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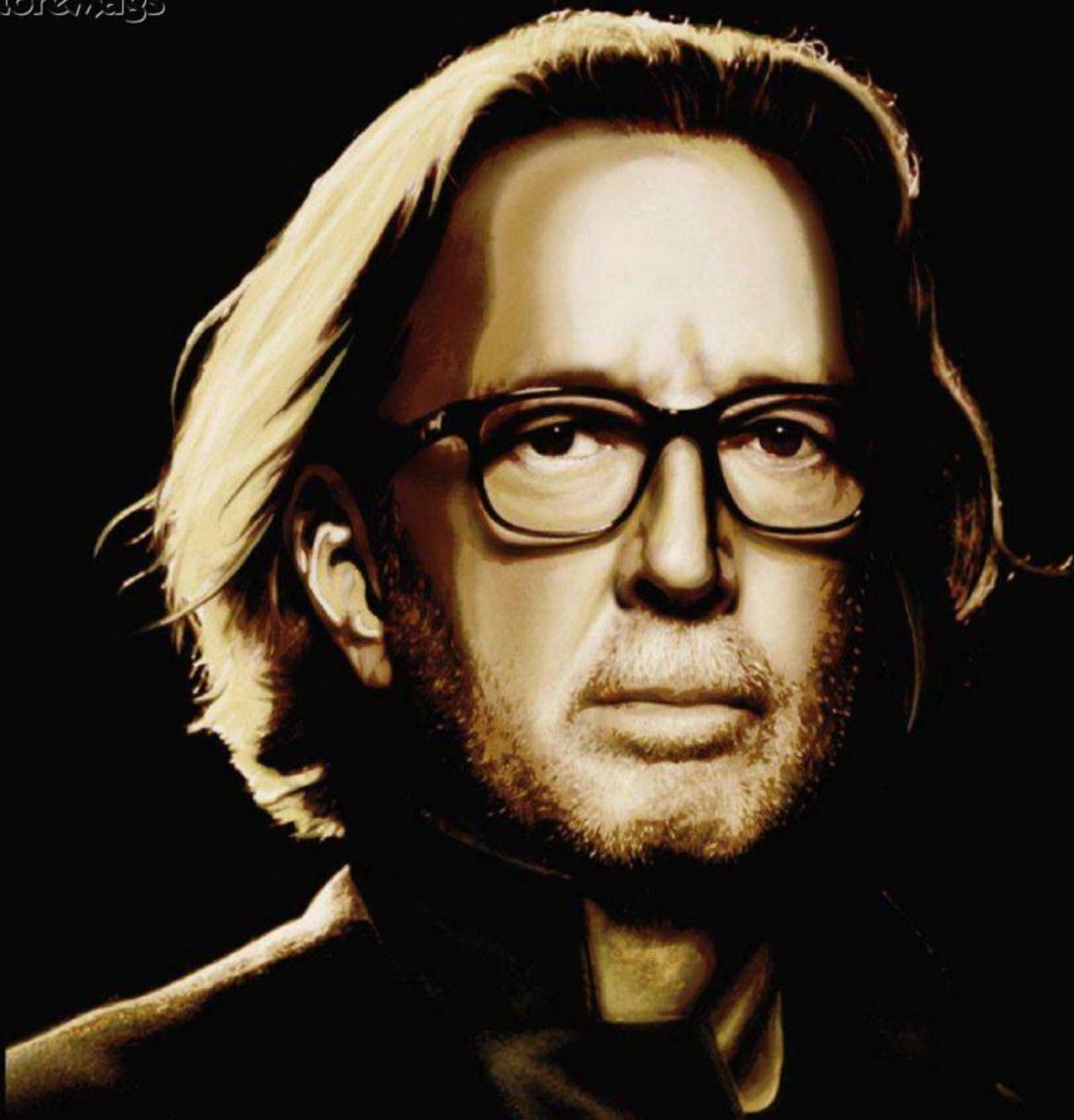
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Gregg Allman and
Cher re-enact one
of the least
thumbed pages of
the Kama Sutra,
Los Angeles, 1977.





DRUGS, DEATH, ALCOHOL - AND MORE THAN HIS FAIR SHARE OF WOMEN...

Gregg 'Unstoppable'
Allman's adventure
continues.

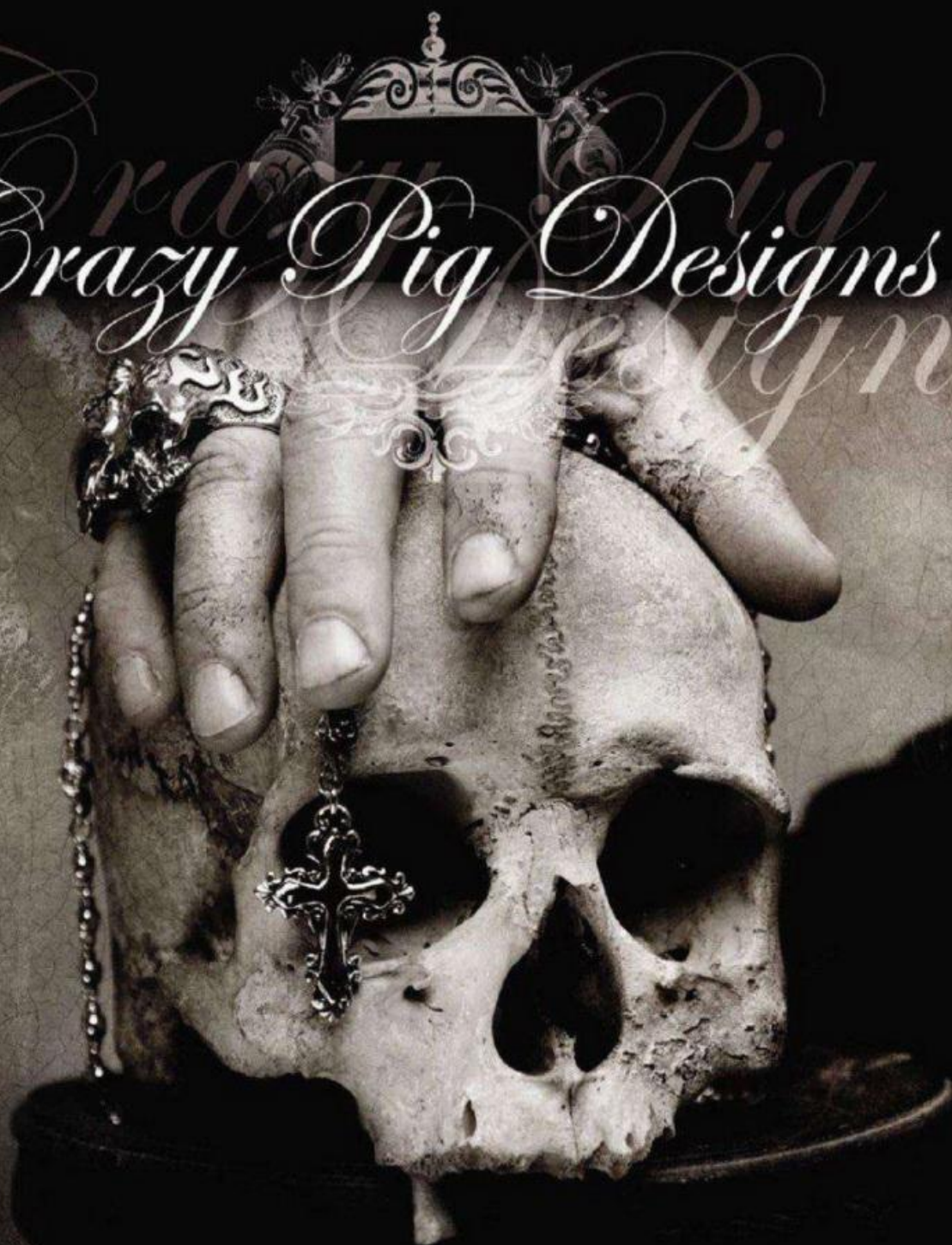
He's had a rich life: marred by tragedy and sweetened by amazing success and acclaim. His father was murdered when he was a toddler. His brother and bandmate Duane killed in a motorcycle accident when he was 24 (and Gregg was 23). He's endured addiction, alcoholism, Hepatitis C and had a liver transplant. On the other hand, he's sold millions of records and married some of the world's most beautiful women - including Cher, in 1975, three days after her divorce to Sonny Bono. The marriage looked to be over after a weekend, but in the end lasted four years, producing a child and an album, *Two The Hard Way*, in 1977.

He's been famous for almost 40 years: are famous people different than the rest of us? "Not a bit," says Allman, who talks to *Classic Rock* about his new album and more this month (p66). "Well, we don't have to deal with the damn freeway. We don't have to deal with working for the man. We don't have to come up for

**"BEING FAMOUS
MEANS YOU DON'T
HAVE TO DEAL WITH
THE DAMN FREEWAY."**

retirement. I mean, I'm going to keep playing until I die. Retirement means running around trying to find something to do every day - you know that sucks."

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Features

40 Eric Clapton

Thanks mostly to Clapton's astonishing playing, John Mayall's *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* in 1966 became one of the most influential albums in rock, and Clapton became the first true guitar god. We look at the making of the Beano album.

50 The Best Of Eric Clapton: guitar stars and experts choose and comment on Clapton's 20 best tracks.

56 The Worst Of Eric Clapton: from God to clod, Charles Shaar Murray on how the most exciting guitarist in the world sold his soul to MTV and MOR - and how he's making up for it.

62 Primal Scream

Speed, dance music and the making of a truly progressive and psychedelic masterpiece: *Screamadelica*.

66 Gregg Allman

How the babe magnet, rehab regular, guitarist and Brother has made possibly the album of his life.

72 The return of proper rock'n'roll

Quiffs, leopardskin, reverb-drenched screams, and bad-to-the-bone rhythms. Rock'n'roll and rockabilly is coming home.

76 Marianne Faithfull

Jagger's squeeze in the 60s, Swinging Sixties icon, reformed addict - and there in Paris 1970 when Jim Morrison died. Marianne Faithfull talks about the man who 'killed' Morrison.

80 Captain Beefheart

A meeting of two rock legends: late legendary rock critic Lester Bangs' 1980 interview with late rock icon and pioneer Captin Beefheart.

40

Eric Clapton

From being the first guitar god, to purveyor of pedestrian 'blues'.

COVER STORY



76

Marianne Faithfull's Secrets

Meet the woman who knows who killed Jim Morrison, and how big Mick Jagger's todger is.



Regulars

18 The Dirt

Special official *Whitesnake* Fan Pack magazine/new album combo from the makers of *Classic Rock*, on sale May 28; *High Voltage Festival* headliners and more announced, plus news of our ticket deposit scheme; what's in the latest issue of *Prog* magazine, on sale now; this year's inductees into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame...

28 Photo Pass

Axl Rose

It's 1988, and the Guns N' Roses frontman is captured playing with his then new yuppie toy. "I'm on the train!"

32 The Stories Behind The Songs

Rush

Bet you didn't know that their anthem *Tom Sawyer* was 'born from the unlikely coming together of a piece of classic American literature and a nutty Canadian poet', did you? You do now.

34 Q&A

Rob Zombie

The former White Zombie leader on working with Alice Cooper, making movies, and having a pop at Ozzy.

36 Ever Meet Hendrix? Ginger

He lost his virginity to Lemmy's girlfriend, gatecrashed Queen's private table with Axl, played bass with Cheap Trick, smoked a fat, expensive one with Steven Tyler... The on-off Wildhearts frontman tells some of his favourite rock stories.

91 Reviews

New albums from Pearl Jam, Black Spiders, Mr Big, Gang Of Four, Robin Trower... Reissues from Black Sabbath, Nine Inch Nails, Tom Petty, Edgar Broughton Band, Caravan... Books on Guns N' Roses, progressive rock, acid rock... Plus live reviews of Black Country Communion, Sonic Youth, Leafhound, the Zombies, Wilko Johnson...

102 Buyer's Guide Japan/David Sylvian

If you're looking forward to a *Quiet Life*, thinking of banging a *Tin Drum* or considering some *Obscure Alternatives*, wait until you've read what we have to say about 'em.

106 Letters

If you've got something to say, fling it right this way. And we might fling a bottle of very tasty Smokehead single-malt whisky your way in return. We'll drink (responsibly) to that!



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*Unless you're a subscriber, in which case you get two more pages on Eric Clapton.



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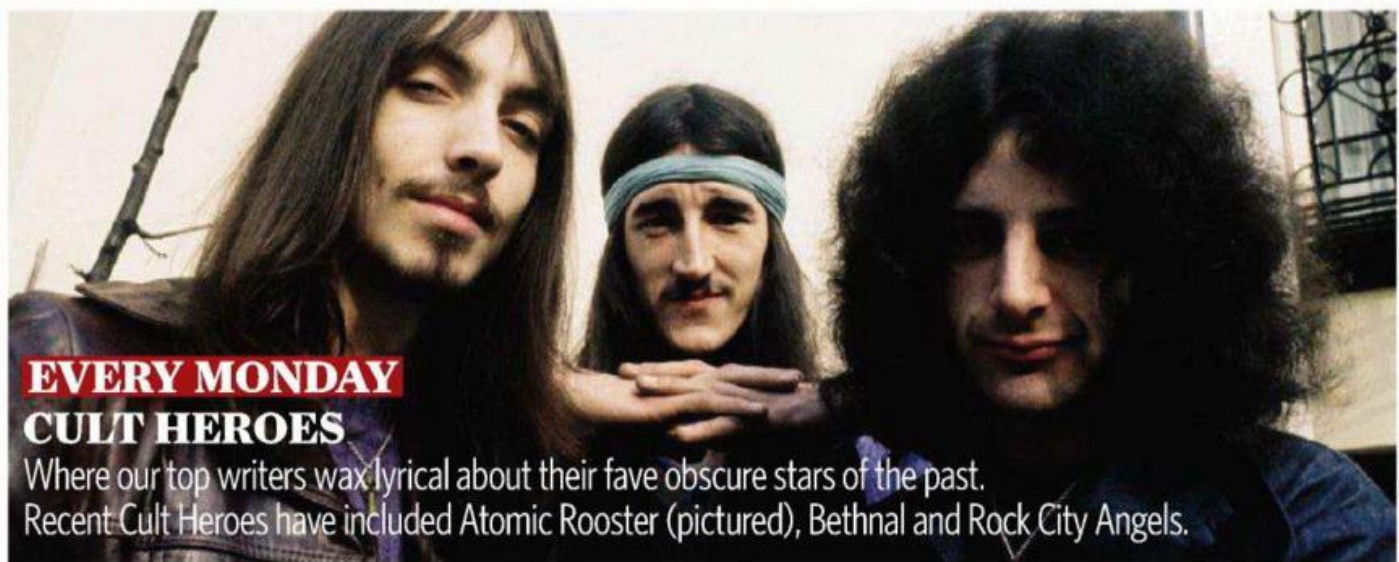
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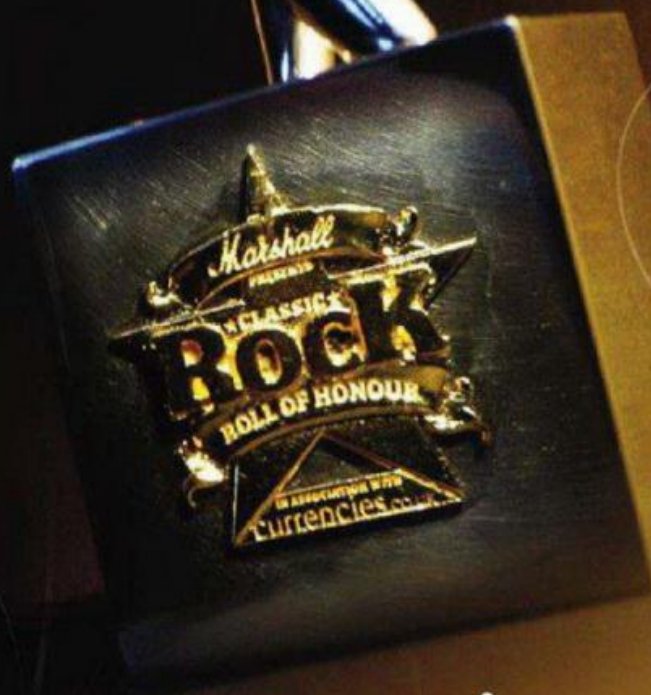
Where our top writers wax lyrical about their fave obscure stars of the past. Recent Cult Heroes have included Atomic Rooster (pictured), Bethnal and Rock City Angels.



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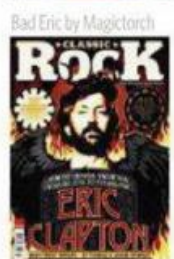
Eric Clapton. Was there ever a man so adored and reviled by rock fans? To become a teenager in the 70s or 80s was to discover Eric Clapton the middle-of-the-road, oh-so-slick millionaire rock star. To be a teenager in the 60s – never mind a teenaged guitar player – was to discover God, a man who could make the guitar do things it'd never done before (or at least not on a Gibson Les Paul through a Marshall amp).

This issue we celebrate Eric Clapton the guitar hero. As Joe Perry points out somewhere inside, EC's ascent to God-like status had already begun with the blazing rock'n'roll of the Yardbirds but the *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album – known the world over as the Beano album – took Clapton to a completely new level, and threw down the gauntlet to the generation that would create the rock music of the 70s. Perry, Lifeson, Iommi, Lukather... they grew up learning every lick and riff. As a result, Clapton's DNA was hot-wired into rock's intrinsic make-up.

Where did he go right – and what did he do wrong? Harry Shapiro's Beano album feature (p40) and an assortment of rock guitar heroes (p50) answer the first question, while Charles Shaar Murray attempts to answer the second (p56). Enjoy.

Scott

Scott Rowley,
Editor In Chief



This month's contributors



HARRY SHAPIRO

Harry Shapiro is the author of several acclaimed rock biographies, including last year's official book *Jack Bruce Composing Himself: The Authorised Biography*. The foreword for that book was by Jack's old bandmate Eric Clapton, and it's Clapton that Shapiro writes about this month, with the story behind a pivotal album in rock: the 'Beano album' (p40).



LESTER BANGS

Possibly the most famous and influential rock journalist of all time, Lester Bangs has been much-imitated and never bettered. A writer for *Creem* and *Rolling Stone*, among publications, Bangs was wild, self-indulgent, poetic and hee-haw funny. He died in 1982. This issue we reprint his classic interview with another late American rock icon, Captain Beefheart (p80).



JAAN UHELSZKI

Jaan Uhelszki was a colleague of Lester Bangs' when she was a senior editor at *Creem* in the 1970s. Since then Jaan has interviewed legends like Led Zeppelin, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Stooges, and she is the only person ever to perform on stage with Kiss in full Kiss make-up. This month she interviews Gregg Allman about his new album and some old ghosts (p66).



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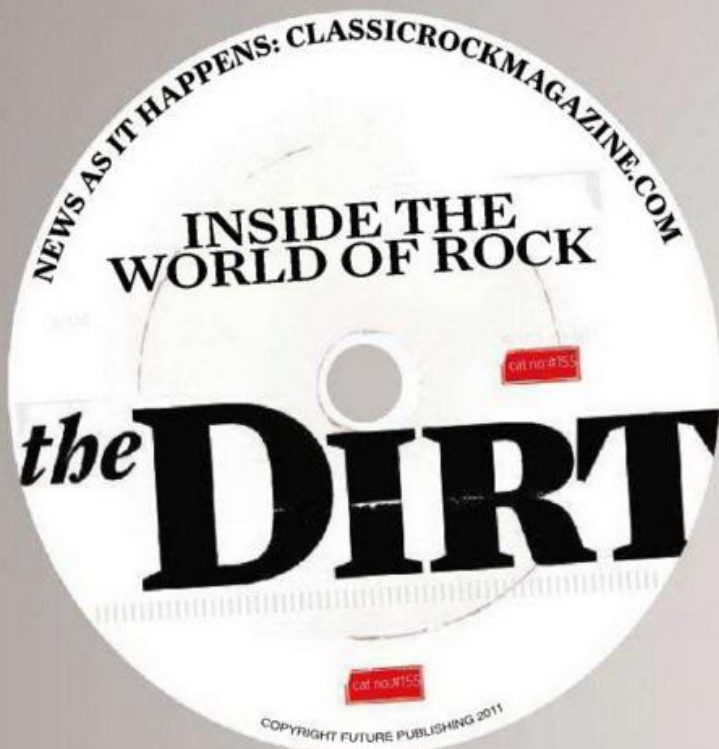
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Whitesnake Fan Pack coming soon!

Special official magazine and the band's new *Forevermore* album combo on sale March 25.

CLASSIC ROCK is proud to announce the latest in our series of official magazine/album release Fan Packs, dedicated to David Coverdale and Whitesnake.

The Whitesnake Fan Pack follows hard on the heels of our acclaimed Slash and Motörhead packs and includes a special 132-page magazine bracketed with a full CD version of *Forevermore*, Whitesnake's brand-new studio album, plus an official Whitesnake pin badge and a giant-size poster in retailer-exclusive versions.

Fans who buy the Whitesnake Fan Pack will get the new album *Forevermore* three weeks before it goes on sale in the record shops. What's more, the Fan Pack version of *Forevermore* comes with two exclusive bonus tracks – *Slide It In* and *Cheap An' Nasty* recorded live at Whitesnake's headline set at the Castle Donington Monsters Of Rock festival in 1990 – not included on the regular album.

"After such a rewarding love affair with *Classic Rock* and its readers these last few years," says Coverdale, "we are honoured beyond words to be given our very own, very special 'Snake edition. We hope you

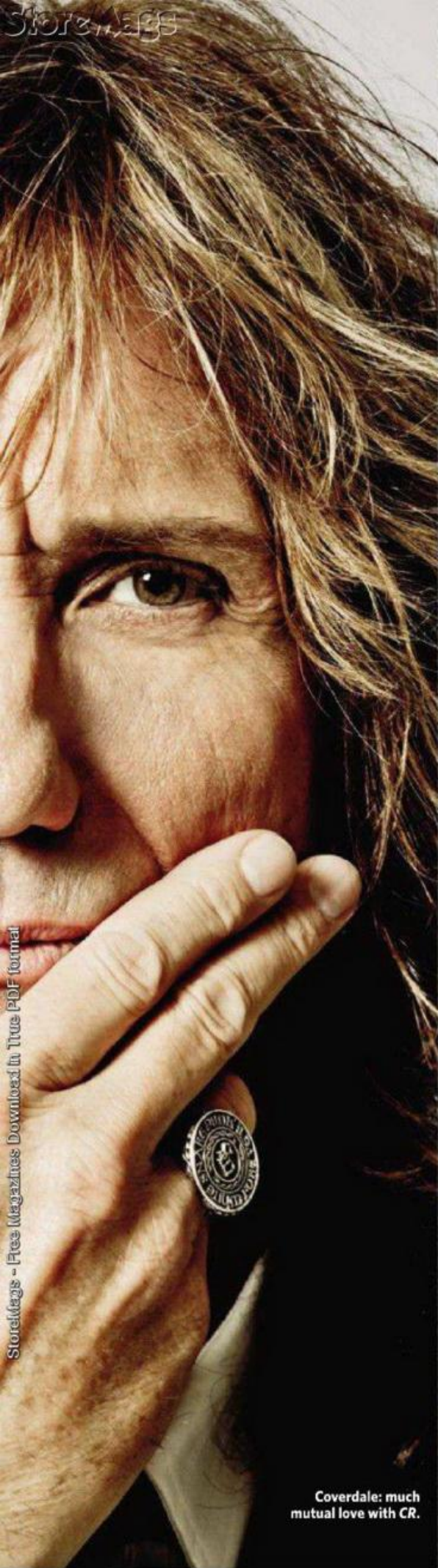
all enjoy the action-packed, high-octane *hissstory* – especially our new *Forevermore* album – and are inspired to come out and play with us this summer on the UK tour."

The Whitesnake Fan Pack magazine contains a major, all-new interview with Coverdale, conducted at his US home in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. *Forevermore* was recorded at Coverdale's home studio, and we were there while it was being made. The vocalist also talks us through the new album, track by track.

Elsewhere in the Fan Pack magazine, we interview the musicians who knew Coverdale when he started out as a club singer in his native north-east England in the 1970s, we analyse the multi-platinum success of Whitesnake's legendary 1987 album and also review the band's entire back catalogue. Plus we list Coverdale's Top 20 Friskiest Lyrics. Slide it in indeed!

The Whitesnake Fan Pack goes on sale on March 25, and it can pre-ordered at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk For more info see p.113. **GB**





Coverdale: much mutual love with CR.



BCC to play HV.

High Voltage: BCC and Tull confirmed!

Plus: Win 10 pairs of VIP tickets!

BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION, Jethro Tull, Spock's Beard, Caravan and Mostly Autumn have been added to the bill of Classic Rock's award-winning High Voltage Festival, which takes place at Victoria Park in East London on July 23-24.

Now into its second year, HV won the Best Festival Award (15,000-39,999 capacity) in the Live UK Music Business Awards and was voted the Festival Of 2010 by Planet Rock Radio listeners.

In 2011 we're making things better still with the introduction of a ticket deposit scheme which spreads the cost of a ticket over two payments. General Admission and VIP weekend tickets can be purchased with an initial £50 deposit plus booking fee, with the final payment due on June 1. For more info go to www.highvoltagefestival.com/tickets/deposit-scheme

The above artists join previously announced headliners Judas Priest (whose farewell spot will close the show on Saturday night) and Dream Theater. The latter have begun recording a new album with guitarist John Petrucci acting as

producer. It will be their first album without Mike Portnoy, who quit DT recently.

Black Country Communion are recording their second album with producer Kevin Shirley, which will be available in time for the HV show. "We're all super-stoked to appear," says Hughes. "This year's HV will be a rock'n'roll extravaganza, which suits us just fine."

Admission to the High Voltage Festival is £99 for a weekend ticket and £56.50 for a day tickets, subject to booking fee. VIP tickets will be available at £105 for the day £199 for the weekend, subject to booking fee. There will also be various VIP and hotel packages available, at various price levels to suit different pockets.

If you fancy being a very important guest at High Voltage, we have 10 pairs of special VIP tickets up for grabs this month. Click your way over to www.classicrockmagazine.com to enter. Regular festival updates and ticket details can be found at www.highvoltagefestival.com Other outlets include Ticketmaster (0844 847 1708) and HMV tickets (08448 222602).

Rock is... dead?

"The rock era is over," says DJ Gambaccini. "My arse," says CR.

"**IT IS THE** end of the rock era. It's over, in the same way the jazz era is over," declared veteran DJ Paul Gambaccini last month, in response to figures from industry magazine Music Week which showed the percentage of rock songs in the singles chart had dropped to 3% in 2010.

But that's only half the story. Rock has never been a singles-chart genre. Led Zeppelin underlined this emphatically in the 70s by refusing to release UK singles. And looking at the 100 best-selling albums

of 2010, rock artists accounted for a very healthy 27%. Which confirms what Tony Wadsworth, chairman of the BPL, said: "Rock isn't dead if you look at album sales."

But record sales alone can't tell the whole story. According to the the Top 10 worldwide band concert tours of 2010, seven rock acts out of the 10 account for a staggering 8.7 million tickets sold. And the trend continues through the whole Top 50.

Is the rock era over? We don't think so. **AK** (To join the debate head to <http://bit.ly/jsemYA>)

This month The Dirt was compiled by Claire Adams, Geoff Barton, Harry Doherty, Malcolm Dome, Lee Dorian, Jerry Ewing, Michael Griffith, Al King, Dave Ling, Mick Farrow, Mick Wall and Philip Wilding



Gerry Rafferty: "an extraordinary talent!"

Gerry Rafferty

April 16, 1947 – January 4, 2011

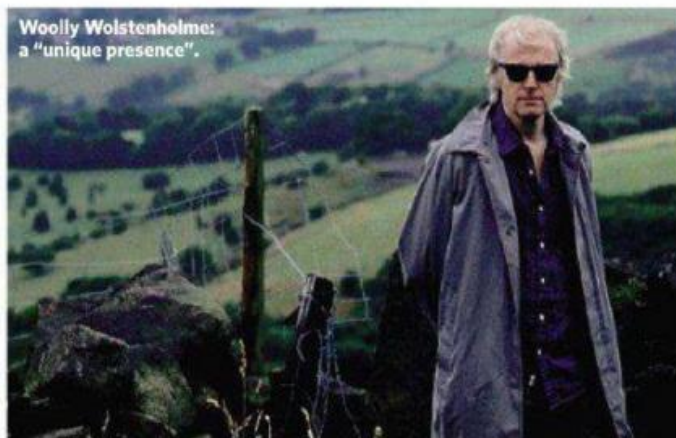
AS A TEENAGER, Paisley-born Gerry Rafferty combined jobs in a local butchers with singing in the Mavericks. There followed a stint in London as a busker on the London Underground, before returning to embrace the Clydeside folk circuit where he teamed up with Billy Connolly in the short-lived group The Humblebums. When Connolly left to pursue a career in comedy, Rafferty formed Stealers Wheel, who had the hit *Stuck In The Middle With You*, but left due to problems with management.

There followed a protracted period during which Rafferty was contractually unable to record. When

in 1978 he finally released the solo *City To City*, containing the massive hit *Baker Street*, it would prove to be the biggest-selling album of his career.

Rafferty's former manager Jon Brewer feels he could have had a bigger career but that "Gerry wasn't able to come to terms with the industry. Then after *Baker Street* when EMI stuffed him with five million pounds he couldn't handle it. Give an artist five thousand and they go and make more magic. Give them five million and they buy a can of beer. He was an extraordinary talent but he didn't want his talent exploited by others."

Mick Wall



Woolly Wolstenholme: a "unique presence".

Woolly Wolstenholme

April 15, 1947 – December 13, 2010

KEYBOARD PLAYER STUART

'Woolly' Wolstenholme took his own life shortly after a bout of nervous exhaustion had caused him to pull out of UK appearances with John Lees' Barclay James Harvest.

Woolly was born in Chadderton, Oldham. Having met guitarist John Lees at Oldham School Of Art, in 1967 they and drummer Mel Pritchard co-founded Barclay James Harvest. After a succession of hit albums such as *Everyone Is Everybody Else*, *Time Honoured Ghosts* and *Octoberon*, Woolly quit following 1979's *XII*. He released a solo album, *Mastoso*, but retired from the music business in 1980.

Woolly's return was on a collaboration with Lees on the album *Nexus...* in 1998. Woolly released his second solo album, *One Drop In A Dry World*, in 2004, which was followed by albums including *Grim* and *Caterwauling*. He also played with John Lees' Barclay James Harvest. A statement from members of the band said: "Everyone associated with the band is stunned that a shining light of Barclay James Harvest is no longer with us. We would ask all of Woolly's fans to remember his incredible contribution to popular music and his unique presence on stage."

Dave Ling



Phil Kennemore: "had a rich and wonderful life".

Phil Kennemore

October 20, 1953 – January 7, 2011

PHIL KENNEMORE, BASSIST and co-founding member of San Franciscan hard rock band Y&T, has died of lung cancer.

After learning of his condition, Kennemore said: "Do me a favour and go out and see the band now, Y&T [with Brad Lang as his replacement] is kicking serious ass. I'll be back rocking with you all soon."

Yesterday And Today were formed in 1972. After their name was abbreviated to Y&T, in the 80s they enjoyed success with the albums *Earthshaker*, *Black Tiger* and *Mean Streak*. In 1984 they played at Monsters Of

Rock at castle Donington alongside AC/DC and Van Halen, among others.

After splitting up in 1991 Y&T reunited four years later, and rebuilt their profile enough to be invited to play at last summer's Download.

Y&T's Dave Meniketti says: "Phil was my best buddy for thirty-seven years... I will miss his sense of humour and amazing wit, but most of all I will always miss not seeing him to my left on stage. He had a rich and wonderful life. I was happy to have been alongside him every step of the glorious way."

Dave Ling



Mick Karn: was "by far the best bassist in the UK" said Pete Townshend.

Mick Karn

July 24, 1958 – 4 January 4, 2011

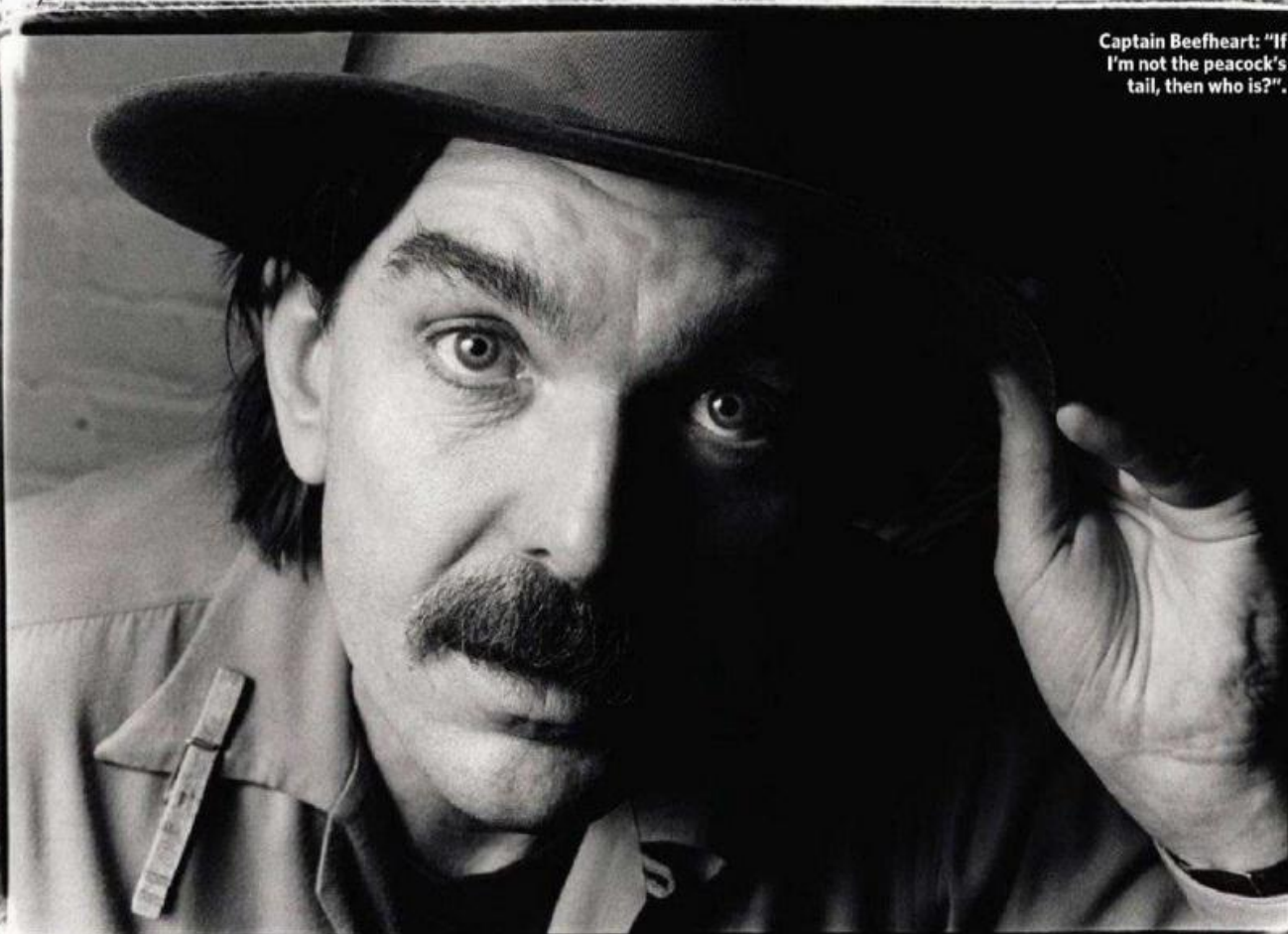
IN 1982 PETE Townshend declared Japan's Mick Karn "by far the best bassist in the UK". Karn, who has died of cancer, was certainly unique in the way he approached playing bass. His distinctive bass lines brought a curious sense of exoticism to Japan's music. The band had begun in London in the mid-70s, their thrashy post-glam sound matched by a look filched from Bowie and the New York Dolls. In the 70s and 80s Japan released a string of albums including *Quiet Life*, *Gentlemen Take Polaroids* and 1981's acclaimed *Tin Drum*, by which time their sound had evolved into an

arty appropriation of chilly synths and Eastern textures.

After Japan, Karn's adventurism continued first with Dali's Car – a minimalist, Middle Eastern-flavoured project with Bauhaus singer Peter Murphy – and went on to encompass sessions for Bill Nelson, Gary Numan, Kate Bush and many more.

Japan reunited briefly in 1991 – billed as Rain Tree Crow – where they paid little heed to conventional pop structures. There followed a variety of solo projects and collaborations, the last being 2010's *The Concrete Twin*. Michael Griffith

Captain Beefheart: "If I'm not the peacock's tail, then who is?"



LAURA LEVINE/CORBIS

Captain Beefheart

January 15, 1941 – December 17, 2010

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART WAS unique. He took rock'n'roll to places other musicians couldn't even imagine. He has been likened to avant-garde jazz innovators Sun Ra and Pharoah Sanders, and even to Vincent Van Gogh, who died without selling a painting, many of which now sell for millions at auction. Beefheart walked his own yellow brick road without fear or favour. At times he cult-controlled his musicians like he was Charlie Manson, instructing them: "If you're guilty of thinking, you're out. If your brain is part of the process, you're missing it."

He was never a rock star, but he once demanded of a *Rolling Stone* interviewer: "If I'm not the peacock's tail, then who is?"

I first heard the voice of Beefheart through the tiny, tinny speaker of a transistor AM radio tuned to John Peel's *Perfumed Garden*, the midnight-to-2am slot on the pirate ship Radio London. It must have been some time in early 1967. The rock'n'roll world was full of young white guys trying to sound like old blues shouters, but Captain Beefheart could have been the real deal rather than a strange, 26-year-old Dutch American called Don Van Vliet from Lancaster, California, who, according to his school friend and early bandmate Frank Zappa, "would just sit at home and listen to rhythm and blues records, and scream at his mother to get him a Pepsi".

The young Van Vliet's listening included a great

**'He was unique.
He took rock'n'roll to
places other musicians
couldn't even imagine.'**

deal of Howlin' Wolf, who provided the foundation of what would be the voice of Beefheart, except that, unlike Wolf, Beefheart's grating and growling baritone would twist at the end of lines into a weird, almost alien higher register. The legendary music critic Lester Bangs described it as "the sly, tongue-slithering glee of an old Delta bluesman at a backyard barbecue".

Beefheart, however, created lyrics that no bluesman would ever have attempted. His surreal, off-world poetry could almost convince the listener that he was a stranded alien from a malfunctioning flying saucer. "Space-age couple, why don't you flex your magic muscle/Why don't you drop your cool tomfoolery, and shed your nasty jewellery?"

Not for Beefheart the cold sci-fi of the early Pink Floyd, setting the controls for the heart of the sun. The Captain travelled boldly through a cartoon cosmos in which motherships transport the big-eyed beans from Venus, but dinosaurs also return to consume the polluters of the planet. And when

it was time to get down-to-the earth, the Captain could be down and dirty. "I wanna lick you everywhere it's pink, 'n' everywhere you think."

The two times I saw him live, the Magic Band's perversely logical spikes of furious rhythm were accompanied by costumes and hopscotch dance formations that only reinforced the idea that they were a displaced bar band from Zeta Reticuli where the gravity was more intense.

We all have our favourite Beefheart album, be it *Safe As Milk*, *Clear Spot*, *Lick My Decals Off...* For me it has to be *Trout Mask Replica*. Its red cover with the fish mask is nothing short of iconic. Beefheart often complained that Frank Zappa's production treated him like a specimen rather than an artist. "He's like the kind of person that would take up ninety per cent of the air in the room," he said of Frank. But the Captain complained a lot, and the music business never treated him kindly. For me, Zappa's radically unorthodox production matched Beefheart's eccentricity weird blow for weird blow, and each man's work complimented the other's to reveal the True Captain.

But now the Captain has left the planet after wrestling multiple sclerosis for years. When good people go, it's easy to say the world won't see their like again, but in the case of Captain Beefheart you can bet on it big-time. Like I said at the start, Captain Beefheart was unique.

Mick Farren

Super-men!

The new issue of *Prog* is full of star-studded collaborations.

PROG KICKS OFF 2011 in healthy style with the news of at least three supergroups on the go.

Mike Portnoy has put his departure from Avenged Sevenfold behind him by hooking up with Deep Purple guitarist Steve Morse, Transatlantic buddy Neal Morse, bassist Dave LaRue and Endochine singer Casey McPherson.

"The musical potential is off the charts," says Portnoy in the latest issue of *Classic Rock Presents Prog*. "We've got so many ideas, I'm very excited to see where this all leads."

The as-yet-unnamed band are currently hard at work on their debut album.

Meanwhile ex-Purple keyboard player Jon Lord has teamed up with Jethro Tull/Roxy Music violinist Anna Phoebe. "The plan is to form a proper band and then write songs for an album," says Lord.

Finally No-Man singer Tim Bowness has linked with Nosound's Giancarlo Erra in *Memories Of Machines*. The duo has enlisted a stellar cast to help them out including Robert Fripp, Peter Hammill of

Van der Graaf Generator and Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson. They release their debut in April.

Steven Wilson and Robert Fripp grace the cover of the latest issue of *Classic Rock Presents Prog*, on sale now. So get clued in to everything that's happening on Planet Progressive right now. **JE**



Velvet Revolver get 'amazing' new vocalist

But who is the band's mystery man to replace Weiland?

VELVET REVOLVER APPEAR to have found a new frontman. Drummer Matt Sorum recently confirmed that a four-day writing/recording session conducted with "an amazing singer" had generated "nine killer demo tracks".

Beyond the drummer's admission that "[the] guy is a known guy - a very strong guy, too," the band have yet to reveal any significant details.

Following Scott Weiland's departure in April 2008, VR guitarist Slash released a highly successful solo album which he is still committed to touring. Bassist Duff McKagan played with Jane's Addiction and is about to issue an album with his group Loaded, and Sorum played some fill-in gigs with Motörhead and produced ex-Runaways singer Cherie Currie.

Should all go to plan the Velvets - completed by Dave Kushner - hope to record a new album in the summer for release towards the year's end. **DL**

NEWS

After a surprisingly short internet search, a Def Leppard tribute band from Dallas, Texas, have reportedly found a drummer with one arm. Besides a 'flame retardant kit' and their own sticks, the group **Pyromania's** advert specified that all applicants should have 'no prosthetics'.



Robert Plant (pictured) has called the world's obsession with a Led Zeppelin reunion "a pain in the arse." He explains: "Think about it from my angle - soon, I'm going to need help crossing the street."

Manowar will be performing their 1982 debut album, *Battle Hymns*, in its entirety when they play their first UK gig in 16 years at Birmingham Academy on March 27.

Now serving as a judge on *American Idol*, **Steven Tyler** nevertheless wants to get on with making a new Aerosmith album. The singer told *Rolling Stone*: "I'm trying to rally the guys, [but] we're having trouble getting [hold of] Joe [Perry, guitarist]. I don't know where he is."

Dave Grohl has agreed to join the cast of the new, as yet untitled *Muppets* movie. Its storyline sees Grohl standing in for Muppet drummer Animal when he attends anger management treatment.

Uriah Heep are recording their 22nd studio album. The band have retained Mike Paxman, who helmed their previous release, *Wake The Sleeper*, as producer.

Kerry Ellis and Brian May: "Kerry is up for anything..."



WELCOME BACK Brian May

Queen guitarist collaborates with 'West End diva' Kerry Ellis. Rest assured, they will rock you...

BRIAN MAY IS a man who likes to keep busy. In Queen's 40th anniversary year, between remasters of every album, a BBC documentary, a movie of Freddie Mercury's life, the ongoing juggernaut that is the *We Will Rock You* musical and writing books, May has found himself something else to be wildly enthused about - *Anthems*, his collaborative album with singer Kerry Ellis, a young West End diva who sang in *We Will Rock You*.

"If this album doesn't reach rock audiences, I'll be upset."

How did *Anthems* come about?

Everybody thought Kerry was exceptional when she was auditioning for *We Will Rock You*... then we made the cast album and that's when we started to work on things.

When you were casting WWRV, did you have people in mind for the specific voices and personalities?

Yes, we did... and Meat [the character Ellis played] was kind of the rebel chief, so there was a rock edge to that. But also she's a rock chick with a heart and she sings the biggest ballad in the show - *No One But You (Only The Good Die Young)*.

A lot of cynics said WWRV was just a vehicle to put Queen songs together and make a quick buck. Then it became this monster West End show.

Ben - the much-maligned Ben Elton; people love to hate him really - transformed the whole story. He made it into something which affected people. It's good comedy but it also has something to say about the world today.

How did the collaboration between you and Kerry develop?

As I said, it started with the cast album. Kerry came down to help us sort through the takes and then we just started to work on a few other things. To me, it was very

exciting to work with someone with such a great female voice. I was just very inspired by the sound that Kerry could make and the interpretation that she could bring. So I started in odd moments to prepare tracks so that when she had an odd moment she could come down and try them out.

The album is called *Anthems*. People might be expecting a string of classic rock anthems, not a collection of original tracks and songs from the musical theatre...

We used to say in Queen that we should be called *Anthems Are Us*. In fact, we debated calling a compilation album *Anthems*. It seems to cover what we are doing very well. With this album, the anthem feel comes not directly from the songs but from the overall feel and performance.

How was it performing *Anthems* at the BBC Proms in the Park?

It was interesting. That was really something for me, nerve-wracking...

But you've played in front of bigger audiences with Queen?

Yeah, but not with an 80-piece orchestra, and with a band I had never routine before. I had to hit the ground running. We've done one gig... and a Wogan on radio! It's all been a learning experience for me. Kerry is up for anything, and I've had to learn a lot about working with people. With Queen, we just bowl in, do what we do and say goodbye! This project has been very interactive. If this album doesn't get across to rock audiences, I'm going to be very upset. When people get to know what it is about, I'm sure they will realise it's their kind of thing. **HD**

Anthems is available now on Decca.

★ HIGH HOPES

The Sights

Inspired as much by 60s Detroit garage as by classic rock, and they love a great E.

"OH MAN, I just love those blatant generalisations! How many times have we heard this before? The NME used to come out with this kind of guff all the time back in the day, that whole 'Rock is dead!' kind of thing..."

Eddie Baranek, guitarist/vocalist with The Sights may be sitting at home in Detroit, but as his voice trails down the transatlantic phone line it's clear that he's aware of what's going on across the pond in Britain with regard to the recent hysterically misguided announcements in certain areas of the UK media that rock is dead.

"I tell you what," he continues. "Why don't those people come and hang out with me and my friends? Come and see what we do? Traffic albums played from start to finish. This is the stuff we've always dug, it's part of our lives and who we are. Rock is dead? Don't make me laugh!"

The Sights have been playing their gritty but melodic, Detroit-style rock since 1998, inspired as much by the garage sounds of the MC5 and more latterly the White Stripes as by the classic-rock stylings of Bob Seger, and coloured with a dash of power pop. However, *Most Of What Follows Is True*, the band's fourth album, released at the tail end of last year after a five-year gap since the last one, is in some ways a rebirth.

"We lost our record deal, and about that time I felt I was feeling kind of jaded with everything," Baranek explains. "Also, Detroit had very much come back into the public eye – you couldn't turn a corner without bumping into a journalist from France or the UK trying to discover the next big hip thing, and it all felt so false to me. So I decided to go back to school. A lot of our 'family' had kind of disappeared as well. So I did go back to school for a year-and-a-half. And in that time I started listening to music again and fell back in love with it. And I realised that I still had something to say, so I started the band back up again and here we are."

And what's the difference between the band then and now?

"I feel that the songs are a lot stronger," he says, "and that I definitely get over what I want to say in my songs a lot better than I used to."

The Sights previously toured the UK in the early noughties, and right now there are tentative plans being considered for them to return for dates in late spring. More pressing for Baranek, though, is a string of dates in the snow-ridden US south. Again this has the singer and guitarist chuckling at the actions of us here in snow-bound Britain.

"Yeah, there's been some snow down there. But we're from Detroit, we're used to a bit of snow. Maybe they're not so used to it down south. They don't know how to drive in snow, ha ha. But we'll make it. I tell you, it'll take more than a bit of snow to stop us. I'll be fifty-five with a gut and I'll still be playing gigs. People love a live E chord and no auto-tuning. Rock is dead? Ha!" **JE**

Most Of What Follows Is True is out now on *Alive Records*.

FOR FANS OF...

the everly brothers

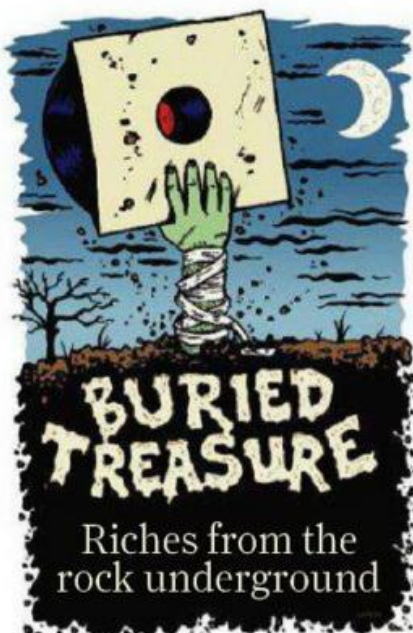


Catchy songs, infectious songwriting, no gimmicks and no studio trickery. This the mantra of The Sights. Steeped in Detroit's rock heritage, Eddie says they "combine the unobtrusive honesty of The Band with countless slivers of influence from our own personal record collections: Ike & Tina, Solomon Burke, The Everly Brothers, Bob Seger, Tim Hardin..."



The Sights: putting the boot in to rock's doom merchants.

"Rock is dead?
Don't make me laugh!"



AARDVARK

Aardvark, Deram, 1970
£225+ for a mint vinyl copy.



Sporting one of the most fantastically twee sleeves of the period, *Aardvark* gets off to a flyer with the distorted Hammond fuzz grind of *Copper Sunset*, a very heavy

track that the band are perhaps best known for. It's like a pre-Gillan Deep Purple, minus Ritchie Blackmore. Yes, here was another progressive rock band devoid of a guitarist, opting instead for organ, piano and other instruments to make up for the absence. At times, especially on this track, it really works.

The whole vibe of this one and only 1970 release is so quintessentially British, it's hard not to be somewhat pleasantly humoured by its charm. *Very Nice Of You To Call* is a mellow slice of piano-lead pop-prog with very Modish vocals, while *Many Things To Do* is another album highlight containing a jazzy drum pattern that borders on being an early blast beat.

'Yes, here was another progressive rock band devoid of a guitarist.'

The *Greencap* brings to mind early ELP meets Procol Harum, with its complex keyboard/percussion workouts and features a distorted vocal. It's here it all starts to lose focus and the lack of a lean sounding guitar begins to wear a bit thin.

The *Outing* -Yes is a near-10-minute journey that begins with a sing-along to the words: 'We're going away'. It comes across like the local Working Men's Club getting ready to board the coach for the annual day trip to the seaside and is initially a lot of fun, before delving into avant garde territory.

Aardvark were aiming for something different on this record and hats off to them for that. For lovers of keyboard-led early prog it's worth investigating. **LD**

NEWS

The **New York Dolls'** new album, *Dancing Backward In High Heels*, is released in the UK via Blast Records on March 18. It features original members David Johansen on vocals, guitarist Sylvain Sylvain, plus former Blondie guitarist Frank Infante, bassist Jason Hill and drummer Brian Delaney.

Almost a year after the death of Type O Negative vocalist Peter Steele, former Type O members Sal Abruscato and Johnny Kelly have a new band called **A Pale Horse Named Death**.

The **Philip Lynott Exhibition**, the biggest ever collection of memorabilia, song lyrics, paintings, tributes, photos and more relating to Thin Lizzy's late frontman, can be seen on the top floor of Stephen's Green Shopping Centre in Dublin from March 4 until April 3.



As this issue went to press, **Todd Rundgren** (pictured) and **Utopia** were set to play a reunion show in New York on January 29. Along with keyboard players Moogy Klingman and Ralph Schukett, bassist John Siegler and drummer Kevin Elfman, Rundgren was aiming to raise money to pay for treatment of Klingman, who is suffering from cancer.

Francis Rossi was forced to cancel this month's solo tour due to requiring a hernia operation. And with Status Quo about to record a new album, the tour is impossible to reschedule. A CD, DVD and Blu-ray of Rossi's solo gig at St Luke's in London is released on March 4.



Cauldron: you don't want to be standing next to the drummer

WELCOME BACK

Cauldron

The Toronto trad-metal revivalists on the benefits of being brief, and living their own scene.

WHEN THEY FIRST came out of the traps with debut album *Chained To The Nite* in 2009, Toronto band Cauldron were immediately hailed as one of the leaders of what was being termed the New Wave Of Traditional Metal.

Now, two years later, they're back with a new album and a new line-up. Joining bassist/vocalist Jason Decay and guitarist Ian Chains is drummer Chris Steve. And, having established their true metal credentials with that debut, the trio are ready to step up to the next level. As Decay explains,

We want him. He wants us. Nothing can go wrong. Or, am I tempting fate?

Are you the visionary in the band?

I wouldn't put it that way, but I started Cauldron with a vision, and was lucky enough to find Ian, someone who shares this with me. We are equal partners. I write most of the songs, but I also know what he will accept. I never force anything onto the band.

The running time for the new album is under 40 minutes.

Were you thinking of a vinyl release? Well, this is gonna be released on vinyl for sure. But it's more than that. For me, an album should be no longer than about forty minutes - that is the ideal running

Did your approach for this record change because of the extra experience you've now got?

We wanted something a lot more live. All the basic tracks were done as live, and then we added overdubs. We did take after take until we got what we wanted.

"What happened to our drummer Chris Rites? He exploded."

You shot a video diary of your time in the studio. Did you think people would be interested in the process?

Blame our label, Earache. They wanted something they could use as a promotional tool for the album. We didn't force anyone to watch these clips, and there was interest from fans. But you'll notice that I'm hardly in there. I was usually behind the camera.

You appear to be suffering from Spinal Tap syndrome, as you're now on your fourth drummer. What happened with Chris Rites?

He exploded! Nah, he was always in two bands: Cauldron and Crystal Castles. While each band's schedules allowed him to be in both, that was okay. But then it became impossible, and he chose Crystal Castles. No big deal. Chris Steve has been with us for about 18 months now. As far as I'm concerned, he's a full-time member.

time. I think it forced us into being more disciplined about what we put on. At one point we had a running time of forty-two minutes, but then we cut a song.

You're giving away a special copy of cult fanzine *Chromium Dioxide* with the deluxe edition of the album. How did that come about?

They're friends of ours. Earache were looking for something extra to put in with the album and this idea came up. It's an edition dedicated solely to Cauldron. We left the guys at *Chromium Dioxide* to come up with the ideas and put it together. We only tweaked it slightly.

Are you getting bored with all this New Wave Of Traditional Metal hype?

It's hardly mentioned now. We were there before the term, and we'll still be here when it's gone. To me, it's meaningless. We play Cauldron music. **MD**

*Cauldron's **Burning Fortune** is out on February 14 on Earache Records.*

Gold-digging: the
Gibson Randy Rhoads
Les Paul Custom.

● RAW POWER

Tribute to a legend

New limited-edition Les Paul named after the late, great Randy Rhoads.

GIBSON GUITARS ARE a confusing entity, even though guitars bearing that classic name have been responsible for some of rock's greatest moments. While fierce rivals Fender continue to produce cool guitars anyone can afford, the Nashville company's current output tends to bounce between 'technological marvels' that few players can realistically be bothered with, and exclusive (with a price tag to match) recreations of specific models used by such players as Jimmy Page, Don Felder, Slash and Angus Young.

However, new to the roster is this Gibson Randy Rhoads Les Paul Custom, which is limited to just 300 pieces worldwide. Randy is best known for his use of just three electrics: a polka dot V built by US luthier Karl Sandoval, one of the first Jackson guitars of a design that would go on to be referred to as the Randy Rhoads Pro, and a stock 1974 Gibson Les Paul Custom.

Of the latter he was particularly drawn to the white finish, as he was a fan of Mick Ronson who used a similar guitar during his stint with David Bowie. And it's this model on which the new Gibson is based.

Randy had his Les Paul long before he was plucked from relative obscurity to help Ozzy reignite his career, and he used it and the Sandoval to record the vast majority of the guitar parts on Ozzy's *Blizzard Of Ozz* (1980) and *Diary Of A Madman* ('81). Randy's tragic death in 1982 has done little to dilute his reputation, and remains one of the greatest guitarists rock has seen.

The version of the Randy Rhoads Custom pictured sells for £3,599, and the fact that rock fans are clamouring to get hold of one gives at least some idea of the regard in which Randy is still held.

Mick Taylor, Editor, Guitarist magazine



WHITE RIOT

Is the white LP rock's coolest guitar?

The white Les Paul Custom is one of the coolest guitars in rock, but its appeal isn't limited to out-and-out rock use. Just ask The Manics' James Dean Bradfield and former Sex Pistol Steve Jones (pictured) for starters.

Bradfield's favourite 1990 white LP features heavily on the Welsh band's latest album *Postcards From A Young Man*, while Jones used his famous '74 model on the classic *Never Mind The Bollocks...*

While to some people a guitar is just a tool, rarely has a screwdriver or a spanner sounded or looked as cool as most guitars, let alone this one.

Sharp Dressed Man

Sponsored by **INITIUM**



[1]

[2]



[3]

Macbeth Warskull Tee, £20
www.macbethshop.com

[1] Skate/punk brand Macbeth are better known for their footwear but they also produce some rocking men's clothing. This Warskull 100% cotton is a Classic Rock favourite with its different take on the traditionally rock'n'roll skull and crossbones.

