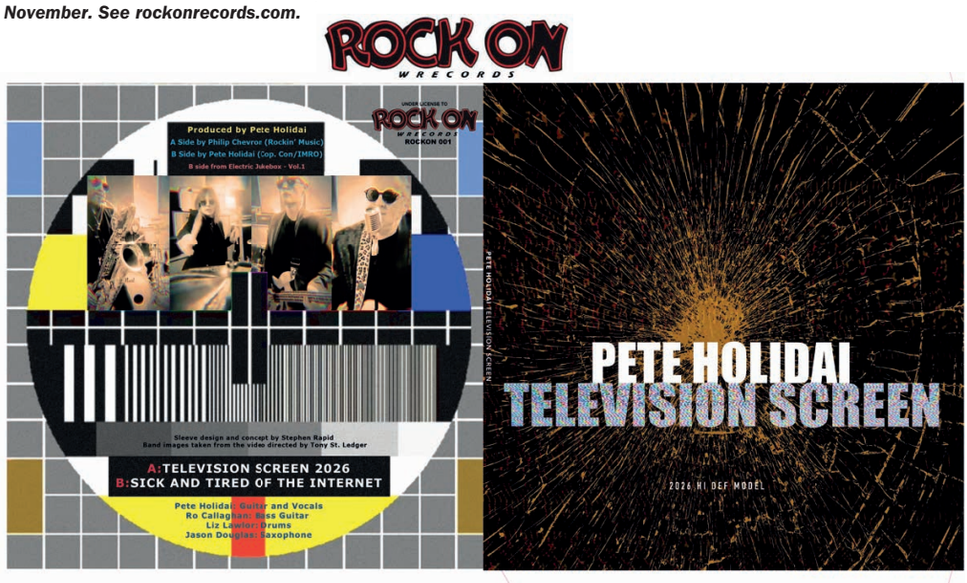
Ted talk

The Ace label founder launches another venture

November 1976 saw the launch of Ace Records with the release of **The Count Bishops**' *Speedball* EP on the Chiswick imprint. Exactly 50 years later, Ted Carroll is up to mischief once more with the launch of his new label, Rock On Wreckords. Its first release is the Television Screen 7" by **Pete Holidai**, a co-founder of **The Radiators From Space**, whose first record was issued by Chiswick in April 1977. Ted sold his interest in Ace five years ago, but soon became restless and, a year later, re-opened his original collector's record shop, Rock On, this time in Stamford, Lincolnshire, near his home in Rutland.

Earlier this year, he contacted Holidai to purchase copies of Pete's newly recorded Television Screen single, which appeared on 31 January as a digital release. Ted asked Pete if he could issue it on vinyl on his new label and Pete enthusiastically agreed. *Voila*!

Pete Holdai's Television Screen 2026/I'm Sick And Tired Of The Internet is on Rock On Wreckords in late November. See rockonrecords.com.



Peter Holdai gets on the gogglebox care of his old mate, Ted – Rock On!

Metal cont'd

with bonus, 15 January, **Dameon** *The Complete Deadly Sins* 3CD, with *Seven Deadly Sins*, *The Second Coming*, *Eye For An Eye*, 29 January 2027, Dissonance. ★ **The Dillinger Escape Plan** *Dissociation* crystal, marble 2LPs, eight unissued, *Deluxe* 3CD adding 10 instrumentals, thedillingerescapeplan.tmstore.es, 11 December. Due: TBC **Staind** *The Space Between The Darkness And The Light*, Alchemy, **Black Sabbath** *Born Again* remix, RATT's **Stephen Pearcy** *The Dogg Mob*, [TBC].

Prog/Avant

Alan Parsons Project *Tales Of Mystery And Imagination Edgar Allan Poe* picture disc LP; 180g 3LP/book adding 11-track *The Remix Album*, 11-track *Work-in-progress Album*; 3CD with *The Remix Album*, 34 bonuses (12 unissued); BD adding 5.1, Dolby Atmos mixes, alanparsonsproject.tmstor.es, 11 December. ★ **Bjork** *Orkestral With The Hamrahlio Choir* CD, LP, DVD, BD, Reykjavik Harpa Hall, October 2021, OLI, 27 November. ★ **Supersister** *From Prog Fest To Paradiso* 2CD/2BD, with *Live At The Paradiso 2000* 2CD, BD, BD with unissued *Live At Prog Fest Los Angeles 2 September 2000*, *2000 The Los Angeles Encore* documentary, Esoteric, 29 January 2027. ★ **Robert Calvert** *Hype*, eight bonuses, Cleopatra, 27 November. ★ ***Air*** 4CD, with *Moon Safari*, *The Virgin Suicides Redux*, *10,000 Hz Legend*, *Talkie Walkie*, Warners, 27 November. ★ **Neal Morse & The Resonance** *River Of Light* CD, 2LP, 2CD adding instrumentals, InsideOut, 27 November. ★ **Public Service Broadcasting** *Live At Alexandra Palace* CD, 2LP, green 2LP/BD adding video from London, September 2026, publicservicebroadcasting.net, 16 December. Due: January 2027 (29) **Yes** *Keys To Ascension – The Studio Recordings*, Spirit Of Unicorn September **Pendragon** *Go Your Way*, [TBC].

Pop+

John Lennon *Power To The People* 2BD with *One To One Concert*, 15-track *Afternoon*, 5.1, Dolby Atmos mixes, *Deluxe* slipcased 4BD adding 16-track *Evening*, *One To One: John & Yoko* documentary, 128-page hardback, two postcards, poster, Mercury Studios, 9 April 2027. ★ **Texas** *White On Blonde* gold-white LP with bonus 7" including unissued cut; gold, white 2LP with 12 bonuses; and 2CD adding two, PIAS, 5 February 2027. ★ **East 17** *The Best Of* 12-track LP, CD adding five, 2CD/DVD adding 10 remixes, 16 videos, **Blancmange** *Happy Families* orange LP, CD with seven bonuses, *Mange Tout* green LP, CD with seven, *Believe You Me* yellow LP, CD with five, London, 4 December. ★ **Propaganda** *1234* 3CD, 17 bonuses, Cherry Pop, 22 January 2027. ★ Unseen 35mm film of **David Bowie** at London Earl's Court, 1978, *Stage*, premieres in 7.1 mix, Berlin Uber Arnea, 14 February 2027. ★ **Prince** *3121 Las Vegas Live* blue 3LP, 2CD, 27 November, NPG, *3121 Las Vegas Concert* 154-minute 4k Dolby Atmos film, cinemas, 3 December, *3121 Expanded* 2CD/BD, 3LP/BD, 10 bonuses, NPG, ➤

Credit: (Annie Dressner) Simon Weller

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Ozzy's last stand

Ozzy Osbourne's final **Black Sabbath** show/tribute due on various formats

In December, **Black Sabbath**'s nine-song set from Aston Villa, 2025, is due on 45rpm 180g 2LP, CD, BD and 4k UHD BD, the BDs including 5.1 and Dolby Atmos mixes, bonus behind-the-scenes footage, tributes, two videos and a documentary. Also available are a BD/CD, BD/grey 180g 2LP, BD/purple 180g 2LP and BD/metallic 180g 2LP. A 35-song box set with a bonus BD featuring **Metallica**, **Guns N' Roses**, **Slayer**, **Tool**, **Pantera**, **Alice In Chains**, **Gojira**, **Lamb Of God**, **Anthrax**, **Halestorm**, **Mastodon**, **Rival Sons**, **Tom Morello's All-Stars**, **Jack Black**, **Steven Tyler**, **Sammy Hagar**, **Billy Corgan**, **Ronnie Wood**, **Jake E Lee**, **KK Downing**, **Nuno Bettencourt**, **Tobias Forge**, **Fred Durst**, **David Draiman**, **Yungblud**, **Chad Smith**, **Travis Barker**, bonus CD, 180g LP, book, necklace, print, is due in April 2027.

Black Sabbath* Back To The Beginning *is out 11 December, box set, 23 April 2027, on Universal.



Ozzy & Black Sabbath box set due in new year

Turning Japanese

Handful of rare records from Japan due next year

Sound Fuji explores the King Record Co Ltd music catalogue established in 1931 with a number of rare and unissued releases on 16 April 2027.

Its 180g LP batch is due in partnership with US Light In The Attic and is newly cut from the original mastertapes with original artwork, plus new obi strips.

The titles are cult rare groove classic, **Fujimaru Band** *BGM* coloured LP; the debut reissue of 1981's hard bop **Isao Suzuki** *Three Cushion*; 1978's jazz/funk/disco **Takeru Muraoka & His New Group** *Soft Landing* blue LP; 1976's jazz/funk/Afro/disco **Akira Ishikawa & Count Buffalo** *Okinawa* clear LP; and a vinyl-debut for **Ebonee-Webb** *Disco Hanagasa Ondo/Soma Bon Uta*.

See soundfuji-kingrecords-co-jp, and 180g-soundfuji.bandcamp.com.



Pop+ cont'd

11 December. *Sign 'O' The Times* 4k UHD BD/BD/poster, with 5.1 version, documentary/Q&A, Via Vision, 20 January 2027. ★ **Book Of Love** *The Sire Years* 6CD, with *Book Of Love*, eight bonuses, *Lullaby*, eight, *Candy Carol*, nine, *Lovebubble*, seven, 21-track *Bonus Material – Remixes & Versions*, 22 January, **Love And Money** *From Sunset Boulevard To Chateaulait* 9CD, with *All You Need*, six bonuses, *Strange Kind Of Love*, six, *Dogs In Traffic*, six, *Littledeath*, one, *The Devil's Debt*, two, 17-track *B-Sides*, eight-track *Extended Mixes*, 12-track *Strange Kind Of Love Live In Glasgow*, 29 January 2027, Cherry Red. ★ **Daft Punk**'s 272-page *Metal Hurlaut* comic is out January 2027 via studio.humanoids.com. Due: TBC **Grimes** *Psy Opera*, [TBC].

Post/Punk

Descendents *Milo Goes To Comics* graphic novel, *Deluxe* oversize slipcased edition with blue 7" including two unissued, three prints, *Platinum* edition with blue-white 7", adding identity card, Z2 Comics, 22 March 2027. ★ **Henry Rollins** *Bait Dog Boy* hardback, Little Brown, 2 March 2027. ★ **Josef K** *Anthology (1979-82)* 3CD, with *The Only Fun In* Town, *Sorry For Laughing*, 20-track *Singles & Sessions 1978-81*, 20-track *Live In Brussels/Live In Edinburgh*, Cherry Red, 15 January 2027. ★ **John Lydon** *Archive* slipcased/signed *Luxury* photobook, *Superluxe* clamshell box with two prints, **PiL** *Alive* CD, are on A Way With Media in November. ★ The *Wir Schweigen Nicht* charity CD, with **John Carpenter**, **EMF**, **Modern English**, **Nouvelle Vague**, The Orchard, 4 December. ★ **Sergeant Buzfuz** *Free Street, 10am*, with **Ian Button** (Death In Vegas), Blang, 29 January 2027. Due: November (27) Buzzcocks' **Pete Shelley** *Sky Yen*, Cold Spring January 2027 (22) **Jah Wobble & The Invaders Of The Heart** *Half Light*, 30 Hertz.

Rock

Kula Shaker *K-Reincarnation* revamp, live to 2" tape, Strange FOLK, 5 February 2027. ★ **Bush** *Razorblade Suitcase* splatter 2LP with four bonuses, 2CD adding seven unissued, Craft, 11 December. ★ **Jeff 'Skunk' Baxter** *From Rock To Rockets* book, Harper, 27 January 2027. ★ Joe Milliken *Livin' On The Edge – The Life And Times Of Aerosmith's* ***Joe Perry*** book, Bloomsbury, 10 December. ★ **Def Leppard** stamps are due via the Royal Mail. ★ Little Feat's **Bill Payne** *Carnival Ghosts* book, Regalo, 16 February 2027. Due: January 2027 (22) **Lee Aaron** *Re-Vamp*, Metalville TBC **Lita Ford** *The Bride Wore Black,* Frontiers.

Soundtracks

Due: November (27) **Murray Gold** *Dr Who The 60th Anniversary Specials* 3CD, Silva Screen.

Got any news? Send it to tim.jones@metropolis.co.uk

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The Vinylist

News and views from the world of vinyl

UPCOMING VINYL RELEASES



Go nutty with Madness: as colourful as ever

NOVEMBER (27) **The Blue Aeroplanes** *Tales From The Silver Lounge* LP, silver LP, CD, ArtStar; **The Rolling Stones** *Foreign Tongues, Loose Lips Deluxe* red LP/CD, 2CD, five bonuses, Polydor; **Julian Cope** *Trip Advizer: The Very Best Of, 1999-2018* 3LP, Weird Walks; **The Human League** *Clash* LP, test-pressing LP, Fontana; **Cory Wong** *On A Random Tuesday* 2LP, Diggers Factory; ex-Psychic TV's **Edley Odowd** *Kowai-Yet* pink LP, Arsenic Solaris; **Augustus Pablo** *Valley Of Jehosaphat* 2LP, Nature Sounds; **Corrosion Of Conformity** *Good Man/Baad Man* blue 2LP, Nuclear Blast; **DEVO** *Duty Now For The Future* 180g LP, Mobile Fidelity; **Robert Calvert** *Hype*, **Johnny Thunders** *Dawn Of The Dead*, **New York Dolls** *Would You Ever Let Your Son Room With A Doll?* splatter LPs, **Willie Nelson** *American Rebel* red LP, Cleopatra; **Ken Boothe** *Got To Get Away Showcase* red LP, Burning Sounds; **Popol Vuh** *The Great Ecstasy Of Woodcarver Steiner* LP, Latency; **Screamin' Jay Hawkins** *A Portrait Of A Man And His Woman* LP, Charly; **Nick Heyward** *The Essential* green LP, Demon; **Stiff Little Fingers** *Tinderbox* LP, Taang; **Opeth** *Deliverance* clear LP, Sony; **Roxette** *Pearls Of Passion* 2LP, marble 2LP, Warners; **The Afghan Whigs** *Congregation* coloured 2LP, *Do To The Beast* red 2LP, *In Spades* coloured LP, Sub Pop; **The Ataris** *Anywhere But Here* splatter LP, Kung Fu; **Wyclef Jean** *Clef Notes* LP, Sodomoodlab; **Mandrill** *Is* LP, Vampisoul; **Yellow Magic Orchestra** *BGM* 180g LP, *Naughty Boys/Instrumentals* 180g 2LP, Music On Vinyl; **Will Young** *From Now On* 2LP, CD, four bonuses, Sony; **Johnny Thunders** *Dawn Of The Dead* splatter LP, Cleopatra; King's X's **Dug Pinnick** *Abracadabra* LP, CD, Rat Pak; Wire's **Bruce Gilbert** *London Orbital* LP, The Hotel; **Anthony Phillips** *1984* white LP, Renaissance; **Gregory Isaacs** *Night Nurse* LP, Proper; **Take That** *Dreamers* LP, EMI; **Toby Keith** *Clancy's Tavern* orange LP, Show Dog; **Split Enz** *A Best Of – History Never Repeats* LP, CD, splitenz.nz.

DECEMBER (4) *High School Musical* orange 180g LP, **Sunnery James/Ryan Marciano** *Love, Dance And Feel* gold 180g LP, **Anthony Willis** *Wuthering Heights* pink 180g LP, **Roy Budd** *Diamonds* grey 180g LP, ***Damn Yankees*** 180g LP, **Golden Earring** *Wall Of Dolls* yellow 180g LP, **Within Temptation** *Mother Earth* red-white, orange-white, green-white 180g LPs, CD, Music On Vinyl; ***Throwing Muses*** LP, red LP, CD, 4AD; **Graham Coxon** *Love Travels At Illegal Speeds* 2LP, purple 2LP, CD, *The Spinning Top* 2LP, brown 2LP, CD, *A + E* LP, splatter LP, CD, Transgressive; **Bill Evans** *How My Heart Sings*, **John Coltrane** *Soultrane*, **Sonny Rollins** *Work Time*, **Miles Davis Quintet** *Steamin' With The* 180g LPs, Craft; **Hanabie** *Umami* LP, CD, Epic; **Gorillaz** *Demon Days* green LP, Parlophone; **Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros** *Global A Go-Go* LP, BMG; **The Black Keys** *Brother* coloured 2LP, *Magic Potion* coloured LP, Nonesuch; **Curtis Fuller** *Vol 3*, **Lee Morgan** *The Sixth Sense* 180g LPs, Blue Note; **Caribou** *Start Breaking My Heart*, *The Milk Of Human Kindness*, *Up In Flames* LPs, People Eating Fruit; **Freddie King** *Alive In America* splatter 3LP, **Little Feat** *Alive In America 73* red 3LP, Renaissance; **Dokken** *Greatest Hits* splatter LP, Deadline; **Culture Club** *Colour By Numbers* LP, Republic; **Big Mama Thornton** *In Europe (Mono)*, *With The Muddy Waters Blues Band (Mono)* LPs, Arhoolie; Eurythmics' **Dave Stewart** *The Way It Was Back Then* green LP, Sonic Wax; **Carter Burwell** *Carol* LP, Varese Sarabande; **Donald Byrd/Pepper Adams** *Motor City Scare*, **Dexter Gordon** *Daddy Plays The Horn* LPs, Solid; **Fu Manchu** *California Crossing* splatter LP, At The Dojo; **George Thorogood** *Purple People Eater* LP, Cleopatra; **Joe Hisaishi** *The Boy And The Heron* coloured LP, Deutsche Grammaphon; **Joni Mitchell** *Blue* blue LP, Rhino; The National's **Matt Berninger** *Type It Up* pink LP, Concord; **Midnight Oil** *Head Injuries Live At Selina's* LP, Sony; **Otis Redding** *Blue/Sings Soul* blue LP, Atlantics; **Sonny Rollins** *Work Time* 180g LP, Craft; **Tempest** *The Double-cross* blue LP, Magna Carta; **The Association** *Greatest Hits* silver 180g LP, **The Rascals** *Greatest Hits (Mono)* red, blue 180g LPs, Friday; **Butthole Surfers** *Live At The Leather Fly* coloured LP, Sunset Boulevard; **The Fratellis** *Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied* coloured LP, Cooking Vinyl; **The Killers** *Sam's Town* red LP, Island; **The Ventures** *Greatest Hits* splatter 2LP, Renaissance; **QOTSA** *Alive In The Catacombs* LP, Matador; ***Portishead*** LP, Mercury; **Jerry Garcia Band** *Heads & Tails Vol 2* coloured LP, Round; **Darkthrone** *Total Death* marble LP, Peaceville; **Cliff Richard** *Only Number 1s* LP, picture disc LP, Rhino; **Hoodoo Gurus** *Silk Purse* LP, CD, Big Time; **Uriah Heep** *Salisbury* LP, BMG; **Gregory Porter** *Take Me To The Alley* coloured 180g 2LP, Blue Note; **Cerrone** *Love In C Minor* LP, Because; **The Be Good Tanyas** *Blue Horse* LP, Birthday Cake; **At The Gates** *Guardians Of Grief* LP, Dissonance; **Bobby Womack** *The Preacher In Paris* LP, Elemental; **Jeff Beck** *Rollin' The Blues* LP, GDS; **The Dave Matthews Band** *Live Trax Vol 75* 4LP, ATO; **Anna Domino** *East And West* LP, CD seven unissued, Domino; **King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard** *Entropy* LP, CD, p(doom); **Cabaret Voltaire** *But What Time Is It Really?* pink LP, Memetune; **The Wonder Stuff** *Never Loved Elvis*, *Hup*, *The Eight Legged Groove Machine* LPs/prints, Proper (11) **Atlantic Ocean** *Discography, 1993-2026* blue 180g 2LP, **Deep Forest** *Made In Japan* yellow 180g LP, *Pacifique* blue 180g LP, **Cheap Trick** *One On One* green 180g LP, *Next Position Please* blue 180g LP, **Stevie Ray Vaughan** *Live Alive* orange 180g 2LP, **Sahara Hotnights** *Jennie Bomb*, **The Good Man** *Give It Up* green 180g LPs, **Armin Van Buuren** *Imagine* smoke 180g 2LP, **Andrew Ridgeley** *Son Of Albert Expanded* silver 180g 2LP, seven bonuses, **Mew** *No More Stories Are Told Today* 180g 2LP, Music On Vinyl; **Ryuichi Sakamoto** *1996* 2LP, Milan; **Butthole Surfers** *Humpty Dumpty LSD* 2LP, *Piouhgd* LP, Matador; **Horace Silver** *The Stylings Of Silver*, **Ella Fitzgerald** *Like Someone In Love*, **Sonny Clark** *Leapin' And Lopin'* 180g LPs, Blue Note; **Chico Hamilton** *El Chico*, **Bud Powell** *Bud Powell's Moods* 180g LPs, Verve; Bauhaus' **Peter Murphy** *Laying On The Waves* 9LP/book box, Madfish; **Billy Idol** *Rebel Yell* 180g LP, Capitol; **Anathema** *Eternity* coloured LP, Peaceville; **BT Express** *Do It Til You're Satisfied* red 180g LP, **Leon & Mary Russell** *Wedding Album* silver, gold 180g LPs, **The Jack Wilson Quartet Featuring Roy Ayers** *Ramblin'* red 180g LP, Friday; **Shakira** *Laundry Service* gold 2LP, Legacy; **The Du Droppers** *Talk That Talk*, **Shirley Bassey** *Reach For The Stars*, **Little Richard** *Keep It Rockin'*, **Bill Monroe** *The Father Of Bluegrass 1940-58* LPs, Acrobat; **Geoff Downes** *Linus And Lucy* red LP, **The Flamin' Groovies** *She Said Yeah*, orange LP, **Chrome** *3rd From The Sun* coloured LP, **Cherie Currie** *The Cleopatra Sessions* purple LP, Cleopatra; **CMAT** *Euro-country Live At St Anne's* LP, CMATBaby; **Elkie Brooks** *Greatest Hits Live In London* red LP, Secret; **LA Guns** *Hollywood Raw* purple LP, Deadline; **Sky** *3* pink LP, Renaissance; **Sun Ra & His Intergalactic Infinity Arkestra** *The Night Of The Purple Moon* 2LP, Cosmic Myth; ***The Cars*** 180g 2LP, Mobile Fidelity; **Volker Bertelmann** *Verity* red LP, Lakeshore; **U2** *Under A Blood Red Sky* LP, Jojo; **Van Morrison** *The Best Of* 2LP, Van Morrison; **Peter Daltrey** *Three Windows* LP, Think Like A Key; **Rick Wakeman** *Silent Night* silver, red LPs, Purple Pyramid; **Ryan Adams** *Star Sign* LP, Impressed; **Queen** *A Day At The Races* turquoise, picture disc LPs, CMG; **Warpaint** *Artifact* 2LP, clear 2LP, CD, Rough Trade; **Madonna** *Celebration* 10-track blue, splatter LPs, Rhino; **Panda Bear** *PB Band Live 25 At Power Station* 2LP, CD, Domino; **Magnum** *Evolution*, *The Visitation* gold 2LPs, CDs, Music Theories; **Jorn** *Return Of The Jorniverse* 3LP, 2CD, double-cassette, Black Lodge; **Alan Parsons Project** *Eve – Work In Progress* 180g LP, Cooking Vinyl; **Jimmy Wilson** *Honey Bee Blues*, **Betty Carter** *The Early Modern Sound Of* LPs, Acrobat; **Grateful Dead** *Dick's Picks Vol 4 – Fillmore East, 2/13-14/70* 180g 6LP, Real Gone; **Toto** *Live In Amsterdam* 2LP, earMUSIC; **The Sensational**

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Alex Harvey Band *A Real Victorian Christmas* LP, **Laura Nyro** *Christmas And The Beads Of Sweat* clear LP, Madfish; **Paul Jones** *The Best Of* LP, Creature; **Chappell Roan** *The Rise And Fall Of A Midwest Princess* orange 2LP, Universal; **Hilary Duff** *Holiday Things* LP, Atlantic; **Mick Karn** *Three Part Species* LP, Kscope; **Jade Warrior** *Reflections* pink LP, Renaissance; **Lenny Kaye & Friends** *Riot On Oxford Street* orange LP, Cadiz; **Ray Gelato** *Everybody Loves Ray* LP, Wienerworld; **Shawn Mendes** *Illuminate* turquoise 2LP, Island; **The Doors** *When You're Strange* 180g 2LP, Rhino; **The Boxer Rebellion** *The Second I'm Asleep* brown LP, Absentee (18) **John Mellencamp** *Chestnut Street Incident* coloured 180g LP, Deko; **Cactus** *Auxiliary Studios 1971* red 2LP, **Robert Calvert** *Test-tube Conceived* coloured LP, **Rose Tattoo** *Nice Boys Don't Play Rock'n'Roll* red LP, **The Damned** *Shadowed Tales From Mulhouse* coloured 2LP, **Megadeth** *Unplugged In Boston* splatter LP, Cleopatra; **Marillion** *Araknophobia* purple, yellow 2LP, Kscope; **U2** *Achtung Baby*, *The Joshua Tree* LPs, Island; **Genesis** *A Trick Of The Tail*, *Wind And Wuthering* coloured LPs, Atlantic; **The Hold Steady** *Boys And Girls In America Deluxe* 2LP, 10 bonuses, BMG; **Freddie McGregor** *FM* coloured 180g LP, Soul Jazz; ***Liquid Tension Experiment*** blue 2LP, Magna Carta; **Sonata Arctica** *Live In Latin America* blue 2LP, Reining Phoenix; **WAR** *The World Is A Ghetto* 180g 2LP, Mobile Fidelity (29) **Marianne Faithfull** *Eye Communication* 180g 2LP, Time Traveler.





Left: The Chin Chins' debut, featuring Green Day's Trey Cool. Right: Tony Iommi collaborator Jorn Lande, on 3LP

JANUARY 2027 (8) **Astrud Gilberto** *That Girl From Ipanema* blue 180g LP, **Earl Hooker** *Rockin' With The Kid* blue, red 180g LPs, **John Lee Hooker** *I Geel Good* red 180g LP, **Sixpence None The Richer** *The Beautiful Mess* red 180g LP, Friday; ***Shed Seven*** yellow LP, Cooking Vinyl; **Richard Bona** *Reverence* 180g LP, ***The Scene*** coloured 180g LP, **Hans Zimmer** *Chief Of War: Season 1* cream 180g 2LP, ***Britny Fox*** 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; **Daniel Pemberton** *Masters Of The Universe* orange 2LP, Lakeshore; **Queensryche** *Frequency Uknown Deluxe* coloured 2LP, nine bonuses, **UFO** *Doctor Doctor*, **Air Supply** *The Long And Winding Road* LPs, **Stray Cats** *Unplugged Strut*, **Ted Nugent** *Rag Doll*, **Anti-Nowhere League** *Sympathy For The Devil* red LPs, Cleopatra; **Bjork** *Fossora* coloured 2LP, OLI; **Linda Ronstadt** *Canciones De Mi Padre* 180g LP, Mobile Fidelity (15) **Marilyn Manson** *Antichrist Superstar* grey 2LP, red 2LP, cassette, Waxwork; ***Cluster & Eno*** 180g LP, CD, Bureau B; **Hall & Oates** *Abandoned Luncheonette* coloured 180g LP, Friday; **Kacey Musgraves** *Middle Of Nowhere Vol 2* LP, Lost Highway; **Sons Of Cream** *Half And Half* coloured LP, CD, cassette, Marshall; ***Rose Tattoo***, *Assault And Battery*, *Southern Stars*, *Scarred For Life*, ***Spirit***, *The Family That Played Together*, *Twelve Dreams Of Dr Sardonicus* 180g LPs, **The Byrds** *Ballad Of Easy Rider* clear 180g LP, **Armin Van Buuren** *Blue Fear* 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; **Donkey** *John Peel Sessions* LP, Wormer Bros; **Barry Manilow** *What A Time* green 2LP, Stiletto; **Electric Wizard** *Witchcult Today* 180g 2LP, Rise Above; **Xiu Xiu** *Collective* grey LP, Cleopatra; **The Chin Chins** *Hellcat* LP, 1-2-3-4 GO! (22) **Ginuwine** *The Bachelor* 2LP, Legacy; **Lee Konitz** *Motion*, **Benny Carter** *Further Definitions* 180g LPs, Verve; **CHVRCHES** *All The King's Men* LP, red, cream, coloured LPs, CD, cassette, Future; **Drowning Pool** *Full Circle* orange 2LP, Earache; **The Flaming Lips** *The Teardrop Throbs* LP, blue LP, CD, Third Man; **Jennifer Lopez** *Love?* LP, *Deluxe* blue 2LP with six bonuses, Universal; **Harold Budd** *Candylion* 2LP, Darla; **John Fogerty** *Centerfold* LP, Concord; **Guided By Voices** *Speculation And Gossip* LP, CD, GBV; **The Derek Trucks Band** *Already Free* red 180g 2LP, **The John Schroeder Orchestra** *The Dolly Catcher* pink 180g LP, Music On Vinyl (29) **Death For Above 1979** *Private Lives* coloured LP, Rough Trade; **Hays & Ryan Holladay** *Resident Evil* red 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; **Chic** *C'est* blue 180g LP, Friday; **Clap Your Hands Say Yeah** *Burned* blue LP, CD, CYHSY; **Hawklords** *25 Years On* LP, Atomhenge; **Rosalie Cunningham** *To Shoot Another Day* LP, Esoteric Antenna; **Yes** *Keys To Ascension* 2LP, Spirit Of Unicorn; **The Cranberries** *Wake Up And Smell The Coffee* LP, blue, liquid-filled LPs, CD, *Expanded* 3LP, 2CD, 23 bonuses, Universal; **Kreidler** *Musik Fur Metropolis* LP, CD, Bureau B; **Madness** *One Step Beyond...* 180g LP, violet 180g LP, CD, *Absolutely* 180g LP, blue 180g LP, *7* 180g LP, silver 180g LP, CD, *The Rise & Fall* 180g LP, red 180g LP, CD, *Keep Moving* 180g LP, white 180g LP, CD, West Village Music Management; **Archie Shepp** *Sea Of Faces* splatter LP, EVOMG; **Bob Welch** *Live In Seattle 1978* blue 2LP, Renaissance; **Buckcherry** *Confessions* LP, Earache; **Michael McDonald** *If That's What It Takes* coloured 180g LP, Friday; **Rainbow** *Finyl Vinyl* 2LP, Deko; **Procol Harum** *Grand Hotel* LP, Esoteric; **Daemon** *Seven Deadly Sins* L, Dissonance; **Skids** *Joy* red LP, *Days In Europa Remix* green LP, Demon.



Be advized: triple trip with Julian Cope in the offing

FEBRUARY (5) ex-Delain's Charlotte Wessels' **The Obsession** *Mute Swan Empire* 2LP, red, white 2LPs, CD/book, Napalm; **Beth Hart** *Live At Paradiso* coloured 2LP, Friday (12) **The Brand New Heavies** *Get Used To It* 2LP, earMUSIC; **Pulled Apart By Horses** *Dopamine Hits* LP, red, purple LPs, CD, Damage Ltd; **Gillian Welch & David Rawlings** *Boots No 3: The Hickory Show* 2LP, CD, Acony; **Damn Yankees** *Don't Tread* red, blue LPs, Friday; **Sleeper** *End Of The World* LP, CD, Republic Of Music; **Bastille** *Wild World Expanded* 180g 2LP, four bonuses, Virgin; **The Damned** *Music For Pleasure* splatter LP, Rough Trade (19) **Everything But The Girl** *Blue Reservoir* LP, turquoise, turquoise marble LPs, CD, Buzzin' Fly; **The Game** *Documentary III* 2LP, Numinati (26) Josh Ritter's **Shane Leonard** *Make The Birds Fly* LP, CD, Sleepy Cat; Doves' **Jez Williams** *Life Of Me And You* white, red LPs, CD, Earth To Echo; **Winterfylleth** *Rising Of The Winter Full Moon* orange LP, two unissued, Resonance; **David Sylvian** *The Distance Between The Killer And The Killing* LP, Nanoq.

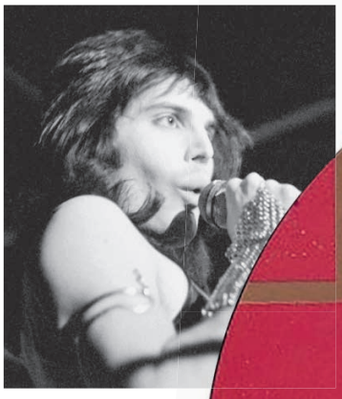
MARCH (5) **Belle & Sebastian** *If You're Feeling Sinister/Lisa Helps The Blind* 2LP/book, 13 unissued, Matador; **Marillion** *Less Is More* 2LP, earMUSIC; **Earl Slick** *Bounce House* LP, Slick; **Marillion** *Less Is More* 2LP, earMUSIC; **The Dead South** *Silence, Please* LP, Six Shooter (12) **Tindersticks** *Dog Roses* LP, pink LP, CD, City Slang; **Everything Everything** *Poison Pop* red, blue, ice eco-LPs, CD, cassette, BMG (19) **Orbital** *Other* LP, CD, London; **Bullet For My Valentine** *Social Apocalypse* LP, Spinefarm; **Florence + The Machine** *Everybody Scream Tour Live* 3LP, clear, red 3LPs, store. florenceandthemachine.net.

APRIL (2) **Glasvegas** *Airy Fairy* LP, grey, orange, blue LPs, CD, Modern Sky; **The Mission** *Songs For Kith And Kin* LP, CD, Cooking Vinyl (16) **Marillion** *.Com* 2LP, earMUSIC.

RC investigates

SKIPPIN' A BEAT

Collecting folklore regales tales of ultra-rare records found free in skips. But beware getting collared for "theft by finding," **Tim Jones** cautions



Freddie Mercury, aka Larry Lurex



Larry Lurex 7", once free, now £350



Lending Larry a hand, Roger Taylor and Brian May (right)

Some 20 years ago, Alan Robinson wrote in *RC* (October 2006, issue 328) about a legendary haul made from a skip near a London record studio. Reportedly, "scores of copies" of a glam rock single featuring Queen's **Freddie Mercury**, **Brian May** and **Roger Taylor**, cut under a nom-de-plume, **Larry Lurex**, were acquired after being discarded by Trident Studios. Apocryphal whispers that some of the I Can Hear Magic/Goin' Back 45 were used as frisbees by workmen at the time (summer 1973) can't be confirmed but suffice to say that those copies that eventually made their way into the hands of collectors are now rated at £350 (*RCRRPG*, 2028, and more in demo form). Counterfeit copies without a solid centre muddied the waters somewhat and reduced asking prices for a time, but it's still a bona fide Queen must-have collectable. However, if you're hoping to make a similar find yourself, perhaps by acquiring some discarded vinyl, tapes or other memorabilia from a skip outside a private house, a studio, or even a record shop or distribution warehouse that's closing down or has suffered flood damage, you'll need to follow certain rules, in order to avoid the possibility of getting pinched!

UK law (the 1968 Theft Act of England & Wales) states that skip-finds of anything taken without permission from the discarded item's owner or the skip-provider commissioned to dispose of it are regarded as theft. As A&R Skips of Wigan point out, "A lot of people don't mind if things are taken from their domestic skip, but that doesn't make it right. We've been offering skip hire for many years and there are some rules on skip diving. Even if you spot a piece of treasure that's another man's trash, you shouldn't take it for yourself. The Theft Act of 1968 states that removing any items from someone's property without their consent is illegal. If someone has a skip on their property, driveway, front garden, etc., and you cross over the property line to take something from that skip, you could be prosecuted. Putting something in a skip doesn't necessarily mean someone wants to dispose of it permanently. They could simply

"Removing any items without consent is illegal"

be putting it there until more space becomes available. If the skip is outside a property and has a skip permit, the items within it can still be considered the property of the home owner/business, given that the skip is still in use. They may be considered the property of the skip hire service provider, given that they're the ones with permission to remove said items. In either scenario, removing items from such a skip without permission from the relevant party constitutes theft. The only instance where this may be acceptable is if the owner/renter of the skip advertises that items within the skip are "free to take," which is rare.

So, always seek the permission of the property owner or the skip provider before taking anything from a skip. And remember to be careful when taking items out, as skips can contain sharp items and even hazardous materials.

With all that said, there have been some standout items salvaged from skips (known as dumpsters in the US). One 'dumpster diver' reportedly unearthed a stash of thousands of Mint/sealed albums, including many prog and psych rarities, and LPs by the likes of **T.Rex**, **Thin Lizzy**, **Budgie**, **Hawkwind**, **The Damned**, **PiL** and **Nick Drake** (woth £650 alone) The co-owner of a record shop who acquired the trove from the lucky finder revealed online in May 2024 a selection of sleeves that were posted at reddit.com. Another user of that website in 2021 reported finding 928 library music albums in a dumpster, including many on the Music De Wolfe, Rouge, Omnimusic, Hudson Music, Southern Library Of Recorded Music, Robert Hall Productions, Bruton Music, KPM and Sylvester Music Company labels. Finally, in August 2009, the *Daily Star* reported Dermot O'Regan's skip-find in Kilburn, London, which included a broken guitar, records and an album containing 27 unpublished photos of **Amy Winehouse**'s May 2007 wedding. The newspaper reported that the photos were returned to the artiste, the discovery having been made not long after her divorce. So, you never know what you might find – just remember to ask before diving in!

See arskips.co.uk, reddit.com/r/RetroLibraryMusic/comments/lji77y/dumpster_library_vinyl_motherlode_update/, reddit.com/r/vinyl/comments/1d0q7cj/a_smattering_of_dumpster_dive_records/.

Have you made any skip finds? If so, let us know via rc.editorial@metropolis.co.uk.

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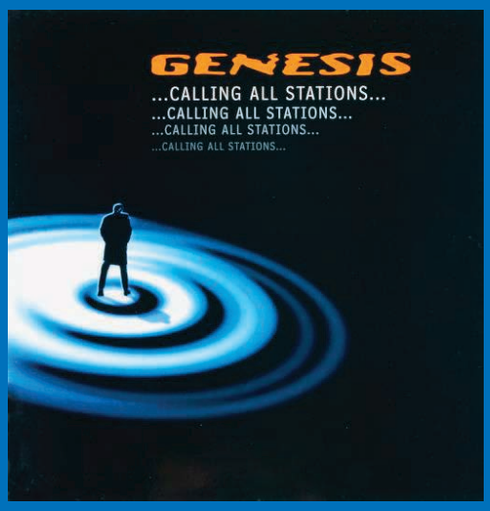

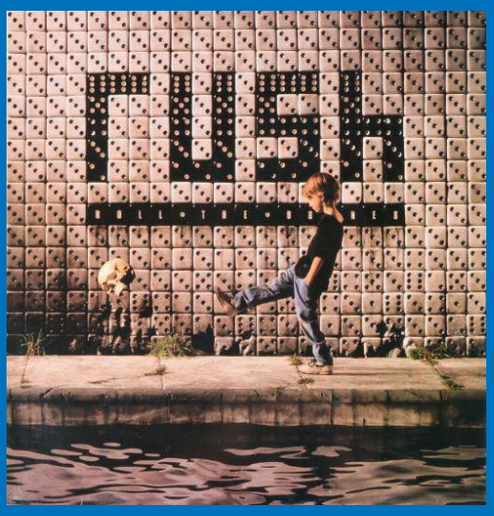

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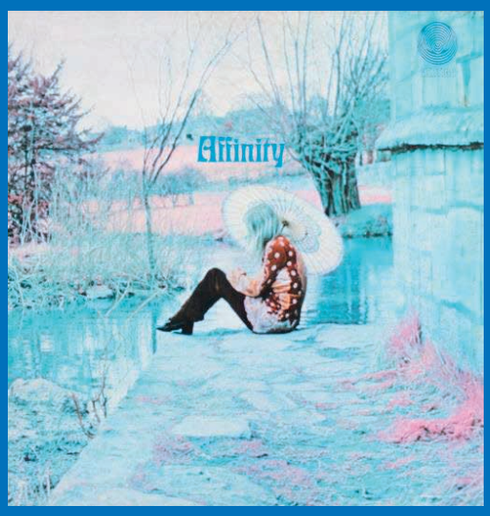

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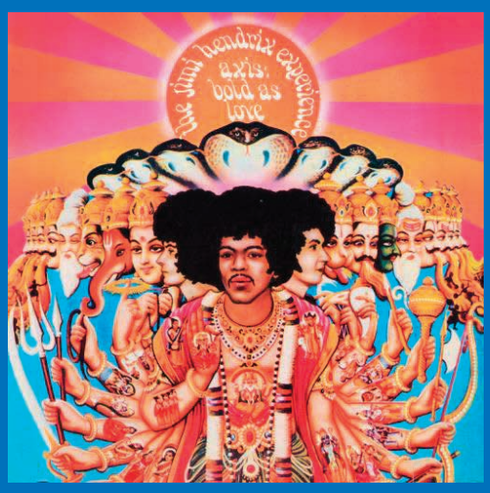

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The Collector

This month: **Wesley Stace**



Stace with his collection: "The filing system has worked at some point"

Born in Hastings in 1965, Wesley Stace began his recording career in 1989 on Demon Records, under the name John Wesley Harding. In 2005, he published his first novel, the international bestseller *Misfortune*, which appeared under his own name, since when he has tended to make records as Wesley Stace. He has recorded albums with the Jayhawks, the Decemberists and The Minus Five, and sung duets with Bruce Springsteen, Lou Reed and Rosanne Cash among others. His variety show, *Cabinet Of Wonders*, has run for 17 years in New York City.

Stace's earlier recordings tended towards strummy folk-rock, but more recently, with Late Style in 2021 and this year's One Last Heist, they've taken a singular, perhaps surprising, new direction. While the genre remains undeniably "singer-songwriter", lyrics always to the fore, the music has become more expansive, lush, cinematic and even jazzy. His record collection, and its focus on two labels in particular, helps explain this trend.

What do you collect, and why?

I have collected many different types of records over the years: folk music, prog (particularly Italian and Canterbury), Bob Dylan, or whatever I particularly liked at the time. If you want to hear *Space Shanty* by Khan, for example, the way to hear it is off the vinyl, as you look at the awesome gatefold: it may not be the cheapest way, but it's the best. For the last few years, my major collection has been inspired by the record producer Creed Taylor and his labels, CTI and Kudu. Once I got into them, I realised that they were all part of the story of a label with a real identity, an entire body of work of which I didn't dare miss one single release. They are pristinely recorded by Rudy Van Gelder at his legendary studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Even the pressings are fantastic. Taylor never allowed too much music on each side so they could literally sound as beautiful as possible: 35 minutes total was the sweet spot. And whoever's name is actually on the front cover – George Benson, Freddie Hubbard, Hubert Laws – the same crew (Ron Carter, Hank Crawford, Billy Cobham, Airto, and many others) play behind them: it'll be their turn at the front next time. The arrangements are also sensational; Don Sebesky (a genius) and then Bob James



(another genius). And there were real hits: Deodato in 1973 with Also Sprach Zarathustra, not to mention the later smashes for – among others – Esther Philips (What A Difference A Day Makes) and Grover Washington Jr [Mister Magic] etc on Kudu, CTI's sister label, which skewed towards pop.

How big is your collection?
I'm not really sure! A lot, but I think it's only worrying when you can't walk across the floor or down the stairs for them. I'm also a great trader of records: I move things on that don't convince me and get something else – trade is great.

What do you think it is worth?
I honestly have no idea. I don't really even know how much the individual records are worth. I have only very rarely paid over $50 for a record. One of the great things about these CTI and Kudu records is how great they are compared to how relatively easily they are to find. That's a very happy combo. Early on in this quest, I happened to hit a couple of stores who had a lot of the right stuff cheap, and because they're such well-made and well-manufactured records, printed on such heavy stock, they rarely look battered.

How and where do you store it?
Most of it is in my office with me in some very nice bespoke shelves; the rest of it is in the basement, housed in IKEA. I tend to keep the classical, easy listening, classic rock and odd stuff down there. I play those records when we play pool; the other day I noticed I had three Wombles LPs (which seems about right) filed next to some yoga TV show music from the 70s. I looked closer to see that the music was by Mike Batt. So, the filing system has worked at some point. Next to them, mind you, was an LP of Wombles covers by the Mike Sammes Singers. So, there is definitely sickness involved.

"IT'S ONLY WORRYING WHEN YOU CAN'T WALK DOWN THE STAIRS"

What's the rarest/most unusual/most valuable item you have?
Well, the most valuable are probably dull things like Bob Dylan's *The Cutting Edge 1965–1966* box or maybe the George Harrison *All Things Must Pass* Uber Deluxe Box Set (with gnomes). Far more interesting are the rarities among the Brazilian records: Gal Costa's exquisite second record, *Gal*, and maybe the beautiful *Elis & Tom* record that features Aguas De Marco. I also have a bunch of very rare Italian prog rock records – I love the Numero Uno label – everything from PFM, Le Orme, Banco etc. The rarest CTI/kudu records aren't that rare but include the sensational *Mama Wailer* by Lonnie Smith (a huge discovery) and *Power Of Soul* by Idris Muhammad, one of my two favourite records on the entire label, tied with *Concierto* by Jim Hall, of which the title track [Concierto De Aranjuez] feels to me like the most beautiful piece of music ever recorded – it's a masterpiece. The 6000 series is where it's at, and this is the peak.

What elusive gem are you still looking for?
I was looking for the not-super-rare self-titled record by Flow to complete the series of the less interesting CTI 1000 series (which comprises only five records) – of which the rarest is Kathy's McCord's self-titled debut – but I just found it in the wild! And now I'm hoovering up the Groove Merchant and Mainstream catalogues, so we'll see what's



Dorothy Ashby – *Afro-Harping*
(Cadet LPS 809, LP, US, 1968)
Estimated market value: **£200**



The Art Farmer Quartet – *Sing Me Softly Of The Blues* (Atlantic ATL 540, LP, UK, 1965)
Estimated market value: **£10**



Jim Hall – *Concierto*
(CTI 6060, LP, UK, 1975)
Estimated market value: **£25**



Elis & Tom – *Elis & Tom*
(Philips 6349 112, LP, Brazil, 1974)
Estimated market value: **£80**



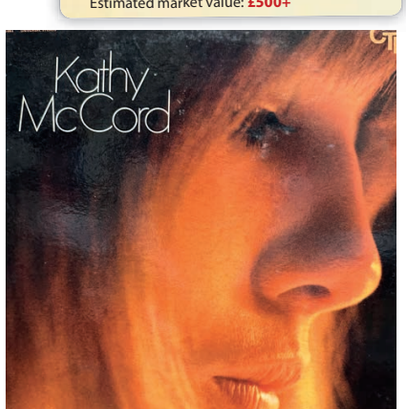
Gal Costa – *Gal*
(Philips 765 098 L, LP, Brazil, 1969)
Estimated market value: **£150**



Johnny Hammond – *Wild Horses Rock Steady*
(Kudu KU 04, LP, US, 1972)
Estimated market value: **£12**



Judas Priest – *British Steel*
(CBS S CBS 84160 LP, UK, 1980, signed copy)
Estimated market value: **£500+**



Kathy McCord – *Kathy McCord*
(CTI 1001, LP, US, 1970)
Estimated market value: **£100**

hard to find there. The "wants" list on my phone currently includes Syreeta's first album, Curtis Mayfield's *Short Eyes*, a couple of O' Donel Levy records and an improved copy of *In A Temple Garden* by Yusuf Lateef. But this is mostly a reminder to look for them.

What's given you the biggest thrill?
Some strange things, sometimes because there's a signature involved. I found a copy of *Music For Pleasure* by The Damned on a stall in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh. It wasn't expensive but I probably wouldn't have bought it until I saw it was signed by Rat Scabies including his personal comments about each of his band "mates" scribbled on the back: "SACKED" written on Lu Edmonds' forehead... Likewise, I recently found a stupendous couple of boxes of reasonably priced jazz records at a record fair, sold by an older collector couple, all of which had been signed to them by the artists in pre-Sharpie ballpoint pen: I couldn't resist Art Farmer's *Sing Me Softly Of The Blues* (a great record, a beautiful cover and featuring Carla Bley compositions long before her first record); Anita O'Day's *All The Sad Young Men* (arranged by Gary McFarland, one of his earliest successes) and a signed Jimmy McGriff record, though nothing can really beat his *Electric Funk*: the right top corner of the copy I bought was water-damaged (which made it affordable) so I converted it into a cut-out.

"CARLA BLEY INTRODUCED ME TO THE WORLD OF JAZZ"

There was a brief moment when I couldn't move without finding a cheap copy (one was free in a box on the street) of the very rare *Afro-Harping* by Dorothy Ashby, a killer record. But my best ever street find was a signed copy of *British Steel* by Judas Priest outside a record store. The record was trashed and the owner probably hadn't noticed the cover was signed. I went in and told him, because I'm not a bad man, but he kindly shrugged and said, "It's yours." I put a new picture disc reissue inside the signed sleeve.

How do you track stuff down?
I wait until I see them in a record store. Occasionally, if I'm missing something that I feel like I'll just never see, I might go to Discogs – or in the old days, eBay – but I tend not to do that anymore. I've been lucky to have some great record-shopping buddies over the years, whose tastes complement mine, either because we want the same records or we don't! And that's a king of a heavenly afternoon for me, driving round between record stores with a friend, chatting about records.

What's your favourite record shop?
One of my favourite places is Pressing Matters in Hastings. I am guaranteed to spend money there, and it's where I've discovered, and been suggested, many great records. The purchase of *Fly Dude* by Jimmy McGriff sent me off on a Groove Merchant expedition. The formative record shop for me was Canterbury Rock in Canterbury, still there and still run by Jim. It's where I got my first Dylan bootlegs. Shhhh!

How often do you listen to your collection?
My major music listening time is every day from about 5pm to 7pm when I make dinner for the family. Also, when I'm sitting in the kitchen playing Yahtzee. I have an Andover turntable there with a space underneath to hold a bunch of records, and that's where the new/favourite stuff goes.

Is there a visual side to collecting for you?
There absolutely is, but not coloured vinyl or anything like that. In fact, it's central to how I got into CTI. I was playing a show at Moe's Alley in Santa Cruz, California, and as I played, I noticed there were some beautiful album covers dotted around the walls. It turned out to be a Pete Turner exhibition – he was the genius who photographed almost every album cover for CTI. (Generally, the artists had no idea what the cover was going to be, nor did the photo have any relevance to the music.) There, for example, I saw the insanely beautiful Soul Flutes [*Trust In Me*] album cover, and the cigarette butt extravaganza of Wes Montgomery's *A Day In The Life*, the first of the 1000 series (although *Down Here On The Ground* has the greater photo, the reflection being in the hood of a shiny blue car), and, of course, the two covers of the great Jobim album *Wave* – which was printed twice, once right (red/purple) and once wrong (green). Of course, one must have both: it's beautiful either way. When the light went on, I realised I already owned a couple of the records and when I realised it was all part of a visual series, I felt very seduced by the whole concept.

How will you dispose of your collection?
Actually, my daughter and I share music tastes (The Damned, for example) and my son likes Chet Baker (because of a *Ted Lasso* episode) and is getting into jazz, so maybe they can work out what to do with it!

What's your all-time favourite record, regardless of value or rarity?
My standard answer to this is *Rock Bottom* by Robert Wyatt: it's a perfect record. It was also my gateway to more experimental and progressive musics, and ultimately also introduced me to Carla Bley (through a later Wyatt collaboration), and therefore the entire world of jazz, since she was my gateway drug. But right now, it's *Wild Horses Rock Steady* by Johnny Hammond. I am obsessed by this record, every single song; it's the record I always buy whenever I see it, just to give it away…

One Last Heist ***is on Pravda. Stace occasionally sings with The Smithereens. He lives in Philadelphia, home of the greatest jazz Hammond organ players.***

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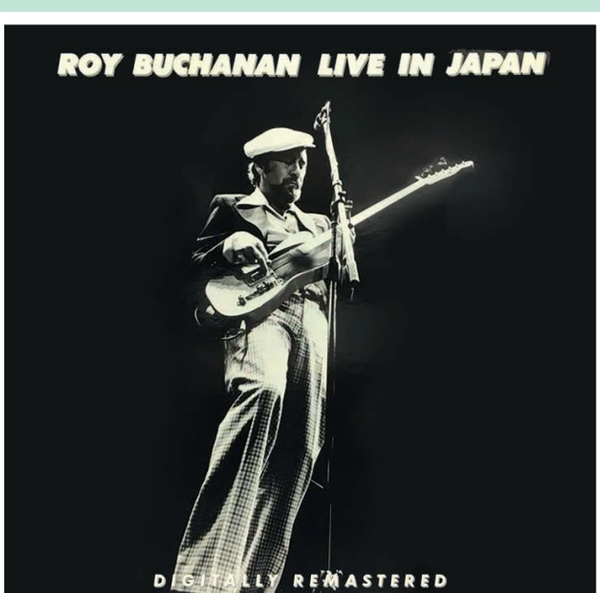

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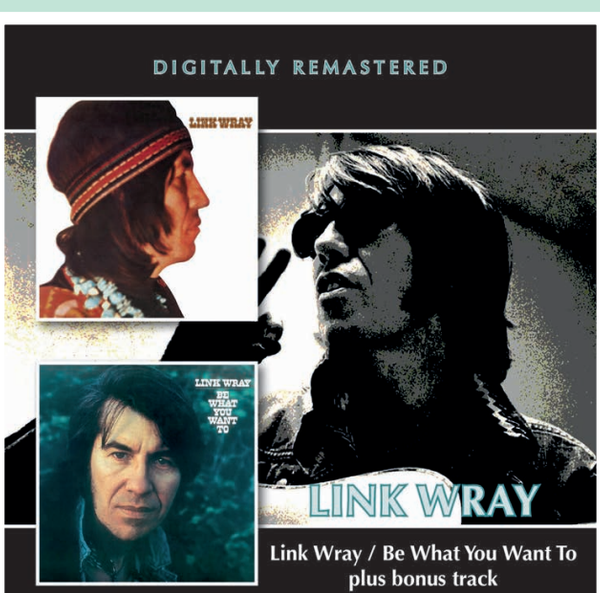

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VALUE Added Facts

Ian Shirley, esteemed alumnus of the *Rare Record Price Guide*, answers your questions



Star turners: Ike & Tina at Wembley TV studios for *Ready Steady Go!*, London, September 1966







PHIL GOOD FACTOR

I have a single by Ike & Tina Turner. It's their classic hot single River Deep – Mountain High, released on the Phillies label in America. I also have the UK version, released on London in 1966. I know that the UK 7" is, according to the *RRPG*, worth in the region of £8, but it would be good to get a price for the American bookend in this set.

Clive Brown via email

In early 1966 it was announced that Ike & Tina Turner (and the Ikettes) had signed to Phil Spector's Phillies label. Spector stated: "It's my feeling that the full versatility of Ike & Tina Turner is still to be adequately realised. As recording artists, they afford an excellent opportunity to present new and fresh ideas." Ike & Tina Turner had been recording as a duo since 1960, with most of their material issued on the Sue label, including their most recent single, the aptly-named Can't Chance A Break Up/Stagger Lee And Billy (139, US, £60), in December 1965.

By the time of his announcement, Spector had already recorded their first Phillies single. The A-side was a song he had written with Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich, River Deep – Mountain High. The B-side was the Spector composition I'll Keep You Happy. Spector also paid to advertise the signing and the title of the single on the front page of Billboard*'s 14 May issue complete with a colour photo of Ike & Tina Turner.*

By then River Deep – Mountain High/I'll Keep You Happy (Phillies 131, US) had already been rush-released and reviews suggested it would be a big US hit. Billboard *remarked: "Exciting dance beat production backs a wailin' Tina vocal on a solid rock tune." Another publication stated: "Ike & Tina Turner's first for Phillies is a powerful driving shouter featuring Tina. Loads of appeal for both Top 40 and R&B markets." And a third title said: "This will be known as the classic Phil Spector record. Everything goes on while Tina screams her love lyric. Ike Turner and the missus have their biggest ever."*

"REVIEWS SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE A BIG HIT"

Released in April 1966, Phillies 131 sold strongly among R&B fans but only peaked at No 88 on the Billboard *Hot 100. Spector was not happy as he had thrown everything and the kitchen sink into the production, expecting it to be a massive hit in America. It was a different story in the UK where it hit No 3. It was not until October 1966 that Phillies released a follow-up Stateside. Ironically, this lag allowed both the Tangerine and Sue labels to release a single each of Ike & Tina material they had in the can before Phillies released Two To Tango/A Man Is A Man Is A Man (134, US, £15) which was not produced by Spector. "Producer Bob Crewe has come up with another wild idea in this hot revival of the Pearl Bailey hit. The electrifying duo rocks it from beginning to end. Should spiral up the Hot 100," stated* Billboard*.*

The success of River Deep – Mountain High in the UK meant that Ike & Tina Turner focused their attention there. Between September and October 1966 they toured the UK as the top support act for The Rolling Stones. London had quickly released an album, River Deep – Mountain High*, in the UK (HAU 8298/SHU 8298, mono/stereo, £40/£30). It comprised, of course, Phillies recordings made under Spector's supervision and there was a photo on the rear of the sleeve showing him sandwiched between Ike and Tina in the control room of the recording studio. The album would not be released in America until 1969 when it was put out on A&M (SP 4178, £40). Adverts stated that it was "the first US release of England's classic bestseller". A&M also reissued River Deep – Mountain High/I'll Keep You Happy (1118, US, £5).*

By that time, the Phillies label had long been wound down with the last single, aptly by Ike & Tina Turner, coming out in 1967. This was A Love Like Yours (Don't Come Knocking Every Day)/I Idolize You (136, £50). The A-side had already been released in the UK, with Hold On Baby on the flip (London HLU 10083, £15), where it went Top 20 in 1966 helped, no doubt, by the couple's tour with the Stones and their ability to do UK personal appearances and interviews with the UK music press.

As for value, a Mint original copy of Phillies 131 is worth £12.



Friends electric: Giorgio Moroder's 1975 synths-and-vocoder album, *Einzelgänger*; (from top right down) the back cover; label; title track issued as a single in Germany







MORODER MYSTERY

I have an excellent LP with the artist and title of Einzelgänger. It was released in 1975 in America on the Oasis label. The catalogue number is OCLP 5001. The labels state that all of the songs were written by Giorgio Moroder. I know he is a big name due to the work that he did with artists like Donna Summer and Sparks but I can find out hardly anything about this LP. I would say that the condition of my original copy is Excellent – both the sleeve and the vinyl. Any information would be gratefully received.

Lionel Ferris via email

You have an interesting LP here. Back in 1975, Giorgio Moroder was already an established producer and songwriter in Germany working in tandem with his partner Pete Belotte. Moroder's biggest success, to date, had come in 1972 when Chicory Tip covered his song, Son Of My Father, which became a worldwide hit. Though born in Italy, Moroder had established himself in Munich where he built a studio and, with a dedicated team of musicians, began writing and producing (with Belotte) a number of artists including Donna Summer and the metal band Schloss.

The key track they came up with was the original version of Donna Summer's Love To Love You Baby which Moroder got to Neil Bogart who ran Casablanca Records in America. Bogart not only wanted a longer version and an album but did a deal with Moroder to release some of his other current productions in America as well. Thus in August 1975 Cash Box *reported: "Casablanca Records have formed a partnership with Giorgio Moroder's new Munich-based Oasis Records whereby Casablanca will manufacture and distribute all Oasis product throughout the United States, Canada and Japan. Albums by three Oasis artists are due to be released here within the next month – Weltzschmertz by Schloss, a German hard rock power trio, a debut LP by songstress Donna Summer and Einzelgänger, electronic music conducted and produced by Moroder himself."*

Summer's Love To Love You Baby single became a huge hit in America (and worldwide) in late 1975, as did the LP (her second), Love To Love You Baby *(OCLP 5003, US, £20). Indeed, at the end of the year Casablanca even took out full-page adverts in* Cash Box, Billboard *and* Record World *to announce that Summer had topped the polls in* Record World*'s Best New Female Artist and Best R&B Album categories. She had also come third in the Top Female Vocalist R&B category.*

As for Einzelgänger *(which translates as "lone wolf"), the entire LP was written, recorded and produced by Moroder using synthesisers and an early vocoder. Casablanca sent the title track to radio DJs as a double-sided promo 7" (OC 403, US, £10) to help sales of the album. Its sonar-sharp electronic sheen was ahead of the curve but the LP did not sell well given that it was by an unknown artist and made no reference to Moroder's previous solo works as Giorgio. Saying that, radio tip sheet the* Walrus *reported that the LP did receive moderate play on stations such as KHSE-FM in St Louis. Indeed, the station even reported heavy play of the Schloss LP* Weltzschmertz *(OCLP 5002, US, £12) which had been released at the same time.*

Besides America, the only other country in which Einzelgänger *was released was Germany where, in addition, the single Einzelgänger/Liebes-Arie (16437 AT, £15) was issued. A single also appeared in France but with a different album track – Good Old Germany – on the flip (Atlantic 10873, 1976, £15). In any event, with Summer detonating hard, Moroder and Belotte and their "Munich Machine" focused their attention on her, to prepare what became the* Four Seasons Of Love *LP (NBLP 7038, US, 1976, £20). So Eizengänger was quickly forgotten by Moroder. The same applied to Casablanca in America who, in 1976, threw all their radio and music press promotion efforts at Donna Summer, George Clinton's Parliament and new emerging stars, KISS.*

Moroder's career went interstellar after the electronic perfection of Summer's I Feel Love, taken from Four Seasons Of Love*, and he became one of the most sought-after producers in the music business, scoring international hits as well as moving successfully into film soundtrack work. Even today, Moroder is still making music and playing out as a DJ. He never looks back and whenever he has briefly referred to the Einzelgänger LP has described it as experimental.*

In fact, it is a fantastic electronic album which, due to its sonic clarity and pulsating electronic sheen, has stood the test of time. Despite this, it has never been officially reissued. Until now, that is… in September, Repertoire Records finally released a fully-remastered version on CD (REP 1536). They plan to follow up with a vinyl version, just in time for Christmas.

As for your original copy, even in Excellent condition it is worth £30.

Photo: (Ike & Tina) Getty



Side-piece: Staines' Jean Hayles with her Statesides, mid-60s

SOUL SEARCHING

I have a single by a band called Jean And The Statesides. It is Putty In Your Hands with One Fine Day on the B-side. It was released on the Columbia label with the catalogue no of DB 7287. I have looked it up on Discogs and see that there are around 490 people looking to buy a copy! Sadly, it looks like a copy has never sold on the site so I would like a valuation as well as some information about the band. There is very little information on Discogs about them.

Brian Hamilton via email

Jean Hayles first sang at a talent contest at Staines town hall when she was 15 years old. She was then asked to join a band called The Counterbeats, who played mostly covers on the West London circuit. "I sang with them on and off for three years," she stated in a Columbia press release in 1964, "and at some point I turned professional. But it only lasted three months or so and since nothing seemed to be happening I went back to an ordinary job again." At that time she used the stage name of Lyn Tracey.

She was working as a receptionist when she began working with an established group called The Statesmen, who then changed their name to The Statesides, possibly as a nod to the UK label releasing a lot of the American R&B and soul that they covered in their set. "We don't play a lot of stuff from the hit parade," she said. "We like to dig out good but lesser known songs from American LPs." Hayles dropped her stage name and the band began playing regularly on the West London circuit as Jean And The Statesides.

Looking to get a contract, the band recorded a self-financed LP which was released in 1963 (Studio Republic no cat no, £50). Entitled Five Plus One*, it showcased 12 cover versions ranging from Boots Randolph's Yakety Sax to Zip-A-De-Do-Da. It was engineered by John Bales in September at his Studio Republic setup in Pinner, Middlesex. It seems that the studio was well-known in the area for custom-made LPs – Studio Republic recorded and released a number of records by choirs, jazz bands and some working groups. The album looked totally professional with a colour front cover, photos of the band (one showed them listening to the playback of one of the tracks with Bales) as well as liner notes. The "five" were Jeff Sturgeon (lead guitar), Bill Stamp, (saxophone), Dave Hovington (rhythm guitar), Mick Bloomfield (bass/vocals) and Ian Walker (drums).*

How many LPs were pressed is a detail lost in the mists of time, but it could have been fewer than 100. The key thing is that their manager, Peter Lindsay, was quick to send a copy to Norrie Paramor at Columbia Records, which led to a recording contract.

Their first single, Putty In Your Hands/One Fine Day (DB 7287), was released in May 1964. The A-side was a cover version of a Shirelles song that had appeared as the last track on their third LP, Baby It's You*, released in the UK on Stateside in 1962 (SL 10006, £100). The B-side was a Goffin/King song originally recorded by The Chiffons who took it into the American charts in May/June 1963. In the UK it was released on Stateside in July (SS 202, £12) and got into the Top 30.*

At this time Jean And The Statesides were still playing after work and at weekends and when asked about going professional in the press release for the single, Hayles stated: "It depends on how the record goes. I would like to, but at the same time I wouldn't, if you know what I mean. I was upset before when nothing happened – and I would like to be really sure before trying again."

Sadly, Putty In Your Hands/One Fine Day was not a hit though the band kept gigging (at some point a second saxophone player, Dave Brogden, joined the line-up) and released a second single at the end of the year, You Won't Forget Me/Cold Cold Winter (DB 7439, £40). Their final single, on which they tackled the Curtis Mayfield track Mama Didn't Lie and Ben Raleigh and Mark Barkan's Just Let Me Cry (DB 7651, £80), was released in July 1965. Hayles left the group in May/June 1966. Though the band kept on gigging as The Statesides, they did no further recording. Nor, as far as I can tell, did Hayles.



As for the value of your single, the good news is that a Mint copy is worth in the region of £150-£200; it has never been reissued and remains in demand as a fine example of blue-eyed soul. Some websites suggest that guitarist Jimmy Page and pianist Nicky Hopkins appear on the record as session sidemen.

Finally, none of the Jean And The Statesides material has been reissued on vinyl and one imagines that there are still enough people interested in their soulful output for it all to be complied on a CD or even squeezed onto an LP.

For price updates and information on general collecting issues and trends follow Ian's successor, Daryl Easlea, now **@rrpgeditor**

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Diggin' For GOLD

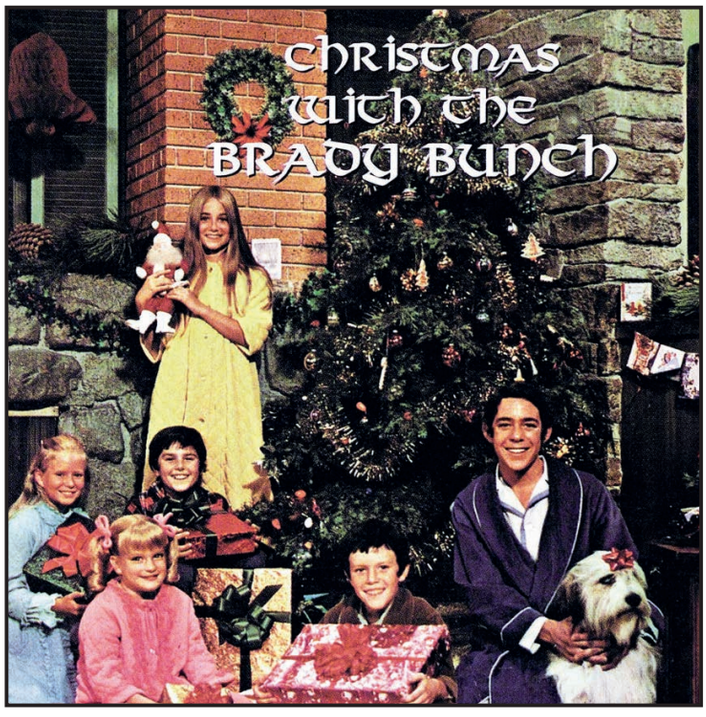
Our regular look at the more arcane corners of record collect. Includes Label Of Love

O COME, ALL YE TONE-DEAF

THE BRADY BUNCH

Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch

(Paramount PAS 5026, LP, US, 1970) £10



In the late 60s and early 70s, musical families were all over the US pop scene – The Cowsills, The Osmonds, The Jacksons. And on US TV, comedies about families, both live-action (*Leave It To Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*) and animated (*The Jetsons*, *The Flintstones*), were hugely popular. So a musical album by a TV family was bound to happen – and thus was brought unto us *Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch*.

The Brady Bunch, launched in autumn 1969, chronicled the adventures of a blended family: dad Mike and his three sons, and mum Carol and her three daughters. For the first season, the series' opening theme song was performed by professional singers. But Sherwood Schwartz, the show's creator/producer, said in a 1997 interview with the Television Academy: "It seemed to me a more honest reflection of the show if the people in the show sang their own song." So when *The Brady Bunch* was picked up for a second season, its theme song was re-recorded with vocals by the six young actors playing the Brady children. They were coached by Florence Henderson (Carol) who had starred in Broadway musicals and TV variety shows.

After that, Schwartz said, the move toward making the Brady kids a musical act "just kind of happened. They sounded pretty good, so I talked to Paramount and said, 'hey, maybe we have something here.'" Paramount had its own record label, so there was, in business jargon, a corporate synergy that could be leveraged.

There was, however, a flaw in this plan. In her autobiography *Happiness Included*, Eve Plumb, who played middle daughter Jan, bluntly states: "We didn't have an abundance of musical talent among the six of us." The young Bradys were all experienced actors, but their singing abilities ranged from near-professional to almost non-existent. Schwartz admitted that Chris Knight (middle son Peter) "had no vocal range", but "it was six kids, and nobody knew because he just opened his mouth and closed his mouth at the right time."



Flawed as the plan was, it might also have been spurred on by the success of the Partridge Family. *The Partridge Family* TV show debuted on a rival network at the start of *The Brady Bunch*'s second season. The producers of *The Partridge Family* planned for their cast to be a recording act, and had two experienced singers in the show. Shirley Jones, the Partridges' mum, was, like Henderson, a veteran of musical theatre and film, and up-and-coming teen heartthrob David Cassidy played Keith, the eldest of the four kids. *The Partridge Family* had higher ratings than *The Brady Bunch*, as well as generating hit albums and singles; that may have provided even more incentive to get the Bradys into the recording studio.

"WE DIDN'T HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF MUSICAL TALENT"

The songs chosen for *Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch* were well-known Christmas standards and hymns – Away In A Manger, The Little Drummer Boy, O Come All Ye Faithful, and Santa Claus Is Coming To Town – nothing adventurous, nothing unexpected. But, as Plumb wryly points out, *Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch* was made 20 years before the invention of AutoTune. This is particularly evident on O Holy Night, a song that can be difficult even for highly experienced singers.

Plumb describes the album as sounding like "a performance by the Sunday school at the five-thirty service on Christmas Eve". She's not wrong. Thankfully for the young actors, their lead vocals are credited to their characters' names rather than their own. The Brady children appear on the album cover in front of a decorated tree, wearing Christmas-morning pyjamas and nightgowns and clutching presents. The only one who doesn't look happy is their pet dog Tiger, sporting a red ribbon bow on his furry forehead and held firmly in place by Williams.

Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch was released on vinyl and 8-track cartridge. Frosty The Snowman, sung by youngest daughter Cindy (Susan Olsen), was released as a single in the US, while an EP of Frosty The Snowman, Jingle Bells, The Little Drummer Boy, and Silent Night was released in Portugal. IMDB doesn't have any record of *The Brady Bunch* being broadcast in that country, so the corporate decision-making behind that EP is a mystery.

Realistically, *Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch* didn't have to be a musical masterpiece. In an era when young people were turning on, tuning in and dropping out, who wouldn't want to spend the holidays with the Bradys? They were wholesome and cute, they listened to their parents, and any family problems were happily resolved by the end of each episode.

According to McCormick, the album was never intended to be a huge success. "It tested the water," she says, for the Brady kids' potential as a musical act. Without charting, it still did well enough that the young Bradys made three more albums. When the TV show wasn't in production, they also toured as a live act, The Brady Bunch Kids, in a stage show put together by professional choreographers paid for by their parents, not by Paramount.

The Bradys' musical career ground to a halt when Harvey Shotz, the theatrical agent representing all six children, attempted to get them to also hire him as their manager and tour booker – both as a group and individually. This proposal raised the suspicions of several of their parents, in particular Plumb's father Neely, a professional musician, producer, and A&R man (he signed Jefferson Airplane to RCA Records). He felt that Shotz was asking for too big a percentage of the Bradys' earnings, and enough of the other parents agreed with him that the deal, and the musical act, fell apart.

The last Bradys album, *The Brady Bunch Phonographic Album*, came out in 1973, and the show went off the air in 1974. *Merry Christmas From The Brady Bunch* was re-released on CD in 1995 as *Christmas With The Brady Bunch.* If you want a seasonal flashback to the glory days of 1970s television and you aren't too fussy about musical quality, then it belongs on your festive wish list.

Fiona McQuarrie

DECK THE DANCEHALL

SIGNAL MASSIV POSSE
Outa Sight

(Worst Nightmare SIGNAL 1, 7", 1990) £30+



Private companies have long produced their own personalised Christmas cards to send to clients. But back in 1990, London-based design consultants Signal Communications opted to make not just a Crimbo card but a solid vinyl 45rpm record. And not just any old Christmas record with a boring sales message, or carols, but two specially-composed slices of indie dance music housed in a glossy gatefold sleeve.

Credited to The Signal Massiv Posse, it kicks off with A-side Outa Sight and a sound clip that will shock: "I'm talking about form, I'm talking about content, I'm talking about inter-relationships, I'm talking about God, the devil, hell, heaven – do you understand?!". This is Mr Harding (actor William Redfield) from the cult 70s film *One Few Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. Then it launches into a superb, extended funky groove, an obvious tribute to Primal Scream's Loaded, complete with drum loop, wah-wah guitar, tapping claves, a heavy organ riff and a female voice calling out "freedom".

The flip-side is more festive-themed and perhaps less appealing, a dub mix called Outa Lapland (Christmas mix). It uses the same rhythm but with added electro keyboards playing bits of the melody of the carols Deck the Halls and Good King Wenceslas, alongside a choir of sampled voices oohing and aahing plus someone saying, "Hey Santa, spin that wheel."

The text on the back of the sleeve reveals that both tunes were the brainchild of composer/producer Ellis Dee (real name Roy Collins). At the time, he was resident DJ at The Fridge, Brixton, a regular on pirate station Sunrise FM and one of only two DJs at the World Dance Organisation. Later he released records by his own group The Ellis Dee Project, and collaborations with Rennie Pilgrem and Nick Newton as Rhythm Section.

The jokey sleeve notes include some crazy credits: "Performing reindeer courtesy of the Tolworth Venison Pie Co", "Sleigh bells supplied by the Notverymuchliketherealthing Make do and Mend Instrumental Sound Workshop" and "Weaponry courtesy of the West Midlands Police Really Naughty Crimes Division". The recordings were supposedly made above the Co-Op in Beeston, Nottinghamshire, which seems unlikely as the company and performers were based in London. The back cover also features a photo of the phantom Posse, three guys in dodgy syrups and Ray-Bans blowing party whistles. This, and some of the credits, suggest that a video was made to accompany the song. We may never know.

Inside the glossy gatefold sleeve, 12 people have signed their names, presumably the devilish disciples of Signal Communications who had great taste in music. The labels carry the message "For promotional use only, not for sale or airplay", no doubt because of the uncleared film dialogue sample.

You might put this unknown indie dance nugget on your Crimbo wish list but you would be lucky to find one in your stocking on Christmas Day; not many were made and not many seem to have survived.

David Noades

BACK IN THE USSR

VARIOUS
Krugozor magazine No 12 with six flexidiscs

(Krugozor 45, 6x7" flexidiscs, 1967) **£8**







Back in the 1960s, British magazines occasionally gave away free records but it wasn't until *Flexipop* in the 1980s that a magazine regularly carried them. By comparison, the Russians were better served with their own sound magazine *Krugozor* (Horizon), which ran from 1964 for over 30 years. Published by state-owned Pravda Publishing, it was a monthly title and included features on music, art, literature, current affairs, history and more. Each issue featured six double-sided flexidiscs carrying music and speech which supplemented the articles.

Each issue was spring-bound in glossy covers with at least 12 pages. The flexis were attached to the binding. Each page and the records had holes in the middle, so that the flexis could be played on a deck without removing them from the magazine.

The magazines are highly collectable and the artwork superb, with some impressive photography and colourful illustrations. The December issues are particularly memorable, though they're not officially festive issues as Russians didn't celebrate Christmas in quite the same fashion. The December 1967 issue features a strangely scary cover shot: a half-melted snowman with spiky, dried-twig hair stares out at you as if a real person were trapped inside. Who wouldn't want to buy this mystery mag and see what treasures were housed within?

Play the records and find out. On the flimsy flexis, in lovely lo-fi, you can hear some Russian pop music including the ballad Autumn Traces by Jean Tatylan, a jaunty uptempo pop nugget My Cherished Dream by Irina Kulikovskaya and That's Just The Way It Is, a big band arrangement of a Georgian folk song, by Eduard Khil. Other discs contain The Stars of Japanese pop (clips of quirky Nippon pop singles), Time Hums Like A Telegraph Wire which is a selection of clips of people in the news in '67, Ostankino – a report from Russian state television service, Three Sound Camera Turns, a comedy routine from "hilarious" husband and wife team Mironova and Menaker and intriguingly "Are there people on earth? – a Robot debate", seemingly a scary sci-fi drama about an alternative universe.

All dialogue is in Russian of course. So it's a tough listen if you don't know the language and it's a long way from The Beatles' Christmas flexis. Even if you can't fully appreciate the words, however, you can enjoy the music plus the printed photos and other images which illustrate the sounds. Not sure where the creepy snow boy on the cover comes into it though there is a cartoon strip about a snowman.

So this December, travel back in time to Russia in the late 1960s and have yourself a state-controlled Communist Christmas.

Col Pilgram

LABEL OF LOVE

BEATBALL MUSIC

Q&A **Label team: Bongsoo Lee**
Interview: Paul Bowler



"You need persistence": label owner Bongsoo Lee, Seoul, 2026

Where are you based, what do you do and why?
We're near Hongik University in Seoul, Korea and we release domestic and foreign albums. As well as issuing albums from the local indie scene, we've introduced overseas indie pop/rock albums, such as BMX Bandits, The Go! Team and the Sub Pop catalogue, under license. In 2001, when we started the label, overseas music in Korea was relatively limited, so we wanted to introduce a variety of styles.

Why the name?
It reflects a love of beat/garage music and was created to be easy to pronounce, in the hope of expanding the label's reach beyond Korea.

When did you launch the label?
We launched the label Bongrass Records, which introduced country and roots music, in 1999. We launched Beatball Records in 2000 and began working in earnest the following year. Many indie labels were launched at the time, but we were probably the only one producing both reissues and local music. We are the only label that specialises in reissues of foreign albums.

What labels were your influences?
Vivid Sound, Sundazed, Rhino Handmade and Ace. Vivid, which encompasses classic stuff and local music, is the biggest influence. Oh, and our friends at Disques Dessinee. Also, Siwan Records, a European rock/progressive label where I worked in the 90s before starting my own label, is very special; they taught me the A to Z of reissue work.

Who are your competitors?
In the early days, we thought Light In The Attic and Guerssen were rivals because sometimes we licensed the same albums as them. But they are growing faster than we are, so I think of them as friends to emulate. LITA is actually our North American distributor.

Any advice for someone who wants to start their own label?
You need persistence. Establish the label's direction clearly and push it steadily. Focus on the quality of the final product first and build a good reputation. Think from the perspective of a listener or collector.

What's been your highest high?
In 2013, we released the Lee Pan-geun & The Korean Jazz Quintet album, practically the only contemporary/modal jazz recording in 70s Korea. It took nearly two years of preparation and it surprised and delighted Korean music collectors. The re-release of the album must have helped make the original record more famous, and its price soared.

I had decided to reissue it after receiving a copy from a jazz critic. I immediately tracked down the producer's widow and most of the performers, and signed contracts. I'll never forget the moment when the first LP edition came out at the Seoul Record Fair in 2015.

… And your lowest low?
I was so fascinated by British contemporary jazz from the 1960s and 1970s that I tried to persuade Universal Korea to launch an LP reissue campaign with me, but it was suspended. Even though some titles had got copyright clearance, and the master files had been delivered, the UK headquarters suddenly decided that they wanted to release them so we gave up. Of course, despite such sad memories, I still enjoy listening to British jazz records.

What's an example of some of the difficulties or setbacks you might face putting together a project?
I really want to release a box set series called Korean Pop Chronicles, summarising the development of each genre or style from the 1960s to the 1980s, when contemporary Korean popular music was established.

But well-organised historical data remains limited, and old local labels are cautious about opening their libraries and vaults.

Who would be your dream reissue?
There are so many. I'd love to release a complete box set of the albums by three-piece power trio, Shin Jung-Hyun & Yup-Juns. Then, and I'm serious, I'd like to re-release every single Deram album in a CD and LP box. I'd call it *Deram A Little Dream Of Me*. Finally, I'd love to reissue the soundtrack of the Altman film, *The Long Goodbye*, by John Williams. I'd use Richard Amsel's original poster for the front cover!

How do you plan what to reissue?
First of all, I select music and records that I think are worth reintroducing, then check whether there is any appeal at this point, and find the copyright holder. Sometimes, while listening to an album I own, I think, "Oh, I should release it for Korean listeners no matter what."

Where would a newcomer start with your label?
Try the Cobrarose catalogue. It's one of Beatball's subsidiary labels and releases old-school soul/funk/jazz-gayo (kayokyokyu) and jazz records from Korea and Japan, or Pleasantville, which centres on the contemporary jazz scene in Korea. If you are interested in local scenes in Korea, a folk duo with a punk edge, Mukimukimanmansu, is also recommended.

