



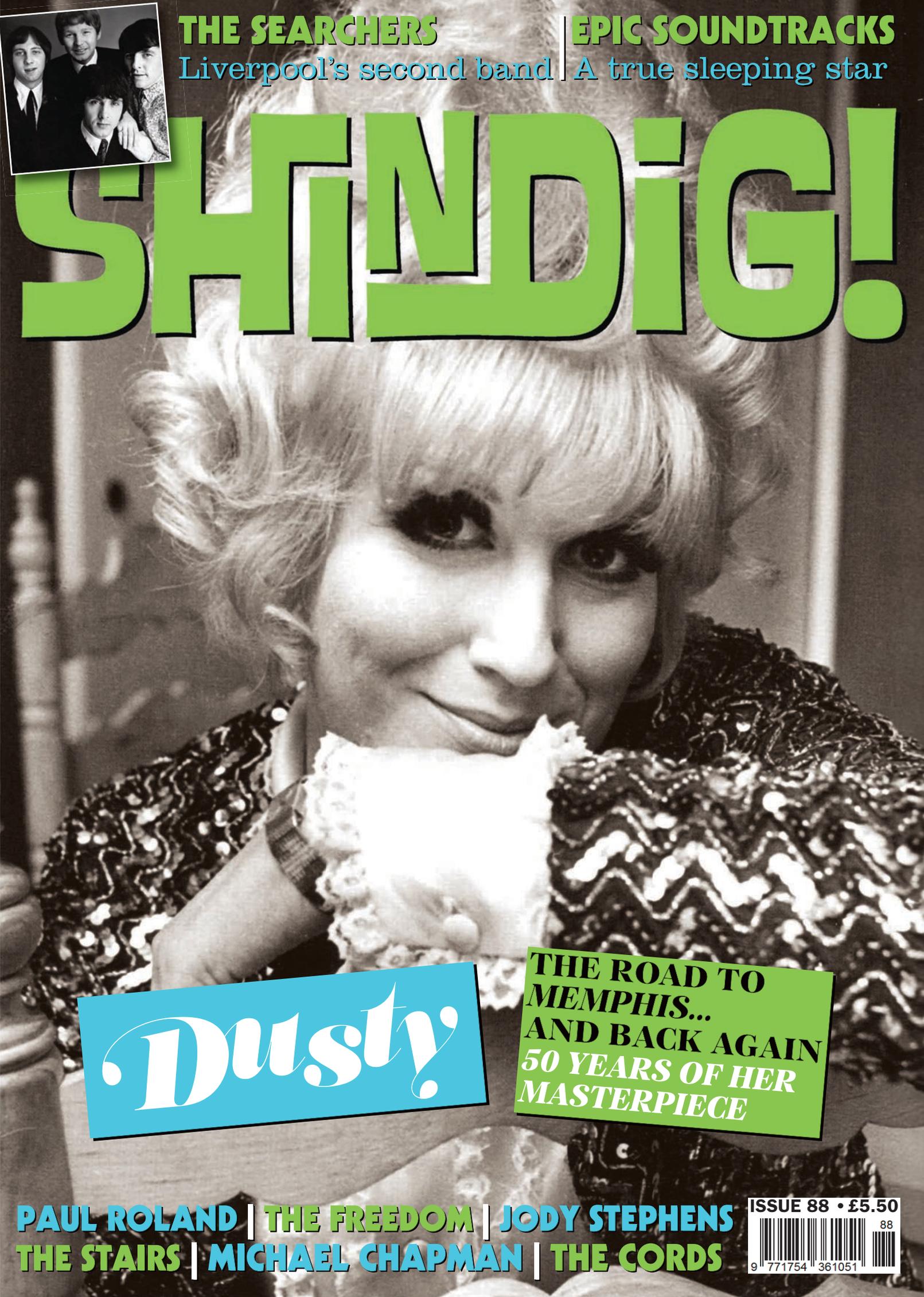
THE SEARCHERS

Liverpool's second band

EPIC SOUNDTRACKS

A true sleeping star

SHINDIG!



Dusty

**THE ROAD TO
MEMPHIS...
AND BACK AGAIN
50 YEARS OF HER
MASTERPIECE**

PAUL ROLAND | THE FREEDOM | JODY STEPHENS
THE STAIRS | MICHAEL CHAPMAN | THE CORDS

ISSUE 88 • £5.50





William Tyler
GOES WEST

MERGE
RECORDS



SHINDIG!

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"I hated it because I couldn't be Aretha Franklin. If only people could realise what a deflating thing it is to say, Otis Redding stood there"

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welcome

Happy New Year Shindiggers,

How's your new year shaping up? I have just completed my annual Dry January. (For non-UK readers, that's "a sponsored no booze for a month effort, with the proceedings going to Cancer Research"). It's a really good cause, and I always benefit from such a major break.

That's the one good thing about these long grey months, they're an ideal time to dedicate to listening to music. What have you discovered or rediscovered? I'm working my way through all manner of box sets, and enjoying their ephemera, weighty books, film content and music.

Have you had a chance to fill in last issue's Reader Survey yet? All I need is a decent quality mobile-snap of the filled-out page, emailed to 2019survey@shindig-magazine.com, and you will automatically be entered into the prize draw. The deluxe box of The Beatles' 1968 masterwork is an absolute stellar prize. If you're a new reader, you can order issue #87 via our website. Good luck.

And here we are, 50 years on from 1969, another year of half-centenary anniversaries to celebrate. There are some big ones, including the self-explanatory named album made by the often-difficult diva Dusty Springfield. *In Memphis*, was cut in American Recordings at the fabled city, with crack production team Jerry Wexler, Arif Mardin and Tom Dowd, and a wealth of incredible musicians and backing singers. Gorgeous songs by Goffin & King, Mann & Weil, Newman – and two doozies from Hinton & Fritts and Hurley & Wilkins – offered the talented singer something to get her teeth into. The balance of funky soul ('Breakfast In Bed', 'Son Of A Preacher Man') and an updated take on the type of MOR she had made her name with ('Windmills Of Your Mind') is absolute perfection. *Dusty In Memphis* does the wonderful thing of combining the sounds and feelings of music from across the Atlantic, with the British tendency toward melancholy and pomp. It's soul, but not as we know it, Jim. Fifty years on, the album stands the test of time like few others, and opened the doors for a new breed of strong yet demanding British female singers.

If Dusty has been rewarded the classic status for *In Memphis*, Liverpool's "second band", The Searchers, have only ever gained a footnote in rock history for formulating the ingredients of folk-rock. This issue, we look at how they adapted to the late '60s. Although commercial failures, the likes of 'Popcorn, Double Feature' and 'Umbrella Man' showed a struggling band getting to grips with the American West Coast zeitgeist.

An interview with Big Star's Jody Stephens, the sad story of Epic Soundtracks and a look back at The Stairs' 1992 classic *Mexican R&B*, along with the usual feast for the eyes, assure that the rest of this issue's content will give you more than enough solid reading for quite a few days.

Lay back and enjoy,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills
Editor-In-Chief



Shindig! listen to all music using the Teufel Kombo 62 and use Technics, Tidal and Roon. For more information go to teufel.co.uk, tidal.com and roonlabs.com

SHINDIG!

Editor-in-Chief:

Jon 'Mojo' Mills
jon@shindig-magazine.com
64 North View Road, London N8 7LL

Managing Editor/Reviews Editor:

Andy Morten
andy@shindig-magazine.com

Assistant Editor:

Paul Osborne
paul@shindig-magazine.com

Contributing Editor:

Thomas Patterson
thomas@shindig-magazine.com

Editorial Assistant:

Phil Suggitt
phil@shindig-magazine.com

Contributors:

Camilla Aisa, Richard Allen, Joe Banks, David Bash, Grahame Bent, Christopher Budd, Jeremy Cargill, Del Day, Hugh Dellar, Charles Donovan, Stuart Draper, Duncan Fletcher, Mike Fornatale, Paul Foster, Ben Graham, Greg Healey, Lenny Helsing, Kate Hodges, Henry Hutton, Johnnie Johnstone, Fergal Kinney, Richard Knight, Grey Malkin, Simon Matthews, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Greg Morse, Andy Morten, Kris Needs, Ashley Norris, Paul Osborne, Thomas Patterson, Jeff Penczak, Mark Raison, Paul Ritchie, Marco Rossi, Martin Ruddock, Luke Smyth, Phil Suggitt, Spenser Tomson, Gary von Tersch, Chris Wheatley, Tim Worthington

Publisher:

Tom Saunders, Silverback Publishing
tom@silverbackpublishing.rocks
14 Victoria Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4RT
Tel: 020 3752 2263

Director:

Andy Crispin

Commercial Manager:

Alan Thomas
alan@shindig-magazine.com
Tel: 07830 168076

Subscriptions:

subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk
Tel: 01778 392495

Design:

Andy Morten, Martin Cook

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PUBLISHING



New Releases for February



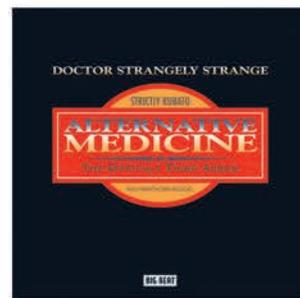
Bellissima! More 1960s She-Pop From Italy
 CDTOP 1527
 Soaring big beat ballads, the occasional guitar-driven nugget and other feminine gems of the stylish Italian variety.



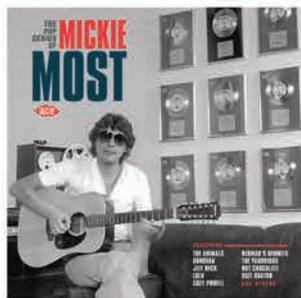
Bellissima! More 1960s She-Pop From Italy
 XXQLP 056 (LP)
 Our Italian Girls compilation pressed on 180g white vinyl with a heavy-duty sleeve and illustrated inner bag.



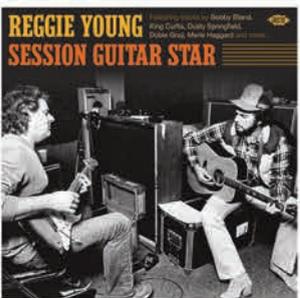
Manchester: A City United In Music
 CDTOP2 1534 (2CD)
 From the 50s folk revival, through beat, prog, punk, indie and rave, Manchester has been a vital source of rock and pop.



Doctor Strangely Strange Alternative Medicine
 CDWKID 177
 Making a return to the Ace catalogue after many years' absence, 1997's difficult third album from the Irish folk group. Features the late Gary Moore on guitar on several tracks.



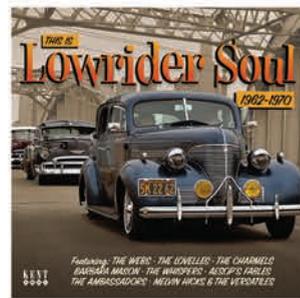
The Pop Genius Of Mickie Most
 CDMOST 1528
 Record producer, hit-picker extraordinaire, entrepreneur, TV talent-show pundit, Pop mogul Mickie Most was a man ahead of his time, anticipating the workings of the modern media before the internet made it all happen. This is the soundtrack to his story, told in rich detail in the picture-packed 72 page booklet.



Reggie Young Session Guitar Star
 CDCHD 1537
 A long-awaited overview of Reggie Young's six decades as Memphis and Nashville's most in-demand guitarist.



On The Detroit Beat: Motor City Soul UK Style 1963-67
 CDTOP 1539
 The Motown Sound gets a distinctly 60s UK makeover.

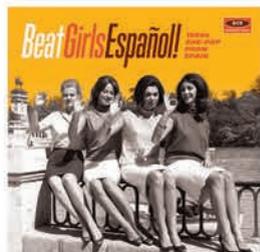


This Is Lowrider Soul
 CDKEND 482
 Slow soulful jams from the golden age of soul music - as adored in southern California clubs and cars

FROM THE VAULTS:



Ciao Bella! Italian Girl Singers Of The 60s
 CDCHD 1414 / HIQLP 025 (LP)
 Groovy girl-pop from the land that brought you Pucci, Fellini and Morricone.



Beat Girls Español! 1960s She-Pop From Spain
 CDTOP 1512 / XXQLP 053 (LP)
 The feminine side of Spanish pop, including some great 1960s examples of the "Torrelaguna sound".



The Girls Want The Boys! Sweden's Beat Girls 1964-1970
 CDTOP 1482 / XXQLP 048 (LP)
 A smörgåsbord of groovy 60s she-pop from Sweden.



Tres Chic! More French girl singers of the 60s
 CDCHD 1365 / HIQLP 006
 Groovy 60s pop as only the yé-yé girls of France knew how.



She came from Hungary! 1960s Beat/Gold Eastern Bloc
 CDTOP 1519 / XXQLP 054
 Feisty freakbeat, folk rock, funky pop and more from Hungary's foremost female recording stars - backed by some of the nation's leading beat bands.



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shindiggin' What's **HOT** on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



MARMALADE Reflections Of My Life

The sad passing of singer Dean Ford lends extra poignancy to this introspective gem he co-wrote with guitarist Junior Campbell. It charted in the UK at the tail end of 1969 and peaked at #3 at home and #10 in the US early the following year. The orchestral accompaniment is courtesy of by Keith Mansfield, who would later go on to compose the theme tune for long-running BBC sports show *Grandstand*. Also worth hearing is a female vocal

cover version by Australian band Flake.

Available on: *Fine Cuts: The Best Of* (UNION SQUARE 2-CD)

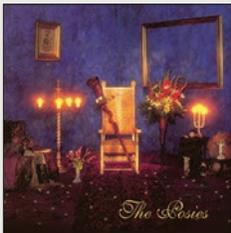


NICK GARRIE The Nightmare Of JB Stanislas

An elusive country-baroque masterpiece from late 1968, stylistically situated somewhere between those other mercurial English singer-songwriting talents Bill Fay and Colin Blunstone, Garrie would eventually achieve cult status, touring with Leonard Cohen before going on to play festivals with contemporary artists such as Camera Obscura, Trembling Bells and recording with Douglas T Stewart of BMX Bandits. The album of the same title

was in truth a mixed bag, but there's no denying the majestic sweep or the sheer passion of its mystical title track.

Available on: *The Nightmare Of JB Stanislas* (ELEFANT 2-CD)



THE POSIES Golden Blunders

Seattle band The Posies, "The thinking man's Nirvana", brought heart-warming melodies and rich harmonies to the early '90s grunge scene. They stood out amongst the plaid shirts as classic songsmiths, reminiscent of '60s heralds The Hollies and The Zombies. This was one of many pop nuggets from their second LP, produced by John Leckie. Written by Jon Auer, who was tickled pink when Ringo Starr, no less, covered the song a few years later.

Available on: *Dear 23* (OMNIVORE CD)

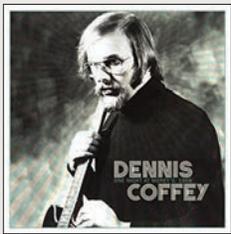


THE STOOGES 1969

Possibly the least sentimental paean to the year we'll be looking back at exhaustively over the coming months, the opening track on The Stooges' debut LP launched a thousand imitators but still couldn't be mistaken for anyone else. Iggy's sullen growl and Ron Asheton's unstable, greased piston guitar riff slide against each other over the primitive tribal funk of the rhythm section, and for a song so specific about its year of origin, '1969'

still sounds ironically timeless, even 50 years on.

Available on: *The Stooges* (ELEKTRA LP)



DENNIS COFFEY Eleanor Rigby

Revered Motown Funk Brother and axeman Dennis Coffey, master Hammond player Lyman Woodard and drummer Melvin Davis dig deep while pushing each other hard on the mighty soul-funk groove they hand out to this Lennon & McCartney classic live from the stage of Morey Baker's Showplace Lounge in the heart of downtown Detroit. Much of the drive and gutsiness of the Motor City soul workout heard during its 13 minutes

come from the fact that it's the sound of a formidable outfit completely at home working within the close confines of what was essentially a local lounge gig.

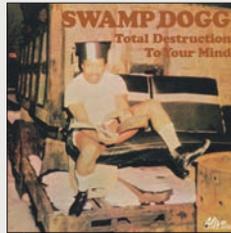
Available on: *One Night At Morey's: 1968* (OMNIVORE CD)



BIG STAR The India Song

'Give Me Another Chance' may tug at the heart strings and point the way forward to both Chris Bell's sadness and Chilton's compositions for *Third*. However, its Andy Hummel's 'The India Song' that is #1s delightful anomaly. Is it a Big Star classic? No. Is it sweet, patchouli-scented and packed with breezy West Coast harmonies, Mellotron and hippie daydream bliss? YES. It's rarely spoken about in terms of the Big Star canon, but its delicacy would have gained lesser bands major accolades.

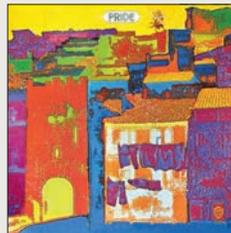
Available on: #1 Record (ARDENT LP)



SWAMP DOGG Total Destruction To Your Mind

"Sittin' on a corn flake / Ridin' on a roller skate." In the era of psychedelic soul, few went quite as far out there as Jerry Williams Jr AKA Swamp Dogg. Raddled after years of bad breaks as a writer, singer and producer, Williams dropped acid and Swamp Dogg was born. The title track of his debut comes on like Beefheart making an album at Stax. The tough up-tempo groove of 'Total Destruction To Your Mind' is topped off with an impassioned howl of a vocal from Dogg. Giving rein to his offbeat humour whilst sounding like a man coming undone it's 3:24 of rocket-fuelled soul - both southern-fried and acid-fried.

Available on: *Total Destruction To Your Mind* (ALIVE LP)



PRIDE Pride

This 1970 album is an obscurity from the rich catalogue of legendary producer/composer David Axelrod. Written and recorded with his son Michael, and rumoured to feature members of The Wrecking Crew, *Pride* offers a stripped-back version of the Axelrod sound, its Spanish and 12-string guitars and funk groove placing it somewhere between Love's gentler moments and Axelrod's famed "Capitol Trilogy".

Available on: *Fantazia Music LP*



TINA CHARLES Rich Girl

Years before 'I Love To Love' propelled her to the UK #1 spot in 1976, the 15-year-old Tina Charles cut a quartet of tough, funky singles for CBS under the aegis of library king Alan Hawkshaw. 'Rich Girl' oozes sass, star quality and a worrying amount of erotic charge for one so young - not to mention a watertight backing courtesy of the day's top sessioneers... and Elton John - but slipped past the record-buying public and into obscurity. You're unlikely to get much change from £100 for a copy now.

Available on: *I Love To Love (Plus)* (RPM CD)



JIMMY FRASER Of Hopes And Dreams And Tombstones

A hard-as-nails R&B number with a swaggering garage edge which would eventually be covered by Australian tough nuts The Purple Hearts, obscure soulster Jimmy Fraser's 1965 single is a warning to stay in school lest you end up in penury like the song's protagonist. Mind you, with its wailing harmonica and white-hot groove, it'd probably entice you to drop out and form a band rather than go for good grades; and you'll need to win the lottery anyway to afford a copy, as original pressings routinely go for four figure sums at auction.

Available on: *Columbia 45*

➔ Visit shindig-magazine.com to check out Shindiggin' playlists, podcasts and much more

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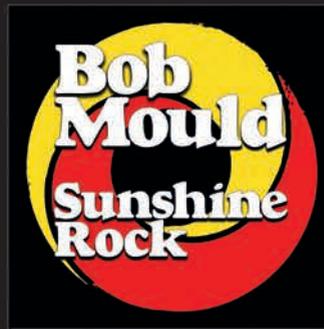
THE LEMONHEADS
VARSHONS 2
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

New album 'Varshons 2' is a hokey jukebox with unique versions of Yo La Tengo, Nick Cave, The Bevis Frond, NRBQ, The Eagles, Paul Westerberg, The Jayhawks, Lucinda Williams & John Prine. Limited edition scratch 'n' sniff sleeve.



TOY
HAPPY IN THE HOLLOW
TOUGH LOVE LP / CD

TOY's 4th album, Happy In The Hollow, is entirely uncompromising: an atmospheric capturing of a state of mind that touches on Krautrock, electronic dissonance & psychedelic rock while building its own reality & inviting us in.



BOB MOULD
SUNSHINE ROCK
MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

A celebration of the power of rock and roll.



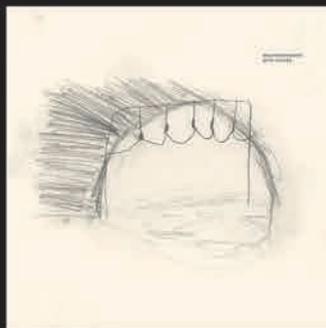
SILK ROAD ASSASSINS
STATE OF RUIN
PLANET MU 2LP / CD

Silk Road Assassins return to Planet Mu with their debut full-length two years after their first EP 'Reflection Spaces'. Silk Road Assassins music is built to last, and a pleasure to indulge in.



EERIE WANDA
PET TOWN

JOYFUL NOISE RECORDINGS LP / CD
Dutch/Croatian songwriter & visual artist Marina Tadic's new LP. A stripped down spectral manifestation that echoes the sonorous gleam of West Coast pop, anchored by Tadic's wistful lyrics and self possessed vocal delivery.



MACHINEFABRIEK
WITH VOICES
WESTERN VINYL LP / CD

Marissa Nadler, Peter Broderick, Richard Youngs & others contribute vocals around which experimental artist Machinefabriek constructs a bewildering aural architecture resulting in a mutating collage of modern minimalism.



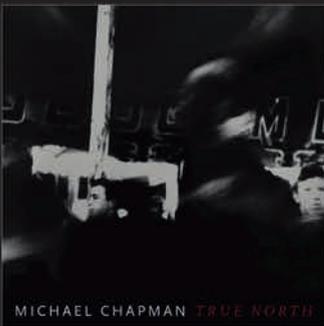
SOURAKATA KOITE
EN HOLLANDE

AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA LP / CD
The resonant, beautiful sound of the Senegalese kora (21-string harp-lute) is the focus of this deeply pleasing 1985 recording.



J.P. BIMENI & THE BLACK BELTS
FREE ME

TUCXONE RECORDS LP / CD
You'd expect this album to be penned by some descendant of US Soul royalty, but this is a new Soul classic every Soul fan will enjoy.



MICHAEL CHAPMAN
TRUE NORTH

PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD
Michael Chapman's elegiac, atmospheric True North finds him honing an ever keener edge to his writing, with Steve Gunn, Bridget St John, and BJ Cole.



WILLIAM TYLER
GOES WEST

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD
Featuring Bill Frisell, Meg Duffy (Hand Habits), Griffin Goldsmith (Dawes), and James Wallace (Hiss Golden Messenger).



SNEAKS
HIGHWAY HYPNOSIS

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD
Includes the singles "The Way It Goes", "Money Don't Grow On Trees" and "Hong Kong To Amsterdam".



MIKE KROL
POWER CHORDS

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD
Includes the singles "An Ambulance", "Little Drama", "Power Chords" and "What's the Rhythm". UK tour April 2019!

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thoughts & words

shindig-magazine.com
jon@shindig-magazine.com
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PHOTO RIC SEABERG



Pacific Ocean, 1969

STAR LETTER

WANNA TESTIFY

Hi Jon,

I read Louis Comfort-Wiggett's recent review of Pacific Ocean's *Pacific Ocean* CD on *Early Dawn* (*Shindig!* #85) and would like to add a bit of scholarship (liner notes would have greatly benefited this CD) regarding this fine record and group.

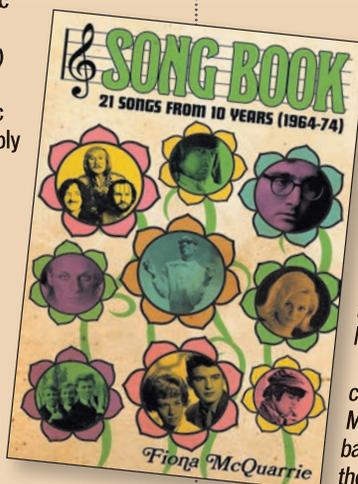
I saw Pacific Ocean at Gazzarri's on the Sunset Strip in 1968. Pacific Ocean was a terrific LA brown-eyed (not blue-eyed) soul band (most of the cuts on *Pacific Ocean* are classic soul songs) with an incredibly charismatic lead singer, Eddie James. Throughout their performance Eddie would often execute what we called "legitimate splits": that is, he would do the splits, hit the floor and then pop back up onto his feet *without using his hands*.

I still have my vinyl LP of Pacific Ocean (on VMC

Records). I assumed it would never be released on CD due to its obscurity.

I held out hope, though, as Eddie James sang and entertained with an intensity that he later brought to his acting career, where he began using his full name of Edward James Olmos.

All My Best,
William Stout



Louis says: "Thanks William for your insights. I can only imagine the story surrounding this band. A little research, care and attention would have added immensely to this package, which at best is an insult. I bet the individuals who put this out would have loved to have heard from you. Maybe you could have written some liners?"

We are sending you a copy of *Shindig!* writer Fiona McQuarrie's Songbook book, based on her feature pieces for the mag.

FAIR WARNING

Hey Jon,

I read with interest Sean Egan's Guess Who story. Just a word of caution, though, having spent much time with Randy Bachman and written four books with him: you have to corroborate everything he says. Everything! His grasp of his own history is limited and heavily skewed by his own vivid imagination. Much of what he stated in the article was incorrect or inaccurate. Randy never lets the truth get in the way of a good story.

Peterson is more reliable. Please let Sean know this.

Cheers,

John Einarson

Tall stories are one of the joys of aging, right?

WHITE DEVIL

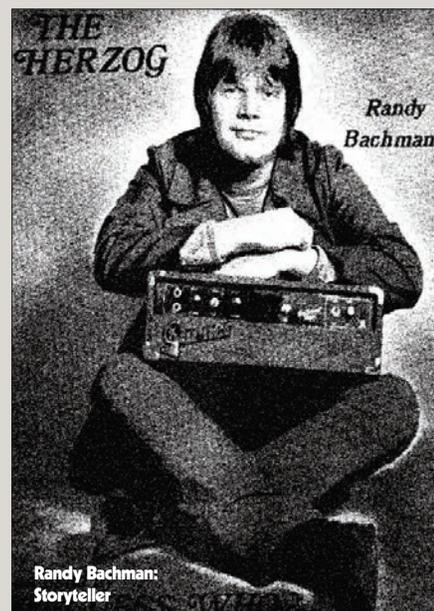
Hi Jon,

Shindig! is one of my monthly salvations; Dec issue great as usual. I had never heard 'Santa Claus Is A Black Man', so YouTubed it, and what a sweet classic it is!

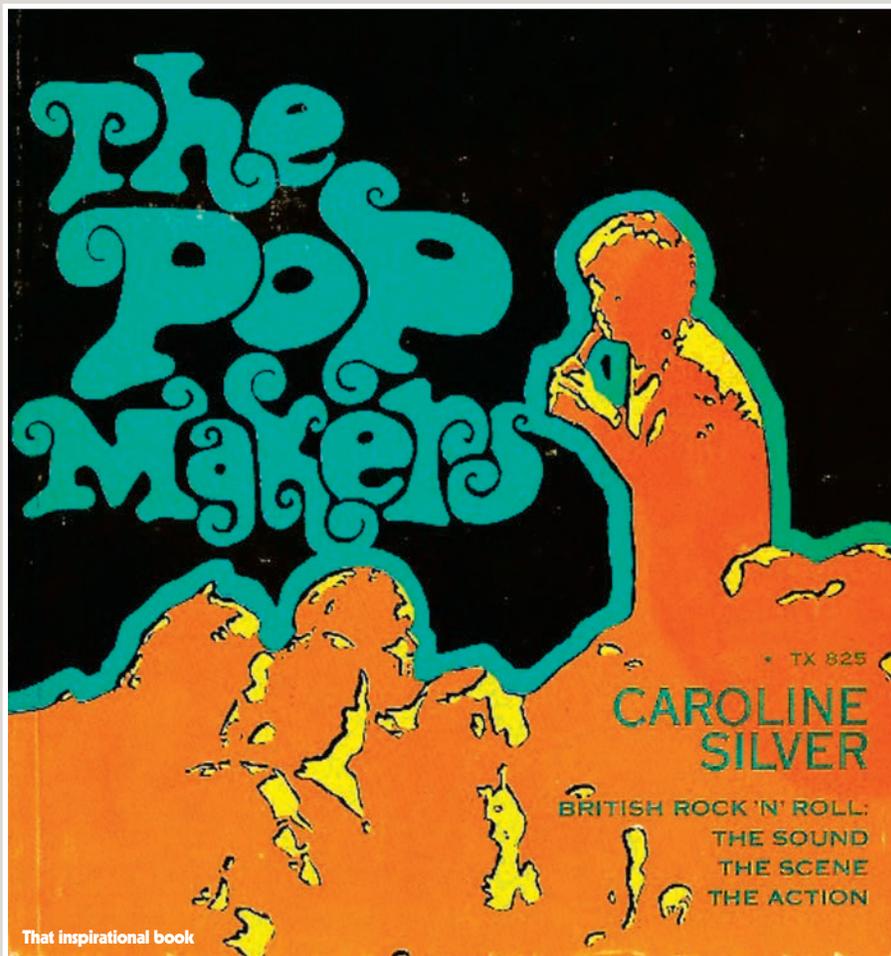
A question; is he the same Teddy Vann who co-wrote (with Calvin White) my favourite Black Pearl track off their first album, 'Forget It'? An absolute rock-soul-proto-metal monster!!

Three great memories:

1) Finding Caroline Silver's book, *The Pop Makers*, in the music room of my US junior high in 1968 or so. It took me years to get the references. I started listening to garage-punk in '74, but didn't start properly getting into beat, etc until moving to the UK in '75. It's a great little read, put out in '66 with articles on The Beatles, Stones (with 'Paint It Black' recently released), Who, Yardbirds... and interviews with Pete Townshend, Keef, etc. All that AND published by the US school friendly



Randy Bachman: Storyteller



Scholastic Book Services...Talk about radical!

2) Meeting Glenn Matlock outside The Nashville in London after my first Pistols gig in April '76 (one of the best gigs I ever saw; they were tight and scary as hell... Legendary). He couldn't believe that I knew 'No Fun'.

3) Meeting Bowie at the American Art retrospective, at The Royal Academy Of Arts in '89. An incredibly knowledgeable and really nice guy. Thank God I kept my mouth shut and didn't bring up his music! It seemed to me that he was in the gallery to chill, so instead we talked art for a few minutes.

Big greets from Ireland and Happy New Year to y'all.

Dave Flynn

Fiona didn't come across Black Pearl in her research on Teddy Vann, but she has found this, which indicates Vann worked with The Sandpebbles, a band that included a Calvin White: and Discogs says Calvin White was in The Sandpebbles and in Black Pearl. So it must be the same Teddy Vann. Cool!

PIECE OF MY HEART

Hi Jon,

I enjoyed your piece in *Shindig!* #86 about '60s San Francisco. I was there a few weeks back and picked up your contributor Harvey Kubernik's book *1967: A Complete Rock Music History Of The Summer Of Love*, and as you may imagine a good haul of vinyl, including a picture disc of *Odessey & Oracle* by The Zombies, another version of which I won in a *Shindig!* competition around five years ago.

I can recommend 1 2 3 4... Go! Records in San

Francisco, also Metavinyll in San Diego. It's far better value than Ameoba.

Cheers,
Glenn Evans

Thanks for the tips.

TRIBULATION

Hi Jon,

Shindig! is still the best music magazine out there, but lately there has not been as much coverage of international music as in the past. Any chance of more frequent coverage Latin American psych and prog, particularly the obscurities? And how about a feature on the making of Aphrodite's Child's psych masterpiece *666*? I understand there's quite a story to be told there.

In the meantime, keep up the good work.

Thanks,
Ray Godfrey

Yes, we really must do a Family Album piece on 666.

GLAD ALL OVER

Hey Jon and team,

Have a very happy New Year.

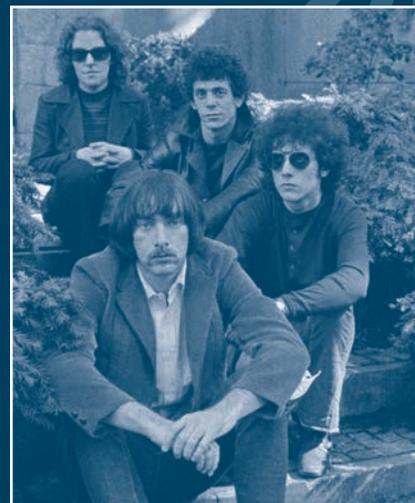
You should be proud of the last year's output - really enjoyed reading the issues over and over!

Anyway, have a mellow one.

Peace,
Dez

Bless ya Dez. We are proud. This year will be even better!

next issue



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

I'm Set Free: A new face, a new direction

BOBBY FULLER

His tragically short life and career

DR STRANGELY STRANGE

The Irish psych-folkies' late '60s ascendancy

TOWNES VAN ZANDT

Wild on the road in the '70s

SUZI QUATRO

From Detroit garage bands to Radio 2 nostalgia

PLUS...

JIM JONES & THE RIGHTEOUS MIND, DESIGN, STUMPWATER, NICK WATERHOUSE, GRAND VEYMONT

NEW ALBUMS FROM

THE HARE & HOOFE, THE SMOKING TREES, DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS, GARCIA PEOPLES, PILL FANGS, POND, LUTHER RUSSELL

REISSUES FROM

WINGS, THE SEEDS, FLAMIN' GROOVIES, THE SEARCHERS, CURTIS MAYFIELD, LARRY JON WILSON

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE PUBLISHED 7TH MARCH 2019



it's a **happening** thing



Noises Off

On the release of her long awaited third album, *Quiet Signs*, **JESSICA PRATT** talks peace, process and privacy with **GREG HEALEY**

It wasn't as much a premeditated decision as it could appear to be," explains Jessica Pratt of her choice of recording at Gary's Electric, the professional studio in New York, where her third album, *Quiet Signs*, was recorded. "I always used to record on a cassette four track, but the last time I had done that was quite a while ago, for my second album, in 2014. I had tried to upgrade my whole setup

and bought a Tascam reel-to-reel. It was really cool, but had a lot of issues and was finicky. I felt inhibited because when you go into working and don't know your gear is going to be functional, that puts you on edge."

Mexican Summer Records owns Gary's Electric and, after Jessica signed to them in 2016, "it seemed foolish not to try it". However, despite being "a really nice studio" and free to use apart from

a daily engineering fee, it was a decision fraught with potential difficulties for an artist used to working alone and at home. "I was dubious as to whether it was going to work out because the studio environment is unfamiliar, and you're walking into this situation that's very intimate with someone you don't know. Whereas previously you're just at home, you can do whatever you want, there's no consequences. And this was somewhat

“There are times when you feel disconnected from your creative self and it can be frightening when you juxtapose that with a creative fire you’ve experienced previously”

of the album happened in what she describes as “a staggered way”. “Before getting in too deep I wanted to see if it would even work. So I started writing in earnest in November 2016, really just starting from scratch. Then in the January of 2017 I did a session. From that point on I would go through a period of writing for a couple of months, then go into the studio. Not everything would make the cut – you’d get one or two songs, then back to the drawing board. It was a year and a half, start to finish, writing it all, mixing and mastering.”

Despite these early qualms, this album of stark and honest beauty marks another step in the evolution of this remarkable singer-songwriter. “When I was recording and writing my second album (2015’s *On Your Own Love Again*) I’d had some mild success, but the notion of people anticipating more material had not really entered my psyche yet. So I was just puttering around doing whatever I wanted, relatively free of the thought of its reception. That changed after the last record – and especially after touring forever and taking a long time off writing. I overanalysed it. It happens when you fall out of practice, maybe. Playing music live is a creative process, but it’s very different than writing. I have to be at home for a long time before I can really get into the place to write again. Which was frustrating, because the whole time I was on tour I was daydreaming about writing again – then when you get back it takes time to adjust. So, in the beginning, 2016 felt like convalescing from this year being out on the road, where I didn’t have any personal time. Physically, mentally, it’s taxing. I was writing casually, trying to do it every day, and I recorded a couple of things on my own at home, but I wasn’t really charged to take it seriously. Then, in November, I started: okay, we’ve really got to do this now. There are times when you feel disconnected from your creative self and it can be frightening when you juxtapose that with a creative fire you’ve



experienced previously.” The step change in recording practices threw up its own challenges. “After I’d written something I was wondering if it was going to work in the studio or not, because there’s something in the

immediacy of recording at home that’s a little freer. And I was flying across the country each time I would do these recording sessions. But it also felt like the studio process kind of sussed through the fluff – like if a song wasn’t super strong it would be difficult to translate.”

Alongside these challenges was the new experience of other people being involved in making the album. “I was very paranoid and doubtful so I went into it putting everything on the table with Al Carlson (the producer/engineer at Gary’s Electric) – who I eventually got to know. In the beginning I was like: I don’t know if this is going to work and we went off of nothing as far as the sound of stuff. It wasn’t sounding right and I basically just played Al songs from my last album and said this is the sonic space I want it to be similar to – not exactly the same, but this is the realm I’m envisioning. He took amazing direction – I would describe a sound and he would deliver it. And he was able to get a very intimate sound. I got really lucky.”

In addition to Al’s skills in shaping the sound, Jessica was able to call on the abilities of the musician Matt McDermott. This represented another new chapter, both creatively and personally. “Matt and I live together now and lived together the whole time I was writing the record. He plays on it and his additions are really important. But more so, I’ve never had a relationship before where I’d play things to someone as I was working on them. That was very helpful coming from a period of not writing for so long and being very isolated.”

Perhaps due to Jessica’s previously hermetic existence and working methods *Quiet Signs* retains a deeply personal and resolutely singular artistic vision. However, the experience of working in a fully-fledged studio, and the peace and focus that came with it, brought a different dimension to her music. “In the studio I was able to hear myself because it’s dead quiet. It does feel like I was very mentally present when I was making these songs and I think that results in a quietude. On the last record it felt like I was outside myself – just this blast of energy. I’ve been used to recording in a house and you’re always waiting for cars to pass...”

 **Quiet Signs is out now on Mexican Summer**

Jessica Pratt considers her own love again, 2018

adhering to a timeline and you’re aware of the money you’ve spent on plane tickets between home in LA and the studio, housing and food. That was a bit stressful. Ultimately, it felt like I was making the record for about 10 years. Sometimes it felt so laborious and uncertain – it’s more pressured when you’re aware of time and money going into something.”

Due to Jessica “trying out the studio in the beginning,” the writing and recording



it's a **happening** thing



Still searching for the truth. Michael Chapman in 2018

Desolation Glow

Back to Wales with new songs and some rediscoveries, **MICHAEL CHAPMAN** dives into the atmospheric of his new album with **CAMILLA AISA**.

“I always want to push the envelope a little bit”, he says. “Just to make sure that I don’t keep making the same record”

Michael Chapman’s latest album *True North*, arriving two years after acclaimed LP *50*, is introduced by some evocative – if murky – verses written in the late 19th century by Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. They hint at one of the album’s recurring themes: desolation.

Michael’s fascinating songs have never been known for being cheerful; through

the decades his busy guitar has clearly favoured night over day. “A lot of people think I’m a really miserable bastard,” he remarks. “Maybe I just have a darker point of view than most people – it’s not personal, it’s just the way I write.”

But, if it’s possible, desolation and regret (another lyrical leitmotif, as gorgeous album opener ‘It’s Too Late’ suggests) are embraced more vigorously than ever on *True North*. There’s an improved sense of candour at play – perhaps a consequence of deciding to

create a new record, with four new songs, at the age of 77. “Well, my philosophy has always been ‘I am what I am,’” Michael explains. “In the past, while making albums, record companies would try and tell me to do this or do that, but now... who knows more about making Michael Chapman records than Michael Chapman?”

Among many things, it’s over a certain call for defiance that he and Steve Gunn – who’s back as producer/guitarist/accomplice – have bonded. He says that



The team behind *True North*, with Chapman (third from right) and Steve Gunn (second from left)



“In the past, while making albums, record companies would try and tell me to do this or do that, but now... who knows more about making Michael Chapman records than Michael Chapman?”

Another definite highlight of the record is the return of Bridget St. John. “Myself and Bridget, we go back to 1968. We met back then and we’ve been friends ever since,” says Michael. He likes the way their voices sound together. “She can’t sing high and I...can’t sing at all. We do not rehearse, we like to keep it fresh and exciting.”

And speaking of fresh and exciting, the very sound of *True North* is an additional treat in itself. “I’ve always wanted to make an album like that - basically there’s no rhythm section, there’s hardly any bass and drums.” It’s something that’s prompted Michael and his collaborators - who this time joined him in Wales - to really get into the *atmosphere* of the songs.

On ‘Vanity & Pride’, he sings: “Sometimes no disguise is the best disguise at all”. We like to associate age with wisdom, and wisdom with the ability to preach (to others, inevitably). The artist behind *True North* doesn’t quite agree: wisdom seems to be all about transparency, the narrative of your frankest possible self through thick and thin. And so for Michael you sing about desolation, and regret, and sometimes you even find yourself singing apocalyptic songs (“I do have a kind of reputation for being miserable. But I’m not a miserable person, honest!” he reassures). And sometimes you just have a lot of fun playing - or listening to - music, as it happens when ‘Bon Ton Roolay’ comes on.

But before any listener tries to find tortuous hidden meanings behind that song being chosen as the final track, the author himself candidly admits: “I recorded the whole album sober apart from ‘Bon Ton Roolay’. The mic was on and I didn’t really know. Steve liked it.”

He thinks about it for a moment, this unexpected carefree revelation after all those darker songs, and he laughs, “We’re human, after all.”

 **True North is out on 8th February on Paradise Of Bachelors**

Gunn, too, had to deal with the same, inevitable, record industry issue “where they want him to make one kind of record and he wants to make a Steve Gunn record. That’s just people in offices who shouldn’t know better than people who actually *make* music. But it’s been like that forever.” He recalls meeting Gunn for the first time while touring the East Coast in the States with The No-Neck Blues Band; “I’ve known Steve for at least 10 years now. He used to open shows for me in the States, and now I open shows for him. He plays like Steve Gunn, he doesn’t play like anybody else, and I like people like that.”

The States, and young American improvisers like Gunn, have played a considerable role in the fruitful renaissance that Michael’s career has encountered in recent years. Discovering that people like Jack Rose, or Ryley Walker, knew and loved his music was surprising, to say the least. “My records were never really released in America,” he says. “When I first started going to America again, I realised that they knew my records. That was amazing... *How the hell did you find that?!* They put a lot of time and effort into tracking down my records, and they liked what I was doing ‘cause I wasn’t doing it like anybody else. And I’m still amazed, really. They’ve kind of adopted me, and I’m like the old guy in the corner that’s still there.”

Being virtually new to American releases was a great occasion to go back to some

older compositions and record them again—something that he’s been doing both on *50* and *True North*. Revisiting songs from the past can disclose new meanings, too. “Hindsight is a wonderful thing, isn’t it? Maybe I didn’t get it quite right the first time, so maybe I want to redo it, alter certain things, play around with it. And I certainly don’t want to just copy the original - what’s the point of that?”

Michael recalls that, when he first started to make *50*, he had not written a song in nearly six years. Working on that record reawakened his song writing skills; suddenly, he had three new songs. “I was so happy - I thought I’d never write again. And now this album, it’s mostly new stuff. And I’ve just written the next one!”

In fact, the finest moment on *True North* comes with one of the new tracks, ‘Truck Song’. “I really wanted to write a song with no people in it,” he reveals. “And I really like that one - everybody plays great on it and I’m very pleased with the lyrics. That’s the best track on the album, I think.” He agrees that songs with no people in them can be more universal. ‘Truck Song’ looks inwards by looking outwards, exploring the very concept of landscape. “That song in a way is a tribute to Jimmy LaFave, who unfortunately died last year. He was from Texas, and he used to be a truck driver. He could write about landscapes so beautifully, because he drove across most of America when he was a truck driver.”



it's a **happening** thing

Soul Indicators

DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS' self-titled debut album was an electrifying slice of raw-soul which put them firmly on the map. New outing *American Love Call* broadens the musical palette of their debut to deliver a much more wide-screen, luscious take on their old-school R&B sound. From the social commentary, sweeping strings and fuzz guitar of the title-track, through the sweeping doo-wop of 'Court Of Love' and the dreamlike haze of 'Sea Gets Hotter', it's an altogether more epic affair that should find a place in the hearts of lovers of early '70s soul music. Here, Durand Jones (vocals), Aaron Frazer (drums/vocals) and Blake Rhein (guitar) guide us through the records that help put the soul in their soul.

IRMA THOMAS

Full Time Woman (The Lost Cotillion Album)

(Real Gone, 2014)



DJ: When it comes to the heart of soul music in NOLA (New Orleans), Irma takes the cake. I've come to love the beautiful collaboration

between Irma and Allen Toussaint, but this album shows a completely different side to her artistry. In her time with Atlantic's subsidiary Cotillion Irma branched from soul and R&B, to country, disco, blues, and funk. Thirteen of the 15 tracks were unreleased until 2014, giving true Irma fans a whole new insight into her career. I love how wide the musical spectrum is on this album, and above all Irma vocal's shine and arise to every occasion. Standout tracks on this album for me are 'Full Time Woman', 'Shadow of the Sun', 'Fancy', and 'Could It Be'.

DONNY HATHAWAY

Everything Is Everything

(ATCO, 1970)



DJ: A musician's first album can sometimes set a tone or spirit for what's to come. For me, Donny Hathaway's was an exciting one. What I love

about this album is we get to see the beginnings of Donny's socially conscious stance in his art. Donny chose to encourage. To uplift. Black America loved and embraced him for that. That's why 'The Ghetto' is still being blasted in cars in the hood. Especially Too Short's

version. It can't get any more timeless than that.

PJ MORTON

Gumbo

(Morton, 2017)



DJ: Stevie Wonder. It's the name I often hear when I talk to other fans of this album. I couldn't agree more. PJ took Stevie's style and essence and brought it to 2018. Many tunes sound like they could've been deep cuts from Stevie's songbook. Even Stevie has said he wished he wrote 'First Began'. The points that this album tackles—stereotypes of black masculinity and the examination of religion and relationships brings a refreshing and new kind of intimacy to soul and R&B. Compared to the other current soul and R&B it's a nice change of pace.

CURTIS MAYFIELD

Curtis

(Curtom, 1970)



DJ: What I love about this album is the ultimate drive for perfection. Curtis truly pushes the musicians in these recordings to the max. Certain versions of



certain tracks have become infamous. But most of all his message to black America was also delivered in perfect timing. Inspiration. It's what we needed then and now. This is why it will always be one of my faves.

AF: Political fury and exquisite arrangements combine in the sound of a master at work.

NAS

Illmatic

(Columbia, 1994)



AF: In 1994, Nas was the future. A murderer's row of producers blessed the anointed emcee with instrumental gold, encrusted with blunted drums and moody jazz samples. He returned the favour with an unrelenting barrage of rhymes that told the truth as he

“The whole album is a cavernous, twinkling masterpiece that flits between rage, humour, tenderness, calm and uncertainty – all of which acts of rebellion in the face of oppression”



Gimme little sign. The Indications, L-R: Aaron Frazer, Durand Jones, Kyle Hout, Blake Rhein, Steve Okonski

saw it from his perch atop the Queensbridge Houses. At 20 years old, his eye for detail made the bars unfold like a movie, with heart-racing specificity that rivalled the greatest of Hank Williams or Bob Dylan. When I began writing songs of my own, it was with a knowledge that sometimes the most powerful work comes from writing small. And as a 12-year-old drummer, I used to play to this CD in my basement over and over again until these boom bap patterns were burned into my brain forever.