Luke 1977 Darlek Jeans, £80
www.luke1977.com

[2] Luke 1977 is an independent, British design lead label that creates men's clothing inspired by the rogues of this world. The regular-jean top with skinny-jean bottom means you get comfort where it matters and the skinny-fit bottom looks great with almost any shoes.

OBEY Drifter Jacket, £120
<http://shop.obeyclothing.co.uk>

[3] Obey Clothing is inspired and developed by urban street artist Shepherd Fairey. Now with a small team of designers, Obey create detailed clothing that suits all lifestyles. The Drifter jacket, in warm-but-breathable 100% cotton flannel fabric, reminds us of something Neil Young or Jim Morrison would have worn in the 60s.

www.initiumeyewear.co.uk

NEWS

Whitesnake's new album, released as a limited edition *Classic Rock Snakepack* on March 25 via is called *Forevermore*. Coverdale emphasises that its title is one word and not two. "Otherwise it sounds like a bleedin' Valentine's Day card, which it ain't!"

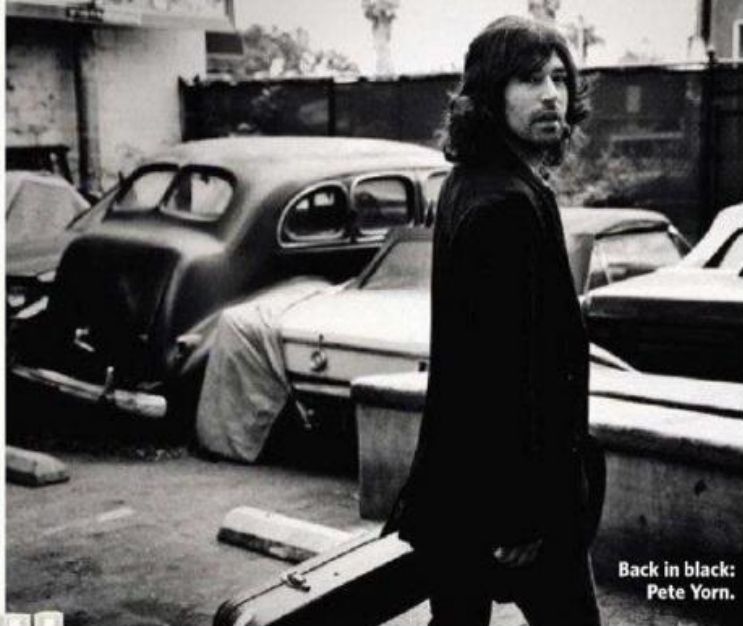
Edsel Records are to release newly remastered editions of four vintage albums by the **Steve Miller Band**. *Book Of Dreams* (1977) and *Circle Of Love* (1981) are available on February 7, and *Abracadabra* (1982) and *Italian X-Rays* (1984) a month later.

Congratulations to **Richard Thompson** and **Trevor Horn**, who both received awards in the New Year's Honours List. Thompson, best known for his work with Fairport Convention, receives an OBE, while former Buggles/Yes member Horn gets an MBE.



The Alice Cooper Band, Dr John, Tom Waits, Leon Russell, Neil Diamond and Elektra Records founder **Jac Holzman** are to be inducted to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame at a ceremony in New York on March 14. As a consequence, Alice Cooper (pictured) says it is "inevitable" that the band's surviving members - himself, guitarist Michael Bruce and bassist Dennis Dunaway and drummer Neal Smith - will perform selected reunion dates.

Eagles guitarist **Joe Walsh** is to release his first solo album in nearly two decades. As yet untitled, it's due in the spring and was co-produced with Jeff Lynne.



Back in black:
Pete Yorn.

WELCOME BACK

Pete Yorn

Album number six is here and it comes with a Burrito Brothers song and Frank Black's production.

WITH HIS SELF-titled sixth album, Pete Yorn has returned to the tougher-sounding records he first made his name with. After the duets album with Scarlett Johansson - *Break Up* - and the reflective, mostly acoustic *Back & Fourth*, Pete Yorn sounds renewed. Recorded in just five days, with Frank Black producing, it has taken two years to get a release. As he celebrates his recent marriage and prepares to take his new band out on an extensive US tour, Yorn talks about working with Charles Thompson, covering the Burrito Brothers and having his own Black album.

It's taken you six albums to do what most people do on their debut: name it after themselves.
I made the record and I had it done for a little while and all my friends were like: "You worked with Frank Black... Where's the album? Where's the Black stuff?" So I just wanted to have a black cover like Metallica or Spinal Tap. Then I was told I had to put my name on it because they had nowhere to file it. Someone put my initials on it, and it looked cool, and that's it. That's really the reason. I wish it were more of a statement, but I just really wanted my own black album.

And it's been in the can since 2008?
I was all set to go in and record *Back & Fourth* then, two weeks before, I got an email from Frank Black. I didn't quite believe it. He's like: "Let's make a record." I had no time, but I knew I had to make it happen. So I called him and said: "We've got to do this in five days and we're going to approach this in a simple way, not over-think it, and see what we get."
I recorded it, loved it, but I had this obligation to Columbia that I put the other record out first. That's the way it worked out."

You recorded it in Salem, Oregon.
It was weird how it all came together. I went down to a friend's house and I was messing around with some music, and this girl named Nancy Walker - she was my first A&R person at Columbia - came over. I hadn't seen her in years, and we were having this cool reunion, and out of nowhere she said: "Charles Thompson should work on this stuff."

Charles Thompson?
Exactly. I was, who the hell is Charles Thompson? And of course that's Frank Black's real name. I didn't know that. I said: "Do you know him?" And said she thought she could get to him. Truth to be told, I didn't believe she could. And then his email turns up.

So I jumped on a plane.

It has the spirit of those first three records, their punch.
This one has a freedom to it, that whole thing of going and working and making something in five days and not adding a million things to it. I needed that at the time - like being eighteen again.

You end the album with a cover of the Burrito Brothers' song *Wheels*.
Frank would pick me up, and on the third morning, he said: "Check out this song." And I'm a Burrito Brothers fan, but I hadn't been that familiar with it. And I loved it. I loved the lyrics; they spoke to me. Since then Frank made a solo record and he did a version too. It's a song about fearlessness and embracing life. And there's so much of that on the record, so I thought it was a perfect way to end it, in a strong and hopeful way. Whatever's coming our way, we're ready for it. **PW**

Pete Yorn is available now on Vagrant.

★ HIGH HOPES

Gentlemen's Pistols

After a four-year gap, the band are back with a new album... but one less beard.

YOU COULD BE forgiven for thinking that Gentlemen's Pistols have been on a slow train going nowhere for a long while. Despite having been around since 2003, the Leeds band aren't exactly pushing hard for major success.

"All of us have been in bands where there's been a bit of a buzz," says vocalist/guitarist James Atkinson. "But we've come to realise this sort of momentum doesn't last. In the end you have to be true to yourself and to the music you want to make. The great thing about this band is that we're not afraid to make idiots of ourselves, musically or otherwise."

With two singles and one self-titled album to their name so far, Gentlemen's Pistols are slowly evolving, as will be evident with second album *At Her Majesty's Pleasure*, due out through Rise Above at the end of March.

"On the 2007 debut we were a lot more bluesy. We've now gone in a more straight-ahead hard-rock direction, and there's even some prog in there. I think we've also got a punk attitude, in that we don't over-complicate the music, or draw anything out for too long."

There's also a different line-up now, with only Atkinson and bassist/vocalist Douglas McLaughlin remaining. In have come drummer Stuart Dobbins and, perhaps even more crucially, guitarist Bill Steer, of Carcass and Napalm Death fame.

"With the first album, Chris [Rogers] brought in blues guitar influences, which you can hear on the solos. But Bill [who joined the band in 2009] is a lot more versatile. He can play in so many varied ways. That won't surprise anyone who's followed his career, because Bill has shown this ability time and again. Listen back to those Carcass albums now, and you can even hear some neo-classical moments in his playing."

"Mind you, there is one problem with Bill; he hasn't got a beard. We should make it a rule that you can only join the band if you can grow one! Beards are great – you can be really ugly, but as long as you've got one, people think you're cool."

The four-year gap since the last record has given Gentlemen's Pistols the luxury of maturing and developing new songs at their own pace.

"Usually bands rush the writing and recording process on their second album, but we've not had that pressure. Instead we have played the songs live, and been in the position to change them as we've gone along. So if something doesn't work, we've dumped it. That meant by the time we were ready to record, the songs were as good as we could make them."

Not that the band deliberately set out to take their time with the album. It's been more a case of a happy accident, one that's worked in their favour. "There have been the line-up changes, and then tours that got cancelled. And time just seems to have flown. But the album is a lot better for the delay." **MD**

At Her Majesty's Pleasure is out on Rise Above in April.

FOR FANS OF... CAPTAIN BEYOND



"One album that's influenced us this time is the self-titled debut by Captain Beyond (1972). We listened to that a lot, and it's where we drew some of our proggy bits. We also discovered the only album from Incredible Hog. Volume One. And that's had a big impact."



|||||
"Beards are great. You can be really ugly but as long as you have a beard people think you're cool!"

PHOTO PASS

THE STORY BEHIND THE SHOT

Artist
Axl Rose

Location
Los Angeles, 1988

Photographer
Mark Weiss

VIP

STAFF

GUEST

AFTER SHOW

PHOTO

“I started shooting Guns N’ Roses in 1986, when they were just getting on the scene. After that I cultivated my relationship with them by doing live and off-stage sessions.

“By 1988 they were superstars, and I ended up in Los Angeles for a couple of months, having only intended to go out there for a couple of days. So I contacted their label, Geffen, and asked if it were possible to do some photos with the band. The band suggested we meet up at the Sunset Grill, and on the day they all trickled in. As usual, Axl was late.

“I shot the rest of the band, but by the time Axl did show up it was too late to do anything with him. But he was very apologetic, and it was arranged that I’d do some stuff with him on his own at the same location the next day.

This time he was punctual. He just wanted to hang out at the Sunset Grill, but I got him posing a little bit. Then he said he had to go outside to make a call on his mobile – and you have to remember that back then mobile phones were very new.

“I went outside with him, still shooting. Then I saw the phone booth, and had this idea. I got him to lean up against it, while

“It was very symbolic of new technology and old technology.”

using his mobile. It was very symbolic of new technology and old technology and how things were changing.

“I also persuaded him to let me make a couple of calls on that mobile – the first time I’d ever used one. I called Zakk Wylde and Sebastian Bach, and told them that one day they might be lucky to have a phone like this.”



MARK WEISS
Having started out shooting live shows (without permission) as a teenager, American photographer Mark “Weissguy” Weiss’s first nationally published photo was of Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler in US rock magazine *Circus* in 1978. Since then he has worked as tour photographer for artists including Ozzy Osbourne, Mötley Crüe and Metallica, and shot and/or art-directed sleeves for numerous multimillion-selling albums.



"Pay phone? Pah! I'll
just use my new
pocket-sized
mobile..."

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Heavy Rotation



What we've been listening to this month



01 Fare Thee Well

WHITESNAKE

Sir David of Coverdale gets back on the 'Snake and does his best Rod Stewart on this standout track from imminent new album *Forevermore*. There's a CR Snake Pack on its way too - more info on page 18.

02 Rearviewmirror

PEARL JAM

A seven-minute version of one of the Seattle quintet's best (though underrated) songs shows Vedder and co. at their live best. Taken from their new *Live On Ten Legs* album (reviewed on page 92).



03 No Reason

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Rock's Grande Dame slips into her raunch'n'roll fuck-me pumps. With Wayne Kramer's signature Motor City guitar temporarily at her back one imagines she really had no choice.

04 Starstruck

RAINBOW

Blackmore was ahead of his time with this abso-friendly paean to the groupie stalker. A punchy and unfairly overlooked moment from the newly remixed *Rising* album (available on March 7).

05 Have You Heard

JOHN MAYALL

From Mayall's *Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton*, aka the Beano album (see feature, p40), this is still one of Clapton's most blow-torch-hot solos, and with that simply phenomenal tone. Paint-peeling stuff from one of the most influential albums ever.



06 Undisputed

HALFORD

At first you think the lyric of 'He's the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world' is a joke, then you realise Rob Halford isn't taking the piss. This really is his answer to *Eye Of The Tiger*.

07 All Or Nothing

CAULDRON

A face-melting, fist-banging rager from the NWOBHM throwbacks. It's the opening track on the Californian band's upcoming new album *Burning Fortune*.

08 Arise Watch

BUFFALO TOM

Boston's Buffalo Tom return with one of their trademark mid-paced, harmony-drenched songs with a melody momentarily reminiscent of Simon & Garfunkel - and then it all kicks off angular and discordant during the bridge. This is the first track from the forthcoming album *Skins*, and we can't wait to hear the rest.

09 Shake Your Money Maker

FOGHAT

With ex-Ted Nugent man Charlie Huhn on vocals, Roger Earl and company have made a fully fledged blues album at last (it's called *Last Train Home*). This version of the Elmore James great is just that - great.

10 Tell The Bitch To Go Home

FAUST

Driving über-krautrock cacophony from the re-formed, rhythm section-led version of the Teutonic legends. Former Gallon Drunk and Bad Seeds' guitarist/keyboard player James Johnston further intensifies their glorious dissonance.

11 Several Shades Of Why

J MASCIS

The title track from the first proper solo album from the Dinosaur Jr man, *Several...* is Dinosaur-minus-distortion. Finger-tangling acoustic fingerpickery, J's trademark world-weariness and a sonorous violin conjure several shades of pretty and a dash of awesome.

12 Down By The Water

THE DECEMBERISTS

Their last album was proggy in places, but the new one (*The King Is Dead*) has more of a country feel. On this first single they're joined by folkie songstress Gillian Welch and REM's Peter Buck, which may go some way to explain the echoes of *The One I Love* in the guitar part.



13 Brickfield Nights

THE BOYS

The breakthrough hit that never was. Always one *Top Of The Pops* appearance away from stardom, punk rock's most (theoretically) commercial band deliver their definitive 200 seconds on 1978's *Alternative Chartbusters*.

14 White Lines

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE

Spirited ode to the power of the Devil's dust from the young Twickenham-based AC/DC and Rolling Stones worshippers... Or is it about driving in the middle of the road?

15 Transition

LUNATIC SOUL

On their new album *Lunatic Soul II*, Poland's answer to Porcupine Tree have created the soundtrack to a road movie about a lost soul, and this is the top track from it.



16 Dirty Ray (Scratch Like A Cat)

VANITY BLVD

The world waits with bated breath for a new album from Swedish sleaze sensations Vanity Blvd. In the meantime this early example of their infectious infestation will have to do.

17 Snake In The Grass

THE LUCKY STRIKES

Swampy, fuzzy, fucked-up, rockin' Delta blues from, er, Southend-on-Sea. The band deserve to strike it lucky with tracks like this on their storming third album, *Gabriel, Forgive My Sins*.



18 Egypt

LEATHER

Veteran femme-metal vocalist Leather Leone returns with this mighty-lunged tribute to the late Ronnie James Dio.

19 Captured City

PRAYING MANTIS

Taken from the 30th-anniversary, five-song EP *Metamorphosis*, this is the 2011 line-up's re-recording of PM's highly melodic NWOBHM standard.

20 Die For Metal

MANOWAR

Manowar recently confirmed their first UK show in 17 years, in Birmingham on March 27. Bring it on! Dig the lyrics on this track from their monstrous 2007 album *Gods Of War*: 'I need metal in my life just like an eagle needs to fly'. Don't we all, dears.



21 Nietzsche Baby

ADAM & THE ANTS

The last great unreleased Ants song and Young Parisians tour set-opener, still only available on the boot market. 'Frauleins in uniform break the heart of any stormtrooper' indeed. Not exactly *Goody Two Shoes*.

22 Blackbird

ALTER BRIDGE

If you haven't caught Alter Bridge live yet, here's the next best thing. Check out this version of their second album's epic title track, taken from the DVD/CD package *Live From Amsterdam*.

23 Man's Ruin

LEWIS FLOYD HENRY

South East London's one-man distillation of Hound Dog Taylor and The Houserockers drags the spirit of *Exile On Main St* down Brick Lane for a haphazard, Hendrixized, hootenanny hammering.



24 Silly Thing

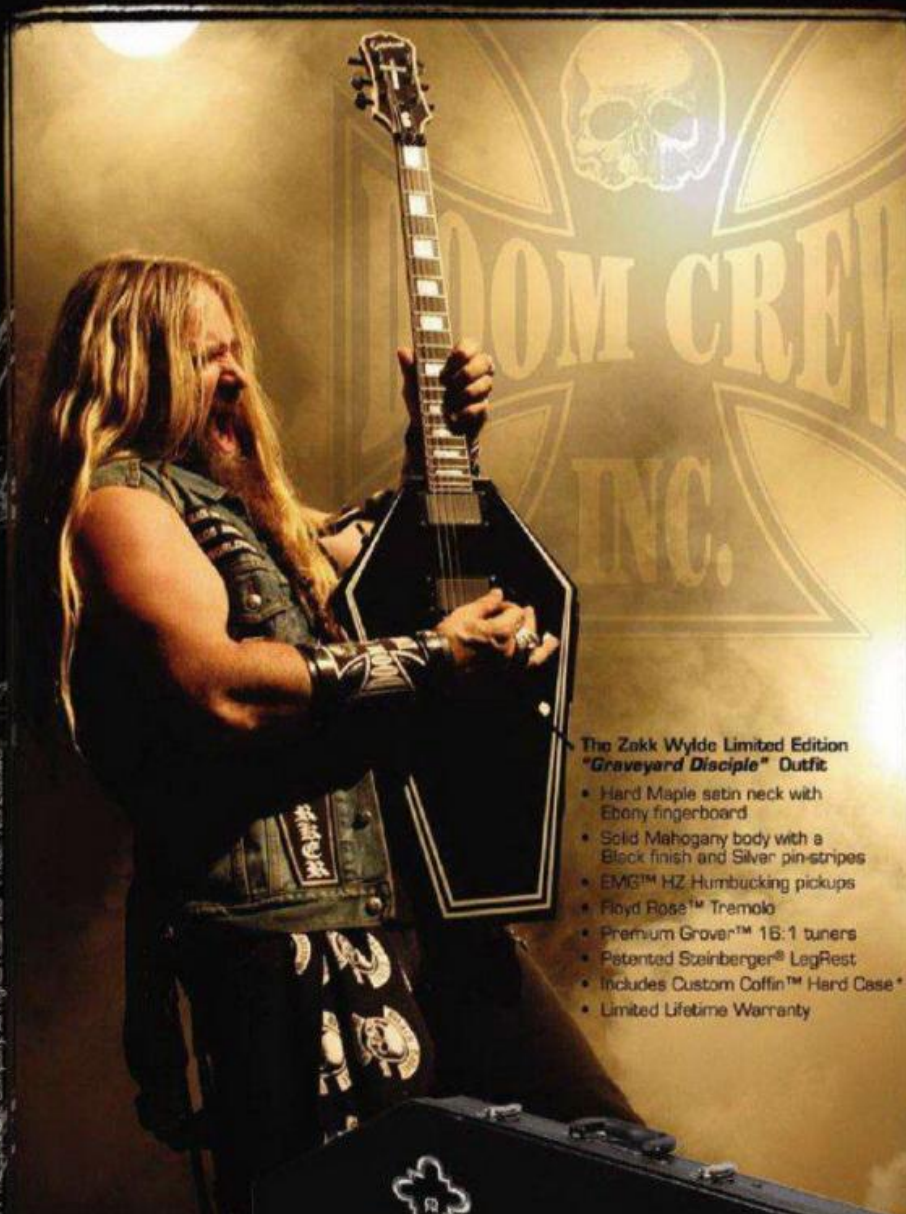
THE GRACIOUS FEW

Take three-quarters of Live and two-fifths of Candlebox and you have The Gracious Few. While their self-titled debut album is far from ground-breaking, if you're a fan of either band then we dare say you'll like this slab of US radio-friendly, bass-driven rock.

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- 19/2 - Guildhall, Southampton
- 21/2 - Apollo, Hammersmith, London
- 22/2 - Apollo, Manchester
- 23/2 - Colston Hall, Bristol
- 25/2 - La Cigale, Paris
- 26/2 - Melkweg, Amsterdam
- 28/2 - Grosse Freiheit, Hamburg
- 1/3 - Train, Aarhus
- 3/3 - Arena, Stockholm
- 4/3 - Tradgard, Gothenburg
- 6/3 - House of Culture, Helsinki
- 9/3 - Stodola, Warsaw
- 10/3 - KD Vitavska, Prague
- 12/3 - Huxleys, Berlin
- 13/3 - Theaterfabrik, Munich
- 14/3 - Arena, Vienna
- 16/3 - Volkshaus, Zurich
- 17/3 - Alkatraz, Milan
- 19/3 - Razzmatazz 2, Barcelona
- 20/3 - Cooperative De Mai, Clermont Ferrand
- 22/3 - Love Music Hall, Cologne

Zakk Wylde



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Rush Tom Sawyer

Perhaps their most recognisable anthem, it was born from the unlikely coming together of a piece of classic American literature and a nutty Canadian poet.

Words:
Paul Elliott
Photograph:
Andre Csillag/
Rex Features

Within Rush's 37-year recording career there are a number of landmark songs: *Working Man* was their first track to get key radio airplay outside of their native Canada, and led to a worldwide deal with Mercury Records; 2112 secured the band's future when that Mercury contract hung in the balance; *The Spirit Of Radio* gave them the unlikely distinction of a UK Top 20 hit. But of all the songs in the Rush catalogue, the most famous is *Tom Sawyer*, the opening track from 1981's *Moving Pictures*, the band's greatest and biggest-selling album.

"*Tom Sawyer* is a real trademark song for us," says Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson. "Musically it's very powerful, and lyrically it has a spirit that resonates with a lot of people. It's kind of an anthem."

Rush had arrived at a crossroads when they came to write *Tom Sawyer*. In the 70s they had become the undisputed masters of progressive hard rock, famed for their epic conceptual pieces that played out over entire sides of vinyl. But with their first album of the 1980s – *Permanent Waves* – came a significant change.

"We began writing in a tighter, more economical form," says Lifeson. The result was that hit single, *The Spirit Of Radio*: a virtuoso-rock tour de force compacted into less than five minutes. And the song's lyrics fit neatly with this more direct approach. Bookish drummer Neil Peart, the author of all Rush lyrics since 1975, had previously found inspiration in ancient mythology and science fiction, but for *Permanent Waves* his writing was simpler, his subject matter more worldly.

Tom Sawyer was the crystallisation of this new, modern Rush: a powerful, finely crafted hard rock song with a punchy yet deeply philosophical message. But it was also a song for which Rush were indebted not only to a giant of American literature, Mark Twain, but also to a rather peculiar Canadian named Pye Dubois.

A poet and lyricist, Dubois worked with the band Max Webster, who were based in Sarnia, Ontario, in the same province as Rush's hometown of Toronto. The two bands were close, recording a song

together, *Battle Scar*, that featured on Max Webster's 1980 album *Universal Juveniles*. "Those guys were big friends of ours," Lifeson recalls. "But Pye was a little mysterious – kind of a strange fellow! He was very quirky, a bit of a nut, but he did write great lyrics. And around 1980 he sent a poem to Neil with an idea to collaborate on a song. The original draft was called *Louie The Warrior*."

The poem was based on Twain's 1876 novel *The Adventures Of Tom Sawyer*, which all three members of Rush had studied in school. Peart in particular identified with the book's central themes of rebellion and independence. From 2112 through to *Freewill* on *Permanent Waves*, individuality was a recurring subject in Peart's lyrics. What Dubois created in *Louie The Warrior* was, in Peart's words, "a portrait of a modern-day rebel". Says Lifeson: "Neil took that idea and massaged it, took out some of Pye's lines and added his thing to it." Peart chose the simpler title of *Tom Sawyer* and completed the lyrics with an element of autobiography. As he put it, "Reconciling the boy and man in myself."

The music for *Tom Sawyer* was also a departure for Rush. Says Lifeson: "Structurally, the way the song develops is very interesting, going from that first verse into a bridge into a chorus and into the solo and then repeating. It wasn't a typical kind of structure for us at the time." Likewise, the music was written in an unorthodox fashion – for Rush, at least. "Moving Pictures was different for us in that it was more of a jam sort of thing," Lifeson explains. "A lot of the material for that record was written off the floor. That was certainly the case with *Tom Sawyer*. We were rehearsing in a little farm outside of Toronto. Half the barn was a garage and half was a small rehearsal space. We would typically just go in and jam and develop songs that way."

It was high summer when Rush wrote the songs for *Moving Pictures*. But by the

time they began recording the album at Le Studio in Morin Heights, Quebec – the mountain retreat where the band had cut *Permanent Waves* – a mean Canadian winter had set in. "It was the coldest I've ever been in my life, that's for sure!" Lifeson laughs. "We were living in a house beside a lake, and the studio was on the other end of the lake. If we were brave enough, we walked through the woods. It was really beautiful, but it was minus 40 out there! I'm serious!" The promotional video for *Tom Sawyer*, shot at Le Studio, begins with a view of this snowbound landscape and ends with a pan out across the frozen lake.

Lifeson says of the recording: "On *Tom Sawyer*, the synthesiser is such a key part of that song. There was a good integration between the three of us and the keyboards. We still had that trio feel. Plus, we always felt that we had to replicate each song as

"There's something in the lyric that people have always related to very strongly – the spirit of independence."

faithfully as possible when we played it live, so *Tom Sawyer* was written in that way. There's no rhythm guitar under the guitar solo or anything like that."

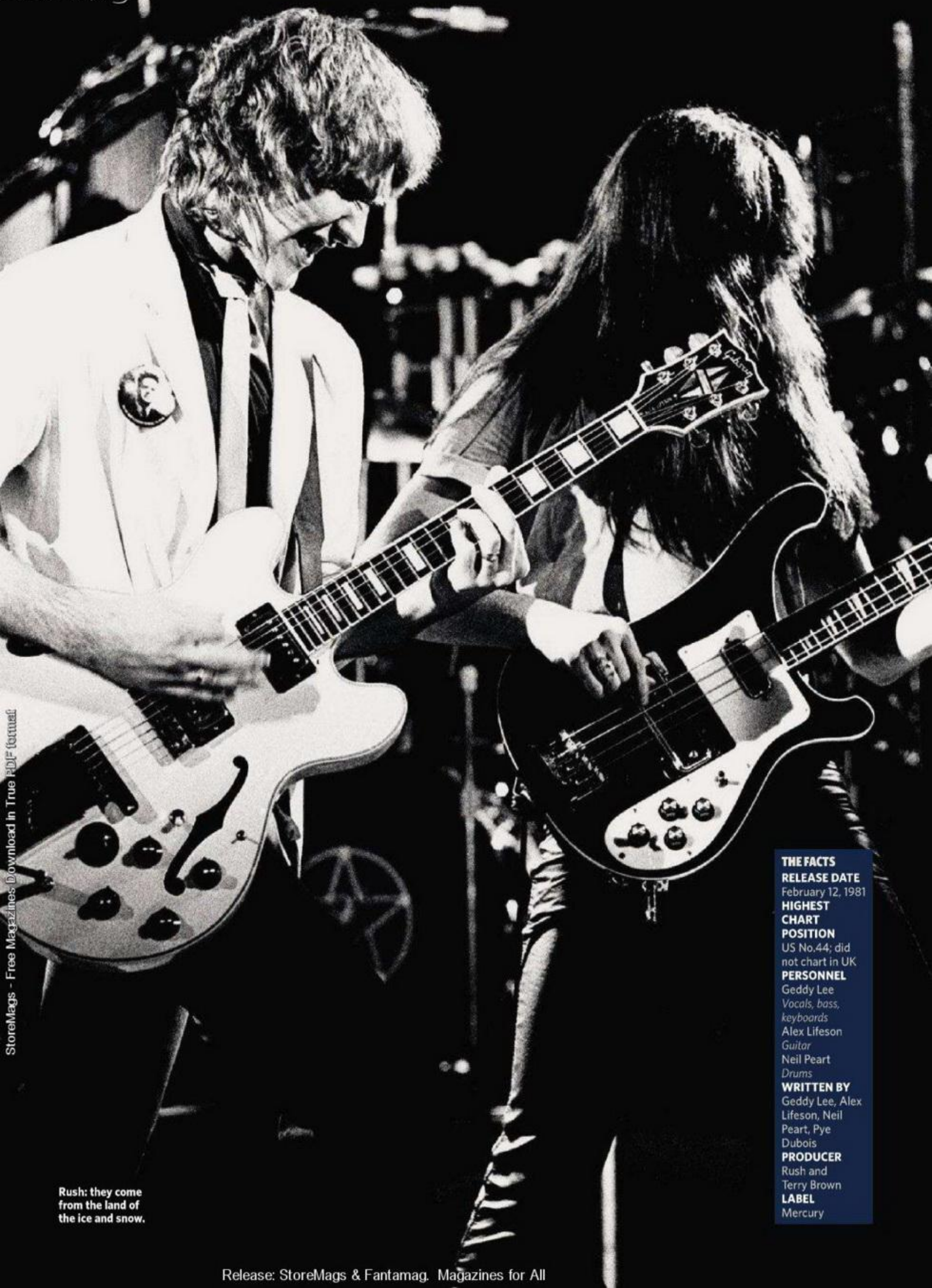
It's a song that proved pivotal to the band's development. Geddy Lee has called it the "defining piece of music" from Rush in the early 80s. For much of that decade, keyboards took an increasingly important role in the band's sound. And all of three decades on, the power of this song, and its message, has not diminished. "There's a freshness about that sound that still stands out," Lifeson says proudly. "And there's something in the lyric that people have always related to very strongly – the spirit of independence and adventure. It's just one of those special songs." ●

Rush return to the UK in May with their Time Machine tour, where they will play Moving Pictures in its entirety.



SOUTH PARK DOES TOM SAWYER

Rush drummer Neil Peart has long been viewed as a serious academic type, but it was his idea to have a comedy version of *Tom Sawyer* performed by the cast of *South Park*. Peart enlisted his friend Matt Stone, co-creator of *South Park*, to make a skit in which his cartoon characters are billed as Lil' Rush. Their performance quickly unravels when singer Eric Cartman fluffs his lines and rival Kyle Broflovski exclaims: "Those aren't the right lyrics, fat-ass!" Cartman snapped back: "I am Geddy Lee, and I will sing whatever lyrics I want!" The skit was screened at Rush gigs before the real band played *Tom Sawyer*. Says guitarist Alex Lifeson: "Matt did such a great job with it. We all had a great laugh. And the fans loved it!"



Rush: they come from the land of the ice and snow.

THE FACTS**RELEASE DATE**

February 12, 1981

HIGHEST**CHART****POSITION**

US No.44; did not chart in UK

PERSONNEL

Geddy Lee

Vocals, bass,

keyboards

Alex Lifeson

Guitar

Neil Peart

Drums

WRITTEN BY

Geddy Lee, Alex

Lifeson, Neil

Peart, Pye

Dubois

PRODUCER

Rush and

Terry Brown

LABEL

Mercury



Rob Zombie

The former White Zombie leader on working with Alice Cooper, making movies, and having a pop at Ozzy.

Words: **Malcolm Dome**

Rob Zombie's stock has seemingly never been higher. Having made serious headway into the UK album chart in the 90s with the White Zombie Records *Astro-Creep: 2000...* and *Supersexy Swingin' Sounds*, the former leader of that band is not only leading his own band – featuring guitarist John 5, bassist Piggy D and drummer Joey Jordison – but is also heavily involved in directing movies and TV shows, as well as creating a series of comics. Now he's getting ready for his first UK tour in 12 years. One that's already sold out.

Does being involved in so many different areas of creativity make music even more special to you?

Actually it does. I love making music and being on stage. When I come back to it after directing a movie, it always brings home how much I enjoy this. I'm probably at my happiest in a band situation.

You recently toured America with Alice Cooper under the banner the Gruesome Twosome. Is there any chance of that package coming over to the UK?

That was just so special. To get the chance to tour with the man who is the reason I joined a band in the first place... It was so strange. I also got the chance to go into the studio with Alice and do some vocals for his new album [*Welcome To My Nightmare II*]. Getting the chance to work with him and producer Bob Ezrin – that's a classic combination, and it turned out to be so much fun.

What did you learn from touring with Alice?

I think the fact that he's 62 and is still out there doing it is remarkable. I learnt that lesson from him – that age is no barrier to rocking, and doing what you believe in. You look around now and there are so many great rockers still performing well into their sixties, in that respect rock is so like the blues – and some of those blues guys are in their mid-eighties. I'm no spring chicken any more, so to have the knowledge that you can go out and tour when you're that old is very gratifying.

Your former drummer, Tommy Clutefos, recently left to join Ozzy's band, and you made some disparaging remarks about Ozzy. Has that calmed down?

Those comments were never aimed at Ozzy, I have no problem with him, nor with Tommy joining his band. My beef was the way Tommy did it. If he'd come to me and said he wanted to leave, I'd have said that was fine and wished him all the best. He didn't. As far as I'm concerned, anyone can leave this band at any time, with my blessing. All I ask is that they're just honest and tell me up-front. However, we've now got Joey Jordison of Slipknot, and the band is better than ever.

Has being involved with such a visual medium as film given you a better appreciation of the visual aspect of putting together a stage show?

What it's taught me is that a live show should have a beginning, a middle and an end. It's given me a better appreciation of dramatic

pacing. As for the stage show, we're bringing everything over to the UK. Judge for yourself. I hope it all fits [laughs].

The music industry is obviously going through tough times these days. Does the same apply to making movies?

I've made five films to date, and it is getting increasingly difficult to get a movie made. Right now it seems that the only way you can get one done is either for under 15 million dollars or for over 200 million. In other words you have to make something on a tiny budget, or do a blockbuster. What's being squeezed out are the films with a middling budget, and that's the area where I feel there's most creativity. The same definitely applies to music. The middle ground is where you always find the best bands. Think of the Ramones or Iggy. They never sold millions, but what they did was so important. As a fan, I always preferred the Birthday Party to Bon Jovi. However, the way things are moving there soon won't be room for those sort of talents and we will lose something special.

You recorded an album in 1999 called *Rob Zombie Presents Frankenstein*, on which you put together dialogue from the original 1930s Universal Frankenstein films. Did that experience of doing that tempt you to do the same for other classic monsters of that era?

That was the original idea. I was gonna do Dracula, the Mummy, the Wolfman. But doing the Frankenstein one was so frustrating. Universal had literally nothing, so I had to go out and get all the images and stills which were used. Then I fell out with the company over my movie *House Of 1000 Corpses* [2003 – written and directed by Rob] and the whole project fell apart. What really angered me was that nobody at Universal cared about these great films. You know why? Because they're convinced younger audiences don't give a shit. The same applies to record labels. They're obsessed with youth – and that's costing them.

Your next movie as a director is *Lords Of Salem*. Will you be doing the music for it as well?

Yes I will. But it won't be hard rock. My idea is to do something dark and spooky. The sort of thing the Italian prog band Goblin have done in Italy with Dario Argento's horror films.

Are there any plans to film any of your upcoming live shows for a live DVD release?

I'll admit something. Whenever one of my shows is filmed, I get distracted from the performance. I think about the camera angles and all the technical stuff, and I find my mind wandering from what I'm doing on stage. So there are no filming plans right now. Anyway, to me a stage show is all about living for, and in, the moment. Once it's over you should move on and not feel compelled to relive it. Somehow DVDs go against the grain of what a show is all about – the feeling of being part of a special time, which can never be recaptured. That's the beauty of live music. ●

Rob Zombie's UK tour ends in Birmingham on February 22.

**"TO ME A STAGE
SHOW IS ALL ABOUT
LIVING FOR, AND IN,
THE MOMENT."**

Rob Zombie: "Er,
cut myself shaving."



Ever Meet Hendrix?

*He was a Quireboy – until he was sacked. Since then he's led The Wildhearts. He's also performed in a string of side projects – Super\$hit 666, Clam Abuse and with Michael Monroe, to name but a few. He's also shared the stage with Motörhead and Cheap Trick. He is singer/guitarist David Walls, otherwise known as **Ginger**.*

Words: Philip Wilding Portrait: Lisa Johnson

Ginger has built an erratic career on brilliantly realised, rousing pop rock and the kind of offstage behaviour that might have given Hunter S Thompson pause for thought. He's been a Wildheart – he sometimes still is – a solo artist, the leader of Silver Ginger 5, an occasional country artist, he was even, if ever so briefly, a Bride Of Destruction. Currently, Ginger's playing guitar in Michael Monroe's band, who have just completed work on their first studio album as well as supporting Motörhead on their most recent UK tour. Lemmy even made time to cameo on their record. It's to Ginger's eternal regret that he never met Hendrix, but at least he's got to know Lemmy.

LEMMY

The Wildhearts toured with Motörhead, I was nervous about hanging out with a hero; if your hero turns out to be a dickhead then you've got three weeks of him breaking your heart; but Lemmy was everything I wanted him to be. They offered to help us in any way they could and I said, "You'd help me by letting me play *Overkill* with you. And he said, "Okay, in Sheffield." And I was like, "I want to do Hammersmith," and he just walked off and I thought, that's it, I've blown it. A couple of days later he came back and said, "You're a cheeky bastard, but you're doing Hammersmith."

My trial by fire was going out drinking with him. His thing is he gets in the club; there are blondes and this bucket of ice with Smirnoff and another with Jack Daniel's. I get in this roped off area in this club somewhere and there were no blondes, not anyone, just me and Lemmy talking. And it turns out that his girlfriend in LA was my first girlfriend – whom I'd lost my virginity to! And when I did *Overkill* at Hammersmith, the room was filled with people who liked and disliked me, and I'm up there playing *Overkill* – yes, sir!

AC/DC

The Wildhearts were on tour with AC/DC in Europe on their *Ballbreaker* tour, then we went to the US and it turned from majesty to comedy to tragedy all in one month. We got there and took full advantage of the welcome that America affords a young band, which is as much drugs and alcohol as we could get our hands on, and then, inevitably, we started fighting with each other. And then we decided that we couldn't work together anymore and so we went home. It's possibly the worst thing that ever happened to me; I was partly responsible for blowing a tour of America with AC/DC. And our crew and our manager were all as fucked up as we were and they all

agreed; there wasn't one person who said, "You can't go home." As a collective troupe, the Wildhearts were all idiots. I love AC/DC. They turn up, do their job and go; you tour for years and years and you don't do that by hanging out and partying all the time. I mean, look at us: we managed five dates. Yes, why did AC/DC make it and the Wildhearts didn't? It's not all sonic.

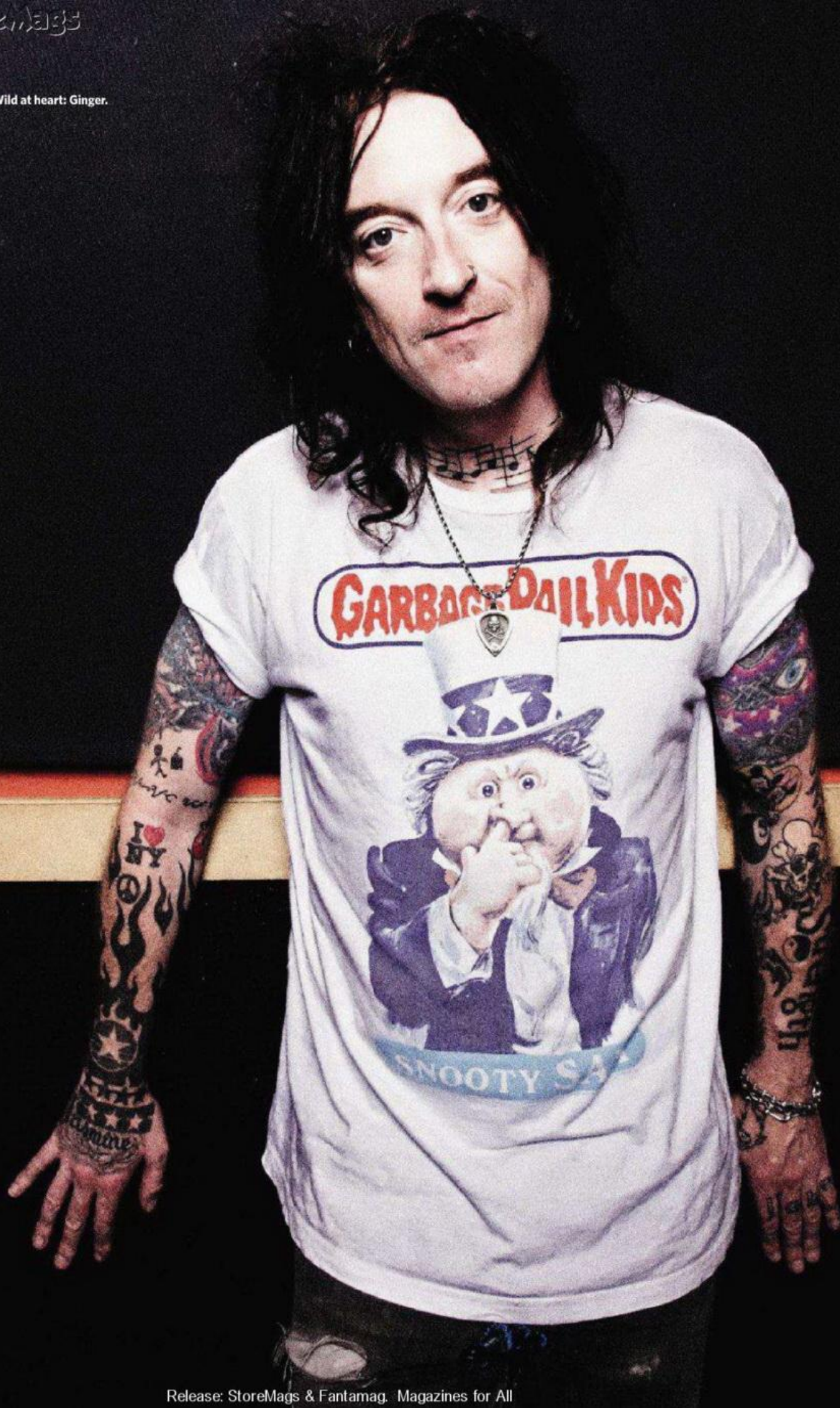
KIM FOWLEY

The Quireboys not only met Kim Fowley, we got on the Tube with Kim Fowley. Everyone's very private and a bit sombre on there; you're just going somewhere. Kim Fowley's not going somewhere, he's performing, and the only difference with him and those annoying guys who jump on the Tube to perform is that he doesn't want any money from anyone. He's wearing marigold gloves, dressed in every colour that doesn't match and talks at a volume that is so loud that you think it must be his intro and then he doesn't leave until he's not there anymore. It's just overwhelmingly brilliant. The portrayal of him in the *Runaways* movie is not accurate in any way at all: he's far more intense than that. He's a force of nature; it's like hanging out with a tsunami. He would name a Kiss or Ronettes song you liked and say he'd written it, and sure enough you'd go and check and he had; he is that guy.

GUNS N' ROSES

The night The Quireboys supported them at Hammersmith, I only got to meet Steven Adler and Slash, but I met Axl when the Wildhearts attended the Freddie Mercury concert at Wembley. Axl was playing with Elton John that day. Anyway, we're sitting at this table, free drinks are coming, Liza Minnelli comes and sits down. Tony Iommi, then Roger Taylor pops over, and then these light bulbs come on over our heads that we're at the wrong table, it's Queen's table! And I'm next to Axl and he was so nice and subdued and cool, and I wasn't expecting it at all. I didn't know if we'd get on and I told him how much I loved Elton John and he just started on about how much he loved Elton John too and how much of an influence he'd had on him musically when he was growing up. I just warmed to him; this figure that I'm sure can be very hard work, but right then he was this lovely guy reminiscing about music. I know a few of the guys in the band now, but Axl's never around if I go and say hello. I met Tommy Stinson when he was playing with them and I was so nervous that nothing came out when I went to say hello. All I could think was, "When are you getting back with the Replacements?" And part of my brain's going: "Don't say it, don't say it!" ➡

Wild at heart: Ginger.



EVER MEET HENDRIX?

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

We did the *Generation Terrorists* tour, and saw them every day for at least a month. Richey Edwards was lovely: he was quiet, studious. He was learning to play the guitar and he had a Beatles songbook. He'd sit in the corner of the dressing room going, "That's a D, that's a G," and then he'd go out and this fevered, kind of crazy Clash vibe came off him when he played. The juxtaposition used to fuck with my head: the guy's learning to play guitar, but when he gets on stage he looks like Mick Jones. We were sharing dressing rooms for the most part, that's the bits I remember, talking about our love of the Stones and the Pistols and Guns N' Roses, kindred spirits all the way. I wanted to go onstage all guns blazing, but if we hadn't gone on tour with the Manics we might never have stepped our game up and done anything. There are not many tours you do that start off with 50 punters in the audience and end up with queues of people outside who can't get in.

CHEAP TRICK

We were playing with The Darkness in Nashville and Rick Nielsen just walks in our dressing room and we're like, "But for you, we wouldn't be here!" Then he goes, "I've got a friend who wants to meet you," so he drags us out and taps the shoulder of some guy and he turns around and it's Steven Tyler and I'm talking to Tyler and Nielsen and going, "Will someone for fuck's sake take a picture?" Steven Tyler gave me the best cigar I ever smoked. It was this ridiculously two-coloured cigar, dark and light tobacco; very rare, so expensive and just like you're smoking air. Then I met Rick again when I was in the Bravado store in New York, and this guy comes over I know and says, "Do you play bass? Cheap Trick are coming to play and they haven't got a bass player. Do you want to do it? It's in about 20 minutes time!" They asked what I wanted to do first and it was *He's A Whore* – had to be. Then *Voices*, *Surrender* and *Clock Strikes Ten*. It was only a few songs, but it came together so quickly and it sounded great and I was in Cheap Trick, if briefly.

UFO

The Quireboys used to hang out with UFO all the time when Phil Mogg managed us. We used to go and stay at Pete Way's house. It was where I discovered Tracii Lords, we'd be in our sleeping bags, passing a spliff around and he'd put a porn movie on and we'd be like, "Oh no, wrong! We're all young guys and we're in your living room. Why are you giving us a hard on? What's the thing? What happens next, you give everyone a hard on and then go around the room with a bat like Al Capone?" UFO was the first dressing room I ever went in when I was a kid too; I was at City Hall, *No Place To*



Lemmy: "It turns out that his girlfriend in LA was my first girlfriend, whom I'd lost my virginity to!"

"The Wildhearts were in Nashville and I'm talking with Steven Tyler and Rick Nielsen and I'm going, 'Will someone for fuck's sake take a picture?!'"



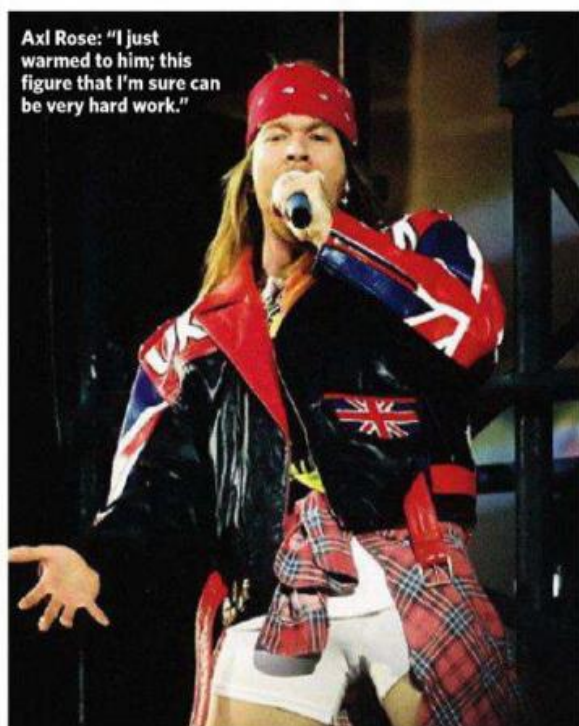
Kim Fowley: "He's a force of nature; it's like hanging out with a tsunami."

Rum tour. And everyone was leaving, and I just walked to this door. I wasn't planning anything, I didn't even know where the backstage was. I walk in this door, no one stops me, straight past security like I'm invisible and along this corridor and I walked straight in their dressing room and they just gave me a drink. They sat me down, gave me some drumsticks, plectrums... I'm in heaven. Seeing Pete Way on stage earlier and wanting to be like him and then being back there and them being so nice to a kid they didn't even know, I still find that incredible.

MICK RONSON

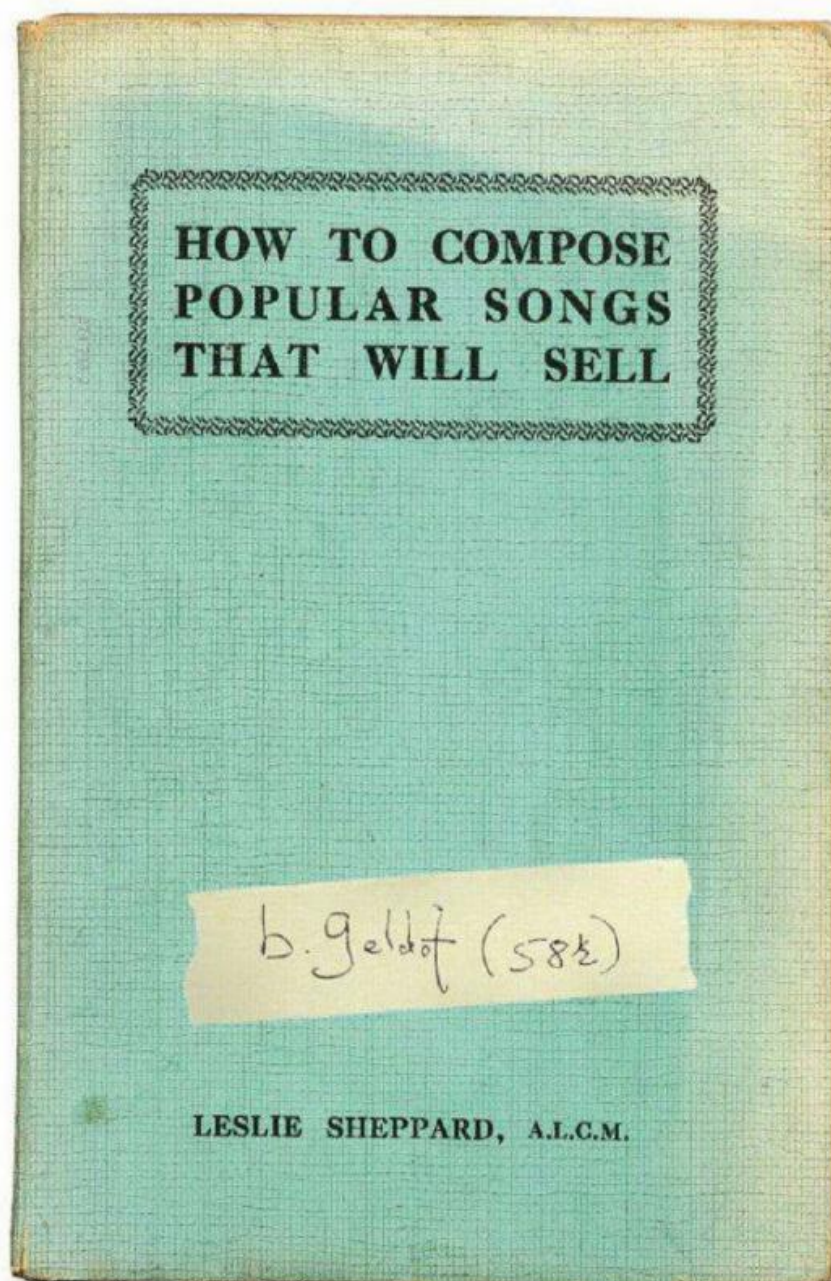
He was going to produce the first Wildhearts album. He came down to the rehearsal place to see us and he was just a lovely man, unassuming, humble, talented as fuck. He didn't end up producing because the label thought he was so sick he might not get to finish the project. We didn't get it at the time, we hated the label; we were so reactionary. We had the song *My Baby Is A Headfuck* and it wasn't that great, but we thought if we can get Ronson to play a solo on it then it'll work. I got in touch with him and said, "We're not going to record this song unless you come down and play on it," and he went, "I'd be honoured." And Ronson wasn't around for very long, but I take solace in that it was the last of his recordings you got to hear, because he died during the making of his album. We got him to do one more take of the song because we didn't want him to stop playing; he nailed it the first time. We just wanted to listen to him. He had one of our cheap Les Pauls and he was using a bottleneck and it was just like, "How the fucking hell is he doing that with that?!" And he's doing all these gorgeous bends and really clever stuff and me and CJ are like school kids – "Look how much we don't know". It was a real lesson. ❶

Ginger is touring with Michael Monroe for 13 dates in April.



Axl Rose: "I just warmed to him; this figure that I'm sure can be very hard work."

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...AND THEN GOD CREATED THE GUITAR HERO



In 1966 **Eric Clapton** recorded the Beano album. Guitar playing would never be the same again.

WORDS: HARRY SHAPIRO
PORTRAITS: DAVID WEDGBURY

Summer 1965. An Immediate records session at Decca studios, 165 Broadhurst Gardens, north-west London. Men wearing white lab coats over shirts and ties, their hair neatly trimmed, stand mouths agape. In the past, perhaps, they had shared a chuckle after telling a bassoon player to quieten down or tutted, recalling that time when the dials quivered in response to an over-enthusiastic triangle player. Today the volume is such that cakes are rolling off their plates, tea cups rattling in their saucers.

Suddenly the engineer in charge comes to his senses and turns off the tape. "This guitarist is unrecordable!" he tells the producer, a young long hair by the name of Jimmy Page.

Page remains calm. A guitarist himself, he already has an impressive track record of session work behind him and, as a young man in touch with the nation's youth, has been entrusted to deliver a new kind of record.

The guitarist on the other side of the control room glass is a 20-year-old guy called Eric Clapton. He has plugged an imported, US-made Gibson Les Paul into an amp made by a new British company called Marshall. The sound is like nothing the engineers have had to deal with. They can't believe that Clapton is creating this *noise* on purpose. Page, on the other hand, understands completely.

"Switch it back on," he tells the engineer. "I'll take full responsibility..."

Just weeks earlier, in March '65, Clapton had made a career move that everybody thought was bonkers. Just as his then band The Yardbirds finally landed themselves a hit single, he quit. Yet it was equally obvious to anybody who actually knew Eric that the split, based on 'musical differences', was inevitable. When it came to the blues, Eric was musical and the rest of The Yardbirds, in his view, were cosmically different.

Mike Vernon was a staff producer at Decca Records, and a blues enthusiast who ran a magazine called *R&B Monthly* with his brother Richard and another blues fan, Neil Slaven. Mike was a regular at Yardbirds gigs in south London.

"It was very much a 'band sound'," he recalls. "Choppy guitars, crisp but mundane harmonica, not stand-out vocals, but the band had a great groove and the young kids really liked it. But they never played a slow blues until [singer] Keith Relf started to suffer with asthma and sometimes he was unable to play the second set, so other people would get up and sing, like Hogsnoth Rupert, Rod

Stewart and Ronnie Jones. Even I got up a couple of times, and I couldn't sing for toffee. Eric would say: 'Oh man, I'm just dying to play a slow blues.' I'd say: 'Okay, I'll get up and sing one.' 'What? You can't sing?' 'Well, good enough.' So we'd do *Five Long Years* or something like that."

So Clapton was never able to express himself through the intensity and measured pace of a slow blues, where timing makes the notes you don't play as meaningful as the ones you do. Worse still, his personal vision was at odds not only with Yardbirds manager Giorgio Gomelsky, who was looking for pop success, but also with guitarist Paul Samwell-Smith, who became the band's musical director and had found that elusive hit single when he heard a song called *For Your Love*, written by up-and-coming songwriter Graham Gouldman (later of 10cc). On The Yardbirds' hit recording of it, the lead guitar was buried in the mix. A showdown between Clapton and Gomelsky followed, and then Clapton was gone.

As Keith Relf observed sadly: "Eric loves the blues so much. I suppose he didn't like it being played badly by a white shower like us."



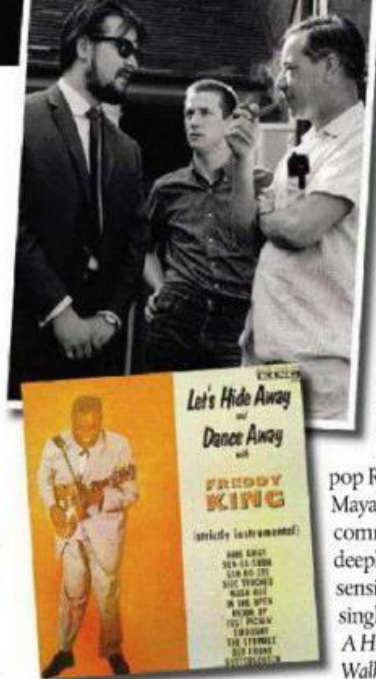
Comic capers: (l-r) John Mayall, Eric Clapton, John McVie and Hughie Flint on the Beano album cover.





The future's orange: as good as they were, Clapton soon outgrew the Yardbirds.

Yardbirds manager Giorgio Gomelsky, Clapton and Lord Ted Willis.