And what can long-time fans look forward to?
We plan to release rare Korean OST records, a compilation of 60s Korean jazz-related tunes, and a collection of new wave-style 80s Korean pop. We're also preparing a couple of Italian soundtrack LPs from the 70s.

beatballrecords.com
Insta: @beatballmusic
email: info@beatballrecords.com









RECOMMENDED BEATBALL RELEASES

2003	**BMRK-K1**	**KIM JUNG-MI *Now*** (LP, ltd edition of 1,000 numbered copies, first ever reissue)
2003	**BMRL-2001**	**LINDA PERHACS *Parallelograms*** (LP, ltd edition of 600 copies, first ever reissue)
2005	**BEAT-8**	**THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING *In Wonderland*** (CD, digipak edition)
2009	**BEAT-53**	**MARGO GURYAN *Take A Picture*/More Songs** (2CD box, mini-LP packaging)
2011	**CR69016**	**LIM JI-HOON *Organ, Orgasm*** (CD, mini-LP packaging, Korean B-3 Hammond jazz)
2015	**CR69024**	**LEE PANGEUN & THE KOREAN JAZZ QUINTET *Jazz: Plays Arirang & Other Assorted Classics*** (CD+LP, yellow vinyl)
2018	**N/A**	**VENGEANCE TRILOGY: FILM SCORES OF PARK CHAN-WOOK: UHUHBOO PROJECT *Sympathy For Mr Vengeance*** (LP, red vinyl), ***Oldboy*** (2LP, green vinyl), ***Sympathy For Lady Vengeance*** (LP, white vinyl)
2020	**CR69050**	**VARIOUS ARTISTS *Funky Coup: Korean Soul, Funk & Rare Groove Nuggets 1973-1980 Vol 1*** (2LP, pink vinyl)
2021	**CR69040**	**TOSHIYUKI MIYAMA & THE NEW HERD *Tsuchi No Ne (Sounds of The Earth)*** (LP, ltd edition)
2023	**SS-63**	**MUKIMUKIMANMANSU *2012*** (LP, Beatball 20th anniversary edition)
2024	**BEAT-84**	**ROY BUDD *Get Carter*** (2LP, ltd edition of 2,000 copies)

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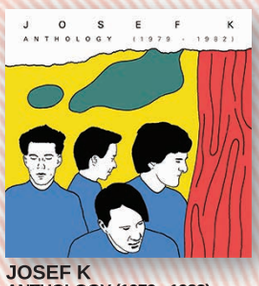

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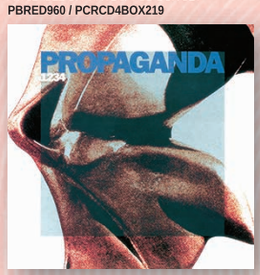

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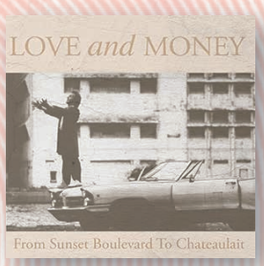

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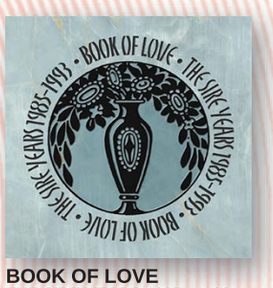

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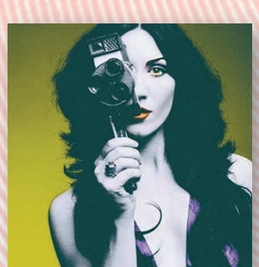

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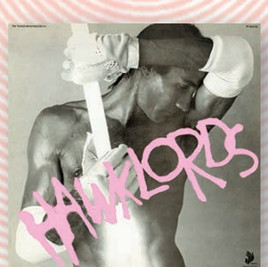

HAWKLORDS
25 YEARS ON
VINYL EDITION
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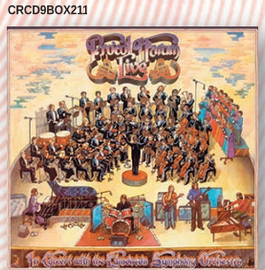

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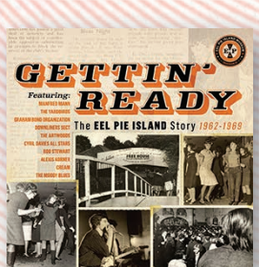

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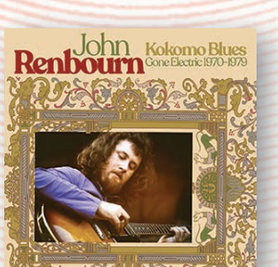

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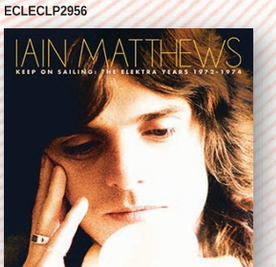

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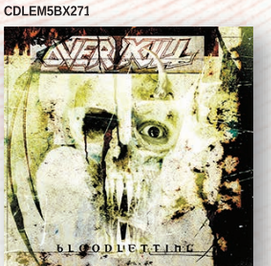

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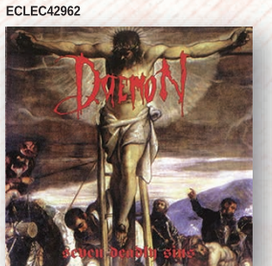

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CYNDI LAUPER Outfit $45,000
Worn on the album sleeve for *True Colors*, the music video and 1986/1987 *True Colors World Tour*. Also featured in Lauper's *True Colors World Tour 86-87* book. **Supplied by Bonhams**



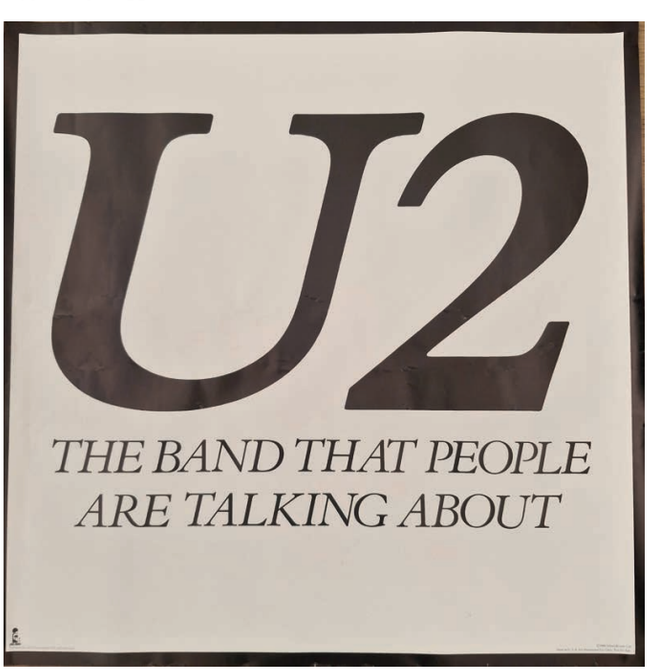
DAVID BOWIE Poster £4,000
Featuring David Bowie on saxophone and vocals. The concert was due to take place on 13 March 1965, but the show was cancelled.
Supplied by Tracks





***FESTIVAL OF MAN & EARTH* Poster £750**
Captures a moment when the American counterculture was beginning to connect rock music with the emerging ecology movement. Advertised just weeks after the first *Earth Day* on 22 April 1970, a major milestone in the American environmental movement. Local opposition to the gathering led to police raids and at least one drug raid. **Supplied by Briggs**

U2 Poster £200
Promotion through typography. No faces, no concert dates, no album sleeve art. From 1980 and believed to be an American issue, the wording and restrained presentation are consistent with a record company trying to build recognition for a developing act. And 1980 was a critical year for the band. **Supplied by Briggs**



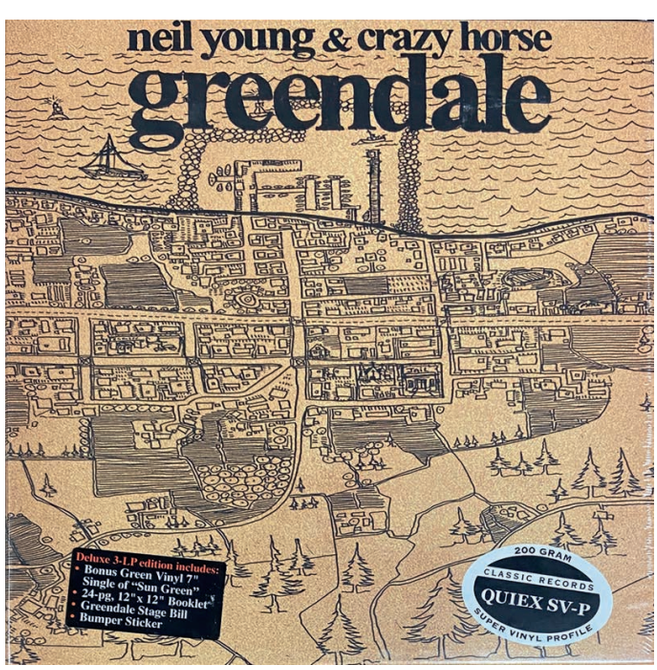


THE BEATLES Acetate (MGM no cat no) $4,000
From 1964, a one-sided 10" mono acetate of the 7" single. MGM Records leased the rights to four of the eight Beatles 1962 Hamburg recordings, including this example, only to learn shortly thereafter that Atlantic Records had replaced MGM for those rights. This is the only available acetate. Lennon is singled out here as vocalist. **Supplied by Rockaway**



LITTLE WALTER/THE CHEYNES Poster £500
Promoters Nanda and Ron Lesley were also responsible for the Aylesbury Bluesville venue booking the Animals, Yardbirds, Manfred Mann and others. Note The Cheynes featuring a young Mick Fleetwood alongside Peter Bardens, who subsequently became associated with Camel. As for Little Walter? He would die in 1968. **Supplied by Briggs**

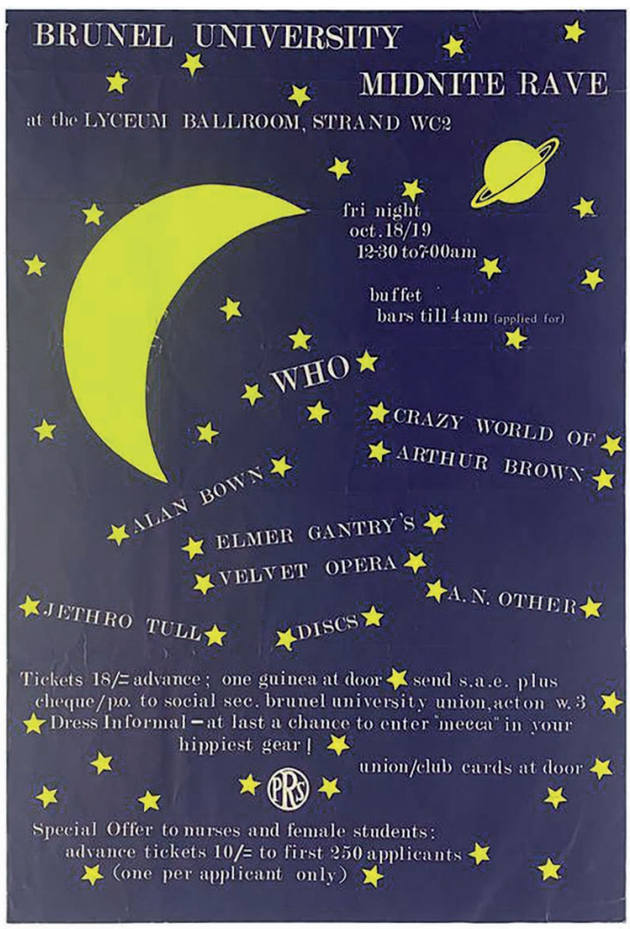
NEIL YOUNG Greendale $500
From 2004, a 200g, vinyl 3LP box set with bonus green vinyl 7", booklet, stage bill and sticker. Included here because I still haven't got over selling my own copy, around that time, for about £30. Bugger. **Supplied by Rockaway**

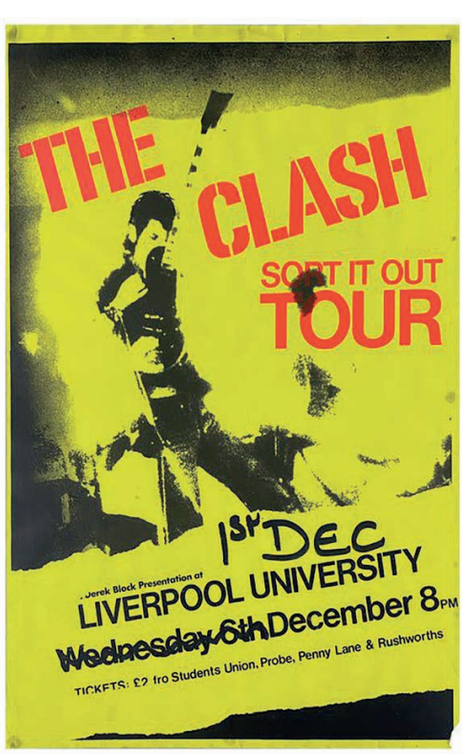




ELVIS PRESLEY Baby Let's Play House (Sun U 143) $850
The Sun singles still retain their value although the market has become much more selective. Common and later pressings have dropped in price. Even now, Elvis holds the strongest interest, although condition is becoming more important. **Supplied by Rockaway**

THE WHO Poster £6,950
An all-night student-organised event from 1968. Note the special offer to female students and nurses. Girls *and* medical expertise? No need for a St John Ambulance donation, then. More money for beer? Canny. **Supplied by Tracks**



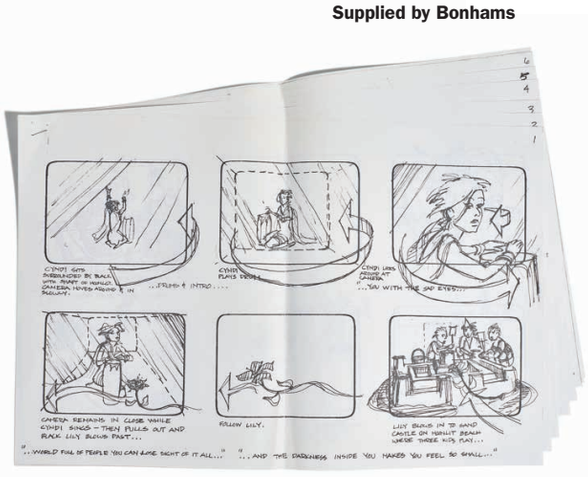


THE CLASH Poster £4,950
The poster crediting "Jerek Block Presentation" is a print error. It should be the colossus, Derek Block, whose archive has supplied other surviving posters from the same tour. Block also managed Mike Yarwood and The Nolans and produced pantomimes starring Charlie Drake. Like I say, colossus. **Supplied by Tracks**



CYNDI LAUPER
Outfit $4,550
Part of the Vivienne Westwood 'Mini-Crini' Collection, Spring/Summer 1986, worn by Lauper in 1986 and part of the official debut of the Vivienne Westwood standalone label.
Supplied by Bonhams

CYNDI LAUPER
Storyboard $1,820
Nine pages of Xeroxed sketches, showing the transitions of scenes and the camera direction for the True Colors music video.
Supplied by Bonhams



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WHOLE LOVE OF LOTS

This month's big scorers online

RICARDO MARRERO & THE GROUP *A Taste* (TSG 805) $5,815
Sealed copy of the 1976 original pressing for this Latin funk outing (eBay item number: 206599786225) **Supplied by eBay**



QUEEN "Experimental Record" (EMI no cat no) £4,250
One of 10 reported copies. Featuring Queen's 1973 debut and Georges Bizet on the flip. (eBay item number: 398451001603)
Supplied by eBay



OTTO VIRGIAL Little Girl in Rome (Bluebird 6213) £3,402
Blues man who only recorded four 78 sides in his career. (eBay item number: 188970211351)
Supplied by eBay



GANGSTA PAT *Deadly Verses* (Power TR 2102 2) £700
…And his black and white cat? Hip hop on CD from 1995. (eBay item number: 406952174448)
Supplied by eBay



DEF LEPPARD *The Def Leppard E.P.* (Bludgeon SRTS 78 CUS 232) £2,556
Featuring Ride Into The Sun, Getcha Rocks Off, and The Overture on the flip. **Supplied by Popsike**



1619 BAD ASS BAND 1619 *Bad Ass Band* (TSG TSG 801) $2,750
Soul funk album outing via the US from 1976. **Supplied by Popsike**



ALBERT AYLER *The First Recordings Vol.2* (Bird Notes BNLP 2) $12,450
Free jazz test pressing via Sweden from 1963. **Supplied by Discogs**



METAPHYSICAL ANIMATION *Metaphysical Animation* (no label no cat no) $9,500
Psychedelic rock/jazz from 1973. Fifty copies were produced to attract label attention. But alas…
Supplied by Discogs




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Not Forgotten



Juan Atkins: godfather of futuristic electronic funk

Juan Atkins, died 31 October, age 64. The American producer and DJ (above) was the co-creator of techno music. Born in Detroit, he moved to the suburb of Belleville as a child. Meeting Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson at junior high school, the trio became known collectively as the Belleville Three as they combined elements of funk, house and electronic music in their recordings to create a new genre that became known as techno music, a term that was coined by Atkins himself.

Acquiring a synthesizer and drum machine, he formed Cybotron with college mate Richard Davis in 1980. Their singles Alley Of Your Mind (1981), Cosmic Cars (1982) and Clear (1983) crafted a futuristic electronic funk sound inspired by an eclectic range of influences from Prince and Parliament-Funkadelic to The B-52s, Yellow Magic Orchestra and Kraftwerk.

After the duo split in 1985, Atkins founded the record label Metroplex and began making solo records under the alias Model 500. Classic singles such as No UFOs (1985) and The Chase (1989) continued to develop Atkins' dancefloor-focused sound.

As the Detroit techno style he had helped to create took hold and exploded in Europe in the 90s, Atkins continued to release new music under the Model 500 banner. As Infiniti, he also created a more up-tempo take on the style on the 1998 album, *Skynet*. Alongside further releases as Model 500 over the coming years, he also teamed up with German producer Moritz Von Oswald, the duo releasing a pair of albums as Borderland in the 2010s.

That decade also saw him tour with May and Saunderson as the Belleville Three.



Steve Ellis, died 30 October, age 76. The singer was best-known as the voice of Love Affair's chart-topping 1968 single Everlasting Love. Born in Edgware, Middlesex, he formed the American soul and R&B-influenced group Soul Survivors as a teenager. Reformed as Love Affair in 1966, they scored a huge hit with their second single, Everlasting Love. Written by Buzz Cason and Mac Gayden and previously recorded by US singer Robert Knight, it was lit up by Ellis's spirited blue-eyed soul vocals, backed by a 40-piece orchestra, helping make the song one of the defining hits of the late 60s.

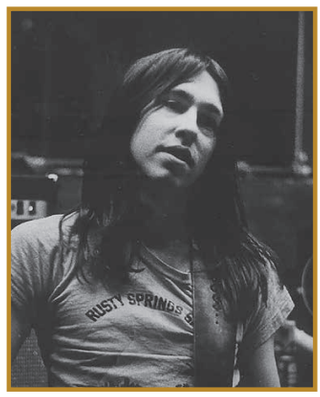
The group continued their run of success with three more Top 10 singles that decade: Rainbow Valley, A Day Without Love, and Bringing On Back The Good Times. Leaving Love Affair in 1969, he formed the rock group Ellis before co-founding hard rock act Widowmaker alongside Mott The Hoople guitarist Luther Grosvenor and Hawkwind guitarist Huw Lloyd-Langton, performing on their 1976 self-titled debut album before leaving the group.

After a period away from the music industry, Ellis began releasing albums as a solo artist in the 2000s, with long-time fan Paul Weller contributing to 2008's *Best Of Days* and 2018's *Boom! Bang! Twang!*.

Clem Cattini, died 2 November, age 89. The drummer played on 42 UK No 1 Hits. Born in Stoke Newington, London, he first gained prominence as part of the rock'n'roll group, Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, playing on their chart-topping 1960 hit, Shakin' All Over.

Co-founding The Tornados the following year, he spent five weeks atop the UK charts with their Joe Meek-produced 1962 sci-fi-tinged instrumental Telstar. Powered by Cattini's distinctive galloping rhythms, the song went on to achieve similar success across the Atlantic as The Tornados became the first British group to reach US No 1.

After becoming a session musician in 1965, he became one of the UK's most in-demand drummers, playing on further No 1 hits such as Tom Jones' Green, Green Grass Of Home, Dusty Springfield's You Don't Have To Say You Love Me and Tony Christie's (Is This The Way To) Amarillo?. He also contributed to recordings by the likes of The Kinks, Bee Gees, Donovan, The Yardbirds, Cliff Richard, and Paul McCartney, playing on all 11 tracks of the former Beatle's 1977 pseudonymous project, *Thrillington*. Among his later work was an appearance on Paul Weller's 2010 album, *Wake Up The Nation*.



David Surkamp, died 13 October, age 73. The American singer and songwriter was the frontman for progressive rock band Pavlov's Dog, briefly touted as contenders for international success, though ultimately they had to settle for cult acclaim. Formed in St. Louis in 1973, they were fronted by Surkamp's startling high-pitched vocals (described variously as "like a choirboy on speed" by *RC* writer Max Bell, then working for *NME,* or an even more frenzied Geddy Lee of Rush), which helped to give the group their distinctive sound. Their 1975 debut album, *Pampered Menial*, contained some of their best-known songs such as Julia and Late November. Second album *At The Sound Of The Bell* (1976) featured the talents of Yes/King Crimson drummer Bill Bruford and Roxy Music saxophonist Andy Mackay but internal divisions led the band to split the following year.

Surkamp went onto co-found new wave/power pop group Hi-Fi alongside Fairport Convention's Iain Matthews, before reforming Pavlov's Dog in 1990 to record their third album, *Lost In America*. After another hiatus, he revived the band once more in 2005, releasing four further albums, their final effort being 2025's *Wonderlust*.

Phil McDonald, died 25 October, age 80. The studio engineer and record producer worked extensively with The Beatles. First working at Abbey Road studios in 1964, his first documented work for The Beatles came the following year on the sessions for Yesterday. He went on to assist on *Revolver* (1966), *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) and *The Beatles* (1968) before taking a key role as a balance engineer in the recording of 1969's *Abbey Road*. Following The Beatles' breakup, he continued working with all four members on their solo albums including Paul McCartney's *McCartney* (1970), John Lennon's *Imagine* (1971), and George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* (1970). Across his engineering career, he also worked with Syd Barrett, Deep Purple,

Photos: Facebook

Eric Clapton and Roy Orbison. As a producer, he shared co-production credits on Squeeze's 1982 album, *Sweets From A Stranger*.

Rosalind Ashford, died 15 September, age 83. The American R&B and soul singer was an original member of Motown group Martha & The Vandellas. Born in Detroit, the soprano singer began her career in the late 50s with vocal group The Del-Phis. Enlisting Reeves into the group, they released several singles in the early 60s and served as backup singers for Mary Wells and Marvin Gaye. With Reeves installed as lead singer, The Del-Phis became known as Martha & The Vandellas and they signed to Berry Gordy's Motown in 1962. Following the release of their breakthrough single, Come And Get These Memories, in 1963, the trio scored hits with (Love Is Like A) Heat Wave, Quicksand, Dancing In The Street, Nowhere To Run, and Jimmy Mack as they became, as Martha Reeves & The Vandellas, one of Motown's quintessential girl groups. Ashford remained with them until 1969, after which she left the music business. ***See Martha & The Vandellas feature, p80.***

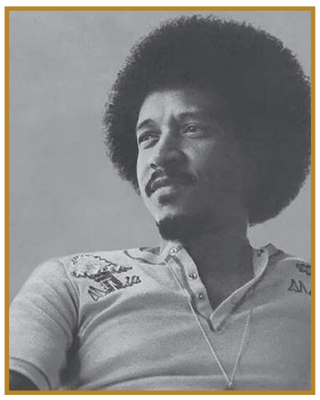


Richard Lloyd, died 7 February, age 75. The American guitarist and songwriter was a co-founding member of Television. The intertwining virtuoso guitars of Lloyd and frontman Tom Verlaine were a defining feature of the group, who became one of the key acts of punk rock's first wave. Formed in 1973, the group built a cult following with shows at the legendary New York clubs Max's Kansas City and CBGB. Releasing their debut single Little Johnny Jewel in 1975, their seminal debut album, *Marquee Moon,* followed in 1977. One further album, *Adventure,* followed before the band parted ways in 1978. Lloyd would join a reunited line-up of Television, who released a third, self-titled album in 1992. Outside of the group, Lloyd's solo career took in nine album releases, beginning with 1979's *Alchemy* and ending with 2018's *The Countdown.*

Dónal Lunny, died 23 October, age 79. The multi-instrumentalist and producer was one of Ireland's most-celebrated traditional musicians. Forming Planxty in 1972 alongside Christy Moore, Liam O'Flynn and Andy Irvine, the group helped redefine and bring a fresh energy to

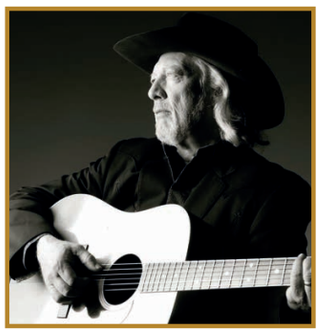


traditional Irish music on the three albums they recorded between 1973-4. Introducing and popularising the bouzouki in Irish music through his playing, Lunny also contributed guitar, keyboards and bodhrán to their recordings. Setting up the label Mulligan Records in 1973, he went on to further shift the boundaries of Irish music as part of the influential acts The Bothy Band and Moving Hearts. In recent years he colaborated with artists such as Kate Bush, Elvis Costello, Baaba Maal and Mark Knopfler.

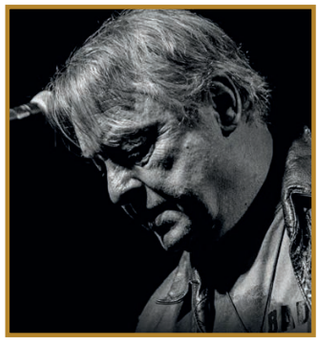


Derrick Harriott, died 24 October, age 87. The Jamaican singer and record producer was a reggae music icon. Born in Kingston, he first gained note as a member of ska harmony group The Jiving Juniors, scoring hits in the early 60s with Lollipop Girl and Over The River. Going solo and forming his own label, Crystal, he enjoyed further success with the singles What Can I Do, Let Me Down Easy, Walk The Street, and Solomon, scoring his biggest success with 1967's The Loser. Switching to a production role, he contributed to songs such as The Ethiopians' No Baptism, and Keith & Tex's Tonight and Don't Look Back, while he was one of the first producers to use King Tubby, enlisting the dub innovator to remix The Crystalites' Blacula in 1973.

John Anderson, died 21 October, age 71. The US singer was known for country music songs such as Swingin' and Seminole Wind. Beginning his career in 1975, he achieved his first country Top five hit in 1981 with I'm Just An Old Chunk of Coal (But I'm Gonna Be a Diamond Someday) before becoming a major force in 80s country music with the chart-topping singles Wild And Blue, Black Sheep, and Swingin'. After a period of declining sales, he had a major



career renaissance in the 90s with the hit singles Straight Tequila Night, Seminole Wind and Money In The Bank.



Gary Heffern, died 18 October, age 72. The Finnish American singer (above) was the frontman for pioneering San Diego punk band The Penetrators. Formed in 1977, Heffern joined the group the following year and remained until 1984, helping establish them as key players in San Diego's early punk scene through their riotous live shows and releases such as 1979's Stimulation / Sensitive Boy single and 1980's *Walk The Beat* EP. After leaving the group, he released a number of albums as a solo artist in the 1990 and 2000s.

Keith Christmas, died 8 October, age 79. The singer-songwriter released a series of albums in the 60s and 70s and recorded with David Bowie. Releasing his first LP, *Stimulus,* in 1969, that year also saw him play on Bowie's *Space Oddity* album, contributing acoustic guitar to Letter To Hermione, God Knows I'm Good and Occasional Dream. In 1970 he appeared at the first Glastonbury Festival and released his second album, *Fable Of The Wings*. Continuing to release records that decade, he also supported acts such as Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa, The Kinks, and Roxy Music. Continuing to release music in his later years, his final album was 2019's *Life, Life*.

Verne Allison, died 7 October, age 90. The American singer songwriter was a founder member of R&B vocal group, The Dells. Formed in 1953 in Harvey, Illinois the group followed up their 1956 breakthrough single, Oh, What a Night, with further hits such as Stay in My Corner, The Love We Had (Stays On My Mind), and Give Your Baby A Standing Ovation. Alongside his role contributing tenor vocals to the long-running group Allison, he also penned songs for them such as Dry Your Eyes and Movin' On.



Neil Henderson, died 20 September, age 73. The Scottish guitarist was an early member of Bay City Rollers. Joining the Edinburgh pop-rock group in 1970, he played on their debut single, Keep On Dancing, which reached No 9, but he left shortly after the release of its follow-up, We Can Make Music. In 1974 he joined Middle Of The Road, a fellow Scottish pop group who'd established themselves in the early 70s with hits like Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep and Soley Soley. As guitarist and songwriter, Henderson contributed to songs such as Rockin' Soul and Everybody Loves A Winner.

Others who passed away recently include: Sandra Kerr, folk singer-songwriter who paired with husband John Faulkner for an album in the late 60s before creating the music for 70s children's TV series, *Bagpuss*; **Brian Jones**, saxophonist for early 60s Merseybeat group The Undertakers; **Chloé Saint-Liphard**, singer and co-founder of French neoclassical darkwave band, Collection d'Arnell-Andréa; **Stephen Raoul Jones**, former member of cult Australian electronic group Severed Heads; **Piero**, Italian-born Argentine singer and songwriter known for songs like Mi Viejo and Soy Pan, Soy Paz, Soy Más; **Bruno Kramm**, co-founder and keyboardist of German darkwave/gothic-industrial band Das Ich; **Nigel Durham**, former drummer for heavy metal band Saxon, who played on their 1988 album, *Destiny*; **Cevin Fisher**, American house music DJ and record producer who scored UK Top 40 hits with The Freaks Come Out and (You Got Me) Burning Up; **Nicole Taylor**, American singer and member of country music trio, Taylor Red; **Bobby Wright**, American country music singer who scored US hits with Here I Go Again and Lovin' Someone On My Mind, son of country music icon, Kitty Wells; **Ian Gregory**, drummer for XTC spin-off band The Dukes Of Stratosphear and brother of XTC guitarist Dave Gregory. Playing under the moniker of E.I.E.I. Owen, he contributed to the group's two albums, *25 O'Clock* (1985) and *Psonic Psunspot* (1987); **Kenny MacPherson**, music publishing executive and artist manager who co-founded Big Deal Music Group and was formerly CEO of Hipgnosis Songs Group.

All obituaries by Paul Bowler unless otherwise stated. With thanks to Andrew Robinson.

the agony and the xtc



Andy Partridge surfs waves, new or otherwise

In rememberance of your lost love (vinyl)

When people ask me, "Andy, what was your experience of records when you were growing up?" I can tell you exactly. It was the dad of the kid over the road, who liked to conduct brass band records, with his fork, while sitting in front of a radiogram, eating his fry-up breakfast. He had trombones coming out of one speaker and tubas coming out of another. We barely had mono in our house.

George Orwell was the patron saint of music in our house. There was a tiny, wretched speaker, in a box, fixed to the wall, that gave you a choice of *The Home Service* or *The Light Programme*. It was all very 1984. My parents rented it from one of those services like Radio Rentals or Rediffusion. Choice, there was not. You even had to risk your neck by getting up on a chair, if you wanted to select the "other" channel. Record player? Nah, mate, not for us.

Then it changed. My dad being an ex-signalman in the navy, and liking shit that buzzed, brought home one day a freebie turntable and a separate mess of glass valves on a metal base. It looked like Superman's bottle city of Kandor. That was its amp, apparently. He then wired it all up, inside a wheeled tea trolley. Yes, he'd made a mobile record player that could be wheeled from the corner it normally stood in, to about three feet away. Wow!

My mother refused to touch it, as if it was a death ray. Then the trouble really started. The things that created DUST in her eyes, started arriving... Yes, records. At first, cheapo versions of my dad's tastes, seemingly all on the Marble Arch label. You know the sort of thing: ersatz Tijuana brass, faceless modern jazz players trying to be Charlie Parker or Miles Davis. Then trouble started brewing. I wanted to spend my birthday or Christmas money on records that I liked the sound of. There's only one solution. "Our Andrew needs his own player."

I vaguely recall I was offered a free second-hand Dansette player (lid down for more bass, lid up for more treble) by my cousin in Cheltenham. She's forever confused in my brain because she looked a bit like Brian Jones, also a Cheltenhamite. But, great, I had my own player, and the singles started to come in. Albums were still too expensive. My paper round couldn't stretch to them. So many great singles, though. Almost everything by the Small Faces (oh, those wonderful B-sides). Landmarks include Time Has Come Today by The Chambers Brothers, a double A-side of Suzie Q by Creedence. My White Bicycle by Tomorrow. I could list stuff for hours.

I also got to know the foibles of all things vinyl on this player. Sometimes it would stretch to six or seven singles stacked on the auto-change, before the dreaded skids would happen. Did you ever discover the ribbed ring just outside of the label edge, that was supposed to stop this sonic calamity? Didn't always.

> **"What do Joe Meek and i have in common, beyond a yokel accent?"**

I had a special supply of old brown Plasticine, "borrowed" from school, to weigh the stylus arm down, if it persistently skipped on some discs. Still didn't always work, so a few old pennies would be stabbed into the plasticine to increase the tone tonnage. The ghost of Heath Robinson hovered over that Dansette to keep it functioning.

Another odd thing I remember: the fact that I almost never played tracks at their "proper" speed. 45s had to go up to 78 to increase the excitement quota, and conversely also down to 33 or even 16 to give them a more dreamlike soundscape. Taking Floyd's See Emily Play way down slow gave up the secret of the manic xylophone run. It's actually an edited-in lazy wander up a piano. This stuck in my head for so long, it subconsciously became the main melody for the XTC song Omnibus many decades later

What do Joe Meek and I have in common, apart from a yokel accent? Both he and I accidentally discovered that you could cut your own voice into a silent run-out groove. Big homemade paper cone, pin pushed through the narrow end, rested on a run-out stretch of silence. Except my sonic mishap was the sound of my mother yelling from the bottom of the stairs,





"Andrew, turn that ruddy row down!" There it was, forever to chastise me. A spirit, trapped in vinyl, long before she'd even departed this world.

Interviewers are always asking, "Andy, do you still have all your vinyl?" The answer is no, and the quick explanation goes like this: I had several thousand albums (alba?), that I wasn't playing, some real gems, too, and CDs looked like the future, so the vinyl had to go to a good home. My 3D *Satanic Majesties*, my Dial box set of Charlie Parker recordings, all my ECM albums "liberated" from Al Clarke's office at Virgin Records. All going to the good home of producer John Leckie.

I thought he might turn up in a rented van to collect them. Oh, no. He pulled up in a red two-seater sports car. I shit you not. Every space in the car was filled with albums, and after he got in, I packed the rear shelf, passenger seat and under his legs with discs. He could move enough to operate the steering wheel; that was it. How he got home without a police record to add to the thousands in his car, I'll never know.

***XTC's 45 is out now, as is the* RSD *Black Friday companion LP,* Besides.**

Lenny Kaye & Friends - Riot on Oxford Street

IN.2 RECORDS



4 STARS **** SHINDIG

Fifty two years after the release of "Nuggets", Lenny Kaye's widely acclaimed psych/garage compilation, that would influence generations of musicians and kick start the punk scene, Lenny Kaye played two sold out nights in April 2024 at 100 Club London to recreate some of those golden nuggets ably assisted by an all star band including Dave Treganna, Rat Scabies AKA Nick Detroit, Cheetah Chrome, Jim Jones, Marty Love.....

The result is this live album which certainly does "Kick Out The Jams". Amongst these rough edged jewels are versions of "I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night", "Interstellar Overdrive" "Louie Louie", "The Letter" interspersed with Lenny's own wry psych observations!

Released exclusively on Johnny Depp's IN.2 Records on orange vinyl
CD with extra tracks and in a very cool silver foiled box set



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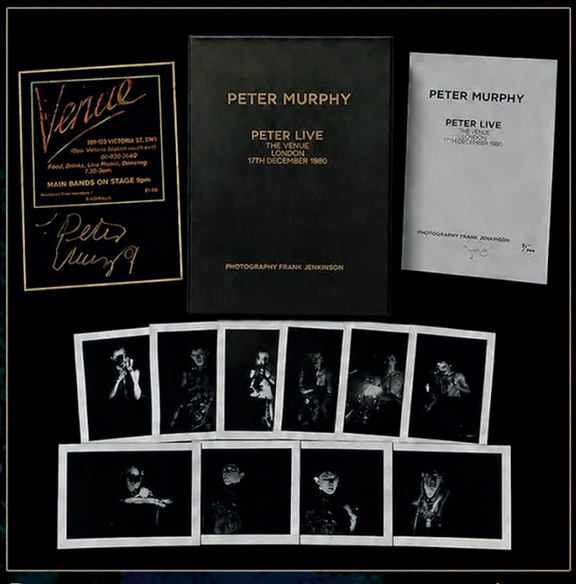

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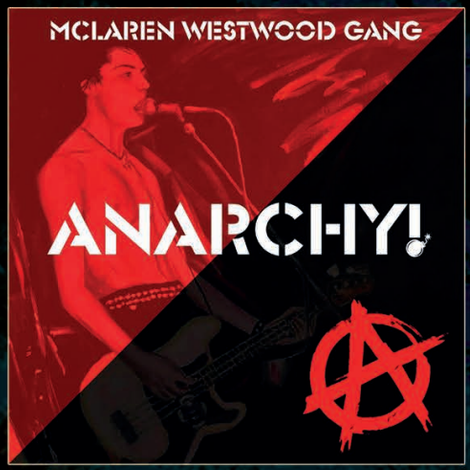
Cockney Rejects
The Power &
The Glory
Ltd White Vinyl



Cockney Rejects
At The BBC
Ltd Clear Claret
& Blue Spatter Vinyl



Jeff Turner - Cockney Reject II
I Love Being Me
In his new Book Jeff Turner pulls no punches, spares no details and only speaks his true feelings and opinions straight from his claret and blue heart.
Paperback with Illustrations & Photographs



McLaren Westwood Gang Anarchy!
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of Punk, the acclaimed but rarely seen ANARCHY! McLaren Westwood Gang film is being re-released in a numbered limited edition box set of 500 copies
Includes DVD, Vinyl, CD, Prints, Posters And More!

Slaughter & the Dogs
White Heat
New album 'White Heat' demonstrates that none of the band's power has dimmed.
"'White Heat' is a natural sounding, powerful and straight ahead slice of raw rock'n'roll with strong performances and song writing throughout. Hugely impressive." - Uber Rock
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MUSIC & DIGITAL

TALKING HEADS

On the couch with *RC*'s resident shrink, Dr Tim

LAIBACH

The avant Slovenian collective on their latest opus

Tell us about your latest project.
MUSICK: ENCORE is the afterlife of *MUSICK* – unreleased material, mutations, remixes.
What film could it soundtrack?
One in which humanity discovers that it has been the machine all along.
If you could revisit any of your albums, what'd you change?
Every Laibach album documents its historical conditions, including its errors, but to correct it would be to falsify the evidence. Having said that, we've already reworked and reissued early material. Falsifying the evidence remains an inspiring principle for us.
Is there anything unissued?
Many unreleased recordings, films, documents, abandoned operations. We're gradually releasing some.
Have you done anything that fans may not know about?
Temporary autonomous departments like Germania and 300,000 Verschiedene Krawalle.
With whom would you like to make a split 7"?
Kraftwerk.
Who'd you like to produce?
The Eurovision Song Contest as one continuous song. It possesses all the spectacle, discipline and geopolitical pathology that interest us.
Who'd you like to remix?
The Beatles' All You Need Is Love, as an advertisement for the subscription economy. Love may be all you need, but access requires a monthly payment.
Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?
In Ljubljana, 1984, listening to *Boji/Sila/Brat Moj*.
What was your favourite record shop when you started out?
One in our hometown of Trbovlje.
What was your first record?
The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown, Fire, Yugoslav 7", 1968.
What record made you want to go pro?
Tiny Tim, Tiptoe Thru' The Tulips With Me.
What records most influenced your style?
Kraftwerk's *Radio-Activity*, Bach, military bands, industrial noise, political speeches.
Did you ever write songs 'under the influence'?
Yes. Of history, ideology, fear, discipline, and occasionally, sex and alcohol.
Have you kept studio notebooks?
Some notebooks, photos, recordings, correspondence, operational documents. Memory is in principle unreliable. The archive is, therefore, merely organised unreliability.
What's the oddest place that inspired a song?
North Korea inspired an entire reinterpretation of *The Sound Of Music*. Once inside the system, the songs revealed meanings that they'd successfully concealed elsewhere.
Have you ever collected anyone?
Many artists. But as a band, we collect systems rather than personalities: folk songs, military marches, electronic music, national anthems, industrial noise, sentimental pop. Every music genre reveals the authority that produced it.
What's your most prized item?
The first Laibach recordings, because they preserve the moment when necessity became form. Their material value is secondary to their evidentiary function.
Is there an unusual story surrounding a record that came into your possession?
In 1989, during our first North American tour, we visited Prince's Paisley Park Studios. While being shown around his largest studio, we discovered that its record library contained two Laibach albums, *Opus Dei* and *Let It Be*. In a moment of impulsive, inexplicable mischief, we stole Prince's copy of *Opus Dei*, which then accompanied us on the bus for the remainder of the tour.



"EUROVISION POSSESSES ALL THE DISCIPLINE THAT INTERESTS US"

Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?
Taylor Swift, Geburt Einer Nation. It would unite confession, commerce, nationhood and mass mobilisation in their most advanced contemporary form.
Which of your songs would you segue?
Life Is Life into This Is The End. This isn't pessimism, but elementary dramaturgy.
Which of your songs is the most personally meaningful?
Yom Kippur, because it addresses remembrance, repentance and responsibility at a moment when all three are being systematically denied. It represents the moral wound within the consciousness of a humanity that's failed.
What fact about you may surprise fans?
We enjoy gardening. Plants understand hierarchy, territory, discipline, collectivism and silent propaganda better than most artists, musicians or political parties.
What record do you own that may surprise fans?
A Coldplay one. Who'd have thought it? Certainly not us!
Which album, on first-listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?
Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music* demonstrated that an apparent act of hostility could function as an autonomous aesthetic system. It didn't ask to be loved, only endured.
Do you have a go-to 'comfort album'?
Kraftwerk *Autobahn* reassures us that repetition can still resemble freedom.
If you had a record-listening party, what'd you play, and who'd you invite to discuss it?
Brian Eno's *Music For Airports* and architects, border guards, refugees and insomniacs. Each would hear a different institution inside the same silence.
Do you plan a book?
The definitive one has yet to be written. It cannot appear before we reach the end, if, of course, we ever get there.
Which question do you wish people would stop asking?
Are you serious?
With whom would you most like to record?
Björk, because her voice exists simultaneously as an organism, landscape and technology. A collaboration would require neither side to become any more or less strange.
To which tribute album would you contribute?
Scott Walker, The Electrician.
Who's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?
Leonard Cohen understood that desire, religion and power use the same vocabulary: "I've seen the future, brother: it is murder."
Of the people that you've worked with, who taught you the most?
Daniel Miller demonstrated that independence isn't the absence of structure, but the ability to construct your own. He understood that control sometimes means allowing the work to remain uncontrollable.
Was there a life-changing* Sliding Doors *moment?
1983's interview on national TV and subsequent ban in Ljubljana could've ended Laibach, but the closed door actually became the entrance.
Any unfulfilled ambitions?
To perform *Alamut* in Tehran with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. Some works must return to the territory from which their contradictions emerged. We'd also like to perform at the White House, where contradictions have found a permanent residence.
Are there any records that you once avoided listening to that you've reassessed?
Disco was once dismissed as decorative surrender, but its discipline, repetition and mass choreography were always profoundly political. The dancefloor was another parade ground.
Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?
John Cage, 4'33".

Laibach* MUSICK: ENCORE *CD, LP are on Mute.

Photos: (Laibach) Ursa Premik; (Brijitte West) Cristina Massei; (Henrik Palm) Chris Shonting

JEREMY CUNNINGHAM

Levellers bassist on the folk-rockers' latest venture



Tell us about your current project.
As well as the 35th anniversary reissue of *Levelling The Land*, we're writing for a new album to be recorded next year.
What film could it soundtrack?
Meantime.
Have you done anything that fans may not know about?
An ad for Weight Watchers in the early 00s. We needed money to fix our studio roof!
With whom would you like to make a split 7"?
The Meffs.
Who'd you like to produce?
Royston Club.
Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?
Walking in Brighton, late 1988. Carry Me was blaring out of a first-floor window.
What was your favourite record shop then?
Wizard Records, Brighton. We rehearsed underneath it.
What was your first record?
The Clash, English Civil War.
What's the last album that you bought?
Phoebe Bridgers *Lost Weekend*.
Who's taken music forward in the last decade?
Foals.
What record are you looking for?
Einstürzende Neubauten, Thirsty Animal 12".
Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?
Phoebe Bridgers, Julie.
Which of your songs is the most personally meaningful?
England My Home.

> ***"WE DID AN ADVERT FOR WEIGHT WATCHERS TO FIX OUR ROOF!"***

Which album, on first listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?
Slipknot *Iowa*.
What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?
Morrissey, "hang the DJ, because the music that he plays, says nothing to me about my life".
Are there any records that you disliked that you've reassessed?
Neil Young's. I thought that he was an old hippie till I heard Ohio. A revelation. Now he's one of my favourites.

Levellers* Levelling The Land *is on Rhino.

BRIJITTE WEST

Ex-**NY Loose** frontwoman on her latest effort



Tell us a bit about your latest project.
It's a high-octane rock'n'roll album.
What film could it soundtrack?
Birds Of Prey.
Is there anything unissued?
I recently found a box of cassettes and I'm working on compiling the sessions.
Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?
Lower East Side, Manhattan, early 90s – Bitch.
What was your favourite record shop then?
Venus Records, St Mark's, New York.
What was your first record?
Mötley Crüe *Too Fast For Love*.
What's the last album that you bought?
Donald Fagen *The Nightfly*, for my son.
What record made you want to go pro?
The Dead Boys *Young, Loud And Snotty*.
What'd you ask your music hero?
DJ Bladee. What's he reading these days?
What's the oddest circumstance that inspired a song?
Shoot Shoot Shoot, about the time that the US sent fighter jets over small towns because of UAPs.
What record are you looking for?
Wu-Tang Clan *Once Upon A Time In Shaolin* would be nice!
Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?
My Chemical Romance, Fire Brigade.
What backstage incident makes you laugh most?
We played a sex club and there were all sorts of freaks. Our bassist, Danny, fell off the stage and was helped back on by a half-naked hairy biker and a drag queen. I was laughing so hard I could barely finish the song.
What fact about you may surprise fans?
I'm an art/antiques dealer.
What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?
Jeff Tweedy, How To Fight Loneliness.

> ***"WE PLAYED A SEX CLUB AND THERE WERE ALL SORTS OF FREAKS"***

NY Loose* Monolith Kids *is on NFA Promotions,* Brijitte West & The Greenowskis *is on Rum Bar.

HENRIK PALM

Ex-**Ghost** guitarist on his fourth solo set



What film could it soundtrack?
Eraserhead combined with *Slap Shot*.
Have you done anything that fans may not know about?
I play acoustic guitar on Ellie Goulding's Devotion, and bass on the latest Hurula LP.
With whom would you like to make a split 7"?
Nunslaughter, Sabbat, Agothacles.
What was your favourite record shop when you started out?
A flea market in Falun and a store in Borlänge, Sweden, fuelled my severe addiction.
What was your first record?
KISS *Destroyer*.
What are the last albums that you bought?
Cosmos Factory *Black Hole*, The Mods *News Beat*, the first Happy End, and *Too Much*.
What record most influenced your style?
Autopsy *Mental Funeral*. I've tattooed the title on my arm.
What record are you looking for?
I've 2,000 records on my Wants list, mostly hardcore punk. If anyone has the Deep Wound 7" and/or Special Forces' World Domination 12", help, *please*! Get in touch with *RC*!
What fact about you may surprise fans?
I'm a trained assistant nurse.
Which album, on first-listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?
Voivod *Killing Technology*. Utterly mind-blowing.
Do you have any go-to 'comfort albums'?
Iron Maiden *Killers*, Twisted Sister *Under The Blade*, Black Sabbath *Mob Rules*, Judas Priest *Defenders Of The Faith*, ACCEPT *Restless And Wild*, Dio *Holy Diver*, Riot *Fire Down Under*, Mercyful Fate *Don't Break The Oath*, *Queensrÿche* EP, and the first WASP.
If you had a record-listening party, what'd you play, and who'd you invite?
Black Hole *Land Of Mystery*, and Sphynxs' Johan and Olof.
With whom would you most like to record?
The Melvins.

Henrik Palm* Idiot Plot *CD, LP are on Svart, 4 December.

> ***"I HAVE ABOUT 2,000 RECORDS ON MY WANTS LIST, HEADED BY DEEP WOUND AND SPECIAL FORCES"***

FLOOR JANSEN

Ex-Nightwish singer on her new solo set

Tell us about your latest project.
It's me focusing entirely on my solo career.
With whom would you like to make a split 7"?
Lzzy Hale.
Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?
After Forever, in the studio, 25 years ago.
What was your favourite record shop when you started out?
The Rock, Roermond, Netherlands.
What was your first record?
Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Then Machine Head and Pantera!
What made you want to go pro?
The Gathering's *Mandylion*. I realised that I could be a metal singer.
Have you kept studio notebooks?
Yes, a lot of handwritten stuff in books or on paper, including my last two solo works. I cherish something physical and have After Forever photo albums and the first newspapers and magazines that we were in.



What's the oddest place that inspired a song?
Two on the new album – cars. One I started while driving too close to the edge and getting a deep sound that started to form a melody in my head – In Wildfire. The other came from not putting Volvo seatbelts on fast enough, resulting in two notes that I then played on the piano – Haven.
Do you have a go-to 'comfort album'?
Don Henley, *Best Of. Gezellig* in Dutch – comforting. I put it on when I'm making food with wine, or having a nice conversation.
What unfulfilled ambitions do you have?
I have two Shire horses and would like to breed them.

Floor Jansen* Hytress *CD, LP are on Nuclear Blast, 15 January 2027.

RICK MCMURRAY

Ash drummer on their latest project

Tell us about your new album and what film it could soundtrack.
It's the 30th anniversary reissue of *1977* and if Danny Boyle is planning a coming-of-age film set in space, it'd be perfect.
Is there anything unissued?
A track from *1977* that never got finished is seeing the light of day on this release. It was a backing track abandoned in favour of other material, then mislabelled, and hiding at the end of an old tape reel. Tim [Wheeler] wrote lyrics and somehow remembered the vibe. It's turned out ace.
What was your favourite record shop when you started out?
From age 11, a shop in Ards, then, a few years later, Fantastic Plastic. We released a cover of Get Ready on their label.
What record made you want to go pro?
Iron Maiden *Live After Death* changed my life. My brother bought it for me and I asked him what he thought the easiest job in a band would be? He said' 'drummer', and here I am!
What was your first record?
Iron Maiden *Powerslave*.
What record most influenced your style?
Nirvana *Nevermind*, which blew us away.
Was there a life-changing* Sliding Doors *moment?
I met Tim through us being in a school play, *The Suicide*. I was a drunken detective and he was a gypsy musician. Backstage, I asked to try out his guitar and that led to me joining Ash.
What records do you own that may surprise fans?
Early Black Sabbath and Metallica are rarely off my turntable.



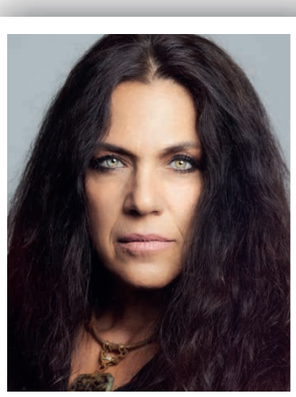
Is there a myth about you that you'd like to set straight?
That Girl From Mars was about a girl from Ards and Tim changed the location to Mars to cover up who it was about. Bollocks! We rehearsed it in an outbuilding at Tim's house underneath graffiti by his older sister saying LIFE ON MARS. That had a subliminal influence.
Which of your songs is the most personally meaningful?
Gone The Dream hits me every time. It takes me back to the studio and the recording of that album. The dividing line of who I was as a teen and who I became with the band.
What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?
Geezer Butler had the balls to rhyme masses with masses. Legend.
Of all the people that you've worked with, who taught you the most?
Owen Morris put all of us through our paces in a loving way.
Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?
Led Zeppelin, Bron-Yr-Aur.

Ash* 1977 *2LP, 2CD are on BMG.

SARI SCHORR

Bluesy genre-fluid rocker on her latest studio enterprise

What film could your new set soundtrack?
Thelma & Louise.
If you could re-visit any of your albums, what'd you change?
Joyful Sky. I really struggled with the opening line of opener, Burn.
Is there anything unissued?
Yes. When I was living in Paris, The Lotus Effect was picked up by Mercury. We were preparing for release when the label shut down.
With whom would you like to make a split 7"?
The Rolling Stones.
Who'd you like to produce?
Nick Cave.
What was your first record?
Stevie Wonder *Songs In The Key Of Life*.
What's the last album that you bought?
Paul McCartney *The Boys Of Dungeon Lane*.
What record made you want to go pro?
Simon & Garfunkel *Bridge Over Troubled Water*.
Was anyone in your family a musician?
My mother's cousin, Linda Laurie, wrote Helen Reddy's Leave Me Alone (Ruby Red Dress), and my husband's grandfather co-wrote That's When Your Heartaches Begin, cut by Elvis Presley.
Did you ever write songs 'under the influence'?
I enjoy a whiskey while I write.
Have you kept studio notebooks?
All my original lyric books with crossed-out lines, fragments of ideas, scribbled art.
What'd you ask your music hero?
David Byrne. Do you still deliberately put yourself in situations where you don't quite know what you're doing?
What's the oddest circumstance that inspired a song?
Call It Freedom – my grandparents' journey from Kyiv to New York.
Who's taken music forward in the last decade?
Bon Iver.
Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?
Rod Stewart, Finding My Way.
Which of your songs would you segue?
Finding My Way, Better Day.
Would you change any of your artwork, given the chance?
A Force of Nature. I'd have preferred a photo that I took of an ancient tree in Germany.



What fact about you may surprise fans?
I train at a boxing gym in Brooklyn with a heavyweight champ. It hurts!
What record do you own that may surprise fans?
Jill Scott *To Whom This May Concern*.
Which album, on first-listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?
Camel opened my ears to how far rock, jazz and psych could travel.
Do you have a go-to 'comfort album'?
Johnny Cash *American IV: The Man Comes Around*.
If you had a record-listening party, what'd you play, and who'd you invite?
Marvin Gaye *What's Going On*, Nick Cave, Dave Grohl.
Do you plan a book?
A fan is writing my biography.
With whom would you most like to record?
David Gilmour.
What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?
Paul McCartney, "Maybe I'm afraid of the way I love you".
Of all the people that you've worked with, who taught you the most?
Producer Mike Vernon – focus on feel and honesty in performance. He changed the direction of my life.
Are there any records that you didn't like but have reassessed?
David Bowie, 1967. Now I hear the experimentation, the theatricality and the willingness to be completely different.
Is there something that you've never revealed before?
I made a conscious choice to put music at the centre of my life and not have children.
Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?
Helen Reddy, Peaceful.

Sari Schorr* Running Wild *LP, CD are on Provogue.

credit: (Ash) Ron Mickson (Sar Schorr) Rob Blackham

33⅓ minutes with...

Graham Coxon

Interview: Shaun Curran

Latterly of The Waeve, a duo he formed with his partner Rose Elinor Dougall, Graham Coxon is best known as the guitarist in Blur. In the aftermath of the band's huge success at the height of Britpop, Coxon began a solo career in 1998 with his debut album, *The Sky is Too High*, commercially peaking with 2004's Top 20 gold record, *Happiness In Magazines*, featuring the hit Freakin' Out. This year, Coxon is reissuing his entire solo back catalogue – eight albums and three soundtracks – as well as the previously unreleased album *Castle Park*, recorded in 2011.

How has this reissue series come about?
Transgressive thought it'd be a nice idea to do it along with this *Castle Park* album, which has just been sitting there for an annoying amount of time [*since 2011, in fact – scheduling Ed*]. Putting out all the albums again and adding a new one seemed like a good way to do it. And it's been interesting. I don't know why people who knew me or were fans would find all the old albums to be revelatory, but they seem to. People have been like, "Wow!" And it's like, "Well, it has been around for a while. Have you not listened?" Maybe that's just the way the world works. People need a bit of prodding.

How has it been for you to revisit this very personal material?
It's been OK, you know. It's funny because each album was a bit like a spewing, really. Just to start with [1998's] *Sky's Too High*, it was an outpouring of all sorts of emotions about all kinds of stuff, frustrations about the limitations of the band or the music industry. It was a fun alternative channel for my own idiosyncrasies, or the weird guitaring side of Blur, but just loads louder and madder. On *The Sky's Too High*, Damon came over to the studio and I said, "If you think any could work for Blur, just say." But he said, "No, I don't think any of these songs are going to work for Blur." So, I was like, "OK, well, I'll stick them out, then."

Your fourth album, *The Kiss Of Morning*, was released in October 2002, the same month it was announced you had left Blur. What was that period like for you?
In 2001 I went into The Priory at the end of the year [for alcoholism] and I came out feeling pretty good. I was still writing songs [in The Priory] that were going on to *The Kiss Of Morning*. Bitter Tears is basically about being in The Priory sitting on the edge of the bed and being checked on by nurses and being given pills that make you feel rather nice but make it difficult to make a cup of tea. But it was brilliant. Things were just getting too much by the end of 2001. Not really with the group – my personal life had got a bit nuts. I turned 30. I had a baby. The world was going nuts. It was bloody 9/11. I was in the pub watching



"I went from being the weirdo to someone making traditional rock music"

it going, bloody hell. I thought this is all crazy, I've got to get myself cleaned up. And that was one of the nicest times of my life. I decided to start taking [the solo career] a bit more seriously, get producers in and do what I was told.

And then 2004's *Happiness In Magazines* was a genuine hit record…
I finally learned how to write songs that were sort of like the ones Blur did, or Kinks-influenced songs. By that point that sort of music was fashionable. There were a lot of garage things going on, Jet and The Hives and The White Stripes. I was just enjoying rocking out a bit.

Did you have a point to prove after leaving Blur, maybe even to the band themselves?
Not really, because I think we were in totally different genres. Blur were really trying to still push themselves a lot, and I'd gone from being the weirdo to someone who was making quite traditional old rock music. But that was again something to do with my own personal development, trying to write perfect pop songs.

***The Spinning Top* is maybe your most interesting solo record – a folkie concept album about a man's life from birth to death. What do you remember about making that?**
I felt that I needed a concept to know what the album meant. Maybe 2005, I got myself an acoustic guitar, and I didn't know about this stuff. An acoustic guitar for me was just [pretends to play], "Ow, that bloody hurts." But I started liking fingerpicking style music and Davy Graham. So, I hid all my plectrums, and I bought myself an OM28V, which cost quite a lot of money. And I sat and practised eight hours a day. I sat around the kitchen table in this this little farmhouse I had in Kent with a big pot of tea and just wrote *The Spinning Top* stuff. And it suggested some sort of story about some bloke's life who had been to war and had come across a sort of supernatural feminine spirit, who makes an appearance on most of my music.

2012's *A&E* and *Castle Park* were recorded in the same sessions?
Yeah, but it was weird – there were just so obviously two different types of music. There were these hooliganistic, really bass-driven, mad, almost dancey, almost krautrock, chaotic songs, which finally came to be *A&E*. And then these other ones that had more of an indie thing or 60s influence. I didn't know they were going to be so different. So, we said put the noisy ones out first, and we'll put the other 10 out later. And then it was about 15 years. In 2012, Blur went on tour again. And I was having a bit of a sticky home life at that point, but I started doing soundtrack work as well. So that got in the way a little.

Speaking of Blur, it seems like nothing is ever off the table in terms of the future.
Nothing there now. Who knows?
I don't know.

I was at Blur's brilliant Wembley show in 2023. How do you look back on it?
It was pretty mental. It was shocking. I mean, an amazing experience – I won't ever forget that. But it was amazing how calm we felt and how much fun we had. It did feel like a little kickabout rather than this massive thing. And I think that was the fun of most of that tour. We just felt really relaxed. It didn't seem like a huge stress. We just had fun with the songs.

Graham Coxon has been touring the UK this month, including London's O2 Forum Kentish Town (this Saturday) to accompany his solo catalogue reissue and previously unreleased album,* Castle Park. *Info at grahamcoxon.co.uk

The Darkness



EDIT
RECORD COLLECTOR

As The Darkness put their stamp on this issue of *RC*, Justin Hawkins, Dan Hawkins, Frankie Poullain and Rufus Tiger Taylor delve into their record collections, and their recollections of 26 years of rock'n'roll mischief



Dan Hawkins: evidently in need of some vinyl storage solutions



Frankie Poullain: "Got any Belgian chanson?"



Justin Hawkins: this is all he got from the divorce settlement



Rufus Tiger Taylor: the new boy, with a mere 11 years' service

BIRTH! SCHOOL! WORK! DEATH!

GUITARIST DAN HAWKINS... ON THE SOUNDTRACK TO HIS LIFE



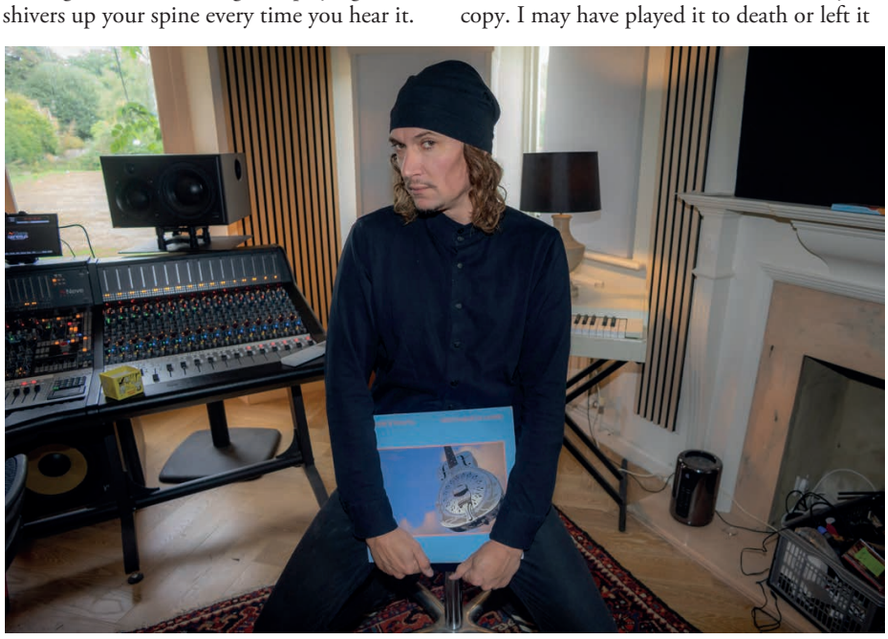
Fleetwood Mac ***Rumours*** (Warner Bros. K 56344, LP, UK, 1977) **£40**
The first album I became obsessed with as a child. My parents were massively into music, and this is the most played record from when I was one year old – even after I moved to London at 17, I'd visit and this would be first record on. The songs are incredible and it's a band record whereas lots of bands are one person's vision. It's the standard by which every other album should be judged. The guitaring was a huge influence… I'm not naturally a guitarist; I was a drummer, moved to bass then guitar. Lindsey Buckingham isn't flashy and the way he plays made me feel better about the way I play. Made it acceptable to play single-note solos and things that are emotive rather than, you know, Eddie Van Halen kind-of inspired. I've carried that with me my whole life. The first solo I ever attempted in The Darkness, on our hit I Believe In A Thing Called Love, was completely Lindsey Buckingham.

Queen ***Jazz*** (EMI EMA 788, LP, UK, 1978) **£40**
Another of my parents' records. One of the main reasons I got into this was the sleeve's centre spread, a studio photo with pretty much every instrument they had. I was like, 'Oh, my god, this is what I want, this is who I want to be.' I had my first drum kit when I was eight so was playing in primary school, then at middle school I was in the orchestra, and spending lunchtime in the music room. There are some really heavy rock moments on this, and I kind've got into metal later in my career. The production by Roy Thomas Baker is extraordinary, and that panoramic drum fill on Fat Bottomed Girls… listening to that as an eight-year-old drummer!

Dire Straits ***Brothers In Arms*** (Vertigo VERH 25, LP, UK, 1985) **£25**
I didn't feel like a child anymore when this came out. As kids, we were exposed to Sultans Of Swing, but this came out at a crucial time. If you were to ask my brother and I who the best guitar player in the world is, you'd maybe look to this record for our favourite. Mark Knopfler is awesome, vital, yet warm and aggressive. We have very different tastes, but this is one album we both agree we love. The guitar playing sends shivers up your spine every time you hear it.

U2 ***The Joshua Tree*** (Island U2 6 , LP, UK, 1987) **£25**
A weird one, but important. The sound here is what got me wanting to be a record producer, finding out how to make a record that sounds like it looks: dark, epic, windswept, rugged, mysterious. The drums, the bass, the guitar, the atmosphere, all amazing. Brian Eno was involved but you wouldn't say it's an Eno record; he's just there, helping things along. The sound, the mix by Steve Lillywhite, is probably my favourite ever. Listen to the dynamics, the way songs build from virtually nothing to, like, the biggest thing you've ever heard, then back again, like With Or Without You. A work of art, highly influential on me.

Swervedriver ***Raise*** (Creation CRELP 093, LP, UK, 1991) **£35**
One of the most underrated bands in the history of rock'n'roll. A masterpiece; the first really noisy guitar record that I was into. The riffs are unbelievable. I can't find my copy. I may have played it to death or left it



"IF YOU WERE TO ASK MY BROTHER AND I WHO THE BEST GUITAR PLAYER IN THE WORLD IS, YOU'D MAYBE LOOK TO THIS RECORD FOR OUR FAVOURITE"

Photos: Gareth Parker





Inspiration stations: Dan at home, subtly positioning old faves *Loveless* (above) and (above right) *The Kick Inside*. Below, *Bandwagonesque* and *Powerage*

on a turntable that ended up getting thrown away! But I have 12"s that I would have ordered from Andy's Records in Lowestoft. There's Duel, and Sandblasted… I reckon that's my most played 12", an unbelievable wall of desert rock guitar noise. They kind've had dreads and looked like they were from an American desert yet were from Oxford. The first time I'd heard guitars as loud as I thought they should be on a record.

My Bloody Valentine

Loveless (Creation CRELP 060, LP, UK, 1991) **£150**

I went from classic bands like Fleetwood Mac, classic rock like Queen, to U2, then a phase of basically guitar noise. And this is the weirdest album that's actually listenable and addictive. There are plenty of avant-garde albums by geniuses, but do you listen to them? This is akin to going to Tokyo and finding it the nearest thing to being on another planet! I'd played this full blast for six months and my mum stormed in, in tears. She didn't understand. Still doesn't, but then, she's a Fats Domino fan. Last year we did a cover of Cliff Richard's Mistletoe And Wine, the whole sound directly influenced by this, the guitar like it's going in and out of tune, like it's drunk.

Teenage Fanclub *Bandwagonesque*

(Creation CRELP 106, LP, UK, 1991) **£40**

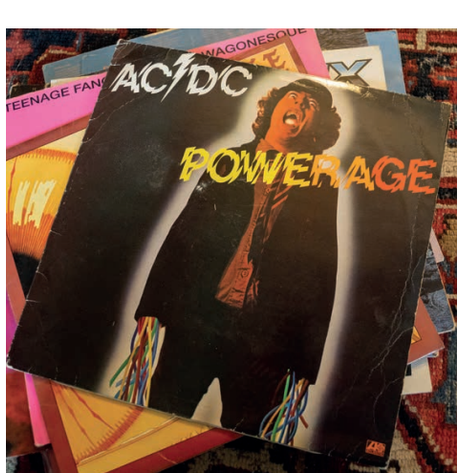
This introduced me to music that I hadn't really thought about before. There were Beatles records in my parents' collection, but I wasn't interested because I was into *Star Wars* and big-sounding records. Then in my mid- to late teens this came out of nowhere. I was like, what the hell is it? This is so tuneful, the harmonies incredible, the songwriting unbelievable, but noise and aggression, guitar solos all over the shop. I started reading about their influences: it made me study The Beatles and introduced me to Neil Young, who I'd never even heard of. Today, The Beatles are my favourite band of all time, but they wouldn't have been if not for this. I've come to know the guys over the years, they recorded their album *Shadows* at Leeders Farm, the studio I had in Norfolk. They're actually quite big Queen and AC/DC fans – their taste and record collection much like mine. And they were first to hear the first mix of our festive song, Christmas Time (Don't Let the Bells End)… and loved it!



"TODAY, THE BEATLES ARE MY FAVOURITE BAND OF ALL TIME, BUT THEY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IF NOT FOR THIS"

AC/DC *Powerage* (Atlantic K 50483, LP, UK, 1978) £50

A year or so before The Darkness formed, I was still trying to suss out how to play guitar. I could play acoustic but only chords because I wanted to know how songs were written. My brother's always been into AC/DC, more hard rock stuff than me. I'd heard a few things I liked and I picked this up. I knew I couldn't do what Angus Young does, fast solos, but could certainly play rhythm like brother Malcolm. I became obsessed, and for





Easily Led: Zep's fourth; (below) *Sounds To Make You Shiver*

two years listened to nothing else. I did what a lot of people do: only play the left speaker so I listen to Malcolm. It's all about him, the most amazing rhythm guitarist of all time. Intricate nuances, the way he interacts with the drums. This informed everything I do in The Darkness. When I play rhythm it's this… lead is melodic Lindsey Buckingham!

Kate Bush ***The Kick Inside*** (EMI EMC 3223, LP, UK, 1978) **£20**
Making *Permission To Land*, the first Darkness album, I was co-producing with Pedro Ferreira. We hired a tiny studio in Kilburn and spent six or seven weeks on three or four big songs including Love Is Only A Feeling and I Believe In A Thing Called Love. Every day the first thing we listened to was this – because it was the only CD he had and we kept forgetting to bring more in! Even now I have it cued up in my studio. It's one of those perfect records, lives in its own biosphere, weird and wonderful. In the studio we had that same attitude. My brother's voice is high and very strange, and so is hers. Inspirational, both songwriting and the virtuoso element. At the time music was, for better or worse, Snow Patrol, Coldplay, Radiohead, quite depressive. This meant what we were doing was OK.

Led Zeppelin ***Untitled (IV)*** (Atlantic 2401 012, LP, UK, 1971) **£550**
These were lost on me until around 2005, when they were the last big discovery in my musical education. What a band! I've met Jimmy [Page] a few times, even judged a guitarist of the year competition with him and Brian May, and he was refreshingly down to earth. Yet the mystery of the sound, there's something inexplicable about how it all interacts. It's eternal; you know you're going to enjoy listening to them for the rest of your life. And Jimmy's production is really overlooked. It takes a leap of faith to make and record music like this. He's talked about his halo of sound, which is basically the opposite to what people were trying to achieve, everything bleeding into everything else, chaos. The sort of thing as engineer and producer you spend years trying to get rid of. But he used all that to his advantage. A very clever guy and inspirational guitarist. When I'm writing I'll throw the guitar into some random tuning and see what comes out, I've taken that from Jimmy. I follow where it wants to go...



Interview: Nick Dalton
Dan is currently in his studio, "gearing up" for the next Darkness album.

Photos: Gareth Parker

NOT BLAND AID

DAN'S CHARITY COLLECTION

My vinyl collection is much, much bigger than I remember! We moved to a new house – and studio – in West Sussex and, nine months into renovations, I'm still opening boxes. I didn't realise how many records I had, maybe 1,200, and I'd forgotten how heavy vinyl is. But, my god, it's brilliant stuff!



These days people miss out on the physicality of records, the artwork, the smell of vinyl and the memories it gives you. You don't get that on a phone, playlists that computers think we like. It's more than sound coming from speakers, it's what we've been through… and I've been visiting charity shops for years. Between school and my first job, I wasn't doing anything. I was living in Gorleston, a seaside town in Suffolk, nice for a month in the summer, and I would just go around charity shops for hours a day. I've got hundreds from that period.

What about *Sounds To Make You Shiver*? "Listen in terror to Count Dracula/Hear Frankenstein break loose…" Halloween sound effects – how amazing is that? And I went through a phase of collecting those *Top Of The Pops* covers albums, I've got so many. Then there's Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass' *Greatest Hits* – I had no idea who they were, but ended up really, really liking it.

"THE ARTWORK, THE SMELL OF VINYL AND THE MEMORIES IT GIVES YOU"

When I moved to London, I worked as a receptionist/runner for the label Almo Sounds… turned out the Al in Almo was Herb. And there's *Blueberry Hill* by *Fats Domino.* My mum had the single, she used to play it relentlessly. I realise he's much more than a one-trick pony, I mean, what a guy. That haircut, basically garden shears across the top.

Then Kid Creole & The Coconuts' *Tropical Gangsters* – incredible. I don't think I'd heard of them, but you can see why I bought it – look at the cover! And *Oh, Annie, I'm Not Your Daddy,* what a tune. I found everyone from The Smiths to Burt Bacharach [in charity shops]… I didn't know who *he* was until I bought the record, and then realised, oh my god, he wrote all these songs that you'd kind've heard but didn't know where they came from.

And Christmas albums: Harry Secombe's *Christmas Cheer, Festival Of Carols* – that still goes on most years – and *Perry Como Sings Christmas Music*.

I used to buy a lot of singles that didn't have the centres, all jukebox junk, as a new lot came in. I've got upwards of 500 and I'm getting a jukebox to get back to that way of enjoying music.

The Darkness sound generates from the record collections where we all meet – maybe the Creation Records era.



PERMISSION TO SPEND

"Let me guess... Def Leppard? W.A.S.P.? Hanoi Rocks?" is what you might think you'd find in the bag of Darkness bassist Frankie Poullain when *RC* took him record shopping. No, think more Afro-jazz, classical, Belgian chanson, romantic soul, and an earful of Clint Eastwood...

Interview: Simon Goddard



To Darkness drummer Rufus Taylor, their Scottish bass player Frankie Poullain is "the weird uncle" of the band. Poullain himself prefers the label of "dork". "The great thing about The Darkness," he explains, sounding not unlike Peter Capaldi, "is that we've got a dude, a dork, a nerd and a geek. Rufus is the dude. I'm the dork. Dan is the nerd and Justin is the geek... or maybe it's the other way round?"

A sunny Friday lunchtime in Soho where Gen-Zers are queueing out of the door for the latest must-Instagram "Parisian smashburger" finds the comically arch 59-year-old strolling suitably dorklike down Soho's Berwick Street in blue jeans, a brown plaid shirt and matching chevron weave jacket. Add Cheech & Chong moustache and spectacles and you've a look more casual 70s chemistry teacher than 21st century hard rock musician, the only heavy metal in sight his prized Vivienne Westwood "armadillo" knuckleduster ring.

But then, if there's one thing Poullain can't abide it's a cliché. A living case in point, for the next hour he'll rifle through the racks of Sister Ray and its second-hand neighbour across the street, Reckless Records, without once allowing his fingertips to trouble the dedicated sections to Sabbath, Zeppelin or AC/DC. Instead, he'll flit from spiritual jazz to 4AD ("I'm trying to find some decent shoegazing"), classical, esoterica and folk: "How can they have a 'British And Irish Folk' section? They're two completely different things!"

By strange cosmic coincidence, our shopping trip reunites him with old pal, Alan Hake, formerly of Must… Destroy! Records who released The Darkness's very first EP in 2002, now behind the counter at Reckless, where his former signing's arrival prompts him to spin an 80s metal compilation featuring such second division Tommy Vance stalwarts as Angel Witch and UFO. "This is just like being on tour," smiles Poullain, pointing to the speakers. "Whenever we walk into a bar, they immediately start playing hard rock."

Which, more or less, remains as close as he'll ever get to it all day…



TRIO ROUVIER-KANTOROW-MÜLLER

Debussy, Ravel, Fauré String Quartets - Piano Trios

(Denon CO-72508, 1988) **£50**

"My father *[Austin Patterson]* was a classical violinist, he was in the Edinburgh Quartet and played with the BBC and a bunch of orchestras before that. He wanted to be a conductor – his hero was Toscanini – but he never quite managed to do that. He wasn't actually around when I was a kid. He was very strict and quite a difficult character and left when I was about seven so maybe in my earliest memories I remember the sound of classical music in the house, but I got into it later on. Now I'm starting to realise which composers I like. Same kind of thing as rock music, really: it's the people you can relate to or almost project onto sometimes, maybe there's something in their personality you understand. Like Debussy, it's just the way he uses the piano. I still go to classical recitals when I can. Recently I went to one where they played a bit of Beethoven, Mahler, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov. I really got into the Russianness of it, the intensity of it. It reminds me of that idea that the Latins are hotblooded whereas Slavic people are kind of hot*brained*. You can hear that in the music, like a feverish kind of thing, almost like a madness, especially at the time it was written in the early 20th century with all the upheaval in Russia."

ALICE COLTRANE

The Carnegie Hall Concert

(Impulse 00602458828696, 2CD, 2024) **£30**

DOROTHY ASHBY

Afro-Harping

(Verve 076 037 2, CD reissue, 2003) **£20**

"As soon as you hear Alice Coltrane, normally you're in a bar somewhere, and it's like a juxtaposition. The piano is traditionally a very white and very formal kind of instrument, and when the Afro-American people started playing it, they took away the formality and improvised a lot. And, if this doesn't sound too pretentious, it's the same reason I love Debussy, the way he plays the piano. He uses it for the sounds and effects it gets, it's much less formal and it's really based around sensuality. I see parallels and I wouldn't be surprised if Alice Coltrane was influenced by Debussy. In fact, I'd be surprised if she *wasn't*.

"My older brother, who's much more into jazz than I am, he told me about Dorothy Ashby. Slightly more formal than Alice Coltrane but sublime. It's very easy jazz but then I think Alice Coltrane is, too, because it blends into something, maybe subconscious. It's never just muzak. She's on a spiritual quest, always, and later on she was into various religious cults but even then, the music she was making was always good, unlike some people who've suffered, like maybe Prince when he got too religious and lost quality control. Hers, it doesn't matter. It's still there, the talent. It's transcendental."





VARIOUS ARTISTS

Play Misty For Me… (Music From The Films Of Clint Eastwood)

(New Continent 101042, LP, blue vinyl, 2025) **£20**

"*Play Misty For Me* … that's the one about the DJ and the stalker, isn't it? Have we suffered psychotic fans? Well, I'd say 'psychotic' is a word that gets overused, so I wouldn't want to use that lightly. But there's definitely been some slightly unhinged ones. Sometimes it's just enthusiasm that gets carried away. It's a nice thing. I mean, fans can be dorky, but I'm a dork so I understand. I'd never judge another dork.

"Anyway, this record is a great example of why Clint Eastwood is still going. It's jazz music, it keeps people young. Clint's a big jazz fan and always has great soundtracks. Just look at the tracklisting here: Stan Getz, Dinah Washington, Billie Holiday, Thelonious Monk – you can't really argue with any of them. He's quite a trad guy, isn't he? But he's the best example of a trad guy. It's a trad selection but it's a cool selection and it comes from the heart. My favourite film of his is the one where he's the soldier and he's captured by a family on the opposite side of the Civil War. That's it, *The Beguiled*. What a movie! So dark and Freudian. Did I have a horrible dream that they're remaking it? *[*RC *breaks the bad news Sofia Coppola indeed directed a remake in 2017]* No! I bet it's fucking awful. I'd be delighted to be proved wrong, but I can't imagine it. It's obviously going to be 'woke', isn't it, because why else would they make it again now?"

Photos: Adrian Hextall



SEX PISTOLS

Pretty Vacant
(Warner Bros unofficial release 7" picture disc, 2017)
"Why this one? Just because I like the song. And the B-side, too, Submission. It captures a place and time when I was only about 10 or 11. There were a lot of mohawks when I was a kid because The Exploited were from Edinburgh. All the punks would be sniffing glue in the park toilets and all that kind of stuff. It's funny, at the time, as a kid, you're almost scared of them but then you realise they're really cool people, and unapologetic, which is what's missing from today. Pretty Vacant reminds me of that time. The Darkness once got to hang out with their producer, Chris Thomas, in Sydney. He was a friend of Rufus's dad, so we had dinner with him which was a real pleasure. He shared some great stories with us of working with Roxy Music but it was the Pistols stuff where we were all really paying attention."



NAZARETH

Born Under The Wrong Sign 1976-1979
(Hear No Evil Recordings HNEBOX 242, 5CD, 2026) **£40**
"Nazareth were the first rock band I ever met as a kid, not necessarily being a fan. But there isn't that much Scottish hard rock. I mean, what would you call Nazareth? Prog rock? Hard rock? Or maybe just classic rock? Anyway, one of their guitarists, and I'm sorry I can't even remember his name, was the first rock musician I ever met. I remember going with some friends of my mum's to somewhere near Grangemouth where he lived. It wasn't even a social visit, and I can't remember the circumstances. We just stopped off there and dropped something off and I remember walking round his house. The first rock star's house I'd ever been in and there was a lot of light. Big windows. I don't remember much else and I don't actually know that much about them, but this boxset looks like early stuff, so maybe it's the more experimental Nazareth? The funny thing is they had one big hit in the States *[1976's Love Hurts]*, same as us *[2003's I Believe In A Thing Called Love]*. So maybe in a way when I was a kid I wished for something. I wished to be like Nazareth and it happened. I ended up in a one-hit-wonder-in America band as well. Strange, eh?"



HOWARD EYNON

So What If I'm Standing In Apricot Jam

(Earth EARTHLP 002, LP, reissue, 2014) **£30**

"I don't know this guy at all. Howard Eynon? *[Australian 70s acid folk singer who later turned up in the original* Mad Max*]* I found this in the Esoterica section. I never knew there was such a thing -- 'esoteric' has been given a bad name by all the new age twats. All these Glastonbury people, they say the word 'esoteric' like it immediately gives them a free pass to talk bollocks. Anyway, look at this. *So What If I'm Standing In Apricot Jam*. The emphasis being on *So What*. This sums up the joy of music. It's got French horn, double bass, everything good about the 70s, and the conceptual nature of it, the fact he's so obviously strung out. This record is a great advertisement for acid, isn't it? You couldn't make a record like this now. How could AI possibly come up with something like this? It's a great example of the idiosyncrasies of human nature. No two humans are alike and don't pretend to be and this guy certainly isn't pretending. He's unfettered. When was it made? Nineteen seventy-four? Well, there you go. It makes me wish I could have been born 20 years earlier."





JACQUES BREL

Brel (aka Les Marquises)

(Barclay 810 537 2 , CD reissue, 2010) **£10**

"The proudest I am of any photo of anyone in my family is my French grandfather on the Poullain side, my mum's father, who was friends with Jacques Brel. He worked for the United Nations and he was the French political diplomat advisor: when guests came over from France and Belgium he would host them and take them out for a cocktail. So, there's a photo of my grandfather and Brel together, looking deep in conversation. I think Brel is something only the French and Belgians understand. It's very hard because most British people would probably prefer the Scott Walker covers rather than the original, but the translations are really hit-and-miss. But you look at old clips of him on YouTube and it's so great to watch him because he's so obsessive and frothing at the mouth, he's incredibly intense. I think if you put that much passion into something you're always going to achieve some kind of success."

TYRONE DAVIS

I'll Always Love You

(Ichiban ICH 1103, 1991) **£10**

"This was in the cheap soul and R&B section. Another guy I've never heard of. But just look at the cover. I picked this for the fashion aspect, the style he's wearing. If you cover up his head that could be Adam Lambert, couldn't it? That's like something he'd wear, the finger jewellery and all. But he looks very comfortable in his own skin. He's really hard to pin down, but he's romantic, certainly, as all his songs are about love. Eight songs and five of the titles directly reference love. That's a little bit like our first EP: it was called the *Love* EP because it had early versions of I Believe In A Thing Called Love, Love On The Rocks With No Ice and Love Is Only A Feeling. So maybe that's why I've chosen this. Some subconscious Darkness love connection."



Photos: Adrian Hextall

With thanks to Reckless Records, 30 Berwick Street, and Sister Ray, 75 Berwick Street, London. Follow on Instagram: @recklessrecordsuk, @sisterraysoho

A THING CALLED GLOVE



The Darkness bucked all skinny-jeaned indie trends when they grabbed the early 00s by the short and curlies with their mega-selling debut, *Permission To Land*. Twenty-three years, seven albums, one break-up and a reunion later, Justin Hawkins' proudly preposterous crew aim to turn the volume all the way up to 11 again with a new best-of, *Crock Of Hits*. On the eve of their first UK arena tour in 20 years, our combative guest editor sits down with Simon Goddard to share his five-octave-range survivor's tale: "I haven't reached that part of my career yet where I sound like a chipmunk," he argues

Perched at a cramped desk in a depressing hotel room in Holborn forking a Pret A Manger vegan salad for one. Not exactly what Justin Hawkins signed up for at the age of 11 when he decided he wanted to be a rock star after his auntie bought him a copy of Queen's *Live Magic*. "It was seeing that photo of the helicopter with the Queen logo on the side flying over an enormous audience, Knebworth or somewhere like that," reflects the lean and tattooed 51-year-old, momentarily forgetting his bland surroundings, eyes misty with boyish enthusiasm. "I remember thinking, 'That looks so much fun!' And they all looked really cool. Me and my brother, together, we were like, 'Oh, yeah! Queen! That's what we wanna do! We wanna be Queen!'"

Despite the geographical handicap of hailing from the Suffolk seaside town of Lowestoft – great if you want to be the next Benjamin Britten, not so great if you've designs on becoming the 21st-century Led Zeppelin – Hawkins and his younger brother Dan would realise their amp stack and spandex dreams with far more tangibility than their battalions of detractors would ever have dared give them credit. Formed in 2000, The Darkness became the anomalous heavy metal fly in the ointment of millennial indie sleaze: losing the battle of trendy yoof "cool" in the Strokes-centric eyes of the *NME* but winning the war of people's rock champions with 2003's four-times-platinum No 1 debut album *Permission To Land* and a hat-trick of BRITs for Best British Group, Rock Act and British Album beating Blur, Muse and Radiohead in the process.

Thereafter followed an age-old rock'n'roll story of success and excess, a difficult second album, exits, break-ups, rehab and resurrection. Since reforming in 2011, Hawkins' band have scored three further Top 10 albums and in 2026 find themselves braced for their first UK arena tour in decades to promote their quarter-century celebratory best-of which, like most things Darkness-related, bears the not untittersome title *Crock Of Hits*. On top of which, since 2015 the Hawkins boys now boast the wish fulfilment of *actual* Queen flesh and blood in their line-up with the addition of drummer Rufus Tiger Taylor, son of Roger. Teenage dreams: so hard to beat.

Outside of The Darkness, Hawkins is now a solo artist (his "art project" debut album, *Incisions, Incisions*, is due spring 2026), a songwriter-for-hire, presenter of his own YouTube channel, father to a 13-year-old daughter and, as he'll bring up several times in our conversation with differing severities of comic effect, a recent divorcee.

As our guest ed, it was originally *RC*'s intention to talk him through his record collection at his home in Switzerland. But since, as he tells us, he lost some of it along with his entire hi-fi system in the divorce, and since we're here in an antiseptic hotel room in central London, instead for the next two hours he'll flop around all four corners of his bed discussing his life, his group, his loves, his loathes and his disheartening lack of domestic turntable. "You know you're in for a few thousand if you want a really nice system," he sighs, "but when you've got alimony to pay…"

What's your first musical memory?

As toddlers we would hear music coming up through the floorboards when mum and dad were having parties. I don't know what they were doing. When people say "party" now it's always a euphemism for something, and I have no idea what it's a euphemism for because I think we didn't dare go down and look.

What specific music?

My mum's very much into reggae, my father was into singer-songwritery stuff, but their common ground was Queen. Not Led Zeppelin, who I had to discover for myself later on via Dread Zeppelin. So, it would have been Mustapha by Queen from *Jazz*. When was that, 1978? I'd have been three. So, my earliest memory is hearing Queen. Then a bit later, this must have been the mid-80s, my dad invested in a really good stereo with a CD player and he played *Brothers In Arms* by Dire Straits a lot. I think my

"OH, YEAH! QUEEN! THAT'S WHAT WE WANNA DO! WE WANNA BE QUEEN!"

Photo: Getty



Out to punch: Justin Hawkins in 2003

JUSTIN HAWKINS' Fave LPs of 2026

The Lemon Twigs
Look For Your Mind!
Angine De Poitrine
Vol II
Getdown Services
Massive Champion
Reissue: David Bowie
Station To Station







***Noir* – what is it good for?: (l-r) The Darkness (above and inset right) circa 2003; Justin gets stuck into a New York audience the same year; the reformed band in 2015**

brother's still got that stereo. So at least I didn't lose that one in the divorce.

Was it the tunes or the lyrics or both that first drew you in?
Both, but I've just remembered ABBA. They had that best-of with the grey cover *[Greatest Hits Vol 2]* and they used to listen to that a hell of a lot and I tried to transcribe the lyrics. They weren't printed on the sleeve, so I'd listen and copy them down like poems and I kept them on a bull clip on my bedroom wall. I still don't know why I did that. Even though they were singing about divorce a lot of the time. Then it might have been a self-fulfilling portent. Maybe as a child I was, "I want to feel like that. I know, I'll have a series of completely dysfunctional relationships which I can then draw from and create poetry like this with!" It was inspiring. But Queen and ABBA, that was my mum and dad's music.

What was the first album you bought with your own money?
When I was about 10 or 11, our grandmother came into some money and gave us some hard cash, so I went and bought a Philips ghetto blaster and a copy of *Raising Hell* by Run DMC. The common thread in a lot of the things I was enjoying at that time was Rick Rubin. Like The Cult, *Electric*. I had that on cassette and still do. My cassette collection is pretty good because I drive an old Porsche and it's got a tape player in it and rather than making my own mixtapes I still play my old *Electric* by The Cult. The other one I've got in my car is *Give My Regards To Broad Street* by Paul McCartney which has [sings] "No mooore lonely nights!" on it with Dave Gilmour playing the solo at the end. I love that.

When did music become something you did rather than something you just listened to?
I started playing guitar when I was about 13 and then when I was 15, I joined my first band. They were a bit older than me, they would have been sixth form when I was still doing GCSEs. One of them was rumoured to have been having sex with one of the teachers and they were all bigger, cooler lads. We did a cover of The Cult's Lil' Devil. Not very good. A cover of The Clash's Should I Stay Or Should I Go. Again, not very good. And a truly abysmal cover of Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds, like probably the worst you'd ever heard it. Even if you loved that song there was little in there that you would have enjoyed. It was *sooo* bad.

Had you started singing at this point?
No. The first band I ever fronted was The Darkness. Before then I'd only ever played live as a keyboard player or guitarist, on occasion both, so I had two things to hide behind.

Where did that confidence to start fronting a band come from?
I had to overcome that stuff in the early Darkness shows, so that would have been around 2000. And it was difficult. It was terrifying.

Was it a case of creating a persona, a rock'n'roll cloak to protect you from stage fright?
For me it was like creating any sort of barrier. So, wearing glasses. That was a good start. If I'd have been able to grow a moustache back then, I'd have had a moustache, or a beard. Anything that creates a layer of separation. And then gradually I stripped that back. I wasn't really in shape at the time and I almost immediately took my shirt off and was just a fat bloke singing on stage.

The cliché a lot of famous singers say is, "On stage is where I feel the most comfortable" which, to normal people, sounds crazy. Do you feel like that?
It sounds like a cliché, but it becomes true after a while. You can't front a band and not be in the moment unless you're miming. You can't have stuff in your head like the last argument you had with your girlfriend, worrying about where you parked or if you left the oven on. Singing, it's just really magical and you can't do it if you've got other stuff in your brain, so you do become so connected with it that that's the only time when you actually feel like, "Oh,





yeah, this is living." I think that's probably what people mean, otherwise you can't do it. Like I had one show in America somewhere and I was singing Love Is Only A Feeling and I forgot the words. That happens, but I forgot the words because I was thinking about a romantic situation I was in. So, the first thing I did after that show was dump her *[laughs]*. Which is how it has to be. *[Adopts comedy sobbing hangdog face]* I still miss her every day.

When did you discover you could do falsetto? Did you have falsetto heroes? Russell Mael? Barry Gibb?
Well, I love both of those singers. And I think they're certainly influences, not just with the timbre and the range, more like the songwriting, the way they approach that stuff is brilliant. But it's just natural for me. It's the most powerful area of my voice. I've got to do battle with loud guitars and drums, so I have to use the part of my voice that projects the most effectively and that's screeching for me. I've still got loads of range and it hasn't done that thing that some other lead singers have done and I'm not going to name names, but one of them – whose name is an anagram of Oral Sex – he just sounds like Mickey Mouse now. But I haven't reached that part of my career yet where I sound like a chipmunk.

When you were making *Permission To Land*, what records were you setting the bar at in terms of "this album has to be as good as X or Y"?
I'd say that the constant for me has always been *Powerage* by AC/DC. I don't know whether the other guys would agree with that, but that's the record that I think looking back I probably listened to more than anything else during that period. I listened to a lot of synth rock as well, for my sins, like Stan Bush. And I like a lot of easy listening music as well so Enoch Light And The Light Brigade's *Provocative Percussion*, stuff like that. And also, Peter Wyngarde's solo record.

That's an outrageous record!
Yeah, obviously there's some stuff on there that's very challenging. But I love anything that's got dramatic monologues. There's actually a dramatic monologue on I Believe In A Thing Called Love but when it came to the mix the guy who was mixing it went, "So, the monologue's here, I'm just going to bring that dooown a little bit." And I went, "You can't really hear it." And he kept going with the fader, "Just going to bring this dooown a little bit more…" But if you listen *really* carefully you can hear me say, "Just listen to the rhythm of my heart". It's proper pre-Matt Berry but very much post-William Shatner style. I love anything with a dramatic monologue. I just think it adds a certain gravitas but, in fact, it's doing the very opposite.

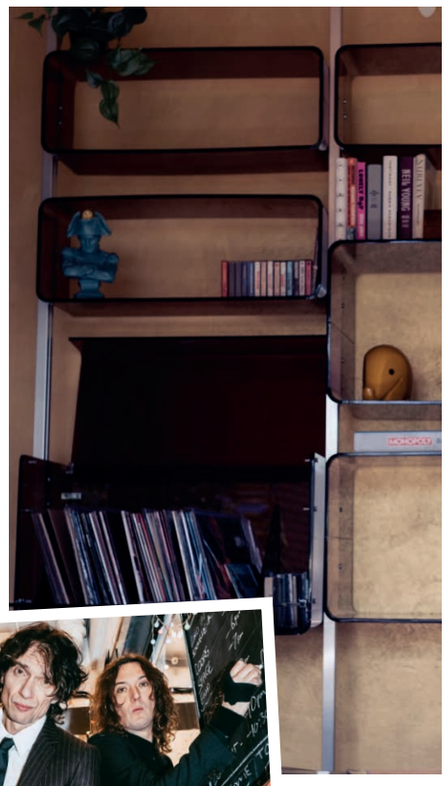
Humour has always been a big factor with The Darkness. Do you keep notebooks of puns and gags and song title ideas?
I do, yes. I have a lot of stuff written down that we'll be rolling out in the coming years. The key is if it makes my brother groan then we're onto something. I've got some real gold coming but you have to feed it out slowly, you can't just throw it all out there at once. With *Crock Of Hits*, it was Ed [Graham] our original drummer who came up with that. We were talking about calling the first album *Crock Of Hits* but we were like, "No, we've got to save that for the best-of." So, I can't take any credit for that, it was all Ed. One of his most amazing contributions to our career and he's not in the band anymore.