THE WHATNAUTS Introducing The Whatnauts (Stang, 1971)



AF: One of the most rewarding things as a music listener is learning the history of my city through the lens of records. I'd first heard 'Message From A Black Man' as a sample in MF Doom's (aka King Geedorah's) 'Anti Matter', and then five years later on Nas' Untitled record, at which point I decided to hunt down the sample. When I found it, I was psyched to learn that the group was from my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. The album opened my eyes to

the power of the '70s vocal group sound, laden with strings and shimmering with vocal harmony. Just as important, it introduced me to the productions of George Kerr, whose work is hugely influential to me and helped inform the style of *American Love Call*.

GIL SCOTT HERON/ BRIAN JACKSON Winter In America (Strata-East, 1974)



AF: "Now, more than ever/
All family must be together/
Every brother everywhere/
Feel the time is in the air/
Common blood flows
through common veins/
And the common eyes all see the same/ Now,
more than ever/ All the family must be
together."

That's the invocation that kicks off the record. Sombre, chanted. I think about it a lot, especially these days. The whole album is a cavernous, twinkling masterpiece that flits between rage, humour, tenderness, calm and uncertainty—all of which acts of rebellion in the face of oppression. Listen to 'H2O Gate Blues' and you'll get chills at how much directly applies to our current state of affairs. Listen to 'Your Daddy Loves

You' and you'll see that even a fighter allows himself to be vulnerable sometimes.

WEE You Can Fly On My Aeroplane (Owl, 1977)



BR: This record draws heavily from two of my all-time favourite soul records, *Music Of My Mind* and *There's A Riot Going On*. I can't think of many album-oriented soul LPs that are half as good as *Aeroplane*. The whole record is nonstop sexy-as-hell synth'd-out bliss with just the right amount of quirkiness you'd expect to find in a self-released affair. Norman Whiteside (the songwriter and visionary behind the record) has a consistent harmonic vocabulary throughout the album that gives it an almost ambient quality. Norman is an absolute sweetheart too. We asked if he would do his song 'Try Me' with us at our show in Columbus last year and he got on stage and sounded just as good as he did when he cut the record 40 years ago.

STANDING ON THE CORNER Standing On The Corner (Self-released, 2017)



BR: It took me a couple of listens to get into this record, but once I was in, I was hooked. It's a completely unique amalgam of influences from free jazz to DJ Screw all set to a cassette four-track. It has a very intuitive sound, in that, these guys aren't trying to sound like anyone else or anything for that matter; they're simply doing what comes naturally to them. Listening to the record is like dialling a radio knob somewhere in the expanses of their brains.

DAFT PUNK Discovery (Virgin, 2001)



BR: I had a CD-R of this in my piece-of-shit car in high school and would listen to it on repeat on the way to and from my summer job. I was mostly playing in rock bands at the time and listening to *Discovery* over and over got me really interested in making recordings rather than just jamming in my friend's basement. I saved up some money that summer and bought a Juno-D, mostly because it had both some really great analogy synth patches comparable to the sounds on 'Short Circuit' and electric piano sounds like 'Something About Us'.

 **American Love Call is out on 1st
March on Dead Oceans/Colemine**

Shadow Of The Bells

As **LAVINIA BLACKWALL** embarks on her first solo outing, **ANDY MORTEN** pokes his nose in and discovers the smell of... Stilton?

Fans of Trembling Bells were surprised and saddened when, in September 2018, their charismatic vocalist and keyboard player Lavinia Blackwall announced her departure from the group. March's *Dungeness* album – the group's sixth in under nine years – found them breaking new ground and was received with customary acclaim and adoration. So what happened?

"Trembling Bells has been a great journey," Lavinia begins, "but I felt it was never my destination. I had a lot of input as far as the arrangements were concerned, but the songs were never mine and eventually I wanted to move on and spend time writing the music I wanted to sing and play. The others have all had their own projects for a while and now I've got mine. We had a lot of fun and are still great friends."

There must have been an enormous sense of liberation to be making your own music again. "Absolutely!" she gushes. "I feel like I'm the way I was when I was 17: excited by it all, thrilled by the magic of ideas coming alive and sounding the way I want them to. It's a really wonderful process, the opportunity to let loose whatever idea takes your fancy – no restrictions, no one to please but yourself. Obviously you also have a deep, dark dream that other people will share your enthusiasm for your creations."

Those "other people" start with one key figure who'll be sharing Lavinia's journey. "I'm in a lucky position because my fiancée Marco Rea (The Wellgreen, Euros Childs) built and owns The Barne Studio (home of The Barne Society and Starla Records) himself. It's a great studio with lots of analogue equipment. As well as being a

fantastic musician he's an amazing producer with a real passion and attention to detail. Musically we have very similar tastes and influences – he totally understands what I'm getting at and brings lots of ideas to the table. I remember talking to him years ago about how I wanted to make this record and now we're doing it!" And who or what are the constituent ingredients of Stilton, exactly? "Stilton is a band Marco and I have put together to house our ideas. I needed a band to bring my songs to life and he did too, for his. We poached Jim McGoldrick from The Wellgreen and Seb Jonsen from The Tomorrow Syndicate and Helicon and thus Stilton was born."

First single 'Waiting For Tomorrow' possesses, to these ears, something of a Gorky's/Super Furries vibe. Did Lavinia have a particular sound or approach in mind during its creation? And is she secretly Welsh? "I wouldn't say that it was a conscious effort to write a certain way with a particular sound in mind, but I think you can't help but be influenced by the music you love. I was obsessed with Gorky's as a teenager and would go to great lengths to buy their records and go to see them. I managed to arrange an interview and do a photoshoot with them once, on the premise that I needed original material for my A-Level art project. They were very friendly and obliging. I roped in my best friend, Marianne, who I think had a mini-tape machine secreted up her jumper recording the whole thing, not sure where that tape went, but I'd love to find it! I'm not Welsh but I love lots of music that comes from Wales: definitely SFA but also Cate le Bon, Meilyr Jones, Meic Stevens... I think Robin Williamson lives in Cardiff these days. He's not Welsh but he certainly has bardic qualities and plays a harp so I think that counts."

Can we expect an album in the near future? "The album is coming together nicely," Lavinia concludes. "Working title is *Muggington Lane End*, a place on a hill in Derbyshire where I grew up. Every time I drove past that sign I would daydream about how it would make an excellent album title. Since it seems to be the season of making dreams become a reality the title seems perfectly fitting."

 **'Waiting For Tomorrow' is available digitally from Bandcamp and will be released on seven-inch in February. Muggington Lane End follows in mid-2019**



"I was obsessed with Gorky's as a teenager and would go to great lengths to buy their records and go to see them. I managed to arrange an interview and do a photoshoot with them once, on the premise that I needed original material for my A-Level art project."



Tim Bowness Flowers At The Scene

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Location, Location, Location

DEL DAY celebrates the geographical influence on **WILLIAM TYLER**'s new album and the renewed interest in all things instrumental

For his fourth studio album, *Goes West*, Nashville born guitarist William Tyler finds himself relocated to LA and stripped of the electric emphasis of 2016's *Modern Country*, once again relishing an artistic connection with his acoustic guitar and wide open to the influence of a new muse born out of his current location.

"LA doesn't feel like home," argues Tyler. "But the whole reason I moved out there was to get away from home. It's a stunningly diverse miasma of culture and geography and displaced creative souls, so I guess I truly hope it continues to shape me!"

A stunning, evocative gem of an album, *Goes West* has a certain purity and maturity that befits an artist clearly enjoying a creative purple patch. From the primitive vibes of his debut, *Behold The Spirit*, that draws lovingly from the well of Fahey, Basho and Rose, through to the cinematic splendour of *Modern Country*, there appears a natural, unforced progression. Tyler's records exist as stunning vignettes on some kind of wonderful continuation from the record before.

"I try to approach each album as being its own specific sonic universe and truly hope there's a unity of mood and theme," Tyler reflects. "I guess I always use the

same type of methodology even though the players and the songs are different."

A return to the acoustic guitar for this record appears a natural decision for the young guitarist who has always felt in tune – creatively linked, if you will – with that instrument. There is a clearly some kind of bond between artist and instrument at play. Tyler agrees; "I definitely feel a direct and unique tactile connection to the acoustic guitar, it's still what I usually go to when I'm writing. I thought that since *Modern Country* was so much more electric and full-band focused it would be a good pivot to go back to a more acoustic forward record."

Tyler rides a wave interest in instrumental music on which there appears to be somewhat of a fresh desire to reconnect on an emotional, primal, almost basic level. Living in an age where we are bombarded with words at every turn there's a feeling that instrumental music has renewed impetus to really move and shift our perceptions. "I think there is a real need now for fewer words and more melody," agrees Tyler. "More music that frees you up for exploratory listening- and yes I hope it's kind of an antidote to the way we are being bombarded."

➔ **Goes West is out now on Merge**



"I definitely feel a direct and unique tactile connection to the acoustic guitar, it's still what I usually go to when I'm writing"



on the **tube**



Stunning colour footage of **THE SMALL FACES** on legendary German pop show *Beat Club* in 1967 has resurfaced to brighten up your screen. **MARTIN RUDDOCK** watches out for zooming green circles

A very welcome Happy New Year treat for Small Faces fans quietly popped up on YouTube in the first week of January. Hardcore fans of *The Darlings Of Wapping Wharf Launderette* will be familiar with their autumn 1967 appearance on *Beat Club*, which has been doing the rounds for years in fuzzy monochrome. However, this live edition was originally transmitted in colour, and the long-presumed-wiped tape has surfaced in all its technicolor glory. This extract opens with youthful Hairy Cornflake Dave Lee Travis's yellow and red ensemble in serious danger of overloading the cameras. There's then a snippet of the future Mrs Ian McLagan Sandy Serjeant's three girl dance troupe kicking up a storm in jeans and canary-yellow tees before *The Small Faces* fade into view – miming to 'Green Circles'. The infamously giggly band somehow get through Ronnie Lane's stop-start slice of psych mysticism despite the best efforts of a rogue Steve Marriott – who's hell-bent on cracking Kenney Jones up with a combination of smirking stare-outs, bad miming and silly guitar poses. It's probably for this reason that Lane keeps his eyes resolutely screwed shut for most of the song. In a charming period touch the German camera crew superimpose zooming green circles over the band, who are struggling to keep a straight face by the end. Moving on to 'Itchycoo Park', the boys pull out a vintage mimed performance full of charm and soul. It's striking to see them in their mod-psych finery looking as though they've stepped straight from an issue of *Fab 208*. The colours are gorgeous (check out Steve's wine-red Gibson). It's both joyous and a little poignant to see them being 'Happy Boys, Happy' in such vivid quality.

Freed from flat, blanket monochrome these clips take on a new life. It's a potent reminder that the '60s happened not in the flat high-contrast black & white of familiar clips from *TOTP*, *RSG* and *Beat Club* but in living, vibrant colour. At the risk of cliché, it's all too beautiful.

Search YouTube for "*Small Faces Beat Club colour 1967*"



Ronnie goes round in Green Circles (top); the boys romp through the park

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Blown Away

PAUL OSBORNE speaks to the artists who will be making the next *Shindig! Revue* a true spectacle of cosmic folk 'n' country

Last year's *Shindig! Revues* in conjunction with our friends at Psycharella were hugely enjoyable, culminating with an incredible end of year show that saw the live return of The Soundcarriers along with *Shindig!* favourites Gloria.

Keeping the quality levels high for 2019, our next show on Saturday 2nd March at The Victoria, Dalston features not one, but three artists who all featured in our previous issues best of the year album listings, which means that *Psycharella Presents The Shindig! Revue #5* will be an unmissable event.

Headlining will be our favourite UK cosmic folk-rockers The Hanging Stars, who've been in the studio recording their new album. *Shindig!* asked lead vocalist and guitarist Richard Olson how the sessions have been going and if we can expect to hear any new material at the show? "We're over the moon about our new record and cannot wait to share it, but when that may be is a different question. This show is the first one where we'll be testing the new songs live, so it's a good chance for folks to get their first taste."

Also joining the bill and returning to the UK from their native Canada for an acoustic performance are the fantastic Kacy

& Clayton, whose latest album *The Siren's Song* (produced by Wilco's Jeff Tweedy) is a sublime blend of country and folk-rock, and if their last UK dates were anything to go by those in the audience will be in for a real treat.

Last but by no means least is the brilliant Emma Tricca, whose album *St Peter* took her ethereal folk songs to new heights. "I'm absolutely thrilled to play with K&C and The Hanging Stars at one of my favourite London venues, that room is just perfect," explains Emma. What can we expect from her performance on the night? "I'm hoping to unravel a new tune or two at the show although I feel that *St Peter* still has a few miles left under its wings before I start recording the next collection of thoughts."

"We can't wait," adds Olson. "*Shindig!* is the main keeper of the flame of guitar and psychedelic music in general and 12-string folk-rock in particular. We're big fans of Kacy & Clayton, and Emma Tricca is an old pal. We expect to be blown off stage before we even step on it!"

With three such quality artists, we're expecting to all be blown away.

 **Tickets for Psycharella Presents The Shindig! Revue #5 are available now from psycharella.com/live**

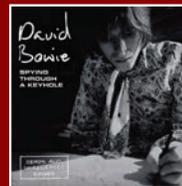
"We expect to be blown off stage before we even step on it!"

The Hanging Stars



PHOTO MICHAEL WOOD

good news



Exciting news for **DAVID BOWIE** fans as Parlophone announces the release of *Spying Through A Keyhole (Demos And Unreleased Songs)*, a previously unreleased physical collection of his demos from late '60s. Most tracks are solo acoustic and home demo performances, including 'In The Heat Of The Morning', 'Love All Around', 'London Bye, Ta-Ta' and what's thought to be the first ever recorded demo of 'Space Oddity'. Although sometimes rough in quality, the demos show Bowie during an important transitional period in his career, giving a fascinating historical document of one of the centuries most important artists. Initially released on vinyl only, the release date is unknown at time of writing. davidbowie.com

CARDIFF PSYCH & NOISE FEST will take place in the Welsh capitol over the bank holiday weekend 24th to 26th May. Celebrating "psych, noise, experimentalism and weirdness" the weekender will feature over 60 live acts performing across three venues on Cardiff's legendary Womanby Street. Artists announced so far include Islet, Teeth Of The Sea, Dead Arms, Lunar Bird, Seshasayee, USA Nails, Raketkanon, Gallops, Sly & The Family Drone, Ill, El Gordo and Sendelica. Tickets for the weekend are priced at a very reasonable £25 and are available from The Moon, Diverse in Newport or online via Seetickets.com, Wegotickets.com and ticketweb.com. themooncardiff.com/psych

Much-loved Liverpool record emporium **DIG VINYL** relocated from its old location in Soho's Bold Street to new premises on the first floor of Resurrection on the same street. Founded in March 2014 by Anthony Nyland and Carl Emery the success of the store is testament to the city's love of music and has become a haven for heads of all ages, stocking a wide range of music from deep-psych to spiritual-jazz. Shop manager Yvonne Page says, "We're really looking forward to the move as we come up to our fifth birthday - it's the right time and the right space. We are so excited to be staying on Bold Street, which, although there's lots of amazing up and coming areas all around the city, is still regarded by many as the heart of the city's independents." digvinyl.co.uk



The **LOVE** band featuring original guitarist **JOHNNY ECHOLS** return to UK shores in the summer for eight shows which will be their last ever in this country (sob!). Performing classic songs from the first three albums *Love*, *Da Capo* and *Forever Changes*, along with some special deep cuts, will be Baby Lemonade, Arthur Lee's longest serving band who performed with him from 1993 until the singer's death in 2006. Lee's childhood friend and original member Echols re-joined in 2005 and has continued to tour with Baby Lemonade ever since. Kicking off on June 26th and running until 5th July, the tour visits in The Isle Of Wight, Brighton, Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, Cardiff, Bristol and London. Guaranteed to sell out fast, these final outings promise to be a truly special event. love-revisited.com



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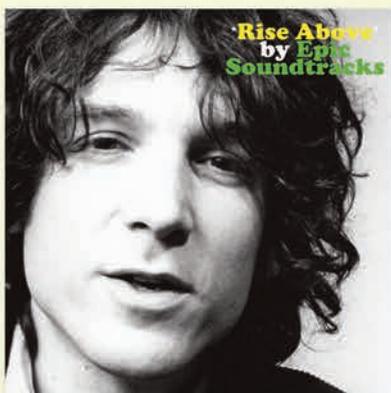
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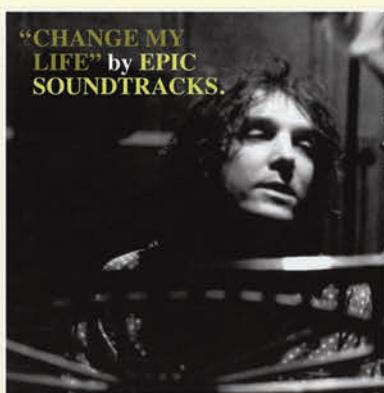
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happening right now

Le SuperHomard

PAUL OSBORNE speaks to creative leader **CHRISTOPH VAILLANT** about the debut long-player from France's latest pop sensations

For those of us on the UK side of the channel, it feels like there's a renaissance in French pop music taking place, with the likes of Gloria, Juniore, Halo Maud and Aquaserge all gaining a place in our hearts and record collections in recent times. Step forward Le SuperHomard, the latest name to be added to the list.

"At the beginning it was just a studio project," says Christophe Vaillant, the creative force behind the band, when talking about their birth. "I recorded some

instrumental songs with my twin brother Olivier on drums and bass. I tried to sing on some of them but it wasn't very good so I added some vocals from a friend of mine called Pandora Burgess on half of the songs. Soon after that Benoit Pithon, another good friend of mine, mixed the eight tracks that I had recorded. I sent them to a Japanese label called Rallye and they signed the record very quickly. So I had to find a name and choose Le SuperHomard (it's the name of a club in a French '60s movie called *Ne Nous Fâchons*

Pas – We Must Not Become Angry).

The tracks in question formed Le SuperHomard's debut mini-album *The Maple Key*, a fine introduction to the band's distinct Franco-pop sound, and now after a three year wait and the help of a new vocalist, Julie Big, the band's debut album proper *MeadowLanePark* is about to drop. Fusing the sounds of Air, Stereolab, Metronomy and late '60s French pop with shimmering synths and electro-pop, it's a fantastic contemporary update on a classic sound.

During the recording Vaillant was

working in a music shop in his native Avignon, and it was a space that the band utilised for some of the recording sessions, as Vaillant explains; "We recorded some instruments from the shop (especially an old Pleyel grand piano that sounded amazing), and we also did the strings sessions here at night after work. But most of the recordings were also done at

home or in Benoit's own studio."

The album is a stylish listen, with the likes of 'Door After Door's' luscious vocals and mellow futurism, the clipped bass waltz of instrumental 'Snowflakes' and the charming electro-pop of 'SDVB' providing several of many highlights.

Despite the band's location, the album's lyrics are all sung in English. *Shindig!* asks if this was this was a conscious decision in the songwriting process. "Yes, it was a decision from the start. In fact I never write a song in French – it's not my musical culture. I listen mainly to English language music in my life, even if I also love Serge Gainsbourg."

And what of the aforementioned French pop renaissance? "Yes, I think that you're right. The French bands seem to be taken more seriously these days in the UK or USA. Since the success of band's like Phoenix, Air and more recently Melody's Echo Chamber, French musicians understood that it's possible to make waves beyond France."

 **MeadowLanePark is out on 1st March on Elephant**

"I never write a song in French – it's not my musical culture. I listened mainly to English language music in my life, even if I also love Serge Gainsbourg"



PHOTO ALICE LEMARIN



Dylan Rodrigue

The singer-songwriter talks to **SPENSER TOMSON** about Elliott Smith, spiritual communities and his new album

Following his 2018 *Scrimp* EP, Dylan Rodrigue presents *Cat's Game*, his first full album. With confessional lyrics that describe youth's love/hate relationship with love itself,

his music brims with the confidence and purpose of maturity.

"I listen to all sorts of music," explains Rodrigue. "For *Cat's Game*, my main inspirations were Elliott Smith, Neil Young,

Bright Eyes and The Stooges. The songs are way more emotionally driven than other things I've done and I purposely wanted the recordings to share that unpolished rawness."

It's the mention of Elliott Smith that rings truest to these writer's ears. At his most upbeat, there's a lo-fi crunch – like Ben Kweller covering Elvis Costello – and at his most melancholic, these songs are almost spiritual in feel. "The spiritual community I lived in was incredibly rigid and repressive when it came to what music was 'suitable to listen to,'" he continues. "My entire peer group essentially grew up on the same 200 new age inspirational songs that the communities founder wrote (they played on repeat

everywhere we went). It's not that this music was particularly terrible, it's just that it wasn't interesting or exciting to me at all."

Like many, his journey to wider musical appreciation was sparked by a Beatles tape, their psychedelic eclecticism stoking his furnace. How, then, did this become *Cat's Game*? "I've been writing my own songs ever since I started playing guitar (though they were cringe-worthy then). I played my originals in bands in high school and in college. After I graduated from Calarts I went straight into playing as a guitarist in several bands. Around this time everything started hitting the fan: I lost a friend to suicide, had a nasty breakup and lost my job. That's basically when the songs for *Cat's Game* were written. For better or worse, when life sucks the most, then of course I'm more inspired."

➔ Cat's Game is out now
Bad Paintings. Dylan will be touring in the spring



Hjalte Ros

PAUL OSBORNE wraps himself up in the warm sounds of the Danish singer-songwriter's dreamy debut

Hjalte Ross's *Embody* is a beautiful slice of hushed folk that mixes Nordic melancholy with the sound of late '60s UK folk-rock.

It's a sound that seems befitting of his upbringing in a thatched house, in between the fjords of an old fishing town on the northern tip of Denmark. Surprisingly though, Ross found his voice as part of a local punk and improv scene in nearby town Aalborg.

Shindig! asks if there was anything that prompted the shift from the loud to the quiet. "I do think that what attracted me to make an album like this is generally just growing up," he explains. "I had this

epiphany about what I really love in music, and I wanted to make an album that I'd like to listen to. Making something that's good, instead of making something that's 'cool!'"

The search for this honesty in his music makes *Embody* an intimate and enchanting experience, with gentle strings, piano and acoustic bass complementing Ross's hushed vocals and acoustic guitar, creating a sound that recalls both Nick Drake and Elliott Smith's earlier work.

"I wanted to make an album that in its instrumentation and in its sound was able to snuggle along a good UK '70s singer-songwriter collection, although the music and lyrics I wanted to be all up to date, or just as much me as possible."

The recording for *Embody* took place in an old studio close to his



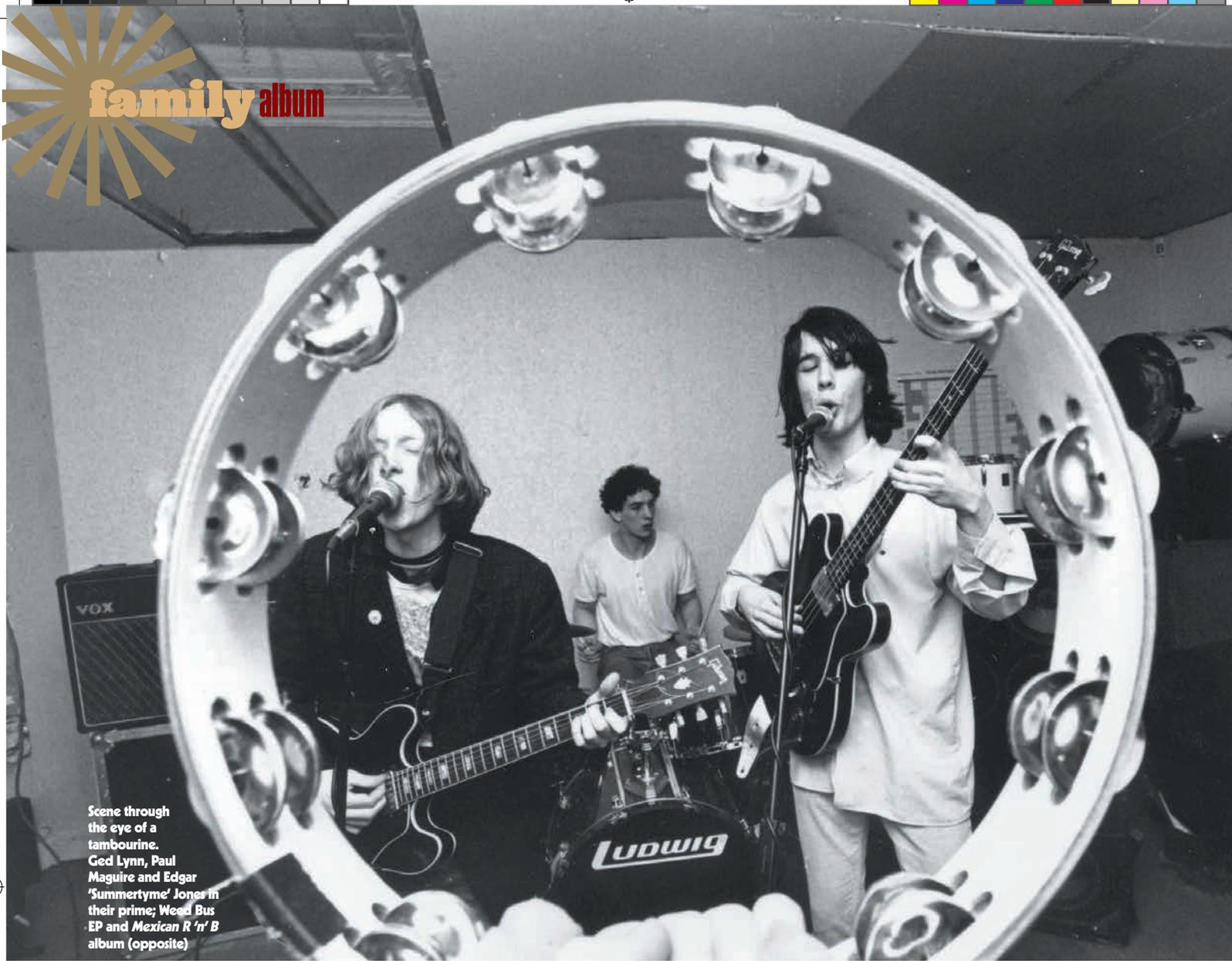
family home, providing a warmth and connection to the familiar, which permeates through the album's nine tracks. "We stayed at the family home, and spent nights and mornings there, enjoying good food and wine. It took a bit more than a week, working at least 10 hours every day. The studio was an old studio a friend of mine has had since the '80s. It hasn't been used much the past decade, so it was a bit dusty."

➔ Embody is out now on Wouldn't Waste



PHOTO CAROLINE EVA





Scene through the eye of a tambourine. Ged Lynn, Paul Maguire and Edgar 'Summertime' Jones in their prime; Weed Bus EP and *Mexican R'n'B* album (opposite)

The World Shall Not Be Saved

“The Chocolate Watchband, Standells, Stones, Kinks, those bands sounded so real to me, they were built on pure energy, excitement, so the plan was to recreate something similar.” So says **THE STAIRS'** Edgar Jones in the sleeve notes of the long-overdue and expanded reissue of their idiosyncratic and colourful album *Mexican R'n'B*.

PAUL RITCHIE and band jump on the weed bus and revisit the album

Many years have passed since *Mexican R'n'B* arrived in spring 1992, bringing the sounds of '66 to a new generation of kids getting turned onto *Nuggets* and *Pebbles* compilations.

The band took the best parts of the '60s and spat them out with the gusto of an authentic garage band. Their sound was raw, energetic and brightly melodic with knowing nods to various '60s sounds.

“We had the blessing of hindsight in that we'd had the mod revival scene

(where) we'd been shown how to do it badly,” laughs Edgar. “I suppose it was the sound on the record, you put on a Secret Affair record next to a Yardbirds record and there's a big lack of gnarl isn't there?”

“You had a lot of '60s songs with '80s drum sounds and we weren't going to let that happen with our music.”

Singer and bassist Edgar 'Summertime' Jones had formed the band in Liverpool, recruiting guitarist Ged Lynn and drummer Paul Maguire in '90. The roots of *The Stairs* date back a few years earlier to when Edgar first heard his older siblings' '60s records as a teenager and the infamous YTS scheme. In '87, aged 16, Jones left school and joined a music YTS scheme, during which he worked in Liverpool's Attic Studios. In downtime he wrote and demo-ed the songs that formed the basis for what would become the backbone of *The Stairs'* debut LP – ‘Weed Bus’, ‘Mr Window Pane’ and ‘Mary Joanna’.

The album's genesis began when the band recorded a session for indie label Imaginary Records in the spring of '91. Soon after major label Go! Discs snapped them up with the promise of wider exposure. The clarion call that is ‘Weed Bus’ was eventually released in October to wide acclaim.

“It was hard work but fun,” says Edgar recalling those early sessions. “We were up to our usually high jinx but serious at the same time. Everything became a bit slapdash later on”.

‘Weed Bus’ was the first of four memorable four-track EPs the band released. The stylisation – from the sleeve design, cover photo and mono recordings – was there for all to see, seemingly fully formed from the outset.

With some recordings for the LP in the can, the band decamped to Kilmarnock in December to begin rehearsals and “get away from the distractions in Liverpool”. Recording of the LP was set to begin in January ’92 but not before the band was rocked by the news that Ged had decided to take a break and head for Czechoslovakia, leaving the band without their guitarist.

“It was a little bit chaotic to begin with,” Ged corroborates. “I hadn’t quite learned all the songs and when you get in the studio, it’s a little bit more exposed and I was analysing myself a bit too much and losing confidence.

“My strange idea was, I’ll get myself off for about five or six days even though we’d just started the album sessions and I presumed that Edgar would play the rhythm guitar and then I’d be back in time to do the tour we had planned. So obviously that freaked them out big time but I didn’t know that,” adds Ged, reasoning that other bands had made records without the involvement of key members. He got as far as Frankfurt before being persuaded to return following a frantic three-way phone call with Edgar and their manager Pam Young. “I got it into my head that I didn’t need to be on the record,” he says now.

With Ged back in tow, the album was finally completed and ready for release but not before the arrival of a second EP, ‘Woman Gone And Say Goodbye’ that February.

The album, which followed shortly after, was also recorded in mono at the record company’s insistence. “If it was good enough for Phil Spector and Brian Wilson, it’s good enough for The Stairs,” boasted their press release.

“The mono thing was all about the cut of the 45 singles, getting that extra bit of gnarl deep into the groove,” Edgar recalls today.

The vinyl edition of the album comprises of 14 tracks and had a specific running time as dictated by Edgar. “I didn’t want the album to be longer than a certain length, so that the cut was good. I didn’t want to go for the K-Tel cut, I wanted a



good strong Beatles cut!” laughs Edgar, referring to the fact that less is more, when it comes to cramming songs onto two sides of vinyl.

The band’s endearing wit and playful naughtiness was apparent on the giddy Cossack harmonies on ‘Russian R’n’B (The World Shall Not Be Saved)’ and the not so subtle drug references in aforementioned songs like ‘Weed Bus’ and ‘Mary Joanna’.

As for favourites, both Ged and Edgar plump for ‘Laughter In Their Eyes’ as Edgar remembers. “‘Laughter In Their Eyes’ really sticks out because we got a real harpsichord player down to be on the record and, because it was like this weird driven thing, he couldn’t play the verses. He couldn’t play the easy bits, so I got to have a go on harpsichord. I was in my total Lurch from *The Addams Family* mode!”

Both sides of the vinyl edition close with a seven minute plus jam. ‘Right In The Back Of Your Mind’ closed Side One and ‘Fall Down The Rain’ brought Side Two to a close. The latter was a joint composition but the album was largely a showcase for Edgar’s passion for the ’60s and his own burgeoning songwriting talent.

“He’s a bit of a genius on the sly, that lad,” jokes Ged who was instantly impressed upon hearing some of Edgar’s earliest compositions when the two first met at a mate’s flat. The energy and cohesiveness in the playing, combined with Jones’ distinctive growl was a breath of fresh air at a time when the indie scene was flagging from a “baggy” hangover and the emergence of a soon to be dominant “grunge” era. *Mexican R’n’B* sounded steadfastly out of time but all the more thrilling for it.

“We thought the music that was going around our contemporaries was a bit soft, even the good stuff didn’t have that gnarl and bite. We just weren’t big fans of the indie thing I suppose.

“We got a lot of stick for not partaking in something that we didn’t believe in but it didn’t really matter, good music comes out in the wash eventually, you know?”

The CD version was bolstered by three extra tracks randomly sequenced into the running order. ‘Flying Machine’, ‘Take No Notice Of The World Outside’ and ‘When It All Goes Wrong’ had originally featured

“You had a lot of ’60s songs with ’80s drum sounds and we weren’t going to let that happen with our music”

on the band’s self-produced ‘Weed Bus’ EP. For those who bought the extended CD version, they all felt very much part of the album.

The sleeve artwork gave the band the chance to unwind and dress up in Mexican garb next to a donkey. Only Ged dressed up in a space suit, perhaps planning the mode of transport for his next exit! Having a laugh was never off the agenda for a band who end one of the tracks with what sounds like a massive fart!

“Well I just used to love it when we got a chance to just misbehave,” recalls Edgar. “Although I was a psychy stoner and I was up for having a laugh, I suppose I was kind of in charge. It was just nice to watch the kids play sometimes, you know like when we had photo sessions and Paul and Ged would do stupid things. I think at the time, me and Paul couldn’t have been happier if we’d been in a cartoon, laughing at the most stupid things.

“I didn’t join in as much as I wanted to” he continues, “but whenever I looked up from my seriousness, there was always something really going on. I laughed a lot but I guess my memories have got wrapped up in the serious side of it. I was the sensible lunatic!”

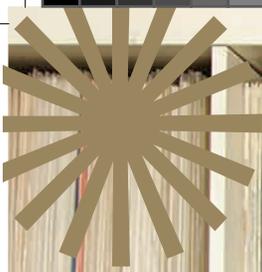
The *NME* hailed *Mexican R’n’B* as “a startling debut, triumphantly free of creative compromise and without the slightest whiff of the wannabe commercialism that has tainted so many debut releases”.

The album was part of a bigger plan. At the time, the ambitious Edgar had his sights on the future with “growth and momentum” high on the agenda as he planned to emulate the rapid progress made by his favourite groups back in the ’60s but it wasn’t to be. The album didn’t sell well and Go! Discs soon lost interest.

“Looking back I tried to advance too quickly,” he says recalling the aftermath of *Mexican R’n’B*. “I didn’t realise how much of a good live band we were and how important that was. I was wanting to make *Pet Sounds* even though we were a garage band.”

Inexplicably long out of print, the album has finally been treated to its first-ever reissue, remastered with an array of bonus material across two additional CDs. 1966, ’92 or 2019, the songs on *Mexican R’n’B* still sound amazing and every Shindigger’s collection is poorer without it. 📀

 **Mexican R’n’B: Deluxe Edition is out now on Cherry Red**



Shelf life. David Hollander in the library

Funky Fanfares

Library music is more popular than ever, and its wild and wonderful history is explored in the exhaustive new book **UNUSUAL SOUNDS: THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF LIBRARY MUSIC.**

THOMAS PATTERSON talks to author David Hollander about this most singular of musical forms

Documentaries, reunions, reissues and brand-new albums – 2018 truly was a renaissance year for library music (broadly, for the uninitiated: royalty-free stock music written by dedicated production companies for movie makers

to plunder for their films and TV shows, and which enjoyed a particular heyday in the '60s and '70s). And one of the key documents helping further the continued interest in library music is the brilliant book *Unusual Sounds: The Hidden History of Library Music* from American author and

filmmaker David Hollander.

There have been plenty of previous books examining library music (Jonny Trunk's excellent *The Music Library* immediately springs to mind), but none are quite as impressively detailed as *Unusual Sounds*. A weighty tome, *Unusual Sounds* is chock full of colour reproductions of hundreds of key library album covers (plus associated ephemera), and Hollander has written impressively detailed histories of the major production houses, such as Britain's KPM and Bruton, Italy's Flipper and Germany's Sonoton. It's clearly a labour of love, one born from a passion for production music that began over 20 years ago when Hollander was browsing through the LA record store Record Supply and stumbled on his first batch of library records, made by the Major Records Production Music Library.

"I was intrigued by the starkness of the

“My collection grew to more than 2000 titles and includes full runs of many libraries including CAM, MP2000, Music Scene, Themes International, Sound Stage, Omnimusic and more. At the end I was collecting mostly Italian library, which is endless”

generic covers and the utilitarian nature of the music,” he tells *Shindig!* via email from his home in the US. “As a film-maker, I immediately saw the potential for using the music in my work. As a collector, I was all about the matching spines on the shelf.

“In the days before internet buying (Pre-Bay), I found ways to connect with folks in Europe to buy collections, mostly by cold calling places that I thought might have LPs,” he says, explaining how his passion for the form grew. “I bought 600 LPs from a guy in the Netherlands – they came in small packages over months – and managed to get most of the CAM Library in one fell swoop. My collection grew to more than 2000 titles and includes full runs of many libraries including CAM, MP2000, Music Scene, Themes International, Sound Stage, Omnimusic and more. There were also many master tapes. I sold the entire collection to a single individual two years ago. At the end I was collecting mostly Italian library, which is endless.”

Hollander’s love for library music eventually led to him crisscrossing the globe, trying to track down rare and unearthed library music master tapes, many of which were in a perilous state thanks to neglect from record companies disinterested in their back catalogues.

“The book came out of several trips

Some typically exotic favourites from David’s collection; the *Unusual Sounds* book



to Europe, visiting archives to see what was extant in terms of master tapes and LPs at the source. I was surprised to find that many had not protected the assets for future use and so much music will be lost to the sands of time if steps are not taken quickly to preserve the material digitally.

“It’s very difficult to estimate how much has been or will be lost but, suffice to say, there’s an enormous amount of vintage library music owned by major labels that will be lost unless effort is made immediately to preserve it. EMI Production Music is doing a great job right now, and hopefully others will follow suit.”

Hollander also tracked down many of the original composers, interviewing such venerable greats as Alan Hawkshaw, Keith Mansfield and Gerhard Narholz. “The majority of the composers from the period I am looking at are now in their 70s,” Hollander says. “Many have passed on. Everyone I have spoken with really appreciates the spotlight finally being put on their work, which

has been largely invisible to the larger world of music. Recently John Cameron said to me that he learned more about the business of library music from my book than actually working as a library musician!

That was a surprise.”



As a tangential project, Hollander also compiled an album of library music, also called *Unusual Sounds*, featuring tracks from some of the more famous names

in the library music firmament, alongside other less celebrated composers such as Mladen Franko and Peter Patzer. Does Hollander have a particular favourite library music composer?

“I am a huge fan of Giampiero Boneschi,” he says. “I had collected 40 of his records and there are still more. He came to library and electronic music as an older man so his approach is utterly unique and quite unlike anything else I

have heard. His abstract (“astratto”) compositions have a strangeness that I find deeply compelling, despite the fact that it is unlikely that any of it was ever used for synchronisation.”

Similarly, *Shindig!* wonders, are there any “Holy Grails” of library music yet to be unearthed? “Many of the ‘Holy Grails’ are just LPs where every song is good, which is typically not the case. There are a couple of stand-outs that by now many are familiar with: Stefano Torossi’s *Feelings* and Stringtronics’ *Mindbender*, but I would also say that the ‘Holy Grail’ of 1990 is not necessarily the ‘Holy Grail’ of 2020. Tastes change.”

Today, Hollander is working on a couple on non-library related movies and is putting the finishing touches to his next book, *Starbody*, “an illustrated discography of alternative/new age spirituality on LP and cassette.” His commitment to library music isn’t on the back burner, however, and he’s started a new music library with partner Lorenzo Fabrizi called *Intermezzi*, which collects vintage Italian library music, making it available for use by contemporary film-makers.

The unusual sounds of library music may come from yesteryear but, as Hollander proves, they still look and sound magnificent today. ■

➔ Unusual Sounds: The Hidden History Of Library Music by David Hollander is published by Anthology Editions. The album *Unusual Sounds* is also out on Anthology Recordings



Bee nice. Pete and Dud send up Swinging London

Funny Ha-Ha And Funny Peculiar

Comedy records were nothing new by the '60s, but it was a time when comedians were becoming more pop music literate – and some pop stars, not least The Beatles, had a commendable sense of comic timing. Moving from jazz to psychedelia to downright weirdness, allow **TIM WORTHINGTON** to guide you through a handful of often overlooked single sides that deliver

BERNARD CRIBBINS Ringing On The Engine Bell (Single, Parlophone, 1964)

With songwriters Ted Dicks and Myles Rudge, Bernard Cribbins released several robust comedy pop singles in the early '60s, including this jazzy job-swapping sequel to 'Right Said Fred' with a raucous clanging tale of dangerous driving, bothering traffic wardens and rescuing cats from trees. It's George Martin's imaginative production, turning vari-speeded fire alarms and screeching brakes into part of the backing, that really



stands out; his imminent tape-fiddling studio experimentation with The Beatles arguably starts right here. The single was withdrawn by Parlophone due to a technical fault so you'll have to track it down on Best Of's.

PETER SELLERS AND THE HOLLIES After The Fox (Single, United Artists, 1966)



Neil Simon provided the script for the poorly-received 1966 crime comedy caper *After The Fox*, a rare misfire for Peter Sellers at the height of his cinematic

fame; the fact that it lampooned real life directors and critics can hardly have helped its box office performance. The moody and sinister minor chord-driven proto-psychedelic title theme, written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David, is more satisfying. The Hollies duet with an in-character Sellers in a call and response questioning of "The Fox" and his motives, which the actor approaches in a refreshingly restrained performance suggesting he was treating it as a pop song first and foremost.

PETER COOK AND DUDLEY MOORE The LS Bumble Bee (Single, Decca, 1967)



First heard in the 1966 Christmas Special of the duo's BBC1 sketch show *Not Only But Also* as part of a Swinging London parody – which also featured

John Lennon as a toilet attendant – this ahead-of-the-game pastiche of psychedelia is sometimes mistaken for a Beatles out-take. In fact it was performed by The Dudley Moore Trio and intended as a send-up of *Pet Sounds*; they also mimed to it mocking early Cream publicity photos. It's a highly effective number in its own right with hilarious interjections from screaming babies and the "Pete" and "Dud" characters; the latter's explanation of the dangers of hallucinogenic drugs on the B-side is also well worth hearing.

THE GOODIES
Taking You Back

(The Goodies Sing Songs From The Goodies, Decca, 1974)



Taken from a 1973 episode of *The Goodies* in which Bill, Tim and Graeme find themselves custodians of Camelot, this wild rocking ode to the

joys of Time Travel is drenched in effect-swamped guitars and thundering bass courtesy of top session man Chris Spedding. It could easily be mistaken for the genuine article but that's hardly surprising; the trio's extended slapstick film sequences were frequently backed by fantastic psych, funk and prog workouts written by Bill Oddie, the original tapes of which have sadly since been mostly lost. *The Goodies* would go on to score a string of funk-based novelty hits, often with unlikely influences drawn from Oddie's esoteric listening habits.

BILL ODDIE
Nothing Better To Do
(Single, Parlophone, 1964)



Before forming *The Goodies*, Bill was a jobbing comic and writer who also fancied himself as a potential pop star, releasing a string of creditable soul-

influenced straight singles and the album *Distinctly Oddie*. This protest song against mods and rockers and their Bank Holiday seafront punch-ups is one of his best efforts, with clever and pointed lyrics, ringing guitars and menacing brass accompaniment. Believing that the endeavour might backfire and the opposing youth tribes would end up singing it mockingly to each other, the BBC restricted airplay for the single, resulting in the first of several unlikely pop controversies for Bill.

MIKE AND BERNIE WINTERS
Fallout Shelter
(Single, Oriole, 1962)



History has not been kind to the brothers and their traditional double act, but there was a time when they were one of ITV's biggest draws with a keen eye for popular

culture worth sending up. Both were also accomplished musicians, which gave their songs more instrumental weight than many of their contemporaries. Recorded for a notorious cash-in label, this swaggering riposte to smug individuals stocking their nuclear hideout with all mod cons features honking saxes, walloping drums and lyrics



Millicent Martin (left) with fellow pop starlets Kathy Kirby, Cilla Black and Brenda Lee at the 1964 Royal Variety Performance

that would probably have been better suited to Scott Walker, and is far stranger – and creepier – than it has any right to be.

HARRY H CORBETT
The Green Eye Of The Little Yellow God
(Single, Pye, 1963)



Hidden away on the B-side of the more conventional pop number 'Like The Big Guys Do' – which featured a cameo from *Thank Your Lucky Stars'* Janice

“Oi’ll Give It Foive” Nicholls – this lavish setting of J Milton Hayes’ 1911 Music Hall staple was an early Tony Hatch production. Mixing beat group stylings and faux-Eastern orchestration, it’s a nicely complimentary setting for Corbett’s expressive reading in full Harold Steptoe mode, with amusing diversions to compliment the lyrical twists. Also, just when the listener is starting to get fed up with the backing singers’ endless chirruping of “Mad Carew!”, Harry handily yells at them to shut up.

MILLICENT MARTIN
Gotta Lotta Lovin'
(Single, Parlophone, 1963)



Broadcast between 1962 and '63 – when it was taken off-air due to political pressure – the BBC's late-night topical satire show *That Was*

The Week That Was broke new ground both with its humour and its presentation style, making no effort to disguise the fact that it was taking place in a television studio. As well as forming part of the sketch troupe, Millicent Martin also performed a – frequently provocative – topical song each week. This surprisingly suggestive number tackling the rise in office romances was originally heard on screen in December '62; produced by George Martin, this beefed-up jazzy powerhouse

found its way onto the B-side of the show's theme single.

LANCE PERCIVAL
End Of The Season
(Single, Parlophone, 1966)



Appearing alongside Millie as a regular on *That Was The Week That Was*, Lance Percival specialised in improvised topical calypsos and

unsurprisingly tried his hand at a couple of pop singles. Released almost a year before The Kinks' own version, this earlier and more up-tempo take on Ray Davies' lament for a lost love who went with the summer and the economy featured more pointed and satirical lyrics that poses the intriguing question of what project the song was originally intended for. Ray's crunchingly psychedelic attack on television stardom for *Private Eye* gag writer Barry Fantoni, 'Little Man In A Little Box', is also well worth tracking down.

STANLEY UNWIN
Goldilocks
(Single, Pye, 1962)



Perhaps best known now as the narrator of The Small Faces' *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake*, Stanley Unwin and his invented language Unwinese were all over

television and radio in the '60s, and arguably never better captured than on his album *Rotatay Disks With Unwin*. The LP was promoted with this single featuring a different take on the story of 'Goldylappers And The Three Bearloaders', with Stanley backed by a jaunty jazz quartet which complement his linguistic trickery well; he always claimed that Unwinese was inspired by jazz riffs and this gives him a nice opportunity and a solid beat with which to prove it. [E]



Haunted!