Relf didn't know the half of it, however. For Eric, playing the blues his way was not just a matter of life and death – it really was more important than that. In a painfully honest interview with teen magazine *Rave* shortly after he'd left, Eric displayed how out of place and detached he felt in the band: "I lived as part of The Yardbirds unit, yet I was completely out of touch with it. I couldn't speak and be understood. And they couldn't speak to me either. We just couldn't communicate... If I hadn't left The Yardbirds I wouldn't have been able to play real blues much longer because I was destroying myself."

Possessed of a wafer-thin skin, a psychologically bruised Clapton, still only 19, retreated to the countryside, into the care of Ben Palmer, the pianist friend from Eric's first real group, The Roosters. Equally cynical of the music business, Palmer had chucked it all in to restore antiques and make cabinets. Cooking, talking and listening to music at Palmer's place gave Eric the chance to catch his breath while he worked out what to do next.

Meanwhile, another blues crusader was struggling. At the urging of Alexis Korner, Macclesfield-born guitarist, keyboard player, singer and harmonica player John Mayall (who as a teenager gained some local celebrity when the *Manchester Evening News* ran a story about how he lived in a tree house in his mother's garden) moved down to London in January 1963 and formed The Blues Breakers, who, like Alexis's own bands, went through a number of line-ups over the next couple of years. In a sense the first wave of British blues was over; never a pure blues artist, Alexis Korner's

repertoire could just as easily feature a Charlie Mingus tune as a Muddy Waters cover, while Cyril Davies, the real Chicago blues flag waver, had tragically died in January 1964. All the other blues-inspired bands, such as The Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, Pretty Things and the rest, had diverted down a Bo Diddley/Chuck Berry-driven pop R&B route. This left John Mayall trying to find a formula for commercial success while still deeply committed to blues sensibilities. Two Mayall-penned singles for Decca – *Crawling Up A Hill* (May 1964) and *Crocodile Walk* (April 1965) – failed to trouble the chart; a similar fate

awaited a live album recorded in December 1964: *John Mayall Plays John Mayall*, recorded at Klook's Kleeck, a club above the Railway Tavern pub in West Hampstead, next door to the Decca studios.

Apart from the lack of chart success, what was holding Mayall's band back as a blues outfit was the lead guitar. Roger Dean had replaced former Cyril Davies guitarist Bernie Watson. Both were accomplished players who could knock off some Chuck Berry or T-Bone Walker licks, but Dean was actually more comfortable in Chet Atkins mode, and neither could get to grips with the stinging, single-string playing styles of a BB or Freddie King.

However, unlike The Yardbirds, who struggled when they backed Sonny Boy Williamson ("Those boys want to play the blues so bad – and they play the blues so bad," was his alleged famous comment) The Blues Breakers made a pretty good fist of backing T-Bone on his 1965 UK tour.

On March 28 the tour rolled into Nottingham. It was here that John Mayall gathered his rhythm section of drummer Hughie Flint and bassist John McVie around a jukebox and said: "Listen to this."

What they heard was Eric Clapton stretching out on *Got To Hurry*, the B-side of *For Your Love*. "John asked us what we thought – and of course we said that it sounded pretty good," Flint recalls. "John said: 'That's Eric Clapton. And he's just left The Yardbirds. Should we ask him to join?' To which we replied: 'Yeah.'"

Eric actually took some persuading when Mayall phoned. But "one day, I got in the van and there he was", Flint remembers.

With no rehearsals, Clapton played the first gig with Mayall in early April, and straight away Mayall knew he had made the right choice: "He was the first guitarist I'd heard who had it – you know, the elusive 'it', the bandleader recalls.

Eric moved out of Ben's place and in with John and Pamela Mayall and their four kids. Not feeling part of the family, he squirmed himself away in a tiny room at the top of the house where he stayed most of the time, listening to Mayall's vast record collection and practising guitar.

The arrival of Eric gave John the chance to further develop the band along Chicago blues lines – he put away his own guitar and concentrated on keyboards and harmonica. Almost as soon as Eric joined, they recorded five songs for the BBC radio show *Saturday Club*, one of which was Freddie King's *Hideaway*, which Eric had heard on the 1962 album *Let's Dance Away And Hide Away with Freddie King*. But it wasn't just the music that grabbed Eric's attention on that occasion – on the front cover, Freddie King was clutching a Gibson Les Paul.

Eric's first electric guitar had been a double-cutaway Kay Red Devil (actually a yellowy/pink sunburst colour, which he'd covered in black sticky-backed plastic) purchased in 1962 with financial assistance from his grandparents. It was a copy of another Gibson guitar, the semi-solid ES335, one of which Eric later played for real with The Yardbirds, on loan from Yardbirds rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja. Eric's main guitar during the Yardbirds years was a red Fender Telecaster played through a Vox amp, producing a sound which Mike Vernon describes politely as "pissy". Jeff Beck initially played Eric's Telecaster when he took over in The Yardbirds ("A terrible guitar," he said later), but Eric retrieved it for his early gigs with Mayall.

Then Eric spotted a magnificent flame-top maple 1958-60 Les Paul in Lew Davis's music shop in London's West End and snapped it up for around £120, which was relatively cheap because the heavy Les Pauls had fallen out of favour in the face of the challenge from the ES335 and models from Fender, Rickenbacker, Gretsch and Guild. Now he had a guitar with a sound that was very far from pissy: its powerful 'humbucking' pickups could drive an amp well into uncharted realms of distortion and sustain.

But which amp? Freddie King used a meaty Fender Bassman, rare and expensive in the UK. Eric's limp Vox amp couldn't handle it.

The answer came not from the hallowed halls of American guitar manufacture, but from a small music shop in west London. Jim Marshall was the boss, Ken Bran his repairman. Requests from musicians for more powerful amps had led Ken to build a UK version of the Bassman. When guys plugged their shiny new Fenders into the new Marshall 45-watt, 2x12 combo, the results were great. When Eric plugged in his Les Paul the sound was astonishing: a thick, creamy, gut-wrencher that trumped anything heard in the States.

YARDBIRDS: RETNA; CLAPTON: GETTY IMAGES

John Mayall's Blues Breakers: the line-up that in 1966 recorded a truly iconic album.



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DAVID WICKER/CHAMP GALLERIES

Eric appeared settled. He had the right equipment to match his aggressive style, all the records he could absorb, and plenty of gigs all over the country, playing exactly the kind of music denied him in The Yardbirds – and establishing his reputation as the hottest guitarist on the scene. Audiences at Blues Breakers gigs were swollen by the arrival of Clapton's own fan club, and it was around this time that the legendary graffiti declaring 'Clapton is God' began to appear around London. In his autobiography, Eric says he was very much torn by the growing acclaim: "I was a bit mystified by this and part of me ran a mile from it.

I really didn't want that kind of notoriety... Another part of me really liked the idea, that what I had been fostering all these years was finally getting some recognition."

Although Mayall was building up a reasonable head of steam on the club circuit, the search for a hit record continued. After the failure of his recordings for Decca, he'd been dropped by the label. In the summer of '65 he signed with Immediate Records, a new label set up by Tony Calder and Rolling Stones manager Andrew Oldham. With Jimmy Page as the house producer, The Bluesbreakers recorded *I'm Your Witch Doctor*

and *Telephone Blues*, put out by Immediate as a single with the former as the A-side and the latter on the B-side. A third track, *On Top of the World*, went unreleased until 1968, along with some unremarkable blues noodlings recorded by Jimmy and Eric at Jimmy's house, where Eric had stayed after a nearby Mayall gig.

Up to that point there had been sporadic hints on record of the Eric Clapton to come – tentative and reverential solos on the live Yardbirds album with Sonny Boy Williamson (*Mr Downchild* and *23 Hours Too Long*), and the track that first attracted Mayall. But Jimmy Page allowed Eric to begin ➔

"ERIC WAS THE FIRST GUITARIST I'D HEARD WHO HAD IT – YOU KNOW, THE ELUSIVE 'IT'."

– JOHN MAYALL



MY OLD FRIEND ERIC, BY DAVE BROCK

How the Hawkwind maverick befriended a pre-fame Clapton.

"In the 1960s we all used to go to Eel Pie Island, which was a jazz club that evolved into a rhythm and blues club. I was already playing guitar, and Eric didn't have one, and we used to sit out on the lawn on Eel Pie Island and play the blues. There's a photo of him and me together at the Strawberry Fayre in Twickenham. I'm playing an old Washburn guitar that I used to lend him. In fact he got drunk one day and sat on it and broke the bloody thing. We were only 17 or 18 then. It was a long time ago.

"We used to listen to a lot of old blues artists like Big Bill Broonzy, Lightnin' Hopkins and Robert Johnson, and try to copy how they used to play. We were just learning how to play the guitar and learning how to play the blues. In those days I never had an inkling of his talent. I never kept track of his progress, until The Yardbirds, because I knew the singer, Keith Relf.

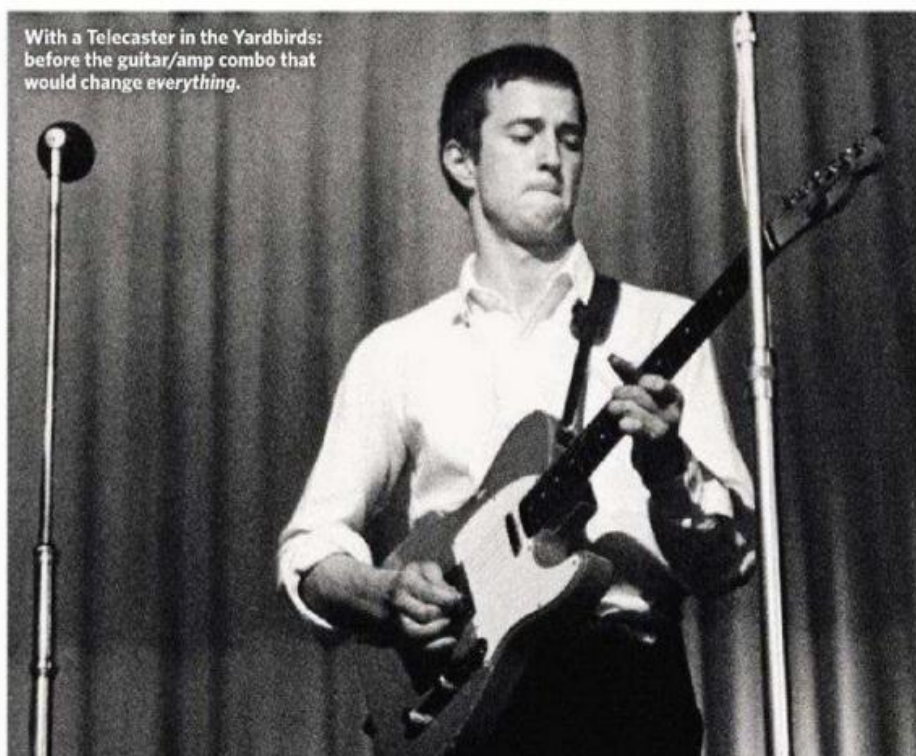
"In 1969 Eric got a place in Notting Hill Gate, and I was busking then down the Portobello Road so I used to pop round to his place for a cup of tea. When Hawkwind played the Porchester Hall last year he sent us an email saying that he would have liked to have been there and wished us good luck. He's a wonderful guitarist, always has been."

unleashing the power he now had at his command with the Gibson/Marshall set-up – striking single-note feedback solos (an idea he may have copped from Jeff Beck) on ... *Witchdoctor* and *On Top Of The World*, and signature soloing on *Telephone Blues*.

Which is where we came in. Jimmy Page recalled: "I remember when we did *I'm Your Witch Doctor*, he had all that sound down, and the engineer, who was co-operating up to that point, but was used to doing orchestras and big bands, suddenly turned off the machine and said: 'This guitarist is unrecordable!' I told him just to record and I'd take full responsibility."

And so John Mayall could have been forgiven for thinking that finally he had a regular and stable top-flight blues outfit for whom the only way was up. But he hadn't reckoned with the wayward spirit that was Eric Clapton. Eric was no guitar grunt, but an intelligent and curious man who was interested in art and culture. He fell in with a group of musicians and poets who between them concocted the sort of mad plan that comes from spending too much time in a fug of dope smoke. This was to be Eric's

With a Telecaster in the Yardbirds: before the guitar/amp combo that would change everything.



'gap year', on the road with his mates in a band they called The Glands. Setting off in September, this "hare-brained scheme" (as Mayall calls it, tersely) ended prematurely and slightly dangerously for Eric in Greece. Mayall, meanwhile, was left trying to hold it all together with a succession of replacement guitarists that included John McLaughlin and Peter Green. By the time Eric phoned John to claim his job back in late October – instantly agreed to by Mayall – bassist John McVie had been sacked for having one drink too many, and Eric found himself in a Mayall band that also included Jack Bruce on bass for about a dozen gigs before Jack was poached by Manfred Mann.

Nothing came of the deal with Immediate. Mayall was unhappy with the arrangements, and approached Mike Vernon to see if Decca would give him another chance. Vernon said to Hugh Mendl at Decca: "You really need to have another look at John Mayall And The Blues Breakers. Now they've got Eric Clapton on guitar they're going to be big-time – they've got an enormous following, they're working five or six nights a week." Mendl said: "If you think it's the right thing to do I'll push it through. Go ahead, and we'll get contracts drawn up."

While that was going through, Vernon had an idea. "They weren't under contract to Immediate any more, and as well as *R&B Monthly*, me, Richard and Neil had this little fledgling label called Blue Horizon where we produced only 99 copies of each record – to avoid purchase tax – and we sold by mail-order only. We were thinking of starting up another label called Purdah. So I said to John and Eric: 'Before we make this record with Decca,

how do you fancy making something for Purdah?' They thought it was a great idea, and decided to do *Bernard Jenkins* and *Lonely Years* as a duo like an old Chicago record.

"We talked it through, and I suggested we just use one microphone. We went into the original Wessex studios in Old Compton Street, up on the third floor right in the middle of Soho. We did it in one afternoon. I think it only took a couple of hours. We put an old microphone on a boom stand, and John and Eric set up. Eric a bit further away from the piano. We moved the mic around until it sounded right and then we said: 'Let's go.'"

This wasn't the first time Vernon had worked with Eric in the studio. Vernon and Giorgio Gomelsky had co-produced the first Yardbirds demos, back in February 1964, and also Vernon lit up Eric's life by asking him to play lead guitar on two studio tracks with Otis Spann and the Muddy Waters Band.

Eric had become obsessed with the character of Bernard Jenkins, the caretaker in Harold Pinter's eponymous play. He bought the script, knew it off by heart, and saw the film *The Caretaker*, with Donald Pleasance as Bernard Jenkins, several times. Its themes of isolation, the inability to communicate and the way the characters attempt to manipulate and deceive each other all resonated strongly with the complex personality that was Eric Clapton. Musicians have testified that back in those early days that you never quite knew where you were with Eric. He could be your best friend one day, and blank you the next. Mood swings that became as well known as his frequent changes in appearance.

'JIMMY PAGE ALLOWED ERIC TO BEGIN UNLEASHING THE POWER HE NOW HAD WITH THE GIBSON/MARSHALL SET-UP.'

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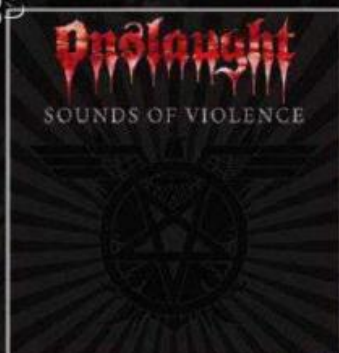
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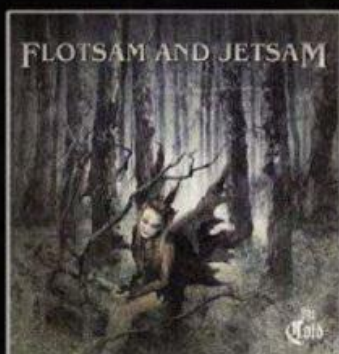
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For Mike Vernon, *Lonely Years* was "the finest effort Eric ever put on record. It just sums up exactly what Eric was about at that time – that real down-home feel. That record was the closest I came to a real Chicago sound. As I said, we only pressed 99 copies, but in three months we sold a thousand. I think I actually sold the masters to Immediate, funnily enough. I was quite friendly with Tony Calder. Decca didn't know what was going on. There was no need for them to."

Praise for the record came from an unexpected source: Paul Oliver raving about it in *Jazz Monthly*. Oliver was normally associated with an older posse of critics, journalists and academics who felt they'd found the blues and it was their domain, their property. And, Vernon says, they felt that "these young, white, long-haired buggers had no right to it. But I was not dim-witted as to think that John Mayall and Eric Clapton were not the real thing, to think they were just a nasty smell that would go away next week. It became an extremely pungent nasty smell for a very long time – and thank God for it."

The deal with Decca Records was struck, and it was agreed to forget about the singles market and go for a studio album. And, importantly, on that album, Mayall says, "I wanted to capture the sound of the band live on stage".

That aim of Mayall's was laudable, Mike Vernon says, but adds that it was also "very, very difficult because the acoustics of live venues vary so much between studios. And back then studios had written rules about 'you can't do this and you can't do that' coming from men in white coats. Until Gus Dudgeon arrived, and then it was all tight trousers, bright socks and sneakers."

After being sacked from various jobs, Dudgeon started out at Decca studios as tea boy and, despite having no experience at all, progressed to sound engineer by initially demonstrating that he knew how to use and repair a tape recorder. In 1964 he had been the engineer on The Zombies' hit *She's Not There*, and in Dudgeon Mike Vernon soon spotted a kindred spirit. But as Mayall and his band set up in Decca's Studio 2 to start recording the album, even Dudgeon became worried.

Vernon describes the set-up on the first day of recording, in March 1966: "If you can imagine the control room window looking into the studio, immediately opposite is the drum booth, enclosed from about shoulder height if you're sitting at the drums, across the sides and over the top. John McVie [back in the band from January] was sitting to the right of that with his amp in front of the board, with the bass drum behind it. To the right of the control room was where the organ was set up

and where John did the vocals. We dressed up the vocals with reverb, delays and things like that. So bass, organ, drums, that was all fine."

But not from drummer Hughie Flint's point of view: "I was told to play on the hi-hat as much as possible," he says, "not to do crash cymbals unless absolutely necessary."

The real problems began when it came to the guitar. "We all knew," says Vernon, "that the guitar would be the main issue. Except Gus, who hadn't seen the band play live. And he had a real shock

playing at, and the 'bleed' on to the recording of the other instruments that it lead to. "Then we put half-transparent boards up all around it and put a microphone about two to three feet from the amp. Then we draped a huge great blanket over the top of the stack and over the mic in an attempt to actually keep the sound in there. So when they started playing, it sounded reasonably akin to how they sounded live. But the guitar was in everything. We recorded on four-track, so when you opened up the drums you definitely had guitar in it. Same with

the bass and vocals. But John actually did some of the vocal tracks over again, so the guitar didn't become an issue.

"The reason for angling the amp was to make sure all the sound didn't come straight out into the room, otherwise we would have stood no chance at all. We had no more isolation rooms that were usable. Actually, we had one room at the end of the studio, with a door and a glass window, that doubled as a vocal booth and a tape store room, but if we'd put it in there Eric wouldn't have really heard his amp – he would have needed to wear headphones, and he didn't want to do that. He said: 'I want to play as if I'm doing a gig. I want to be standing right next to the amp. I want to be able to hear what I'm doing and what everybody else is doing.' A tall order in 1966. Gus was going: 'We can't do this, man. We can't do it. We're not allowed.' So I said: 'Come on, we need to work together with these guys, and we'll get a great sound. And when we do, they'll play and it will be wonderful.'"

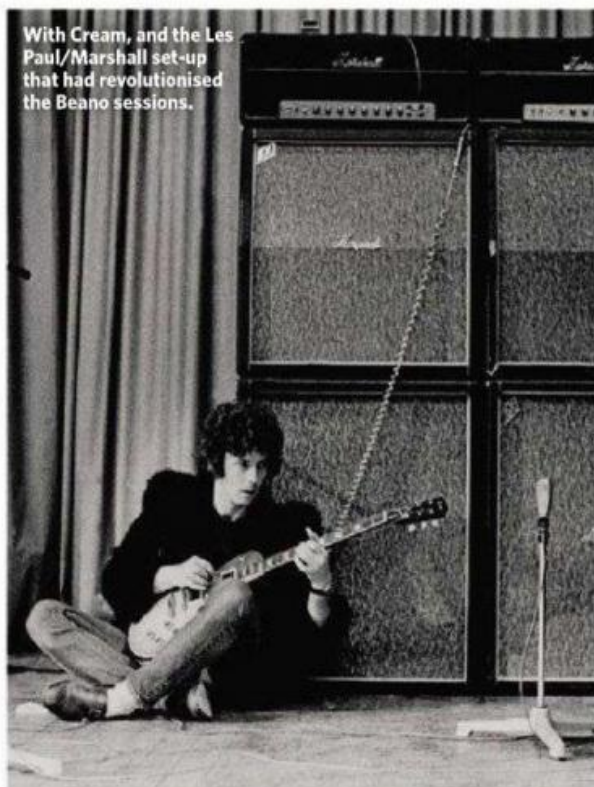
"It took a while to get a sound that everybody was happy with, especially Eric, but everybody had to take on board that we were going into an unknown era. Nobody in Decca studios had ever witnessed somebody coming into the studio, setting up their

guitar and amp and playing at that volume. People in the canteen behind the studio were complaining about the noise. Normally they'd never hear it, but this was travelling around the studio complex. People were saying: 'What the bloody hell is that?!' and coming to see what was going on."

(Arguments among guitar freaks have raged down the years as to whether or not Eric used a Dallas Rangemaster treble booster in the studio. Well, the answer is no, he didn't – and that's straight from the source.)

As for the songs that were to appear on the album, Vernon recalls: "We probably didn't do as much planning for the album as we should have done. My discussions were directly with John. He chose the material."

The album was supposed to reflect the band's live set at the time and, with its mixture of Chicago blues covers and Mayall compositions, for the most part it did. The Blues Breakers had a large contingent of followers at the Flamingo Club, a posse of black American GIs who, as fans of



With Cream, and the Les Paul/Marshall set-up that had revolutionised the Beano sessions.

when Eric arrived, plugged in, turned everything on and started playing. Gus almost fell over. He looked at me and I knew exactly what he was thinking: 'Jesus Christ, we're gonna have to turn that down!' And of course that's when the 'discussions' started. It was never an argument, but it was definitely a 'discussion' about how the hell we were going to record this. The sound was going everywhere because it was so loud. The studio wasn't that small, you could get a brass section and background singers in there."

But if the idea was to capture the live sound of the band, then Eric was going to play exactly as he did live, which was loud. In fact although Eric had more recording experience than anybody else in the band, he was quite snippy about recording the blues in a studio at all, much preferring to do live recordings to capture the passion on the night.

"We had him turn the amp towards the wall and angle it slightly towards the control room," Vernon says of their efforts to find a way round the problem caused by the volume Eric insisted on

"PEOPLE WERE SAYING: 'WHAT THE BLOODY HELL IS THAT?!' AND COMING TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON." - PRODUCER MIKE VERNON

DID THE BEANO LES PAUL ADD ITS MAGIC TO WHITESNAKE?

The Les Paul that Eric Clapton played on the Beano album was stolen soon afterwards and has never been seen again. But former Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden has a vintage Les Paul, and CR's Hugh Fielder has a flashback...

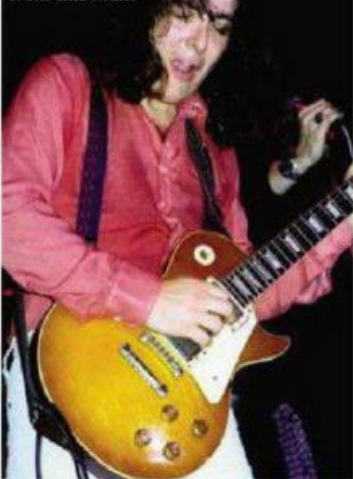
The guitar that Eric Clapton played on the Beano album – a 1960 Gibson Les Paul Standard with a sunburst finish – has, not surprisingly, become a holy grail for blues guitar enthusiasts.

Unfortunately the guitar was stolen just a few months after the album was recorded, in July 1966, while Clapton was rehearsing with Cream. It has never resurfaced, although numerous rumours and theories have emerged instead.

When a remastered version of the album was released in 1998 it included previously unpublished photographs showing that the guitar's pick-up covers had been removed, but there were no other distinguishing marks. Indeed Clapton now says there is no way of confirming the authenticity of the guitar.

Cue a flashback from your reporter who reviewed *Sounds* magazine in the dim and distant mid-70s. He cannot recall the gig, but he can remember sitting with Bernie Marsden, who told him that the guitar in his lap was the one Clapton played on the Beano album.

Bernie Marsden: would you buy a used Les Paul from this man?



"You're not entirely wrong," Marsden chuckled recently when I tracked him down. "I bought a 1960 Les Paul Standard in 1974 when I was in Wild Turkey. This guy seemed

particularly keen that I should have it. What clinched it was when he brought it to a gig at the Marquee. Suddenly it was as if I was using two amplifiers.

"Some months later I saw him again and he asked how I was getting on with the guitar. I said I was delighted. And it was only then that he told me that it had been Eric Clapton's guitar, the one he used on the Beano album. I had no idea at the time that that guitar had been stolen.

"Now, I'm not saying that it is and I'm not saying that it isn't. I don't think there's any way of knowing for sure. But both Jeff Beck and Jack Bruce cast knowing glances at it when they saw it.

"I do know it's a special guitar. I call it The Beast

because it's such an animal. I played it constantly for the next 20 years, all through my time in Whitesnake.

"People ask me if I still have The Beast and I say, yeah, but it's locked away now. Any 1960 Les Paul is worth a bit these days."

Jimmy Smith, were into the organ-driven bands of Georgie Fame, Brian Auger and Graham Bond, and were actually more appreciative of Mayall's organ playing than of what Clapton was doing. So Mayall wanted to include the sounds of Mose Allison (*Parchman Farm*) and Ray Charles (*What'd I Say*).

Vernon, though, had his doubts about the second one: "I do remember saying that I wasn't too keen on doing *What'd I Say* – you're up against a Ray Charles record which was pretty huge. But John said they did it live and people liked it, and it gave Hughie a chance to do a drum solo – which, under my breath, I said: 'Oh no'. But I don't think the drum solo was Hughie's idea, he didn't see himself as a solo drummer."

Indeed it wasn't Hughie's idea. Looking back, the drummer says: "I was a bit apprehensive about doing the solo on the recording. On stage you can get away with anything and it sounded fairly exciting. But I wasn't that happy with it at the time. I was never a great soloist."



The version of *Double Crossing Time* that appears on the album was actually recorded for Immediate Records prior to Christmas '65 with John Bradley on bass, brought in quickly to replace Jack Bruce who'd jumped ship to Manfred Mann on the promise of vast riches (which of course never materialised). John and Eric were somewhat pissed off by Bruce's departure, and together wrote *Double Crossing Man*, later changed to *Double Crossing Time*. Eric's solo on that track, however, was dubbed on during the recording of the album.

One song which was definitely not in Mayall's live sets was Robert Johnson's *Ramblin' On My Mind*. Recorded

for the album as a sparse, plaintive guitar-and-piano track, it's notable for being Clapton's debut vocal performance on record. He later told US music critic Peter Guralnick: "I don't think I'd ever heard of Robert Johnson when I found the record... I was around 15 or 16, and it was a real shock to find something that powerful... What

struck me about Robert Johnson's record was that it seemed as if he wasn't playing for an audience. It didn't obey the rules of time or harmony or anything. It led me to a belief that here was a guy who really didn't play for people at all, that his thing was so unbearable for him to have to live with that he was almost, like, ashamed of it, you know. This was an image, really, that I was very, very keen to hang on to.

"I'd been singing and playing in that style for so long, it was really just a question of turning the tape machines on. The leap came in accepting that this thing was going to go onto plastic and would be recorded. Accepting that took a lot of convincing from John, who really kept having to tell me that it was worth it."

The contributions of saxophonists Alan Skidmore (tenor) and John Almond (baritone) and trumpeter Derek (wrongly credited on the sleeve as 'Dennis') Healey deserve honourable mentions. "I used to see Jimmy and Alan Skidmore in the jazz clubs, so I brought Alan in for the recording," Mayall recalls. Many of the original Chicago blues bands used horns both on stage and on record, and John himself had used Nigel Stanger on sax for the previous live album. But the white blues purists were aghast. Mayall had little time for "people pretending to know your music better than you do. We were learning from people we admired and being as true to the music as possible."

Hughie Flint acknowledges that the band played well on the album, but concedes that "it was Eric who shone".

The album was a unique moment in time – a combination of Mayall's intellectual sincerity, and Clapton's savage intensity and emotional truth that ripped through all the key solos: the two instrumentals *Hideaway* and *Steppin' Out*, *Key To Love*, *Double Crossing Time* and of course the monumental *Have You Heard*. Clapton detonated a neon explosion of noise and notes, cutting, biting, trebly and harsh, angry, passionate, a firestorm of blues runs, intense yet controlled; a music caught in the crosshairs of a young man's frustration and anger, a man gripped by a psychic disturbance that he felt could be exorcised only through a Gibson/Marshall set-up. The simple skeleton framework of the blues allows acres of freedom inside. Neil Slaven wrote in his original sleeve notes: "...On his best nights Eric can make time stand still." And on the album, in places he seems to produce the same effect.

The cover photograph for the record, which inspired the nickname the 'Beano album', was shot by Decca Publicity Art Dept. photographer David Wedgbury.

Various locations were scouted, but before Wedgbury could take his shots in front of the wall he had to scrub off graffiti helpfully daubed on it by the band. Harold Wilson was the Prime Minister at the time, and also 'A Nit' according to the political analysts of The Blues Breakers – you can just see the remnants of the word in the top right-hand corner of the cover.

Eric had always loved comics, the *Beano* in particular, and feeling bored and unco-operative he just started reading the one he'd bought that morning. One of the comic's leading strips was Lord Snooty and his pals. Which in a way described The Blues Breakers. By his own admission, Eric regarded himself as a cut above any

other white blues guitarist, and actually wrote the words 'Lord Eric' in Biro on his very first guitar. And while John was the bandleader, Eric was the star – and knew it. Nobody called Eric 'Lord Snooty of the blues', but at that time he probably was.

Mayall never saw this album as the route to taking the band to the next level. "You would be foolish to think an album would do that," he offers. "I have never recorded albums in that way – more as stepping stones. The priority is to produce some good blues music and get it down the way you want it. Where it goes from there is anybody's guess."

Hence it came as a massive shock when the *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album, as it was titled, released in July 22, 1966, extraordinarily reached No.6 in the UK chart (a gritty blues album flanked by the likes of The Beatles, Herb Alpert And The Tijuana Brass, The Beach Boys and *The Sound Of Music* soundtrack) and enjoyed a chart stay of 17 weeks. Quick as a flash, Eric was phoning John to ask for more money. John was in no mood to be magnanimous, however, and brushed Eric off with a curt: "You got a session fee, the same as everybody else." Which is hardly surprising – after all, even by the time the first copies of the record were coming off the presses, Eric had dumped The Blues Breakers to go off and form Cream with Jack Bruce and drummer Ginger Baker.

Even as he lined up for the photo-shoot for the Beano album sleeve, Cream had already been rehearsing in secret. Kinks bassist Pete Quaife recalls Eric talking to him about forming a band as far back as Christmas 1965. In the same month that the album was recorded, Clapton was so self-assured in his ability that he was telling *Melody Maker* he was thinking of quitting the UK altogether and moving to Chicago because there was nothing for him at home. Hughie Flint recalls some BBC sessions Mayall's band did when Eric had to play quietly (preserved BBC recordings of *Crocodile Walk* and *Key To Love* spring to mind), and "where the contempt for what he was being asked to do just oozes out of



By the time the Beano album was released, Clapton had already moved on to Cream.

**"IT HAS TO RANK AMONG THE TOP 10
INFUENTIAL ALBUMS EVER RECORDED. BUT
IT HAS NEVER WON ANY AWARDS." – MIKE VERNON**

it. Even on live gigs Eric could be very badly behaved and hardly play. Thankfully it didn't happen very often, although sometimes he wouldn't turn up at all and we would play as a trio."

Clapton's guitar playing on the groundbreaking, now iconic *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album encapsulated everything about his development as a musician: his disrupted childhood, his disrupted adolescence, and the discovery of an art form, a mode of expression into which he could sublimate all his anger, his sense of isolation, playing combinations of notes which for him expressed more than words ever could. And all this tied to a knowing that, while he started out as Mayall's student, the band was now trailing in his wake and he knew he needed to move on. The short period that bassist Jack Bruce had spent in Mayall's band alongside Eric had shown him what

was possible, where Eric could take this music and make it his own.

Nothing that John Mayall has done since – and Clapton only with Cream – has quite had the reach down the years and across rock music as the hugely influential *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album. It opened up the world of the blues to young white audiences, announced the arrival of the modern guitar hero, and kick-started the cult of virtuosity, encouraging young musicians (and not just guitarists) to become accomplished players. For most it was the first time they had heard and felt the power of a Les Paul through a cranked Marshall, a sound that helped define rock for decades afterwards. It saved the then-ailing Gibson guitar company, and put the then-new Marshall amplification on the international map – and on subsequent generations of guitarists' wish-lists.

Yet, as Mike Vernon points out, the album itself has hardly been acknowledged, certainly nothing like its legend and iconic status today might lead one to expect. "It would be a fascinating project for somebody to find out exactly how many units this album has sold in all the formats and different releases and in the different regions. Everybody wants to talk about this album, so many people own it and it has to rank among the top 10 influential albums ever recorded. But it has never won any awards, doesn't have silver or gold record status, isn't in any Hall Of Fame. And because I was a salaried staff producer at Decca I never got a royalty. I never made a bean-o." 

With thanks to Chris Hjort, author of Strange Brew: Eric Clapton And The British Blues Boom 1965-1970 (published by Jawbone, 2007).

Clapton's 20 Greatest Moments

Joe Perry, Alex Lifeson, Joe Bonamassa, Tony Iommi, the cream of new blues guitarists and the editors of Britain's biggest guitar mags choose the cream of Clapton.

ILLUSTRATION: SAM CHIVERS

CROSSROADS (live)

Cream, Wheels Of Fire, 1968

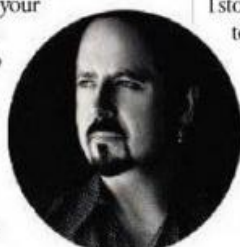


Steve Lukather:

"I know he hates to hear it, but *Crossroads* has one of the greatest rock guitar solos ever recorded. The sound, the composition of the solo, the feel, the phrasing is off the hook, and the bending is perfect. And Jesus... that sound."

"Of course, there are guitar players more technical than Eric Clapton. But that's like having a twenty-inch cock: it's great to show your friends, but what are you gonna do with it? The heart and soul is what lasts."

"Eric was one of the first — quote, unquote



— 'guitar-slingers'. The guy turned it upside down. Eric was the first, even before Hendrix came and kicked my ass. He's one of the architects of modern guitar as we know it. If you can't give him any love for that, then fuck you."

"I've read the books where Eric says he just copied him. You have to understand that, at the time, we were a bunch of white boys from Los Angeles and we had no idea what the blues were. I remember it very clearly. I was at grammar school, and I went to a friend's house, and his older brother had *Fresh Cream*. I heard it coming out of the bedroom and I stopped everything. It was different to the clean, jangly guitars of the era; it was dirty and it had vibrato. I was drawn to it, like, 'Holy shit! who is that?' Then when *Disraeli Gears* came out... forget about it, it was over for guys like me."

"Back in the day, it was harder

to learn music; we had to lift the needle up and painstakingly learn this stuff, and I started developing a little vibrato of my own, based on trying to sound like Eric. I actually once got to play *Sunshine Of Your Love* with Jack [Bruce] and play the part of Eric Clapton — and I do stress 'play the part of'. It was a kick. I even played the exact solo off the record, and Jack looked over at me, like, 'You actually learnt that?' Well, yeah. What guitarist of my generation didn't learn that solo note-for-note?"

"Some people are rude about Clapton's later solo work? Really? Who's saying that? Journalists? He doesn't have to prove anything to any of you weenie journalists. You would suck cock to play like him. There was so much pressure on him to be 'Eric Clapton'. Just like Eddie Van Halen. Like, they've already changed fucking history, what more do you want from the fucking guy? He just wants to play the blues. Leave him the fuck alone. His vibrato and his feel says it all. Fuck everybody else."

BADGE

Cream, Goodbye, 1969



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar:

"*Badge* is a song of two halves, a textbook example of tension and relief in music. Eric's solo is the climactic moment, and it's written, like poetry, in the language of the soul. Hyperbole? Nope, this for me is Clapton at his best. The construction of the solo is flawless, which suggests it was composed then performed in the studio. But check out the repeated string bend halfway through. That to me says Eric was totally caught up in the moment, in the emotion of that brilliant arpeggiated chord sequence. It's just a joy to listen to."

SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE

Cream, Disraeli Gears, 1967

Alex Lifeson: "I was certainly a fan of Clapton's when growing up. When he played in Cream, stylistically it was so different and fresh, and the music that Cream wrote was very unique, very hard to pinpoint. It was blues-based, of course, but there was other stuff going on. There was a really interesting level of composition in their material. And then as a player,

he's so fluid, so different to what was happening at the time. His playing was so lyrical, and it had a darkness to it."

"I loved Cream's versions of *Spoonful* and *Crossroads*, but

Sunshine Of Your Love, that was such a cool-sounding song, such a cool pattern. His soloing was really unique. I don't know if I've followed him more recently, but he was a great influence on me in the days of Cream. And the band, the way they played. They were a trio and there was a lot of activity in their playing, so that was an inspiration for Rush. I certainly learned a lot from Clapton. I guess that means I ripped him off."

FURTHER ON UP THE ROAD (live)

The Band With Eric Clapton, The Last Waltz, 1978



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar:

"This performance at The Band's farewell concert

is famous for the moment when Clapton's guitar falls from its strap mid-solo. The Band's Robbie Robertson leaps in and covers for Eric while the Englishman regains his composure. Some Clapton fans have interpreted this as an attempt to upstage Slowhand [Clapton's nickname from his Yardbirds days], but as any gigging musician knows, the show must go on. Admittedly Robertson does seem to take his playing up a notch here, but if this was a competition there'd be only one winner. and that's our man Eric."

SPOONFUL (live)

Cream, Wheels Of Fire, 1968

Stephen Dale Petit: "Once I got a guitar and it was known in the neighbourhood that I was a guitar-mad kid, friends would bring over their older brothers' record collections, and that's when I first heard of Clapton."

"It was Cream that first impressed me. I was floored when I heard *I'm So Glad*, and I think the solo on





Spoonful, where he comes in and it goes 'Pow!' it's like someone taking a sledgehammer to a huge anvil. He constructed solos that were like songs in themselves. The textures, the tones, the attack, it was all quite mind-blowing. He'd be the first to say that he doesn't play like that any more. I spoke to him recently about that solo and he can't really remember it. For a guitarist like me these were seminal albums, for him they're just stones on the pathway. When he did them he was fully committed to pushing the envelope. Now he's in a different place.

"The Beano album captures a time when the British blues scene caught fire. Mick Jones from The Clash loves that album, and it makes perfect sense to me because Eric is playing like a punk with anger and aggression – a punk who can play guitar. It may sound like an oxymoron, but Clapton definitely had the same punk attitude. He was a blues obsessive who had a technique like nobody else had at the time. What he was doing was truly revolutionary. He was a pioneer, he was cutting-edge, he was musically dangerous and he was doing it for the first time – he was out in uncharted territory. I think that's been lost – an understanding of just how innovative Clapton was."

LAYLA

Derek And The Dominos, *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs*, 1970



Neville Marten, Editor, Guitar Techniques:

"I first heard *Layla* on the radio, right out of the blue, and thought, 'What the...?' I had no idea who it was, but the wall of guitars and the sheer might of the riff hooked me in a flash. It took a while to realise it was Clapton, but the signature licks in the verse soon gave him away. And although controversy surrounds how much of it he or Duane Allman, the slide guitarist on the track, actually conceived, it remains one of the most powerful riffs and most heartfelt vocal performances in rock."

"No wonder, then, that George Harrison's wife, Pattie, the subject of this ode to unrequited love, soon

succumbed to its charms, and left George for Eric."

COCAINE

Slowhand, 1977



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar:

"Unlike Cream's reworking of Robert Johnson's

Crossroads Blues, Clapton's cover of JJ Cale's *Cocaine* sticks closely to the original. The first two beats of Cale's riff mimic those Cream's, *Sunshine Of Your Love*. Eric repays the homage here by injecting *Cocaine* with a serious sense of groove, the like of which JJ couldn't quite muster. For this alone, it's a worthy favourite among Clapton fans. As for the guitar solo, it's hardly his most inspired lead, but Clapton on an off day is still better than a whole honky-tonk full of on-form journeymen."

STEPPIN' OUT

John Mayall, *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton*, 1966

Tony Iommi: "I've liked Clapton since the early days of the Blues Breakers, with John Mayall. That was a cracking time. People like the Shadows were around back then, so the Blues Breakers were something completely new – they had such an incredible and fresh sound. I loved what they were doing and so did



ninety-nine per cent of the other guitar players. As Eric went from the Blues Breakers to Cream he got more of his own thing going,

stylistically speaking, which I also thought was great."

"I still love *Steppin' Out*, one of the instrumentals on the *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album. You can't go wrong with pretty much anything from that album, in fact. It was great for guitar players because it inspired you to go away and try to learn what you'd heard."

"In a broader sense, what Clapton did was to change music. So many players took on board those early steps he took. Even Peter Green [who replaced Clapton in the Blues Breakers], as good as he was, didn't have that same spark. Clapton just stood out from the crowd. Any guitarist that tells you they were not influenced by what he did, not even just a little bit, is probably a liar."

HAVE YOU EVER LOVED A WOMAN

Eric Clapton, *E.C. Was Here*, 1975



Oli Brown:

"Most of my friends at school listened to Radio 1. Eric Clapton was just like,

'Oh, that's what my parents like.' But I wasn't

anywhere close to being 'cool' at that age, and my dad had a great taste in music."

"When people are as big as Clapton they're gonna get criticism. But I can make a pretty good defence of him. I'd just play *Have You Ever Loved Woman* and tell them: 'Just listen.' That would be my argument. That song – off the *E.C. Was Here* album – was the first time I was aware of him. His playing was just amazing. I loved his tone on the Strat, but also his phrasing; the way he lets the notes breathe makes what he plays next sound really important."

PRESENCE OF THE LORD

Blind Faith, *Blind Faith*, 1969



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar:

"The unconventional structure

Presence Of The Lord was perhaps a sign of Clapton's growing confidence in his ability as a songwriter. It starts off as a soul ballad,

wrapped in swathes of organ and piano (so far, so un-Cream-like) until halfway through when Eric's wah-wah guitar slices through and Ginger Baker's drums kick back in at a furious tempo. This interlude features some quick chord changes, and Clapton does an impressive job of outlining each chord as he wails away, wah-wah pedal rocking riotously at his heel. Lynyrd Skynyrd were among Clapton's biggest fans and I wouldn't be surprised if *Presence Of The Lord* inspired, at least partly, their own ballads, *Free Bird* and *Tuesday's Gone*."

HAD TO CRY TODAY

Blind Faith, *Blind Faith*, 1969

Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar:

"Around the time of *Blind Faith*'s formation, Clapton started recording and performing with Fender guitars as opposed to the numerous Gibsons he favoured while he was with Cream. *Had To Cry Today* sounds like it was recorded using the same Telecaster Eric played at the group's Hyde Park gig in 1969 (actually a Telecaster body married to a maple Stratocaster neck). Eric switches between the mean main riff and hybrid picked arpeggios, showing a sensitivity to his playing that was often unnoticed amid the blitzkrieg of Cream at their height."

WEE WEE HOURS

Chuck Berry With Eric Clapton, *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*, 1987



Philip Sayce:

"My favourite Eric Clapton moment? It's like picking your favourite page in your favourite

book, and I'd answer this differently every day. But I've been really getting into a performance of *Wee Wee Hours*

that he did in a film called *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*.

Keith Richards is there, and Robert Cray, all these cats, all to honour Chuck Berry.

Clapton very

humbly walks out on stage, and proceeds to absolutely melt down the Fox Theater in St Louis. He just fucking kills it. For me it's perfect. It's respectful and restrained, but kinda like, hey, don't fuck with me. Chuck Berry gets down on one knee

"Of course, there are guitar players more technical than Eric Clapton. But that's like having a twenty-inch cock: it's great to show your friends, but what are you gonna do with it?" – Steve Lukather



Unslaughter
SOUNDS OF VIOLENCE

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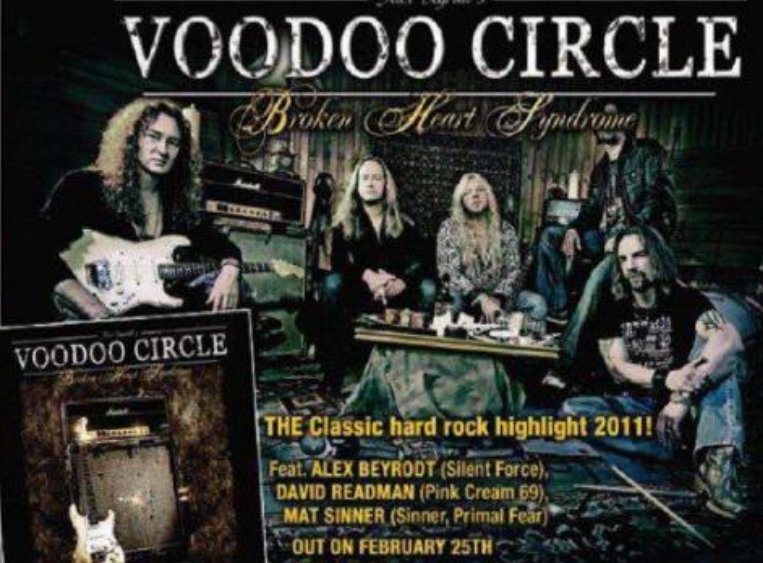


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in front of Eric Clapton. Clapton is just gonna go for one solo, and he's bringing it home, and Chuck Berry just goes: 'Take another one!' So Clapton takes another round. That performance is so chilled. He's just got it down, and his tone is so clean and pure and you can hear his fingers. Then Johnnie Johnson rips this huge piano solo, and Clapton is just so relaxed and cool and in the pocket. And then he just whips it out like a machete and cuts everybody up. It's unbelievable."

WHY DOES LOVE GOT TO BE SO SAD?

Derek And The Dominos, Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs, 1970

Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total

Guitar: "Clapton wrote this with Dominos member Bobby Whitlock at a time when Eric was in love with his friend George Harrison's wife Pattie, so you might expect a mawkish ode to unrequited love. But *Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad?* is an explosion of pent-up lust, propelled skywards by Jim Gordon's brilliant drumming. Clapton's frenzied lead guitar playing is free-formed in stabs and scribbles, as an Impressionist might capture a sunset. This is Eric the artist reaching beyond his blues roots."

I DON'T KNOW WHY

Delaney & Bonnie & Friends, On Tour With Eric Clapton, 1970

Rich Robinson: "Growing up in Atlanta as a kid, you regarded Hendrix and Clapton along the same lines. I remember a friend of mine had Cream's *Disraeli Gears* and Hendrix's *Are You Experienced*, and I was blown away by both of those albums. I really loved Clapton's approach, but more so the feeling that comes from his guitar. Even the simple things would permeate a feeling, it was moving."

"*Sunshine Of Your Love* was one of the best rock riffs ever written. I also think Clapton is an amazing songwriter and singer. My focus has always been on songwriting, that's what I do in my band. I'm impressed by how malleable he was. He went from Cream to do his own stuff and then play with Derek And The Dominos and JJ Cale. I thought everything he did was really cool."

"Personally my favourite Eric Clapton moments are him with Delaney & Bonnie, and one of my favourite



songs is *I Don't Know Why*. It's just a fucking amazing song, and the way he sang it was just phenomenal. He joined the band because he was so moved by their music. And that's amazing. It's a quality you rarely see in musicians today."

TALES OF BRAVE ULYSSES

Cream, Disraeli Gears, 1967



Jason Sidwell, Senior Music Editor, Guitarist/Guitar Techniques/Total Guitar:

"With its descending chord progression reminiscent of Cream's *White Room* (and, less obviously, the verse opening chords of the Loving Spoonful's *Summer In The City*), this Cream track is the first time Clapton used a wah-wah pedal (bought from Manny's in New York) on record. Adding atmospheric colour to small chords and sonic fire to his trademark bluesy licks, Eric demonstrated what the wah-wah could offer rock music fans. It may have taken Hendrix's *Voodoo Chile* to propel the wah-wah pedal to sonic heights of virtuosity, but Eric's wah-wah pedal work remains both inspiring and exciting."

TOO MUCH MONKEY BUSINESS

The Yardbirds, Five Live Yardbirds, 1964



Joe Perry: "When I was in my teens I got a second-hand copy of the Beano album [John Mayall's *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton*] that was really well worn and it sounded incredible. There were a couple of songs that sounded 'lounge band' but the rest of the stuff took the top of your head off. I'd never heard anything like it. *Steppin' Out* is still a song that I pick apart. When I get bored and want to get inspired again I sit down and learn a few new licks from it, or I'll listen to the solo from *Crossroads* from the Cream live album [*Wheels Of Fire*]. That was probably my first taste of the blues."

"Some of the straight blues on the Beano album raised the bar for guitar playing. Every guitar player I knew had that record on their turntable and tried to get that sound and learn those licks. Once I got a

band together I used to play a couple of songs off the album. I remember playing this keg party, and someone came up to me and said: 'You were amazing. What is that music you're playing?'

"I just looked up, smiled and said: 'Kids, that's the blues.' People like Clapton brought the blues back to America. In the late 60s most of the kids in America thought the blues came from Britain!"

"I'm also a huge fan of Clapton's work on *Five Live Yardbirds*. Their version of Chuck Berry's *Too Much Monkey Business* was such a blueprint for a lot of what Aerosmith tried to do. The 'Rave Ups' [instrumental interludes], which were backing up Eric, the solos – it was like the band were a slingshot, and as soon as it soon as it hit that pocket he went sailing. Those parts of the songs still give me goosebumps. There are some solos by Clapton, along with a couple by Jeff Beck, that just haven't been beaten."

AFTER MIDNIGHT

Eric Clapton, Eric Clapton, 1970, and After Midnight (single), 1988



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar: "After Midnight is another cover of a JJ Cale song. There are two

versions to choose from: an up-tempo soul stomper from Clapton's first solo album of 1970, or the version he recorded for a Michelob beer commercial in the late 80s. And make sure you listen to the right one. The latter recasts *After Midnight* as a skulking minor blues with a studio sheen reminiscent of its era. For 'studio sheen reminiscent of its era', read 'pan pipes' – and avoid this abomination lest ye lose faith in the man they once declared 'God.'"

FIVE LONG YEARS

Eric Clapton, From The Cradle, 1994



Danny Bryant: "The moment Clapton clicked for me was the *From The Cradle* album. It was just him doing blues covers, using his own style, but making each track a little tribute to his

heroes. He did a version of *Five Long Years* that's just unbelievable. He tears into it, and keeps it in that manic Buddy Guy style where you don't know if it's gonna hold together or fall apart. It's a simple song, in the sense that it's just a straightforward, slow 12-bar blues, but it's the intensity. The only way I can describe it is that it's totally on the edge, about to descend into chaos, but just managing to hold itself from the brink. Anybody who says Clapton is too safe or has lost his edge needs to listen to that song. It's some of the greatest guitar playing you'll ever hear. Listening to it makes me want to go and practise."



KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

Eric Clapton, Knockin' On Heaven's Door (single), 1975



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar: "Thanks to its simple three- (or sometimes four-) chord

arrangement, *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* has become a busker's staple. Done badly – and in the hands of your average street performer it usually is – it's an endless dirge. But Clapton's reggae-fied arrangement of this Bob Dylan classic is a masterpiece. Thematically it stays true to the world-weary condition of Dylan's protagonist, but the effect is bittersweet, not sour. For the solo, Eric whips out the bottleneck and makes his guitar sob and moan."

TRAVELIN' ALONE

Eric Clapton, Clapton, 2010



Stephen Lawson, Editor, Total Guitar: "The opener off Clapton's last album gets the Delta blues

treatment: a steady 4/4 stomp and no chord changes. It's hypnotic stuff, with Eric's snaky lead-cum-rhythm guitar weaving its magic on the listener. The stripped-down arrangement and the sense of restraint on this track prove one thing: that Clapton needs only a few notes to blow you away."

He's a multi-bulti-millionaire. One of the most admired and imitated musicians on the planet. The composer of at least three rock standards. And a ladies' man who's had a string of spectacular beauties. So where, asks **Charles Shaar Murray**, did it all go wrong?

ILLUSTRATION: SAM CHIVERS

racist Powellite rant which he delivered from the stage, whilst severely alcoholically impaired, at a 1977 gig in Birmingham and which, even in his recent autobiography, he has never fully retracted. The irony of a man whose career was founded on his remarkable ability to empathise with and interpret black music spouting such a titanicly offensive tirade was not lost on many: the foundation of Rock Against Racism was a direct response to Clapton's utterance. And yet, classifying him as a straightforward racist is excessively simplistic: Clapton has worked, over the years, with the likes of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, BB King, Robert Cray, Peter Tosh and many more, all of whom are proud and sensitive men experienced in 'reading' whites, and none of whom are or were remotely stupid. If Clapton was racist in any conventional sense, trust me: they would have detected it and had absolutely nothing further to do with him. Nevertheless, it still leaves a bad taste, even decades down the line.

However, if that was all there was to Eric Clapton, it would be safe and easy to write him off: as a burn-out, a sell-out, a banaliser... a man who took the soft musical and cultural options and, as a result, gained the world, but lost his soul. But... and it's a very big 'but' indeed, a 'but' of almost J-Lo-esque proportions: Clapton is a complex and contradictory man, and nothing in which he's involved is remotely that simple.

The Clapton of today – or rather, the Clapton familiar to everybody who's come of musical age since the early 1970s – may appear to be essentially a laid-back singer/songwriter who plays a bit of guitar (or, to be more accurate, quite a lot of guitar). The Clapton who came to prominence in the second half of the 1960s was a very different beast. In those days, it was as a guitarist that he was primarily renowned, working behind a succession of singers in a succession of groups whilst taking the occasional lead-vocal cameo. He was the first British rock musician to attain stardom purely on the strength of instrumental virtuosity: our first certified home-grown guitar hero. He was the first of the local boys capable of matching the power and passion of his heroes, and when – on the epochal album he cut with John Mayall – Clapton plugged a Gibson Les Paul guitar into one of the then-brand-new Marshall amps, he created what is, to this very day, one of rock's iconic sonic signatures.

Clapton displayed none of the extravagant physicality and theatrical showmanship of contemporaries like Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend or Jeff Beck. Arms were not windmilled, amps and guitars not smashed, hips not ground. Instead, he was the still centre of the hurricane, the eye of the storm, the Hamlet of the blues, soliloquising through his guitar. Tight-lipped and stony-faced, virtually nothing moved other than those flashing fingers. Yet eyes and ears were relentlessly drawn to him: in The Yardbirds, it was Clapton, not their

singer, the late Keith Relf, who was the focus of audience attention. (Relf, a great punk singer a dozen years too early, had the unique misfortune to be comprehensively upstaged by not just one, but three stellar guitarists: when Clapton left the band, he was replaced first by the then-unknown Jeff Beck, and finally by Jimmy Page.) ➔

Many people have a bit of a problem with Eric Clapton. I'm one of them. Part of it is to do with the radical disjuncture

between the still-reverberating work he did during his turbulent two-and-a-half years with Cream – when white-hot jazz improvisation was poured into the mould of blues and pop song structures and delivered with what was then considered monstrous levels of volume and distortion, thereby blasting a path for Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and much of what followed them – and the sedate (verging on sedated) blend of blues, country, gospel and reggae which marked the opening phase of his 70s-and-onwards solo career.

Then there were the rather vacuous MTV-friendly AOR pop moves of the 1980s: all pastel-

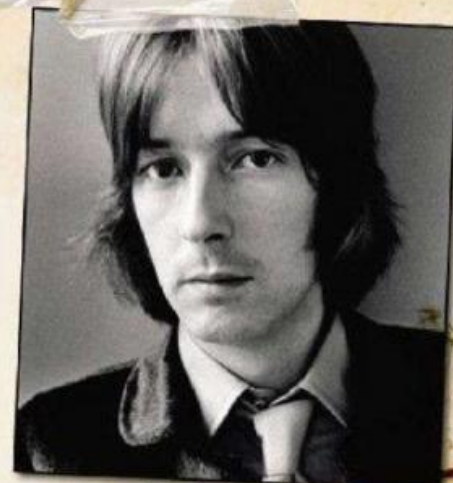
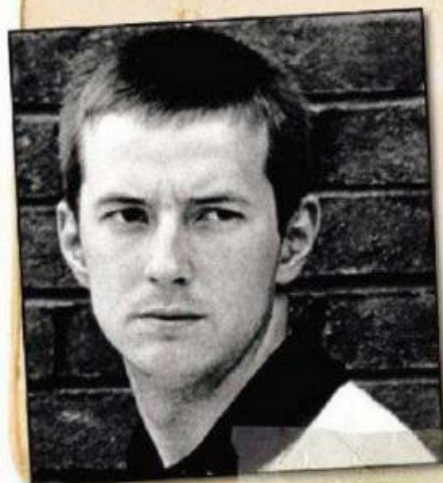
coloured suits with sleeves pushed up to the elbows, banal empty songs, big glossy synthesiser and LinnDrum sounds, and – cough – Phil Collins. The blues may well be the stake to which Clapton's music, throughout all its phases and stages, has always been tethered, but sometimes it seemed that even if the linking rope was highly elastic, it was still strained almost to breaking point.