From the outset, in the early 00s The Darkness had to contend with a landslide of flak from the music press. Was revenge a motivation for success?
Oh, [sings to the tune of the Barbara Dickson & Elaine Paige hit] "You know me so weeell!" Yeah, *absolutely* it was revenge. It felt satisfying on that level. I've never been the most gracious person in victory. The best example I think would be the *New Musical Express*. Now you'd think from the title of that – *New Music* – but they treated it more like it was *The Sporting Times* because they were offering odds on who was going to be successful. They backed a band from New Zealand called The Datsuns who were operating in a similar AC/DC territory to us, but they didn't have the songs, and I say that with love and respect. They were great live but I can't remember any of their songs. But the *NME* were like, "Oh, this AC/DC thing is going to happen and it's going to be The Datsuns that do it" and at the same time were really dismissive of us. And this was a British newspaper! I just thought, "What the fuck's going on? Aren't you excited by these blokes from a small seaside town doing cock rock and actually getting somewhere with it?" It was an outrageous story in that climate. It was completely ridiculous and you'd think that they'd be all over us. I was so disappointed they were dismissive about it and really rude about me

"I LOVE ANYTHING WITH DRAMATIC DIALOGUE. IT ADDS A CERTAIN GRAVITAS"

Photos: Getty







Bigger, badder, Darker: Justin and the band circa 2017 and (below right) in 2020; (above right) Fonz regards; (below right) Justin's live version of Youtube show/podcast *Rides Again*, 2026

personally. So, when we did achieve success, I was, "Finally, motherfuckers. Fuck you!"

It was quite a stand-off as I remember. I saw you at Brixton Academy at the end of 2003 and there were teenage fans in the crowd wearing "FUCK THE *NME*" T-shirts.
Really? Yeah, it was interesting that it became a full-on war for a second then. But I didn't speak to them and that was my vengeance. So, we played at Glastonbury [2003] and it was all about us. They'd created a special slot for us, we nailed it and then the weather turned bad, everyone else was shit and we won that weekend. There's no getting away from it. And the editor from the *NME* said to me, "We can't write about Glastonbury this weekend without talking about you guys. So will you please do an interview?" And I was just, "No!" So they put me on the front cover, but they didn't get an interview. That was the vengeance for me.

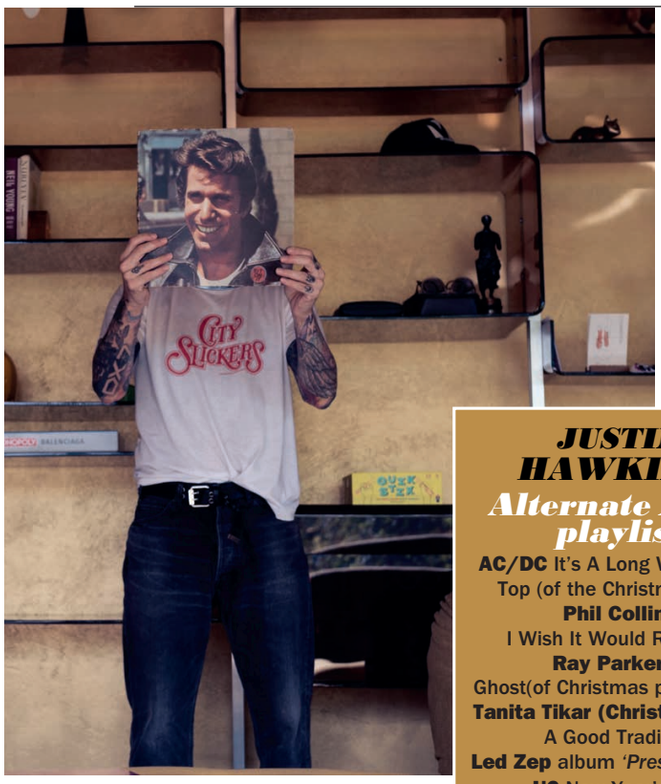
The rumour at the time was that the editor actually dropped to his knees and begged you?
Yeah, that is what happened. I was quite rude to him. But he didn't deserve any better.

Once you'd achieved success and fame, everything The Darkness ever wanted, why do you think, going into the second album, the wheels started to come off?
That's one way of looking at it but I don't know if success and fame are the things that you actually sign up for anyway. If we'd have been concerned with hedging our bets to try and give ourselves the best chance of becoming famous, we probably wouldn't be doing cock rock. I would argue that it wasn't what we were expecting at all. The reality of it was we just work hard and we didn't say no to anything. Where we could fit stuff into our schedule we did and we didn't have days off for a long time. Then we found ourselves suddenly obliged to follow up the first album and it was, "Oh? Fuck. OK. Now what?" And obviously the pressure and all the stuff that meant [bassist] Frankie [Poullain, who left in 2005, rejoining in 2011] wasn't in the band anymore. The thing about The Darkness has always been that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and Frankie's contribution cannot be overlooked. It just isn't as fun when he's not involved. So, I think the fact that it wasn't the same band personnel-wise as the first record made it impossible, for me, to enjoy it in the same way. Obviously, we had a chance to work with [Queen producer] Roy Thomas Baker who is a genius. A god, actually, I'd say. But I don't think that record [2005's *One Way Ticket To Hell… And Back*] is as good because Frankie's not there.

For you, that malaise, was it a case of becoming sick and tired with being in a band, the industry, or both?
The industry is a different question. I was in a relationship with the manager of the band, so she had her office in our house. Unfortunately, that meant I was privy to a lot of the things I shouldn't have seen, really, and I knew a lot about what was really happening in terms of the way we were really being seen and treated. It's very different if you're in a band and you live in a bubble, you think, "Oh, I do music for a living, this is cool." You go and see the label and they're all really nice to you. But when you live with the manager you see the reality of it. It's a bit like the difference between the first half and the second half of David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*. Suddenly you see the dog turds. I think the sheen came off all that stuff for me a little bit earlier than it should have done and I was already a bit prickly. Because I just knew. I started to smell bullshit everywhere because I'd been told one thing by one person and then heard the same person tell someone else a totally different thing because I'm sitting in the office. And they don't know I'm there! You're supposed to be focusing on the creative aspects and thinking about making music and performing and doing all that fun stuff but the industry, the trade, the business side of it, it's ugly.

The collapse of The Darkness in 2006 coincided with you going into rehab for drug and alcohol addiction, which you've been very open about...
I'm not *very* open. I'm reluctantly open.

… but do you think that was unavoidable? What happened to you has happened to so many others that it seems like part of the timeworn script of being in a rock band. Success leads to excess which leads to fucking up which leads to rehab?
It does happen a lot. It's an interesting



haven't been as lucky as me or it was too late for them to turn it around and they didn't survive. So, I think that the work they do, particularly in the Roehampton Priory, is really, really important. For a minute, I was thinking I'd like to go and become a counsellor or something or help them in some way, but the reality is I've got to focus on my own recovery. Even after 20 years, I'm nowhere near strong enough to provide that sort of guidance. But they were excellent and they really helped me but it's different because I volunteered to go there.

It's a luxury as well. Not everybody has the means to do an expensive rehabilitation programme. It's a form of privilege, so it is only successful people that go and do it, or people who come from money. I suppose everyone's got their different story but there are similarities, in terms of going off the rails, yeah. That's the whole point. We started off off-the-rails. That was our default setting. But when it gets to the point where I need to do this or else I am going to die, that's a bit further away from the rails. That's down the embankment, lying in a ditch.

How much of a part did music play in your initial recovery?
In early recovery stages, I tried a few different things to get myself on the straight and narrow and none of it took because I didn't let it, but I was listening to a *lot* of Todd Rundgren.

Particularly *Something/Anything*? That's a great record, isn't it? He was also doing TED talks about the industry, how music was changing from being a product, ie physical recordings, albums, cassettes, CDs to a service which is streaming and performing. He was predicting that around the time I came out of rehab and that is the way the music industry has shifted since the beginning of our career.

But the real philosophical change that everyone had to adjust to probably happened between 2006 and 2011, the years The Darkness were absent, and Todd Rundgren saw it all coming. I love his music. The Range War [from 1971's *Runt. The Ballad Of Todd Rundgren*] is probably my favourite song of his because the poem is just brilliant and where the rhymes land isn't where you think they're going to. If you just read it aloud it's like, wow! Todd's just amazing.

Beyond Todd, what record in your collection do you think our readers would be most surprised to find?
I don't think anybody would be that surprised to hear there's a Joe Dolce record in there.

***The* one?**
Yes, *the* one. Is there another? I've also got the Loadsamoney single, Doin' Up The House.

So, what can fans expect on The Darkness's arena tour? Props? Pyrotechnics? Spinal Tap-isms?
Yeah, you can expect stuff like that, but I don't think I'm doing flying this time because that has become prohibitively expensive, mainly because of insurances. I used to do it and that was already a big cost. It's one thing to fly over the stage because you're only really endangering yourself or your business partners. But then if you're flying over the audience there's a whole different level of liability involved. I remember the first time I did it, on our first big tour, I was sat on a giant stuffed tiger and that was all cool. But then the next time we did arena touring was about two years later, two years that I'd spent eating and drinking. The guy who was in charge of the flying stuff was the same guy as before and he was looking at me going, "Um, you look… *different?*" He was trying to find a nice way to tell me I was too fat to fly over the audience.

And after the tour is over, how will you be spending this Christmas?
It depends. Years with an even number I really enjoy Christmas but years with an odd number not so much and that's due to the terms of my divorce. Some years I have my daughter with me, some years I don't. If I don't have her this year I'll probably go snowboarding on my own. And I'll put my Joe Dolce record on my Walkman and just glide down the slopes to Shaddap You Face.

Follow/subscribe to the* Justin Hawkins Rides Again *channel on YouTube.

JUSTIN HAWKINS' Alternate Xmas playlist

AC/DC It's A Long Way To The Top (of the Christmas tree)
Phil Collins I Wish It Would Reindeer
Ray Parker Jr Ghost(of Christmas past)busters
Tanita Tikar (Christmas) Ham A Good Tradition
Led Zep album *'Presen(~ce~)ts'*
U2 New Year's Day

question. I always say that I could have plotted the whole thing but the rehab part of it is a bit different. You often see people who have had success and then done something so stupid that they got themselves in a bit of trouble and then the rehab part of it is mandated. That usually just involves a lap of the grounds of the North London Priory or something like that, and then they're back to their old ways as "reformed characters". But I do think it's a bit different for us. The reason I say I am reluctantly open is because I think rehab has literally saved my life. There are some people who I was in recovery with who

"HE WAS TRYING TO TELL ME I WAS NOW TOO FAT TO FLY OVER THE AUDIENCE"



33⅓ minutes with...

RUFUS TIGER TAYLOR

Interview: Simon Goddard

Born into pomp rock royalty, Rufus Taylor is the son of Queen's Roger Taylor – his middle name, Tiger, suggested by Freddie Mercury. The apple falling close to the crash cymbal tree, he followed in his dad's hi-hat-peddling steps, originally as part of the Queen + Adam Lambert band, where he regularly engaged in father and son "drum battles". Joining The Darkness in 2015, he's since made four albums with them, from 2017's *Pinewood Smile* to the most recent, *Dreams On Toast.* When not busting snare skins for a living, Rufus also runs The Shipwrights Arms pub in Helford, Cornwall.

Could you sum up our guest editor and your band leader Justin in three words?
Three words? Oh, god! OK.
Talent – like a freak talent. Ludicrous.
And sharp.

When you joined The Darkness, it must have made his dream come true, having actual Queen DNA in his band?
Yeah. I guess he's put it that way a couple of times. But it was for me, of course, also.

You were a Darkness fan before you joined?
Oh, totally! I first saw them when I was 15 when Growing On Me came out. I just thought they were the exact injection into the music industry that we needed. There was no one who had any balls at that time, they were all just a generic cut and paste of the last thing, it was all really boring. The Darkness were unapologetically English and good at what they did. Some people wrote them off as a joke band, which I never saw. I just saw them taking the piss out of themselves and the ridiculousness of our job, but that's what all our heroes did anyway. It's now over 10 years since I was asked to join and I'm still over the moon I'm in The Darkness.



What's your earliest memory of realising your dad was in Queen and how massive they were?
There wasn't one specific moment. My dad was always very good, and so was my mum, at making sure it never really came up or was made a big deal of. I knew he did music but I wasn't aware of what it meant to people and the scale of it until I got a little bit older and then you start meeting other people who find out who he is and ask me, "Do *you* realise?!" Then when I got older and got into music it almost became a negative for a while, everyone assuming I had everything super easy. Then you try writing songs yourself, that's when you really realise how amazing [Queen] actually were. Like, "Ah. Now I get it!"

What's the best piece of advice your dad's ever given you in terms of surviving a career in rock'n'roll?
A couple of things. One was to play your instrument, always serve the song and never yourself so keep showing off to a minimum if it's going to hinder the song. That was so key, brilliant advice. The other thing was just watching him when Brian [May] asked me to join the Queen tour. The way he dealt with tour life, all the local crew in every venue, shaking everyone's hand and giving a shit which, 99 per cent of artists I see, it doesn't enter their brain. It means you go back round to these venues the next year and they remember you and they'll go the extra mile to help you. You'll just have a much better touring existence.

"I'M STILL OVER THE MOON I'M IN THE DARKNESS"





Taylor made: (clockwise from left) Rufus with dad Roger in 2009; Rufus now; in action with The Darkness

Is it true that before you took up music professionally you were almost a ski instructor?
Not quite. I wasn't planning on becoming one as a lifestyle choice, but I got kicked out of school…

What for?
Haha! OK, well that was for a, er, "rock'n'roll reason" but I'll leave it at that! I got kicked out just before my GCSEs. I didn't know what to do at that point, so my dad threw me into this thing which his mate sent his son on, this really intense four-month course where people break bones and all sorts. The Warren Smith Ski Academy. It was great, one of the best things I ever did, but after those four months I started working on music right away.

When you come up with album titles – *Dreams On Toast,* for example – do they have to pass a group laughter test?
Absolutely. Every album we'll have a massive debate about it. Sometimes it goes on for a few weeks and we'll come up with a billion of the worst ideas you've ever heard, but some of them will really make us laugh. *Dreams On Toast* came about when we were thinking of names for what became *Pinewood Smile*. It was *sooo* shit, it was a joke suggestion, but Dan was getting really angry that we were so adamant about using it. We were winding him up. We brought it up again for *Easter Is Cancelled* – "Hey, *Dreams On Toast* is still there?" We didn't even suggest it for the last one. Dan just went, "For fuck's sake, if we call *this* one *Dreams On Toast* will you just shut the fuck up about it?" And we all went, "YAY!"

Do The Darkness give each other Christmas presents?
We usually do because we're usually touring in December so at some point at the end of the tour we'll find something for each other.

Is Justin hard to buy for?
He is a little bit. He's got his niche things that he likes. The main thing with Justin is, don't try and buy him clothes. He's constantly buying the world's most expensive clothes for himself so it's a waste of time. Unless it's a really dumb T-shirt or hat that'll make him laugh. That's the bottom line with The Darkness: thank fuck we all have the same sense of humour. There's never a dull day in the office. RC

The Darkness'* Band Of Brothers *UK arena tour starts 8 December at Glasgow OVO Hydro, finishing at London's O2 Arena on 16 December.* Crock Of Hits *is out now on Warner Music.

DARKLIFE

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL DESERVE TO DIE?

Guest editor Justin Hawkins vents his spleen



Music used to be, if you had something to say and you found a way of expressing it that was undeniable, whether it was a protest song or a love song, you had a chance and there'd always be someone like Ahmet Ertegun who'd put some money behind it because he'd feel it. And if you were dedicated to what you were doing, you worked hard, had an acoustic guitar and an idea, then you'd have an opportunity.

Now the *illusion* is that everybody has the opportunity, but it's not true. It's about privilege. Like football, it used to be the street kids who saw football as their way out of poverty and became incredible magicians through necessity so they could support their families. Music is the opposite. Music now, the only people who've got any sort of chance have parents who are hedge fund managers. Nobody takes a chance on anything. You have to have an existing social media fanbase, so nobody takes any risks anymore. So, the real visionaries have to completely dedicate their whole existence to it, and then be lucky, because most of the music is made by rich kids with nothing to say. They're not interesting people. It's the risk averseness that's killing it. What's the first thing they tell you if you have to therapise anything that you've ever experienced? That adversity is a gift. But if it's just music made by rich kids, where's the adversity?

What's absent from modern recording is dynamics. The reason it's important to get first pressings of classic albums is because you don't want the remastered stuff, where if you looked at the wave form, it's just a sausage. You want to be able to see the peaks and troughs. Some of the best examples of that are Queen records where Roy Thomas Baker was really pushing it to the max. There are some bits that are just too quiet, because it's not trying to compete with other stuff on the radio, it's a listening experience in its own right.

That's what's missing from modern records. It's a different approach to mixing and mastering, top to bottom. The whole way we think of what a record should sound like has changed mainly because of the format and the way we listen to it. And when I say "we", I mean people who listen to it on their phones so it's only important to get as much oomph out of their tiny speakers as possible. That's what's killing dynamics.

Thankfully, there are exceptions. Recently I interviewed Jason Williamson from Sleaford Mods on my YouTube channel. I love his performance style and his attitude – there aren't many people who embody punk in a really authentic way anymore. It's become corporatised and commodified. When I heard Sleaford Mods I thought, finally, wow, somebody's deconstructed it all. Jason's performance style has echoes of Axl Rose and stuff like that. You can see there's more going on. That's punk, isn't it? I'm just glad there are people like that who are prepared to stick it out.

So, apart from Sleaford Mods, who else do I like? There's Angine De Poitrine. "Quebec math rock", they call it. They're obviously not trying to get in the charts but look what's happening to them: their record is blowing up. And it's stayed blown-up as well, which is quite amazing. That first record, *Vol 1*, is brilliant, but there's only so much of it I can take. I do love Sherpa, though: if you're a running person like I am, and if you can find a way to get perhaps one of those baby strollers with a record player in it and a good set of headphones, that's a great track for running.

I also love Paris Monster. They're a contemporary band who are making really interesting music. But it's not rock, Jim, not as we know it. If you see them live it's a bass player and a drummer who sings, with modular synthesizers, and it's quite mesmerising the sound they make. The record sounds a bit more



"IT'S LIKE THERE ARE TWO MUSIC INDUSTRIES"

electronic, but you've got to admire the harmonic content of it, and the lyrics are really clever. I don't know how I'd describe it, really.

It's like there are two different music industries, the one that The Darkness live in, where the metrics for success are quite clearly ticket sales, album sales and so on, and then you've got this other weird shadow industry with bands like Paris Monster in it and musicians like Louis Cole and Nate Wood, who I've collaborated with on my new solo record. These guys who are really, really accomplished but they don't adhere to traditional song structure and don't seem to want to play the game. They could outplay any of the people in our industry but they just don't and nobody knows why. Paris Monster are definitely one of my favourites from that world. So, the good stuff is out there. It just takes some finding.

Justin Hawkins Rides Again *is also a podcast, while his debut solo record, provisionally titled* Incisions, Incisions, *is currently in development.*

HAPPY XMAS (*BORE* IS OVER)

Fed up with the same old festive records? Try *RC* columnist **Bob Stanley**'s new book about the history of the Christmas single (see inset). Or indeed get your lugholes round these dozen left-field choices. Then turn to page 62 where guest editor **Justin Hawkins**, no stranger to the Yule-themed smash, waxes lyrical about seasonal singles…



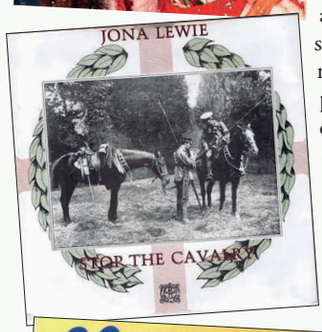


Santas and sinners (clockwise from above left): Darlene Love, purveyor of "the most emotional Christmas single of all"; tardy festive shopper and latter-day Christmas non-hitmaker Chris Isaak; Ray and Dave Davies of The Kinks, responsible for a slice of 70s seasonal satire, ignored by all; humbug-vendor Mark E Smith of The Fall; James Brown offers his "delightfully leftfield" remedy for Yuletide blues; Bobby Vinton goes polka on us in the 80s

Photos: Getty

I must have been five years old when I asked my mum and dad why they hadn't played Fire by the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown yet. It was Christmas Day, 1969. My dad had played it the previous Christmas, on his impressive Teac reel-to-reel tape recorder (cassettes were still in their infancy). I have no idea why he played it on Christmas Day – perhaps because he had lit a roaring fire in the front room – but either way, I associated Brown screaming, "I am the god of hellfire" with Christmas Day. To me, aged five, Fire was a traditional Christmas song. I thought we did it every year. So, when my dad told me that he had taped over it since the previous Christmas, I blubbed my eyes out.







Everyone has their own peculiar take on what is "Christmassy". One of the few things we can all agree on – leaving religion out of this, naturally – is the Christmas No 1. People still care about it. Kylie Minogue's huge fanbase cared about it enough to co-ordinate their purchases of Xmas, ensuring that it pipped Wham!'s Last Christmas to the top in Christmas week, 2025. Ditto Rage Against The Machine, keeping *The X Factor*'s latest five-minute wonder from No 1 in 2009.

Whether it's a positive or negative vote, it still counts. Yet in the age of streaming a whole swathe of Christmas songs that never had a moment of airplay, let alone a bite at the top of the chart, are as readily available as your Wizzards and your Wham!s.

I was born on Christmas Day. I love Christmas. For me it begins on 1 December – light the advent candle, purchased from the Swedish Christmas fair a week or two earlier (maybe that's when Christmas begins, in mid-November) and you're off.

Growing up, I always wanted to savour Christmas. My family always wanted to rip into everything, eat dinner in record time, get "merry" before the Queen's speech, and open the presents as quickly as possible. I was a turn-taker and always felt slightly guilty for my little sister, Jools, because, as well as taking twice as long to open my presents, I had a pile of presents that was twice as big – birthday and Christmas all jumbled together.

I've now got quite a water-tight system. We switch from Christmas to birthday mode at 6.00PM – when everyone's flagging at the end of Christmas Day, bringing out a birthday cake is exactly the sharpener that everyone needs. But it took until I was a fully grown adult for a slightly mean ex-girlfriend to suggest this (earning herself very black looks from my mum). Hyperactivity had previously felt like a prerequisite of the family Christmas and, of course, I didn't know any different. Taking ownership of Christmas – including cooking the turkey and, of course, putting the playlist together – made me feel like an actual grown-up.

I'm in firm agreement with Half Man Half Biscuit's It's Cliched To Be Cynical At Christmas, so anyone hoping for a loving analysis of the Pogues' Fairytale Of New York in this article will be disappointed. (I'm also not quite sure why Shane and Kirsty get a free pass for a homophobic slur, though I was impressed when they dubbed over the offending line, so it became, "You scumbag, you maggot, you had a bit part in Taggart"). It's fine to sound mildly despondent – not every 25 December is going to be a joyful time for everyone – but I think the best Christmas songs at least have to have an air of optimism, no matter how unrealistic that may be.

Christmas songs being No 1 at Christmas doesn't happen that often. Indeed, many of the canonical Christmas songs (Rocking Around the Christmas Tree, I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day, Step Into Christmas, Stop The Cavalry, Fairytale Of New York) weren't ever Christmas No 1s; many of the finest festive 45s never charted at all.

Here are a dozen of the best.



Vaughn Monroe
The Jolly Old Man In The Bright Red Suit (RCA Victor 47-3070, 7", US, 1949) **£5**
Nineteen forty-nine saw the first Christmas when 7", 45rpm vinyl singles were available in the shops as well as shellac 78s, which had been the dominant format for the first half of the 20th century. Vaughn may sound round and avuncular, but he was quite a sharp-faced fellow, with acute eyebrows to rival Fiona Bruce. He had already scored the original hit version of Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! in 1946. In 1950, Monroe would apparently turn down the chance to premiere Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer, which instead became an international hit for Gene Autry; this in turn meant he also blew the opportunity to cut Frosty The Snowman, purpose-written for Autry as a follow-up to Rudolph in 1951. Not everyone found his voice cosy and comfy at the time – Vaughn was quite the ladies' man and was nicknamed both "the baritone with muscles" and "the voice with hair on its chest".



Darlene Love
Christmas (Baby Please Come Home) (Philles 119, 7", US, 1963) **£40**
The most emotional Christmas single of all, I reckon, and a tour de force that might have been a huge hit had it not been issued in December 1963, just after John F Kennedy's assassination, which meant Christmas was effectively cancelled in America. It has been used as a festive backdrop in umpteen movies since Phil Spector's *A Christmas Gift For You* was revived in the 80s to become the default festive playlist, but this is rather peculiar, as you can literally hear Darlene's heart break in half at the two minutes, six seconds mark – not the kind of thing you might necessarily want to hear as you bite into a mince pie. Having flopped in 1963, the single was re-issued in the States in 1964, 1965 and 1966 (the year Spector retired – at least for three years), but for whatever reason it never caught the public's ear. Probably the most influential record on this list – no Darlene, no Mariah.

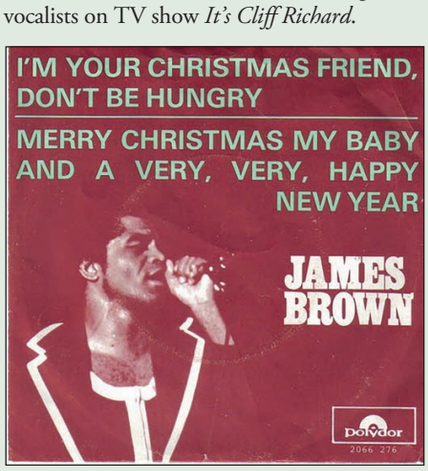
Brian Hyland **It's Christmas Time Once Again** (Dot 17061, 7", US, 1967) **£10**
Hyland's motto was apparently "one hit record means two years' gravy", which was a nicely positive outlook on a stop-start career that meant he scored huge American hits



over a 10-year period – from 1960's awful, but oddly deathless, Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini to 1970's moody and wonderous revival of Curtis Mayfield's Gypsy Woman – without ever building up much momentum. This oddly mumbled number was only his second single after signing to Dot in 1967 and is about as far from The Beatles' contemporaneous *Christmas Time Is Here Again* album, and its psych-pop jollity, as you can get. Its kindred spirit is Bobby Goldsboro's Look Around You (It's Christmas Time) on which Goldsboro spits out the word "plastic" with more vitriol than Dylan at the Albert Hall.



The Flirtations Christmas Time Is Here Again (Deram DM 216, 7" UK, 1968) **£35**
"Christmas cards completely surround me," sings Viola Billups, and you do get the feeling she might be housebound, hopefully due to snow drifts rather than an awkward tumble on the ice. A wonderfully full production on this one, with the same magnetic brass, bass and drum sound that propelled The Flirtations' beloved Nothing But A Heartache, which just happens to be on the A-side. Likewise, this was written by Wayne Bickerton and Tony Waddington before they went on to conquer the world with The Rubettes' Sugar Baby Love in 1974. The Flirtations had originally been The Gypsies, a New York girl group who released four singles before changing their name in 1966 and recording the Northern soul classic, Stronger Than Her Love. They moved to the UK in 1968, where they recorded two superb albums for Deram and became resident backing vocalists on TV show *It's Cliff Richard*.



James Brown I'm Your Christmas Friend (Polydor 2066 276, 7", Netherlands, 1970) **£10**
The Godfather Of Funk was clearly a Christmas fan, cutting enough festive material to fill a CD anthology. The one that usually makes it onto Xmas shopping playlists is Santa Claus Go Straight To The Ghetto, but this is so delightfully leftfield it has to be included. "I do the monkey, the mashed potatoes, whenever I'm blue," he sings at the beginning, and you wonder if he's read the room. He urges you to do more exercise before melancholically singing, "Don't be hungry, cos I'm your friend, I'm your Christmas friend." The whole feel of the song – funky as it is, with some superb skittering drums – is unusually downbeat, not helped by JB singing, "I got the fever, I'm soaking wet. Get up! I'm in a cold sweat." I'd clear out of his house sharpish unless you want to spend Christmas Day with a thermometer in your mouth.



Birgit Lystager
My Snowman (from *Love's Labyrinth*, Artist ALP 507, LP, Denmark, 1971) **£50**
All kinds of tricksy moves on this wonderful pop-jazz number. Birgit Lystager was from Aarhus and is best remembered in Denmark for her 1966 cover of Tommy Dorsey's wartime hit, Kiss The Boys Goodbye, and her 1970 translation of Chris Andrews' Euro hit, Pretty Belinda. Ordinarily she sang in Danish, but she recorded a brace of wonderfully arranged English language albums at the turn of the 70s, Ready To Meet You (on the cover of which she was tastefully naked) and *Love's Labyrinth*, both of which have long been prized by Japanese vocal jazz collectors. "We can go on forever, playing all sorts of games," sings Birgit to her snowman, suggesting she is worryingly unfamiliar with Aled Jones and Raymond Briggs' tale. Maybe Aarhus is much colder than I think it is. A box set of her complete recordings, released in Denmark in 2006, is probably the easiest and cheapest way to pick up her best albums.

The Angels Of Islington
We Want A Superstar For Christmas (Decca F 13614, 7", UK, 1975) **£5**
This was written by Denmark Street writer-for-hire Paul Curtis, who a few months earlier had come second in the *Eurovision Song Contest* with his song, Let Me Be The One, as performed by The Shadows. We Want A Superstar dedicated a line to every current chart performer with



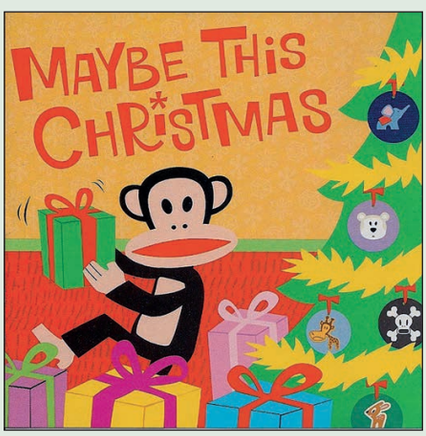
vague pin-up appeal ("David's gonna make you a star… and Elvis Presley lost weight"), including Status Quo ("we were rollin' it over, we were layin' it down"). No wonder one of the "Angels" sounds exhausted at the end, as her mate chides her into chasing after Alvin Stardust. The kids on the single going "Oi! Oi! Oi!" were from Kings Gate school, West Hampstead, and sounded like they were having a lot more fun than their Islington Green counterparts on Another Brick in the Wall (pt 2).



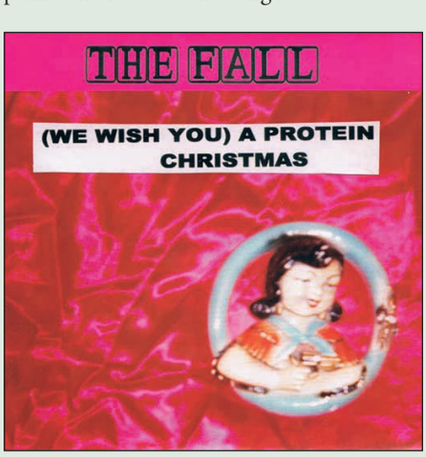
The Kinks Father Christmas
(Arista ARISTA 153, 7", UK, 1977) **£15**
A brave and snappy attempt from 1977 to keep up with the young 'uns, this power pop 45 showed The Kinks to be much more adept than any of the other 60s big names at engaging with the new wave. Father Christmas relates a tale about kids attacking Santa in a department store and shaking the small change from his pockets. Lyrically, it recalled Brenda Lee's I'm Gonna Lasso Santa Claus, taking issue with the fat man's "one size fits all" policy for rich and poor kids alike. Hard cash was preferable for kids with unemployed parents, reasoned Ray Davies: "Give all the toys to the little rich boys." Though he did cheekily add, "But if you've got one, I'll have a machine gun, so I can scare all the kids on the street." On the flipside was the equally class-conscious prince of the punks, a swipe at the likes of Joe Strummer and Tom Robinson who came from wealthier stock than they let on.



Bobby Vinton Santa Must Be Polish
(Bobby Vinton/Tapestry TR 100, 7", US, 1987) **£5**
Going by his mawkish early-60s hits – Blue Velvet, Roses Are Red, There I've Said It Again – it would have been hard to guess that Bobby Vinton would become a polka king. It was hard to even detect his Polish roots, but here they are writ large. There's accordion accompaniment, a splash of Bobby's native tongue and an undoubted air of bonhomie. I especially like the "must" in the title. I'd always thought Santa had to be from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but what do I know?



Ron Sexsmith *Maybe This Christmas*
(from *Maybe This Christmas*, Nettwerk 06700 30295 2 0, CD, US, 2002) **£5**
The title track from a compilation that generally featured bigger names than sulky faced Ron (Coldplay, Ben Folds, Bright Eyes, Vanessa Carlton) but you can see why the album was named after this lovely, low-key thing. It sounds like crunching snow under your feet as you trudge back from the pub, gloved hands in pockets. All Ron wants is a little peace and quiet, but his optimism – muted though it may be – points the route to the song's success.



The Fall
(We Wish You A) Protein Christmas
(Action TAKE 22, CD, UK, 2003) **£30**
One to file next to Earl Brutus's Single Seater Christmas, Denim's I Will Cry At Christmas and Half Man Half Biscuit's It's Cliched To Be Cynical At Christmas, classics all. What's going on in the lyric? Jesus appears to have returned to earth – Salford, probably – to find that things aren't quite as "ho ho ho" as he was hoping they'd be; he sees his own blood on the streets, for a start. The melody is plangent, the backing

vocals like cheerless monks, but it moves along at a fair lick and is a necessary counterweight to The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year et al, one to match Cristina's 1982 Zé classic Things Fall Apart in its dashed Christmas hopes. "Why did I come back?" asks Mark E Smith glumly. "The only good thing to say is all the politicians are on holiday."



Chris Isaak
Almost Christmas (from *Everybody Know It's Christmas*, Sun SUN 8017 CD, US, 2022) **£10**
In which indecisive Chris is haring around a department store on Christmas Eve trying to find the perfect present for his beloved. Don't do this, people, get your shopping done in November! This rollicking, rolling number has percussion that sounds like Chris pinballing from one counter to another, his perfect quiff collapsing all over his face. It has a counterpart in Nathan Fake's Christmas Rush, a slice of electronica that sounds exactly like the inside of your head as you attempt to simultaneously placate three different relatives, all cross at you for different reasons. "Where's the remote?" "I dunno. You probably threw it out with the wrapping paper, you berk!" RC

Bob Stanley's* The Twelve Songs of Christmas: Britain's Love Affair With the Xmas No 1 *is published by White Rabbit.

SLEIGH BELLS AND SADNESS

Our guest editor, Justin Hawkins, co-writer of The Darkness's 2003 festive No 2 Christmas Time (Don't Let The Bells End), on the secret of the ultimate Yuletide smash


The Darkness: many a true word spoken with bare chest







The perfect Christmas song? Well, we had a go and did very well with ours. The title was almost *Viz*-level. Nobody at the label protested, at least not to me. The thing is, when you're recording backing vocals that are stacked like that, or there's a choir or something, you try and avoid softer consonants and the fizzier stuff, because they can land in the wrong place, so that's why I was saying the backing vocals should be *"bells end"* and *"ring peace"* just to maintain clarity. So, in the end we did have all the kids singing bell-end and ring-piece and I'm quite certain that everybody knew what was happening. Children, especially, they all talk like that, don't they? Weirdly, the children's choir were all from the same school in New Cross that my mum went to, but it was a complete coincidence.

In terms of what you want to hear on a Christmas song, that's when chromatic percussion becomes important. Outside of a Blondie record, I think Christmas is the only time I ever want to hear tubular bells. Apart from Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*. But bells, absolutely, sleigh bells, other types of bells, children singing – their voices are so important in that context, and I think once you've got those things you're laughing, really. But it shouldn't be the foundation; those are the embellishments that make it Christmasy. Because if you think about a Christmas tree, it's just another green tree and then once you put all that stuff on – it's a Christmas tree! Songs are the same. It's just a song until you put the children and the bells on and then it's a Christmas song.

Whenever I think of Christmas, I always think of It Must Have Been Love by Roxette because that was originally a Christmas song. They rebranded it after Pretty Woman, but it used to be called It Must Have Been Love and then, in brackets, "Christmas In Solitude" or something depressing like that *[indeed: It Must Have Been Love (Christmas For The Broken Hearted) – Non-guest ed].*

There's a noble tradition of Christmas songs and it only works when you pour everything into it. There's no half-arsing a Christmas song. Coldplay will tell you that. Their Christmas Lights thing? Fuck, what is that? It's just shit! They could have called it anything, there's nothing Christmassy about it at all. You've got to think about your audience in that instance because it's the eggnog-guzzling reluctant family gatherings, that kind of stuff, so there's always a tinge of sadness. That's why I love Last Christmas, because there's something remorseful about it, but it's still uplifting despite what is essentially a break-up song.

Do They Know It's Christmas? That's the exception. You could almost ask, Should They Know It's Christmas? Why Is Christmas Relevant? In that environment, slap bang in the middle of a famine, Who Cares About Christmas? That is the only one that doesn't fit into that. Why Are They Bothering With Christmas? That's what I would've called it. The whole thing you have to encapsulate is that, regardless of how shit the rest of the year might have been, Christmas is a time to put all that to one side and go, "Yay! It's Christmas!" Which is why Do They Know It's Christmas? is a great example of that because it's like, oh god, the rivers are dry, there's no food, there's famine and starvation… but there's Christmas as well! In all that bleakness there's this glittery thing.

It's important it has a bit of sadness. Fairytale Of New York is a great example of that, too. There's something swingy and uplifting about it until you listen to what they're saying. It's like, oh… but at least it's Christmas. In fact, that could be a title for a Christmas song – At Least It's Christmas. That's pretty good, actually. Sums it up.

Death Cult
BBQ2706

Gary Numan
BBQ2704

The Charlatans
BBQ2700

China Drum
MNT1009

Tubeway Army
BBQ2262

Gene Loves Jezebel
BBQ2724

Mclusky
PURE383

The Go-Betweens
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SYNTH'S UP

In 1985, **The Beach Boys** returned with their first studio album since the death of Dennis Wilson. A shiny, star-studded electronic pop record that brought surf rock into the 80s, their first digitally recorded album is now getting a new remix, inviting reappraisal of an overlooked – and routinely underappreciated – period in the band's history. **Felix Rowe** talks to the album's producer, **Steve Levine**.



Console yourselves: Levine with Brian Wilson during the making of 1985 album *The Beach Boys*

The 1980s have never been cosidered a vintage era for The Beach Boys. While other periods are getting a welcome reassessment, this decade has yet to be claimed by the hiperati. Commercially, at least, 1988's Kokomo is the outlier – a guilty-pleasure No 1 smash that's conspicuous precisely because it stands alone on greatest hits packages (even if routinely derided as sugary, nostalgia-baiting pastiche).

But spare a thought for the group's 25th studio album, 1985's *The Beach Boys*. The self-titled record is usually an honour reserved for an artist's definitive statement – or, as here, an ageing act's attempt to reassert the brand. Given the upheaval that preceded it – the return of Brian Wilson's psychologist Eugene Landy, Carl Wilson going solo, and the death of Dennis Wilson – it's a wonder it was made at all.

The worst thing that might be said of *The Beach Boys* is that casual listeners can't remember it exists. That may change with a new mix being lined up for release. Several milestones distinguish the album as worthy of note: the group's first post-Dennis LP; their first to be recorded fully digitally; and the first since the early surf records produced entirely by an outsider – Englishman Steve Levine, fresh from global success with Culture Club. What's more, it's the moment The Beach Boys went full-on synthpop.

Whatever one's view of the divisive 80s aesthetic, undoubtedly it underpins the collection as a focused, consistent-sounding body of work – not the product of five or six musicians pulling in as many directions, a criticism often levelled at its predecessors.

Highlights include Mike Love's Getcha Back (a near-carbon copy of Springsteen's Hungry Heart, released five years prior), Bruce Johnston's yearning ballad, She Believes In Love Again, and Carl Wilson's majestic Where I Belong – all worthy of repeated spins. *The Beach Boys* features several star cameos – Stevie Wonder, Ringo, Gary Moore – but none overpower the main event: those rich, layered harmonies.

Today, Levine works out of his own studio in Liverpool, where he is also an associate at Paul McCartney's LIPA. He has produced a series of award-winning BBC radio documentaries on subjects including The Beatles, 10cc and Brian Wilson. Restoring *The Beach Boys* with a fresh mix has been a pet project.

Levine cut his teeth as a trainee engineer at CBS Studios, where he worked on Sailor's 1977 album, *Checkpoint*, produced by then ex-Beach Boy, Johnston. Though initially a lowly tape-op assistant, Levine got promoted when the Stella-swigging, chain-smoking engineer assigned to the project "was very much not the kind of vibe that Bruce liked. This particular engineer was used to those rock'n'roll sessions, starting very late in the afternoon, going through the night, and that wasn't the cycle that Bruce was on".

Johnston's straight-laced studio etiquette was a far cry from the infamous cocaine-and-hamburger sessions enjoyed by Brian and Dennis Wilson. "Bruce fell out with the engineer, big time," delivering an ultimatum to the studio boss: "I can't work with this guy. If Steve's not doing the session, I'll take it somewhere else."

So, Levine was upgraded, though not without agitating the senior engineers he'd leapfrogged. "It was such a weird vibe. We put paper over the studio door window, because people really had the arse with me. 'What the fuck is he doing? He's only 19, bloody upstart!' It's a burden I've carried my whole life; the

opposite of imposter syndrome. I felt absolutely that I knew what I was doing!"

Johnston took Levine under his wing, inviting him to Los Angeles to hone his craft. "Bruce was the successful producer of The Beach Boys at the time. Brian wasn't doing anything." Johnston was fresh from winning a Grammy for I Write The Songs, a 1976 No 1 for Barry Manilow.

Johnston later returned to produce the next Beach Boys records, 1979's *L.A. (Light Album)* and 1980's *Keepin' The Summer Alive*. Produced during a particularly fractious time and padded out with older material, both were patchy and poorly received (though the former contained some sublime material courtesy of Brian [Good Timin'], Carl [Full Sail] and Dennis [Love Surrounds Me]). Perhaps keen to get out of the firing line, Johnston handed the poisoned chalice to his protégé.

"I then get the call from Bruce to say, 'How would you like to produce the next Beach Boys album?'" By now, Levine was an in-demand producer, having topped the charts on both sides of the Atlantic with Culture Club. In 1984, he became the youngest ever recipient of the Brit Awards' "Producer of the Year" (a record he held until 2026).

"'WHERE'S MIKE?' 'HE'S IN THE BOOTH, MEDITATING'"

NEW HORIZONS

While Levine was in Jamaica recording Ziggy Marley & The Melody Makers, Brian flew out with Dr Landy to discuss the project. Levine fondly recalls an impromptu version of Surfer Girl around the piano, complete with reggae-infused backing vocals from the Tuff Gong session players.

"Brian was really excited, because Carl had told him I had a Fairlight [novel sampling synthesizer]. One of the first things he asked was, 'Can you show me what it can do?' So, we sampled Brian's voice doing an 'ahh'. It's not exciting now, but honestly, it was mind-blowing at the time to be able to sample your voice and play it back on a keyboard."

Dennis Wilson had been increasingly estranged from the group for years. In 1982, Dennis and cousin Mike Love even issued mutual restraining orders. Then Dennis drowned in late December 1983, shortly before sessions got underway. Footage from the 1984 press conference shows the surviving brothers visibly shaken. A dark cloud must have lingered over the sessions…

"I honestly have no recollection of it being morbid," says Levine, who never met Dennis. "It may well have been some sense of relief, because he was a troubled soul. Maybe they felt he had peace."

Yet for all the public ups and downs of America's greatest soap opera, they appear to have been in a relatively pragmatic headspace to get the job done.

"Brian, at that point, was possibly [enjoying] one of his fittest blocks of time in terms of his physical health," recalls Levine. "In terms of my conversations with him, he was lucid, fine, and absolutely on the money."

Starting in early 1984, they hopped back and forth between London and LA, completing the record over the course of a year.

"Although you hear all these stories about Mike, I can honestly say he was incredibly professional," Levine states. "The only thing that was really hilarious was his bullshit meditation. One point, I wanted him to do a vocal – 'Where's Mike?' 'Oh, he's in the vocal booth, meditating.' I went in and he was sound asleep, snoring. If that's meditating, so be it."

Producing The Beach Boys, how do you go about making a contemporary record with an established act boasting such a legacy?

"One of the things we definitely didn't want to do was make a retro record," Levine muses. "You can never, ever capture your youth. That's gone. But that was never on the list. Essentially, they wanted to make an 80s album. It was as if it was a Culture Club record, or any of the other bands I was working with at the time – their backing tracks with The Beach Boys singing on it. We went about it in exactly the same way."

FAB GEAR

Levine remembers the Boys being eager to explore "the playground of toys". "Well, not everyone. Bruce, Carl and Brian were absolutely obsessed with all the gear that I brought in. Al is a guitarist, so he was less bothered. Mike could care less.

"One thing that Mike did love – that Mike Love loved – was when we did Getcha Back with Terry Melcher." They utilised a novel Kurzweil keyboard, which sounded like several instruments playing at once. "I really remember Terry playing the part, and Mike, an inch away from him, absolutely loving the sound."

Brian, of course, was no stranger to synths. Ever the pioneer, *The Beach Boys Love You* (1977), Brian's proto-synthpop record, baffled audiences on release, but is now enjoying a critical re-evaluation.

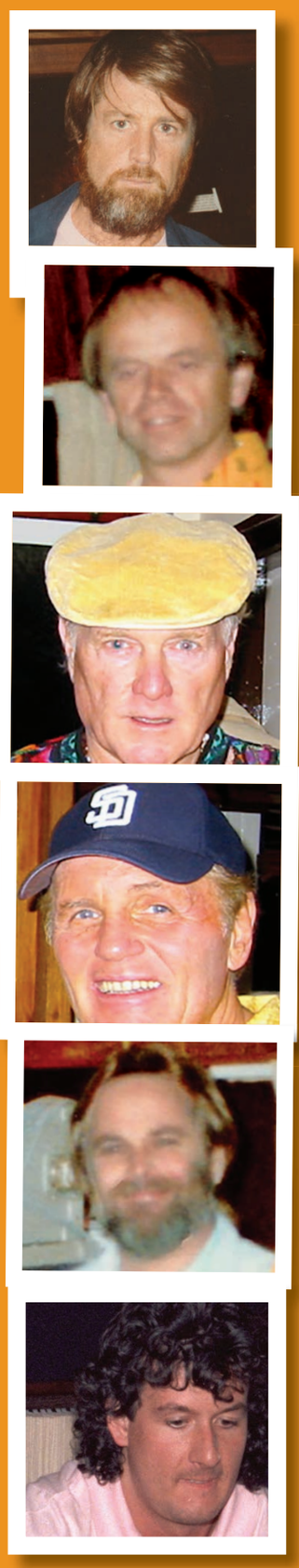
"Everyone of that generation – Brian Wilson, The Beatles, the Motown producers –wanted to use the latest thing and push the envelope as far as they could," asserts Levine.





FAIRLIGHT BRIGADE

Who was there for The BBs' digi debut?



Over and Oberheim – the team from top to bottom: Brian Wilson, Al Jardine, Mike Love, Bruce Johnston, Carl Wilson and producer Steve Levine

Brian had pioneered modular recording on Good Vibrations, building small sections and splicing them together. Now, Brian and Carl embraced the real-time editing possibilities of MIDI, as well as the ease of sampling found sounds. "Where I Belong is one of Carl's great things – everything on that is an innovative sound. Those low drums are things like flight cases we sampled.

"I had breakfast with Carl one day at the Century City Racquet Court," Levine adds. "You walk past the court and it's got this big noise. I said, 'Oh, that's a great sound.' Carl makes a call… the next morning, I go in there before it's open with a portable recorder. That's the big sound on Getcha Back. We were always trying to think of silly things to do in the way we approached it."

To achieve the "doo doo" vocal parts on California Calling, they sampled the group's voices into the Fairlight and then triggered them for precision.

"Al and I had a bit of a falling out over the key change," Levine admits, "because they had to sing them again." Recalling the incident in a 1988 interview, Brian remembered feeling "terrible" after the bust-up. They swiftly made up and got back to work, with Brian later joking: "Everything's cool – except for that fuckin' Al Jardine screwing him up!"

He recounts "another Steve Levine faux pas", realising they needed to re-record another sample – a brief snippet of bass they'd recorded in London. Fortunately, Luther Vandross was recording next door. So, Levine strolled in and commandeered his bass player, who duly played a quick "Boink! Dink!" and left.

"Greg [the engineer] said, 'You know who that was?' No. 'Marcus Miller.' I went, 'Oh, fuck.'" Levine had inadvertently called in one of America's most in-demand bassists (credits including Miles Davis and Aretha Franklin) to perform two rudimentary notes.

Levine regrets failing to enlist Vandross at the same time. "Luther came in loads of times to listen. I should have bloody got him to sing."

On the subject of vocals, rumours circulated that Levine sent Brian off to get singing lessons…

"Yes, that is true," Levine reveals. "After a very early take – which was just awful – I said to Brian, 'It's terrible. I think you need some singing lessons.' What I actually meant was vocal coaching to enable stamina and breathing. And I still maintain that. Brian had finished smoking and was physically fit, but singing on mic for four or five hours needs a lot of stamina."

That's got to take some guts.

"My name was going on the top of the shop," he counters. "I didn't want the world to be embarrassed by them. I did it through the hubris of youth. Ultimately, it proved to be correct, because the vocals are great. Getcha Back, for example, those high vocals are 100 per cent Brian, and in those days we didn't have AutoTune."

"I SAID TO BRIAN, 'I THINK YOU NEED SINGING LESSONS'"

But surely Levine felt just a bit cheeky telling the world's greatest vocal arranger to get singing lessons?

"No," he replies. "I was hired to do a job, and I didn't have the tools. Sometimes you've got to do shitty things for the bigger picture."

A STARR TURN

Early in the sessions, The Beach Boys played Washington DC's 4 July celebrations – one of their first high-profile performances post-Dennis, with Ringo Starr sitting in on drums.

"I was introduced to Ringo backstage by Jerry Schilling, who knew Ringo really well because of Elvis and The Beatles," Levine explains. "Mike and Carl said, 'Please, please speak to Ringo, see if he'll do a session.' Mike had managed to get us Concorde tickets. On the way back, it was virtually empty." So, Levine seized his moment. "Before I'd even finished the sentence, Ringo said, 'When do you want me?'"

California Calling was the obvious choice. "I was trying to achieve a surf song, but with an 80s programmed electronica vibe. Whether I achieved it or not… It was close."

For the main groove, they sampled Ringo's drums into the Fairlight, then Ringo overdubbed timpani and percussion. "On the remix, I was able to improve the fidelity further, because I still have the original samples. It's also stereo now – in those days, I could only sample mono, but thankfully I recorded in stereo."

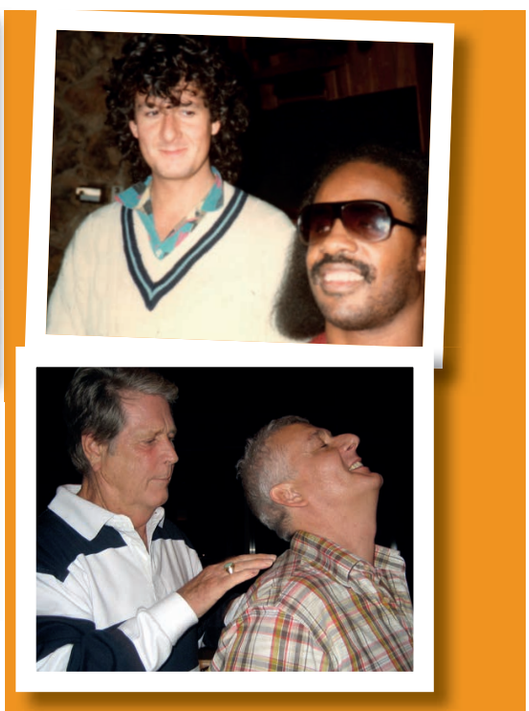
Maybe I Don't Know, which Levine co-wrote with Carl, grew out of discussions around Gary Moore's 1983 single, Falling In Love With You, also produced by Levine. Carl liked the idea of a West Coast "faux-rock-sounding track" with polished vocals. "At the time, you had Chicago, Toto, Aerosmith, Journey, those type of bands, with that rock sound, but they'd all been influenced by The Beach Boys."

Another reference point was the shuffle rhythm of Sail On Sailor. The result is an unashamed yacht-rock anthem in all its pomp – the kind of brash, sheening goliath once derided but now celebrated for its gilded excess.

The Stevie Wonder collaboration on I Do Love You came about when Wonder rang up Levine, asking him to pop round to fix his drum machine. In return, Stevie asked if they wanted any songs. Absolutely, was obviously the reply – with the proviso that Wonder would play on the track. "It was honestly as simple as that."

But it's never as simple as that. "You know what people have said about Stevie – he turns





Can you digitise it? (above, clockwise from bottom left): Levine at the controls at Red Bus Studios, UK; with Carl, Al and (left) engineer Gordon Milne at Westlake Studios, LA; with Brian; Stevie Wonder offers his services; Levine with Brian in 2007; with Ringo Starr during the album sessions



One of the Boys: (above) Levine with Mike Love and Bruce Johnston in 2004; (right) Dennis' demise makes the front pages, while *The Beach Boys* LP gets a patriotic marketing launch

up late in the middle of the night? 5 o'clock comes, no Stevie, and I didn't book anyone else. 5.30, nothing. Oh, fuck. Quarter to 6, the phone rings. 'I'm really sorry, I am stuck in horrendous traffic.'"

It was worth the wait. "One of the most brilliant experiences I've ever had," decides Levine. "Literally, each thing was one take. Drums, Rhodes, bass – bam, bam, bam. So fast, so good, and so brilliant."

After Wonder delivered his trademark chromatic harmonica, all that remained was for Carl to lay down an uncanny lead vocal, capturing all of Stevie's inflections and phrasing.





Carl's soulful vocal on Passing Friend could easily be interpreted as a tribute to Dennis (sample lyric: "there's nothing worse than a passing friend, who will die on you till the bitter end"). In fact, it was written by Culture Club's Boy George and Roy Hay, with the latter providing most of the instrumentation. The lyric becomes especially pertinent in pre-empting events that soon unfolded in George's life.

MIND GAMES

Throughout, Brian was overshadowed by the looming spectre of Eugene Landy, famously brought in to keep him on task, though essentialy keeping him a psychological captive.

"Americans use the word 'grifter', don't they? That's what he was." says Levine. "I tried to get him away as much as possible. I hated working with him. He was an awful man, a real pain in the arse."

He recalls joking about with Brian before an interview. "Brian's really laughing, and then Landy comes over and whispers something in his ear. And it changes like that. His face. As if someone had flicked a switch."

The power Landy wielded over Wilson has become legendary. "One point, I fell out with Landy. Landy is standing there. Tom Hewlett [the band's manager] is standing there. And Landy won't speak to me. So, I have to say to Tom, 'Can you ask Landy to bring Brian to the studio tomorrow?' How fucking childish is that?"

It's reminiscent of a televised interview for Wilson's 1988 solo album. He refers to Landy as his "doctor", then he corrects himself to 'business partner' – a disturbing example of a professional line being crossed.

"Landy absolutely crossed it. I remember when we were doing I'm So Lonely, sat around the piano, Landy chipped in with a lyric idea. And we went, 'What the fuck?'"

Landy was co-credited on many Brian compositions of the era, only to be removed years later in subsequent reissues. "I think the estate has finally managed to rescind that," says Levine, "because it was bullshit."

Levine remained close friends with Carl up to his death in 1998, and his relationship with Brian endured, too. He recalls the frustration of missing half the *SMiLE* afterparty in Kensington [in 2004], struggling in vain to find a parking space, while his wife and daughter were hobnobbing with Brian over drinks and canapés.

"Eventually," Levine says, "I run up to the hotel. They see me come in, sweating and fuming. This is my daughter's anecdote. Brian says to Rosie, 'What's the matter with your dad? He needs to smoke some weed and calm down!' Brian then gives me a back rub to make me chill. A great moment of his loveliness."

THE NEW MIX

Levine had hoped to get *The Beach Boys* reissue out for the 40th anniversary.

"But, as always with The Beach Boys, as Carl said, they have a bad case of entourage. Brian did sign off, everyone signed off on it before I started. So, we have the provenance that everyone knows what was going on."

What was Levine's ultimate goal?

"Number one, preservation, because we've all seen stories of tape storage facilities bursting into flames, masters being destroyed. Tape formulations are deteriorating over time. My main concern was, I'm the only person that knows where the bodies are buried, as it were, because I can remember what goes where. Someone else coming into it in 20–30-years' time may not know what's going on, because it's not obvious."

Were there certain things that always bugged him?

"I have fixed technical things – the odd pop and click – that were too difficult back then." Today's technology also allows greater separation of parts. "But I haven't gone through and tuned everything. In some cases, I've kept my original bounce-downs of the vocal blocks, because I thought, you know what? That's perfect."

While he was keen to remain "as respectful to the original mixes as possible", alternative decisions include the front-end of Getcha Back being left as originally recorded (it was edited for the release) – and likewise, the back-end of She Believes In Love Again. "We faded it originally, because there was an issue with the track, but I was able to fix it to reveal what we actually wanted."

Levine has fixed tape damage and dropouts, "So, what's on the hard drive now is as close to the day we recorded it as possible". It means everything is in good shape, should the opportunity arise to do a Dolby Atmos mix in future.

The band's reissue schedule is booming following the *Pet Sounds* anniversary, with renewed interest in the back catalogue since Brian's passing. Levine's updated mix was initially slated for a digital release, although there are rumours of a vinyl pressing, and one or two other surprises, with full details yet to be announced.

"I think the original version is fabulous," says Levine, finally. "The remix sounds bigger, more open. Like, if you have a painting that's been on a wall for quite some time, and it goes to restoration – they polish it and the colour comes back. That's all I've done." RC

The new mix of* The Beach Boys *will be released in January 2027.

GOOD RHYMIN'

10 of the best 80s Beach Boys Songs (that aren't Kokomo)

She Believes in Love Again
Goin' On
Meet Me in My Dreams Tonight (Brian Wilson)
Getcha Back
Love And Mercy (Brian Wilson)
Where I Belong
Givin' You Up (Carl Wilson)
Rio Grande (Brian Wilson)
I Do Love You
Hold Me (Carl Wilson)





Photo: Avalon Red

WAYNE'S WORLDVIEW

It's been 40 years since **The Mission** released their debut album, God's Own Medicine, and the **Wayne Hussey**-led band have been playing shows in London this month to celebrate. **Joel McIver** asks the maestro to recall the thrills and spills of the last four decades, including his spell as a Sister Of Mercy, the sudden fame that made The Mission a target for the press, and the 'cheap and cheerful' substance that powered their early days...

Any band formed in the 80s still selling out midsized to large venues can congratulate themselves on a first-rate career. Indeed, keeping any group together and solvent for even a year or two presents a significant challenge. In the case of The Mission – formed in 1986 in Leeds by Wayne Hussey (vocals, guitar), Simon Hinkler (guitar), Craig Adams (bass) and Mick Brown (drums) – their presence is undiminished, having rewarded their fans with a run of four anniversary shows at the Forum in London's Kentish Town this month (November). The group, now with Alex Baum on drums, have been playing four different sets of songs from their 10-album career as well as new material from their forthcoming album *Songs Of Kith & Kin*, due out in the spring.

Is Hussey looking forward to the shows? He chuckles drily in our video call to Brazil, where he lives: "I am, but the band aren't thanking me for it! They've got 60-plus songs to learn, plus some new ones. I like to keep them on their toes, you know."

In fact, The Mission have plenty to celebrate. Hussey, resident in Sao Paulo, recently recovered from heart surgery, and the band's first three albums – *God's Own Medicine* (1986), *Children* (1988) and *Carved In Sand* (1990) – are about to reappear in a variety of remastered



The Mission in 1989 (l-r): Mick Brown, Simon Hinkler, Craig Adams, Wayne Hussey





Goth willing (l-r): The Mission in 1987; Hussey backstage with The Cult's Billy Duffy; at the peak of the band's late-80s success



coloured vinyl reissues, another indicator of a present and loyal fanbase.

"It's been 40 years since *God's Own Medicine*," observes Hussey, "so it seemed like a pertinent point to re-release that one album, and the Demon label wanted to follow up with the other two at the same time, so why not? The chaps that look after the band's business on my behalf thought it was a good idea, so they approached a couple of labels and Demon were up for doing it. We could have done it ourselves, but going with a more established independent label, you have a bigger reach."

Hand on heart, can he hear the difference between the remasters and the originals? "Hand on this fragile heart of mine, not really," he admits. "They sound the same, except we've moved some of the songs around on *God's Own Medicine*. It's reverted to how I originally wanted the tracklisting to run, which was a nice little touch."

It turns out that this issue has been slightly bugging him for decades. "This was our first album on a major label, and I felt at the time that Stay With Me would be the best first single off that album," he says. "I was wrong, and I'll hold my hands up to that, but I felt that we'd had two alternative independent chart No 1s with Serpent's Kiss and Garden Of Delight, so I just thought, let's try Stay With Me. That song was originally going to be track four on side two of the vinyl, but they came to us and said, 'The territories don't like that, they want the single on side A. Can we swap it around with Severina?' In terms of the lyrical arc, if there ever was such a thing on the album, the original order fitted more succinctly, in my opinion, so I suggested that we revert it for the reissue. I don't think anybody else was really aware of it..."

Asked about *Songs For Kith & Kin*, Hussey notes that a personal highpoint has been that singing the new songs was fun this time, rather than a chore. Like so many musicians of his vintage (he's 68), his vocal cords are showing their age, but as he admits: "I'm actually enjoying the sound of my voice this time. I don't normally enjoy it, because I'm hypercritical. I don't know whether that's a relief that I still have a voice, or because there's a quality that's appeared that wasn't there before. It feels lived-in, and I like that. My range changed a little while ago, so we dropped all the tunings down to compensate for that when we play live, but I'm hitting the high notes all right. Being onstage and singing for two hours straight is another matter. I'm building up my strength and my lung capacity, and I do physio twice a week... I'm going to be real buff!"

A quick run-down of Hussey's career: having grown up in Bristol, he honed his craft with Penetration singer Pauline Murray and the Liverpool band Dead Or Alive before landing a spot in The Sisters Of Mercy, the quintessential British goth-rock band despite their hatred of that term. He recorded the Sisters' classic debut album, *First And Last And Always,* alongside bassist Adams in 1985. After failing to see eye-to-eye with frontman Andrew Eldritch, Hussey and Adams quit to form The Mission.

"I had a great time in The Sisters Of Mercy," recalls Hussey, "because I was able to bring some colour to the music: their songs had been a bit monochrome before I joined. We didn't have much money until we signed to Warners, and they put us on a wage of £25 a week, but we never cared about that. A high point came when we played the Royal Albert Hall in June 1985, although I was really hungover because I'd gone out the night before, so I got told off by Eldritch."

Although Eldritch initially took the news that Hussey was leaving the Sisters with good grace, and indeed asked him if he'd play on the next album, the relationship soon soured and remained tense for some years. "It all went a bit nasty," sighs Hussey. "Mind you, I went to see the Sisters around 1991, and at the aftershow he told me that I was the best guitarist he'd ever worked with, which was nice of him."

How does he look back on *First And Last And Always*? "It's a decent album, definitely. I remember a few years ago I was contacted by Billy Corgan of the Smashing Pumpkins, who is a big fan of the Sisters and also a big fan of my guitar playing, I think, as much as anything else. He got in touch and asked if I'd played *First And Last And Always* recently. I said I hadn't played it in years, and he said, 'Go on, you need to play it again.' I put the CD on in the car and I was pleasantly surprised, because after this much time, I'd forgotten all the trouble and the strife that surrounded it. A while after that, he invited me and Craig up to his house in Chicago for a week. The day we arrived was the day that David Bowie died [on 10 January 2016]. Billy wanted to play those early songs, and he had all the gear. We started playing and said, 'Yeah, that's it – that's the sound of *First And Last And Always*.'"

Photos: Avalon Red, Getty



The Mission went stratospheric with remarkable speed. *God's Own Medicine* was a No 14 hit and the singles Wasteland, Severina (featuring All About Eve's Julianne Regan) and Stay With Me all scored highly. Tours with The Cult, Psychedelic Furs and U2 established the brand and, within a year, the new group were very hot property. With the benefit of hindsight, Hussey and Adams might reasonably have vanished into obscurity, but in fact they did the exact opposite.

"It wasn't like we were a completely new band," reasons Hussey, "because we knew what we were doing and what it was about. We knew that we looked good. We knew we had some good tunes. We knew we could play them well, so it was a case of going out there and getting in people's faces. It sounds really, really big-headed, but I always felt that I had it in me to be successful. There was a lot of suspicion and disdain in the music press at the time about how quickly it happened for us, because within six months we were making an album and within a year we were Britain's best new band and all the rest of it. It did happen very fast, relative to most new bands, but in my mind, we weren't a new band. We were perceived as being bad boys a little bit, too, which suited our purpose, I suppose."

He continues: "We did have a few supporters in the press – they were like sleeper spies within the fraternity – but generally, we weren't perceived as being cool. We were four Yorkshire lads who liked getting pissed and taking drugs. We never hid that. In fact, we were very vocal about all that, but at the same time, we made records that weren't afraid to show our influences. We were raised on glam rock and bands like Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and Black Sabbath. We just weren't cool enough for them."

The rock-consuming public embraced The Mission from day one, however, and popular adulation was showered on the new group. Did they weather the storm? "I think we were a little overwhelmed by it when it first started happening," he ponders. "It's something you've always dreamed about and wanted and aspired to, and then all of a sudden, you find yourself in that situation. I can't see how that wouldn't affect anybody. So yes, there was a definite effect on us, mentally, spiritually and in terms of how we perceived ourselves."

It didn't help that The Mission embraced the rock'n'roll lifestyle with such enthusiasm. What were their stimulants of choice? "Well, first of all, it was speed. When we first got the band together, we didn't have very much money, and speed was cheap and cheerful. We liked to drink, too, and obviously when you do speed you can drink a lot more, so that became our thing. I liked acid, too, going back to the Liverpool days before the Sisters. The three of us used to live in Leeds and Simon lived in Sheffield, so we'd go out as a gang. After a while, we started getting more money and we all moved to separate places, so we didn't get together as much, socially, and when we did get together, our drugs of choice had changed. I was still doing the acid, but I also got into cocaine, as you do, instead of speed. Simon was more of a spliff boy, Craig just drank, and Mick did everything. He was the life and soul of the band, the glue that held it all together, because he'd do a line with me and then go and have a spliff with Simon and a pint with Craig."



"YOU KNOW, THERE WERE MOMENTS WHERE I THOUGHT WE WERE ONE OF THE BEST BANDS IN THE WORLD"

The band's upward progress continued into 1987 with the gold-selling No 2 hit *Children*, produced – in a superbly flamboyant gesture – by Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones, yielding the hit single Tower Of Strength and accelerating The Mission to arena status. The third album from this imperial phase, 1990's *Carved In Sand*, delivered Butterfly On A Wheel and three other hit singles, after which the wheel of fashion span one too many times and we all started listening to Madchester, grunge and, later, Britpop.

"Around 1992, fashions changed," Hussey recalls with an appreciative chuckle. "I remember being at Crewe train station in late 1988 or early '89 and seeing these girls wearing really baggy jeans and Stone Roses T-shirts. I'd never heard of them, and lo and behold, just a few months later they were the new thing. But fashions come and go for good reason. I remember when we were playing in Paris in 1994 or '95, Liam Gallagher came down to see us. We went out drinking with him afterwards, and he was saying, 'You've had your go, Hussey. It's our turn now.' And he was right. There's something to that."

After the mid-90s The Mission became more sporadically active, releasing albums on an ad hoc basis and undergoing line-up changes. They've never gone away for long, though, and nor has their fanbase. Hussey moved with his family to the US and then to Brazil, from where he runs the band's albums and tours. How does he look back at that golden era?

"You know," he says, "there were moments during that period where I thought we were one of the best bands in the world, but it's not just about those three albums, it's the whole catalogue of The Mission. We have a substantial body of work, and there's lots of good stuff in there, and it's pretty diverse."

What would he say is his best album?

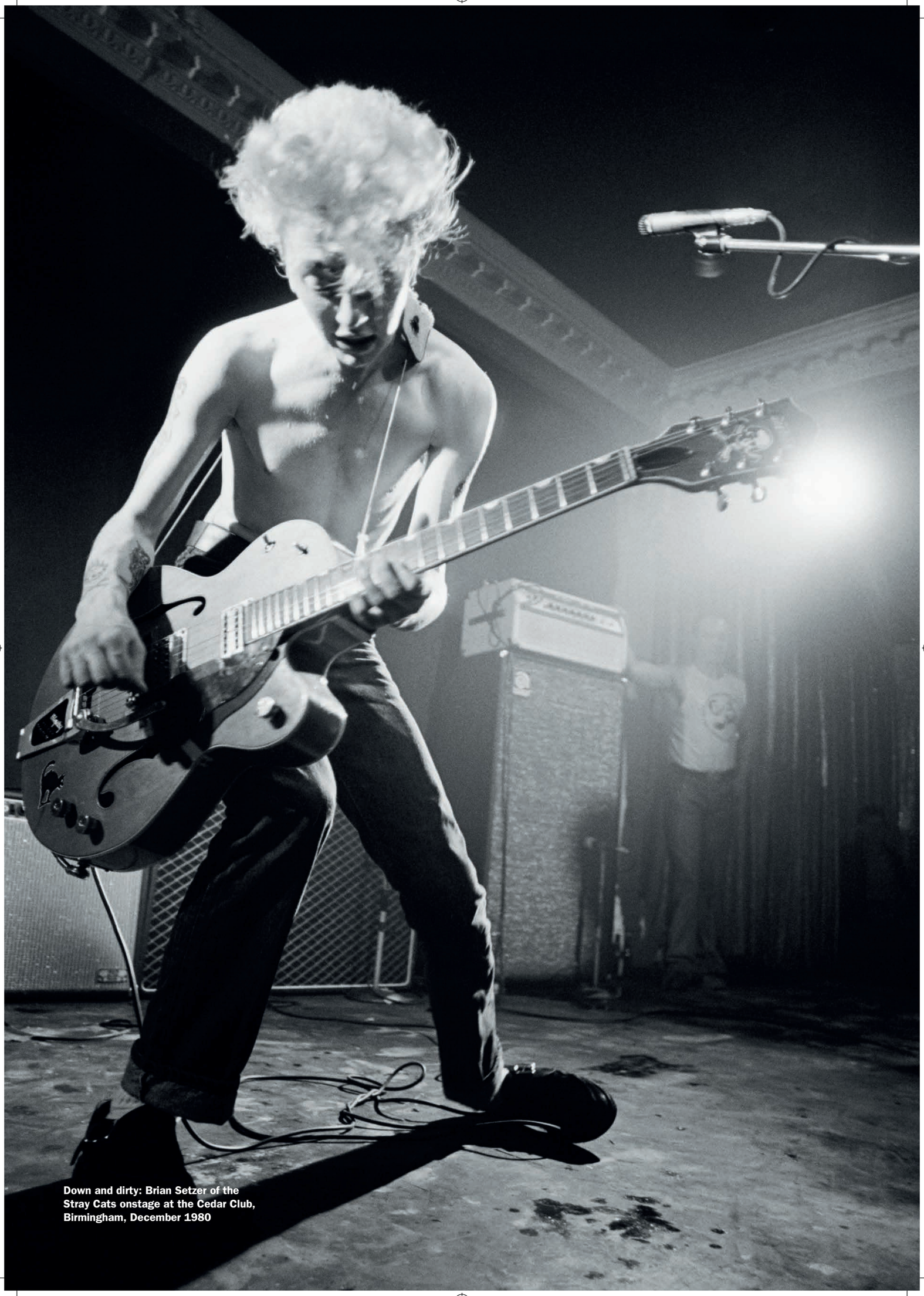
"I think that's for the people to decide, not me," he replies, cautiously, "but the one that means the most to me would be *God's Own Medicine*. It was obviously the first album, and everything was wonderful and new and exciting. That record has this kind of innocence, this naivety, this charm, that was lost after that, to be replaced with other qualities."

He tours clean and sober these days, telling us, "I gave up the booze about three or four years ago when I was on tour and I was really ill and I couldn't get better. I was drinking a bottle of wine before I went onstage, so I just thought, 'You know what, this ain't working,' so I gave up drinking while I was on tour. It was really weird for the first three or four shows. I was terrified going onstage, because I'd never done it completely sober, but after about three or four songs, the persona kicked in and I thought, ok, I can do this straight. I'm not completely teetotal – I have a glass of wine when I'm in Europe – but I don't have a hankering for it. Cigarettes are more difficult, actually. I've still got that one to beat."

After Hussey's recent heart surgery, presumably he has a heightened interest in good cardiac health at this point?

"Yeah," he agrees, "I do! I saw a quote today by somebody who said, 'I'm not scared of dying, but I like living' – and I like that."

The Mission tour Europe in 2027. More info: themissionukband.com.



Down and dirty: Brian Setzer of the Stray Cats onstage at the Cedar Club, Birmingham, December 1980

Can't Stop The Rock

In the last issue, *RC* 590, we looked back at the time in the 70s when 50s rock'n'roll dominated the airwaves as well as TV screens and cinemas. But the story didn't end there. **John Coleman** tells the tale of the visual and musical smash-up that was the **80s rockabilly scene,** and talks to some of the original runaway boys.

The 70s may have been taken over by a 50s revival, but by the start of the 80s, something different was on the horizon. What started out as a gentle homage to 50s music and fashion, occasionally bordering on pastiche, led to a younger generation looking for something tougher, more authentic.

Nineteen eighty-one was Year Zero for neo-rockabilly. There were six debut albums from the leaders of the scene: The Meteors' *In Heaven,* Polecats' *Polecats Are Go!,* The Deltas' *Boogie Disease,* The Shakin' Pyramids' *Skin 'Em Up,* The Jets' *Jets* and the Stray Cats' *Stray Cats.*

Setting the scene for what was to come: Vince Taylor's Brand New Cadillac, the rock'n'roll classic from 1959, was reissued by Ted Carroll's Chiswick Records in 1976. Carroll bridged the gap between original rock'n'roll and the new scene with his Rock On record stall and shops.

"Brand New Cadillac sold over 10,000 copies, pretty good for a tiny independent with their second release," Carroll says from his home near his Rock On shop in Stamford, Lincs. Casting back 45 or so years, he remembers noticing a much younger demographic coming in to Rock On. Some of those youngsters included Phil Bloomberg, Tim Worman and Boz Boorer.



Feline good: the Polecats in 1981

"I'd known Tim since primary School; I met Boz a bit later at Scouts," says Bloomberg, just back from a mini-tour of Austria with fellow 'billy boys, King Kurt. "Our first drummer, Chris Hawkes, was also at our primary school."

Soon they were all playing together in a band called The Cult Heroes, forming at the start of 1977. Boorer, speaking to *RC* via Zoom from Portugal, where he has a home, recording studio and record shop, remembers the scene emerging and differences arising: "Slowly, it broke – the Teds were older than us, so we started dressing differently, listening to rockabilly and finding our own style."

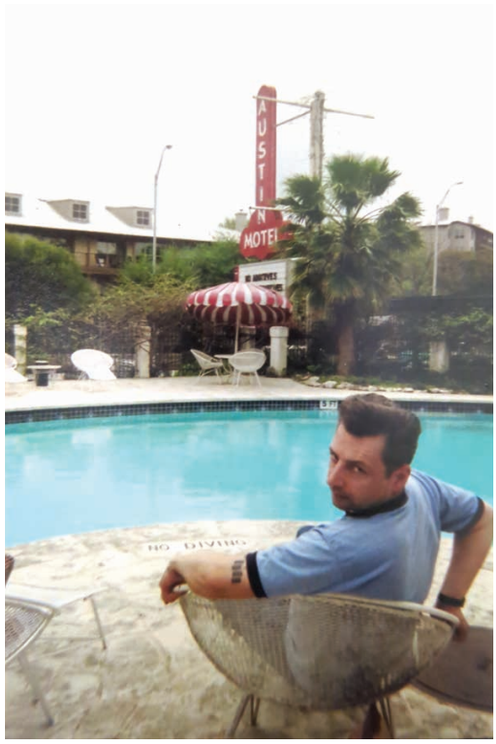
"THE TEDS WERE OLDER THAN US, SO WE FOUND OUR OWN STYLE" – BOZ BOORER, POLECATS

By 1979, The Cult Heroes had changed their name to Polecats and released first single, Rockabilly Guy, on Roy Williams' Nervous Records. "I really don't remember much about writing the song – I was only 15 years old," admits Bloomberg aka Phil Polecat, who played double-bass and sang lead vocals on this first version. Roy Williams was a hugely influential figure as DJ with the *Wild Wax* show, which showcased rock'n'roll and rockabilly. Nervous Records was to become a very important label on the nascent rockabilly scene.

In 1979 another bunch of teenage rockabilly fans formed a band. Raw Deal had a line-up that included four musicians who were to become integral to neo-rockabilly: Pat Panioty (The Deltas), Paul Fenech and Nigel Lewis (The Meteors) and Terry Earl (The Rapiers). Panioty, leader of unsung rockabilly heroes The Deltas, was a pivotal figure on the rockabilly live and club scene. Parked in London's Century Club

Photo: Getty





Ready to rumble (l-r): The Meteors' Paul Fenech and Hendrick Corleone at the Blitz, 1981; their erstwhile bandmate Nick Garrard; the still-rocking Pat Panioty

towards the end of 2026, he has vivid memories of those early days: "I got a call from Terry saying, 'Do you want to come and try out for a band?' I went over to Paul Fenech's place to meet Paul and Nigel who were 16/17. I was 18. Terry, 14 years older, was on drums. We jammed on a couple of numbers and became Raw Deal."

Raw Deal never released any records, but played plenty of gigs and acquired a manager, Nick Garrard (another legendary figure on the scene). At 17, Garrard was promoting Dave Phillips & The Blue Cat Trio. Sitting in a real ale bar near Kings Cross, he reminisces: "The Polecats were still at school. Boz and Tim came up to me at the Blue Cat Trio gig and said, 'If you do another one, can we do it?' I put them on at Billy's Club, which became Gossips, home of long-standing one-nighter club, Gaz's Rockin' Blues."

There was friction in Raw Deal: they were young and moving in very different directions. "Nick Garrard was managing the band. He wanted to go into horror soundtrack-influenced rockabilly, so we had some differences," says Panioty. "Paul Fenech was a great guitar player. I learned quite a lot, he pushed me to play more lead guitar. Paul and Nigel Lewis were 100 per cent influenced by The Cramps, but I was steeped in hardcore blues, which for me was the punk of the 40s and 50s."

Panioty had plans to be the rockabilly version of Howlin' Wolf, so he formed The Deltas while Fenech formed The Meteors; both bands recorded demos in 1980. The Meteors recorded theirs for EMI, who passed on the band. Maybe their unique brand of horror-rockabilly was too dangerous? EMI chose the more traditional-sounding Jets instead. Nick Garrard had been fashioning The Meteors' sound with cassettes of "crossover rockabilly horror records and Joe Meek stuff", as he puts it, to steer them in this new direction.

The Meteors received an unexpected boost with their very own feature film short, *Meteor Madness*, it featured the band performing songs and starred actor/comedian Keith Allen. Garrard then sought out Ted Carroll. "I've got this band," Garrard gushed. "I want you to see the film and do a soundtrack EP." Carroll loved the film and said he would do a one-off release.

The Deltas, meanwhile, had been playing gigs in the St Albans area and word reached Roy Williams at Nervous Records. The Deltas' debut album, *Boogie Disease,* was released on Nervous in 1981. Its dynamic, uniquely British approach hit a nerve among a new generation of rockabillies. "The album was No 1 in *Sounds'* Alternative Chart for 16 weeks," says a still shocked Panioty.

Phil Polecat remembers a seismic moment in February 1980 when the *NME* published their 'Rockabilly The Kid' cover story. The feature told of an event at the Royalty Dance Hall in Southgate. "They wrote about us, The Blue Cats, plus others that were playing and had a large picture spread on the scene."

The rockabilly subculture was proclaimed as the next big thing. Over in the US, Brian Setzer, Lee Rocker and Slim Jim Phantom of Stray Cats had seen the *NME* story and imagined the UK was a hotbed of rockabilly. The emergence of Stray Cats caused some umbrage among UK rockabilly bands, especially Polecats.

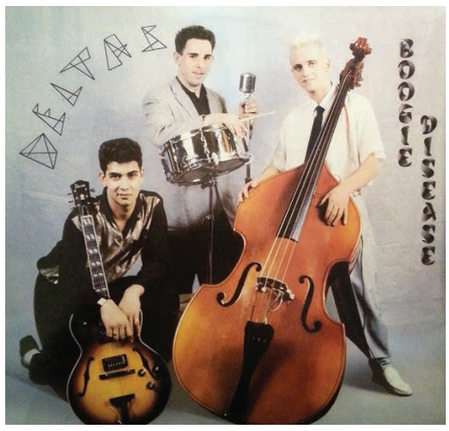
"At first, when the Stray Cats signed a big record deal, we were really pissed off," says Phil Polecat. "Then, suddenly all the record companies were interested. We'd been talking to a few; Stiff wanted to sign us, Chrysalis, too, but the offers weren't very good."

Once Stray Cats signed and made the national press, Polecats got a big record deal with Phonogram/Mercury and their debut LP, *Polecats Are Go!,* was released in 1981. The Rockabilly Guy single was re-recorded with Tim Polecat on vocals.

Stray Cat Slim Jim Phantom picks up the story from his home in the Hollywood Hills. Like Polecats, the band had known each other growing up. "I went to school with Lee [Rocker] and Brian [Setzer]. We would play CBGBs or Max's Kansas City [in New York] on the bill with post-punk type bands. There was no dedicated rockabilly scene. That was the reason we came to England."







The three Stray Cats arrived in the UK without any work permits and began hanging around rock locations such as Fulham's Greyhound and Camden's Dingwalls, where they struck lucky, meeting the likes of Lemmy, Chrissie Hynde, Joe Strummer and Glen Matlock. "We were quite outrageous looking, even for London back then," says Slim Jim. "We were in London for months, homeless, sleeping on couches, but we eventually got gigs."

Things went into overdrive when the band played The Venue in Victoria. "We looked out at the front table. There were five Rolling Stones, so all of a sudden it's not just music papers, it's the *Daily Mirror* asking, 'Who are these guys, why are the Stones there?' Record labels started to be interested."

There was a scramble for the Cats. The Rolling Stones wanted to sign them to their label, Richard Branson and Virgin were interested, but it was Arista that got their signatures. "Arista got our immigration sorted and found us somewhere to live," says Slim Jim.

Dave Edmunds had been coming to every gig. He had been looking for a young rockabilly band who could modernise the sound. With Edmunds producing, Stray Cats recorded and released the Runaway Boys single by Christmas 1980. The debut album, *Stray Cats,* hit the shops in February 1981.

By coincidence, Polecats had been on tour with Dave Edmunds and Rockpile in 1980. "On the tour, we hung out with Nick Lowe and Dave Edmunds," says Boz Boorer. "Edmunds played us his rough mixes of the Stray Cats and it sounded amazing. The snare drum sound, it was gated reverb under the snare mic, that was his trick." The Polecats wanted Dave Edmunds for their first record, and he produced the band's debut LP, *Polecats Are Go!*

Panioty and The Deltas had been asked to support Stray Cats, so their manager came to see them play at the Blitz club. "At that point, there was a fun thing going on with The Deltas called 'cabbage disease'. People would throw cabbages and there'd be buckets of beer going up in the air. It was mayhem." Then the inevitable happened. "The manager said, 'Actually, you're not going to be supporting Stray Cats,'" laments Panioty.

The Meteors' film *Meteor Madness* became the support to 2-Tone's own movie, *Dance Craze,* in March 1981. The *Meteor Madness* EP sold well and an album deal was done. Garrard explains how it came about: "Andrew Lauder ran United Artists in the 60s/70s. He had a job at Island and was a good friend of Ted Carroll, so The Meteors signed to Island." Though, as Carroll recalls, "The Meteors debut LP *In Heaven* came out through Island just as the band [temporarily] broke up, a cue for the band to pursue "a more garage/psychedelic-oriented direction with a one-off EP as The Clapham South Escalators".

"PEOPLE WOULD THROW CABBAGES AND THERE'D BE BUCKETS OF BEER GOING UP IN THE AIR"" – PAT PANIOTY, THE DELTAS

America's The Cramps were arguably the first psychobilly band, existing very much in their own sphere. Before *In Heaven* came out, Garrard secured a support slot for The Meteors on The Cramps' 1981 tour. Polecats were Cramps fans, too, and played at their Lyceum gig in 1980. "We first saw them in '78 at the Marquee and I remember buying Tim Polecat the *Gravest Hits* LP for his birthday," says Boorer.

The Meteors were firmly established by 1982 with a fiercely loyal fanbase, but as Garrard observes, "There were problems brewing." Meteors leader Paul Fenech brought in a new manager. Garrard was philosophical. "The new guy was also a promoter, so having a manager that can get you all the best gigs in London – it was a no-brainer." After an argument at the 100 Club, Garrard walked out of the dressing room, never to return, followed by bass player Nigel Lewis.

Garrard proceeded to take the rockabilly scene in another direction with a series of 60s garage-influenced bands, which included The Escalators (featuring Nigel Lewis), The Tall Boys and Stingrays. The scene culminated in a couple of excellent compilations. *Stomping At The Klub Foot* from 1984 brought together live tracks from The Milkshakes (managed by Garrard), Stingrays, Restless and The Guana Batz.

Another excellent 1984 compilation exemplified the movement. Ted Carroll, who had released much of the music on Ace and Big Beat (including The Cramps' *Smell Of Female* LP in 1983) had long wanted to put together a mixture of contemporary rockabilly bands and rare 50s and 60s tracks. On *Rockabilly Psychosis And The Garage Disease* LP, Garrard was helped by Poison Ivy from the Cramps. The album sums up





Movers and shakers: (left) an influential *NME* cover and (above) Ace Records' Ted Carroll

Feel Like A Slob?

Try these neo-rockabilly classics
Chosen by rockin' John Coleman



The Meteors
Wreckin' Crew
(I.D. NOSE 01, 7", UK, 1983) **£20**
A powerful, angst-driven statement of rockabilly intent, infused by the spirit of The Cramps and punk's attitude. Includes excellent Paul Fenech originals and a fine version of the Joe Meek standby, Johnny Remember Me.



Polecats
Polecats Are Go!
(Mercury 6359 057, LP, UK, 1981) **£15**
The immaculate, authentic rockabilly debut included Rockabilly Guy, John I'm Only Dancing and Bo-Diddley-meets-Eddie-Cochran stomper Black Magic.



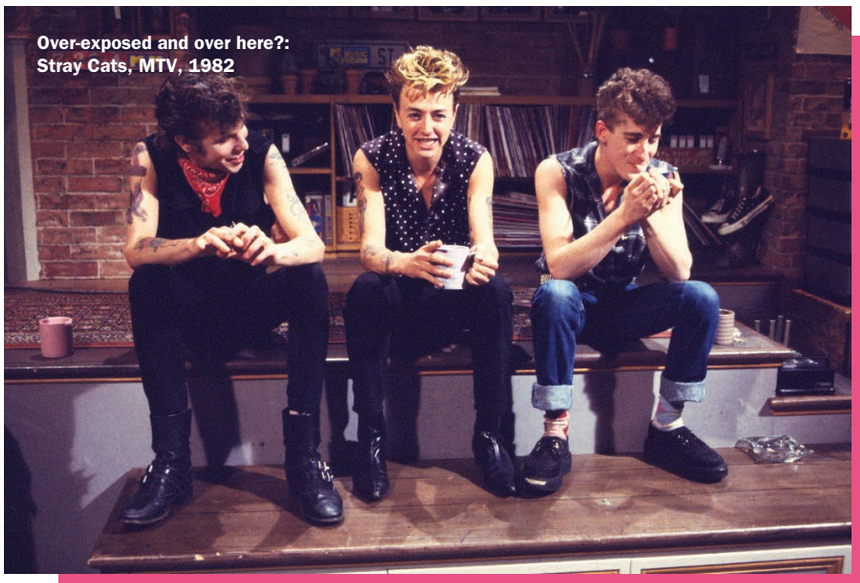
The Deltas
From Fleetville To Vegas (Rockout NIT 007 10" LP, UK, 1995) **£25**
Late period neo-rockabilly, this was originally released as a 10". A riff-packed classic, it includes a rockin' version of Marc Bolan's I Love To Boogie. The LP was reissued with four extra tracks to celebrate the band's 45th anniversary in 2025.



Stray Cats
Stray Cats
(Arista STRAY 1, LP, UK, 1981) **£15**
The explosive debut album from these UK-based American exiles boasted three instant neo-rockabilly, Brian Setzer-penned classics: Runaway Boys, Rock This Town and Stray Cat Strut. It propelled rockabilly into the mainstream.



The Cramps
Songs The Lord Taught Us
(Illegal ILP 005, LP, UK, 1980) **£30**
Arguably the LP that started it all. The band had to come to the UK to get proper recognition. Tracks like TV Set, Garbage Man, The Mad Daddy and their version of Fever (featuring Alex Chilton on organ) were the blueprint for a striking new movement/genre.


Over-exposed and over here?: Stray Cats, MTV, 1982

the neo-rockabilly movement with its collision of styles and time-frames.

The period 1981- 84 was the zenith for neo-rockabilly. Stray Cats were emblematic scene figures and Polecats had become *bona fide* pop stars with appearances on *Top Of The Pops*. "We also played on TV shows like *Pebble Mill At One,"* says Phil Polecat. "Then, when MTV started, Make A Circuit With Me was all over MTV."