THE CORDS are responsible for a late in the day garage-psych classic – 1970’s harrowing ‘Ghost Power’ – hardly typical of trainee Franciscan monks!

As their work is anthologised **LENNY HELSING** tracks down chief spectre Jim Bertler

The Cords classic, the fantastically spooked-out ‘Ghost Power’ was re-discovered in 1983 when featured on the debut volume of Tim Warren’s highly-revered series of compilation albums *Back From The Grave*. The cult heroes are now the subject of a thrilling seven-inch singles collection issued by new Canadian label OKtay Records – the visual presentation of which is a nod to New York City’s vintage jazz/R&B imprint OKeh. The newer, younger

OKtay label is based out of British Columbia, the brainchild of rabid ’60s garage-punk fan and enthusiastic collector, Oktay Gürbüç.

The Cords came together in Pulaski, a small town in Wisconsin, and their weird-sounding, thoroughly compelling instrumental ‘Ghost Power’, culled from one of two obscure singles made in ’70, remains a startlingly powerful and dynamic calling card. The overall sound happening through ‘Ghost Power’ is like being adrift on a scary ghost train ride surrounded by incessant

drum rumblings, and pierced by odd screams amidst the unrelenting barrage of fuzzy, often futuristic-sounding surf guitar – imagine if you will the sound of embryonic freak-rockers Hawkwind merged with some in-the-garage antics as performed by Devo. Now there’s a thought.

Unlike most regular teen garage and psychedelic-style groups of the time, The Cords were instead young students being trained in the ways of the Franciscan order of monks based at the town’s Assumption Friary, and their music making endeavours (nonetheless viable and intentional) were but a joyous sideline to what, otherwise, was a more serious life devoted to religious study.

“The Monastery in Pulaski was a focal point throughout the town’s history,” Cords’ organist, sax player, bassist, vocalist and songwriter Jim Bertler tells *Shindig!* “A population of a couple thousand people at that time, everybody seemed to know everybody in a small town. The Monastery was The Motherhouse of the Franciscans at that time (Blessed Virgin Mary Province) in Pulaski. So, yes, we were well accepted



Not your average Saturday night showband. The Cords in 1969 with Jim Bertler (far left)



More Monk-based madness; that defiant 1970 single

“Most people, I believe, supported us because we were different, with the young religious probably being more receptive than if we’d have been older”

and known. And don't forget we played Polkas, which the town is well noted for. Every year they host a Polka Festival in July that turns a population of a couple of thousand into 10–20 thousand people over the weekend.”

Operational in some form or other since as early as '64, The Cords would go on to record a now sought-after LP, *Spiritual Troubadours*, at Sauk City Studios, a recording facility in Sauk City that belonged to Jim Kirchstein, who then issued the record, credited to The Franciscan Cords, on his own label, Cuca, at the tail end of '69. This was the label famed for releasing 'Mule Skinner Blues', an international chart hit back in '60 for another Wisconsin-based act, The Fendermen.

Apart from their own Christian names, Franciscan monks were also given another name, special to the order. Therefore alongside Jim (Bonaventure) Bertler, the core personnel of The Cords lined-up thus: Kevin Schroeder (rhythm guitar and vocals), Steve Bertin (Bieda – electric accordion), James Francis (Dacian) Kendzierski (tambourine and vocal effects

– most apparent on 'Cords, Inc', which features Kendzierski's often hilarious vocal outbursts that led to the nickname "Turkey Man"), Matthew Gawlick (12-string guitar and bass) and Earl Hylok (drums and percussion).

In the early months of '70, The Cords would once again have the occasion to visit Kirchstein's studio and at that time, incidentally, undertook to record another session; the results of which would soon bring forth their two single releases for Cuca. 'Cords, Inc' coupled with 'Trink' was first to appear, followed by the mighty 'Ghost Power' and 'Waiting Here For You', both issued sometime around the middle of the year. OKtay have now gathered together both singles, lovingly presented inside a sumptuous, aptly matt black, action-packed gatefold cover which includes some personal recollections along with a cache of unseen images. Celebrated Wisconsin music historian Gary E Myers illuminates the group's story further with his highly informative sleeve note.

Although a version of the group's theme song 'Cords, Inc'

was also included on the *Spiritual Troubadours* LP, it's a different, and harder-edged rendition (utilising the same backing track as the LP cut) with a crisper, more upfront mix and some fuzz guitar additions that the group chose to issue on 45, and which now kicks off OKtay's release.

About the group's free-time pursuits, Bertler has this to say. "It was a very exciting time for us brothers to go out and perform for the youth. I always had the intent to show them (the youth) that there was a fun side to religious life. We even had guitar Mass at that time in our Monastery Chapel for the local people in Pulaski," he enthuses.

Aside from the more experimental, almost *avant-garde* outpourings the group have become renowned for, the singles also show a softer side, splendidly captured on 'Trink' and 'Waiting Here For You'. Perhaps it's not so obvious during the latter, but certainly with 'Trink' The Cords expertly demonstrate – and with enough hip, modern panache and charm – the kind of romantic, less-brooding nature that certain garage teenbeat songs of the period possessed. "We were very conservative when we played out," relates Bertler, "but people were surprised at the types of music we would play. Most people, I believe, supported us because we were different, with the young religious probably being more receptive than if we'd have been older. We did play for older people also, depending on the situation." ■

Thanks to Jim Bertler, Oktay Gürbüz and Chris Bishop at garagehangover.com

 **Ghost Power is out now on OKtay and limited to 500 copies**

Very Good! The seminal four-man line-up of Big Star in 1972. L-R: Andy Hummel, Jody Stephens, Chris Bell and Alex Chilton



Daisy Glaze

JODY STEPHENS knows how fortunate he is to have drummed for one of the most influential bands in '70s rock. Having been in Big Star is a major accolade. Today he performs in Those Pretty Wrongs, maintaining the sound he helped establish nearly 50 years ago.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS, with the help of the *Shindig!* team, ask the ever-youthful legend about his life in Memphis music

Shindig! Was Ice Water your first band? How did you form and what inspired you? Where were you gigging?

Jody Stephens: My brother Jimmy and I had been in several neighbourhood bands starting around 1966. The Beatles and the whole British Invasion got us excited about being in a band. I was drawn to playing drums and Jimmy to bass and we covered songs from mostly UK bands. The draw for me was being part of a band not so much being an individual musician.

The music that started coming out of Stax around '68 had this visceral impact that changed our course. We became a soul band with a black lead singer. Calvin was his name. He had this deep rich voice that inspired us all.

In late '69 we were part of a band doing album cuts from rock bands. That band became, in some part, the stage band for the musical *Hair* produced by what is now The University Of Memphis. Andy Hummel, who had been in a band with my brother, came to see one of the shows and invited me to come jam with him and some of his friends. That turned out to be the beginnings of Ice Water. We didn't gig much, just a few private parties.

SD! How did you find Chris Bell? Did he strike you as unique, even then?

JS: The jam that Andy invited me to included Chris Bell and took place in his parents' back house. Chris struck me as being focused on music and putting together what he thought would be the right combination of players and personalities. It took a minute or two to get to know him. He was indeed a unique player, singer and person.

SD! What were your expectations as you entered the recording studio to record *#1 Record*?

JS: We had rehearsed the songs so the basic tracks came together pretty quickly. The songs were exciting to me. Expectations of a great new adventure in the studio were high. The unknown was how much John Fry added sonically. He made them sparkle! John was a brilliant engineer, Ardent's owner and our mentor.

SD! Over the years folks have speculated about Chris Bell's contribution to the production of *#1 Record*. What sort of role did he play in terms of production?

JS: *#1 Record* was Chris's vision. Andy and Alex were really creative players but Chris was the producer.

SD! The production of the first two Big Star albums is incredible. Every instrument chimes with clarity. Was that something you were striving for or a combination of different elements – your playing, the studio? Was there a unified vision?

JS: As John would say, the player determines

the original sound. We all spent a bit of time on our parts and the way our respective instruments sounded. John made sure they "chimed with clarity".

For the most part, unity of vision is about trust. We all had similar music interests and Chris and Alex were brilliant players, singers and minds so it was easy to trust them.

SD! With Chris's departure, the band's sound changed quite dramatically. *Radio City* seems much more earthy, more Memphis than Merseyside. Was something lost or gained in the transition?

JS: We lost Chris's input and we became a three-piece band. We also evolved as people and players so *Radio City* reflects that. I love both of those records so we gained a new perspective with *Radio City*.

SD! How did you develop your extremely

unusual approach to rhythm. Was it due to the loose feel of the Memphis R&B sound or something else entirely?

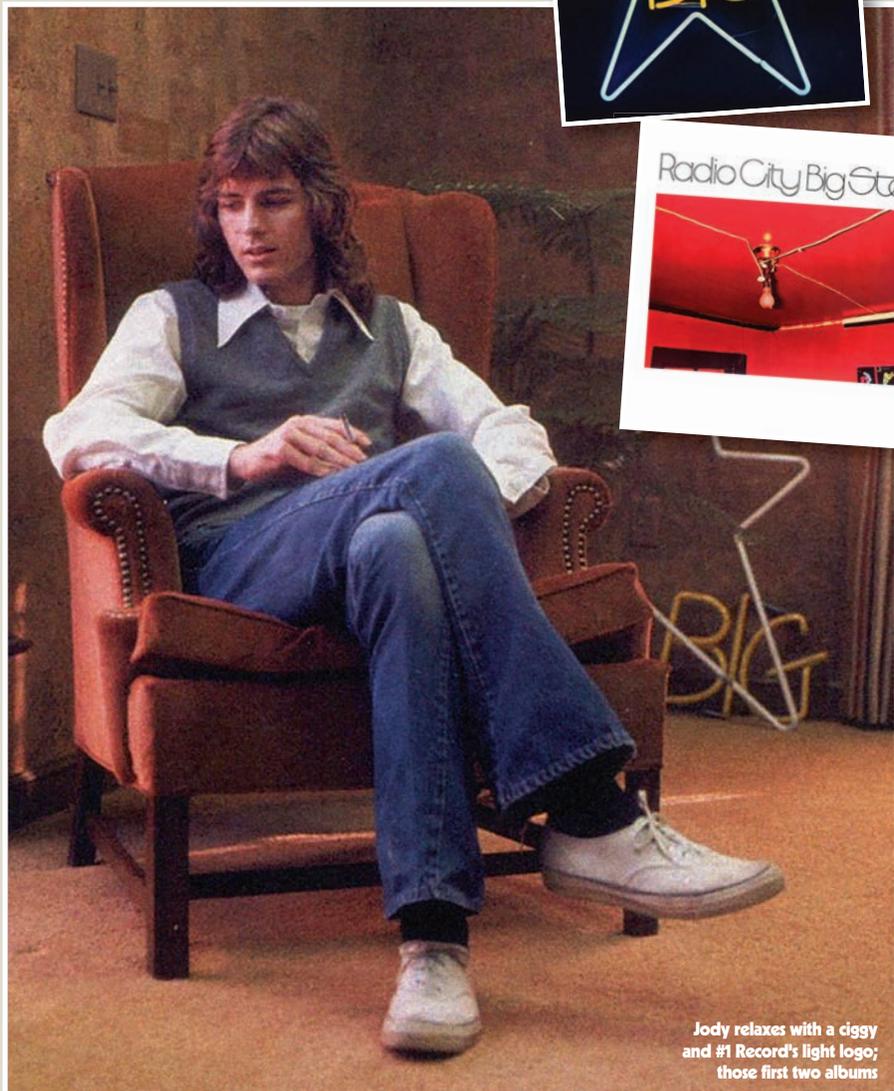
JS: I was inspired by Ringo, Charlie Watts, Keith Moon, Al Jackson, John Bonham and others. The way I play on a song is usually a response to the lead vocal and guitars. That seemed to just naturally work with what Andy was playing on bass. I was lucky to be playing with pretty unique players.

SD! 'Daisy Glaze' is one of the most beautiful songs on *Radio City* – what part did you play in its composition?

JS: Thanks. Alex had the song but when the three of us played it together the energy changed a little bit. I think that's why Alex gave us a little writing credit.

SD! Is it possible to say something about the atmosphere in the studio for the third

"#1 Record was Chris's vision. Andy and Alex were really creative players but Chris was the producer"



Jody relaxes with a ciggy and #1 Record's light logo; those first two albums

album. How much was the psychological disintegration the result of the band's commercial failure and how much did it owe to other relationships unravelling? How integral was Jim Dickinson in bringing the album to fruition and what was he like to work with?

JS: Alex and I would track with John and Jim during the day. Alex had played some of the demos of the songs for me: his voice and an acoustic guitar. They were complete emotional thoughts as they were. We didn't rehearse them prior to recording, so I was searching for parts that would support the songs. Jim was a trusted presence in the studio so I would look to him for approval. His reassurances were enough. *Third* would not have happened without Jim and how we hear it wouldn't be the same without John's engineering and mixing brilliance. One of Jim's roles was building a track around Alex's acoustic guitar and vocal for 'Kangaroo'. That's Jim you hear on drums and other instruments as well.

I loved working with him.

SD!: How did Alex and yourself meet ("Sister Lovers") Lesa and Holliday? What did they bring to you both musically and philosophically?

JS: Andy was dating Lesa and he introduced me to her sister Holliday. Seems like Lesa was, as I think Jim Dickinson said, Alex's muse for *Third*. She also co-wrote 'Downs'. I learned a lot from Holliday's mom and dad. More about being okay with who I was and how to be secure in that. Holliday and I had a great relationship and I wrote 'For You' while we were together. She wasn't really a part of what I was doing musically.

SD!: What can you tell us about taking 'For You' from the germ of an idea to a finished

album track? What are your memories of recording the album? Was it a Big Star record or a Chilton record?

JS: Andy gave me an acoustic guitar (it had belonged to Chris and was used on *#1 Record*) and Alex showed me a few chords. I sat down and wrote 'For You' one autumn day. I played it for Alex and he liked it ... called it the fireplace song. I wanted to add strings to it and talked with arranger Carl Marsh about it. Alex liked the idea and asked Carl about string arrangements for other songs. In addition to the string arrangements Carl played bassoon on 'Blue Moon'.

It wasn't an Alex solo record. Jim, John, and I shaped the way you hear the songs.

SD!: Was it strange to be a white rock group on a black soul-funk label like Stax? And for all of its cultural significance was it the wrong label for Big Star?

JS: It would have worked with Stax if Columbia hadn't backed out. I was excited to be a part of Stax and was in awe of Al Bell and the artists on the label.

SD!: You recorded a Kinks song with Big Star: 'Till The End Of The Day' was originally released as a Lesa Aldridge 7" and then as a bonus track on Jim Dickinson's Rykodisc version of *Third/Sister Lovers* in 1992. Later, with Golden Smog, you released a lovely version of 'Strangers' (a standout track from The Kinks' *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround* album). What sort of influence did The Kinks have on you?

JS: Kinks' songs like 'All Day And All of the Night' and 'Til The End Of The Day' had this immediate energy about them. Pretty cool observations about life as well.

SD!: Following the band's split Alex

appeared to distance himself from the Big Star records. How did you feel after you'd disbanded and when did you start to realise that those three records were taking on a new lease of life?

JS: We all had other interests at that point, so there wasn't much of a change in my day to day life. I was still going to school, waiting tables and playing music whenever the opportunity arose. I spent some time in London in 1978. My friend Andrew Tyler (*NME* writer) put me up so I got to hang out with him in London for two and a half months or so. Big Star would frequently be mentioned in the press. Someone introduced me to Nick Kent who talked about a bootleg of *Third* and of our WLIR performance in '74. After that it was music writers and musicians like Mike Mills and Peter Buck talking about Big Star in interviews.

SD!: Does Big Star's enduring appeal and massive influence ever surprise you? When were you first aware of this?

JS: The music, of course, has always been the driver of interest. I love these records so it is not a surprise to me that the music is finding its way in the world. The relationships with all kinds of people are the added gifts of having been a part of Big Star. People like Cheryl Pawelski and her Omnivore label's very carefully-produced Big Star reissues, Chris Stamey who had the idea to perform Big Star's *Third* live using like-minded players and Danielle McCarthy who produced the Big Star documentary all contribute immeasurably to the reach of the music.

Thirty-odd years ago someone I had just met told me that I should wake up every morning being thankful to have been in Big Star... I'm a lucky guy. But yes, I am surprised at times.



The journey into darkness. Big Star in 1973 following Chris Bell's departure



Big Star reborn in the '90s. Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow join Jody; with Luther Russell as Those Pretty Wrongs (above)



“Thirty-odd years ago someone I had just met told me that I should wake up every morning being thankful to have been in Big Star... I am surprised at times”

SDI: You appeared briefly in the recent documentary about Primal Scream’s return visit to Ardent Studios. Did you work with them when they recorded what became *Give Out But Don’t Give Up*? What was your impression of Bobby Gillespie & co?

JS: We all loved having them here at Ardent. They worked in Studio A with Tom Dowd producing. They would search through indie/used record stores during the day, come to the studio to listen to what they had found and then record. They had a deep appreciation for Delta area music. I wasn’t in the studio with them but I think, given Tom Dowd, it was probably pretty organised and focused within the walls of the studio. I don’t remember anything crazy happening while they were here in Memphis. I did hear some interesting stories about their leaving one of the band members behind in Mexico as they were on their way to LA for a talk show appearance and one about Robert’s encounter with security at LaGuardia/NYC airport. I’ll bet being their tour manager was more challenging than most.

SDI: Studios like Ardent are so important culturally for their impact and role in musical history. What do you think the future will hold? Is it thriving as a recording space still? Do you think its rich history and the music that’s embedded in the walls there will be preserved for generations to come?

JS: Every major Stax artist, except Otis Redding, recorded and/or mixed something at Ardent. Isaac Hayes recorded *Hot Buttered Soul* at Ardent, The Staple Singers hits were mixed at Ardent. ZZ Top recorded and mixed seven or eight records here. Jimmy Page and Terry Manning mixed *Led Zeppelin III* at Ardent when it was on

National St. The Replacements, R.E.M., Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, The Raconteurs, The White Stripes, Deer Tick’s *Vol 1* and *Vol 2*. Low Cut Connie’s latest for sampling.

Betty Fry, John’s widow, is now the sole owner of Ardent. She is making sure Ardent remains a place where great things can happen and yes, are preserved for generations to come.

SDI: How does it feel to still be making music with Those Pretty Wrongs and how does it compare creatively to the work you’ve done in the past? It looks like you’re having a blast.

JS: Writing songs and making music with Luther Russell is indeed a blast. I thought we might write three or four songs together and now, to be releasing a new TPW single with our second LP to follow in late spring is mind blowing to me. The difference between my role in Those Pretty Wrongs and my role in Big Star is that I now sing lead and co-write all the songs. Playing with Chris, Andy and Alex and working with John Fry was more incredible than what I could have imagined for myself. What I learned from them inspires what Luther and I do now.

We have played in Australia, Spain, UK and many cities across the U.S. We are excited about doing more when the LP comes out.

SDI: You recently met and then drummed on the track ‘The Student Becomes The Teacher’ for The Lemon Twigs. What do you think of these talented youngsters? Does their love of Big Star surprise you? They’re kids.

JS: I met Brian and Michael (The Lemon Twigs) here at Ardent. They were on the road near Memphis and Big Star fans so

their tour manager brought them by. Very nice guys, so I checked out a few of their videos and their *Do Hollywood* LP. Their music, vocals, instrumental and visual talents were beyond fantastic. Their command of who they are and what they want is way beyond their ages.

They set up a little studio in their parents’ basement and wanted to record what was to become *Go To School* there. They invited me up to join them on ‘The Student Becomes The Teacher’. Even at 18 and 20 years old they were pros. We set up and played together so I got to play off of their bass and guitar parts and Michael’s lead vocal.

They were going to put me up at a hotel but I wanted to stay with them at their parents’ house... kinda felt like a sleep over. We all set down to a family dinner together that I helped prepare. It was the total Lemon Twigs teenage experience for me. Awesome!

SDI: What’s next?

JS: Burger Records will release Those Pretty Wrongs’ single ‘Time To Fly’ backed by ‘A Day In The Park’ in February. The LP will come out sometime in late spring or early summer. We will hit the road in late spring.

I love continuing to be a part of Ardent. 32 years now on the business side of things. Seems like doors continue to open. ☑

Big Star’s Live On WLR (Omnivore) and Those Pretty Wrongs’ new single on Burger are out now.

Thanks to: Cam Cobb, Hugh Dellar, Daragh O’Halloran, Johnnie Johnstone, Simon Matthews, Jon ‘Mojo’ Mills, Andy Morten, Paul Osborne, Martin Ruddock, Stuart Shea

LIVERPOOL SUNSET

At the end of 1965 **THE SEARCHERS** were one of the most successful acts in Britain, with a dozen hits including three chart-toppers to their name. Their blend of tough R&B standards, harmony-rich folk and Brill Building pop marked them out as innovators from the off – only their slightly better-known Liverpool allies The Beatles trod the same path. But even as The Searchers introduced US talents like Jackie DeShannon and PF Sloan to UK record buyers while simultaneously seeing their sound appropriated by The Byrds and sold back to us as folk-rock they needed an identity and they needed their own material. **ANDY MORTEN** picks up the story with Searchers Frank Allen and John McNally as Swinging London explodes and the Mersey sound seemingly becomes an anachronism overnight, despite more great singles and a work ethic that would put most bands to shame





Where have all the flowers gone?
The Searchers Mk III in late 1966.
L-R: Mike Pender, John McNally,
John Blunt and Frank Allen

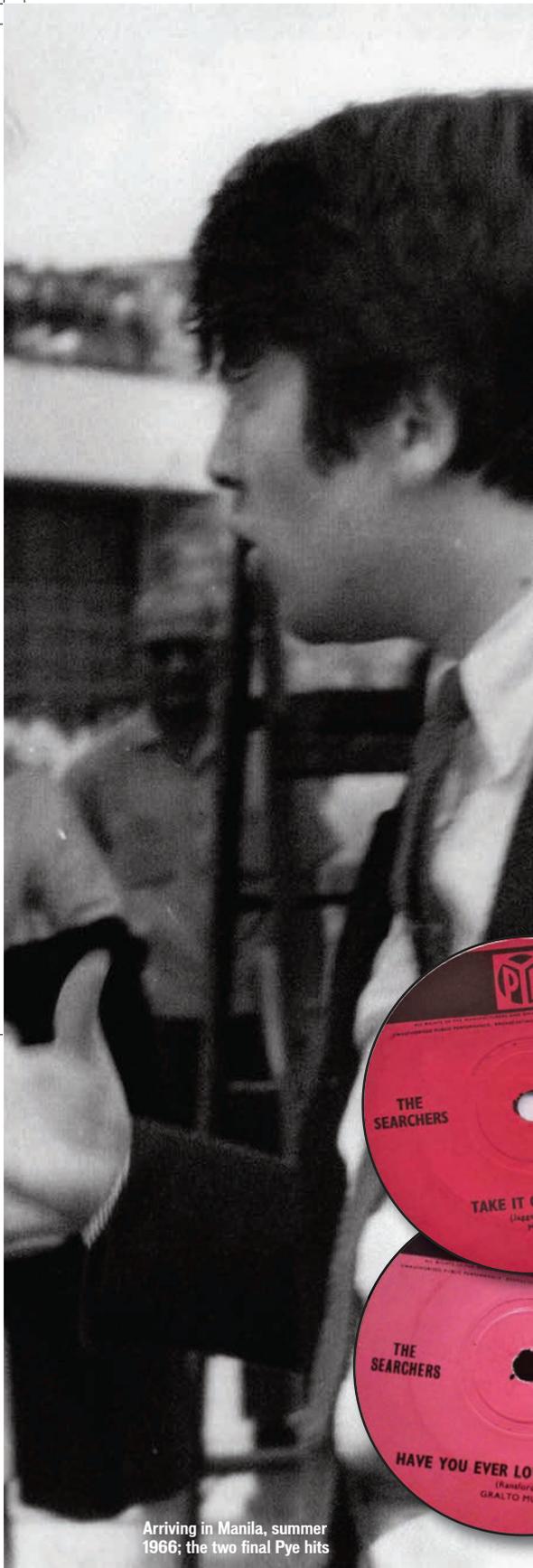


t's March 1966 and The Searchers – guitarist/vocalist Mike Pender, bassist/vocalist Frank Allen, guitarist/vocalist John McNally and drummer/vocalist Chris Curtis – have just completed a gruelling tour of Australia and New Zealand in the company of pop's bad boys The Rolling Stones, “a combination as weird as teaming Vlad The Impaler with Mother Theresa”, as Frank Allen would later attest. The Stones were on the up: ‘19th Nervous Breakdown’ was about to hit #2 on both sides of The Atlantic and their fourth album was in the can and awaiting release.

“We’d been listening to *Aftermath* on the tour. Chris Curtis liked ‘Take It Or Leave It’ and thought it would be a good idea to record it,” explains Frank matter-of-factly down the phone from his new Middlesex

: home. Curtis, The Searchers’ tall, falsetto-
 : singing drummer, had become something
 : of an A&R man, sourcing and selecting
 : much of the group’s material in lieu of
 : them having an in-house songwriting

: team. “Chris was the grammar school
 : boy,” says Searchers founder John
 : McNally, still in Liverpool, where, apart
 : from a few brief weeks spent in London at
 : the height of the band’s fame in the mid-



Arriving in Manila, summer 1966; the two final Pye hits

“CHRIS WAS GOING A BIT LOOPY ON THAT TOUR - HE WAS TAKING STRANGE THINGS. IT BECAME EMBARRASSING BECAUSE HE WAS OUT OF IT ALL THE TIME”

a Searcher any more. We very much encouraged him to stay but he wanted to go out on his own and be a producer.” McNally gets straight to the point. “Chris was going a bit loopy on that tour – he was taking strange things. It became embarrassing because he was out of it all the time.”

Curtis may have been out of the band but his spectral presence remained. The group promptly cut ‘Take It Or Leave It’ with new drummer John Blunt – a 19-year-old Keith Moon fanatic from Croydon who was hired on a temporary basis to fulfil touring commitments after being brought to the

attention of Searchers manager and music entrepreneur Tito Burns. Blunt could hardly have been a more different character to Curtis. Dressed in the latest Carnaby Street threads and prone to destroying his kit *a la* Moon, he somehow remained with the group for three years. “If we arranged to meet him at one station he would be at another,” Allen told Searchers biographer M Denger. “If we arranged to meet him at 3.30 pm he would be there at 4.30 pm. We went to Rome one day, he lost his return ticket. And then we were horrified to get a call one day to say that he had been arrested for the

possession of cannabis and remanded for medical reports!” Such scandals were not in keeping with the group’s squeaky-clean image.

The Stones cover struggled up to #31 – not their worst showing to date – and was followed by another song by one of The Searchers’ UK contemporaries, The Hollies. “Even though he’d left the band Chris came to us and wanted to record us doing ‘Have You Ever Loved Somebody’, which he’d heard from the guys in The Hollies,” Allen recalls. “We decided that we really didn’t want to be associated with him any more – we’d rather make our

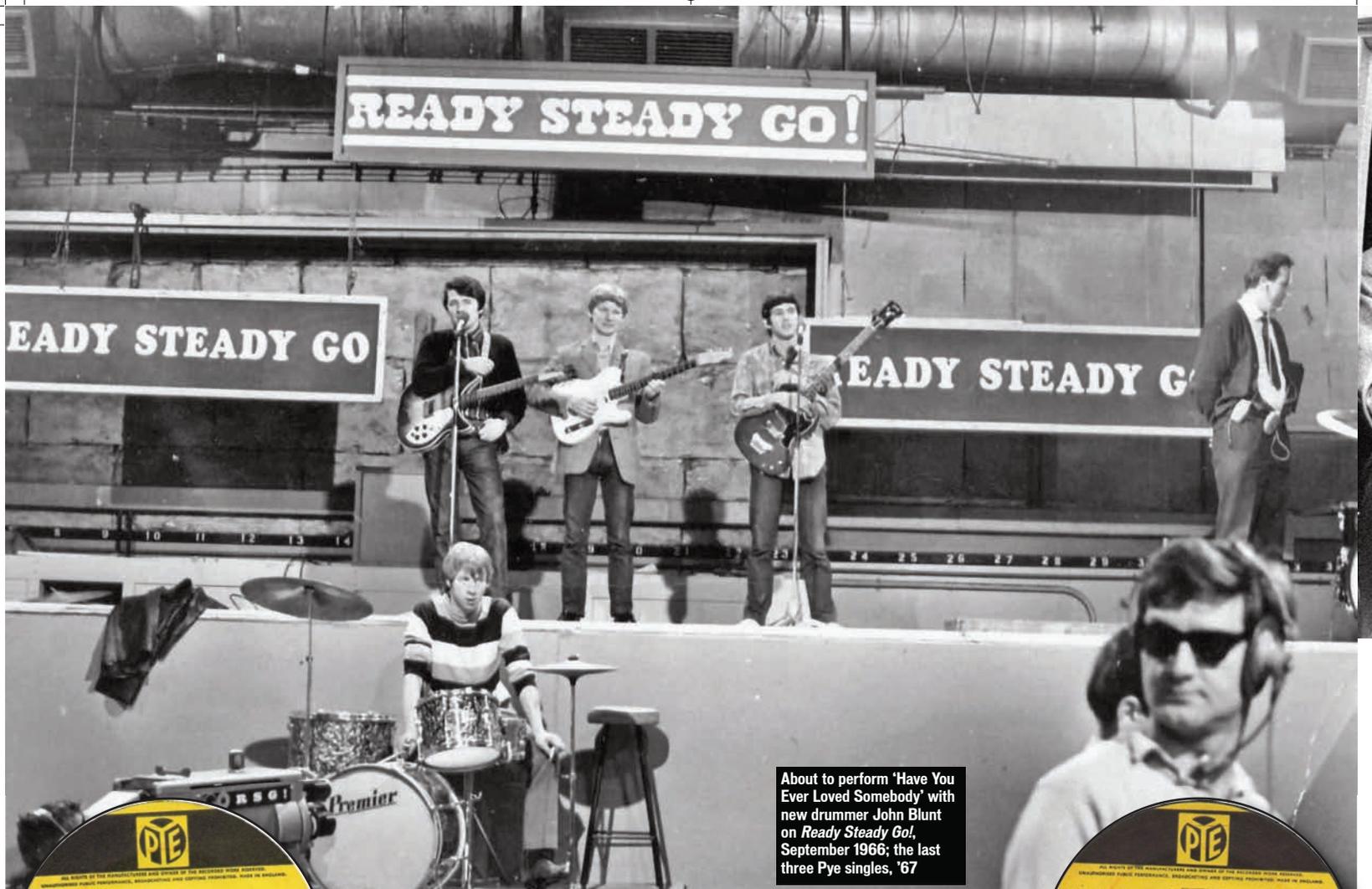
own decisions. There was nothing to stop us recording it though – it’s a very good song – so we went in and recorded it with Tony Hatch.”

The Hollies had tried unsuccessfully to cut the song themselves in March and June ’66 so it’s likely that one of these takes of what is a supremely commercial song was then circulated as a publisher’s demo. John Blunt appears on the record, albeit buried in the mix, while the group’s customarily heavenly vocal harmonies soar. “There was a bit of rivalry because Chris immediately recorded the song with Paul & Barry Ryan,” Allen continues, “who had the very powerful Harold Davidson Agency behind them and got them on every TV show. The joke at the time was that the only TV show they hadn’t been on was the epilogue. Anyway, we got *Countdown* (a short-lived pop quiz show on Southern TV) and *Ready Steady Go!* and just managed to beat them – ours got to #48 and theirs got to 49. Maybe Chris had lost his magic touch by this point and was no longer picking big hits – I don’t know if we could’ve picked better ones ourselves. I wouldn’t know a hit if it bit me on the arse and said, ‘I’m a hit.’”

Incredibly, that #48 placing would mark The Searchers’ last brush with the UK charts. Meanwhile they maintained a busy live schedule, chalking up sold-out shows at The Araneta Coliseum in Manila, painfully soon after The Beatles’ controversial visit there in July, and touring Europe, particularly Sweden and Germany where their stock remained high.

The Searchers’ recording manager Tony Hatch was responsible for introducing them to ‘Popcorn, Double Feature’, their first single of ’67. Penned by US songwriters Scott English and Larry Weiss (who would shortly score with multiple recordings of ‘Hi Ho Silver Lining’ and ‘Bend Me, Shape Me’, among others) The Searchers’ version marked a shift away from the increasingly redundant Mersey sound into new, more modish territory. “‘Popcorn, Double Feature’ I thought was very good,” says Allen. “It wasn’t an in-your-face hit song but it was very adventurous and well-recorded. I had the pleasure of playing a rather odd but very





About to perform 'Have You Ever Loved Somebody' with new drummer John Blunt on *Ready Steady Go!*, September 1966; the last three Pye singles, '67



nice bass line on that one – I was always thrilled with that.”

Contrary to received wisdom, US singer Tim Wilde’s

gently psychedelic version of the song that The Searchers have often been said to have covered, wasn’t released until July.

The Five Americans’ US Top 5 hit ‘Western Union’ had enjoyed some UK airtime but hadn’t charted here, its radio-friendly Morse code bleeps making it ripe for commercial exploitation. The Searchers decided to have a crack at it, with mixed results. “I never liked ‘Western Union,’” Allen states. “I don’t think we made a particularly good version of it. It’s amazing how many people like it though – they still ask for it but we’ve never done it on stage since the day we recorded it.” John McNally pauses on the line then sings “doo-doo-doo-doo” in a falsetto befitting someone a third of his age, before concluding with a laugh, “That wasn’t one of our highlights.”

With no chart action forthcoming, Pye began reissuing old Searchers product. 1963’s debut *Meet The Searchers* was rolled out on their Golden Guinea imprint, with the hit-heavy *Smash Hits Vol 2* appearing on budget wing Marble Arch. When *Sgt Pepper*, acid and kaftans cleaved the decade asunder, many groups who’d enjoyed

success during the early to mid-60s were suddenly considered out-moded and redundant. The Searchers were typical victims of these seismic cultural shifts.

“We were no longer the flavour of the month,” Allen says with no hint of bitterness or regret. “We were grasping at straws and should’ve been more calm and collected. We weren’t being offered the right songs any more. I don’t know why. Neither Tony [Hatch] nor us really had our finger on the pulse.”

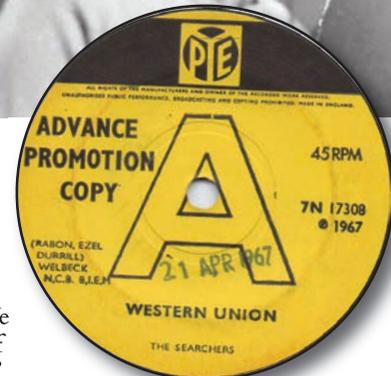
Once again McNally cuts to the chase. “I don’t think we acknowledged or accepted [psychedelia] – we just tried to carry on as normal. It really was a period when we were just trying to pay our mortgages.”

A final Pye single, the more than respectable self-penned ‘Second Hand Dealer’, was released in November. As with ‘Popcorn, Double Feature’ this hazy, Kinks-inspired gem has gone on to become a fixture of psych-era UK pop anthologies – but at the time nobody was listening. “Mike wrote the tune and I wrote the lyrics,” recalls Allen, clearly amused that your writer has brought it up. “We’d been in Sweden and had a support band called The Second Hand Dealers and we liked the sound of it. We wrote this rather Kinks-ish thing with that dark humour – I was rather proud of the lyrics actually. But it didn’t get a sniff of radio or TV and was probably the wrong thing to put out as a single.” What the right thing for The Searchers to have put out as a single at this juncture was is

impossible to know, as they’ve already established. John McNally, ever the stoic, merely adds, “We lost the thread of our own sound.”

And let’s not forget that *that* sound – the creamy, often plaintive, twin-guitar, triple-harmony attack that had propelled exceptional pop constructions like ‘When You Walk In The Room’ and ‘Needles And Pins’ into the Top 5 just two and a half years earlier – had been co-opted by a loose-knit coterie of Brit-obsessed Californian beats, specifically Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark in The Byrds, and re-purposed for the drug generation, entirely re-shaping pop music in the process. Whilst The Byrds and their brethren were bathed in accolades, their original inspirations were now rudderless and hopelessly out of step.

When their Pye contract wasn’t renewed at the start of ’68, the erstwhile Tito Burns took The Searchers to Liberty Records, where they were paired with displaced American songwriter/producer Kenny Young, co-author of ‘Under The Boardwalk’ among countless others. “I imagine Tito got a reasonable advance from Liberty,” Allen speculates, “and, as usual, we got nothing other than what was in the royal contract, which was nothing because we never had any hits with them. It was another chance but it





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just didn’t work.”

It was a full 12 months after ‘Second Hand Dealer’ that ‘Umbrella Man’ – written and produced by Young – appeared; a dangerously long period to be silent in ’68. “‘Umbrella Man’ was almost a good record,” Allen acknowledges. “Intriguing lyrics, quite a hypnotic tune. My bugbear about that one was that Kenny Young had this drum stagger thing that came in between the verses that threw the whole thing out, ruined the mood totally.” Allen himself wrote the flipside, ‘Over The Weekend’, a throwaway Tremeloes-style confection typical of the era.

Footage of the band lip-synching to ‘Umbrella Man’ on German TV’s *Beat Club* shows them appearing uncomfortable, their trademark black suits off-set by grown-out hair and, in McNally’s case, a goatee beard, while

Blunt – who may or may not have actually played on the record due to his “erratic sense of timing” – flounders stony-faced to one side.

A further trio of singles for Liberty followed, although the first – a generic cover of Andy Kim’s US ’68 single ‘Shoot ’em Up Baby’ – only appeared in Germany. ‘Somebody Shot The Lollypop Man’ is another Kenny Young effort, one for which the group clearly had little time. “We realised we weren’t getting anywhere under our own name so we decided to record it with a slightly different sound and name ourselves after Kenny Young’s dog, an Afghan hound called Pasha,” laughs Allen. The flipside ‘Pussy Willow Dream’ (incorrectly titled ‘Pussy Willow Dragon’ on the label) is far more interesting, a lively blast of tightly-

arranged pop that would’ve made a better topside. “Jonathan King reviewed it in *Disc*,” Allen recalls, “and said, ‘I believe this is a well-known group recording under the name of Kenny Young’s dog. I think the dog could’ve done a better version.’” The less said about July’s ‘Kinky Kathy Abernathy’ the better. Clearly, the group was losing its grip.

It’s at this point that some kind of innate survival instinct kicked in – “paying the mortgage”, as McNally puts it. The Searchers hit the club circuit of northern England. “By this point we were firmly entrenched in the cabaret circuit,” Allen explains, “which was looked on as the pop stars’ graveyard, but for me it was a good learning process because we suddenly had to learn how to deal with an adult audience. Being the one who did all the fronting, all the speaking, that was my university education. It stood us in great stead for the years to come. We were getting paid a pittance working every hour that God sent – the price of an education I suppose.”

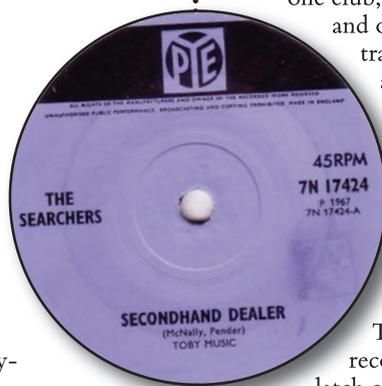
“The Bailey’s circuit,” says McNally, referring to The Bailey Organisation, the overlords of the biggest chain of clubs in the north of England that would come to dominate the variety scene of the early ’70s. “Stockton Fiesta, Sheffield Fiesta, Batley Variety Club. We were just working. A hard period but a nice period – we enjoyed it.”

Allen, animated as the memories of the period flood back, continues. “We’d go away and do a week in a town, sometimes two clubs a night, for virtually no money. We had to completely reduce our circumstances because we were struggling to keep afloat. We’d do an early show at one club, pack up the backline,

and our roadie would transport it to the next one and we’d do a late show there. There were places in Manchester where we’d do THREE shows in three different clubs in one night!” At least they still had a roadie.

This chasm between The Searchers as a viable recording unit unable to latch onto the faddish nature of the era, and the workaholic unit prepared to go out and play their estimable catalogue of hits to hordes of northern club goers isn’t an unusual one – hell, even The Kinks found themselves doing the same thing while simultaneously recording their masterpiece *The Village Green Preservation Society*. In the long term, it turned out to be the best thing that could’ve happened.

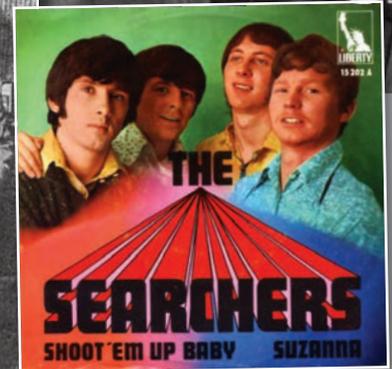
(Author’s note: Is it mere coincidence that when Ray Davies, recovering from a nervous breakdown in ’66, wrote his era-defining reflection on love, loss and the passing of time, his original title for the song was ‘Liverpool Sunset’. “I’d fallen in



“WE WERE FIRMLY ENTRENCHED IN THE CABARET CIRCUIT, WHICH WAS LOOKED ON AS THE POP STARS’ GRAVEYARD, BUT FOR ME IT WAS A GOOD LEARNING PROCESS. THAT WAS MY UNIVERSITY EDUCATION”



In the studio with Tony Hatch in 1967 (below); the Liberty singles



love with Liverpool by that point,” Davies told *The Liverpool Echo* in 2010. “On every tour, that was the best reception. I had a load of mates in bands up there, and that sound – not The Beatles but Merseybeat – was unbelievable. It used to inspire me every time. So I wrote ‘Liverpool Sunset’. Later it got changed to ‘Waterloo Sunset’ but there’s still that play on words with

Waterloo. London was home, I’d grown up there, but I like to think I could be an adopted Scouser. My heart is definitely there.”)

It was this baptism by fire that would ultimately breathe new life into our heroes as the challenges of the record business became insurmountable and the practicalities of sustaining a 10-year career took precedence. The Searchers would become a popular draw on the club circuit and stick at it until the early ’80s when “nostalgia acts” started getting some

kudos, their music was reissued and anthologised and the baby boomer generation started going out again.

In the interim, an early ’70s stint with RCA saw The Searchers, trapped by their Pye contract (“In perpetuity – that means bloody *forever!*” as McNally rues today), re-record their ’60s classics for the ill-advised *Second Take*, as well as being first out of the gate with their version of Neil Sedaka’s evergreen ‘Solitaire’. Stranger still, the group – still led by Pender, McNally and Allen – would be signed to Seymour Stein’s Sire label in ’79 for a pair of recently excavated albums that saw them tackling the likes of The Records’ ‘Hearts In Her Eyes’ and Big Star’s ‘September Gurls’ – rebranded as powerpop legends and progenitors of the new-wave sound. Which, in a way, they were. But that’s another story for another time.

At the risk of this account of a fascinating, frustrating chapter in the career of one of the UK’s most influential and ground-breaking bands ending up all doom and gloom, we’ll leave the final words to Frank Allen, as he and John McNally prepare to take The Searchers out on the road for one final extensive, country-wide tour this month, as they

celebrate 60 years of the band McNally has helmed since day one. *Shindig!* posits the notion that a Searchers album made during those conflicted months of ’67 and ’68 might well have been worthwhile; a chance to consolidate their disparate influences one final time in an era when such experimentation was encouraged and expected but had been denied to them.

“We left Tony Hatch when things were just about touching the charts but after that it all felt a bit temporary. We’d been put with record companies and they’d have a go for a couple of singles and when that didn’t work out, you were out of the window. We were never with anyone long enough to do an album. I don’t know who’d have bought an album of our flops – *The Searchers’ Greatest Flops*.”

Well, I would have. [S](#)

With thanks to Pete Flatt, and to Frank Allen and John McNally

➔ The Farewell Album: The Greatest Hits And More is out now on BMG. When You Walk In The Room: The Complete Pye Recordings 1963-67 is out on Grapefruit next month. The Searchers tour the UK until 31st March

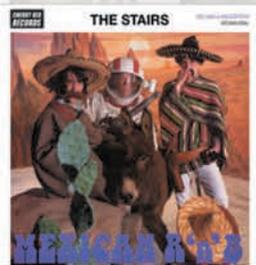
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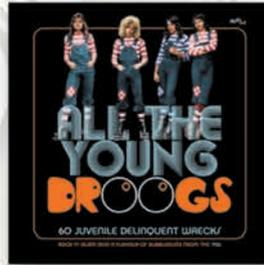
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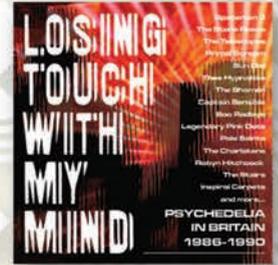
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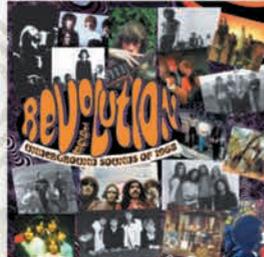
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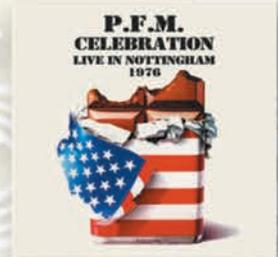
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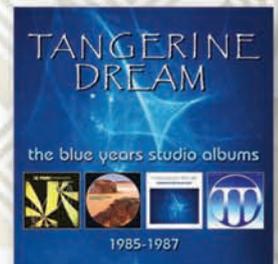
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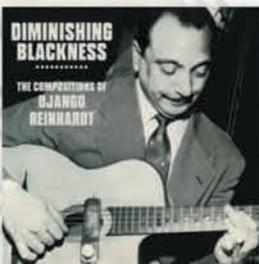
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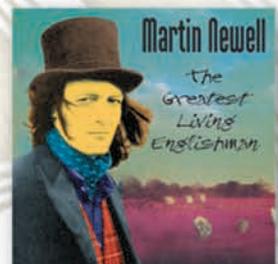
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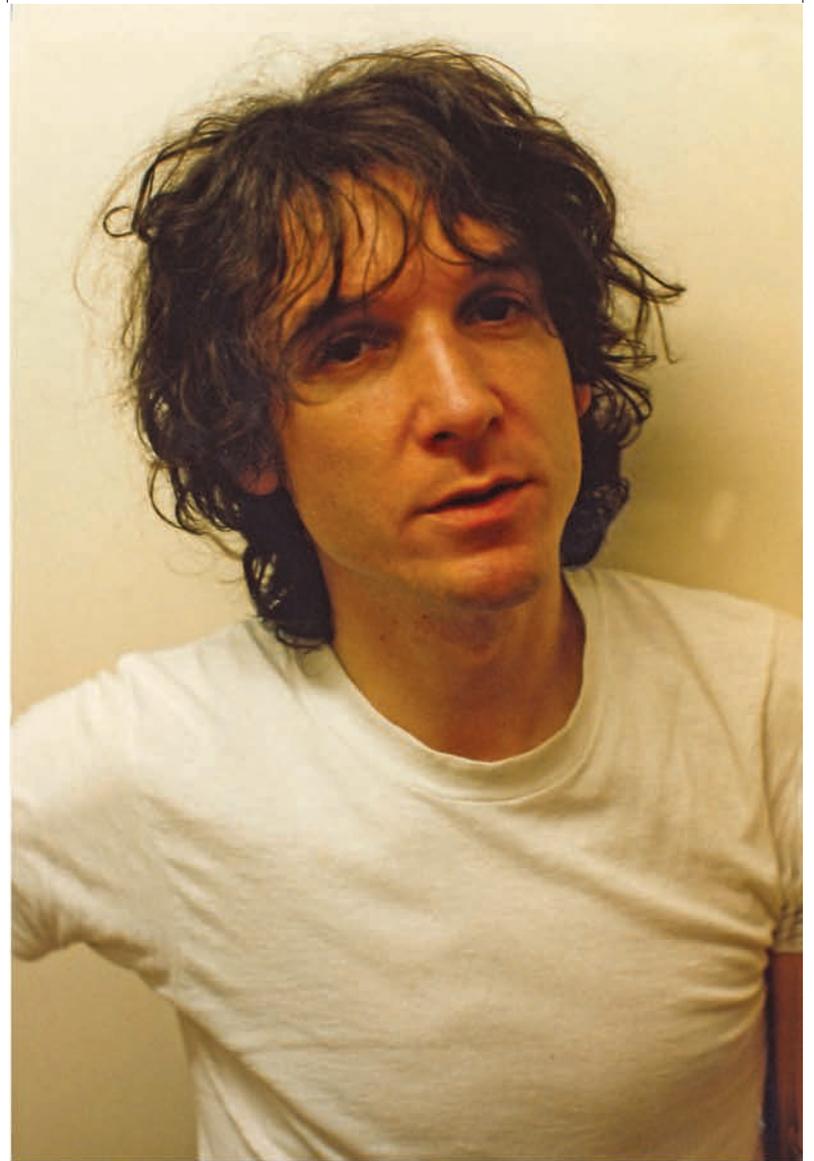
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In 1992, **EPIC SOUNDTRACKS** - real name Kevin Paul Godfrey - released the album *Rise Above*. Despite featuring musicians from Sonic Youth, The Bad Seeds and Dinosaur Jr, this haunted baroque-pop masterpiece would vanish into obscurity upon release. Two albums and five years later, Epic would be dead - dying alone in his London flat in circumstances that remain unexplained.