Even in the 1990s, when the magnetic pull of the blues seemed to be reeling him back in once more, the resulting music seemed enervated and academic, oddly bloodless. *From The Cradle*, his 1994 reworking of a fistful of copper-bottomed blues classics, was encouragingly and energisingly gutsy and muscular, but I left one of his Royal Albert Hall blues nights muttering to my companion: "Blues under glass for an audience deader than Elvis." His Robert Johnson tribute album, *Me And Mr Johnson*, was finely wrought and exquisitely detailed, but almost entirely deficient in the dark fire of those songs' originator.

And then there's the elephant in the room: the

{ 'The blues may well be the stake to which Clapton's music has been tethered, but the highly elastic linking rope is still strained to almost breaking point.' }





The changing man: Clapton through the ages, from rough to smooth...

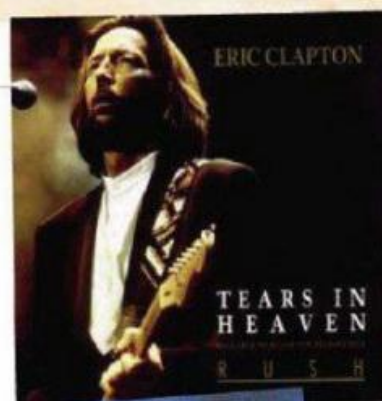
In those days Clapton was a weirdly chameleonic figure whose appearance would change from photo to photo. His sartorial style seemed permanently in flux. In The Yardbirds, he was an archetypally crisp and dapper moddy-boy in slick Italianate suits and crewcut hair; in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers a scruffy, dishevelled bohemian art-student in hooped T-shirt and ratty fur coat; in Cream a colourfully-clad psychedelic dandy, who even briefly permed his lank hair into a bushy Hendrixian 'fro. Sideburns, beards and 'taches sprouted and vanished almost overnight.

He's continued to alternate dressy and scruffy phases e'en unto this day, showing up one moment in devastatingly elegant designer suitage and the next in baggy jeans and T-shirts which would be considered 'dressed-down' even for an afternoon washing the car: his hair perpetually lengthening and shortening and the stubby facial fuzz which replaced the bushy beards of the 70s and 80s continually disappearing and reappearing.

In a sense, just about everything Clapton has done in the past 40-something years has been a reaction against the trauma of Cream, the band that effectively made his reputation in the US. From his abandonment of the fat, roaring Gibson-and-Marshall sound with which that period of his music will be forever associated in favour of the thinner, flintier sound of the Fender Stratocaster, to his rejection of turbulent, full-on

turbulence, to the emotional pain generated by his love life and his inner conflicts; the dark transition from heroin addiction to alcoholism and finally to sobriety... all these contributed to a music informed by a muted melancholy and questing for a gentleness and peace which proved – as the music suggests – tantalisingly elusive.

And, for many, he has never been forgiven, for both good reasons and bad. Cream were a landmark band in the development of hard rock, and a primal influence on what would soon become heavy metal, and legions of small-c conservative hard rock loyalists who would have wanted Cream to stay together forever and never change significantly, much of Clapton's post-Cream music has been both a betrayal and an affront. Blind Faith, the ill-fated 'supergroup' he formed with Steve Winwood from Cream's ashes, was originally supposed to be a low-key, song-oriented group influenced by



Tears in Heaven and Wonderful Tonight were inspired by traumatic events. Unplugged provided a career highlight.

Hyde park free concert, followed immediately by a tour of US enormodomes – conspired to virtually strangle the newborn group in its cradle. It would be decades before Clapton and Winwood attempted to collaborate again on a triumphant joint tour.

His next venture, Derek & The Dominos – the first

band to place him front and centre as lead singer and principal composer – recorded a stunning debut album spark-plugged by the impromptu inclusion of slide maestro Duane Allman and premiering his first truly immortal composition, the anguished masterpiece *Layla*, before collapsing in a welter of heroin and ego. From then on, Clapton would have no more truck with bands: for better or worse, he would appear as himself, and pay the cost to be the boss.

Much of that music he's made since then was simply lazy and hazy. Left to himself, his desire for an easy life has tempted him to coast, to rely on his awesome fluidity and facility to carry him through, to simply phone it in. It's therefore often seemed that Clapton requires a challenge to bring out his best. There's a wonderful clip on YouTube – you can Google it up in seconds – from an early 80s Secret Policeman's Ball, where he's jamming with Jeff Beck on *Further*

'Left to himself, Clapton's desire for an easy life has tempted him to coast, to rely on his awesome fluidity to carry him through, to simply phone it in.'

high-octane guitar improvisation in favour of gentle, tuneful, semi-funky songs with a pop or country bedrock; from the distress which the blazing, feuding Celtic temperaments of Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker induced in his reserved, introverted sensibility and the sheer musical exhaustion sustained by the band's thunderous

Clapton's discovery of, and love for, The Band, but the arrival of Ginger Baker put paid to that, and the hoopla which surrounded their formation – a rushed-out first album in which Clapton and Winwood's songs had to be padded out by a bloated 15-minute jam in order to meet a premature release date, a debut at a massive

On Up The Road, the Bobby 'Blue' Bland classic which has been one of Clapton's perennial favourites. Clapton kicks it off in decidedly first gear, plays a solo and cues in Beck – who comes out blazing and raises the temperature quite considerably. Clapton is thereby forced to dig into his reserves and come back with something he



almost certainly wouldn't have bothered to play if he hadn't been opposite someone as formidable as JB. What it suggests is that Clapton – the Clapton of that era, anyway – would serve up his second-best unless compelled to do otherwise.

However, there have been gems even within the murk of the all-too-frequent banality of Clapton's middle years. There are some stunning blues showcases – *Double On Trouble* and *Ramblin' On My Mind* – even on the lacklustre and aptly named live album *Just One Night*. *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* became 'his' Bob Dylan song in much the same way as *All Along The Watchtower* had become Jimi Hendrix's, though not to the same extent. His version of Bob Marley's *I Shot The Sheriff* was a key factor in bringing Jah Bob's music to a mass American audience; even though accusations that he diluted rebel music into AOR, it can still serve as an in-concert vehicle for some of his most transcendent soloing.

His 1970s recastings of JJ Cale's *Cocaine* and *After Midnight* have become definitive, though many eyebrows were raised when, in the late 80s and fresh from Alcoholics Anonymous, he re-recorded the latter... for a beer commercial.

As far as Clapton the songwriter is concerned, two of his three most celebrated compositions have emerged from trauma. *Layla* was famously inspired by his (then) unrequited love for George Harrison's wife Patti and *Tears In Heaven* by the tragic death of his infant son Conor. The song first emerged, in a somewhat over-arranged incarnation, in the incongruous setting of Clapton's soundtrack for the drug-dealing caper-movie *Rush*, but its greatest impact was achieved as part of his all-acoustic MTV *Unplugged* session, in which he revisited his folkie roots (in his earliest pre-Yardbirds days he'd picked Big Bill Broonzy and Brownie McGhee classics in folk cellars), also radically recasting *Layla* as an acoustic shuffle.

Come taste the bland: post *Layla*, much of Eric's output has been 'lazy and hazy'.

Ironically, it subsequently outsold the iconic original.

And one wonders if all the people who

roll out EC's *Wonderful Tonight* – the love song which almost bookends Chris de Burgh's *Lady In Red* – at weddings and anniversaries are aware of the bitter undercurrent beneath the sugary surface, and its subtext of alcoholism. The closer you listen, the more uncomfortable the situation depicted in the song becomes.

The decade just past has – in artistic terms, at least – provided Clapton's career with an Indian summer. The Crossroads guitar festivals which he's fronted as fundraisers for the drug-recovery clinic he sponsors in Antigua – and hey, if you have to attend a clinic to get off drugs, there must be way worse locations in which to do it – have showcased some magnificent performances, by Clapton himself and many other serious notables.

He has recorded, performed and toured with the kind of musicians who'll kick him in the ass and make it necessary for him to bring his very best game: Steve Winwood, Jeff Beck, BB King and – in his own band – Doyle Bramhall II and the prodigious Derek Trucks. His collaborative album with BB, *Riding With The King*, is an absolute treasure.

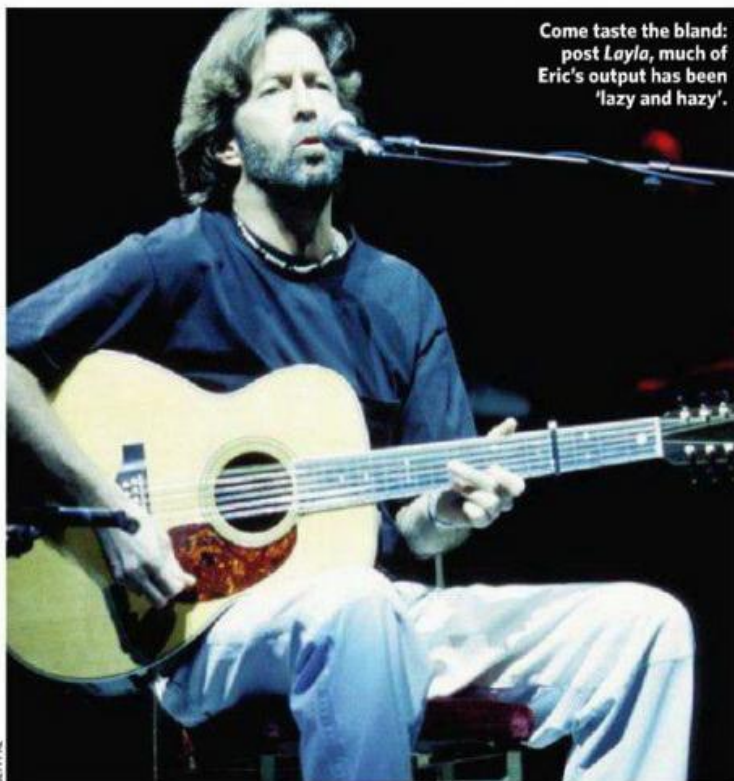
He even reformed Cream, which arose, phoenix-like, from the very same Royal Albert Hall stage on which they had immolated almost four decades earlier, though ancient tensions resurfaced at subsequent dates in the US.

And his own latest album, tersely entitled *Clapton*, is unique within his catalogue because he sounds – for what is virtually the very first time – to be having fun with his music. Well into his 60s, it sounds like he's learned the final lesson of the blues: that the music is not simply about confronting and expressing pain and sorrow, but coming through the heartbreak and out the other side into celebration and joy.

Old age suits Eric Clapton. He has at last unified his various selves. He has achieved real dignity, and it is wholly to his credit that he wears it so lightly.

"I've been around the world. I've played 90 different countries around the world. I've met many people, kings and queens, but I've never met a better man, a more gracious man, than my friend... Eric Clapton. May I live forever... but may you [Clapton] live forever and a day... because I'd hate to be here when you pass away."

– BB King, *Crossroads Guitar Festival*, 2007



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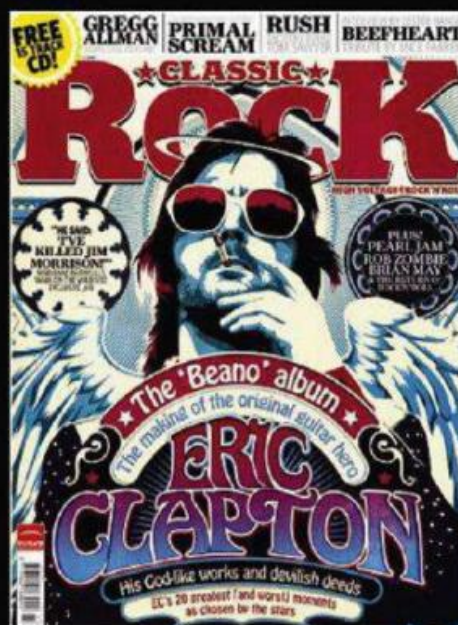
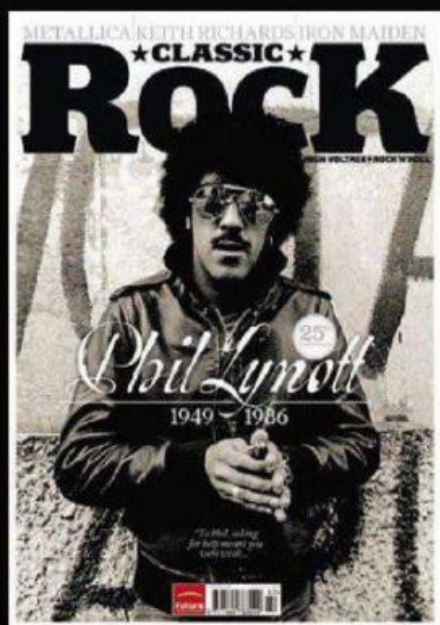
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Shining like stars:
Bobby Gillespie (far
left), Robert 'Throb'
Young and friends.





MOVIN' ON UP

The making of *Screamadelica* - or how self-belief, speed, dance music and the best producer the Stones ever had combined to make Primal Scream's truly progressive and psychedelic masterpiece...

Words: **Rob Hughes** Photographs: **Kevin Cummins**

Bobby Gillespie, frontman and founder of Primal Scream, is perched in his publicist's office in North London, wondering just where it all went right. He's here to talk about *Screamadelica*, the genre-bucking phenomenon that spun 1991 on its head. A glorious starburst of acid house, psychedelia, dub, funk and old-school rock'n'roll, it was the album that scooped the inaugural Mercury Music Prize, helped forge the reputation of Alan McGee's Creation Records, and a record that united the hitherto largely disparate factions of indie rock and dance music. More importantly for Primal Scream, it also saved the band.

"I honestly never thought it would be a commercial record," Gillespie says. "I thought it was going to be just a really cool underground album, like *Tago Mago* by Can. But then it started getting amazing reviews and just kept selling and selling. I believe it's sold a couple of million now."

The success of *Screamadelica* - led off by two UK Top 30 hits in *Loaded* and *Come Together* - was as swift as it was unexpected. Emerging from Glasgow's early-80s indie scene, Primal Scream had been formed by Gillespie and schoolmate Jim Beattie, fired by punk and the licentious rock'n'roll of the Stooges and MC5. In fact Gillespie was the drummer for The Jesus And Mary Chain by the time of the Primals' first official gig, in 1984.

There were a couple of unsteady PS singles,

followed by the inclusion of *Velocity Girl* on the NME's fabled C86 cassette, a compilation that celebrated the new jingle-jangle dawn of British indie bands. Primal Scream's debut album, *Sonic Flower Groove*, in 1987, was an awkward conflation of Love, the Velvet Underground and the Byrds, recorded for McGee's micro-label Elevation. It peaked at 62 on the UK chart.

1989's self-titled follow-up, by contrast, was a full-on rock album in thrall to the Stones and the Stooges, Ramones and the MC5, Gillespie's cutesy vocals battling it out with a classic Les-Paul-through-Marshall-stack wall of guitars. Despite classics like *Ivy, Ivy, Ivy*, *She Power* and *Lone Star Girl*, it wrong-footed some fans and the music press pounced on them for being 'sad old rockers', with *Melody Maker* dubbing them "Primal Tap". McGee later admitted that "Primal Scream, media-wise, were a fucking joke".

Gillespie remembers it all too well, but says he never lost faith in the band's own abilities: "We never sold a lot of records, but we toured that album all over Europe. But we really believed we were a great band and had something that nobody else had. We always believed we were fucking great. I know it sounds really arrogant, but when it did happen for us with *Screamadelica* we weren't surprised. We'd been out there for years and knew how to play live. And we were fucking ready for anything. It wasn't like we were some band who came out of nowhere, had success then didn't ➡

PRIMAL SCREAM

know what to do with it. Plus we were still angry too. We were total punk rockers."

Despite the media's almost unstinting disapproval, that second Primal Scream album did at least snag the imagination of one punter. The band's press officer, Jeff Barrett, had given a copy to his good friend Andrew Weatherall, a club DJ and publisher of a fanzine called *Boy's Own*. Weatherall was much taken with the album's ballads, particularly *I'm Losing More Than I'll Ever Have*. Urged on by Barrett, Weatherall remixed the song, dug out a drum loop from an Italian bootleg version of an Edie Brickell tune and added an intro from the old Peter Fonda biker flick *The Wild Angels*: 'Just what is it that you want to do?/We wanna be free/We wanna be free to do what we wanna do/And we wanna get loaded.' The band themselves were intrigued and, thus, *Loaded* was born.

The acid-house boom and the Primals' own highly eclectic listening habits seemed made for one another. "I have this big thing about the fact you should be able to dance to rock'n'roll," explains Gillespie. "What I liked about the whole acid thing was that you were dancing. Maybe you were dancing because you were on MDMA, but nevertheless there were a lot of electronic funk rhythms going on. Marry that to the fact we were into the Beach Boys, the Stones and free jazz, as well as lots of American blues. In *Loaded* there's a bit where I go: 'I'm gonna get down/I'm gonna get deep down'. There was a long outro section on the original song Andy Weatherall mixed it from,

and I had this book of Robert Johnson lyrics, so decided to read some of it: 'I'm gonna get deep down/Keep on tanglein' with your wires/When I mash down on your little starter' [1936's *Terraplane Blues*]. So a bit of that ended up on *Loaded*. Nobody really knows that, but I just had all this stuff – Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker, gospel music... And we'd grown up with pop radio in the seventies, so you had stuff like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, but you'd also have the Stylistics, the O'Jays and all that great black American soul that came out of Philadelphia."

Loaded was released as a single in March 1990, and reached made No.16 in the chart. It was Primal Scream's first UK Top 40 hit, and one that had the curious effect of crowning this most rock'n'roll of bands as the new darlings of the rave scene. The success of *Loaded* led to Alan McGee putting the band on a weekly wage of £50.

"We were on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme just before that," Gillespie recalls. "We were absolutely skint. He gave us an advance of a few thousand pounds, so we built a studio in Hackney, on Tudor Road. We rented an office and turned it into a writing studio. We wrote a lot of *Screamadelica* in there. We wrote a lot of the songs on keyboards, though I shouldn't really be saying that in *Classic Rock*. I mean, we are a guitar band live, a high-energy rock'n'roll band."

They were certainly living the life. *Screamadelica* was a filthy party animal of a record. It was a place where the tribal edicts of rock'n'roll were played out amid the glowstick rallies of rave. The album's unbowed hedonism was typified by songs like *Higher Than The Sun*, Gillespie intoning to some imaginary Golden God: 'I live just for today/Don't care about tomorrow.'

"That's exactly how I felt," Gillespie says today. "I didn't care if I died. I know that sounds dramatic, but it's all there in the lyrics. We were out there taking ecstasy and speed. Speed was our main drug of choice, then people got more money and got into cocaine, then they got into heroin and it kind of fucked everything up. But I can't really include heroin here, because while we were making the record it'd be speed and ecstasy. We'd never record on it though; you can't play rock'n'roll on ecstasy."

"Acid house was similar to the LSD explosion of the sixties. The music was different, but I think it released a similar amount of energy and creativity in people who maybe hadn't realised they had that inside them before. The energy in the clubs was intense. It reminded me of early rock'n'roll and punk. And that energy was extremely seductive. So we were up for days, living what it says in the songs. Being up for days meant we were exposed to a lot of great scenes and wild, strange, dangerous people. And fucking weird scenes with weird women. But we were a serious band when it came to recording and gigs. We may have partied at the weekends, but every week we were in the studio writing. At that point in your life you're really out to prove to the world what you can do."

"We had a fucking great time, and that found its way into the music and the songs. I think it's a very euphoric record. To me it's ecstatic rock'n'roll. It's what rock'n'roll should be: joyous and celebratory."

Amid the mixes by Weatherall, Hypnotone and The Orb – who took *Higher Than The Sun* into the freakoid realm of cosmic dub – *Screamadelica* was notable for a more obvious Primal Scream influence. Jimmy Miller was the producer behind The Rolling Stones' killer streak of albums from 1968's *Beggars Banquet* through to *Goats Head Soup* in '73. When engineer Colin Leggett quit three days into the sessions for *Movin' On Up*, Gillespie knew just who to call to finish what was already an ultra-Stonesy track: "The one guy in the world I wanted to mix us was Jimmy Miller. But he was hard to find, because within the music industry he was seen as a burn-out. But I went up to Eden Studios and he mixed *Movin' On Up* for us there. And it was incredible. Then he did *Damaged* with Andrew Innes. We were blown away. He was really into groove and rhythm. On *Movin' On Up* there's this mad percussion thing going on, and it's Jimmy playing two Coca-Cola bottles."



Sharp-dressed man: Bobby Gillespie, 2011.

GET YER ROCKS OFF

Still think Primal Scream are a 'rave' band? Here are 10 of their rockin' best tracks.



SHE POWER

(Primal Scream, 1989)

The Scream's debut album has some pretty Byrdsian pop, but it's on songs like this from their self-titled sophomore record where they really begin to kick out the jams.

MOVIN' ON UP

(Screamadelica, 1991)

Stones producer Jimmy Miller brings old school groove to the Scream's fusion of dance music and rock, with this ecstatic rave-up (and its downbeat twin, *Damaged*).



COME TOGETHER

(TERRY FARLEY REMIX)

(12" single, 1991)

Andrew Weatherall smothered the track with samples; Farley let's it breathe with twanging *Suspicious Minds*-style guitars, horns and gospel backing singers.

ROCKS

(Give Out But Don't Give Up, 1994)

Full-fat riff, clattering rhythm, spanking percussion, rubber-lipped vocal. It could easily be a lost out-take from *Exile On Main St*.

JAILBIRD

(Give Out But Don't Give Up, 1994)

'Scratchin' like a tom cat/Got a monkey on my back.' Gillespie sings in a voice positively dripping with attitude.

KOWALSKI (Vanishing Point, 1997)



Brutish electro biscuit named after the lead character in an obscure 70s car-chase caper. The inherent sense of threat is accentuated by Gillespie's sinister vocal.

ACCELERATOR

(XTRMNTR, 2000)

Corrosive sonic assault that suggests some secret pow-wow between Ministry, the Stooges and Black Sabbath.

DOLLS (SWEET ROCK'N'ROLL)

(Riot City Blues, 2006)

Bowie's *Queen Beeth* remodelled for the 21st century, all hand-claps and faux New Yorkisms, while the Dead Weather's Alison Mosshart intones some Patti Smith-style poetry.



COUNTRY GIRL

(Riot City Blues, 2006)

This tight-but-loose beauty, propelled by a dirty great riff, finds Primal Scream forging on like vintage Stones at their country-honkin' best.

NECRO HEX BLUES

(Beautiful Future, 2008)

An incendiary blast of raw power, with Josh Homme joining guitarist Andrew Innes for a mighty riff-fest.



Coming together: Bobby Gillespie and guitarist Throb, in 1991.

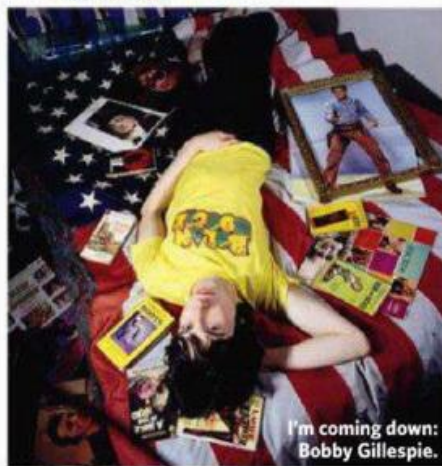
So was *Screamadelica* ultimately a balancing act between guest producers and the Primals' own artistic vision?

"With Andy Weatherall, I think we were both coming from the same place," Gillespie offers. "I think we married a rock'n'roll attitude and sensibility and songwriting instinct to Andy's knowledge of the dancefloor and contemporary rhythms. Also, Andy was a bit of a punk. He wasn't a musician, but what he had was ideas in abundance. I think the best records are not just made by people with loads of technique, it's about attitude and imagination. And between Andy and us – and The Orb and Jimmy Miller – we made a fantastic record. I've got to give those guys credit, but then they did what producers are supposed to do. Producers are supposed to enhance your songs and suggest things. For example, I know the Stones struggled with the rhythm of *Honky Tonk Women*, then Jimmy Miller came up with the cowbell intro. Charlie Watts says that it was Jimmy's riff. And that's one of the most famous intros in the whole of rock'n'roll."

True to their own wilful nature, Primal Scream refused to repeat *Screamadelica*. *Give Out But Don't Give Up*, in '94, was instead a return to the visceral charge of time-worn rock'n'roll. The music press largely bemoaned the fact that this was no Son Of *Screamadelica*, and duly waded in. True, the album may have been uneven, but there were more than a few choice moments.

"Even if we'd wanted to we couldn't have made another *Screamadelica*," reasons Gillespie. "We were in a different place, and so was Andy Weatherall. I know that he didn't – and we didn't – expect that success. And then we went away and toured the world. Some of the band got into heroin. My take on it is that the creativity seized up a little. It was a really strange period, then out of that came the ...*Don't Give Up* album. We could have made a better record than that, but maybe that record was as good as it could be. There are two songs

"WE GREW UP WITH 70s RADIO, SO YOU HAD DEEP PURPLE AND LED ZEPPELIN BUT ALSO ALL THAT GREAT SOUL MUSIC."



from that that we play live every night: *Rocks* and *Jailbird*. At the time, the music press in Britain slagged it. But when we play *Rocks* at our gigs these days, younger and younger generations just love it and the place goes fucking nuts. To me it's like *School's Out* by Alice Cooper."

Primal Scream have made some striking albums since – chiefly *Vanishing Point* ('97) and *Riot City Blues* ('06) – but none more memorable than 2000's *XTRMNTR*. Coming at the opposite end of the decade, it can almost be seen as the sinister flip-side to *Screamadelica*. It's a dense, punishing listen, shot through with abrasive riffs, hard-nosed electronica and a misanthropic world-view. It's like that second Summer of Love never happened at all.

"*Screamadelica* is an emotionally warm record," Gillespie agrees, "whereas *XTRMNTR* is the other end of the scale – angry, paranoid, vitriolic, scathing. But then that's part of my character and part of the character of the band. When he heard *XTRMNTR*, Alan McGee said to me: 'That's the record you've wanted to make all your life.' And I went: 'Yeah, you're right.'"

The band are still forging ahead, of course. Gillespie talks of releasing a new studio album some time in 2012. But first there's the small matter of the imminent *Screamadelica* tour, which finds them revisiting that classic in its entirety. For someone not readily inclined to nostalgia, how much of an undertaking has this been?

"For most of the last twenty years we've been a high-energy rock'n'roll band live," he says. "But this was a challenge. Is it going to be weird looking into the past? Is it an admission of defeat? I had all this weird stuff going through my head. But I'd been to a few shows where an artist played a whole album all the way through – I saw Van Morrison doing *Astral Weeks* and it was out of this world – and it kind of made me feel like, we can do this, and it can be relevant to today."

"So we went to the Sony vaults and found the *Screamadelica* multi-tracks, and went about working out how we were going to do this record live. We spent a lot of time doing this, because some of these songs had never been played live before – *Shine Like Stars*, *I'm Coming Down* and *Inner Flight*. It's an intense band of musicians, so everything we play sounds intense. *Higher Than The Sun* goes on for sixteen minutes when we play it live. And that's the one that everybody says they're blown away by. It's a real fucking epic. The process has been fantastic, and we've brought it all up to date for a new audience. I think it's actually made us better at what we do."

Primal Scream tour Screamadelica in March.

Tattooed beat messiah:
Gregg Allman in 2010.

BROTHER, *where art thou?*

Words: **Jaan Uhelszki** Portrait: **Danny Clinch**

Gregg Allman has been to rehab 14 times, had six wives, two livers and nine lives. But, hell, who's counting? Now he's back with a great new solo album – and this weird feeling that brother Duane has been paying him a visit...

SIX DAYS SHY of his 63rd birthday, Gregg Allman has disappeared. Had this been 35 years ago it would have been easy to suss out where the man many still insist on calling the Midnight Rider might be. There'd been that time he took a limo and a bottle of 21-year-old Scotch over to Willie Dixon's house and got Dixon so drunk he fell asleep mid-sentence, causing Mrs Dixon to apologise profusely to the visiting musician. There were the hours upon hours Allman had spent romancing beautiful women he'd just met over champagne and peach cobbler. And the lost days he'd spent indulging in any number of nefarious substances, which eventually put him to rehab more times than Lindsay Lohan (14, for the record).

But then Gregg Allman was in the number one band in America, the Allman Brothers having sold more than 30 million records by the end of the 70s. And, as you and I well know, there's a different set of rules for the very famous.

Today, with Willie Dixon 10 years in his grave, Allman is 15 years sober, with a brand-new liver, and he wants to talk about the new record he's made with Oscar- and Grammy-winning producer T Bone Burnett. But Gregg is nowhere to be found.

Three hours later, Caller ID (a great boon to journalists and debtors) indicates that there's a call

coming in from Gregg Allman. Unlike so many of the not-so-renowned, this icon of American music makes no attempt to obscure his name.

"Will you ever forgive me?" Allman purrs over the phone. The famous voice that launched a string of hits – *Whipping Post*, *Melissa*, *No Way Out*, *Ain't Wasting Time No More* – still drips honey and gargles gravel, oozing southern charm and contrition. "I lost all track of time. I was Christmas shopping for my mother," he explains apologetically. There is something unaffected and, well, just rather sweet about the admission. And who am I to disbelieve his excuse/reason for his late show? Would it have been better if it had been a supermodel?

Over the decades there were a string of them – the band used to call him PB, for Pretty Boy, because he was such a babe magnet. "Those were extraordinary times back then," Allman admits obliquely, ever the gentleman. "I probably took as many of those liberties as I could."

Then there were six stunning spouses, Cher among them. "You know, I loved him," she stated simply in a cover story in *Vanity Fair* magazine. "He was the nicest person, even when he was doing drugs."

It was Allman's addictions that broke up the couple on their honeymoon after their impulsive Las Vegas wedding in 1975 (although they did actually manage to stay together until 1979 – and have a son, Elijah). ➤

GREGG ALLMAN

"I have had big loves," the recently divorced Allman says, when grilled about it. "It'd be nice to find the perfect lady again," he adds. And somehow, with that unstudied charm, you just know he will.

"You might say he [Duane] was born to lead," his mother Geraldine once famously said of Gregg's late elder brother. "Some people are. Gregg is a lover... He'd rather have a leader."

That goes a long way towards explaining why the tragedy of losing his guitarist brother in that late October night in 1971 was such a harrowing wound for Gregg. The Allman boys were aged two and three respectively when their father, Willis Allman, gave a GI a lift and the soldier killed him. Too young to remember much about it, their lives went on, the doted-upon children of a single-parent mother. But when Duane Allman crashed his Harley-Davidson while trying to avoid a flatbed truck that was turning on Bartlett Avenue at dusk in Macon, Georgia, on October 29, 1971, Gregg's world fell apart. It was akin to losing a father rather than a sibling, even though only 13 months separated the two boys.

Allman Brothers founder member Butch Trucks: "Duane was less than a year older than me. Gregg is less than a year younger than I am. But that's just chronological. Mentally, emotionally and every other way, Gregg was Duane's son. When Duane died, Gregg's father died, not his big brother. He had that much influence on him."

There was no one Gregg loved more – or would more willingly follow – than his elder brother. It was Duane's idea for Gregg to shoot himself in the foot back in the winter of 1965 to avoid the military draft – even coming up with the idea of having his brother place his size-10 foot in a wooden box filled with sawdust to contain the bleeding. And it was Duane who phoned his brother on that March day in 1969, when Gregg was bunking with Jackson Browne in Los Angeles, to tell him to come back home, he had something cooking and he wanted Gregg to be a part of it.

"Yeah, that phone call changed my life," Gregg recalls. "I'd just tried out for the musical *Hair* that day and I knew that I was in desperate straits."

It was his brother who determined that Gregg would play a Hammond B-3 organ in the band and also sing, despite the fact that in their earlier band Duane had done all the singing. "Oh, he couldn't sing," Gregg laughs. "But he was the only one who didn't know. I told him a bunch of times that he couldn't sing."

Even today, you get the sense that his brother is a silent presence in everything Gregg Allman does, a lodestone he returns to even in determining what songs he covered on his latest solo album, *Low Country Blues*. "The first song I did on the album was *Floating Bridge* by Sleepy John Estes. My brother used to love him."

But one also senses there's a kind of peace and acceptance after spending 25 hard years wrestling with survivor's guilt and the attendant self-medication. When the Allman Brothers were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the only person Gregg mentioned from the stage was his brother. "In honour of the greatest friend, brother, guitar player, inspiration, my brother Duane was always the first to face the fire and my greatest motivator," he said, more than half in the bag. The day after the induction ceremony, he watched films of the proceedings and immediately

hired a male nurse, and for the next five weeks set up a rehab clinic in his own home to finally rid himself of the demons.

"I was so anaesthetised for so long," he says. "You know, I just wanted away from it but I wanted to still be there. To do that, you get loaded. Check in on reality every now and then. A lot of people have great losses. I did not do the best I could've done."

"On the other hand, I know having to live through my brother's and Berry's [Oakley, Allman Brothers bassist] passings absolutely made me stronger. Sometimes I feel like it was a test. It had me asking, 'Why, why, why?' for years. I remember when we first all got back together, and everybody wanted to know what everyone else thought about it. When it came to me I said: 'If we don't keep playing we're going to wind up either all junked out or just losers.'"

"I was so anaesthetised for so long. You know, I just wanted away from it but I wanted to still be there. So you get loaded."

— GREGG ALLMAN

"It's funny, my brother used to say: 'I'll be the first one of us to go.' I didn't want to believe him."

In October 1970 that prophecy began to take on a chilling reality. The Allman Brothers were in Nashville, Tennessee and they all ingested some opium. Feeling indomitable, Duane took a double dose. The next morning when everyone arose, they couldn't wake him up. They took him to a nearby hospital, where doctors told them there was little they could do, and they shouldn't keep their hopes up that he could come out of it. According to witnesses, Berry Oakley began bawling and praying, asking God to intercede. "Just give him one more year," Oakley apparently bargained. A short while later, Duane began to come out of it.

But Oakley's bargaining with God had a price. Like in often-told fairy tales, the time came to pay for the Faustian bargain. After three hours of emergency surgery following his accident, Duane died at Macon Medical surgery. He was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery, the same place where the Brothers often went to jam, and where they wrote songs like *In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed*, a title they cribbed from a weathered gravestone.

"I have dreams," Gregg says, "that I run into him on the road, where he'll just be walking by as I'm



walking in the back of someplace, and I'll say: 'How are you?' And he'll say: 'We're okay, man.' Then he'll say: 'Hey, how you doing?' and keep walking. In the dream, I'm always like: 'Come back here. Let me talk to you!' Then he'll come back and I'll say: 'Where the hell you been? I mean, shit, we missed you. Come on in, let's play.' And he says: 'No, I had to step away from it, you know.' He'll tell me: 'I'm doing this and that and the other thing, or helping somebody.' And then he kind of fades off into the distance."

"Sometimes on stage I can hear his music, almost as if like he's playing it. I start getting his tones. Of course Derek and Warren [Trucks and Haynes respectively, current Allmans guitarists] play the same kind of guitars through the same kind of amps with the same level of musicianship. I mean, they're good; Derek's good and Warren's good. But Duane, he was something else," Gregg says, his voice trailing off.

It's one of the rare times he addresses his sibling by name – more often he just calls him 'brother' or 'him', as if the act of speaking Duane's name somehow makes him feel the pain anew.

"You know, a day doesn't go by when I don't think about him or I don't hear about him, read about him or hear somebody talking about him," he says softly.

"He was the nicest person, even when he was doing drugs," says Gregg's former wife Cher.



And neither does anyone else. *Rolling Stone* put Duane Allman at number two in their list of the Top 100 guitarists. And both old- and new-timers revere him for his session work with musicians such as Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin, John Hammond and King Curtis, and famously how he urged Eric Clapton to speed up the pace of the originally ambling song *Layla*—until it caught fire—on Clapton's 1970 masterpiece with Derek And The Dominos, *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs*. Somehow Duane's spirit continues to burn—uncannily like the soaring winged avian of *Free Bird* that Lynryrd Skynryd wrote to honour him.

"I have this friend that lives near me, she's about three docks down on the river here," Gregg begins. "Anyway, she's a psychic. She works for the government, she works for the police department, she helps a lot of official agencies solve things. When I first met her I hated her guts because she said to me: 'You know, your brother comes around all the time. He's always around you. Can't you feel him?' I was taken aback. I said to her: 'Who the fuck can you think you are, telling me that even after so many years?! You know, that I've longed for my brother and all that.' None of that bothered her one bit. She just continued on and said to me: 'Your brother takes the form of a little bird.' I'm a little ashamed to admit it now, but I've come to believe

her. That little bird comes to my window every single morning of my life. He wakes me up every morning," he says, sounding a little abashed.

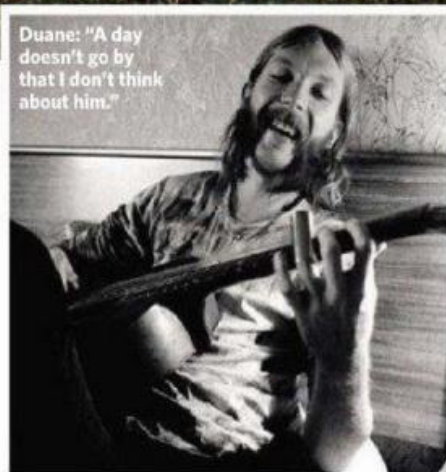
And what does the bird want to communicate? "I think to tell me he's real proud that I kept it together without him."

One suspects that Gregg Allman is finally proud of himself. For the recording of his first solo album in 14 years, titled *Low Country Blues*, named after the coastal Georgia region he calls home, he enlisted the help of producer T Bone Burnett. But that new-found association was almost a non-starter—not only did Burnett tell Gregg that he wanted to record in Los Angeles, he also wanted to use a band of his choosing.

"I liked him [Burnett] because he listened to WLAC, the same radio station my brother and I did when we were growing up," Gregg says. "I liked his aura. I mean, it was all pretty cool with me until it came to me not being able to take my band. That was almost on the doorstep of an insult."

Allman gave in to Burnett only after remembering the concessions he'd had to make to work with Tom Dowd, and because of the high quality of the musicians that Burnett had put together for him: Dr. John on piano, Doyle

Duane: "A day doesn't go by that I don't think about him."



Bramhall II on guitar, and a rhythm section of bassist Dennis Crouch and drummer Jay Bellerose, both of whom played on Robert Plant and Alison Krauss's *Raising Sand* album.

"I didn't want to go and record at Criteria Studio in Miami in the middle of summer, but my brother convinced me," Gregg says now, continuing in the paranormal/fraternal vein. "He said: 'Let's go play in his sandbox and see what happens.'"

What happened was that Dowd produced the Allman Brothers' 1969 self-titled debut, and worked with the band until his death in 2002.

"When I met the Bone, one of the first



GREGG ALLMAN

things out of his mouth was this and that about Dowd, and things that he did that I didn't think anybody knew about. Little tricks of his trade. When Dowd died in 2002, I thought, 'Man, what in the hell are we going to do now? I guess we've had it, there's no way we're going to record'. Then we did that record with the elephants on it (*Hittin' The Note*). I thought: 'That guy Michael Barbiero was an okay producer, but he didn't know what you were thinking.' The Bone does. He can read your mind."

Prior to meeting with Gregg in January 2010, Burnett had trawled through his extensive library of old pre-WWII 78rpm records and vintage recordings, and sent about 20 for Allman to peruse (much as he did when he worked with Plant and Krauss on their Grammy-winning *Raising Sand*).

What was it like having Burnett do some of the heavy lifting?

"Heavy lifting? Heavy lifting! I'll tell you about heavy lifting!" he says. "The heavy lifting is trying to make something out of that damn thing that he sent me, because these things were like Billie Holiday old. I mean, you could hear the [makes the sound of crackling, skipping old vinyl records] on those 78s that I was trudging through. It was tiring, let me tell you. Pushed the release date back up."

But the drudgery was worth it. Allman finally decided on 11 lesser-known tunes from some of the great writers of blues, country and R&B, including Skip James, BB King, Magic Sam, Otis Rush; tunes that fit well together, because the organising properties of his song choices on the new album seem to be about heartbreak, betrayal and the flickering hope of reconciliation. Themes chosen, no doubt, because they echoed Allman's divorce, allowing him to purge some of the pain, inflame some of the hope and outrun some of his demons, his seen-it-all voice cracking in recognition.

Also included is *Just Another Rider*, which Gregg wrote with Allman Brothers guitarist Warren Haynes. And while that song a breath of fresh air among the well-presented antiques, it's not out of place – its subject matter of betrayal, resignation and the spectre of a good old-fashioned blood feud is somehow right at home in this swampy Low Country. And if you listen very closely you just might recognise who it's about. But Gregg is definitely not saying.

It's clear he's pleased with the record, not least that it took only 15 days to record the whole thing. "Some of the stuff we did in one or two takes. I can tell you this, I cannot wait to go in the studio again with the exact same people, the exact same producer, hopefully this exact same studio. And I would also like to go in there with the [Allman] Brothers," he enthuses.

It's clear why. In *Low Country Blues* he may have made the album of his life. Always very taciturn in both his songs and his speech, Allman conveys his pain, his thwarted romances and his fear of dying perhaps better in these old, forgotten pre-WWII numbers than in most of the songs he's written for the Allman Brothers. In those he is usually is more stoic, remote and just plain cool. But on this new record he's shown himself to be a skilled interpreter, able to reveal himself more fully when using someone else's words as a mask.

But he's not masking anything. He has opened himself up in ways he probably doesn't realise.

As with Iggy Pop, no one was taking any bets that Gregg Allman would be around into this millennium. But both of them have proved to have



Allman, 2011: has he just made the album of his life?

"I have this perseverance. It's almost like I'm running from something and to something at the same time. Like I'm late."

– GREGG ALLMAN

uncanny powers of endurance, and have beaten the Reaper when barely anyone thought they could, given their prodigious drug habits.

"Iggy Pop? You're going to compare me with Iggy Pop?" Gregg explodes. "Har har har har. Man, I've been compared to a lot of things... but not..."

Wait, are you talking about the guy with the red-headed wife? See, I don't know anyone from the Stooges: I thought you were talking about the guy on TV – he does a commercial where he mumbles 'black coffee' and he has to get out his BlackBerry and text it to the man behind the counter. Oh, that was Ozzy, not Iggy? I met him not too long ago. What a great guy, man!"

When asked if he found Ozzy difficult to understand, he laughs: "Not at all. I can speak loaded. Please don't print that... Nah, you can print that."

"As for Iggy, I'm not sure if it's endurance, I think it's this perseverance that comes from somewhere. It's almost like I'm running from something and to something at the same time. It's like I'm late for something. Yeah, it feels like that a lot of the time, like I'm late. If I get to a certain place by a certain time, maybe I'll get the treasure or find the person or get the perfect feeling. But, you know, sometimes it'll feel as though something's chasing me. It's always been that way."

'Well I've got to run to keep from hidin', and I'm bound to keep on ridin'/ And I've got one more silver dollar/ But I'm not gonna let 'em catch me, no/ Not gonna let 'em catch the Midnight Rider...'

Gregg Allman's Low Country Blues is released on February 7 through Decca Records.

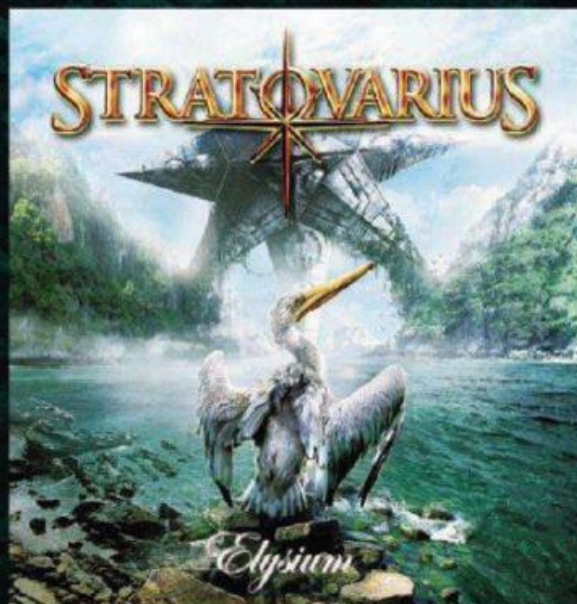


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Quiffs, leopardskin, reverb-drenched screams, and bad-to-the-bone rhythms. Brace yourself for **The Return of Real Rock'n'Roll**, as the likes of Imelda May, The Urban Voodoo Machine, The Jim Jones Revue and a whole heap of retro-influenced innovators bring old school rock'n'roll and rockabilly back to life and back home.

Words: **Jo Kendall** Illustration: **Steve Mitchell**

Halloween, 2010. At a North London pub, 200 B-movie bounders and vixens are whooping and grooving to the non-stop rockin' cabaret provided by nine-piece local heroes The Urban Voodoo Machine presenting their unique "bourbon-soaked gypsy blues bop'n'stroll". An extension of UVM's regular club night Gypsy Hotel, tonight not only features former Clash DJ Scratchy on the decks with punk, R&B and jazz, but also gives the Machine a chance to indulge their vintage antics. "Do you wanna hear some more?" screams frontman Paul-Ronney Angel, before new single *Goodbye To Another Year* incites a bawdy knees-up, and the crowd howl for encores until we all get kicked out at 4am.

But what's happening here isn't unique. Across the UK and mainland Europe, proper rock'n'roll is stirring from its slumber. So what's happening?

"It's like a tide, and it's high tide right now," says chief Polecat and rockabilly icon Boz Boorer. "The Polecats have done more gigs this year than since we started thirty years ago. The whole wave of British sixties-sounding records – Amy Winehouse, Plan B – was a thing on its own. It's only natural that if people were impressed by those, they'd investigate further."

Having played this music all his life, leading to a job as Morrissey's musical director, Boorer points out: "This stuff never goes away, but it needs rediscovery to sound fresh. Right now it's got serious momentum."

So let's get back to the UVM and their trailblazing events: where have they come from?

"There was a gap in the London scene and in my own life!" laughs UVM founder and frontman/guitarist Angel. "I came to London from Norway" ♦♦



Rock till you drop! (clockwise from top right) Highliners' Luke Morgan, Penetrators, Kitty, Daisy & Lewis, Jim Jones, Heavy Trash, Boz Boorer, Caezars and Imelda May.



THE RETURN OF ROCK'N'ROLL

Two-toners: The Urban Voodoo Machine.



in 1992, looking for the rock'n'roll dream. I was in bands like the Godfathers but eventually wanted something different. About five years ago I had an idea to form a band that would play real rock'n'roll, with soul and folk-punk. I wanted a double-bass player, two drummers, black suits, red shirts, burlesque performers... And that coincided with my wife's birthday party, so a band and an event were born."

Making waves across the city – and the continent – UVM's stock is in demand. "This isn't fashion for us, it's the love of this music mixed with experience. I'm out five nights a week looking for bands just like us. In 1992, or even 2002, this scene couldn't happen. But we're making it happen."

It does seem that this DIY ethic is a rather successful and anarchic alternative to the mainstream offerings, or lack of them. However, one festival did take a chance on acts like this: Vintage 2010 at Goodwood, incorporating artists, fashion and culture over five decades. Luke Morgan from reunited 80s psychobilly nutcakes the Highliners was charged with curating the Let It Rock 50s stage. "The organiser, Wayne Hemingway, hired me on the strength of my quiff!" Morgan chuckles. But he was determined to not just present a purist's line-up. "I was DJ-ing the launch, but realised if I played something 50s and followed it up with something from 1961, I wasn't supposed to play it. That didn't feel right, it was too narrow. To me, rock'n'roll is about rebellion, and that feeling comes from any era."

Morgan's eventual bill included Wanda Jackson, the Damned, the Polecats and Wilko Johnson, and new bands like Dragster and Jessie And The Orbits. It was a huge success. But does Morgan see a new age of rock'n'roll?

"I don't think rock'n'roll went away. I think fashion is back on it. The 80s is in, not the 50s. That kind of rock'n'roll is an element of the 80s – I should know, I was in a band then. Artists like Imelda May and the Caezars, who are totally authentic, will benefit, and deservedly so."

Making their own noise in East London are garage rock ruffians the Fabulous Penetrators. Vocalist Liam Casey and his band are actively encouraging a resurgence. "We've been going for five years – our original singer was Paloma Faith, singing pre-'62 rock'n'roll covers – and in the last year there's been a definite upswing," he affirms. Asked why that is, Casey pauses. "I think it helps that the groups have banded together. It's hard in London. In the lean years we were lumped in with anything slightly filthy, so we began our own club, Saturday Night Beaver. We wanted to get treated a bit better, away from the Camden scene. We've met so many like-minded people this way, becoming friends with bands like King Salami and The Urban Voodoo Machine. It's very supportive, giving us a sense of unity."

Currently touring the globe non-stop and a flag-bearer for this new noise are the Jim Jones Revue. Formed at guitarist Rupert Orton's itinerant punk rock blues club Not The Same Old Blues Crag, Orton's organisation and Jones's musical vision have delivered a thrilling force that is being praised by the media

and fans alike. Jones started in seminal psych-rockers Thee Hypnotics, then bluesed it up in Black Moses, before bringing Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis to the Revue's table. Jones wasn't aware, though, that he's the standard-bearer for the resurrection of rock'n'roll. "I had no idea!" he exclaims from his tour bus bunk. "We're so busy, we've just not noticed."

The Revue played their first show at Gypsy Hotel, mirroring Angel's hunger for a new rock aesthetic: "We wanted to go back to a time when music wasn't hype or fashion, but energy, vibrancy, danger. People come up who've never heard anything like us before and they want to know more. We're proud to oblige."

Another... Old Blues Crag regular is the godfather to the current scene, New York noisenik Jon Spencer. Has Spencer found rock'n'roll pervading Stateside?

"Not in mainstream culture, no. In the US, rock'n'roll is always around you, but it's the dull, bloated stuff. That's why I started the Blues Explosion, a mix of punk, hip-hop and Hound Dog Taylor. It was only when I met my wife, that through her I began to appreciate Elvis and became obsessed by Sun Records." With Spencer bringing his Heavy Trash rockabilly outfit to the UK, his awareness of the British scene has increased. "It's great to see Jim Jones become successful. They're a great band, so incredibly in-your-face. People need that right now – excitement and authenticity."

Spencer also mentions Kitty, Daisy & Lewis as ones to watch, appreciative of their 50s style, and swing, ska and skiffle influences. A sibling outfit based in North London, they started playing about five years ago at rockabilly jam night Come Down And Meet The Folks when they were all just teenagers.

"We've been inspired by the music our parents listen to and the bands we used to see jamming," KD&L's Lewis Durham explains. "We don't listen to much modern music, preferring the black music from the thirties to the sixties. There's so much stuff to discover in a lifetime, you may as well start with the best."

Putting the finishing touches to a new album in the family home studio, crammed with vintage equipment, Durham reinforces the need for credibility within their field, ranging from their recent replica 78rpm releases to their look. "We want to emulate vintage American sounds, and the production is as important as the music. I think people have forgotten what rock'n'roll is. It's not Elvis. What about thirties jazz guys stripped to the waist, blowing saxophone?"

At the vanguard of the movement is Classic Rock Breakthrough Artist of 2010, Dublin-born, diminutive jazz-blues firebrand and album chart topper Imelda May. Having performed since she was 16, what is it for her that's so special about rock'n'roll?

"What comes out of me is what I love, and rockabilly and rock'n'roll was the first music that turned my head. I'm pleased it's having a revival. One thing that's flummoxed me over the years is how it's so influential – The Beatles, Springsteen or Led Zeppelin wouldn't be here without it – but can have such a black mark against its name."

"I don't think it's a coincidence that people are looking back during a recession. People realise there's a lot of quality to be had in vintage stuff."

★ Imelda May ★

"Of course there's a fashion element to it. There's polka dots and black leather jackets on the high street. And there are times when we all look backwards – in the 80s we looked at the 50s – but I don't think it's a coincidence that people are looking back during a recession. A lot of the interest in vintage stuff – music, lifestyle, furniture – is people realising there's a lot of quality to be had in it. This music has a lot of quality, it's not throwaway.

"We also need excitement, and this is sexy, hair-raising stuff... Hearing something like Gene Vincent almost slays me sometimes."

May's recent rise was aided by the patronage of Jeff Beck and Jools Holland, and she's happy to give others a hand up too. Young West Country quartet The Caezars are recipients, as frontman AJ explains: "The interest in us and our kind of rockabilly has come from Imelda. But as a band we've not tapped into a trend, we've genuinely got a passion for this particular sound.

AJ met fellow band members at the purist events Rockabilly Rave and The Shakedown. Eighteen-year-old guitarist Danny O's father Paul had made a mark on the previous generations' scene. "He was in The Rough Diamonds and TV21, a bit of a cult guitar hero. Unfortunately he had an accident and can't play any more, but that's spurred Danny on and he's taken up the mantle, using his dad's hand-built guitar."

The boys don't rely on covers, their material is original, just like peers Knoxville, the Ladykillers and Jake & The Hightone Rumlbers. "We get a lot of drunken students coming up to us saying: 'I've never heard this music,'" AJ says. "We're just reacting to pop. Our influences are fifties bands but with the punk side of the Hives and White Stripes. It seems to get us noticed."

Imelda May's husband, band guitarist Darrel Higham, played in rockabilly bands for 25 years and has experienced the troughs and peaks. What does he make of today's mushrooming wave?

"I think it's great," he grins. "After playing it for so long, it's important for me that rock'n'roll survives and carries on. For a while I thought people my age would be the last to embrace it.

"I think it started with the interest in Johnny Cash's career after his death, and with *I Walk The Line* – good film, very stylish and accessible. People suddenly recognised the stand-up bass and the way we looked. Music has changed so much in the last twenty years compared to when rockabilly still had a place between the 50s and 70s. It got forgotten and became image over talent. But, like all great music, it always comes round again. Sons and daughters of my generation are into it, maybe through their parents.

So what's the future of rock'n'roll and rockabilly? "The great thing about rockabilly is you can do anything with it. We're dealing with a small scene, so you can hardly do anything radical, but you can do what Imelda's done by mixing in jazz and blues, and growing it from there. It will constantly evolve, and you can see that from the charts. In the sixties it was Creedence Clearwater Revival, in the seventies Stray Cats and Shakin' Stevens, in the eighties The Cure with *The Love Cats*. Now it's the turn of Imelda and the Jim Jones Revue." ●

Suggested listening:

The Urban Voodoo Machine: www.theurbanvoodoomachine.com

Boz Boorer: www.bozboorer.com

The Highliners: www.myspace.com/thehighlinersofficial

The Fabulous Penetrators: www.myspace.com/tbefabulouspenetrators

The Jim Jones Revue: www.jimjonesrevue.com and www.punkrockblues.co.uk

Jon Spencer: thejonspencerbluesexplosion.com and www.beavytrash.net

Kitty, Daisy & Lewis: www.kittydaisyandlewis.com

Imelda May: www.imeldamay.com

The Caezars: www.myspace.com/thecaezars

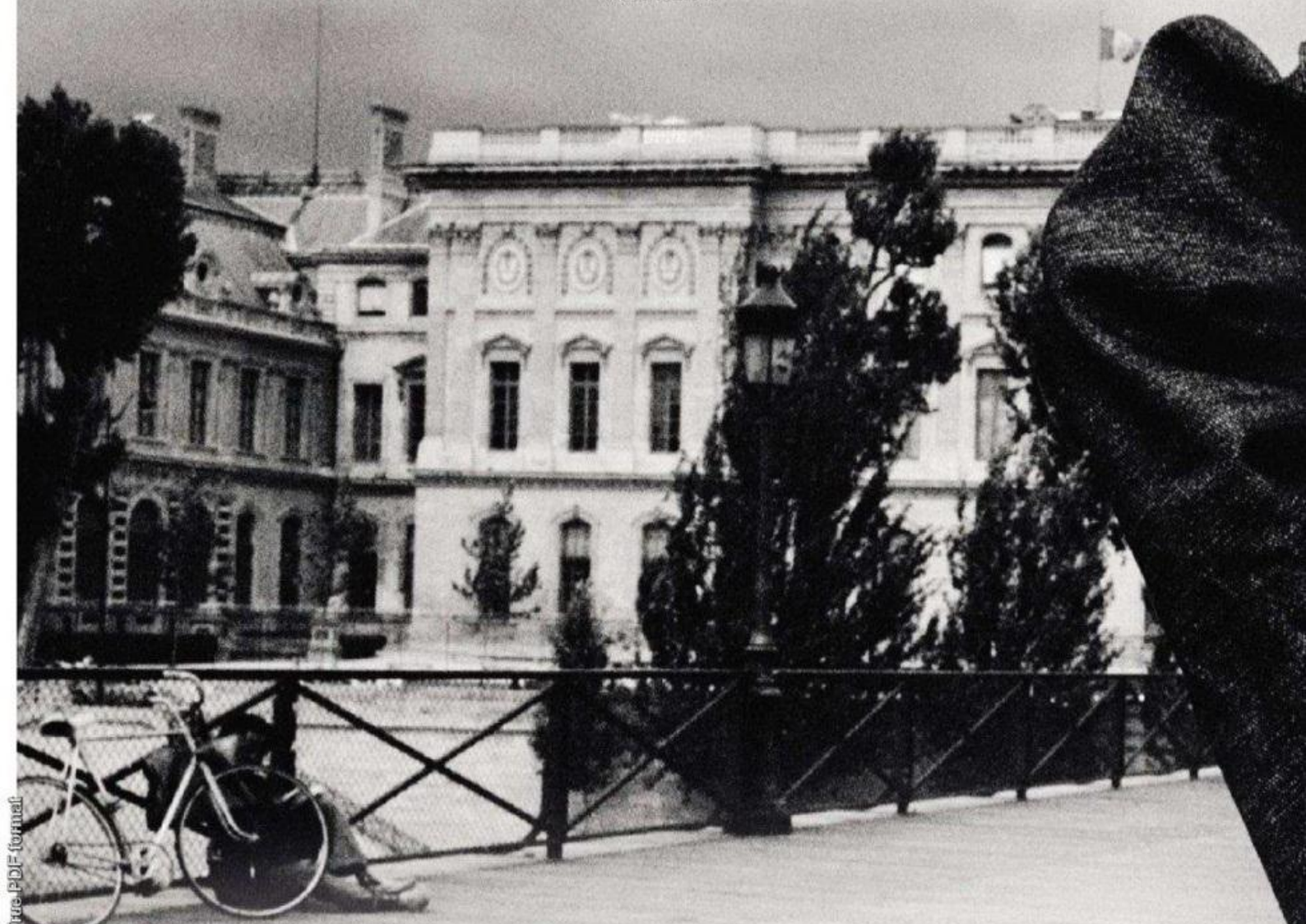
King Salami: www.myspace.com/kingsalamiamandthecumberland3



Imelda May, in particular, has made a huge success from bringing an old style of music back to life.