Polecats only made one LP for Phonogram before they were dropped. "The UK label weren't really pushing *Make A Circuit With Me* because our A&R guy had gone." Tim moved to America to become a set designer; Boz had his own studio and was working at Chrysalis as an engineer.

"We never actually broke up," stresses Phil Polecat, who went into management (in partnership with Tim) signing bands for huge advances. The Shillelagh Sisters included Phil's then-girlfriend Jacquie O'Sullivan (later of Bananarama). The other band were former rockabillies, The Blue Cats, who changed their style to become Beltane Fire. "Beltane Fire were still rockabilly, with double bass, but it was songs about King Arthur," decides Phil Polecat. "It was 'progabilly'. Blue Cats/ Beltane Fire vocalist Clint is still one of the best singers of our generation."

Through the 80s, a new generation of neo-rockabilly/psychobilly bands kept the music alive. Stiff had signed King Kurt. Bands such as Restless and The Guana Batz were followed by Frenzy and The Frantic Flintstones. The Meteors recorded well-received albums for a variety of labels. Stray Cats were active throughout the 80s and 90s. In the US, Slim Jim was playing with Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and George Harrison. He was also married to Swedish film start Britt Ekland from 1984 to 1992. "Yeah, I was living this showbiz lifestyle," he says, "but it all leads back to this love of the original rock'n'roll singers and records."

As for Boz Boorer, he joined The Deltas in 1986 for their well-regarded *Mad For It* LP. He also wrote and produced The Deltas' 1995 LP, *From Fleetville To Vegas*. He went on to play with Morrissey's band between 1991 and 2021, serving as musical director. Also in Morrissey's band was bass player Gary Day, himself a veteran of the neo-rockabilly scene with stints in The Frantic Flintstones, The Nitros and his own neo-rockabilly label, Rockout.

"WE WERE OUTRAGEOUS LOOKING, EVEN FOR LONDON BACK THEN" – SLIM JIM PHANTOM, STRAY CATS

The scene remains healthy. The Meteors were on tour recently and there are numerous rockabilly festivals worldwide.

"I think it's bigger today," says Slim Jim of the scene. "The Stray Cats are on a US tour, and we hope to come to the UK in 2027. I also played the UK in February with Star Cat, a neo-rockabilly outfit with Phil Polecat and Neal X [from Sigue Sigue Sputnik]."

Polecats have played regular live shows over the decades, but 2027 is set to be a big one. "Next year is the Polecats' 50th anniversary – we will probably do about 50 or 60 shows," says Phil Polecat.

One of the last projects Phil, Pat Panioty and Gary Day were involved in was Dantes Eyes. The band featured vocalist and songwriter Clive Franklin, who sadly died in 2024. A superb neo-rockabilly LP entitled *Harlequins & Jokers* was mastered at Toe Rag studious and remains unreleased.

Runnin' faster, faster all the time…

Polecats' 50th anniversary tour starts in April 2027. Check out dates at facebook.com/ThePolecats

BRUCE FOXTON & THE JAM

'50 YEARS OF THE JAM' TOUR 1977 – 2027

+ VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

SECRET AFFAIR * The Laynes ** THE VAPORS ***



14/11/26	ST.HELIER	DRIFT BAR	
20/11/26	EDINBURGH	THE QUEEN'S HALL	*
21/11/26	NOTTINGHAM	THE LEVEL	
14/12/26	GLASGOW	SWG3	***
15/12/26	ABERDEEN	LEMON TREE	**
15/01/27	LINCOLN	THE DRILL	
16/01/27	LEEDS	HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM	
22/01/27	COVENTRY	HMV EMPIRE	***
23/01/27	BIRMINGHAM	THE CROSSING	***
08/04/27	BRISTOL	THE FLEECE	
09/04/27	GILLINGHAM	GLASSBOX THEATRE	
02/05/27	LONDON	229 (MODS MAYDAY)	
21/05/27	NORWICH	ADRIAN FLUX WWATERFRONT	***
22/05/27	MANCHESTER	BOUNDARY AT MET UNIVERSITY	***
09/06/27	LIVERPOOL	THE CAVERN	
10/06/27	LIVERPOOL	THE CAVERN	
18/06/27	CAMBRIDGE	JUNCTION	***
19/06/27	STOKE-ON-TRENT	THE SUGARMILL	
25/06/27	CARDIFF	ACAPELA	SOLD OUT
26/06/27	COLCHESTER	ARTS CENTRE	

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featuring LEBA

'Funky Kingston' Tour 2027



02 JUNE	COVENTRY	HMV EMPIRE
03 JUNE	LONDON	229
04 JUNE	LONDON	229
05 JUNE	BRIGHTON	CHALK
06 JUNE	BRISTOL	TRINITY CENTRE
08 JUNE	MANCHESTER	BOUNDARY AT MET UNI
09 JUNE	EDINBURGH	THE QUEEN'S HALL
10 JUNE	LEEDS	HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM
11 JUNE	NOTTINGHAM	THE LEVEL

FRED WESLEY & THE NEW J.B.'S

'A Blow For Me, A Toot To You'
50th Anniversary Tour



04 May 27 BRISTOL
05 May 27 WIMBORNE
06 May 27 NOTTINGHAM
07 May 27 LEEDS
09 May 27 EDINBURGH
10 & 11 May 27 LONDON
12 May 27 CAMBRIDGE

TOM BROWNE

'Funkin' For Jamaica' 2027 Tour

& THE BritFunk ASSOCIATION



09.02.27	ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA	THE ASSEMBLY
10.02.27	NOTTINGHAM	METRONOME
11.02.27	MANCHESTER	BAND ON THE WALL
12.02.27	CAMBRIDGE	JUNCTION
13.02.27	LONDON	229

9 BELOW ZERO

50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR 2027

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

Robbie McIntosh ■ Bruce Foxton □ Ben Waters ●

The Dirt Road Band ○ Dr Feelgood ▲

19 Feb	Manchester ▲	18 Jun	Colchester ●
20 Feb	Doncaster	24 Sept	Barnoldswick
26 Feb	Southend ▲	25 Sept	Blackpool ▲
27 Feb	Faversham	02 Oct	London □○
12 Mar	Weston-super-Mare ■	09 Oct	Hertford ○
13 Mar	Great Torrington ■	15 Oct	Southampton ▲
22 Apr	Liverpool ●	23 Oct	Hastings ○
23 Apr	Morecambe ●	29 Oct	Saltaire ●
24 Apr	Kendal ●	30 Oct	Newcastle ●
30 Apr	Cambridge ■	12 Nov	Nottingham ●
01 May	Hartlepol	18 Nov	Wimborne ■ ●
08 May	Sturminster ■	26 Nov	Glasgow ●
14 May	Newport IOW	27 Nov	Edinburgh ●
17 Jun	Ramsgate	18 Dec	Ripley



ELI PAPERBOY REED

09.03.27 **LEEDS** BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB

10.03.27 **NOTTINGHAM** METRONOME

11.03.27 **BRISTOL** THE FLEECE

12.03.27 **LONDON** 229 THE VENUE

NOUVELLE VAGUE TOUR

A Date with Depeche Mode

04.03.27	STRATFORD-UPON-AVON	13.03.27	LIVERPOOL
05.03.27	LONDON	14.03.27	BRISTOL
06.03.27	MANCHESTER	17.03.27	NOTTINGHAM
07.03.27	NORWICH	18.03.27	LEEDS
10.03.27	BRIGHTON	19.03.27	GLASGOW
11.03.27	CAMBRIDGE	20.03.27	EDINBURGH
12.03.27	CANTERBURY		

RUTS DC PRESENT

50 YEARS OF RUTS MUSIC (1977-2027)

RUTS 50



07 Apr	NOTTINGHAM
08 Apr	LIVERPOOL
09 Apr	MANCHESTER
10 Apr	BIRMINGHAM
14 Apr	NEWCASTLE
15 Apr	EDINBURGH
16 Apr	GLASGOW
17 Apr	LEEDS
22 Apr	CAMBRIDGE
23 Apr	NORTHAMPTON
24 Apr	STOKE-ON-TRENT
14 Oct	CARDIFF
15 Oct	BRISTOL
16 Oct	EXETER
21 Oct	BRIGHTON
22 Oct	SOUTHAMPTON
23 Oct	LONDON
28 Oct	HULL
29 Oct	NORWICH
30 Oct	COVENTRY

LONDON CALLING

PLAY THE CLASH

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO TOUR

19.11.26	LIVERPOOL	THE CAVERN
20.11.26	GLASGOW	QMU
21.11.26	ABERDEEN	THE LEMON TREE
27.11.26	NORWICH	ADRIAN FLUX WATERFRONT
22.01.27	BEDFORD	ESQUIRES
23.01.27	LONDON	ELECTRIC BALLROOM
29.01.27	NEWCASTLE	THE CLUNY
30.01.27	NEWCASTLE	THE CLUNY
19.02.27	HAMPTON	HAMPTON HUB
20.02.27	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	CHINNERYS
05.03.27	HULL	SOCIAL
06.03.27	EDINBURGH	LA BELLE ANGELE
19.03.27	LEEDS	BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
20.03.27	LEEDS	BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
23.04.27	GALASHIELS	MAC ARTS
24.04.27	CARLISLE	THE OLD FIRE STATION
21.05.27	LEAMINGTON SPA	THE ASSEMBLY
22.05.27	COLCHESTER	ARTS CENTRE

THE SPECIALS LTD

'GANGSTERS' TOUR 2027

Sat 09 Jan	MINEHEAD	Sat 27 Mar	EDINBURGH	Fri 15 Oct	GOUROCK
Fri 15 Jan	NEWCASTLE	Fri 16 Apr	READING	Sat 16 Oct	HUDDERSFIELD
Sat 16 Jan	NEWCASTLE	Sat 17 Apr	SALISBURY	Fri 22 Oct	LINCOLN
Fri 22 Jan	NOTTINGHAM	Fri 23 Apr	LEEDS	Sat 23 Oct	HARPENDEN
Sat 23 Jan	SHEFFIELD	Sat 24 Apr	LEEDS	Fri 29 Oct	CARLISLE
Fri 29 Jan	WREXHAM	Sat 01 May	LEAMINGTON SPA	Sat 30 Oct	BURTON ON TRENT
Sat 30 Jan	PONTARDAWE	Fri 07 May	BIRMINGHAM	Fri 05 Nov	HASTINGS
Fri 05 Feb	LONDON	Sat 08 May	SWINDON	Sat 06 Nov	CHIPPENHAM
Sat 06 Feb	NORTHAMPTON	Sat 22 May	ST HELENS	Thu 18 Nov	PRESTO
Fri 12 Feb	MANCHESTER	Fri 28 May	DORKING	Fri 19 Nov	INVERNESS
Sat 13 Feb	DONCASTER	Sat 29 May	BRIGHTON	Sat 20 Nov	DUNDEE
Fri 19 Feb	BLACKPOOL	Fri 18 June	EXETER		
Sat 20 Feb	KIDDERMINSTER	Sat 19 Jun	BRIDPORT		
Thu 04 Mar	LIVERPOOL	Fri 24 Sept	COLCHESTER		
Fri 05 Mar	GLASGOW	Sat 25 Sept	HAMPTON		
Sat 06 Mar	KENDAL	Fri 01 Oct	TORQUAY		
Fri 19 Mar	CAMBRIDGE	Sat 02 Oct	TRURO		
Sat 20 Mar	NORWICH	Fri 08 Oct	SWANSEA		
Fri 26 Mar	ABERDEEN	Sat 09 Oct	TENBY		



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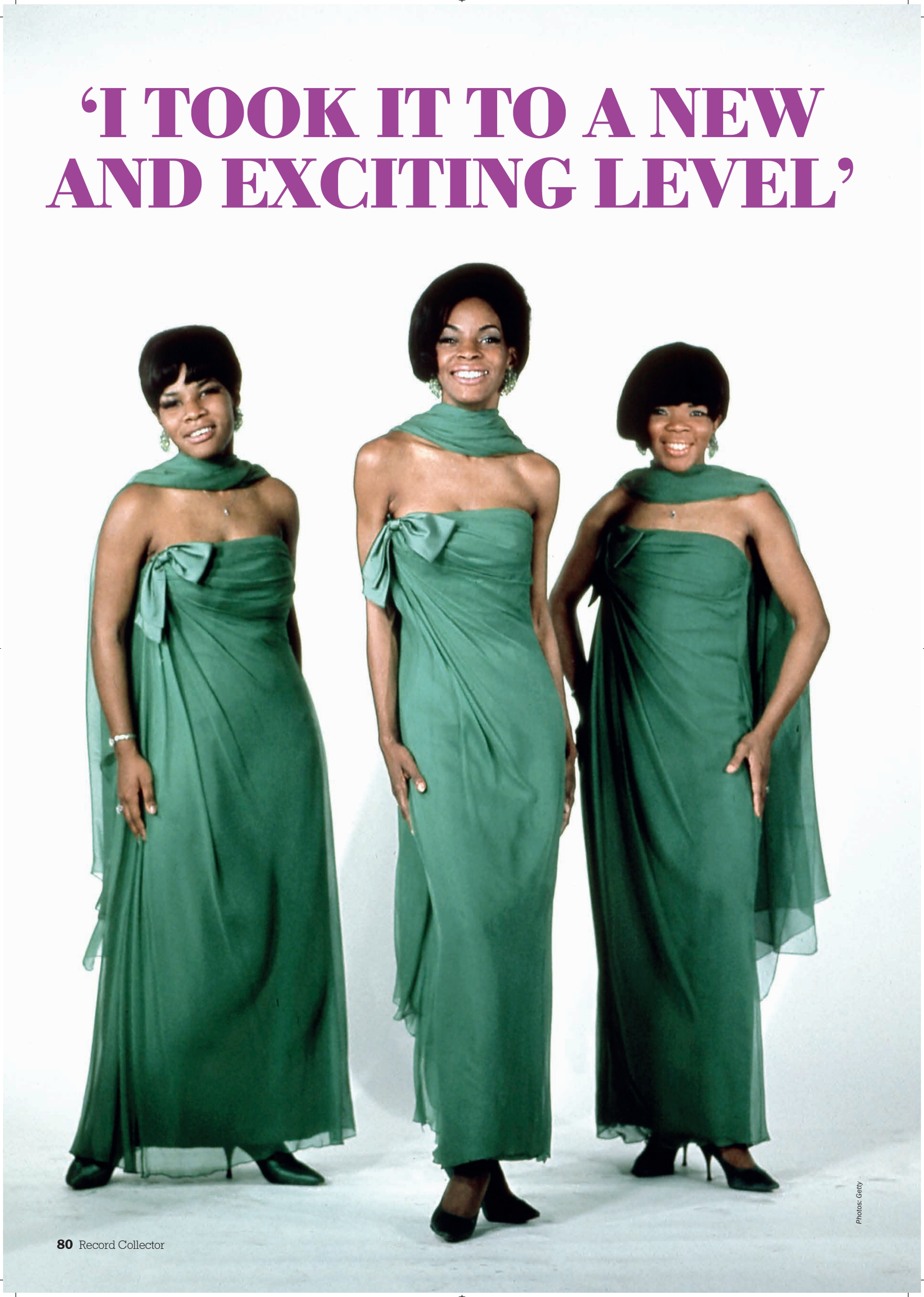
‘I TOOK IT TO A NEW AND EXCITING LEVEL’



Photos: Getty

A product of Motown's early 60s Hit Factory, **Martha Reeves**, fronting the Vandellas, became one of the defining girl group figures of the era, her version of Dancing In The Street emblematic of a period of upheaval and flux. Her solo career, beginning in the 70s, is in need of greater appreciation, and as she prepares to release a new album at 85, she tells **Lois Wilson** why there's still life – and music – in her yet.

October 1961, the 20-year-old Martha Reeves, under the name Martha LaVaille, takes the stage at the Twenty Grand in Detroit. The club, at West Warren and 14th Street, is packed. A cultural hub for the black community, it is also the stomping ground for Motown, its artists and staff. Reeves launches into Fly Me To The Moon, the song a favourite of her mother's who has raised her eldest daughter, one of 12 children, on the classics. Motown A&R man Mickey Stevenson is sat in the front row within touching distance of her. When she starts singing, his mouth gapes open. When she finishes, he gets to his feet and rushes straight up to her and introduces himself.

"I didn't know who Mickey was or what he did," says Reeves today. "But he gave me his business card, and he said I had talent and to come to Hitsville USA. When I looked at that card and saw the artists' names – Mary Wells, Marv Johnson, Eddie Holland, The Marvelettes – my heart raced. I was there the next morning."

Initially she worked as his secretary, but then, when Mary Wells failed to show for a session in August 1962, Stevenson got Martha to take her place. The song she recorded, I'll Have To Let Him Go, written by Stevenson, became Martha & The Vandellas' debut single. It wasn't a hit, but it started a decade-long relationship with Motown that saw them record an unimpeachable run of 45s – future classics like Come And Get These Memories, (Love Is Like A) Heatwave, Quicksand, Dancing In The Street, Nowhere To Run and Jimmy Mack – that, steeped in R&B and wrapped around her ebullient vocal, came to define the 60s Motown sound.

Born on 18 July 1941 in Eufaula, Alabama, then raised in Detroit from a baby – her parents moving north as part of the great migration – Martha was surrounded by music. At home, her mum, Ruby, sang and played Billie Holiday records while her father, Elijah, played blues on the guitar. "He taught me to sing while I sat on his lap," she remembers fondly.

At three, she sang with her two brothers in a talent show at her grandfather the Reverend Elijah Reeves' Metropolitan AME Church. They came first, the prize candy. "I loved it," she says. "From then on I wanted to be a singer so bad."

She sang her way through high school then, at 16, joined The Fascinations, who recorded for Curtis Mayfield (although she's not on any issued sides) and then The Del-Phis, a girl group led by Gloria Jean Williamson and featuring Rosalind Ashford and Annette Beard. They provided background on JJ Barnes' Won't You Let Me Know in March 1961 then recorded an answer record, I'll Let You Know, with Williamson on lead, which was issued on Chess subsidiary, Check-Mate, in December that year.

By then, Reeves was working in Motown's A&R department. One of her duties was to corral Motown house band The Funk Brothers. "If they needed to be in the studio at 3pm, I'd tell them 2pm. Marvin Gaye was a drummer at this time, and the fourth on my list to call after Benny Benjamin, Richard 'Pistol' Allen and Uriel Jones," she says.

"THIS BOY ISTEVIE WONDERI, JUST EIGHT, CAME IN, PLAYED ALL THE INSTRUMENTS. HIS TALENT... WOW!"

She also 'babysat' Stevie Wonder. "This boy, just eight, came in, and he was tipping over the waste baskets, turning them into bongos, making sounds on the typewriter and making the phone beep," she says. "We went over to studio A, he played all the instruments, then pulled out the harmonica and his talent… wow!"

She got her first break when The Andantes, Motown's female backing vocal group comprising Jackie Hicks, Marlene Barrow and Louvain Demps, failed to show for a session with Marvin Gaye and she and The Del-Phis stepped in on Stubborn Kind Of Fellow, written by Stevenson, Gaye and Motown boss Berry Gordy. Issued in July '62, it was credited to Marvin Gaye vocal acc: The Vandellas, and became his first hit, making the US pop Top 50 and R&B Top 10.

Gaye would claim he gave The Vandellas their name, joking that they sounded like vandals on his record. It was actually Martha, though, who came up with the moniker – Vandellas being an amalgam of Van Dyke Street, near where she grew up and her favourite vocalist, Della Reese. That same month also saw the release of Saundra Mallett & The Vandellas' Camel Walk. Unlike Gaye's single, it flopped and Mallett went on to sing with The Elgins.

Of the recording of I'll Have To Let Him Go, she reminisces: "I put the headphones on and really sang that song as if it were written for me. Berry Gordy heard it, and said, 'Put that song out on her.' The Vandellas came in and did the backing, and we became Motown recording artists," says Martha.

At the same session they cut You'll Never Cherish A Love So True ('Til You Lose It) backed with There He Is (At My Door) with Gloria Williamson on lead. Confusingly, it was issued just a week after I'll Have To Let Him Go on Motown subsidiary Mel-O-Dy, under the name The Vells, so as not to scupper any chances of that. Soon after, Williamson left the group to work in the civil service and Martha & The Vandellas became a trio with Martha their lead singer.

In October they were one of eight acts that appeared on the first *Motortown Revue*. It was physically gruelling – five to six shows a day – and dangerous, the groups performing in the Jim Crow south. "There was racism: we couldn't use the same toilets, water fountains, hotels as white people; we





Hair d'you do?: Martha & The Vandellas with Dusty Springfield on *Ready Steady Go!*, 1965





Girls aloud: The Supremes (left) and the Vandellas in London in 1965 (Martha far right); and (in white) with the new-look Vandellas circa 1975

got verbal abuse, threats, guns pointed at us," she recalls. But there was also camaraderie: "All of us travelling on the same bus, laughing, joking, singing, it really was like family."

It was Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier and Brian Holland, who were just starting out at Motown themselves, that provided her and the Vandellas with their first hit when the jazz-flecked Come And Get These Memories, featuring Reeves' inimitable husky vocal, hit the US R&B No 6 in February 1963.

Their second single, (Love Is Like A) Heatwave, also penned by the Holland-Dozier-Holland songwriting/production triumvirate, arrived in July. Their first US R&B No 1 and pop Top 10, peaking at No 4 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, it templated what would become their and Motown's sound, with Reeves' hungry vocals backed by an exuberant beat. It was also the first Motown song to be nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best R&B category.

"They really were a songwriting factory," says Reeves of Holland-Dozier-Holland. "They were prolific. They had to be. They had to keep the Four Tops happy, The Supremes happy, us happy, which they did with Heatwave. We loved singing that." Their fourth single, Quicksand, issued in November, repeated the hit formula and returned them to the Top 10.

In the first half of 1964, they faltered, with singles Live Wire and In My Lonely Room, but come July, with The Velvelettes' Betty Kelly replacing Annette Beard, they were back on track with Dancing In The Street. Co-written by Gaye, Stevenson and Ivy Jo Hunter, it made the US No 2 and provided their first UK hit when it made No 28 (when it was reissued in the UK in 1969 it hit No 4).

The song was initially intended for Kim Weston. In just two takes (it would have been one, but they forgot to switch the tape player on) Reeves delivered her jubilatory call to party.

"I was watching Marvin singing the song through the window of Studio A," she remembers. "I was so wanting to be in there with him while he was singing and Mickey spotted me and called me in. Marvin was singing the song as if he was singing it to one of his loved ones. I took it to a new and exciting level. But you should have heard Marvin. He really gave it his all."

As racial tensions rose, the song was adopted by the civil rights movement, Reeves' "invitation across the nation" chiming with Black power activists like H Rap Brown, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who used the song as a rallying cry at Black Panther rallies. The Rolling Stones would also paraphrase the lyrics in Street Fighting Man. "I wasn't a Black Panther," she says, "but I believed in the cause, of equality and justice."

"THERE WAS RACISM... BUT THERE WAS ALSO CAMARADERIE. ALL OF US ON THE SAME BUS. IT WAS LIKE A FAMILY"

Nineteen sixty-four closed with Wild One, which made the US pop Top 40 and R&B No 11, then 1965 began with the urgent Nowhere To Run, which made the pop No 8 and R&B Top 5 in February, and became their second song to chart in the UK, reaching No 26. The song was partly inspired by a conversation Lamont Dozier had with a 19-year-old drafted into the army to fight in the Vietnam war. Dozier then found out he had died, his body returned to his parents two months later. Like Dancing In The Street, it would become part of the soundtrack to the '67 Detroit riots.

In March '65 Martha & the Vandellas performed in the UK for the first time as part of the *Tamla Motown Revue*, sharing a bill with The Miracles, The Supremes, Stevie Wonder – who was just 14 – and the Earl Van Dyke Six. Also on the tour were Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames.

To promote the tour, the groups appeared on an episode of TV show *Ready Steady Go!* called *The Sound Of Motown*, hosted by Dusty Springfield. Martha had first met Dusty at the Brooklyn Fox Theatre in September '64, when they shared a bill and had become close friends. Even though it was The Supremes who were headlining the tour following their UK No 1 with Baby Love, it was Martha whom Dusty chose to duet with on the show, the pair delivering a delightfully soulful cover of Wishin' And Hopin'.

While The Supremes dominated Motown, the Vandellas still enjoyed US Top 10 hits with 1966's I'm Ready For Love and '67's Jimmy Mack, the latter their second and last R&B No 1.

But a blow was struck when HDH and Mickey Stevenson left the label that same year. Still, the Vandellas made waves with the Richard Morris and Sylvia Moy-scribed Love Bug Leave My Heart Alone, issued in August, and the same writers' Honey Chile,







"It was an education": Reeves channelling Angela Davis in 1974

their first issued as Martha Reeves & The Vandellas, in October.

Betty Kelley was replaced by Martha's sister Lois Reeves for April '68's Aretha-like I Promise To Wait My Love, but it and July's I Can't Dance To That Music You're Playing fared less well, only registering on the R&B Top 40 chart. It wasn't until September 1971's Bless You, on which Martha was joined by Lois Reeves and The Velvelettes' Sandra Tilley, that they hit their stride again, with the single making the UK Top 40.

But by then it was too late. Martha was exhausted – she'd had a nervous breakdown in 1969 – and disillusioned with Motown, which was about to move to LA. The Vandellas played their last show in December 1972 at Detroit's Cobo Hall, with the group officially splitting in March 1973.

That year, Reeves signed a solo deal and put her self-titled debut album out with producer Richard Perry in July '74. Recorded in LA with a band featuring a who's-who of backroom boys – James Jameson, Jim Keltner, Wah Wah Watson, Nicky Hopkins, Billy Preston et al – it featured rock'n'soul covers of Van Morrison's Wild Night, Gladys Knight's I've Got To Use My Imagination and Marvin Gaye's Ain't That Peculiar. Nevertheless, it didn't hit.

"Richard Perry introduced me to a whole lot of people, and our sessions were like parties," she remembers enthusiastically. "He was one of the sweetest people to me in the recording studio. He and his engineer pulled things out and let me hear things that no one else had ever let me hear on the recordings, and he taught me proper breathing. It was more than a recording session; it was an experience and an education."

Keeping up with the changing times, she embraced disco with 1976's *The Rest Of My Life* on Arista, then 1978's *We Meet Again* and 1980's *Gotta Keep Moving* on Fantasy. Then in 1989, she reunited with the Vandellas, recording the single Step Into My Shoes for Ian Levine's Motorcity Records. In 1995, the group got music industry validation when they were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame.

Reeves returned to the studio in 2001 to record *Home To You*, her first album in 24 years, most notable for her cover of Billie Holiday's God Bless The Child (a 2004 reissue added a remake of Jimmy Mack). Music took a backseat between 2005 to 2009 when she served on the Detroit City Council, but from 2010 she's been a constant live presence and this year sees the release of new album *Searching*, which marks her 85th year.

Recorded live in New Orleans with producer Delfeayo Marsalis, it captures her in remarkably fine voice, satisfyingly deeper with age but instantly recognisable on a Motown-meets-Big-Easy set featuring a cover of Syreeta Wright and Stevie Wonder's To Know You Is To Love You.

"It was wonderful being back in the studio. It felt like we were family and god was on our side," she says.

It sounds like she's come full circle.

"It's been a wonderful trip," she says. "I wouldn't change anything." RC

Searching *is on Deko.*



The trip continues: Martha celebrates her 85th birthday

Photos: Getty

LONGER REEVES

Martha's finest albums



Martha & The Vandellas *Dance Party* (Tamla Motown TML 11013, LP, UK, 1965) **£70**
Their debut album, *Come And Get These Memories*, and follow-up, *Heatwave,* both include exceptional tracks, but like a lot of Motown albums at this time, both were inconsistent (the latter's Danke Schoen and If I Had A Hammer, anyone?) This third delivers from start (Dancing In The Street) to finish (an ace cover of Hitch Hike).



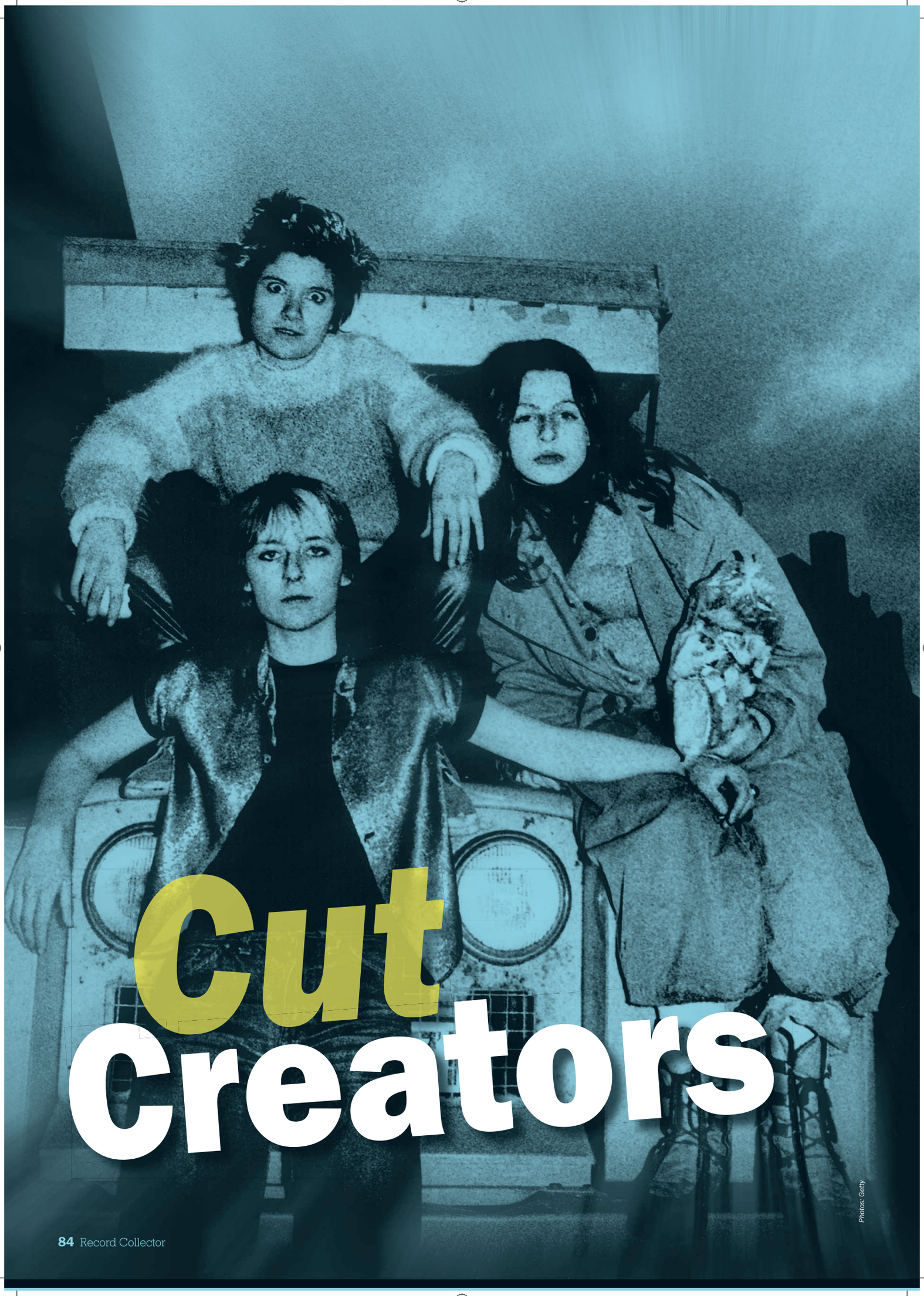
Various *Willie Dynamite (Music From The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)* (MCA MCA 393, LP, US, 1974) **£40**
The brainchild of JJ Jackson, this long-forgotten soundtrack to the 1974 blaxploitation flick of the same name could be a showreel for Reeves' talent; the singer, backed by The Sweet Things aka The Darlettes, socking it to 'em on the title theme, Willie D, while on King Midas and Keep On Movin' On, she's the sophisticated balladeer, her delivery equal parts velvet and grit. Honestly, she's never sounded better.



Martha Reeves *Martha Reeves* (MCA MCF 2565, LP, UK, 1974) **£10**
Martha Reeves deserved a solo career to match that of the post-Supremes Diana Ross. It wasn't to be, but her 1974 self-titled debut is ripe for rediscovery. Produced by Richard Perry, whose track record at this point was second to none, it was a statement of intent; Martha, tough, confident and more mature-sounding on a cover of Van Morrison's Wild Night that should have set the charts alight.



Martha Reeves *Searching* (Deko 26 0553, LP, US, 2026) **£30**
Reeves goes to New Orleans and, in a funk-blues setting, delivers a Delfeayo Marsalis-produced set that does her credit, her voice deeper but still raw and husky on the highpoint, a cover of Wright/Wonder's To Know You Is To Love You but sounding compelling throughout.



Cut Creators

Photos: Getty



When The Slits emerged during the initial punk explosion, they put other bands' revolutionary credentials to shame. Making an untutored, unhinged, dub-inf(l)ected noise that was musically, socially and culturally transgressive – with a 14-year-old singer to boot – they were one of the era's true originals. Fifty years on, Rob Hughes traces their radical rise with founding drummer Paloma "Palmolive" Romero.

Paloma Romero is there for The Patti Smith Group, but a teenager is stealing the show. It's October 1976 at the Hammersmith Odeon, where Smith and co. are nearing the end of their European tour, and Romero's attention has been drawn to a fellow punter, 14-year-old Ariane Forster, who's currently berating her mum.

"She was screaming at her," recalls Spanish-born drummer Romero, referencing Forster's mother Nora, a German music promoter and publishing heiress, and John Lydon's future partner. "Ariane was wild, with no inhibitions. But there also seemed to be a sense of humour in her wildness. At that time, I wanted to form a group but didn't want to be the frontperson. So, I asked her if she wanted to be in a band."

Within days, the pair – along with Kate Korus and Suzy Gutsy – were rehearsing in a London squat and calling themselves The Slits. By the following spring, the line-up had shifted into that of Forster (aka Ari Up), Romero (Palmolive), bassist Tessa Pollitt and guitar player Viv Albertine. They quickly become a gang.

"WE WERE KIDS SAYING, 'THIS SOCIETY STINKS!'"

"We were aligned with punk, but it wasn't like The Damned or The Clash or The Sex Pistols," says Romero. "We had our own thing going, our own style. We really didn't know what we were doing, but we were so determined. And it was very ideologically driven. We were like the kids saying, 'Fuck you! This society stinks!'"

They had a lot to rail against, from casual misogyny and the dearth of youth culture to social inequality and the expectations foisted on female musicians in a male-dominated industry. And while the ferment of punk proved an ideal catalyst, it was largely dub reggae and the sound systems of Ladbroke Grove that informed their thrillingly raw, untutored rhythms.

"The Slits were a fresh breeze blowing through a scene that was still part of the 'cockocracy', as I call it," says journalist, champion and good friend, Vivien Goldman. "It was just fantastic having them. They were unique and pretty rambunctious, right down to their punk fashion, which was transgressive with a sort of dissonance. They made a glorious, shambolic noise, redolent of punk, but also the product of hanging out in shebeens with dub and listening to African music. Plus, Ari was a force of nature; confrontational and dynamic."

"The girls weren't *that* proficient onstage, but they were playing instruments the way they wanted to," notes sometime Slits drummer Bruce Smith, co-founder of The Pop Group. "And when we *did* hit it right, it would be really magical. They were a way-out rock band of sorts, with this incredibly delicate quality. Ari would be spinning like a dervish in the middle. She was an amazing frontperson, because she would talk directly to people. The stage was like the front room for her."

The Slits' initial run was all over by early 1982, leaving behind a relatively slim recorded legacy of two studio albums, a couple of John Peel sessions and a split single with The Pop Group. Yet the band's impact was undeniable, on a variety of levels.

"We were changing the culture in music," Ari told this writer in 2009, a year before she passed away. "The music was one thing, but with it came the attitude and the clothes. We were revolutionaries."

The Slits made their live debut at the Harlesden Coliseum in March 1977, sharing a bill with Buzzcocks, Subway Sect and headliners The Clash. Their rehearsals had often been chaotic affairs, a factor that spilled out into their stage performance. The self-taught Palmolive, whose only prior experience of being in a band was a brief stint with messy punks The Flowers Of Romance, would coax a ferocious, primal rhythm from her kit, while Ari Up yelled, stamped and barked out orders. Pollitt somehow managed to keep it all grounded.

"I was there with my brother and friends and it was just extraordinary," marvels Smith. "It was one of the most anarchic live performances I've ever seen in my entire life. They had these songs, but the tempo would be all over the place, and Ari would be screaming at the top of her voice."

Albertine, who'd also served in The Flowers Of Romance and was then girlfriend of The Clash's Mick Jones, was in the audience. The Slits had asked her to join some time earlier, but it took the Harlesden gig to finally swing it for her. It was (as she later recalled in her 2014 memoir, *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes, Music, Music, Music, Boys, Boys, Boys*) "a call to arms". Goldman reviewed the show in *Sounds*, gushing:
"For a first-ever gig, it was outstanding. See them AS SOON AS YOU CAN!"

The band's unpredictability onstage was partly down to their combustible dynamic. "I remember playing the Roxy and fighting with Ari, telling her to shut up because she said

I was off-beat," says Palmolive. "Eventually I threw my sticks at her. But it was really how we were with each other, like she was my little sister. It wasn't like we were trying to be punk; we were just responding to what was happening."

The Slits' reputation was growing fast by the time they were invited onto The Clash's *White Riot* tour in May '77. Dressed in slashed T-shirts, bondage gear and Doc Martens, their hair backcombed to heaven, they were routinely thrown out of hotels due to them being perceived as threatening. They even had to bribe the driver to allow them to stay on the tour bus.

"The way we were treated was terrible," says Palmolive, who was then in a relationship with Joe Strummer. "But people loved the actual gigs, even though it was a challenge for us. Those audiences were much bigger than what we were used to. We had good times and crazy times and fights. The other element, for me personally, was that Joe and I were kind of breaking up at that time."

The Slits had a bunch of distinctive songs – Number One Enemy, Shoplifting, Newtown, So Tough, and Love And Romance included – but, unlike almost all their peers, they'd yet to sign a record deal. They were in no hurry. "Joe Strummer came up to me one time and said: 'You guys are the only ones who haven't sold out,'" remembered Ari. "It wasn't that we didn't want to sell out; we just didn't want to compromise or be a gimmick. We enjoyed our freedom."

The Slits went through a succession of managers (among them Roxy DJ and filmmaker Don Letts, who captured them in fly-on-the-wall doc, *The Punk Rock Movie*). By 1978, however, the issue was causing a schism. "Malcolm McLaren came along to meet us, and I remember him saying that he hated women and hated music, but he wanted to work with us," says Palmolive. "Tessa, Viviane and Ari wanted to go along with him, but I didn't. He was a con artist and manipulator. Then that created this split."

It wasn't just the management situation. Palmolive had started to detach herself a little: "I was writing songs that were different, like FM and Adventures Close To Home, starting to look at the scene and our experiences. For me, we weren't getting the same excitement, whereas in the beginning it was such a blast. I just started thinking that it wasn't worth it. The decision to leave was made for me, in a way, and it was a shock. Viviane basically told Ari: 'Palmolive or me.' They actually got Tessa to tell me. But we were all young. It was just life in a rock group."



The Slits in 1977, between guitarists (l-r): Ari Up, Palmolive, Kate Korus



Palmolive would soon move on to another influential all-female outfit, The Raincoats. But her immediate replacement was 21-year-old Peter Clarke, aka Budgie. The drummer came mentally prepared for his initiation with The Slits, supporting The Clash on tour in November 1978. "I'd hung out with The Slits at places like Croydon Greyhound," Budgie explains. "Onstage, Ari used to charge into Palmolive's kit, so I was ready for that."

"WE DIDN'T WANT TO COMPROMISE OR BE A GIMMICK"

Budgie arrived just after The Slits, still managerless, had finally bitten the bullet and signed with a label. Island Records was their choice of destination. "We got onto Island by our own steam, hustling and running around," said Ari. "The Jamaican connection was very important to us. At Island there was Linton Kwesi Johnson and so many other reggae artists. All this energy going on. We sealed the deal ourselves, putting full artistic control in our contract."

The Slits repaired to Ridge Farm Studios in the West Sussex countryside, with reggae producer Dennis Bovell, to record their first album. "It was my first professional studio engagement," says Budgie. "I think the first song we did was Typical Girls, which has two different tempos – a kind of swingtime, then a straight walk feel. There was a lot of learning going on, which was interesting to observe. And Dennis' attention to detail was minute. Those great percussion ideas – matchbox, spoon, rattle – are all his inventions. And I was doing things with floor toms and my fist that was more like a djembe style, which came in very handy when I later joined the Banshees."

The Slits were intent on making every track memorable, from the trance-like Newtown and the skanking groove of Adventures Close To Home (sung by a reluctant Pollitt, with Ari Up slapping out a remarkable bassline) to rock/reggae hybrid FM and beyond. They also gave Marvin Gaye's I Heard It Through The Grapevine a radical makeover.

"There was a real complexity and range about those songs," reflected Ari. "Our stuff was spaced out and so far ahead of its time. People couldn't really grasp the abstraction in our music. Dennis was a real pioneer of lovers' rock, so he was crucial to the sound because we wanted someone we could relate to."

Island bosses weren't sure what to expect. And Bovell was smart enough to keep them at arm's


"I threw my sticks at her": Palmolive (below) in 1977, before splitting with (above left) Ari Up; opposite page, left to right) the late Ms Up in 2009; Palmolive in 2019

Photos: Getty



Upward mobility: Ari with stepdad John Lydon, New York, 2000



length during the sessions.

"It seems there was an idea that The Slits could be molded into a more commercial version of themselves, like a Spice Girls for the late 70s or something," reckons Budgie. "But I'm not sure Island even heard a note. I doubt Dennis would have played them anything, with good reason. He probably thought, 'I'm making the record I want to make with the girls.'"

When they were done, The Slits christened the album *Cut*, as suggested by Budgie: "We were sitting with Island's in-house art guy and I saw a slit in a piece of paper, and maybe some pink writing, very punky. I was just thinking about the group name and the musical idea of cut, as in a track." Island wanted to play relatively safe and issue I Heard It Through The Grapevine as a primer single. The band disagreed, insisting on Typical Girls as a showcase for their own songwriting. They got their way, naturally. Grapevine… was relegated to the B-side.

When photographer Pennie Smith visited Ridge Farm to shoot the album cover, Albertine, Pollitt and Ari went topless and smeared themselves in mud from the rose garden outside, emerging like Amazonian warriors. "It was totally spontaneous," Ari recalled. "There was a lot of mud, and we were getting really tribal and in touch with our sense of womanhood. We did it without all the constrictions of how the media told women to be. We wanted to be reflections of our music."

Issued in September 1979, *Cut* made the UK Top 30. But The Slits were already moving on. With Budgie Banshees-bound, the Bovell connection had brought them into contact with another of the producer's charges, Bristol avant-punks The Pop Group. The Slits duly borrowed Bruce Smith.

"Bruce is a fantastic drummer," notes Goldman. "That's when their sound kind of started broadening out, which isn't often spoken about or understood. Musically, that whole period saw The Slits progress a lot."

Smith and The Slits bonded over a shared love of reggae, but it was free jazz and world music that cemented their working relationship. "I introduced them to a lot of things they'd never heard, like Sun Ra and Don Cherry, particularly *Brown Rice* [Cherry's 1975 album], and a wealth of different, largely black American music," says Smith. "I remember The Slits and some of The Pop Group going to see Sun Ra and his Arkestra at the *North Sea Jazz Festival* in Holland. We took the boat over. It was like a kind of weekend family outing. So, their musical worlds were opening up all the time. That created a whole level of excitement and interest for them."

A teenage Neneh Cherry had contributed backing vocals to *Cut*. For the ensuing UK tour, The Slits invited her famous stepfather out with them, plus Jamaican toaster Prince Hammer and dub masters Creation Rebel. "They were generally punky crowds, well juiced-up," remembers Smith. "Some nights were touch and go, while others were amazing. People had never seen anything like it before, they were utterly transfixed. And that was all because The Slits had had this wonderful, incredible idea."

Having shifted allegiance to CBS, the band took this world fusion aesthetic into sessions for a second album, *Return Of The Giant Slits*. The scintillating, afrocentric Earthbeat was typical of The Slits' new approach. "They were evolving all the time," marvels Smith. "But I'm not sure what the head of CBS, Maurice Oberstein, thought of the album. Maybe he didn't really care, because they had The Clash and were making plenty of money from them."

Sadly, for all its ethno adventurism, *Return Of The Giant Slits* was largely ignored by the public. Critics were often left baffled by its directional swerve. Exhausted, The Slits were losing faith in a changing industry, too. They were also slowly disintegrating. They played their final show at Hammersmith Palais – just down the road from the Odeon, where it all essentially began – in December 1981.





While each member's lives would take varied turns over the decades, Ari Up and Pollitt eventually revived The Slits in 2005. Albertine wasn't interested. Nor was Palmolive, despite Ari's best charm offensive. "Ari came over and stayed in our house for three days," Palmolive explains. "She was telling me how wonderful we were, that the group was never the same after I left. I mean, she was laying it on really thick! But I said, 'It's so great to see you, and let's stay in touch, but no thank you.'"

The new five-piece recorded a third Slits album, 2009's *Trapped Animal* – an effervescent mixture of lovers rock, electronica and brash punk-pop. But Ari Up's death from breast cancer the following year, aged just 48, gave The Slits a tragic ending. "I was there at Ari's last ever New York gig and then we hung out together afterwards," says Goldman. "I get hit with sudden waves of emotion thinking about The Slits. Having them around was very important for me.

"I often think about Pussy Riot when it comes to The Slits, because their stories are so sensational," Goldman continues. "The Slits were so extreme and unusual that people often don't *listen* to the music. They were always like a cult group, and I would imagine their cult has somewhat grown. People like Kathleen Hanna pay tribute. I MC'd a Slits tribute event at the venerable Lincoln Center recently, and it was a full house."

Ari at least lived long enough to witness the start of this fresh wave of appreciation for The Slits. "*Cut* was big at the time, in an underground way," she pondered. "But then it grew and grew over time. Now we've become a legend. It was amazing how four teenage girls with no real guidance managed to get on in the record business."

Looking back, Palmolive has conflicting emotions about her tenure in The Slits: "Am I proud of our legacy? In some ways, yeah. In other ways, I just think we were crazy. Would I recommend doing what I did to my grandkids? No. But I'm proud to be part of any generation that was able to speak to power. We didn't pretend to have a solution, but we were saying, 'This doesn't work.' And I'd rather have that, anytime, than conformity. That, I think, is the real danger."

Palmolive is currently writing her autobiography. Budgie's* The Absence: Memoirs Of A Banshee Drummer *is published by White Rabbit. Vivien Goldman's* Revenge Of The She-Punks *is published by University of Texas Press. A major new exhibition,* Punk To Pop *(featuring The Slits, Sex Pistols, The Specials, Joy Division and more), runs at the V&A in South Kensington from 13 March 2027 until 2 January 2028.

More than meets the eyes

Although established as a husky-voiced soft rock singer, in 1981 Kim Carnes took a left turn with the sultry synthpop of Bette Davis Eyes. A global smash resulted. As she releases a 10-disc box set, she tells Charles Donovan about the journey from songwriter to superstar



It's 1981. American singer/songwriter Kim Carnes is in France, promoting Bette Davis Eyes, a cover of a little-known 1975 Jackie DeShannon song. In its original guise, the song is saddled with a sluggish, brassy, variety-hour arrangement. Carnes, her band and her producer, Val Garay, have alchemised it into coolly detached, cutting-edge synth-rock. As she leaves the Paris studio, something happens that she has never experienced before.

"There's a huge crowd waiting for me," she recalls, "and as I start to go down the street, they're running after me, screaming, 'Kim! Kim!' I'm like, 'Holy shit! Wow!' That's when it hit me – we've definitely got something big here.'"

Quite how big will surprise everyone. Carnes is six albums and 10 years into her recording career. She's in her mid-thirties and has a young son with her songwriter husband, Dave Ellingson. She's not the new kid on the block… but it's about to be her year.

In the main, the 80s weren't particularly kind to acoustically inclined artists who'd emerged in the 60s and 70s. Many didn't adapt convincingly to the electronic sounds of new wave and synthpop. Carnes was one of the most notable exceptions. She moved into the new sound-worlds of the decade with remarkable self-assurance.

There was a reason for her confidence: she wasn't bringing synthesisers into her band because of some neurotic fear about moving with the times. She was doing it because she'd been captivated by the records coming out of the UK at the turn of the decade, including those by Gary Numan and Classix Nouveaux.

"I fell in love with that music," she confirms. "I was heavily influenced by the new romantics and the synthesisers. And Bill Cuomo, my long-time keyboard player, happened to be brilliant on synths and he also loved everything coming out of the UK."

Carnes is talking to *RC* from her home in California, following several years in Nashville. We had been told to expect an audio-only Zoom, so are delighted that she's turned on her camera and, at 81, is looking so healthy and vital.

Prior to the 1981 explosion in her fortunes, Carnes had been gathering slow-burn momentum via an array of talents: pianist, songwriter, producer, backing vocalist, singer. And what a singer. Of all the raspy vocalists of the period (Rod Stewart, Bonnie Tyler et al), Carnes was perhaps the most subtle and multi-textured. Born in 1940s Los Angeles, she'd been building a solid career combining solo recording, high-profile opening slots (for James Taylor among others) and songwriting (the first artist to cut a Carnes song was Big Mama Thornton in 1971 and before the decade was out, she'd be joined by Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Andy Williams, Jose Feliciano, Tata Vega, Anne Murray and Loretta Lynn).





Carnes' first album, 1971's *Rest On Me*, was a one-off that stands apart from the rest of her discography. For that reason, it's not part of the lavish 10-disc box set – *Universal Songs* – for which this conversation has been arranged.

"It's a first album," she explains. "I was trying out different styles and all that." It's also notable for not really establishing her as an authorial voice. With only two tracks written by her, it's more a popular-vocalist album.

All that changed once she was on A&M, a label she so admired that she repeatedly lobbied them, undeterred when the head honchos told her that they already had their "lady" – Rita Coolidge – and weren't looking for another. On Carnes' self-titled 1975 A&M album, everything fell into place: the songwriting (nine of the songs bear her credit) and the classic "Kim Carnes" voice.

"The feedback was, 'Too much gravel! Way too much!'"

This was even truer of its superior 1976 follow-up, *Sailin'*, possibly her finest album of the decade, with its seductive mix of pop and soul plus a dash of country. "I produced that with Jerry Wexler," she says (Carnes routinely co-produced, even if she wasn't always credited). "A&M came to me and said, 'Who should produce your next album?' I said, 'Well, my dream would be Jerry Wexler.' The next day he said: 'I'd love to!'

"I flew to Muscle Shoals and it was just one of the best experiences in my life," she relates. "It was like working with Buddha – he was such a mentor and so incredibly wise, and the best part was that every day we would take a lunch break and because we were in Muscle Shoals we'd go out and get his favourite barbecue, which I hadn't had a lot being from California."

Carnes also found a way to turbo-charge her vocal takes. Having flown in Julia and Maxine Waters, of the famed, four-sibling, backing-vocal titans, The Waters ("Years ago, Maxine and Julia made me their third sister so they're a huge part of my life," she says), she broke out the Drambuie. "By itself, I think it's kind of yucky, but you mix hot water in it – it's called a Drambuie Louis and it's so good for doing vocals! Maxine, Julia and I were in the booth drinking Drambuie Louis and we did all the backgrounds for *Sailin'* in one night. Wexler was sitting in the booth and kept saying, 'I've never seen anything like it!'"

By the late 70s, Carnes had been headhunted by EMI to launch their American offshoot. Her first two albums for the label built on the sound she'd established at A&M but added a greater rock emphasis. It was at this juncture she received some advice that she has followed ever since. For the first single from *St Vincent's Court* (1979), It Hurts So Bad, a rootsy mid-tempo rock song written by Carnes alone, she decided to go all out with a rough, growly vocal from start to finish, rather than taking her usual, more tempered approach.

"Charlie Minor was head of promotion [at EMI America] at that time and he was the best promotion man in the history of the world. He was just incredible. And I loved him because he was always super-honest with me. And when he took It Hurts So Bad to radio stations, the feedback was, 'Too much gravel! Way too much!' I took that advice to heart and made sure, tried to make sure, that that never happened again. I always want somebody to level with me, and he did and I'm forever grateful.'"

Too much gravel or not, the single was a modest No 56 US hit – Carnes' first solo appearance on the *Billboard* Hot 100 (the previous year, she'd reached No 36 on a duet, also written by her, with Gene Cotton).

Nineteen-eighty was the turning point. Not only were Carnes and her husband commissioned to write a concept album for

Kenny Rogers (the million-selling *Gideon*, on which Carnes also duetted with Rogers for the US No 4 single, Don't Fall In Love With A Dreamer), she also reached the US Top 10 as a soloist with a cover of Smokey Robinson's More Love and issued her first album to break the Top 200, *Romance Dance* (US No 57). It was mixed by Val Garay, who signed on to produce her next album.

One year on, after recording Bette Davis Eyes and its parent album, *Mistaken Identity*, Carnes says she knew something was about to happen. "My band and I knew the minute we cut it," she remembers. "There was no doubt in my mind or their mind that it was gonna work. I fought hard for it to be the first single because I believed in it so strongly. I remember being in the studio and the local station in LA was on. Bette Davis Eyes came on and afterwards the DJ said, 'Man, I don't know what's going on, but the phones are ringing off the hook. This is gonna be huge!'"

"Huge" turned out to be an understatement: nine weeks at No 1 in the US, No 1 in Germany and Australia, No 2 in Canada and New Zealand and No 10 in the UK. And in another sign of Carnes' grasp of the early-80s zeitgeist, she turned out to be an MTV natural, whose face, presence and ice-blonde hair the camera couldn't get enough of. Having debuted on video with the humorous clip for More Love, directed by Mike Nesmith of The Monkees, she began a fruitful collaboration with Australian director, Russell Mulcahy, responsible for Duran Duran and Elton John promos.

"He [Mike Nesmith] had explained to me how important videos were going to be in the future. For the Bette Davis video, Jim Mazza, president of EMI, and I were in a room for days, looking at reel after reel, trying to find the right director. Days into it, we saw a video out of the UK by Classix Nouveaux that Russell had directed and we both went, 'That person! We need to find Russell!' He was in the UK and had never done a video here before and he consented to come and shoot it. Russell's vision, bringing the heavy new romantic movement into it… I remember when I first saw it, I couldn't believe how cool it was. He's a genius."

"My band and I knew the minute we cut it"

Mistaken Identity had a four-week run at No 1 in the US and a UK peak of No 26. And at the 1982 Grammy Awards, Bette Davis Eyes had two wins: Song Of The Year (for Jackie DeShannon and Donna Weiss) and Record Of The Year (for Carnes and Garay).

Of course, there's a danger when something becomes a global phenomenon that it casts a shadow over an artist's subsequent work. This is especially true for Carnes in the UK where Bette Davis Eyes did not kick off a run of hits. Beyond her devotees, Carnes could be wildly and reductively misremembered: that blonde woman who had the big hit in 1981. Her significance – as singer, songwriter, producer, performer, star of the original music-video era, keyboard player – might completely elude the wider public.

That's partly what this box set is for, to remind people of the whole story. Until now, Carnes' catalogue hasn't been well-served. Some of her finest work (eg *Sailin'*) has hardly ever made it to CD while other albums have appeared and reappeared in fits and starts but never as part of a properly considered catalogue-restoration campaign.

Carnes' 1982 follow-up, *Voyeur*, should have consolidated her 1981 success. It was the stronger album, with Carnes committing totally to a synth-noir aesthetic. To this day, it stands on its own in her catalogue for its dark, eerie beauty. The title track, written by Carnes with Duane Hitchings, was the lead single, supported by another unforgettable









Kim as you are (clockwise from left): onstage in 1981; with Kenny Rogers and Sammy Davis in New York, 1980; with Rogers in 2014



"I was trying out different styles" (l-r): Carnes in 1971, around the time of her debut album *Rest On Me*; performing on US TV show *American Bandstand* in 1982, still riding high on the success of the previous year's smash hit Bette Davis Eyes; at the Grammys in 1984 with an award for the *Flashdance* soundtrack

Mulcahy video: a mini-murder mystery in which Carnes witnesses the violent death of an erotic dancer before being pursued by the killer.

Unfortunately, the video was watershedded by MTV, so no daytime or early-evening audiences got to see it. Then, perhaps most critically, her beloved Charlie Minor left EMI. "He went back to A&M, my former label, and it was never ever the same," she says. "I'd gone on three-week tours of radio stations and watched him in action – he was phenomenal. I always wish he had stayed on and promoted *Voyeur* because it would have been different. He was one in a million."

Voyeur was by no means a flop, but it returned Carnes to the kind of chart presence she'd been in 1980 – she'd continue to make reappearances in the American Top 40 but not with the kind of sales juggernauts she'd been responsible for in 1981.

Her fame and prestige had, however, been given a huge shot in the arm, and this played out through the course of the decade. She was sought for high-profile duets (Make No Mistake, He's Mine, with Barbra Streisand) and soundtrack contributions (I'll Be Here Where The Heart Is, from *Flashdance*) as both writer and singer. She had an international audience and could tour almost any territory. "To this day, I'm so grateful that it [Bette Davis Eyes] became a worldwide hit. It enabled me to go to Europe every year. And South America where my fans are loyal – loyal and phenomenal."



For the rest of the 80s, Carnes remained a high-profile star across radio and video. *Cafe Racers* (1983), a lighter album than *Voyeur*, was bafflingly overlooked. But her 1985 album, *Barking At Airplanes*, did well. And, lest anyone forget, she was part of the era's most famous charitable celebrity shindig, We Are The World (USA For Africa), singing a solo line rather than just being part of the chorus.

"It was recorded over one evening at A&M studios," she tells *RC*. "There was a big sign above the entrance saying, 'Leave your ego at the door.' And afterwards, we walked out at 7.30 in the morning and the sun was up. There's no words to describe how grateful I felt to be part of it. We took a break at one point, and everybody signed everybody else's sheet music. I have that to this day, this *treasure*."

Carnes' eventual retreat from the album-tour-album-tour treadmill was foreshadowed by her 1988 album, *View From The House*, for which she left EMI America for MCA and strived for an earthy, non-synthesised sound.

"I went back to Jimmy Bowen, who had produced my very first album and been my first publisher, because I knew I wouldn't have to explain to him where my head was at at that point… that I wanted to go back to a more organic sound. I flew to Nashville where Jimmy was head of MCA and, like with Jerry Wexler in Muscle Shoals, it was a great experience. Both Bowen and Wexler had the same attitude about what their role as producer was: to find out who I am as an artist and do their best to make sure that gets recorded."

Carnes' arrival in Nashville coincided with a significant migration of singer/songwriter talent from other States and she, too, stayed there, focusing on writing while maintaining a solo touring schedule.

"My publisher was there, most of my original band moved to Nashville before I did. As a songwriter, I had really good success with other artists covering my songs – they weren't country songs, they were just songs sung by country artists and it worked. I concentrated on playing live and writing for others."

As for recording, Carnes has only occasionally broken her silence, first with a Japan-only album in 1991 and then with an indie album, *Chasin' Wild Trains*, in 2004. A reissue of the latter is next on her list of projects once the box set is out. She's particularly pleased it's going to have a vinyl outing.

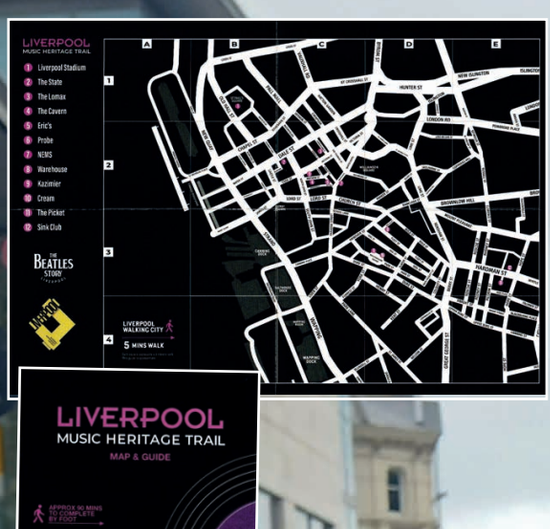
"I love the sound of vinyl," she admits. "When I did *View From The House* [1988] everything was starting to be digital. But I loved the warmth of analogue. Still do, always will. And Jimmy Bowen was cool enough that he said, 'OK, let's record it digitally and then we'll mix to analogue' and he got that warm feeling. It's not for every kind of music, but my music? I want it to sound warm. Always."

Universal Songs: The A&M, EMI America & MCA Years *is on Demon/Edsel.*

Photos: Avalon/ Getty

THE QUALITY OF MERSEY

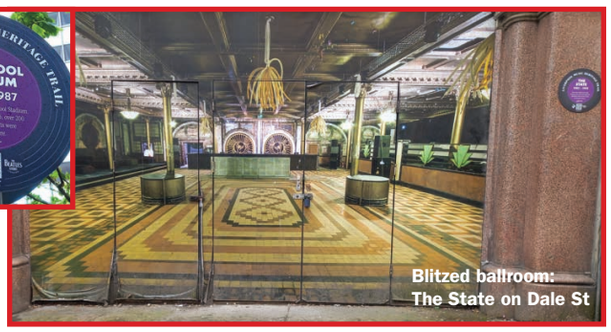
Liverpool Council has established a Music Heritage Trail covering 12 sites and making an enjoyable 90-minute walk across the city centre. Spencer Leigh and Mike Haskins put them in a walking order and add a few other things you can spot along the way



Giant steps: the Brian Epstein statue in Whitechapel, Liverpool, which depicts him walking to the Cavern to see The Beatles for the first time on 9 November 1961

LIVERPOOL STADIUM, St Paul's Square, 1932-1987




Blitzed ballroom: The State on Dale St

Many famous boxers (Randolph Turpin, John Conteh) fought at Liverpool Stadium and the owner was Johnny Best, grandfather of Pete. His sons, Johnny (boxing) and Billy (wrestling), arranged the matches. In the 1950s, both John Lennon and George Harrson saw Dirty Jack Pye wrestle. John Conteh, meanwhile, was one of the celebrity fugitives photographed for the cover of Wings' *Band On The Run* (1973).

In 1956, Louis Armstrong invited the Merseysippi Jazz Band to join him onstage at the Stadium, the highlight of their career. In 1960, Gene Vincent performed alongside British beat acts including local talent, Rory Storm & The Hurricanes and Gerry & The Pacemakers – the promoter Allan Williams didn't consider the Beatles good enough. The audience sat on all four sides and the stage revolved before them.

In the 70s, the Manchester-based promoter Roger Eagle presented numerous rock acts here, including Dr Feelgood, Led Zeppelin, Captain Beefheart and Roxy Music as well as Deaf School, Liverpool's answer to the Bonzo Dog Band and then some. A violent attack following a Thin Lizzy concert led to the authorities closing the venue. Roger Eagle then concentrated on promoting events at his own venue, Eric's.

You now walk down Old Hall Street, across Exchange Flags and onto Dale Street. You will see Liverpool Town Hall with its balcony from which The Beatles waved to fans at their homecoming in 1964. We are now turning left and looking at…

THE STATE, 14 Dale Street, 1982-1992



Where Holly Johnson said "Relax" and Alexandra Pigg wrote a letter to Brezhnev.

This ornate building (pictured top right), with its multi-coloured marble and beautiful ballroom was built in 1906 by Aubrey Thomas, the architect of the Royal Liver Building. It was sold to Littlewoods' pools and mail order business, which held sophisticated tea dances for their staff.

Everything changed in the 80s when The State was home to house music and became the first local club to use lasers. The video for Frankie Goes To Hollywood's Relax was filmed there and the ballroom featured heavily for the copping-off scenes in Frank Clarke's film drama, *Letter To Brezhnev* (1985). The State hosted popular events like the Monster Jam and even today there are body contortions, as it is owned by JD Gyms.

Head down Dale Street towards the Mersey Tunnel. You will cross Temple Street, but it is worth looking at the plaque on No 13. This was the site of the rival club to the Cavern, The Iron Door, and was the stronghold of The Searchers. Back on Dale Street, you turn right at the next street along.

THE LOMAX, 34 Cumberland Street, 1993-2000

The key venue for Liverpool bands in the 90s, not to mention Oasis.

Many old warehouses in the city were put to a good use as music venues. In the early 1990s, Mike Hindley took over three floors in Cumberland Street and opened The Lomax. Oasis played there in 1994 and their performance was recorded: this is celebrated with a mural, but clearly one Scouser objected (see photo, right). The Lomax also presented Echo and the Bunnymen, Radiohead and the Coral. The building is now serviced apartments and is part of the LGBTQ neighbourhood.





Relative value: former site of The Lomax, where the Gallagher brothers plied their trade

Walk down Cumberland Street onto Victoria Street and immediately turn left down Stanley Street. On your left-hand side, you will see Tommy Steele's much-loved statue of Eleanor Rigby. You reach Whitechapel and turn right. You will see Brian Epstein's statue (see main picture, left hand page), perhaps a little too big for sensible selfies. On the opposite side of the road, is NEXT, the site for NEMS record store. Turn over (or cross over) for more on that subject...

NEMS, Whitechapel, 1960-1973



The Epstein family owned NEMS (North End Music Stores) and the young manager of the Whitechapel branch, Brian Epstein, aimed to make it the best record store in the north-west. He ordered every UK release and had listening booths where you could hear them before purchase. The store was opened by Anthony Newley in May 1960 and fans crowded the street, making it impossible for traffic to pass.

Local musos including the Beatles crowded into the booths to scribble down lyrics and chords and perform them that night. This explains why groups often sang the wrong words, Some Other Guy being an example.

Through selling the *Mersey Beat* newspaper, Epstein realised there was a vibrant music scene in Liverpool and he walked 200 yards to the Cavern on 9 November 1961 to see the Beatles at a lunchtime session.

Although Eppy became a great manager, he was a loss to record retail. He loved it if you asked for a record by catalogue number – he knew them by heart.

You can now do Eppy's 200-yard walk to the Cavern and that in itself holds interest. Along the way you will see a corner warehouse with steps to the front door: this is another significant site...

PROBE, Button Street, 1976-1994



This curious warehouse with multi-coloured brickwork deserved equally strange occupiers and it got them. Geoff Davies' record store stocked underground music and he recommended Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart and Dr John. Geoff established the Probe Plus record label with Half Man Half Biscuit and Jegsy Dodd & The Sons Of Harry Cross.

The record racks were jammed with imports and obscure releases. The knowledgeable staff included the extravagant Pete Burns, who was as tough as a docker and would criticise conventional record-buying tastes. Woe betide anyone who asked him for Boy George.

Going up Mathew Street, there is a mural celebrating Liverpool music and going right back to Lita Roza. There is the Liverpool Beatles Museum run by Roag Best (brother of Pete). Unlike most museums, this is crammed full of exhibits and you'll need a couple of hours to check it out.



ERIC's, Mathew Street, 1976-1980



In 1976, after his success with rock concerts at Liverpool Stadium, Roger Eagle opened the basement club, Eric's. It was the start of punk and new wave and the performers included the Runaways, the Stranglers, Deaf School, the Sex Pistols, the Clash and Elvis Costello. Eric's encouraged successful local bands and its members formed the Lightning Seeds, Echo & The Bunnymen and Teardrop Explodes. Pete Wylie of the Mighty Wah! was so outspoken that he was known as the mouth of the Mersey.





THE CAVERN, Mathew Street, 1957-1973

In January 1957, a doctor's son and jazz enthusiast, Alan Sytner, opened a basement club in a Liverpool warehouse. The opening act was the Merseysippi Jazz Band, and jazz was the order of the day until Ray McFall took over in 1959. Gradually it switched to rock'n'roll, and all the Merseybeat bands played here as well as Stevie Wonder, The Who and Chuck Berry.

The erudite and witty Bob Wooler was an amazing DJ, changing the tastes of musicians and the public. Because of him, the Liverpool bands picked up on Chan Romero's Hippy Hippy Shake and he told the Mavericks (nothing wrong with that name!) to become the Merseybeats.

The Cavern's drains were its downfall, followed by a plan to demolish the club for a ventilation shaft for the underground railway. The club moved over the road and in turn, became Eric's. Meanwhile, the shaft was never built.

A new Cavern was opened in 1984, built to the old specifications but with an extension, and it is the city's top attraction. In December 1999, Paul McCartney's concert to promote his *Run Devil Run* album was broadcast around the world. For over 30 years, Bill Heckle and Dave Jones did a wonderful job managing the Cavern. They have now retired and sold the business to 14 Collective. Quite simply, the Cavern is the most famous club in the world.

OK, ready for a 10-minute walk. Up to the top of Mathew Street, the Hard Days Night Hotel is on your left. Walk past it and then turn left into the shopping area Lord Street, which goes into Church Street. You'll see Bold Street with its bombed-out church at the top of the hill, but you are turning right into Hanover Street. The second turning on the left is Fleet Street.



Scouse party(top to bottom): Macca immortalised; the Mathew Street mural celebrating 75 years of Liverpool music; the site of Eric's on the same street

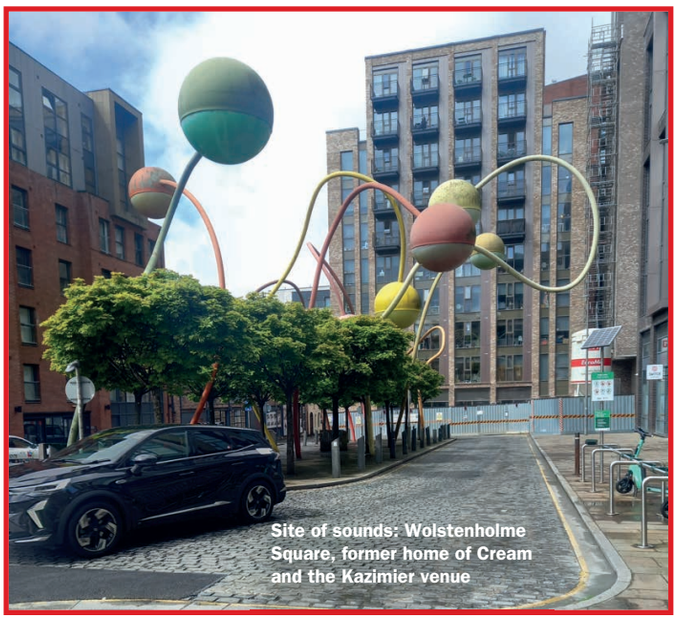
THE WAREHOUSE, 13/15 Fleet Street, Liverpool 1, 1981-1983

The Warehouse was nothing elaborate – a huge room with red walls, a bar, a stage, a dance floor and heavy tables you could dance on. The owner and booker, Dave C, knew what the public wanted and his local successes included Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Black and A Flock Of Seagulls. Visiting bands included the Thompson Twins and Cabaret Voltaire.

Nick Cave came onstage with a bottle of Jack Daniel's and drank it completely, finishing the night slumped over the piano. Dave handed out flyers outside the Royal Court Theatre so that concertgoers could then move to Fleet Street and get free admission. The Warehouse only lasted two years, burning down after a wild night.



Return to Hanover Street and walk to another left turn, Gradwell Street. That leads into Wolstenholme Square, which you can easily spot because of the giant Penelope Sculpture by the Cuban artist Jorge Pardo (right).


Site of sounds: Wolstenholme Square, former home of Cream and the Kazimier venue

CREAM, Wolstenholme Square, 1992-2002

Wolstenholme Square was a once grand area of Liverpool but it was blitzed during the Second World War and became derelict. Then a succession of clubs came along and one building was the cabaret club, Russell's, then Snobs, Harvey's and the Academy.

Impressed by the DJ nights at The State, James Barton and his associates took over and soon people were even travelling from London to listen to pounding dance music. As well as local DJs, they invited top names from around the country to host music nights. Cream became a global phenomenon and led to the annual Creamfields festival.



KAZIMIER, Wolstenholme Square, 2008-2016

When Liverpool became the European Capital of Culture, some creative types from Oxford came and opened the Kazimier. It had disco nights but it also featured live music from The Fall, Sean Lennon and the ill-fated Viola Beach. It also featured theatre and film nights. The building has been demolished and apartments built, but the instigators created a new arts project in the city, the Invisible Wind Factory.



Turn left and you will be in Slater Street and see the Jacaranda coffee bar, once owned by Allan Williams and a haunt for The Beatles in 1960. At the bottom of Slater Street, you turn right into the shopping area, Bold Street. You reach the bombed-out church, where Yoko Ono held a celebration of stepladders. Keep going up the hill on Leece Street, which quickly becomes Hardman Street, going up towards the Philharmonic Hall...

THE SINK, 1963-1971, 45 Hardman Street, Liverpool 1

The Sink Club was opened by Neil English in 1963 and was different from other clubs – no membership cards; you just showed a sink plug. It concentrated on Soul and R&B and had nights devoted to Tamla-Motown. Both the Clayton Squares and the Hideaways were recorded live at the Sink. The Sink became the Magnet and now is the Quarry bar and club. A shout out for DJ Norman Killon, an influential mover in the city. He was the DJ at the Sink and at Eric's and he also sold records at Probe. He changed the listening habits of so many residents and he is as enthusiastic as ever.

THE PICKET, 1986-2004, 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool 1

In the late 70s and early 80s, unemployment was rife in Liverpool. The former School for the Blind in Hardman Street became the Trade Union and Unemployment Resource Centre and the buildings behind it were used for a studio and music venue run by Phil Hayes. Up and coming groups could use the centre's PA system, and The Farm and The La's came out of there. The Picket was strongly supported by Pete Townshend. In 2004 it moved to a different part of Liverpool and then changed its name to District. RC

You've now seen the first 12 sites for the Liverpool Music Heritage Trail. There will be more. Check out its website, where there are QR codes giving playlists for each venue. Hope you'll be a daytripper and visit Liverpool. It's the friendliest place in the country, although Oasis mightn't think so.



Wall of sound: a mural of Elvis Costello on Renshaw St, former home of *Mersey Beat* magazine



A cute jangle: (above) Talulah Gosh in the late 80s; (below) Heavenly circa 1993

TOUGH ACT(RESS) TO FOLLOW

When a collection of bold if bookish teenage indie kids formed a band in the mid-80s, they couldn't have guessed that, as **Talulah Gosh**, they would become synonymous with a jangly, gentle, ramshackle brand of guitar pop derided as 'twee'. But they also attracted a passionate fanbase, and when they regrouped as **Heavenly** in the 90s, they found themselves close allies of the nascent riot grrrl movement. And while they've survived line-up changes and personal tragedy to work on numerous projects since, Heavenly's reputation endures. As they return with a new album, **David Pollock** hears their story.

Two icons of the 80s played an unwitting part in the formation of music press darlings (and later bête noires) Talulah Gosh, who continue to exist as the recently reformed Heavenly. Both bands might comfortably fit into the category known as 'twee-pop', but don't tell them that.

"These things become shorthand in a way you can't control, like the famous word 'twee'," says bassist Rob Pursey, on a Zoom call from the Kent house he shares with Amelia Fletcher, both bands' singer and songwriter. "We still react badly to that, because it was the sort of word that was bandied around by men to complain about 'why non-rock girls are allowed to be in bands'. Whereas now it's just an innocent word that means a genre, somebody who's 20 will go, 'Oh, yeah, I like twee-pop.' It's lost all its original, negative implications."

The first of Talulah Gosh's foundational icons was the 80s' definitive female indie star, Clare Grogan, who lent the band their name. Fletcher credits Greg Webster of sometime Creation band Razorcuts, also then-boyfriend of Talulah Gosh's other co-vocalist Elizabeth Price, with the idea. "Greg knew I loved Altered Images, and he saw an interview in which Clare Grogan said her original idea for her actress name was Talulah Gosh," recalls Fletcher. "She's more recently explained this to me as being a combination of Tallulah Bankhead and Lillian Gish, but she thought Gish didn't sound right, so it became Talulah Gosh. She said to Bill Forsyth [director of *Gregory's Girl*], 'I'm going to be called Talulah Gosh' and he said, 'You might regret that...' It seemed to work for us, though."

The other 80s institution which helped birth Talulah Gosh was the Oxford branch of record store chain Our Price. Fletcher grew up and went to school in the city (she had a school band with Adam Franklin of Swervedriver) and she took a job at Our Price during a year out between school and Oxford University.

Here, she met co-worker Peter Momtchiloff, who had moved to Oxford from Surrey for university, and they started dating. "I played in school bands in the late 70s, but it was only about '85 that I felt I belonged to a scene," says Momtchiloff. Our Price taught Momtchiloff and Fletcher a lot. "They allowed their staff a certain amount of autonomy to order records. If you knew some indie kids who liked Orange Juice or whatever, you could stock them, so it was an interesting place to come to. I worked there from '83 to '87, during the birth pangs of indie-pop."

> **"SHE HAD NO CLUE WHAT SHE WAS DOING, BUT OUR BEGINNER APPROACH PAID DIVIDENDS"**

Fletcher, in fact, managed to collect every Postcard release via Our Price. She had ambitions to be in a band, and while Momtchiloff usually played bass, he wanted to be a guitarist, which he turned out to be good at. Meanwhile, Fletcher's brother Mathew, four years her junior, wanted to be a drummer. "Mathew was really young when we started," she says. "He'd had a few lessons and drummed along to The Damned and the Ramones in his room, but he'd never been in a band."

Fletcher met Price at a gig in Oxford, where Price was studying art, and spoke to her because she was wearing a Pastels badge. "I went up to her and said, 'Do you want to be in a band?'" says Fletcher. "She looked somewhat horrified and said, 'I don't know how to play guitar, I can't sing, but yeah, why not? I've got a guitar.' I think she'd bought it for 25p at a charity shop. She turned out to be an amazing singer and songwriter; some of the best Talulah Gosh songs were written on that guitar. She had no clue what she was doing, but our complete beginner approach paid dividends."

Finally, Pursey was recruited. A co-founder of The Five Year Plan in his home city of Bristol, who were later played on John Peel, he felt out of his element studying at Oxford. "I was there because I loved literature, but when I got there, I discovered I didn't really like anybody else much," he says. "I was desperate to get in touch with people who were into the same music as me, which is how I ended up knowing Amelia, Mathew and Peter."

They were introduced by a mutual friend who knew Fletcher from Our Price. "Amelia and Liz came round," laughs Pursey. "I wasn't asked to play my bass; they just looked at the records on my wall… Go-Betweens, Microdisney, The Fall, Girls At Our Best! They obviously thought, yeah, he's OK."



Talulah Gosh in the studio, 1987

Photos: Murdo Macpherson; Nicola Chrichton



Tree-pop, anyone? Talulah Gosh in 1986 (l-r): Mathew Fletcher, Peter Momtchiloff, Elizabeth Price, Amelia Fletcher (Chris Scott not pictured)

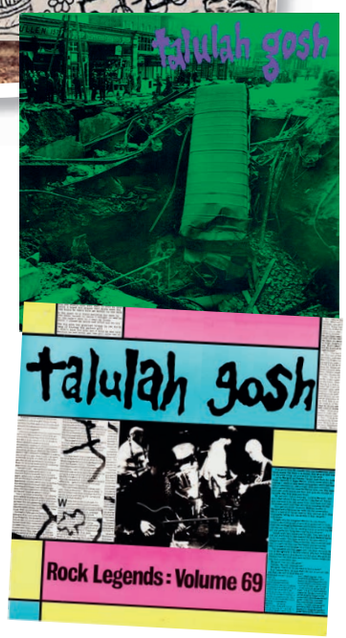
Talulah Gosh formed in late 1985 and played their first gig the following spring. Right from the start, they were on a path to recognition, partly because Fletcher was an active fan on the indie scene and vaguely knew bands like The Pastels and Shop Assistants, and partly because Price was already going out with Webster. He helped the band record a demo tape, then gave them their first gig supporting Razorcuts in an Oxford college bar.

"We weren't even on the poster; we wanted to reserve the right to pull out at the last minute," says Fletcher. "Martin [Whitehead] from the Subway Organisation was at that gig; in fact, all these people who were reasonably big in our tiny indie scene saw us early on, so a buzz was created pretty fast. Probably too fast for our own good, because we didn't know what we were doing."

The writer Everett True (then writing as The Legend!) saw their first London gig and immediately wrote a full-page feature for the *NME*. "It said, 'Remember fun? Talulah Gosh do!'" recalls Fletcher. "At this point I don't think we'd put out a single, the band was less than six months old. In retrospect I think it wasn't good for us, but we were obviously all thrilled. We were going to do something with Subway, then Stephen Pastel rang up and said, 'I've got a new label, do you want to be on that?'"

By this point, Pursey had quit the band. His university grant had run out and Talulah Gosh were already getting more attention than he was comfortable with, so he went back to Bristol. His replacement was Chris Scott, another friend from Oxford, who "sometimes played lying on the floor with a terrible hangover," says Fletcher. "He definitely was the most punk rock of all of us."

The rise and fall of Talulah Gosh was swift. Working with Stephen Pastel's 53rd & 3rd label, they recorded five singles in Edinburgh and released them between 1986 and 1988. These included the cheerful, willowy Beatnik Boy, a template for Belle & Sebastian if ever there was one, the rattling Steaming Train and the screaming thrash-pop of Testcard Girl. By the time these singles were collected in 1988 as *Rock Legends: Volume 69* (with their collected Janice Long and John Peel Sessions following as *They've Scoffed The Lot* on Sarah Records in 1991), the band had already split.



Pursey had seen the writing on the wall. "The Talulah Gosh songs – and I can say this because I had nothing to do with writing them – were really good," he says. "But you could see the inevitable backlash coming, so the songs became irrelevant. You watched them become one of those bands everybody has an opinion about, whether they've heard them or not; 'Brilliant, they're the future of pop', or, 'Eww, they're run by posh girls and this shouldn't be allowed.' The wall of misogyny was hit, it became quite overheated, and these really excellent songs were there in the middle of the argument but rarely talked about."

"THEY BECAME A BAND EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ABOUT, WHETHER THEY'D HEARD THEM OR NOT"

It took Fletcher longer to catch on. "Even though we sounded sweet on record, we did all our songs fast live because that's what the Ramones did," she says. "We were playing sold-out gigs across the country and it felt amazing, but at some point, the press turned against us. In fact, lots of people turned against us, and sometimes they paid to come to gigs to tell us how much they hated us. At the time I didn't really think of it as sexism, I could just see we were winding people up.

"Sometimes we decided they were sad old guys, and maybe we did wind them up a bit," she acknowledges. "Liz was particularly brave about that. There was the 'posh' thing, too. You could probably allege that I was posh, but Liz, you really couldn't; she was a very Luton girl. I was so young then, but over time I realised this was about the music press and the industry generally, and their attitudes towards what women were and weren't allowed to do."

By 1988, Price had left Talulah Gosh to form The Carousel with Webster; now a contemporary artist, she won the Turner Prize in 2012. Her replacement was Eithne Farry, but by '88, indie-pop was out and acid house was in. "I just thought, no one wants to listen to this stuff anymore, no one cares," says Fletcher. "Also, I thought people shouldn't be in bands when they were over 21, and I was 21, so we had to stop! Embarrassingly, I forgot to tell the rest of the band before I announced it to the world, so we did our last gig at the LSE and that was that."

"We wanted to have fun," says Momtchiloff of Talulah Gosh. "We wanted to try and generate some excitement and to play with bands we liked. I wouldn't put it any more strongly than that. Most of the people I've known in bands had fairly low aspirations when they started, then sometimes they think, let's try and make something bigger out of it. We never took the plunge, although there were a few major label conversations."

In short order, Talulah Gosh split; Fletcher took a brief, bizarre detour into house music with her solo single Can You Keep A Secret?, funded with money from an inheritance ("I wanted to be the new Yazz, although I didn't actually like the music that much"); Pursey moved back to Oxford to do a doctorate, where he and Momtchiloff started a new band, The Umbrella Birds; and Amelia got jealous of their new adventure and wanted in.

Together with Mathew, they reconvened as Heavenly in 1989, adding Cathy Rogers on keyboards and backing vocals. Fletcher and Pursey were now both postgraduate students and Rogers was studying, too, so Heavenly felt less like a ticket to youthful fame and more like an ongoing passion project.

"It was more like, we really like the music, so we wanted to record it," says Pursey. "There was no courting the press or effort to get publicity. It was also the first time we'd talked about running a label, because the independent attitude goes deep within us all. The more we could control it, the better it was going to be. Maybe fewer people will hear it, but it was better to keep it as pure as we could."

At one of their earliest gigs, Heavenly encountered Clare Wadd and Matt Haynes of



Heavenly in the early 90s (l-r): Peter Momtchiloff, Cathy Rogers, Amelia Fletcher, Robert Pursey, Mathew Fletcher

Sarah Records, and their request for label advice led to an offer to release with Sarah instead. Liking what Pursey calls Sarah's "quiet, anti-establishment attitude", they agreed, and along with label artists like The Field Mice and The Orchids, Heavenly became emblematic of a new, truly independent 90s guitar underground, while the word 'indie' became mainstream.

Heavenly's most concertedly productive period saw them release four albums between 1991 and 1996, the first three on Sarah and the last on Wiiija in '96, following Sarah's dissolution. In America, meanwhile, they were signed to K Records, a key indie player in grunge and riot grrrl, giving them a foot in two significant camps.

"In the UK the scene was smart, bookish and quite political," Pursey explains. "In America, it was a very different counterculture, partly because women were coming to the fore more than in the UK. We were seen there as what they'd call 'punk' – more assertive, more brash. It was very DIY and exciting, playing improvised gigs in squats. In the UK it was like we were in the Quakers, while in America we were in something more radical."

"In the UK it was more 'flowers and steam trains', but everywhere we went there were people dressed the same and excited by the same bands," says Fletcher. "We really felt like part of something that existed outside the mainstream."

Their music evolved rapidly. "At the start [1991's *Heavenly vs Satan*] we wanted to sound like The Pastels combined with girl groups. For the second album [1992's *Le Jardin de Heavenly*], Teenage Fanclub had come into our lives. By the third (1994's *The Decline And Fall Of Heavenly*) we'd discovered riot grrrl, so it was a lot more forceful. By the fourth album [1996's *Operation Heavenly*], it couldn't help but have a bit of Britpop influence."

Heavenly ended suddenly in 1996, with Mathew's suicide. Immediately the group stopped promoting *Operation Heavenly*, and there appeared to be an unspoken understanding the band was over. "Then, about a year later, Rob and Cathy took me out for lunch and told me, 'We kind of miss it, how would you feel about starting a new band?'" says Fletcher. "I said, 'I kind of miss it as well,' so we started Marine Research."

Reuniting Fletcher, Pursey, Momtchiloff and Rogers, Marine Research lasted until 1999, releasing the album *Sounds From The Gulf Stream* in 1999. Then, unusually for most bands, just as they split up, they really found mostly non-musical success. Fletcher and Momtchiloff broke up, and he joined his current partner Jessica Griffin's band The Would-Be-Goods in 1999, releasing five albums, including this year's *Tears Before Bedtime*. He also worked a day job at Oxford University Press until recently.

Fletcher and Pursey got together, moved to Kent, had kids, got married and have continued to record variously as Tender Trap, The Catenary Wires (with poet Brian Bilston) and Swansea Sound (with Pooh Sticks' Hue Williams). Fletcher was also chief economist at the Office of Fair Trading from 2001 to 2012 and is now an academic, working with the Financial Conduct Authority, the Competition and Markets Authority and acting as an expert witness in cases against Google and Amazon.

Pursey, meanwhile, was a script editor on *The Bill*, then a television producer, then he ran his own company making TV drama. Price, of course, won the Turner Prize, Farry became a book reviewer and writer, and Rogers also worked in telly, devising the shows *Scrapheap Challenge* and *Junkyard Wars*, before doing a doctorate in neuroscience.

"Mathew got a job at the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and he got 'riot grrrl' and 'road rage' in there, that's his achievement," says Fletcher, proudly. "I'm not sure about Chris, I think he works as some sort of highfalutin' travel agent for Eastern Europe." She concedes that maybe there was some truth to Talulah Gosh being seen as swots.

With this year's fifth album, *Highway To Heavenly*, the band (Fletcher, Momtchiloff, Pursey and Rogers, with Ian Button on drums) have returned, a decision which mainly grew out of the shared curation of their 2020 compilation, *A Bout de Heavenly: The Singles* and the decision to play a few shows together after lockdown. At long last they also have their own label, Skep Wax.

"The reaction to those shows was incredibly positive, and alongside that, a couple of our songs went crazy on TikTok and Spotify, so there was suddenly big young-person excitement about the band, which we couldn't have predicted," says Fletcher. "The combination of all those things meant we wanted to carry on playing and making new music again."

"Music's a very global thing now," adds Momtchiloff. "Only a few hundred people might like your band in Britain, but there might also be a few hundred each in northern Europe, southern Europe, the Far East, North America... When you add it up that's quite a lot of people, which can be very reassuring. When you get a message that someone in Indonesia really liked your record, it helps you think you're doing something worthwhile."