FERGAL KINNEY speaks to his nearest and dearest to gain a portrait of this ahead of the curve tortured soul.

Portraits by **Steve Gridley**



PLEASE NO MORE SAD SONGS



This year would mark the 60th birthday of Epic Soundtracks. Though his previous band, the post-punk pioneers Swell Maps, became a key influence on American grunge and British indie, Epic's solo work – the towering *Rise Above*, as well as *Sleeping Star* and *Change My Life* – have gone without appraisal or rediscovery.

On its release, if it was covered at all, *Rise Above* seemed to be viewed as a curio from a relic of the early years of post-punk. Those who came to it intrigued by its US rock guest musicians would be surprised to find an album of lushly arranged chamber-pop, totally off-kilter from the prevailing grunge mainstream.

Following Epic's death, artists like John Grant, Rufus Wainwright, Belle & Sebastian and Father John Misty would find international acclaim with lushly orchestrated, '60s and '70s-inspired confessional singer-songwriter albums. But success never came for Epic.

"As with Nick Drake," explains music writer Pete Paphides, "he wasn't even a cult artist when making his best work. Not enough people liked him for him to be a cult artist, he wasn't even that. He just had no traction and it was incredibly sad."

Formed in his native Leamington Spa with brother Adrian Godfrey – known better as Nikki Sudden – Swell Maps released two albums on Rough Trade in the aftermath of punk. "We always had a

really good relationship with Swell Maps," recalls Rough Trade boss Geoff Travis, "and Epic was one of the first people I heard talking about CAN. Even then there was always an air of melancholy around him." After Swell Maps' split in 1980, Epic remained close to Rough Trade, working in the store and collaborating with Rough Trade artists like The Raincoats' Gina Birch.

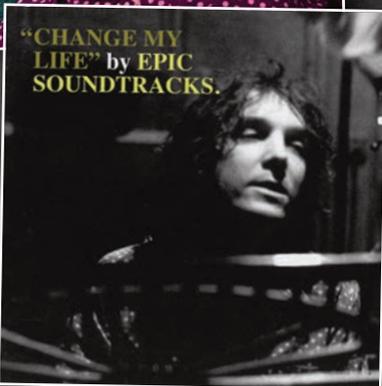
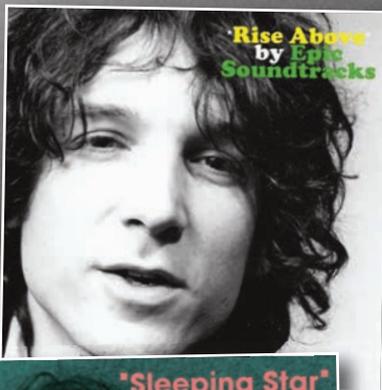
"Epic and Nikki were really into the music before punk," says fan Stephen Pastel of The Pastels, "the flash point of punk wasn't year zero for them and I think that Epic was just really into great music and not so fussed about where it came from or anything." Epic and his brother remained close following Swell Maps' split – Sudden formed The Jacobites in London, whilst Epic would oscillate between London and, increasingly, Berlin.

Eighties West Berlin became the base for Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and a coterie of associates like Rowland S Howard and brother Harry Howard; motivated partly by dissatisfaction with

London and partly by the availability of relatively cheap heroin. Epic would begin orbiting this world and join Howard's group Crime & The City Solution, and later follow the brothers into These Immortal Souls. It would be in the former band that Epic would brush with cinema history – making a brief cameo appearance drumming in a nightclub scene for Wim Winder's '87 masterpiece *Wings Of Desire*.

Though he would drift out of that circuit, this loose Berlin underworld would prove catalytic on *Rise Above* – Howard would play guitar on the record, Martyn P Casey of The Bad Seeds would play bass, and Cave's then producer Victor Van Vugt produced the record with Epic. Even the sleeve was shot by photographer Bleddyn Butcher, who has worked extensively with Nick Cave across decades.

Back full-time in London, Epic was a memorably brusque presence at Notting Hill's Record & Tape Exchange, where he worked during the early '90s. Writer and musician Max Decharne says, "The first



Epic Soundtracks at Chiswick Reach Studio, 1985; the three studio albums, '92 to '96

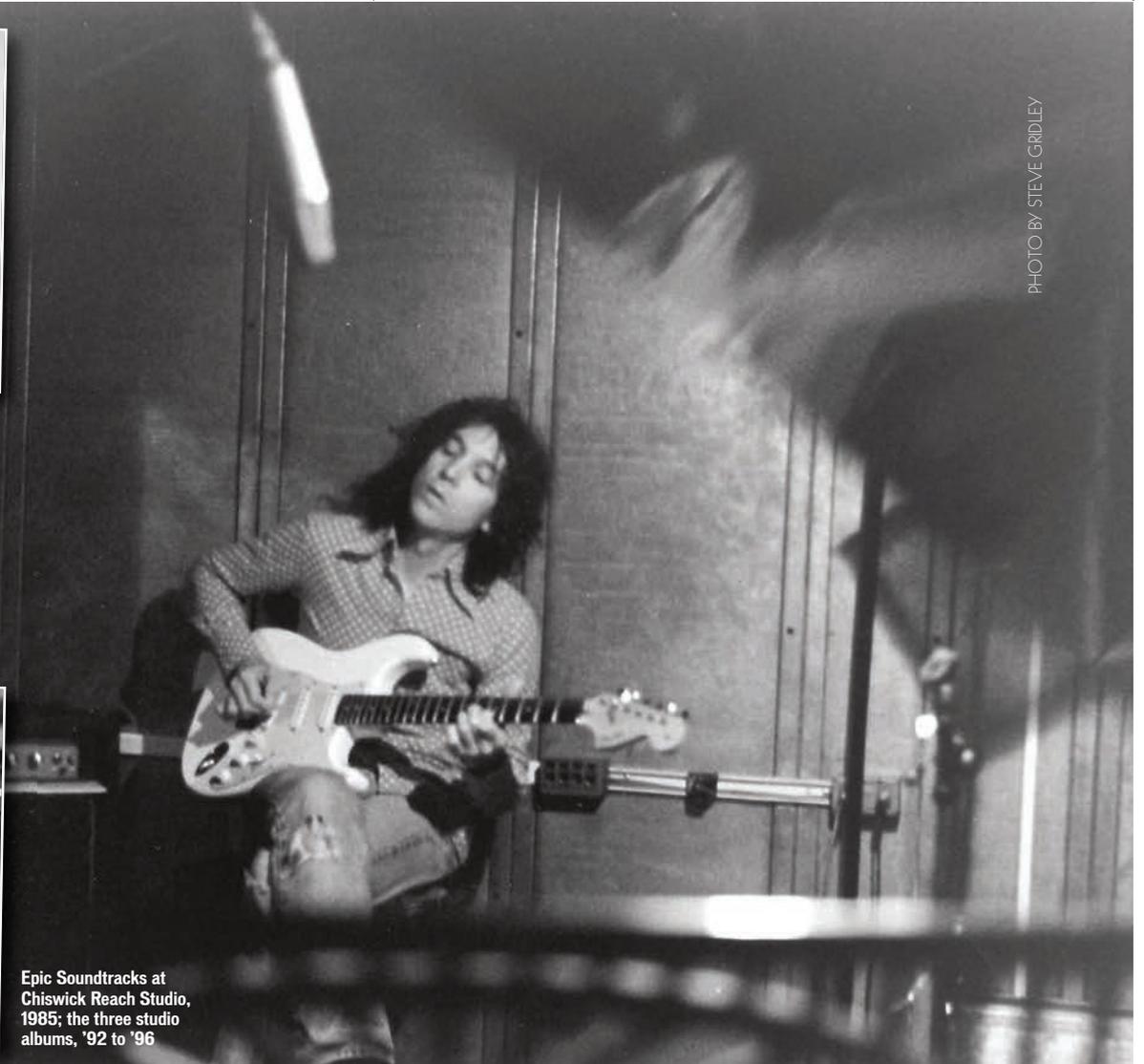


PHOTO BY STEVE GRIDLEY

time I met him, he spent most of the time we were talking looking down at the record on the counter. If he did look at me, it would be through his fringe." Describing Epic, one colleague said "He could be incredibly diffident; he could be incredibly rude actually to customers. He was quite moody, but he was funny and had a dry sense of humour." The music journalist Pete Paphides did a few days' work at the store: "I remember someone pointing at this person and saying, that's Epic Soundtracks. I was thinking he didn't look like he wanted anyone to approach him."

An interplay began between the music Epic played in the store and the songs he was tentatively writing at home – Epic would fill the shop with the sounds of Carole King, Laura Nyro, and crucially, Big Star and their songwriter Alex Chilton. The key influence, however, was always Brian Wilson. James Endeacott, who worked on the release of *Rise Above* for Rough Trade even recalls a trip with Epic to the '93 Beach Boys Stomp Convention at the glamorous location of Greenford Parish Centre, Middlesex. "I don't actually like types of music," explained Epic of his influences in an interview with *Twister* fanzine. "I like individuals. I couldn't say I like rock 'n' roll or soul or blues, but I like individuals who do those things. Sometimes I make the influences obvious."

In May '91, Epic found himself over in New York helping out Sonic Youth's Lee

Rinaldo on a project at Fun City Studio. Finding themselves with extra time on their hands, Rinaldo generously asked Epic if he had anything he wanted to record or do. "I had this one song," explained Epic in '92, "but it wasn't finished and I said I didn't have the confidence to sing it. Lee said 'Just do it.' So I did. The encouragement I got from that made me want to carry on."

That song, 'Fallen Down', would become the first track on the album. Buoyed by how well that recording had turned out (this would be the recording used on the finished album) Epic returned to the UK and worked extensively on demo-ing, finalising lyrics and working out arrangements to have an album ready to record. In April '92, work on *Rise Above* proper would begin at a now defunct studio overlooking West London's Paddington Old Cemetery.

"It was quite a miracle that we pulled it off," explains the album's producer Victor Van Vugt. "The studio was about the size of two cupboards put together, you could just squeeze a drum kit in there. It was a tiny budget, a couple of grand, and I paid for the studio out of my own pocket – it took a long time to get reimbursed." *Rise Above* would be Epic Soundtracks' masterpiece – a stark, gorgeously crafted collection of meticulously realised songs packed with references to Epic's West London haunts.

Richard King, the former A&R man

turned historian of British independent music, explains "It felt like an elegy for a life that a lot of people could live in the '80s, of being in the middle of London on the dole or in a record shop, living a kind of bohemian life that obviously no one can anymore. There's that sense of drifting through the day. Saint Etienne did that too, but in a very different way without heroin or guitars or long hair."

Some of the album's beauty lies in the conflict between Epic's ambition and the constraints of his limited budget. With no money for a string section, Van Vugt drafted in his girlfriend – a cellist – and another string musician and spent days laboriously tracking their performances until it created the effect of an orchestra. Listen to the gorgeous, Bacharachian pop of tracks like 'She Sleeps Alone' or the gothic bombast of 'Big Apple Speedway' and it's impossible not to marvel at how effective that feat was. Much of the record, however, is marked by a sonic minimalism – some tracks just Epic and piano. Indeed, the minimalism of the album's production is echoed by the starkness of Epic's lyric writing. Words rarely contain more than two syllables, and there's very little metaphor or poetic allusion. Instead, it's conversational, direct and highly effective. Epic was not a natural singer, and friends talk of how much coaxing it took to get him to begin singing his compositions. At points on *Rise Above*, he rubs up against the limits of



his own vocal technique, but again this disparity is endearing – indeed, occasionally moving.

There had been an understanding between Epic and Geoff Travis that the record would be released on Rough Trade. Though the label honoured this commitment, Rough Trade were going through bankruptcy at the time and were operating at skeleton capacity.

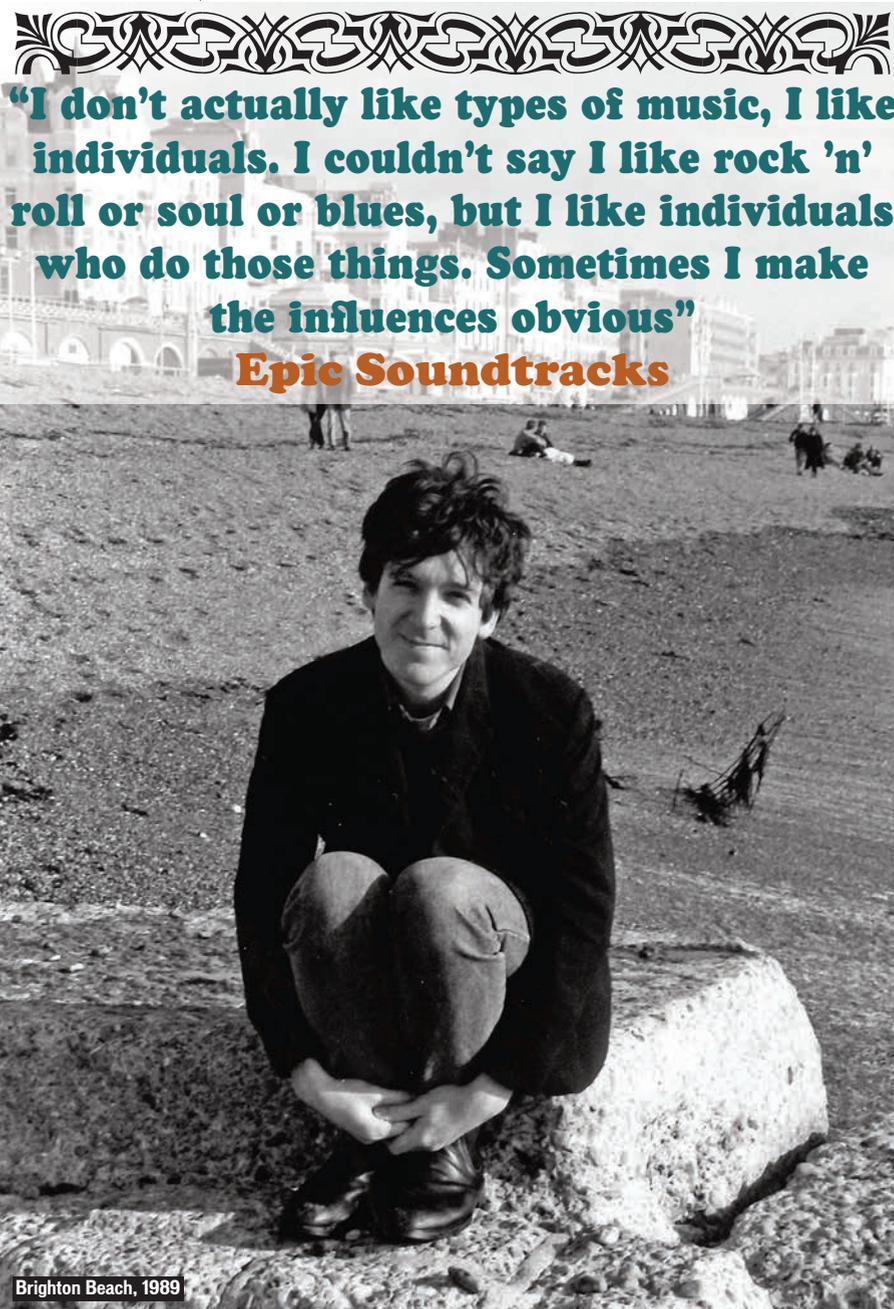
“He worked in the shop, he did his time, did his service,” Geoff Travis explains. “We didn’t have high expectations but thought it was a really good record. I think he was not in the best frame of mind during those years, so there was a certain amount of redemption in him having made this great record.” James Endecott remembers Epic driving the label to amused distraction by his insistence on securing the exact typeface from The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* for the record’s sleeve.

Richard King says, “Rough Trade was more or less non-existent after the collapse, and the record just limped out. I couldn’t get hold of a copy in Bristol and had to go to Soho. *Rise Above* was made on a budget of nothing, on a label that was non-existent, and the whole thing was doomed – the tragedy is that he was in love with that sense of doom anyway.”

“I thought it would do really well,” remembers Pete Paphides. “How could this not succeed? Look at the personnel on the record, and what the songs sound like, it’s just a dream. It felt like a potentially canonical piece of work.”

At The Record & Tape Exchange, colleagues noticed Epic’s mood shifting, with one colleague explaining, “Lots of other people in the shop were making records and he saw other people getting moderately successful and felt that he was being overlooked. In retrospect, he was absolutely right. I went to see him do a solo show somewhere off Old Street and there was like 30 people there. A lot of his moodiness stemmed from that.”

The record did find an ardent fan in The Lemonheads’ Evan Dando, who would perform with Epic live. Another fan of the album, though not immediately upon release, would be Bernard Butler – the former Suede guitarist turned Duffy and Libertines producer. “Fallen Down’ is the song I’m obsessed with,” he explains. “I play that song probably once a week and have done for years. It’s not an optimistic start to an album, I love the fact it’s quite pessimistic and it’s quite resilient and it’s just about clinging on. It connects with me in a very personal way. It’s just littered with beautiful lines like ‘Get out of London, you know it’s killing me’, that’s a huge lyric for me. I’m a Londoner and I’ve never left and I constantly fantasise about getting out – you’ve got ‘Big Apple Graveyard’, there’s this yo-yo across the record between London and New York. Great songs don’t tell you about the artist, they tell you about you. If I met him at this stage in my life I’d be



Brighton Beach, 1989

PHOTO BY CAROLINE

drawn to him magnetically to make a record with him and I’d give anything to do that. It’s a very unfinished record, it doesn’t feel like the finished product and I would have been dying to do slightly that bit more. Some of them feel finished but a lot of it feel like he’s just getting through the words, almost like he’s making it up, and I love that feeling of just hanging on, it really works.”

Epic left Rough Trade, and in ’94 joined the new Bar/None Records for the release of *Sleeping Star*. That record would depart from the minimalism of *Rise Above* in favour of a more full-band approach – bringing in Epic’s close friend Kevin Junior on guitar. It may lack the vision of its predecessor, but songs like ‘There’s Been A Change’ and ‘Emily May (You Make Me Feel So Fine)’ show a songwriter still at the top of his game. Unfortunately, the album’s release would be hampered by poor management and the label would fold the following year.

By this point, not only were many of Epic’s former associates like Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, The Lemonheads and Sonic Youth enjoying crossover mainstream success, but the rise of

“I don’t actually like types of music, I like individuals. I couldn’t say I like rock ‘n’ roll or soul or blues, but I like individuals who do those things. Sometimes I make the influences obvious”

Epic Soundtracks

Britpop saw younger artists than Epic find fame with derivative takes on much of the music that Epic loved. Success becoming more elusive, Epic seemed like yesterday’s man. 1996’s final album *Change My Life* would be the patchiest of his releases – at points it suggests a songwriter unsure what anybody might want from his work. Painfully, for a collector such as Epic, the album would get no vinyl release.

Again, Epic’s luck was worsening. A European tour was shelved the evening before departure. A small US tour resulted in Epic being detained at Minneapolis airport – no work visa had been approved, and he fainted at being given the ultimatum to face a US ban or return immediately to the UK.

Bad luck and bad management was taking its toll on his already fragile mental health. Though a private individual and no party animal, some of Epic’s friends suggest that harder drugs may have also begun to enter the picture – certainly many of Epic’s friends and associates were committed heroin enthusiasts. “We’d always be bumping into each other at various things,” explains Van Vugt, “but Epic got more and more introverted, went



Outside Abbey Road Studios, 1995: Nikki Sudden, Kevin Junior and Epic Soundtracks in Dresden, '97, the last photograph of Nikki with his brother

PHOTO BY TIM TOOHER

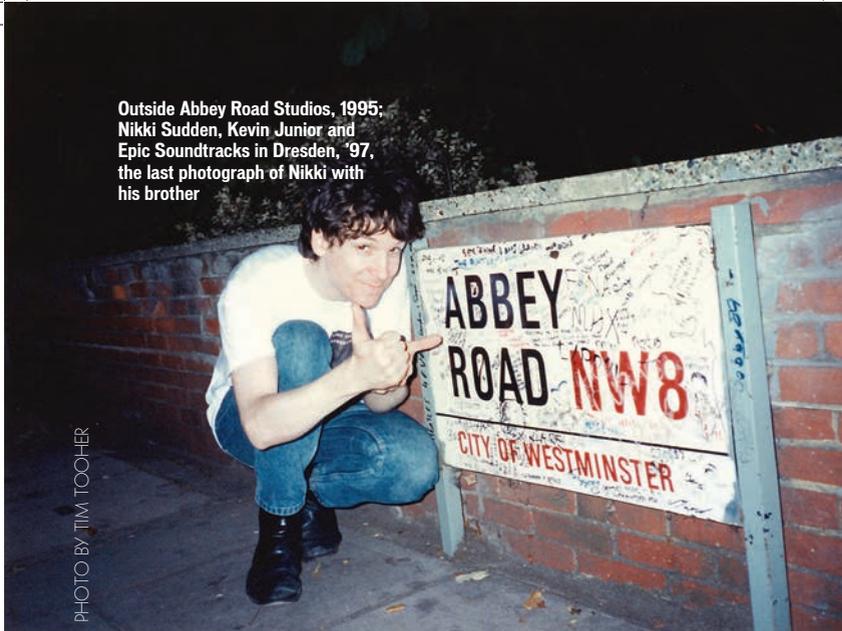


PHOTO BY KAREN KISKA



“Epic got more and more introverted, went out less and stayed at home more and more. He was always a pretty tortured soul, that comes out in the songs, but I don’t think anybody knew he was as tortured as he ended up being”
producer Victor Van Vugt



out less and stayed at home more and more. He was always a pretty tortured soul, that comes out in the songs, but I don’t think anybody knew he was as tortured as he ended up being.”

In October '97, Epic had a whistle stop tour of his old stomping ground of Germany booked – including a London warm-up at The Garage, and a handful of Austrian dates. He would be accompanied by Kevin Junior. The tour had sold poorly and was preceded by Epic’s relationship with his girlfriend ending.

Often, audiences would be 30 to 40 people – one particularly talkative audience provoked the usually mild Epic to open rage, venting at the audience and refusing to continue with his set. He was booed and the show limped onto a premature finish. Even the tour’s relative successes brought their own challenges.

One well-received German show climaxed with the audience shouting for an encore. Kevin Junior recalls coming off stage to find Epic backstage breaking down – “I just wish she was here to see this,” Epic told Junior.

On returning to London, things were growing ominous. Writing in 2004 of the end of that tour, Kevin Junior observed, “The black clouds began to arrive. The mood inside Epic’s flat was solemn. We waved to him from the taxi, he looked as though he had just been dropped off and left on a deserted planet as he waved back.” Later that day, Epic phoned Junior and thanked him warmly for their

friendship. That would be the last time that Junior would hear from Epic. Epic had told friends he would be seeing them at a concert, but he didn’t turn up. After days of unreturned calls, Junior grew worried and phoned Nikki Sudden. Before Junior could speak, Sudden frantically asked him whether he had heard anything from his brother.

Epic’s landlady arrived at Sumatra Road, and was the first person to find Epic lying dead in his bed. He was 38 years old. The coroner’s inquest ruled the cause of death as inconclusive, and it was estimated that he had passed on 5th or 6th November – his body had been in the flat for around 10 days before discovery. Empty packets of antidepressants were found around his bed, but few think that overdose on these could prove fatal, and no suicide note nor drug paraphernalia was found.

“We don’t know why he died and we will never know,” explained Sudden following the death. “My mother thinks Epic died of a broken heart, and I and all his close friends agree.”

This is confirmed by author and musician Max Decharne, who accompanied Sudden at the flat. “Nikki rang me up to tell me what had happened to Epic and he said he was going to Epic’s flat to basically pack up. Epic’s front room was a ground floor of a two-up-two-down, and it was every wall floor-to-ceiling just thousands of LPs. We stayed up all night packing up the collection. His

piano was there, you’re surrounded by the man and he’s no longer there – it’s very, very emotional.”

Curiously, after Epic’s death a meeting was arranged at Notting Hill’s Intoxica Records to sell Epic’s collection to one Noel Gallagher, who had heard that the famously vast collection was up for sale. After inspecting the collection, Gallagher duly wrote a six-figure cheque to Epic’s parents. Unfortunately, the name was misspelt and the cheque was returned to him with a note explaining the situation. The family never again heard back from Gallagher, the collection was broken up and sold incrementally. Epic’s parents survived not just to suffer the death of Epic but also of Sudden, their only other son, who died aged 49 in 2006. Kevin Junior would later die in 2016, aged just 46.

There’s a contemporary debate about the responsibility that the music industry has to its artists – both in the pressures of success and the costs of failure. Geoff Travis reflects on this, explaining, “I think we were learning then how to behave with our artists and where that line should be drawn.” For Bernard Butler, Epic Soundtracks’ experiences echo some of his own observations: “There was no respect or even interest in (mental health) at the time. If you had issues around anxiety you were put down as a junkie and told to stop fucking moaning. It’s great to celebrate these characters in music who came to a sorry end and we can absorb the wonder of what they created but it’s easy to forget that somebody died, that’s a fucking shame and that shouldn’t have happened. You just think, how has this person gone? How did this happen? Someone died here.” [E](#)

With special thanks to Chris Coleman for access of Epic Soundtracks’ archive. Thanks to Gina Birch, Nick Brown, Bernard Butler, Max Decharne, James Endecott, Richard King, Kirk Lake, Pete Paphides, Stephen Pastel, John Robb, Geoff Travis and Victor Van Vugt

Epic Soundtracks’ albums and unissued material are available on Easy Action and Mapache



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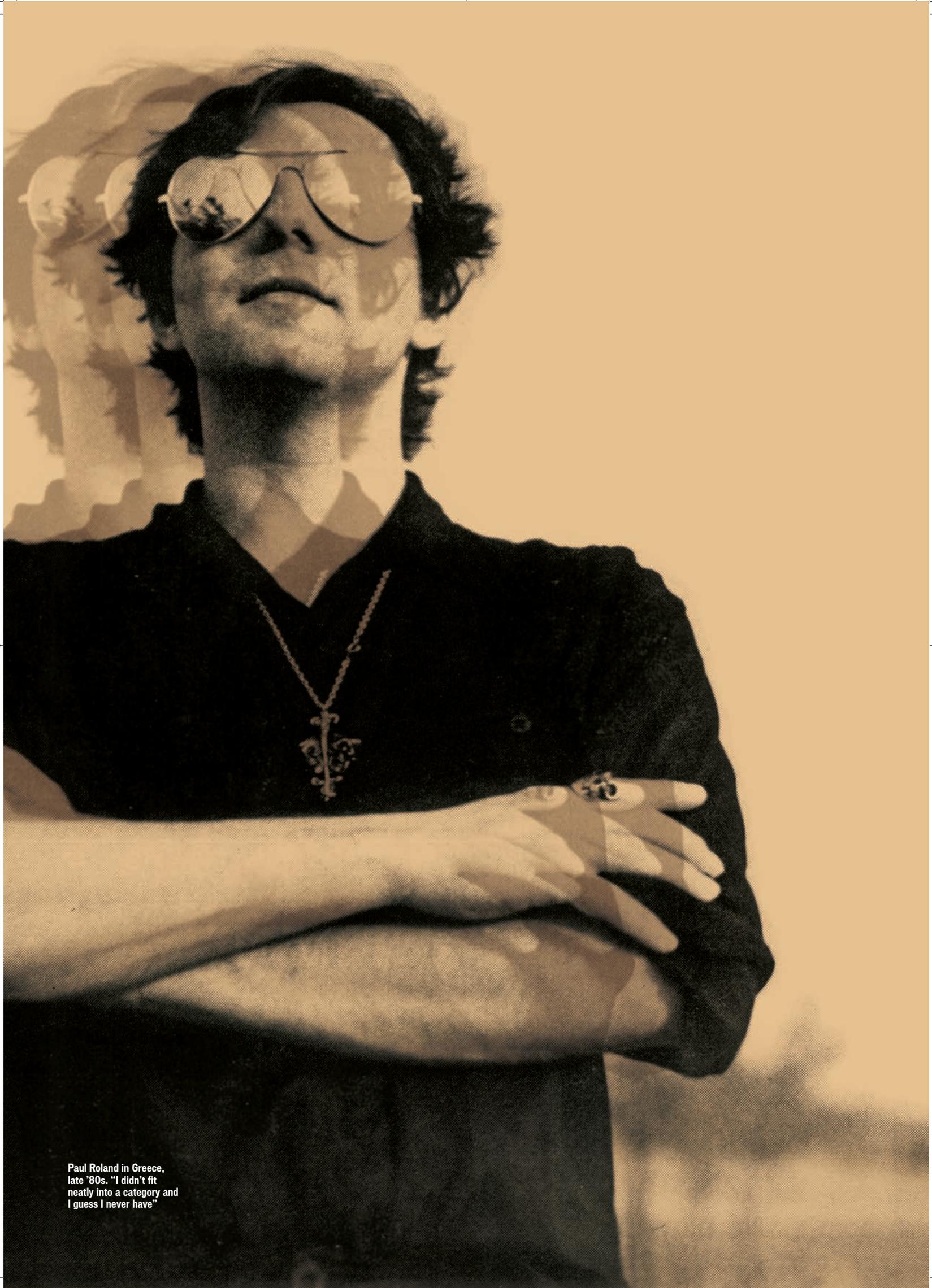
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Paul Roland in Greece, late '80s. "I didn't fit neatly into a category and I guess I never have"

The Return Of The King



Timely appearances from Marc Bolan's ghost to songs about flying machines and English eccentrics, **PAUL ROLAND**'s career has been notably unusual. **GREY MALKIN** looks back across 40 years of music that entwines Syd-like psychedelia with prog, baroque and synth-pop flourishes



It is 2004. The man once described by Robyn Hitchcock as “The male Kate Bush” has returned to music after a break of almost seven years and is suffering from an uncharacteristic lack of confidence in both his songs and himself, unsure of what he still has to offer after more than 25 years since his debut release. Once prolific and feted, time has moved on and the singer is no longer feeling assured of his ability to conjure his previously pristine psychedelic pop songs from the ether. Uncertain and racked with doubt, he glances up to see a familiar yet sidereal figure watching him from the side of the recording studio.

“I had never seen a ghost, although I had written several books on the subject, so when I ‘saw’ an apparition in the recording studio, I didn’t know what to make of it,” he explains. “And it wasn’t just any ghost – it was Marc Bolan, my first musical hero and the artist I had always hoped would one day produce me. He had died in 1977, two years before I made my first album, but I had visited his parents shortly after his death and they had allowed me to play his guitar which may have given us this psychic connection. And a few years later I found myself managed by his widow June so I don’t think the Bolan connection was entirely coincidental.

“Of course, it’s more than likely the ‘apparition’ was merely a projection of my subconscious mind. I had just returned to making music again after a seven-year break during which I had written a lot of books, and I was seriously worried whether I was doing the right thing. Then this smiling ‘vision’ appeared as if to reassure me. Who knows? What’s important is that I had my answer.”

Sublime intervention perhaps; welcome to the strange and uncanny world of Paul Roland. For the last four decades this darkly psychedelic troubadour has been delving into the cobwebbed and more eerie corners of popular song, occasionally coming close to more mainstream success but seemingly more accepted and destined to thrive in the underground. Roland has experienced the peaks and troughs of a genuinely original and fascinating career, from a stellar run of critically acclaimed releases in the ’80s to the lows of binning his

“It was the peak of the DIY label boom when you could hire a studio, press your own records and take them personally to the reviewers at *Sounds*, *Melody Maker* and the *NME*”

master tapes and selling off his instruments following a number of years in the musical wilderness. He has, however, now emerged from this self-imposed exile seemingly more prolific and creatively fuelled than ever, as recent albums and a newly published biography have demonstrated.

Perhaps we have a diminutive glam-rock star to thank for this; indeed, the recording studio apparition was not the only time Bolan had seemingly intervened in Roland's career. June Bolan had also bequeathed Paul one of Marc's handwritten lyrics and a rare acetate single of his first recording 'Gloria – The Road I'm On'. This was then sold to a collector so that the funds should finance the recording of (perhaps) Paul's finest offering, the baroque chamber-folk of *Cabinet Of Curiosities*. However, this was not simply a means of obtaining the necessary cash, but a magical rite. "I wanted the acetate that June gave me to be transformed into my own album, in a way," says Roland. "I'm sure Marc would have understood the symbolism, even if collectors think me barmy!"

Not many artists consider a ritualistic transmutation the road to go down to produce their most recent album, but then Roland is no typical musician; in a parallel to his often haunted and macabre subject matter, Roland's career follows a distinctly unconventional, offbeat and left-hand path. A uniquely British institution, as well as being a prolific and inventive artist, Paul Roland is also one of our most understated, perhaps not altogether the best recognised or well-known. This is despite accolades from the likes of Frank Zappa and Greg Lake of King Crimson (who said of Roland "His songs are like short stories set to music, I can't understand why he has not had major success"), time spent recording with psych luminaries like the aforementioned Robyn Hitchcock, Nick Nicely and Nick Saloman of Bevis Frond, writing songs for surviving members of The Velvet Underground and having nearly recorded an album with his personal hero Michael Nyman. Yet, whilst many readers may have heard of Paul Roland, his story, as well as the extent of his output and sheer creativity, may well come as a surprise.

It was '79 when the 19-year-old Roland entered a small eight-track recording studio in Herne Bay, Kent to record what would be his debut single (the glam-inflected new wave of 'Oscar Automobile'), subsequently working up enough material for an album, *The Werewolf Of London*, which he issued under the name Midnight Rags. Whilst

reflecting the new wave and synth sounds and mood of the era, this initial outing did contain the seeds of the stylistic direction Roland would make his own over the following four decades, his blossoming direction being particularly honed and distilled in the violin driven 'Lon Chaney' and the anthemic 'Blades Of Battenburg'. It also introduced him to the burgeoning paisley psych scene of the early '80s, inspiring collaborations with the likes of Robyn Hitchcock, who would go on to provide backing vocals and play guitar on two tracks from Roland's second album. This collaboration was also notable for The Soft Boys' singer's tendency to answer the phone screeching "Pieces of eight, pieces of eight", Roland having been pre-warned not to let this put him off when calling.

"I had been writing songs since I was 14 and recording them with an acoustic guitar on cassette, so by the time I came to record my first album in October '79 I felt I had served my 'apprenticeship' and was impatient to get into a real recording studio," adds Roland regarding his formative years. "But I was only 19 and hadn't yet found my own 'voice'. I wanted to go in so many different directions and in retrospect I should have focused on one – the goth side that had grown out of my obsession with early horror movies, particularly the Universal series of the '30s, the Val Lewton B-movies of the '40s and Mario Bava's *Black Sunday*, but also the American horror comics I had been reading which had deliciously macabre illustrations by the likes of Bernie Wrightson. That imagery in 'Ghosts', 'The Witching Hour' and 'House Of Mystery' opened a door into an imaginary world that I wanted to live in."

Nonetheless Roland persevered, displaying the driven nature that would see him navigate his way throughout the maze of the '80s underground scene and quickly establishing what felt like strong connections and promising foundations from which to launch a successful and vaulted career.

"It was the peak of the DIY label boom when you could hire a studio, press your own records and take them personally to the reviewers at *Sounds*, *Melody Maker* and the *NME* and also hand them personally to John Peel, if you had the nerve. I was very, very lucky to get in at the end of that and Peel played 'Blades Of Battenburg', the opening track to that first album, several times which gave me the nerve to phone him and ask what he thought of it and if he would play it again," Roland proudly recalls. "That was the flip side of my impatience, complete

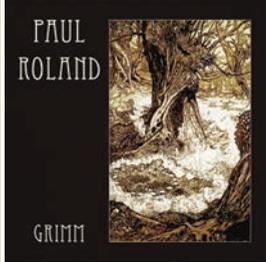
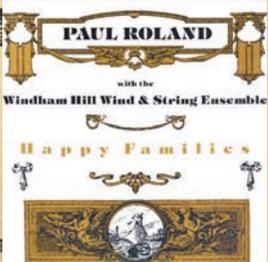
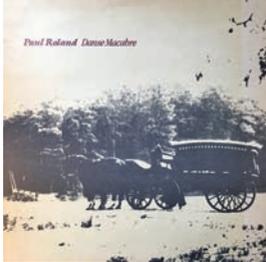
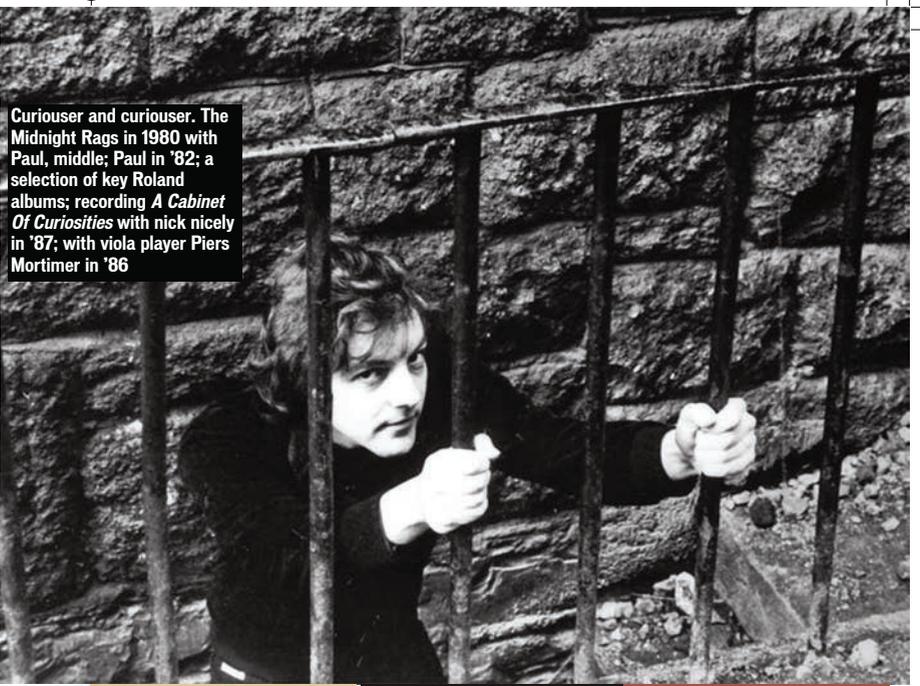
confidence, and it soon got me a management deal with David Enthoven who had handled ELP, King Crimson, Roxy Music and T Rex, and his then partner June Bolan, widow of my hero Marc Bolan."

At this point, one of the setbacks or set of circumstances that were set to befall Roland at different points in his career intervened. However, one man's drawback is another's incentive. Whilst *Werewolves Of London* is no classic it ensured Roland's name was out there and its quirky, unsettled nature garnered an initial small but dedicated fan base. The seeds of Roland's stubbornly individual approach were sown. "So I thought I was on my way," he laughs, "but I didn't have a band to play live. I had recorded the album with local studio session men who were in other bands. Then David and June were offered Squeeze and I found myself being offloaded to a Dutch guy who had made Joan Jett's 'I Love Rock 'n' Roll' a worldwide hit. If I had waited six months I would have more songs in the same vein as 'Blades Of Battenburg' and it would have made that first album much stronger. But I was a songwriter first and wrote and recorded whatever I felt like at the time – psych-pop, electro-pop, folk-rock etc and it wasn't the time to be wearing too many different hats. I didn't fit neatly into a category and I guess I never have."

Indeed, a rattle through Roland's song titles, lyrics and musical styles displays a variety of adopted personae and genres; from garage-rock that challenges The Cramps for utter demented mayhem, to studied string quartet accompanied numbers and dreamy psychedelic three-minute pop songs. His subject matter and inspiration veers along a dark and shadowy route from *Nosferatu* to HP Lovecraft, via *Alice In Wonderland* and Edwardian eccentrics and their illicit hot air ballooning escapades. From the whimsical to the chilling to the lysergic, Roland is undoubtedly a teller of tales. "I didn't set out with the intention of making 'literate' psych-pop. I just didn't see why rock lyrics should be limited to the subjects that concerned its original adolescent audience. I wanted to write graphic novels with music. Someone once called some of my more whimsically macabre songs 'gothic rock as cartoon' and I think that's a fair summary. But I don't want to be Charles Adams all the time. I also like the idea of channelling Poe, Lovecraft and HG Wells through the medium of rock music."

These sensibilities would be more finely honed on Roland's next project, the *Burnt Orchids* mini-album, featuring tracks about

Curiouser and curiouser. The Midnight Rags in 1980 with Paul, middle; Paul in '82; a selection of key Roland albums; recording *A Cabinet Of Curiosities* with Nick Nicely in '87; with viola player Piers Mortimer in '86



demented pirates and ghost ships, hallucinatory travels through Cairo and a devilish puppet master. Stylistically his music was transforming and refining too, acquiring a “chamber-folk” feel with the assistance of a string trio. This approach, often interspersed with more guitar-led psych-stompers, has become an almost trademark Roland “sound”. Reviewers have at times heard the essence of Syd Barrett in his compositions, an occasional smidgen of Left Banke, a helping of Bolan and a seasoning of Moody Blues.

Burnt Orchids was a critical, if not commercial success, its twisted, textured psych-pop garnering some much needed attention and prepared the path for what was arguably Roland’s purple patch of ’86 and ’87, which included the psych-pop perfection of single ‘Gabrielle’ and the expansive, richly detailed and finely hued *Danse Macabre* album.

Both furthered his collection of lyrical

oddsities and his musical palette, from ‘The Great Edwardian Air Raid’s’ languid but dense strings, the dark, swirling psychedelia of ‘In The Opium Den’, the acoustic pomp of ‘Madame Guillotine’ and a sympathetic cover of the Floyd’s ‘Mathilda Mother’. Only mere months afterwards there followed the string quartet accompanied mini-album *Cabinet Of Curiosities*, brimming with tales of eccentricity and the occult. Tracks such as ‘Wyndham Hill’ (about an errant Edwardian inventor and the first flight of his prototype winged machine, the title paying homage to sci-fi writer John Wyndham) and the exquisitely arranged ‘Demon In A Glass Case’ were perfectly formed psych jewels, a hint of the baroque in their orchestration and yet also something identifiably unique in Roland’s macabre storytelling and distinctive vocals. *Cabinet* also featured, of all things, a successful chamber-folk interpretation

of The Adverts’ ‘Gary Gilmore’s Eyes’, replete with spinet and pizzicatos, ostensibly about an organ donor transplant patient waking from an operation to find he had been given the serial killer’s peepers.

Like a man possessed and in a state of prolific hyperactivity, Roland then followed this up with yet another mini-album in the same chamber style, *Happy Families*, this time attributed to Paul Roland & The Wyndham Hill Ensemble. Not unlike Edith Sitwell’s book of English eccentrics set to music, characters such as the misguided missionary in the ‘Curate Of Cheltenham’, the kleptomaniac ‘Aunty’ and the haunted ‘Cousin Emilia’ populated the songs with their own strange and bizarre stories. Jon Storey at *Bucketfull Of Brains* stated, “Roland is at his most humorous and most eloquent – the stories await discovery like long forgotten screenplays for Ealing comedies

“I have always imagined that my music ‘matters’ to somebody, somewhere and that has been my primary motivation. It doesn’t matter to me whether it sells a hundred, a thousand or 10 thousand copies”

or Agatha Christie murder mysteries.”

“It never occurred to me that my degree of productivity was anything unusual,” he considers. “I could write songs all day, every day if I didn’t have other commitments such as writing books, magazine features and reviews. It’s not something that requires any effort. The difficult part is finding a suitable theme and lyrics to match the music, although with both *Happy Families* and *Bitter And Twisted* (two contrasting albums at either end of my ‘career’, if you want to call it that) the lyrics came first because they were humorous and I always find being morbidly funny comes much easier.

“*Happy Families* was an acoustic mini-album recorded with a small woodwind and string ensemble and was based on the lives of real English eccentrics who lived in the Victorian and Edwardian era. That was perhaps the most enjoyable album to make because the lyrics came so effortlessly and also because performing with a string and wind quartet had been one of my dreams since I began writing songs in ’74. That kind of instrumentation evokes a particular period for me but also a timeless world where my characters exist. Finding the most suitable instruments to conjure up the characters and also the period are two elements that help me to create the soundtrack to the movies I see in my mind.”

Roland’s next long player would prove his most ambitious to date. 1989’s *Duel*, a conceptual and themed album based upon a story of a crumbling medieval kingdom, would add a harder edged guitar sound to befit the dramatic subject matter (which also later appeared as a novella). The strings, acoustic guitar and flutes remained however, creating a hybrid prog-folk sound that would just as easily appeal to those partial to a bit of Jethro Tull or King Crimson as those ensconced in The Left Banke or Syd Barrett. The dreamy psychedelia still raised its head with the effervescent lead single ‘Alice’s House’ and the demented Victoriana was represented by ‘Springheeled Jack’ and ‘The Crimes Of Dr Cream’ (a real-life physician notorious for both blackmailing and poisoning). A sizeable success, not least in both Italy and Greece, countries which took (and continue to take) Paul to their hearts, a particularly enthusiastic review noted “If Will Shakespeare, Charles Dickens or Arthur Conan Doyle were around today, they’d surely have some Roland in their record collections. Unfortunately, they’re dead – what’s your

excuse?”