Last year, a *Classic Rock* story on Jim Morrison's death placed **Marianne Faithfull** in Paris at the time with the man most likely to have known what really happened. Now she reveals more about the mysterious Count Jean de Breteuil, as well as the truth about the Stones, and Jagger's 'tiny todger'.

Words: **Max Bell**



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Spring 1964. Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham is about to introduce Mick Jagger, the dark prince of British pop, to a fashionable society girl called Marianne Faithfull (who happens to be related to 19th-century Austrian nobleman Leopold von Sacher-Masoch) and has pretensions to be a folk singer. We're at a smartly Swinging London party thrown by Beatles pal Peter Asher, so Lennon and McCartney are also in the house, as are the rest of the Stones. Before Oldham can do the honours, Jagger – evidently smitten by the blonde 18-year-old convent girl – suddenly pours his glass of champagne down her very impressive and highly visible cleavage. Not the most romantic of gestures, perhaps, since Faithfull is also with her future husband, art gallery owner John Dunbar, at the time.

Salacious tales have dogged Faithfull ever since, which is why she admits that today she is better known for her life story than for her career.

Marianne, today sitting in the penthouse suite of the Mayfair Hotel in London W1, is

approaching her 64th birthday with aplomb. "I like to live in a very high style indeed," she announces. "I never made a lot of money out of the music business, but spending so much time with Mick spoiled me. I saw myself as a rich person, because I hung with the Stones, who were stinking rich. I'm not – although I do live in the most wonderful apartment in Paris with a huge fireplace. But we really must talk about my album, darling, or I'll get into trouble."

Ah yes, Marianne Faithfull's new album. It's called *Horses And High Heels*. Produced by her long-time collaborator, the musicologist Hal Willner, it's not a full-on Mazzer-and-guests affair like *Kissin' Time* and *Easy Come Easy Go*. "I'm covering some great songs, like *Goin' Back*, and a Jackie Lomax number and an Allen Toussaint song. There are guests: Dr. John – groovy old Mac Rebennack – Lou Reed, and Wayne Kramer from MC5. But he was dubbed on. In fact so was Keith Richards when we recorded *Sing Me Back Home*. That was a shame, but probably better because I get fraught around Keith. I loved his book, *Life*. I've just read it."

In that autobiography, Richards refers to

Marianne's old boyfriend Jagger's "tiny todger". Was that accurate?

"Not quite, but nearly. When he writes about me I'm rather touched, especially when he admits that I contributed to Stones songs. He almost treats me like an equal! The one I claimed above all is *Sister Morphine*. It took me years to get a writing credit [Faithfull also kick-started *Sympathy For The Devil*, since she gave Jagger the book that inspired it, and she was the subject of *Wild Horses* and *Dead Flowers*].

"Trouble is the Stones don't give points. Mick won't do it. They don't 'write' with other people – in theory. But they were grateful to use my mind and my talents – without credit. I kinda knew that was the deal, but when I was with Mick in the mid-sixties I was really young and naïve, so I sacrificed my name. Obviously I also contributed to *You Can't Always Get What You Want* and *Dear Doctor* – junk songs. I don't listen to the Stones any more, but I know they used me as a muse for those tough drug songs. I knew I was being used but it was for a worthy cause. I don't feel that any more. I'd love to get: a) some credit, and b) some bloody money for the songs I helped on. Mere inspiration? I did bloody more than that."

A walk on the wild side

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Is Mick as selfish as legend portrays him to be? "No comment. But it would be unrealistic to expect him to share. He isn't like that. I can't help loving Keith, not on a Christmas-card level but I'll send him a copy of the album with a fax and a note: 'Here it is, loved your book, thank you for everything you said about me.' I'm very fond of Keith and Anita Pallenberg [Richards' 60s girlfriend – the three of them are said to have enjoyed an intimate relationship]. I'd meet up with them; I'd only bump into Mick in a concert situation. Friendship is totally inappropriate. I still see Charlie [Watts] because he lives in Paris."

Indelibly linked to the Rolling Stones at their most hedonistic, Faithfull still recalls some good times. "Plenty. Everyone focuses on the Redlands bust at Keith's house [the infamous fur rug and the popular 'work, rest and play' comestible] but that's a negative. Mick and I had wonderful times when we'd go off ley-line hunting in his Aston Martin, or in Keith's Bentley. We travelled all over the West Country and Ireland. We went to the north in disguise. Mick was very interested in that one ley-line stuff and the Arthurian legends [at one point he believed he and Keith were Lancelot and Galahad and Faithfull was Guinevere]. He was into aliens and UFOs. I got into the communing with the earth stuff from my husband, John Dunbar. Mick was a wonderfully civilised partner in all that. We used to go travelling with the actor James Fox [who played opposite Jagger in Nic Roeg's classic film *Performance*]. It's such a shame that everything I did with the Stones is boiled down to the Sussex bust when Mick was such a very interesting companion. Fuck yeah!"

Marianne ascribes her subsequent recording career after her string of 60s hits, including *As Tears Go By* and *This Little Bird* – to time spent hanging out with the highest echelons of rock royalty ever: The Beatles and the Stones. "I probably couldn't write now without those experiences. I met The Beatles straight away. I met Paul McCartney via Peter Asher [brother of Macca's 60s girlfriend Jane Asher], and I met John Lennon because Paul and John were close friends of John Dunbar. Lennon and John took thousands of acid trips together. Lennon's attitude towards me changed a lot when I went off with Mick. He didn't like that at all. I'd see him and he was always in such a wild state on acid it scared me. He really scared me, actually. All the emotion that came out on the Plastic Ono Band was there for years for all to see. He had huge number of demons. Maybe we all do, but he had more than most. I'm still very close to Paul. I sang on *All You Need Is Love*. I went to a lot of Paul's sessions – I was there when he did *Lovely Rita* and *Fixing A Hole*. Always late evening. That's when I saw John [Lennon] mostly. He was very forbidding. He didn't like other people being there. I was always very shy and quiet. Even with the Stones I didn't want to be noticed. I sang on *You Can't Always Get What You Want*, but I wore a dark green floppy hat so you couldn't see me. At least Paul was welcoming. I liked Linda McCartney very much but she didn't like me. She wasn't sure whether I'd had an affair with Paul. She thought everybody had because he had a lot of affairs. Not me though. I wasn't one of his affairs."

Once the pot and acid wore off and heroin became the drug of choice in London rock circles after 1968, Faithfull's relationship with Jagger deteriorated rapidly. "It sickens me, now that I'm clean. Heroin is bad and cocaine may be worse.

It ruins you. And it's so easy. Even after I took treatment at rehab, I relapsed. I took coke and alcohol and sleeping pills. Then I gave up the first two because I contracted hepatitis C. The sleeping pills were the last to go – apart from the fags. I've got an addictive personality. I just can't take it. I'd stop the ciggies, but I'm scared of getting really fat."

Jagger dumped Marianne in 1970, at which time she moved to Paris and began a relationship with Count Jean de Breteuil, the French aristocrat who is said to have been a dealer to Brian Jones, Keith Richards, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison and his partner Pamela Courson. Faithfull has been placed

"That's what he said: 'I've killed Jim Morrison.' He provided the gear." – Marianne Faithfull



Jagger and Marianne, arriving at court in 1969 to answer charges of possessing cannabis. Inset: Count Jean de Breteuil – Jim Morrison's killer?

ANDREW OLDHAM ON MARIANNE

The singer's former manager sees her as a survivor – and one owed by the Stones.



"All of my comments about are her made with affection. I really think that the least Keith and Mick, or the Dimmer Twins, could do is give the dear lady an appropriate Ronnie Wood allowance

so that she does not have to appear so grateful on that awful Jools Holland show.

"When I first saw her, I said in days gone by men would have gone to sea for her. I signed her to a record contract. She was unique, sort of like Grace Kelly and a slut once she allowed you to get to know her. Four hits in ten months and we shoved her out there touring the toilets of England, and she survived that too.

"As for the Stones and her, she may have helped Mick decide what he should read. Her and Mick certainly cut a dash. They were the couple in 1966/7."

in Morrison's company shortly before his death but she refutes that completely. "I was in Paris at the same time. That's true. But I never saw him or had anything to do with him. Did Jean have an affair with Pamela? I didn't know that."

"I was living with Jean at L'Hotel in Paris, and it seems that he was the guy who killed Jim Morrison. That's what he said, anyway: 'I've killed Jim Morrison'. He provided the gear. I didn't know Jim was found in the Rock And Roll Circus nightclub [for the full story see CR 148] or that he was found dead in the toilet. I didn't know about him being taken back to his apartment in a Mercedes. Did the doctor say he was dead? I was left on my own in the room when he got the call from Pamela. I'd taken Tuinals [barbiturate] and was completely out of it, so I missed that. Then Jean got back and beat me, which I do remember. He was in the most terrible state ever. Even bad by his appalling standards. Years later I can connect it all. He dragged me to his mother's house in Marrakech in a huge hurry. He wanted to get over this terrible memory. It was obviously such a huge thing – as he said – to have killed Jim Morrison."

One of *Classic Rock*'s contacts, Roger Steffens, recalled meeting Jean and Marianne in Morocco, and said the Count had told of a nightmare few days that began with a car crash, included the attempted suicide of a friend, and ended with both of them finding Morrison's corpse. Faithfull doesn't dispute a possible meet. "But nothing else," she says. "Maybe there was a car crash. That sounds familiar. Many people committed suicide or OD'd in Jean's wake. He was seriously bad news. Even I could see that he was a curse. Once we left Morocco I ditched him. I didn't want to be another of his casualties. As for anyone involved in Jim Morrison's death – that was just too much."

"He still tracked me down to my mother's cottage in Oxfordshire when I was recuperating in 1971 and tried to get me back! There was death hanging over him. Luckily I didn't take his smack in Paris, just my Tuinals."

Steffens remembers Jean and Marianne bringing an advance copy of the Stones' *Sticky Fingers* album with them to Marrakech. "Yeah," Marianne says, "because Jean was also Keith and Anita's dealer in Chelsea and the Stones contact when they went to Nellcôte to record. As far as the Morrison thing goes, it isn't the first time I've been placed as Sister Morphine herself. I am not she. But I had my darkest days after being with Jean. That's why everybody connected to him died and why he OD'd in a most awful fashion. Pamela, Jim, they died. But I escaped. That heroin existence really fucks people up. They lose the will to live. I never did. I always felt I'm going to get out of this. And I did."

Indeed, Faithfull's tale is all about survival, whether it's from the clutches of addiction on the streets of Soho and the squats of Notting Hill, or more recent battles with breast cancer, stage collapses and nervous exhaustion.

As the interview draws to a close, she orders some food and settles back into the sofa. "Ridiculous isn't it, darling... My destiny was always was to stand alone, not to be part of any entourage," she says. "But look at this suite. Isn't it wonderful? I feel like a Grande Dame. Of course, I couldn't afford to stay here. They've let me have it for free. Perhaps I must be quite famous after all."

Horses And High Heels is released on March 7.



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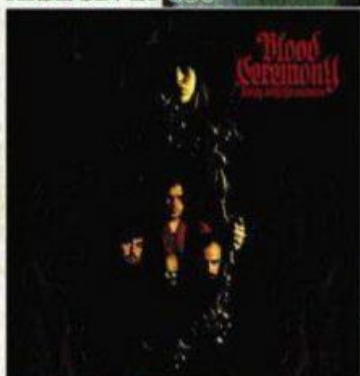
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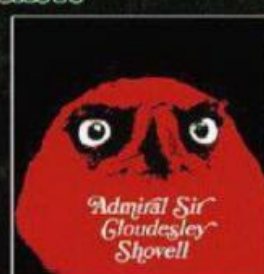
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Rock's Backpages

Captain Beefheart's Far Cry

*In tribute to one of rock's greatest innovators, this month we reprint a meeting of two rock legends: Captain Beefheart interviewed by **Lester Bangs**.*



LESTER BANGS
Californian Bangs is frequently cited as one of the most influential voices in rock criticism. He was fired from *Rolling Stone*, edited *Creem*, and wrote for *The Village Voice*, *Playboy*, *NME* and a host of others. He died of an overdose of prescription tranquillisers in April 1982 at the age of 33.

DON VAN VLIET is a 39-year-old man who lives with his wife in a trailer in the Mojave Desert. They have very little money, so it must be pretty hard on them sometimes, but I've never heard them complain. Don Van Vliet is better known as Captain Beefheart, a legend worldwide whom the better part of a generation of New Wave rock'n'roll bands have cited as one of their most important spiritual and musical forefathers: John Lydon/Rotten, Joe Strummer of the Clash, Devo, Pere Ubu, and many others have attested to growing up on copies of Van Vliet's 1969 album *Trout Mask Replica*, playing its four sides of discordant yet juicy swampbrine jambalaya roogalator over and over again until they knew whole bits-routines out of his lyrics, which are a wild and totally original form of free-associational poetry.

There are some of us who think he is one of the giants of 20th century music, certainly of the postwar era. He has never been to music school, and taught himself to play about half a dozen instruments including soprano sax, bass clarinet, harmonica, guitar, piano, and most recently mellotron. He sings in seven and a half octaves, and his style has been compared to Howlin' Wolf and several species of primordial beasts. His music, which he composes for ensemble and then literally teaches his bands how to play, is often atonal but always swings in a way that very little rock ever has. His rhythmic concept is unique. I hear Delta blues, free jazz, field hollers, rock'n'roll and lately something new that I can't put my finger on but relates somehow to what they call "serious" music. You'll probably hear several other things.

This is going to be a profile partially occasioned by the release of his twelfth (and best since 1972's *Clear Spot*) album, *Doc At The Radar Station*. This is also going to be, and I hesitate mightily to say this because I hate those articles where the writer brays how buddybuddy he is with the rock stars, about someone I have long considered a friend and am still only beginning to feel I understand after 11 years. Which is perhaps not so long a time to take to be able to say that you have learned anything about anyone.

Meanwhile, back in the Mojave Desert, Don Van Vliet is enjoying a highly urbane, slyly witty (anecdotes and repartee litter the lunar sands like sequins 'n' confetti on the floor of a Halloween disco), and endlessly absorbing conversation with a gila monster. "GRAAUUWWKKKI" says the big slumbrous reptile, peering out its laser-green lidless bulging eyes and missing nothing. "Brickbats fly my fireplace," answers Van Vliet. "Upside down I see them in the fire. They squeak and roast there. Wings leap across the floor."

"KRAAUUUAUWWKKKI" advises heat-resistant gila. Van Vliet the Captain nods and ponders the efficacy of such

a course. They've both just washed down the last of the scalding chili fulla bigeyed-beans from Venus what glare atcha accusingly as ya poppem doomward inya mouf. The Captain, Van Vliet, call him which you choose, has chosen to live out here, squatflat wampum on this blazoned barren ground for many a year. Don't see too much o' the hoomin side o' the varmint family out here, but that's fine with Cap Vliet. "Doc" as he's called by the crusty prospectors hung on lak chiggers from times before his emigration to this spot.

Have you ever had somebody you idolised or looked up to as an artist?

"Can't think of anybody, other than the fact that I thought Van Gogh was excellent."

How about in music?

'His style has been compared to Howlin' Wolf and several species of primordial beasts.'

"Never in music, I never have. A hero in music. No, fortunately."

So you didn't listen to like Delta blues and free jazz and stuff before you started to—

"Not really... I met Eric Dolphy. He was a nice guy, but it was real limited to me, like bliddle-liddle-diddlenopdedit-bop. "I came a long way from St. Louie," like Ornette, you know. It didn't move me."

Dolphy didn't MOVE you?

"Well, he moved me, but he didn't move me as much as a goose, say. Now that could be a hero, a gander goose could definitely be a hero, the way they blow their heart out for nothing like that."

Is that because you think that people generally do it for purposes of ego?

"Um, yeah, which I think is good because it gets your shoes tied. You know what I mean, it doesn't scare old ladies, you get dressed. So I think that's nice."

You don't think it's possible to create art that's egoless, that just flows through you?

"That's possible, I'm tryin' to do that, on this last album definitely."

One thing I find is that the more I know the less I know.

"Me too. I don't know anything about music."

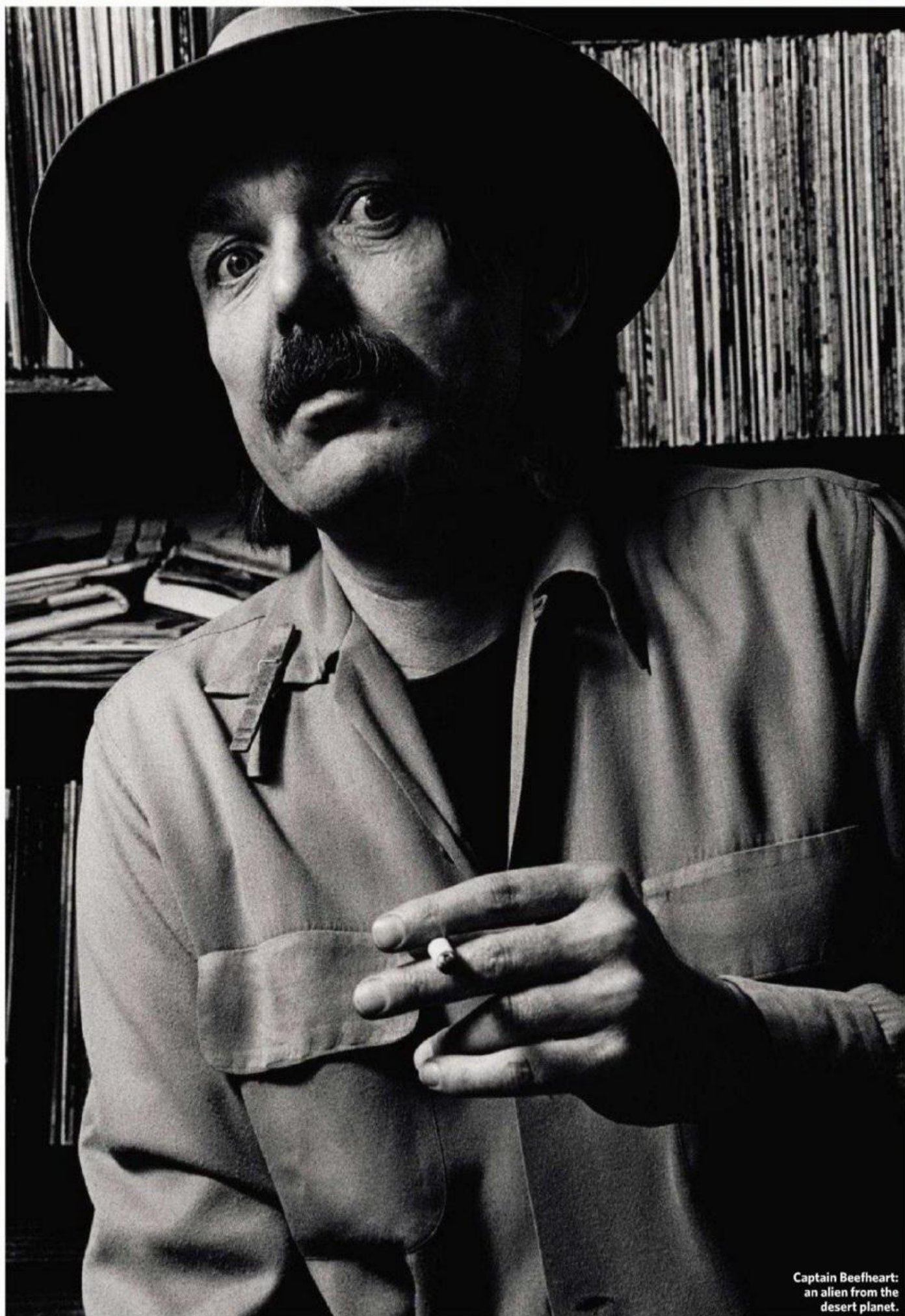
As reviews over the years have proved, it's always difficult to write anything that really says something about Don Van Vliet. Perhaps (though he may hate this comparison) this is because, like Brian Eno, he approaches music with the instincts of a painter, in Beefheart's case those of a sculptor as well. ➔

ERIC DOLPHY

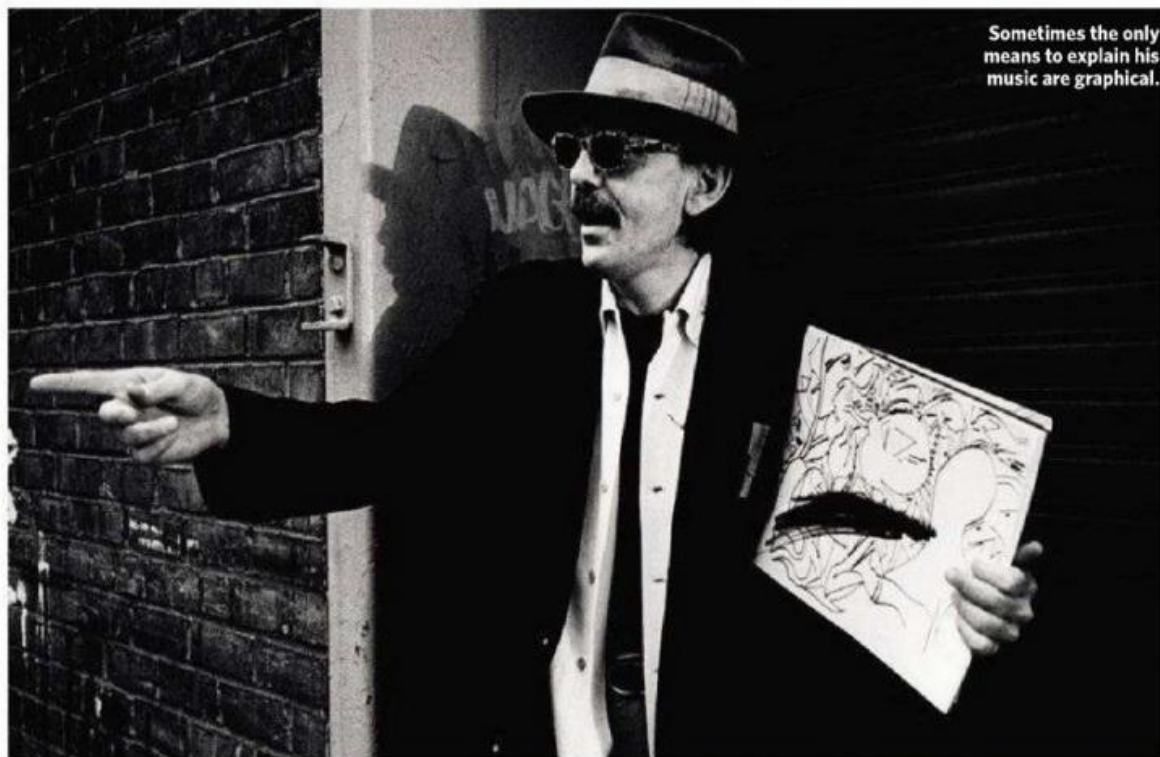
The nice man of who Van Vliet referred was an American jazz musician of some note in the 60s. Equally adept on the flute, alto sax and bass clarinet, his improvisation style characterised by wide intervals and almost animalistic noises, and he was among the first big players of the free jazz movement.

Signed to the legendary Blue Note Records, he toured as part of the Charles Mingus Sextet, but died, somewhat mysteriously in Berlin in the summer of 1964. Collapsing in a diabetic coma, the hospital may have assumed he was an ODing addict and left him to die.





Captain Beefheart:
an alien from the
desert planet.



Sometimes the only means to explain his music are graphical.

LARRY LIVING CORN

(When I was trying to pin him down about something on his new album over the phone the other day, he said: "Have you seen **Franz Kline** lately? You should go over to the Guggenheim and see his Number Seven, they have it in such a good place. He's probably closer to my music than any of the painters, because it's just totally speed and emotion that comes out of what he does.") When he's directing the musicians in his Magic Band he often draws the songs as diagrams and shapes. Before that he plays the compositions onto a tape himself, "usually on a piano or a Moog synthesizer. Then I can shape it to be exactly the way I want it, after I get it down there. It's almost like sculpture, that's actually what I'm doing, I think. 'Cause I sure as hell can't afford marble, as if there was any."

Much of what results, by any "normal" laws of music, cannot be done. As for lyrics, again like Eno, he often works them up from a sort of childlike delight at the very nature of the sounds themselves, of certain words, so if, to pull an example out of the air, "anthrax," or "love" for that matter appears in a line, it doesn't necessarily mean what you'll find in the dictionary if you look it up. Then again, it might. Contrary to *Rolling Stone*, *Ashtray Heart* on the new album has nothing to do with Beefheart's reaction to punk rockers beyond one repeated aside that might as well be a red herring. ("Let's open up another case of the punks" is the line reflecting his rather dim view of the New Wavers who are proud to admit to being influenced by him. "I don't ever listen to 'em, you see, which is not very nice of me but... then again, why should I look through my own vomit? I think they're overlooking the fact—they're putting it back into rock and roll: bomp, bomp, bomp, that's what I was tryin' to get away from, that mama heartbeat stuff. I guess they have to make a living, though.") He laughs about the misinterpretation, but since the song is pretty clearly about betrayal, I asked: "What was it about the person in the song that could make you care enough to be that hurt?"

He says: "Humanity. The fact that people don't hear it the way you really mean it. Probably for a similar reason that Van Gogh gave that girl a piece of his flesh, because she was too stupid to comprehend what he was doing. I always thought that he gave her that as a physical thing to hold onto because she didn't accept the aesthetic value of what he was saying.

'We don't have to suffer, we're the best batch yet.'
Would you care to comment on what that might mean?
"Yeah, what I was doing there was having these cardboard

ball sculptures, fake pearls, real cheap cardboard constructed circles, you know what I mean, floating through that music. Actually, I was afraid to sing on that track. I liked the music so much, it was perfect without me on it. And so I put these words on there, you know, they're just cheap cardboard constructions of balls of simulated pearls floating through, and it's an overwhelming technique that makes them look like pearls. 'We don't have to suffer, we're the best batch yet' were these pearls

'When he's directing his Magic Band he often draws the songs as diagrams and shapes.'

talking to themselves."

As opposed to the other ones. What does it mean when you say: 'White flesh waves to black'?

"God, I don't know what that means. It means, it's just a, uh, it's merely just a painting, you see, that's poetic license."

I thought you were talking about racism.

"Oh, no. I don't know what to do about racial or political things. It was just a poem to me. A poem for poem's sake."

I was also thinking of when you walk around looking at people who have turned themselves into commodities.

"Yeah, we're the best batch yet! We're the newest best that has been put out. Well, that has to do with that, too. You know, I'm, uh, ahm, whaddaya call it, it isn't schizophrenic but it is, uh, what people in the West think of people in the East, you see, meaning that in some instances they think that people are crazy who think multifaceted, that there's many ways of interpreting something. I mean 'em all. I can't say I don't know what my lyrics mean, but I can say that, uh, yeah I know what they mean, but if you call it you stop the flow."

Van Morrison has said that he doesn't know what a lot of his own lyrics mean, and even if Beefheart does, or they mean something different for each of us, I think, as with Morrison, occasionally you feel that the voice of some Other just might be speaking through this singer at this particular time, as if he

FRANZ KLINE

The artist to whose work Beefheart most compared his music was born Franz Josef Kline, in Pennsylvania. He was most frequently associated with the Abstract Expressionist movement, and along with Jackson Pollock, was labelled an 'action painter', in reference to his spontaneous and intense style.

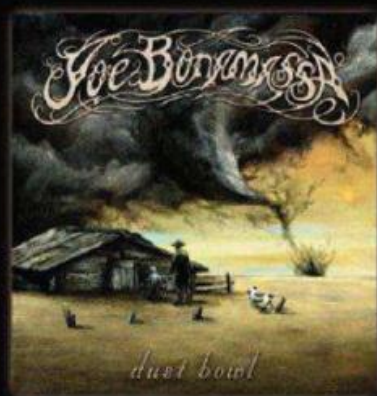
His best-known paintings were created in a stark black and white calligraphic style, among these the popular piece Number Seven, to which Von Vleit referred.

Franz Kline died at the age of 51, of rheumatic heart disease, in 1962.



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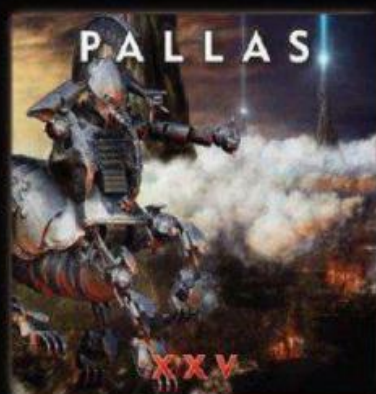
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were an instrument picking up messages from... Doc at the Radar Station? (About the various voices he switches between, often in the same song: "I'll tell you the truth, some of those guys really scare me, that come out at me when I do some things, like 'Sheriff of Hong Kong.' I never met him before. Or she, I dunno... It's like different, uh, uh... You see, I don't think I do music. I think I do spells.")

Wherever Don Van Vliet gets his rules and messages from, it's rarely the external, so-called rational – I think psychotic – "civilised" society we've known and lived in. He chooses to live out of it, mentally and physically, and began trying to escape from it at a very early age: "I never went to school. I wet my pants and my mother came and got me as I was running and I told her that I couldn't go to school because I was sculpting at that time a hell of a lot. That was kindergarten, I think. I tried to jump into the La Brea Tar Pits when I was three, whatever that means. I was so intrigued by those bubbles going bmp bmp. I thought I would find a dinosaur down there. I told my mother when I was three years old – she showed it to me not too long ago, in this baby book in that horrible Palmer Penmanship method of writing that she used, you know that fantastic curlicues type stuff that had everything to do with everything other than what it said, on this old yellow piece of paper it's written out – that if she would stay on one side of the room and I would stay on the other, that we would be friends the rest of our life. I used to lock myself in a room and sculpt when I was like three, five, six."

What sorts of things did you sculpt?

"Oh God, things that I would try to have moved kinetically, try to move these things around. These were my friends, these little animals that I would make, like dinosaurs and... I wasn't very much in reality, actually."

Do you feel bad about that?

"No, I feel good. I was right. The way people treat animals, I don't like it. One of my horrible memories is the great Auk, the fact that it was extinct before I was born. What a beautiful bird."

What were your parents like?

"Pretty banal. They moved me to Mojave, that's where they kept the Japanese-Americans during World War II. They moved me up there to keep me out of a scholarship to Europe

for sculpture. They wanted to get me away from all the 'queer' artists. Isn't that awful? Periscopes in the tub, right?"

In this sense, he's still not very much in "reality." His problems with record companies over the years are legendary. Yet he has, somehow, kept on making those amazing albums; just when you've almost given up hope, somebody else comes along and offers him a contract, and he does another one, and it doesn't sell. Jon Landau told me in 1970, when he was my record reviews editor at *Rolling Stone*: "Grand Funk will be more important to the history of rock'n'roll than Captain Beefheart. And you can quote me on that." But there are other occasions, like that time I met a young woman in a bar who was not a scenemaker or into avant-rock, and when I asked her what kind of music she liked she said: "This guy I heard named Captain Beefheart. There was just something kind of real sensual and musky about it. I dunno... it was different, but I loved it."

Beefheart himself thinks women tend to understand his music better than men so, especially since he can be so elliptically, obscurantistly difficult to pin down in interview and describing his music in prose is kind of like trying to catch the prism of a dragonfly wing and hold it intact in the palm of your hand, I'll talk about his wife. Jan is a young woman of such radiance and wholehearted sincerity that it can be a little stunning at first meeting. Phrases like "earth mother" are too quaint, dreary, way off the mark. She is as active an artist as he and the complexities of her mind are fully up to his moodswings, which can give you jetlag. Which doesn't mean she's the archetypal Great Artist's Nursemaid either – she won't take his shit, and he can be a tyrannical baby at times. Like a lot of us.

Jan helps mightily at broaching some kind of rapprochement communications-wise between this man and the world at large. In other words, she translates. In both directions. You'd see the same thing at the UN. And if Don is not exactly intoning "Klaatu barada niktu," he does at times seem almost like a visitor from another planet, or more precisely someone still stunned by his first sight of this one, as I suspect he always will be. Perhaps he just doesn't have those filtering mechanisms which enable most of us to cope with "reality" by blocking out at least 80 per cent of it.

According to his set of filters, inanimate objects are alive, and plants and animals share with them the capacity to think as well as feel. Don sees perspicacity in a mesquite, an old broom-handle even. If his lyrics are about anything absolutely, they are about ecology.

You're a painter. In *Run Paint Run Run* are you saying that the paint itself is a conscious entity with a will of its own?

"Yeah! Definitely! Hey, you got it. Yes, it has a will of its own."

Do you generally feel that about the things around you, inanimate objects?

"Um hm. Yeah, I really do. I think they're all alive. Don't you?"

I don't know.

"Come on, you do too..."

So how do you and the paint get along?

"Pretty damn good, I'll tell ya. I'm just looking forward to getting enough money to be able to really paint big. I don't wanna paint any littler than five by five. But I'd like to paint twenty by twenty."

Do you and the paint ever have fights?

"Yeah, definitely."

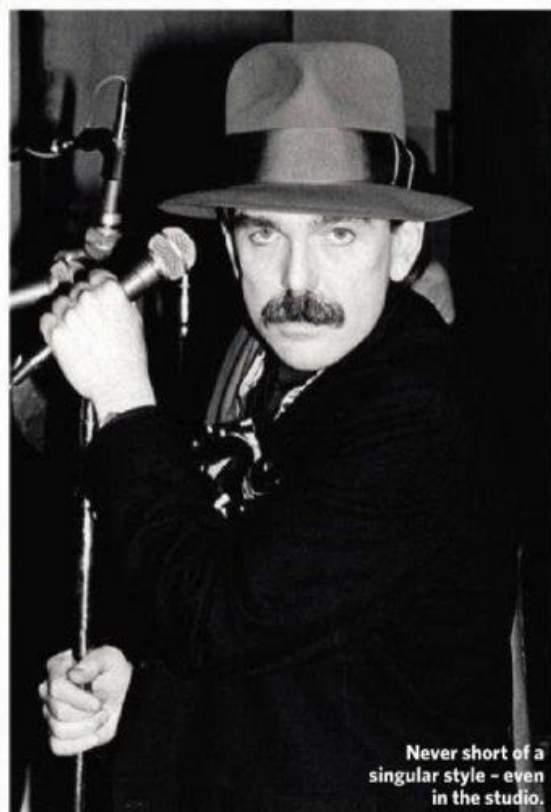
Do you feel the same way about the electric guitar, that when you plug it into the wall it's this battle of wills sort of?

"I think so. It'll spit out atcha anything that's out there."

Was that what you were talking about in *Electricity*?

"Yeah, that had a hell of a lot to do with it... It always seems to come out the way it wants to, y'know."

I think that partially Don anthropomorphises animals and objects as a defence against a human crew who empirical observation has told him are by and large incomprehensible to themselves as well as him, that's when they're not also out to getcha. He's like an Androcles that would chat a spell with ➡

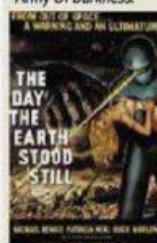


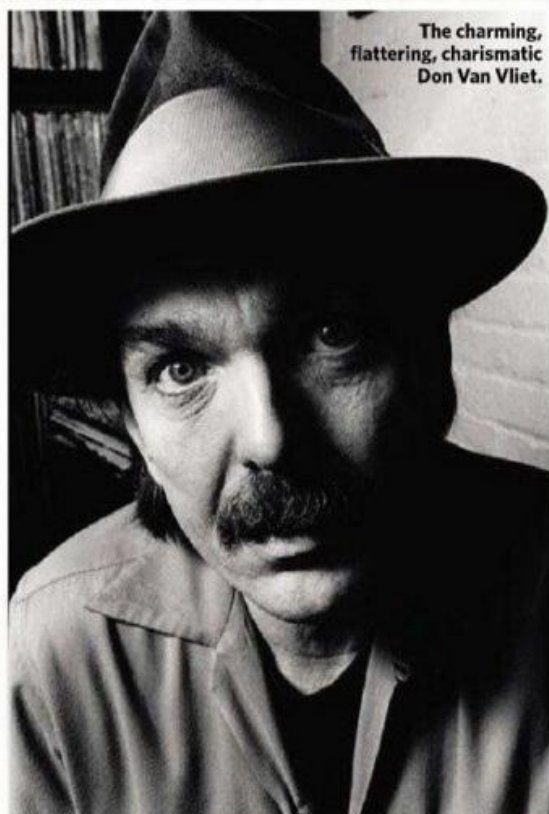
Never short of a singular style – even in the studio.

KLAATU BARADA NIKTU

This mysterious phrase comes from the 1951 science fiction film *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. The words were given by the alien Klaatu to earthling Helen Benson, under the strict instructions that should anything happen to him, she must utter the phrase to his robot Gort in order to stop him from destroying the world.

The phrase, created as part of a full alien language by the film's writer Edmund H North, has made a number of cameo appearances in other cult movies, including *Tron*, *Return Of The Jedi*, *Toys* and *Army Of Darkness*.





The charming, flattering, charismatic Don Van Vliet.

LAURA LERNER/CONTOUR

Leo but see fangs and claws on a delivery boy. Lacking aforesaid filters, he has devised an elaborate system of checkpoint charlies to keep most of humankind's snoots at bay. This can sometimes be frustrating. His favourite device in the past was to always say some bigtime gonzo Dada non sequitur ("All roads lead to Coca-Cola" was the first one I ever heard), then look you straight in the eye and enquire: "Do you know what I mean?"

"Yeah, sure, Don, sure!" everybody (except Jan) would always huffnpuff. He is a very charismatic person, a guru, of sorts. He knows how to charm, and has a way of flattering you by asking you all kinds of questions suggesting real concern. He really means it, too, his basic philosophy has always been summed up in the open invitation to share his suddenly brighter sunshine in *Trout Mask Replica's Frownland*. But see, that's just it: it was always his sunshine, on another level all these things were and are distancing devices (though he's not nearly as egocentrically defensive as he used to be) and it can be extremely frustrating because no matter how intimate you get with somebody if all they ever say practically is stuff that sounds like it came out of their lingo-tango lyrics (another technique is to ask you to elaborate when you ask a question and then just agree with you) you go home with a tape recorder full of words that mean nothing in particular and the sad hunch that there was something a bit impersonal about this whole affair. I've been told that with Don the best countertactic is to try and pin him down: "Just exactly what do you mean?" But somehow I've never been able to draw that hard a line. The man is too magical. Literally. Once in Detroit I walked into a theatre through the back door while he was onstage performing. At the precise moment I stepped to the edge of the curtains on stage right, where I could see him haranguing the audience, he said, very clearly, "Lester!" His back was to me at the time. Later he asked me if I had noticed it. I was a little shaken.

The years of what career-oriented folks would file as "failure" have ripened and mellowed Don; like most of us, he's grown up some, albeit perhaps against his will. Once I listened to him rant drunk and bitter all night; now I ask him: "Will the music business ever find you 'commercial,' and do you care?"

"I don't think they ever will," he laughs, "and I don't care. I'm just thankful that an audience is listening to me."

He just lets it turn with the earth, though he was particularly angry in the past when a band he literally taught to play cut some sides on Mercury under his name without even telling him. There are also many of us who think Frank Zappa, with whom he grew up, wouldn't be hock in a spittoon, much less a "composer" (anybody says that certifies themselves a moron) if there had never been a Don Van Vliet on this earth.

When Zappa established his Straight Records in 1968, he invited Don to join a carny sideshow which also included the GTOs, Alice Cooper and *Wild Man Fischer*, producing, or so he was credited, *Trout Mask Replica*. Hell, it's such a sleeper you can still order it from Warner Comm. That record was four sides, 28 songs cut in two days of the most unparalleled ruckus in the annals of recorded sound. In it, after relatively unfocused albums for Buddah (with whom he even scored a minor hit in '66, *Diddy Wah Diddy*) and Blue Thumb, Beefheart and his unearthly looking cabal of spazmo henchmen seemed effortlessly to cook up the so-far still definitive statement on the possibilities for some common ground ("fusion," I believe they called some bathwater quickbuckaroos bearing scant relation a few years later) on which raunch rock, slide-slinging Delta blues and post-Coltrane/Shepp/Ayler free jazz might consecrate a shakedown together.

Like almost all of Beefheart's recorded work, it was not even "ahead" of its time in 1969. Then and now, it stands outside time, trends, fads, hypes, the rise and fall of whole genres eclectic as walking Christmas trees, constituting a genre unto itself: truly, a musical Monolith if ever there was one. On it, Beefheart, behind a truly scarifying gallery of separate voices, becomes at various times a sagebrush prospector, Jews screaming in the ovens at Auschwitz, greased-back East LA pachuco, a breakable pig, an automobile, *Ant Man Bee* (title of one song), a little girl and her brinechawed seafarin' aged father (in the same song), a Pa Kettle-mischievous *Old Fart at Play*, and several species of floral, piscatorial and amphibious life. The band, under his tutelage, thereon reinvented from the ground

"None of these albums have sold more than 50 or 60 thousand, and that's over a long period."

up rhythm, melody, harmonics, perhaps what our common narrow parameters have defined as "music" itself.

Since then he has released seven albums of varying quality. The immediate followup, *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*, was brilliant though a little abrasive even for my ears at the time it was released. 1971's *The Spotlight Kid* was more commercial, though hardly compromised, and many people regard 1972's *Clear Spot*, a minor masterpiece of sorts, as a dance album in disguise. Two later records on Mercury, *Unconditionally Guaranteed* and *Blue Jeans and Moonbeams*, were bald-faced attempts at sellout. *Shiny Beast*, a charming but relatively minor work, was released by Warner Brothers in 1978. None of these albums has sold more than 50 or 60 thousand, and that's over a long period of time; only *Trout Mask Replica* and *Shiny Beast*, in fact, remain in the catalogues.

Perhaps it is the "success" ("triumph?") of the New Wave that has emboldened Warner Brothers. In any case, *Doc at the Radar Station* is one of the most brilliant achievements by any artist in any year. And in 1980 it seems like a miracle. It certainly is not compromised, and I doubt that it will get any radio play in this country at least, but then I said The Clash didn't have a prayer. While some of his self-acknowledged acolytes have gone on to stardom, megabucks, pop-out lunchboxes, etc. the progenitor remains in his Mojave trailer, where he

Continued on page 122

WILD MAN FISCHER

Placed into a secure unit at the age of 16 for attacking his mother with a knife, Fischer was diagnosed with severe paranoid schizophrenia. Upon his release, he wandered the streets of Los Angeles singing his rambling songs to passers by for 10 cents a time. Discovered by Frank Zappa, he became the first artist to release a record on Rhino, and soon became firm favourite on the underground scene. He has collaborated with Linda Ronstadt, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Tom Waits and even Rosemary Clooney over the years.





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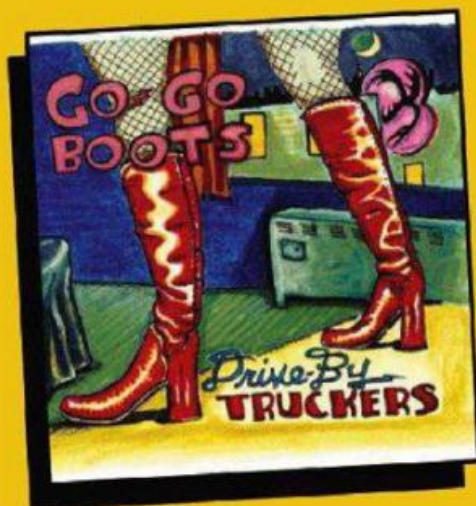
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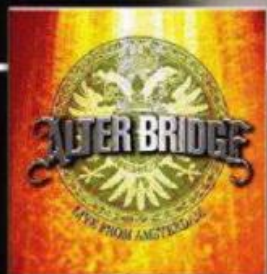
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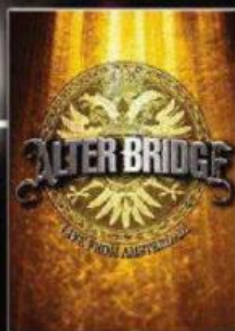


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1 (the original) Iron Maiden

God Of Darkness

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2 Ghost Ritual

The young Swedes have fast become idols of the metal underground, with a sound that is a melodic take on early Mercyful Fate; satanic rock with a pop sensibility. **From the album Opus Eponymous**



3 Blood Ceremony

Night Of Augury
With a folkier approach to the doom psych sound, these Canadians' self-titled 2008 debut quickly established a formidable reputation. **From the forthcoming Living With The Ancients**



4 Gentlemen Pistols

Living In Sin
This Leeds band's approach is inspired by the blues rock of the late 60s and early 70s, but that certainly doesn't mean they're retro. **From the forthcoming At Her Majesty's Pleasure**



5 Incredible Hog

Lame
An early-1970s band who didn't reach their potential, these Londoners' intelligent mix of melody, heavy rock and insightful lyrics is only now receiving its deserved acclaim. **From the forthcoming reissue of their 1973 album Volume 1**



6 Grand Magus

The Shadow Knows
Dedicated to revitalising 70s hard rock, the Swedes released their first album in 2001. This song, from their fourth, displays the trio's ability to deliver a style that closely resembles Ronnie Dio-era Rainbow. **From the album Iron Will**



7 Bang

The Queen
Early-70s US band Bang released three cult albums in 1971/3 but never made the impact their talent deserved. **The Queen** is typical of their Black Sabbath-meets-The Beatles approach. **From the album Bang**



8 Electric Wizard

Venus In Furs
Electric Wizard have been called stoner, doom, sludge, occult metal... but really have their own enigmatic style that owes something to all of the above genres. **From the album Black Masses**



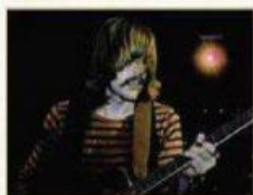
9 Astra

Broken Glass
Astra's interpretation of psyche and prog rock brings to mind the likes of Yes and King Crimson, in that they explore all musical boundaries. The result, as on this track, is mesmeric. **From the album The Weiriding**



10 The Gates Of Slumber

To The Rack With Them
A doom-style band from Indianapolis, with a nod to Saint Vitus as well as taking inspiration from underground heroes like Cirith Ungol. **From the forthcoming album The Wretch**



11 Horisont

Road To Cairo
Young Swedes tipped to join the likes of Witchcraft and Graveyard as a band who take the blues-rock sounds of the early 70s and filter them through a stoner experience. They also owe something to Sabbath and Blue Cheer. **2010 demo**



12 Admiral Sir Cloudesly Shovell

Day After Day
They've been dubbed rock revivalists, but they use influences like Dust and Sir Lord Baltimore as a basis for building their own passionate, powerful groove-laden sound. **B-side of 7" Return To Zero**



13 Firebird

Soul Saviour
A blues-rock power trio founded in 1999 by Carcass/Napalm Death guitarist Bill Steer, they have created a body of work that stands comparison to giants like Mountain, Taste and Cream. **From the forthcoming album Double Diamond**



14 Orange Goblin

Blue Snow
In their 15 years they've become one of the UK's best-loved bands, combining Motörhead thrust with AC/DC groove and the class of Thin Lizzy. **From the forthcoming remastered Travelling Blues**



15 Steel Mill

Green Eyed God
Another remarkable yet ultimately unsuccessful British band from the early 70s. Steel Mill combined prog elements with the heaviness of Uriah Heep and Black Sabbath. They released just one album, 1972's *Green Eyed God*. **From Jewels Of The Forest**

OOPS! SORRY

Due to a host of circumstances such as snow, ice, wind, rain and, um, a plague of locusts, some of the writing credits for the above songs are incorrect on the CD sleeve (the Firebird and Steel Mill song credits are the wrong way around). Our apologies to those bands and thanks to Lee Dorrian for compiling this CD, even in the midst of child birth.



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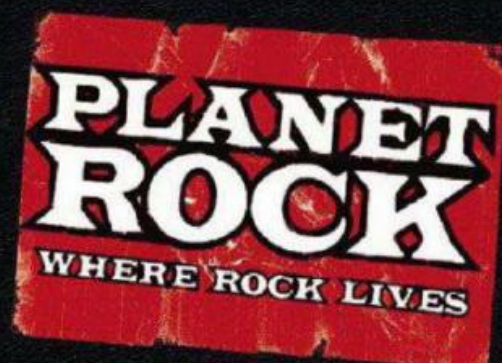
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■■■■■■■■	VERY GOOD
■■■■■■■	GOOD
■■■■■■	ABOVE AVERAGE
■■■■■	AVERAGE
■■■■	BELOW PAR
■■■	A DISAPPOINTMENT
■■	POOR
■	VERY POOR

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM

14 PAGES

100% ROCK

THE HARD STUFF *The Ultimate* ROCK REVIEWS *Section*

INGREDIENTS:

- P 92 ALBUMS
- P 98 REISSUES
- P 102 BUYER'S GUIDE
- P 104 BOOKS

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P 94

Black Spiders

Why is their new album 'destined to become one of 2011's must-haves'?

StoreMags

HARD STUFF ALBUMS



Pearl Jam: a major-league band who have retained their integrity.



Pearl Jam

Live On Ten Legs ISLAND

Not just a live 'greatest hits', this album confirms Pearl Jam as one of the truly iconic rock'n'roll bands of their generation.

A live album from Pearl Jam is nothing new. There are now 79 of the buggers, including the 72 'official bootlegs' released between 2000 and 2001.

Likewise the title of this new live record is an old joke. Pearl Jam's very first live album, released back in 1998, was called *Live On Two Legs*, a tongue-in-cheek tribute to Queen's classic track *Death On Two Legs*. But the gag – now numerically precise in the case of this latest release – still works. And, with its knowing reference to old-rock royalty, it suggests that Pearl Jam are no longer embarrassed about being a stadium rock act.

It's now 20 years since the Seattle band released their debut album, *Ten*, which set them off on the road to becoming heroes of the alternative rock era. But throughout their career, Pearl Jam, and especially singer Eddie Vedder, have remained typecast as hair-shirted ascetics. As recently as 2006, *Rolling Stone* magazine stated: "Pearl Jam have spent much of the past decade deliberately tearing apart their own fame."

Perhaps Kurt Cobain was to blame. When he mocked Pearl Jam in 1991 for "pioneering a corporate, alternative and cock-rock fusion", he played on the punk-rock guilt at the heart of the Seattle scene. In truth, *Ten* was no more a corporate rock record than *Nevermind* was. But Cobain's slur stuck, even after he and Vedder reconciled.

Pearl Jam's third album, *Vitalogy*, released in late 1994, less than a year after Cobain's suicide, was an attempt at enhancing the band's credibility, with vinyl-fetishist garage-rock (*Spin The Black Circle*) and oddball experimentalism (*Hey Foxymophandlemama, That's Me*). What followed that was a series of laboured and self-consciously serious records. It was only in 2006, with the symbolically titled Pearl Jam album, that the band returned to the direct and accessible style of their debut, a theme that carried over into 2009's *Backspacer*.

There is, however, a constant in Pearl Jam's history that has a certain irony to it, something that would not have been lost on Cobain, that most reluctant of superstars. For all their hand-wringing, Pearl Jam have sold 60 million albums



over two decades; even their least successful records have sold half-a-million in the US. And although Cobain's jibe had some truth – *Ten* was the most polished of the breakthrough grunge albums – Pearl Jam's success has been achieved on their own terms. This is one major-league rock band who have retained their integrity. *Live On Ten Legs* is proof of that.

In a sense, *Live On Ten Legs* is much like the classic 70s live albums released when the members of Pearl Jam were impressionable schoolkids; albums such as Aerosmith's *Live Bootleg* and Kiss's *Alive!* It has that same celebratory air, and it features many of Pearl Jam's best-known, crowd-pleasing songs: *Jeremy*, *Animal*, *State Of Love And Trust*, *Alive*. Plus its big-room ambience gives a palpable sense of the scale on which this band operates on

the road: the roar of a really big audience is unmistakable.

But, Pearl Jam being Pearl Jam, this is not simply a live 'greatest hits' set.

That would be too

easy. And, yes, too corporate rock. Featuring recordings dating from 2003 to 2010, it omits another album's worth of great, career-defining songs, including *Even Flow*, *Daughter*, *Dissident* and *Given To Fly*. Instead it includes a bunch of recent songs (four from *Backspacer*) and a cover of PiL's post-punk classic *Public Image*; it begins with another cover, Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros' *Arms Aloft*; it ends with the obscure B-side, *Yellow Ledbetter*.

Inevitably, it's the old favourites that elicit the biggest cheers and carry the greatest power, especially the ass-kicking existentialist anthems *Alive* and *Rearviewmirror*, the latter arguably Pearl Jam's greatest ever song. But this is an album full of great songs and great performances, confirming Vedder as one of the finest singers of his generation, and Pearl Jam as one of the truly iconic rock'n'roll bands.

As they proved before an audience of 50,000 at London's Hyde Park in June 2010, Pearl Jam were made for the biggest stages. So, too, was Kurt Cobain, whose most memorable show with Nirvana came at the Reading festival in 1992. These people weren't so different after all.

★★★★★

Paul Elliott

Innervcity Pirates

Cutting Noses, Chasing Tales SUPRACORE

Urban Welsh buckling the punk swash.



The cover art shows a digital wolf mid-attack, and the debut from these

Welsh spittle punks is fittingly savage. Packing a rabid pop bite, this is an unrelenting assault on the hook bone, from the snarling glam-slam of *Bang Bang* to the Pixies bark of *Eat The Paint* and the funk-punk Rapturisms of the appropriately titled *Ear Sex*. Singer Russell Toomey – former frontman with post-Britpop yowlers *My Red Cell* – is a contrary beast, coming across as romantic punkoid poet on the country-thrasher *Love's Over*, and unreconstructed rock alpha male on *She's A Bastard*: 'I only wanted a bitch/I never expected a bastard like this.'

Confrontational, cocky and brash in a way few modern punk bands dare to be in an era when one eye is always on the Green Day dollar, this album promises to be an unavoidable marauding force on the oceans of 2011.

★★★★★

Mark Beaumont

Anna Calvi

Anna Calvi DOMINO

Roy Orbison reborn as a young female Londoner.

Anna Calvi's gorgeous debut sounds completely out of step with the modern world – and that's one of its key strengths.

The label that brought us the herky-jerky disco punk of Franz Ferdinand, the wordy but blokey student stomp of The Arctic Monkeys and the digital psychedelia of Animal Collective have now signed a young Londoner who sounds as if she has been beamed in from 1960s Argentina. And it is this eclecticism and refusal to try and replicate former successes that keeps the Domino label vital.

The tracks on *Anna Calvi* are bewitching slices of heavily reverbed rock'n'roll bolstered with shimmering bossa nova jazz flourishes and staccato flamenco attack. *Rider To The Sea* combines a Duane Eddy twang with dramatic backing vocals.

It's unfortunate that most young female vocalists now get compared to either Kate Bush or Polly Harvey, but in Calvin's case comparisons to the latter are more than justified, although Calvin has a more baroque ululation which constantly

threatens to spill over into Diamanda Galas territory but never quite does.

★★★★★

John Doran

Angeline

Confessions AVENUE OF ALLIES

Melodic quartet finally release debut after 23 years.

No one could accuse Angeline of rushing into this debut album. They had a mini-album out in 1990, but their soap-opera of a career peaked with Sigge Stardust, a film tribute to their late singer Jörgen 'Sigge' Sigvardsson.

On this album, vocals are by Jocke Nilsson whose impressive voice falls somewhere between Joe Elliott and Torstein Flakne of the Stage Dolls.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a band who took their name from a song by Paul Sabu, *Confessions* is an album grounded firmly in 1980s AOR. But although slick and melodic, it's free of keyboards and, *Miracles* aside, never wet or wimpish. In fact, as on the likes of *Good Is Getting Better* and *Part Of Evolution*, Angeline are mostly metal with harmonies.

★★★★★

Neil Jeffries

[dweeb]

Feels Like Dynamite PIR

Pop-friendly four-piece's second takes them up a gear.



Imagine the cheeky-grin bombast of The Darkness grafted on to

the melodic pop of The Feeling, and you've pretty much got Coventry's [dweeb] – a pleasing enough hybrid to just about forgive them the punctuated awkwardness of their name.