"There was a sense of dread at playing loads of gigs where you just play old songs; it felt moribund and boring," says Pursey. "If we were going to play more gigs they had to be new songs, which are more fun to play than the old ones, to be honest. We'll see what people make of the album, but I think it's pretty good." RC

Highway To Heavenly *is out now on Skep.*



The reformed Heavenly in 2025 (l-r): Fletcher, Pursey, Rogers, Ian Button, Momtchiloff

Photos: Getty; Alison Wonderland


BLUES BREAKERS
JOHN MAYALL
WITH ERIC CLAPTON
DECCA


FIFTH DIMENSION
THE Byrds


stereo
Ascension
John Coltrane
impulse!


IKE & TINA TURNER
RIVER DEEP~
MOUNTAIN HIGH
LONDON

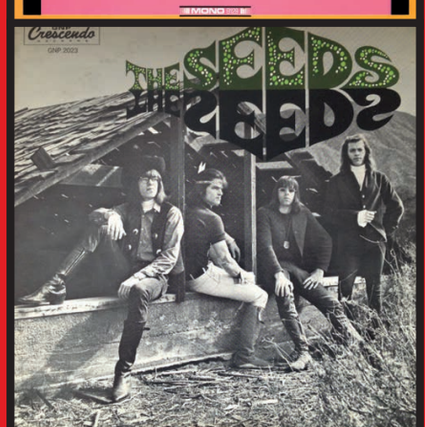

BERT
JANSCH
Jack
Orion


BIG
MAMA
THORNTON
In Europe
ARHOOLIE


THE
EXCITING
WILSON
PICKETT
ATLANTIC
LAND OF 1000 DANCES
SOMETHING YOU GOT
634-5789
BAREFOOTIN'
MERCY, MERCY
YOU'RE SO FINE
IN THE MIDNIGHT HOUR
NINETY-NINE AND A HALF (WON'T DO)
DANGER ZONE
I'M DRIFTING
IT'S ALL OVER
SHE'S SO GOOD TO ME
MONO


SIMON & GARFUNKEL
SOUNDS OF SILENCE


Buffalo
Springfield
ATCO
MONO


Crescendo
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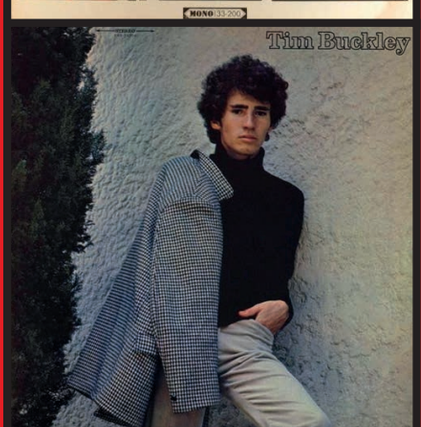
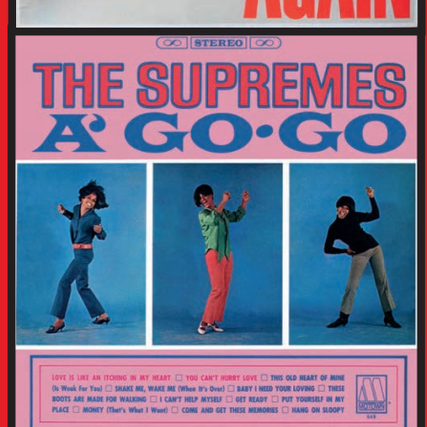
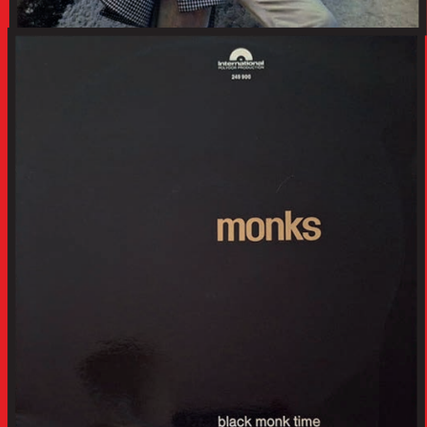

Tim Buckley


da capo
LOVE


STEREO
THE SUPREMES
A' GO-GO
LOVE IS LIKE AN ITCHING IN MY HEART
YOU CAN'T HURRY LOVE
THIS OLD HEART OF MINE
(Is Weak For You)
SHAKE ME, WAKE ME (When It's Over)
BABY I NEED YOUR LOVING
THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF
GET READY
PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE
MONEY (That's What I Want)
COME AND GET THESE MEMORIES
HANG ON SLOOPY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TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS

HOW THE (66) GREATEST ALBUMS OF 1966 STAND UP 60 YEARS ON

In 1976, ***NME*** decided to look back at the best albums of 1966, to see how they sounded with the hindsight of a decade. Fast forward 50 years, and every one of that issue's five cover stars – ***Pet Sounds, Revolver, Blonde On Blonde, Otis Blue*** and ***Aftermath*** – still regularly feature in charts of all-time greatest albums. Here, we've thrown the net wider to compile a longer list of essential albums from '66, a year when, as **David Stubbs** argues below, the LP truly came of age...



There was long a sense that 1967 was the year in which pop and rock music flowered suddenly into colour, with *Sgt. Pepper*, San Francisco, Flower Power and Carnaby Street all signifying a revolt from monochromatic conformity. However, 1966 is the more intriguing year in many respects, as it was then that you could see the Great Maturing that was taking place on both sides of the Atlantic. It's for this reason, and in recognition of this, that it became fashionable to place *Revolver* above *Pepper* as The Beatles' crowning achievement; bedazzled as critics and fans were by the momentous, psychedelic eruption it marked, it had its weaknesses, its off moments. However, by 1966, it felt like The Beatles were first among equals.

The Beach Boys, who had spurred on and in turn been spurred on by The Beatles to ever greater creative pop heights, released *Pet Sounds*, arguably the greatest pop album ever. And yet, as marked with the wistful Caroline No, it was as if Brian Wilson experienced a moment of vertiginous terror at the immediate future for music, stared into the beyond and lamented the coming transition from songs of innocence to songs of experience. Bob Dylan reached his own zenith with *Blonde On Blonde*, which *NME*'s Mick Farren, in a 1976 retrospective piece, described as "the deepest shaft rock'n'roll had ever sunk in its journey to the centre of the psyche". Frank Zappa's Mothers Of Invention put out their debut *Freak Out!* Although this slogan could have felt like a call to arms to drop out, Leary style, Zappa was fiercely anti-drugs, ran a tight ship as bandleader and regarded hippie excess with satirical contempt. Songs like Trouble Every Day depicted America hurtling into a darkness of strife and racial discrimination. "There ain't no 'great society'," declared Zappa, in reference to President Johnson's galvanising slogan. *Freak Out!* prefigured that, amid the impending light and love and idealism, the Great Maturing would also involve a deep burgeoning scepticism about the state of the world, a new sense of rock as counterculture. The Who, meanwhile, released *A Quick One*, featuring Pete Townshend's first effort as rock'n'roll transitioned to rock, and all the substance, weight (see also Zep precursors Cream), sense of ambition and self-importance, which that entailed.

As for black music, while its popular wing, specifically Motown as helmed by Berry Gordy, would have its own psychedelic moment delayed, the Stax label indicated a new oaken maturity of its own, an iteration of soul both raw and refined. And with *Ascension*, John Coltrane and his young new jazzmen would reach pinnacles of near-abstraction still undreamt of in rock music.

"10 YEARS AGO WOULD HAVE FELT LIKE AEONS"

Ascension was one example of the great developments made in the avant-garde and the arts, which the more inquisitive rock creators were feeding off, McCartney in particular – he attended concerts by the British free improvisation group AMM, for example. In New York, Andy Warhol had taken Lou Reed's Velvet Underground under his wing. The Fluxus movement, one of whose participants was Yoko Ono, was in full effect. In 1966, the minimalist Steve Reich composed the tape piece *Come Out*, based around the words of a young African-American victim of police brutality, similar in its use of twin tape recorders falling in and out of sync to 1965's *It's Gonna Rain*. It reflected both a new mode of music making and the increasing heat of the American civil rights movement.

There was a shift in the drug culture, too. The sort of pep pills which had fuelled pop and rock's energetic, upbeat, sanguine, frantically entertaining early years, gave way to psychedelics, more expansive drugs which both fuelled and reflected the more expansive music and outlook of the Great Maturing.

There were some things that had yet to happen. The Moog synth was yet to impact. When artists talked about "electronics", they referred to the battery of studio equipment that enabled them to modify and manipulate their instruments, rather than any abandonment to the sort of cosmos occupied by Karlheinz Stockhausen. As for women, while the likes of Dusty Springfield, Diana Ross and Aretha Franklin enjoyed great success, the we had yet to properly see the rise of the female auteur.

In 1976, the *NME* revisited 1966's great moments; only by 1976 had the music press acquired the sort of critical language to discuss these works, their own maturing having taken place a few years after the music. Just 10 years earlier, but it would have felt like aeons, such had been the great historical strides in the culture. There was a conviction, however, that the cathedrals of rock legacy were sealed in their permanence – *Blonde On Blonde*, *Revolver*, *Pet Sounds*, though Brian Wilson's mid-70s travails perhaps had a retrospective spoiling effect on his reputation.

Back to late 1966 and the ultimate sign of the Great Maturing – until recently a hired musician playing in the back line for The Isley Brothers, now transmogrified into a terrible beauty, hoving in on a cloud of sculpted fretboard electricity, about to descend like a black rain on London, on pop, on rock. Jimi Hendrix – songs of experience, indeed. And we never heard surf music again.

All entries are UK LPs, with catalogue numbers for first pressings, some mono, some stereo, unless stated





The Beach Boys *Pet Sounds*
(Capitol T 2458, UK) **£150**

Of all 1966's musical landmarks, *Pet Sounds* took the biggest, boldest steps in reinventing the modern album as work of art, presenting future benchmarks in song structures, instrumental backdrops and studio techniques. It sounds, if anything, even more extraordinary today than it did in 1966.

Fifty years on, *Pet Sounds* is routinely hailed the most groundbreaking micro-crafted suite of all time, even first concept album; not theme-wise or lyrically but, according to Wilson, "a *production* concept album" that reinterpreted Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound. For a band still tarred with surfing ditties, *Pet Sounds* got negative responses from Capitol Records, critics and the conservative Mike Love when Wilson spent months crafting songs inspired by lost youthful innocence with lyricist Tony Asher. The UK was much more positive, Stones manager Andrew Oldham hailing it "the most progressive album of the year" in a full-page press ad.

Described by Wilson as "the prettiest ballad I've ever sung", the yearning Caroline No had appeared under his own name in March followed by the heavenly perfection of God Only Knows in May. Yet Wilson's ongoing studio journey incensed Love, who barked, "Who's gonna hear this shit? The ears of a dog?" Wilson responded by recording his pooch Banana and calling the album *Pet Sounds*.

Starting with Wouldn't It Be Nice, Wilson declared he and rock'n'roll had grown up, illustrated by the heavenly chorales draped in soft focus chamber quartet resonance of Don't Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder), You Still Believe In Me and I Know There's An Answer, capped by the self-explanatory I Just Wasn't Made For These Times. Let's Go Away For A While and title track dispensed with voices to forge modern classical psychedelic mood music. Sloop John B provided another deceptively complex hit.

"All my friends thought I was crazy to do *Pet Sounds*," recalled Wilson. Next stop, 1966's most startling single, Good Vibrations. *KN*



Tim Buckley ***Tim Buckley*** (Elektra EKL 4004, UK) **£75**

Only really noticed after second album *Goodbye And Hello* brought Buckley into 1967's psychedelic protest zeitgeist, his Elektra debut was routinely described as the adolescent warm-up until later appreciated as folk-rock milestone boasting heady glimpses of the uniquely uncompromising greatness to come.

Produced in two days at LA's Sunset Sound by Elektra staffer Paul Rothchild with engineer Bruce Botnick, the band including newly recruited guitarist Lee Underwood and Mothers Of Invention's rhythm section, *Tim Buckley* unveiled that supernatural voice soaring with spellbinding purity and inflections channelled from his beloved Fred Neil, garnished with Van Dyke Parks' overdubbed keyboards, and Jack Nitzsche's string arrangements, including on first single Wings. Sounding as fresh and pure as he looks on the cover, Buckley's voice is most effective when enhanced by Underwood's mercurial guitar on dream-like ballad Song Slowly Song or Strange Street Affair Under Blue, the soul-stirring Understand Your Man pointing to his future path. *KN*



Buffalo Springfield ***Buffalo Springfield*** (ATCO 33-200C, US) **£50**

Pleasingly different at the time, a melding of folk and country with the tantalising tinkle of West Coast pop. Members Stephen Stills and later Neil Young went one stage further with the harmonies of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, a sound that did catch the world's imagination. This goes part way with the voices of Stills and Richie Furay, but nowadays sounds easygoing and middle of the freeway, even the rocking guitar-squeal of Leave. Young comes out of it well on the floating Do I Have To Come Right Out And Say It and the slow, psychedelia-tinged Out Of My Mind. The single that made their name, hazy Stills/Furay gem For What It's Worth, is generally regarded as the album opener but was added in a 1967 revamp. The original opener was the more conventional (in retrospect) country rocker Go And Say Goodbye. So, charming but maybe not a world changer. *ND*



The Butterfield Blues Band *East-West* (Elektra EKL-315, UK) **£50**
Hailing from Chicago blues clubs, force 10 singer/harp player Paul Butterfield's shapeshifting ensemble blazed a scorchingly innovative trail as America's first significant electric blues band, fronted by stellar guitarists Elvin Bishop and Mike Bloomfield. After 1965's self-titled Elektra debut rebooted electric blues with covers and originals, 1966's *East West,* produced at Chicago's Chess Studio by Paul Rothchild, launched it into the stratosphere. Sparkling on Robert Johnson's Walkin' Blues, Allen Toussaint's Get Out Of My Life, Woman, Muddy Waters' Two Train Running, traditional blow-outs and future Monkee Mike Nesmith's early marijuana ditty Mary Mary, incandescent magic happens on two lengthy instrumentals credited with igniting jazz liberation in rock. Inspired by Coltrane's epic flights, modal jazz, LSD trips and Indian ragas, Bloomfield's incandescent soloing on the 13-minute title track kickstarted San Francisco's acid rock jamming on the ballroom scene, its transcendent impact compounded by the band's scintillating workout on Nat Adderley's Work Song. A true landmark. *KN*



The Byrds *Fifth Dimension* (CBS BPG 62783, UK) **£45**
Most bands struggle in the sudden absence of their chief songwriter, but The Byrds were a rare exception. Wilting under the weight of fame and expectation, frontman Gene Clark quit in February 1966, leaving the remaining quartet to rise to the challenge on *Fifth Dimension*. Their cause is helped by the fact that Clark bequeathed Eight Miles High (co-written with Jim McGuinn and David Crosby), a spectacular collision of raga-rock and Coltrane-inspired free jazz. The track proved a defining moment in the full flowering of West Coast psychedelia, even if it effectively killed The Byrds' commercial career due to a radio ban over its supposedly druggy connotations. Elsewhere, McGuinn's chiming 12-string powers the likes of 5D and I See You, while Crosby begins to unfurl his freak flag on the seeking What's Happening?!?! The Byrds would mutate freely over the next few years, but this is where it all starts. *RH*



John Coltrane *Ascension* (His Master's Voice CLP 3543, UK) **£50**
Unanimous praise greeted Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, which was hailed as his masterpiece on its 1965 release, but the following year's *Ascension* – a large-ensemble piece credited to the John Coltrane Orchestra – polarised critics and the jazz community. Whereas *A Love Supreme*, a four-piece suite, had a clear structure and adhered to melodic and harmonic norms, *Ascension* was a sprawling, dissonant, 40-minute free jazz exploration delivered by an 11-piece supergroup including Coltrane acolytes Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, and Marion Brown. Rhythmically, Elvin Jones' explosive drum barrages try to inject some swing, but with its emphasis on tonal colour and texture, the work is a world away from Coltrane's bebop foundations. Although 60 years on, *Ascension* remains one of the most challenging works in Trane's canon, it's not quite as daunting to 21st-century ears because its language – once deemed alien – has been absorbed into the jazz lexicon and has influenced many of today's jazz musicians, including Kamasi Washington. *CW*



Cream *Fresh Cream* (Reaction 594 001, UK) **£120**
In terms of laying templates for this decade and the next, the debut album by the UK's first supergroup would prove 1966's most pivotal release. Predicting blues-rock, extended jamming and even heavy metal, Eric Clapton from John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Graham Bond Organisation rhythm section Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker went straight in the studio after forming that July, the muted music hall of first single Wrapping Paper caused puzzlement. Then I Feel Free and *Fresh Cream* unveiled Cream's powerhouse blues prototypes and virtuoso jazz-derived pyrotechnics, albeit hampered by polite production but starting to explode at gigs. Joining idiosyncratic band compositions (NSU, Sweet Wine, Cat's Squirrel), the trio's blues covers unveiled the nascent telepathic power igniting Cream's live improvisations, notably Spoonful (Willie Dixon), Rollin' and Tumblin' (Hambone Willie Newbern) while I'm So Glad (Skip James) heard Clapton influenced by encountering Jimi Hendrix that October, Baker's Toad bringing drum solos to rock. *KN*

1966: SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The Association *And Then... Along Comes The Association* (London, UK) **£40**
Harmony-stacked sunshine pop from LA, topped by Cherish and Along Comes Mary. *RH*

The Animals *Animalisms* (Decca, UK) **£150**
Third and final album of the band's original run, packed with stirring reworks of classic R&B. *RH*

Jacques Brel *Ces Gens-Là* (Barclay, France) **£15**
Also known as *Jef,* the French chansonnier's seventh album contains his deathless La Chanson De Jacky (later translated as Jackie for UK release) and Mathilde. *JS*

John Coltrane *Meditations* (HMV, UK) **£35**
Trane follows *Ascension* with a record often regarded as a spiritual descendent of *A Love Supreme.* Tenor sax solos from the main man and Pharoah Sanders hog the spotlight. *JS*

Donovan *Sunshine Superman* (Epic, US) **£25**
Scottish folk messiah ditches the acoustics for sparkling psychedelic pop. *RH*

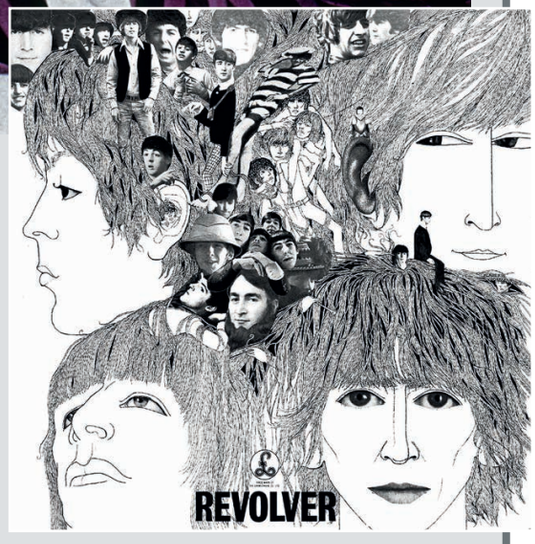
Jefferson Airplane *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off* (RCA Victor, US) **£40**
The nascent Airplane's debut, with Signe Anderson and Marty Balin on vocals, was more folk-rock than psych but acquitted itself well, bringing the San Francisco sound about to ignite rock's next revolution to the world. *KN*

John Fahey *Guitar Vol. 4* (Takoma, US) **£30**
American Primitive pioneer Fahey ruffled purists with the first instrumental blues albums, this fourth built around the ethereally monumental 19-minute The Great San Bernardino Birthday Party. *KN*

Marianne Faithfull *North Country Maid* (Decca, UK) **£75**
Marianne's third (and best) 60s album reaffirmed her supernatural reinterpretative skills with her strongest vocals yet caressing a set of folk standards. *KN*

The Beatles
Revolver
(Parlophone PCS 7009, UK) **£175**





By 1966, The Beatles were no longer alone at the vanguard of pop and rock. Their challengers included The Beach Boys, Dylan, The Mothers Of Invention, the emergent Velvets and British psychedelia. *Revolver* saw them both draw inspiration from their peers and also to seek to outdo themselves to maintain their cultural lead.

Despite its emphatically monochromatic cover artwork, *Revolver* sees The Beatles on the point of bursting into their second, and final, Technicolor phase. Its use of studio techniques such as automatic doubletracking and varispeed as well as a battery of "outside" instruments – strings, brass – was born out of their knowledge that they would never tour these songs.

Lyrically, too, the group were moving away from their former Fab Four selves. The themes explored on Revolver are more existentially fraught and inquisitive, broader in scope than the love songs that were their previous stock in trade.

If there is a blight on the album, it is George Harrison's Taxman, on which he whines self-pityingly about the tax levied on high earners like himself by the Wilson government, one which preserved relative post-war economic equality, followed swiftly by Love You To, which preaches indifference to the transient, material world.

There is an emergent polarisation between Lennon and McCartney's songs – Macca's For No One seems to hanker, in style and mood, for some melancholic, pre-Beatles world, while Got You Get You Into My Life and Good Day Sunshine are influenced, to the point of pastiche, by Motown and The Lovin' Spoonful. Lennon's songs, such as She Said She Said and I'm Only Sleeping, are more caustic, dripping with abrasion, acidic in every respect.

Revolver is towered over by its twin masterpieces – Eleanor Rigby, McCartney's string-soaked study in the loneliness of souls never touched by Beatlemania, and Lennon's Tomorrow Never Knows, a Leary-inspired studio foray into psychedelic epiphany which represented their most advanced achievement to date. *DS*



The Fugs
The Fugs
(ESP-Disk ESP 1028, US) **£15**

Formed in 1965 by poets Ed Sanders, Tuli Kupferberg and Ken Weaver, New York's Fugs pioneered underground counterculture offensives, DIY punk and shattering lyrical taboos.

Signing to Bernard Stollman's NY-based independent ESP-Disk in 1966, the trio recorded their second album with producer Richard Alderson at his state-of-the-art RLA studios on 65st Street co-owned with Harry Belafonte, adding pianist Lee Crabtree, Vinny Leary and Pete Kearney on guitars and bassist John Anderson.

The newly electrified Fugs explored uproarious garage-psych on Group Grope, Coming Down and rollicking Dirty Old Man. Tuli's brutal anti-war singalong, Kill For Peace, still sounds relevant, his Morning Morning its hymnal hippie counterpart. Eleven-minute finale Virgin Forest pioneered collaging traversing William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Greek poet Hessiot. Released that March with sleevenotes by Ginsberg, *The Fugs* became the first underground album to scale the US Top 100, reaching 89 while the FBI started keeping America's most dangerous band under surveillance. *KN*



The Godz
Contact High From the Godz
(ESP-Disk ESP-1037, US) **£50**

Punk's DIY attitude didn't just appear in 1976. Ten years earlier, New York's radical ESP-Disk unleashed The Godz. Guitarist Jim McCarthy, autoharpist Jay Dillon, drummer Paul Thornton and bassist Larry Keller met when working at Sam Goody's record shop. After Kessler became ESP's sales manager, a stoned gathering at his house degenerating into banging percussion and howling led to an audition with ESP honcho Bernard Stollman.

Literally meowing through White Cat Heat earned three hours at Atlantic co-founder Herb Abramson's A-1 Studios, where they recorded *Contact High* in 45 minutes. Like an acid-spiked campfire singalong, Come On Girl, Turn On, Lay In The Sun, 1+1=? and Squeak holler, mumble, shuffle discordantly and disintegrate but, with all the band now working at ESP's offices, they recorded two more albums. After 1971's *Creem* article by superfan Lester Bangs, The Godz gained eternal cult status. Stollman later called them the Sex Pistols of their time. *KN*



Bert Jansch *Jack Orion* (Transatlantic TRA 143, UK) **£70**
Arriving in 1965 with two riveting albums, Bert Jansch brought folk out of the clubs and made it cool with quicksilver guitar virtuosity and repertoire mixing the traditional with his own bitingly topical songs delivered in his quietly expressive voice (Needle Of Death remains folk's most heart-searing anti-heroin broadside).

Joined by guitarist John Renbourn, '66's third set *Jack Orion* presented all traditional songs including the 10-minute child ballad title track, future Pentangle staple Nottamun Town, Pretty Polly, Henry Martin, and Ewan McColl's First Time I Ever Saw Your Face. Although traditional, Jansch's Black Water Side treatment would be notoriously heisted by Jimmy Page for Led Zep's Black Mountain Side.

Tangibly bouncing off each other, Jansch and Renbourn's rough and joyous guitar interplay led to recording that year's *Bert And John*, sowing the seeds for Pentangle the following year on Charles Mingus's Goodbye Pork Pie Hat. The quiet revolution started with these two albums. *KN*



The Kinks *Face To Face* (Pye NPL 18149, UK) **£120**
The inverse irony of The Kinks at 33⅓ is that as Ray Davies grew in strength as the greatest English songwriter of his generation, their albums charted lower and lower, the slide starting with their fourth, *Face To Face*, their first not to go Top 10. A frankly baffling state of affairs considering its 14-song strong showcase for Davies' prolificacy, the group's first to be all-but-entirely penned by their inscrutable leader (brother Dave co-writing moptoppish opener Party Line). That it was written at a mental low point in Davies' life is evident, its best tracks wringing with kitchen-sink melancholy – Rosy Won't You Please Come Home, explicitly directed at his older sister after she joined the ten-pound poms – and profound introspection, notably the beautiful Too Much On My Mind and the raga-like Fancy. Add their third UK No 1, the equally downcast Sunny Afternoon, and you have a first class 60s guitar pop album of consistent quality. *SG*



Love *Da Capo* (Elektra EKL 4005, UK) **£120**
Released in March 1966, Love's self-titled debut album signalled Elektra's entry into the rock arena with its melange of psych, folk-rock and garage-punk. Produced at LA's Sunset Sound by Paul Rothchild, *Da Capo* signalled restless genius leader Arthur Lee's desire to embrace jazz and baroque flavours, bolstered by sax and flute player Tjay Cantrelli on the lustrous Orange Skies, Stones-influencing She Comes In Colours and bossa nova !Que Vida!. Breakneck gallop 7 And 7 Is was countered by The Castle's mysterious ethereal beauty inspired by the band's dilapidated mansion. Running out of time, the band recorded live jam John Lee Hooker as Revelation for side two.

Released in the UK in 1967, John Peel was *Da Capo*'s only champion, hammering it on Radio London. Nevertheless, the album succeeded in planting seeds for *Forever Changes* in Lee, who declared, "As far as saying things that I want quoted in records, I was born in *Da Capo*." *KN*



The Lovin' Spoonful *Daydream* (Pye International NPL 28078, UK, LP) **£35**
Formed in 1965 to realise Greenwich Village folk stalwarts John Sebastian and Zal Yanovsky's "electric jug band" idea, the Lovin' Spoonful scored instant US success with Do You Believe In Magic's sunshine folk-pop, precipitating them becoming one of America's biggest bands.

With UK pop culture dominated by pirate radio and *Ready Steady Go!,* the Spoonful captured both on April's visit promoting third single Daydream, sending its contagious jug chug (composed by Sebastian while touring the deep South with The Supremes) to No 2, along with same-titled second album swiftly following *Do You Believe In Magic*'s March release. Almost all original songs, *Daydream*'s many highlights included Let The Boy Rock And Roll, Jug Band Blues and the exquisite You Didn't Have To Be So Nice.

It was followed by Summer In The City's harder urban pop becoming our heatwave anthem and second UK hit, presaging November's *Hums Of The Lovin' Spoonful* topping their peak year. *KN*

1966: SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Marvin Gaye *Moods Of Marvin Gaye* (Tamla Motown, UK) **£50**
On his seventh solo album, Motown's crown prince emerges as a hit-friendly R&B crooner. *RH*

Herman's Hermits *Both Sides Of Herman's Hermits* (EMI, UK) **£15**
British Invasion darlings fashion teen-friendly pop from lovelorn cover ballads. *RH*

The Hollies *Would You Believe?* (Parlophone, UK) **£50**
The Salford beat combo thrive, propelled by highlights including a spirited cover of Evie Sands' I Can't Let Go. *RH*

John Lee Hooker *The Real Folk Blues* (Chess, UK) **£60**
Combining previously released singles with new recordings, this Chess LP is a fine introduction to the bluesman. *JS*

The Incredible String Band *The Incredible String Band* (Elektra, UK) **£225**
Produced by Joe Boyd, the Edinburgh trio throw down an early psychedelic folk marker. *RH*

The Leaves *Hey Joe* (Mira, US) **£40**
The fuzztone-induced title track, before Hendrix made it better known, made cult legends of this West Coast quintet. *RH*

Love *Love* (Elektra, UK) **£150**
A more conventional variety of folk-rock was displayed on Arthur Lee and co's debut than its successors, but it still offers bewitching glimpses of the giddy beauty that would follow. *JS*

The Mamas & The Papas *If You Can Believe Your Eyes And Ears* (RCA, UK) **£15**
The first of two albums in '66 finds the folk-soul harmonists minting California Dreamin' and Monday, Monday. *RH*

Mississippi John Hurt *Today!* (Vanguard, UK) **£20**
Arguably the standout set recorded by the "rediscovered" septuagenarian folk-bluesman not long before his death. *JS*

Bob Dylan *Blonde On Blonde* (CBS DDP 66012, UK) **£150**



On tour across the States in late 1965, The Hawks had served Bob Dylan well as a backing band, animating the electric rock'n'roll of the just-released *Highway 61 Revisited*. But the studio was another matter. Dylan became increasingly dissatisfied with the new songs they were recording in New York, eventually deciding to scrap the sessions altogether and shift base to Nashville for a change of scenery.

With only organist Al Kooper and guitarist Robbie Robertson retained, Dylan enlisted a team of crack local sessioneers – veterans of recordings by Elvis, George Jones and Roy Orbison – under the direction of guitarist and harmonica player Charlie McCoy. There, in the early months of 1966, Dylan sought to capture what he later famously described as "that thin wild mercury sound" in his head.

The resulting *Blonde On Blonde*, his seventh album, contains a number of Dylan landmarks. Visions Of Johanna is an enigmatic homage to a past lover, possibly two, though the titular muse holds his spirit more vividly. Dylanologists have speculated it's about Joan Baez. Similarly, tender ballad Just Like A Woman is rumoured to concern Warhol acolyte Edie Sedgwick, her vulnerability all too apparent through "her fog, her amphetamine and her pearls". But there's little doubt over the subject of Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands, an epic, imagistic love letter to Sara Lownds (Dylan's wife of three months) that occupies an entire side of vinyl.



At other times, Dylan revels in playfulness, from the irreverent Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat to the silvery rhythms of Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again and Rainy Day Women #12 & 35's brassy blues declaration that "everybody must get stoned". Rock's first double album, *Blonde On Blonde* was Dylan's greatest statement yet – impish and intangible, romantic and exploratory – shifting popular music into a whole other realm of expression. *RH*



John Mayall With Eric Clapton *Blues Breakers* (Decca LK 4804, UK) **£150**
A ground breaker, where blues rock truly started. Mayall, godfather of British blues, had been playing the clubs, electric yet somewhat respectful, but was joined by Clapton who'd flown the Yardbirds as their R'n'B embraced psychedelic pop. The team-up was inspired, Clapton bringing a new kind of playing to the party. While this is mostly blues standards – Mose Allison, Robert Johnson, Otish Rush – Double Crossing Time, a Mayall-Clapton co-write, is epic, a modern-world Clapton guitar workout coming from each speaker. And there are guitar solos aplenty, stepping stone to the progressive blues rock of Cream… by the time this was in the shops, the power trio of Clapton, former Mayall bassist Jack Bruce and drummer Ginger Baker were already performing. Talking of the future, this also features bassist John McVie, a Fleetwood Mac founder, and drummer Hughie Flint, later hitmaker with McGuinness Flint and member of The Blues Band. *ND*



The Monks *Black Monk Time* (Polydor International Production 249 900, Germany) **£1,000**
It reads like a joke and to the few who paid them any attention at the time that's all they were. Five American servicemen stationed in West Germany whose idea of a 60s

beat group was not only to call themselves The Monks but go the whole cassock by shaving tonsures upon their heads, dressing in black and wearing cincture-style ties made of rope. But the only joke was on history itself. As their punk-pre-empting debut proves, sonically The Monks were so absurdly ahead of their time it's almost frightening to contemplate what impact this might have had were its release not restricted to Germany, Polydor refusing to distribute it in their native US because a) its lyrics were openly anti-Vietnam war and b) it was just too bonkers. Fabulously so.

Electrified banjo, fuzztone bass, brutalist drums and song titles like headbutts: I Hate You, Shut Up – both covered by The Fall in the 90s. Then, as now, nobody else has ever sounded anything like this. *SG*



The Mothers Of Invention
Freak Out!
(Verve V 5005-2, US) **£70**

Legend has it that producer Tom Wilson signed the Mothers to Verve/MGM on the strength of the hard-driving Trouble Every Day, convinced they were a white blues band. Little did he know the true extent of what the label had on their hands. Initially a Californian covers outfit called The Soul Giants, the Mothers took a radical new direction with the addition of guitarist Frank Zappa, who quickly established himself as bandleader and songwriter, peppering their R&B repertoire with experimental rock, avant-jazz and musique concrète. Debut *Freak Out!* – after *Blonde On Blonde*, only the second double album in rock circles – is a deeply satirical song cycle that takes aim at authority, American pop culture and hippie conformity. Trouble Every Day offers a stinging indictment of the Watts riots; Who Are The Brain Police? is pure creeping paranoia; The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet is playful abstraction on an epic scale. *RH*

Wilson Pickett
The Exciting Wilson Pickett
(Atlantic 587/588 029, UK) **£30**



This third album and second for Atlantic was indeed exciting. Recorded in Memphis and Muscle Shoals, it captures the Wicked Pickett's volatile nature and testifying screams on its four smash singles. Three of these - In The Midnight Hour, which had made the US R&B No 1 the previous year; 634-5789 (Soulsville USA); and 99 And A Half Won't Do - are penned by Steve Cropper and/or Eddie Floyd and Wilson Pickett. The latter takes its inspiration from Dorothy Love Coates' gospel hit of the same name. The fourth single, meanwhile, is his inimitable cover of Chris Kenner's Land Of 1000 Dances, another R&B No 1 and his biggest pop hit when it reached No 6. The rest of the album is equally ace, with him stamping his authority on covers of Mercy Mercy, She's So Good To Me, Barefootin' and more. His most commercial, it reached the US R&B No 3 and pop No 21. *LW*



Sam & Dave
Hold On, I'm Comin'
(Atlantic 588 045, UK) **£50**

The living embodiment of Stax/Atlantic soul, Sam Moore and Dave Prater had struggled when starting out in 1961, but signing to Atlantic and on loan to Stax in 1965, they hit with You Don't Know Like I Know, their first of 10 consecutive Top 20 R&B hits including Hold On, I'm Comin', their first No 1. Both are on their debut album, their first of two in 1966 (follow-up *Double Dynamite* is also ace) and penned by Isaac Hayes and David Porter (they pen eight of the album's 12 tracks), it captures the pair's straight-out-the-church melisma and call-and-response over pulsing rhythms provided by Booker T And The MGs and energetic brass by The Mar-Keys horns. They could also do ballads: Don't Make It So Hard On Me, co-written by Eddie Floyd, Willa Dean and Deanie Parker, is a proper drop-to-the-knees pleader. *LW*



'MUSIC ISN'T AS GOOD NOW?' Justin Hawkins on 1966

If you look at the quality of the albums in *RC*'s 1966 list and then compare it to 2026, is it an old man shouting at a cloud to suggest that music isn't as good now?

Let's start with *Revolver*. My mum and dad were Beatles fans but the record I remember them having is *Sgt Pepper's*. Possibly they had *Revolver*, too, maybe my brother Dan remembers, but I don't recall getting to know that album as a kid but later on. The opener, Taxman, was such an amazing retaliation to what would have been super tax then: it was something ridiculous like 95 per cent for musical artists, which is why, later on, there was that whole exodus of rock stars, and why the Stones did *Exile*...

I've just started to introduce my daughter to *Revolver* and she's reluctantly enjoying it. She's only 13 so maybe still a bit young for it. Some people talk about The Beatles making music that was designed to appeal to pre-teen girls. I don't think that's true. *Revolver* is one of the records that proves it's not true, same as "The White Album" and *Abbey Road*.

***Pet Sounds* is a big record for me. I started to listen to it properly when I was about 20. I was at college studying music technology with a module in composition, so I started to recognise some of the things that I was learning in college in Brian Wilson's stuff and trying to figure out how he plots melodies through these chord sequences and vice versa. I was trying to reverse-engineer it. I spent a long time obsessing about that record and one of the iterations of *SMiLE* that came after it. The fascination continues…**



Otis Redding *Otis Blue/Otis Redding Sings Soul* (*Atlantic* ATL 5041, UK) £50

Otis Blue/Otis Redding Sings Soul was Redding's third album and was issued in October '65, but hit in '66, becoming his first US R&B No 1 and the only one in his lifetime. It also made No 6 in the UK. Its importance in plotting the course of soul music cannot be overstated; Otis's vertiginous, intense vocal performances are the benchmark for every shouter and emoter since.

Produced by Jim Stewart and Steve Cropper, engineered by Tom Dowd and backed by Booker T and the MGs, with brassy embellishments by the Mar-Keys horn section, the group recorded it in just 24 hours, including a six-hour gap for the musicians involved to play scheduled gigs, and its tracklist reads like a greatest hits. The three Otis-penned numbers reveal him to be an emphatic writer: the stirring album opener Ole Man Trouble, delivered by a vocal heavy with experience, is a spiritual blues in the style of Paul Robeson; Respect, the second track on the album, is a relationship narrative that of course became a feminist rallying cry in Aretha Franklin's hands; and the side 1 closer, the scorched-earth ballad I've Been Loving You Too Long, which he co-scribed with Jerry Butler, is second to none in the heartstring-wrenching soul lament stakes, with Otis the essence of pleading. The covers, meanwhile, present a fearless interpreter, Otis going back to church on Solomon Burke's Down In The Valley and William Bell's You Don't Miss Your Water; paying homage to his mentor Sam Cooke on A Change Is Gonna Come, Shake and Wonderful World; giving The Temptations' My Girl the Memphis treatment and turning The Rolling Stones' Satisfaction into a Southern soul classic – Otis heard it for the first time in the studio and delivered his version on the spot. *LW*



Simon & Garfunkel *Sounds Of Silence* (CBS BGP 62690, UK) **£20**

While Paul Simon was in London recording his first solo album in 1965, producer Tom Wilson picked up on The Sound Of Silence – a promising acoustic track from S&G's flop debut *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* – and gave it a folk-rock makeover without the duo's consent. Simon was reportedly "horrified" by the outcome, but its chart-topping US success set the tone for S&G's subsequent *Sounds Of Silence*. Most of its pieces had already appeared, unadorned, on *The Paul Simon Songbook*, but electric guitars, bass and drums kick them up a gear, most dramatically on the soaring, harmony-rich I Am A Rock and the freshly minted Homeward Bound (added to the UK version). The latter, written at Widnes train station, joins another holdover from

Simon's time in England, a cover of Davy Graham's majestic instrumental, Anji, which itself forms the root of the frisky Somewhere They Can't Find Me. *Sounds Of Silence* helped make superstars of its creators. *RH*



Nina Simone *Wild Is The Wind* (Philips (S) BL 7726, UK) **£30**

Despite comprising offcuts from her previous four albums for Philips recorded in 1964 and '65 in New York, *Wild Is The Wind* acts as a showreel for Simone's exceptional talent, capturing her at her high-priestess best on a diverse set spanning traditional folk ballads to jazz protest to soulful pop. The high points are many and include the startling, stinging Four Women, the album's only song written by Simone and a soundtrack to the African-American female experience. In just four-and-a half minutes, she succinctly summarises the intersectionality of race, gender, class and generational trauma. It's quite something. A sparse rendition of Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair provides another standout; a part of her live repertoire, here it's just Simone, her piano and Lisle Atkinson's bass drone. Likewise, the unsettling title track. In her hands, it is pure elegy, Simone despairing over the loss of a lover. *LW*



Frank Sinatra *Strangers In The Night* (Reprise R9-1017, UK) **£10**

Sinatra was that rare thing in pop: an untouchable whose career never seemed to be affected by trends. Staying strong amid rapidly shifting currents, he survived the 50s rock'n'roll tsunami and then fought off the 60s British Invasion. In May 1966, at the height of moptop mania, Strangers In The Night replaced The Rolling Stones' Paint It Black at the summit of the UK pop charts; the same-titled album, which contained a groovy take on Tony Hatch's Downtown, confirmed Sinatra's refusal to be made irrelevant by trendy rock groups. Later the same year, "Ol' Blue Eyes" showed, with his first-ever live album, that at 50, he still ruled in Vegas (see sidebar, p111). *CW*



Spencer Davis Group *The Second Album* (Fontana TL 5295, UK) **£80**

It wasn't their titular leader who musically elevated the Spencer Davis Group above their 60s beat combo peers. It was the exceptionally talented Stevie Winwood, who sang like a Memphis soul singer, played guitar like he was raised in the Mississippi Delta and pounded the organ and piano like he worshipped in a Chicago church. With a group line-up completed by his brother/bassist Muff Winwood and drummer Pete York, he excels throughout the group's second LP, and unbelievably so when you consider he's just 18 at the time of recording. The high is undoubtedly Keep On Running, which, penned by Jackie Edwards, provided their first No 1 hit single. But covers of Bobby Parker's Watch Your Step, Hoagy Carmichael via Ray Charles' Georgia On My Mind and Curtis Mayfield's You Must Believe Me are utterly compelling too and show Winwood knows exactly where it's at. *LW*



The Supremes *Supremes A Go-Go* (Tamla Motown TML 11039, UK) **£25**

Their ninth album and first to make the US *Billboard* chart, making them the first all-female group to do so, *Supremes A Go-Go* captures Diana Ross' finest vocal performances and Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson in perfect harmony. The songs are top-notch, too. Eschewing ballads, show tunes and standards, it is firmly angled to pop radio and the dancefloor with eight of the 12 tracks scribed by a peaking Holland, Dozier and Holland. The two singles are classics: Love Is Like An Itching In My Heart which, introducing a tougher-sounding trio more akin to Martha & The Vandellas, hit the US Top 10. You Can't Hurry Love, meanwhile, is a perfect pop confection and their seventh No 1. Recorded in Detroit with the Funk Brothers and LA with the Wrecking Crew, they further bewitch with This Old Heart Of Mine (Is Weak For You), Money (That's What I Want) and Get Ready. Here is the sound of young America. *LW*



The 13th Floor Elevators *The Psych-edelic Sounds Of The 13th Floor Elevators* (International Artists IA-LP-1, US) **£750**

The first band to actually refer to themselves as psychedelic, and a turning point in pop. Curiously, from Texas, they set the tone for the San Fran scene, with first single, You're Gonna Miss Me, a mindbending mix of chunky guitar and yelping vocals, a minor US hit. The album has retained its glow, a garage band thrill with a difference, the whooping sirens of Fire Engine, the chugging feedback of Reverberation (Doubt) and the disarming electro wobble throughout. It's sharper and more out on the edge than the dreaminess of much psychedelia – The Byrds' Eight Miles High, by comparison, had a subtle sophistication. The Elevators, tipped for greater heights thanks to an underlying pop sensibility, crashed down when frontman Roky Erickson's electroshock therapy after a drugs conviction left him mentally scarred, although he later emerged as a wild-eyed horror-psychedelic solo performer. *ND*

1966: SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The Monkees *The Monkees* (RCA, UK) **£15**
America responds to The Beatles with their own prefab four: Monkeemania ensues, and singles such as their TV show theme and Last Train To Clarksville light up this debut. *RH*

Billy Preston *Wildest Organ In Town!* (Capitol, UK) **£25**
Later to be something of a fifth Beatle as well as playing with Ray Charles, the keyboard whizz pricked up ears with his jazz and blues-infused skills on this instrumental covers set, arranged by Sly Stone. *JS*

Question Mark And The Mysterians *96 Tears* (Cameo, US) **£40**
Its title track was the first proto-punk single to sell a million copies. With Frank Rodriguez's simple organ motifs, their formula stretched to two albums and inspired countless bands. *KN*

Otis Redding *The Otis Redding Dictionary of Soul* (Atlantic, UK) **£25**
As the follow-up to *Otis Blue*, the last studio album Redding made in his lifetime can get overlooked, but that searingly emotive vocal identity infects a fine mix of covers and originals. *JS*

The Seeds *The Seeds* (GNP Crescendo, US) **£100**
The Seeds led garage-punk's psych crossover, signature singles Pushin' Too Hard and Can't Seem To Make You Mine leading one of the era's strongest albums. *KN*

The Seeds *Web Of Sound* (GNP Crescendo, US) **£50**
The follow-up to the above, A *Web Of Sound* expanded their distinctive trademark sound from lead single Mr Farmer to 14-minute psycho-mantra Up In Her Room, predicting The Velvet Underground's Sister Ray. *KN*

Wayne Shorter *Speak No Evil* (Blue Note, US) **£400**
This landmark hard bop release from the mercurial sax man was bursting with ideas and invention which still sound fresh 60 years on. *JS*

The Rolling Stones *Aftermath* (Decca SKL 4786, UK) **£200**

While it's fair to say the Stones never fully became a Great Albums Band until 1968's *Beggars Banquet*, as the first to be entirely written by Jagger/Richards, their fourth, *Aftermath*, marked a major artistic breakthrough. Offering blessed respite from the unending chart strangulation of those pesky Von Trapp children, it became the year's non-*Sound Of Music* album to spend the longest at No 1, hogging the top spot for eight weeks – even *Revolver* could only manage seven. Clocking in at over 50 minutes, *Aftermath* was also the longest pop LP anyone had ever released up until that point. Yet this was both its pride and its problem. Without containing anything deserved of tarring "a bad song" – at worst, a couple that might have served better as decent B-sides – there's just too much of it. Fourteen tracks, one of which, Goin' Home (the *Ready Steady Go!* theme tune for its last stretch), grooves on for a joint-passing 11 minutes in a spacious blues jam ultimately more rewarding for the band than the listener: a precursor to Midnight Rambler, yes, but more vibes than tune and one that hasn't rung throughout history for that reason.



But if at times *Aftermath* is a victim of its own gluttony, that doesn't detract from the joy of the feast. Mostly bangers, with only a scoop of filler mash: the sneering R&B ragtime of Mother's Little Helper – if Jagger's *"What a draaag it is getting old"* isn't the year's best album opener, what is? – the pre-Raphaelite Lady Jane, the epic swelling soul of Out Of Time (*sooo* much better than Chris Farlowe's) and no feminist's Stones favourite, Under My Thumb. These, the standouts to have enjoyed afterlives on subsequent best-ofs, but holding their own between, are the stomping slide blues of Doncha Bother Me, the fuzzy kiss-off of Think and the non-fuzzy kiss-off of Take It Or Leave It (*sooo* much better than The Searchers'). If anything, *Aftermath* is mistitled: an auspicious prelude to even greater things to come. *SG*





Ike & Tina Turner *River Deep – Mountain High* (London HA-U/SH-U 8298, UK) **£40**

After watching the group at LA's Galaxy Club in early 1966, Phil Spector approached Ike and Tina Turner to make a record. The result five tracks produced by Spector sans Ike (he paid him $20,000 to stay out of the studio), and seven by Ike, are jumbled up to make up *River Deep – Mountain High*. Spector's five are unsurprisingly grandiose, over the top and utterly captivating, with Tina and a 21-piece orchestra and 21-voice choir going for gold. Her letting-rip vocal on the title track over an emotion-capsizing wall of sound took the song into the UK Top 5. Save The Last Dance For Me, Every Day I Have To Cry and A Love Like Yours (Don't Come Knocking Everyday) are epic, too, with Tina's direct, throaty delivery in glorious contrast to Spector's symphonic scope. Ike's tracks, meanwhile, return Tina to gutsy blues

territory with remakes of I Idolise You, It's Gonna Work Out Fine et al. *LW*



The Walker Brothers *Portrait* (Philips BL 7732, UK) **£20**
Released off the back of their second No 1 smash The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore, the fake Walker siblings' second and most successful album held its own for over two months in the same UK Top 10 as *Revolver*, *Aftermath*, *Pet Sounds* and *Blonde On Blonde*, peaking at No 3. *Portrait*, though, is no kindred rock'n'roll spirit with any of the aforementioned, for the most part positioning itself in the gloomier corner of easy listening save for a clutch of up-tempo soul pop interludes as an occasional change of pace. Neither of its light Scott Engel tunes – the Spector-ish Saturday's Child, the lovelorn ballad I Can See It Now – offer fair warning of *the* Scott Walker to come, only the voice – *the* voice – at its most baroquely boneshaking on In My Room (not the Beach Boys song) and Where's The Girl?, both the orchestrated equivalent of a call to the Samaritans. *SG*



The Who *A Quick One* (Reaction 593 002, UK) **£200**
Arguably the year's most experimental album by a British guitar band, The Who's schizophrenic second was a literal group effort sharing its composer credits between all four members. Daltrey supplies the brilliant Buddy Holly-ish See My Way, Entwistle the comic touches of Boris The Spider and Whiskey Man, and Moon the melancholic Beatles dig I Need You and the barmy Sally-Army clatterfest Cobwebs And Strange. But despite such ostensible democracy and the one Motown cover of Martha & The Vandellas' Heat Wave, this is still the Townshend show, from maximum R&B opener Run Run Run to single-that-could've been So Sad About Us (later covered by The Jam, who'd likewise tackle the Vandellas' Heat Wave on *Setting Sons*) and the lyrically silly if ambitious nine-minute title track, his first rock opera in miniature. An uneven hotchpotch of a record but a seismic evolutionary leap towards *Tommy* and beyond. *SG*



Stevie Wonder *Up-Tight Everything's Alright* (Tamla Motown TML 11036, UK) **£35**
Little Stevie Wonder had hit the US pop and R&B No 1 spots in 1963 with Fingertips, but two years later Berry Gordy was threatening to drop him from the label when he hadn't been able to follow it up successfully. Then with Sylvia Moy and Henry Cosby, he co-penned Uptight (Everything's Alright). Fanfaring the arrival of a more mature Stevie, who was clearly no longer "Little" and with a vocal now more distinct, with a gritty undertow, the song returned him to the US pop No 1. An album was recorded quickly to capitalise; his fifth, it witnesses Wonder grasping the possibilities of artistic control and beginning to forge his own musical path with the co-penned Hold Me, Ain't That Asking For Trouble, Pretty Little Angel and Music Talk. An astute cover of Bob Dylan's Blowin' In The Wind, meanwhile, is an early glimpse of what was to come with his 1970s socio-political output. *LW*



Yardbirds *Yardbirds* (Columbia SX 6063, UK) **£80**
Their debut *Five Live Yardbirds* had captured the group with Eric Clapton on guitar in the sweaty environs of the Marquee, playing blues and R&B to an audience of mods. By the time of their self-titled second, and only UK studio album, Jeff Beck had replaced Clapton to join singer/blues harpist Keith Relf, rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja, bassist Paul Samwell-Smith and Jim McCarty on drums. Better known by the title "Roger The Engineer", taken from Chris Dreja's drawing on the front cover of engineer Roger Cameron, it was recorded in London's Advision with Samwell-Smith and new manager Simon Napier Bell at the controls. It's them aiming high, still respectful of their blues beginnings, with tracks such as Rack My Mind and The Nazz Are Blue, but moving forward, embracing psychedelia, fusing feedback, fuzz and eastern drone on Over Under Sideways Down and Hot House Of Omagararshid. Its influence is writ large, from Cream and Jimi Hendrix Experience to Tame Impala and Jack White. *LW*

1966: SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Simon & Garfunkel *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme* (CBS, UK) **£25**
Following just a few months after *Sounds Of Silence*, some fans prefer this, the duo's third LP, for its more varied and ambitious stylistic range. *JS*

Frank Sinatra *Sinatra At The Sands* (Reprise, UK) **£20**
Featuring the super-slick Count Basie Band playing Quincy Jones arrangements during a Las Vegas residency, the 50-year-old Ol' Blue Eyes' performance still mesmerises. *CW*



Small Faces *Small Faces* (Decca, UK) **£250**
The mod-pop quartet's peppy debut blueprinted their soul-infused sound, courtesy of hits such as Whatcha Gonna Do About It and Sha-La-La-La-Lee. *RH*

The Sonics *Boom* (Etiquette, US) **£200**
Feral and fearsomely influential proto-punk from the Pacific Northwest, featuring riotous covers of Louie Louie and Skinny Minnie. *RH*

Sonny & Cher *The Wondrous World Of Sonny & Cher* (Atlantic, UK) **£10**
Post-I Got You Babe, the husband-and-wife pop duo aim to continue their hot chart streak – and with the help of hit singles But You're Mine and What Now My Love, they succeed. *RH*



The Standells *Dirty Water* (Tower, US) **£30**
Snotty LA garage rock goes overground, thanks to an unstoppable title track on this debut studio set, which hit No 11 on the US *Billboard* charts. *RH*

Them *Them Again* (Decca, UK) **£200**
Ahead of the Belfast rockers' imminent split, singer Van Morrison yelps through a definitive I Can Only Give You Everything. *RH*

Big Mama Thornton *In Europe* (Arhoolie, US) **£40**
One of the great female blues performers first seriously grabbed the attention of blues revivalists with this London live set. *JS*

The Young Rascals *The Young Rascals Incl. Good Lovin'* (Atlantic, UK) **£30**
Invading UK pirate radio with their high-octane cover of the Olympics' Good Lovin', New Jersey's Young Rascals scored a string of 60s hits as blue-eyed soul titans. *KN*

Words: Nick Dalton (ND), Simon Goddard (SG), Rob Hughes (RH), Kris Needs (KN), Johnny Sharp (JS), David Stubbs (DS), Charles Waring (CW), Lois Wilson (LW)













1966 LPs: A COLLECTOR'S PARADISE

There is no disputing that the year 1966 was a truly vintage one for albums. John Coleman puts the spotlight on a selection of classic, ground-breaking albums by choosing 10 collectable versions released over the years on various formats. There are valuable first editions, limited editions and deluxe box sets.

THE BEACH BOYS: PET SOUNDS

66	Capitol T2458	**PET SOUNDS** (LP, first UK pressing, flipback sleeve, 'Capitol' label on left, mono) ... **£150**
66	Capitol ST 2458	**PET SOUNDS** (LP, first UK pressing, flipback sleeve, 'Capitol' label at top, stereo)... **£130**
66	Capitol T 2458	**PET SOUNDS** (LP, US, Los Angeles pressing, '6' on back sleeve, Capitol rainbow rim labels, mono)... **£100**
66	Capitol DT 2458	**PET SOUNDS** (LP US, Los Angeles pressing, '3' on back sleeve, rainbow rim labels, stereo)... **£100**
90	Capitol CDP 7 48421 2	**PET SOUNDS** (first UK CD, remastered, 3 bonus tracks, 4-page booklet)... **£6**
00	Capitol 527 3192 – EMI UK	**PET SOUNDS** (first hybrid CD/HDCD, remastered, mono, 8-page booklet)... **£10**
26	Capitol T 2458	**PET SOUNDS** (LP, UK Zoetrope picture disc, 60th Anniversary Edition, mono)... **£45**
06	Capitol T 2458	**PET SOUNDS** (2LP box set, yellow vinyl mono, green vinyl stereo, 40th Anniversary Edition, numbered)... **£50**
97	Capitol 837 6622	**THE PET SOUNDS SESSIONS** first UK 4CD, HDCD box set, 128-page book, 40-page booklet, box set) ... **£45**
99	Capitol 72435212411 4	**PET SOUNDS** (LP, Ltd Edition, 180g audiophile, first time on vinyl in stereo)... **£40**

THE BEATLES: REVOLVER

66	Parlophone PMC 7009	**REVOLVER** (LP, first pressing, Side Two matrix [XEX 606-1], (G & L or E. J. Day sleeve; Mono)... **£500**
66	Parlophone PCS 7009	**REVOLVER** (LP, first pressing, G & L or E. J. Day sleeve; stereo)... **£175**
66	Capitol T 2576	**REVOLVER** (LP, first pressing, black colourband labels, Capitol inner, mono)... **£50**
66	Capitol ST2576	**REVOLVER** (LP, first pressing, black colourband labels, Capitol inner, stereo)... **£50**
87	Parlophone CDP 7 46441 2	**REVOLVER** (CD, 4-page booklet)... **£5**
09	Apple 82417 2	**REVOLVER** (CD, trifold sleeve, booklet)... **£25**
22	Apple 0602445599707	**REVOLVER** (LP, picture disc, die-cut sleeve)... **£35**
22	Apple 0602445599523	**REVOLVER** (4LP/7" box set, 100-page book)... **£100**
22	Apple 4559941	**REVOLVER** (4CD/CD single box set, 100-page book)... **£60**
22	Apple 4559969	**REVOLVER** (LP, half-speed mastered)... **£25**

THE BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND: EAST-WEST

66	Elektra EKL 315	**EAST-WEST** (LP, first UK pressing, orange labels, laminated sleeve, mono) ... **£50**
66	Elektra EKS 7315	**EAST-WEST** (LP, first UK pressing, orange labels, stereo) ... **£40**
66	Elektra EKL 315	**EAST-WEST** (LP, US, first pressing with tan/gold labels, mono) ... **£45**
66	Elektra EKS 7315	**EAST-WEST** (LP US, gold labels, stereo on both left and right of labels) ... **£40**
88	Elektra 960 751 2	**EAST-WEST** (first UK CD, 6 panel fold-out booklet)... **£8**
26	Mobile Fidelity UDSACD 2308	**EAST WEST** (SACD, US, limited edition, numbered, 2,500 only)... **£25**
18	Sundazed Music LP 5096	**EAST WEST** (LP, US, blue vinyl, hype sticker, stereo)... **£25**
87	Edsel ED 212	**EAST-WEST** (LP, UK, Reissue, stereo)... **£18**
14	Audio Fidelity AFZ 172	**EAST-WEST** (SACD, US Box Set, ltd edition, numbered) ... **£40**
26	Mobile Fidelity MFSL 1611	**EAST-WEST** (LP, Ltd Edition, 180g audiophile, original master recording, numbered)... **£40**

THE BYRDS: FIFTH DIMENSION

66	CBS BPG 62652	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, first UK pressing, textured orange label, flipback sleeve, mono)... **£45**
66	CBS (S) BPG 62652	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, first UK pressing, textured orange label, flipback sleeve, stereo)... **£35**
66	Columbia CL 2549	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, US, first pressing, red '360 Sound 'labels, mono)... **£50**
66	Columbia CS 9349	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP US, first ressing, red 'two eye' 360 labels, stereo)... **£40**
91	BGO BGOCD 106	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (first UK CD, 4-page booklet)... **£6**
96	Columbia COL 483707 2	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (UK, remastered, 6-bonus tracks, 16-page booklet) ... **£8**
15	Friday Music FRM 9349	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, US, gold translucent with blue swirls, 180g 50th anniversary edition)... **£40**
26	Columbia MOVLP 501	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, UK, 60th anniversary edition, dark orange vinyl, Textured cover 1,500 only)... **£30**
97	Audio Fidelity AFZ5 205	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (SACD, US, multichannel, stereo, quadraphonic, unreleased, gold test discs only) ... **£80**
98	Simply Vinyl SVLP 0047	**FIFTH DIMENSION** (LP, Ltd Edition, 180g audiophile vinyl, silver hype sticker) ... **£30**

BOB DYLAN: BLONDE ON BLONDE

66	CBS DDP 66012	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (2LP, first UK press, gatefold, 9 photos on inside, laminated outer sleeve, mono) ... **£150**
66	CBS (S) DDP 66012	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (2LP, first UK press, gatefold, 9 photos on inside, laminated outer sleeve, stereo) ... **£120**
66	Columbia C2L 41	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (LP, US, Pitman pressing, red Columbia "360 Sound" labels, mono) ... **£80**
66	Columbia C2S 841	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (LP US, Terre Haute pressing, red Columbia "360 Sound" labels, stereo) ... **£70**
87	CDCBS 66012	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (First UK CD, remastered, 4-page booklet)... **£6**
94	Columbia COL 480417 2	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (UK, *Collector's Edition Master Sound* gold disc remaster, slipcase, poster) ... **£15**
19	Columbia C2L 41	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (LP, UK/Europe, ltd edition, reissue, 180g, white vinyl, mono)... **£30**
06	Mobile Fidelity MFSL 3 45009	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (US, 3LP box set, ltd edition, half speed mastered, 180g, numbered) ... **£70**
99	Columbia MILLEN15	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (UK/Europe ltd edition gatefold, LP style package, numbered Obi strip)... **£15**
98	Simply Vinyl SVLP 063	**BLONDE ON BLONDE** (2LP, ltd edition, 180g audiophile vinyl, 9 photos, gatefold)... **£50**

LOVE: DA CAPO

The first UK issues of Da Capo actually arrived in 1967, but it was a 1966 recorded LP

66	Elektra EKL 4005	**DA CAPO** (LP, first UK pressing with 'Manufactured in England' on orange labels, mono)... **£120**
66	Elektra EKL 4001/EKS 74001	**DA CAPO** (LP, first UK pressing, gold labels in US sleeve, stereo)... **£150**
66	Elektra EKL 4005	**DA CAPO** (LP, US, large white 'E' logo on tan/gold labels, mono) ... **£60**
66	Elektra EKS 74005	**DA CAPO** (LP US, large white E logo, stereo on tan/gold labels, stereo)... **£70**
88	Elektra 974 005 2	**DA CAPO** (first UK/Europe CD, remastered, 4-page booklet)... **£6**
02	Elektra 8122 73604 2	**DA CAPO** (UK/Europe, mono and stereo mixes, 15-tracks inc. 1 bonus track, 16-page booklet) ... **£10**

81	Elektra K 42011	**DA CAPO** (LP, UK reissue, red Elektra labels, stereo)	**£18**
23	Elektra R1 724965	**DA CAPO** (LP/7", Box Set, both red vinyl, 45th anniversary 'Rhino Reds' edition, 2,000 only)	**£40**
25	Music On CD MOCCD14565	**DA CAPO** (CD, UK/Europe, deluxe reissue, insert)	**£15**
16	Music On Vinyl MOVLP 1002	**DA CAPO** (LP, US, gold vinyl ltd edition, 180g audiophile, numbered, 500 only)	**£30**

THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION: FREAK OUT!

67	Verve VLP 9154	**FREAK OUT!** (LP, first UK pressing, single disc, mono)	**£150**
67	Verve SVLP 9154	**FREAK OUT** (LP, first UK pressing, single disc, stereo)	**£100**
66	Verve V5005 2	**FREAK OUT!** (2LP, US, first pressing 'Hot Spots' map/poster offer printed on gatefold, mono)	**£70**
66	Verve V6 5005 2	**FREAK OUT!** (2LP US, first pressing 'Hot Spots' map/poster offer printed on gatefold, stereo)	**£60**
87	Zappa CD ZAP 1	**FREAK OUT!** (first CD, Nimbus remastered, 8-page booklet)	**£12**
02	Rykodisc RCD10501	**FREAK OUT!** (CD UK, remastered, 4-panel fold-out booklet)	**£10**
85	Zappa ZAPPA 1	**FREAK OUT!** (2LP, UK, reissue, gatefold sleeve)	**£30**
26	Zappa ZR20051 5	**FREAK OUT!** (5LP box set, expanded booklet, hot spots map, lithographic print, numbered)	**£130**
26	Zappa ZR20051	**FREAK OUT!** (UK, 5CD/BDA, 60th Anniversary Edition, box set, poster, 60-page booklet)	**£50**
13	Zappa 0238341	**FREAK OUT!** (2LP, UK, reissue, 180g vinyl. 4-page folded 'FREAK OUT! - Hot Spots' map/poster insert)	**£40**



OTIS REDDING: OTIS BLUE/OTIS REDDING SINGS SOUL

This album was first released at the end of 1965 but had its success in repressing in the UK throughout 1966

65	Atlantic ATL 5041	**OTIS BLUE** (LP, first UK pressing, Atlantic plumb labels, mono)	**£50**
65	Atlantic SAL 5041	**OTIS BLUE** (LP, first UK pressing, Atlantic plumb labels, stereo)	**£60**
65	Volt VOLT 412	**OTIS BLUE** (LP, US first pressing, solid yellow labels with bold black VOLT logo, mono)	**£50**
65	Volt SD 2458	**OTIS BLUE** (LP, US first pressing, solid yellow labels with bold black VOLT logo, stereo)	**£60**
00	ATCO 7567 80318 2	**OTIS BLUE** (first UK/Europe CD, remastered, 4-page booklet)	**£6**
08	ATCO8122 79938 9	**OTIS BLUE** (2CD, UK, collector's edition, digipak, insert)	**£10**
12	ATCO 8122797160	**OTIS BLUE** (LP, UK, 180g blue vinyl, special edition, stereo)	**£20**
15	Rhino R1 547282	**OTIS BLUE** (2LP/7" blue vinyl, US, RSD 2015, 7500 only)	**£35**
15	Rhino 081227951856	**OTIS BLUE** (2CD box set, remastered flip-tray double jewel case, 4-page booklet)	**£45**
16	ATCO APP 095 45	**OTIS BLUE** (2LP, Analogue Productions remaster, 200g, gatefold)	**£45**



THE ROLLING STONES: AFTERMATH

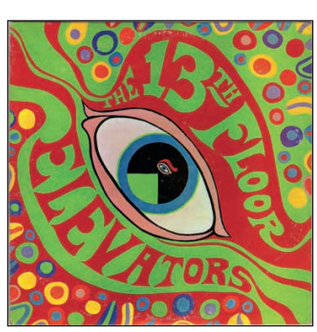
66	Decca LK 4786	**AFTERMATH** (LP, UK, red unboxed Decca labels, front cover titles with purple shadow, mono)	**£250**
66	Decca SKL 4786	**AFTERMATH** (LP, UK, red unboxed Decca labels, front cover titles with purple shadow, stereo)	**£200**
66	London LL 3476	**AFTERMATH** (US, LP, first pressing with dull red labels, silver text, mono)	**£70**
66	London PS 476	**AFTERMATH** (LP US, first pressing, blue labels, silver text, stereo)	**£60**
88	London 820 050 2	**AFTERMATH** (first UK CD, 12-page booklet)	**£8**
02	ABKCO 882 324 2	**AFTERMATH** (CD, *Rolling Stones Remastered Series*, 4- page booklet)	**£10**
19	ABKCO 018771860112	**AFTERMATH** (LP, UK ltd edition 'violet' colour vinyl, hype sticker)	**£30**
03	ABKCO 882 323 1	**AFTERMATH** (LP, 180g vinyl, *Rolling Stones Remastered* Series, DSD (Direct Stream Digital)	**£50**
06	ABKCO UICY 93021	**AFTERMATH** (CD, UK, 'Vintage Vinyl' replica sleeve collection, DSD)	**£25**
85	Decca SKDL 4786	**AFTERMATH** (LP, digitally remastered, silver, blue and red labels, stereo)	**£20**



THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS:

THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS

78	Radar RAD 13	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, UK first issue, white label test pressing, mono)	**£90**
78	Radar RAD 13	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, first UK issue, semi-gloss cover, orange labels, stereo)	**£45**
66	International Artists IA LP 1	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, US, first pressing, 3 columns of text at bottom back cover, mono)	**£750**
66	International Artists IA LP 1	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP US, first pressing, 3 columns of text at bottom back cover, stereo)	**£650**
91	Int. Artists CD LIKM 001	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (first UK CD, 4-page booklet)	**£8**
07	Charly SNAP 225 CD	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (CD, UK, remastered, 10-bonus tracks, 12-page booklet)	**£15**
92	Decal LIKP 003	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, UK, picture disc, Special Edition with poster)	**£40**
11	Charly CHARLY 111 L	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, UK, ltd edition, 2LP mono and stereo remaster mix)	**£40**
10	Charly SNAX616CD	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (2CD box set, UK, digibook with attached 16-page booklet, 5000 only)	**£25**
24	International Artists IA LP 1	**THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF...** (LP, UK half-speed master, 180g vinyl, hype sticker, mono)	**£50**



THE YARDBIRDS:

YARDBIRDS (ROGER THE ENGINEER)

66	Columbia SX 6063	**YARDBIRDS** (LP, first UK pressing, flipback sleeve, 'Capitol' label on left, mono)	**£80**
66	Columbia SCX 6063	**YARDBIRDS** (LP, first UK Pressing, flipback sleeve, blue/black labels, stereo)	**£70**
66	Epic LN 24210	**OVER UNDER SIDEWAYS DOWN** (LP, US, yellow labels, mono)	**£55**
66	Epic BN 26210	**OVER UNDER SIDEWAYS DOWN** (LP US, sleeve, rainbow rim labels, stereo)	**£45**
86	Edsel RED CD 116	**ROGER THE ENGINEER** (first UK CD, 4-page booklet)	**£8**
98	Diablo DIAB 852	**ROGER THE ENGINEER** (CD, UK, mono and stereo versions +7 bonus tracks, 4-page booklet)	**£10**
15	Demon DEMREC 25	**ROGER THE ENGINEER** (LP, UK picture disc)	**£15**
21	Demon DEMRECBOX 55	**YARDBIRDS (ROGER THE ENGINEER)** (2LP/7"/3CD box set, inserts, booklets)	**£70**
07	Repertoire REP 5088	**ROGER THE ENGINEER** (2CD, box set, UK/Europe, 40th anniversary special edition, booklet)	**£15**
16	Repertoire V 172	**ROGER THE ENGINEER** (LP, UK, 50th Anniversary, half speed master, insert, hype sticker, mono)	**£25**





THE BEST OF 2026

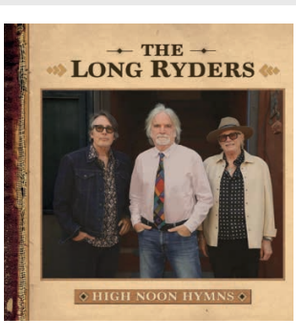
New Albums Top 50



1. **DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS**
Love (Heavenly)
Kevin Rowland hinted that Dexys' seventh album might just be their last. If that's true, this was some way to go out, a record that *RC*'s Daryl Easlea described as their "smiling coda". It was followed by a triumphant tour that saw them bask in this late-career peak, a fitting celebration for their joyous and contemplative modern classic.
2. **FONTAINES D.C.** **Dopamine Chamber** (XL)
Over four previous records, the Irish quintet have shapeshifted from poetic post-punks into adventurous alt-rock titans. There was another thrilling reinvention on *Dopamine Chamber*, atmospheric synths and Depeche Mode-y moodiness introduced into the mix.
3. **THE ROLLING STONES**
Foreign Tongues (Polydor)
The Stones hardly need to prove their credentials as rock'n'roll dynamos, but they did anyway, producer Andrew Watts helping them to craft a modern-sounding record steeped in their defiant classicism.
4. **BOARDS OF CANADA** **Inferno** (Warp)
Over a decade since their last record, the trailblazing electronic duo showed they'd lost none of their ability to startle with this ambient, uneasy gem of an album.
5. **GORILLAZ** **The Mountain** (Parlophone)
A reflection on grief turned into a bounding, kaleidoscopic art-pop (and guest-filled) bonanza on the ninth album from Damon Albarn &. his cartoon crew.
6. **THE WOMACK SISTERS**
The Womack Sisters (Daptone)
This sibling trio could've relied on the family name to do the work for them, but instead they emerged with this absolute blast of a record that pulled R&B and 60s pop into its soulful swirl.
7. **PAUL MCCARTNEY**
The Boys Of Dungeon Lane (MPL)
Sir Macca's 21st solo album found him in a pensive mood, going back to where it all began on a rich and nuanced record filled with his trademark sweet and evocative songcraft.
8. **YARD ACT**
You're Gonna Need A Little Music (Island)
An excellent third album from the Leeds quartet, their wiry indie and surging post-punk grooves now delivered with an expansive pop swagger in the lineage of Blur and Pulp.
9. **ALDOUS HARDING**
Train On The Island (4AD)
A work of stark and minimalist wonder from the New Zealand singer-songwriter, cementing her status as a supernaturally singular talent.
10. **KELELA** **New Avatar** (Warp)
The US artist's third album was an experimental-pop masterclass that brought guests such as A.K. Paul and PinkPantheress along for its heady ride.
11. **KNEECAP** **Fenian** (Heavenly)
The Irish wallflowers came out fighting on their second record, an awesome blitz of hip hop, techno and electro-punk the perfect vehicle for their dexterous, dynamic wordplay.
12. **TYLER BALLGAME**
For The First Time, Again (Rough Trade)
Rhode Island native Tyler Perry arrived fully-formed, his debut steeped in 70s singer-songwriter melodicism and a rough-round-the-edges charm.
13. **LUCINDA WILLIAMS**
World's Gone Wrong (Highway)
The Americana luminary offered up a gripping state of the nation address on her 16th studio album.
14. **JOHNNY MARR**
The Age Of Everything (BMG)
Johnny went uber-Marr on this solo peak which played out like a Best Of made up of new songs, a brilliant collection of indelible jangly riffs and indie anthems.
15. **THE CORAL** **388** (Modern Sky)
After a run of (highly enjoyable) concept albums, The Coral got back to basics on an album that melded Northern soul, psych-pop and rocksteady rhythmics. A fantastic reminder of their songwriting mastery.
16. **THE DURUTTI COLUMN**
Renascent (London)
Even without its anguished backstory – ringleader Vini Reilly had three strokes between this album and their last – this was an emotional, sweeping return from the Manchester experimentalists.
17. **DRY CLEANING** **Secret Love** (4AD)
The post-punk sound of the London quartet grows ever more widescreen, their third album incorporating Stonesy riffs and intricate art-pop while also sometimes sounding like they've been hit with the Blockheads' rhythm stick.
18. **ANGINE DE POITRINE**
Vol. II (Spectacles Bonzaï)
The mask-wearing, swashbuckling Canadian math-rock duo summoned up another bewildering dose of rhythmical head-hurting and riff-laden magnificence on album two.
19. **INTERPOL** **This Mirror Weighs A Ton** (Partisan)
Over two decades since the dazzling one-two of their first two records, the New York trio tapped into something special on album eight. Up there with their very best.
20. **SLEAFORD MODS**
The Demise Of Planet X (Rough Trade)
This felt like an electrifying reset for the Midlands duo, a record that, with its barbed energy and inflamed imagination, could've been a second debut.
21. **SQUEEZE** **Trixies** (BMG)
Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook revisited a concept album they wrote as teens but had no idea how to pull off. No issue for them now: this was an audaciously entertaining trip to the past.

AMERICANA COLLECTOR
By Nick Dalton

1. THE LONG RYDERS
High Noon Hymns (Cherry Red)
2. MICHAEL WESTON KING
Nothing Can Hurt Me Anymore (Continental Song City)
3. FREDDIE STEADY'S WILD COUNTRY
Pass That Jug! (SteadyBoy)
4. BILL KIRCHEN
Cat Out Of The Bag (The Last Music Company)
5. NELSON BROTHERS
Tall Tales, False Trails (NB Music Productions)
6. IAIN MATTHEWS
Return To Tupper Street: Valley Hi Reimagined (MIG)
7. CARLY PEARCE
Honest Woman (Stoney Creek US)
8. DAN PENN
Smoke Filled Room (The Last Music Company)
9. TIFT MERRITT
Sugar (One Riot)
10. DAVID SERBY
Broken Heart in a Honky Tonk (S/R)

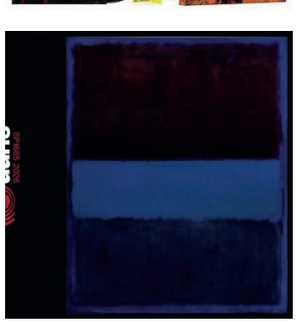




METAL COLLECTOR
By Joel McIver

1. SLAYER
Hell Awaits: 40th Anniversary Edition (Metal Blade)
2. DARKTHRONE
The Fist In The Face Of God (Peaceville)
3. SUNN O)))
Sunn O))) (Sub Pop)
4. ZEALOT CULT
Psalms Of Filth (Awakening)
5. MELVINS & NAPALM DEATH
Savage Imperial Death March (Ipecac)
6. AT THE GATES
The Ghost Of A Future Dead (Century Media)
7. ANTHRAX
Cursum Perficio (Nuclear Blast)
8. ANNIHILATOR
Criteria For A Black Widow (earMUSIC)
9. OPETH
Blackwater Park (Music For Nations)
10. SIGH
Hail Horror Hail (Peaceville)





THE BEST OF 2026

New Albums Top 50

22. **LEMON TWIGS**
Look For Your Mind! (Captured Tracks)
The D'Addario brothers kept the standard up on album six, retro power pop that infuses the songs with the energy of their live shows.

23. **ARLO PARKS** **Ambiguous Desire** (Transgressive)
Shaking off the solemn introspection of their first two records, Arlo Parks channelled nights out raving to unite jubilant bangers and pulsing beats.

24. **DEEP PURPLE** **Splat!** (earMUSIC)
The heavy rock trailblazers lived up to their legacy on this 24th effort, as amped-up and playful as they ever were.

25. **TORI AMOS** **In Times Of Dragons** (Fontana)
The US singer-songwriter veteran's 18th studio album took a fantastical voyage through her life and career. Ambitious, smart and lush.

26. **PETER HAMMILL**
Tears In Time (Cherry Red)
Hammill's first solo record of new material since 2017 found the Van Der Graaf Generator co-founder taking stock as he approaches his 80s.

27. **JILL SCOTT**
To Whom It May Concern (Blues Babe)
A warm and soulful return from the R&B stalwart, her first full-length in over a decade.

28. **KIM GORDON** **Play Me** (Matador)
The former Sonic Youth doyenne really hit her stride with this third solo record, direct and melody-heavy art-rock.

29. **QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE** **Perfecth** (Matador)
The US rockers stripped things down on this introspective ninth, their barbed riffing swapped out for acoustic laments and languid grooves.

30. **SOFT CELL** **Danceteria** (Republic Of Music)
A fitting farewell for Marc Almond and Dave Ball's synth-pop duo, completed before Ball's death in 2025, nostalgic but celebratory, too.

31. **ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN**
Apples For Isaac (BMG)
Ian McCulloch took the reins on the Bunnymen's 13th album and who's to doubt his leadership when it came out this good, a deep and sumptuous late-career peak.

32. **FAT DOG** **Cancel Me** (I'm Tired) (Domino)
The south London electro-punk scoundrels broadened their sonic horizons on album two, an impressive blend of furious techno-rock and melodious alt-pop.

33. **KRISTIN HERSH** **Sugar On Blackstone** (Fire)
A stark and engrossing addition to the Throwing Muses frontwoman's fascinating solo canon.

34. **CHARLI XCX** **Music, Fashion, Film** (Atlantic)
The meta-pop star continued to push things forward on this rock-imbued follow-up to the all-conquering *Brat*.

35. **RICHARD THOMPSON**
Hippies, Thugs And Heroes (New West)
The quality of the ex-Fairport Convention man's work has never slipped but this was his best for some time, full of vivid folk-rock storytelling.

36. **FAUST** **Fliegen Lernen/Gugaruz/MOI/ Ungebunden** (Bureau B)
Four brilliant solo efforts from its members under the Faust banner, as close as we'll get to a reunion.

37. **ERYKAH BADU & THE ALCHEMIST**
Before The World Blows (Control Freaq)
Stunning collaboration between the R&B gamechanger The Alchemist, a woozy meld of neo-soul, hip hop and psychedelic-jazz atmospherics.

38. **THE TWILIGHT SAD**
It's The Long Goodbye (Rock Action)
The Scottish duo are one of Robert Smith's favourite bands and came back in 2026 with this suitably gloomy and epic career-best.

39. **RINGO STARR** **Long Long Road** (UMR)
The month before the arrival of Macca's … *Dungeon Lane*, Ringo put out his 22nd studio album, another T Bone Burnett-assisted trip to the country.

40. **SUNN O))) Sunn O)))** (Sub Pop)
They might be down to a duo but the drone metallers sounded just as hypnotically imposing on their Sub Pop debut.

41. **JALEN NGONDA** **Doctrine Of Love** (Daptone)
An infectious mix of Motown-ish retro-pop and stirring soul on the Liverpool-based American's ace second.

42. **TEENAGE FANCLUB**
Do Not Dare To Dream (Merge)
Even on its darker moments, there was a sense of ease running through the Scottish indie veterans' 13th album, songs that beckoned you in and warmed you up.

43. **LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY & MOUSE ON MARS**
Spatial, No Problem (Domino)
Death has not dimmed Perry's prolific output. Five years after his passing, this beguiling record with the German electronic duo was yet more evidence of his collaborative genius.

44. **THE MARY WALLOPERS** **Paddywhackery** (BC)
The Irish Celtic-folk crew are the raucous spirit of a late-night ceilidh writ on a grand scale – this was their best yet.

45. **CHAKA KHAN** **ChakZilla** (BMG)
Irresistible, modern pop revelry from the veteran singer.

46. **BILL CALLAHAN** **My Days Of 58** (Drag City)
Hardly renowned for his happy-go-lucky output, this was one of the US singer-songwriter's most melancholic and thoughtful efforts.

47. **THE ANCHORESS** **As We Once Were** (LNFG)
Fantastic return from the prog-adjacent indie polymath, sonically lush and lyrically gripping.

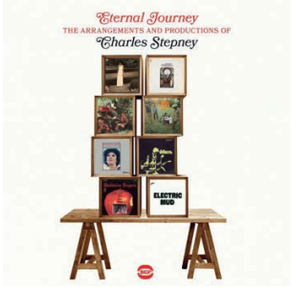
48. **BRUCE HORNSBY** **Indigo Park** (Thirty Tigers)
Influencing a new wave of artists over the past decade seems to have lit a fire under the US songwriter and piano man – this fourth record since 2019 was one of the most inventive and rewarding of his long career.

49. **PHOEBE BRIDGERS**
Lost Weekend (Dead Oceans)
Eerily excellent third record from the US singer-songwriter, her first solo album since 2020's landmark *Punisher*.

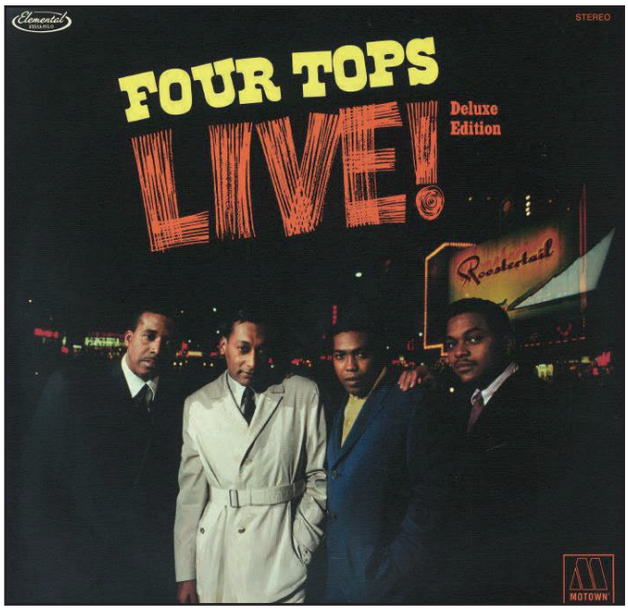
50. **EZRA COLLECTIVE** **Here Because Of Hope** (Partisan)
The London jazz crew grow ever more adept at joining their loose-limbed jubilance together with pop songs. Their fourth album continued the party.

SOUL COLLECTOR
By Lois Wilson

1. **FOUR TOPS**
Four Tops Live! Deluxe Edition (Elemental)
2. **VARIOUS**
Dave Hamilton's Detroit Soul Sound 1965-1977 (Kent)
3. **ASHA PUTHLI**
The Devil Is Loose (Mr Bongo)
4. **THE EMOTIONS**
Untouched (Real Gone Music)
5. **ANN PEBBLES**
Tellin' It (Fat Possum)
6. **VARIOUS**
Eternal Journey - The Arrangements And Productions Of Charles Stepney (BGP)
7. **FUNKADELIC**
Maggot Brain (Org Music)
8. **BLUE EYED SOUL**
You Ain't No Weight (Numero Group)
9. **VARIOUS** **Keep The Fire Burning Soul Sister Sides 1968-1982** (Strawberry)
10. **MICKEY & THE SOUL GENERATION**
Give Everybody Some (Real Gone)







THE BEST OF 2026

From The Vaults Top 50



1. **THE BEATLES Rubber Soul** (UMR)
The sign of a great reissue is that it offers up a new way of hearing a classic album and this one delivered on all fronts, going behind the curtain of the Fab Four's transformative masterpiece with a new mix of the original, eye-raising outtakes, mono mixes and more. "A cornucopia of pleasure," we said.
2. **JOY DIVISION Eternal: Live** (Warner)
This deep dive into the live world of Joy Division was about as close as most of us will ever get to hearing them perform. With 16 shows spread across 14 CDs and accompanied by two DVDs, it painted a vivid picture of their visceral power.
3. **THE STYLE COUNCIL**
Café Bleu (Universal)
As a man who's always followed his muse, Paul Weller set out his stall early. His post-Jam band might have flummoxed some fans at the time, but it stood up, a bounty of extras offering the inside track on where his head was at.
4. **10cc The Stockport Shuffle** (Cherry Red)
Forget its terrible cover and enjoy its incredible contents, a rarities and outtake-heavy voyage into the art-pop icons' first two albums.
5. **ROXY MUSIC For Your Pleasure: Super Deluxe Edition** (Universal)
Now delivered with even more gratification, their classic second record is bolstered with demos and formative early takes.
6. **DAVID BOWIE**
The Shel Talmy Recordings (Parlophone)
A peer into the time before Bowie was Bowie, we immediately marked these rare and unissued 1965 gems as "essential".
7. **THE CRAMPS Gravest Gravy** (Vengeance)
A reissue campaign celebrating the punk-rock forces of nature kicked off with this shelved '77 recording. It was worth the wait.
8. **THE BEACH BOYS**
We Gotta Groove: The Brother Studio Years
This fascinating set traced Brian Wilson's return to the fray in the mid-70s, packed with outtakes and alternate mixes.
9. **BOB MARLEY**
Roots Rock Reggae: Live At The Hammersmith Odeon
Compiled from a four-night stint at the west London venue in 1976, this superlative live set captures a star and his band at their peak.
10. **YOKO ONO**
Season Of Glass (Secretly Canadian)
A grief-stricken work of art, originally released in the wake of John Lennon's death, revisited. It had lost none of its potency in the intervening decades.
11. **NIROSTA STEEL My Skyscraper** (Ulyssa)
A collection spanning over 40 years, this beguiling compilation finally brought Arthur Russell collaborator Steven Hall into the limelight.
12. **SCRITTI POLITTI**
Songs To Remember (Rough Trade)
This remastering of Green Gartside's mesmeric pop conversion saw the 1982 classic get an overdue vinyl repress.
13. **MA RAINEY Mother Of The Blues: The Complete Paramount Recordings 1923-1928** (Black Swan)
Its audio restoration had Mother Of The Blues jumping out of the speaker, which is just as this influential blues singer was meant to be heard.
14. **DOWNLINERS SECT Sect Maniacs – The Complete Sixties Sessions** (Grapefuit)
This three-disc box set contained three albums alongside a plentiful supply of single and EP tracks, the sound of the riotous and underrated 60s crew at their best.
15. **T.REX 1974-1977** (Edsel)
A bustling set that chronicled Marc Bolan's later years, excavated bonus cuts adding to the package.
16. **CARE Love Crowns And Crucifies** (Needle Mythology)
The short-lived team-up from Paul Simpson and Ian Broudie finally got the album release it deserved with this collection of singles, B-sides and previously unreleased material.
17. **SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES**
Downside Up (UMR)
The Banshees' majestic flipsides collection, released on vinyl for the first time.
18. **RUSH Grace Under Pressure: Super Deluxe Edition** (Universal)
Insightful revisit to the prog pioneers' 1984 opus, offering up a full remix of the record alongside a 20-song gig recording.
19. **KRAFTWERK Radio-Activity** (Parlophone)
A masterpiece gets rewired for their 50th anniversary, new Dolby Atmos and binaural mixes adding a cosmic spaciness to the futuristic sonics.
20. **ELVIS COSTELLO My Aim Is True** (UMR)
A 49th anniversary edition, because why not, of a classic debut remastered and now accompanied by a truckful of unreleased studio cuts and outtakes.
21. **GENESIS**
From Genesis To Revelation (Esoteric)
The future prog giants' debut got to be heard in a whole new light here, a fresh mix in the four-disc set bringing out their musicianship.
22. **BE BOP DELUXE Axe Victim** (Esoteric)
Remastered and re-pressed, their 1974 dazzler sounds sharper than ever.
23. **FUNKADELIC Maggot Brain** (ORG Music)
A landmark record gets spruced up and remastered directly from the analogue tape.
24. **LEO SAYER**
Leothology: The Studio Albums 1973-Now (Edsel)
A comprehensive collection charting the career of the much-loved crooner, pop rocker and disco kid.