Roland was fast developing a reputation as a storyteller and a songwriter of a distinctly bookish bent. His songs promised much more than the standard girl-meets-boy fare or kitchen sink rhyming couplets of the contemporary indie scene, there were entire worlds and tales inside Roland’s work; characters, curios and a genuine sense of the otherworldly. “I wrote short stories as a child and then fanciful poetry in the manner of Bolan’s ‘Warlock Of Love’ which was akin to *Lord Of The Rings* in verse but very obtuse and rather pretentious, though I didn’t see it as such at the time! But it inspired me and soon as I was setting these poems to music and trying to convey the essence of the story and the characters in three minutes, which I felt was the ideal length for a song, having grown-up with glam-rock. I still try to be concise and get to the point as soon as possible.”

Another mid-career triumph emerged in *Masque*, whereupon Roland chose to focus on the regency period and revert to a refined acoustic psych-pop sound with occasional forays into the lysergic folk of the Ambrose Bierce-inspired ‘I Dreamt I Stood Upon The Scaffold’ and the eerie pop of ‘Candy Says’, about a girl’s invisible friend. However, exhaustion was beginning to set in; the recording, release and touring schedule starting to impact upon Roland. A further album *Roaring Boys* met with mixed reception, its follow up, the cover versions mini-album *Strychnine*, also struggled to maintain his previous benchmark of quality and contains some rare mis-steps amongst more successful cover versions of The Electric Prunes’ ‘Too Much To Dream’ and Kevin Ayers’ ‘Lady Rachel’. Label worries too, were taking their toll and after the disappointing *Sarabande* (also Roland’s least favourite of his albums, though not without some standout tracks and some blistering guitar work by Bevis Frond’s Nick Saloman) and its bleak and downbeat follow-up *Gargoyles*, something had to give. *Gargoyles* itself, despite being a strong suit of songs, failed to maintain its predecessor’s momentum or media interest, possibly as Roland had released this himself on his own tiny label and didn’t have the means to promote it effectively. Erstwhile supporters in the music press had moved on or hung up their pens and, in an age where dance music was the dominant musical form, distributors were failing to provide any

real impetus or enthusiasm for the work of a psych singer songwriter. A significant low was the occasion one German firm sent Paul back a pile of unsold live albums but removed the sleeves to save themselves the extra postage costs. Things were about as disheartening as they could get and, motivation crippled and personally despondent, Roland reluctantly decided to quit, putting away his dreams, scrapping his master tapes and selling his instruments in the process.

“It got to the point where I had released too many albums, as far as the ‘market’ saw it, and I had been ‘over-exposed!’ But I couldn’t stop writing songs and recording and had no one to advise me to slow down or be more selective and sit on tracks for a while to see if I felt different about them after a few months. I never had a real manager. By the early ’90s though the labels were experiencing difficulties and closed down because there was more money in organising gigs or they sold out to major record chains and I was left without a label. I was cut off from my fans and the press and radio in those countries. So, I turned to writing (non-fiction) books and reviewing for magazines which I had been doing on a pretty regular basis since the early ’80s when I wrote for *Kerrang!* and various film magazines. I accepted that I had enjoyed a good run and assumed that I would put all my creative energy into writing books which was satisfying, but something was missing. For seven years I felt something had died inside me, but I couldn’t muster up the enthusiasm to listen to my old records or touch an instrument. I sold my instruments and threw my master tapes and multi-track reels in the bin.”

And as far as the music buying public were concerned, that was it for the next seven years. Roland however was not idle, the protagonists in his songs knowing just what the devil can do with idle hands. Raising his two young sons and focusing on his increasingly successful writing career (which now accounts for over a dozen books written on the occult, as well as music biographies, Roland’s interest in esoteric hidden knowledge now perversely aligning him with some of the characters from his songs). Roland however still felt that without his muse he was at times “a dead man walking”. A chance offer to play a German festival awoke something that he had long considered closed and over. Reading some of the letters he had received from fans over the years and listening back to some

of his own albums, suddenly things began to feel possible again. A compilation album, *Gaslight Tales*, was to be issued on a French label and suddenly interest in Roland's music was stirring once more.

"Curiosity got the better of me. I looked out those old records and listened to them. Now I could hear what worked and what didn't work so well. I could hear myself as others heard me and that was a very revealing and valuable experience. I had also become a better writer as a result of writing 25 books and so when I picked up a guitar again I wrote with a new maturity and perhaps most important of all, I refused to release anything I had recorded until I had set it aside for a few weeks or even months and only when I knew that I had everything perfect, did I release it.

"The old labels had long gone, so I released everything on my own label Gaslight Records and found a promotion agency in Germany to get the reviews and radio play until a number of new labels approached me and then things got really interesting!"

A new offering, *Pavane*, was planned but the singer was hesitant and lacking confidence, that is until the previously mentioned ghost of Marc Bolan intervened. The finished recording, a fully rounded and successful Paul Roland album, resurrected many key styles including the familiar baroque touches; harpsichords and oboes permeate, as does a new influence, that of classical composer Michael Nyman, perhaps best known for his film scores with Peter Greenaway.

"Nyman had offered to write an arrangement for me based on one of my themes back in the '80s, and I stupidly hadn't accepted his offer because I was afraid he might not like my music enough and that would have been a cruel blow as he is my favourite composer."

Other releases followed, inspired and re-energised, the HP Lovecraft influenced *Re-animator*, featuring members of Canterbury proggers Caravan, and *Nevermore*, which contains nods to not only Poe but Jules Verne. More recently, 2011's *Grimm* was played entirely by Roland himself and focused on The Brothers Grimm's darkest fairy tales. Roland's recent oeuvre has also seen him tackling garage/psych with a fervour and an appreciation for the bizarre that either The Seeds or The Cramps would approve of. Further work is imminent, with Roland showing no signs of relaxing into a gentle autumn career nor the nostalgia circuit.

"I was asked what I would like to create next and that was an album of narrative extended songs based on the short stories by England's most celebrated writer of ghost stories, MR James. It would be essentially an acoustic album with sparse orchestration played by a chamber ensemble who had worked with Frank Zappa.

"From there it was one leap of faith on



my part and also on the part of the label to allow me to write a 30-minute piece for a full-size orchestra, my first attempt at such a thing. 'A Grimm Little Fantasy For Orchestra' was performed and recorded in the last week of January 2019 and released in the spring together with 'The Nosferatu Variations', music for a dance drama, or ballet if you prefer, based on my song of the same name. I have also written my first string quartet for a well-known Italian quartet who I hope to be performing and recording with in the future, so this is the direction I am exploring at the moment and it offers infinite possibilities; a hybrid of rock and classical music that integrates both without compromising either. I guess I'm just a late developer!"

Latterly Roland has also found himself hailed as a major influence on the burgeoning Steampunk movement, his narrative tales of wyrd Victoriana and Edwardian airships resonating with a whole new audience. At the same time he has found himself welcomed into both the current psych and goth scenes, with many younger fans delving into his extensive and eclectic back catalogue. An extensive biography, Roberto Curti's comprehensive *The Devil's Jukebox*, emerged in 2018 and Roland himself was recently featured being interviewed on a Bolan documentary commissioned by BBC4.

"I have always imagined that my music 'matters' to somebody, somewhere and

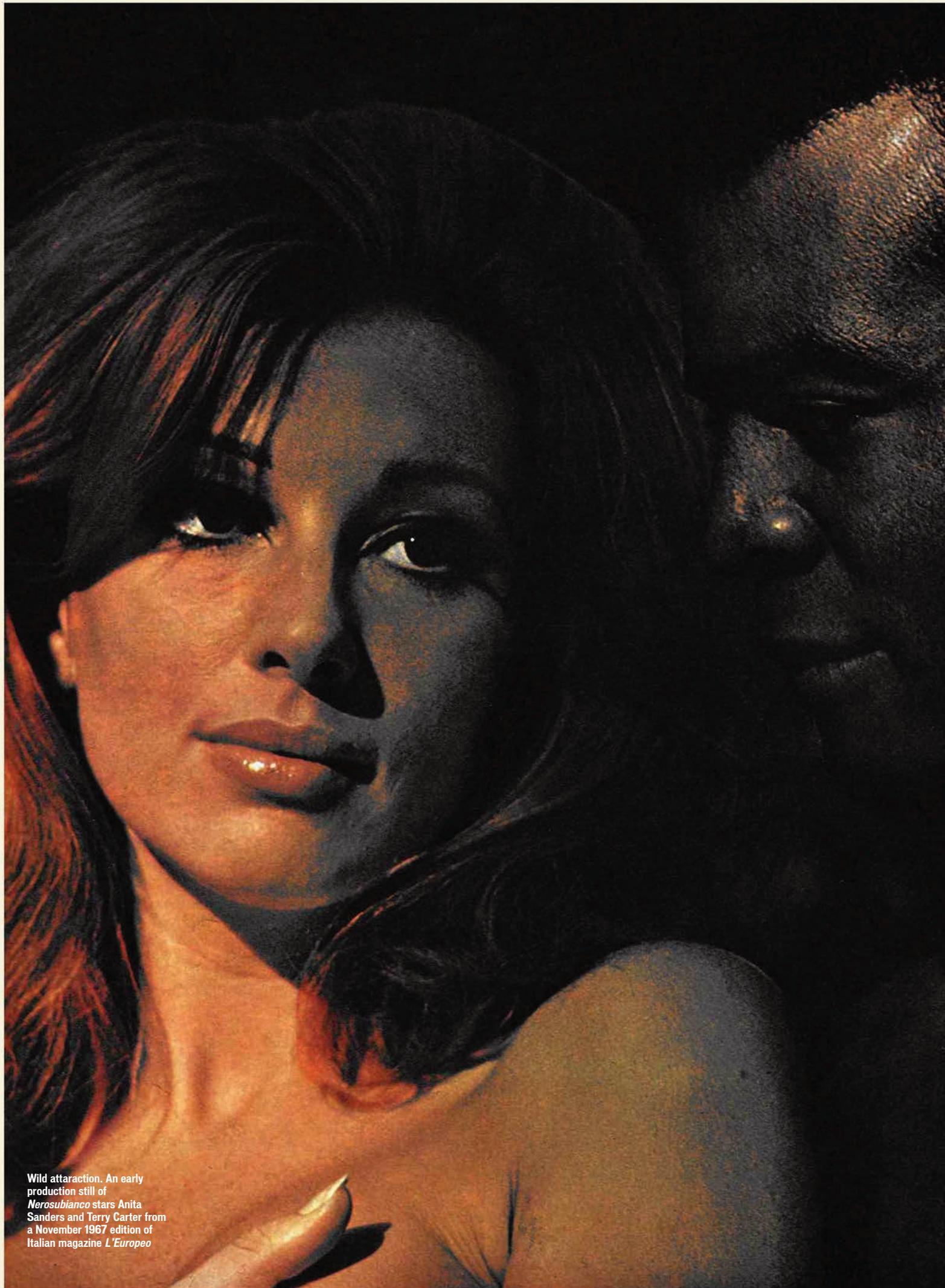
that has been my primary motivation. It doesn't matter to me whether it sells a hundred, a thousand or 10 thousand copies. It has never been a question of commercial success, as that is dependent on so many other factors and very rarely on the quality of the work!

"I don't distinguish between writing lyrics and writing books and I don't consider either as 'work'. A lot of time and energy goes into both, but I have a compulsion to write and it pleases me to do so. I'd rather write than do anything else. I had no eye on posterity, I had no intention to be categorised as 'goth', 'psych-pop' or 'Steampunk', nor did I imagine that I might be influencing or inspiring others, but only recently I was told that I had given another artist the idea that 'pop' songs don't have to be about the standard themes and that gratified me enormously."

Paul Roland is not your average singer songwriter; he goes where the ghosts, the freaks and the bizarre inhabit, perhaps feeling quite at home there. His oeuvre, documenting those liminal spaces and haunted corners is, however, there for anyone who wishes to partake. Never dull, never ordinary, Paul Roland's cabinet is always filled with curiosities. 

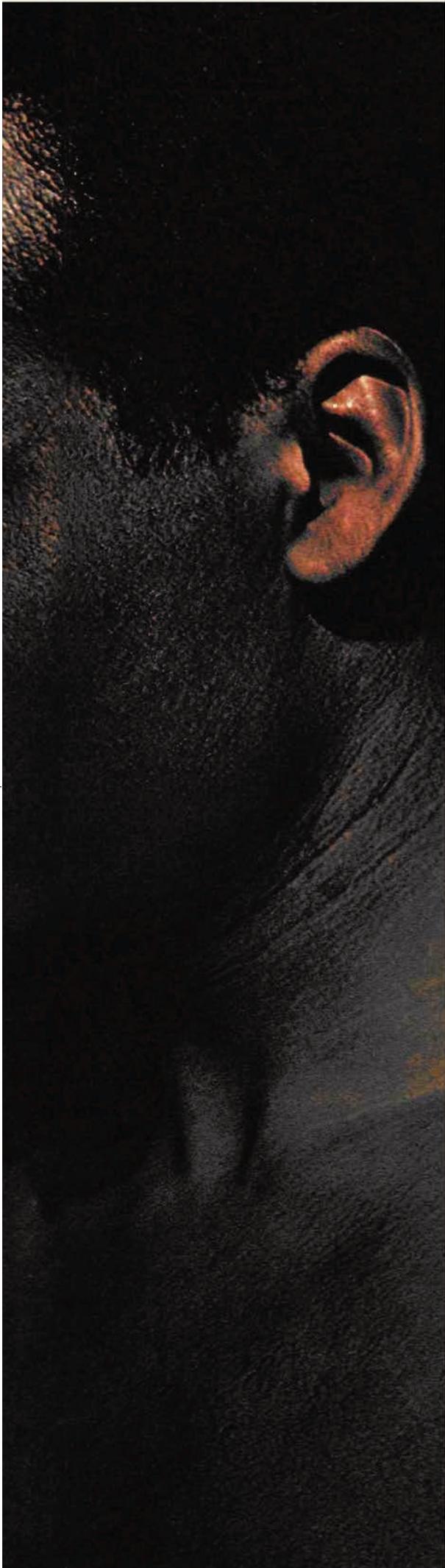
For more information visit paulroland.net

 **Paul Roland & Mick Crossley's *Grimmer Than Grimm* is out now on Dark Companion**



Wild attraction. An early production still of *Nerosubianco* stars Anita Sanders and Terry Carter from a November 1967 edition of Italian magazine *L'Europeo*





BLACK — ON — WHITE

In March 1967 Tinto Brass arrived in London to make four films, each of which would be as contemporary as possible and filmed almost entirely on location. The second of these, *Nerosubianco*, starred and was soundtracked by **THE FREEDOM**, the group formed by ex-members of Procol Harum following a messy divorce in the summer and plagued with problems during its short first incarnation. **SIMON MATTHEWS** speaks to organist, composer and mediator Mike Lease.

“Virtually all the composing was done concurrently with the filming and recording. I had never known such sustained pressure in a professional capacity, and it went on for months”



So, what on earth was going on with Procol Harum in July 1967? The facts are well known. ‘A Whiter Shade Of Pale’ hit the shops on May 12th and promptly rocketed up the charts in Europe and the US. Sales exceeded six million globally as it reached #1 virtually everywhere, quickly earning its composers Keith Reid and Gary Brooker £50k in royalties (£1.75m today). Liberally borrowed from Bach’s ‘Suite No 3 In D Major’ it started a fad for classical/baroque pop flourishes that ultimately led to the birth of prog-rock. Offers of gigs, tours and TV appearances poured in together with, as was the fashion then, film work. By June 24th 1967, when ‘Whiter’ was midway through a spell of six weeks at the top, *NME* was announcing “Matthew Fisher, a former pupil of The Guildhall School Of Music, will co-write the score of *Separation* with noted film composer Stanley Myers. It must be completed by July 10th. Procol Harum may then wax the music for inclusion in the film.”

So far, so good. Then, to the astonishment of the assembled masses, the music press broke the news on July 1st (with the band still at #1) – “The group had ‘terminated its association’ with its business manager Jonathan Weston.” More followed. By July 15th it was announced that guitarist Ray Royer and drummer Bobby Harrison had been sacked followed a week later by reports that “they are seeking re-instatement and state that with its two new members the group is not entitled to appear under the name Procol Harum”. A full-scale war – which dwarfs the January ’68 ousting of Barrett from the Floyd, the only comparison that springs to mind – was clearly waging as the same article goes

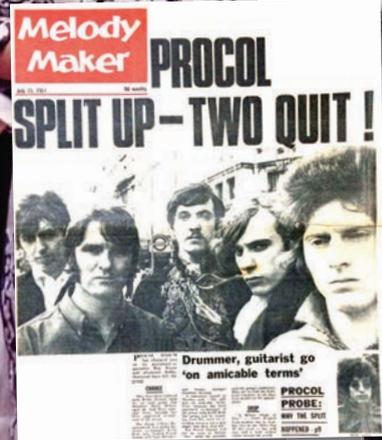
on to note “Keith Reid, *who owns the group*, invented the name and registered it.” Whatever the rights and wrongs, by August 12th it was clear that pragmatism had broken out when *NME* stated “Procol Harum announced on Wednesday that it had reached an amicable settlement with guitarist Ray Royer and drummer Bobby Harrison, ending the dispute which followed their departure from the

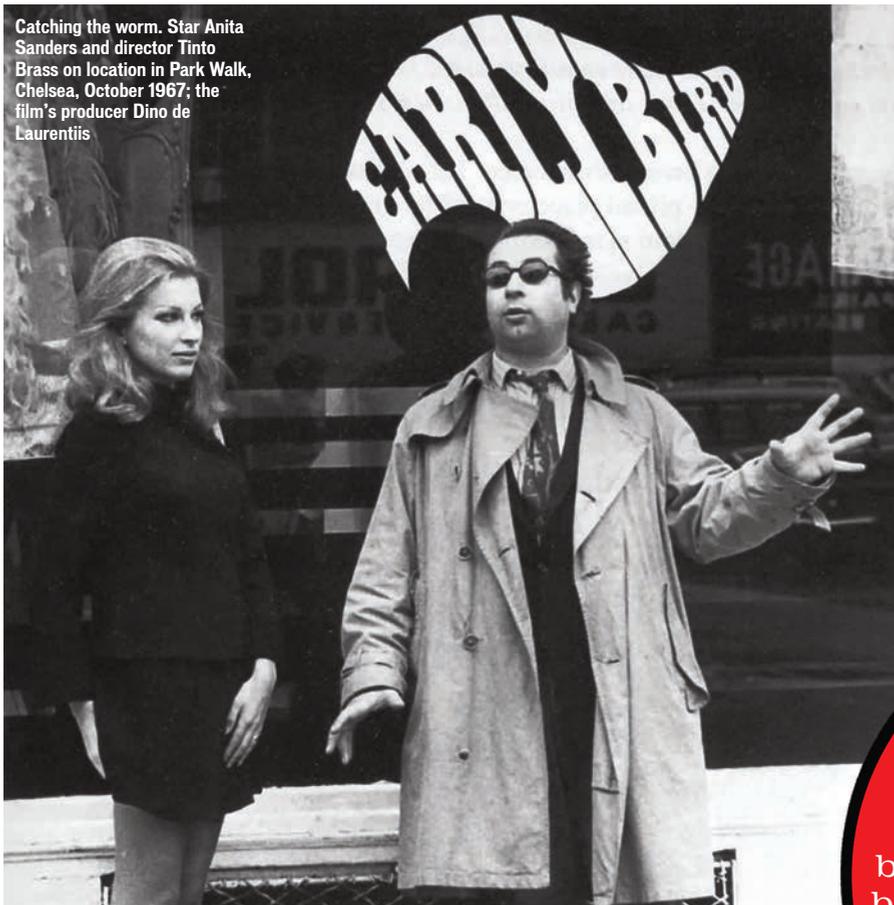
group last month”. Although on August 26th more came with “Jonathan Weston has started proceedings, to be heard in The High Court next Wednesday, claiming re-instatement as Procol Harum’s



Procol Harum in May 1967. L-R: Matthew Fisher, Ray Royer, Bobby Harrison, Dave Knights, Gary Brooker; Freedom later that year. L-R: Steve Shirley, Harrison, Royer, Mike Lease; the Procol split makes the front page; The Zephyrs in '65 with Mike Lease, top

business manager – or alternatively substantial damages as compensation for his displacement,” the outcome of this claim is not recorded. Given this silence it may be that Weston too reached a settlement with Procol Harum, as the day after the case was due to be heard (September 1st) the music press announced “Bobby Harrison and Ray Royer – the two displaced members of Procol Harum – have now completed the formation of their new group, to be named Freedom. Line-up includes Harrison (drums, vocal), Royer (lead guitar, violin, vocal), Tony Marsh (organ, piano, harpsichord and vocal) and Steve Shirley (bass guitar, lead vocal).





Catching the worm. Star Anita Sanders and director Tinto Brass on location in Park Walk, Chelsea, October 1967; the film's producer Dino de Laurentiis



“The absolute centrality of the music was paramount with a significant part of the film’s slender budget being spent on housing the band in an enormous house in Mayfair near the US embassy and on the lengthy recording sessions”

The group is spending the next four weeks rehearsing and experimenting and will then make its debut at a major London venue. Group member Steve Shirley is writing most of Freedom’s material, including a debut single for autumn release. The team is being managed by Procol’s former business manager Jonathan Weston.”

What would emerge from the wreckage and who would prevail? Whilst Procol Harum got on with re-recording their debut album in its entirety, and shifted labels to Regal Zonophone, Weston and Freedom broke cover again on October 14th with the report that “former Procol Harum members Bobby Harrison and Ray Royer announced this week that their breakaway group, Freedom, has been signed by British Lion films. It will appear in a colour feature film *The Attraction*, which will be submitted as an entry for The Cannes Film Festival in April.” Only four days later *Variety* announced that filming had started – and Tinto Brass was directing.

The Attraction – better known as *Nerosubianco (Black On White)* – had first been mentioned to Weston when he was still managing Procol Harum, and as film projects go was significantly bigger than *Separation*. It was a Dino de Laurentiis production, his first in the UK, and its genesis went back to a ’64 Brass script in which the action – about a white woman having a relationship with a black man – would be explicated by music with relatively little dialogue needed. Having just finished *Col Cuore In Gola/Deadly Sweet* with Ewa Aulin and Jean Louis

Trintignant – the finale of which was shot at The 14 Hour Technicolour Dream – he pitched the idea of shooting the film in London to de Laurentiis, using a band to both appear and provide all the music. In June-July ’67 who better for this than Procol Harum, the big new act in UK pop? So, whilst Brass and de Laurentiis sorted out their cast and locations, Weston re-assured them that his new group, constructed out of Procol remnants, would do the business. But, as the weeks passed and Freedom failed to come up with suitable material, Brass and de Laurentiis began citing deadlines and talking about bringing Steppenwolf over from the US, the latest act to sign with Lou Adler’s Dunhill label. In some desperation, Weston and his charges acknowledged that whatever their strengths, to score an entire film they required an experienced arranger and multi-instrumentalist. Enter Mike Lease.

Former keyboard player in London beat group The Zephyrs (he played on five of their singles in ’64-65, including some produced by Shel Talmy, and can be glimpsed with them in the film *Primitive London*) Lease came heavily recommended by Denny Cordell. With Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, Nicky Hopkins and Alan White he had backed folk singer Beverley Kutner (later Beverley Martyn, but at this point just Beverley) on numerous sessions with a September ’66 single, Randy Newman’s ‘Happy New Year’, becoming the first release on Decca’s new Deram subsidiary. Whilst at Deram he had also produced and arranged The Pyramid, co-

incidentally another act managed by Jonathan Weston. Featuring Ian Matthews, later of Fairport Convention, their debut single ‘Summer Of Last Year’ appeared in January ’67, after which Lease took on the job of doing the string arrangements for The Move’s ‘Here We Go Round The Lemon Tree’. But how and when, exactly, was he approached to join Freedom? “It started when Bobby and Ray were thrown out of Procol Harum and long before Tony was invited to join the band. Either Bobby or Ray would phone me up at least once a day to try and persuade me to join them, meeting with a constant rejection from me – this went on for several months. Then it all went quiet – I assume this was after Tony had joined the band – to my relief! Then the phone calls started again, and they were clearly panicking because they had accepted the *Nerosubianco* project and had made no progress at all on it. Tony was still with the band when I joined, and I was asked by Ray Royer if I could work with another keyboard player, the same line-up that Procol Harum had. After I said I didn’t think I could Tony was ‘released’ as it were. I think the reason they particularly wanted my services was

because of the film music.”

The scale of what was required soon became apparent. At only 22 years old Lease found himself plunged into writing, composing and arranging the entire score whilst simultaneously appearing with the band throughout the film. “Virtually all the composing was done concurrently with the filming and recording. It was very hectic indeed. In fact, I had never known such sustained pressure in a professional capacity, and it went on for months until completion. We liaised with Tinto through an American interpreter, who would give us an English-language précis of the ideas that Tinto wanted as the lyrical basis of each song. We would then embody this within the music as quickly as possible. He would often challenge some of the lyrics, which to him conveyed the wrong impression of his meaning, sending us back to the drawing board – he spoke very little English. To get a more correct meaning was usually my task. The beginning of the project revealed a major problem. I noticed as we rehearsed, that I couldn’t hear any bass drum. Puzzled, I asked Bobby if he’d damaged his foot. He sheepishly confessed that he’d never done any bass drum work – he’d learnt his drumming (mainly snare) in a military band during national service. So, for a couple of weeks, we got up early so that I could teach him what I knew about drumming (in late ’65 I’d been playing in Spain with Peter Trout, later part of Denny Laine’s Electric String Band and a superb drummer, from whom I’d learnt a certain amount). He responded well and quickly.”

The absolute centrality of the music (and the band) was paramount with a significant part of the film’s slender budget being spent on housing the band in an enormous house in Mayfair near the US embassy and on the lengthy recording sessions, at Olympic studios with Glyn Johns and Eddie Kramer as engineers. By comparison the cast – led by Swedish model Anita Sanders, who’d made a few Italian films, and US actor Terry Carter, who’d mainly done TV and a couple of Broadway shows, was low key. Neither were established “box office names”. There were few UK personnel on the crew and none in the supporting roles, though the sharp eyed will spot an uncredited Janet Street-Porter as an assistant in a boutique hair salon.

So, what’s the story? A young woman gets dropped off by her partner to spend a day (or is it several days?) sight seeing around London. She roams through big city parks, shops, a hair salon, travels by tube and bus and notices that she is being followed throughout by a young black man. At various points she takes part in an anti-Vietnam demonstration in Trafalgar Square (cue shots of Tariq Ali in full flight), has various sexual encounters, including one with the black man – although whether this happens or is just her fantasy isn’t clear. After a curious

chase sequence shot inside The Roundhouse she’s picked up by her partner and they drive away. It’s all put together with immense bravura. A couple of minutes in it’s clear this isn’t going to be a Rattigan drawing room narrative... best to let the camera work (some shots are miniature pop art masterpieces in their own right), the sense of movement throughout, the alternating between the outside “real” world and the woman’s dreams, the mix of politics, sexual liberation, women’s liberation and brilliantly edited sound just wash over you – accept it as a full-on contemporary experience.

Unlike other films of the time where they might be restricted to a single club scene, or a tiny cameo or just heard in the background, the band appear continually. First seen in a brilliantly ambitious scene in a park, Mike remembers: “For the ‘tree’ filming, we simply invaded Woburn Park and started setting up the instruments in the tree. An official eventually arrived, puzzled, and demanded to see our authorisation. Tinto pretended to send off his assistant to get the (non-existent) approval certificate, then assured the man – in broken English – that he had personally got permission from The Duke Of Bedford until the man was convinced and went off satisfied, forgetting that he hadn’t seen the evidence. This was typical of Brass – an arch-manipulator, though very likable. It was quite difficult to set up, particularly for the lads in the higher branches, Ray and Steve. I was on one of the lower branches because the Hammond was so heavy and difficult to manoeuvre around. It was a whole day’s work and very dangerous – Tinto was particularly good at getting others to take risks! On another occasion at Trafalgar Square, several policemen, very suspicious, came on heavy about Tinto not having permission to film there. Within 15 minutes they were all smiling and joking and obviously flattered to be unpaid extras on the set. Tinto was an avowed anarchist and did much of the filming ‘on the hoof’ without any official permission!”

The shoot lasted through to January ’68 and, in the middle of this, Freedom made their live debut – at Dino de Laurentiis’s New Year’s Eve Party. Lease again: “Apparently, Dino’s daughter had asked her father for us, and was our biggest fan. It was a beautiful mansion overlooking the Med. We stayed there for the best part of a week, in luxury. The majority of the clientele gave off a distinctly ‘mafioso’ atmosphere – very well-heeled and shady. This may have been a totally false inference on my part, they were probably just wealthy businessmen from southern Europe, after all. We performed all of the film music plus a couple of other compositions, and things went fine until 12 when I launched into ‘Auld Lang Syne’ and was baffled by the non-existent response from the audience. I’d forgotten that it meant nothing to people from this

neck of the woods!”

After this it was back to recording and mixing the songs and then editing them into the final cut of the film. Everything was completed in time for the start of The Cannes Film Festival (May 10th ’68) where among the works being premiered were *Charlie Bubbles*, *Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush*, *Joanna*, *Petulia and Girl On A Motorcycle*. Alas, in the first of several set-backs, things began to go wrong. First, the Festival was abandoned due to “the political events in France” meaning that *Nerosubianco*, like *Wonderwall*, got only a trade screening (and *Revolution* didn’t get shown at all) and second, the Italian tax authorities finally caught up with Dino de Laurentiis. He hadn’t been paying what he owed for years and now they seized his property, including the negative of *Nerosubianco*.

Meanwhile Weston, trading on the Procol connection and the forthcoming film, landed the group a contract with Mercury, a US label looking for UK and European talent. (Around the same time, they also signed Aphrodite’s Child and The Eyes Of Blue). Mike recollects, “I’m not sure what led to the Mercury deal, there was very little information given to us. I know that there was a huge advance paid, of which we (at least I) saw nothing. I should have been more than a little suspicious when our manager suddenly bought a Ferrari, driving around London streets in second gear – yes, it was the real deal.” What eventually emerged in June was a magnificent debut single, ‘Where Will You Be Tonight’, a stately piece of late ’60s pop – all “creamy whirlpools” and Mellotron haze. The flip, ‘Trying To Get A Glimpse Of You’, wasn’t bad either and is now rightly prized by psych collectors.

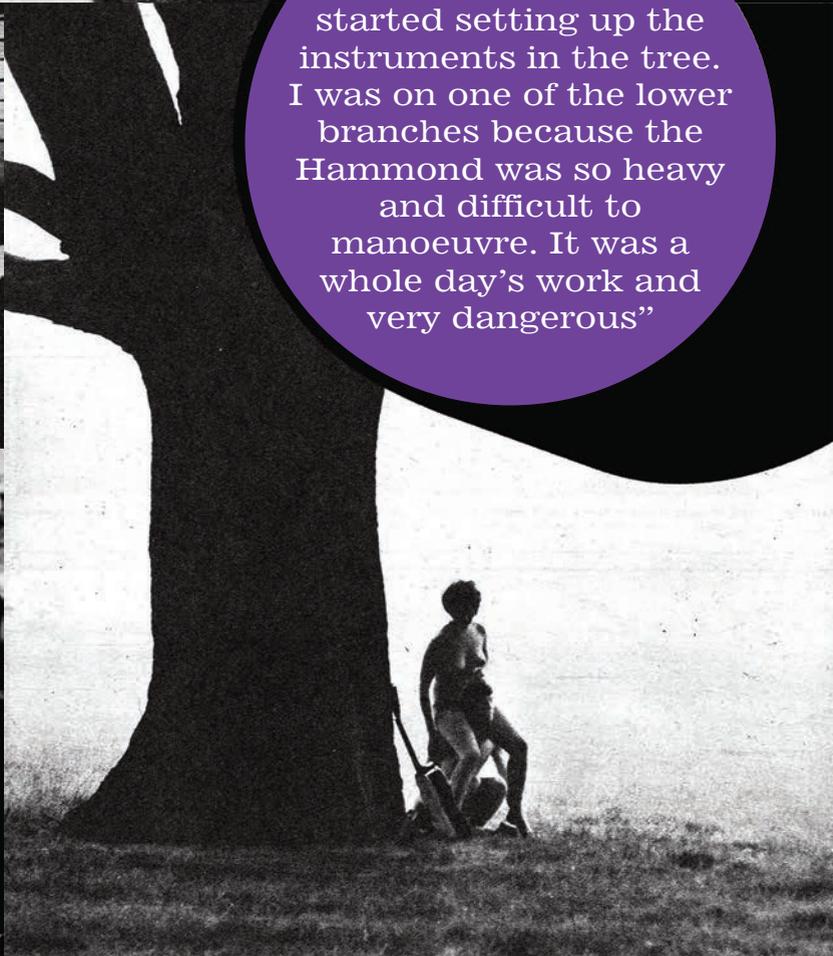
After which Freedom finally hit the road. But not for long. At a gig at a college at Uxbridge in the summer of ’68 Lease noted that he and Harrison were playing the correct number in the set whilst Royer and Shirley had veered off completely. Drug issues were suspected and attention focussed on their roadie, Harvey Bramham. “At the Uxbridge gig Bobby and I were playing the agreed song, Ray was playing a different song and Steve yet another different item, both of them apparently oblivious of the cacophonous result. The audience were mystified, although some thought it was ‘far-out’ prog-rock. The problem was obviously drug-related, and I found out they were still in contact with Harvey and were reluctant to address the problem. So, I turned this over in my mind, becoming sickened by the whole scene and eventually decided to quit. Sometime later, of course, Harvey was responsible for the horrific Fairport Convention crash that killed Martin Lamble in June ’69.” Soldiering on, Freedom made an ill-judged attempt at recording a Hollies/Tremeloes-style pop single, ‘Kandy Kay’, produced by Keith



Stills from the film,
with The Freedom
performing in a sea of
flesh (below)



“We invaded
Woburn Park and
started setting up the
instruments in the tree.
I was on one of the lower
branches because the
Hammond was so heavy
and difficult to
manoeuvre. It was a
whole day’s work and
very dangerous”





Mansfield for the tiny Plexium label, in December '68, and then disintegrated. Weston later emerged managing Shawn Phillips in the US. Royer and Shirley disappeared completely and Harrison alone held things together fronting a completely different version of the band that recorded four hard rock albums down to '72.

But: the film, and their soundtrack album, *did* eventually appear. The tax authorities wanted their money back and although the Italian censors refused a release certificate in November '68, cuts were made (many of the more explicit scenes, albeit mild by today's standards, being hidden behind swirling psychedelic designs) and *Nerosubianco* finally came out – 20 minutes shorter than when shown at Cannes – in Italy in February '69. To tie in with this, Atlantic Records, with Led Zeppelin and Yes already on their roster, bought the rights to the music and released it as an album, but, again, only in Italy. The band, by now dispersed to the four winds, weren't aware of either event. Containing only 10 of the 13 tracks recorded by them, the album didn't sell. In late '69 Columbia bought the film distribution rights in the US and under various names including *Attraction* and *Black On White*, it played the late night circuit in the US, usually packaged as a sex film and cut again to as little as 69 minutes, for another 10 years, making its distributor, Radley Metzger, a lot of money.

When finally rediscovered after the 2001 re-issue of the soundtrack (complete with the three missing tracks) some may wonder, given how well it stands up today, why Procol Harum, and Keith Reid didn't insist back in July '67 that they should do the Di Laurentiis film. After all, Di Laurentiis produced large scale features like *The Battle Of The Bulge* and *Danger: Diabolik*, and anything of his would be bigger than *Separation*, which was low-budget, shot mainly in black and white and directed by Jack Bond from a script by feminist writer and playwright Jane Arden. But, during this period Procol Harum not only limited their involvement in *Separation*, for which Matthew Fisher composed three gorgeous keyboard instrumentals and the band contributed only a single track from their debut album, they also turned down a



“I know that there was a huge advance paid, of which we (at least I) saw nothing. I should have been more than a little suspicious when our manager suddenly bought a Ferrari, driving around London streets in second gear”

third film role. On September 23rd '67 *Melody Maker* announced “Procol Harum is expected to accept an invitation to make its movie debut in a big budget production which starts shooting in November. As well as appearing in the picture, the group would also write the musical score and several featured songs. The film is titled *Seventeen Plus* and is being produced by John Heyman's company, which was also responsible for the controversial Paul Jones movie *Privilege*. In a story written by Wolf Mankowitz, Procol would play a pop group which becomes more powerful than the government as a result of teenagers being given voting powers. A budget of £750,000 has been allocated to the film.” At this point Heyman was producing two Elizabeth Taylor films, *Boom* and *Secret Ceremony*, and Mankowitz had just finished being one of many scriptwriters on *Casino Royale*. The budget mentioned is roughly equivalent to £22.5m (\$29m) by today's standards, so this was a really big project, eclipsing even *Nerosubianco*, but Procol Harum still walked away from it. (Which may not have entirely killed it, though, as *Wild In The Streets*, which has an identical plot, was made very quickly afterwards by AIP.) On October 14th – the same day *The Freedom* were confirmed for *Nerosubianco* – the UK music press stated “Procol Harum have declined an offer to star in the new British film *Seventeen Plus*, to be produced by the company which made the Paul Jones movie *Privilege*. The group has opted out

of the picture as it would have meant curtailing its US promotional visit, which is regarded as particularly important in the campaign to establish Procol Harum in America”. In other words, Procol Harum and Keith Reid concluded there was more money to be made touring the US and promoting 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' and their debut album, released in September in the US

and rising to #47 there (rather promising for a first effort by a UK act) than there was working day and night on film soundtracks. They were right and the Procol split shows, as with post-Syd Pink Floyd, that pursuit of the album market, particularly in the US, financially trumps any other type of artistic creativity, no matter how brilliant.

Looked at today *Nerosubianco* is a brilliant film... possibly the best marriage of its type made then between pop-art, pop music and a drifting counter-culture plot. And *Freedom*'s soundtrack a staggering achievement. Much of which can be put down to Lease's *de facto* role as producer and De Laurentiis's investment in Glyn Johns and Eddie Kramer. Leaving aside George Martin and Norman Smith at Abbey Road, these two were possibly the best “on the money” engineers in the UK in late '67, with a spectacular schedule of credits that included Chris Farlowe, The Rolling Stones, The Small Faces, Traffic, Spooky Tooth, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Family and Eric Burdon and The Animals. Because of the circumstances and strict time scale under which it was devised and recorded, nothing is over-written or over-produced and it possesses an authenticity that's lacking on more complex similar efforts, where more time has been spent in the studio. It must be regarded as one of the great “lost” albums of the '60s, with that incarnation of The Freedom making them one of the great “lost” bands of the era. [9]

With thanks to Mike Lease and Ranjit Sandhu





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Lost soul. Dusty performs
'Son Of A Preacher Man'
on US TV, 1969



Song Of The South.

Smashed plates! Tantrums! Travelling hairdressers! In 1968 British pop superstar **DUSTY SPRINGFIELD** turned her back on glitzy orchestras and London drizzle to make an authentically southern-fried soul album in Memphis. Crippled by self-doubt, she hated every second of it.

Fifty years on, **MARTIN RUDDOCK** unravels the story of how an uncomfortable, uncertain star made her '69 masterpiece, **DUSTY IN MEMPHIS**

"I think the word 'difficult' is one of those magic words that just means you give 150%" – Dusty Springfield, 1989

It's July 1968, and pop superstar Dusty Springfield is eyeing up new horizons from the dingy canteen of Shepherd's Bush's Lime Grove studios. Here to chat about new single 'I Close My Eyes And Count To Ten' and the future in general with *NME*'s Keith Altham, Dusty's in a good mood. Gearing up for a stint at *The Talk Of The Town*, where she'd recently recorded a BBC2 TV special, she's preparing to take her cabaret act across the pond and record in the States. "All has been left to the last minute and I'm in my usual panic," she confesses to Altham. When pressed as to what the show would contain she wryly replies, "Well I do a little juggling and then there's the trampoline..."

1968 was a watershed year for 29-year-old Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien, better known to the public as Dusty Springfield. Five years into a glittering solo pop career, Dusty was at a crossroads with one foot in the blues and the other in variety. By her own admission "Dusty Springfield", with her Lady Penelope hairdo and panda eyes, was an invention, a persona. What lay beneath the facade was infinitely more complex. She was, again by her own admission difficult, but for every diva tantrum there was a moment of warm generosity. She could be soft-spoken and shy, but also fiery and outspoken. Subject to endless tabloid speculation about her love life, she kept her sexuality under wraps to all but her inner circle. She claimed not to be a party animal, except when she chose to be. A quiet gentle woman with a tendency to hurl crockery in fits of rage. The more famous she became, the more the nerves grew. Now she was treading an uneasy tightrope between soul singer and all-round entertainer.

Dusty's schizophrenic musical identity wasn't helping her own sense of self. She couldn't seem to work out which side of the line she wanted to land. Dusty may have been uncertain about her musical direction, but there was one thing she definitely wanted – control. She was selling records by the truckload and was respected enough to sing with the likes of Mel Tormé and Burt Bacharach, but was being nudged further and further into variety and embarrassing guest spots in pantomimes. Enough was enough.

'I Close My Eyes' was a fitting swansong for this phase of Dusty's career. An epic, melodramatic ballad loaded with tumultuous strings and high camp angst – it was the logical conclusion to the series of doomy anthems she'd been perfecting since 'You Don't Have To Say You Love Me'. The album she'd been working on that year was the first fruit of the British end of an unusual new arrangement. Until recently Dusty had dual record contracts, two separate deals with Phillips/Mercury in the UK and the US. Although she'd remain with Phillips in the UK, when the US side of the deal expired Dusty seized the opportunity to take control of her career. At the same time her contract with long-term manager Vic Billings wasn't renewed. "I don't feel a

desperate need for a personal manager at the moment," she coolly told Altham.

However, by her own admission Dusty wasn't very organised. A small, but loyal entourage of friends helped out with day to day while Dusty kept a grip on creative control. It was necessary to pay the bills with cabaret engagements, which filled Dusty with dread. A soul singer at heart, she was frustrated at the treadmill of the lucrative but drab northern chicken-in-a-basket circuit. She went down a storm with the audience, but she wanted to be taken seriously and make records *her* way.

A recent meeting with Atlantic Records head Ahmet Ertegun in London had provided a light at the end of the tunnel. "I played him ['65 single] 'Some Of Your Lovin'" and he said, 'If you ever get free of your obligations elsewhere, come to

Atlantic,'" she recalled later. Dusty stayed with Phillips in the UK, but the ink was soon drying on a contract with Atlantic in the US. Latest album *Dusty... Definitely* had been recorded over the summer with regular producer John Franz. Now plans were being made to record and perform in the US later in the year, with Dusty's focus now set on the other side of the pond.

Dusty was nothing if not eclectic in her choices of material ("Jim Webb is said to be writing some things for me. It would be marvellous if he did write something," she opined to Altham). Her latest recordings were a showbizzy mix of pop-soul, jazz and book numbers. However, a growing yearning to record R&B and soul material was becoming apparent. Perhaps more importantly Dusty wanted to apply the punchy production and cool measured arrangements of Stax and Atlantic soul sides to the work of her favourite songwriters like Goffin and King, Mann & Weill and Randy Newman. The parallel record deals only added to Dusty's overall confusion about what sort of material she should be recording. Dusty had already taken tentative steps toward the looser, funkier R&B she yearned to record when she cut the cool, sparse 'Spooky' in January. Breathy and jazzy, it was a world away from the massive production numbers she was known for. Perhaps for this reason the song would remain in the vault for another two years, by which time Dusty's transformation from Pop Queen to Soul Sister was complete.

Dusty had effectively been producing her own records as a silent partner for the last few years supported by Franz, who conjured up Wagnerian pop glory for her but let her call the shots. "He'd sit in the control room while I'd go out and scowl at the musicians," Dusty told Paul Du Noyer in '95 "It was very difficult for them because they'd never heard this stuff before. I'm asking somebody with a stand-up bass to play Motown bass lines, and it was a shock. I never took the producer's credit for two reasons. For one, he deserved it and I was grateful. And then there was the calculating part of me that that thought it looked too slick for me to produce and sing. Because women didn't do that."

By the time of *Definitely*, Dusty was able to wrangle a pretty good impression

"I had agents who would book me into clubs that were completely wrong for me and I'd get so frustrated I'd find myself in hotel rooms flinging crockery at the walls"



On the road to
Memphis, 1968





of Motown's Funk Brothers rhythm section out of her regular crew of Brit sessioners. It was just that, though – an impression. This was very apparent on Dusty's take on 'Piece Of My Heart' – a top to bottom copy of Erma Franklin's recent hit version. This approach didn't translate well to other material. A version of Goffin and King's 'Don't Forget About Me' had been recorded the previous year during sessions for *Where Am I Going?*, but the arrangement was stiff and lifeless. Franz could fake up a good replica soul arrangement under Dusty's direction, but they couldn't make their own. It would be their last album together.

Once the stint at The Talk Of The Town was out of the way, Dusty flew to the States to start the next phase of her career. She quickly found herself ruining her decision to self-manage, as her US booking agents flung their highly-strung new signing straight into a gruelling series of unsuitable cabaret gigs. Dusty hated every minute of it and went stir crazy on the road. "I was a complete nutcase," she admitted to Tom Hibbert for *Q* in '89. "I didn't like that world at all. I couldn't deal with it. I had agents who would book me into clubs that

"When Dusty's entourage made its entrance in a whirl of **hairspray, heels and glitz** it was an instant culture shock. **The dressed-down soul brothers** of the American rhythm section were an incongruous match for Dusty"

• were completely wrong for me and I'd get so frustrated I'd find myself in hotel rooms flinging crockery at the walls."

• Between cabaret gigs Dusty went to meet her new producer to plan the new album. Ertegun had fixed Dusty up with Aretha Franklin's hot producer Jerry Wexler. A big Aretha fan, Dusty needed little persuasion when Ertegun arranged for the album to be cut with his dream team of Wexler, engineer/co-producer

Tom Dowd and arranger Arif Mardin in the heart of Memphis.

It looked like a match made in heaven. Eager to impress his new artist, Wexler pulled together a huge trove of potential material ready for her arrival. Wexler had 80 acetates to play Dusty when she turned up at his house at Great Neck.

"Dusty showed up at my door, and we went into my living room," Wexler later recalled in *Oxford American*. "We soon found ourselves ass-deep in acetates – on tables, chairs, shelves, the floor. As I played her song after song, I was hoping for a response – would she like this one? If not, how about the next one? After going through my entire inventory the box score was Wexler 80, Springfield 0."

• Having trashed Wexler's entire in-tray Dusty promptly flew back to London. It wasn't a promising start. Within weeks though, Dusty had a change of heart. • Flying back to New York, she revisited the same batch of songs. This time she said yes to a large swathe of tunes that she said she would have picked herself. There was material by old favourites like Goffin & King (including 'Don't Forget About Me' – with which she had unfinished



Under cover in Amsterdam, 2nd May 1968 (left); Dusty with Atlantic Records' Jerry Wexler, whom she wooed with '65's 'Some Of Your Lovin''; the UK and US editions of *Dusty In Memphis*; US 'Son Of A Preacher Man' 45; arranger Arif Mardin (left) and co-producer Tom Dowd (right) at an Aretha Franklin session in '67



DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
SON-OF-A PREACHER MAN
b/w JUST A LITTLE LOVIN' 45



business), and Bacharach & David to get stuck into. There was also a sexy, slinky number by writers John Hurley and Ronnie Wilkins called 'Son Of A Preacher Man'.