Feels Like Dynamite, their second album, practically fizzles with hard-edged, hook-laden singalongs, from the mockney synth surge of the ennuï anthem *We Are The Ones* to the grunge-lite guitars of 3D. Tim Alford's vocals occasionally veer towards the histrionic, but his near-pantomime approach is perfectly suited to the self-deprecating 'poor us' vibes of a jobbing touring band on *Playing In The Snow*. It's not quite as successful on opener *Dynamite*, a sinister tale of sex trafficking that could have done with a touch more restraint, given its subject matter. Still, it's way better than their more straight-rock 2008 debut *It Came From Outer Space*.

★★★★★

Terry Staunton



Black Spiders:
Rock from
a hard place.

ROB MOODY

Black Spiders

Sons Of The North DARK RIDERS/CARGO

A heavy cure for arachnophobia, these spiders are nothing to fear.



One of the most important things that any aspiring musician needs to learn about rock'n'roll is that, despite a few anomalous exceptions to the rule, it really isn't brain surgery. Get the basics right, remembering to add a tiny dash of spice to those delicious, nourishing meat and potatoes every now and then, and there is surprisingly little that anyone with a degree of competence can fuck up.

This is a lesson that Black Spiders clearly learned at the very start, and it's a testament to their mastery of the form that the Sheffield quintet have accrued a remarkable number of critical plaudits over their two-and-a-bit years of active service. Ultimately, you're either the real classic rock deal or you're not, and Black Spiders have ticked the 'Yes' box with a big, fat marker pen.

After a few low-key releases and a huge number of live performances, *Sons Of The North* marks the point where this band step out from the cosy wing of the pre-cajoled media and live or die by their own creative efforts. Pleasingly, from the clattering bravado of the opening *Stay Down* and the cheeky *KISS Tried To Kill Me* onwards, their fiery commitment to slamming the best bits of AC/DC, Motörhead, (early)

Aerosmith and Black Sabbath together in one huge, thunderous slab of old school rowdiness bears high-quality fruit. The big hooks of *Just Like A Woman*, *St Peter*, and *Si, El Diablo* could easily sound like warmed-up clichés in less skilful hands, but the Spiders attack everything with passion and it's hard to imagine hearing any of this at a live show without wanting to headbang, drink heavily and leer lasciviously at members of the opposite (or indeed same) sex. Peter 'Spider' Spiby is not a vocalist prone to histrionics or needless showboating, but his commanding performance provides the glue that holds the whole album together, and gives it just about enough character of its own. And, of course, there are plenty of enormous riffs here – most notably on clear highlight *Blood Of The Kings*, which is simply a great old-school heavy metal song imbued with vast, pendulous elephant testicles.

Of course, if you haven't heard it all a million times before you clearly need to get out more and buy this magazine more often, but in terms of straight-ahead rock'n'roll entertainment, *Sons Of The North* is destined to become one of 2011's must-haves.

★★★★★

Dorn Lawson

Paul Collins

King Of Power Pop! ALIVE

Jangle-rock fundamentalist preaches to the converted.



As a member of both The Nerves and The Breakaways (both featuring

The Plimsouls' Peter Case), as well as fronting his own band The Beat, Paul Collins is more entitled than most to lay claim to such a regal sobriquet.

Recorded in Detroit with garage rock guru Jim Diamond, his thirteenth solo album does what it says on the tin, jittery anthems like *C'mon Let's Go!* and *Do You Wanna Love Me?* as highly-strung as the tuning heads on Collins' trusty 12-string guitar. With local luminaries including drummer Dave Shettler (from the criminally under rated *Sights*) and Wally Palmer from The Romantics chipping in, mop-top anthems like *Hurting's On My Side* come with a valedictory feel, while a faithful rendition of Alex Chilton's *The Letter* acts as a fitting tribute from a fellow trailblazer. Insular stuff, for sure, but Collins knows the genre works best when its heart is aching and its head is lodged firmly in the clouds.

'Sometimes I feel so bad/ Other times I'm so glad/I took out my Rickenbacker guitar' he sighs on the title track, still dreaming of that slot on the Ed Sullivan Show.

★★★★★

Paul Moody

Elixir

All Hallow's Eve CTR

Heavy metal music – in the grand old style.



Elixir's history is a long one, distinguished not by achievement,

but by a quality as simple and as admirable as perseverance. They began in 1983, and 27 years and six albums later, still sound exactly the same. The term Byfordesque, had it ever been coined, might have been so for the vocals of Paul Taylor, a man who sticks to a stoic lyrical line involving hallowed doors, raven's claws and *Daughters Of The Moon*. Behind him, naturally, come twin guitars and a thudding rhythm section that on occasion produce a meaty riff, *You're Not Fooling Me* being the best example here.

The young Lars Ulrich would have loved them – instead,

opportunity never quite knocked. Elixir, though, remain admirably unbowed by fate's fickle hand.

★★★★★

Jon Hotten

Earth

Angels Of Darkness, Demons Of Light 1

SOUTHERN LORD

Earth are once again firmly planted on solid ground.



Recently Earth, the highly influential doom/drone band from

Seattle turned 21, and sealed the occasion by book-ending their entire career. A few months back saw the release of *A Bureaucratic Desire For Extra-Capsular Activity*, a capturing of their complete first recording session in Smeigma Studios. And it makes sense for any fans of avant-garde metal to be able to contrast this punishing sonic manifesto with their most recent collection, *Angels Of Darkness, Demons Of Light 1*, their sixth studio album to date. And while the abyssal drones and cataclysmic banks of sludge doom that typified early albums such as *Earth 2: Special Low Frequency Version* have long since gone, they're still exploring some of the stylistic changes that were ushered in with the Americana-infused *Hex*; *Or Printing In The Infernal Method* in 2005. However Dylan Carlson (guitars) and Adrienne Davies (drums) – this time joined by Lori Goldstone (cello) and Karl Blau (bass) – have ventured geographically much further abroad, while still maintaining an interest in rural textures. The warm tones of the title track recalls the dusty desert blues of Tinariwen or Tamikrest, slowed down to the rate at which sand dunes move forwards, and elsewhere the pre-doom folk rock of Pentangle is summoned up delightfully.

★★★★★

John Doran

John Waite

Rough & Tumble FRONTIERS

The Rover Returns. We've been Missing You.



Sad but true: John Waite failed to deliver for much of the last decade.

Prone to re-recording old material and becoming ever more set in his ways, the Lancashire-born former Babys/Bad English frontman seemed way too fond of Californian life

to shake himself down and get back to his roots. But having teamed up with Matchbox 20 guitarist and songwriter Kyle Cook for this first album of original material since 2004's *The Hard Way*, that's exactly what's happened here.

Rough & Tumble begins with such nimble, seductive ease that one can almost imagine Waite wiping a brow with relief at the return of his mojo. Compositions like *Shadows Of Love*, *Evil and Further The Sky* - the latter proposed by his other half, Alison Krauss - saunter along with aimless transatlantic ease, coloured by intensely hummable melodies and the singer's distinctive wordplay. This is a gorgeous, immensely satisfying album.

★★★★★

Dave Ling

Pallas

XXV MUSIC THORNS

A grand tale, told with style.



More than 25 years after their Eddy Offord (Yes/ELP)-produced

major-label debut *The Sentinel*, Aberdeen-based neo-proggers Pallas resume this tale of Cold War hostility cloaked in fantasy-heavy Atlantis-themed metaphor. Some 25,000 years have passed and mankind remains its own worst enemy, so the Sentinel decides to put

an end to its social experiment. This is the grim background to XXV, a bold and challenging collection that introduces vocalist Paul Mackie in the place of previous 26-year incumbent Alan Reed. Mackie sings with clarity, authority and no little versatility, guiding the listener through a surprisingly heavy, often thought-provoking and rarely less than evocative selection of material. *Monster* is an example of the album at its most stripped-down and commercial, though the reverse is true of the symphonic-sounding *Something In The Dark*. And as we wait to discover whether the planet will be snuffed out, *Violet Sky* and *The Unmakers Awake* conjure a shimmering, unnerving sense of foreboding and dread.

That Pallas have summoned music grand and weighty enough to match the album's futuristic eloquence was perhaps unlikely. But make no mistake, XXV does them enormous credit.

★★★★★

Dave Ling

Mr Big

What If... FRONTIERS

They don't make 'em like this any more.



Fourteen years after the desertion of guitarist Paul Gilbert comes

the melodic hard rock album that even Mr Big's four original band members advised us not to expect. In attaining multi-platinum success and a run of hits, including the ballad *To Be With You*, the US band scotched the conventional rock'n'roll notion that first-rate musicianly chops and hummable hooks can never be compatible bedfellows.

Produced in an overdub-free whirlwind by the increasingly ubiquitous Kevin Shirley, *What If...* offers an instant refresher course of the quartet's talents, from the album's impressive video calling card of *Undertow* to the sassy *American Beauty* (with distinct echoes of bassist Billy Sheehan's work alongside David Lee Roth), by way of the psychedelic-tinged *All The Way Up* and the power balladry of *Stranger In My Life*. The contributions of Sheehan and Gilbert reach a muscular climax during *Around The World*, drummer Pat Torpey the silent partner, sticking them together like glue throughout, while Eric Martin's voice - a mixture of soulful blues wailing and hard rock preening - hasn't aged a single day over the years since their last outing.

Granted, there's nothing as saccharine-friendly as *To Be With You* this time around, but if MTV still played real music, Mr Big would be stars once again.

★★★★★

Dave Ling

The Jigsaw Seen

Bananas Foster VARIO PHONIC

Sticking to the recipe.



You'd think that a Grammy nomination, albeit for packaging

rather than content, would act as an incentive. But it's taken Los Angeles psychedelic popsters the Jigsaw Seen a whole decade to follow up their last original collection, *Zenith*.

During this time they've occasionally resurfaced with clever covers of The Hollies and Scott Walker, but mainly they've been perfecting their own authentic 60s pastoral sound - awash with glockenspiels, mandolins and flutes - like digital never happened.

Bananas Foster is elaborately arranged but never pretentious. Sadly it's not particularly gripping, either. Only the first and last tracks have any real sense of purpose; the rest are simply cherry-picked from their own truncated edition of *Encyclopaedia Psychedelica*.

The best track, *Choreography Killed The Cat*, is excellent updated acid rock with spacey guitars and vocals, and *Where The Action Isn't* is fast and fuzzy, with a garage sound that they could have used more of for the album's momentum. The packaging's still good, though.

★★★★★

Hugh Fielder

Drive-By Truckers

Go-Go Boots PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

Country music done the right way.



For 14 years and 11 albums, Drive-By Truckers have been producing

everything that is right about modern country. As far removed from the plastic smiles and sequined camp of Nashville's big hat-wearing acts as it's possible to get, their grizzled, soulful take on the genre is as warm and comforting as a nice glass of good bourbon, while retaining enough rough and ready rockisms for a decent old time bar-room brawl.

The vocals veer from the wobbly whine of the laid back, engrossing literary murder ballad *The Fireplace Poker* to the chest-beating U2-with-soul, gospel-tinged drama of *Everybody Needs Love*. There's the hints of musical theatre from the honeyed tones of Shonna Tucker on the heart-wrenching *Where's Eddie* to the gruff, manly, sleazy Johnny Cash sentimentality of *Cartoon Gold*, adding up to a gorgeous palate of colour that's as easy to slip into as a hot bath. If you've resisted the charms of country rock so far, *Go-Go Boots* is a brilliant place to start if you feel like broadening your horizons.

★★★★★

Emma Johnston

ROUND-UP: PROG



Areknámés, Italy's answer to Van der Graaf Generator.

Areknámés

In Case Of Loss...

Black Widow



If Van der Graaf Generator had formed in Milan rather than Manchester, they'd likely sound a lot like Areknámés. For a start, the playing style of band leader, organist Michele Epifani, clearly owes a lot to VdGG keyboardist

Hugh Barton. The jazzy distractions, the jarring finger-stabs, the gently subversive tinkles: they're all here for your delectation. The VdGG vibe is heightened by some parping David Jackson-esque saxophone work on a track called *Alone*. But don't get the wrong impression - Areknámés also have a cool style of their own, so there's plenty of Armani amid the angst. The undoubted highlight of *In Case Of Loss...* is the 21-minute closing track,

The Very Last Number. It's a morbid, mesmerising marathon that really rams home the central theme of (you guessed it) loss. The feeling of isolation is exacerbated by the somewhat disturbing CD cover, which shows a beached whale carcass that washed up on a Florida shore way back in 1896. The dead creature is huge, gnarled and mysterious - much like this Italian band's music, in fact.

★★★★★

21st Century Schizoid Band

Live In Japan

Gonzo Multimedia



The CD companion to a DVD of the same name, this was recorded in November 2002 in Tokyo. Even though he's the only non-former King Crimson member in the band, guitarist/singer Jakko Jakszyk is the star. His vocals are full of precise Greg Lake-style phraseology, particularly on KC's ace ballad *Formentera Lady*.

★★★★★

Borean Dusk

Borean Dusk

www.myspace.com/boreandusk



Comin' atcha from Bridgeton, Missouri, Borean Dusk decided not to recruit a singer so they could concentrate solely on earth-trembling instrumental prog metal, interwoven with elaborate acoustic interludes. Dig the great track titles: *Blood On The Hoar Frost* and *Scarab Wings And Scorpion Eyes*. Hell, BD are already one of the bands of the year - and it's only January.

★★★★★

By Geoff Barton

Anti-Matter Poetry

Prog/Rock



The mysterious 't' (actually Thomas Thielens) is notorious for fronting German prog maestros Scythie. This, the third solo effort from the self-styled 'multi-instrumentalist, singer, producer and control freak', was four years in the making. A 68-minute brain-buster, if Alan Parsons (of Project Fame) recorded an album of Zappa covers, it would sound a lot like this.

★★★★★

Robert Schroeder

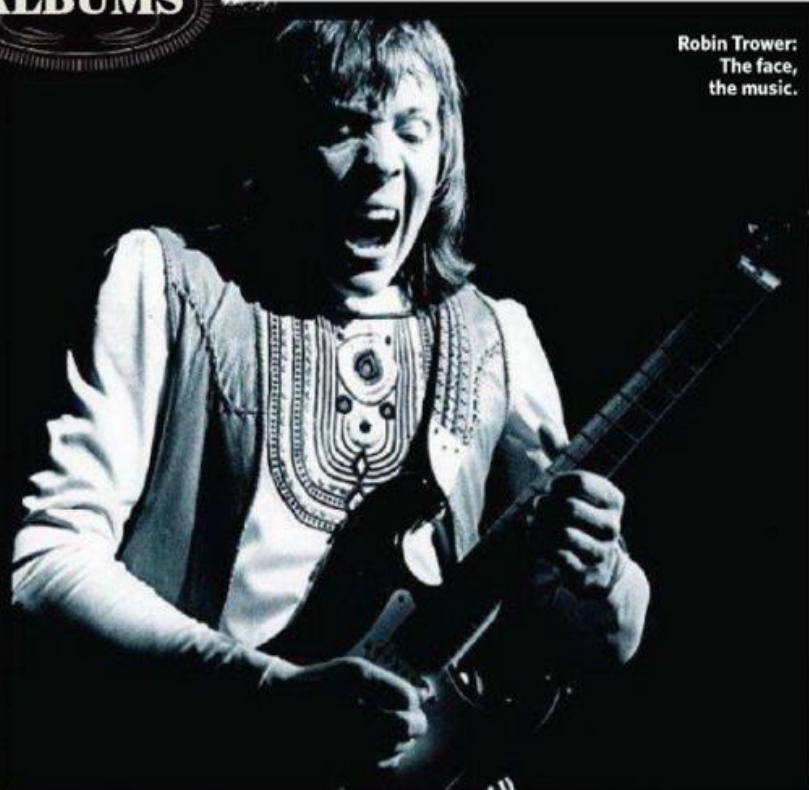
Galaxy Cygnus-A

Spheric Music



"I am happy!" exclaims Schroeder in the CD blurb. "Happy, because this re-recording is much better than my [1982] original." If you're a Jean Michel-Jarre fan you'll be happy, too: this galactic keyboard epic sounds exactly like the flamboyant Frenchman. The music utilises noise signals from a galaxy 1.05 billion light years away, recorded via radio telescope. No shit!

★★★★★

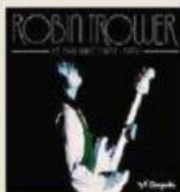


Robin Trower:
The face,
the music.

Robin Trower

At The BBC 1973-1975 CD RYX/US/EMI

A two-CD, 30-track collection of five radio sessions and an in-concert classic.



One of Britain's greatest guitarists, Robin Trower joined Procol Harum just after *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* was a hit, made six albums, then left. He re-emerged (after the short-lived Jude, with Frankie Miller) fronting a bluesy trio bearing his name in 1973. On bass and vocals, Jude's James Dewar. Dewar (who previously sang alongside Maggie Bell in Stone The Crows, and died in 2002) had a spectacularly soulful voice as eloquent and poignant as Trower's Stratocaster, occupying the rarified air between Paul Rodgers and Miller himself.

These discs capture the band at the height of its powers – a period that spawned the debut *Twice Removed From Yesterday*, the career-defining *Bridge Of Sighs* (1974) and *For Earth Below* (1975).

Some songs appear more than once, but Trower and band apparently worked hard to minimise this – repeating only one number from their set for John Peel in March '73 and opting to record three (then) unreleased numbers for Bob Harris six months later. Harris got first dibs in February '74, but the band recorded an entirely different four for Peel less than a fortnight later.

The opening numbers here (from '73) sound as if lifted from an old TDK C90 rather than a BBC master, but the likes

of a funky *Man Of The World* and *Daydream* (a beautiful homage to Jimi Hendrix) shine through. Likewise *Day Of The Eagle*, which ends with a crescendo rather than the slow blues of the (then unrecorded) album take.

The sound quality picks up for the later sessions, though – two of which were bonus tracks on the 2007 remaster of *Bridge Of Sighs* – highlighting a superb *The Fool And Me* and *In This Place* with a double-tracked guitar solo that's probably better than the *Sighs* version.

On disc two the trio's original drummer Reg Isidore has been replaced by Bill Lordan. Four songs – including brilliant versions of *Fine Day* and *Gonna Be More Suspicious* – recorded in January '75 – are followed by a glorious 10-song *In Concert* played the very next day. This diamond has been issued before, but never as authentically as here. Earlier releases appeared polished, with crowd sounds from venues suspiciously larger than the Beeb's old Paris Theatre studio in London's Lower Regent Street...

Truly classic rock, sounding as timeless and pure as when it was created. This collection works both as a 'best of' for newcomers and an archive for converts.



Neil Jeffries

Sully Erna

Avalon SPIN/FARM

Godsmack man finds a different beat.



Sully Erna has no need to make a solo album that's heavy and

brutal: he can do that any time as the frontman with Godsmack. Instead, he's gone for an altogether more moody style. With tribal rhythms and a stripped-down musical set up, this is a darker, more claustrophobic approach.

At times, you get the feeling that Erna disappears up his own behind, but there are some moments here that are stunning. The best track by some way is the mammoth *7 Years*, which really is touched by the spectre of Zeppelin in their more acoustic approach. But *Sinner's Prayer* and *The Departed* are also powerfully emotive.

It's doubtful that *Avalon* will be the springboard for a huge Erna solo career. More likely he's clearing out some ideas that wouldn't fit onto a Godsmack album. But this is diverting and interesting enough to make you hope that this isn't a one-off release from the man.



Malcolm Dome

Jonny

Jonny AVIATION

Gorky's *Teenage Mynci Club*. Some collaboration albums you could have enjoyed more in your head. It doesn't take a musicology doctorate to conclude what the mid-point between *Teenage Fanclub's* Norman Blake and Gorky's *Zygotic Mynci's* Euros Childs might sound like, and Jonny sits pleasantly and inoffensively there: half mid-paced Big Star jangle, half surrealist pastoral folk about witches. An air of after-you politeness pervades, each acceding to the other's talent without making much of an impact – bar the odd harmony, synth prod and approving nod. So *English Lady* is a stirring example of Childs' dappled balladeering and *Candyfloss* showcases Blake's impeccable knack with a power-strum, but only the Sufjan-esque *The Goodnight, You Was Me* and *I Want To Be Around* are mixed-personality enough to warrant the project. Surprises do crop up, but not welcome ones – not even a slab of tired boogie-woogie piano (*Waiting Round For You*) and a ten-minute time

warp pastiche called *Cave Dance* that out-drones its welcome by a good eight minutes. A bit too sweet, Jonny.



Mark Beaumont

Stratovarius

Elysium FAR MUSIC

Finnish power-metal stalwarts' thirteenth album.



Long before the portmanteau was in popular use as shorthand for

A-list power-couples such as Brangelina and the now sadly defunct Bennifer, there was Stratovarius. This fusing of Stratocaster and Stradivarius captured perfectly the virtuoso-rock sensibility and neo-classical pomposity of this most high-minded of heavy metal bands.

Stratovarius have sold 2.5 million albums in a 27-year career. *Elysium*, their second album since the departure of guitarist and leader Timo Tolkki, is another masterclass in overblown, ultramelodic, widdle-heavy and quintessentially European power metal.

Darkest Hours and *Infernal Maze* are high-tempo anthems with shades of 80s-vintage Helloween and Queensryche. *Fairness Justified* is a power ballad, power metal-style. And the title track is like an album within an album, a labyrinthine 18-minute prog marathon reminiscent of Dream Theater's early pomp.

Stratovarius might just be the silliest band name of all time, but for connoisseurs of histrionic heavy metal, it doesn't get much better than this.



Paul Elliott

The Whigs

In The Dark KARTI

Southern rock nouveau



Touring mates of Kings Of Leon, Black Rebel Motorcycle

Club and Drive-By Truckers, Georgian racket pop trio The Whigs are avid students of southern noir rock. From BRMC they've gleaned a subterranean sonic squall put to excellent use on *Dying and Hundred/Million*. From Drive By Truckers they've garnered a dirty pop edge on display in *Automatic* and *So Lonely*. And *Kill Me Caroline* has certainly learnt the lessons of *Sex On Fire*: keep it stompin', keep it wailin' and keep it

potentially fatal (oh, and get it produced by KOL svengali Angelo Petraglia, while you're at it). Which is not to say that The Whigs' third album has been entirely pilfered during soundchecks. There's an amalgamation here of My Morning Jacket seascapes, Bob Seger roots rock and a vital guitar crunch that's all their own. And when the stone-hearted *I Don't Even Care About The One I Love* breaks out a Northern Soul groove, it's clear these Whigs aren't going to hang around getting dusty.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Mark Beaumont

Arboretum

The Gathering THRU | JACOBY

Following the road to God knows where.

Like the lone figure walking off into an unknown distance pictured on the cover, there's something both isolated and mystical about the fourth album by Baltimore's Arboretum. This isn't entirely a surprise; the quartet boast a back catalogue of shimmering folk-rock experimentation, culminating in 2007's exquisite *Rites Of Uncovering*, that marks them out as pioneers in the field.

It probably doesn't hurt either that, far from the earthy lyricism traditionally observed by alt-folk and Americana, The Gathering's inspirations come from Gnostic principles and the writings of

Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Certainly as opener *The White Bird* kicks into its distorted lumbering glow, there's an initial sense of journey (be it physical or existential) about the record. But things get more interesting when Arboretum venture off the map altogether.

The echoing vocal on *Waxing Crescents*'s stormy rumble serves as a detached precursor to its trippy, psychedelic neo-tribal drumming and hypnotic drones, while *The Empty Shell* shudders under one-and-a-half minutes of feedback squall before suddenly jack-knifing into an instantly addictive noisy pop stomp. However, *Song Of The Nile*'s ten-minutes plus amp wipeout closer means there are less instances of the bewitching stillness this act are so adept at, but it's still worth the trip.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Catherine Yates

Gang Of Four

Content NEU | GROF | AND

Punk-funk veterans return to cash in their cult kudos.



After decades of being name-dropped as a key influence by bands of

magnitude of Nirvana, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Franz Ferdinand and many more, this archetypally angular post-punk quartet have finally followed up last decade's live comeback with

their first new album in 16 years. Always fairly fluid, the line-up has been reshuffled once more, although the core guitar-vocal duo of Jon King and Andy Gill remains intact. Much of *Content* revisits the discordant, declamatory, politically-charged punk-funk of the band's early 1980s prime. But the more interesting numbers reveal a playful, experimental, arty underside. Tracks like the mournful dub-rock groove *I Can't Forget Your Lonely Face*, the dreamy vocoder lullaby *It Was Never Gonna Turn Out Too Good*, or the self-lacerating disco-funk confessional *I Party All The Time*. Here, as in all the best Gang of Four moments, the personal and the political collide. Three decades on, their calculated rage against the consumerist pop machine still feels valid and thoroughly engaging.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Stephen Dalton

White Noise Sound

White Noise Sound AI | NYF

NATURAL SOUND

Sounds familiar.



Swansea's White Noise Sound are not afraid to wear their influences on their sleeves. And most of them are gloomy. The Jesus And Mary Chain, My Bloody Valentine, Slowdive,

Spiritualized, Suicide, and even in the melodically sleazy *Blood*, The Dandy Warhols – the scuzzzy shoegazing grit runs through them like sugary words through smack-addled Brighton rock.

The good news is that what they lack in any sense of originality, they more than make up for in dirty-fingernailed authenticity, their self-titled debut awash with whispered, blissed-out, druggy vocals and vast swathes of howling feedback and directionless chiming riffs. Whatever time of day you put it on, you'll feel that fuzzy sense of unreality that comes at three o'clock in the morning after one too many beers. Or something. Reality becomes as distorted as the sounds they're making. If we really have to have an 80s revival, we're better off with this kind of anti-social but weirdly beautiful cacophony than anything else that the decade had to offer.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Emma Johnston

Lunatic Soul

Lunatic Soul II ISCORF

Super Mariusz.



Recognise the name Mariusz Duda? Nope, he doesn't play left back for Middlesbrough – he is in fact the frontman of Riverside, Poland's hottest prog band. Riverside

have often been described as Warsaw's answer to Porcupine Tree so, unsurprisingly, Duda's second solo album has more than a whiff of Steven Wilson about it.

Lunatic Soul I was released in 2008 and *II* is more than a simple follow-up, with Duda stressing that the listener should regard the project as: "a double album divided into two single ones... a continuation but certainly not a repetition".

Lunatic Soul is a much less mangled and aggressive beast than Riverside, Duda reining in his patented 'prog death grunts' and adopting a more sedate, not to say mysterious, approach. Beginning with *The In-Between Kingdom*, which with its ethnic vibe sounds like a Jade Warrior outtake, we embark on a journey that sounds like something Peter Gabriel could've created while being simultaneously tortured and under heavy sedation. The undoubted highlight is the 11-minute *Transition*, full swirling, windswept sounds and a half-spoken singing style that veers frequently between reflective and despairing.

With *Lunatic Soul II* Duda's stated aim was aim to create the soundtrack to an imaginary road movie about a lost soul. He's not only succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, he's recorded them as well.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Geoff Barton

ROUND-UP: MELODIC

Hinder: down and dirty rock 'n' roll, Oklahoma style.



Hinder

All American Nightmare

Universal Republic



We know what to expect from Hinder by now. With more than three million album sales, the Oklahoma quintet are

back to thumb their nose at political correctness and musical pretension of any kind. They serve up their rock 'n' roll with hummable choruses, lashings of sleazy guitar and a barrel of attitude. *All American Nightmare* is awash with liquor, loving, cigarettes, strip joints and life on the road.

Austin Winkler's vocals appear to have become fuller and a little gruffer since 2008's *Take It To The Devil* and a first-rate production from Kevin Churko accentuates the band's core heaviness on tracks like *Waking Up The Devil* without making them sound bombastic or repetitive. Lyrically? Well, that's a whole other question and Hinder will never win prizes for prose, even daring to lambast other artists for exploiting their looks – "You're a wannabe stripper with a microphone", roars Winkler during the rip-roaring anthem *Striptease*.

No matter, *AAM* is a fine album. Fans of Daughtry, Nickelback and Buckcherry should give it a go.

■■■■■■■■■■■

TNT

A Farewell To Arms

Metal Heaven



Little has gone right for TNT since Tony Hamell's departure in 2006. Both of the albums made with Shy/Siam's Tony Mills on vocals were slaughtered by press and fans – often quite humiliateingly so. Spurning fake grandiose pretension, *A Farewell To Arms* thankfully does a passable job of recapturing the band's original fusion of hooks and heaviness.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Bad Habit

Atmosphere

AOR Heaven



Practise has certainly made perfect for Swedish melodic rockers Bad Habit, who have now clocked up ten albums in a mega-long 24-year career. Voiced by Bax Fehling, a man with a smooth, strong and clear delivery, *In The Heat Of The Night*, *Angel Of Mine* and *Fantasy* are squeaky-clean Scandi-AOR songs of the highest calibre.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Heartland

Travelling Through Time

Escape Music



Since his days fronting Virginia Wolf, singer Chris Dusey has had an undated career, something confirmed by this double-disc retrospective of Heartland, also featuring guitarist Steve Morris (Export/Gillan/Shadowman). Search Goes On, a new song that sounds almost Mr Big-like, is a winner – and look out also for five fine unreleased bonus tracks.

■■■■■■■■■■■

Brian McDonald Group

Desperate Business

Yesterrock

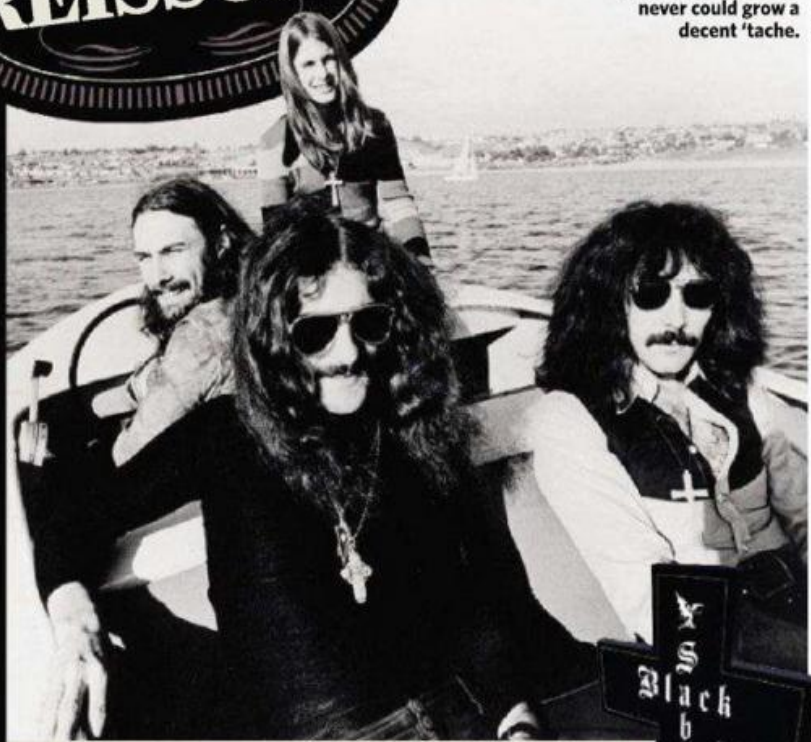


Originally released in 1987, this disc was produced by Beau Hill and features Reb Beach on guitar throughout, plus backing vocals from Fiona Flanagan on *These Are The Good Times*. Though very much of its era, it remains a stirring, hooky and confident signpost to Hill and Beach's later achievements with Winger.

■■■■■■■■■■■

By Dave Ling

HARD STUFF REISSUES



Black Sabbath: Ozzy never could grow a decent 'tache.

BOX SET

Black Sabbath

Cross Box Set UNIVERSAL

Everything you've already got, in a package you don't really want.



As a symbol of the woundingly short-sighted, arrogantly presumptuous position that fading institution once known as the record business now finds itself in, you would be hard pushed to find a better example than this overwrought, undercooked monstrosity.

Priced at £112.93, you get the eight original Ozzy-era Sabbath albums, plus the greatest hits, *We Sold Our Souls For Rock'n'Roll* – which of course you won't need if you have the eight original albums – plus three discs of radio documentaries featuring, it trumpets on each sleeve, "exclusive interviews with Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi and Geezer Butler" – neither of whom appear anywhere on the three discs. But don't worry, because there is a long, rambling telephone interview with drummer Bill Ward on two of them, plus commentary from such well-known Sabbath experts as Ben Ward from Orange Goblin, Chuck Billy from Testament, Scott Ian of Anthrax and Mike Bordin of Faith No More – significant portions of which are repeated across the CDs.

But wait. There's also the 100-page discography, which handily comes with the disclaimer on the back that it is "by no means definitive and features many omissions." Still not quite delighted

enough? How about the 'poster'? I use inverted commas here because to my mind the word 'poster' conjures up the notion of a large expanse of colourful paper, sizeable enough to command any surface it is attached to. This, however, is so small it barely covers the surface of the keyboard on my laptop. I'm looking at it now and laughing out loud. This is the poster equivalent of the Stonehenge set-up in *Spinal Tap*. Still, there are three nice Sabbath-esque guitar plectrums for you to play with. If you play guitar.

When you consider that you can buy the eight original Ozzy-era Sabbath CDs for around a fiver each on Amazon, and that you only need the first five anyway as the last three were abysmal, you're paying around £85 for... what exactly? The huge cross-shaped box the whole shebang comes in? Mine is already falling apart. And anyway, for £85 I'd want the bloody thing made of oak.

No, what you're paying for is the harebrained idea of some record company purse-pincher working on the basis that 'rock franchise' plus 'lavish packaging' equals money for old rope. There's nothing wrong with repackaging back catalogue – when it's done well. Don't take the piss, though.



Mick Wall

Nine Inch Nails

Pretty Hate Machine: Remastered ISLAND

Trent Reznor gets his spit and polish on. With *Pretty Hate Machine*'s master tapes finally back in their creator's hands after a protracted label dispute kept it out of circulation in the US for eight years, Trent Reznor has given NIN's seminal debut a complete sonic makeover to update it for the iPod generation.

Of course, anguished soul-baring in music has become par for the course this side of the millennium, but were PHM released for the first time today, it might still raise eyebrows. In the 21 years since Reznor spliced Public Enemy with Joy Division, and Prince with Depeche Mode and Skinny Puppy to produce an abrasive milestone in creative angst that stayed in the charts for two years, his own efforts might have sought ever more organic fusions of man and mixing desk. Elsewhere though, electronics and rock have remained a curiously un-evolved pairing.

As a listening experience, PHM 2.0 is far brighter and cleaner than its original incarnation, but ultimately it's the strength of the songwriting – from the corrosively addictive *Head Like A Hole* to the bleak, beautiful *Something I Can Never Have* – that shines through. Although that said, a super bass beef-up job on an already infamous cover of Queen's *Get Down Make Love* ups the sleaze 'n' grind quotient no end.



Catherine Yates

Norman Greenbaum

Spirit In The Sky – The Best Of REPRISE

All the hit and more.



History has serially cast Norman Greenbaum as the quintessential One Hit Wonder. With its Canned Heat riff and gospel hosannas, *Spirit In The Sky* was the song that pretty much ate 1970. After which, as Stormin' Norman dolefully pointed out on more than one occasion, "there were follow-ups, but no hits." It certainly wasn't through lack of effort or, as this sturdy comp illustrates, talent. Granted, some of these songs – *Tars Of India*, *Milk Cow*, *Hook And Ladder* – sound like mere novelties, but there's much to admire in the chugging

psychedelia of *Canned Ham* or *Junior Cadillac*'s slippery white funk. *Daddy I Know*, meanwhile, is a countrified gem that dates from 1967, back when he was a member of Dr West's Medicine Show. By 1972 Greenbaum was dividing his time between the recording studio and a goat farm in California, the latter celebrated here in rural ditties *Petaluma* and *Country Lad*. He was dropped by Warner Bros in the mid 70s, after which his pop career was effectively over, although he's never been too far from the public consciousness since, largely thanks to *Spirit In The Sky* living on through Doctor & The Medics, Fuzzbox and, yes, Gareth Gates and The Kumars.



Rob Hughes

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers

Damn The Torpedoes

UNIVERSAL

Breakthrough third album from the future Wilbury.



Having emerged victorious from a strength-sapping legal battle with label

MCA over song ownership (hence the title, cribbed from US Admiral David Farragut's declaration: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!") Petty's third album saw him firing on all cylinders, his pent-up fury channelled into a gung-ho tunelessness that combines the swagger of Jagger with the melodic clout of the E Street Band. Afforded an air-tight production by Jimmy Iovine, songs like *Refugee* and *Even The Losers* are the apotheosis of streamlined 70s rock, Petty's roadhouse tales of girls and life in the big city delivered with a knockout punch and an all-American optimism. "Like modern men and modern girls/ We're going to live in the modern world" he drawls like an auto-tuned Dylan during *Century City*, and it's easy to see how such upbeat sentiments, delivered during the musical and economic tumult of 1979, resonated with a mass audience, *Torpedoes* becoming Petty's first top ten album. The bonus ball comes with the extra CD, however, in the shape of *Nowhere* and *Surrender*, musical offcuts so sweetly melodic you'd swear they'd been kept in suspended animation.



Paul Moody

Jimmie Vaughan

Strange Pleasure/
Out There SUPPERS

Stevie Ray's big brother was pretty good, too.



Having left the Fabulous Thunderbirds, whose fun R&B never hit full

potential, Texan guitar-slinger Jimmie Vaughan embarked on a solo career after the death of Stevie Ray. *Strange Pleasure* retained the family style, and includes a tribute to SRV in *Six Strings Down*, although it's arguable that everything he did was blood tied. Very much a roots and roadhouse guy, Vaughan could still fly pretty on *Flamenco Dancer* and crank it heavy on *Just Like Putty*, while a choice set of sidemen, Dr John, George Rains, Nile Rodgers, and Lyle Lovett's gospel/country choir pals lent polish.

Out There may even be the better bet, thanks to the sophisticated arrangements on *Like A King* and the swampy soul of *Astral Projection Blues*. Out of fashion when released in the 90s, these songs will get a more sympathetic ear today.

★★★★★

Max Bell

Magnum

The Storyteller's
Collection UAC

It's not our fault - blame Ling...



Prefaced by the terrifying words 'Compiled by Dave Ling of *Classic Rock*

magazine' comes *The Storyteller's Collection*, another Magnum anthology. There's no shortage of those, but allowing Ling, a long-time champion of the band, access to their vaults is a guarantee that the choices will be made with care, however much of a cavil they raise.

His liner notes reveal that Magnum have been together for so long that they a) cannot remember exactly when they formed and b) that their first single was a cover of *Sweets for My Sweet* - a gruesome thought. The band have worked steadily, too, so there is just room, over the 32 songs here, to offer a primer of their earliest years with Jet records - *Kingdom Of Madness*, *Changes*, *Soldier Of The Line*, *Sacred Hour* and *The Spirit* capture them best - before sketching their breakthrough record, *On A Storyteller's Night*, via the title track, *Just Like An Arrow* and *Les Morts Dansant*,

a song that manages to be heavily poignant despite its pretensions.

The second disc is wonderfully over the top. Magnum are not subscribers to the 'less is more' theory, and the almost Shakespearian melodrama peaks with their three-part WWI tearjerker, *Don't Wake The Lion*. If Magnum's quirky charms have somehow eluded you, this is a nice place to start.

★★★★★

Jon Hotten

Circus Of Power

Vices ROCK CANDY

New York tough guys' second album: hits not included.



They were a rowdy five-piece rock'n'roll band from America. Their singer had tattoos and wore a bandanna. But that's where the similarities between Circus Of Power and Guns N' Roses ended.

When Circus Of Power's self-titled debut album was released in 1988, its meaty riffs and balls-out attitude drew comparisons to *Appetite For Destruction* and *The Cult's Electric*. But what COP lacked was that one killer song that would cross over to

a mainstream audience. As frontman Alex Mitchell concedes: "RCA wanted *Welcome To The Jungle* or *Love Removal Machine*, something that would kick-start the band."

It never happened. Like the debut, *Vices* was a bullish hard rock record with a sleazy vibe, typified by a title track in which Mitchell eulogized: "whiskey and sweet cocaine". But the big ballad, *Don't Drag Me Down*, was no *Sweet Child O' Mine*, and when *Vices* tanked, Circus Of Power left RCA for Columbia Records, for whom they recorded just the one album before splitting.

In 1999, the band's bassist-turned-guitarist Gary Sunshine played on the Guns N' Roses track *Oh My God*. But that was as close as any of these guys ever got to making it big.

★★★★★

Paul Elliott

The Jayhawks

Reissues COLUMBIA/LEGACY

First two major-label albums repackaged with extra tracks.

In 1992, *Hollywood Town Hall* marked a major breakthrough for the double-fronted Minneapolis band The Jayhawks. The twin guitar, organ-laced, harmony-rich

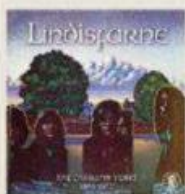
blend forged by frontpair Mark Olson and Gary Louris on two previous albums assumed a new conviction and authority.

Typically a Jayhawks tune was a delicate construct - trip-wired with cathartic Neil Young-style guitar, which works to assuredly devastating effect on the perennially impactful *Waiting For The Sun* and *Take Me With You (When You Go)*. Louris has described compiling these reissues as: "a Herculean task," and the work hasn't been in vain. Bolstered by the addition of pianist/vocalist Karen Grotberg, a more vibrant and looser approach - not least in a cover of Grand Funk Railroad's *Bad Time* - defined 1995's *Tomorrow The Green Grass*.

But it's the predominantly acoustic *The Mystery Demos*, the 18 track extra CD recorded in 1992, that provides the real treat. In their raw acoustic state, songs that would be reconfigured on future Jayhawks albums provide a fine testament to the invention of resource of the Olson and Louris songwriting partnership - just as it is undergoing a welcome 21st century reunion.

★★★★★ ...Hall
★★★★★ ...Grass

Gavin Martin



Lindisfarne

The Charisma Years: 1970-1973 EMI

Geordie folk royalty's first five albums on four discs (woolly jumper not included).

Cutting their teeth on the same late-60s/early-70s low-key folk-rock live circuit as Fairport Convention, Fotheringay and John Martyn, Newcastle's Lindisfarne quite possibly exceeded even their own expectations by landing at *Top Of The Pops* and chalking up a Number One album. Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, was it such a surprising turn of events? They may have lacked the blanket critical acclaim of their contemporaries, but they had a rich populist streak from the get-go.

The title of their 1970 debut album, *Nicely Out Of Time*, suggested a willingness to poke fun at themselves and the often serious nature of folk purists, and the inclusion of diversions into pub rock (*Road To Kingdom Come*) and country hoedowns (*Jackhammer Blues*) prevented them from being too niche. It reaped rewards when the following year's *Fog On The Tyne* album topped the charts (although it took six months to get there), propelled by the catchy hit single *Meet Me On*

The Corner and a title track that immediately rang out from the terraces of Newcastle United's St James' Park, and is still regarded as the city's unofficial anthem.

However, the success of *Fog...* meant that 1972's *Dingly Dell* was a hurried affair, chief writer Alan Hull's songs lacking the spark of the earlier albums. Listening back today, there's a sense of a band trying too hard have their cake and eat it, employing familiar folk motifs, but shakily going off on too many distant tangents. A 1973 live release may have been designed to give them time to take a breath and consider their next move - which turned out to be Hull and Ray Jackson (whose mandolin helped give the group their signature sound) putting together a new line-up while their colleagues left to form Jack The Lad.

Roll On Ruby (1974) found the new-look Lindisfarne embracing more American

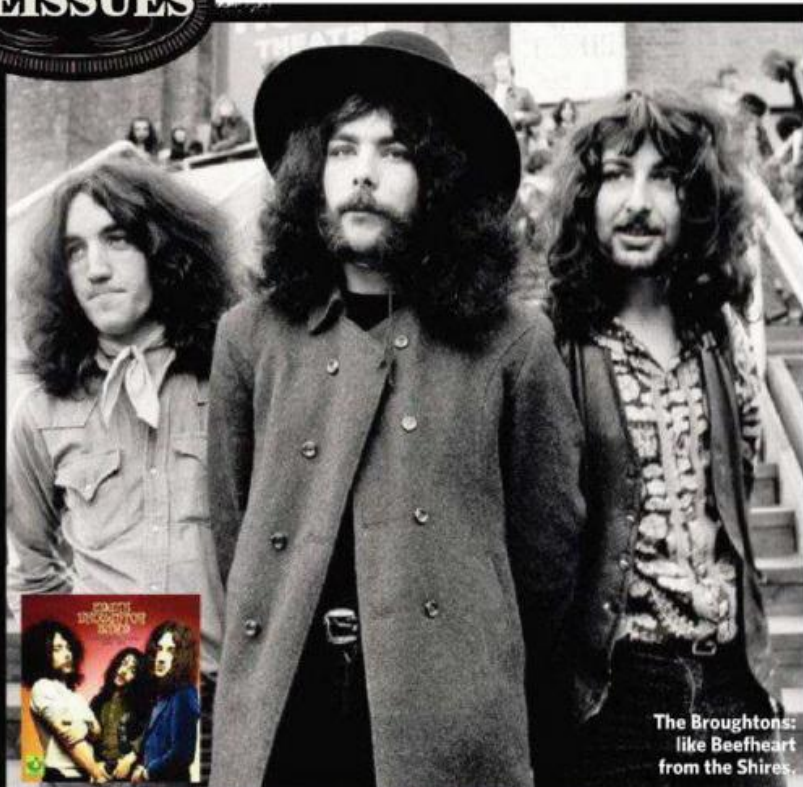
Lindisfarne: enjoying the innocent days before the Gazza hit.



influences, like jugband blues on *Steppenwolf* and *Tow The Line*, while *When The War Is Over* explored the same mythical West as Elton John's *Tumbleweed Connection*. Various permutations continued to record and tour, even after Hull's death in 1995, but never quite recaptured the spirit of playfulness of their earliest days.

★★★★★

Terry Staunton



The Broughtons: like Beefheart from the Shires...

The Edgar Broughton Band

The Harvest Years (1969 - 1973) EMI/HARVEST

Those middle-England psychedelic blues stompers give their Harvest output a much deserved dusting off.

Like the MC5 and The Stooges, or the Pink Fairies and The Deviants, the Edgar Broughton Band defied easy categorisation. Although their roots were firmly planted in the psychedelic 60s, they were also early signposts for radical punks like The Clash. Bushy-haired wildmen from Warwick, as fronted by a lead singer/guitarist with a massive stage presence and an obsession with Howlin' Wolf and Captain Beefheart, the Broughtons rapidly became unconventional stars of free festivals and street agitprop, and amassed a devoted following of malcontent youth eager to participate in their riotous show-stopping chant: "Out demons out."

Although this rebel exorcism became the Broughton band's signature, it was actually a Fugs' song, *Exorcising The Demons Out Of The Pentagon*, composed for a surreal Vietnam War protest.

As a live band, they were a crowd pleasing guitar-powered juggernaut, distinguished by Edgar's alarmingly powerful voice. This is plainly evidenced by a newly unearthed 1970 Hyde Park concert tape on the fourth disc of this four-CD set. In the studio, though, they had trouble generating the same excitement. An unkind evaluation might have been that they were doing

faux-Beefheart, and while managing some original, Magic Band-style rhythms and eccentric guitar figures, they could never match the fast and bulbous Van Vliet dementia. (But who in their right minds could scale the heights of the Captain's true madness.) Above all they lacked a creditable or memorable lyricist. Without Edgar's extraordinary voice, the majority of their songs would have been little more than inane hippie/prog ditties. ("I am the Madhatter/And I'm getting fatter.")

The Broughtons, though, were not without a few studio gems, and these usually happened when either their sense of humour came into play – as in *Apache Drop Out*, an unholy, and indeed unlikely marriage of The Shadows' *Apache* and Beefheart's *Dropout Boogie* – or when they kept it simple, like the standout singles *Hotel Room* and *Call Me A Liar*. Edgar, his brother and drummer Steve, and Arthur Grant on bass, may not have been the most accomplished of recording artists, but they were an important British institution and thoroughly deserving of repackaging for posterity. And let's face it, few singers can even come close to sounding like Captain Beefheart.

■■■■■■■■■■

Mick Farren

Barclay James Harvest

Once Again FAB

The first great BJH record.



Now, this is an odd record, to be sure. It heralded a falling out with musical director Robert John Godfrey, and a few of the tracks were also credited to the wrong people (nothing sinister going on, just genuine confusion). But through it all, *Once Again* sparkles as a truly great early 70s prog release.

After finding their feet with 1970's self-titled debut, the band hit a confident stride. Backed by a dynamic orchestra, the foursome marched majestically through a selection of well-constructed songs, with *Gladriel* and *Mocking Bird* becoming the first BJH classics.

But these are far from the only high points. *Happy Old World* tackles environmental issues long before they became trendy. *Song For The Dying* is a potent anti-war polemic. And *Vanessa Simmons* is a love song about confused emotions.

Not only has *Once Again* been remastered with bonus tracks (including *White Sails*, left off the original because they didn't feel this sea shanty fitted), but there's also a DVD with a 5.1 surround sound version. What we have is a celebration of the record's fortieth anniversary, while also recognising that this has proved itself to be timeless.

■■■■■■■■■■

Malcolm Dome

Buffalo

Dead Forever... REPERTOIR

Dead but not forgotten.



Who are the greatest rock band ever to come out of Australia?

AC/DC? Rose Tattoo? The Saints? Jo Jo Zep And The Falcons, even? Nope, none of the above. Ladeez 'n' gennemen, allow us to introduce you to the obscure delights of the one, the only, Buffalo. *Dead Forever...* was the band's debut album, released in 1972. Imagine if Black Sabbath had been a bunch of Fosters-swigging larrikins, or if Free had spent their life ogling gals in bikinis on Bondi. That's Buffalo for ya.

Vocalist Dave Tice (later of London pub rock stalwarts The Count Bishops, would you believe) leads the way with his psychotic barking, while bassist

Pete Wells (who would go on to join the Tatts) ain't far behind, sounding like Andy Fraser crossed with a Sumo wrestler. *Pay My Dues* could be a Blue Cheer demo; *I'm A Mover* is 11 minutes of madness and mayhem; *Ballad Of Irving Fink* lopes like Skippy with a tranquilliser dart up its arse. Sadly, Buffalo's career advancement was hampered by their sexist attitude. But they ploughed on regardless, later recording songs like *I'm A Skirt Lifter*, *Not A Shirt Raiser*. Attaboys!

■■■■■■■■■■

Geoff Barton

Cressida

Reissues REPERTOIR

A visit to prog's lower leagues. Far from the sell-out crowd glamour of prog's Premier League were bands like Cressida, firmly in the middle of NPower League Division Two – the band you booked when Greenslade were too busy. Signed to Vertigo, Cressida played pleasing, if hardly adventurous, light jazz rock. If they had a 'hit' it would be *To Play Your Little Game*, the opening track on their eponymous 1970 debut, which with its melancholic and very English sound, is possibly all you need to know about Cressida. Their second album *Asylum*, recorded following the departure of founder and guitarist John Heyworth, is a little less fully formed, bulked out by the lengthy *Munich* and *Let Them Come When They Will* which sound a bit like the sort of mellow instrumentals you used to hear on those stereo demonstration albums where some session men pretended to play heavy rock.

■■■■■■■■■■ Cressida

■■■■■■■■■■ Asylum

Tommy Udo

Poison

Nothin' But A Good Time: The Poison Collection CAPTAN

Style, or rather lack of it, over substance



It says much about Poison and associated glam goons, that this box set

comes not with a lavish booklet detailing the band's career highs and lows, but rather with a free bandana. You'd like to think that these hair-brained – or in the case of bandana-clad singer Bret Michaels, hairless – glam metallers hell bent on having a good time were actually being

ironic. Deep down you just know that irony is quite beyond them.

It certainly has no place in the 18 tracks on offer here (most of which are duplicated on the accompanying 16-track *Live - The Hits*). Tacky, occasionally charming (but more often charmless) and bereft of anything approaching social conscience or commentary. It says much that the best two songs are covers - Loggins & Messina's *Your Mama Don't Dance* and Grand Funk's *We're An American Band* - although power ballad *Every Rose Has Its Thorn* showed that Poison did at least have some talent.

The rest is candyfloss. It probably sounds good when you're drunk, and no doubt *Unskinny Bop* even challenged the intellect of the gormless morons who bought into the band in the first place. But thank the good lord above that era's way, way behind us.

★★★★★

Jerry Ewing

Phil Manzanera/ Quiet Sun

Reissues EXPRESSION

Rockin' solo and side-album nuggets from Roxy axe hero. The latest additions to Manzanera's own-label collector

revisions are a duo recorded on the same day at Island Studios in December 1974 in two sessions - *Diamond Head* (midday-6pm) and *Quiet Sun's Mainstream* (6pm-midnight). And these time slots certainly reflect the moods. Debut solo album *Diamond Head* is a waggish and chirpy fandangle; *Quiet Sun* represent Manzanera's pre-Roxy art-prog, their 1970 jazz rock vectors thrumming toward the late-night drift of the mind's eye.

Diamond Head leads with *Frontier*, the Robert Wyatt-sung Tropicalian nonsense nugget (Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard's *Team Spirit* reworked), before textbook Eno vignettes (*Big Day* and *Miss Shapiro*) intervene to break up Manzanera's Latino party/shameless guitar exhibitionism. John Wetton and Doreen Chanter also guest alongside the Roxy backbone to create whimsical - and sometimes extraordinarily complex - orbits.

A critical favourite at the time, *Mainstream* beguiles with instrumental krauty sorcery, Canterbury playfulness and Gong-ish twinklings a-go-go - particularly on tracks like *Mummy Was An Asteroid*, *Daddy Was A Small Non-Stick Kitchen Utensil* and *Rongwrong* featuring

Charles Hayward's wonky Syd-style vox (later to surface on *Manzanera And Friends' 801 Live*, alongside tracks from *Diamond Head*, fact fans). Both releases carry demos (including some great Farfisa freak-outs from *Quiet Sun '71*) and a band interview, fold-out digipacks and photo-glorious luxe liner booklets.

★★★★★ ... Head
★★★★★ Main...

Jo Kendall

Various Artists

Kris Needs Presents...

Dirty Water: the Birth Of Punk Attitude YEAR 77/RO

Definitive compilation of the pioneers of punk.

The teenage president of the Mott The Hoople fan club who edited

ZigZag magazine and went on to DJ with and write biographies on everyone from The Clash to Primal Scream, Kris Needs isn't so much rock as marble.

Little wonder then that this 33-track collection tracing punk's growth from its origins in US garage rock (it opens with The Standells' *Dirty Water*) to its entry into the mainstream in 1977 is impeccably sourced.

What separates it from the million other compilations covering the same ground is the Alan Lomax-esque attention to detail.

In Needs' hands, the passage from The Pink Fairies proto-punk anthem *Do It* via Dr Feelgood (Roxette) to The Saints (*I'm Stranded*) becomes a sprawling sonic tapestry, diversions into everything from avant noise (The Silver Apples' *Confusion*) to reggae (Culture's *Two Sevens Clash*) only adding to the sense that punk attitude was primarily about experimentation and individuality before Johnny's stare and Sid's leather jacket ingrained it in the popular imagination as simply an excuse to pogo.

★★★★★

Paul Moody

Rob Zombie

Hellbilly Deluxe 2 ROADBLASTER

Never mind the bonus.



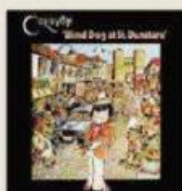
Is Rob Zombie a schlock-culture genius or horror house franchise? And is he maybe stretching himself too thin? He makes splendid splatter movies, he wins Grammys, he publishes a comic book, and at any moment will be

staging a pyro-tastic live tour. And there's absolutely no argument that his musical work is genre-impressive. Frenzied guitars, ultra-sharp production, and who could resist lyric lines like "Mars needs women/Angry red women?" On the other side of the coin, though, *Hellbilly Deluxe 2* was years in the making, and for it to be quickly followed by a tour-related reissue seems cruel to the Zombie faithful, despite offering up a bunch of extra goodies to lure them back.

Not that the goodies are less than deluxe. Three excellent new tracks are added - *Devil's Hole*, *Girls And The Big Revolution*, *Michael and Everything Is Boring* - plus a reworking of *The Man Who Laughs*. The new and extensive artwork is truly impressive, and a bonus DVD contains a 30-minute tour documentary titled *Transylvanian Transmissions*, a video for the track *Mars Needs Women* and a live version of the Alice Cooper classic *School's Out*. The question remains, however. Can an artist really treat an album like a work in progress to be added to and messed with according to other demands on his time?

★★★★★

Mick Farren



Caravan

Reissues REPERTOIRE

The seventh and eighth albums from the Canterbury prog rock stalwarts.

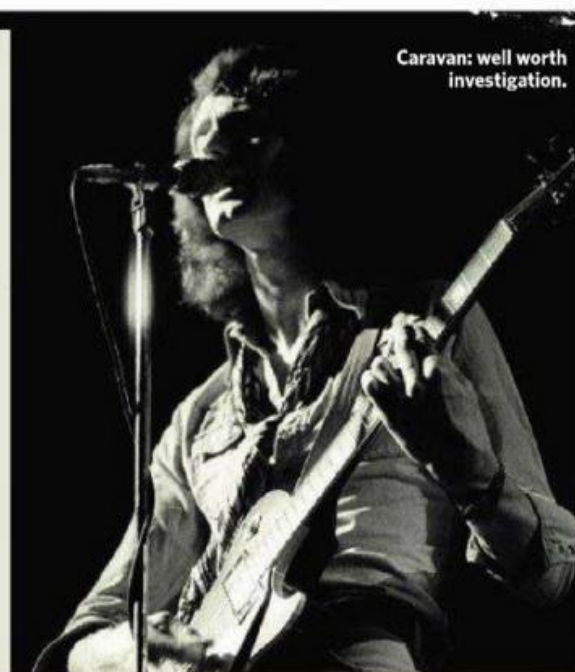
Alumni of the Canterbury scene that spawned Soft Machine (the band had played with Kevin Ayers and Robert Wyatt in pre-Softs incarnation The Wilde Flowers), Caravan's combination of symphonic flourishes and pun-laden lyrics took an unexpected lurch towards the mainstream with their sixth album *Cunning Stunts*, originally released in 1975.