JAZZ COLLECTOR
By Charles Waring

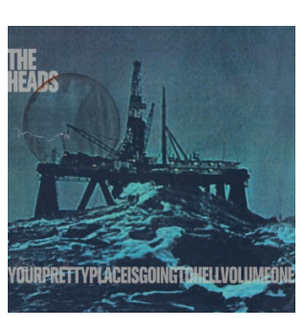
1. ROLAND KIRK
Vibrations In The Village (Live At The Village Gate) (Resonance Records)
2. JOE HENDERSON
Tetragon (Craft Recordings)
3. MIGUEL ATWOOD-FERGUSON
ANANTA: Spirit Of Coltrane (Impulse!)
4. IRREVERSIBLE ENTANGLEMENTS
Future Present Past (Impulse!)
5. PAT METHENY
Side-Eye III + (Uniquity Records)
6. MAL WALDRON
Stardust And Starlight: At The Jazz Showcase (Resonance Records)
7. HADLEY CALIMAN
Iapetus (WeWantSounds)
8. CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT
With Every Breath I Take (Nonesuch)
9. BUSTER WILLIAMS
Pinnacle (Time Traveler)
10. LEDISI
For Dinah (Candid Records)





PSYCH COLLECTOR
By JR Moores

1. THE HEADS
yourprettyplaceisgoingtohell (Rooster)
2. FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND
Satori (Munster)
3. INSTANT
Instant (Sommor)
4. BARDO POND
Volume 6 (Fire)
5. KALEIDOBOLT
Karakuchi (Svart)
6. HERMANO
Clisson, France (Ripple)
7. LOS SAICOS
¡Demolición! The Complete Recordings (Munster)
8. SLY & THE FAMILY DRONE
With Love (S/R)
9. FLOWERS MUST DIE
Tystnad (Rocket)
10. DEAD MEADOW
Foundlings (Heavy Psych Sounds)





THE BEST OF 2026

From The Vaults Top 50



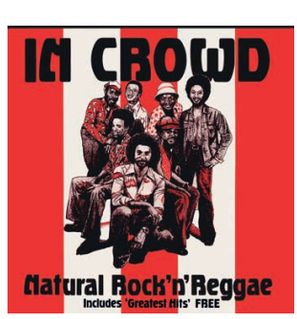
25. **THE WHO** **The Who By Numbers: Super Deluxe Edition** (Universal)
Their introspective classic, now with four extra discs of demos, outtakes, alternate mixes and a Blu-ray.
26. **PAUL WELLER**
Weller At The BBC (Vol. 2) (Parlophone)
Spanning his sets at the Beeb from 2008-2024, this excellent three-disc set worked as a sort of live greatest hits, taking in Jam and Style Council numbers alongside some expertly chosen covers.
27. **THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL** **What A Day For A Daydream: The Complete Recordings 1965-1969** (Cherry Red)
A winning set gathering the jug band's hit records in both mono and stereo mixes alongside a raft of bonus cuts and a pair of film soundtracks.
28. **CARAVAN** **For Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night** (Fontana)
The Canterbury clan's 1973 prog classic as a limited 180g vinyl through Fontana's successful Thousand Club series.
29. **FATBACK** **Hotbox** (Ace)
Thanks to Ace, this gem from funk titans Fatback finally saw the vinyl reissue it deserved.
30. **MANIC STREET PREACHERS**
The Holy Bible Live (Sony)
A ferocious and thrilling stage document of the Manics' masterpiece third album, as captured at its 2014 anniversary shows.
31. **TOM WAITS** **Small Change** (ANTI-)
A vinyl return for this prime early Waits jewel, containing some of his all-time best.
32. **MERCURY REV** **All Is Dream** (Cherry Red)
The psychedelic rockers' 2001 opus got even more out there with this impressive four-disc set.
33. **DONNA SUMMER**
The Casablanca Studio Albums (Demon)
Seven classic albums from Summer's imperial phase available as a bumper CD or vinyl package.
34. **THE SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY BAND**
Good Evening Boys And Girls (Madfish)
But perhaps not as bumper as this – a mammoth 21CD live collection, the definitive word on the Scottish rockers' concert recordings.
35. **MILES DAVIS**
Miles '56: The Prestige Recordings (Craft)
One of many excellent Miles sets this year, released to celebrate his centennial, this collection from a pivotal year just shaded it.
36. **THE BRIDES OF FUNKENSTEIN**
Never Buy Texas From A Cowboy (Ace)
Second and last album from the P-Funk group brought together by George Clinton in what turned out to be a sizzling finale.
37. **FOUR TOPS**
Four Tops Live! Deluxe Edition (Elemental)
A top drawer expanded edition of the Motown quartet's hit live album.
38. **ELASTICA** **Elastica (Deluxe Edition)** (Rough Trade)
One of Britpop's most fully formed debuts sounded just as fresh on this reissue, which added rarities and B-sides.
39. **IAIN MATTHEWS** **Keep On Sailing (The Elektra Years 1972–1974)** (Cherry Red)
Abundant set celebrating folk-rockers' California years, two discs stacked with live cuts and bonus tracks.
40. **JOHN MAYALL & THE BLUESBREAKERS**
Guitar Heroes: The Decca Years 1965–1967 (Fontana)
A vital era for the influential blues rockers was captured on this superlative release, cut at Abbey Road from the original master tapes.
41. **TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS**
Origins 1971-78 (Universal)
Enthralling set that dug into the making of an American hero, rounding out the story of his early work and formative recordings.
42. **HAPPY MONDAYS** **Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches: Super Deluxe Edition** (London)
Shaun Ryder & co's Madchester masterpiece, bolstered with a dizzying array of extras.
43. **RAINBOW**
The Temple Of The King 1975-1976 (Edsel)
The story of Ritchie Blackmore's hard-rock giants as told by a sprawling nine-disc collection.
44. **THE COLOURFIELD**
The Sound Of The Colourfield (Chrysalis)
The complete works of Terry Hall's post-Fun Boy Three project, with live footage and TV shows on an accompanying DVD.
45. **PHIL COLLINS**
Face Value (Full Value) (Rhino)
A 45th anniversary re-release of Collins' monster record lives up to its subtitle, chucking on live material, demos, remixes and more.
46. **SMALL FACES** **Decca Singles 1965-1967** (Nice)
Seven-inch heaven for diehards on this very limited-edition set bringing together their singles.
47. **PIXIES** **Complete B Sides 1988-97** (4AD)
Pixies were so consistently brilliant in their first phase that their B-sides collection pretty much works as an alternate greatest hits. It was remastered and augmented with live cuts for this 25th-anniversary reissue.
48. **MCLUSKY** **My Pain and Sadness Is More Sad and Painful Than Yours** (Beggars Banquet)
Cult Cardiff rockers' debut remastered but still untamed for this 2026 re-release.
49. **MILLIE JACKSON**
A Moment's Pleasure (Ace)
First vinyl reissue for US soul star's lost classic, originally released in 1979.
50. **CREAM** **Wheels Of Fire (UMR)**
The trio's swansong got an audio restoration for this golden set, presented alongside live takes.



REGGAE COLLECTOR

By Mike Atherton

1. **VARIOUS**
Club Reggae '69 (Doctor Bird)
2. **VARIOUS**
Randy's 50th Anniversary Chapter One (Greensleeves)
3. **VARIOUS**
Reggae In The Sun (Doctor Bird)
4. **VARIOUS**
Soul Jamaica (Soul Jazz)
5. **DELROY WILSON**
Lover's Rock (Burning Sounds)
6. **THE IN CROWD**
Natural Rock 'n' Reggae (Doctor Bird)
7. **VARIOUS I**
2 Classic Dubs (Burning Sounds)
8. **VARIOUS**
Lee 'Scratch' Perry Presents Flashing Echo (Doctor Bird)
9. **KEITH HUDSON**
Torch Of Freedom (Greensleeves)
10. **LAUREL AITKEN**
Reggae Serenade (Doctor Bird)





From The Vaults

Reissues, remasters and compilations

B Keepers

A treasury of the post-punk icons' flipsides. *By Simon Price*

Siouxsie & The Banshees

Downside Up

★★★★★

UMR 7508782 (3CD, 5LP)

Downside Up is, *prima facie*, something of a counterintuitive beast. In a world where Siouxsie & The Banshees' actual core canon still remains somewhat underrated and overlooked, a box set of their deeper cuts might seem like a tough sell. To those who know their S&TB, however, it's a diamond mine, and this collection's availability for the first time in two decades on CD (and the first time ever on vinyl) will be devoured by the hardcore. And it deserves to be heard beyond that constituency.

Its strength lies in the fact that, for the majority of the band's career, Banshees B-sides don't appear to have been rejects and remnants from the studio album sessions. This isn't just a slop tray of the tracks that weren't good enough to make it onto *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse* or *Juju*. Instead, the band used the blank vinyl on the flipside of their sevens as a virgin blackboard for improvisation and innovation. (And it's not as if the Banshees were ever an ensemble who, even in their more public-facing moments, were noticeably manacled by musical convention.) "The idea," says Siouxsie in her introduction to this box set, "was always to be loose and experimental and rise to the challenge, a welcome break to record without the normal pressure and restraints of albums and singles." As such, they're snapshots and sketches, in some cases pointing towards where the Banshees drew their inspiration, where they were headed next, or in certain cases, where they never headed at all.

The earliest example of a foreshadowing Banshees B-side, the largely drumless Voices (In The Air), with John McKay's wire-wool-against-sheet-metal guitars and Siouxsie's unsettling, backmasked vocal about "the sea beckoning me" and "the waves lapping with contempt" (inspired by bassist Steven Severin's love of Baudelaire's *Les Paradis Artificiels* and a walk along the North Sea coast at Tynemouth while on tour), tells you far more about the Banshees' imminent future in shaping what we might coyly term the *darker* end of post-punk than does its effervescent smash hit A-side, Hong Kong Garden. A relic from abortive sessions with American producer Bruce Albertine, it was apocryphally played on pub jukeboxes by landlords in Liverpool to clear the bar at closing time.

In terms of fessing up to their influences, 20th Century Boy, flipside of The Staircase (Mystery), recorded only six years after Bolan's original and later re-recorded for covers album *Through The Looking Glass*, tells us the Banshees felt no shame in acknowledging their debt to the theatricality and excess of glam, unlike some of their more spartan, Roundheaded punk peers. It's great, even if Sioux makes the understandably common "Robin Hood" (instead of rock'n'roll) error on the T.Rex classic.

And an example of a curious cul-de-sac is the charming, respectful rendition of French Christmas carol Il Est Ne Le Divin Enfant, recorded and filmed for French TV and released on the reverse of Melt!. Whatever the underlying intention behind recording a religious hymn may have been, the treatment is a million miles from The Lord's Prayer at The 100 Club.

You can dip in pretty much anywhere, at random, to find evidence of their experimentation. The atonal, anti-melodic Congo Conga, for example (from the Arabian Nights single), or the eerie, lopsided instrumental A Sleeping Rain (also from Melt!). And you will also find what is simply some of their very best work. Like the superbly harrowing Eve White/Eve Black, informed by the 1957 split personality drama *The Three Faces Of Eve* and the true story upon which it was based (as was the A-side, Christine). Or the intimate yet intergalactic Tattoo, a fan favourite from the Dear Prudence single featuring Robert Smith on guitar (and therefore one of a handful of tracks which make this collection highly desirable for Cure completists), which feels like an exploration of inner space, surreptitiously voyaging through your veins.

Downside Up, remastered for 2026, hangs together as a body of work precisely because Banshees B-sides were rarely, if ever, throwaway afterthoughts or contractual obligation clunkers. Instead, it offers an intricately detailed map of where they were going at any given moment, where they were coming from, and where they never ventured again.

"Long live the B-sides," Sioux concludes in her intro. Long live, indeed. Rather than a mere grab-bag for the obsessive few, *Downside Up* functions as a superb secret history of one of the finest bands of their, or any, generation.



Q&A

Banshees co-founder and bass player Steven Severin gives us the lowdown on the band's B-sides.

Have you listened to *Downside Up* as an album?
Of course not! Who has the time, or inclination, to listen to five albums in a row? I only listen to Banshees songs if I have to. Otherwise, I hear imperfections and start dwelling on the moments during their initial lifespans that were dreadful. I have to be in a certain mood to approach Banshees songs, just to "enjoy" them. Don't get me wrong, I'm very proud of what we achieved, but there's a lot of baggage.

What was the Banshees' approach to making B-sides?
I grew up with great B-sides. I'm thinking The Beatles' Rain, the Stones' Play With Fire, Bowie's Holy Holy and Roxy Music's Sultanesque. I used to feel swindled if an artist just put a pre-released album track on the B-side. Both Bowie and Roxy did that quite a bit, and it pissed me off. Right from the very beginning, we used the B-side to showcase other ideas, other sides of the band. There was never a set plan. Usually we set aside time, maybe a weekend, to write, record and mix B-sides. Especially with the advent of the 12-inch where you now had space to use two tracks (and later, with CD singles, more and more). The record company had no interest in the B-side so they never tried to "manage" them – not that they could have, anyway – and producers were usually left out of the picture, so we could just get on with the work ourselves.

How were the songs chosen?
We were always really aware of the single being a "package". Sometimes it's blatant, like Pulled To Bits carrying on the playground theme from the other side, Playground Twist. Christine is backed with another song about Christine Sizemore and her 22 "personalities", Eve White/Eve Black. Other times it would just be a mood carried over, like Shooting Sun and Sleepwalking (On The High Wire) on the other side of This Wheel's On Fire. Sometimes, we would have a bit of time to let things ferment. Dear Prudence was worked on in two countries and three studios, so by the time we were mixing, we were pretty confident that we had a "hit", and Tattoo was written to complement the A-side.

Were you always conscious that the songs on B-sides might find themselves in thousands of households, if the single was a hit, and shape people's impressions of you?
Yes, this was particularly true of our very first single, Hong Kong Garden. Putting Voices (On The Air) on the flipside was indicative of what was to follow with *The Scream*.

> "We used the B-side to showcase other ideas, sides of the band"

Are any B-sides missing from *Downside Up*? And are there any that you *wish* had been left out?
I think on this new release we have omitted a couple of live tracks, just for the continuity of sound. Apart from that, they are all there. Once you start cherry-picking, you are on shaky ground. I personally dislike Mechanical Eyes and Whole Price Of Blood, but I just skip them. And I disliked the lyrics for Hang Me High, with their Catholic/bats-in-the-belfry inferences, and stealing a Clint Eastwood title is pretty stupid.

Which B-sides could have been A-sides?
I Promise is very catchy, I think, but I love the rawness of it. Polishing usually rubs off the charm.
As told to Simon Price

Photo: (Siouxsie) Matt Anker

Siouxsie & The Banshees: catch 'em on their flipside on *Downside Up*



PSYCH COLLECTOR

By JR Moores

Just as the Merry Men's Little John was hardly diminutive in stature, **FLOWERS MUST DIE**'s new album is called ***Tystnad*** (★★★★ **Rocket**). That word, in Swedish, means "silence". It opens with Vet Ej, a lively and colourful piece with a propulsive rhythm, sharp and spindly lead guitar and wordless vocals. This one clatters to a close at the five-minute mark which, if anything, is too soon. Don't worry, because the fun's just begun. With prominent violin, Raka Vägen För Damo sits at the organic, wheezing end of krautrock, e.g. Amon Düül II. Nåja is a jazzy Hawkwind-ish concoction. A few tracks later, the two longest jams are saved for last. The title number absorbs the ears with its rasps and squelches, while the final one is grounded in funk swagger. Silence? Flowers Must Die should be reported to Trading Standards for mislabelled goods.

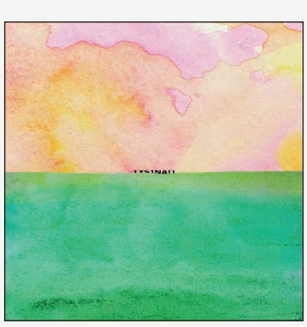
Formed by three brothers in 60s Idaho, **STONE GARDEN** were inspired by the flower power scene and although their sets lifted from the catalogues of Cream, Creedence, The Doors, etc, they were always intent on writing their own material. Good at this they were, too, even if the only purchasable evidence of it at the time was the Stop My Thinking single. The A-side was blues-by-numbers but the other tune was far more feral. Even better is the rerecorded version of Oceans Inside Me that opens ***Stone Garden*** (★★★ **Out-Sider**), thanks to whatever distortion pedals the guitars were being fed through by that point. The heavy fuzz is a little Kinks, a little Stooges, and a little proto-grunge. That's also the case on the choppy It's A Beautiful Day which is among other unearthed delights. There is an issue with consistency because the lighter SF Policeman Blues and The World Is Coming to An End sound like they were created by a different act entirely. The former was recorded under another name and slightly earlier, it turns out.

While there are only four songs on ***Instant*** (★★★★★ **Sommor**) by **INSTANT**, each one is packed with ideas, frequent changes and lord knows how many instruments. French admirers of Pink Floyd, they formed in 1976 with the idea of creating onstage rituals that might help to shed light on alternative realities. Prog fans, indeed. There's a strange story in the liner notes that partly explains why their album did not see the light of day after its recording was completed in 1978. At one point, almost every copy was accidentally destroyed. Thankfully a handful survived, allowing for this overdue pressing. Aside from the calm, almost classical and rather beautiful Le Mausol De Cristal, Instant's songs are busy and frantic affairs with jolting time signatures and regular directional swerves. Highly recommended if you're into the likes of Magma and King Crimson.

Having dusted off their archives with last year's *Rewind To Return: Rarities, Singles And B-Sides*, Swedish stoner kings **DOZER** still had plenty left in the cellar. ***Reflect To Rewind: A Rarities Collection*** (★★★★ **Blues Funeral**) offers another four sides of phat riffs and gravelly vocals. Every review of this lot is obliged to mention Kyuss, which is Dozer's own fault because they sound almost tribute-act indebted. It's more respectable than striving to closely replicate Red Hot Chili Peppers, of course. On this comp, Dozer also dabble in trippy space rock (Exoskeleton Part 1), stoop towards drone metal (Sub Ethna), threaten to deconstruct their formula (Bitchin') and get a bit grungy on Twilight Sleep. There are some nifty covers, including a meaty charge through Rocket From The Tombs/Dead Boys' Sonic Reducer and a distortion drenched take on Devo's Mongoloid.

I'm not the first to write it and I won't be the last. Psych isn't about the instruments used. It's a state of mind, maaaaan. Originally the cassette manipulation project of Matt Cargill, **SLY & THE FAMILY DRONE** soon evolved into a multi-membered collective. And they became one of the most beloved in the UK underground scene, no less. To this day, they won't go anywhere near a guitar. Live drums and electronics are their tools. Accompanied by James Allsop's saxophone, it's arguable that ***With Love*** (★★★★ **SLY**) could slot into Charles Waring's Jazz Collector roundups. There's even a soft and blissful passage of a certain standard on Track 3, but I don't wish to spoil the surprise. Elsewhere, there are Liars-ish beats, bassy hums, white noise, various tinkerings, machine-derived gurgling, human voices buried deep in distortion, reverb and whatever else is going on, and Wolf Eyes-esque soundscapes. *With Love* is perhaps the Drone's most satisfying LP to date. And it belongs right here. Until the launch of *RC*'s inaugural neo-avant-sax-noise column, that is.

Also experimental, in a serener vein, are **CHROME CHASM**. Described by their label as an "acid folk/radical ambient trio", they are Tom Carter (Charalambides), Mlee Marie (Hearts of Animals) and Will Adams (Lower Dens). The latter's pedal steel, Marie's woodwinds and Carter's guitar effects combine to give a lysergic wooziness to ***Interpreter*** (★★★★ **Silver Current**). The Star's 16 minutes radiate soothingly, whereas Gabriella is a little more gurgling and noirish. The atmospheres of the preceding tracks appear to combine into a 20-minute voyage called Animus / Bats. It's as though Humphrey Bogart has been marooned on The Land of the Lotus-Eaters, with a deconstructed alt-country twist.





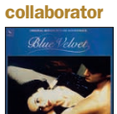
Angelo Badalamenti

Blue Velvet 40th Anniversary Edition

★★★★

Varese Sarabande 00888072781139 (CD, LP)

Enter David Lynch's lifelong collaborator



After 1984's *Dune* bombed, David Lynch emerged two years later with *Blue Velvet*, polarising audiences with its sex, violence and spectacularly twisted Dennis Hooper performance. Many were mesmerised as Lynch unveiled trademark tropes (from small-town secrets to red curtains), future cast regulars and soundtrack created with new musical collaborator Angelo Badalamenti, the master of haunting melodies and atmospheric mood-enhancing. For *Blue Velvet*, Lynch requested a Shostakovich-like Russian feel, beauty, darkness and "a little bit scary". Badalamenti responded accordingly, his stellar compositions joined by the pair co-writing the entrancing Mysteries Of Love, sung by Julee Cruise. Most effectively, the soundtrack added Bobby Vinton's 1963 title song version, Roy Orbison's In Dreams and Ketty Lester's Love Letters. Timelessly extraordinary; the start of a spectacular creative relationship. *Kris Needs*

Gary Bartz

I've Known Rivers and Other Bodies

★★★★★

Craft Recordings 888072 760479 (2LP)

Long-out-of-print live opus gets a much-needed reissue



Having earned his spurs as a sideman for Max Roach, Art Blakey and Miles Davis, jazz saxophonist Bartz formed NTU Troop in the early 70s. Laying down his own funk-adjacent vision of spiritual jazz, they delivered a series of classic albums. Recorded at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1973, this double LP caught them at their majestic best. The opening half, played straight through like an extended jam session, moves from the smoky jazz blues of Nommo – The Majick Song to the expansive jazz experiments of the 11-minute, Coltrane-quoting Jujuman before Don't Fight That Feeling rides in on the heaviest of funk grooves. The big draw here is the title track. With Bartz's delicate voice delivering a setting of Langston Hughes' poem *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* over deep bass grooves and rolling piano, it's one of spiritual jazz's catchiest and most affecting tunes. *Paul Bowler*

Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers

Blue Moon Over Paris: ORTF Recordings 1963-1968

★★★★

Elemental Music 5990565 (CD, 2LP)

A hard bop masterclass



powerhouse drummer Art Blakey led various line-ups of the ever-changing Jazz Messengers for almost 35 years. Over 150 musicians graduated from Blakey's so-called "Hard Bop Academy", including the legendary Wayne Shorter and Freddie Hubbard, who star in the 1963 portion of this sumptuous package presenting previously unreleased live performances recorded in Paris by two different incarnations of The Messengers. In sharp contrast, the 1968 segment spotlights an unfamiliar but equally effective lineup, featuring the lesser-known trumpeter Bill Hardman and tenor saxophonist Billy Harper. Highlights include a pulsating Caravan, explosive Buhaina's Delight and a wild, rocket-fuelled Moanin', driven by Blakey's pulsating polyrhythms. The vinyl version is an *RSD* Black Friday exclusive. *Charles Waring*

Black Cat Bones

Barbed Wire Sandwich

★★★

Fontana 01999580423 (LP)

Blues backers' 1970 effort



Formed in 1966 by blues brothers Derek and Stuart Brooks, Black Cat Bones backed US bluesmen and undertook gruelling tours during the 60s' blues boom. Free's Paul Kossoff and Simon Kirke were band members – replaced by guitarist Rod Price and drummer Phil Lenoir. This 1970 album included blues covers (Memphis Minnie, Arthur Crudup, Peppermint Harris, Nina Simone) – along with self-penned material. The band were unhappy with the production and its release was delayed. By then, three group members had left. Decca released it on their prog rock Deram Nova label. It tanked. Unfairly, too – it's a good set from a solid British blues band. They turned themselves into a hard rock band (Leaf Hound)

and released an album on Telefunken in Germany – it also sank. This reissue has new and informative notes, photos and graphics. *Tony Burke*

BMX Bandits
15 Big Ones
★★★★
Tapete Records TR 625 (CD, LP)
Revisiting the little Scottish supergroup that could



Founded in Bellshill in 1985 by Duglas T Stewart, Norman Blake and Sean Dickson, the latter pair later of Teenage Fanclub and Soup Dragons, Stewart has indefatigably continued to record as BMX Bandits with shifting line-ups since the others' departure, like an eccentric indie Mark E Smith. This 15-track (plus an extra limited-edition 12") 40th anniversary comp takes us on a whistlestop career tour, from schoolboy-ish early songs E102, Disco Girl and Come Clean, to Little Hands, Gettin' Dirty and the mighty Serious Drugs from the three-album mid-90s Creation deal, to recent treats like Stewart's partner and ex-bandmate Chloe Philp's Love Me 'Til My Heart Stops, Dickson's incongruous, New Order-like rework of Razorblades & Honey and the joyful Hop Skip Jump (For Your Love). The omission of Kylie's Got A Crush On Us aside, it's a pure hit of romantic DIY jangle-pop. *David Pollock*

Boards Of Canada
Hi Scores
★★★★
Warp WARPLP 367 (CD, LP)
Enigmatic electronic pioneers' EP still beguiles



Hot on the heels of *Inferno*, the Scottish brothers' first widespread release gets a 30th-anniversary reissue. Heard in retrospect, the six-track EP maintains its mystique even if its ideas – mellifluous melds of scattered breakbeats and evocative synth melodies – later became familiar to Boards-heads. The title track's contrapuntal unease sets the blueprint, all crunchy beats and detuned synth melodies, though the impeccably queasy drop at three minutes and 25 seconds still captivates. Nlogax resembles memories of a half-forgotten funk song reassembled in incremental layers of beats, synth motifs and voice samples, until it becomes something new; June 9th's curious call-and-response synth melody contrasts keenly with crunchy beats. The almost Portishead-ish Turquoise Hexagon Sun twinkles dreamily, though the standout remains Everything You Do Is A Balloon, seven minutes of ephemeral beauty that radiates a sense of blissful innocence in passing. *Kevin Harley*

Bon Iver
22, A Million
★★★★
*Jagjaguwar JAG 300 (CD, LP_*
Justin Vernon's experimental alt-folk gem



Only kept from No 1 by Craig David in 2016, Bon Iver's third album represents their commercial peak. It also cemented a transformation from backwoods folk to electronic mavericks, Aphex-style impenetrable song titles and all. In truth, while ringleader Justin Vernon plays with Autotune throughout, the experimental reputation is overplayed. After the skittish percussion on 10 d E A T h b R E a s t (yes, I *will* use the Recommended Strong Password, thanks), the second half settles into more traditional songcraft, down to the hymnal organ underpinning Vernon's unadorned keening vocals and 29 #Strafford APTS' bouncing acoustic riff. It makes for a satisfying, unpredictable merging of old and new, though it's disappointing that only the artwork is expanded for its 10th anniversary edition. *John Earls*

Billy Bragg
Brewing Up With Billy Bragg
★★★★★
Cooking Vinyl COOKLP 107 (LP)
Talking With The Taxman About Poetry
★★★★
Cooking Vinyl COOKLP 108 (LP)
Workers Playtime
★★★★
Cooking Vinyl COOKLP 109 (LP)
Big-nosed boy from Barking shows big heart too



Arriving amid the high 80s hoopla, it's hard to overstate how vital Billy Bragg felt as a corrective: a no-frills agit-pop troubadour, armed only with the abrasive chug of a Les Paul copy. By second album *Brewing Up With Billy Bragg* (1984), however, he'd already moved on: organ and trumpet crept in, and love(lorn) songs outnumber political ones, St Swithin's Day being the outstanding pick. *Talking With The Taxman About Poetry* (1986), featuring cameos from Kirsty MacColl and Johnny Marr, had a similar balance, and tracks like Levi Stubbs' Tears packed phenomenal emotional heft. By *Workers Playtime* (1988), an even fuller sound emerged, along with a certain sense of despair. All three, remastered on vinyl, trace the development of a songwriter of uncommon human empathy as well as political insight. *Simon Price*

Isobel Campbell & Mark Lanegan
Sunday At Devil Dirt
★★★
Cooking Vinyl COOK 778 (CD, LP)
Hawk
★★★★
Cooking Vinyl COOK 777 (CD, LP)
Unlikely duo's twinned trails revisited



After *Ballad Of The Broken Seas*, Isobell Campbell and Mark Lanegan consolidated their union on 2008's *Sunday At Devil Dirt*, adding Tom Waits-ian clatters and Feeling Good-ish jazz-blues vibes to their honey'n'gravel pitch. If the results still sounded hesitant, more cosplay than commitment, 2010's *Hawk* brought a richer dynamism to the table. A note of tension emerges from poised opener We Die & See Beauty Reign, before Lanegan unleashes the full cowboy swagger on You Won't Let Me Down Again. Get Behind Me loosens the straps for a raucous hoedown, while Campbell's wispy delivery and Lanegan's tender rumble couple beautifully on snow-soft Christmas ditty Time Of The Season. Willy Mason is no real substitute for Lanegan on two songs, but the swinging Eyes Of Green and gospel-lifted closer Lately provide fine send-offs to the main double act's diverting run. *Kevin Harley*

Bobby Charles
The Bobby Charles Story
★★★★
Last Music Co LMCD264 (CD)
Alligator man's full output



Charles was 14 when he wrote See You Later, Alligator; this 7CD, 122-track album-sized book set features his Chess recording alongside Bill Haley's rendition. There's Fats Domino's chartbusting version of his Walking To New Orleans but the rest is the superlative, soulful Louisiana swamp pop singer/songwriter. Hip in the 70s, his debut album featured Rick Danko and other Band mates, 1994's *Wish You Were Here Right Now* had Willie Nelson, Neil Young, Fats Domino and guitarist Sonny Landreth while 2004's *Last Train To Memphis* involved harmonica king Delbert McClinton and country soul legends Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham. Plenty more names here and classic songs, too, with track-by-track annotation, plus a US documentary DVD. Truly brilliant. *Nick Dalton*

Don Cherry
Sunrise – Live In Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1977
★★★★
WeWantSounds WWSLP 124 (CD, 2LP)
Otherworldly improv in the Midwest



Fresh from collaborating on the ECM album, *Grazing Dreams*, trumpeter Cherry and multi-instrumentalist Collin Walcott, a member of the jazz group Oregon, played their only concert together at Ypsilanti's Pease Auditorium. Bootlegged for years and now released for the first time, this sublimely trippy affair contains four mesmerising sound collages. Long known for his interest in "world" music, Cherry, who switches between trumpet, flute and the Doussn'Gouni, an African stringed instrument, has a kindred spirit in the virtuosic Walcott, who alternates between percussion and sitar. Singer Leon Thomas is a welcome addition, his improvised yodelling adding an otherworldly dimension. *Charles Waring*

Cluster & Eno
Cluster & Eno (50th Anniversary Edition)
★★★★
Bureau B BB 029 (CD, LP)
Experimentalist dynamos team up



Sometimes it takes years for things to come together, like streams feeding into one big river: and so it is with this album, now enjoying 50 years of brilliance. Cluster (formerly known as Kluster, and reduced to a duo of Moebius and Roedelius) had been ploughing their own insistently minimal furrow before they met Brian Eno, who had himself been busy leaving Roxy Music and inventing ambient.

The two parties brought with them different ways of composing that came together perfectly on this album (and its same-time-recorded successor, *After The Heat*). From the swaying, bird-song filled Schone Hande to Fur Luise's slow piano fade, this is an album that rebels against labelling, and is what it is. Which is, frankly, brilliant. *David Quantick*

Coil
Gold Is The Metal (With The Broadest Shoulders)
★★★
Mute/Threshold House COIL 3 (CD, LP)
New light shed upon industrial pioneers' early work



The first of four remastered early Coil releases via Mute and the band's Threshold House label, 1987's third album *Gold Is The Metal (With The Broadest Shoulders)* isn't as queasily caked in dark sexuality as Peter "Sleazy" Christopherson's old group, Throbbing Gristle. Yet core members Christopherson, John Balance and Stephen Thrower, the only survivor, still revelled in making sinister, oppressive, starkly beautiful machine music, which here reflected the AIDS crisis and the resulting homophobia engulfing the queer community at the time. The record occasionally loses focus and momentum, but there are some striking moments, like the creepy, suggestive hi-NRG of The Broken Wheel, the proto-chillwave of Cardinal Points and the industrial-orchestral experimentation pervading Stravinsky adaptation, The Last Rites Of Spring, the diptych … Of Free Enterprise and Aqua Regalia, and the finale The First Five Minutes After Violent Death. *David Pollock*

Miles Davis & John Coltrane
The Complete Columbia Recordings 1955-1961
★★★★
Legacy 19958456352/41 (6CD/9LP)
Essential jazz history



There has been no better, more exciting, double act in jazz than Miles Davis and John Coltrane, whose unique approaches to their horn playing resulted in a startling dramatic contrast. Miles' forlorn trumpet sound – spare and minimalistic, yet supremely lyrical – was the antithesis of Trane's volcanic saxophone, spewing out notes in searing torrents. Their thrilling interplay makes this music in this Grammy-winning box set, reissued to mark Miles and Trane's centenaries, so fascinating. From the pent-up energy of Milestones and the cool swagger of So What to the delicate Andalusian aromas of Flamenco Sketches, Miles and Trane's musical conversations never disappoint. Although the packaging isn't a patch on the sturdy original 2000 version, it doesn't detract from the amazing music. Jazz heaven. *Charles Waring*

METAL COLLECTOR

By Joel McIver

In my last column I listed the albums in order of heaviness, ie from cheerful spandex whimsy to brain-frying gargled-custard terror, so this time let's go in the opposite direction. The band most competently shattering the glassware at McIver HQ this month is the rather traumatising Aussie act **THE BERZERKER**, whose ***The Reawakening*** (★★★ **Apocalyptic Witchcraft**) is a monstrously violent slice of enraged, semi-industrial death metal, underpinned by the massive, distorted kickdrums that made their stuff so unnerving in the early Noughties. This 'lost' album, The Berzerker's fifth, was first released in 2008 but was soon withdrawn from sale, so its reappearance on a limited range of multicoloured vinyl is welcome, in a thoroughly twisted way.

Revisit the catalogue of **IMMORTAL** via their ***Complete Discography 1992-2023*** box set (★★★★ **Nuclear Blast**) if you're in the mood for some ice-cold, hate-filled Norwegian black metal. With 11 LPs – including two doubles – in gatefold sleeves, there's a lot of product to enjoy here, ranging from 1992's *Diabolical Fullmoon Mysticism* to *War Against All* from 31 years later. Less notorious than their countrymen Mayhem and less symphonically-inclined than Emperor, Immortal occupy a nostalgic position in black metal lore because of their high-fantasy lyrical approach and the odd aesthetic misfire (look up the video for Call Of The Wintermoon and you'll see what I mean). Yes, some of the stuff is a bit cheesy, but if cheesy music is not for you, I think you're reading the wrong column.

Two self-released albums, **A DISTORTED UTOPIA**'s **An Heir To All The Ills Of Flesh** (★★★) and **NOCTULE**'s ***Extinguish Thy Flame*** (★★★) will supply you with some pretty tasty technical death metal and melodic black metal respectively. The first comes from the multi-instrumentalist Richard Allsopp of the band Monachopsis and is an impressive suite of complex, highly arranged songs packed with the expected guttural roars and twisty riffs, but there's plenty of space to breathe too. The latter is a concept album about the *Elden Ring* video game and is another solo work, this time from Serena Cherry, formerly of Svalbard: it's more atmospheric than the Allsopp album, and layers expert piano and keyboards atop the extreme metal template. The intensity and complexity of both albums are pretty mind-blowing, bearing in mind they're the work of solo musicians. Kids these days, et cetera...





POLYPHIA's fifth album ***Be Not Afraid*** (★★★ **Rise Records**) is, like the acclaimed Texan quartet's previous work, a slick combination of metalcore riffs and trap beats: it's probably best to call it prog-metal and leave it at that. The stuff is very clean, and also very produced, so it won't suit headbangers looking for a rawer vibe. Everyone else will enjoy the dancefloor vibes and giant bass presence: like it or not, this is where metal is going. It's available on eight (count 'em) flavours of coloured vinyl.

Al Jourgensen has always been an acquired taste, but you can't fault his industrial-metal band **MINISTRY**'s commitment to making obnoxious music that is unafraid of shooting at the bigger targets. Now 67, he's winding his 45-year-old project up with his 18th and final studio album, ***Hate To Go (Take Out Or Delivery)*** (★★★ **Cleopatra**), that is as fiery as anything he's ever done. The hardcore punk ethos and tempo of songs such as Clown Car and the abrasive grinding edges of We Hate tell you everything you need to know, and the presence of former Tool bassist Paul D'Amour and his predecessor Paul Barker add gravitas. I still think the best thing "Mad Dog" Jourgensen ever did was the Lard project with Jello Biafra of Dead Kennedys, but this will do fine.

There is, and always will be, a profound nostalgia among metalheads for the period approximating 1976 to 1984, when heavy metal was basically about motorbikes, warfare and the devil and the music hadn't yet split into loads of subgenres. Hence the arrival of the supergroup **ABSOLUTE POWER** and their debut album ***Needs Must When The Devil Drives*** (★★★ **Time To Kill Records**), on which the tempos are sedate and the vocals melodic, a far cry from the day-job band of the prime mover Shane Embury of Napalm Death. The influences are Dio, Saxon and Manowar, with a bit of Twisted Sister here and there, and it's masterfully done and hellishly catchy.

Talking of nostalgia, the latest **UFO** reissue, ***Mechanix: Deluxe Edition*** (★★★ **Chrysalis**) features expert notes from *RC*'s Michael Hann and is a feast for the vintage metal collector, with the original 1982 LP given a slick remaster. It's accompanied by a live show recorded at the "Hammy O" on 28 January '82, itself restored by producer Brian Kehew. New interviews with Phil Mogg, Andy Parker and Neil Carter add value, on which note the 3LP package comes in at under £40 if you shop around.

Finally, there is the dreaded Christian metal act **STRYPER** and their mostly harmless 18th studio album ***Throne Of Thorns*** (★★ **Frontiers Music**). Their brand of pious riffage isn't completely without merit, with the basic tone a kind of winsome, sub-Maiden chug, but it's difficult to take any of it seriously given the state of the world in 2026. I suppose you have to give them credit for sticking to their spiritual guns for the last 40 years, so to speak, and anyway, it's an anything-goes period in metal history. None other than **WILLIAM SHATNER** has a heavy metal covers album out next year, a concept that defies imagination but which we'll definitely review here in due course. Stay metal now.

De La Soul
Stakes Is High: 30th Anniversary Edition
★★★★
AOI Records/Chrysalis RMM 10351 (2CD, 4LP)

D.A.I.S.Y. Age pioneers defend hip-hop's roots



Originally released in the summer of 1996, *Stakes Is High* was a state-of-the-hip-hop-nation address from the Long Island trio that had, for the best part of a decade, led the way for the resolutely thoughtful Native Tongues movement. With "swoll'-head rappers with they sickenin' raps" in their sights, De La Soul issued an unremitting broadside against gangsta rap culture, firing off pitch-perfect pastiches of Puff Daddy's Bad Boy output (Baby Baby Baby Baby Ooh Baby) and challenging pretenders to prove their worth on the mic, rather than in the bling they flashed (Supa Emcees). As well as trading bars with like-minded up-and-comers Common and Mos Def (now Yasiin Bey), Posdnuos and Trugoy The Dove turned in some of their most dextrous rhymes to date, while Maseo manned the boards as the group largely took on their own production for the first time. Moving away from Prince Paul, who'd helmed *3 Feet High And Rising*, resulted in a starker sound, but an instrumental version of the album, included among this reissue's bonus material, shows that De La were as dexterous as ever with their samples. *Stakes Is High* may not have been the most headline-grabbing album in a year that also saw the release of 2Pac's *All Eyez On Me* and Nas's *It Was Written*, but it's one of the most enduring, challenging us to assess our values in a way that still resonates.
Jason Draper

EMF
Schubert Dip
★★★★
Cherry Red CRCD 4 BOX 2020 (4CD, 2LP)

35th anniversary edition of 90s grebo classic



The explosive techno-pop hit Unbelievable still dominates EMF's legacy, even though the Gloucestershire-formed band continues to tour and release new music. But across four CDs boasting a slew of remixes, live tracks and B-sides (including 19 previously unreleased songs), this thorough deluxe edition of the band's 1991 debut emphasises their expansive musical vision. On the album itself, the post-baggy comedown When You're Mine and rave-up Children show their edgier side, while a revelatory full disc of 1990 demos illuminates the strength of their songwriting. And if you can't get enough of Unbelievable, the second disc is nearly entirely devoted to remixes of the hit single; the Hip-Hop Mix and Funk Mix are particularly enjoyable.
Annie Zaleski

The Flaming Lips
At War With The Mystics
★★★★
Rhino/Warner 0603497802791 (6CD, 6LP)

Timely two-decades-old message from freaktastic Oklahomo Sapiens



Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots established The Flaming Lips as a furry-suited, Zorb-walking huge festival draw in 2002. Heralded by the self-explanatory positivity of lead single and opening track The Yeah Yeah Yeah Song (With All Your Power), its 2006 successor *At War With The Mystics* continued *Yoshimi...*'s themes of enlightenment and love taking on the forces of murderous irrationalism, and existential explorations on the place of a human in a hostile universe. Throughout, the benign and wizardly Wayne Coyne imbues the Lips' uplifting cosmic psych-pop with a sense of optimism and belief. Coming back around 20 years later, with multiple discs of often ear-boggling extras (check out the incongruously gorgeous cover of Bohemian Rhapsody, to pick but one), its overall message feels even more necessary than it did back then. *Simon Price*

Michael Garrick
Voyages – The Argo Studio Albums Vol. I
★★★★★
Fontana 5501163 (4LP)

Garrick's Argo-issued jazz classics remastered



Pianist and composer Michael Garrick was at the heart of many of the great British jazz

Going Global

Reissued *London Calling*-heavy US radio promo captures Strummer and co's creative peak. *By Kris Needs*




The Clash: at their world-beating best on this punchy set

The Clash

The World According To The Clash

★★★★★

Sony 19658775731 (CD, LP)

Originally sent to radio stations to further progress The Clash's ongoing breakthrough in the US, this 11-track set comes repurposed as an ultimate compilation of the post-punk era's most exciting rock'n'roll band. Yep, rock'n'roll. Although the band's punk grounding and attitude remained alive and kicking, as 1978's *Give 'Em Enough Rope* showed, Strummer's initial year zero manifesto had gone out the window as classic musical styles were grabbed, explored and amped up for modern times.

Strummer and Mick Jones going to the US that August to finish the album opened the gate to further new directions glimpsed by visiting the country that birthed rock'n'roll and so many icons, igniting the creative flame that burned so brightly from *London Calling* to *Combat Rock*. Holed up at San Francisco's Automat studio, Joe and Mick loved its jukebox stuffed with soul evergreens and rock'n'roll classics, including Bobby Fuller Four's 1965 hit I Fought The Law. Transformed into *The Cost Of Living* EP's supercharged punk anthem, the track kickstarted side two of the original promo now remastered with new Clash-created cover.

Represented by seven tracks, *London Calling* started life at isolated Vanilla Studios in Pimlico, daily football games bringing the band together to create their masterpiece. "I think we really found ourselves at that time and it was a lot to do with the football," Jones told me. "It made us play together as one." Further influenced by touring the US for the first time and armed with killer songs, The Clash relocated to Islington's Wessex Studios where legendary producer Guy Stevens insisted sessions commence with three days of cover versions. Inciting the band with the chair-hurling chaos he'd used on Mott The Hoople, their scorching version of Vince Taylor's Brand New Cadillac made the album.

One crucial element in *London Calling*'s immaculate conception was Topper Headon's wildly diverse pre-Clash drumming background, his deft precision in the engine room enabling the panoramic musical styles gripping the band. "I played in jazz bands, Royal Marines brass bands and rock bands, GI bases and chicken-in-a-basket places," explained Headon. "I do think I allowed them to play other styles of music like funk and jazz, but it was always just a question of finding the right beat for the right track."

Topper's grooves gave Strummer, Jones and Simonon the foundations on which to build the glorious skyline that towered over post-punk in 1979, including the claustrophobic urban terror of Simonon's Guns Of Brixton that evolved from a hammering high bassline at rehearsals. Anchored by Headon's metallic piledriving, Jones' instrumental For Fuck's Sake mushroomed into Clampdown aboard the album's heaviest duty riffs, Strummer railing against assembly-line drudgery (further stoked by Stevens pouring beer into the studio TV then upending it).

Taking its title from BBC World Service reports Strummer heard visiting his diplomat dad overseas, lyrics inspired by 1979's Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown, the rivetingly evocative title track, mixed at Joe's request to sound like the foggy river, could be seen as The Clash's apocalyptic answer to The Kinks' Waterloo Sunset, sailing multi-guitar pyramids Jones had developed into a fine art. Lost In The Supermarket was written by Strummer and given to Jones to sing after a confused 5AM shopping experience, his lyrics, invoking loneliness and a disaffected childhood, given plaintive edge by Mick's vulnerable vocal and sensitive backing including album keyboardist Mickey Gallagher; possibly the pinnacle of the Strummer-Jones songwriting partnership along with quintessentially glorious Spanish Bombs, Joe echoing protest folk roots juxtaposing Costa Brava hotel bombings with Spain's tourist industry. Learned and recorded by the band in two days, Jones' contagious last minute funk rocker Train In Vain became the unlisted final track since art-work had already gone to the printers.

Headon cites the camaraderie in the band as crucial to *London Calling*'s success. "There was a chemistry between the four of us that became the album's energy," he said. "*London Calling* was our pinnacle, without any doubt. Every track was dynamite. That was the time we were at our peak, because everyone loved being together."

Divisions started setting in during sessions for 1980's sprawling *Sandinista!* triple album at NY's Electric Lady: Jones de facto producer, band having to write in the studio. With Simonon away filming, flown-in Blockheads Mickey Gallagher and bassist Norman Watt-Roy locked with Headon on The Magnificent Seven, born from Strummer and Jones being smitten by the hip hop breaking out all over the city. Inspired by the Sugarhill Gang's landmark Rappers Delight, Strummer introduced his own spin on rapping with lines like "Italian mobster shoots a lobster". Released in April 1981, The Magnificent Seven became The Clash's first 12" single, a hit in NY's hip clubs.

It's the ultimate collection of the post-punk era's most exciting rock'n'roll band

"It was really funny, because we were like punk rockers!" laughed Jones. "You couldn't have written it or contrived it. I guess we did the first proper 12" dance mixes, too, but it wasn't planned that way, it just happened. We were just sort of knocking out some numbers. I think The Clash's involvement in the start of that whole thing was by luck, really, if anything. We were in the right place at the right time."

Amid the experimentation that initially gripped 1982's *Combat Rock*, Jones' block-rocking Should I Stay Or Should I Go ("it's not about anyone really"), would give The Clash their first (posthumous) No 1 in 1991 on the back of a Levi's ad. *The World...* starts with The Clash's previous only UK Top 10 hit, Rock The Casbah, ironically released a month after its composer Topper Headon was sacked over his heroin addiction in May 1982. "I had the idea one afternoon at Electric Lady," he recalls. "No one was there so I thought, 'I've got an idea' and put down the drums, piano, bassline and percussion one by one. Then Joe came in and had the words. Not a bad afternoon's work."

Following Mick Jones' ejection from the band he formed in September 1983, The Clash's glory days were over, this sparkling collection now standing as exhilarating evidence of that time when punk collided with rock'n'roll's original spirit then sprouted wings.

Photo: Pennie Smith

experiments of the 1960s and 70s, whether as part of the legendary Don Rendell–Ian Carr quintet or leading his own ensembles. This box set collects four of his most daring recordings as leader, reissued on vinyl for the first time.

Experiments abound across the four records. 1970's *The Heart of A Lotus* found the group experimenting variously with Eastern-tinged modal grooves or harpsichords plucked from the Middle Ages. 1971's quasi-religious jazz cantata *Mr. Smith's Apocalypse,* featuring school choirs and poetry readings, counts as one of the era's more outré jazz experiments. By comparison. *Home Stretch Blues* (1972) and *Troppo* (1974) are more straight-ahead affairs though their melding of modal and spiritual jazz styles are never less than superbly conceived and delivered. Garrick's secret weapon of the period was singer Norma Winstone, whose largely wordless vocals operate effectively as another instrument throughout. Four essential recordings.
Paul Bowler

Gentle Giant

Front Row Center (U.S. Dates 1975-1980)

★★★★

Madfish SMABX 1335 (8CD)

Superb selection from the prog equivalent of the Masonic handshake

Front Row Center... is an updated, augmented CD



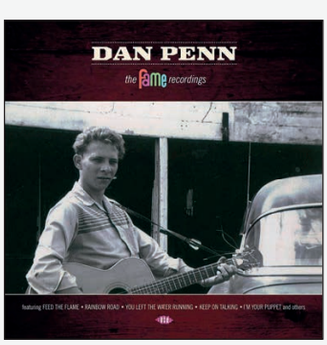
version of the 2022 vinyl box that followed in the wake of the ground-breaking *Unburied Treasure* set. The eight discs capture Gentle Giant as the honed road-seasoned band who effectively abandoned Britain after 1976, finding their most appreciative audiences in the US. The group's eccentricity was embraced by those who admired their ability to switch from hard rock to madrigal and back again with ever-exhilarating force. The hardcore will be familiar with most of these recordings, yet it's not often an eight CD set can be recommended for curious outsiders. Emphatically, this one can. The New York State University show from November 1977 has never previously released in any format and never even bootlegged; this alone is, as they say, worth the price of admission.
Daryl Easlea

SOUL COLLECTOR

By Lois Wilson

JIMETTA ROSE is a Los Angeles singer, musician and producer who is best known for her high-profile collaborations with Erykah Badu and Georgia Anne Muldrow. She also makes innovative solo recordings that bridge neo soul, hip-hop, jazz and funk with The Voices Of Creation, her community-based choir that she formed via social media. ***MettaSun*** (★★★★ **K7**) is her follow-up to 2024's *Things Are Getting Better* and it was put down in just four days with producer Henry D'Ambrosio at The Recording Club in Santa Monica. A tribute to Sun Ra and his Arkestra's vocalist, violinist, dancer June Tyson, it comprises eight Sun Ra reimaginings as astral travelling soul, stylistically spanning Nuclear War to Sleeping Beauty, the first an angry protest, the second a more gentle number, seeking communion with the divine.

The Melbourne based vocalist **ELLA THOMPSON** cites Australian soul singer Renee Geyer as a chief influence and Geyer acted as Thompson's vocal tutor for a while. But on ***Triumph And Sadness*** (★★★★ **Mr Bongo**), her debut album, she sounds like she's straight out of Brooklyn's Daptone stable, perhaps because the album is mixed by the Daptone affiliated engineer Wayne Gordon but more likely because she and her band, who are moonlighting from jazz funkers Surprise Chef, deliver vintage soul with a modern twist, Thompson's enticing falsetto over dancefloor angled rhythms, on the exquisite Promise To Keep, the album's highpoint.



DAN PENN's ***The Fame Recordings*** (★★★★ **Ace**) was first issued in 2012 and comprises his impressive demos from 1963 to 1965 recorded during late night sessions while he was a staff writer at Rick Hall's Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals. While he released a steady stream of singles and later in 1973, the *Nobody's Fool* album, for the most part he toiled behind the scenes. But he could really sing and his demos not only provided the song's performers with a template to follow but the studio with a unique southern soul sound to build upon - see his versions of The Puppet, aka I'm Your Puppet, and You Left The Water Running.

His version of Keep On Talking, meanwhile, is a passionate call to arms written with Spooner Oldham, that would surely have been a hit if it was released as a single. Equally compelling is Come Into My Heart. With its uncharacteristic mix of early Marvin Gaye and Phil Spector, it's unique in the Fame catalogue.

Singer, harmonica player and occasional guitarist **SYL JOHNSON** first made his name at Chicago's Twilight with 1967's Different Strokes and 1969's Is It Because I'm Black on Twinight. Then at Hi Records in Memphis from 1971, he worked with producer Willie Mitchell and put out records that, although overshadowed by label mate Al Green's, were still of a remarkably high standard, in particular his cover of the aforesaid Green's Take Me To The River, which gave him a US R&B Top 10 hit.

While the 80s were quieter, he made a significant comeback in 1994 with *Back In The Game* on Delmark. 1999's *Talkin' Bout Chicago* (★★★ **Denmark**), his second for the label, was recorded in Chicago's Riverside Studio with a crack band featuring Hi Records' pianist/organist Charles Hodges, bassist Orlando Wright and drummer Wayne Stewart with a horn section featuring Willie Henderson and Gene Barge. Tracks are a collision of Chicago and Memphis styles with bluesy R&B numbers such as Woo-Wee! and All Night Long the latter originally by Magic Sam and greasy Memphis soul with I'm Back Into You and Cheryl.

LA-born, Dallas-raised Willie Hutch debuted in 1964 on the Soul City label with Love Has Put Me Down, then at RCA he put out 1969's *Soul Portrait* and 1970's *Seasons For Love* albums before going to Motown where he wrote classic blaxploitation scores *The Mack* in 1973 and *Foxy Brown* in '74 and also worked with the Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson. For the former, he wrote the lyrics to their 1970 US No 1 single I'll Be There. It's Gabrielle's moving 2021 cover of the song that appears on the various artists comp ***Keep The Fire Burning – The Willie Hutch Songbook*** (★★★★ **Kent**), though. Jackson 5 are here instead with the 1972 unissued at the time Can't Get Ready For Losing You while other highs are provided by The Sisters Love's Mr Fix-It Man from the same year and several from his post Motown career including the 1982 title track by Gwen McCrae and Ben E King's Street Tough from the previous year.

Texas's **CAMILLE HOWARD** was an R&B singer and boogie-woogie pianist equally adept at thumping instrumentals, rockers and ballads. She honed her craft with Roy Milton's Solid Senders in the 40s before becoming a solo act in the mid-40s and 50s. ***Thrill Me – Boogie Woogie, Ballads & Blues 1945-52*** (★★★ **Acrobat**) is a greatest hits and rarities 54-track, 2CD set that includes Milton's Boogie, RM Blues, Thrill Me and True Blues with Roy Milton, along with such solo recordings as 1948's excellently titled X-Temperaneous Boogie, the same year's You Don't Love Me, 1949's Fiesta In Old Mexico and 1951's Money Blues (If You Ain't Got No Money, I Ain't Got No Use For You).

Also out is **TIMI YURO**'s ***The Complete Singles & Albums 1961-62*** (★★★★ **Acrobat**) which brings together her six singles on Liberty during the time period bookended by June '61's debut 45 Hurt and November '62's The Love Of A Boy and including What's A Matter, Baby (Is It Hurting You)" from June '62 plus the 1961 album *Hurt!!!!!!!*.

ROSE ROYCE's ***The Definite Collection*** (★★★ **Robinsongs**) is a 3CD set with tracks taken from MCA, Warner Brothers and Epic Records and includes the hits Car Wash, Love Don't Live Here Anymore and Wishing On A Star, along with the 12-minute version of RR Express. It also comes with detailed notes from *RC*'s own Charles Waring.

Stan Getz

The Sound In San Francisco: Live At Keystone Korner

★★★★

Resonance HLP 90 90 (2CD, 3LP)

"The Sound" meets "The Myth"



"The Sound" was Getz's nickname, bestowed on him for his silky tenor saxophone tone, which became synonymous with the West Coast "cool" sound in the 50s. In the 60s, Getz helped popularize Brazilian bossa nova, famously collaborating with the enigmatic João Gilberto (dubbed "O Mito", or "The Myth"), who shines as the saxophonist's co-star on this stunning 13-song collection of live performances recorded in 1976. Gilberto's gentle, whisper-like voice and soft but rhythmic acoustic guitar contrast with Getz's lithe sax melodies, while pianist Joanne Brackeen, bassist Clint Houston, and drummer Billy Hart support them sympathetically, their understated backdrop a perfect platform for the two main stars' intimate musical dialogue. Listen out for Aguas De Marco and Chega de Saudade, both sublime examples of bossa-inflected jazz. *Charles Waring*

Hanoi Rocks

The Complete Collection 1981-1984

★★★★

BMG 964263950 (6CD, 6LP)

Comprehensive overview of the Finnish legends



Looking back now, it's hard to objectively assess the influence of Hanoi Rocks as the legend has largely overwritten the reality. They were never commercially successful as such, but the larger-than-life, boundary-defying Finns certainly had a massive cult following and were, apparently, the first Finnish act to chart in the UK. This six-album set features their original 80s run of albums, from 1981's *Bangkok Shakes…* to *Two Steps From The Move*, which followed three years later. Second album *Oriental Beat* is represented here by the 2022 "re(al)mix" and a sixth CD or LP rounds up demos, unreleased oddities and Underwater World and Boulevard Of Broken Dreams from their August 1984 BBC *Friday Rock Show* session. Comprehensive and inviting, this is the perfect way to reappraise their legacy. *John Tucker*

Nick Heyward

The Essential Nick Heyward

★★★★

Demon Music Group DEMREC 1391 (2CD, LP)

Sifting through his favourite shirts



Currently treading the boards fronting a reactivated Haircut 100, and with an autobiography fresh on bookshelves, Heyward's musical back pages are brought together in one tidy collection. Kicking off with the Haircuts' 80s hits plus comeback bangers The Unloving Plum and Dynamite, the solo Nick shines on the remainder of the set. The slick funk-like Take That Situation sounds like a leftover from the band days, but there's a deeper, more mature mind at work on the atmospheric Whistle Down The Wind and the pop-soul finger-snapper Goodbye Yesterday. Pick of the bunch, perhaps, is 1997's epic ballad The Man You Used To Be, a near seven-minute showstopper that feels like a lachrymose ode to heartache Harry Nilsson left unattended. *Terry Staunton*

Richard Groove Holmes

Six Million Dollar Man & Other Selections

★★★★

Flying Dutchman/Ace HIQLP 171 (LP)

Bionic organ maestro back on wax

Hailing from the early 60s



jazz organ trio boom and releasing albums on Pacific Jazz and Prestige, Richard 'Groove' Holmes turned his swinging Hammond to styles of the times, including funk and soul-jazz on this first album for Flying Dutchman. Working with esteemed arranger Oliver Nelson, composer of TV themes including *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *125th Street & Seventh Avenue* saw Groove lather both works in swirling Hammond action, along with Henry Mancini's twinkling Once Is Not Enough. Relishing the rich brass and Chuck Rainey's popping bass, he takes self-explanatory Disc-O-Mite, lowdown Mama's Groove and percussion exploding Dumpy Mama to blaxploitation funk heaven, his uproarious solo on the latter embodying the outrageously gifted talent that made Groove such a popular figure. *Kris Needs*

Cookin' Up A Storm

Souped-up copyright-protection release rehabilitates tour reputation. *By Jason Draper*





Bob Dylan: it finally became clear why he'd requested a pack of tea-towels on his rider

Bob Dylan

The Rolling Thunder Revue: The 1976 Live Recordings

★★★★

Columbia/Legacy Recordings/Sony Music 19958451852 (39CD)

Aimed squarely at the hardcore Bob Dylan fan, *The Rolling Thunder Revue: The Live 1976 Recordings* follows the same format as previous multi-disc box sets devoted to specific Dylan tours. But while those releases focused on shows that are revered beyond a core group of bootleg traders – taking in, as they did, Dylan's electric tour of 1966, with The Band (then going as The Hawks); his arena-filling return to the road in 1974, also with The Band; and 1975's thrilling first leg of the Rolling Thunder Revue – the Revue's second leg is largely thought of as a footnote to its dazzling predecessor, its legacy a hodgepodge live album that failed to live up to the Rolling Thunder hype.

At 39 CDs, this is the biggest of the four tour boxes so far, presenting a sweeping view of the Dylan portions of each night's show. (A couple of nights are missing; a bunch of songs are incomplete due to tape run-outs.) The broad shape of things goes from fatigued to fiery, leaving Dylan in a place not too dissimilar to the one he found himself in a decade earlier, after that exhausting first electric tour. But whereas those legendary concerts resulted in burnout from nightly battles with a catcalling audience furious at what they perceived as Dylan's abandonment of folk music, this time around the fury came from within. Leading his backing band, Guam, and an extended troupe that included Joan Baez, Roger McGuinn and Kinky Friedman through the US South throughout April and May 1976, Dylan reckoned with the recent suicide of his onetime Greenwich Village sparring partner Phil Ochs, while also seeking refuge from the increasingly disastrous state of his marriage. Add several girlfriends, limitless booze, half-empty arenas and a new look that swapped the white face paint of 1975 for a sallow perma-scowl, and you get the kind of fractious mood that inspired Joan Baez to instigate a communal singalong of "Happy birthday, dear Shithead" as the entourage flew home at tour's end, shortly after Dylan turned 35.

Newly recruited for the spring leg, T Bone Burnett would go on to call the 1976 Revue "the first national punk rock tour". That's a push, but Dylan's decision to play lead guitar – alongside Mick Ronson, of all people – certainly adds an amateurish edge that, at times, causes arrangements to teeter on the verge of collapse. On this set's sole full-band rendition of Tangled Up In Blue, Dylan's fills seemingly invite the group to treat each verse as if it were from a different song – all galloping hard-rock one minute and downbeat blues the next. It's hardly the most sympathetic reading of such a subtly time-shifting masterpiece, but it's indicative of the kind of high-wire act the band could pull off by the time they took to the open-air Hughes Stadium, in Fort Collins, Colorado, on 23 May, during a torrential downpour. The culmination of this collection (although one more show followed, at Salt Lake City, two days later), the gig was filmed for an NBC TV special and provided highlights of a spinoff live album, *Hard Rain*. From a feverish take on I Want You to a much-written-about Idiot Wind, in which Dylan howls in the face of his own tempestuous emotions, the whole concert is a potent brew of frayed nerves and ferocious bloodletting.

Dylan's decision to play lead guitar adds an amateurish edge

The 16 May show, at Tarrant County Convention Center Arena, in Fort Worth, Texas, is another go-to. Also a source for the *Hard Rain* album, the complete recording is now receiving a standalone 3LP release alongside the box set, and is worth it for the performance of Isis alone. A highlight of the 1975 Revue, the song is here reworked into a humid swamp of screeching violin, scratchy guitar and skittering percussion, over which Dylan declaims his tale of misadventure and marriage like an incantatory shaman. Also of note is the audio from a scrapped *Midnight Special* TV broadcast, recorded across two shows held on 22 April. Treating a studio audience to one-off appearances of When I Paint My Masterpiece (heavy on the mandolin and with a bassline that's in danger of getting funky) and Like A Rolling Stone, this incarnation of Guam all but anticipates the *MTV Unplugged* format while proving themselves far more versatile than history has allowed.

Wholly unrepresentative of the tour, the *Midnight Special* recordings are the pivot point around which everything shifts. Shaking off the torpor that dogged the earliest shows, the band figure out their purpose: rather than recreate the previous year's communal highs, their task is to provide ballast as Dylan plumbs the depths of his grievances. Once locked in, they deliver everything from persistently lustful versions of Lay, Lady, Lay to gorgeously elegiac palate-cleansers such as You're A Big Girl Now (1 May, Hattiesburg, Mississippi) and a wildly inventive I Pity The Poor Immigrant, which somehow manages to find a place where island rhythms and barroom piano meet (27 April, Tallahassee, Florida). Elsewhere, with Joan Baez as his foil, Dylan reaches into the trad folk songbook for Wild Mountain Thyme and Railroad Boy, and, alone onstage, seeks to exorcise the ghosts of his past with two startlingly raw – yet very different – takes on If You See Her, Say Hello, complete with newly written threats to some unnamed nemesis.

Clearly, Dylan was coming out fighting, even if he was, at times, in the ring with himself. Fifty years on, a battle against bootleggers has brought this box into being, in order to fend off a looming copyright expiration. The upshot is that *Rolling Thunder 1976* can finally take its place on the podium, giving fans a worthy stopgap between official instalments of the *Bootleg Series*.

Hot Chocolate

The Studio Recordings 1970-1986

★★★★★

Edsel EDSL 0309 (9CD)

Every 1's A Winner on comprehensive collection



Songs about sex, death, racism, class, divorce, yearning, religion and UFOs: they were so much more than the guys behind the irresistible You Sexy Thing. Their consistent pop success across the years this box covers meant they never got due canonical acclaim as Britain's greatest crossover funk/soul band. Errol Brown and Tony Wilson mastered the three-minute melodrama and, from boiling basslines to impish hi-hats, their records gleamed, Emma being pre-eminent. Through eight albums plus a disc of singles, this trove is never going through the motions – even on late-period covers of The Police's Walking On The Moon and Elvis Costello's Green Shirt, because Errol could *wail*. *Chris Roberts*

Iron Maiden

50th Anniversary Studio Album Collection Part One: 1980–1992

★★★★★

Parlophone 1200214668631 (10LP)

Vinyl re-run for first nine LPs



From 1980 to 1992, Iron Maiden released nine studio albums, the first pair featuring Paul Di'Anno front and centre and the rest showcasing Bruce Dickinson's first tenure with the band. Tracks from these nine albums formed the set of their current 18-month *Run For Your Lives* tour, and they've now been collected together over 10 different coloured vinyl LPs (*Fear Of The Dark* being the double) in this lavish box. It's Maiden, so you know there's no duffers here, but *Piece Of Mind*, *Powerslave* and that glorious self-titled debut take some beating. A *Run For Your Lives* tour poster completes the package, and to celebrate its 40th birthday *Somewhere in Time* also gets a standalone vinyl release, in the same oxblood-coloured vinyl as its box set brother. *John Tucker*

Jean-Michel Jarre

Oxygène

★★★★

BMG 964277182 (CD, LP)

Home recording from 1976 that changed electronic music



It's easy to forget after five decades what a strange and beautiful record *Oxygène* is. The eminently hummable Oxygène Pt 4 has passed into the collective consciousness and is never too far away, while the stigma of being classified as New Age has never entirely left it. It transcends such reductive classification, a cosmic amalgam of ambient with progressive ambition. No expense has been spared for this illustrious anniversary edition, with half-speed black vinyl, a transparent turquoise 140g eco vinyl version, a 40-page book and a new stereo mix from the original tapes, accentuating the space within its celestial grooves. A newly-minted Dolby Atmos version goes even further, the best thing to come out of a French kitchen since les frères Troisgros. *Jeremy Allen*

Photos: Jerry Aronson

From The Vaults

Elton John
Rock Of The Westies
★★★
UMR 5755922 (2CD, 2LP)
Back to basics after a magnum opus



Released just five months after the intensely auto-biographical *Captain Fantastic…*, Elton's second album of 1975 is a more direct and uncomplicated proposition, bristling with energy but perhaps lacking a killer touch. There's a change in personnel with his regular rhythm section of Dee Murray and Nigel Olsson conspicuous by their absence, the most prominent new collaborator, future soundtrack maestro James Newton Howard, adding a swathe of synths. I Feel Like A Bullet (In The Gun Of Robert Ford) is one of his classiest ballads, Grow Some Funk Of Your Own cuts a gritty rug, but hit single Island Girl's racial stereotype lyrics have not aged well. The two-disc package boasts stripped-back, previously unreleased piano and vocal versions of most of the songs.
Terry Staunton

Manic Street Preachers
The Holy Bible Live
★★★★★
CMG 19958455451 (CD, 2LP)
Heroic trio's overdue concert recording thrills



Having defied mid-career complacency with *Rewind The Film* and *Futurology*, the Manics issued a stinging jolt to comfort-zone nostalgia in 2014. Two decades since Richey Edwards' final testament, the trio revisited 1994's excoriating *The Holy Bible* live, a bold undertaking by any metric. This ferocious Roundhouse recording finds them all-in, drilling down hard into the spiralling anguish of Of Walking Abortion and Archives Of Pain, yet never losing a capacity for connection. The strafing heavy-metal of Faster and mellow beauty of This Is Yesterday – nostalgia dissected – find the audience compensating loudly for singer James Dean Bradfield, who navigates the record's syntactical densities despite having the flu. Poised between celebration and purgation, Mausoleum and Revol are bristling peaks, dark yet dazzling in their unblinking acuity and anthemic attack. Kieran Evans' blistering concert film, *Be Pure – Be Vigilant – Behave*, complements a glorious release.
Kevin Harley

Mercury Rev
Boces
★★★★
Beggars Banquet BBQ 2727 LP (CD, LP)
Dazzling early effort from US indie adventurers



While *Deserters' Songs* remains their most accomplished LP, the first two Mercury Rev albums, featuring eccentric frontman David Baker, and a snowstorm of haemorrhaging guitars, were wilder and more beautiful than anything that came afterwards.

1993's *Boces* – despite its hideous sleeve – still sounds thrilling. At times they came across as a more fractured and frazzled Sonic Youth but dig deeper and you'll encounter a glam stomp (Trickle Down), spooked out ghost rock (Boys Peel Out), and hazy psychedelia (Downs Are Feminine Balloons). Best of all are the spawling 10-and-a-half-minute space odyssey Meth Of A Rockette's Kick and Something For Joey, a zinging burst of pure rock'n'roll adrenaline, awash with torrents of noise and ridiculous hippie flutes. Magnificent.
Johnnie Johnstone

Jelly Roll Morton
New Orleans Joys: The Earliest Recordings 1923-1926
★★★★
Tompkins Square TSQ 4166 (2CD)
Consummate reappraisal of jazz pioneer



Born from TSQ honcho Josh Rosenthal's increasingly deep dives into the earliest records on recent *1926* and *Treasures Untold* 78s compilations, *New Orleans Joys* focuses on pre-RCA Victor releases by the hugely influential molten pianist who, after playing in a brothel at 14, released a swathe of trailblazing recordings he claimed invented jazz. Quite rightly, going on the fluid ragtime intricacies distinguishing 53 tracks including The Pearls, King Porter Stomp, Fat Meat and Greens, Frog-I-More Rag, Wolverine Blues and Tiger Rag. With material anthologised for the first time and tracks restored and remastered from impossibly rare original 78s, Rosenthal's crack team also provide the 80-page photo and essay-stuffed booklet that repositions JRM from cartoon obscurity to 20th century giant. *Kris Needs*

The Orchids
Unholy Soul
★★★★
Circuitry PLEXUS 006 (2CD, 2LP)
Cult Scots' second



Originally released to little fanfare on Sarah Records in 1991, The Orchids' second album is an understated gem. The Glasgow band were a match for close neighbours Teenage Fanclub and The Pastels, but possibly to their detriment, lacked something of the former's swagger and latter's savviness. The songs here, especially the first two (Me And The Black And White Dream, and Women Priests And Addicts) are superb, while the lovely Peaches (featuring Pauline Hynds Bari) should probably have tickled the charts. This new edition, featuring a limited run of translucent pink vinyl, replicates the additional material included on the 2005 LTM reissue (adding the *Penetration* EP and the Something For The Longing 45). Ripe for rediscovery.
Johnnie Johnstone

R.E.M.
Reveal (25th Anniversary)
★★
Craft / 7281578 (2CD/Blu-ray)
Daysleepers at the wheel



Following the eclectic *Up*, R.E.M.'s second album without co-founder Bill Berry was a tidier but duller affair. This downward curve would continue on 2004's *Around The Sun*, its future anniversary edition anticipated only by the most committed filler-philes. *Reveal*'s stronger moments evoked past glories. The title of its lead single included the word "imitation", fittingly. R.E.M. hadn't switched to autopilot, yet the finger did linger over that button. It almost sounds like the only thing these superstars had left to fight against was their own creeping lethargy. At one point, on I've Been High, they even channel a drowsy Phil Collins. On an accompanying live set for Radio France, the sense of going through the motions infects the older numbers, too. *JR Moores*

Republica
Republica (30th Anniversary Edition)
★★★★
Sony Music CG 19802954721 (2LP)
90s indie-pop stars are ready to go again



Fronted by charismatic livewire vocalist Saffron Sprackling, Republica reared out of 1996's dowdy Britpop swamp with instant anthems Ready To Go and Drop Dead Gorgeous, tunes that stormed the charts with big choruses, techno beats, scathing guitars and punk attitude. Released on the Deconstruction label, the band's self-titled debut album went Top 5 with earlier single Bloke joining Bitch, Get Off, Out Of The Darkness, Holly and Wrapp's steamy twist. To mark its 30th, Republica is reissued on black and red cornetto double wax (after Saffron's hair), including bonus 1997 live recording from Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. Always sole original member and one of the true stars to emerge from that era, the unstoppable Saffron is celebrating with UK gigs.
Kris Needs

Minnie Riperton
Come To My Garden
★★★★
Capitol Records LPNOTLP 254 (LP)
You are advised to take up the invitation



Impressing as the celestial-voiced singer with the Chicago psych-soul group Rotary Connection, Riperton launched her solo career in 1970 with this ambitious symphonic song cycle, featuring arranger/producer Charles Stepney's dazzling orchestrations. The lead track Les Fleurs is familiar to the mainstream public from several cover versions and its appearance in numerous movie soundtracks and TV ads, but the parent album is still the musical equivalent of an undiscovered shady nook. Now, Levi Seitz's gloriously detailed vinyl iteration adds greater lustre and colour to Riperton's blissfully bucolic meditations. The album's best cut is the ethereal Completeness, which reveals how Stepney's densely swirling strings and cascading harps don't swamp Riperton, but inspire her five-octave voice to soar. Soul music with a baroque floral flourish.
Charles Waring

Slayer
Reign In Blood
★★★★★
Universal UMR 5757450 (LP)
The first and last word in audio horror



It's difficult to evoke the cultural position of Slayer's third album without sounding like you've just drunk six espressos, but the blindingly fast, mesmerisingly aggressive nature of the music does lend itself to that approach. Its 10 tracks in 28 minutes were recorded at a pivotal point in metal history, with producer Rick Rubin stepping away from hip-hop to try his hand at something new, with devastating effect. The songs are ridiculously intense, with the big hits at either end – Angel Of Death and Raining Blood – matched, uniquely, by the monstrous tracks in between: Piece By Piece and Reborn are particularly devastating, but there isn't a single duff note here, let alone a subpar track. *Reign In Blood* is the pinnacle of thrash metal, and a top five contender in any Generation X headbanger's list of regular heavy metal albums, too. For that reason alone, a box set would have been nice to tie in with *Reign*'s 40th anniversary, and indeed I've been bugging Universal to do that very thing for years with no result. In its absence, this trippy zoetrope vinyl, which you can gaze at while the most exhilarating music ever recorded batters your eardrums, will do nicely.
Joel McIver

Yes
Keys To Ascension
★★★★
Cherry Red/Spirit Of Unicorn SOUM 2 LP 579 (2LP)
Ending on a high note



Here's the last studio album from the classic Yes line-up of Jon Anderson, Steve Howe, Chris Squire, Alan White and Rick Wakeman, finally available on black or blue vinyl, with new artwork from Roger Dean and capable liner notes from *Prog* editor Jerry Ewing. *Keys To Ascension* was given a spiffing, polished sound by the late producer Bruce Fairbairn and was originally released in two volumes in 1996 and 1997, a curious amalgam of new studio material and a live concert. All 75 minutes of the studio stuff is here, and when it's good, it's very good indeed, as with the excellent opener Foot Prints, the splendid if very Police-alike Be The One,

Scaredy Cuts

Art-funk classic takes fright again. *By Chris Roberts*



Talking Heads: absolute mavericks when it came to letting a draught in

Talking Heads

Fear Of Music (Super Deluxe Edition)

★★★★★

Rhino 0603497807963 (3CD/Blu-ray, 2LP/6LP)

Weymouth and Frantz play like Chic are fleeing a fire

This ain't no fooling around. We sometimes think of Talking Heads as being the product of a massive brain, all clever-clever, as large in the cerebellum as one of David Byrne's outsized suits. And that's valid. But sweet Lordy, what a wicked funk is going on here. The *body* of *Fear Of Music* wiggles its hips and shakes what its mama gave it like James Brown is living in its shorts. Yes, they'd started dancing, shyly, on *More Songs About Buildings And Food*, but this was like nobody was watching. Which, given they recorded it in Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth's loft, with cables running out of the window down to a van, was probably true. Eno was watching, of course, and listening intently, and this stands as one of his finest, most precise, productions (just months after he'd collaborated on Bowie's *Lodger*).

The New Yorkers' third album lifted them to new levels of acclaim (1979's Album Of The Year in both *NME* and *Melody Maker*) and profile (it went gold). There's a sharp clarity to it which will never age. Hearing it in 2026, revived, makes you mimic Byrne's hyper-voiced, stuttering, grunting, squeaking, testifying character in Life During Wartime: "Burns like a furnace – the burning keeps me alive."

Of course, for all the grooving, that brain doesn't switch off. Byrne sets the cast of his lyrics in a dystopian diorama, as much influenced by Brecht as the East Village. Those titles, like chapter headings – Mind, Paper, Cities, Air, Heaven, Drugs – emphasise via their very curtness that there's a tight conceptual picture going on here. Nelson Algren reimagined by Philip K. Dick, perhaps. It's rare for rock music (which it is, just) to sound this much fun while addressing paranoia, urban decay, guerilla survivalism, toxic leaks and the possibility that Paradise might be boring and repetitive.

Repetition itself is requisitioned as a tool: Weymouth and Frantz play like Chic are fleeing a fire. Jerry Harrison finds guitar jolts which scare and thrill. As the Afro-pop of I Zimbra foreshadows *Remain In Light*, Eno suggests they adapt Hugo Ball's surrealist poem. Body and brain, in perfect harmony. Drugs – "I feel mean, I feel OK, I'm charged up electricity" – is, like Memories Can't Wait, a dark cloud which makes all the bright lights brighter.

This repackaging offers mixes in all the formats and the same handful of out-takes which were on the last reissue: the crazed funk of Dancing For Money, Byrne humming and scatting, plus alternative mixes of Cities (longer, with louder sirens), Mind ("help me out!" shrieks Byrne), Drugs and Life During Wartime (Robert Fripp intruding on guitar: they were right to nix that.) What's new here? Two live concert recordings from '79; Boston and New Jersey. A tiny few of these tracks were on live album *The Name Of This Band Is Talking Heads*, but the vast majority are genuine debuts. Onstage, that band were lean and focused, Weymouth's bass correctly prominent (and getting all Mick Karn-like on Mind), and it's riveting to hear set-lists which unleash the *Fear Of Music* tracks alongside "hits" like Psycho Killer and Take Me To The River, wondering if they can co-exist. They can.

In a way, it's gratifying there isn't a bunch of unearthed rejected demos or sketches: "What good are notebooks?" The songs of this album feel faintly awkward anywhere else (even live). The cool, aesthetic construction of the work, akin to *Marquee Moon*, is a perfect sculpture, a novella, an exemplar which shouldn't be tampered with. Re-embrace its gunfire, nerviness and sly hope, its moment-caught-in-time energy. Be afraid again, be beautifully, vividly afraid.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

20th Century Paddy – The Songs of Shane MacGowan

★★★★

Rubyworks RWXLP 743 (2CD, 3LP)

A fitting tribute to legendary songsmith

Tribute albums usually and the 18-minute Mind Drive – originally a jam by the briefly-extant supergroup XYZ of Squire, White and Jimmy Page – obvious high points. Bring Me To The Power alternates white-sock funk and a pastoral folkie approach, Sign Language is a beautiful piano and blues guitar interlude, and Children Of The Light ends with a fabulous ambient synth section straight from the drawer marked cinematic sci-fi: now this is your actual prog brilliance. *Joel McIver*



come with four B-listers and a host of reprobates you've never heard of, the latter reaching their career apexes by association. That's certainly not the case with *20th Century Paddy – The Songs Of Shane MacGowan*, a cavalcade of music legends, celebrities and well chosen relative newcomers. The Boss kicks things off with Rainy Night In Soho with an uncharacteristically sensitive rendition, and there are other appearances that'll raise eyebrows in a good way – Tom Waits pops out of semi-retirement for Summer In Siam and Kate Moss does justice to the Popes' Lonesome Highway. This charitable collection breathes life into some of the more recondite songs in the MacGowan songbook, and there are poignant late offerings from Moya Brennan and Glen Hansard. *Jeremy Allen*

Heart Of Gold: The Songs of Neil Young (Volume 2: Out Of The Blue)

★★★

City Slang SLANG 50627 LP (CD, LP)

Heart Of Gold: The Songs of Neil Young (Volume 3: Into The Black)

★★★

City Slang SLANG 50627 LP (CD, LP)

Artists offer up their best Neil Young impressions on Bridge School benefit sets



Neil Young covers are common – but *transformative* Neil Young covers are harder to come by. That's evident on two benefit albums that feature multiple generations of artists tackling some of his best-known works. Ann Wilson leads the veteran-heavy Out Of The Blue with a snarling, distortion-coated Walk With Me, while My Morning Jacket and Preservation Hall Jazz Band storm through a horn-heavy Like A Hurricane and Sharlotte Gibson contributes a string-swept soul-folk take on Ohio. Into The Black is more surprising, as the most successful covers aren't by known acolytes (MJ Lenderman, Kurt Vile). Ben Gibbard nails the muscular pop-rocker Don't Cry No Tears; New Constellations puts a synth-driven spin on Unknown Legend; Cold War Kids unleashes a haunting Tonight's The Night; and LP's Harvest Moon is swaying tropical folk. *Annie Zaleski*

Soundcity Joburg: South Africa's Township Soul 1969–1981

★★★★

Analog Africa AA 47 (2LP)

One Rainbow Nation under a groove…



With the South African Broadcasting Corporation thinking nothing of using razors and nails to deface records by Black musicians, it's a minor miracle that the 22 tracks that make up this collection were even recorded, much less evaded the racist censorship of apartheid-era authorities. Picking up on the soul and funk music coming across the Atlantic in the 60s and 70s and infusing it with their own localised styles, the boldest SA renegades fashioned what they called "Township Soul" – a genre without borders, as *Soundcity Joburg* attests. Swing Africa is 10 minutes of laidback groove-riding courtesy of Reggie Msomi & His Jazz Africa, while The Suns Of Thunder fold reggae into the wiry, horn-drenched Soweto Sporo 1. Influences may well have flowed the other way, too: it wouldn't be a surprise to learn that Amazimzim's Tshela Jwala Renwe slipped onto Talking Heads' turntable during the *Fear Of Music* sessions. *Jason Draper*

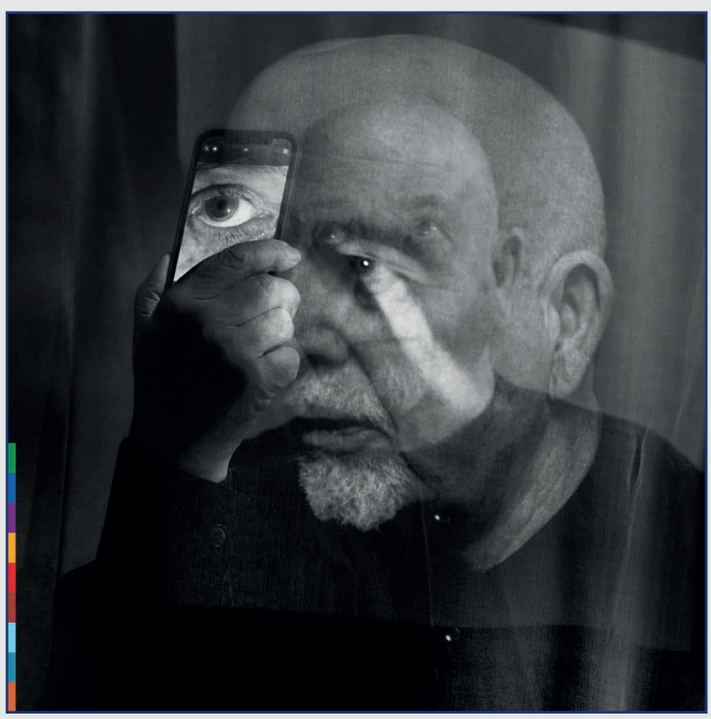
Photo: Jill Furmanovsky

New Albums

Over The Moon

Prog legend's ambitious lunar project reaches its conclusion.
By Jeremy Allen

Peter Gabriel
o\i
★★★
Real World PGLPN 24 (4CD, 2LP)



In January 2026, *Rolling Stone* ran a commentary piece imploring Peter Gabriel to do as David Byrne and Bruce Springsteen have done and embrace his own past. According to the writer, Gabriel has not put himself out there enough with reissues, books, films or musicals, a more-is-more approach that isn't compatible with doing nothing while allowing daily reruns of Sledgehammer on MTV 80s to reap their benefits.

Whether the singer took heed of such unsolicited advice is doubtful, but this has been a bumper year in the output of the ex-Genesis man by his own standards, including two live albums (*In The Big Room* and *Live At WOMAD 1982*) as well as a steady deluge of songs released digitally and on streaming services with each full moon. If Gabriel is only on nodding terms with his past then latest album *o/i* is future-facing, thematically more than anything. Whichever way you look at it, our cup runneth over with Gabriel right now.

Been Undone first appeared on 3 January to accompany the Wolf supermoon. It's a nine-minute epic in which Gabriel comes up with ever more poetic and elaborate reasons that he has been undone, including by the Mandelbrot set equation, unusually. For the opening bars, his sing-speak delivery sounds garbled and broken, and one wonders if that precious voice might have come undone by the ravages of time. Then he roars majestically, reminding us that he is still in possession of one of the more soulful and underrated voices in rock.

A Snow Moon, a Worm Moon, a Pink Moon and so on followed with new Gabriel songs, bringing feast where there had only been famine before the 2023 comeback, *i/o*. And now comes *o\i*, the relatively swift follow-up and companion piece. The latter, lest we forget, was his first album of original material in 21 years. Flipping the title and employing the lesser-used backslash, there are two different versions with alternate engineering jobs here, too: the Bright-Side Mix by Mark 'Spike' Stent and the Dark-Side Mix by Tchad Blake and, just like last time, these rival mixes are invariably indistinguishable from one another unless you have the ears of a bloodhound.

One thing's for certain and that is that there is no Playing For Time here, that heartrending song from *i/o* with the resonance of an old spiritual à la Don't Give Up. Nevertheless, he certainly has a go with Yes, It Will Go. Where Don't Give Up was inspired by pictures from the Great Depression of the 1930s – a message of hope to hang in there as things will surely improve – here we are in more cosmic, philosophical territory, perhaps witnessing the Earth crashing helplessly into the Sun seven billion years from now, eliciting little more than a shrug of the shoulders: "Everything's going to fade in time like the falling snow/And all the things that look so permanent will go," he sings. Josh Shpak brings some mournful flugelhorn and euphonium to add to the sense of resigned melancholy. It's a message of impermanence and cosmic entropy that is oddly comforting. Another poignant highpoint is What Lies Ahead, with help from the New Blood Orchestra and the Orphei Drängar Swedish male voice choir, the latter opening the track at the suggestion of Brian Eno. The song apparently celebrates the against-the-grain vision of Gabriel's inventor father Ralph, who died in 2012 aged 100, while a melody his son Isaac was toying around with is incorporated, becoming a textural, intergenerational ballad that is nothing without that lineage.

> He is still in possession of one of the more soulful and underrated voices in rock



Face The Wall is another intimate number about managing to pull back from the brink, a worthy enough addition to the canon, albeit not quite in the same class as Don't Give Up. Won't Stand Down is yet another song of resistance, a shot across the bows of the tech bros and the heads of state leading us towards the brink in a frenzy of self-enrichment – a noble enough effort even if the ascending chord shapes feel hackneyed in their bombastic triumphalism. There's an optimism that doesn't ring true in the circumstances. More pacey and upbeat is the electro-funk number Live And Let Live, which treads a similar groove to some of Gabriel's biggest hits from the 80s and 90s such as Big Time and Steam. And Till Your Mind Is Shining has the most infectious synth-driven phrase on the album, which only falls down slightly for its unintentional interpolation of Whitney Houston's How Will I Know? Once you've been exposed to it, it's difficult to unhear.

Gabriel has been omnipresent in 2026, a dream come true for one aforementioned *Rolling Stone* critic and public alike, though whether that will see him cut through beyond "the lunatics" (his affectionate name for his dedicated fanbase) remains to be seen. It's another quality batch of PG songs performed with longtime collaborators like Tony Levin and Manu Katché, and – as his 10th studio solo album in just under 50 years – we'll take it.

But if these songs are very good, then why is it still hard to not feel a little disappointed? Everything appears to be in its right place: a pristine, mid-paced electronic-based collection that'll work well as inflight entertainment. But where's the jeopardy, the danger? When he started this project, he tried working with relative upstarts and unexpected collaborators such as Skrillex. Unfortunately, that unlikely team-up never quite happened; certainly we could have done with at least some of that unpredictability and madness. Even the lunatics might have preferred a bit more actual, you know, lunacy.

Beware the moon, then, especially if it turns up 13 times in one calendar year, like this one. Where most of his classic albums consist of between eight and 10 tracks, here the need for extra songs means he's spreading himself too thin, creatively, and not quite matching up to his 1978–86 glory days. And so we find ourselves hoping that Peter Gabriel will embrace the future more than his past, and shake the tree a little more while he's at it.

Photos: Viviane Sassen; Michael Schwartz



Peter Gabriel: completing his moon cycle on *o\i*

Wintery Wonderland

Irish singer-songwriter takes a hibernal, lovelorn stroll through the streets of Berlin.
By David Pollock



Fionn Regan: bringing that DIY ethic to his press shots

Fionn Regan

Berlin, Berlin

★★★★

Cormorant Bird CRB 001 LP (CD, LP)

There's something wonderfully ungraspable about *Berlin, Berlin*, the eighth album by Irish troubadour Fionn Regan, and first on his own Cormorant Bird label. Its gossamer lightness of touch blends with the particular recorded tone of his voice – reverberating gently in the room, not struggling to outperform his already delicate acoustic instrumentation – to make the listener really focus in on everything he's doing. For example, to treat a suggestion of a song like the hesitantly hopeful, barely-there Black Silk Dress as background music is to let it disappear unnoticed into the ether; to really pay attention is to sense new worlds opening up.