A relieved Wexler booked the sessions in. It was a jolt for Dusty when she arrived at the studio on September 26th to find that it was even funkier than she was expecting. A stone's throw from the original Sun Studio, the borderline run-down frontage of Chips Moman's American Recording Studio was a world away from the clinical atmosphere of London's Philips premises at Stanhope Place.

Wexler had assembled his A Team for the sessions. As well as Dowd and Mardin Wexler brought in the formidable rhythm section of drummer Gene Chrisman, organist Bobby Wood, pianist Bobby Emmons, guitarist Reggie Young and bassist Tommy Cogbill. Killer soul vocal group The Sweet Inspirations were also on hand for backing vocal duties. All was set for the big session. When Dusty's entourage made its entrance in a whirl of hairspray, heels and glitz it was an instant culture shock. The dressed-down soul brothers of the American rhythm section were an incongruous match for Dusty, who was impeccably turned out as if ready to hit the stage. "She had her hairdresser John Adams with her, and she'd have her hair blown, dried and cut every day," remarked Tom Dowd.

"In the first place, Dusty Springfield and Chips Moman's American rhythm section, according to most observers would be the most improbable quinella in musical history," observed Wexler in a 2006 interview with the BBC. "How can you put Dusty Springfield in with this band of redneck ragamuffins with that Southern style?"

"These people played behind Wilson Pickett, Elvis Presley, so he (Wexler) thought that we couldn't go wrong," Mardin told the BBC. "But when we took Dusty down there the story changed, because she was used to recording with a bigger orchestra. This wasn't like that. This was a very stripped-down situation."

The sessions were difficult from the off. *NME*'s Terry Manning visited Dusty at American and found her sitting out the tracking sessions whilst Wexler's crew worked. Dusty explained this away as a bad case of laryngitis, with Manning noting she was stationed "in the control room munching from a box of Vick's menthol cough drops".

The truth of the matter of why Dusty

wasn't singing was more complex. Dusty had wanted to shed her heavy orchestral wall of sound for something more soulful, but she hadn't banked on the Wexler/ Dowd/Mardin team's approach of recording with the rhythm section, arranging from the floor, and dubbing any orchestral arrangements later. She liked the backing tracks but felt painfully exposed singing along live. She particularly struggled to get to grips with the quick and dirty arrangement of 'Windmills Of Your Mind', a song she personally didn't much like. "It caused absolute mayhem in the studio trying to get the chords right," Dusty griped. "Originally it was very much faster and I slowed it down so it would be more organised."

Wexler, keen to act as cheerleader had tried to gee-up the rattled Dusty by telling her studio war stories of the soul legends he'd worked with. However, this just made her freeze up even further with feelings of self-doubt. "I knew I could sing the songs well enough, but it brought pangs of insecurity... that I didn't deserve to be there," she later rued.

"I hated it because I couldn't be Aretha Franklin", Dusty confessed to Du Noyer. "If only people like Jerry Wexler could



realise what a deflating thing it is to say, Otis Redding stood *there*. Or, that's where Aretha sang. Whatever you do, it's not going to be good enough."

By the time the initial sessions for *Dusty In Memphis* wrapped, there wasn't a single vocal track laid down by the numbed star. She finally gave in and sang when the tapes were taken for overdubbing in New York's Atlantic Studios, but the insecurity Dusty felt at American travelled with her.

"She insisted we crank up the track so loud it was physically painful," recalled Wexler. "There was no way she could hear herself – it was like she was singing into a void, projecting an interior monologue. Like she was totally deaf and asked to sing from aural memory. The thing was, and this shows what a gifted, idiosyncratic artist she was, she sang perfectly in tune. Her pitch was miraculous."

"I was someone who had come from thundering drums and Phil Spector," confessed Dusty, "and I didn't understand sparseness. I wanted to fill every space. I didn't understand that the sparseness gave it an atmosphere. When I got free of that I finally liked it, but it took me a long time. I wouldn't play it for a year."

With Mardin's orchestral arrangements also overdubbed in New York the album came together quickly. The tempo-shifting 'What Do You Do When Love Dies' was left on the cutting room floor, and *Dusty In Memphis* was ready to go. The moody 'Son Of A Preacher Man' was released as a single in November and went Top 10 on both sides of the pond.

There was a feeling of relief all round. Dusty confessed to Penny Valentine for *Disc & Music Echo* that "The past few months have been very hard. To say I cry once a day sounds sloppy but it can be more – it's just the strain. You have to have a release."

Everyone loved 'Preacher Man', and its mix of soft vocal and restrained funk impressed the American studio crew. "The fact that Dusty was a white British girl gave it the extra little spice," said keyboardist Bobby Emmons. "The sound of the song, with low chords that rang, made it dark and mysterious."

Dusty was happy with the song too, at least at first. Friend (and later manager) Vicki Wickham recalled Dusty calling her from New York to preview it. "She played it down the phone to me three times, she was thrilled to bits with it."

She would soon change her tune. Within months there would be a glut of

sultry copycat versions of 'Preacher Man' by the likes of Nancy Sinatra and Bobbie Gentry. Fittingly, considering Dusty's history of covering black artists, Aretha Franklin would also record 'Preacher Man'. On the strength of Dusty's version of 'Preacher Man' Elvis Presley would rock up at American two months later to

record *From Elvis In Memphis* with the same band. Most artists would see this as praise indeed. But not Dusty.

"'Son Of A Preacher Man' was just not good enough," she complained to Du Noyer. "Aretha had been offered it but didn't record it until after I had, and to this day I listen to her phrasing and go, Goddamit! That's the way I should have done it. It was a matter of ego, too. If I can't be as good as Aretha then I'm not gonna do it at all."

Dusty In Memphis was released in the US in January '69, and in the UK in April. Unfortunately, the great reviews didn't translate into album sales. This didn't stop Wexler from reconvening the full Memphis crew at New York's Groove Sound Studio in May with a view to record a second Atlantic album. Dusty and company cut Tony Joe White's 'Willie & Laura Mae Jones' and Goffin & King's 'That Old Sweet Roll', but they couldn't rebottle that

Memphis lightning. Both songs crept out on a single, but the sessions were quietly abandoned. When Dusty resumed recording later in '69 at Sigma sound it was with Philly soul kings Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff. The underrated *Brand New Me* came out in '70, but the next few years would be difficult for Dusty and bring diminishing returns. Moving full-time to the States, the demons of anxiety and addiction caught up with her in a big way.

Meanwhile, *Dusty In Memphis* was deleted from Atlantic's catalogue and developed a cult reputation that only grew over the years, until it was quite rightly acknowledged as a masterpiece. From warm, sexy grooves like 'Breakfast In Bed' to the stately despair of the

closing 'I Can't Make It Alone' it's also a magic trick of sorts. An unhappy singer recorded an album of songs she wasn't sold on in a different city to the band, and it turned out to be her most joyous and cohesive. As ever, the only dissenting voice was Dusty herself. Perhaps she associated it with the beginning of a painful period. Perhaps she was just too hard on herself to see just how good it was, telling *The Guardian* in '90 that "It's become rather an over-rated classic. It's not as if it's some magnificent work of art. It's a good record."

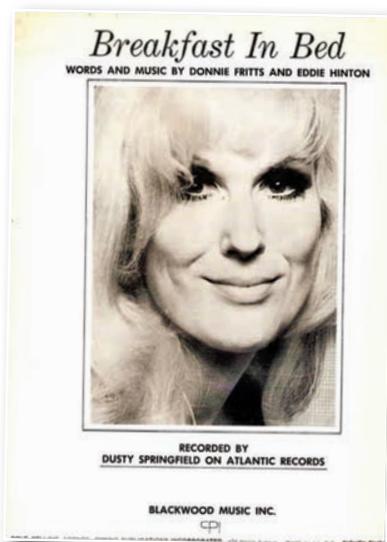
To Dusty Springfield, that was perhaps as much praise as she would allow herself. 

Dedicated with love to the Mitchells



'Son Of A Preacher Man' on US TV again, 1969

"I hated it because I **couldn't be Aretha Franklin**. It's a deflating thing it is to say, Otis Redding stood there. Or, that's where Aretha sang. Whatever you do, **it's not going to be good enough**"



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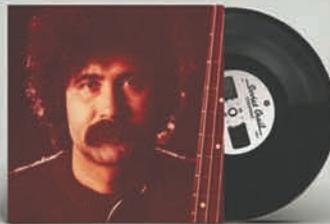
DOS-MUKASAN
DOS-MUKASAN LP / CD / DL (1976)
GRAIL ALERT: 2ND PRESS OF KAZAKH PSYCHEDELIC AND FOLK-ROCK MASTERPIECE



DOS-MUKASAN
WEDDING SONG 7" / DL (1973)
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GUNESH ENSEMBLE
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VIETNAMESE FRESCOES 7" / DL (1984)
ALBUM VERSION OF THE TRACK BACKED WITH NEVER BEFORE RELEASED ORIGINAL



SATO ENSEMBLE
LEGEND LP / DL (1986)
GRAIL ALERT: A HARD-TO-FIND PEARL OF UZBEK ETHNIC & ORIENTAL JAZZ



SATO ENSEMBLE
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SECOND LP BY UZBEK ETHNIC & ORIENTAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE



MIKHAIL CHEKALIN
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A COLLECTION OF EARLY JAZZ-ROCK, SYNTH & EXPERIMENTAL WORKS



THE VICIOUS SEEDS
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reviews then

Reissues, anthologies and compilations

Quiet Please!

THOMAS PATTERSON is carried away by a surprise wave of library music reissues, the first of many

KEITH MANSFIELD / JOHN CAMERON
Voices In Harmony
NICK INGMAN
Distinctive Themes / Race To Achievement
BRIAN BENNETT / ALAN HAWKSHAW / JOHN FIDDY
Hot Wax
KEITH MANSFIELD / ALAN HAWKSHAW / DAVID SNELL
Big Business
FRANCIS COPPIETERS
Piano Vibrations
BRIAN BENNETT & ALAN HAWKSHAW
Synthesis
ALAN PARKER
The Sound Of Soul
ALAN PARKER / MADELINE BELL
The Voice Of Soul
JAMES CLARKE
Mystery Movie
BRIAN BENNETT & ALAN HAWKSHAW
Synthesizer & Percussion
All ★★★★★

ALL BE WITH LPS

When *Shindig!* interviewed Brian Bennett and Alan Hawkshaw last autumn, the pair expressed amazement at the fact the albums they recorded for the KPM label in the '60s and '70s are not only beloved by listeners today but are highly collectable; as Bennett exclaimed, "We weren't trying to sell albums, but these KPM records, especially the green labels, they're collectors' items. You can get an old Alan Hawkshaw vinyl on eBay for over a hundred quid!"

Indeed, between 1966 and '80, KPM released over 200 platters of library music - that is, music recorded for use in TV and film by a small brace of professional musicians - as part of their iconic KPM 1000 series, and

only the truly deep-pocketed amongst us could afford the eye-watering prices many of them now command (their stock having risen thanks to both scarcity and the plundering of their grooves by hip-hop samplers).

Thankfully, Be With Records, the label behind *Full Circle*, Hawkshaw and Bennett's "comeback" LP from last November, have reissued 10 highly sought-after releases from '73-76 on vinyl, six from the KPM archives and four from the associated Themes International library.

Kicking off chronologically, the reissues open with '73's *Voices In Harmony* from KPM mainstays Keith Mansfield and John Cameron. It's an album of horn-drenched, harmony-laden sunshine-pop, featuring the seductive classic 'Half Forgotten Daydreams', a cut that was included on the venerated '90s easy listening compilation *The Sound Gallery*, one of the key albums that paved the way for today's library music renaissance.

Also from '73 comes the double-sided *Big Business/Wind Of Change* from Mansfield, Hawkshaw and David Snell, again all blazing horns, especially on Mansfield's 'World Of Action'. The album's highlight, however, is harpist Snell's heavenly 'International Flight', a track that evokes memories of Dorothy Ashby's classic soul albums on Cadet.

Moving onto '74, and things take a futuristic turn with two albums from Bennett and Hawkshaw, KPM's *Synthesis*, and companion piece *Synthesizer & Percussion*, recorded for KPM composer Alan Parker's

own Themes International Imprint. Hawkshaw and Bennett had recently latched onto the *Odyssey*, an analogue synthesiser created by ARP in '72, and they use it with wild abandon on both discs - 'Daytripper' and 'Pacesetter' drip with funky retro-futurism, the aural equivalent of '70s sci-fi mainstays *Buck Rogers* and *Logan's Run* (although titles like 'Mile High Swinger' root the album solidly in the *Confessions Of...* era).

Also from '74 comes James Clarke's *Mystery Movie*, an excellent collection of cues designed for use in thrillers with titles like 'Study In Fear' and 'The Heavies' - although shoving in a laidback track and calling it 'Relaxed Scene' strikes me as a bit of a cheat.

The sole offering from '75 is an outlier in the series, a selection of jazzy piano and vibes pieces with the puntastic title *Piano Vibrations* from Belgian composer Francis Coppieters, his sole contribution to KPM. By '76, however, we're back in Bennett and Hawkshaw territory with the pumping *Hot Wax*, an album recorded with John Fiddy, and one that continues their funky electronic experimentations.

1976 also births *Distinctive Themes/Race To Achievement* from lesser-spotted KPM composer Nick Ingman, an album noted for both its variety and its impressive 21-track length (the densest album here). Yet '76's crowning achievement comes in the shape of *The Voice Of Soul* from guitarist Alan Parker and American singer Madeline Bell, and it's side-release *The Sound Of Soul* (basically the same album shorn of Bell's vocals). *The Voice...* is a fabulous collection of '70s soul, notable for Bell's silky vocals, so good that many of the tracks were repurposed for Bell's commercially available *This Is One Girl* album later that year.

Ten library classics then, all evocative in their own distinct ways. As Hawkshaw told *Shindig!*, "Library music has become an art form and that's quite pleasant. More people are interested in collecting our work and having the privilege of owning it, and that is surprising." Not to us Alan, not to us.

"Hawkshaw and Bennett had recently latched onto the *Odyssey*, an analogue synthesizer created by ARP in '72, and they use it with wild abandon on both discs"



IAN A ANDERSON Onwards!

★★★★

GHOSTS FROM THE BASEMENT CD



The young Ian Anderson first trod the boards in his hometown of Weston-super-Mare, pushing a peculiarly plangent Anglified stab at country blues, before graduating on to the vibrant Bristol scene at the tail-end of the '60s, where he had to add the A to his name to avoid confusion with the pelican-legged, leather jock-strapped Jethro Tull frontman of the same name. An enduring relationship with legendary local label Village Thing ensued, and an early '70s sideways swerve into what an optimistic record dealer might call psych-folk, before he found longevity as a native son at home in the traditional musics of the world.

This career-spanning collection covers cuts from 1968 right up to the present decade and takes in everything from very competently finger-picked folk blues to slightly terrifying Cajun-inflected Morris dancing music, all shot through with a West Country warmth.

Hugh Dellar

MAXINE BROWN The Best Of The Wand Years

★★★★★

KENT LP



Maxine Brown is held in high regard amongst soul enthusiasts. The late deejay Randy Cozens' Top Five soul songs featured the singer's songs exclusively; listing her exquisite reading of the Goffin-King classic 'Oh No, Not My Baby' at #1.

Brown could draw on material penned by other top writer-producers such as Ashford and Simpson, Van McCoy and Burt Bacharach. In 1967, she was dispatched to Muscle Shoals, where she cut 'Baby Cakes' with Otis Redding at the controls. That song and energetic dancers such as 'It's Torture' and 'I Want A Guarantee' languished in the vaults until the mid-80s, only to further cement her status as a soul goddess.

This superb vinyl edition picks the best of the selections first featured on the 2009 CD of the same name, although the '65 single 'If You Gotta Make A Fool Of Somebody' included here was omitted from the CD version.

Paul Ritchie

THE BYRDS Byrdmaniax

★★★★

RETROWORLD CD



Post-*Sweetheart*, The Byrds were in steep decline. But beyond 1968, if one listens carefully, there are certainly some luminous moments which enhance rather than diminish their legacy.

Overall '71's *Byrdmaniax* is not one of those, although - in the subterranean twilight of their heyday - McGuinn (the sole surviving original member) was still worth a listen, his two cuts - the anthemic country-rocker 'I Trust (Everything's Gonna Work Out Alright)' (released as a 45 it bombed) and the pretty but bashful ballad 'Pale Blue', co-written with Gene Parsons - being, along with the terrific closer 'Jamaica Say You Will', the pick of the bunch here. Elsewhere, producer Terry Melcher, much to the band's dismay, did his best to sabotage the whole thing with superfluous strings, horns and choirs, but in truth, this bewildering hodgepodge of bluegrass, gospel and ragtime lent the famous sleeve image of the band sporting death masks, even greater poignancy, and after one more album, McGuinn would call it a day.

Johnnie Johnstone

CALENDER It's A Monster

★★

TIDAL WAVES LP

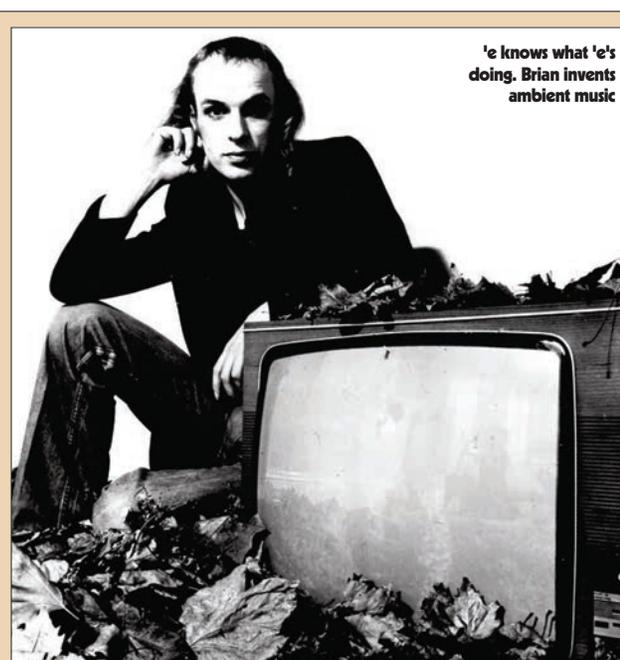


In 1976, funk was morphing into disco, and *It's A Monster*, the sole album from this seven-piece ensemble, was caught somewhere

in between. Someone like Allen Toussaint might have brought out the band's character and given them a richer, less harsh sound than that concocted by producer Paul L. Kysner (the founder of the Pi Kappa label also handles arrangements and a chunk of the songwriting).

Nothing else on the disc quite matches the appeal of the opening 'Hypertension', in part because the arrangements are flawed and the vocals aren't flattered by being recorded dryly. 'Oh What A Pity' features a brass motif that recalls 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and 'Good Old Funky Music' has a treble-heavy sound and decidedly un-funky horn parts more evocative of marching bands than dancefloors. Nevertheless, *Tidal Waves*' reissue, made with access to the original Pi Kappa masters, opens a window back to an intriguing, transitional period of R&B.

Charles Donovan



'e knows what 'e's doing. Brian invents ambient music

Music For Listening



BRIAN ENO Discreet Music

★★★★

Music For Films

★★★★

Ambient 1: Music For Airports

★★★

Ambient 4: On Land

★★★

ALL UMC/VIRGIN LPs

In 1975, Brian Eno's *Obscure Records* imprint released four records simultaneously. *Obscure's* stated aim was to focus on experimental music, and the '75 releases included works by noted *avant-garde* musicians like Gavin Bryars and John Adams. Yet it was Eno's own contribution to the quartet, entitled *Discreet Music*, that raised eyebrows amongst the mainstream music press; for whilst Eno had previously pushed the boundaries of music on albums like *No Pussyfooting* with Robert Fripp, he was still best known as the lascivious Roxy Music provocateur and the man behind solo glam classic *Here Come The Warm Jets*. And if his third solo album *Another Green World*, also released that year, pointed towards a new creative direction, *Discreet*

Music is where Eno's pioneering ambient work really began.

Discreet Works is composed of two distinct sides. The first side contains a 30-minute long track entitled 'Discreet Music', a soundscape designed as a backdrop for Fripp to play over live. The second side, meanwhile, consists of 'Three Variations On The Canon In D Major By Johann Pachelbel', electronic manipulations based the classical staple. With intellectually rigorous liner notes and technical diagrams, *Discreet Music* is a proto-electronic classic, its influence readily apparent on everything from the *Warp* record catalogue to the soundtracks of Vangelis.

Eno would follow it with '76's *Music For Films*, a selection of unrelated cues written as an *ad-hoc* library music album for film-makers to pluck cues from (many of which ended up in the movies of Derek Jarman) and then, from '78, having coined the term "ambient music", a series of totally ambient soundscapes, numbered 1 to 4 (2 and 3 recorded with Harold Budd and Laraaji, respectively).

Discreet Works, *Music For Films* and *Ambient 1 and 4* have now all been rereleased as half-speed, double album re-masters. The first two work best as stand-alone albums, whilst the two *Ambient* releases both have the power to soothe and infuriate in equal measure (especially as one now has to flip the records multiple times, somewhat negating the desired hypnotic effect). All four, however, sound better than ever, Virgin's lovingly curated series of Eno reissues splendidly forging ahead.

Thomas Patterson

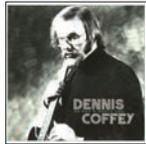
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DENNIS COFFEY

One Night At Morey's: 1968

★★★★

OMNIVORE CD



Taken from Dennis Coffey's personal archive this previously unreleased recording of a hometown show at Morey Baker's

Showplace Lounge in downtown Detroit documents the esteemed member of Motown's Funk Brothers burning up the stage on a routine club date in the company of his regular sidekicks, ace Hammond player

Lyman Woodard and drummer Melvin Davis.

Arriving as a companion volume to *Hot Coffey In The D* which previously surfaced on Resonance, *One Night At Morey's* offers another wholesome helping of the same rootsily soulful sound of the trio getting deep in the pocket in the familiar surroundings of their favourite local venue. No surprises to report that the groove is the thing on this smokin' showcase of instrumental Motor City soul-funk which mixes the odd original alongside vibed up reworkings of Bobby Womack and Wilson Pickett's 'I'm A Midnight Mover', The Meters' 'Cissy Strut', Charlie Parker's 'Billie's Bounce' and epic

explorations of 'Eleanor Rigby' and 'Burning Spear'.

Grahame Bent

THE COUNTDOWN 5

Uncle Kirby

★★★★

OUT-SIDER LP



It always comes down to the songs, doesn't it? In terms of which mid-60s local garage bands still resonate with us half a century

hence? At the time, it was more important to look good, play decently and probably have some impressive stage gear. But the groups we choose to remember now are the ones who had songs. And these Texan lads had the songs.

Oh, they were a more than competent band; they sound great on these tracks, and they must have been fun to watch. But the difference is this: there are no fifth-generation soporific rehashes of 'Woolly Bully' and 'Tired Of Waiting For You' here. They're all originals, and they run the gamut from polished mod-psych gems like the title track all the way to utterly-unhinged fuzz-rants like 'Candy' - a song that would have done someone like Steve Runoffsson proud.

This record was a very pleasant surprise.

Mike Fornatale

Second Generation Men



FAMILY

At The BBC

★★★★

MADRISH 7-CD/DVD/BOOK BOX SET

Beginning life as R&B band The Farinas and hailing from Leicester this unit briefly morphed through an incarnation as The Roaring Sixties before Kim Fowley, spotting the '20s gangster suits they were wearing on stage, remarked, "You look like the Family."

The first disc of this set has some amazing early live performances from the *Music In A Doll's House* line-up of the band and shows the versatility and

ambition contained within the group. Cello, sax and violin underpin Roger Chapman's wailing vocal style (not as pronounced here as it was later to become) as the group explored prog, folk and rock - sometimes all within the space of one track. The sound quality of these early recordings is variable but the fact that they exist regardless of the tape-wiping inclinations of the BBC is miraculous. Despite their underground roots Family always projected an aggressive stage presence and elements of their R&B roots would emerge in songs such as 'Hey Mr Policeman', 'Old Songs, New Songs' and the storming 'Second Generation Woman' all showcased in this collection. A blitzing *Top Gear* session from March '69 is testament to these rockier inclinations of the band.

Recording quality improves on the later discs as line-ups change around the fine core guitar work of Charlie Whitney and style-straddling drumming of Rob Townsend. Giggling anthem 'Part Of The Load' is funky, country truckin' music and live

renditions of chart success 'In My Own Time' find Chapman enthusiastically clearing a golden fleece-sized furbal from his adenoids. Disc Six shows that the group had lost none of its ability to effortlessly change gear, seamlessly moving from funky pub crawl anthem 'Burlesque' to folky acoustic ballad 'My Friend The Sun'. The final sessions, which feature Tony Ashton on keyboards, add a lot more roll to the rock with the soulful 'Sweet Desiree' and a rare, gleeful cover version of 'Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu'. As with any compilation of live performances there are repetitions of key songs but enough variation amongst the set lists to make this a minor quibble.

The discs come in a beautifully bound book and slipcase format with extensive notes, photographs and illustrations plus a replica poster and welcome DVD of early '70s TV performances.

A lovingly compiled piece of work and a must for fans of the band.

Henry Hutton



Whitney, Townsend, Chapman, Wetton and Palmer. In a class of their own

FLIBBERTIGIBBET

Whistling Jigs To The Moon

★★★★

SOMMOR CD/LP



Whispered in hallowed halls of collectorhood in connection with Mellow Candle, this previously bootlegged album only came out in

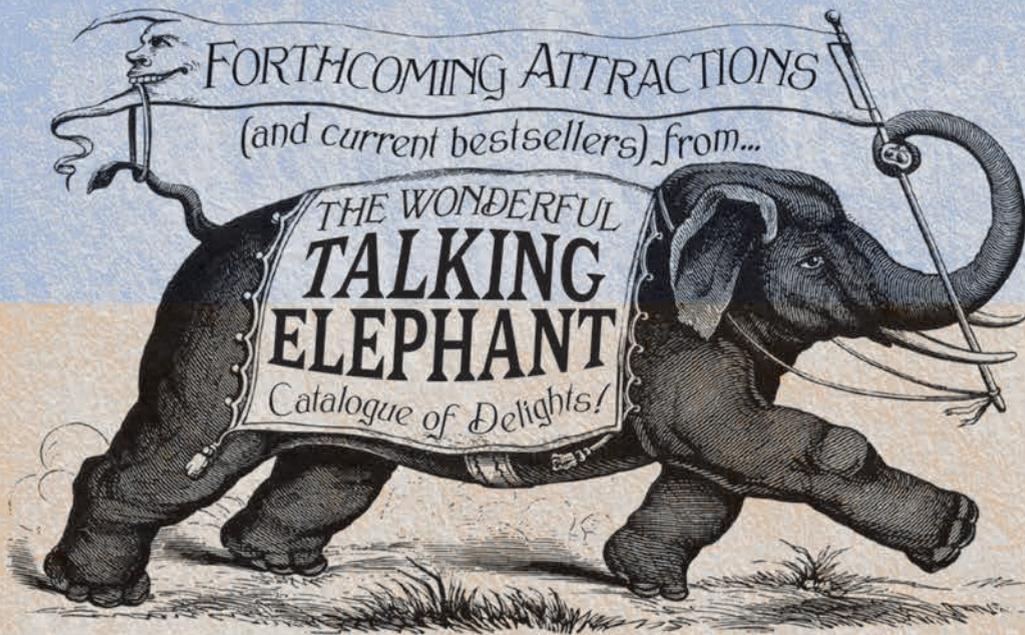
South Africa in 1978 and included band members David Williams and Alison O'Donnell one half of the heavenly duo that made the Irish progressive folk legends so great.

Whilst lacking her mellow sister in song Clodagh Simmonds, Alison - who has gone on to enjoy a recent resurgence in freak-folk circles - is a recognisable voice duetting with Jo Dudding on this collection of original and traditional folk songs. Don't expect the epic sweeping, electric sound of the Candle but those who like the acoustic sound of Spriguns Of Tolgus, Stone Angel, Folkal Point or Brandywine Bridge will find something to enjoy here. The album kicks off with a great version of 'Black Leg Miner' featuring mandolins and beautiful twin female vocals and continues in that vein, production and eclectic instrumentation remaining top notch throughout.

Richard Allen

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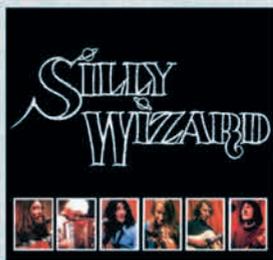
DECAMERON
Tomorrow's Pantomime
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Cheltenham's finest
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THE PURPLE GANG
Strikes
Summer of Love classic,
includes Granny Takes A Trip
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JULIE FELIX
Rock Me Goddess
Brand new studio album
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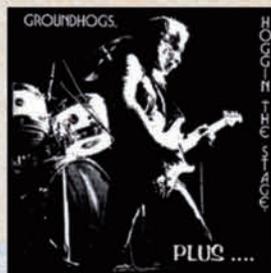
SILLY WIZARD
Silly Wizard
Scottish folkies' 1976 debut
CD TECD420



THE SHADOWS
Change of Address
Their first post-EMI release
from 1980
CD TECD194



THE LEMON PIPERS
Green Tambourine
1967 debut album from Ohio's
psychedelic popsters
CD TECD278



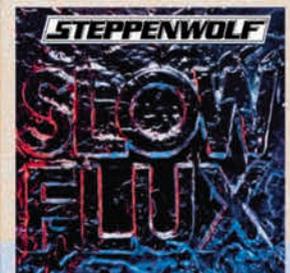
THE GROUNDHOGS
Hoggin' the Stage
2CD TECD101



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Fifty Foot Hose mix it up

No Coming Down



FIFTY FOOT HOSE
Cauldron
 ★★★★★
Bad Trips
 ★★★

BOTH MODERN HARMONIC LPS

When it comes to the first wave of *avant-garde* electronic rock music The United States Of America may continue to gain the plaudits, but Fifty Foot Hose got their first. This progressively-minded aggregation of disenchanting rockers coalesced in San Francisco in 1965 around a nucleus of Cork Marcheschi and the husband and wife team of Nancy and David Blossom. Inspired by *musique concrete* and Dadaism and coloured by the first stirrings of the city's acid-rock counterculture, Marcheschi's band The Ethix had already cut a pair of wildly unconventional, echo-laden tape experiments, 'Bad Trip' and 'Skins', in his family home. When released as a single on SF indie label Mary Jane Records in early '67, it was left to the listener to decide what speed they should be played at.

The arrival of the Blossoms galvanised the group and soon they'd been joined by Larry Evans, Terry

Hansley and Kim Kimsey, who found themselves signed to Mercury's dormant jazz label Limelight, reborn as a none-more-'67 home for electronic/experimental music. It was this six-piece group that cut the *Cauldron* album, released in December to little fanfare and virtually no sales beyond the group's small hardcore following. Its influence has grown exponentially over the years, with *avant-rockers* from Throbbing Gristle to Broadcast citing it as a key touchstone. Cork's opening 'And After' is a non-musical two-minute rumble that ushers in David's 'If Not This Time', one of the record's more structured acid-rock numbers - comparatively speaking - on which Nancy's spectral vocals and Cork's electronic colours conspire to make Jefferson Airplane sound like Peter, Paul & Mary. The sequencing largely follows this template, although by the time we hit Side Two's 10-minute 'Fantasy' and queasy re-invention of Billie Holiday's 'God Bless The Child', any notions of formula or predictability are long-forgotten.

Bad Trips gathers up those pre-*Cauldron* recordings (calling them demos seems unfair, such is their maturity), some captured live in front of onlookers "at a Haight-Ashbury house", and adds a clutch of album out-takes penned by guitarist Evans but dumped in favour of less traditional material.

Modern Harmonic's customary exemplary packaging (Cork's liner notes for *Cauldron* take the form of a 12-page fanzine) and attention to detail ensure you'll want the pair. And you don't have to change the speed to hear 'Bad Trip' in both of its still *outré* forms.

Andy Morten

HASTING'S STREET OPERA Slippery When Wet

★★★★★

OUT-SIDER LP



Originally released back in 1969 in a limited edition of 100 copies with hand-painted covers, this charming album, created by four young New Jersey lads and recorded direct to tape by their Maths teacher, serves as a perfect homage to making music for the love of making music. Which is not to say the tracks contained herein are merely curios.

Quotes from the original musicians, taken from the liner notes to this reissue, say pretty much all you need to know: "Pharaoh Sanders... Doc Watson... Ravi Shankar... that's what informed my musical sensibilities early on. Other bands played the hits of the day, we wanted to jam and see what happened," says bassist Gordon Carlisle.

In short, what you get here are extended instrumental pieces chronicling a bunch of passionate musicians exploring their instruments and their art. Psych, folk, blues and jazz are all present, and damn good fun it is too.

Chris Wheatley

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS California Mudslide (And Earthquake)

★★★★★

MODERN HARMONIC LP



As soon as the needle hits the vinyl, *California Mudslide (And Earthquake)* takes you to a place where it's just one man against the

world, and where his only weapon is the blues. That man is Lightnin' Hopkins.

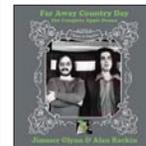
The album, recorded at The Vault Studios in Hollywood, came out in 1969 and essentially shows the Claptons, the Greens, the Richards and the Taylors how it should be done. The opener is an old Texas flood tune adapted to more recent events, 'Easy On Your Heels' packs a hard, rhythmic punch, while 'Change My Way Of Living' showcases Hopkins' no-nonsense guitar expertise. This is a record to be played when simplicity is needed, when the heart is aching and the soul is in need of succour. As Tony Joe White - quoted on the cover - says, Hopkins "can make the chills run over you when he sings". Amen to that.

Greg Morse

JIMMER GLYNN & ALAN RACKIN Far Away Country Day

★★★★★

APCOR LP



In 1968, an obscure New Jersey-based group called The Distinguished Flying Cross, which featured Jimmer Glynn and Alan Rackin, recorded a small clutch of very pleasant, melodic psych-rock style concoctions before calling it a day. Glynn and Rackin, however, decided to stick together



Bottled Lightnin'.
 Mr Hopkins gets
 the tremors

and, in much the same way as did The Aerovons before them, made a trip from USA to London, to lay down demos at Abbey Road Studios. It was hoped that a Beatle or two would find them favourable as new Apple signings but, as things were swiftly unravelling there, that notion wasn't to be.

It's taken almost a half-century, and the encouragement and enthusiasm of Apcor, for Glynn and Rackin's wistful, country and folk-tinged acoustic pop dreams to finally achieve commercial release. The winsome opening title track, 'Take Us Home' and 'Boston Song' will surely win a smile from McCartney fans and aficionados of Badfinger's lighter efforts. Yet it's 'Carnival', 'How Long', 'Lord Of Lights' and 'Sun' - all bonuses from their days as The Distinguished Flying Cross - that constitute their finest moments.

Lenny Helsing

JODI Pop Espontáneo

★★★★

OUTSIDER CD/LP



Recorded between 1969 and '75 by a duo from Paraguay this bizarrely pleasing mish-mash of garage, powerpop, funk and

glam opens with 'Loveseller', a homemade electronic stomp that bears an uncanny resemblance to Goldfrapp's 'Ooh La La'. And so it continues, surprising at every turn.

'Altered Termites In My Room' starts out like Hugo Montenegro on a budget with Moogs, Mellotrons, clavinet and Farfisas galore, then turns into The Sweet with its stomping chorus of "Hey get out of my mind". Just great. 'Change Your Mind' has wonderful, whooshing, distorted fuzz guitar solos over a proto-disco/funk groove whilst the songs title is repeated over and over in various ornate vocal arrangements. Weirdly fascinating. It doesn't all work and the low-fi sound quality is somewhat frustrating, but one can only wonder at what these guys would have done with a big pile of cash!

Richard Allen

MANDRAKE PADDLE STEAMER Pandemonium Shadow Show

★★★★

SOMMOR LP

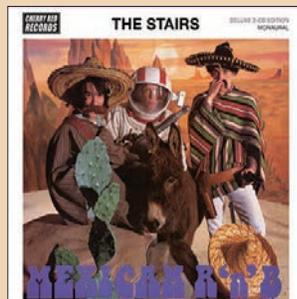


UK psych Zelig Mandrake Paddle Steamer deposited just one single during their lifetime - 1969's exquisite and unique

'Strange Walking Man', on which the quintet's dramatic vocals and proggy predilections ensured they'd never be heard on Radio One.

Visits to the studio in '68 and '70 resulted in these nine tracks, all but one unheard until now, which display a full grasp of the doomy sound of post-psychedelic London on 'The World Whistles By' (previously released as 'East Wing') and 'Pandemonium Shadow Show' (title courtesy of Nilsson, music model's own)

Skins Versus Shirts



THE STAIRS Mexican R'n'B: Deluxe Edition

★★★★★

CHERRY RED 3-CD

Back in the early '90s, there were few shows more mainstream than Radio 1's *Steve Wright In The Afternoon*. Cutting edge and subversive it was not, so God only knows what the regular listeners would have made of its brief championing of a storming slab of freakbeat R&B that extolled the delights of spliffing up on the 147 bus back

home. 'Weed Bus' was the standout song on the debut EP by Liverpool three-piece The Stairs, formed only a year or so previously by Ian McCulloch's occasional bassist Edgar Jones, guitarist Ged Lynn and drummer Paul Maguire, too late to be part of the first waves of '60s-obsessed garage mania and just too early for Britpop.

Their career was brief but action-packed and over the next year or so, they put out four further seven-inches as well the legendary debut LP from which this set takes its name. There was a tour with The Charlatans, obsessive Stairs fanatics chasing the band round Japan and an unreleased second LP cut before they split, four short years after their inception. Having already been the subject of various collections, this definitive set is surely the last word, gathering together as it does all the official releases, the Toe Rag demos, the follow-up album and various other odds and sods, with a gorgeous

biographical booklet thrown in as well for good measure.

CD-1 is the 1992 debut LP, three EPs and a punchier powerful take of 'Fall Down The Rain'. All served up with a splash of stoned Scouse sensibility, the tracks come pitched somewhere between '66 Kinks, warped Nederbiet and the kind of moody garage popularised by countless New England acts, adorned every now and then by a surprise harpsichord or blast of harmonica and topped off with Edgar's distinctively theatrical growl.

CD-2 is the fourth EP, a fifth that was never realised and bedroom demos spanning from '86 to '91 along with Toe Rag demos from the following years, whilst the final disc is the second LP, radio sessions and some late-in-the-day doodlings, all of which capture a band overflowing with ideas and hook-laden songs.

Heroes of our time.

Hugh Dellar

Up the wooden hill with Ged, Paul and Edgar



before the group emerged in the solemn shadows of Arthur Brown and King Crimson two years later with the seven-minute 'Stella Mermaid' (hey, we've all encountered mermaids after trips to "the tavern", right?) and the wild extemporisations of 'Doris The Piper'.

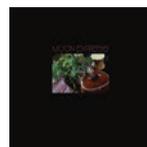
It's fascinating stuff alright but the Steamer's over-arching earnestness and constantly furrowed brows prevented this listener from fully engaging.

Andy Morten

MOON EXPRESS Prophetic Spirit

★★★★

MODERN HARMONIC LP+7"



extraordinary slice of late '60s exotica.

Arnold's growing interest in Eastern mysticism had already yielded *The Inner*

Sounds Of The Id in 1967, but a blossoming partnership with Yemenite singer Tsvia Abarbanel was brought to an abrupt end after Arnold was severely injured by a runaway vehicle. An album's worth of tracks had been recorded but none would see the light of day - apart from a memorable slot on *The Monkees'* wacky NBC TV special in early '69. Until now.

Prophetic Spirit blends together Arnold's diatribes against the decay of western civilisation with free jazz, fluid sitar and ghostly

Continues over

Back To The Junkshop



VARIOUS ARTISTS All The Young Droogs

★★★★★
RPM 3-CD BOX SET
It's been well over 10 years since RPM released their first batch of glitter-related compilations, *Velvet Timine*, *Glitterbest* and *Boobs*, so this box set is a welcome expansion to the genre, containing both revered singles and newer discoveries from the litterbin. Split into three categories the three discs set out to cover the glam oeuvre from the decadent swoon

of Brett Smiley, whose 'Abstracting Billy' is the precursor for a soon to be released, originally shelved album, through copious, tom-thumping, teen disco clatter to the heavy-rock bash of Zephyr's 'Baby Grande'.

Disc One, *Rock Off!*, explores the weightier edge of glam to the extent that The Stooges' 'I Got A Right' gets a look in. Happily there's also plenty of proto-punk angst, Third World War's 'Working Class Man' and speed boogie such as The Brats' 'Be A Man' lobbed into the skull-blasting aural hand grenades. Amongst the risky gender bending lyrics there's room for the self-aware with Sweeny Todd's 'Roxy Roller' sweeping us off on a trip to a sleazy, sunset groupie heaven.

The second chapter, *Tubthumpers & Hellraisers*, sides with the boot heel-demolishing stompers including Hector, Mott and the always value for money Hello. This disc also includes the fabulous 'Cut Loose' by Stud Leather - championed by the excellent Purepop website, it's a triumph of ambition

over ability and a precursor of the DIY attitude that punk would embrace a couple of years later. A stand-out of this miscellany is 'Little Boy Blue' by Angel. Produced by members of The Sweet it's a mystery how it wasn't a huge hit. There are so many supercharged bubblegum and rock delights here that it's hard to pick favourites but UK Jones's 'Let Me Tell Ya' merits a mention both for being released in '69 - a very early addition to the genre - and for sounding like a brutal steroidal kids TV theme.

Elegance & Decedance, the final entry in this trilogy, explores the more wanton, Bowie-esque facets of glam with the outstanding 'Virginia Creeper' by Greg Robbins and a surprisingly restrained Jesse Hector rarity in 'I Live In Style In Maida Vale'.

Expertly compiled by Phil King and containing detailed breakdowns of band/artist/release history this is a long overdue must-have for fans of Junkshop Glam.

Henry Hutton



percussive atmospheric, becoming a kind of aural benediction for the hippie era. Add to that a remarkable rendition of 'Love Is Strange' and twin Beatles covers on a bonus 45 and it's a must-have for those who prefer their '60s discoveries a little out there.

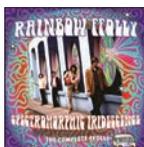
Johnnie Johnstone

LISTEN TO
SHINDIG!
ON SOHO RADIO



RAINBOW FOLLY Spectromorphic Iridescence

★★★★★
GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD BOX SET



One of the great "what-ifs" of the British psychedelic era, High-Wycombe band Rainbow Folly's 1967 album *Sallies Forth* is here lovingly reissued in another beautiful three-disc set from Grapefruit Records. From the first beats of opener 'She's Alright' it's evident that this four-piece was a head above the chasing pack in terms of songwriting,

musicianship and invention, clearly inspired by both The Beatles' sonic experiments and old-school English eccentricity.

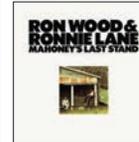
Yes, some of the cuts betray the feel of an unfinished demo (which, in fact, they were - EMI chose to release them as-was) but this in no way diminishes their charm or delightful playfulness. From sweet acoustic numbers to harder-hitting swathes of psych, replete with four-part harmonies, this is a collection worthy of rediscovery. Also included are rare tracks, demos and the band's extremely likable 2016 album *Follow-Up!*

Chris Wheatley

RON WOOD & RONNIE LANE Mahoney's Last Stand

★★★★★

REAL GONE CD



The 1972 soundtrack to a virtually unreleased Alexis Kanner film about a city boy who moves to the country, *Mahoney's Last Stand*

was recorded in downtime while waiting for Rod to show up to sessions for The Faces' *Ooh La La* LP. And even though Woody's name comes first, this is much more of a Ronnie Lane-sounding release, dominated by semi-acoustic country blues instrumentals as befits the film's subject.

Opener 'Tonight's Number' is a Rod-less Faces jamming with the Stones' horn section (Bobby Keys and Jim Price), while 'Chicken Wired' is a scratchy shuffle that Lane would redo on *Anymore For Anymore*. 'Title One' and 'Car Radio' are both irresistibly funky grooves (the latter featuring Pete Townshend), and 'Just For A Moment' (here in both instrumental and vocal versions) is one of Lane's best and best-loved ballads. A wistful masterpiece, it's the high watermark of a laidback and charming collection.

Ben Graham

THE SEARCHERS The Farewell Album: The Greatest Hits And More

★★★★★

BMG 2-CD



We have lots of love for The Searchers here at *Shindig!* Peerless purveyors of Merseybeat and godfathers of folk-rock, their timeless 12-string jangle influenced everyone from The Byrds to The Ramones, and as they finally retire after 60 years on the road they've more than earned their place among rock 'n' roll's greats.

Sadly, however, this is far from the best of the many compilations of the band's work. Forty-six of the 50 tracks draw from the 1964-66 period, and the remaining four are not their classic run of singles from '67-68 ('Popcorn, Double Feature' to 'Umbrella Man') but come from '92 and 2019 and bear an unlovely resemblance to '90s chart-botherers Wet Wet Wet. There's all the expected sugar, spice, needles and pins, plus B-sides and LP tracks leaning heavily on over-familiar cover versions. But those looking for a cherry-picked anthology of the band's best are better served elsewhere.

Ben Graham

MATTHEW SWEET Blue Sky On Mars / In Reverse

★★★★★

RETROWORLD 2-CD



Two albums of guitar-driven powerpop brought together as a double CD set. 1997's *Blue*

Continues over

tune up

GRAHAME BENT grooves to the latest hot jazz titles



Resonance's mission statement to track down and release previously unissued jazz recordings has once again paid handsome dividends with **ERIC DOLPHY'S Musical**

Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Studio Sessions (★★★★). Formatted as triple vinyl/CD packages that combine the *Conversations* and *Iron Man* albums (both of which are presented here with bonus tracks) with a complete disc's worth of previously unreleased studio recordings and a hugely detailed 100-page booklet, the contents of the *Musical Pioneer* set will come as a major find to all serious Dolphy devotees who in recent times have found themselves starved of anything in the way of previously unissued material from the ill-fated one-time high flying sideman of John Coltrane and Charles Mingus. Fronting a studio ensemble which included Clifford Jordan, Woody Shaw, Bobby Hutcherson, Richard Davis and Charles Moffett everything here with the exception of the astoundingly atypical 'A Personal Statement' was recorded over the space of a mere two days during these Alan Douglas-produced sessions in July 1963 with the latter track dating from March '64. While both *Conversations* and *Iron Man* have previously enjoyed independent releases in their own right having everything from the New York sessions collected together under the umbrella of the *Musical Prophet* set counts as a real bonus however, it goes without saying that the real star attraction here is undoubtedly the complete album's worth of alternative takes where Dolphy and his troupe can be heard at their best on 'Music Matador', the haunting 'Love Me', Fats Waller's 'Jitterbug Waltz', 'Mandrake' and 'Burning Spear'.