With former Curved Air bassist Mike Wedgewood adding Sly Stone-esque grooves (on *Welcome To The Day and Lover*), and singer guitarist Pye Hastings weighing in with breathless power pop (*Stuck In A Hole*) the result is a schizophrenic affair, culminating in the near 20-minute song suite *Dabsong Conshirtoe*, a feat of musical dexterity combining folk, jazz and country rock which is as bold as it is bewildering.

Put it down to a new label, or the departure of keyboardist David Sinclair, but follow-up *Blind Dog at St Dunstons* is far leaner, aimed at

commercial success rather than approval from their beard-stroking fanbase. Hastings' delivery is clear as glass throughout, his voice contrasted with soaring synths (*Here I Am*), crunching rock riffs (*A Very Smelly, Grubby Little Oik*) and, progressive funk rhythms (*Jack And Jill*).

Why such a potent blend of musicality and melodic power didn't reap a greater commercial reward at the time remains a mystery; to modern ears Hastings' trebly warble is every inch the equal of Yes's Jon Anderson. Perhaps it was their whimsical nature that was the band's undoing. The album's title stemmed from a comment made by Noël Coward regarding the mating habits of dogs, while nine-minute finale *All The Way (With John Wayne's Single-Handed Liberation Of Paris)* could have tried the



Caravan: well worth investigation.

patience of Bonzos fans, let alone audiences gearing themselves up for the onslaught of punk. A reminder, nonetheless, that Caravan's path down the road less travelled is always well worth investigation.

★★★★★ Cunnin' Stunts

★★★★★ Blind Dog at St. Dunstons

Paul Moody



Made in Japan: (l-r) Steve Jansen, Richard Barbieri, David Sylvian, Mick Karn and Rob Dean.

Japan / David Sylvian

They might have looked like 80s teen pin-ups, but along with the clothes-and-make-up style there was music of real substance.

Now remembered by those who have never actually owned any of their albums as poster boys for the New Romantics – the early-80s movement based on a post-punk taste for ‘shocking’ dress-wear and androgynous imagery – there was far more to Japan, and their leader, singer-songwriter David Sylvian, than met the eye.

Arriving in a photo-flash of publicity in 1978, looking like a cross between the New York Dolls and Roxy Music, at a time when every other new band looked like Johnny Rotten, Japan almost willed you to misunderstand them from the off.

It was easy to dismiss early Japan as all surface, no substance: they looked a million dollars in their photos – more expertly made-up and coiffured than most girls. But their music, a one-inch deep mix of glam clichés and punk orthodoxy, topped off by a weird cross between Marc Bolan and Bryan Ferry on vocals, was as fizzy and cheap-tasting as New Coke.

What nobody bargained for was the remarkable staying power of the group, or their indefatigable desire to confound the expectations of even their most ardent fans. As a result, by the time they had released their biggest-selling album,

Tin Drum, in 1981, they had already decided to split, once again subverting career-expectations. Even when they re-emerged briefly in the early 90s they did so under the name Rain Tree Crow, thus ensuring the perfect non-comeback comeback.

Sylvian, meanwhile, has evolved into one of the most musically narrow-cast, publicity-resisting artists this country has ever produced under the ‘rock’ banner. There were only five fully fledged Japan albums. Since then there have been more than 20 Sylvian-related ‘solo’ releases, and at least 30 guest appearances on others’ recordings, all of which are worthy of everyone’s attention. Indeed you get a clue to his true musical nature in naming some of his regular collaborators, from (recently deceased) bassist Mick Karn and keyboardist Richard ‘Porcupine Tree’ Barbieri in Japan, through to Robert Fripp and Ryuichi Sakamoto in his solo career.

If we really must draw the beginner’s attention to just a few Japan and Sylvian albums, the following are probably the place to start, though, please, not finish.

Mick Wall

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Essential Classics



Japan

Tin Drum VIRGIL, 1981

A puzzling place to start for newcomers, perhaps – a band called Japan records Chinese-themed album – but this really is the moment where David Sylvian shed his rock-star skin and began to butterfly into an original artist in his own right.

Influenced by his newfound friendship with Yellow Magic Orchestra, and determined as ever to take the career-path less travelled, Sylvian led Japan through their most exquisite collection of songs. The unexpected hit *Ghosts* really did end up haunting you, while tracks like *The Art Of Parties* and *Visions Of China* showed what wonderfully expressive – and brave – musicians they were.



David Sylvian

Secrets Of The Beehive

VIRGIL, 1987

Several albums could have filled this slot. ...*Beehive* gets the nod on the basis that it is solo Sylvian’s most accessible, and therefore the place to pick up the story post-Japan.

A combo of jazz-inflected, orchestrally enhanced arrangements that leave the songs utterly denuded and achingly vulnerable, pepped-up by synths, loops and other studio sounds, it also features Sylvian’s trademark vocals unusually high in the mix. It’s the whole, though, that most impresses. The CD comes with *Forbidden Colours* (with Ryuichi Sakamoto) from the *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* soundtrack.

Superior Reputation cementing



Japan

Gentlemen Take Polaroids

VIRGIN, 1980

Their last with guitarist Rob Dean, this was also the last Sylvian-related album to resemble what a conventional rock record might be.

It was also the first time Japan came into their own, now mixing Euro-disco to their glam and punk influences, the glacial keyboards of Richard Barbieri adding a mirrored sheen to Mick Karn's tentacled bass and Steve Jansen's cubist percussion on stand-out tracks like *Methods Of Dance* and the cathedral-like title track.

Japan were suddenly influential in their own right, as newbies like Duran Duran fought to keep up.



Japan

Brilliant Trees VIRGIN, 1984

His first solo album and still one of his most interesting. Clues to his future direction had been left as far back as ... *Polaroids*, which closed with *Taking Islands In Africa*, his first collaborative songwriting effort with Ryuichi Sakamoto.

Now Sylvian gave full vent to his more experimental ideas, melding purring funk with spacey jazz and icy ambient sounds, most affecting on the almost jaunty *Red Guitar*, the twilight *Weathered Wall* and the epic title track. Featuring guests including Sakamoto, Can alumni Holger Czukay, John Martyn and bassist Danny Thompson, this was Sylvian's biggest chart hit.



Rain Tree Crow

Rain Tree Crow VIRGIN, 1991

When news broke that Japan had re-formed (albeit without Dean, and for just one album) the hosannas were stymied somewhat by the additional news that Sylvian had insisted they do so as Rain Tree Crow.

The results, however, bore out his decision. This is not the long-delayed follow-up to *Tin Drum* that fans desired, but a deliberately unrehearsed, apparently improvised mix of Sylvian's shimmering ambient ballads, and provocatively experimental instrumentals like *New Moon At Red Deer Wallow* (very Low-period Bowie).

A bittersweet farewell, then, but one worth cherishing.



Sylvian

Dead Bees On A Cake

VIRGIN, 1999

A quarter-century into his career, Sylvian could have been forgiven had he relinquished his power to surprise. Instead he proved as effortlessly un-pin-down-able as ever, not least on the swampland blues of the Tom Waits-like *Midnight Sun*. The muted trumpet on *Thalheim* offered equally unexpected delight, while on *The Shining Of Things* he proved that nobody outside the pure jazz spectrum does lounge-lizard cool any more like David Sylvian. Ably assisted by collaborators including Jansen, Sakamoto and Marc Ribot, this was Sylvian at full guttering-candle power.

Good Worth exploring

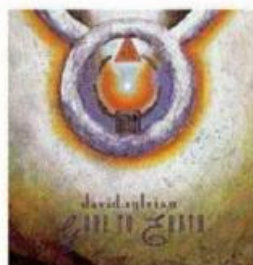


Japan

Quiet Life ARISTA, 1980

Japan's third - and last - album for original label Hansa-Ariola was the first to offer strong hints of what the future had in store as the band began to fight free of their influences. Sylvian's voice - previously little more than an extended pout - took on the now familiar acid-vibrato, and the material grew wings at last with the title track (and lead single) providing them with their first anthem.

It's the modern CD version that really stands up, though, with its inclusion of contemporaneous singles not included at the time, *Life In Tokyo*, *European Son* and a heavily 'stylised' version of the old Motown chestnut *I Second That Emotion*.



David Sylvian

Gone To Earth VIRGIN, 1986

Originally a double album with 17 tracks spread over four sides of vinyl - the first two comprising vocal-led songs, the latter a series of ambient instrumentals - Sylvian's third solo release was a typically bold adventure guaranteed to leave the faint-hearted searching for the nearest escape hatch.

A pity, as there's gold waiting to be sifted here, not least the three tracks co-written with Robert Fripp, including the jarringly dissonant (vocal) title track and the slowly pulsing, Floyd-esque (instrumental) closer *Upon The Earth*. Former Be Bop Deluxe guitarist Bill Nelson also plays and co-writes on the instrumental *Answered Prayers*.



David Sylvian

Manafon SAMADHISOUND, 2009

Sylvian's most recent work shows no more desire to accommodate the passing fancy of the casual disc buyer (or downloader). That said, some albums are more difficult than others. For that reason this is not the place to start. But for seasoned Sylvian and Japan collectors this is a gem that grows in power as time whooshes by.

Sylvian has left behind his twinkling ambient sounds and headed for darker, nonlinear musical territory. As ever the supporting cast is top-drawer, including saxophonist Evan Parker. The musical destination: those places few can or would wish to follow.

Avoid



Japan

Obscure Alternatives

ARISTA, 1978

It seems churlish to single out an album as devoid of originality, spontaneity or even a half-decent cover version as this. Especially when David Sylvian, with and without Japan, has based his entire career on ensuring everything he has subsequently recorded bears some or all of those hallmarks. But if you are new to this catalogue it's only fair to put a red flag over this as definitely one to avoid. But then it was only Japan's second album, they were still being touted by their record company as the new Bowie (or whatever the current poster boy was at the time). They would, however, never be this compliant again.

Essential Playlist

Quiet Life

Quiet Life

Life In Tokyo

Quiet Life

Methods Of Dance

Gentlemen Take Polaroids

The Art Of Parties

Tin Drum

Ghosts

Tin Drum

Visions Of China

Tin Drum

Bamboo Houses

1982 single with Ryuichi Sakamoto

Forbidden Colours

1983 soundtrack to *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*, with Ryuichi Sakamoto

Red Guitar

Brilliant Trees

Brilliant Trees

Brilliant Trees

Upon This Earth

Gone To Earth

The Boy With The Gun

Secrets Of The Beehive

Orpheus

Secrets Of The Beehive

Rain Tree Crow

Rain Tree Crow

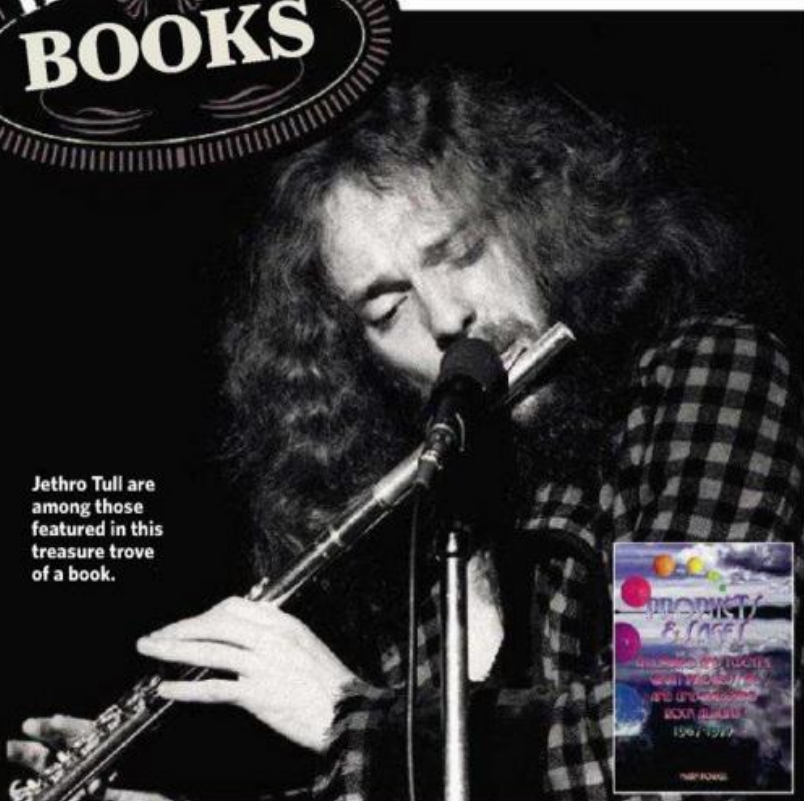
Pocketful Of Change

Rain Tree Crow

Blackwater

Rain Tree Crow

Jethro Tull are among those featured in this treasure trove of a book.



Prophets & Sages: An Illustrated Guide To Underground And Progressive Rock Albums 1967-1975

Mark Powell CHERRY RED

Entering the dustier corners of the prog rock dungeon.

There was a time when prog rock really was the domain of the men of a certain age who looked like they'd just walked off the front cover of Jethro Tull's *Aqualung* album. All greatcoat clad, fingerless gloved types with inappropriate facial hair and a penchant for (whisper it) brown corduroy. And indeed there are still those who not only hold to that belief, but those who ably illustrate it too.

It would be very easy to say that this splendidly researched tome is for those people. One can almost smell the bargain basement of the second hand record emporium upon opening its very pages, and indeed there is more than one album written about inside that you're likely to have stumbled across in said establishment. At least before the resurgence of interest in the genre sent prog prices skyrocketing.

However while there are pockets of resistance within the prog community whose toys will exit the pram with speed were you to suggest that what this book covers is only a part of the genre and not the genre as a whole, progressive music has moved on apace. And what *Prophets & Sages* represents is a glimpse of a magical era when ideas and not balance sheets truly were at the forefront of music.

Get past the quite horrific cover and you'll unearth a treasure trove of well researched and expertly presented articles on such a wide variety of albums – from the jazz meets classical approach of Jethro Tull's *Stand Up*, through the warped space rock overdrive of Hawkwind's *Warrior On The Edge Of Time* to the expected conceptualisation and almost rustic charm of Camel's *Music Inspired By The Snow Goose*.

At times, like with Aphrodite's Child's apocalyptic vision *666* or Khan's quirky *Space Shanty* (featuring a youthful Steve Hillage) it's easy to snigger and ask yourself: 'What were they thinking?' But with each entry, lovingly embellished with cuttings and adverts from the music press of the time, this represents one of the best insights into the whys and wherefores of an often misunderstood genre you'll find.

As such, it is a treasure trove awaiting discovery. Because the eager young pups who delve deep and use this as an inspiration to move forward musically, instead of simply recreating what's gone before (who mentioned Marillion?) are the ones who'll be written about when a version of this book will be penned in 2050.

 Jerry Ewing

Richard

Ben Myers PEACOCK

An imaginary journey through the mind of a lost Preacher.



In the wrong hands, this could have been a travesty. A work of fiction from the viewpoint of missing Manics' lyricist Richey Edwards, it covers the time between his walking out of a London hotel room and his car being found near the Severn Bridge two weeks later. There are people who still miss him 16 years on – not least the rest of the band – so the potential for upset was huge.

It's a testament to Myers' empathy that *Richard* swerves mawkishness to craft a moving account of an inward battle against personal demons. The story of the band's rise from Blackwood to become the most exciting, thought provoking band in the UK is told in flashback, but this is no biography – there's much more imagination at work than that. The highs of their breakthrough come breathtakingly alive, the boozing, the casual sex and moments of madness with a razor blade painted in vivid detail. And there's humour too, in the protagonist's view of his bandmates, the fans and the media, befitting a man who – despite his torment – had a fast wit, which makes the conclusion all the more unbearable. In conveying emotion so beautifully, *Richard* is a special book. Ben Myers didn't personally know Richey Edwards, but by the end of this you'll feel that you know, love and cry for his version of him.

 Emma Johnston

Seasons They Change: The Story Of Acid And Psychedelic Folk

Jeanette Leech WAVELAND

A fish-eyed trip through a half-century of electric folk. Faced with something of this size and scope, the task at hand – that's conceptualising the "birth, death and resurrection" of experimental folk music from the last 50 years – is enormous. Unsurprisingly, no-one's quite tackled it yet. So step forward UK journalist and psych-folk superfan Jeanette Leech, with the big idea of linking artists like Davy Graham, Pete Stampfel, Ash Ra Tempel, Wire, King Crimson, Animal Collective,

The Kinks and hordes more in a huge, kaleidoscopic melting pot, which is also her first book.

Thankfully Leech's energy, attention to detail and depth of knowledge help pull together a tremendous investigation, crammed with interviews, histories and ideas. From the foundations in the 50s to the freewheeling boom of the 60s and the barren years up to 21st century rediscovery, Leech builds her freaktopic family tree using heavyweight US and UK roots, with the shoots and leaves of the epic diaspora represented too as European groups enter the picture, and modern American musicians light a fire beneath the current scene (Philadelphia psych-folk mainman Greg Weeks from Espers provides the simple but effective foreword). Fitting alongside Rob Young's *Electric Eden*, Vernon Joynson's *Fuzz, Acid And Flowers* and Richie Unterberg's *Acid Folk* trilogy, welcome an engrossing new keystone of reference in this multicoloured stratum.

 Jo Kendall

Appetite For Destruction

Mick Wall ORION

Dispatches from cupboards on the rock 'n' roll frontline.



As Wall writes in his introduction, 'these stories may come from many different places – Moscow, Berlin, Rio, Los Angeles – what really characterises them is the time they come from'. This is true, and vital. For those of us who were there at the time, they run hot with the vibe of this last great era of rock n roll excess. Wall was a satyr at the feast, his dispatches dripping with salacious detail, his journalism most definitely of the participatory kind. Yet the real skill behind his work is that it was inclusive. There was a strong bond between writer and reader, and Wall, and *Kerrang!*, stood apart from the music press of the time in that they celebrated the culture, embraced the fun, made stars of the stars.

As the decade hurtles towards its conclusion, from the glories of Rock In Rio to the bloated egos of the Moscow Peace Festival and on to the nadir of Wall's bizarre imprisonment in a cupboard at a Poison gig, a genuine sense of End Of Days comes through, and is then

leavened by some considered and powerful pieces from after the crash. This is how it was to be there.



Jon Hotten

Star Guitars: 101 Guitars That Rocked The World

Dave Hunter VOYAGER

The world's finest axe exhibit.



The term 'handsome volume' seems inadequate to describe the classiest and most luxurious example of full-on, hardcore guitar porn published since Billy F Gibbons's *Rock + Roll Gearhead* - which, come to think of it, emanated from the same publisher; and it also seems logical, Captain, that the Rev Willy G weighs in here with a foreword. Dave Hunter's massive art-book rounds up, arranged alphabetically by player from A-for-Atkins (Chet) to Y-for-Young (Neil) - shame he didn't make it all the way to Z-for-Zappa (Frank) - the equivalent of a whole museumful of the guitars which made the music which changed the culture.

From bluesmen (Son House, Robert Johnson, BB, Muddy, Buddy) through jazzers (Charlie Christian, Wes Montgomery) and country pickers (Mother Maybelle Carter, Chet A, Waylon, Willie) to all the expected rockers both classic (Jimi, Jimmy, Eric, Jeff, Gilmour, Iommi et al) and shreddy (EVH, Dimebag, Yngwie), this is something you wish you could hear as well as hold and see.

This volume is a powerful Exhibit-A argument in favour of actual physical-object type books. Even if every single word and image from *Star Guitars* was available online, you still wouldn't be getting the half of it.



Charles Shaar Murray

The Great Folk Discography Volume 1: Pioneers And Early Legends

Martin C Strong POLYGON

Legendary discographer's first foray into folk.

What would we have done without Strong's titanic masterpieces, the *Great Rock Discographies*? Pre-Wikipedia and other lazy t'Internet ways where any Tom, Dick or Harriet can source music info these days, Strong has spent 25 years

creating incredible resources for release lists and chart tracking. Even with his life savings lost in the process of this latest epic, Strong obviously loves the job and now Folk's first volume of three is now getting its turn.

Featuring 500 influential folk artists from 1900-1975 and 2,000 album reviews, Strong has improved previous weaknesses such as the quality of biogs, and introduced ratings for albums, plus more detail on compilations and box sets.

Content-wise, all the big hitters appear, but weirdly The Wurzels get a full listing but not The Carter Family.

New publisher Polygon has spruced up the package, still unequalled for price and invaluable for collectors and music writers alike. But the occasional photo spread wouldn't go amiss. And perhaps Branson, Gates or Google may like to step forward and get the archive online.



Jo Kendall

Never Mind The Bollards: A Road Trip Around England's Rock'n'Roll Landmarks

Max Wooldridge FOOTPRINT

TRAVEL GUIDE

Does exactly what it says on the jacket.



Bit of a Eureka! moment for this tome, which takes the reader to thousands of

important or trivial rock sites and refreshes their importance with great wit and research. More than a labour of love, the book also signifies that location shapes music - whether it's Supergrass in Jericho, Peter Gabriel on Solsbury Hill or Madness lording it in Kentish Town. Neatly divided into boroughs, counties and genres - everything from prog to Britpop and Liverpool to Romford - this is one of those bedside or bathroom books that demands dipping into, raising chuckles and jogging memories while the pages turn. As a travel guide it's also going to be packed on many a trip and could inspire sequels, which should include the Kings Cross Cinema and Donovan's pad in Holborn. Even if it's not definitive it's pretty damn close. An excellent item. Make it a present to yourself. It'll be the gift that keeps on giving.



Max Bell

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THE TREATMENT: JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

Just had to send you guys a message saying how much I am enjoying the 'Ones To Watch in 2011' CD: best CD since Slash's new album. Saw The Treatment supporting Zodiac Mindwarp and was blown away – reminded me of seeing many of the NWOBHM bands when they were starting out, longer ago than I care to admit! Black Spiders – in fact all the others – have exciting potential too. Many thanks.

Sally S, via email

Cheers Sally – in a month that saw articles about the 'death of rock' (see the Star Letter) that's good to hear.

"IT'S YOU WHO'S THE TWAT"

Re: Dave Davies. Hasn't the grumpy sod realised that when you think everyone is a twat it is usually you who's the twat? Also did you pay him a bonus every time he mentioned the riff in *You Really Got Me*? PS: More articles on bands like Stray: never heard of them before, now a big fan.

Neil Feirn, Wiltshire

TICKET PRICES: WHAT'S THE COST PER MINUTE?

In response to Bill Kirtley complaining letter about the price of Rush tickets in CR154, it's interesting to compare the cost of tickets against other forms of entertainment.

I support a Championship football team who are doing quite well at the moment – tickets for their home games range from £30 to £33 depending on their category. That's 33p per minute. I've paid £65 for my Rush ticket at the O2. Now, if previous Rush gigs I've attended are anything to go by they'll play for 2-2.5 hours – that's 43p a minute which is certainly more expensive than attending a football match but better value than attending a London West End production where prices are 0.55p for top range seats (OK, cheaper ones are available but so are cheaper Rush tickets). I guess you pay your money you take your choice. For outstanding value though, go to the Royal International Air Tattoo at

RAF Fairford in July – 8 hours flying, ground entertainment including two concerts by tribute acts – all for about £45 (9p a minute for the just the flying display let alone anything else).

Personally, I can't wait to see Rush again – the £65 doesn't compare so badly when up against the ticket prices I paid to see both The Eagles and Bon Jovi at the same venue where the tickets were both £85.

Roll the bones, lads!

Malcolm Maggs, Peterborough

DELUXE INTERIORS

I really love deluxe/collectors' edition CDs. I'm such a sucker for them that when I heard that Thin Lizzy were reissuing their back catalogue, I was straight on to Amazon to pre-order. I am salivating at the prospect of hearing what they sound like with beefed-up guitars and remixed. One question: why is *Live And Dangerous* missing *Me And The Boys*...? This was the B-side to *Rosalie* and it seems churlish not to give us this track – which was a permanent fixture in the set-list of course. It's on the DVD but not the audio CD. Such a shame. By the way, Judas Priest – *Unleashed In The East* needs *Beyond The Realms Of Death* putting back in.

Ken Arber, Chandler's Ford

WE'RE AN INSPIRATION, SO WE ARE

As loyal readers of *Classic Rock* my friend Mark and I noticed that many people like us (in Belfast) had no clubs to go to to enjoy the

songs/artists our favourite magazine plugged every month.

So we came up with a Club Night template, bought our own PA system and started up Paradise City Belfast, the only old school classic rock club night in Northern Ireland.

Now one year down the line we have built up our fanbase, co-run other rock nights in Belfast and still run monthly Paradise City Belfast nights/special events like New Year's Eve, where we dust off the vinyl and



CR154's One To Watch CD: "the Best CD since Slash's album."

play sets inspired by the one and only *Classic Rock* magazine.

We must admit we owe it all to you at *Classic Rock* and a few beers, the idea was born from that and many have benefited from it. We look forward to doing it for many years to come and love to have *Classic Rock*'s approval, to be the only classic rock club night in Ireland that you acknowledge for its setlist/music style.

This past year we moved into the world of live promotion,

toured to Hard Rock Hell IV in Wales and even hope that we could be a part of HRH V?

Thanks *Classic Rock* and roll on another year of inspirational reviews and writing.

Phil Allen, Belfast

Consider yourself blessed, my son (er, we mean that in a non-sectarian way, of course). Hope to see you at HRH V.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING US 'HEAD

Thank you for the wonderful Motörhead issue, and the great new album, but I must take issue with a comment in the *Another Perfect Day* review (a classic and grossly underrated album, I'm sure Lemmy got a kick from Robbo, at least in

the studio).

The comment that they didn't play any tracks live from between 1983 and 2003 is clearly wrong, as the band played *Shine* at a gig at the Hastings White Rock Theatre in 1998. Lemmy introduced it as, "Here's a song we've not played in 15 years". This received a very loud cheer and the song was well received. And compared to recent years, the gig's setlist was much more varied and enjoyable.

Joe, via email

"My Rush ticket works out at around 43p a minute, more expensive than a football match..."

Dave Davies: a "grumpy sod", apparently.



THE WORLD IS SEWERS

I have just purchased the excellent new Motörhead album *The World Is Yours* (or probably theirs!) with your magazine special pack. What more could I want? My favourite band's new album with my favourite magazine! After reading the mag and playing the album until it was a pool of molten plastic and magnetic particles (slight exaggeration) I was spurred on to read more Motörhead articles from past issues (yes I have stored every issue of CR from day one!). After perusing issue 49

★ Star Letter

SO PAUL GAMBACCINI THINKS rock is dead?

[On January 11, *The Guardian* newspaper ran a story in which the veteran DJ claimed that "the rock era is over, in the same way the jazz era is over" – Ed.] Apart from conveniently forgetting to take into account little things like, you know, the facts (eg that the world's biggest live acts are rock acts – Bon Jovi, AC/DC, U2, Metallica etc) it's such a simplistic view of the world of music that it's hardly believable that a grown-up said it.

The jazz era was superseded because rock'n'roll, pop and soul music touched a new nerve among teenagers. Those genres captured the popular imagination and still continue to. Rock music hasn't been made redundant by pop, it's just that pop remains the lowest common denominator: jolly music for kids. (I bought the new *Shrek* DVD for my kids. We all like it, and I bet it made more money than *The Road*, say, but I don't think that means Dreamworks have killed traditional movie-makers.) You can't even claim pop has found some seam of originality while rock retreads the past: all the pop I hear either directly covers old songs, samples them, or sounds exactly like pop from years gone by. The X-Factor is the most obvious example of this. How many years has it been going and how many enduring stars or classic songs has it produced?

People will always want quality and the most passionate people – in this case rock fans – will find good music. Great musicians will keep on making it. *Classic Rock* will doubtless keep telling us about it. And generation after generation will keep on discovering it. Is the same going to happen with Leona Lewis?

Harvey T., via email

Well put, sir. And maybe rock music would stand a chance of reaching Gambaccini's precious singles chart if Radio 1 – a station our licence fee pays for – reflected the taste of the public and actually *played* some rock songs? Crazy idea, right?

Every month, the Star Letter wins a fine bottle of Islay Single Malt Smokehead Whisky. Enjoy. And remember: Smokehead encourages responsible drinking.



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THANK 4 THE MOTÖRHEAD PACK: MOTÖRHEAD AT THEIR BEST. GOES TO SHOW IF IT AINT BROKE, ETC. ANY CHANCE U CAN DO A VINYL EDITION? KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! **DAVE, K-IN-A, NOTTS.**

SO GLENN HUGHES THINKS BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION R THE 'PEOPLES BAND'? HMM TKTS 4 SHEPHERDS BUSH R £75! WOT SORT OF PEOPLE, GLENN? **DAVE WALTHAMSTOW**

IN REPLY TO THE KNOCKIN' OF DOKKEN, THEY WERE A CLASS ACT AND IN GEORGE LYNCH THEY HAD THE BEST GUITAR HERO OF THE 80s. **CAESAR, ALTRINCHAM**

WHY ARE VIKING SKULL PLAYING SUPPORT TO BLACK SPIDERS? THEY SHOULD BE HEADLINING **HOWARD, CAMBRIDGE**

AT LAST, A FEATURE ON STRAY! NOW I SHALL HAVE TO THINK OF ANOTHER BAND TO PESTER YOU ABOUT... **THAT BLOKE WOT ALWAYS TEXTS ABOUT STRAY**

ROCK IS DEAD? NOT ON MY WATCH, PAL! **DAVEY, AYR**

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from January 2003 I came across a photo of Motörhead at a very familiar location. It turned out to be the very sewage works that I currently work at! As the picture is of Lemmy and Phil Taylor I would assume it was taken during the late 70s, probably when they were "flushed" with success and not going through the "motions" (ho ho!). In fact, I could go as far as to say they were sitting on their heavy metal "throne" so to speak.

Just think my heroes who I have listened to and followed since they made my ears ring in the 70s were that – sorry, sat – where I have so often sat myself! So emotional was I that myself and work partner decided to recreate the picture as best we could abiding by all health & safety laws etc (yawn!). I think you will agree we did a pretty naff job of it!

In conclusion thanks for an excellent magazine which over the years has introduced people

young and old to classic and new bands and has inspired so many young rockers to start a new wave of great up-and-coming bands.

In fact my son started his tech metal band after being brought up on a diet of classic rock and *Classic Rock* magazine (I used to rock him to sleep to Alice Cooper!).

Tom Tank, via email

Top: Lemmy and Phil from CR49. Bottom: reader Tom Tank and buddy.



'HEAD FIRST

One small point regarding *Classic Rock* 154 that Charles Shaar Murray makes in his review of *Lemmy – The Movie*: Motörhead's debut gig was indeed supporting Blue Öyster Cult but was at London's Roundhouse on the 20th July 1975 and not Hammersmith as stated. Tracks played

were: Motörhead, *Leaving Here*, *Good Morning Little Schoolgirl*, *Lost Johnny*, *City Kids*, *Silver Machine* and *Waiting For The Man*.

Take it easy,
Armitage, via email

Think you know your rock - not to mention your roll? See how many of these questions you can answer, and how many album sleeves you can identify from the details pictured.

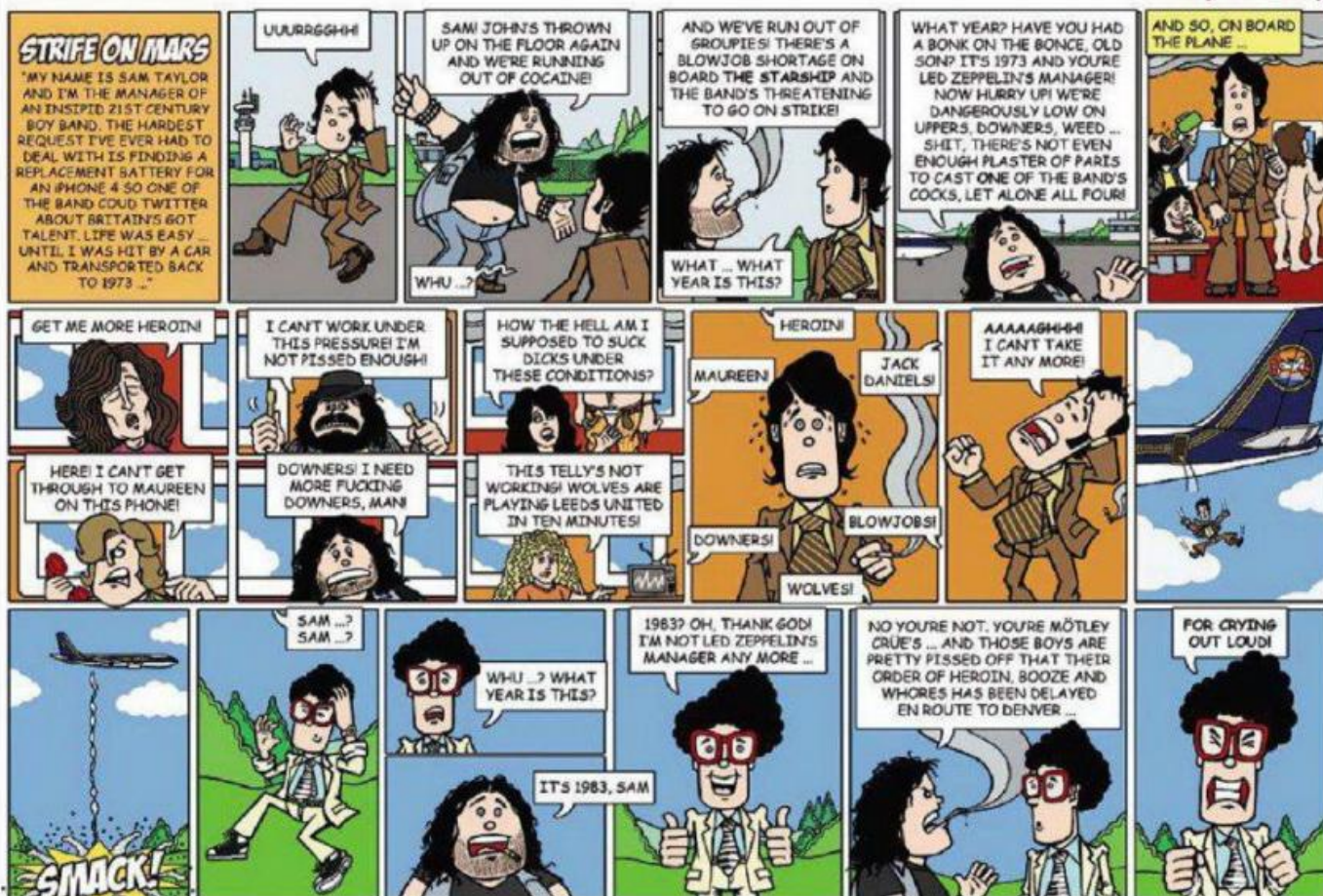


1. John Graham Mellor (1952 - 2002) was the British guitarist and singer better known by what name?
2. Which song is the following first verse taken from: 'You don't have money or a fancy car/And you're tired of wishin' on a falling star/You gotta put your faith in a loud guitar'?
3. What is the title of the track used as the theme tune to the TV programme *Top Gear*, and which band is it by?
4. Who were the bassist and drummer brothers in David Bowie's 80s band Tin Machine, and who played which instrument?
5. Whose bands have included the drummers Aynsley Dunbar, Tony Newman, Dennis Davis and Omar Hakim?
6. Who was the guitarist in the 90s band BBM, the near reformation of Cream?
7. In which year were Dire Straits' *Sultans Of Swing*, The Rolling Stones' *Miss You*, Rainbow's *Long Live Rock 'N' Roll* and Foreigner's *Feels Like The First Time* all released as singles?
8. 'And did they get you to trade, your heroes for ghosts? Hot ashes for trees? Hot air for a cool breeze? Cold comfort for change?' A verse from the title track from which mid-70s classic album?
9. Which superstar band member recorded the solo albums *Talk Is Cheap* ('88) and *Main Offender* ('92)?
10. Which former member of the Mahavishnu Orchestra went on to have his own group that recorded a live album with Jeff Beck in 1977?
11. Which band that released their first studio album in 1967 (and followed it with the next three all going Top 10) had the rhythm section of drummer Ric Lee and bassist Leo Lyons?
12. In which year did The Prodigy release their UK No.1 album *Music For The Jilted Generation*, and the Manic Street Preachers release *The Holy Bible*?
13. Which bass players quit which bands to form Wild Turkey, Fat Mattress and Sharks respectively?
14. Which band was Stevie Ray Vaughan's brother Jimmie in during the 70s and 80s that also included singer Kim Wilson?
15. Place the following three Iron Maiden singles in the order they charted: *Aces High*, *The Trooper*, *Run To The Hills*, *Stranger In A Strange Land*.
16. Which was the first Guns N' Roses single released in the UK?
17. Who won the Best New Band award at the 2010 Classic Rock Roll Of Honour?

Answers opposite

Flock Of Numbskulls

By BP Perry



Quiz answers from page 102: 1. Joe Strummer (the Clash); 2. God Gave Rock And Roll To You; 3. Jessica (Alman Brothers); 4. Tony Sales (Bass) and Hunt Sales (drums); 5. David Bowie; 6. Patsy Moore; 7. 1979; 8. Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd); 9. Keith Richards; 10. Jan Hammer; 11. Ten Years After (1994); 12. Glenn Gould; 13. Keith Richards; 14. Noel Redding left the Jimi Hendrix Experience; Andy Fraser left Free; 15. Run to the Hills (82); The Who (83); Aces High (84); Stranger in A Strange Land (88); 16. It's So Easy; 17. The Union; Album sleeves: A) Alice in Chains (Alice in Chains); B) Whatever's Cool With Me (Dinosaur Jr.); C) Vigilante (Magnum); D) Lions (Black Crowes); E) Caravan (Santana); F) Mirage (Camel); G) Heavy Horses (Jethro Tull); H) Recipe For Hate (Bad Religion).

CHRISTIE GOODWIN



LIVE!

THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

P **118**

Black Country Communion

Was it a super performance
from the latest supergroup?

P **110** INTERVIEWS

P **115** TOUR DATES

P **118** LIVE REVIEWS



Pallas: "Come on in, the water's lovely."



IS THAT A FACT?
 ★ A non-album track called *Atlantean* can be downloaded from www.pallasxxv.com
 ★ The band were formed as schoolboys by bassist Graeme Murray and drummer Derek Forman.
 ★ Initially called Rainbow, they became Pallas in 1976 when Ritchie Blackmore 'stole' their moniker.

Pallas

Twenty-odd years down the line the heavier side of their prog rock has surfaced.

XV, the new album from Aberdeen-based neo-progressive rockers Pallas, is significant for two reasons: as well as being a sequel to their full-length debut, *The Sentinel*, released in 1984, it also introduces their new lead singer, Paul Mackie. Pallas bassist Graeme Murray gives *Classic Rock* an update.

After 26 years, it must have been difficult to sack singer Alan Reed?
 We had just grown apart. And with Alan working long hours for the BBC [in London] and doing lots of outside collaborations, he wasn't around to start work on the album.

Was important that his successor, Paul Mackie, is also from Aberdeen?
 It wasn't a prerequisite that whoever got the job lived locally, more a question of them being available when necessary. At this stage in our career the last thing we wanted to do was to have to start placing adverts. So finding somebody so talented who was on our doorstep was certainly a huge bonus.

"We've always been at the heavy end of prog... Deep Purple are one of our biggest influences."

In a nutshell, what's the concept behind the XXV album?
 Well, *The Sentinel* explained how the Atlanteans had seeded the Earth, as opposed to us being descended from molluscs. It was a bit of a sociological experiment. The new album moves the story on by 25,000 years. A new *Sentinel* arrives, Messiah-like, and tries to decide whether or not the ant farm will be allowed to continue.

The planet's fate is seemingly left unresolved, then?
 Well, things end with a radio beacon that's still

broadcasting, which means there's still hope.

Does that mean the story is set to continue?
 It certainly won't be carried over on to the next album. Continuing the *Atlantean* theme was a bit of the shackling experience, though we're all extremely happy with how the album turned out.

For all its grandeur this is definitely one of the heaviest albums Pallas have made.
 Very much so. We've always been at the heavy end of prog. Besides the likes of Yes, Rush, Pink Floyd and Genesis, one of our biggest influences is Deep Purple. And that really came to the surface this time. I really hope we can persuade some heavy rock fans to dip their toes in, as we've made an album that fans of Rush, Porcupine Tree and Dream Theater will probably appreciate. **DL**

Pallas's UK dates begin in Aberdeen on February 4.

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All dolled up:
Wednesday 13
and Joey Jordison.

Murderdolls

They're back – now more violent and mad than ever.

Murderdolls are flying in for an 11-date UK tour to promote a new album called *Women And Children Last*. Singer Wednesday 13 explains how the US shock-rockers came back from the dead.

What caused the band to reactivate after a hiatus of eight years?

Joey [Jordison, guitar] finished a world tour with Slipknot [for whom he plays drums]. I was wondering what to do next when his call came out of the blue. Once again we had become bored with the music scene, so the time felt right.

If Murderdolls were a cocktail, which bands would be the spirits for the mix?

With our first incarnation it would've been the Sex Pistols meeting Mötley Crüe, but Joey has since turned me on to bands like Killing Joke. The music is still fuelled by violence and madness, but we've absorbed everything from Slayer to the Misfits.

How did you persuade Crüe guitarist Mick Mars to guest on songs on the new album?

A guy who was working for us knew that Mick lived near the studio. I had met him as a fan but never professionally. He came in, shared a few of our bad-taste jokes and recording tips. As well as being a lovely guy, Mick is one of the villains of rock... along with Alice Cooper and Rob Zombie.

The new album has contains the delightfully titled song *Hello, Goodbye, Die*. As a chat-up line, does it work?

[Cackles] It has done. It's a great way to start a conversation.

Is the Murderdolls show as visual as one might expect?

We don't yet have the money to use lots of pyro so we stick to what we know. It's a high-energy show. We are the props, but the crowd plays its part. **DL**

The tour finishes in Exeter on February 14.

Europe

Expect guests, new songs and some classics on the Swedes' UK tour.

The final countdown to a new nine-date British tour by Europe has begun. Ever-smiling frontman Joey Tempest lets us know what we can expect.

Was 2010 the year that Europe began to earn respect in new quarters?

I think so. We did around a hundred gigs, including the Sonisphere and iTunes festivals, and it was the culmination of six or seven years of hard work. We are back on track.

Last Look At Eden was nominated in the Album Of The Year category at the Classic Rock Awards, but lost out to Slash's solo debut.

With so many great records up for consideration we were so excited even just to be nominated. I live in London, so I was on the phone to the rest of the guys: "Do you know what's happening here?"

You're now a DJ on Planet Rock Radio. Does the station give you carte blanche to play whatever music you like?

Now that the producers know me and trust my judgement they do. I like to play some songs that moved me in the past but which may not be as well known as a band's biggest hit. It keeps things interesting.

You personally had a lot to do with the fact that Voodoo Johnson, a British band, are opening on this UK tour Europe are doing.

That's right. We definitely wanted a hard rock band from the UK. They were on a list of names that we considered. I was a little concerned to hear that they recently lost their singer, but there's already a new guy and we're happy for the arrangement to continue as planned.

Having toured *Last Look At Eden* fairly extensively, will the set-list change for these new dates?

It will, definitely. We are planning to test out some songs intended for our next album, which will be recorded later in the year for release in 2012. We are also considering some guest appearances, which is something we've never really done before. It would be cool to invite some people to get up and play or sing with us, maybe even throw in some covers from *Almost Unplugged* [a symphonic-enhanced live album from 2008]. **DL**

The tour finishes in Newcastle on February 27.

"It would be cool to invite some people to get up and play or sing with us."



JOEY TEMPEST

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More news on HV every issue but keep up to date on more regular updates and ticket offers online right here.



QUEEN'S 40TH

www.queenonline.com

Brand new official website to celebrate the band's 40th anniversary in 2011. Watch out for trailers of the Freddie movie too.



Steven Adler: would love another trip to that Paradise City.

Adler's Appetite

As GN'R's drummer he "didn't give a shit". With his own band he does.

Setting the scene for his first European visit in five years, former Guns N' Roses drummer Steven Adler gives us the inside track on Adler's Appetite and reveals that, along with millions others, he too would love to see the classic GN'R line-up reunite.

What sort of a show can we expect from Adler's Appetite? It's a ninety-minute set, which we'll turn into two hours now that we're doing our own material. We're adding two more songs from Appetite For Destruction: Think About You and Anything Goes. It's gonna be great. It can't be less, it has to be more. Back in Guns we had a crazy, anything-goes-kind of energy because I didn't give a shit. Now I kind of give a shit.

The band has been through some different line-ups. Who are you bringing with you? We've got a real solid line-up now. It's Chip Z'Nuff on bass, Rick Stitch

on vocals, and Michael Thomas and Alex Grossi on guitars.

There's some new material, too? Last year's single, *Alive*, really made us want to kick on. We just cut two new songs, called *Stardog* and *Faded*, with Fred Coury, who used to drum in Cinderella, as producer.

It's been quite a comeback year for you, with an autobiography and also getting clean. It's amazing what the body can survive, man. I wasted twenty years doing drugs, but I have a new start and I'm taking it. I blamed Slash and Duff and Izzy and Axl for my

downfall, but when I started working with Dr Drew Pinsky I learned that I had to talk about these things to get them out of my system. I needed to apologise to Slash for blaming him for everything that happened to me. When I first came to Hollywood I was sexually abused by an older teenager, an older guy. I had not been able to say that out loud, but I had to say it, and this huge weight was lifted.

Do you see any sign of that Guns N' Roses reunion yet? The fans want it, man, and I've been the most enthusiastic about it. The five of us, we're brothers. And what do brothers do? They fight. But we created something historic. I'd be lying if I said I didn't care about the money too, but the fans are the reason that I get to play music. They gave me this amazing life. **JH**

The tour ends in Bilston, Wolverhampton on February 27.

"The fans want a GN'R reunion and I'm also enthusiastic."



NAO: caught "in no-man's land".

North Atlantic Oscillation

"We're definitely not prog."

A few words by way of an introduction from Sam Healy (vocals, guitar, bass, keyboards, synths, sax and percussion), as Scottish group North Atlantic Oscillation play some UK dates with labelmates Anathema.

When people ask what type of band you're in, how do you respond?

We inhabit the no-man's land between the mainstream and niche markets. Although we're signed to Kscope Records, we're definitely not a prog band.

Tellingly, apart from Tangerine Dream, North Atlantic Oscillation are more likely to cite Nirvana, Blur or Aphex Twin as an influence than any mainstream prog acts. That's because I grew upon American indie rock. I wasn't even aware of early Yes or Genesis till people started telling me we had things in common.

Not everybody gets what NAO are trying to do, however. Classic Rock's Geoff Barton called your debut album, *Grappling Hooks*, "an unholy mix of the Buggles, Howard Jones and ELO".

[Laughs] Only one of those references - ELO, who I really like - is appropriate. I'd never even heard of the Buggles.

However, Geoff did add: "Terrifyingly, they could be huge."

At least he got the conditional tense right. The charts are so diabolically godawful.

Is the band's music compatible with that of your tour headliners Anathema?

I really don't know. We did play a festival gig with them and Porcupine Tree in Italy, but European audiences are so different [to British ones]. Time will tell, I suppose.

What are the band's plans for 2011?

We hope to release our second album sometime in September. **DL**

The dates begin in Durham on February 9.

Watch!
Rock eye candy coming into view this month



COLLEN ON SHRED
tinyurl.com/6kxcccug
Keen to learn the Lepp style? Def Leppard axeman Phil Collen comes over all muso at a recent industry show.



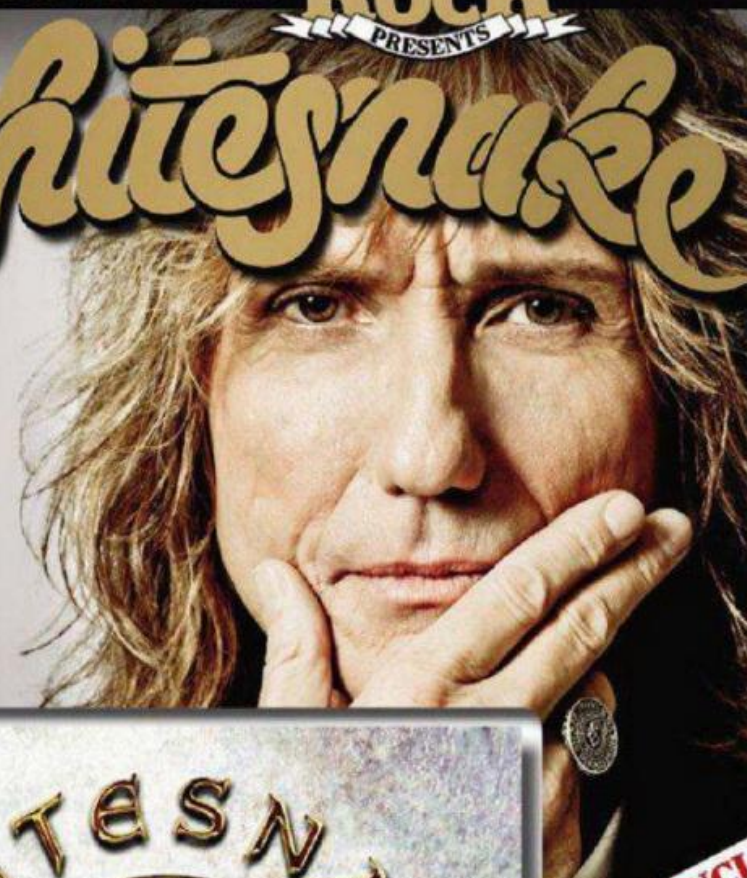
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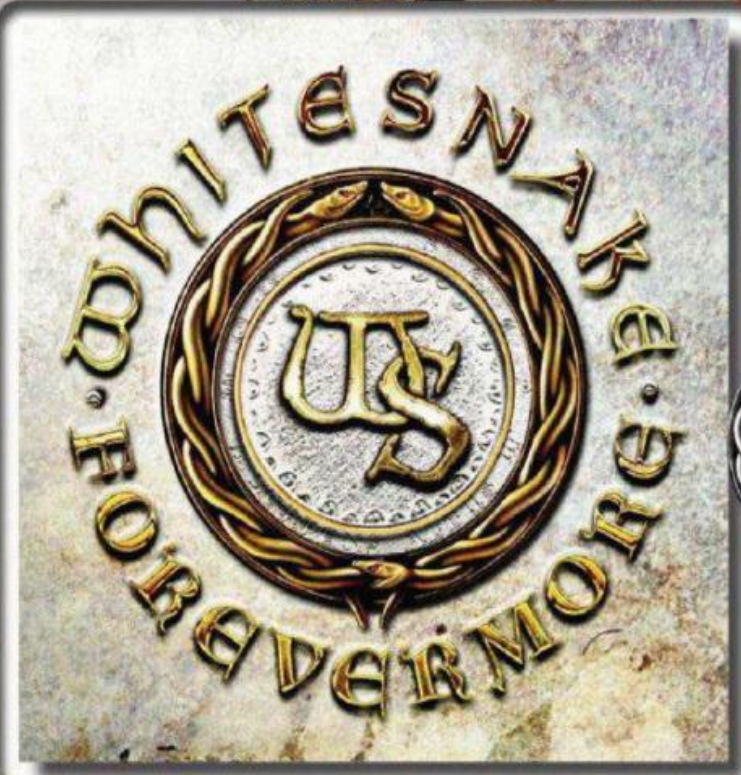




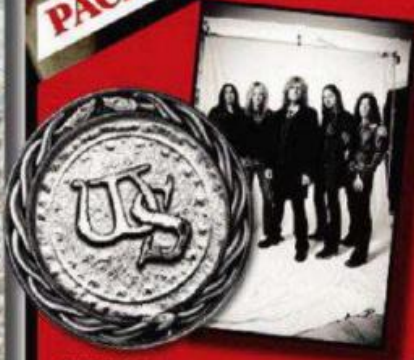
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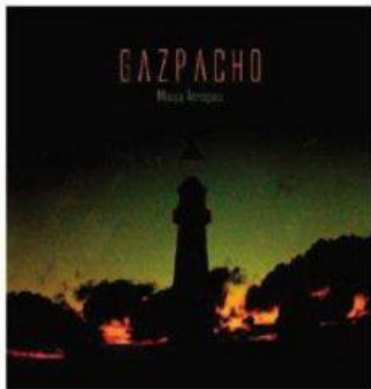
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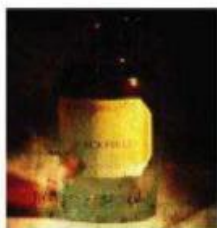
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The classic Porcupine Tree rarity – available on vinyl for the first time. Double heavyweight (180gm) vinyl in a gatefold sleeve with printed inner sleeves, available from the Kscope store at www.kscopemusic.com/store.

Digibook CD edition also available.



Blackfield *Blackfield - Vinyl Edition*

Double vinyl edition of the debut album from Steven Wilson (Porcupine Tree) and Aviv Geffen with two bonus tracks. Heavyweight (180gm) vinyl in a gatefold sleeve with printed inner sleeves, available from the Kscope store.



The Pineapple Thief *Little Man*

The first in a series of re-mastered reissues from The Pineapple Thief's back catalogue



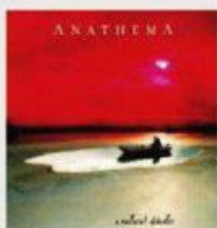
Download the Kscope podcast to hear new music, as well as interviews with the bands. Visit www.kscopemusic.com/podcast for more details.

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For more information and news updates go to: www.kscopemusic.com

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Anathema *A Natural Disaster Vinyl Edition*

Double heavyweight vinyl reissue of the classic 2003 Anathema studio album. Limited to 2000 numbered copies only.

Also available from the Kscope store



PINK FLOYD *London 1966-1967*

SYD BARRETT – NICK MASON –
ROGER WATERS – RICK WRIGHT

The first ever studio recordings from the classic 60's Pink Floyd line-up on 180 gram white vinyl in a gatefold sleeve with printed inner.

Available from www.burningshed.com

Tour Dates

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ACCEPT

London	Highbury Garage	Mar 17
Hammerfest	Prestatyn	Mar 18
Dublin	The Village	Mar 19
Belfast	Spring & Airbrake	Mar 20
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 22

ACCEPT, BIOHAZARD, ONSLAUGHT, MORE

Hammerfest	Prestatyn	Mar 17-19
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ADLER'S APPETITE

London	Camden Underworld	Feb 22
Ipswich	Regent	Feb 23
Grimby	Yardbirds	Feb 24
Sutton-in-Ashfield	The Diamond	Feb 25
York	The Duchess	Feb 26
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 27

JAN AKKERMAN

Southampton	The Brook	Apr 28
Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 29
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Apr 30
Cardiff	The Globe	May 1
Stratford-on-Avon	Cox's Yard	May 2
Runcorn	The Brindley	May 3
Birmingham	Glee Club	May 4

ANATHEMA, NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION

Durham	Live Lounge	Feb 9
Glasgow	Cathouse	Feb 10
Sheffield	Academy	Feb 11
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 12
Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Feb 14
Manchester	Academy 3	Feb 15
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Feb 16
London	King's Cross Scala	Feb 17

THE ANIMALS & FRIENDS

Kingston	Kingsmeadow Stadium	Mar 26
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AVENGED SEVENFOLD, SYSTEM OF A DOWN, MORE

Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 10-12
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BIG COUNTRY

Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Apr 8
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 9
Oxford	Academy	Apr 10
Cambridge	Junction	Apr 11
Nottingham	Waterfront	Apr 12
Bristol	Academy	Apr 14
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 15
Leeds	Academy	Apr 16
Sheffield	Academy 2	Apr 17
Dublin	The Academy	Apr 19
Belfast	Spring & Airbrake	Apr 20

Recommended

BLACKFIELD

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Apr 6
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 7
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 8

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY, GODSIZED

Birmingham	Academy	Feb 14
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 15
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 16
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Feb 18
Southampton	Guildhall	Feb 19
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Feb 21
Manchester	Apollo	Feb 22
Bristol	Colston Hall	Feb 23

BLACK SPIDERS, VIKING SKULL, TURBOWOLF

Bristol	The Croft	Feb 21
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 22

London	Highbury Garage	Feb 23
Southampton	Talking Heads	Feb 24
Aldershot	West End Centre	Feb 25
Sheffield	Academy	Feb 26
Manchester	Roadhouse	Feb 28
Leicester	Lock 41	Mar 1
Glasgow	Cathouse	Mar 2
York	Fibbers	Mar 3
Wrexham	Central Station	Mar 4
Hull	Lamp	Mar 5

COLIN BLUNSTONE BAND

Cardiff	The Globe	Feb 3
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 8
Southampton	The Brook	Feb 9
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 10
Glasgow	The Ferry	Feb 11
Kinross	Green Hotel	Feb 12
Liverpool	Stanley Theatre	Feb 13
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Feb 17
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Feb 18
Deal	Astor Theatre	Feb 19

BON JOVI

Edinburgh	Murrayfield Stadium	Jun 22
Manchester	Old Trafford Cricket Ground	Jun 24
London	Hard Rock Calling	Jun 25
Bristol	Ashton Gate	Jun 27

OLI BROWN

Norwich	Maddermarket Theatre	Apr 1
St Helens	The Citadel	Apr 9
Scarborough	Blues Club	Apr 12
Gloucester	Vonnie's	Apr 13
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 14
Bristol	The Tunnels	Apr 15
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Apr 16
Exeter	The Timepiece	Apr 20
York	The Duchess	Apr 22
Hull	The Piper Club	Apr 23
Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 26
Glasgow	The Ferry	Apr 28
Kinross	The Green Hotel	Apr 29
Dumfries	Thornhill Blues Festival	Apr 30
Guisborough	R&B Club	May 1
Darlington	Arts Centre	May 20
Edinburgh	The Caves	May 21
Darvel	Music Festival	May 22
Twickenham	Live Room	Jun 22

GARY BROOKER, WALTER TROUT, MORE

Chichester	Blues On The Farm Festival	June 17-19
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CHILDREN OF BODOM, AMON AMARTH

Norwich	UEA	Apr 1
Manchester	Academy	Apr 2
Glasgow	Vicar Street	Apr 3
Dublin	Vicar Street	Apr 5
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 7
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 8
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 9

ERIC CLAPTON

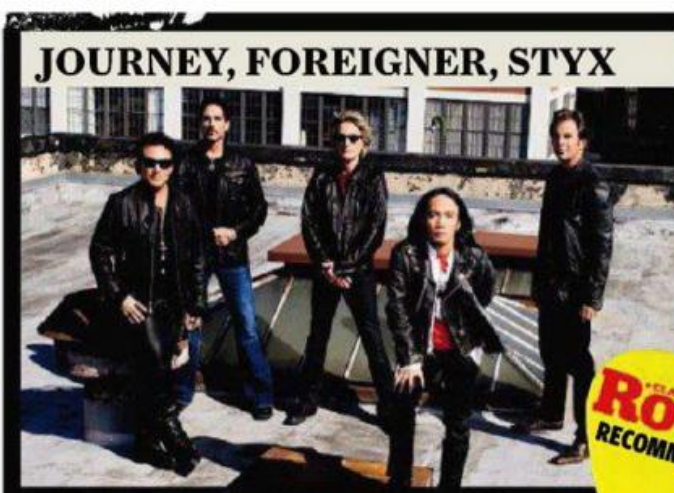
Dublin	O2 Arena	May 9
Belfast	Odyssey Arena	May 10
Glasgow	SECC	May 12
Cardiff	CIA	May 14/15
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 17/18, 23/24

ERIC CLAPTON & STEVE WINWOOD

London	Wembley Arena	May 20/21
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 26/27, 29/30

HUGH CORNWELL

Portsmouth	South Parade Pier	Apr 6
Gateshead	The Sage	Apr 7
Manchester	Academy	Apr 8
Glasgow	Academy	Apr 9
Sheffield	Academy	Apr 10
Clietheroe	The Grand	Apr 12
Leamington Spa	Assembly	Apr 13



JOURNEY, FOREIGNER, STYX

'I wanna know what AOR is...' Well you won't get a better answer than getting along to see this lot.