There's enough here to hint at the influence of the greats; the intimacy of *Pet Sounds*, the simple rusticism of Nick Drake, the confessional poetry of Leonard Cohen. Yet Regan is his own man, and two decades after his debut solo album, his voice is honed and experienced enough to be welcomed like the presence of a comforting old friend.

Where his last album, 2024's *O Avalanche*, was recorded under the influence of time spent in the mountains of Mallorca (alongside his old friend, actor Anna Friel, who lent her voice to the title track), this is a more esoteric collection, without the relative overdubbed expansiveness of its predecessor. Instead, intent on moving quickly, Regan went into an east London studio with producer Ian Grimble and recorded these songs in less than six days.

Despite the title, the only part of the album which appears to be steeped in a sense of place is Berlin, which appears four songs in and sees the softly strumming Regan walking the streets of the city, following in the footsteps of a former partner and wondering if she might have a new lover or if he may have just missed her in an old frequented venue. The melody of the song surges with bittersweet sadness, as Regan's narrator trudges back to his hotel and contemplates his early-morning flight.

It's all fiercely, understatedly poignant, the Proustian sensation of a place steeped in memories being visited for the first time in a long time set to music. Is there an element of autobiography here? Regan included a song named Moving To Berlin as an extra track on his similarly stripped-back 2012 album *The Bunkhouse Vol.1: Anchor Black Tattoo*, but if this one's about anything personal, he's not saying.

This sense of cathartic sadness, of romance so new or so freshly ended that it hangs just out of reach, permeates the album. The wintry, windchime circular melody of lead single Hurricane Bruise compares a kiss to an injury, received either through an excess of passion or of heartache, while the virtuosic melancholy of Don't Forget Your Friends ("the ones that had your back/when you were running frightened/they came and helped you stand") suggests dark times have been overcome.

Hope feels more apparent in the album's second half, amid the understated excitement of Your Love Is Like Wine, the ambiguous marital proposal The Streets Are Wet With Rain and the warmly contented Fox Kiss and Love Blood. Few songs break the three-minute mark and none are wild singalongs, but every one has depths like a still, smooth reflecting pond.



Q&A

Fionn Regan talks Picasso, Fellini and only figuring out what he's doing in front of an audience

"I just wanted to make an album fast, get it on vinyl and go play some shows"

***O Avalanche* was written about the experience of spending time in Spain – does *Berlin, Berlin* have autobiographical roots in the city?**
This album's so good I named it twice! With *O Avalanche* I found myself in the mountains in Mallorca, feeling a kind of light quality which I wanted to echo in the music. It was a much slower, pearl-like process, an assemblage of ideas. This album's more connected to memories. In the song Berlin there's a ghost-like quality of returning to a place you've not been to for a while and imagining it's going to be the same, but it's twisted, it's moved on.

Does Berlin have profound memories for you?
I've been there quite a bit so I definitely have a connection, it'll always be part of my story. I played Hurricane Bruise for the first time at Berlin's PEOPLE Festival recently, there's cosmic significance to that. I played it in one room and it made people tearful, then I played it out on the stairs during the changeover and others found it humorous. Like in country or folk music, sometimes there's two worlds happening at once in a song, it just depends which way the wind's blowing the sail.

What's the album about?
Right now, it feels quite mysterious to me. It's always good when you make an album which just arrives and you're like, right, I've got to do this. You get to a point where it feels the lake is full and it's time to sail. Nobody has any idea about what an album is (after they've made it), or where it sits in the scheme of everything, but an audience is like a collaborator, they create this two-way energy which helps you understand it a little more.

You recorded it on your own in under a week, is that right?
It was written fast and recorded fast, down in Hackney with [producer] Ian Grimble. Just walking in, picking up the guitar and playing the songs, not much more to it than that. Very simple, I guess no different from Columbia Studios in the 60s. I'd been touring on my own and I enjoyed it, the songs came from that. It's that Picasso thing of learning and then forgetting, to infuse it with the right energy. I just wanted to make an album fast, get it on vinyl and go play some shows.

You've mentioned Picasso and you namecheck Kerouac in the press release. They're not typical musical influences, are they?
I think about things in cinematic terms, I'm always imagining an Italian arthouse film by Fellini or whatever. I make art as well, there's definitely a visual quality I'm looking for. A song like Berlin is like a black and white short film to me. I started writing poetry before anything else, and like Leonard Cohen, when you have a poetic quality it's always there in your writing. Music's a whole journey, it drags you into the jaws of it, but there's things you can do on the page which are very different. Some writers try to fuse both those things together – like in a B-movie, where two people meet in an elevator and something new kicks off. *As told to David Pollock*

Abstract Concrete
Guilty Buildings
★★★★
The state51 Conspiracy RT 0610 LP (2CD, 2LP)
Spiky return from legendary sticksman



"The rooftops of Laaahndan, *cor*, what a sight", growls Charles Hayward on Big Ben from the Abstract Concrete's second album *Guilty Building*s. While Big Ben was out of action for a few years, Hayward, the radical rhythm-meister who made This Heat and Camberwell Now forces of nature more than four decades ago, never stopped working. As part of a relatively young outfit according to their median age, it's a fine vehicle for Hayward's intrepid high-hats, running into the violas of Agathe Max and the woodwinds of Yoni Silver. At times there's an imbalance of snarling punk energy and orchestral polish, a scurvy ship that feels like it might capsize at any moment, though that's all part of the charm.
Jeremy Allen

Art D'Ecco
Scheele's Green
★★★★
Paper Bag PAPER 168 (CD, LP)
Wide-eyed soundtrack for the end of the world



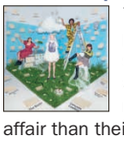
Art D'Ecco is the stage name of an anonymous Vancouver, BC musician who's been releasing records since 2016. His quirky art-pop has been evolving over that decade, something very evident on this sixth full-length, *Scheele's Green* – named for a toxic chemical pigment. Riotous opener The Death Of Indie is possibly the most boisterous and angry the musician has been to date, railing against all the tech oligarchs who seem to have scant regard for humanity. While there are some elements of his usual style remains (Like Trilby, Darién Gap), both that raucous energy and subject matter remain consistent throughout these 11 songs. It makes for a thrilling, understandably paranoid trip into the end of humanity – with added sax for truly dystopian, despairing effect. *Mischa Pearlman*

Jake Bugg
Alamo
★★★
Thirty Tigers LVBR 002 CD (CD, LP)
Singer-songwriter moves on



Teenage sensation Bugg is now 32 but he's lost none of his boyish charm, although he has grown beyond it. He was always advanced for his age, his music flipping from folk to rockabilly-country and back, and here we dart between that 50s romp in Never Can Tell and the gentle, pedal-steel etched title track while Trapped In A Cage somehow fuses 60s pop with indie Americana. That said, the singer-songwriter is perhaps more to the fore than in the past, Bugg sounding sadly alone on Ten Stories High and Cloud In The Sky, the latter nearly six minutes long, building in a gently powerful crescendo. *Nick Dalton*

The Buoys
Concrete Cowboy
★★★
Sony Music 19958462842 (CD, LP)
Slick sophomore set from Aussie four-piece



The Sydney pop-rockers' second full album is a more varied affair than their spiky 2024 effort *Lustre*, a broadening of the musical palette that finds space for attitude-laced rock grooves, mellow harmonies and a touch of electronica. The sleazy edge of Bitch comes across like Courtney Love fronting Girls Aloud; first single Alone In Vegas echoes with the confessional articulacy of Haim; and the coming-of-age question marks of Stay Up To Date On Politics oozes laconic cool. The lyrics are awash with striking imagery (intermittently borrowed from the band's favourite movies), while rooted in personal autobiography that still manages to chime with the experiences of their core audience. Thoughtful, intelligent pop from a band with continued promise. *Terry Staunton*

Current Joys
Rosebud
★★★★
They Are Evil CJRDLP 1 (CD, LP)
Nevadan songwriter steps up his game



Current Joys, aka Nick Rattigan, has come a long way since the droning repetition of 2013's *Wild Heart,* an album that helped define the more lo-fi elements of late-2010s indie, with two of his tracks featuring in the sleeper hit horror film *Obsession* this year. Certain tracks on *Rosebud* such as Wildfire retain this beloved rhythmic, spaced-out energy, but overall the record is much more dynamic. It reaches screaming highs in the gritty Chaos and the hyperpop Skinamrink On The TV, before the graceful, orchestral Swept Away does in fact sweep us away. The cover of Justin Bieber and The Kid Laroi's Stay may be an absolute wildcard, but it's somehow incredibly affecting – and trust me, this writer was sceptical, too. *Alice McIver*

Kim Deal
Live At The Barbican
★★★★
4AD 4 AD 0922 (CD, 2LP)
Orchestra backs the art of the Deal



Two years on from *Nobody Loves You More*, her first solo album, the immortally cool Breeder, ex-Pixie and force of nature Kim Deal releases a live take of that triumph. Recorded in March 2025, it's even bigger this time, with a 25-piece ensemble and an actual orchestra. We're a long, long way from *Come On Pilgrim*, but of course it works spectacularly. As her high yet robust voice rides the strings' swells and swoops, it becomes clear there was always a barely repressed Cilla Black element to her stylings. Crystal Breath throbs and punches like a boxer in round seven. A grab-bag of Breeders and other gnarly solo songs follow the slick album performance, and the audience's whoops are justified. *Chris Roberts*

The Dirty Strangers
Country 'N' West Ten
★★★★
Dirty Strangers Records 0684910356848 (CD)
Gatecrashing the Grand Ole Opry



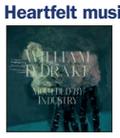
Born from jamming with Slim Chance multi-instrumentalist Charlie Hart, Alan Clayton's follow-up to 2023's *Hunter's Moon* amps up country elements in the band he's led for 48 years. Joined by Hart, keyboardist Mickey Gallagher, current line-up Guy Griffin and John Rollason on guitars, bassist John Proctor and drummer Lawrence Fox revisit Dirties classics country style, including Diamonds and live fave Shepherds Bush City Limits (late Brian James on guitar). New songs mix rip-snorting rockers (including single Get Wild) with fabulous country ballads Turkey Bone and bar-wailing If You Won't Leave Me I'll Find Someone Who Will joined by vocalist Nina Walsh. Unearthed on cassette, Weekend Treat features Clayton's autobiographical lyrics over music written by Gallagher and Ronnie Lane 40 years ago. Total class. *Kris Needs*

Django Django
Doveland
★★★
Clouds Hill 4250795612285 (CD, LP)
Indie psychedelicists come down to earth



For so long a byword for anything-goes, genre-twisting experimentation, Django Django's sixth album is their most focused and musically conventional. Created at the same time as 2023's electronic *Off Planet*, *Doveland*, named after a mythical US town and produced by former Franz Ferdinand guitarist Nick McCarthy, plays a straighter bat with intimate songs of grief and imagined tales of the road – Meteorite is cut from Beck's acoustic oeuvre; Little Me with Hak Baker takes a cue from James Blake – with ventures into art-folk (Cameos; the propulsive Dirty Hotel Blues) and hypnotic psych grooves (Still Life). Still, the best moments retain something of their eclectic past: the jaunty So Heavy and the Max Pope-featuring Feel Alright, a Northern soul-meets-indie stomper ending things on a bright note. *Shaun Curran*

William D. Drake
Moulded By Industry
★★★★
Onomatapoeia Records HUM 59 (CD, LP)
Heartfelt music, in all senses



William D Drake's sixth album, his first in 11 years, won't disappoint fans of the music he made in his 1983-1991 stint with his best-known ensemble, Cardiacs: there are bits of unnerving, twisted keyboard playing in songs such as Bliss Again which hint directly at that band's earliest albums. This is Drake's own venture, though, and the feel of Moulded By Industry is landscaped rather than frenetic. The opener and first single, The Flickering Shade, is essentially an epic hymn, and its warm, wide feel continues in Green Shadows and The Storm: this suits the album's theme, an exploration of the countryside's connection with human longing and its evocation through ancient poetry. Taking lyrical references from sources such as Thomas Hardy and Rupert Brooke, Drake crafts subtle, yearning music that retains some enigma despite its lush feel: see the very McCartney-esque closer Love In The Universe for a deft summation of this album's ambitions. *Joel McIver*

Dummy
Do You Love The Color Of The Sky?
★★★
Polyvinyl PRC5362 (CD, LP, cassette)
Shoegazers hit the rave tent



Having toured heavily off the back of 2024's acclaimed second album *Free Energy*, LA shoegazers Dummy wanted to revisit the idea of what a 21st-century band should sound like. In practice, this involves harking back to 90s breakbeats. Emma Maatman's wide-eyed vocals mean April Limousine and Song Of Mana resemble mythical collaborations between Orbital and Harriet Wheeler, but the unsubtle thud of Omen Globe recalls Banco De Gaia's crusty rave. Guitarist Nathan O'Dell aims to be hypnotic on the dreamlike Alluvial Fan yet merely ends up insubstantial. So it's left to N of 1's chilly anti-surveillance drama as the most fully realised vision of the newly expanded quintet's electronic pop ideal, as catchy as it is sleek, modern and distrusting. *John Earls*

Johnny & Lillie Flynn
Beam Cottage
★★★★
Transgressive TRANS 1000 (CD, LP)
Prodigious folk siblings celebrate their roots



The titular home inspires a rousing, affecting excavation of shared pasts from the Flynn siblings, folk musicians/actors both. The duo grew up in Beam Cottage, before Johnny left home to study and their father died. Reconvening on originals and beloved covers with robust band back-up, Johnny and Lillie view childhood innocence through the lens of weathered but resilient adult experience. The results are both wistful and stirring, with The Ghost Of O'Donahue and The Boy In The Bubble (the Paul Simon song) evoking "miracles and wonder" over full-bodied settings. Covers of Moon River and Between The Wars (Billy Bragg) brim with fresh meaning, while Lillie's meditative Brockwell Park and Johnny's roistering Lady Is Risen stand out among a brace of originals. Closing with family lullaby Sleepy Head, *Beam Cottage* honours the constancy of unbreakable bonds, embodied in tangible settings and hale, hearty harmonies. *Kevin Harley*

Dave Hill
Dirtyfoot Lane
★★★
DJH 001 C (CD, LP)
Slade's stalwart superyob gets reflective



The bubbly guitar star who put the "crazee" into Slade has some advice here: "Hold on to life, it's better that you never retire," he sings. With that in mind, aged 80, he's put together his first solo album. It's a trustworthy set of songs ranging from jolly, old-school, bluesy rockers about being on the road to more delicate, very un-Slade, folky musings on family, loss and home. Thanks For The Good Times feels a bit like a last will and testament, while the big-chorus, lighter-waving, title track, referring to a place where he grew up and still lives near, is like Wolverhampton's answer to McCartney's *Dungeon Lane* mythologies. Produced by Django Holder – yes, Noddy's son – it's all rather moving. *Chris Roberts*

Easing The Pain

Cult US rockers get the full stop they deserve. *By JR Moores*





Morphine: the late Mark Sandman's work is completed on *Cocoon*

Morphine

Cocoon

★★★★

Partisan PTSN 3067 (CD, LP)

Mark Sandman died aged 46, after collapsing onstage in July 1999. His band, Morphine, had recently finished recording their fifth album, *The Night*. Completed by saxophonist Dana Colley with drumkit duties alternating over the years between Jerome Deupree and Billy Conway, the Boston band had drawn comparisons to the outlaw likes of Tom Waits, The Gun Club and The Bad Seeds. They were a distinctive sonic Cerberus, however, not least due to Sandman's unusual instrument of choice: a two-stringed bass, played with a slide. His lyrics stood out, too, full as they were of beat-poet literacy, narrative intrigue and black wit. Morphine's sound was noirish, spacious and undeniably sexy. In the video for 1995's Honey White, a woman spins around a bedroom in her negligée. She wasn't the only thing that gave Beavis & Butthead the horn. The music did, too.

Hailed as "a new Morphine album three decades in the making", *Cocoon* comes from recordings made after 1997's *Like Swimming* and abandoned in the run up to *The Night*. The tracks have been freshly mixed by their original producer, Paul Q Kolderie, and Colley has added new saxophone parts to three of the pieces.

Eagle-eared fans will notice that several songs on *Cocoon* already appeared on 2004's double-CD/DVD set *Sandbox: The Music Of Mark Sandman*, albeit in different forms. Others have been on Morphine compilations. The work partaken by Kolderie, Colley and other contributors does make it feel like a properly rounded album, nevertheless. The selections, the sequencing, the flow and the mastering all have their parts to play in this success.

Cocoon opens with Tomorrow, a sort of chamber-glam tune which isn't a million miles away from Eels' more upbeat numbers, albeit with much deeper vocals. Immediately after that, Wig finds Sandman in a friskier mood. This air of seduction is enhanced by the hip-swingingly funky nature of the brass. Towards the end, Sandman is so worked up he's practically rapping. The acoustically rendered Patience has an autumnal shuffle. Like Tomorrow, its lyrics are optimistic, however. Spaceman Charm leans into jazz with some juicy work from Colley. This continues on another amorous number, Justine. Moons Of Jupiter is grungier thanks to the distortion on the rolling bassline, with the croonsome Sandman inhabiting the role of a lonely astronaut.

> The selections, the sequencing, the flow and the mastering all have their parts to play in this success

On the title track, the narrator beckons the object of his infections into his home. It has an ambiguity to it which is darkened by the sleazy music. Words that might initially be interpreted as romantic become potentially sinister and you begin to wonder whether these are the imperative promises-cum-threats of a deluded stalker or aspirant kidnapper. "There's something I've been dying to do," he offers. "I'll learn the names of all your favourite food/I want to cook for you in my cocoon." Rather than enter this place where "the curtains are closed" and "the cupboards are stocked", the crush's instinct might be to run away as quickly as possible.

Questions remain regarding whether Sandman would want people to hear this material, in the form in which it has been packaged and presented. On the other hand, should the public be denied access to that which might otherwise rot in the archives? Had Franz Kafka's manuscripts been burned, as requested on his deathbed, the canon of Western literature would look very different today. Nor would we be so inclined to describe everything from criminal proceedings to Post Office queues as "Kafkaesque". Is *Cocoon* a true Morphine album? Suave, smoky and sensual, *Cocoon* is assuredly "Sandman-esque".

COLLECTING... MORPHINE AND MARK SANDMAN



Treat Her Right – *Treat Her Right* (Soul Selects SS-42085, LP, 1986) **£30**
Before forming Morphine, Mark Sandman made three albums with Treat Her Right. Their self-financed debut was released on an emerging local label before it caught the ears of Demon Records in the UK and, subsequently, RCA. Songwriting and singing duties were shared between Sandman, David Champagne, and Jim Fitting. This added some spicy variety to their swampy blues rock. Picture a lesser-known and more democratic Rolling Stones, where Mick Jagger surrenders the microphone to his bandmates on a much more regular basis.



Morphine – *Cure For Pain* (Natasha 427916-1, LP, 1994) **£250**
Building on *Good*, their statement of intent from 1992, Morphine came into their own on the following year's *Cure For Pain*. If the word "swagger" ought to be applied to any record, then it's this one. The title track is worth the price alone but the whole affair is tight, consistent, focused and gripping. For those uninitiated with Morphine, this is the entry point. CDs being all the rage in the mid-90s, *Cure For Pain* was unavailable on vinyl in most territories until its reissue in the 2010s. Still trading for impressive figures are the LPs from 1994 that were sold exclusively in Brazil. If you'd rather own a wealth of bonus material at a fraction of the price, then look out for 2021's deluxe edition.



Supergroup – It's Not Like That Anymore / Telepathic Cathy (Cosmic COSMIC 004, 7", 1996) **£12**
Sandman was close friends with Chris Ballew from The Presidents Of The United States Of America, a trio whose forefronted humour was wackier than Morphine's. Their own preference for using custom instruments with fewer strings than usual was influenced by Sandman. The two pals played together in the ironically named Supergroup whose songs were improvised around subject suggestions from audience members. Sandman considered Ballew to be "an absolute genius" at making up lyrics on the spot. Some of the ideas they freestyled together would become fleshed-out and fully finished songs for both men's main outlets. See Morphine's Sheila, which is about the owner of the pet in The Presidents' Kitty. On Supergroup's only release, Telepathic Cathy provides a tantalising glimpse of their in-concert magic and mayhem.



Morphine – *The Night* (Modern Classics MCR 930-1-2, 2LP, 2023) **£90**
Although it absolutely defined their approach and appeal, Morphine were never religiously committed to the minimalist setup of slide-bass, drums and sax. By the end, their embellishments could sometimes include cello, viola, organ, oud and other instrumentation. Due to Sandman's untimely passing, we'll never know how his trio's sound would've developed further. The palette widened on *The Night*, released in February 2000. Yet it never spills overboard into symphonic pretension or orchestral bombast. This restraint is assisted by the earthy production, which the band helmed themselves. Its first vinyl pressing was spread across four discs, playing at 45RPM.



Mark Sandman – *Sandbox: The Music of Mark Sandman* (Hi-N-Dry HNDM SSB, 2CD+DVD, 2004) **£60**
Whereas *Cocoon* bottles eight tracks from a specific point in Morphine's story, *Sandbox* offered a dumper truck's wealth of rarities. The songs on the DVD are credited to some of Sandman's different projects (Treat Her Right, Morphine, Hypnosonics, Candy Bar, etc). However, none of the tracks on the two CDs are attributed to a particular project so it isn't clear which musicians are playing, and for what band. The booklet's refusal to specify will impress only those musicologists who wish to rise to the challenge. "Music doesn't come with a map," it states bluntly. Although some of these obscurities are on the ragged side, the quality remains pretty high for what is a long compilation. Well worth hunting down.

Kings Of Leon
O My Beloved
★★★★
Virgin LTR 035 SLP (CD, 2LP)
The family Followill in reflective mode



After a career that saw their raw and ragged garage rock morph into a polished, stadium sized juggernaut, Kings Of Leon approach their 10th album in arguably their most elemental state. Always Tennessee boys at heart, the Followills have stripped back the bombast for a set of acoustic-led songs, deviating between wistful and sombre and occasionally sparse, that take stock of their journey from childhood to mega stardom. Bar the odd exception – Rose's relatively anthemic chorus; the gently soaring 70s rock of Make it Count – these are mature songs in the best sense, rooted in folk and country rock that carry genuine emotional heft: not one catering to the Sex On Fire crowd, and all the more enjoyable and accomplished for it. *Shaun Curran*

Lowly
Softy
★★★★
Bella Union BELLA 1716 (CD, LP)
Exploratory Danes find strength in unison



Themes of curiosity, community and courage in dark times underpin this ever-inquisitive Danish alt-pop quintet's fourth record. After 2023's multi-layered *Keep Up The Good Work*, the band found their tenacity playing in a room together, juggling melodies and ideas. Brave sets the tenor, its classicist pop melody layered over huge drums and delicate keys as Soffie Vermose reflects luminously on family and fortitude. Liminal Space explores role modelling over a dreamy arrangement, while What Is It For finds a fertile contrast between its fluttery settings and fretful lyrics. The hymnal Curious, gorgeous Stretch Under Strain and glitchy At All stake out the extremes of a record that works best at its most unsettled. The introspective latter stretch could use more lift but Xclouds is a beatific summation of Lowly's concerns: "Remember who we are… be like a changeable cloud." Fine advice on a sweetly robust, warmly experimental record. *Kevin Harley*

Alastair Macduff
Kåtebol
★★★★
DistroKid No Cat No (CD)
Atmospheric wonder from Sweden-based Scot



From the outset (Ödehus 1, or "deserted house"), everything on *Kåtebol* , the debut offering by Gothenburg-based Scottish musician, is marked by blissfulness and brevity. Macduff blends lo-fi dreampop and electronica with ambient and classical touches. Some of the piano pieces are stately like Rachel's or Michael Nyman, others gently euphoric, like Harold Budd on ecstasy. He creates an enchanting and immersive soundworld, with brushed drums, plaintive vocals and shimmering droplets of synth, punctuated occasionally by children's voices (his daughter Ingrid's) and crackling musique concrete. At times this libretto of misty reveries feels like delving into a private photo stash of happy family portraits and lost, blurry seascapes, but its melancholic undercurrent makes it the perfect antidote to Boards Of Canada's dystopian nightmares. *Johnnie Johnstone*

Kali Malone
Burning Song
★★★★
Ideologic Organ SOMA 078 LP (CD, LP)
Mournful, ritualistic drones with Sunn O))) spouse



Kali Malone's divine electro-acoustic organ music is grounded in a rich vein of minimalism that stretches back to 1960s New York, though Steve Reich et al were never this minimalistic. Recorded at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig where Johann Sebastian Bach was the cantor for nearly three decades, *Burning Song* was performed on the Bach Organ, an instrument that was finished at the turn of the century with bespoke tuning systems based on the historical norms from the baroque period, adding some microtonal verve. Partner Stephen O'Malley brings bowed guitar, Lucy Railton some cello, following profound, elongated drones that reverberate with such exquisite balance that they can't fail to break your heart, the yearning My Eve My Dawn at the denouement especially. *Jeremy Allen*

Sendelica
Nirmata II: Journey To The Stars
★★★★★
Fruits de Mer: Friends of the Fish 101 (CD, LP)
Pete Bingham's last epic flight



The passing of founding leader Pete Bingham in May closed a 25-year chapter that saw Sendelica release countless albums cottage industry style; often overlooked by mainstream press but loved by their many fans. Along with compiling the retrospective *Introduction To Sendelica*, the band's final album had reached mixing stage before Bingham's final cancer diagnosis. Now brought home by co-producer and electronic architect Colin Consterdine, along with cerebral sax titan Lee Relfe and bass anchor Glenda Pescado, Pete's guitar motifs and ethereal textures open the spaceways for his final cosmic journey over four lengthy pieces, including weightlessly poignant Severing The Tether and climaxing with other-worldly ascension Di Ankh Djet Neheh. True to form, this magnificent sendoff is available from Sendelica's Bandcamp page. *Kris Needs*

SOAK
decembers
★★★
Rough Trade RT 0606 (CD, LP)
Mercury-nominated indie-folk singer back on song



After losing distinction with the indie-rock stylings of 2022's *If I Never Know You Like This Again*, Derry's Bridie Monds-Watson was forced to recalibrate. An autoimmune disease meant they lost their voice; duly, they sought renewed connections to words, melody and their songs' subjects. The result takes them from Derry to New York, Portugal and Dublin, a travelogue of self-rediscovery plotted in poised, affecting song. *Decembers* reflects on teenage ties and the luminous Death Valley Fridge Magnet on long-distance friendship, Monds-Watson's voice cracking as the crescendo builds. Speed meditates tenderly on family, Woodstock on escapism. Minus 3's romanticised paean to a deep-winter Dublin benefits from a minimalist glow, giving Monds-Watson's voice room to roam, before Transmitter Park brings ecstatic release. "I go out singing in the streets," Monds-Watson sings defiantly, a derailed artist back on track. *Kevin Harley*

Susanne Sundfør
Revelations Of Divine Love
★★★
Bella Union BELLA 1721 (CD, LP)
Norway's avant-pop explorer goes to church



Not to be caught standing still, Susanne Sundfør follows the intricate cadences of 2023's *blómi* with a singular meditation on motherhood and theology. Co-composed with Kit Downes and recorded in a Norwegian church with pipe-organ backing, *Revelations* draws its inspiration and title from the work of medieval anchoress Julian of Norwich, writer of the first-known book in Middle English by a woman. Bookended by spoken-word pieces and laced with three Downes instrumentals, the songs are variably hushed and ecstatic, warm and spacious. It I Am tingles with yearning, while For He Standeth All Alone and Charity are pensive and whispered. If the warm and rapturous All Shall Be Well is a highlight, much here tends to wander rather than arrive: a feature more than a flaw, perhaps, but the results are fitfully intriguing rather than revelatory. *Kevin Harley*

Rick Wakeman
Return To The Red Planet
★★★
Madfish SMACD 1377 (CD/CD/BD, 2LP/LP)
Ex-Yes man floats in space… man



Having contributed the flamboyant keyboard flourishes to David Bowie's 1971 epic Life On Mars, Wakeman revisited the Red Planet with a concept album in 2020, just pre-lockdown. This epic continues the theme, his English Rock Ensemble in tow: they feature Steve Marriott's vocalist daughter Mollie and virtuoso bassist Lee Pomeroy. It's as lavish as you'd expect, with lashings of Wakeman's instrumental trademarks, but vocal songs like Land Of Noah have an Alan Parsons vibe that suggest he has at least advanced a decade from the glory days of Yes. Hopefully this album will receive the attention its predecessor evaded due to circumstances and help keep the prog-rock flag flying high. *Michael Heatley*

Walt Disco
Walt Disco
★★★
EMI North EMINV 04 (CD, LP)
Indie anthems from young Glaswegians



Now three albums into a career which has spanned the 2020s, Glasgow's cheekily named Walt Disco are like a pick'n'mix of gothic art-rock styles from through the ages. One appropriate musical comparison is Editors in their early days, for all that songs like Lies and Don't Do This Alone emulate the anthemic, festival-ready guitar wind-tunnel of groups like Echo and the Bunnymen and the Cure, while the clanking, industrial Talking Heads grind of My Body Knows When To Run, Look Out For Me's spectral, murky hymnal or the trans-affirmative My Body's Still Mine indicate more esoteric sonic fascinations. Jocelyn Si's voice is the centrepiece throughout, an expressive, dramatic baritone which calls to mind Edwyn Collins, Lloyd Cole or Stephin Merritt. *David Pollock*

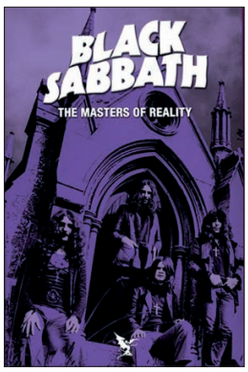
Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan
Industrial Growth
★★★★
Castles In Space CIS 216 LP (LP)
Bleak and beautiful electronica



Originally written as part of a suite commissioned by the 2024 *Roadburn* festival in Tilburg, *Industrial Growth* has been developed in studio and on tour, resulting in Gordon Chapman-Fox's bleakest work to date. By taking the name Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan, Chapman-Fox's electronica has always come with an inherent melancholia; an encapsulation of the extinction of the hope of 50s and 60s Britain. This is underlined by the synth stabs that close Industrial Unrest, which sound like wrecking balls destroying a once-utopian structure, while the minimal bleeping of Warrington Bank Quay evokes a late night *sur le quai* on the town's principal railway station. This glacial yet frequently beautiful music suggests the dark poetry of urban desolation. Recommended. *Daryl Easlea*

NEXT MONTH
Simple Minds Queen
Flaming Lips Joe Strummer
Chvrches Shed Seven

Books



Black Sabbath – The Masters Of Reality
Black Sabbath and Ross Halfin

★★★★

Rufus Stone, £99

No ISBN, 538 pages

Beautifully presented photographic history of Osbourne-era Sabs

Subtitled "Why Black Sabbath Matter", *The Masters Of Reality* is a sumptuous coffee table affair curated by photographer Ross Halfin with additional words from Geoff Barton and Dave Ling and an introduction by Billy Corgan. It starts pretty much at the beginning, with some vintage shots from the early Earth days before the band decided on something more sinister and borrowed a new name from a cinema poster (a reproduction of which also graces the book). Odd bits of memorabilia sprinkled through the pages help set the context, and if there's a criticism it's that there's conceivably too many offstage photos when the attraction is really shots of Sabbath in full flight live.

But this is a book perhaps more about Ozzy Osbourne than Sabbath *per se*, and after the coverage of the 1978 *Never Say Die* tour and photos of the singer waving runner beans at the camera, it fast-forwards to the 1997 re-union dates before romping onwards to last year's *Back To The Beginning* finale. The four original members all get to say their piece, and if you want to know why Sabbath matter – spoiler alert – Butler explains it's because "if you believe in yourself – or selves – then no matter what life throws at you, so long as you have that unbreakable belief you will succeed…" A point well made. *John Tucker*

The Motel: High Times In 90s Ibiza
Claire Manumission

★★★★★

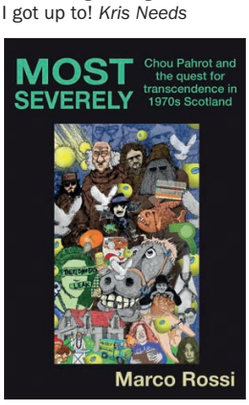
Velocity Press, £25

ISBN 9781805780144, 448 pages

White Isle fever! Paradise found at the world's most infamous niterie

Opening in a converted brothel for Ibiza's 1998 summer season, the Manumission Motel swiftly became the most infamous hotbed of sex, drugs and acid house in partying history, DJs and staffers staying in its 13 all-white rooms that doubled as the recreational domicile of the biggest (and most notorious) club in the world. As host/DJ of Manumission's 'Insane Asylum' back room that first month, this writer remembers the party starting on Monday evening as six New York strippers called the Pink Pussies put on their show in the pink Motel bar before joining 10,000 revellers at the main club, continuing through Tuesday with silly string, sombreros and DJ Alfredo at Carry On at Space. Going on for 15 weeks, the cast included Irvine Welsh, Howard Marks, Fatboy Slim, Zoe Ball, Jade Jagger and many more.

Influenced by living in NYC, Mike and Claire McKay started Manumission to take the city's no-holds-barred club spirit to wild, pre-gentrification Ibiza. Although the Motel briefly continued, 1998 was its barely believable peak. Recounted in eloquent detail, Claire's astonishing story comes drenched in drugs, debauchery and defiance until becoming the *Fear And Loathing* for hedonistic 90s clubbing, inevitably getting quite dark, excellently capturing an era when clubbing was still selfie-free fun, all boundaries crushed and excess precedents set never to be equalled. It's also fascinating finding out what I got up to! *Kris Needs*



Most Severely: Chou Pahrot And The Quest For Transcendence In 1970s Scotland
Marco Rossi

★★★★

Kennedy & Boyd, £20

ISBN 9781849212687, 336 pages

Cult Scots have their story told

Chou Pahrot (pronounced Chow Parrot) only released one 7" EP in 1978 and a live album the following year. They've been largely forgotten by everyone besides those fortunate enough to witness their incendiary live performances during the era.

Perhaps their most ardent enthusiast was musician and journalist Marco Rossi. From spotty schoolboy pinned to the wall agog in Greenock pubs when he should have been tucked up in bed, he remained under their spell until their demise in 1980.

In others' hands this story, even with full band involvement, would inevitably crash and burn, but Rossi's genius – aside from writing like an angel – is to recreate in extraordinarily vivid detail, time and place. What we are gifted with, then, is far more than a bio of an obscure and uncompromising band from half a century ago. It's also part-autobiography – it's furiously funny – and offers a fresh perspective on the punk/prog culture wars (to which the 'Pahrots' remained defiantly oblivious). Most of all, however, it is a love poem to the 70s itself – that strange dark and mysterious decade. Stuffed to the brim with photos, and band memorabilia, as well as a comprehensive gigography, this is a beautiful book which should help to reawaken interest in Scotland's best kept musical secret. *Johnnie Johnstone*

The Third Eye: Early Photographs
George Harrison

★★★★

Penguin, £45

ISBN 9781529976052, 352 pages

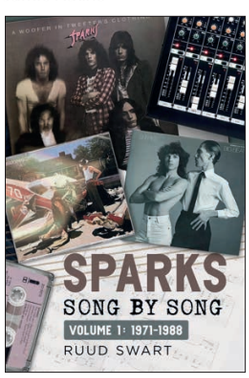
Dark (room) Horse

"George was not shy about filming people going about their day," Olivia Harrison writes of her husband in her foreword to *The Third Eye*, "Let me put it this way: his camera etiquette was non-existent. Yours would be, too, if your every move had been stalked and snapped."

That sense of the camera giving Harrison a way to escape and investigate runs throughout this collection of his photography, which mostly runs from a solo trip to visit his sister in Benton, Illinois, in September 1963 to snaps of his beloved Friar Park estate in the late 60s.

Much like Paul McCartney's 2023 collection, *Eye Of The Storm*, Harrison's photos offer an intimate perspective on well-worn stories, making them feel personal: John Lennon sleepily peering over a plane seat on the flight to New York that changed everything for them; goofing around during the making of *Help!*. But it's not all Beatlemania. Shots of people and nature encountered on his travels are intimate, unfussy and playful; all strange angles, unposed candour and fish-eye lenses. They're photos by a gifted young person in a rapidly changing world that seem to say, "Well, why *should* we do things the old way?"

With contributions from literary big guns – Colm Tóibín's introduction expertly sets the scene while George Saunders' afterword reflects serenely on what it all means – and pithy context at the beginning of each chapter, *The Third Eye* offers another angle on the greatest pop story of all time. Sick of them yet? No, not us, either. *Jamie Atkins*



Sparks - Song By Song, Volume 1 1971-1988
Ruud Swart

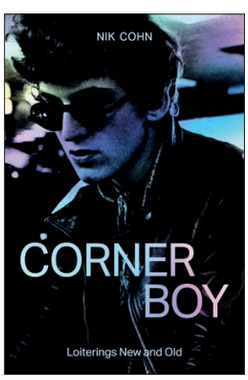
★★★★

Fonthill, £22

ISBN 9781036152321, 224 pages

Intricately detailed encyclopaedia of the Mael brothers' 70s and 80s

Almost 60 years into Sparks' career, the genius of Ron and Russell Mael is attracting new admirers more rapidly than ever. But each new fan, confronted with a daunting catalogue of 26 studio albums, plus assorted operas, film soundtracks and side projects, could be forgiven for finding it somewhat bewildering. As a guide through this artpop jungle, Ruud Swart's credentials cannot be rivalled. A major figure in Sparks fandom, he was the founder of the FanMael website in 1998 and, from 1979 to 1990, editor of Sparkszine *Propaganda*. The Dutch writer's tone can be somewhat dry, but his command of the topic is total. Arranged in chronological order, every Sparks song from the era in question is examined, and there are enlightening insights (for example, a comparison between Sparks' semi-spoken 1985 masterpiece Change to Peggy Lee's Is That All There Is?), amusing anecdotes (the time the Maels pranked RCA by delivering a video for Funny Face consisting of four minutes of hardcore porn), and satisfying detours (the story of the wonderful 1979 album *Is There More To Life Than Dancing?* by Sparks protegee Noël). If there are two halves to Sparks' career, this book ain't big enough for both of them. A second volume from Swart, covering the duo's later works, is on the way. *Simon Price*



Corner Boy
Nik Cohn

★★★★

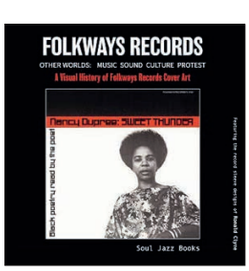
ZE Books, £25

ISBN 979-8988670148, 352 pages

Career-spanning anthology from the original rock journalist

The 70s are often touted as the golden age of music journalism, though there's gold to be had right throughout the career of Nik Cohn from the early 60s to the present. *Corner Boy* is a fascinating trawl through the life and times of a writer who grew up in Derry during the Troubles and went on a series of geographicals to New Orleans, New York and Newcastle, to name but a few places. When Cohn starts out, access to rock royalty like The Beatles and the Stones isn't mediated by PR and it's all the more colourful for it. Indeed, Cohn ends up getting up Mick Jagger's nose when he encourages The Rolling Stones to split up towards the end of the 60s to protect their legacy, a wish that is yet to be fulfilled. Later, he becomes a documenter of the disco scene, making a small fortune as the writer of the story that became *Saturday Night Fever*. He admits here that his writing is looser because he spent so much time strung out, though this writer detects no discernible drop in quality. Drug busts and tales of hanging out with junkie ex-boxing champions make for decadent, delightful reading. *Jeremy Allen*

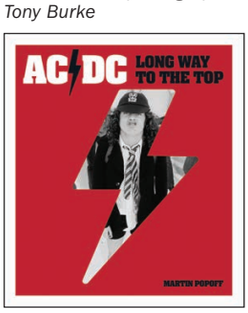
Since Forever
Jeff Ament
★★★
Ten Club, £74.99
ISBN 9788234105462, 272 pages
Snapshots for the jammy few
Photo collections are usually pretty self-indulgent and/or for fans only, but aside from some highly skippable anecdotes about his dreams, Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament does an effective job of chronicling his band's early days in this book. There's some inevitable nostalgia, but it doesn't detract: as he notes in his accompanying captions of shots of a 1992 Pearl Jam, Alice In Chains, Soundgarden and Red Hot Chili Peppers show, "It would have been a good life if it had all stopped after January 2" that year. The value here is for fans who want to see reams of alternate cover shots, behind-the-scenes and tourbus images, because there's not a lot of live stuff, presumably as Ament himself was taking the pictures. Even casual fans will be interested in images of Pearl Jam at the White House, chatting it up with Bill Clinton, as well as Ament's travel photos. As he accurately notes, "We saw the insides of way too many airports." Not sure if anyone really needs to shell out over £70 for this, to be honest, but what the heck, it'll look good on the coffee table. *Joel McIver*



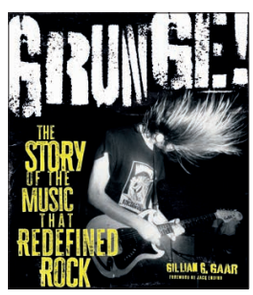
Folkways Records : A Visual History Of Folkways Records Cover Art
Stuart Baker
★★★★
Soul Jazz Books/Hanover, £39.99
ISBN 9781916359857, 208 pages
Presenting the art of historic record label
Founded in 1948 by Moses Asch, a Polish émigré living in New York City, Folkways Records came about when Albert Einstein encouraged Asch to document the "sounds of the world". It made Folkways the first 'world music' label with 2,168 titles – all still in print.

This 12" x 12" book features hundreds of iconic record sleeves many designed by Ronald Clyne, the primary designer at Folkways. "At Folkways, the art on an album cover was a portal as what was to be found inside," says Maureen Loughran, Director and Curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. For Bob Dylan: "Folkways Records. That was the label I wanted to be on. They put out all the great records."

Featuring album covers of traditional US music, blues, cajun, gospel, jazz, modern composers like John Cage, Charles Ives and Edgard Varese; folklore collections from Harry Smith and Sam Charters; and further afield sounds and music from Equatorial New Guinea; Flathead Indians; Tropical Rain Forest's, Aboriginal music, Chinese classical music, calypso's, sea shanties, drums from Nigeria, the sounds of insects; children's street games; electronic music; civil rights music and beat poets – if it made a noise Folkways recorded it. This book is a veritable treasure trove, with detailed essays and historical photographs. *Tony Burke*



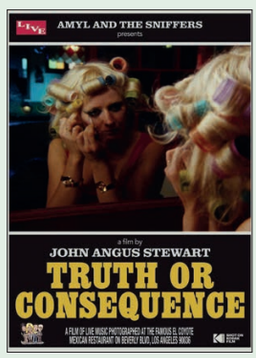
AC/DC – Long Way To The Top
Martin Popoff
★★★★
Quarto / Motorbooks, £14.99
ISBN 9798317902308, 192 pages
Updated volume on rock's titans
Essentially a revamp of Martin Popoff's 2023 outing *AC/DC At 50*, *Long Way To The Top* examines the lengthy career of the legendary band once dubbed by one wag "the chunder from down under", through the lens of 50 cornerstone moments. So, for example, chapter one starts – logically – with the band's formation, chapter three introduces Bon Scott and chapter 25 discusses their performance at Rock In Rio in January 1985. Given this approach, every album goes under the microscope, moments like the mighty *Back In Black* going 10 x platinum are celebrated and the book concludes with a comprehensive album discography. In this revised version the final twenty pages or so have been revamped and reworked so that things come up to date with the *Power Up* tour (and the so-claimed 'accidental' demolition of the Young family's childhood home) while still keeping within the magic 50 chapters of the original book. As such, if you've got *AC/DC At 50* there's no great reason to pick this one up; that said, at just £14.99 for such a lovingly illustrated and exceptionally informative large format volume, it's really a hard bargain to turn your back on. *John Tucker*



Grunge!
Gillian G. Garr
★★★★
Quarto / Motorbooks, £28
ISBN 9781577156291, 208 pages
As it happened, by someone who was there
Whether you subscribe to the book's subtitle, "the story of the music that redefined rock", or see grunge as just another pothole in the bumpy road of rock'n'roll, there's little doubt that whatever blew up out of Seattle as the 80s became the 90s did, for a time at least, completely dominate the heavy music scene. And Gillian G. Garr was there from the start, writing for the city's longstanding music magazine *The Rocket*, and so saw – and heard – the whole thing reveal itself firsthand.

With some 20 books under her belt, Garr knows how to create something masterful and *Grunge!* is no exception. Expertly written and analysed, it's both a historical narrative and a love letter to the city, its musicians and the music they created; and while Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Alice In Chains and Soundgarden are of course the heavy hitters Garr picks up on bands who were early influencers and digs into the many acts who – inevitably – fell by the wayside. Insightful and at times heartbreaking the illuminative text is backed up with numerous photos and memorabilia, bright yellow breakout boxes expand on key events, releases and items of interest (the story of the fake 'grunge slang' is hilarious), and short introduction by producer and self-confessed "professional noisemonger" Jack Endino adds some early context. *John Tucker*

Films



Amyl & The Sniffers Presents: Truth Or Consequence
★★★
Cinemas/Online
Punk livewires on a country bender
Amy Taylor's good-time Oz rockers unleash their inner cowpokes on this short and filthy concert film. Staking out a corner of LA's El Coyote Mexican restaurant before an invited audience in 2025, the quartet gleefully dish out country-fied versions of their songs in rollicking flurries of C-bombs and spaghetti-punk swagger.

With Taylor grinning ear-to-ear under dingy dive-bar spotlights, hoedown opener Big Dreams proves how well the Sniffers' pell-mell pitch adapts to country. Bailing On Me keeps up the momentum, galloping like a wild horse as Taylor hoists a megaphone for the vocals. The band are caught exchanging barroom banter between songs, their convo ranging from naughty nun jokes to tall stories of on-the-road mischief. Meanwhile, their deceptive range as a band impresses. Declan Mehrtens' killer guitar work underpins the reverberant doomy twang of Facts, while Caltex Cowgirl is surprisingly touching. As riotous set closer Bag Of Cocaine keeps their potty-mouthed party band rep freshly fuelled, you're left thinking they should saddle up and take this rhinestone shakedown show on the road. *Kevin Harley*

Take It Or Leave It
★★★
BFI, Cinemas/Blu-ray
Madness at the movies
Shot for peanuts in about a week, this 1981 Madness film brims with can-do charm and mischief. Billed as a "Nutty Stuff" production, the scrappy self-portrait – lovingly restored by the BFI – mixes larky improvisation and performance with the band's self-portrayed origin story, making up in authentic character for any lack of gloss.

It starts in a flurry of flatcaps and smoking, the band caught loitering in airports, signing autographs, snogging partners and kicking balls about. Soon we time-travel back to Camden, 1976, a period of penury, pubs and jams in tiny bedrooms, shot in black and white. It always rains, Chris Foreman has the grimmest line manager ever and the Tube looks disgusting.

Intra-band punch-ups erupt as Madness try to nail down a covers set, but an *Oz*-like shift to colour heralds a boost in assurance. Soon, prospective managers tell them they're "superb, fantastic, great". The bandmembers aren't "superb" actors – they play themselves, not always successfully – but it's a thrill to see them revisit how they became a "great" band. After a montage of goofing around on the Tube, a Dublin Castle gig captures Madness in their youthful glory, One Step Beyond and Bed & Breakfast Man lifting a tight-packed audience off their feet. As an exercise in nostalgia, it's a blast. *Kevin Harley*

Pulp: What Do You Do For An Encore?
★★★
MUBI, Cinemas/Streaming
Could have gone to see a film…
"This film is going to be like me at a jumble sale," says Jarvis Cocker. Duly mixing concert movie with documentary self-portrait, director Garth Jennings' film is a grab bag of many parts, all likeable, with a caveat: only about half of Pulp's 2025 02 Arena set features in the mix.

Pulp-heads will recognise the format: in 2014, Florian Habicht's docu-hybrid *Pulp: A Film About Life, Death & Supermarkets* spliced footage from a Sheffield gig with interviews, footage of fishmongers and more. *Sing/Sing 2* film-maker and pop-promo veteran Jennings's marvellous widescreen direction and Cocker's droll, detailed voiceover help make *…Encore* a superior film, though losing half the gig feels like a missed chance to capture the resurgent Pulp in their full elder glory.

What you do get is terrific, with clever staging, an expanded band line-up and Cocker unleashing his battery of age-defying moves in a hell of a show. Disco 2000 projects a giddy edge of hysteria, This Is Hardcore a lush perv-Bond splendour. The docu-matter digs deep into the archives and adds laughs aplenty (Cocker's mum is a hoot), without neglecting the emotions. A tribute to Cocker's spiritual twin Steve Mackey is hugely affecting, while a decades-spanning montage of Common People performances is an ingenious flourish. Like items found at that jumble sale, the result is a flawed treasure. *Kevin Harley*

Singles

By JR Moores



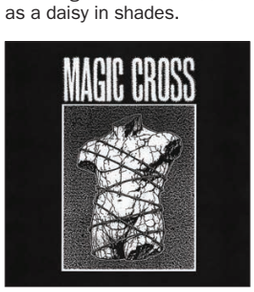
Xeeland
Meon Hill / Wytch Elm
Skewnote / SN 202610 (7")

Under his Xeeland alias, Jason Stoll's latest release takes inspiration from historical murders with possible ties to the occult. First up is Meon Hill, named after the place where Charles Walton's body was discovered in February 1945. Did black magic play a role in his violent demise? Was Walton a human sacrifice? An innocent victim of a pagan ritual? Whatever the reality, the case would inform folk-horror movies for decades to come. And now this track. Suitably, Meon Hill would work well on a scary soundtrack. Take note of Xeeland, Ben Wheatley. There's a new Clint Mansell in town. Meon Hill throbs urgently for four minutes, with echoes of John Carpenter and disciples of his music like Umberto. Its effect is so intense, in fact, that immediately after hearing it I ran through the nearest wooded area, half-naked and smeared in my own blood, screaming in panic, until a stick pierced through my foot and I fell, slipping out of consciousness just as some masked figures emerged slowly out of the mist. The next piece, Wych Elm, refers to the remains of an unidentified woman that were discovered inside a tree near Hagley, in 1943. Graffiti sprang up thereafter asking variations on the question "Who put Bella in the Wych Elm?" Musicians who've drawn on this grisly story include Margarita Witch Cult, Greenlady and, more surprisingly, Deep Blue Something. Xeeland's contribution shares little with Breakfast At Tiffany's, mercifully. It's more in the vein of foreboding *Twin Peaks* melancholy. I'm writing about it from the sickbed where I am resting. I'm fine, by the way. The troupe in masks were a local historical reenactment society who often rehearse out of the way, in the forest, where it tends to be quiet. They bandaged my appendage and took me to the safety of the local public house. The landlord's daughter is very friendly. However, I have told her I am due to be wed. Every other patron I meet here seems to be inordinately concerned about the harvest…



His Lordship / Chuck Berry
Nadine
Chiswick CHISW 7002 (7")

October 2026 marked 100 years since the birth of Chuck Berry. What would the world have been like without his contribution? Quieter and significantly duller, you'd have thought. To mark the occasion, rockabilly rattlers His Lordship have recorded a whole album of Berry's songs and showcased here is their take on Nadine from 1964. They punk up the tempo, adding extra garage fuzz. Singer and guitarist James Walbourne yelps his way through it, as would Howlin' Pelle Almqvist from The Hives. The band briefly break things down on the "wayward summer breeze" verse. Walbourne takes his hands of the guitar for a moment and whispers over the beats, before they kick back in again for the final loud and rapid chorus. On the other side of the 7" is Berry's original, still sounding as cool and fresh as a daisy in shades.



Magic Cross
Magic Cross
Caligari CAL 228 (Cass)

There are four songs on the debut EP from this Florida outfit. Each one is as ugly as the next. The quartet purport to fuse punk, noise rock and black metal, although the low-mixed shriek of the vocals places it most firmly in the latter category, as do titles such as Holy Bile. The riffs are powerful as well as murky. The drums sound as though the whole kit was covered in damp cardboard before anyone pressed "record". There are some moderately engaging changes in speed. The stand-out track is the final one, Hellhole, because it whips along so readily. Overall, the material doesn't conspicuously separate itself from the leathered crowd. Maybe increase the punk or noise rock quotas, then. Or do more of what Hellhole was doing. Whatever that was. I wonder whether it's the punkiest or even the poppiest piece overall, relatively speaking.

Perzeptiverda mpfkesselqualm tbesinnlich & Edward Ka-Spel
Cold Calling On The Spirit Line
Synaptic Cliffs SC 033 (12")

Try saying this artist's name after a couple of margaritas. It's an alter-ego of producer PDQB who also claims to be a time-traveling alien parasite. One that manages to run its own record label, no less. You'd think an extraterrestrial organism might struggle to get a basic handle on the admin involved in such an endeavour. Could be one of those super-intelligent beings, of course, for which no Excel spreadsheet or licencing agreement is too confusingly convoluted. Also appearing is the possible human once known Edward Sharp, co-founder of The Legendary Pink Dots. Mostly he talks rather than sings. Over industrial soundscapes that could indeed be transmitting from deep space, Mr Ka-Spel seems to be expressing his contempt of politicians and the pointlessness of the electoral process. Following Not In My Name, A Shared Space ruminates on isolation, alienation and misanthropy. Then midway through its narrative, something weird happens. As such, it feels like a mercifully short and slightly ambiguous audio episode of *The Twilight Zone* or *Black Mirror*. On Side 2, the music pumps more playfully and Ka-Spel croons through heavy reverb, an effect that evokes Marvin The Paranoid Android if he MC'd at the interstellar discotheque.

The Dear Boys
I Hope You Know How Fucking Cool You Are / Procrastination
Dear No cat no (Cass)

At first, I mistakenly thought The Dear Boys were being sarcastic, on account of the repeated swear word and their general indie-punk delivery. But no. This is not a chastising boomer moment along the lines of "they spend all their money on smashed avocados instead of a mortgage and I'll be damned if I politely respect their pronoun choices". The song is dedicated to the younger generation(s) and it is genuinely in thrall to how fantastic they are. The kids themselves might not even recognise the extent of this coolness. Well, they should. The Dear Boys empathise with their plights. They celebrate their attitudes, opinions, perspectives and behaviours. They have written an anthem that revels in the F-word (ie the future). Procrastination, meanwhile, is in the key of jangly self-help. Its verses advise the avoidance of crippling indecision through trusting one's instincts, going with the flow and heading into things with the necessary confidence. Again, I believe it is sung with sincerity. So much so, the jaunty ode spurred me on to file this column a good two hours ahead of its deadline. Talk about poise and self-belief. There's no stopping me now. You ain't seen nothing yet. I've got my eyes on the Pulitzer Prize for Pithy Singles Reporting.



Berry good show: His Lordship

Photo: (His Lordship) Paul Kelly

Bed Maker
The Mark
Discord DIS 203v (7")

As the younger sister of Ian and Alec, Amanda MacKaye is part of an illustrious Washington, DC dynasty. Ian was in Minor Threat and Fugazi; Alec was in Untouchables, The Faith, The Warmers and more. Holding her own as promoter, label owner and band member, Amanda has been in Desiderata, Routineers and now Bed Maker. The Mark is rooted by Arthur Noll's deep and melodic basslines. Jeff Barsky's guitar strings scratch around the edges and leave gaps where required, as Fugazi often did themselves because they took after Gang Of Four. If that description makes it sound as if The Mark is dated, this earthy post-punk style of rock never goes out of fashion and the track has its similarities to newer acts on the scene, such as Chicago's Ganser. The lyrics address women's invisibility on this patriarchal planet. In a way, they echo that old recurring *Fast Show* sketch in which Arabella Weir's character was ignored by all the men around her and left exclaiming, "Can any of you actually hear me?" How little society changes. The B-side, What Boy Where, is somewhat funkier than The Mark, yet still angular with it. It's fierce and angry, again, and it threatens to fall apart every so often which is always a thrill. Something about the main, returning lick is veering near to Franz Ferdinand. Reining themselves back towards the scrawl, Bed Maker have more dignity than to write their answer to 2005's Do You Do You Do You Want To Do Wah Diddy Diddy Doo Doo.

SINGLES OF THE YEAR

Orcutt Shelley Miller Yow – Hot Head / A Man Needs A Maid

Alexis Taylor & Mike Simonetti – I See A Darkness / Perfect Kiss

Bastard – Doctor Gong / Comfort

Say She She – Cut & Rewind /Disco Life

Massive Attack X Tom Waits – Boots On The Ground

Cat Power – Redux

Chat Pile – Masks

No Peeling – EP2

Bed Maker – The Mark

Lydia Lunch And The Art Gray Noizz Quintet – Permafrost / Mass Production



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Across The Tracks – 'On busiest corner of hippest city, open seven days. Thousands of rarities in the shop that aren't on the net. All genres, including classical and new CD promos, nothing mundane. Collections bought.' **110 Gloucester Road, Brighton BN1 4AF**. Tel: 01273 677906. edfrombrighton@tiscali.co.uk www.acrossthetracksrecords.com

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Casbah Records – 'Open every day from 10.30am to 6.00pm. Come with me to the Casbah where you'll find a fab selection of second-hand/new vinyl, new CDs, DVDs, books and memorabilia. Most genres catered for in south-east London's coolest shop! Key areas: classic rock, soul, punk and indie.' **320-322 Creek Road, Greenwich, London SE10 9SW**. Tel: 0208858 1964. tony.davis@ntlworld.com www.casbahrecords.co.uk

Collectors Record Centre, Guildford – 'Retailers of rare records for 35 years. Our stocks exceed 300,000 45s, albums, CDs & DVDs. Mail order or call in for a collecting experience.' **89 F Woodbridge Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4QD.** Tel: 01483 568100

Grammar School Records – 'We stock 25,000 LPs, including 8,000 soundtracks, 5,000 classical, 12,000 rock, pop, jazz, folk, blues, country, easy, reggae, spoken, plus 20,000 45s, 1000s of CDs, DVDs, 78s, 8-tracks, dealer discounts.' **The Old Grammar School, High Street, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7JF.** Tel: 01797 222752. sales@backtrackrye.com, www.grammarschoolrecords.com

Helter Skelter Records – 'Quality second-hand records and CDs bought and sold. Established in 1994. Pay us a visit when in Chichester.' **44 The Hornet, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7JG**. Tel: 01243 771744.

Intense Records #1 – 'Dance music specialists: new & second-hand vinyl & CDs plus DJ & PA equipment.' **33/34 Viaduct Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1TS**. Tel: 01245 976027 Tel. 01245 347372 www.intenserecords.com shop@intenserecords.co.uk

Intense Records #2 – 'Chelmsford's only independent record store selling new and second-hand vinyl and CDs, all genres catered for: rock, pop, indie, dance and more, and DJ and hi-fi equipment.' **Unit 11 Meadows Shopping Centre, 42-47 High Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6FD.** Tel: 01245 976027 www.intenserecords.com shop@intenserecords.co.uk

Music Mania – 'Selling quality vinyl – rare, new and used, covering all genres. Based in Worthing town centre, near Brighton.' **21 West Buildings, Worthing, BN11 3BS.** Tel: 01903 203489. mobile: 07912664576. email: help.musicmania@gmail.com

Not Just A Record Shop – 'Vintage vinyl store, all genres, large stock of new and second-hand vinyl, CDs and DVDs from £1. We also specialise in retro, new and old items, new vinyl added most days. We also buy! Open 7 days a week, Mon-Sat 10-6 and Sunday 10-5.' **188 Seaside, BN22 7QR** Tel: 01323 730037. sumer110@hotmail.com

On Broadway – 'Open Wed–Sun 12–6. We stock R&B, r'n'r, blues, indie, power pop, soul, northern, garage, funk, reggae, mod, Latin and boogaloo on 7"/12" LPs at competitive prices. On vinyl and CD thousands of 7" from 50s–80s.' **161 Dawes Road, Fulham, London SW6 7EE**. Tel: 0207 385 6593. vinylphonic@googlemail.com / www.onbroadway161.com

Out On The Floor – 'From ska to punk rock, reggae & soul, reissues & originals. We buy & sell records – that's what we do.' **10 Inverness Street, Camden, London NW1 7HJ.** Tel: 0207 485 9958/07961315874. jajukebox@hotmail.com

Planet of Sounds – 'New shop now open in Haslemere, Surrey selling new and second-hand records. Visit our spacious store for a super selection of LP's, 7",12" and used CDs.' **109 Weyhill, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1HS** planetofsounds.co.uk. paul@planetofsounds.co.uk

Raven Retail – 'Specialises in punk/rock/indie: selling vinyl, CDs, DVDs and memorabilia (Est 1988).' **74 Bromley Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5NP**. Tel: 0208 289 6941, sales@ravenretail.co.uk Facebook: Raven Retail – Music

Rock Bottom Records – 'Rock Bottom Records – 41 years old and continuing to sell CDs/DVDs/LPs/singles/books and mugs. Both new and pre-owned. Open 10-5 Mon–Sun (except Weds). Come down and see us!' **37-38 Harbour Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AJ.** Tel: 01227 277438. mikehoare06@aol.com

Russell's Records – 'New shop in Hampshire, come in and see us and our rapidly increasing/changing stock of good quality used albums/singles. Browse and enjoy our friendly service and free tea/coffee.' **Unit 12, The Hardies, High Street, Bordon, Hampshire GU35 0AY. Tel:** 01420 477221. watersidepixels@hotmail.co.uk www.russells-records.co.uk

Second Scene Records – 'Independent vinyl-only record shop in Watford – a five-minute walk from Bushey station. A vast selection – thousands of second-hand, original only, vinyl records. All genres and budgets. New stock daily, rare records always available. Bulk and trade customers welcome. Open Wed-Sat 10-5pm'. **125 Pinner Road, Watford, WD19 4EJ.** Tel:01923800635. www.secondscene.co.uk

Sister Ray – 'The last true all-genre record store in Soho. We have an unbeatable mix of CDs, vinyl and rarities. Music lovers from around the world come to us for a great shopping experience.' **75 Berwick Street, London W1F 8RP.** Tel: 0207 734 3297. sales@sisterray.co.uk www.sisterray.co.uk

Slipped Discs (Steyning) – 'Located in picturesque Steyning High Street. Quality vinyl bought and sold. New and pre-loved records, used CDs and collectible cassettes. In-store vinyl flattening and professional record cleaning services are also available. **58a High Street, Steyning, BN44 3RD** slippeddiscssteyning@gmail.com Tel: 01903 816798

Spin Sounds – 'An independent record store offering a frequently updated and curated selection of new and used vinyl and CDs spanning all genres.' **78 South Street, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2 HD.** Tel: 01306500551. Web: Spinsounds.com Email: music@spinsounds.com

The Little Record Shop – 'Voted in Top 10 *Guardian* London record shops. Selling rock, reggae, jazz, African, thousands of LPs & 45s. Rare records too. 95 per cent second-hand. Open 1-6.30 Tues, Fri, Sat & Sun. Records bought. I don't sell on eBay or on the 'net, only from the shop.' **43 Tottenham Lane, London N8 9BD.** Tel: 07946412766. David@thelittlerecordshop.co.uk

The Rare Record Company – 'The Rare Record Company is an online store that trades in obscure and rare vinyl & CDs, helping you fill the gaps in your shelves.' **Little Martins, Langham, Colchester, CO4 5PY** Tel: 07789 901567 rarerecord.co.uk/shop/

The Record Shop Ltd – 'We stock a large range of second-hand & new vinyl plus guitars, CDs, DVDs, sheet music & accessories. We buy vinyl & instruments (all types).' **37 Hill Avenue, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5BX.** Tel: 01494 433311. therecordshop@btconnect.com www.therecordshopltd.co.uk

The Sound Machine – 'Based in central Reading, one minute from Reading station, we are the town's longest-established independent collectors' record shop. Wide range of new and second-hand vinyl and CDs. Collections bought & sold.' **24 Harris Arcade, Station Rd, Reading RG1 1DN.** Tel: 0118 957 5075. info@thesoundmachine.uk.com www.thesoundmachine.uk.com

Time Machine Records – 'Now in new larger shop offering an internet-free vinyl experience with a big reputation for quality and rarity. Rock and pop memorabilia also in stock. Open every Thursday, Friday & Saturday from 10am-5pm.' **Almshouse Arcade, 19 The Hornet, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7JL.** Tel: 07900142718. harry_boulter@hotmail.co.uk

Truck Music – 'A huge selection of brand-new CDs, DVDs and vinyl, plus around 5,000 pre-owned titles. We are also proud stockists and installers of Sonos streaming systems.' **Woolgate Centre, Witney OX28 6AP and 101 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1HU** (formerly Rapture). Tel: 01993 700567 www.truckmusic.store

Vinyl Revival – 'is a new independent record store in the beautiful market town of Petersfield in Hampshire, we opened the doors to our very old shop (cira 1690) in April 2025. Original pressings reign supreme in store: Rare find LPs, 7" & 12" singles, CDs, cassette tapes, DVDs, collectible items and a regular sales crate full of bargains. Fresh Tea & coffee available too'. **9 Dragon Street, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4JN. 07368-912213.**

SOUTH WEST

Red House Records – 'Established May 2013, our stock of both new and vintage vinyl has increased year on year. We now have one of the best selections in the area. All genres in store with specialist areas for Jazz, Prog, Metal & Reggae. Professional vinyl cleaning service plus accessories'. Find us within Holmes Music 21-23 Faringdon Road, Swindon, **SN1 5AR. Tel: 01793 526393 www.redhouserecords.co.uk info@redhouserecords.co.uk**

Red Rock Records – 'Packed with records, CDs, DVDs, rare videos and bargain vinyl room. Also posters, Blu-ray etc. Just off Poole High Street, by Coffee #1. **4, North Street, Poole BH15 1NX.** Tel: 01202 677793. wayneofafcb@msn.com www.amazon.co.uk/shops/redrockrecordspoole

Rocket Records – 'Independent record shop with over 40 years of collecting experience. Mostly second-hand vinyl, posters and memorabilia. Wide range of genres. Speciality sections include punk and metal. Vinyl collections bought. Friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Open 10.30-5 Wed–Sat'. **884 Wimborne Rd. Moordown, Bouremouth, BH9 2DR rocketrecords.co.uk – Tel: 01202 512762. info@rocketrecords.co.uk**

The Independent Record Shop – 'Our opening hours are bespoke to customer requirements via a successful extensive Whatsapp group so prior appointments important for polite newcomers.' **7 Shurdington Road, Cheltenham Spa GL53 0JB.** Tel: 07831 372642. info@theindependentrecordshop.co.uk www.theindependentrecordshop.co.uk

Vinyl Vault – 'We stock rare collectable vinyl and CDs. Prog, psych, folk, reggae, rock and pop.' **6 Cambray Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1JS.** Tel: 01242 227454. vinvault@aol.com www.vinyl-vault.co.uk

Wanted Records – 'Established September 2009 in central Bristol, we buy sell and trade quality vinyl LPs and singles from psych to reggae to hip-hop. We aim to pay the best prices and have the best stock – no CDs, DVDs, or Chris De Burgh. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.' **43 High Street, Bristol BS1 2AT.** Tel: 0117 9290524. info@wantedrecords.co.uk www.wantedrecords.co.uk

EAST ANGLIA & THE MIDLANDS

Back To Mono – 'Open Mon-Sat, 10-5.30 New shop (20 years' experience) specialising in new and quality used vinyl, 60s, psych, garage, rock, soul, jazz, etc. Collections or one-off items purchased.' **26 Guildhall street, Lincoln LN1 1TR.** Tel: 01522 537988. backtomonorecords@yahoo.co.uk, www.backtomonorecords.com

DD Music Geek – 'Independent music and pop culture shop dealing in new and pre-loved vinyl, merch, books, cassettes, CDs, magazines, comics, manga, games, gifts and much more!' **111 A, Bridge Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9J0** Tel: 07584281556 dave@ddmusicgeek.co.uk www.ddmusicgeek.co.uk

Head Records – '30 Years' experience. Huge range. Quality service. New & ltd releases. All genres. second-hand. Record Store Day. CD, DVD, BR, Books, Merchandise.' **8 Lower Mall, Royal Priors Shopping Centre, Leamington Spa, CV32 4XU.** www.facebook.com/HEADLeamingtonSpa Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 10:30 to 16:30 www.Headrecords.co.uk. Tel 01926883421

Mister Tees – 'A large selection of music for all tastes. Vinyl and CD, specialists in Northern Soul and 60s, 70s plus merchandise including badges, patches etc (wholesale available). Established 30 years.' **65 Blackwell Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 2EL.** Tel: 01562 515291. terry@mrteerecords.co.uk

Rock On Records – 'Rock On stocks 96 per cent vinyl: over 12,000 7" singles 3,000+ collectable albums, also cassettes and a very few great CDs. AND rock'n'roll memorabilia! **4 All Saints Street, Stamford, Lincs PE9 2PA** Tel: 01780 755888. hopwilson@aol.com

Spiral Archive Records – 'New and used records and CDs. Punk, indie, rock, alternative, ska, reggae, soul, 50s, 60s. Wed-Fri 11-4pm/Sat 11-5pm.' **First Floor, 43 Hazelwood Road, Northampton. NN1 1LG** Tel: 07974885450. alex@spiralarchive.com ebay.co.uk/str/spiralarchiverecords

Stylus Records Limited – 'Independent retail-only record shop providing new and second-hand musical formats in Lichfield city centre. We do not sell online.' **Minster Pool Walk, Lichfield, WS13 6QT.** Tel: 07864 762 261. www.stylus-records.co.uk tim@stylus-records.co.uk

WALES

Derricks Music – 'Established 1956. We stock all types of music, specialising in rock, AOR, metal, prog and indie. We are also the main concert ticket outlet in West Wales incorporating Ticketmaster.' **221 Oxford Street, Swansea, West Glamorgan SA1 3BQ.** Tel: 01792 654226. derricks@eurotelemail.net www.derricksmusic.co.uk

Revibed Records – 'Established December 2021 in Wrexham town centre, we sell and trade vinyl and singles from all genres specialising in pre-loved vinyl at very competitive prices. We also have an extensive selection of band merch and posters. Regular gigs hosted within the store. Open: Mon-Sat 10-4, **Unit 2 North Arcade, Ty Pawb, Chester Street, Wrexham LL13 8BB.** revibedrecords@gmail.com Facebook/Instagram: @revibedrecords

VOD Music – 'Independent record shop in the town since 2009, new and used vinyl, CDs, hi-fi accessories, Rega stockist, RSD participators... Rock, psych, krautrock, reggae, electronic and more, alongside weekly releases…' **24 New Street, Mold, Flintshire CH7 1NZ.** Tel: 07904 688739 www.vodmusic.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Underground Solution – 'We're one of the longest surviving independent specialist record shops in Edinburgh, selling quality vinyl and audio gear in Scotland's capital since 1996. Everything from drum'n'bass to classic rock – there are stacks of wax to wade into, and countless tapes and CDs to get your ears round.' **9 Cockburn St, Edinburgh EH1 1BP**. Tel. 0131 226 2242 sales@undergroundsolution.com

NORTH

Grey 'N' Pink Collectors Records – 'Established for 40 years, we specialise in vinyl and CDs: rock'n'roll, 60s, blues, folk, reggae, indie, new wave and punk, to present-day rock and pop.' **57 Brook Street, Chester CH1 3DZ.** Tel: 0124 431 1921 info@greynpinkrecords.com

Just The Sound – 'Situated in the centre of Houghton-Le-Spring we stock a wide range of vinyl records, CDs, music DVDs and memorabilia. Easily accessible by car or bus.' **Unit 2 Lambton House, Newbottle Street, Houghton le Spring DH4 4AR.** Tel: 0191 447 0136

Replay Records – 'Established in 1999. Stocking new and pre-owned CDs and records. Shop open Tues-Sat 9.30–5.30.' **62-64 Freeman Street, Grimsby DN32 7AG**. Tel: 01472 351125.replay-records@btconnect.com

Reflex – 'Classic indie high-street store, catering to all musical tastes, fads & fashions. Fully geared up online with worldwide mail order. Specialist in new release vinyl on 7" and LP.' **23 Nun Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5AG.** Tel: 0191 2603246 reflexrecordshop.com

RPM Discs– 'A traditional record shop specialising in quality value-for-money second-hand vinyl. CDs and new vinyl also stocked. Home to one of the UK's largest singles-only online shops.' **7A The Shop, Front Street, Wingate, County Durham, TS28 5AA.** Tel: 07711 450045, sales@rpmdiscs.co.uk www.45rpmdiscs.co.uk

Skeleton Records – 'Established in 1971, we carry over 150,000 new and used LPs, singles, CDs, tapes, videos and DVDs. All types of music catered for – we buy your unwanted vinyl, CDs, DVDs.' **11 Oxton Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 2QQ.** Tel: 0151 6539 003. skrecs@hotmail.co.uk www.skeletonrecords.co.uk

Spinning Discs Sheffield – 'An independent record shop where music lovers can meet, relax, drink coffee and browse new, reissue and select second-hand vinyl in a friendly community environment.' **1 Lees Hall Avenue, Meersbrook, S8 9JE** Tel. 0114 258 2387. contact@spinningdiscsheffield.co.uk, www.spinningdiscssheffield.co.uk

The Musical Box– 'Liverpool's oldest record shop since 1947, owned by a family business spanning four generations. We take pride in our longevity and extensive history, having been featured in several TV programmes and documentaries. We are renowned for being a "hidden gem" and specialise in new old vinyl LPs, 7" singles, CDs, 78s & cassettes.' **457 West Derby Road, Tuebrook, Liverpool L6 4BL** Tel: 01512633845. musicalbox@hotmail.co.uk www.instagram.com/themusicalboxrecordshop www.facebook.com/themusicalboxrecordshop

Vinyl Tap – 'New & used, vinyl & CDs. New releases, indies, exclusives, dinked editions. Over 150,000 items in stock online and available in store. Can't find in the shop, please ask!' **42 John William Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1ER.** Tel: 01484 845999 www.vinyltap.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

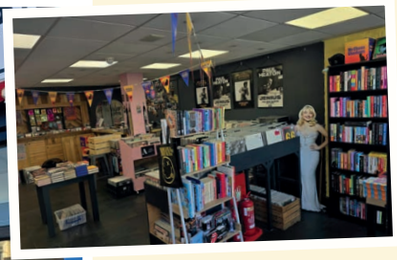
Vanilla Records – 'Thousands of quality pre-owned and new records and CDs nestled upstairs in an ice cream parlour. Rock, roots, indie, punk, psych, wave, blues, jazz. On Facebook and Instagram. Collections bought.' **4 William Street, Cookstown, Co Tyrone, BT80 8ND** 07903249850 www.vanillarecords.co.uk vanillarecordsireland@gmail.com

OVERSEAS

Gibert Joseph Musique – 'France's biggest independent record shop for more than 35 years.' 34 Boulevard Saint Michel, 75006 Paris, France. Gibertjoseph.com Tel: +33 44 41 88 53. Email: philippe.marie@gibertjoseph.com

Shop Of The Month: A Slice Of Vinyl, Gosport





Brimming with ideas and energy, **A Slice Of Vinyl** has clearly established itself in the local community. They've even launched their own collectors' cards. **Kieron and Emma Howes** tell **Steve Burniston** the shop's story.

Tell us about the history of the shop and the kind of music you sell.
A Slice Of Vinyl is an independent record shop in Gosport, run by our little family of four! The idea has always been to create the sort of record shop we'd want to visit ourselves: friendly, relaxed and somewhere you can rock up and find the music you love, or will love soon enough. We started on the Gosport market around 12 years ago, then our first bricks and mortar, before moving to Stoke Road around four years ago. We stock a broad mix of music, from brand-new releases and indie exclusives to reissues, soundtracks, second-hand vinyl and CDs. Rock, metal and alternative are a big part of what we do, but on any given day you'll find everything from punk to pop, indie, jazz, soul and classic albums.

And what artists and genres are your regulars mainly looking for?
It's incredibly varied, one of the many things we love about the people that support us. We have customers looking for Bowie, Fleetwood Mac and Motörhead alongside people coming in for the latest releases from newer indie, alternative, pop and metal artists. We've noticed that people are increasingly open-minded about the genres they want to try. Someone can come to the counter with a metal album, a film soundtrack and a Taylor Swift record and nobody thinks twice about it. That's how it should be and we champion it.

If you have a typical working day, what is it like?
Normally a cuppa and a biscuit before the chaos! There are always records or books arriving, orders to pack, pre-orders to organise, new releases to get onto the wall. Then there's the website, socials, events and all the other bits that happen behind the scenes. The best part of the day is still the shop itself. Talking to our little community about what they've been listening to, recommending something they might not have heard before and seeing someone find a record they've been searching for is the bit we never get tired of. We've also been doing more events and special releases, so increasingly a "normal" day can involve anything from sorting out A Slice Of Vinyl collectors' cards to preparing for an in-store event.

In your view, what has been the best reissue in recent times?
There have been some fantastic reissues recently, particularly as labels are putting deep thought into the whole package rather than simply pressing an album again. We're suckers for a reissue that's been properly remastered, has great artwork and gives you a genuine reason to own that particular edition alongside one you might already have. Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* (50th Anniversary on yellow flame) has been a standout for us recently, purely because of how excited our customers were to get their hands on it. It's a great example of how to revisit an album properly without losing what made the original special.

Tell us about some interesting records you have sold in recent months.
One we're particularly proud of is Mike D's *Thank You*, because we used the release to launch our first A Slice Of Vinyl collectors' card. Cards were hand numbered and available with the album. The response from customers was brilliant. It's now grown into a series involving other artists, including signed cards, which has been really exciting. We've also had some brilliant pre-loved collections come through the shop. Those are always fun because there's a real buzz when something unusual arrives, particularly when it's an artist our regulars love.

Name one impossibly rare record you would love to get.
The first press of Tom Petty's *Wildflowers;* Kieron's all-time favourite would complete his collection! Emma chooses Kate Nash's *House Of Bricks,* which landed in the shop last year. Part of the fun of owning a record shop is that you never quite know what somebody is going to walk through the door with.

A Slice Of Vinyl, 103 Stoke Road, Gosport PO12 1LR

Vinyl2Books

Hot Stuff AB – 'Southern Sweden's leading shop for collectable records & ephemera. 50.000+ items of second-hand, new limited editions and inhouse labels. Bank vault with high-end collectables and wide range of vinyls in almost any genre. If you travel a long way, we even got special deals for hotels.'
Norra Esplanaden 5, Almhult, Sweden 34330
Tel: +46 476 10449 www.hotstuff.se

Nostalgipalatset / Trash Palace – 'Sweden's biggest store for vinyl! We specialise in collectable rock, progressive, indie, jazz, blues, soul, reggae etc. Also Scandinavia's No 1 stockist of rare metal and punk. Even a wide range of pop memorabilia like posters, magazines etc. Open Mon-Fri 11am-7pm, Sat-Sun 11am-3pm.' **Sankt Eriksgatan 101, 11331 Stockholm, Sweden.** Tel: (+46)8340061
info@nostalgipalatset.com, www.nostalgipalatset.com

Vinyl2books.com – 'Specialist online supplier for English language Music Books/Biographies plus *Record Collector* magazine.' **Based in Minden, Germany**

RECORD LISTINGS

Sell Vinyl/CDs direct to *RC* readers, call us on **0208 752 8172**
or email **listings@recordcollectormag.com.** Rates: **recordcollectormag.com/advertise**

NEXT ISSUE: JANUARY ISSUE 2026 (on sale 23 DECEMBER)
Deadline for submitting adverts (Listings & Classified): Monday 30 NOVEMBER
Please email your advert (Word doc/Excel file/plain text) to: listings@recordcollectormag.com
Record Collector Listings, Diamond Publishing Limited
4th Floor, Harmsworth House, 13-15 Bouverie Street, London EC4Y 8DP
Following issue: FEBRUARY 2027 (on sale 21 JANUARY) Deadline: Monday 28 DECEMBER

SET SALE

Write to: R BLAKE, SOUTHACRE, TUNSTEAD ROAD, HOVETON, NORWICH, NR12 8QN. Tel: 01603 783218. Email: 2blakes13@gmail.com
POSTAGE: 45s & CDs £2.00. LPs and 12" £4.00.

45	DAVE CAREY, Bingo (Philips '61)	EX	10.00
45	LES REED ORCH., Man Of Action (Chapter One '70)	EX	12.00
45	A-HA, Hunting High And Low (Warner Bros '86, PS)	EX	6.00
45	MACNEE & BLACK, Kinky Boots (Decca '64)	EX	35.00
45	T REX, One Inch Rock (Regal Zonophone '68)	EX	40.00
45	CASUALS, Toy (Decca '68)	EX	8.00
45	GOONS, Xing Tong Song (Decca '56, Tri)	EX	20.00
45	JEFFERY OSBORNE, You Should Be Mine (A&M '82)	EX	5.00
45	ACKER BILK, Incontro (Pye '76, Promo)	EX	12.00
45	JIM REEVES, Is It Really Over (RCA '65)	VG	5.00
45	CRAZY WORLD / BROWN, Fire (Track '68)	VG	7.00
45	SHEENA EASTON, One Man Woman (EMI '80)	VG	5.00
45	LIZA MINNELLI, Love Pains (Epic '89, PS)	EX	6.00
45	BOBBY DAY, Rockin' Robin (London '58, Tri)	VG	12.00
45	PERRY COMO, Kewpie Doll (RCA '58, Tri)	EX	8.00
45	FULHAM FURIES, These Boots Were Made For Walking (GM '78)	EX	35.00
45	JOHN BARRY 7, Black Stockings (Columbia '60)	EX	6.00
45	HOT BLOOD SOUL, Dracula (Creole '76)	EX	6.00
45	CLIFF / SHADOWS, Please Don't Tease (Columbia '60)	VG	7.00
45	NANCY SINATRA, Summer Wine (Reprise/India '66)	EX	12.00
45	LONNIE DONEGAN, Tom Dooley (Pye Nixa '58)	EX	12.00
45	UB 40, Love Is All Right (DEP)	EX	6.00
45	TINA TURNER, Let's Stay Together (Capitol '83)	EX	8.00
45	DOROTHY SQUIRES, Till (President '70)	EX	8.00
45	DONOVAN, Mellow Yellow/Sunshine Superman (Memory Lane, noc)	EX	6.00
45	JERRY LEE LEWIS, High School Confidential (London '58, Tri)	VG	15.00
45	JOHN WILLIAMS, Cavatina (Cube '71)	EX	5.00
45	SNAP, Cult Of Snap (Arista '90)	EX	5.00
45	ROY ORBISON, In Dreams (London '63)	EX	8.00
45	NERO / GLADIATORS, Czardas (Decca '61)	EX	20.00
45	THE JAM, In The City (Polydor '77)	EX	8.00
45	FOREIGNER, Cold As Ice (Atlantic '77)	EX	7.00
45	WINGS, I've Had Enough (Parlophone '78)	EX	7.00
45	SMOKEY ROBINSON, Being With You (Motown '80)	EX	8.00
45	ELTON JOHN, Daniel (DJM '78)	EX	7.00
45	BRUCE FORSYTH, I'm In Charge (Parlophone '58)	EX	7.00
45	GENESIS, Turn In On Again (Charisma '80)	EX	8.00
45	BRIGHOUSE BAND, The Floral Dance (Transatlantic '76)	EX	5.00
45	CHUCK WAGON, Rock 'n' Roll Won't Go Away (A&M '79, Promo)	VG	12.00
45	JAVAROO, Bring Out The Woman (Capitol '80, Demo)	EX	15.00
LP	AL MARTINO, The Best Of Al Martino (Capitol)	EX	15.00
LP	BILL WYMAN, Monkey Grip (Rolling Stones '74)	EX	20.00
LP	LESTER YOUNG, President (Vogue)	EX	40,00
LP	ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCH., E L O (Greatest Hits Jet '79)	EX	20.00
LP	ARETHA FRANKLIN, Take A Look (Columbia US '67)	EX	20.00
LP	PAUL YOUNG, No Parlez (CBS '83)	EX	10.00
LP	ODYSSEY, Hang Together (RCA '80)	EX	15.00
LP	GERRY / PACEMAKERS, How Do You Like It (MFP '68)	VG	12.00
LP	EVERLY BROS., The Fabulous Style of Everly Bros. (London '60)	VG	30.00
LP	DR HOOK, The Ballard of Lucy Jordan (CBS '75)	EX	12.00
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45 JIMMY DURANTE, I Came Here To Swim (Warners WB 149) EX 4.00
45 EAGLES, Come On Baby (Pye 7N 15550) VG 4.00
45 EARTH WIND & FIRE, Help Somebody (Warners WB 6125, Demo) VG 4.00
45 EDDYSONS, Ups And Downs (Olga OLE 010) VG 10.00
45 DAVE EDMUNDS, Girls Talk (PS, Swan Song SSK 19418L, Picture Disc) M 6.00
45 ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA, 10538 Overture (Harvest HAR 5053) EX 4.00
45 BERN ELLIOTT, Money (Decca F11770) EX 5.00
45 E.L.P. Fanfare For The Common Man (PS, Atlantic K10946) M 5.00
45 E.L.P. Brain Salad Surgery (PS, Lyntone LYN 2762, Flexi) VG 5.00
45 EMPIRE, Palace Sign (RAK 340) EX 5.00
45 RAYMOND FROGGATT, Maybe The Angels (PS, Red Baloon RB 0001) EX 5.00
45 GIRL, "The Single" (PS, Jet 169) EX 5.00
45 EARL GRANT, Tender Is The Night (Brunswick 05865) EX 5.00
45 DONALD HEIGHT, Talk Of The Grapevine (JayBoy BOY 32) EX 8.00
45 BIG DEE IRWIN, Heigh-Ho (Colpix PX 11040) M 6.00
45 WANDA JACKSON, Mean Mean Man (Capitol CL 15176) VG 6.00
45 LITTLE WILLIE JOHN, Talk To Me, Talk To Me (Parl. R4432, Purple) EX 30.00
45 JUICY LUCY, Pretty Woman (Vertigo Swirl 6059.015) VG 8.00
45 KIDS FROM FAME, Mannequin (RCA P 299, Picture Disc) EX 5.00
45 PETER KRAUS, Honey-Baby (PS, Polydor 23904, Orange) EX 8.00
45 MARSEILLE, Kites (Mountain TOP 51) M 5.00
45 PAUL McCARTNEY, Press (PS, Parlophone R 6133) M 5.00
45 DAVID McWILLIAMS, Days Of Pearly Spencer (Major Minor MM 533) VG 6.00
45 DOLLY PARTON, Shattered Image (RCA 2764) EX 5.00
45 CARL PERKINS, The E.P. Express (PS, Mercury ELV 15) EX 5.00
45 POLLY PERKINS, The Bad Girl (Chapter 1 SCH R183, Demo) M 10.00
45 ROYAL GUARDSMEN, Baby Let's Wait (London HLP 10235) EX 5.00
45 RUBETTES, Little 69 (PS, Polydor 2059.029) EX 5.00
45 RUBBER DUCKS, Pop Club Convoy (Pye DMPC 101) M 6.00
45 SIR HENRY & HIS BUTLERS, The Rolo Sensation (Columbia DB 8497) VG 4.00
45 JUDY STREET, What (Soul Stop SS 3003) VG 4.00
45 SUN DRAGON, Blueberry Blue (MGM 1391) G 5.00
45 DORIS TROY, I'll Do Anything (Pye 7N 25751) EX 6.00
45 ALAN TWEEDIE, Alan Tweedie E.P. (Wild Dog DOG 16) EX 6.00
45 UNION EXPRESS, Ring A Ring Of Roses (Decca F13230) EX 6.00
45 URIAH HEEP, Prima Donna (Warners WBS 8132, Special Promo) M 8.00
45 FRANKIE VAUGHAN, Think Beautiful Things (Beautiful V40001, Demo) M 8.00
45 BETTY WRIGHT, If I Ever Do Wrong (RCA 2765) M 5.00
45 MADONNA, Express Yourself (Zipper Jeans PS, Sire Ltd. Ed. W2948W) M 50.00
45 TARGET UK, Alive And Kickin' (PS, Flying V FV 7) EX 30.00
45 JOHN MAYALL, I'm Your Witchdoctor (Immediate IM 051) EX 30.00
45 VOLCANOS, The Laws Of Love (Arctic A-VOL 5) EX 90.00
45 "NOUVEAU RICHE", Breaks My Heart (Long Vehicle CND 2) M 50.00
45 BING CROSBY, White Christmas (PS, MCA 111) M 4.00
45 BOB DYLAN, Dylan E.P. (PS, CBS EP 6051) M 20.00
45 TEENAGERS, Teenagers E.P. (PS, RCX 102) EX 50.00

RARE LPs

LP ANIMALS, Animal Tracks (Columbia 33SX 1708, Mono, 1st Press) EX/EX 30.00
LP LOUIS ARMSTRONG, What A Wonderful World (Stateside SSL 10247, Stereo) M/M 40.00
2LP BLACK SABBATH, We Sold Our Soul For Rock 'n' Roll (GF, PS, NEMS 6641 335) EX/EX 20.00
2LP BLONDIE, Slow Motion (PS, Phoenix 44782, Rare Imp.) EX/EX 50.00
LP CHER, Take Me Home (Picture Disc, Casablanca NBPIX 7133) EX 12.00
LP CHER, Heart Of Stone (Picture Disc, Geffen GEF 75TP) EX 10.00
LP CHER, We All Sleep Alone (Picture Disc, Geffen GEF 35TP) EX 10.00
LP COLOSSEUM, Daughter Of Time (Vertigo 6360.017, GF, PS, Swirl Inner) VG/EX 30.00
LP HUGH CORNWELL & ROBERT WILLIAMS, "Nosferatu" (PS, United Artists GP 778) EX/EX 20.00
LP DONOVAN, Sunshine Superman (PS, Pye NPL 18181, 1st Press) EX/VG 30.00
LP AYNSLEY DUNBAR, Retaliation (PS, Liberty LBS 83154) EX/M 55.00
LP DUKE ELLINGTON, "...And His Mother Called Him Bill" (PS, RCA SF 7964, St.) EX/EX 10.00
LP MARVIN GAYE & TAMMI TERRELL, United (PS, Tamla TML 11062) EX/VG 20.00
LP JETHRO TULL, Stand Up (GF, Pop-up Island ILPS 9103, 1st Press) EX/VG 35.00
LP JUDAS PRIEST, Rocka Rolla (Picture Disc, RCA AP 201) EX 35.00
LP JUICY LUCY, Juicy Lucy (GF, PS, Vertigo VO2, Phillips credit / large swirl w Swirl inner, outstanding condition) EX/EX 90.00
2LP LED ZEPPELIN, Physical Graffiti (PS, Swan Song 889400, 1st Press) EX/EX 50.00
LP MADONNA, Justify My Love (Ltd. Ed. Pic Disc, Sire W 9000TP) EX 25.00
LP JOHN MAYALL, Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton (PS, Decca LK 4804) EX/EX 75.00
LP PATTO, Patto (PS, Vertigo VEL 1001, Vertigo Swirl, US 1st Press) EX/EX 95.00
LP PINK FLOYD, The Dark Side Of The Moon (GF, PS, Harvest SHVL 804 w posters & stickers, Gram. Co. text A3.B2, stickered slv) EX/EX 145.00
LP QUATERMASS, Quatermass (GF, PS, Harvest SHVL 775, no EMI logo) EX/EX 120.00
LP QUEEN, Queen II (GF, PS, EMI EMA 767) EX/EX 20.00
LP THEE RAG N BONE MAN, Kill A Hipster For Rock n Roll (PS, Petrol Bomb Records White lbl, Rare) EX/EX 40.00
LP ROLLING STONES, Aftermath (PS, Decca SKL 4786, Stereo) EX/EX 50.00
LP ROLLING STONES, Let It Bleed (PS, Decca LK 5025, Mono, stickered slv, Red Inner, 1st Press w EX poster) EX/EX 180.00
LP ROLLING STONES, Sticky Fingers (Big Zip Sleeve, R/Stones COC 59100, matrix A3 B3, TML R/Stones Records) EX/EX 80.00
LP MICK RONSON, Slaughter On 10th Avenue (PS, RCA APLI 0353) M/M 20.00
LP SLOAN, Smeared (PS, Geffen GEF 24498) M/M 60.00
LP TYKE, Picture Postcard (Magnum MNM 101, Ltd. Ed. 1977) EX/M 50.00
LP VELVET OPERA, Ride A Hustler's Dream (PS, CBS S 63692) G/EX 30.00
LP WHO, A Quick One (PS, reaction 593002) EX/EX 60.00
LP YES, Yes (GF, PS, Atlantic 588190 Maroon/Orange lbl, 1st Press, A1 B1) EX/EX 40.00

GREATS AND GENERAL

Write to: RODNEY TIGHE, 72 ORIEL ROAD, DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS., NN11 4SP. Tel: 07960 219456. P&P included.