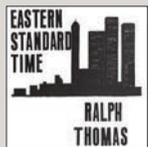


Judging by its design style, its line in deluxe packaging and its commitment to issuing previously unreleased jazz recordings, newly launched label Reel To Real Recordings comes across as every inch the little sister to its well established big brother Resonance. The first title to see the light of day on Reel To Real is **CANNONBALL ADDERLEY'S Swingin' In Seattle** (★★★★, CD) which comprises a sterling collection of archive radio broadcasts taped during four dates at Seattle's Penthouse Jazz Club in June '66 and October '67. Fronting his regular quintet which also featured brother Nat Adderley on cornet and Joe Zawinul on piano, Cannonball and the band are heard in scintillating form as they demonstrate their versatility on a repertoire which includes a truly superb reading of Luiz Bonfá's 'The Morning Of The Carnival' ('Manha De Carnaval'), a sublimely understated take on Leonard Bernstein's 'Somewhere' along with Joe Zawinul's extended compositions '74 Miles Away' and 'Hippodelphia'. Part of the appeal of this particular release is the fact that it includes the original radio intros and features all of Cannonball's on-stage chit-chat which enhances the authenticity of the listening experience to the extent that you feel like you're actually in the club witnessing the show in person.



Boasting pristine audio, deluxe sleeve artwork and originally released in '77 as one of Sony Japan's pricey high-end jazz titles **HERBIE HANCOCK'S**

Flood gets a limited edition double vinyl reissue (★★★★, GET ON DOWN). Recorded live at two shows in Tokyo in late June/early July '75 Flood documents Herbie and his precision drilled Headhunters outfit, which at the time featured future Parliament-Funkadelic guitarist Blackbyrd McKnight, at the height of their popularity as they wow the locals with an ultra-tight showcase of their highly polished and definitively mid-70s fusion sound. That said, the recording actually opens with an acoustic rendition of Hancock's definitive solo masterpiece 'Maiden Voyage' but it's not long before the all-consuming funkiness kicks in on rapturously received versions of the iconic 'Watermelon Man', 'Butterfly', the Sly Stone-influenced monster groove of 'Chameleon' and 'Hang Up Your Hang Ups'.

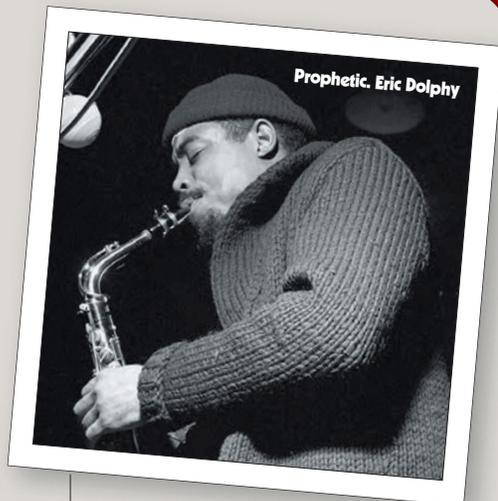


Originally released in '80 on the obscure Zebra Jazz imprint and now widely available on both vinyl and CD for the first time thanks to the efforts of BBE it's hard to believe given the quality of its

contents that **Eastern Standard Time** (★★★★) remains the sole album baritone/alto/tenor man, flautist and self-styled globe-trotting "ethno-musicologist" **RALPH THOMAS** recorded as leader in a career that saw him variously recording with Howlin' Wolf and Mighty Joe Young for the Chess imprint Cadet, working as a session man at 20th Century Fox and Motown while also playing with a host of major names including Quincy Jones, Johnny Colon, Sun Ra, Don Cherry, Sunny Murray ad Archie Shepp. Free-flowing, gutsy, big on the groove and encompassing styles ranging from modal to post-bop with an overall feel similar to some of the titles issued on the highly regarded Detroit-based independent label Strata-East, the self-produced *Eastern Standard Time* ranks as something of a major find for an album that has at best languished in semi obscurity since its original release. With Thomas backed throughout by an empathetic collection of players who are given ample room to stretch out on a string of original compositions which include 'Cafe Phillippe', 'Doloroso', 'Moscovado', the splendidly titled 'Big Spliff' and the album's title track, *Eastern Standard Time* will guarantee rewarding listening to all those of us open to the prospect of uncovering a slept-on gem.



BBE's World Jazz Grooves (★★★★, CD/LP), compiled by Jean-Claude and Victor Kiswell of If Music, is a boundary-stretching collection that brings together a wide variety of sounds and styles drawn from across the wide geographic spread of the international jazz community on a selection of recordings dating from the '60s, '70s, '80s and

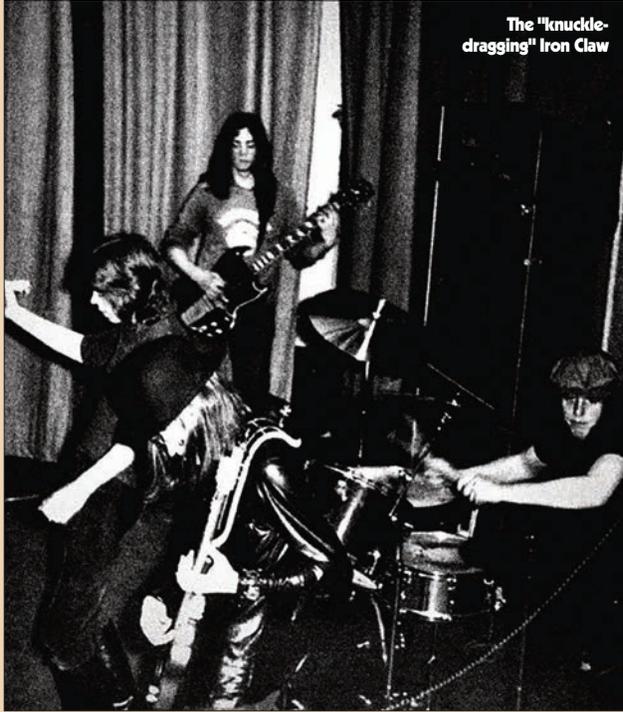


beyond. Opening with Billy Bang's Survival Ensemble whose incredible combination of hard-hitting rap and jazz on 'Illustration' brings with it comparisons with The Watts Prophets, The Last Poets and Gil Scott-Heron to the Caribbean flavours of Michel Sardaby's 'Martinica' and Le Steel Band De La Trinidad's 'Calypso Jazz Improvisation', the Afro rootsiness of Kafe's 'Fonetik A Velo' and The Theo Loevende Consort's 'Timbuktu' to The Jazz Committee For Latin American Affairs' 'Ismaaa' featuring oud master Ahmad Abdul-Malik, Masabumi Kikuchi's 'Puma #1' and Joe Malinga & The Southern African Force's 'Twenty Five' the album's very *raison d'être* lies in its sheer out-reaching diversity.



To conclude we go Stateside for another significant anthology in the form of **Soul Of A Nation: Jazz Is The Teacher, Funk Is The Preacher - Afro-Centric Jazz, Street Funk And Roots**

Of Rap In The Black Power Era 1969-1975 (★★★★, SOUL JAZZ CD/LP). Released as the sequel to last year's *Soul Of A Nation: Afro Centric Visions In The Age Of Black Power 1964-1969* this new volume impressively picks up the story where the first part of the collection left off. The story in question being the stylistically diverse and yet interwoven musical strands of Afrocentric jazz, soul, funk and proto-rap which came into being in the post-Civil Rights era of black empowerment and increased African American militancy which ultimately led to the dawn of rap and what would eventually evolve into the first flowerings of hip hop. Throughout this period a lot of challenging and mould breaking sounds came into being which is reflected in the tracklisting which balances material from familiar names including The Art Ensemble Of Chicago, Baby Huey, Funkadelic, Gary Bartz & NTU Troop, Oneness Of Juju, Sarah Webster Fabio, Wendell Harrison, Phil Ranelin & Tribe, Gil Scott-Heron and Don Cherry with little known gems from acts as diverse as the Har-You Percussion Group, The Pharoahs, Byron Morris & Unity and Rashied Ali & Frank Lowe. While the radical defining themes of the collection are maybe most vividly expressed by The Art Ensemble Of Chicago's 'Theme De Yoyo' and Gary Bartz & NTU Troop's 'Celestial Blues' the freak-out factor undeniably belongs to Oneness Of Juju's 'Space Jungle Funk' and Don Cherry's 'Brown Rice' which leaves the razor sharp, hard hitting sentiments of Gil Scott-Heron's spoken word tour de force 'Whitney On The Moon' to comprehensively capture the spirit of the anthology and all in a playing time of under two minutes!



Loud Green Songs



VARIOUS ARTISTS I'm A Freak 2 Baby: A Further Journey Through The British Heavy Psych And Hard Rock Underground Scene 1968-73

★★★★★
GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD BOX SET
While '60s psychedelia and garage-rock feels like it's been almost completely asset-stripped, 1968-73 is a still fruitful and arguably more interesting period in British music. It's when "rock" as we know it really came into being, an avalanche of bands armed with cheap distortion pedals and youthful enthusiasm building on the grungy *sturm und drang* of early pioneers such as Hendrix and Cream. Reflecting the experiences and desires of a young working class with money in its pocket and a need to let off steam after the drudgery of manual labour, the bands here reject any pressure to be "commercial" and revel instead in the simply joys of making an unholy racket. Northampton's Wicked Lady are the epitome of the provincial heavy act, the crunching boogie-

rock of 'Run The Night' featuring a head-nodding riff, an eye-scraping solo, and a vocal that sounds like it was recorded in a pub's beer cellar. Similarly impressive is 'Clawstrophobia' from Dumfries's Iron Claw, a knuckle-dragging wave of sludge that mines Black Sabbath's atmosphere of impending doom. Like much of the material here, neither of these tracks got a proper release at the time.

The muscular blues-rock of Led Zeppelin is a touchstone for Orang-Utan, Leaf Hound and Freedom, but the alternative heavy canon is also well-represented: the monstrous low-end of Budgie's 'Guts', the intense horror-prog of Atomic Rooster's 'Death Walks Behind You', the up and at 'em teen attack of Stray's 'The Man Who Paints The Pictures'. And the epicentre of freak culture Ladbroke Grove is celebrated with prime cuts from The Deviants, Edgar Broughton Band, the Lemmy-fronted Sam Gopal and High Tide, whose Doors-meets-Stooges gothic brain-blaster 'Futillist's Lament' is another essential.

Then there's the unsung guitar heroes hiding in plain sight: Ollie Halsall turns the blokey raunch of Patto's 'Loud Green Song' inside out with some WTF shredding, while *avant*-jazzier Ray Russell welds proto-metal to funk on Mouse's 'Ashen Beshler'. Finally, occasional respite from the din is provided by the throbbing melancholia of Sam Apple Pie's 'Winter Of My Love' and Sunday's Shel Talmy-produced, Traffic-alike 'Fussing And Fighting'.
Joe Banks

Sky On Mars and '99's *In Reverse* both have a sound and production that stands up well today. Sweet was one of the musicians in the '90s who studied Big Star, Brumbeat and Brit Invasion as core texts, making it his mission to re-present melody and melancholia to an audience raised on grunge. That said, the contemporaneous influence of Nirvana pushes through on 'Where You Get Love' and 'Hollow'.

The use of synths gives *Blue Sky On Mars* a lightly futuristic edge and *In Reverse* is fleshed out with some nice touches - the trumpet peels on 'Millennium Blues' for one. Sweet's ability to write earworm tunes is in evidence throughout as is his sensitivity with the themes of fractured friendship and love's ever-elusive nature. The lack of filler and tracks to cash ratio here makes this a particularly sweet deal.

Duncan Fletcher

VARIOUS ARTISTS FAME Northern Soul

★★★★★
KENT CD
Although renowned as the stable for quintessential southern soul, FAME, like most other labels in the '60s, was hungry for hits and willing to diversify. This up-tempo compilation taps into the different soul flavours that have enamoured the northern soul scene over the years.

There's southern grit in the grooves of those Clarence Carter, George Jackson, Arthur Conley and James Govan sides but the real prize here is the plethora of recent

discoveries including Candi Staton's 'One More Hurt' and Spencer Wiggins' 'I'm At The Breaking Point'. Other highlights include David & The Giants' soaring 'Ten Miles High' with its dizzying psychedelic phasing effects and George Soule's super-slick 'Midnight Affair', an infectious slice of '70s soul.

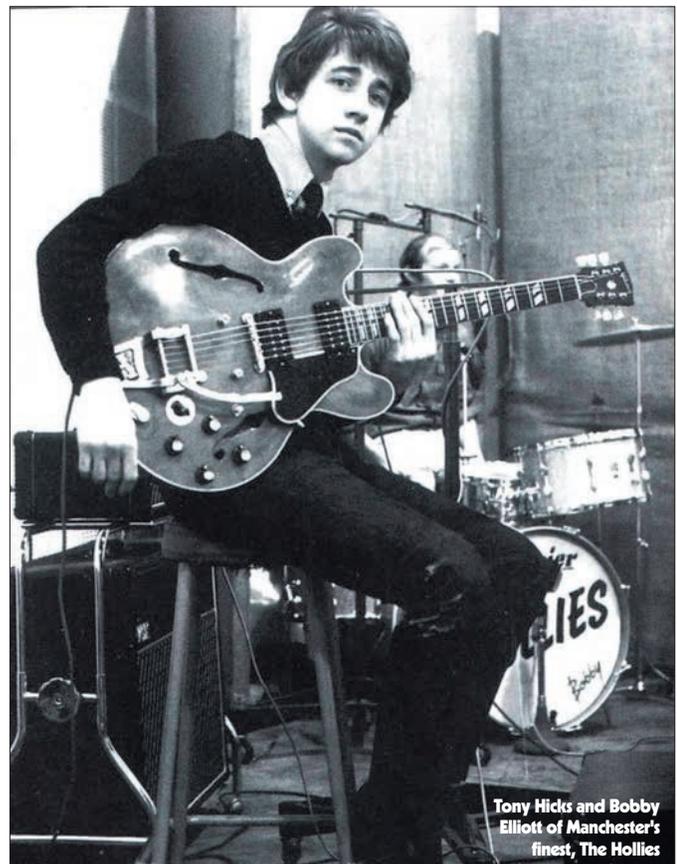
Each track shows FAME could mix it with the big boys and this compilation stands head and shoulders above the overplayed sounds you'll hear on other High Street northern-themed sets.

Paul Ritchie

VARIOUS ARTISTS Manchester: A City United In Music

★★★★★
ACE 2-CD
This 45-track collection ticks all the genre boxes as it solidifies (Greater) Manchester's claim as the UK's second music city. The set is a veritable jukebox of folk (Ewan MacColl), beat (Hollies, Hermits, Mindbenders), blues (John Mayall, Georgie Fame), prog (Barclay James Harvest), punk (Buzzcocks, Slaughter, Salford Jets), powerpop (The Freshies' brilliant novelty smash) and delightfully unexpected representations of Joy Division, New Order, Simply Red, Fall and Johnny Marr (representing the conspicuously absent Smiths). It all ends with Britpop smash hits from Stone Roses, Mondays, Inspiral and Oasis.

Continues over



Tony Hicks and Bobby Elliott of Manchester's finest, The Hollies

prog nosis

MARCO ROSSI sees in the New Year through a haze of medieval folk and mathematical prog

Oh Jesus, 2019 already? One of the many side-effects of the UK's unending horror show over the last two-and-a-half years has been the way it made fun and frivolity seem inappropriate. There have been many occasions recently when the mere thought of listening to albums felt indulgent and inconsequential... when my time could have been better spent gnawing my fingernails down to the shoulder blades, worrying what's to become of us all.

I was, of course, forgetting a fundamental property of music: it's an antidote to poison. It may not have any direct bearing on events in the wider world, but like all good art (and a gratifying amount of bad art), it bolsters your tattered spirit and resets your anxiety parameters for another day. It's a thing that saves us.



Third Ear Band

“The title track of this ’73 touchstone, cloaked in its era-defining Roger Dean sleeve, is one of the most exquisite, delicate, twinkling, sighing constants in the whole prog constellation”



That said, I'm writing this on New Year's Eve, and debating whether music by **THIRD EAR BAND** would be a challengingly unorthodox or grimly pertinent choice for seeing in 2019. I live near Weymouth, renowned and feared for its hard-partying attitude towards the New Year and have just remembered a proposition issued to my friend Tom one New Year's Eve about a decade ago. In short, it was mooted that he should spend the New Year-spanning party hours between 8pm and 3am sitting alone in a cold shed in total darkness. He declined this offer; but if ever an ideal soundtrack suggested itself for such an endeavour, it would be Third Ear Band.

Elements 1970-1971 (★★★★, BMG 3-CD BOX SET) reminds us that the band's ominous, chilly, largely improvised metier - wherein oboe, violin, cello and hand drums vied for dominion - was strong meat. In combining TEB's self-titled debut album with their *Abelard & Heloise* soundtrack and a vast quantity of doughty unreleased material - two-thirds of the track listing, at a rough estimate - the *Elements* box set commands serious respect. It's not that the TEB were congenitally opposed to accessible melody, as such: 'Earth', for example, is a guardedly jaunty interlude of neo-medieval minstrelsy. It's just that they were, more often than not, likelier to sound like a vengeful wind blowing a haunted spinning top through an abandoned abattoir. Just how we like it.

Of those bonus tracks, 'Very Fine... Far Away' rolls maleficent electronics into TEB's darkened hallway, and 'Mistress Of The Sun' is Quintessence trying on The Magic Band's trousers. 'Evening Awakening', meanwhile, is heroically dour and insular: 22 minutes spent in wilful avoidance of resolution. More forbiddingly still, 'Druid One' sounds like the fallen angel Mulciber furiously trying to sand his initials off Lucifer's throne leg before The Prince Of Darkness returns from the Tory party conference.



If the idea of such powerfully evocative dark magic appeals, '72's **Music From Macbeth** (★★★★, ESOTERIC CD), featuring a later TEB line-up with cellist Paul Buckmaster, High Tide/Hawkwind violinist Simon House and, we shit you not, the child Keith Chegwin (providing an effectively plaintive vocal on 'Fleance'), is probably their most cohesive and absorbing work. Familiarity with the Polanski film - or, indeed, "The Scottish Play" - is not required to derive the maximum brooding satisfaction from the TEB soundtrack.



As the bells approach and I demolish the first single malt of the evening - correct, one malt loaf - **PFM** are sounding far more appropriate for New Year revelry. Look, they've even got a track literally called 'Celebration', a much-loved prog

tarantella from their '73 debut UK album *Photos Of Ghosts*, just one of the four included in **The Manticore Studio Albums 1973-1977**

(★★★★, MANTICORE/ESOTERIC 4-CD BOX SET). As the highest-profile Italian prog band of the era, PFM benefited big time from the patronage of ELP, who signed them to their Manticore label and brought erstwhile King Crimson lyricist Pete Sinfield into their orbit.

Sinfield's ornate loquacity seemed like a snug fit for *Photos Of Ghosts* and '74's *The World Became The World* - endearingly earnest, grandiose, stiff-peaked affairs, studded with celestial thunderheads of Mellotron and even a plummy-voiced choir which, irony of ironies, sounded just like a Mellotron. However, as befits a band named after a bakery, 'Have Your Cake And Beat It' could be five Kenwood Chefs in a Robot Wars-style battle to the death, and points to the scuttling, ferociously virtuosic jazz-prog direction they would pursue on '76's *Chocolata Kings* and '77's *Jet Lag*. The addition of former Acqua Fragile vocalist Bernardo Lanzetti for the latter two albums was a smart prog move: he always sounded as though he gargled each morning with Gentle Giant's entire back catalogue.

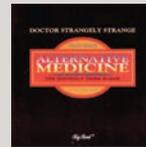
Having all four of PFM's Manticore albums in individual replica sleeve wallets allows you to map this development in strict chronology, should you so wish. Thrill all over again to the vertiginous crescendo in 'Meridiani', featuring more notes per musician than there are stars in the firmament; or let the cud drop from your ruminant jaw at Franco Mussida's gently uncanny nylon-string guitar solo piece, 'Peninsula'. Alexa, set dexterity levels to "Steve Howe performing keyhole surgery on a neutrino".



The hour of midnight is upon me, and I find myself reaching past the Twiglets and cheese footballs for an old ally: **Beside Manners**

Are Extra (★★★★, ESOTERIC CD+DVD) by **GREENSLADE**. The

title track of this '73 touchstone, cloaked in its era-defining Roger Dean sleeve, is one of the most exquisite, delicate, twinkling, sighing constants in the whole prog constellation. It outshines pretty much everything; not least the remainder of the album, truth be told, although 'Sunkissed You're Not' and 'Time To Dream' share a measure of its careworn elegance, and 'Pilgrim's Progress' admirably maintains its boogie tempo with all the precarious restraint of Sneezzy conducting an egg-and-spoon marathon over a minefield. The new reissue comes with a DVD of Greenslade's '73 *OGWT* performance and a long-forgotten promo film - a poignant reminder of an era when major labels (a) invested in hairball prog combos, and (b) existed in any significant sense.



Lastly, let's raise a glass to the illustratively titled **Alternative Medicine: The Difficult Third Album** (★★★, ACE CD) by **DOCTOR STRANGELY STRANGE**.

Originally released in 1997, a full 27 years after second album *Heavy Petting* (hence the "difficulty"), it's as measured and sober as I'm not at time of writing. Herein, the "freak" element of yore is toned down while the folk bit is ramped up. Gary Moore adds guitar heft in patches, but the album nevertheless retains welcome traces of their signature fragility.

Speaking of fragility, I'm due the first hangover of 2019 any minute now. Stay lovely, and we'll all get through this year somehow.

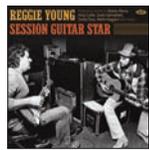
But it's the obscurities from beat rockers Measles and Pete Maclain & The Clan, a trawl through Graham Gouldman's varied career (Whirlwinds, Mockingbirds, 10cc), loonies Jilted John and electro-synth headscratchers Gerry & The Holograms, mod stompers St Louis Union, punk Bonzos Smack and commune-styled folk rockers Greasy Bear that will entice the musicologist in all of us.

Jeff Penczak

VARIOUS ARTISTS Reggie Young: Session Guitar Star

★★★★

ACE CD



You may not have heard his name before but you've definitely heard his work. Reggie Young is one of the greatest guitarists from The Deep South, and his sublime playing has graced classic songs like Dusty Springfield's 'Son Of A Preacher Man', The Box Tops' 'The Letter' and Willie Nelson's 'Always On My Mind'.

This career spanning comp from Ace Records is a 24-track stroll through some of Young's lesser-known cuts (alongside a couple of big hitters like J J Cale's 'Cocaine'). Arranged in roughly chronological order, things kick off with Eddie Bond & His Stompers' rollicking 'Slip, Slip, Slippin' In', before moving into the killer soul territory of King Curtis & The Kingpins' 'In The Pocket' and the twanging country sounds of Merle Haggard's 'I Think I'll Just Stay Here and Drink'. With appearances from Elvis Presley, Joe Tex, The Highwaymen and even Natalie Merchant, this is a joyous celebration of a relatively unheralded great.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Lowrider Soul

★★★

KENT CD



For *Shindig!* readers not up on car culture, the lowrider is an American automobile modified so that it cruises low to the ground, often with hydraulics that allow the drivers to bounce along the road. Their genesis can be found in post-WW2 LA, where Mexican-American kids took to remodelling their rides before cruising down

LA's Whittier Boulevard on a Saturday night, blasting soul music as they went. This compilation, curated by Sean Hampsey in collaboration with noted low rider scholar and DJ Ruben Molina, is an attempt to collect some of the deep cuts embraced by the culture back in the '60s.

The sound of the scene wasn't one of macho swagger; instead it was smooth and slow, typified by deep soul ballads from the likes of Melvin Hicks and Barbara Mason, and bands with names like The Esquires, The Vows and The Lovelies. These are the silkiest sounds, seductive even without a modified ride.

Thomas Patterson

ZOOT Archaeology

★★★★

EMI AUSTRALIA CD

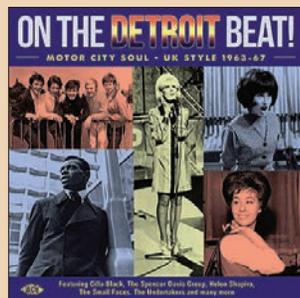


Even after all these years Adelaide's Zoot are mostly remembered for two things: their pink stage outfits, and Rick Springfield, who joined the band in mid-stream. However, they also boasted an excellent lead vocalist in Daryl Cotton (Friends, Cotton, Lloyd & Christian) and future Little River Band member Beeb Birtles, along with a slew of great tracks which ranged from groovy bubblegum to heavy-rock.

Archaeology is an excellent compendium, featuring among other things the hits 'One Times, Two Times, Three Times, Four' and 1968 debut 'You'd Better Get Goin'', along with other pop gems like 'Sailing' and 'She's Alright', any of which could have sat on an early Who album without anyone knowing better. Not long after Springfield joined the band they offered up a heavy-rock treatment of 'Eleanor Rigby' (#4 on the Aussie charts), along with the aptly named 'The Freak'. *Archaeology* also boasts a fine 2013 reunion version of 'Life In A Northern Town'!

David Bash

It's A Miracle!



VARIOUS ARTISTS On The Detroit Beat!: Motor City Soul UK Style 1963-67

★★★★

ACE CD

On January 12th 1959, Berry Gordy founded Tamla Records in Detroit, Michigan, its first release, Marv Johnson's 'Come To Me'. Soon renamed Motown, the label quickly became a powerhouse in contemporary music, releasing hit after hit by the likes of Eddie Holland and The Supremes, soon

coming to dominate the US charts.

Over in the UK, however, it was a somewhat different story; for whilst imprints like Oriole and Stateside released dozens of Motown tracks, the label wouldn't have a chart hit until Mary Wells' 'My Guy' in the summer of '64 - and as the exemplary liner notes to Ace's shimmering and shaking new comp *On The Detroit Beat!* point out, they wouldn't have any sustained success until '66.

Still, lack of Top 40 action couldn't diminish the sheer quality of Gordy's output, and tastemakers and music makers grabbed onto the new Motown sound with delight. The Beatles covered tracks like 'Please Mister Postman' and 'Money' on *With The Beatles* in '63, whilst innumerable other British acts attempted to make tunes from the Motown catalogue their own, with varying degrees of success - which is where *On The Detroit Beat!* comes in.

Containing 24 tracks from mostly well-known British artists, this is a delightful look at what happened when

Motown collided with London Town (and cities beyond). The album kicks off with The Hollies' rousing '65 version of The Miracles' 'Mickey's Monkey', and the album shows that it's when beat bands got in on the act that things really got interesting. Bern Elliott & The Fenmen's 'Shake Sherry' from '63 is a highlight, as is The Birds' deconstruction of 'No Good Without You'. In comparison, solo female singers like Truly Smith and Beverley Jones sound anaemic next to their American cousins, although Dusty Springfield and a very young Elkie Brooks demonstrate early star power. Elsewhere, *bona-fide* American Herbie Goins busts out dancefloor classic 'Number 1 In Your Heart', future musical impresario Bill Kenwright presents a cooing cover of 'I Want To Go Back There Again', and Sounds Incorporated's cool mod-jazz version of 'Shotgun' nearly survives Cilla Black caterwauling over it. The Sound Of Young America, UK style - and how!

Thomas Patterson



Georgie Fame and Elkie Brooks celebrate the genius of Motown

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Charlie Faye (middle) and FAYETTES BettySoo and Akina Adderley

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE & THE MELTING PARAIISO UFO

Rebirth Of Universe In Reverse

★★★★★
RIOT SEASON CD/LP



Like the stars in the night sky, who can say for sure just how many Acid Mothers and related albums there are out there. What's

for sure is that with nominal leader Kawabata Makoto and long-serving first lieutenant Higashi Hiroshi, re-energised by the arrival of three new members, the notoriously prolific Acid Mothers' latest studio collection finds the Templars - in their own words - embarking on the next stage of their spaced odyssey.

The opening 'Dark Star Blues' and its sister cut the more abstracted 'Blue Velvet Blues' act as the conduit that leads to 'Black Summer Song' - the cavernous 20-minute black hole lurking at the heart of the album. By way of an added bonus the CD version concludes with a stunning circumnavigation of what else but Gong's 'Flying Teapot' during which Acid Mothers' spiralling vortex of sound manages to drift close by the orbit of Can's 'Mother Sky'. Welcome to the next stage.

Grahame Bent

CHARLIE FAYE & THE FAYETTES

The Whole Shebang

★★★
BIGGER BETTER MORE CD



Composing in period style isn't straightforward. The task involves, by necessity, a self-consciousness that wouldn't have burdened

the original writers. Charlie Faye's second retro-pop collection (with FAYETTES BettySoo and Akina Adderley) is convincing stuff, sustaining its conceit for 37 minutes.

The writing ranges from boy-crazy bubblegum ('1-2-3-4') to statements of independence ('I Don't Need No Baby'), and there's a delicious, Patsy Cline-style resignation to 'That's What New Love Is For'. When Faye ventures beyond romantic concerns ('The Cream Rises To The Top', 'Night People'), she's even stronger. Her limber voice, the cooing of her band-mates, the period orchestrations and expertly catchy choruses make *The Whole Shebang* an uplifting trip through Fame Studios country-soul ('Riding High'), before ending on a jubilant, B52's-style anthem ('You Gotta Give It Up').

Charles Donovan

COBALT CHAPEL

Variants

★★★★
KLOVE CD/DL



Trippy duo Cobalt Chapel reimagine some of the songs from their self-titled debut LP - leave it to the epic hypnoses of 'We Come Willingly' or 'Horratia' to cast spells of timeless synesthetic quality, evoking an arcane past while embracing modern electronic delights.

When 'The Lamb' starts playing, it feels like some mysterious forgotten rite is about to happen before our eyes. This is possibly the most obvious and clichéd thing for a review to say, but here it is: *Variants* deserves - better yet, demands - repeated listens. That's because, ultimately, Cobalt Chapel's collages of evocative sounds form a language of their own.

It will probably take a while to tune in, but once it happens the pleasures and discoveries hidden in these spacey fairy tales are seemingly endless. Hallucinogenic Albion at its best.

Camilla Asia

COW

Steeple For The People

★★★
COW MUSIC CD



Mandy and Mark Boxall make a totally radio-friendly sound that pays respect to the benchmarks of the '60s and early '70s with the feel of the '90s. They've worked with Love Affair's Steve Ellis and supported Paul Weller, which should give you an idea of their pool of influences.

'Family Stone' recalls the kind of Stones-inflected Britpop that was all the rage when Cool Britannia arose. 'Manifesto' and 'The Gathering' are a tad more dance-y. 'Ha Ha Lucifer!' rocks more, recalling Primal Scream, and 'Roots' airs an Oasis-type version of psych-pop. A lot does tend to come across a little dated.

'Free The Love' is much better though, its plaintive summery harmony-pop feel sounding like The Style Council if they went to San Francisco and the genuinely dramatic 'Some Old Romantic Way' shows off Mandy Boxall's vocals, which are undeniably the band's strongest asset.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

MATTHEW DOC DUNN

Some Horses Run

★★★★★

COSMIC RANGE CD/LP



Dunn truly came of age last year with the torchlit country-soul delight of *Lightbourn*, a record he lovingly crafted single-handedly. *Some Horses Run* sees his good form continue, adopting a more direct, heavier approach here, most noticeably on side openers 'Virgin Snow' and 'Down The Line', the instrumentation fortified via additional contributions from James Matthew VII and Brian Tysoe.

Throughout the playing is loose, passionate and expressive - check the intricate guitar work on the understated melancholic 'Love In Autumn' and the sparkling swirling organ on 'Only Love Can Guide Us Now', while Dunn sounds entranced on the epic title track which contrasts beautifully with the chimeric brevity of its predecessor 'Flood Light'. The songs are more immediate and alluring than before, making this a searing - at times gorgeously glittering - foray into cosmic-country.

The muse is decidedly upon him just now. He is stardust, golden.

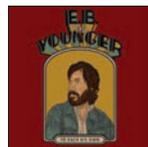
Johnnie Johnstone

E B THE YOUNGER

To Each His Own

★★★★★

BELLA UNION CD/LP



As winter warmers go, the solo debut of latter-day Midlake frontman Eric Pulido, AKA E B The Younger is a nice surprise.

It's everything that *Antiphon* - the one Midlake album to date with Pulido in the hot seat - isn't. Where *Antiphon* was a fussy effort from a rebuilding band trying to fill the void left by songwriter Tim Smith, *To Each His Own* is warm and assured. Pulido reinvents himself convincingly as a reflective 70s singer-songwriter, coming over musically like a more well-adjusted Father John Misty. As a result *To Each His Own* is satisfyingly woody-sounding but Pulido chucks in twists like the stadium-AOR moves of opener 'Used To Be', the catchy yacht-rock of 'CLP' and the rollicking, Nilsson-esque 'On An Island', on which Pulido pulls out an uncanny Harry impression.

It's the quiet ones you have to watch, they'll often end up surprising you.

Martin Ruddock

JACK ELLISTER

Telegraph Hill

★★★★★

YOU ARE THE COSMOS LP



Ellister's third album was recorded in his home studio in the eponymous section of South London. The intimacy and relaxed vibe a home recording affords is evident

throughout these mostly acoustic tunes.

Opener 'Roots' is a dreamy reflective tale for soundtracking a walk through the enveloping arms of tall forest trees. The sinewy synth-strumentals 'Maureen Feeding The Horses' and 'Icon Chambers' offer eerie sorbets to druggy Barrett-esque head-nodder 'Fill Another Glass' and epic finale 'Condor', while 'Mind Maneuvers' could easily have sat on the latest Dodson And Fogg album.

Ellister's minimalist production (Otari eight-track and old Tascam desk) evoke flashbacks to the organic ambience of Nick Drake, Ralph McTell and Bert Jansch, the title track fondly recalls vintage Bee Gees, and the entire experience transports the listener back to smoke-filled bedsits, sitting cross-legged on Persian carpets, staring at paisley wallpaper, mandalas, and gatefold sleeves.

Jeff Penczak

IRMÃO VICTOR

Irmão Victor

★★★★★

POP SUPERETTE CD/LP



Fronted by Florianapolis-based multi-instrumentalist Marco A Benvegna the sound and spirit of the heady days of Brazil's Tropicalia movement are seemingly alive in the sound of Irmão Victor, such is the breadth

of imagination and spirit of adventure displayed throughout the 12 tracks on this long player, the lion's share of which initially appeared on rare private press CDs.

Plentiful echoes and resonances of Tropicalia's leading lights and serial risk-takers Os Mutantes and Caetano Veloso (to name but two) are detectable throughout this remarkably atypical collection of songs. From the outset there's a lot going on - from the intricate tapestry of ingredients both mainstream and experimental to the frequent and apparently random changes in direction which makes the album feel like a series of intricate pop symphonies in miniature. All of which is testament to the power of Irmão Victor's musical imagination - something that means just about anything feels possible here.

Grahame Bent

MASSIMO MARTELOTTA

One Man Sessions Volume

5//Just Cooking

★★★★★

CINEDELIC CD/LP



Having explored his love of soundtrack and library records over the first four volumes of his accomplished and diverse *One Man Sessions*, Calibro 35 member and

multi-instrumentalist Martellotta has used this fifth and final installment to showcase his expertise with the funk, making this perhaps the most accessible release to those fans of Calibro's groovier excursions.

With Martellotta covering all instrumental duties and layering track by track there's a deceptively "live" feel to proceedings, with 'Carbonara's Meters-esque strut and the DIY JB's groove of 'Big Burger' sounding like they're being beamed in from a late night basement set. 'Spacey Kudu' is fantastic; a perfect slice of retro-futuristic funk that sounds like a lo-fi Headhunters, and 'Foie Gras' is a wonderful piece of wonky library funk. A loose, funky and fun way to close a prolific 12 months.

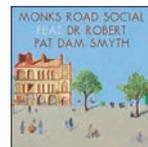
Paul Osborne

MONKS ROAD SOCIAL

Down The Willows

★★★★★

WONDERFULSOUND CD/2-LP



This genre-shifting epic takes in downbeat soul, folk, jazz, dub and blues over its 18 tracks. It's the first full-length offering from this ever-evolving collective, is curated by chief Blow Monkey Dr Robert, and shows a

Continues over

Massimo Martellotta turns up the heat





It's been a long ryde but they're back

Returning Legends



THE LONG RYDERS Psychedelic Country Soul

★★★★

CHERRY RED CD/LP

It's been 32 long years since their last studio album, but opener 'Greenville' blasts out of the speakers like The Long Ryders have never been away: a pounding beat, wailing guitars and

Stephen McCarthy's aching vocals conveying a melody and lyrics that are simultaneously joyous and rueful. 'Let It Fly' slows the pace, with lap steel, mandolin and fiddle to the fore, as The Bangles' Debbi and Vicki Peterson assist on sweet harmonies. They're back later on a respectful cover of Tom Petty's 'Walls,' while elsewhere the album veers from country ballads like Sid Griffin's 'If You Wanna See Me Cry' and McCarthy's Gram-channelling 'California State Line' to the hard rock of 'What The Eagle Sees' that expresses anger and sadness at ecological devastation.

As the incense-tinged title track fades into a wistful approximation of a *Satanic Majesties* out-take, all we can say is it's great to have them back.
Ben Graham

remarkable cohesion aided by Ben Trigg's string arrangements and a core band featuring Matt Deighton and Mick Talbot along with members of Galliano.

Its most sublime moments include 'Lost In Rasa' which echoes the troubled soul of

LISTEN TO
SHINDIG!
ON SOHO RADIO



Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On,' and 'Still Got A Lot To Learn' where guest vocalist Nev Cottee employs his baritone voice in a spot of self-reflection. Also of note is a lushly arranged re-recording of Dr Robert's 1994 track 'The Coming Of Grace'. Added to this is the wealth of new vocal talent with Pat Dam Smyth standing out with 'So Long Soho', a Kinks-style homage to a disappearing London, along with Samantha Whates' dub-folk track 'Three Miles Left'.

Duncan Fletcher

PYE CORNER AUDIO

Hollow Earth

★★★★

GHOST BOX CD/LP



Reviews of Martin Jenkins' previous work as Pye Corner Audio have noted the "submerged" feel of his soundworld, and on *Hollow Earth* The Head Technician has evidently really run with the idea - indeed, some of the synthesiser sounds do appear to be emanating from underwater. It's a familiar palette for long-time fans; Vangelis-y synths and fizzy drum machines, and an obvious love for an arpeggiator or two. But Jenkins' arrangements are noteworthy for their sophistication, somehow avoiding the repetitive grid-like effect of much sequenced electronic music.

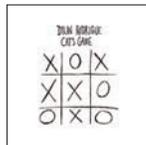
This LP, which could easily be the soundtrack of any number of imaginary European science fiction shows, is possibly PCA's most accessible work yet, while still retaining atmosphere in spades. If *Hollow Earth* is too mature a recording to be charmingly naïve, it nevertheless feels like the work of a man in love with the brilliantly murky depths of electronica and synthesis.
Christopher Budd

DYLAN RODRIGUE

Cat's Game

★★★★

BAD PAINTING CD/LP



Despite having played guitar in eight bands, Dylan Rodrigue likes to think of himself primarily as a songwriter - and it couldn't be otherwise with a name like that, you might say. In fact, the kind of music his name evokes seems to be his strong suit: stripped-down, confessional songwriting interweaved with mainly acoustic arrangements that are both elegant and essential.

Occasionally, Rodrigue gets louder (as in 'The Money Game' and 'Minimize The Damage') but his ruminations on heartbreak and grief turn out to be definitely more intriguing when set against intimate atmospheres. Highlights include the Elliott Smith-flavoured opener 'White Moon', brooding ballad 'Living This Way' and 'Some Kind Of Heaven', an interesting reflection on the comforts of spirituality.

Camilla Aisa

THE SENSATION SEEKERS

Jerk Beat

★★★★★

BACK TO BEAT LP



We've experienced a swell in new music made in the image of '60s exploitation film soundtracks, library albums and other wordless vintage curios over the last few years, with Calibro 35, The Heliocentrics, Papernut Cambridge and The Senior

Service leading the charge. The mysterious Sensation Seekers, however, have just created *the* soundtrack of your fuzz and Hammond-addled dreams.

Seemingly of Scottish provenance, The SS (as they'll hopefully never be referred to again) take no prisoners (well, a little Prisoners maybe) as they crash through 14 bite-sized instrumentals that vividly evoke technicolour scenes of mini-skirted dolly birds and Jason King lookalikes hopping into open-top MGBs and powering round the back streets of Chelsea at 70mph as Christopher Lee leaps to safety. The titles say it all: 'Pop Special No 5', 'Purple Pill Party', 'Greasy Fry Up'. The library-style descriptions ("cartoon drum fills", "mid-tempo jiggery pokery", "deft octave guitar licks", "chuffing maracas") say even more.

It's an idyllic world and I want to live there. With *Jerk Beat* blasting out of every window.

Andy Morten

SKINSHAPE

Filoxiny

★★★★

LEWIS RECORDINGS CD/LP



William Dorey's fourth album *Filoxiny* is described as a soundtrack to an imaginary film, but that well-worn phrase is a rather redundant cliché these days, when mostly-instrumental, jazz-flavoured down-tempo collections like these are common enough to stand or fall on their own merits.

True, the warm keyboards on the languorous 'After Midnight' suggest some late '70s TV show about bittersweet life in the big city (*Taxi* without the laughs?), and 'Metanoia' has a distinctly noir-ish chill. But without a back story, *Filoxiny* is more a hypothetical soundtrack to a lazily meandering Sunday afternoon. Dorey's light, offhandedly soulful vocals decorate three of the eight tracks, including 'Life As One' which could pass for a DJ Shadow concoction, and the quietly ruminative 'We Lose'. But the laidback atmosphere is ultimately just a touch too mellow and tasteful to conjure cinematic narratives, or indeed inspire much more than a pleasant mid-afternoon nap.

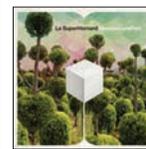
Ben Graham

LE SUPERHOMARD

MeadowLanePark

★★★★★

ELEFANT CD/LP



There's a strain of cinematic French music that feeds head and heart, and is fixed on the central tenets of style and sophistication. You can join the dots from Jean Claude Vannier to Air through to its latest progenitors - Le SuperHomard, an Avignon-based quintet led by Christophe Vaillant.

Continues over

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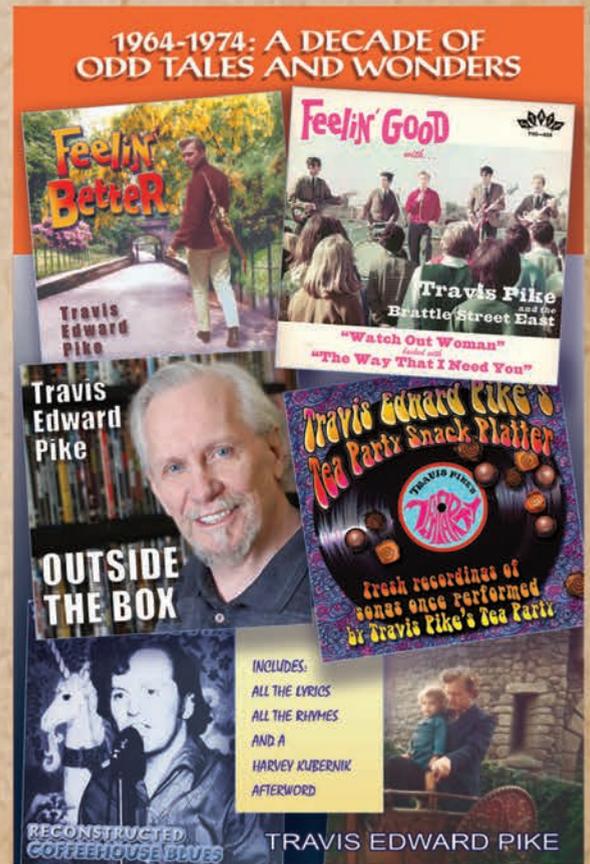
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Lee Zimmerman's FOUR STAR review in *Goldmine* magazine (U.S.), reports "[Travis] Pike's name and reputation may still reside below the surface of general public awareness, but...he's created a veritable cottage industry consisting of numerous albums, books and other output reflecting his prodigious talents as a singer, songwriter and storyteller. This follow-up to his earlier musical memoir, *Odd Tales and Wonders, 1964-1974: A Decade of Performance* describes his artistic development while sharing the stories of his performances over the course of a storied decade and the lyrics to the dozens of songs that populate his self-recorded efforts. It is, in every sense, a remarkable reservoir of craft and creativity."

In 1963, Pike wrote the title song for *Demo Derby*, a short film that played on thousands of screens across the country with The Beatles *Hard Day's Night*; ten songs, including the title song, for the 1966 movie, *Feelin' Good*; and in 1973, his song, "End of Summer," underscored *The Second Gun*, a Golden Globe Nomination for Best Documentary Film, investigating Robert Kennedy's assassination. This 374 page memoir of Pike's career as a singer-songwriter, *1964-1974: A DECADE OF ODD TALES AND WONDERS*, features more than 170 photos and artifacts, and a revealing Harvey Kubernik Afterword that looks at Pike's projects currently in development. The new book is available in Trade Paperback and Kindle Editions.



ORDER IT NOW AT AMAZON.COM

Youth Of America,
Scottish style



MeadowLanePark is the group's first full-length LP following 2015's mini-album *The Maple Key* and recent release *The Pomegranate EP*. Recorded during closed hours in the music shop where Vaillant works, the results are a joy, ebbing through sunshine-pop, breezy electro, and gently playful psychedelia.

The group make good use of the instruments to hand with vintage synths, harpsichords and strings making up the sonic palette. The band's key influences (Stereolab, Saint Etienne, Broadcast) can be heard but their sense of self wins out. Whether it's the evocative instrumental 'In The Park' or the electronic textures of 'SDVB', *MeadowLanePark* is one of this year's early gems.

Duncan Fletcher

TELEKINESIS
Effluxion

★★★★

MERGE CD/LP



An album title to increase your knowledge (Latin for flow, in case you were wondering), *Effluxion* is the fifth full-length offering from Seattle-based musician Michael Benjamin Lerner, fresh from a stint as touring keyboard player with Teenage Fanclub. The album was self-produced over two years in the basement of his home, with Lerner taking on all instrumental duties.

He's a songwriter who knows how

to knock out a decent hook-laden tune or 10. Be it the quiet/loud dynamics of 'Set A Course', the piano-led pop of 'How Do I Get Rid Of Sunlight?', or the playfully dancing bassline on 'Cut The Quick', the attention is focused on songcraft with properly pleasing choruses and twist-laden mid-eights throughout.

Containing 10 taut tracks *Effluxion* may be a short listen, but after spending 32 minutes in its company the world will seem a brighter, more hopeful place. As Teenage Fanclub might say - ain't that enough?

Duncan Fletcher

THE VAN COOTHS
The Van Cooths Are Back

★★★★

GREY PAST LP



In the vast array of albums released throughout 2018 this newest by Dutch family-based group The Van Cooths certainly rates amongst the very best. In fact, relative modernity aside, the majority of tracks included could've been written and performed almost anytime within the last three decades, and had *The Van Cooths Are Back* been issued say decades before; when guitar noise experimenters such as Sonic Youth, The Jesus & Mary Chain and innovative, naive cult mavericks like The TV Personalities were indie darlings, The Van Cooths also could've been a force to be reckoned with.