London	Wembley Arena	Jun 4	Manchester	Evening News Arena	Jun 8
Birmingham	NIA	Jun 5	Glasgow	SECC	Jun 9
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Jun 7			

Bath	Komedia	Apr 14
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Apr 15
London	Islington Academy	Apr 16
Brighton	Komedia	Apr 17

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

Bristol	Bierkeller	Apr 25
London	Camden Underworld	Apr 26
Manchester	Moho Live	Apr 28
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 29

THE CURE, BRIAN WILSON, MORE

Bestival	Isle of Wight	Sep 8-11
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DELAIN, SERENITY

Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 29
London	Islington Academy	Apr 30
Glasgow	Cathouse	May 1
Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	May 2

DINOSAUR PILE-UP

Bedford	Esquires	Feb 17
Bournemouth	Champions	Feb 18
Brighton	Audio	Feb 19
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Feb 20
Cambridge	Haymakers	Feb 22
Birmingham	Academy 3	Feb 23
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 24
Bristol	Academy 2	Feb 25
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Feb 27
Newcastle	Academy 2	Feb 28
Leeds	Cockpit 2	Mar 2
Manchester	Roadhouse	Mar 3
York	Duchess	Mar 4
Southampton	Joiner's Arms	Mar 5

EARTH, SABBATH ASSEMBLY

Leeds	Josephs Well	Apr 1
Manchester	Islington Mill	Apr 2
Birmingham	Hare And Hounds	Apr 3
Newcastle	The Cluny	Apr 4
Glasgow	Stereo	Apr 5
Dublin	Button Factory	Apr 8
Cork	Cyprus Avenue	Apr 9
Cardiff	Millennium Music Hall 2	Apr 11

ENSLAVED

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 22
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EPICA, REVAMP

Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 10
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Mar 11
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 12
Manchester	Moho Live	Mar 13
London	King's Cross Scala	Mar 15

THE EROTICS

Cambridge	Man On The Moon	Feb 10
Ikeston	The New Inn	Feb 11
Bristol	Area 81	Feb 12
Newcastle	Trillians	Feb 16
York	Venue TBC	Feb 17
Grimby	Yardbirds	Feb 18
Nottingham	The Central	Feb 19

EUROPE, VODOO JOHNSON

Glasgow	Academy	Feb 17
Birmingham	Academy	Feb 18
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 19
Oxford	Academy	Feb 21
Bournemouth	Academy	Feb 22
Bristol	Academy	Feb 23
Manchester	Academy 2	Feb 25
Leeds	Academy	Feb 26
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 27

EVILE

Manchester	Academy 3	Feb 9
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 10
Glasgow	Cathouse	Feb 11
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 12
London	Camden Underworld	Feb 13

FEEDER

Belfast	Spring & Airbrake	Feb 4
Dublin	Academy	Feb 5
Liverpool	Academy	Feb 7
Leeds	Academy	Feb 8
Dundee	Fat Sam's	Feb 10
Middlesbrough	Empire	Feb 11
Manchester	Academy	Feb 13
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 14
Cambridge	Junction	Feb 16
Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Feb 17
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Feb 19
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 20

THE FLAMING LIPS

London	Alexandra Palace	Jul 1
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Recommended

FOO FIGHTERS

Isle of Wight	Festival	Jun 11
Milton Keynes	Bowl	Jul 2/3

PETER FRAMPTON

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Mar 1
Glasgow	ABC	Mar 2
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 3



Rock
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LIVE!

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 5
Bristol	Academy	Mar 6

FU MANCHU

Manchester	Academy Mar 2	
Glasgow	Cathouse	Mar 3
Birmingham	Academy 2	Mar 4
London	Islington Academy	Mar 5

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND, RISE TO REMAIN

Aberystwyth	Arts Centre	Mar 16
Buckley	The Tivoli	Mar 17
Penrith	Eden Arts Centre	Mar 18
Edinburgh	Bongo Club	Mar 19
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Mar 20
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Mar 22
Birmingham	Academy 2	Mar 23
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 24
London	Highbury Garage	Mar 25
Liverpool	Academy	Mar 27
Stoke-on-Trent	The Sugarmill	Mar 28
Walsfield	Black Flag	Mar 29
Durham	Live Lounge	Mar 30
Poole	Chords	Apr 1
Saltash	Livewire	Apr 2
High Wycombe	Academy Of Music & Art	Apr 3
Wrexham	Central Station	Apr 4

GOOD CHARLOTTE

Dublin	Academy	Feb 4
Southampton	Guilchall	Feb 6
Norwich	UEA	Feb 7
Bristol	Academy	Feb 8
Cardiff	University	Feb 10
Leeds	Academy	Feb 11
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 12
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 14
Manchester	Academy	Feb 15
Birmingham	Academy	Feb 17
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 18

THE GROUNDHOGS

Chester	Alexanders	Feb 10
Haverhill	Arts Centre	Apr 16
Bristol	Area 81	Apr 30
Glasgow	The Ferry	May 27
Durham	Barnard Castle Festival	May 29

ROGER HODGSON

London	Royal Albert Hall	May 25
Gateshead	The Sage	May 27
Glasgow	Pavilion	May 28
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	May 29

GLENN HUGHES

Northampton	Roadmenders	May 14
Cambridge	Junction	May 15
Birkenhead	Pacific Road Arts centre	May 17
Buxton	Opera House	May 18
Edinburgh	Picture House	May 20
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	May 21
York	Opera House	May 23
Norwich	Waterfront	May 24
Brighton	Komedia	May 26
Poole	Mr Kyp's	May 27
Birmingham	Town Hall	May 29

IGGY & THE STOOGES

Evolution Festival	Newcastle	May 28/29
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IMMORTAL, MORBID ANGEL, TRITYPKON, MORE

Bloodstock festival	Derbyshire	Aug 12-14
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IRON MAIDEN

Glasgow	SECC	Jul 20
Aberdeen	AEC	Jul 21
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Jul 23
Sheffield	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 24
Nottingham	Trent FM Arena	Jul 27
Manchester	MEN Arena	Jul 28
Birmingham	NIA	Jul 31
Cardiff	CIA Arena	Aug 1
Belfast	Odyssey Arena	Aug 3
London	O2 Arena	Aug 5/6

HAMMERFEST III



It's metal-up-er-ass time in Wales, this year with Accept (above), Biohazard, Satyricon and more. Cum on feel the force!

Prestatyn

Portin's Holiday Village

March 18-20

JOURNEY, FOREIGNER, STYX

London	Wembley Arena	Jun 4
Birmingham	NIA	Jun 5
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Jun 7
Manchester	Evening News Arena	Jun 8
Glasgow	SECC	Jun 9

KAMELOT

London	Camden Koko	Apr 28
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Recommended

KING'S X

Newcastle	O2 Academy	Apr 8
Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 9
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 10
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Apr 12

KYUSS LIVES

Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 31
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 1
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 2/3
Glasgow	ABC	Apr 4
Manchester	Academy	Apr 5
Bristol	Academy	Apr 6

THE LEVELLERS

Dublin	Academy	Mar 3
Liverpool	Academy	Mar 4
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 5
Lincoln	Engine Shed	Mar 6
Bournemouth	Academy	Mar 8
Bristol	Academy	Mar 9
Leeds	Academy	Mar 10
Glasgow	Barrowland	Mar 11
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 12
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 13
Southampton	Guilchall	Mar 15
Norwich	UEA	Mar 16
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 17
Manchester	Academy	Mar 18
London	Brixton Academy	Mar 19

STEVE LUKATHER

Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Mar 17
Manchester	Academy	Mar 18
Holmfirth	Picturedome	Mar 19

ERJA LYYTINEN

Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 2
Kinross	The Green Hotel	Mar 3
Glasgow	The Ferry	Mar 4
Oxford	Bullington Arms	Mar 7
Scarborough	Blues Club	Mar 8
Cardiff	The Globe	Mar 9
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Mar 10

MAGNUM

Glasgow	Garage	Apr 13
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 14
Liverpool	Stanley Theatre	Apr 16
Bristol	Assembly Spa Hall	Apr 17
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 19
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 20
Holmfirth	Picturedome	Apr 22
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 23
Southampton	The Brook	Apr 24
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 27
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 28
Treorchy	Park & Dare	Apr 29
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 30
Bristol	Academy	May 1

MANOWAR

Birmingham	Academy	Mar 27
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RICHARD MARX

Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	May 25
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 26
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	May 28
Bristol	Colston Hall	May 29
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 31

IMELDA MAY

Birmingham	Institute	Feb 8
Norwich	Waterfront	Feb 9
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 11
Leeds	Academy	Feb 12
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	Feb 13
Glasgow	ABC	Feb 15
Bristol	Colston Hall	Feb 17
Southampton	Guilchall	Feb 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 19

METALLICA, MEGADETH, ANTHRAX, SLAYER, MORE

Sonisphere Festival	Knebworth	Jul 8-10
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MIKE + THE MECHANICS

Hull	City Hall	Apr 27
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Doncaster	Dome	Apr 28
Bradford	St George's Hall	Apr 30
York	Opera House	May 1
Oxford	New Theatre	May 3
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	May 5
Bournemouth	BICC	May 8
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 9
Portsmouth	Guildhall	May 11
Brighton	Centre	May 12
Bristol	Colston Hall	May 13
Plymouth	Pavilion	May 15
Cardiff	CIA	May 17
Ipswich	Regent Theatre	May 18
Manchester	Apollo	May 20
Blackpool	Opera House	May 21
Liverpool	Empire	May 22
Edinburgh	Playhouse	May 24
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	May 25
Gateshead	Sage	May 26
Sheffield	City Hall	May 28
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 29

LARRY MILLER

Pontedawe	Arts Centre	Feb 3
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Feb 11
Derby	The Flowerpot	Feb 12
Andover	Lights	Feb 25
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Feb 26
Poole	Mr Kyp's	Feb 27

MICHAEL MONROE

Brighton	Concorde 2	Apr 4
Bristol	Academy 2	Apr 5
Exeter	Phoenix	Apr 6
Portsmouth	Wedgewood Rooms	Apr 7
London	Islington Academy	Apr 8
Leeds	TJs	Apr 9
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 11
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 12
Newcastle	Academy 2	Apr 13
Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 14
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 15
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 16
Birmingham	Institute	Apr 17

MURDERDOLLS, BLACK VEIL BRIDES, THE DEFILED

Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Feb 2
Norwich	Waterfront	Feb 3
Bristol	Academy	Feb 4
Sheffield	Corporation	Feb 5
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Feb 7
Middlesbrough	Empire	Feb 8
Glasgow	ABC	Feb 10
Manchester	Academy 2	Feb 11
London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 13
Exeter	Lemon Grove	Feb 14

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

London	Wembley Arena	Feb 12
Birmingham	LG Arena	Feb 13
Glasgow	SECC	Feb 15
Manchester	MEN Arena	Feb 18
Nottingham	Trent FM Arena	Feb 19
Cardiff	CIA	Feb 21
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Feb 22

MY RUIN, HEADCHARGER, SANCTORUM

Bristol	Thekla	Mar 9
Winchester	Railway Inn	Mar 10
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 11
Reading	Sub 89	Mar 12
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Mar 13
Peterborough	Club Revolution	Mar 14
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Mar 15
Leeds	Cockpit	Mar 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 17
Hammerfest	Prestatyn	Mar 18

NEW DEVICE, LETHARGY, MILLION DOLLAR RELOAD, THE TREATMENT

Margate	Westcoast Bar	Feb 22
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Feb 23
London	Camden Underworld	Feb 24
Poole	Chords	Feb 25
Manchester	Moho Live	Feb 26
Sheffield	Corporation Front Room	Feb 28

GET THE CLASSIC ROCK NEWSLETTER!

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and have all this and more delivered straight to your inbox every week!

Newcastle	The Other Rooms	Mar 1
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Mar 2
Wrexham	Central Station	Mar 3
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Mar 4
Nottingham	Rock City Basement	Mar 5

OVERKILL, DESTRUCTION, HEATHEN		
London	Islington Academy	Mar 3

PALLAS		
Aberdeen	The Tunnels	Feb 4
Kingston	The Peel	Feb 5
Wath Upon Dearne	Montgomery Hall	Mar 5

PARADISE LOST		
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 1

THE PRETTY THINGS		
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 12

QUINTESSANCE		
Hull	Adelphi	Feb 26

RIVAL SONS		
London	Camden Barfly	Feb 12

PAUL RODGERS, JOE ELLIOTT'S DOWN 'N' OUTZ		
Blackpool	Opera House	Apr 15
Sheffield	City Hall	Apr 16
Newcastle	City Hall	Apr 18
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	Apr 9
Manchester	Apollo	Apr 21
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Apr 22
Bournemouth	BIC	Apr 24
Bournemouth-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Apr 25
London	Royal Albert Hall	Apr 27
Birmingham	NIA	Apr 28

ROXY MUSIC		
Nottingham	Trent FM Arena	Feb 2
London	O2 Arena	Feb 7

RUSH		
Dublin	O2 Arena	May 12
Glasgow	SECC	May 14
Sheffield	Motorpoint Arena	May 16
Manchester	MEN Arena	May 19
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	May 21
Birmingham	LG Arena	May 22
London	O2 Arena	May 25

SAXON, WOLFSBANE, FURY UK		
Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Apr 9
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 10
Whitehaven	Civic Hall	Apr 11
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 13
Glasgow	ABC	Apr 14
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 15
Leeds	Academy	Apr 17
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 18
Bristol	Academy	Apr 19
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Apr 21
Bournemouth	Academy	Apr 22
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 23

SICK PUPPIES		
Birmingham	Academy 3	Feb 2
London	Manette Street Borderline	Feb 3

SKINDRED		
Brighton	Concorde 2	Apr 26
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Apr 27
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 29
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 29
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 30
Exeter	Lemon Grove	May 2
Cardiff	University Solus	May 3
Pooie	Chords	May 4
Liverpool	Academy May 5	
Sheffield	Corporation	May 6
London	Kentish Town Forum	May 7

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR		
Bilston	Robin 2	May 17
Buxton	Opera House	May 18
Edinburgh	The Caves	May 20
Glasgow	Academy	May 21



WHITESNAKE

Coverdale and his wonderful back catalogue add up to one of the defining sounds of the term 'classic rock'.

Newcastle	City Hall	Jun 13	Manchester	Apollo	Jun 17
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	Jun 14	Bournemouth	BIC	Jun 19
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Jun 16	London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 20

Aberdeen	The Lemon Tree	May 22	Glasgow	Garage	Mar 6
York	Opera House	May 23			
Newcastle	Academy	May 25	THIN LIZZY		
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 26	Belfast	Waterfront Hall	Feb 16
Sheffield	Academy	May 27	Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Feb 17
Manchester	Academy	May 28			
Bristol	The Tunnels	May 29	TOTO		
London	Islington Academy	May 31	London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 26

SODOM		
London	Camden Underworld	Feb 6
THE STRANGLERS		
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 4
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 5
Edinburgh	Picturehouse	Mar 6
Liverpool	Academy	Mar 8
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 9
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Mar 11
Leeds	Academy	Mar 12
Leicester	Academy	Mar 13
Oxford	The Regal	Mar 15
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 17
Brighton	Dome	Mar 18
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 19
Norwich	UEA	Mar 21
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Mar 22
Bristol	Academy	Mar 24
Sheffield	Academy	Mar 25
Manchester	Academy	Mar 26

SYMPHONY X		
London	King's Cross Scala	Mar 22
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 23
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 24
TAKING DAWN		
Colchester	Arts Centre	Feb 2
Portsmouth	Wedgewood Rooms	Feb 3
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 4
Oxford	Academy	Feb 5
Liverpool	Academy 2	Feb 6
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Feb 7

TERRORVISION		
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 24
Leeds	Cockpit	Feb 25
Norwich	Waterfront	Feb 26
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 27
London	Electric Ballroom	Mar 3
Southampton	The Brook	Mar 4
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 5

VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR		
Leamington Spa	Assembly Hall	Mar 24
Glasgow	ABC	Mar 25
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 26
London	Barbican Centre	Mar 27
Cambridge	Junction	Mar 28
VIRGINMARYS		
Kendal	Bootleggers	Mar 25
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 26
Brighton	The Prince Albert	Mar 27
Southampton	Joiner's Arms	Mar 28
London	Camden Barfly	Mar 30
Newcastle	The Cluny	Mar 31
Aberdeen	The Tunnels	Apr 1
Glasgow	ABC2	Apr 2
Nottingham	Rock City Basement	Apr 3

Bristol	The Tunnels	Apr 5
Sheffield	The Corporation	Apr 6
York	Fibbers	Apr 7
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Apr 8

JOHN WAITE, JON AMOR		
Newcastle	The Cluny	Apr 25
Pontefract	Rogerthorpe Manor Hotel	Apr 26
Lancaster	Grand Theatre	Apr 27

WARRIOR SOUL		
Birmingham	Academy 3	Mar 26
London	Islington Academy	Mar 27
Dublin	Crawdaddy	Mar 28

WHITESNAKE		
Newcastle	City Hall	Jun 13
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	Jun 14
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Jun 16
Manchester	Apollo	Jun 17
Bournemouth	BIC	Jun 19
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 20

BRIAN WILSON		
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Sep 13
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Sep 14
London	Royal Festival Hall	Sep 16-18

WIRE		
London	King's Cross Scala	Feb 2
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 3
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Feb 4
Dublin	Academy 2	Feb 5
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Bristol	Academy	Mar 23
Oxford	Academy 2	Mar 24
London	Islington Academy	Mar 25

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Leeds	Academy	Feb 21
Birmingham	Academy	Feb 22
Castle Donington	Download Festival	Jun 12
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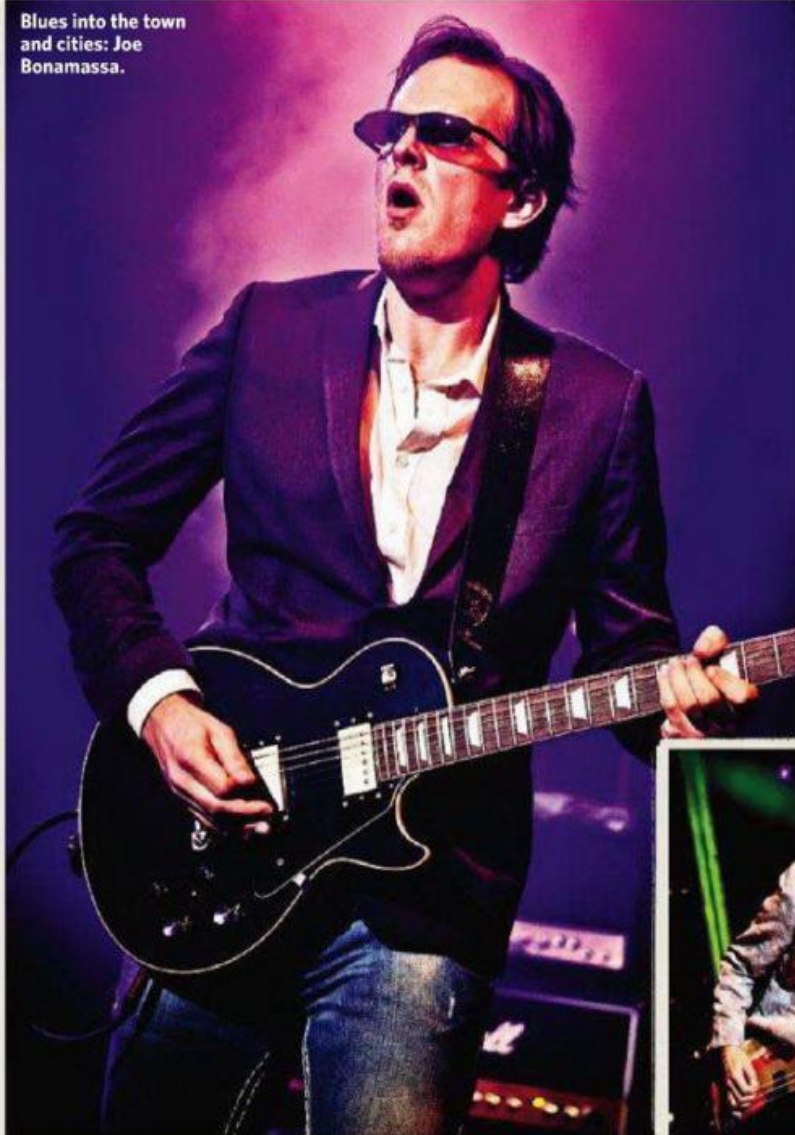
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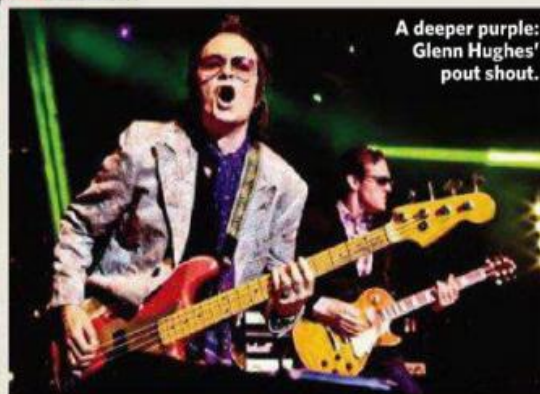
London Shepherd's Bush Empire

The supergroup almost burn the house down with a scorching set that includes some classics.

★ A sense of occasion built by a fine support set from Joanne Shaw-Taylor ignites into roars of delight once a tape of rock classics gives way to Wagner's *The Ride Of The Valkyries* and – finally – BCC themselves, look as pleased to be here as Shepherd's Bush is to welcome them.

Opening with their signature *Black Country* (Glenn Hughes pauses to deliver the 'I am a mess-en-ger... This is my pro-phe-cy...' chorus to maximum effect). Moving into *One Last Soul*, they hardly put a foot wrong until tackling Zeppelin's *No Quarter* late in the set. Instrumentally, the rendition is spine-tingling (full marks to keyboardist Derek Sherinian), but the crowd know the words rather better than Hughes does.

Yet that's grin- rather than cringe-inducing because it's just such a joy to see Glenn play with genuine heavyweight musos in a proper band again. Case in point... guitarist Joe Bonamassa taking centre-stage to sing *Song Of Yesterday* (a leviathan of a song, awesome solo) then giving us his own *The Ballad Of John Henry*.



A deeper purple: Glenn Hughes' pout shout.

After closing with a storming *Sista Jane* – featuring a great drum solo from Jason Bonham, a nod to The Who's *Won't Get Fooled Again*, and a reprise of *Black Country* – they encore with *Deep Purple's Burn*. A scorching set from start to finish. Neil Jeffries

Motorpsycho

London Charing Cross Borderline

Norway rockers bring the best of 20 years – and then some.

★ With venues across the capital collapsing like Aussie wickets in the shockwave of recession, it's reassuring to find nestled between the flattened Astoria, the CroBar and London's snottiest bookstore this remaining preserve – a 200-capacity subterranean retreat where veteran Norway avant-rockers Motorpsycho will play their only London show.

With 20 years of material available, tonight's 90-minute set-list will be a lottery and the trio start with narcotised jam-ballad *Year Zero*, before breaking in two wild new psych-outs around syncopated heavy bluesbreaker *Whole Lotta Diana*. Drummer Kenneth Kapstad cuts a lean, mantis-like figure as he obliterates his kit, while Hans Magnus Ryan's colourful guitarwork and Bent Sæther's retro-progressive bass lines choreograph jazzy sonic ballets for the brain. As *Hogwash's* hairy groove thrillingly segues into Can's hypnotic *Halleluwah*, a transcendental Mexican head-nod sets off around the venue, and the crowd are rapt. Final song X3 can only disappoint – mainly because it's an unrequited finale, and when the ugly lights go up no-one wants to leave. Catch 'em while you can.

Jo Kendall

Wilko Johnson

London Oxford Street 100 Club

Happy New Year Wilko and this old club.

★ It's New Year's Eve and Wilko is basking in the glow fired up by *Oil City Confidential*, the film's success adding another string to his battered Telecaster. It's also a new dawn for the 100 Club, which has escaped closure with a sponsorship deal.

Another formidable war horse, Charles Shaar Murray, leads the charge for support act Crosstown Lightnin'. Their harp-driven rockin' blues soon draws the crowd away from the buffet and mulled wine.

Wilko's set has barely altered over the years, chugging through *Back In The Night* and *Johnny B Goode*, and he takes no prisoners as he fires along the front row. He's aided and abetted by Norman Watt-Roy writhing and grimacing on bass and Norm's fellow Blockhead Dylan Howe on drums.

Jerry Tremain is on vocals and harmonica for *Going Back Home* and *Roxette*. He's no Lee Brilleaux but there's sparks in the air and not just from a room full of polyester shirts. It's the musical Sweeney kicking the door down – 'We're the Feelgoods and we haven't had our dinner!' As Big Ben strikes, it's not really 'off with the old and on with the new', but if it means we get more of Wilko and the 100 Club, that's a good thing.

Claudia Elliott

Godspeed You! Black Emperor

London Troxy

Don't ask us how, but it works.

★ That a band whose songs routinely hit the 14-minute mark, whose pathological avoidance of both lyrics and tune make Mogwai sound like pop divas can hold audiences of 2,500 plus rapt, makes you think there might just be something in the old adage of treating 'em mean. But just as this revamped east London 1920s-style theatre resonates with a tarnished glamour from times long forgotten, so Canadian post-rock troupe Godspeed... transport you effortlessly to the heart of their own arcane world. The shadowy gloom makes figuring out who is onstage playing what nigh on impossible, but GY!BE offer a transcendental experience far greater than the sum of their indeterminate parts. Giant projections cover the back wall of the venue as their slo-burn, melancholic symphony reverberates with a cauterising power. GY!BE might push some serious volume but there's an intricacy to the intensity, as the songs build layer by layer from near silent beginnings to shattering crescendos. As the instruments howl and squeal in unison for a final time, the crowd roar in a surprisingly joyous unison, clamouring wildly for an encore.

Catherine Yates

Sonic Youth

London

Hammersmith Apollo

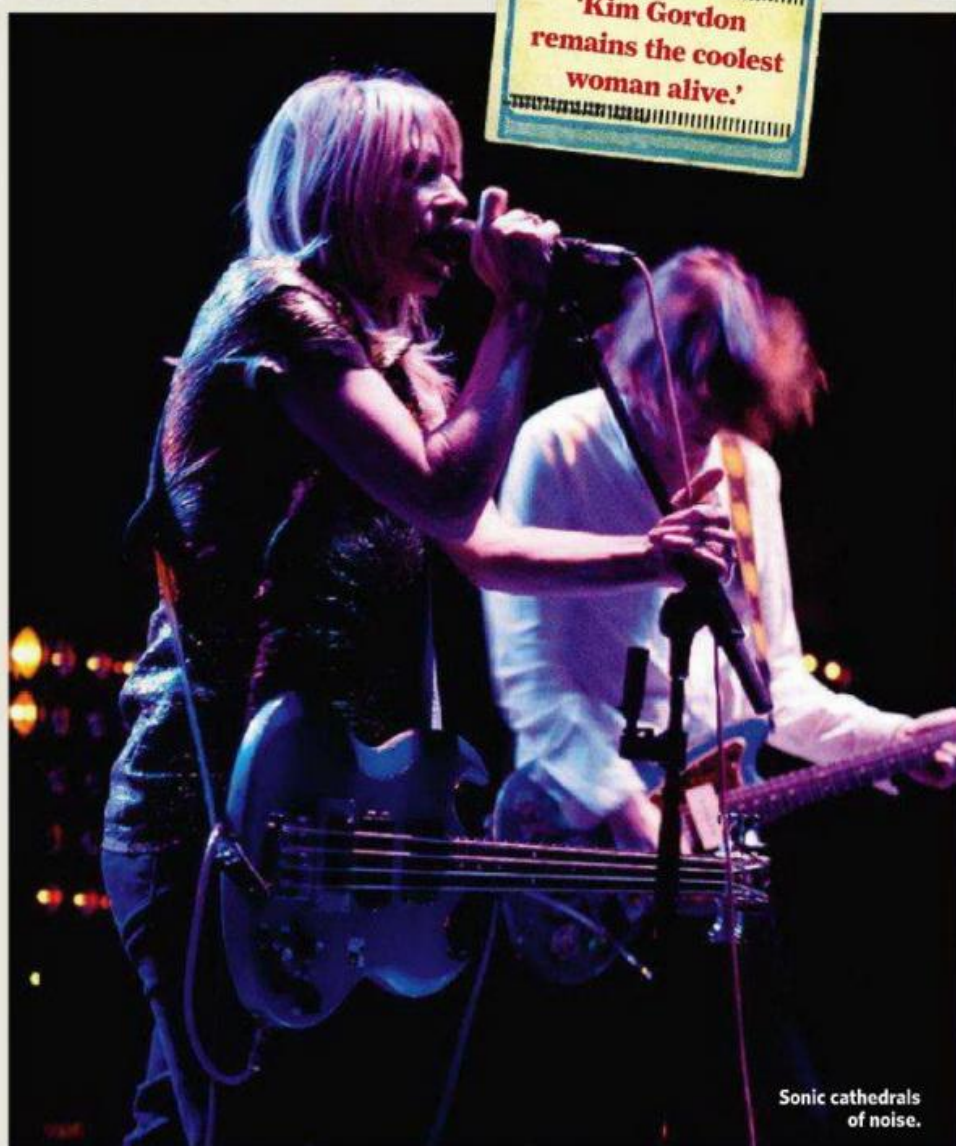
The New Year arrives with a bang thanks to some legends.

★ As we all know but are not supposed to admit, New Year's Eve is horrible. Overcrowded, overpriced, with the very real probability that someone will puke on your shoes at some point in the evening. Which is why it comes as such a relief to wave goodbye to 2010 in the company of alt-rock legends Sonic Youth.

Factory Floor kick things off with a barrage of gloriously filthy noise akin to being strapped to the ceiling of a moving helicopter as it's peppered with machine-gun fire. The Pop Group bring a dose of dark, melodic anarchy, while Shellac are beautifully abrasive, *End Of Radio* sounding urgent as drummer Todd Trainer bounds out from behind his kit and stalks the stage with his snare.

Sonic Youth have been the final world in ultra cool, avant garde indie rock for the last 30 years, but tonight they're on pure crowd-pleasing form. Arriving onstage just before midnight, a shockingly young-looking Thurston Moore leads the countdown. Only instead of Big Ben and *Auld Lang Syne*, we get to embrace a new start with a burst of glitter and a typically gritty *Brother James*. Kim Gordon - centre stage and full of beans - remains the coolest woman alive, leading the band through a set that, while heavy on tracks from newest album *The Eternal*, features fiery versions of *Anti-Orgasm* and, for the finale, their peerless *Kool Thing*. Best of all, they couldn't look more thrilled to be here, which means we are too. If this is just the start, 2011 should be a vintage year.

Emma Johnston



Sonic cathedrals of noise.

Leaf Hound

The Unicorn, London

Still got bite to go with the bark.

★ The days when Leaf Hound could attract a crowd on the basis of their cult album, *Growers Of Mushroom* (released 40 years ago) have long gone. So, why do people still pack out venues such as this? Simple, Leaf Hound are an excellent live band.

Only frontman Pete French remains from the early 1970s, but this current line-up is so sharp and defined that nobody moans about the absence of others. Guitarist Luke Rayner is among the best at evoking the sound of that era, while also offering his own stoner vibe. And with French proving he's still got the pipes to deliver, everyone is quickly drawn into the groove.

The set mixes up songs going back to that *Growers Of Mushroom* album with newer material from 2007's *Unleashed* comeback album. It all melds together well, as does an extended reworking of Atomic Rooster's classic, *Breakthrough*, and the hour-long set is tight, yet also leaves enough breathing space for spontaneity.

Climaxing with a combination of comparative newbie *Too Many Rock 'N' Roll Times* and *Growers Of Mushroom* itself, and helped by an impressive sound, this is a performance that proves the band are among the best on the British club circuit right now.

Malcolm Dome

The Zombies

London Metropolis Studios

Sixties legends back from the grave.

★ It's 8pm in Chiswick and an unlikely resurrection is taking place. In front of an invited TV audience, The Zombies have risen from the dead for a one-off TV special to celebrate the 50th anniversary.

"We'd like to play you some songs spanning our entire career," explains Rod Argent, who in leather jacket and jeans looks all of 30 (he's 65).

What follows is an impeccable 75-minute journey through their back catalogue, combining choral beat-pop (*I Love You*), lysergic psych-rock (*Time Of The Season*) and even new songs (*Any Other Way*).

If the affable Argent acts as tour guide, reminding us of celebrity fans ranging from Paul Weller to Beck to Dave Grohl, it's Colin Blunstone who inspires awe.

Standing stock still, and clad head to toe in black, his lustrous black locks give him the look of a beatific Jimmy Page, the occasional twitch of his left wrist indicating life. His voice, though, remains peerless; a plaintive instrument of emotional repression perfectly suited to this most English of bands.

"Everyone seems to think I wrote this song, but I didn't," announces Argent before a thunderous rendition of *Hold Your Head Up*. Quite a night.

Paul Moody

Big Country

London, Islington O2 Academy

Jock rock legends honour late singer in style - with help from Mike Peters.

★ There's a space in the centre of the stage where Stuart Adamson should be. Father and son guitarists Bruce and Jamie Watson are on one side, covering the rhythm and lead duties formerly shared by Bruce and Adamson, drummer Mark Brzezicki leads from the back, while bassist Tony Butler is joined by The Alarm's Mike Peters on the other side.

Peters - known and respected by much of this crowd - nevertheless has some big shoes to fill.

Drums beat, guitars skirl and Peters leans into the mic and sings the following perfectly chosen words: 'Now we play our final hand/Move in closer, understand'. Never have the lyrics to *1000 Stars* meant so much. Over the next two hours Big Country's final hand is duly unveiled and it turns out tragedy doesn't hold all the aces. Peters is not so much a 'replacement' for Adamson as a ringmaster, respectfully helping to bring BC's music back to life in all of its stirring, panoramic glory - *Wonderland*, *Chance*, *Harvest Home*, *Just A Shadow*, *Fields Of Fire*, *In A Big Country* and a mesmerizing *Porroh Man* - coaxing the best out of band and audience alike. A triumph.

Scott Rowley

Continued from page 86 barely has room for an indoor easel. (So if any neo-Florentine patron is reading this, I will make a plea that Don would never make or ask anyone else to for him: support a real artist.) I'm not sawing violins in half – Don certainly doesn't feel sorry for himself, and in late 1977 when he reappeared at the Bottom Line with a new band and *Shiny Beast* in the wings, he had the distinct air of a, well, I don't even feel "survivor" is the word. A patriarch, perhaps, a high priest, born again from Ancient Egypt smiling like the spuming headwaters of the Nile, long weathered body holding just that many mysteries, arcane secrets from half-apocryphal texts of hoodoo mojo Coptic canebreak healings of the kind Ishmael Reed likes to dream up.

Next to him, Dr John looked like Gary Glitter: all soot, no zoot. He could go 15 rounds brainwave-to-brainwave with Screamin' Jay Hawkins and judges who know nothin' anyway call it a draw. Might be the white Leadbelly. Too much in love with living to be Robert Johnson. In the late 60s, some hotshit young hitpicker got famous by proclaiming that Don Van Vliet, if he wanted to, could be: "the greatest white blues singer in the world." That would have been as dumb as settling for a moosehead over the fireplace when you've lassoed the Loch Ness Monster and taken it to dinner, highballs and dancing. Like Van Gogh doing pasteup for Bloomingdale's. Make no mistake, Captain Beefheart is an absolutely authentic chunk of taproot Americana on a Mark Twain level with Paul Bunyan stature.

But today an artist is expected to market him or herself as a commodity to be generally recognized. So in that sense it's no wonder Don retreated to the Mojave Outback. On the other hand, the old garret routine doesn't exactly work anymore either. And Don has pretty much been through his phase of living out the Artist as Genius/Idiot Savant cliché. On the phone the other day I mentioned Andy Warhol, and Don said: "He soups things up. But isn't it nice, being able to say that we're not like him?" At the time I thought this was a shopworn verbal popper combined with an absolutely childlike attitude: "Isn't it nice, being able to say that we're not like him?" Well, yes, it is, and Mr Rogers will be here at 3:30. This plus the fact that artists know how much they can get away with, how much we in fact expect of them, can lead to truly sick situations, disastrous for all concerned: "Isn't it nice, being somebody's pet?" I feel like even the word "genius" should be put in quotation marks because the very concept has a way of getting out of hand, like an unruly child. Artists often end up conspiring with their adoring audiences to insure their own isolation. Once, a very long time ago, I saw Don go sweeping imperiously in and out of hotels until he found one that met his aesthetic specifications, entourage (including me) trailing embarrassedly behind while he wore a cape and doodled on a pad the whole time.

Still, there is something ingeniously natural about him. I don't think, for instance, that he necessarily "tries" to "create" these things, they just sort of... happen to (through?) him. In the course of this process, he has managed to practically reinvent both music and the English language. And if you think that's a thorny thicket of defences to try and hack through so as to get to the actual person back there, you're right. He embarrasses you with his effusiveness, he feels misunderstood and craves desperately to talk with anyone who, he's satisfied, understands what he's trying to do. I don't know why he thinks I understand it. I only understand a little part of it. A lot of it is Sanskrit to me too. But you'll never miss the feeling however obtuse the structure, because this man is almost 100 per cent feeling, can be feverish with it, leads with every open nerve end till sometimes you wonder if he has a mind at all, or just threw the one he had away one day because every pore in the body is a knowing little eye fiercely darting at experience.

Now, there is no reason on earth why such a creature should be articulate. Except that he is. But on his terms, most of the time. And this is what has always bothered me. What good is being an artist, creating all these beautiful things, if you can't just throw down your defences sometimes and share things on the common level of other people? Without that, it's barren and ultimately pathetic. Ultimately, without some measure of that, it can never matter as art. 'Cause art's of the heart. And I'm talking about the heart that flies between two or more humans, not to the ghost of the great Auk, or a glob of paint, or any of his other little friends. All this week, one song off *Trout Mask Replica* kept playing in my head: *Orange Claw Hammer*, an unaccompanied field holler-like poem about a man who's been away at sea for years and catches first sight of his daughter since she was in swaddling. He grasps her hand and offers to: "Take you down to the foamin' brine 'n' water, and show you the wooden tits on the goddess with the pole out full-sail that tempted away your pegleg father. I was shanghaied by a

highhat beaver-moustache man and his pirate friend. I woke up in vomit and beer in a banana bin, and a soft lass with brown skin bore me seven babies with snappin' black eyes and beautiful ebony skin, and here it is I'm with you my daughter. Thirty years away can make a seaman's eyes, a roundhouse man's eyes flow out with water, salt water."

Now if that isn't pure true American folklore then you can throw everything from Washington Irving to Carl Sandburg and beyond in the garbage. I'm saying Don Van Vliet, "Captain Beefheart," is on that level. But what I realised this morning, the reason why it was this song stuck out from 26 others: because it's not about the "Neon Meate Dream of a Octafish," but something that happened between people.

Why do you almost always talk elliptically?

"Due to the fact that probably it's very difficult for me to explain myself except in music or paint."

But don't you think talking that way all the time is kind of impersonal, a distancing effect?

"It probably comes out very personal in the music. That's where I'm truthful and honest. I don't know how it happens exactly, but my mind becomes the piano or guitar."

What about when you're alone with Jan?

"We don't talk too much. Because we trust each other, and we don't have that much faith in the spoken word. I guess it's true that I do talk selfishly, as a conversationalist."

Well, don't you think you're missing something you might get from other people, by being that way?

"Sure, but they usually won't accept me anyway. I'm comfortable talking to you. Not many people seem to have things in common with me. I guess what intrigues me the most is something like seeing somebody wash my windows – that's like a symphony."

But if you and I are friends, and you trust me, we should be able to have a reciprocal conversation.

"We're talking without talking. I mean that in a good sense. We're saying things that can't be put into the tongue. It's like good music."

In the end I'm not sure which of us is right. I am probably unfair in wanting everything so explicitly defined from everybody, demanding the rest of the human race be as verbal or verbose as I am. I can't say that he's

'Captain Beefheart is an absolutely authentic chunk of taproot Americana on a Mark Twain level.'

wrong in choosing to live out of society, because this society itself doesn't seem to have much of a future, and doesn't seem to care either. A goat and a corporation exec, or most rising young affluent career people around this town for that matter, come up about even conversation-wise, and the goat smells better and is fun to pet so there you are. As for art that deals with human situations, almost none of the art being produced from within the society these days does that, so why pick on Beefheart because he'd rather commune with paints and bats in the fireplace? Certainly he illuminates more about the human heart, and the human groin for that matter, than all these dry dead literati and "minimalist" artists and juiceless composers. As for Don Van Vliet the man, each passing year seems to bring him farther out of defensive obscurantism, measurably more open and trusting, which is really wild in itself because the world around is careening in exactly the opposite direction.

Besides which on another level it's none of my business anyway, except insofar as he chose to make it so. If he is somewhat in retreat, it can be justified on all the levels above and several more I'm sure, besides which who isn't in retreat these days? His kind takes a lot more courage than most, and as an artist he is so far removed from any kind of burnout that he can't even be called, like I said earlier and like all the Neil Youngs and Lou Reeds who made it from the late 60s to this point relatively intact, a survivor. More like a natural resource. The difference, finally, is that, to use an example by one of his favourite writers, he'll never give us his version of *Macbeth*. He would rather be the Grand Canyon. ●

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14	NEWCASTLE CITY HALL	0191 261 2606
15	LIVERPOOL ECHO ARENA	0844 800 0400
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19	SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL	023 8063 2601
21	LONDON HMV HAMMERSMITH APOLLO	0844 844 4748
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13	GLASGOW THE GARAGE	0871 320 7131
14	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
16	LIVERPOOL STANLEY THEATRE	0844 477 2000
17	LEAMINGTON ASSEMBLY	0192 652 3001
18	OXFORD O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
19	NORWICH WATERFRONT	0160 350 8050
20	SHEFFIELD THE CORPORATION	0114 276 0262
22	HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDOME	0871 230 1101
23	WOLVERHAMPTON WULFRUN HALL	0870 320 7000
24	SOUTHAMPTON THE BROOK	0238 055 5366
27	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	0845 413 4444
28	MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2	0161 832 1111
29	TREORCI THE PARK AND DARE THEATRE	0800 014 7111
30	LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE	0844 477 2000

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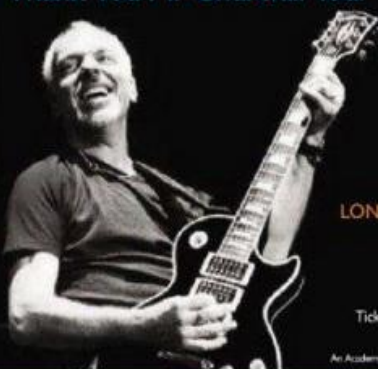
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10 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	0845 413 4444	19 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
11 WHITEHAVEN CIVIC HALL	01946 514 960	21 FALMOUTH PRINCESS PAVILION	0871 220 0260
13 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2	0161 832 1111	22 BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY	0844 477 2000
14 GLASGOW O2 ABC	0871 230 7131	23 LONDON O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE	0844 477 2000
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28 SOUTHAMPTON JOINERS 02380 632 601
30 LONDON BARFLY 0844 842 2424
31 NEWCASTLE CLUNY 0844 230 4174

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01 ABERDEEN TUNNELS 0871 230 7131
02 GLASGOW O2 ABC2 0871 230 7131
03 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY 0845 413 4444
05 BRISTOL TUNNELS 0870 444 4400
06 SHEFFIELD CORPORATION 0114 276 0262
07 YORK FIBBERS 0844 477 1000
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27 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY 0845 413 4444

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04 SOUTHAMPTON THE BROOK 023 8055 5366
05 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2 0161 832 1111
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UNIVERSITY
GARDEN COURT
02380 632 601

FRI 04 BRISTOL
THE FLEECE

SAT 05 NOTTINGHAM
ROCK CITY
0845 413 4444

VENUE UPGRADED
DUE TO DEMAND
SUN 06 MANCHESTER
ACADEMY 2
0161 832 1111

MON 07 GLASGOW GARAGE
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SAT 26 LONDON O2
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24 SOUTHAMPTON TALKING HEADS 02380 678 446
25 ALDERSHOT WEST END CENTRE 01252 330 040
26 SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY2 0844 477 2000
28 MANCHESTER ROADHOUSE 0161 932 1111

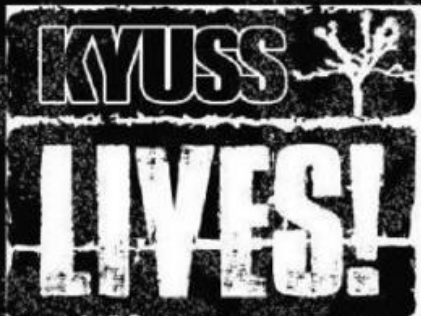
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WULFRUN HALL 0870 320 7000
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03 LONDON HMV FORUM 0844 847 2405
04 GLASGOW O2 ABC 0871 230 7131
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SAT 5 APRIL
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ROTHERHAM, Civic Theatre Mon 7 FEB
01709 823621 www.rotherham.gov.uk/theatres

BIRMINGHAM, Alexandra Theatre Tue 8 FEB
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DUMFRIES, DG One Fri 11 FEB
01387 243 550 www.dgcommunity.net

HALIFAX, Victoria Theatre Sat 12 FEB
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KILMARNOCK, The Palace Wed 16 FEB
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FALKIRK, Town Hall Thu 17 FEB
01324 508850 www.falkirk.gov.uk/cultural

GLENROTHES, Rothes Halls Fri 18 FEB
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DUNDEE, Whitehall Theatre Sat 19 FEB
08717 029 486 www.whitehalldundee.co.uk

GREENOCK, Arts Guild Theatre Sun 20 FEB
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BLACKPOOL, Grand Theatre Sun 27 FEB
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WORTHING, Pavilion Wed 9 MAR
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HORSHAM, Capital Theatre Thu 10 MAR
01403 750220 www.thecapitolhorsham.com

FOLKESTONE, Leas Cliff Hall Fri 11 MAR
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SWINDON, Wyvern Theatre Sun 13 MAR
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GLASGOW, King's Theatre Mon 14 MAR
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HARLOW, Playhouse Wed 16 & Thu 17 MAR
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IPSWICH, Playhouse Fri 18 MAR
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CLACKTON, Princes Theatre Sat 19 MAR
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11 HAYWARDS HEATH Civic Hall 0144 445 5440
12 CLACKTON West Cliff Theatre 0125 547 4000
25 DONCASTER The Civic 0130 234 2349
31 LIVERPOOL The Philharmonic Hall 0151 709 3789

APRIL

2 EDMONTON The Millfield Theatre 020 8807 8890
3 DORKING Dorking Halls 01323 688 1717
8 CROMER The Play Pavilion Theatre 01263 351 2455
23 CHELTENHAM Town Hall 0844 576 2210
28 YEOVIL The Octopus Theatre 0193 542 7854
29 WESTON SUPER MARE Playhouse Theatre 0193 404 5544
30 NEWPORT The Riverfront 0163 355 6679

MAY

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6 EPSOM The Playhouse Theatre 0137 274 2555
7 LICHFIELD The Garrick Theatre 0154 341 2121
13 SWANSEA The Grand Theatre 0179 247 5715
14 PONTYFRID Muni Arts Centre 01800 014 7111
15 LONDON Beconbury Theatre 020 7369 8822

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8 DARWIN Library Theatre 0124 705 0066
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10 SKEGNESS The Embassy Centre 0145 574 0205
11 TUMBRIDGE WELLS The Assembly Hall 0189 251 6942
16 HAVERHILL The Arts Centre 0144 671 4440
17 WORTHING The Pavilion Theatre 0190 320 8106
18 WIMBORNE The Trisk Theatre 0120 288 5560
20 DARLINGTON Civic 0124 688 6555
21 SHERWESBURY The Severn Theatre 0174 326 1281
22 TRURO Hall For Cornwall 0187 226 2406
23 BASKINGSTON The Arid Theatre 0256 844 2444
25 MORECAMBE The Playhouse Theatre 0152 458 2903
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30 FOCKLINGTON Arts Centre 0175 930 1547

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Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

Tony Clarkin on hairdressing and death.

Interview: Dave Ling

Anthony Michael Clarkin was born on November 24, 1946. Like his future Jet Records labelmate Jeff Lynne of the Electric Light Orchestra, Clarkin grew up in the Birmingham suburb of Shard End, later immortalised – along with Rome, Tokyo and Monte Carlo – in ELO's hit song *All Over The World*. Guitarist and songwriter Clarkin formed the band Magnum with vocalist Bob Catley in 1975, and released their debut album, *Kingdom Of Madness*, three years later. The band eventually attained long-overdue chart success through trimming back their pomp-rock excesses during the late 80s, but split up in 1995. Perhaps unexpectedly, given that the guitarist had abandoned Magnum for a more modern-sounding venture called Hard Rain, it was Clarkin who instigated a reunion in 2001. The band's current studio album, *The Visitation*, is their sixteenth to date.

How was your childhood?

I had a working-class upbringing that was very happy, I guess.

Were your parents understanding of your musical ambitions?

Although they were worried about my being in a band, they really helped. My dad bought my first two guitars for me.

Is there any truth in the internet revelation that you trained as a ladies' hairdresser after leaving school?

Yes. I thought being in a band and being a hairdresser were sure-fire ways to meet girls.

How did you feel when, early on in the band's career, *Sounds* magazine wrote that Magnum looked "like a bunch of roadies at a fancy-dress party"?

[Laughs] That would be an insult to the road crew, really. Being a fashion guru has never really been my style.

Is there a secret to writing good songs?

If there is, then I wish someone would tell me.

After the band had struggled for so many years, did having hit singles feel like some sort of vindication?

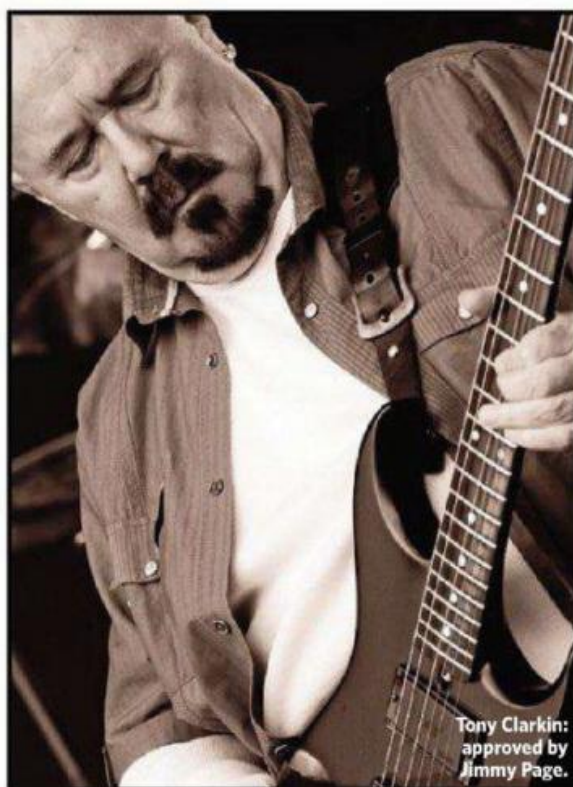
'Vindication' is not the right word. I remember being really pleased, but it's not something you should expect just because you've been playing for a long, long time. It was also around that point that I think we lost our way, being pushed around by a record company [Polydor] and manager [Keith Baker] who always thought they knew better than the band. Thank heavens we got rid of both.

You cut your hair and threw away your trademark hat in 1992. The story goes that on the day concerned Bob Catley walked right past you.

Believe it or not Bob's been walking past me for years. I sometimes think he's blind. On one occasion I remember being shoved out of the way by fans trying to get to Bob. I'd just shaved my hair off, and I went round introducing myself as Tony Clarkin's brother. The trouble was no one believed me.

You and Bob have worked together for 39 years. Do you ever argue?

Actually, it's very rare that Bob and I have disagreements. I think by now you'd say we need each other [laughs]. And of course I mean that in a musical sense.



Tony Clarkin: approved by Jimmy Page.

You suffered a heart attack at the Sweden Rock festival eight years ago and had to be airlifted to hospital.

Yes, that's true. And I nearly had another one getting into the helicopter. As I've grown older I've begun to hate flying.

Against doctor's advice you continued to smoke and drink. Is that still the case?

[Laughing] Hang on a minute. Do you know my doctor? No, I stopped smoking and drinking on the same day four years ago.

Very little is known about your life outside of Magnum. Do you have kids?

Yes, I do have children. In fact it was Dionne, my eldest daughter, who gave me the idea for the song *The Visitation*.

Do you believe in God?

The best way I can explain it to anyone is to suggest they watch the film *Fiddler On The Roof*. That [the film's lead character, Tevye] is me; it's a wonder I haven't been arrested.

Were you pleased to discover, via a recent interview with photographer Ross Halfin, that Jimmy Page approves of Magnum's music?

Yes, I'm very pleased. I'll never get my big head through the door now.

What's the best feeling in the world?

It's putting the last full stop after the last word in the last song when you've been writing an album.

Do you have some understanding of the meaning of life?

It's different for everyone, whether it be making love to a beautiful woman or

spending lots of money on stuff that you don't really need.

Do you want to be buried, or cremated?

I'd like to spend my last month on this planet in a house of ill repute, and afterwards they can do whatever they want with me. ☺

Magnum's new album The Visitation is available via SPV Records. The band tour the UK throughout April.

How many CDs do you own but never play?



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What's the point in owning hundreds of CDs worth thousands of pounds if you never listen to them? The problem with CDs is that it's quicker to make a cup of coffee than dip into a CD. Try timing how long it takes to pick a CD, load it in the CD player, play a snippet from a track or two, eject it and put it back where it came from. Then there is the problem of finding music. The print on a CD spine is tiny. What if the track is on a compilation CD? What if the CD is in the car? Then there is the clutter. You need to keep your CDs near the player or you won't play them. So you are forced to share your living space with literally hundreds of cheap plastic boxes.

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The face behind Brennan

Martin is a physicist, computer engineer and silicon chip designer. He co-designed the world's first 64-bit games computer.

"I always liked the promise of CDs. It wasn't so much the quality but the quick access to a given

track. After vinyl and cassette that was a real plus. My first CD player was a five CD multi-changer. I liked the idea of quick access to more than one CD and music that didn't repeat after 40 minutes. A few years ago I had a go at loading

my music onto a computer - but I never listened to it - I needed something simpler, more immediate. In the end the computer got a virus and the music files were lost - I still had the originals thankfully. The JB7 is really my personal ideal music player"



Martin Brennan

To get the whole story on the Brennan JB7 and order visit www.brennan.co.uk

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