7" KATE BUSH, Wuthering Heights (PS, Italian issue) EX/M 18.00
7" KATE BUSH, Army Dreamers / Babooshka (Double A, Rare, Polish) EX/EX 15.00
7" FREDDIE MERCURY, Time (Rare Picture Disc) M/M 15.00
7" BLONDIE, X Offender (Rare Saw-shaped Blue & Yellow vinyl, PS) M/M 18.00
7" BLONDIE, Sunday Girl EP (2 x 7" Red / Yellow vinyl) M/M 25.00
7" QUEEN & DAVID BOWIE, Under Pressure (Rare Picture Disc) M/M 20.00
12" BLONDIE, Union City Blue (PS, Ltd. Ed. Light Blue vinyl) M/M 15.00
12" DAVID BOWIE, The Heart's Filthy Lesson (Rare Picture Disc) M/M 15.00
12" DAVID BOWIE, Let's Dance (Rare Picture Disc) M/M 15.00
LP KATE BUSH, The Kick Inside (Rare Picture Disc) EX/EX 85.00
LP PINK FLOYD (8 track Live Ltd. Ed. Light Blue vinyl) M/M 25.00
LP PINK FLOYD, Wish You Were Here (Ltd. Ed. Yellow vinyl) M/M 25.00
LP CLASH, Combat Rock (Ltd. Ed. Pink vinyl) M/M 10.00
LP CLASH, Live In Aylesbury (Ltd. Ed. Orange vinyl) M/M 10.00

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE LPS

Write to: COLIN WILKINSON, "TORLAND", KNOCKANDO, ABERLOUR, AB38 7RX. Tel: 01340 810506 after 6pm. Answer machine before. Mobile if problems with landline 07776 264004. NO TEXTS. Leave your Name and Telephone Number on messages. If you do not leave your CONTACT DETAILS I cannot call you back. PLEASE NOTE NEW P&P CHARGES.

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60s / 70s / 80s LPs. Cover Graded First. * = more by artist.

ANDWELLAS DREAM, Love And Poetry (2008 Oak Records, disc Nr M) EX/EX 25.00
ART, Supernatural Fairy Tales (Tapestry Records White Lbl Test Press, Full Lam. Cvr, Nr M) EX/EX 30.00
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BEATLES, With The Beatles ('69 PCS 3045 w 1 EMI Box on Lbl, Lam. Cvr EX+) EX/EX 25.00
BEATLES, 1962-1966 (2LP, 1973 PCSP 717 1st Press + Inners) EX/EX/EX 20.00
BEATLES, Rarities (1979 PCM 1001, EX+ copy) EX/EX 25.00
BEATLES, Sgt. Pepper (Capitol SMAS 2653 Orange Lbl Canada, EX+) EX/EX 30.00
BEATLES, Abbey Road (PCS 7088 Orig. Dark Apple Lbl, Lam. Cvr + Apple Inner, lovely EX+ copy) EX/EX 30.00
BEATLES, Let It Be (Red Apple Lbl USA, GF Cvr, import cut to corner, disc Nr M) EX/EX 40.00
BEATLES, Rock 'n' Roll Music (2LP, '76 Parl. PCSP 719, EX+ copy) EX/EX/EX 20.00
BEATLES, Rock 'n' Roll Music, Vol. 1 (MFP 50506) EX/EX 6.00
BEATLES, Something New (Odeon Blue Lbl, Germany, disc EX+) EX/EX 25.00
BEATLES, A Collection Of Oldies (1969 PCS 7016 w EMI Box on Lbl) EX/EX 20.00
BELL & ARC, Bell & Arc ('71 Charisma CAS 1053, Pink Scroll Lbl, disc Nr M) EX/EX 30.00
BLONDE ON BLONDE, Contrasts (+ 2 Bonus Trks, 2015 Hi Fly Sound, Yellow Vinyl, very Nr M) EX/EX 25.00
BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS, Greatest Hits (1972 CBS S 64803) EX/EX 6.00
GRAHAM BONNET, Line Up (1981 Vertigo 6302 151 + Inner, Nr M) EX/EX 6.00
BONZO DOG BAND, Gorilla (Sunset SLS 50160, EX+) EX/EX 600
BOSTON, Boston (1st Press, 1976 Epic SEPC 81611) EX/EX 9.00
DAVID BOWIE, Space Oddity (1972 RCA LSP 4813 + Lyric Inner) EX/EX 32.00
DAVID BOWIE, Heroes (1977 RCA Victor AFL1-2522 USA + Inner, EX+) EX/EX 20.00
BREAD, Guitar Man (1972 Elektra K 52004, Butterfly Lbl + Inner) EX/EX 5.00
BREAD, Manna ('71 Elektra K52001, Butterfly Lbl, Die-cut Fold-Out Cvr + Inner) EX/EX 5.00
BROWNSVILLE STATION, Brownsville Station ('77 PVLP 1021, Nr M) EX/EX 9.00
MICHAEL CHAPMAN, The Man Who Hated Mornings (+ Ins, Criminal Records STEAL 3, EX+) EX/EX 15.00
MICHAEL CHAPMAN, Lived Here 1968-1972 (Cube GNAT 1 + Ins, EX+) EX/EX 16.00
CHIMERA, Holy Grail (Rec. 1970 + Inner, 2015 Morgan Bluetown, Nr M) EX/EX 20.00
KEITH CHRISTMAS, Pigmy ('77 Nova Germany, small mk & no. on rear cvr, disc Nr M) EX/EX 6.00
CLIMAX BLUES BAND, A Lot Of Bottle (Rec. '70, '76 Sire SASD 7418 USA, EX+ disc) EX/EX 12.00
CURVED AIR, Air Conditioning (1970 K 56004, Pic Disc in Lam. Cvr) EX/EX 25.00
CURVED AIR, Air Conditioning (2nd Press K 56004 Burbank Lbl, disc Nr M) EX/EX 12.00
CURVED AIR, Second Album ('71 K46092 Grn Lbl, Die-cut Fold-out Cvr) EX/EX 30.00
CURVED AIR, Live (1975 Deram SML 1119) EX/EX 14.00
CURVED AIR, Midnight Wire ('75 BTM 1005, Trk times written small on rear cvr) EX/EX 14.00
DEEP PURPLE*, Who Do We Think We Are (2015 Back To Black Issue + Ins, disc Nr M) EX/EX 15.00
BO DIDDLEY, Surfin' With Bo Diddley ('67 Marble Arch MAL 751, Nr M) EX/EX 6.00
DOORS, Weird Scenes Inside The Gold Mine (2LP, 1st Press '72 Elektra K 62009, EX+) EX/EX/EX 30.00
JULIE DRISCOLL / BRIAN AUGER, Jools / Brian ('67 MFP 1265, EX+) EX/EX 6.00
BOB DYLAN, The Times They Are A-Changin' (CBS 3202 Orange/ Yellow Lbl, EX+) EX/EX 9.00
BOB DYLAN, Bringing It All Back Home (CBS SBPG 62515 Orange/ Yellow Lbl, EX+) EX/EX 12.00
EQUALS, Unequaled Equals (1967 President PTL 1006, EX+ copy) EX/EX 15.00
FAIRPORT CONVENTION, Fairport Convention (1st LP, '76 Polydor Special 2384 047) EX/EX 15.00
FAMOUS JUG BAND, Chameleon ('70 Liberty LBS 83355 Blue Lbl, disc EX+) EX/EX 60.00
ROY HARPER, HQ (1975 Harvest SHSP 4046 + Inner) EX/EX 15.00
HAWKWIND, Sonic Attack ('81 RCA RCALP 6004 + Lyr Sht, lovely EX+ copy) EX/EX 22.00
HAWKWIND, Astounding Sounds, Amazing Music ('76 Charisma CDS 4004) EX/EX 22.00
HEADS, HANDS & FEET, Old Soldiers Never Die ('73 Atlantic K 40465 + Lyr Ins, EX+ copy) EX/EX 22.00
HUMBLE PIE, Safe As Yesterday ('69 Immediate Germany, fully Lam. front) EX/EX 45.00
HUMBLE PIE, Performance - Rockin' The Fillmore (2LP, '71 AMLH 63506, Tan Lbls, EX+) EX/EX/EX 25.00
INCREDIBLE STRING BAND, Changing Horses (1st Press '69 Elektra EKS 74057 Red/White Lbl) EX/EX 25.00
JADE WARRIOR, Last Autumn's Dream ('72 Vertigo VEL 1012 US Large Swirl Lbl, neat thin layer clear tape on edges for protection only, disc Nr M) EX/EX 125.00
JANUS, Gravedigger (2013 MIG Universal Germany Issue, Nr M) EX/EX 25.00
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE, Crown Of Creation ('69 RCA LSP 4058 Germany, Full Lam. Cvr) EX/EX 20.00
JEFFERSON STARSHIP, Earth ('78 Grunt FL 12515 + Inner, Nr M) EX/EX 6.00
JETHRO TULL, Broadsword And The Beast (1982 Chrysalis +Inner) EX/EX 14.00
JOHN LENNON + YOKO ONO, Two Virgins (Apple T 5001, USA Issue w Brown Paper Outer, EX+ copy) EX/EX 60.00
JOHN LENNON / PLASTIC ONO BAND, Same (Apple EAS 80704 Japan '77 Issue + Lyr Ins + Inner + Obi Strip, All Nr M) EX/EX 60.00
JOHN LENNON, Imagine (PAS 10004 + Inner + Postcard + Poster, Non Lam. Cvr, All EX+) EX/EX 35.00
MAGNA CARTA, Songs From Wasties Orchard (Vertigo Swirl Lbl, Germany, Orig. Multifold Cvr, some light print damage to top of Cvr, disc Nr M) VG/EX 20.00
JOHN MAYALL, A Hard Road (2nd Press, Decca SKL 4853 Stereo, Lam. Cvr, Nr M) EX/EX 20.00
JOHN MAYALL, Looking Back ('69 Decca SKL 5010 Stereo, 1st Press) EX/EX 22.00
MEGATON, Megaton (2012 ACME Records, disc Nr M) EX/EX 22.00
MELLOW CANDLE, Swaddling Songs (Tapestry 180g, Nr M) EX/EX 25.00
MOODY BLUES, Seventh Sojourn (Threshold THS 7 + Lyric Sheet) EX/EX 6.00
MOTT THE HOOPLE, Mad Shadows (1970 Island ILPS 9119 Pink Lbl, EX+) EX/EX 45.00
PENTANGLE, Basket Of Light (1969 TRA 205 GF w Orig. Plastic Inner) EX/EX 18.00
PINK FLOYD, A Saucerful Of Secrets ('71 Press Columbia SCX 6258 w "Gilmore" misprint on Lbl & Cvr) EX/EX 50.00
PINK FLOYD, GRATEFUL DEAD, KALEIDOSCOPE etc., Zabriskie Point (OST) (MGM SE-4668ST USA) EX/EX 28.00
QUINTESSENCE, Self (1972 RCA SF 8273, EX+) EX/EX 22.00
QUINTESSENCE, Indweller (1972 RCA SF 8317) EX/EX 22.00
RAINBOW, Rainbow Rising (1976 Oyster 2490-137, EX+ copy) EX/EX 20.00

ROLLING STONES, Out Of Our Heads (1st Press, Decca SKL 4733, Unboxed Logo, Rare Stereo, really nice example)	EX/EX	100.00
ROLLING STONES, Metamorphosis (1975 Decca SKL 5212, Nr M)	EX/EX	20.00
ROLLING STONES, It's Only Rock 'n' Roll ('74 COC59103 + Inner, EX+)	EX/EX	15.00
SAXON, Power & The Glory (1983 Carrere CAL 147)	EX/EX	9.00
MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP, M S G ('81 Chrysalis CHR 1336 + Inner, EX+)	EX/EX	9.00
McAULEY SCHENKER GROUP, Perfect Timing ('87 EMI EMC 3539 + Inner)	EX/EX	6.00
SKID ROW, Skid (2nd Press, CBS 63965, EX+)	EX/EX	35.00
SLADE, Slade Smashes (Polydor POLTV 13)	EX/EX	7.00
SMALL FACES, Small Faces (1st LP, '66 Decca LK 4790, Cvr Nr EX, some discolouring to rear disc, EX+)	VG/EX	60.00
SMALL FACES, Ogden's Nut Gone Flake (2017 Immediate / Charly 1.305, Red Vinyl + Inner, Nr M)	EX/EX	25.00
SOFT MACHINE, At The Beginning (Rec. 1962-67, Charly CR 300014)	EX/EX	15.00
STATUS QUO, 12 Gold Bars, Volume 1 + 2 (2LP, Quo TV 2, Discs, Nr M)	EX/EX/EX	5.00
ROD STEWART*, Atlantic Crossing (1975 Warners K56151 + Inner, EX+)	EX/EX	5.00
STRAY, Houdini (1975 Pye NSPL 18482, Nr M)	EX/EX	18.00
STRAY, Saturday Morning Pictures (1971 TRA 248, Lam. GF Cover)	EX/EX	20.00
TANGERINE DREAM, Ricochet (1975 Virgin V 2044, disc Nr M)	EX/EX	7.00
UB 40, The Best Of UB 40, Vol. 1 (UBTV 1, EX+)	EX/EX	6.00
WINGS, Band On The Run ('73 PAS 10007 + Inner + Poster, nice EX+ copy)	EX/EX	18.00
NEIL YOUNG, Zuma (1975 Reprise USA + Textured Inner, EX+ copy)	EX/EX	25.00
NEIL YOUNG, American Stars And Bars (1977 Reprise K54088 + Inner)	EX/EX	15.00
NS		
PICNIC, (2LP, Harvest SHSS1, no EMI On Lbl - Bakerloo, BJH, Pete Brown, Tea & Symphony + loads more)	EX/EX/EX	25.00
THE 49 MINUTE TECHNICOLOR DREAM (Rubble 4 + Insert - Jason Crest, Kaleidoscope, The Fox, The Misunderstood + more)	EX/EX	18.00

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50s / 60s 7" singles & EPs. Send 2 x 1st Class Stamps on large S.A.E.
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ROCK / METAL 7 "/ 12" List. Send 1 x 1st Class Stamp on large S.AE.
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PUNK / NEW WAVE LPs. Send 1st Class Stamps on large S.A.E.

RARE REISSUES FOR EVERYONE

Write to: COLIN WILKINSON, "TORLAND", KNOCKANDO, ABERLOUR, SCOTLAND, AB38 7RX. Tel: 01340 810506 after 6pm. Answer machine before, or 07776 264004 if problems with landline. Please leave your CONTACT NUMBER with any message. NO TEXTS. PLEASE NOTE NEW P&P CHARGES.
P&P extra (Royal Mail Tracked): 1 LP £5.00 + £6.00 for up to 4 SINGLE LPs. Doubles = 2LPs (Special delivery / insurance extra). BUY Any 3 for Free UK P&P. If you want your order sent Signed For please add £1.50 to your payment. Overseas customers please note we accept WESTERN UNION, MONEYGRAM, or STERLING. NO OTHER CURRENCY. Postage at cost. Post Cheques to C. Wilkinson. Send an S.A.E. with written orders or requests for a reply. Please PRINT your NAME, ADDRESS & POSTCODE on all correspondence. COLLECTIONS ALSO BOUGHT. ADVERT ISSUE 591 - XMAS 2026. * = more by artist

NEW TITLES AND RESTOCKS JUST IN RECENTLY

BLOSSOM TOES, Live On Radio & TV (Rec. 1967 to 1969, R&B Records)	NEW	23.99
CHIMERA, Holy Grail (Rec. 1970 Feat. Nick Mason & Rick Wright, 180g Red Vinyl)	NEW	23.99
GILES, GILES & FRIPP, The Cheerful Insanity Of... (200g Panegyric)	NEW	21.99
LED ZEPPELIN*, Live At Madison Square Garden, NYC, July 1973 (2LP, DBQP)	NEW	19.99
McDONALD AND GILES, McDonald And Giles (200g Panegyric)	NEW	21.99
POPOL VUH, Einsjager & Siebenjager ('70s German Prog Classic, Esoteric)	NEW	24.99
POPOL VUH, Affenstunde (Classic Debut Album w Poster, Esoteric)	NEW	24.99
TWINK, Think Pink (Floating World Records)	NEW	21.99
YELLOW BALLOON, The Yellow Balloon (Coloured Vinyl, Sundazed)	NEW	23.99
ZIOR, Every Inch A Man (Heavy Psych Blues Rock, Trading Places)	NEW	19.99

ALSO IN STOCK NOW

AFFINITY, Affinity (From 1970, Bonfire Records)	NEW	22.99
ANCIENT GREASE, Women & Children First (Rare '71 Blues Rock, Sommor)	NEW	23.99
MILLER ANDERSON, Bright City (His 1971 Debut, Bonfire Records 180g)	NEW	23.99
ARS NOVA*, Sunshine & Shadows (Rare '69 US Psych Art Rock, Pink Vinyl, Sundazed)	NEW	23.99
ASSAGAI, Assagai (Their 1971 Debut, Cosmic Rock)	NEW	19.99
BABY BERTHA, Just The Beginning (Rare Private Press Blues Rock, Seelie Court)	NEW	18.99
BEAT OF THE EARTH, The Beat Of The Earth (Late 60s Rarity, Cosmic Rock)	NEW	20.99
BENT WIND, Sussex (Super Rare 1969 Heavy Psych, Guerssen 180g)	NEW	24.99
BLODWYN PIG & MICK ABRAHAM BAND, Radio Sessions '69 To '71 (Blue Vinyl, Indigo Records)	NEW	21.99
BLUE CHEER, Vincebus Eruptum (Their 1968 Debut LP, Universal)	NEW	15.99
BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD, Buffalo Springfield (From '66, Endless Happiness)	NEW	19.99
CAIR PARAVEL, Some Other Morning (1976 Rarity, Sommor)	NEW	22.99
CENTIPEDE, Septober Energy (2LP, From 1971, Endless Happines)	NEW	23.99
ERIC CLAPTON & JIMMY PAGE, Snake Drive (Rec. 1963-1965, Replay 180g)	NEW	14.99
CRESSIDA*, Cressida (From 1970, 180g Red Vinyl, Future Shock)	NEW	19.99
CROOKED OAK, From Little Acorns Grow (1976 Folk Rarity, Seelie Court)	NEW	22.99
CROW, Crow By Crow (Coloured Vinyl, Sundazed)	NEW	23.99
CROW, Mosaic (Coloured Vinyl, Sundazed)	NEW	23.99
DANTALION'S CHARIOT, Chariot Rising (The Complete 1967 Recordings, Guerssen)	NEW	24.99
BARRY DRANSFIELD, Barry Dransfield (Rare 1972 Folk, Guerssen)	NEW	22.99
AYNSLEY DUNBAR RETALIATION*, Remains To Be Heard (Not Bad Records)	NEW	22.99
EVENSONG, Evensong (From 1973, 180g Green Vinyl)	NEW	23.99
MICK FARREN, Mona The Carnivorous Circus (Trading Places)	NEW	19.99
FIVE DAY WEEK STRAW PEOPLE, Same title (180g Coloured Vinyl)	NEW	23.99
GASS, Juju (Feat. Peter Green) (From 1970, Endless Happiness)	NEW	21.99
HEAD MACHINE, Orgasm (From 1969, Trading Places)	NEW	19.99
HP LOVECRAFT*, HP. Lovecraft (From 1967, Cosmic Rock)	NEW	20.99
JAKE HOLMES, The Above Ground Sound Of Jake Holmes (From '67, Cosmic Rock)	NEW	21.99
JADE WARRIOR*, Last Autumn's Dream (Their 3rd LP from '72, Trading Places)	NEW	20.99
JO-ANN KELLY, Jo-Ann Kelly (From 1969, Endless Happiness)	NEW	19.99
KILLING FLOOR, Killing Floor (Their 1969 Debut LP, Repertoire 180g)	NEW	22.99
LED ZEPPELIN, Live At Orlando Stadium Florida, August 31st, 1971 (2LP, DBQP)	NEW	19.99
LED ZEPPELIN, Live On Blueberry Hill Inglewood, September 4th, 1970 (2LP, DBQP)	NEW	19.99
LIFEBLUD, Be Thou My Very Amour (Rare 1971 Folk/Prog, Seelie Court)	NEW	18.99
MISUNDERSTOOD, Complete Recordings (2LP, RSD 2026, Trading Places)	NEW	25.99
ZOOT MONEY, Transition (From 1968, Audio Clarity)	NEW	17.99
NEKTAR, Sounds Like This (2LP, Cleopatra Records)	NEW	21.99
NICO*, Drama Of Exile (Her 4th Solo LP, Lantern Records)	NEW	22.99
NICO*, Live At The Hacienda '83 (Clear Purple Vinyl)	NEW	20.99
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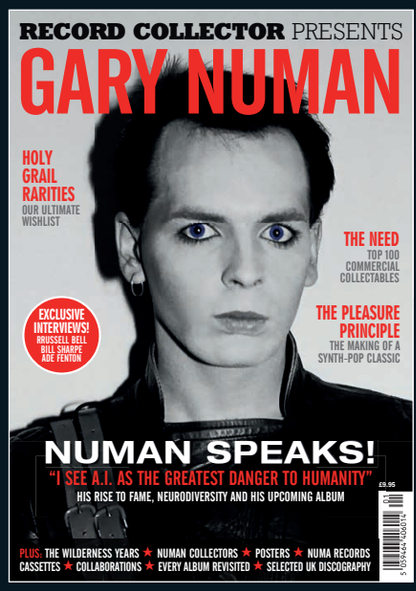





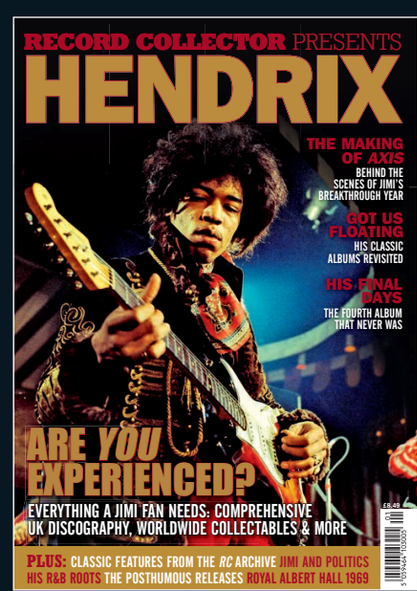







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Lives



More than OK: Megan Moroney

ON CLOUD 9 WITH MEGAN

Country-pop singer swiftly wins over the capital

Megan Moroney
London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo
23/10/26

Queues of mostly young rhinestone-attired cowgirls snaked their way into a sold-out show and gave huge adulation to the Georgia-born Nashville country star, Ms M. As she showcased here, she's a whole lotta country and a little bit o' rock'n'roll, riding high on her recent *Billboard* No 1 *Cloud 9*. With her natural charisma and beauty, she shone like a musical glitterball with sparkly songs about love, girls' wishes, and, well, betrayal. Outfit changes (some sold in repro form at the merch desk) saw an artist attuned to her audience, who presented her with banners and bouquets, while her well-drilled band traded some deft musical moments. A nigh on 150-minute set comprised 22 mainly country-pop tunes with a dash of rock, digging from her debut *Hair Salon*, and nearly the entirety of *Lucky* and *Cloud 9*. The singalongs meant that the big hair, big smile, big voice and big following promise a big future for Meg. Confident in her stagecraft, there ain't nothing bony about this Moroney. On Cloud 9 is where she belongs. *Paul Davies*

I Prevail
Birmingham O_2 Academy
27/9/26

An exercise in controlled excess saw enormous guitar riffs, precision electronics and choruses engineered for maximum audience participation. NWO opened with suitable brutality, setting the tone. Eric Vanlerberghe is an imposing frontman, switching between guttural aggression and cleaner melodies, while the band remain impressively tight, Bow Down, Self-Destruction and There's Fear In Letting Go supplying some of the heaviest punches. New single, Paradise, fitted in seamlessly, and flashes of irreverence came with covers of Blank Space and Sad But True. When Choke, Hurricane and Gasoline arrived, the Academy was in full voice. *Nick Allan*

Buzzcocks
Norwalk District Music Hall, Connecticut, US
26/9/26

Buzzcocks always delivered a dose of harmony with the thrash and, promoting latest album, *Attitude Adjustment*, Steve Diggle gave his Telecaster guitar a serious thwacking on classics like Orgasm Addict and Fast Cars, before newer rockers like Sick City Sometimes. They sat alongside standards such as Harmony In My Head and I Don't Mind, while Chasing Rainbows carried a deep-seated throb from bassist Chris Remington. Though Diggle's voice can't replace Pete Shelley's, he gamely wrapped his Manc vocals around latest single, Poetic Machine Gun, and they closed with The Greatest Of Them All, Diggle leading a brilliant singalong. *Christopher Walsh*

Van Morrison
London Olympia BA Arc
24/9/26

Suit, in shades and trilby, Van Morrison outfitted a set of precision jazzy blues covers, balanced by a curious, insufficient choice of originals. Barking out the lyrics to Kidney Stew Blues, he gestured instructions to his crack band. Van's Hammond organ veteran, Jim Allair, led on a slow, slinky Moondance, before Dweller On The Threshold, Northern Muse and Real Real Gone. Playing it safe and quiet, the set showcased the R&B/jazz vibes that influenced young Van, as he switched between saxophone, harmonica and electric piano. Finally, a groovy Gloria allowed the band to let loose and up the swing tempo, Morrison long gone from the stage. *Paul Davies*

Skids
Kirkcudbright Cochran Hall
5/9/26

Skids transformed the Kirkcudbright *Fringe Festival* into a high-energy haven of electrifying punk. They captivated with a raw, nostalgic set-list, the room erupting as they tore through the hits. Into The Valley sparked a mass singalong, while Masquerade and Charade showcased their signature post-punk sophistication. A highlight was deep track, TV Stars, which had the mosh-pit chanting "Albert Tatlock" in unison. Frontman Richard Jobson matched this musical ferocity with a powerful stage presence, connecting with the audience through humorous, self-deprecating banter. *Gerry Hassan*

Laibach
London Islington Town Hall
29/9/26

Laibach have pulled off another stylistic revamp with *Musick*, an EDM album with biting undertones. Milan Fras was up front in a colourful, pulsating show, with plenty of dry ice, fluorescent pink mise-en-scene, plus a pair of dancers, and young bucks in long coats working the tech. Highlights included a whip-tastic version of Serge Gainsbourg's Love On The Beat, a medley termed The Hit Parade, and an interactive workout with the aforementioned dancers alluding to the wellness-to-fascism pipeline (incorporating the Hitlergrüß). *Musick* isn't exactly a skewering, more a playful send-up of the disinformation age. If anyone can make sense of what's going on, it's Laibach. *Jeremy Allen*

Primal Scream
Bristol Electric
13/9/26

Following a well-received 25th anniversary performance of *XTRMNTR* at London's Roundhouse, the Scream turned the idea into a full tour. Bobby Gillespie and the eight-piece erupted into the album's first three cuts, Gillespie talking politics and social issues, the backdrop for both versions of Swastika Eyes a series of Gaza clips followed by a sign reading 'Stop Genocide, End Apartheid, Free Palestine'. He left the stage for psychedelic instrumentals, Blood Money and MBV Arkestra (If They Move Kill 'Em), and the band finished on Shoot Speed/Kill Light. This left album closer, 5 Years Ahead Of My Time, for the encore. A moving tribute to Mani followed, before their biggest hits: Loaded, Movin' On Up, Country Girl and Rocks. *Jake Templeton*

Joe Jackson
Bournemouth Pavilion
2/10/26

Jackson remains in fine voice and on sparkling instrumental form. With his long-established band, he constructed a skilfully curated set of classics, starting with Is She Really Going Out With Him? and It's Different For Girls. Mixed in were impressive cuts from the new *Hope And Fury*, End Of The Pier most appropriate. Old friends from Portsmouth reminisced about rural local pub gigs and tears flowed as he climaxed with Home Town. *Oliver Gray*

Trash
London Hope & Anchor
3/10/26

Their first gig in 48 years saw Trash delight a packed venue with a tight set interspersing their best-known 1977-78 songs with carefully curated covers. Long-time members, Simon Wright (vocals), Mick Brophy (guitar/harmonica), Neil Cossar (guitar) and Simon Butler-Smith (drums), were joined by new bassist, Mark 'Wolfie' Wolfenden. The ➤

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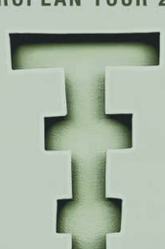

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singles, Matter Of Time, Priorities and N-n-e-r-v-o-u-s, and powerful versions of Yesterday's Numbers (Flamin' Groovies) and Pills (Bo Diddley) fitted seamlessly with their own What Do You Think About That? and In On All The Secrets. Stormtrooper and Social Security also both went down well. *Nick Duckett*

Best Day Of All Time
London Oxford Street Lush
7/10/26
Mark Constantine, owner of cosmetic chain, Lush, is a music aficionado, issuing 2LPs of music by established and upcoming artistes. *Best Day Of All Time* was a showcase punctuated by a Q&A with the perfumier c/o BBC Radio 6's Chris Hawkins. Constantine enthused about his love of prog and folk, following an ethereal, wondrous looped vocal performance by trip-pop singer Clara Pople. Essence Martins' quaint, charmful folk-soul blended beautifully with the esoteric vibes, and Beans On Toast rounded off an enchanting evening with rousing acoustic guitar folk. *Paul Davies*

Stonedead Festival
Newark Showground
29/8/26
Run by fans, *Stonedead* sticks to its winning formula of unannounced rock acts playing for some 5,000 punters. East Anglia's Aethoria opened before Lemmy doppelgängers Asomvel made the right noises. Crobot provided animated high jinx and stoner rock, and The Damn Truth dazzled with their soulful classic rock grooves. Trad power metal from Armored Saint got heads rolling and answered their own question with a sparkling Can You Deliver? Marina La Torraca led Finnish symphonic metallers, Battle Beast, technical hitches not upending her UK debut. Bob Catley fronted Magnum before ACCEPT impressed with razor sharp riffs and pyrotechnics, and John Bush joined in on a spirited Up To The Limit and bulldozing Balls To The Wall. The PA briefly cut out, but the crowd filled in magnificently. Europe headlined with a career-spanning set, Joey Tempest and co on top form with new material from *Come This Madness* and their chart-topping hits. *Mark Taylor*

Gilbert O'Sullivan
Dublin 3Arena
10/10/26
Despite wooden stage patter, O'Sullivan's vocal power is undiminished, and Andrea Corr joined in for Is That You?, a country-esque rocker. Growing Old Disgracefully highlighted his standing and the powerful Clair singalong saw him on keyboards. With a band including percussionists, pianists and a string section, the bouncy What's In A Kiss showcased his commercial side, while Happiness Is Me And You was charming, bolstered by waltz rhythms. The loudest cheer was reserved for Nothing Rhymed, at his strongest when focused on the striking music, not the reverie. *Eoghan Lyng*

Band Of Horses
Manchester Albert Hall
10/10/26
A celebratory dose of Americana featured a full gallop through *Everything All The Time*, highlights including The Funeral and an acoustic St Augustine, guiding light, Ben Bridwell, taking the reins alone, centre-stage. After the break, the going got even firmer and the crowd came alive. Enthusiastic singalongs of stable classics, No One's Gonna Love You and Is There A Ghost, ensued, and the word-perfect fanbase trotted home happy. *Dave Leggett*

ACCEPT
London Greenwich Indigo$_2$
28/8/26
A neck-breaking gig from German metallers, ACCEPT, celebrating 50 years with a dream set-list. Only two songs were included from vocalist Mark Tornillo's post-2009 stint, the other 21 over two hours from Udo Dirkschneider's era. Only guitarist Wolf Hoffman remains from the original incarnation, but he guided the band with clinical precision. Among the classics were proto-thrasher, Fast As A Shark, the smashing Balls To The Wall, and joyful Metal Heart, while rarely aired gems included Run If You Can, Love Child, Fight It Back and the set-ending Burning. Restless And Wild still. *Mark Taylor*

Jon Anderson & The Band Geeks
London Palladium
20/9/26
Wondrous applause greeted Anderson's entrance as The Band Geeks embarked on Close To The Edge. Waving his peace flag and conducting the near nonpareil music, timeless Yes songs included Perpetual Change, And You & I, Starship Trooper, Soon and Leaves Of Green. A deeply emotional Awaken brought joyful tears to his visage and JA's carefree dance with his wife during an encore Roundabout was infectious. The Band Geeks played with supreme affection, blending in tunes from their recent release and premiering new song, Giving Is Living, emphasising that this glorious mass is beautifully retained. *Paul Davies*



The Ryde is Long, in London

A Celebration Of Syd Barrett
Cambridge Corn Exchange
10/10/26
Syd's 80th birthday celebration was a moving, emotional day, especially as the Exchange is where he played his final show, in 1972. A superb range of bands played Barrett covers and a few originals, including Radhika (who threw in Strawberry Switchblade's Since Yesterday) and Soft Machine (the riffing on Wined And Dined and See Emily Play was astounding). Portuguese singer Diana Silveira turned Octopus into late-night funk and Shine On You Crazy Diamond a piano ballad (with Emily Francis on keys). Lee Harris and Guy Pratt popped up with Kula Shaker, and money was raised for mental health charities, championed by Syd's sister, Rosemary Breen, who appeared, as did Syd's one-time girlfriend, Jenny Spires. *Daryl Easlea*

Emma Swift
Twyford's St Mary's Church
9/10/26
The Australian singer-songwriter performed songs from her two finely-wrought albums, the opening Nothing And Forever and No Happy Endings reducing the audience to reverential silence. Balancing fragility with dry wit, she moved between intimate country-inflected balladry, literate indie-folk and emotional singer-songwriter material. Rarely relying on grand gestures, Swift let detail, phrasing and atmosphere do the work. A rare cover of Lennon's Jealous Guy blended the best of the original with Roxy Music's hit, before a stunningly perfect Visions Of Johanna. Awe-inspiring. *Dave Roberts*

Long Ryders
London Camden Electric Ballroom
15/10/26
Starting at a frenetic pace with Run Dusty Run and climaxing with a rousing Looking For Lewis And Clark, this was a rampant set by a band at their peak. Sid Griffin and Stephen McCarthy exchanged songs and guitar licks as Americana-tinged, San Francisco rock-flavoured sounds from across 40 years merged with tracks – not least spellbinding rocker, Four Winters Away – from killer new album, *High Noon Hymns*. Drummer Greg Sowders laid down a phenomenal beat, never losing control of his Stetson, while a rip-roaring sax duo popped on and off. An exhilarating cover of Dylan's Forever Young from the new LP summed it up. Sensational. *Nick Dalton*

Cabaret Voltaire
Bath Forum
15/10/26
An amazing, immersive evening saw Steve Mallinder and Chris Watson supported by Eric Random and Oliver Harrup, treating a devoted audience to a journey through 50 years of groundbreaking music. Nag Nag Nag, Just Fascination and Yashar sound as vital and electrifying as ever, Mallinder overcoming some microphone issues to hit his stride, delivering trademark deadpan, rhythmic, chant-like vocals against a hypnotic backdrop of constantly shifting visuals. Watson worked his magic, weaving together distinctive electronic sounds and, after 16 songs, they closed with Sensoria. Truly special. *Pete Rand*

Justin Hayward
London Cadogan Hall
13/10/26
With his 80th birthday the day after, it proved forever autumn for Hayward, who provided an exemplary performance of his solo works and The Moody Blues' timeless music. His contemporary demographic respected the no phone dictat, sitting rapt in the presence of a legend who dropped in a new song and conducted an entertaining Q&A. Opening with Blue Jays' I Dreamed Last Night homage to John Lodge, the acoustic-based show featured wonderfully reworked versions of Tuesday Afternoon, Question?, The Voice and Forever Autumn, and climaxed with eternal epic Nights In White Satin and I Know You're Out There. With Julie Ragins excelling on keyboards alongside enchanting flautist Karmen Gould, Hayward's voice is as strong and smooth as ever. *Paul Davies*

PHP Pouk Hill Prophetz
London King's Cross Water Rats
26/9/26
PHP Pouk Hill Prophetz are a glam tribute act with original material, Nigel Hart (vocals/bass) and co nodding to Elton John and David Bowie on Old, New Borrowed And Blue, and The Beatles on other numbers. As well as a gorgeous cover of Hey Jude, Slade drummer Don Powell guested near the close on T Rex's Get It On and Slade's Cum On Feel The Noize. At 80, his power and precision was incredible and capped an enormously fun night. *Gonzalo Carrera*

Credit: (Long Ryders) Nick Dalton









































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Beth Hart September 2027 (21) Manchester Bridgewater Hall (23) York Barbican (25) Glasgow SEC Armadillo (27) London Royal Albert Hall

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Palaye Royale March 2027 (31) Glasgow Academy **April** (3) London Wembley OVO Arena

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Rod Stewart April 2027 (27) Belfast SSE Arena (29) Glasgow OVO Hydro **May** (4) Birmingham Utilita Arena (6) Manchester Co-op Live (11) London Greenwich O_2

Slash & Myles Kennedy June 2027 (30) Cardiff Castle **July** (1) Scarborough Open Air Theatre (4) Belfast Custom House Square (6) Halifax Piece Hall (7) London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo

Shonen Knife May 2027 (26) Manchester Night & Day Café (28) Glasgow Oran Mor (29) Edinburgh La Belle Angele **June** (1) York Crescent (2) Leeds Brudenell (4) Nottingham Rescue Rooms (6) Birmingham Castle & Falcon (10) Cardiff Fuel Rock Club (12) Reading Facebar (15) Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (16) Lewes Constitutional Club (19) London Islington Garage (20) Bedford Esquires

Spiritualized April 2027 (2) London Islington Union Chapel (5) Bristol Beacon (6) Brighton Dome (8) Gateshead Glasshouse (9) Edinburgh Queen's Hall (11) Manchester Bridgewater Hall

Ward Thomas April 2027 (30) Horsham Capitol **May** (1) Worthing Connaught (2) Hertford Beam (5) Chelmsford Theatre (6) Peterborough Key (7) Norwich Epic Studios (8) Wavendon Stables (13) Sunderland Old Fire Station (14) Ilkley King's Hall (15) New Brighton Floral Pavilion (16) Crewe Lyceum (19) Basingstoke Haymarket (20) Swindon Wyvern (21) Pontardawe Arts Centre (22) Cheltenham Town Hall (23) Fareham Live



Louise: loving Blur's cheese

TOUR DU JOUR

Spotlighting an upcoming road trip

This month: LOUISE WENER OF SLEEPER

How have you been preparing for the tour?
Rehearsals are only a small part. It's a bit like running a travelling circus. The logistics, financing, travel, hotels, the tech side. It's enough to give you a nervous breakdown before you start!

Do you have any pre-/post-show routines?
We all do a proper vocal warm-up, guided by our keyboard player, Aimee. No one warmed up in the 90s, which probably explains a lot.

Will you be playing any songs that you rarely perform?
If fans requested them on social media and we remember how to play them.

Will the set-list change much?
Only if the rhythm feels off. It's only when you get in front of a crowd that you know if a set-list works.

Are there any venues that you're particularly looking forward to?
Anywhere that I don't have to get changed in the toilets.

Will you check out your tour support?
Always. Turin Brakes will be amazing. Watching is part of the calm-down process, getting a measure of the atmosphere, and feeling it before you go onstage.

Will there be any unusual merchandise?
We create and design all the merchandise – a beautiful T-shirt and vinyl. Old skool.

Will you be recording any shows?
Sometimes it works best when your sound-man records a show without telling you and you're not thinking about it during the performance.

Do you collect bootlegs?
I used to buy cassettes when I was a student.

Have any gigs stood out of late?
In Brighton: Slag, Congratulations and My Precious Bunny.

Do you have an amusing road story?
In the 90s, we almost got thrown off a Blur tour for ravaging their cheeseboard while they were onstage. We didn't have a rider, so we stole a bit of theirs. Rock'n'roll. Snaffling Alex James' roquefort!

Sleeper play in March 2027 at (12) Nottingham Rock City (13) Manchester Albert Hall (18) Sheffield Electric (19) Newcastle Digital (20) Glasgow Barrowlands (26) Bristol Crane (27) London Camden Roundhouse April (1) Brighton Dome (2) Norwich UEA (3) Birmingham O_2 Institute.

Texas October 2027 (15) Aberdeen P&J Arena (16) Newcastle Utilita Arena (18) Belfast O_2 (21) Glagow OVO Hydro (23) Leeds First Direct Bank Arena (25) Cardiff Utilita Arena (26) Brighton Centre (27) London Greenwich O_2 (29) Manchester Co-op Live (30) Birmingham Utilita Arena

Toto, Todd Rundgren June 2027 (19) Glasgow OVO Hydro (20) Manchester AO Arena (22) Birmingham BP Pulse LIVE (24) Cardiff Utilita Arena (25) London Wembley OVO Arena

TOUR NEWS

London: **The Flaming Lips**, 2-3 April, **The Manfreds**, **Elles Bailey** *et al*, 11 April, **The Prisoners**, 8 May 2027, Shepherd's Bush O_2 Empire. ■ **David Guetta**, 5 June, **Santana**, 30 June 2027, Greenwich O_2. ■ **Slipknot**, Wembley Stadium, 3 July 2027. ■ **John Mitchell & Friends**, Tufnell Park Dome, 18 December. ■ **Melody Gardot**, 16 November, **Elkie Brooks**, 11 May 2027, Royal Albert Hall. ■ **Branford Marsalis & Dianne Reeves**, Kensington Olympia BA Arc, 21 November. ■ **Babyshambles**, Kingston Circuit, 16 December. ■ **Marc Almond**, Cadogan Hall, 9 April 2027. ■ **Threshold**, Islington O_2 Academy, 17 December. ■ **First Aid Kit**, Hammersmith Eventim Apollo, 29 January 2027. ■ **Judy Collins**, Palladium, 6 February 2027. ■ **British Lion**, Stratford Cart & Horses, 13-18 December. ■ **Ruby Turner**, Ronnie Scott's, 25-26 January, 8-9, 15-16 February 2027. ■ **U2**, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, 18-19 June 2027. *Also:* **The Cribs**, Wakefield Tileyard North, 20 August 2027. ■ **808 State**, Manchester New Century Hall, 11 December.

For more tours/gig news see www.recordcollectormag.com/latestnews

credit: (Sleeper) Alex Lake @twoshortdays



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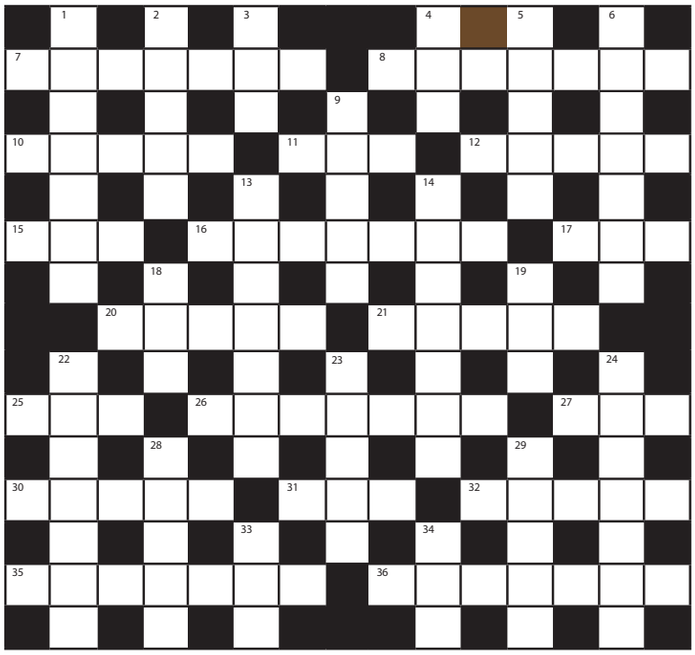
Crossword & Competitions

Across

7) Fairytale Of _ _ (3,4)
8) All I _ _ Christmas Is You (4,3)
10) *Stained* _ (5)
11) _ Together Now (3)
12) *Fresh* _ (5)
15) _ Tribes (3)
16) Little _ Boy (7)
17) Explosive AC/DC track (1,1,1)
20) James _ (5)
21) _ Deep, Mountain High (5)
25) _ Years After (3)
26) 'Aquatic' US punk band (7)
27) _ Soldier (3)
30) *Once Upon* _ _ (1,4)
31) _ Garfunkel (3)
32) Rocket From The _ (5)
35) *The Art Of* _ *Apart* (7)
36) Christmas hit, *The* _ (7)

Down

1) The Showboys, The _ _ Of Hip Hop (3,4)
2) Uriah Heap 1970 single (5)
3) Hue & _ (3)
4 _ & Dean (3)
5) The _ Of A Broken Heart (5)
6) _ Blues (7)
9) _ It On The Boogie (5)
13) A-Ha hit (3,4)
14) Measurement of sound (7)
18) Green Day's drummer (3)
19) Stranglers' drummer (3)
22) Graham _ Station (7)
23) Shades _ (5)
24) L.A. AOR band for the radio (7)
28) _ *Of Female* (5)
29) The In _ (5)
33) _ Direction (3)
34) Any Time, _ Place (3)



JON SAVAGE VINYL



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PAUL WELLER SOUL



Back in 2025, Ace Records released a collection, curated by Paul Weller, of some of his favourite soul music. This month sees a second volume, where Weller digs even deeper to present a set of 24 of his favourite tracks. "I hope you enjoy this compilation; it's the sort of thing I would have made up on a mix-cassette 30-plus years ago…" he writes. To be in with a chance of winning one of two copies on double vinyl, please tell us the name of the Gwen McCrae track: Rockin' _ a) Robin, b) Chair, c) All Over The World?



BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Following the worldwide cinematic release of *Back To The Beginning*, Black Sabbath and Ozzy fans will now be able to celebrate their historic final performances via the official soundtrack, released in December on a variety of formats. We have two copies of the (black) vinyl with Blu-ray set-up for grabs.
To be in with a chance of winning one, please complete and submit this month's crossword.

DECEMBER solution

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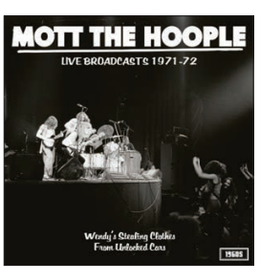

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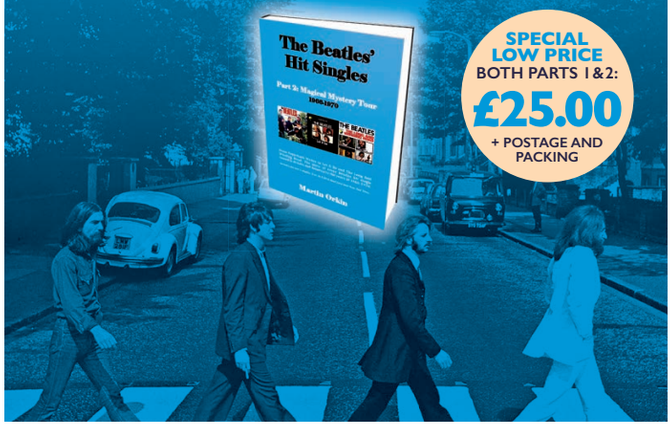

THE ENGINE ROOM

The unsung heroes who helped forge modern music





This month: Chris Braide

Singer-songwriter Chris Braide emerged as something of a prodigy back in the early 90s, working in his late teens with some of the finest producers and musicians in the country. His songs have been recorded by multiple pop megastars, and his own work has seen him collaborate with such luminaries as Andy Partridge, Mike Oldfield, and, most recently, on a new album with Yes and former Buggles keyboardist, Geoff Downes, as The Downes Braide Association.

"I was always obsessed with music from a very young age," Braide tells *RC*. "I have an older brother who would bring a lot of singles home: Elvis Costello, XTC and Squeeze and stuff. We'd sit in the living room just obsessing about the production on things like New Musik's Living By Numbers."

Braide taught himself piano and began songwriting from an early age. He was only 17 when his big break came along. "I was signed by a guy called Jim Doyle who worked for Elton John's Rocket Music. Then I got a singles deal with Polydor, and it just went from there."

Braide's first single, the slick and sophisticated pop song, Funny Five Minutes, was released in 1992. It was produced by one of Braide's musical heroes: Thomas Dolby. For parent album, *Chapter One*, Simply Red's Mick Hucknall took over. "Looking back, it's amazing," recalls Braide, "I've got kids that are older than I was when that happened. I was in a studio in Italy with Mick, just thinking, 'This is where I belong,' not in an arrogant way. I just felt at home."

Follow-up LP, *Life In A Minor Key*, appeared on Eurythmics' David A Stewart's Anxious Records. "Dave really liked what I was doing. We spent years together making this record at Electric Lady Studios in New York, hanging out with Michael Hutchence and Lou Reed. It was an absolutely bonkers time – riding electric scooters through Times Square. You'd be sitting by Dave Stewart's pool, and then he'd just announce that Bryan Ferry was coming round. Absolutely bizarre, but brilliant." Despite the chaos, Braide retained an admirable sense of balance. "I knew it wasn't real. I always thought I was witnessing some kind of fantasy version of what a life could be."

By 1996, Braide was back in London, where he received a call from friend and fellow Polydor artist, Cathy Dennis. "I was sleeping on floors. I had no money. Cathy called me up and said, 'Polydor dropped me.' She asked where I was living and I said, 'Anywhere.' She said, 'Well, I've got a spare room. Why don't you move in?" Dennis suggested that she and Braide write together. "Overnight, we just had a couple of hits, and it was like, oh well, that wasn't that difficult. Should we do it again?" This marked the start of Braide's songwriting career. "Writing felt like a natural place to be. There was a freedom in it."

> **"Trevor Horn said, 'Do you want to be a Buggle for a night?'"**

Other artists began approaching for collaborations. "People like Glenn Tilbrook from Squeeze was always a supporter right from the beginning. I helped him write his first solo album [*The Incomplete Glenn Tilbrook*, 2001]." That same year, Braide wrote, or co-wrote, songs for Emma Bunton, Rick Astley, Victoria Beckham, and S Club 7. The following year, Braide and Cathy Dennis co-wrote Anything Is Possible, the debut single from *Pop Idol* winner Will Young, which shot to No 1 in the UK singles chart. Braide was rewarded with an Ivor Novello award. "It's a funny thing, because what do awards really mean? I've written things that I think are Grammy award-winning songs that never saw the light of day. An award is nice to put on your mantelpiece, but it means nothing to me."

Braide continued writing for artists such as Kylie Minogue, Lisa Stansfield, Beverley Knight, boy band JLS, Scottish singer Leon Jackson, and many others. "I don't even know if it's conscious, but I can feel what someone needs. It's more like a spiritual thing for me." In 2010, Braide relocated to America. "The American success that I had in 2001, when I was writing a lot with [songwriter] Desmond Child, who was writing for Bon Jovi, meant that when I eventually moved there, I'd already established a name." Work followed for major artists such as Pixie Lott, Delta Goodrem, Paloma Faith, Beyoncé, Lana Del Rey, Nicki Minaj, Toni Braxton, and more.

Throughout, Braide has continued to release albums under his own name – "It's definitely very important to me" – including this year's collaboration with Andy Partridge, *Return To Planet Wow!*, as well as working on soundtracks for several films (*The Princess Diaries, The Great Gatsby, Wonder Woman*). In 2012, he formed The Downes Braide Association with former Buggle and current Yes and Asia keyboardist, Geoff Downes.

The connection with Downes came via The Producers – a concept supergroup that consisted of Braide, drummer Ash Soan, producers Trevor Horn and Stephen Lipson, and 10cc's Lol Creme. "The Producers was a really great sort of interesting period. I'd founded that band with Steve Lipson in 2006, but by 2009, our record [*Made In Basing Street*] still hadn't come out – we'd finished it in 2007. I just thought, I'm not going to spend another five years doing this." The Producers' LP finally saw the light of day in 2012. Back in 2010, before Braide left for America, Trevor Horn made him an interesting offer. "He said, well, before you go, do you want to be a Buggle for the night? Because we're reforming to do a charity concert at this place called Supperclub, in London. I said, 'Of course.' I don't know what it was, but me and Geoff just got on really well."

Now ensconced back in the English countryside, projects such as DBA give Braide a chance to explore different musical directions. "Hits are important, and there's no way around it. It's great to make crazy, interesting arty indie records, but to have some real, tangible success really does help get you through a door."

That success has provided an appreciable safety net.

"I much prefer being an artist now than I ever did back then," he says, "because then your whole life was riding on it."

Words: Chris Wheatley
Trauma *by The Downes Braide Association is out now via Cherry Red.*

Photo: Olivia Braide

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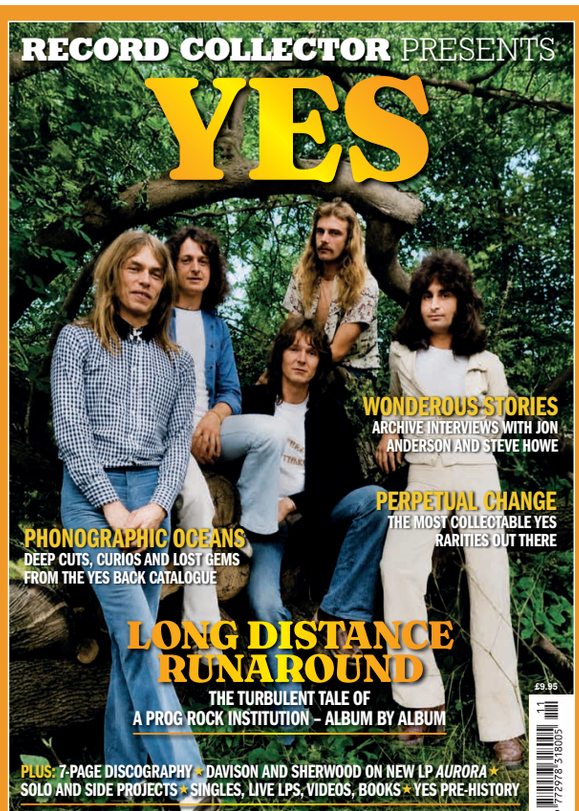

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UNDER THE RADAR

Artists, bands, and labels meriting more attention

This month: Wee Willie Harris



For a few months in 1957 and 1958, Bermondsey boy Wee Willie Harris was the public face of British rock'n'roll. Every day brought another newspaper story. A 5'2" pink-haired pocket rocket, he stopped traffic in Oxford Street posing for photographers in his Teddy Boy drape and brothel creepers. On TV, a live edition of the BBC's *Six-Five Special* found him leaning against a bar in a daringly louche manner, chummily addressing the channel's stuffy intellectual institution Gilbert Harding as "Daddy-O". While politicians ruminated on the impact of Harris's depravity on the nation's youth, a young Benny Hill rustled up a skit involving a thickly bewigged character called Wee Willie Hill.

Unfortunately, sudden celebrity did not bring Harris a hit single. His profile sank and he succumbed to parody. Yet he remains fascinating, not just for those who see the talent behind the pantomime, but also for his pioneering grasp of the possibilities of using image to create another self.

Harris, the son of a Thames bargeman, played piano by ear and started out doing vocal impressions of Al Jolson, Johnnie Ray and Fats Domino in dockland pubs and dance halls. Then news arrived that Bermondsey neighbour Tommy Hicks (aka Tommy Steele), who'd once gazumped him for an interval spot at the New Cross Palais in Deptford, was going down a storm in the West End. So, Harris decided to try his luck north of the river. Heading straight for Soho's coffee bars, his gritty tones and penchant for Meade Lux Lewis and Pete Johnson boogie stylings made him unusual when everyone else was trying to be Elvis. Paul Lincoln, boss of the 2 I's, happily hired him as a regular act.

But a lack of height, topped off by a face like something out of the *Beano*, disadvantaged Harris next to pretty boy rockers like Terry Dene. Distinctly unstarry offstage, with the manner, as a *Sunday Mirror* scribe put it, "of a nervous waiter about to be interviewed on a mistake in his figures", he struggled to get noticed.

What Harris needed, Lincoln reckoned, was an image change. Hence the hair dyed pink – or sometimes red, marmalade-orange or green – a big polka-dot bow-tie, Edwardian drape jacket (pillar-box red to begin with, later a nice bright green number from Cecil Gee's on Shaftesbury Avenue), extra-short drainpipe trousers, pink socks and heavy-soled creepers.

While biographer Rob Finnis [*I Go Ape! The Wee Willie Harris Story*] wrote that the intention was to offer Harris as "a cockney yobbo version of Little Richard", he was a one-off. The change of look seemed to liberate his stage personality. A *Record Mirror* reporter caught his show at the Trocadero, Elephant & Castle, in 1958. In the course of upstaging top-of-the bill Cliff Richard, he rattled off rock'n'roll songs "at Bren gun speed, interspersing the lyrics with whoops, grunts, gargles and growls, and all the time maintaining a mad dance like a jack rabbit." A year later, having added a distinctly animated interpretation of Neil Sedaka's I Go Ape! ("I go ape, ay-yi-yi-yaaah!!") to his song list, he dyed his hair blond and wore a skimpy leopard-skin leotard, clambering over the piano. Hugely popular in Italy, where he first toured in 1959 with a backing band wearing bowler hats, he was dubbed Il Leopardo Del Rock.

He was the original rock oddity, described by David Bowie as "the man who started glam"

Harris was the original British rock oddity, described by David Bowie in a 1998 online interview as the man "who started glam". Roland Heinrich Rumtreiber, German alt. country, folk and rockabilly musician, writes of being fascinated just by seeing his photo. In liner notes to Bear's new 26-track Harris compilation, *Grab You,* he suggests, "He could have been part of the Sex-Pistols…. the missing man in the Pistols' promo shot showing Johnny Rotten in Teddy Boy gear."

Harris was best onstage. The Bear disc contains several tracks from his Italian gigs, reflecting his energy and range, from Dixie tunes to a version of I Don't Know Why (But I Do) that sounds close to Charlie Rich in prime supper club mode. But there were plenty of Decca discs which, overlooked at the time, display show how Harris' rich-textured, gravelly London rasp added unusual flavourings to American rock and boogie. Back To School Again, Love Bug Crawl, Smack Dab In The Middle, and No Chemise, Please! leave the originals in the dust. Trouble in Mind and Lollipop Mama (not on the Bear CD) demonstrate Harris' blues feel.

It wasn't all imported. Aside from Grab You, a vampire number that would have suited Screaming Lord Sutch, Harris's self-penned signature song, Rockin' At The 2 I's, was recorded before an audience in the function room above The Railway Tavern, West Hampstead (later home to the R&B club, Klooks Kleek) in 1957. Next door was the Decca studio. Engineers ran cables through the windows to get the live feel. This curious singalong number has a simmering Fats Domino-style piano in the company of an 18-piece band, rustled up by producer Dick Rowe. Drummer Tony Crombie supplied a stout backbeat. While, months later, Cliff Richard made unlikely references to "Mississippi heat" and "bullfrogs croakin'" in Move It, Harris sang in the guise of a South London geezer off for a night in town ("we won't be 'ome tonight"), with references to making a cup of tea and catching the No 54 bus.

There's a sweet story of Harris visiting Ian Dury, who'd listed Harris in Reasons to Be Cheerful (Pt 3), in his dressing room after a Hammersmith Odeon show in 1985. Dury sat him down and sang Rockin At The 2 I's to him, word for word. Two great eccentrics, united in keeping the British music hall tradition alive in rock.

Words: Jack Watkins
Grab You *by Wee Willie Harris, Vol 9 in* The Brits Are Rocking *series, is available from Bear Family Records.*



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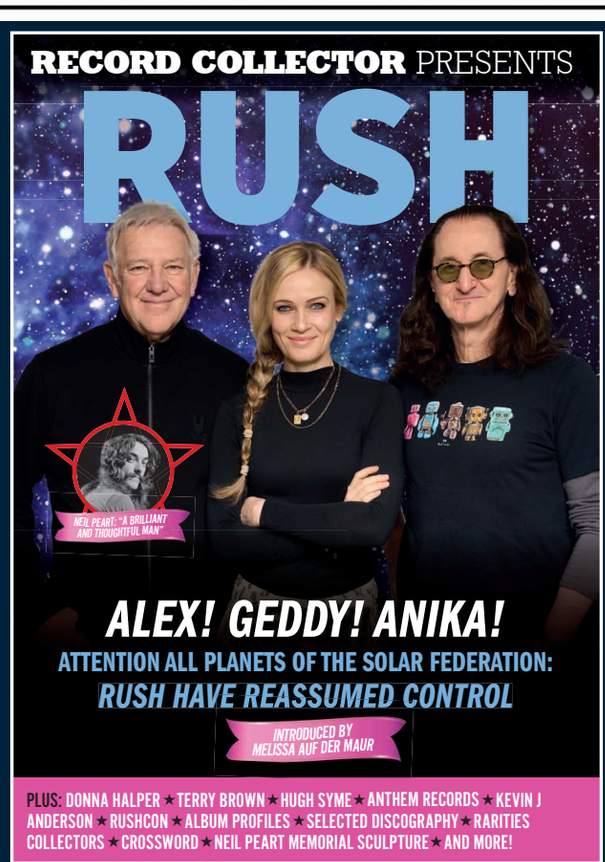

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This month: Jesus Jones

Formed in 1988, Jesus Jones' mix of pop melody, samples, and alt rock scored multiple hits throughout the 90s on both sides of the Atlantic. As they return with *Twilight*, their first new album in eight years, frontman Mike Edwards and keyboardist Iain Baker join *RC* to discuss the vagaries of fame, fortune, and a life free from pressure.

Born in Wiltshire, Edwards recalls his early musical epiphanies as seeing T.Rex on *Top Of The Pops*, hearing The Beatles' *'White Album'*, and, in 1973, a road trip around Africa with his parents. "Endless days of driving through the Congo Basin, listening to The Beatles, Janis Joplin, Simon & Garfunkel. I remember sitting in the back of the car, listening and thinking, 'This is something I'd like to do.'"

He began teaching himself guitar. "In 1977, when Pretty Vacant [Sex Pistols] came out, that was another crucial factor. When I was 15, Gen [drummer, Simon Matthews] and I played our first ever gig at a friend's birthday party. From that point on, that was all I was going to do. Thank God it worked out."

It was another 10 years before the Jesus Jones line-up was complete and settled in London. "Members came in and out. Alan [bassist, Al Doughty] joined in around '83, Jerry [De Borg, guitarist] in '86. The last one to join was Iain on keyboards."

Iain Baker had grown up in a quiet region near Bath, immersed in his dad's extensive jazz collection before, like Mike, his taste was wrenched in the direction of punk. It was a chance meeting while at university in London that led to his association with Jesus Jones.

"I bumped into Mike in a pub. He was wearing a pair of Converse high tops. In 1988, it was like a secret sign – you could tell somebody was a skater." The duo bonded over this shared passion. "At some point, he [Mike] said, 'I'm in a band. I have a demo of my new song [Info Freako]. I listened and I thought it was amazing."

"We were getting nowhere with record companies," Edwards remembers. "We were looking for managers." Gen made acquaintances with Andy Ross and David Balfe, who managed alt-pop band Voice Of The Beehive. "He gave them the demo of Info Freako. They called up and said, 'Did you know we're a record company as well?' That's how we got signed to Food Records."

It was at this point that Baker came onboard. "I'd never done anything like that in my life and, brilliantly, I could actually play the keyboards and could play them quite well."

Work began on a debut album, with Edwards at the helm. "I just had this vision. The Shamen were a huge influence on us," he says of the credible Scottish techno-pop outfit, with a hint of psych, who would later have a No 1 hit with Ebeneezer Goode. "I was listening to lots of hip-hop and house music. I had this utterly rubbish little echo guitar pedal because it had a four-second sampling function on it. I was just sampling things left, right, and centre, thinking this is incredible."

"There was no reason to continue. There were no avenues open to us"

Famed producer Craig Leon was drafted in to helm the project. "It doesn't get any better than that," Baker recalls. "Here's the guy that did the first Suicide album, that did the first Ramones album. I spent the whole time hyperventilating."

The resultant LP, *Liquidizer*, was released in 1989 – a heady mix of punk, hardcore, new wave pop and dance.

"The Shamen showed us that drum machines and really inventive pop music could work together," Baker says, adding that "World Domination Enterprises was another piece of the jigsaw – this kind of aggressive wall of noise".

Liquidizer reached No 32 on the UK charts, with lead single Info Freako drawing particular acclaim from *NME, Melody Maker,* and *Sounds*. A follow up album, *Doubt*, was released in 1991, with the band refining and expanding their sample-heavy, dance-pop sound. Singles Real, Real, Real, Right Here Right Now and International Bright Young Thing scored big on both sides of the Atlantic.

"There was much more pressure in doing a third album," Edwards says. "How do we keep it going while still doing what I wanted to do with music?" 1993's *Perverse* – a heavier, darker, affair – reached No 6 in the UK. "It was the era when techno was making sounds like you'd never heard before," Edwards explains. "With *Perverse*, I wanted to make it as digital as possible and take that idea as far forward as we could."

Perverse sold 500,000 units, compared to *Doubt*'s two million. As Edwards remembers, "That was when the pressure got even greater. It was enormous."

The band's fourth album, the more alt-rock *Already*, appeared in 1997. As Edwards recalls, "It was a very long and drawn-out process; there was so much indecision and so much doubt".

By this point, Food had been acquired by EMI, and the financial crisis that severely affected the company did little to help *Already*'s poor performance. A fifth album, *London* (2001), released via Koch/Mi5 Recordings, failed to chart. "There was no real reason for us to continue," Edwards admits. "There were no avenues open to us."

Iain Baker subsequently took a job as a DJ for XFM. Edwards, meanwhile, moved into personal fitness. The birth of Baker's first child in 2010 proved pivotal. As he tells *RC*: "I thought, right, I'll be a stay-at-home dad, because my wife had a proper job."

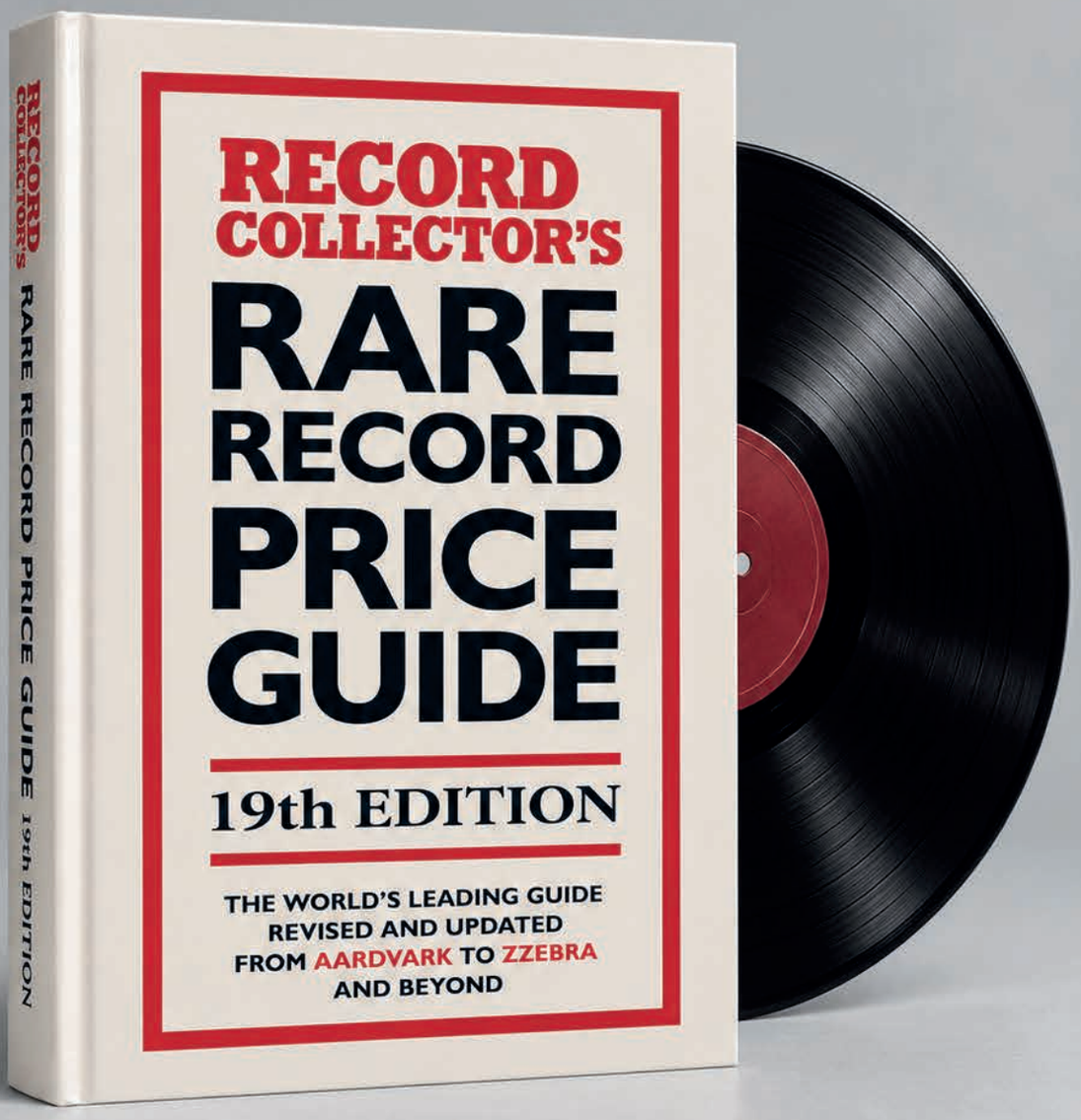
Baker used his spare time to lay out a 10-year plan for Jesus Jones. "I sat down with Mike and said I want to revitalise all of the back catalogue, maybe remix and remaster some of the old material, tie all the social media stuff together. At the end of that, we could maybe start recording again. I think it took six or seven years, and we did all of that."

In 2018, the band released two albums via their own label, *Passages*, and *Voyages*. It's been a long wait since then for *Twilight*.

"It's so much more enjoyable now," Edwards reflects, "because I only make the music that I want to make. With this album, I was hoping we'd end up with quite a lot of variety, and I think we have."

"That classic sound is still there," adds Baker, "but *Twilight* is the sound of us being unapologetically us right now."

Interview: Chris Wheatley
Twilight *is out on Jesus Jones Recordings.*



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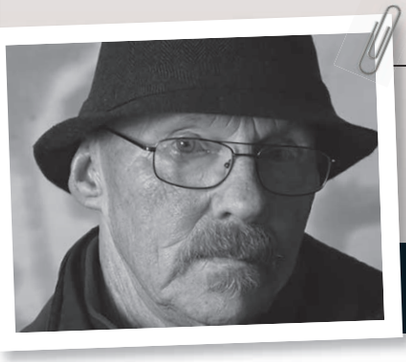

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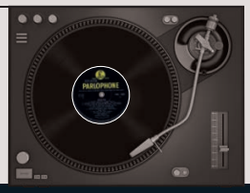

John 'Pugwash' Weathers of Gentle Giant on the soundtrack to his life



Tennessee Ernie Ford 16 Tons
(Capitol EAP 1014, EP, UK, 1956) £5

My parents had a wind-up gramophone. They bought a new radiogram, so they gave me the gramophone. And one record, which was Tennessee Ernie Ford singing Sixteen Tons. I wore it out! I had it in my bedroom in our little one-up one-down cottage in Carmarthen, Wales. It was owned by the church and had an outside toilet. You Don't Have To Be A Baby To Cry was the B-side, which I hardly ever played. Sixteen Tons had a rhythmic feel… those clicking fingers! That was the first record I ever took a lot of interest in, at age nine.



Elvis Presley All Shook Up
(HMV POP 359, 10"/7", UK, 1957) £15

I was addicted to Radio Luxembourg because the BBC didn't play anything interesting. By the time I heard Elvis' first UK No 1 on Luxembourg, I was 11. That's what got me interested in the drums. I was wondering how DJ Fontana was able to do all these things at once: the bass drum, the hi-hat and the snare. So, I got my parents to buy me it and actually taught myself how to play drums off the record. I taught myself off the single using a wooden chair with a pair of my mother's huge wooden knitting needles.



Jerry Lee Lewis Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On
(London 45-HL-S-8457, 7", UK, 1957) £18

That was the first record I ever bought with my own money, from Littlewoods in Carmarthen. I also sang Whole Lotta Shakin' at my first public appearance: that was when I was living in Liverpool with my aunt and uncle. I used to go to the Locarno on West Derby Road and saw Gerry & The Pacemakers and quite a lot of Liverpool bands there. I entered their Friday night talent competition and really enjoyed myself singing with all these kids out front watching me. A guy doing a Mario Lanza song won, but by then I had a taste for performing.



Little Richard Good Golly Miss Molly
(London 45-HLU 8560, 7", UK, 1958) £25

This is my ultimate Desert Island Disc, which I just could not do without. It's such a wonderful record. I think it's the best rock'n'roll record ever recorded. Earl Palmer was the drummer on that. When I first heard it, the guy's voice just floored me. And the other side of it was Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, which I think The Beatles used to do back in their Hamburg days. Paul McCartney used to do a very good impression of Little Richard.



The Shadows The Savage
(Columbia 45-DB 4726, 7", UK, 1961) £5

By 1961, I knew I was going to be a drummer. I thought, I love this drum business. The Savage is a great track to play along to if you're learning to play. The floor-tom figure is particularly interesting, and when it comes to the chorus, it really swings. Once I mastered that, I thought, "Wow, I'm a drummer." So, I saved all my money and bought a kit, or pieces of one. It was a snare drum, a small tom and a bass drum, a very cracked cymbal and a pair of hi-hats. Tony Meehan would have approved!



The Pirates My Babe
(HMV POP 1250, 7", UK, 1964) £40

I was in a band, Peter Shane & The Vikings, that used to do some support work up at the Ritz in Llanelli. We opened the show for The Pirates. There was another band called The Meteorites in between. But The Pirates absolutely floored me. They were originally Johnny Kidd's backing band. Mick Green was the guitar player, and he was brilliant. Playing guitar in a three-piece band, you have to do a lot of rhythm work as well as lead, and it was great. A wonderful, wonderful live band.



Graham Bond Organisation *The Sound Of '65*
(Columbia 33SX 1711, LP, UK, 1965) £400

By 1965 I was with the Eyes Of Blue, and we supported the Graham Bond Organisation at Swansea's Patti Pavilion. It was the first time we'd seen the original band: Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, Dick Heckstall-Smith and Bond. Ginger was an absolute beast of a player. All the tunes on this album bring back memories of that night in the Patti. Graham always said if he could choose his perfect backing band, it would be the Eyes Of Blue; I was the only one that got the gig [in Graham Bond's Magick in 1970].



The Beatles *Revolver*
(Parlophone PCS 7009, LP, UK, 1966) £175

It's the Fabs' first "proper" album. The ones before that had a few good tunes on them, plus covers, but with *Revolver*, they upped their game. And it was almost the first prog album, because the sounds on there were very experimental. I thought *Beatles For Sale* had some great songs on it. But they really took their time with *Revolver* and went psychedelic, which was big at that time. The Eyes Of Blue went psychedelic as well!



Wilson Pickett In The Midnight Hour
(Atlantic AT 4036, 7", UK, 1965) £20

Wilson Pickett wrote it in his hotel room the night before he recorded with the Memphis Horns and the MGs… Gentle Giant were playing in New York in 1976 on the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. We finished the set, it was midnight and the audience were screaming for more. Derek [Shulman] said, "Oh, do you all remember Midnight Hour?" So, we played it off the cuff. It was a wonderful, wonderful night.



Spirit Mechanical World
(CBS 3523, 7", UK, 1968) £15

Spirit were great innovators. Randy California's guitar solo makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. The drummer, Ed Cassidy, was his stepfather. And he had a shaved head, which was great, too! The singer was Jay Ferguson. Gentle Giant kept running into his later band, Jo Jo Gunne, at Atlanta Airport. We ended up playing a gig with them and Jay waxed lyrical about us onstage. Mechanical World brings it all back...

Words: Michael Heatley
Gentle Giant's 1973 album* In A Glass House *and a new version of* Front Row Center (U.S. Dates 1975 – 1980) *are out now on Madfish.





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10 OF THE BEST

This month: Children's Records





Raymond Scott *Soothing Sounds For Baby Volume I* (Epic LN 24083, LP, US, 1964) £100

Composer, bandleader, producer, and pianist, Raymond Scott's work will be familiar to millions as the basis of Carl Stalling's music for the *Looney Tunes* children's animations. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Scott started out in swing jazz during the 1930s, but even then he was busy tinkering behind the scenes, inventing new ways of manipulating sound. This early electronic classic, the first of three volumes, pulses, chirps, and flows with a sweet, sometimes eerie, and always hypnotic quality.



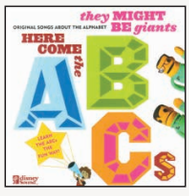
The Wombles *Remember You're A Womble* (CBS 80191, LP, UK, 1974) £5

Mike Batt [pictured top] created The Wombles to provide music based on the classic children's TV series of the same name, memorably narrated by Bernard Cribbins. This is the second Wombles album, following *Wombling Songs*, released the same year. Batt himself features on vocals and keyboards, with the great Clem Cattini on drums and Chris Spedding on guitar. It remains a fun listen, with a strong, diverse range of songs ably executed by top-class musicians.



BBC Radiophonic Workshop *Doctor Who – The Music* (BBC REH 462, LP, UK, 1983) £15

Released in 1983 and featuring music from 1963 onwards, this LP could have been included here on the strength of the fabulous Ron Grainer-composed, Delia Derbyshire-arranged definitive take on the show's theme tune. This was the first 'Who' album to only contain music from the programme and features the beautifully minimalist Nyssa's Theme and the ominous Threat Of Melkur by Roger Limb, alongside atmospheric numbers by Peter Howell, the bombastic March Of The Cybermen by Malcolm Clarke, and other gems.



They Might Be Giants *Here Come The ABCs* (Disney Sound 61204 7, CD, US, 2005) £10

Following their successful run on Elektra, John Flansburgh and John Linnell found themselves open to a deluge of new opportunities that lay in surprising directions. It should come as no surprise that the duo turned their hands to children's music. *Here Come The ABCs* is bouncy and delightfully easy to absorb but deceptively simple, and contains all the craft, guile, and innovation of the band's 'adult-oriented' releases.



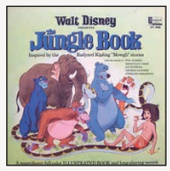
The Muppets *The Muppet Show* (Pye NSPH 19, LP, UK, 1977) £10

A *Grammy Award Winner* for Best Album for Children, this was the first soundtrack LP released from Jim Henson's enduring, anarchic, brilliant TV show. All the series' beloved characters are here: Kermit, the unmistakable Fozzie Bear and Miss Piggy. Even the curmudgeonly Statler and Waldorf make several interruptions. From the rousing theme tune to Kermit's Bein' Green, this is a non-stop delight. The record hit No 1 in the UK in June 1977.



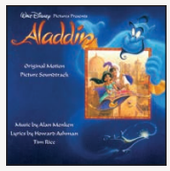
Woody Guthrie *Songs To Grow On For Mother And Child* (Folkways FC 7015, LP, US, 1956) £100

Woody Guthrie penned hundreds of songs during his lifetime, many of which have found their way into the Library of Congress as invaluable works of art and documents of history. He was no stranger to writing for children and this collection contains some of his finest work in the genre. Recorded in 1947, these songs still sound fresh, appealing, and full of subtle magic.



Various *The Jungle Book* (Disneyland ST 3948, LP, UK, 1967) £10

The Jungle Book will always stand as one of the best of Disney's animated films, and certainly the one which contains the most memorable songs. This particular version of the soundtrack featured new narration by actor Dal McKennon. The original songs are still in place, however, with The Bare Necessities and I Wanna Be Like You taking pride of place. Fun fact: the Sherman Brothers, who wrote the majority of the compositions, were hired on condition that they did not read Rudyard Kipling's source material.



Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, Tim Rice *Aladdin* (Pickwick DSTCD 470, CD, UK, 1992) £5

Aladdin the movie remains a jewel in the crown of modern-era Disney's animated full-lengths, not least thanks to its colourful, singalong soundtrack, which scooped an Academy Award for Best Original Score and a Grammy Award for Song Of The Year for A Whole New World. Alan Menken, who had previously worked on *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty And The Beast*, composed the music for *Aladdin*, with lyrics by Tim Rice and Howard Ashman. It's a rambunctious, cabaret-esque collection of energetic show tunes.



Ella Jenkins *You'll Sing A Song And I'll Sing A Song* (Folkways FC 7664, LP, US, 1966) £30

Born in 1924, singer-songwriter Ella Louise Jenkins, who lived to be 100, was a lifelong advocate of children's music as a valid art form. She grew up in Missouri and Chicago, receiving no formal training, and naturally absorbed blues, gospel, and jazz. It was during her career with the YWCA that Jenkins began writing songs, and this collection provides a fine overview of her talent. Backed by the Urban Gateways' Children's Chorus, Jenkins weaves a mesmerising, distinctive spell.

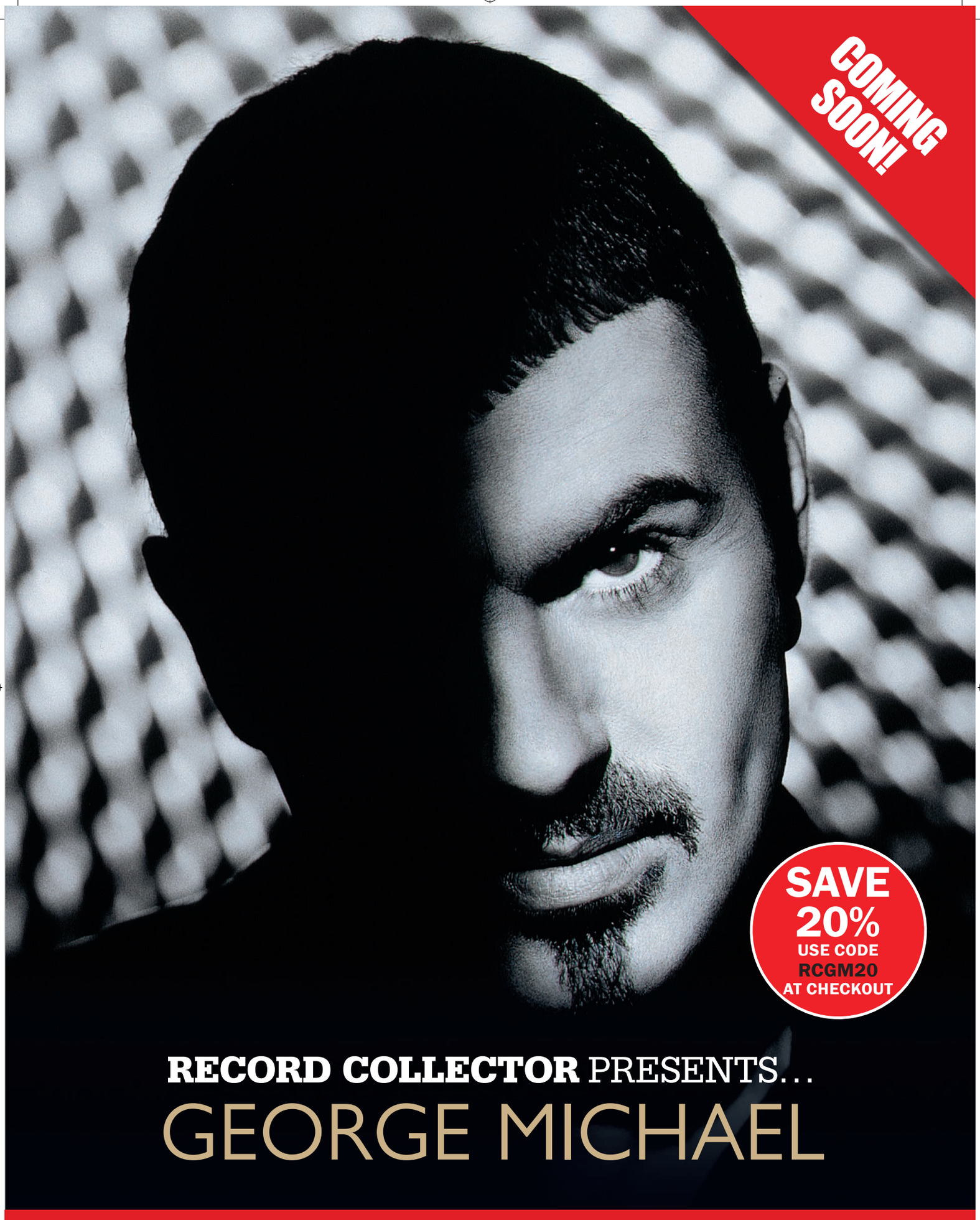


Jerry Garcia, David Grisman *Not For Kids Only* (Acoustic Disc ACD 9, US, CD, 1993) £15

David Grisman appeared on the Dead's *American Beauty* LP, and alongside Jerry Garcia in the band, Old & In The Way. This entertaining album, recorded when the Dead were past their best, showcases the natural chemistry between the two old pals, as they tackle traditional children's songs with laid-back charm and no small amount of skill. A good-natured, jazzy take on Teddy Bears' Picnic provides a particular highlight, but everything here is supremely enjoyable.

Words: Chris Wheatley

Woody Guthrie* – Woody At Home – Vol 1 + 2 *is available now via Shamus Records.



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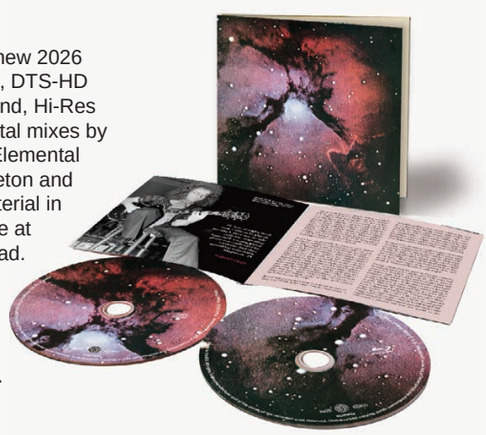

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