Never mind, it's great to know that as you wrap your head around the fearsome delights of 'Dry Your Tears' and 'I Will Never Lie To You' and reel to the buzzsaw pop cacophony of 'Shut Up' and 'You're Tearing Me Apart', you realise this is no phantom past hit squad but a relevant art-punk happening taking place right now.

Lenny Helsing

YORICK VAN NORDEN
The Jester

★★★★★

EXCELSIOR CD/LP



This young gentleman made a name for himself in his hometown of Amsterdam, leading powerpop band The Hype, but Yorick van Norden has come a long way even from those lofty heights with his second solo album *The Jester*.

On this disc, van Norden shows a maturity well beyond his years, as it's replete with soft, polished pop songs, the likes of which you don't hear even from seasoned artists twice his age. Tracks like 'Train In The Station', 'Days' and 'Love's Taken Over' are simply lovely, 'Winter' is a softly serene Christmas song, and the two 'suites' on the album are transcendent. Only the Monkees-esque soft-psych of 'The Forest Of The Mind' harkens back to van Norden's Hype days. File *The Jester* under '20-something pop for sophisticated listeners' and hopefully word will spread far

enough to make van Norden a household name in homes outside of Amsterdam.
David Bash

YOUTH OF AMERICA
YOA Rising

★★★★★

FIGHTING SWANS CD/LP/8-TRACK



Shindig! favourites Trembling Bells may be no more, but the whole band is present and correct on the debut album by Youth

Of America, the songwriting project of ex-Bells bassist Simon Shaw, here sharing vocals with Lucy Sweet and Sophie Sexton. Lavinia Blackwall sings back-up and splits keyboard duties with Belle & Sebastian's Chris Geddes, and the album displays all the imaginative, dramatic song arrangements that were a Trembling Bells trademark, just without the overt folk and psychedelic influences.

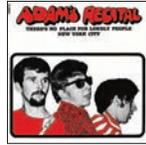
Instead, Youth Of America fuse '80s indie with '70s powerpop, always melodic but with definite epic tendencies. Dual female vocals on the Jonathan Richman-referencing 'Spirit Of '94' suggest The Long Blondes or Heavenly, but the sinuous twin lead guitar breaks on 'Broken Down '57 Ford' are more Big Star meets Flamin' Groovies. Deceptively dark, deep and far more than mere pastiche, *YOA Rising* is a classic in its own right.

Ben Graham

ADAM'S RECITAL There's No Place For Lonely People / New York City

★★★

CAMELEON 45



Despite existing for three years and appearing at the 1967 Windsor Jazz & Blues Festival (on Saturday evening, just before Amen Corner), Belgian trio Adam's Recital's sole vinyl gift to the world was this single, released on the French Barclay label that same year.

But what a single it is - a joyful racket carelessly propelled into the ether by clattering drums, solid bass, wasp-ish fuzz guitar and unintelligible lyrics, reissued here in its original DIY picture sleeve. It's the sound of three teenagers pre-empting Dick Taylor's *SF Sorrow* guitar sound while homaging Hendrix's 'Fire' and still managing to sound like the most over-excited garage band in Brussels. The magic is lost somewhat on the rarely-spotted flipside, a curiously disjointed beat ballad that can't quite find its feet, but who cares when the lonely people's place is so much more enticing?

Andy Morten

ANCIENT SHAPES Separation Anxiety / A Flower That Wouldn't Bloom

★★★★

YEAH, RIGHT!



Ancient Shapes began as Daniel Romano's side project, an outlet to bash the drums and turn up the guitars for two-minute rolicking blasts of energy, avoiding further confusion with his already broadening artistic palette under his own name. Romano's recent album *Finally Free* is a bewildering collection of difficult to penetrate poetry accompanied by acoustic pickings with melodies and hooks hard to pinpoint, so the simplicity of an Ancient Shapes single comes as light relief.

These tracks represent two of Romano's most immediate and, in old money, "commercial" tracks to date. Skinny and wiry, this is powerpop par excellence. 'A Flower That Wouldn't Bloom' fizzles and crackles like a radio on a kitchen windowsill in the summer. Pete Shelley's legacy lives on. The flip of this shared EP, by fellow Canadians Dboy, consists of two tracks of blood curdling super-heaviness that will terrify all but the most bangy-heady of Shindiggers.

Mark Raison

THE BEGINNER'S MYND Ego Death / Baby Blue

★★★★

13 O'CLOCK



From the get go it's obvious that this newest sound projection from Washington DC's Beginner's Mynd is a

truly special aural treat. Dan McNabb and his electric beat cohorts always manage to keep their listeners fully engaged and here the garage insistence and thumping intensity that drives topside 'Ego Death' is punctuated by high register organ flourishes which brings a '67 UFO-style psychedelic image to the fore. This might prove their most potent offering yet.

On the flip, Dylan's masterpiece 'Baby Blue' - but where other younger generation combo's may have gathered inspiration from such versions as catalogued by Them, The Chocolate Watchband and The 13th Floor Elevators, the Mynd eschew such leanings in favour of a brightly chiming, quirky folk-rock into baroque-pop interpretation featuring subdued, almost Lou Reed-style vocals. Both sides are different and great but 'Ego Death' is where the needle will want to be dropped again and again.

Lenny Helsing

BRUTE FORCE I Love You So Muchism / Conjugation To Love

★★★

APCOR



This here is rather an odd single, from the same-named group/individual that issued the rare as hen's teeth, hugely controversial

'King Of Fuh' single on the original Apple label way back in 1969. Brute Force has been somewhat reclusive for many years now but have finally been swayed by the charming and insistent powers of the Apcor crew to return to business.

'I Love You So Muchism' proffers a positive message to its audience, albeit through the medium of some strange, yet not altogether unpleasant, minimal and quite repetitive musical patterns. Occasionally odd flourishes of something approaching a good droney pop sounding idea flashes through too, threatening to take things further and leaving you with the thought that it'd be good if that something happened... but it kind of doesn't. Alas, flipside 'Conjugation To Love' is a more modern application, its whole approach much less enjoyable.

Lenny Helsing

THE HIGHER STATE Ten Clear Petals / Dark Night Of The Soul

★★★★

13 O'CLOCK



On the infamous *Pebbles* Volume 3, *The Acid Gallery*, instead of teens providing primitive takes on British beat music to their high school buddies and hopeful of denting the local charts, bands such as The Calico Wall and The Third Bardo had no such commercial intentions as they soundtracked their often-paranoiac acid experiences.

It's those recordings that inspire UK outcasts The Higher State, who swop their sardonic folk-rock jangle for a furious attack

on the senses. In 'Ten Clear Petals', voices green and purple disorientate the listener, teetering on the brink of insanity, before a savage guitar severs the brain from the body. 'Dark Night Of The Soul' circles like a bad dream as organ swirls and blasts of fuzz fry the already frayed nerves. Recorded on cassette, this is an uncleaned, uncensored howl into the abyss. Dangerous, disturbing and demented. Not everyone will be able to handle the experience. Will you?

Mark Raison

THE MAD WALLS It Turns / Eternal Light

★★★

HYPNOTIC BRIDGE



Tim Presley produced this LA band's last EP, which indicates where they come from. 'Eternal Light' stems from the same dark

twisted place as *White Fence*: as discombobulated and anxious as Syd Barrett recording with Joy Division. It's all lost little boy vocals, angular guitars and floating keyboards and as good as anything Plasticland made.

The lead side 'It Turns' is nowhere near as effective, too dour and depressed to cause attention. Quilt do this so much better. The Mad Walls do have a certain quality, and if they follow an edgier path may become a band to watch.

Very LA psych then, but not without merit. There is a lot of stuff like this out there - maybe they just need a few new tricks or a fresh bout of madness.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

MAGMA MALONE Les Vampires Bronzées / United States Of Mind

★★★

LA MÁQUINA INFERNAL



Anyone drawn to this release in the hope of unearthing some surreal mash-up involving aging French prog legends and Wil

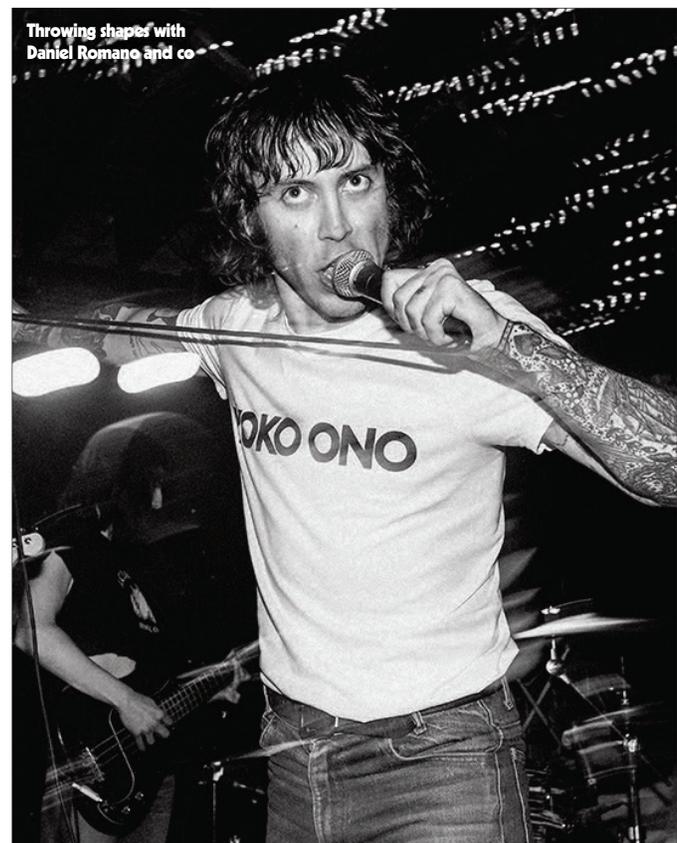
Malone of Orange Bicycle, Fickle Pickle and Bobak, Jones, Malone fame will be bitterly disappointed for this Magma Malone is actually a Barcelona-based project of the experimental composer and illustrator Enric Chalaux.

Kicking off with sexy stoned female voices that give off *Vampiros Lesbos* vibrations, the top side is a rambling instrumental built around a simple sitar riff and a funky backbeat, yet served up all smothered in lashings of the kind of wind tunnel whoosh and whistle that Hawkwind once specialised in. The flip is a pounding, wah-wah driven number with lilting lysergic harmonies, a strangely subterranean production, a bleeding organ wash and the kind of relentless restlessness more commonly associated with bearded vegans who spend their holidays running Iron Man ultra-marathons through The Sahara Desert.

Hugh Dellar



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Throwing shapes with Daniel Romano and co



Time, gentlemen please! Frank Habicht captures an era

PHOTO: FRANK HABICHT

AS IT WAS: FRANK HABICHT'S SIXTIES
Frank Habicht

★★★★★

HATJE CANTZ



Few photographers chronicled the youth explosion of the mid to late '60s like Frank Habicht. The German-born Habicht found himself working for

numerous publications throughout Europe (including *Esquire*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Guardian*) before finding his spiritual and artistic home in London, where he proceeded to capture the full flowering of the city's counterculture with the keenest of eyes and a true sense of insight and empathy.

His photographs are at once romantic and risqué (there's a lot of flesh on offer here, but rarely does it suggest exploitation or titillation), cheeky and profound (the era's *ennui* writ large in emotionless faces and

moody, middle-distance stares). Here we see the city's bright young things enjoying an unparalleled newfound freedom as they parade through the streets (most of these images were taken outdoors) in their Carnaby Street finery and Kings Road military jackets, gently poking fun at the old guard: witness the two teenage girls asking a bowler-hatted city gent for the time in 'Time, Gentlemen Please' (1967) or even middle-aged American *bon viveur* Fred Marshall sitting on horseback in a Knightsbridge mews as a naked "angel without wings" approaches him.

If you're one of those people who could spend all day glancing at the heavy-eyed Portobello Road hippies, impossibly beautiful models cavorting in bombed-out churchyards and opportunistic waifs in knitted mini-dresses that populated Habicht's much-coveted '69 bulletin *Young London: Permissive Paradise* then you need this gorgeous hardback edition more than food or sleep.

Andy Morten

THE BALLAD OF SYD & MORGAN
Haydn Middleton

★★★★★

PROPOLIS



The 1991 fictionalised cinematic account of a '63 holiday that John Lennon and Brian Epstein could have taken, *The Hours & The Times* is relatively close in tone to Haydn Middleton's delightful 185-page novel *The Ballad Of Syd & Morgan*, which closes, "It is not recorded that Syd Barrett ever met E M Forster - on this earth." Its premise however, like that of *The Hours & The Times*, seems utterly plausible.

After being politely asked to leave Pink Floyd, Syd Barrett finds himself uncertain about his future at the tender age of 22 and searching for purpose a year after he changed the face of British pop music. It's October '68 and change is in the air. The day-glo spectrum of psychedelia has become subdued. Enoch Powell feared rivers of blood.

Middleton's gently woven tale contrasts old Britain with the supposed permissive age: the stiff upper-lip of The British Empire that E M Forster inhabited meeting the effete young Barrett's Age of Aquarius. Syd and Morgan, although separated by their eras, have far

more in common than either of them could consider.

The story unfolds over the course of an autumn evening centred around a plot concerning Barrett believing the old writer to have purchased one of his paintings; an artwork the troubled artist needs for both closure and the next phase of his life. As the two discuss their lives, the parallels between them unfold. The unlikely friendship develops as they discuss psychedelic music, literature, sexuality and smoke a joint.

It's an entirely believable concept that would work magnificently as a film or stage play with Jim Broadbent as Forster and Ben Whishaw as Barrett. Barrett fans will find a lot to enjoy, but this book also says a lot more about what it is to be male and society's view of such.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

PORKY'S PRIME CUTS
George Peckham

★★★★★

APCOR BOOKS



Liverpool-born George Peckham started out playing guitar for such rock 'n' roll groups as The Renegades, The Pawns and Decca

hopefuls Lee Curtis & The All-Stars, before a further twist of fate then extracted him from Earl Joyce & The Olympics, placing him with another of the city's more famous mid-60s groups, The Fourmost. However, it's as tape operator and recording engineer for The Beatles' then brand-new Apple Studios that Peckham was to find his true calling. He would take that process even further winding up as one of Britain's foremost progenitors of the art of disc cutting, assisting with various solo Beatle and other Apple-affiliated projects - drawing special favour from George Harrison and John Lennon. Across the ensuing decades, Peckham's name has also been affixed to recorded works by Led Zeppelin, The Who, Deep Purple, plus such post-punk figures as The Fall and Cabaret Voltaire; his "A Porky's Prime Cut" signature and other dead wax slogans are now the stuff of record geek legend.

Whether at work or play Peckham was always up to some jape, or other laugh-til-you-burst shenanigans, therefore this book's contents are (aside from being hugely informative) often side-splittingly funny at times.

Although a little editing here and there - mainly to lessen the repetitive, already recounted fact-telling, plus his fondness for name-dropping - could've improved things, we can forgive Peckham these oversights, for Porky's pages certainly contain some legendary tales from what was then still just the unfolding "rock scene", as told by one who was at the heart of the action. It's the candid story of a rich, colourful life lived out during the pop/rock maelstrom of the '60s, '70s and beyond. Warm, enthusiastically told and with bouts of gargantuan humour, *Porky's Prime Cuts* makes for a great read.

Lenny Helsing

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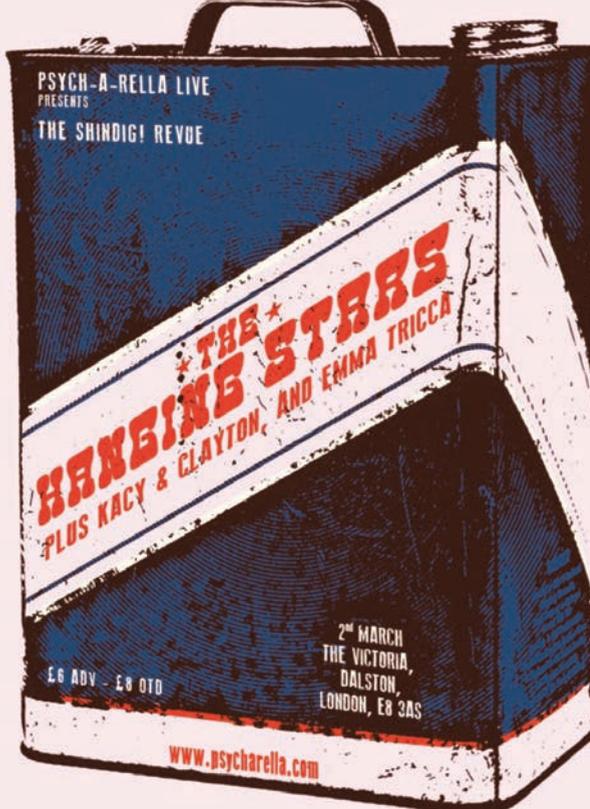
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Mudhoney. No whistles and bells

MUDHONEY, THEE HYPNOTICS, THE MASONICS
Concorde 2, Brighton

WEDNESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

PHOTO JEFF PITCHER
 There are a lot of box-fresh Pearl Jam T-shirts in the crowd tonight. But this triple threat of a bill serves to remind us of Mudhoney's true allegiances; not to corporate grunge, but to the punk-rock underground. The Masonics are old friends; their former incarnation Thee Headcoats supported the Seattle band, and Mudhoney even went on to record a backing track for Thee Mighty Caesars' 'You Make Me Die'. Tonight, they're a perfect warm-up; likeable, relaxed, and with killer tunes. The appearance of Miss Ludella Black is an always welcome treat, and her rendition of Cale and Reed's 'Why Don't You Smile?' kicks things up a notch.

Things get kicked up considerably more with the arrival of Thee Hypnotics. This show puts a cherry on the top a triumphant year which has seen an incendiary reformation and anthology release. The band are also old friends of the main band; Mudhoney singer Mark Arm helped the Brit rockers get signed

to Sub Pop in 1990. Tonight they're on fire; a short support set distills their riffs-and-righteousness rock 'n' roll into a sticky black essence of leather, maracas and strobes.

Finally Mudhoney take to the stage. There are no whistles and bells with this archetypal plaid-and-denim grunge band. But, boy, their ear-splittingly intense slabs of punk groove and charm. Singer Mark Arm looks near-identical to his '90s self, and yells just as hard through a set drawn from all eras - the excellently named 'Hey Neanderfuck' from recent release *Digital Garbage* is a peak, but old favourites 'You Got It' and, of course, 'Touch Me I'm Sick' rev up the crowd into a frenzied beer-and-nostalgia-soaked mosh. It's a virtuoso show with surprisingly little laurel resting. Carry on screaming, Mark.

Kate Hodges

GAMBEAT 2018
Sala Upload, Barcelona

THURSDAY 13TH TO SUNDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER

High in the Montjuic hills of Barcelona, a motley crew of beat-freaks and psych-heads

gathered for the eighth annual Gambeat weekender. Though your correspondent was nursing a back injury from skidding on a wet Wax Museum floor (please don't laugh), The **Asteroid 4** from Philly soon perked him up on the opening night with their laidback cosmic grooves; Hawkwind tinged at times, with occasional Byrds-y guitar colourings albeit with less of the jingle-jangle angle. Their current collaboration with Kaleidoscope's Peter Daltrey should be interesting, so stay tuned people.

Spacehopping to Friday, **Fogbound** hit the stage for their final gig for the foreseeable future, and they'll be missed like crazy judging by the night's frenzied reaction. Scorching through a blistering set, the lack of their usual light show was soon forgotten, as was the back pain. Who needs painkillers when you have a live psych panacea of this calibre? A clearly emotional post-gig Fabio alluded to a farewell single, then sadly it's adios, amigos.

It's hard not to like Saturday's offering, the insanely melodic Dutch Nederbeat popmeisters **The Kik**. Already big in

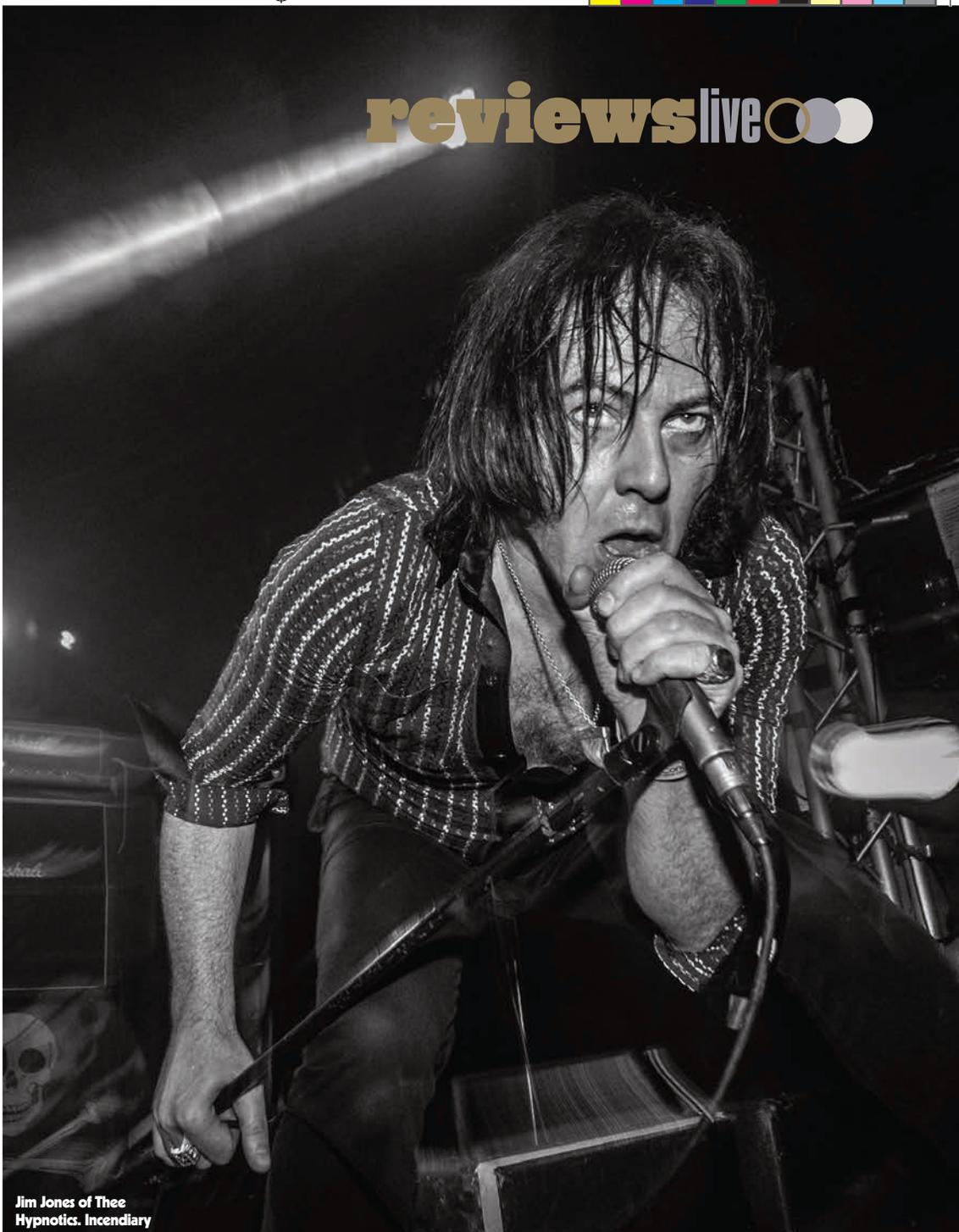
Holland, Margate's Hipsville festival could use these guys big time. The highpoint for many was their cover of Het's 'Keije Naggan', complete with freaky spoken monologue bridge (something about flowers and girls - thanks Dave Von Raven for the translation). Plaudits also to the keyboard noodlings of velveteen dandy Paul Zoontjens, who at one point wowed the crowd playing blindly on his back a la Hendrix. Another highlight was guitarist Arjan Spies (name appropriation a-go go!) serenading a doe eyed seniorita with the James Bond theme whilst being attacked by a giant humanoid lobster (Bond meets Ebriah, Godzilla fans?). The unexpected encore of 'Blitzkrieg Bop' managed to sound both in and of place. Gambeat 2019? It's a no brainer.

Paul Foster

THE VAPORS
Hercules Hall, Portmeirion, Wales

SATURDAY 10TH NOVEMBER

This *Shindig!* correspondent happened



Jim Jones of Thee Hypnotics. Incendiary

to be holidaying in Portmeirion for a dirty weekend, and just to make things even more surreal he discovered that turn of the '80s post-punk powerpop heroes The Vapors of 'Turning Japanese' fame are playing in essentially the village hall, as featured in *The Prisoner!*

Next thing you know we're in, and the bar is buzzing with a full house consisting of hardcore fans who've made the trip especially, some *Prisoner*-head tourists, and many presumably just local music freaks. DJ Jacqui Carroll spins some suitable '60s tunes and then we're off to a fine start to this two-set evening. Returning original

guitarist Ed Bazalgette stuns and prowls the stage like a more handsome Wilko Johnson, Steve Smith is the McCartney bass-monster of his generation, Dave Fenton sings his high-energy heart out, and everybody goes mental.

Mostly the TUNES - what can you say? This band does not possess one bad song in their two-album catalogue and, introduced by the son of a super-fan, even air some brand new ones from their "difficult third album" with no loss of momentum in set two.

Highlights included 'Jimmie Jones', new song 'Novocaine', the rarely played 'Spiders'

and an epic 'Letter From Hiro', and after two encores, finishing with a grand bow and an emotional speech from Portmeirion owner Meurig Jones. They did this here last year - by all accounts this year's was even bigger and better. Triumphant.

Luke Smyth

KING CRIMSON
Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow

MONDAY 12TH NOVEMBER

The sight of three drum kits sitting at the front of the stage, the ambient sounds of bells and chimes filling the air and

the disembodied voice of Robert Fripp welcoming the audience and politely requesting that they refrain from taking any photos until the end of the show are all hints that this will be far from an ordinary evening.

Come the appointed moment the current eight man Crimson contingent troop onstage like smartly turned out conference delegates, led from the back forever under the all controlling eyes and ears of Robert Fripp from his vantage point at the left of the stage.

To say the sound is impressive when the opening 'Larks' Tongues In Aspic Part 1' kicks into life would be something resembling a trite understatement. Relentlessly driven by the three-way polyrhythmic thunder provided by the triple drum battery upfront, the sound of the singular Mr. Fripp's precision-drilled orchestra in miniature is never short of breathtaking throughout the near three-hour performance, which is strategically

PHOTO: JEFF PITCHER

“By the time the closing ‘Cometary Orbital Drive’ kicks in things have almost reached levitation mode with Kawabata Makoto pointing his guitar to the heavens as the band lock deeper and deeper into the rapidly accelerating groove”

Continues over



Acid Mothers Temple's Kawabata Makoto reaches for the stars

PHOTO GIUSEPPE LIVIDE
split into two halves by a 20-minute intermission.
Whether coloured by the ethereal tones of mellotron, Fripp's distinctively glassy guitar sound or pummeled by jagged rhythms, particular highlights include 'In The Court Of The Crimson King', 'Islands', the concluding trio of 'Epitaph', 'Larks' Tongues In Aspic Part 2' and 'Starless'. Not forgetting the barnstorming encore of '21st Century Schizoid Man'. Ever the enigma, Fripp is the last to leave the stage having himself comprehensively photographed and filmed by yet another enraptured audience.

Grahame Bent

MATTHEW SWEET
Islington Town Hall, London

TUESDAY 18TH DECEMBER
'I've Been Waiting' is one of Matthew Sweet's best-known songs - a powerpop classic that channels both The Byrds and mid-period Beatles. It's also the signature tune for his British fans too, for it has been 14 long years since the Nebraskan and his band last graced these shores. Yet from the

opening ringing chords of 'Time Capsule', one of the highlights of his 1993 collection *Altered Beast*, it's clear that appropriately enough time has stood still.

Sweet may be older, and hopefully wiser, but along with his stellar band which comprises Velvet Crush's Paul Chastain and Ric Menck along with Jason Victor, moonlighting from The Dream Syndicate, on guitar, he still knows how to charm an audience.

Choice cuts from his recent album, *Tomorrow Forever*, and that album's accompanying out-takes collection *Tomorrow's Daughter* (with 'I Belong To You' a surprise highlight), alongside classics from his breakthrough albums of the early '90s delight his devoted, yet patient fans. Inevitably it's the six songs from his Neil Young/Big Star influenced masterpiece *Girlfriend* that most excite the gathered ageing hipsters. The visceral title track and the gentle ballads 'Winona' and 'You Don't Love Me' sounding as fresh now as they did back in '91.

And to top it all the band delivers a blistering encore climaxing with 'Evangeline' with extended guitar high jinx

from Victor. The biggest cheer of the night though is saved for the moment when Sweet promises that he won't leave it so long next time. On this sort of form he better be true to his word.

Ashley Norris

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE & THE MELTING PARAISSO UFO
Nice N Sleazy, Glasgow

THURSDAY 8TH NOVEMBER
Another year and another visitation from Japan's far travelled kings of the road and intrepid deep-psych voyagers Acid Mothers Temple, who tonight roll into town previewing material from their latest opus *Reverse Of Rebirth In Universe* alongside a cluster of evergreen staples from their justly renowned live interstellar burn-ups.

You're guaranteed certain things when you show up at an Acid Mothers' show - the feeling of being part of a loose association of fellow heads, access to some of the most potent contemporary psych available without prescription and a merch stand destined to wreak serious havoc on your bank balance.

Ensclosed in the compact subterranean confines of Sleazy's basement this is an underground psych happening for real and one which manages to successfully fuse the spirit of the San Francisco Acid Tests with the collective heydays of the UK psych underground of the late '60s/early '70s, Krautrock and even kosmiche musik. It's a magical equation which plots the cardinal points of reference - Grateful Dead, Hawkwind, Gong, Can et al - on Acid Mothers' star map for tonight's celestial trek, which lifts off amid the abstract Hendrix-ified wail of 'Blue Velvet Blues' and 'Black Star Blues', both of which feature on the new album.

It's a mood that continues amid the familiar spiralling, mantra-like oscillations of 'OM Riff' and 'Disco Pink Lady Lemonade'. By the time the closing 'Cometary Orbital Drive' kicks in things have almost reached levitation mode with Kawabata Makoto pointing his guitar to the heavens as the band lock deeper and deeper into the rapidly accelerating groove.

Grahame Bent

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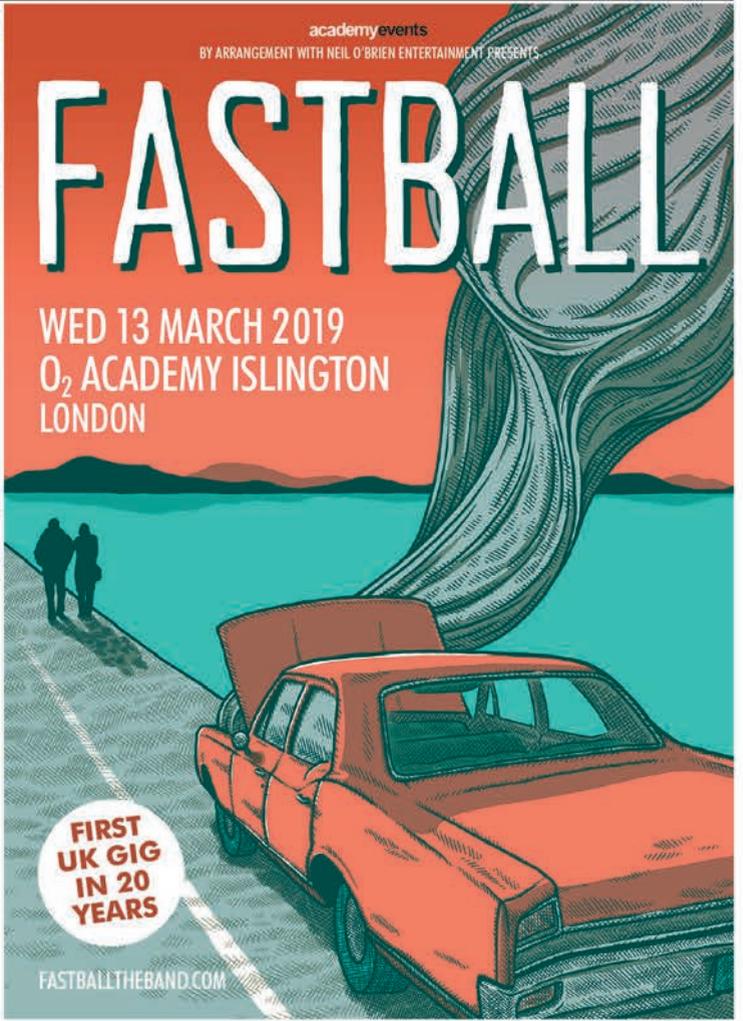
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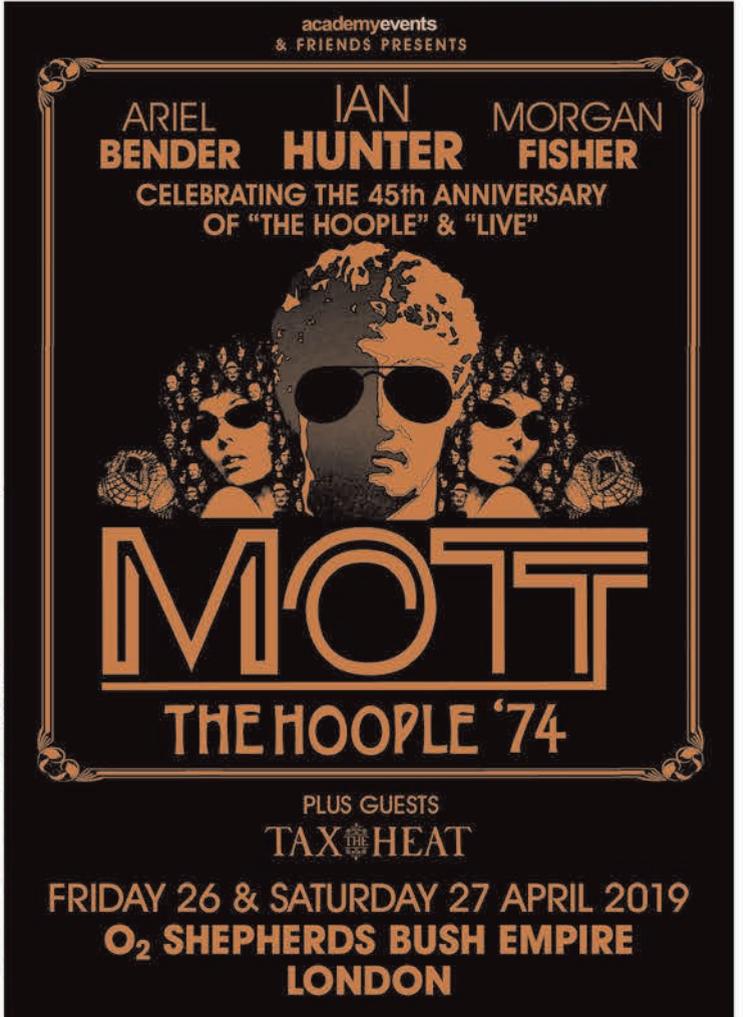
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#74 Various Artists

The Beat Merchants UNITED ARTISTS, UK, 1976

COVER PAINTING AND DESIGN: TONY WRIGHT

PHIL SUGGITT examines a seminal mid-70s anthology of '60s beat obscurities

Various Artists compilations are renowned for their often cheap and cheesy covers, but Andrew Lauder's United Artists mid-70s double LP compilation of British beat groups is a notable exception to the rule. The cover painting is a lovingly-observed depiction of an early '60s music shop, rendered in minute and realistic detail. A sharply-dressed mod tries out an Epiphone guitar with a Vox amp whilst another fashionable boy and girl look on. A series of guitars and 1963 albums adorn the walls. A cheap notice board advertises gigs and tries to cover some crumbling plaster. A small boy, apparently based on the artist's nephew, gawks through the window.

The painting was the work of artist and illustrator Tony Wright, who has produced many other iconic covers in a long career, such as Traffic's *The Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys* and The B-52s' '79 debut. Tony received little specific art direction from UA. After a brief 10-minute meeting he was simply asked to paint a typical '60s record store.

"That painting is my childhood," reflects Tony, who was 13 in '63. A second painting, on the back cover, reveals that we are looking at Potters Music Shop, next to a zebra crossing on a typical English High

Street. "Potters Music Shop was a real store in South Croydon," remembers Tony. "It was where I went to buy records, guitars, plectrums, strings and sheet music. For me, that was what was unique about the idea of a '60s record store... the records were just part of what you bought. You also bought all the materials to make your own music. Many people today find it hard to accept that just selling records like *With the Beatles* would not have supported their business. There were far fewer people who bought these records than people today realise." Perhaps things have come full circle; most of the shops that still sell records have successfully survived the last lean decade by also selling a variety of other products, from pies and coffee to books and magazines.

The painting is full of believable details

"That painting is my childhood. Potters Music Shop was a real store in South Croydon – it was where I went to buy records, guitars, plectrums, strings and sheet music"

invented by Tony, such as a poster for the imaginary Attic Club in Hounslow, featuring R&B with The (non-imaginary) Sheffields. On the rear cover a white Bedford Van belonging to The Four Just Men (whose excellent 'Things Will Never Be The Same' features on the album) passes the shop, inscribed with several girls' names in lipstick. The numerous album covers inside the shop are accurate, as Tony was an avid music fan. "In '63 I was buying the Mersey sound and Bob Dylan," Tony reminisces. "I subscribed to a mag – I think it was called *Mersey Beat*. I saw The Beatles when they were second on the bill."

In the painting the Norman Rockwell-like middle aged owner behind the counter sports a greasy comb-over and appears to disapprove of his young clientele. Tony explains that this is the only part of the painting that is inaccurate, as the real proprietor, "Mr Potter, if that was his name, was a very nice chap."

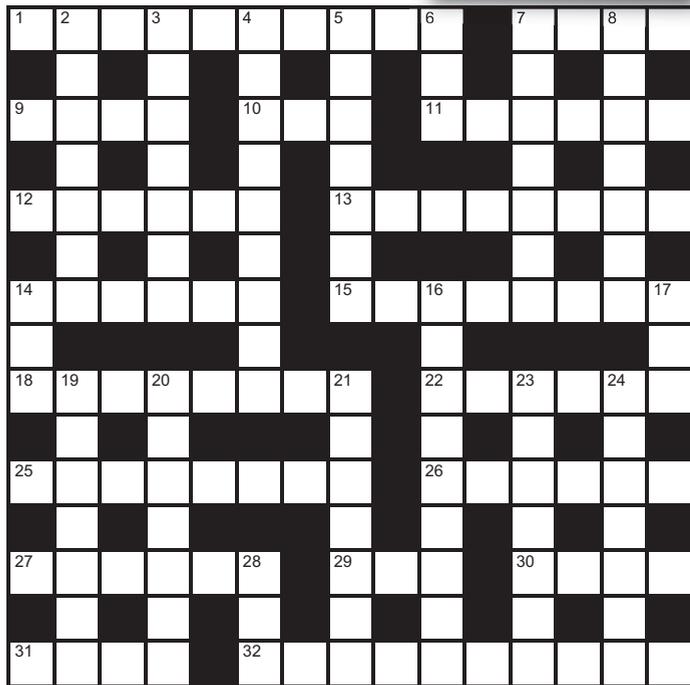
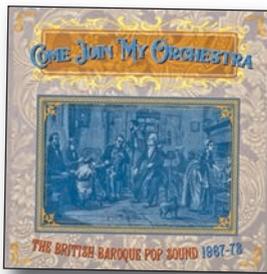
Tony also designed the red surrounding frame and the type containing the names of the bands on the album. "Later I might have thought differently, but at the time I thought the painting alone was too dull in colour," he explains. "It needed a lift; some of the fun from the time not just a dismal store, however accurate."

Surprisingly UA didn't ask Tony to submit rough sketches or preliminary drafts for approval. His usual method of working was to submit the completed work, in this case two original oil paintings on 16 by 16-inch board, not very much larger than the actual LP cover. He confesses, "I never submitted sketches. I always painted or designed what I thought was right and delivered. If the piece was rejected that would have been my hard luck!"

Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

Ahhh, who here likes nothing better than the sound of a parping oboe, a slurping cello and a childhood-fixed plum-voiced singer extolling the virtues of a Dickensian bicycle covered in jam? Or something. Anyway, Honeybus, Stackridge, Barclay James Harvest, Billy Nicholls, Donovan, The Zombies and dozens of other baroque 'n' roll stars are collected for your delight on Grapefruit's new 3-CD set, *Come Join My Orchestra*, and we have a copy to give away. To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #88 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "SD88 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 7th March. And don't forget to include your name and address!



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|---|---|
| <p>Across</p> <p>1 Ray Davies composition, released by The Applejacks and Marion (1,2,2,5)</p> <p>7 What follows for fox for The Fox (4)</p> <p>9 You'll find Mars Bonfire in Christina's (4)</p> <p>10 Agreed, this is the land where The Sunliners rest (3)</p> <p>11 A magical noise from The Move (6)</p> <p>12 Eli, who didn't raise their boy to be a soldier (6)</p> <p>13 Grapefruit's ups and down (8)</p> <p>14 "A top comes a-spinning into your life / And you've reached a ____" - 'Belda-Beast', Iron Butterfly (6)</p> <p>15 Les Baroques have a harsh opinion of themselves (4,1,3)</p> <p>18 Destruction follows The Brian Jonestown (8)</p> <p>22 What The Guess Who have left for you (2,4)</p> <p>25 One occurred in a greatcoat for Cleaners From Venus (8)</p> <p>26 Sticker that would add pounds to the price of an LP (6)</p> <p>27 Faces' first single didn't take take off like it should have (6)</p> <p>29 According to <i>Nuggets</i> at least, '65-68 was the first psychedelic one (3)</p> <p>30 Stuart, Clyde's partner (4)</p> <p>31 Like the sky for King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard (4)</p> <p>32 Love Affair vocalist who gave us <i>Boom Bang Twang</i> last year (5,5)</p> | <p>Down</p> <p>2 The Deviants put out some rubbish (7)</p> <p>3 Sweet Tootie's sole album sounds challenging (7)</p> <p>4 Man, The Chosen Few aren't very authentic (9)</p> <p>5 This Summer compilation for The Beach Boys goes on forever (7)</p> <p>6 Collector of royalties (1,1,1)</p> <p>7 Fifties revivalists that took to the stage at Woodstock (3,2,2)</p> <p>8 Red band of Mayo Thompson, who sometimes start on C (7)</p> <p>14 Badfinger Pete (3)</p> <p>16 Bowie's 'Sweet Thing' contains a potential nominee (9)</p> <p>17 What Country Joe & The Fish felt like they were fixin' to do (3)</p> <p>19 Drummer Dunbar who offered a blue whale by way of retaliation (7)</p> <p>20 Evil latest from The Damned (7)</p> <p>21 When their cruelty is casual, this is how Unknown Mortal Orchestra take their wealth (7)</p> <p>23 As you'd expect, Wimpey Winch weren't fans of British workmanship (7)</p> <p>24 Their perpetuum mobile didn't last as long as expected (7)</p> <p>28 Dudgeon, producer of Strawbs through to XTC (3)</p> |
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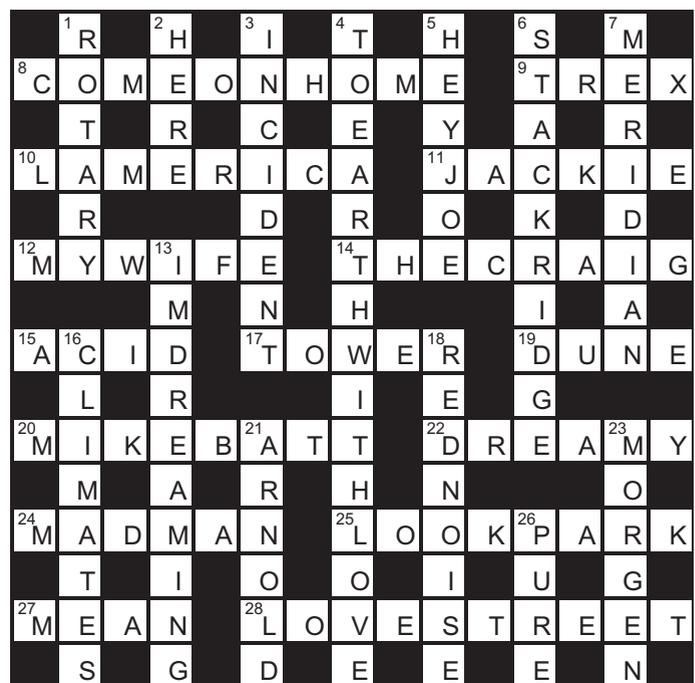
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Issue 87 crossword solution



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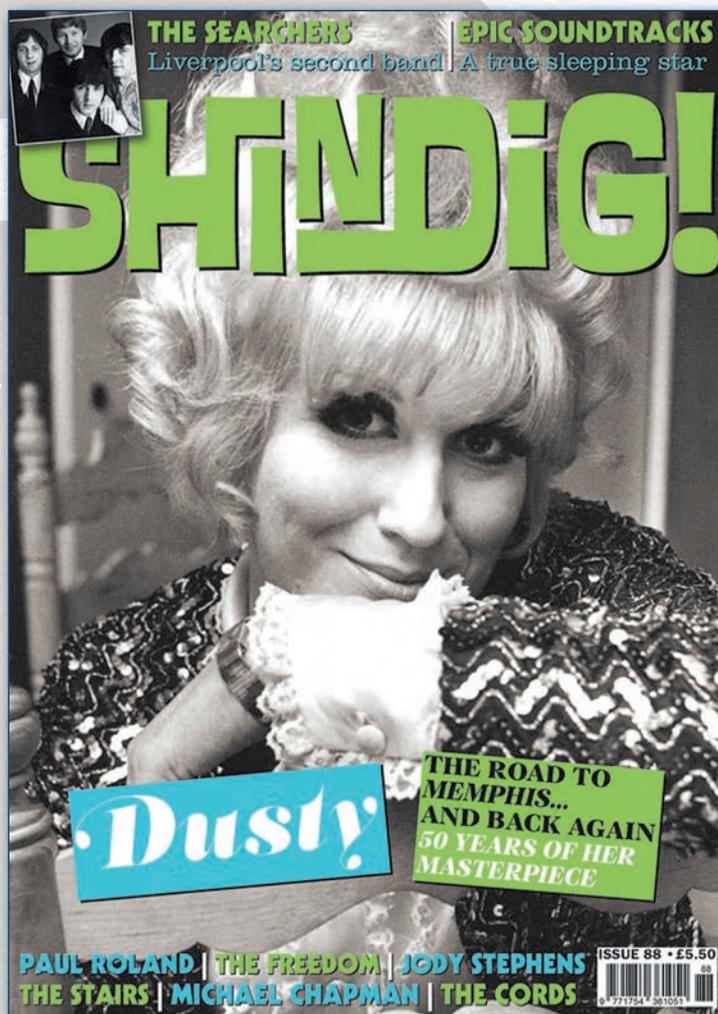
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